Project 2: An Interview with Erica Fernandez

Nicholas Favazzo

Educational Technology MA Program

Florida Gulf Coast University

Monday, October 7, 2013

Erica Fernandez is currently a game design student and employed as an editor for online publication GenGame.net. Despite the relative infancy of her professional career, Ms. Fernandez has already developed and modified numerous games, including those serving the purpose of educational technology. On the afternoon of September 17, 2013, I had the opportunity to speak with her in person at the Collier County Library in Naples, FL. Erica and I spent about 30 minutes discussing the applicability of gaming as one avenue of educational technology.

Erica views educational technology as a broad term for any tool that is used to teach people of various ages. She cited examples of products ranging from school aged children to military professionals. Naturally, most of the references were toward gaming products. We also discussed one of her success stories in using technology for learning. Most notable, Ms. Fernandez played a role in the development of a game for youth that promoted fire safety knowledge. Other projects targeting youth have also been developed for both personal entertainment and as assignments during her program. Erica elucidated the development trends in educational technology by recognizing the dynamic nature and significant growth and impact of technology itself. We also spoke about potential barriers with respect to gaming in education. I agree completely with her theory that it is both grossly underutilized and comparatively unexplored, predominantly due to an ostensible belief that the sole motive is entertainment. Erica pointed out the importance of communication amongst game designers and educational technologists and supports my theory that an introduction to game design and development course would be a valuable addition to the educational technology program at FGCU. It was also recognized that the learning goals of such course should not center around programming, but instead on the elements of story design.

After conducting this interview, my pontification for game use in education will continue with some increased strength. I certainly continue to recognize a benefit in offering coursework related to gaming in the educational technology curriculum. However, this interview provided me with an increased appreciation of the profundity of game design. Accordingly, I would approach the design and development of a *Gaming in Education,* versus an *Introduction to Gaming* course with more caution. At minimum, input from a team comprised of both game design and educational technology professionals would be necessary to better determine which specific elements may best improve interdisciplinary collaboration.

Appendix:

EricaFernandez2013.mp3