

QUIZ BLOCK

The Quiz Block is now working! What began as a small side project for our programmers ballooned into a major deliverable in its own right, with Romain solving some interesting programming challenges in its development.

First, teachers can set up a question for individual blocks – with multiple Quiz Blocks in the same game world, each is able to have a separate question, and even separate types of questions (true/false, short answer/fill-in-the-blank, or multiple choice). Any previously created question for a Quiz Block is stored for a teacher to use later on any Quiz Block. And in a game world where all the Quiz Blocks have the same question, editing one Quiz Block in the world will update the rest.

Further, if a Quiz Block is answered correctly, it activates any connected redstone circuitry. For instance, if a teacher wanted to give students an in-game reward through a dispenser, or to open a door for a student to proceed when a correct answer is given, the teacher would be able to set this up easily. If an incorrect answer is given, nothing happens – or a previously active redstone circuit attached to the Quiz Block would turn off.

Finally, all answers are logged for our Lesson Review tool – including the username of each person who gave each answer. We're looking to add one last feature – the ability for a teacher to push a Quiz Block's question dialog out to all students whether or not they're at the Quiz Block. With that, we're in our final debugging pass over the Quiz Block and will be ready to hand that off along with documentation about our process.

The documentation may be the most valuable part – we've answered some very unique questions about modifying Minecraft. We've added some in-depth interface elements that also communicate with programs outside the game, we've made "unique" blocks, and have conditional triggers for redstone circuitry. All of this can provide a great foundation for future modding of the game in these directions.

RESEARCH AND PLAYTESTS

This week, the design side of the team has primarily been focused on digesting the results of last week's playtests – seeing what we've learned, and what new questions have come up. It's also been a great help to have conversations with many visitors to the ETC this week, including game design professionals and Masters students in educational technology, to name a few – each with varying degrees of knowledge of Minecraft. We were fortunate to get some fresh perspectives on our goals and research, as well as the ability to hone our message by communicating with these very relevant experts that had no prior knowledge of our project. Further, we just had an extremely constructive call with Quest 2 Learn, and we'll be exchanging notes for the rest of the semester. We've run into similar challenges, and our goals align extremely well.

We plan to return to the Elizabeth Forward School District in two weeks for a final session of playtests, where we'll be playtesting with some of the same classes of students we tested with before. We're looking to move past that initial introduction of Minecraft and see how students now react to specific content and curriculum-driven objectives in the game world.