



FINAL PLAYTEST

On Wednesday, we had our final battery of playtests at Elizabeth Forward Middle School and High School. We were also privileged to host a crew of two from the Institute of Play; they tagged along to observe and film us for their multimedia case study on game-based learning. At the end of the day, we got to sit down and talk about the day, and hear about our work from an outside perspective.

All the tests went amazingly well from every angle. Dave Faulkner's stats lesson even impressed the statistics teacher at the high school, while the students walked away with a basic understanding of core statistics concepts. It seemed incredibly helpful that the students were creating their own data sets in the course of the lesson, to say nothing of the fact that previous experience with Minecraft went a long way towards being able to actually teach a lesson in the game world. With the students' investment in the data sets, they even did some basic hypothesis forming and testing.

In addition, we tested an updated version of Yotam's contour line lesson. We had reframed it as a competition between two halves of the class, as well as making some other minor tweaks based on lessons learned from the last test. The lesson went much smoother, with students focused and taking much more out of it than the previous test with another class.

Finally, Scott had created a spatial reasoning lesson, really leveraging the strengths of Minecraft as it allows students to explore a three-dimensional space. We were initially concerned about it being a linear or restrictive experience, but again, students were focused and learned something thanks to some great design decisions and the fact that we were no longer introducing Minecraft to students alongside new educational content.

Indeed, where our previous playtests had really taught us what NOT to do with Minecraft in the classroom, these sessions were shining examples of what to do. It was thrilling to see the students and teachers engaged, and to be able to see firsthand examples of how iteration and our next generation of lessons hit closer to home.

SOFT OPENING AND THE ROAD TO FINALS

Next week is Soft Opening, where we'll show ETC faculty all of our deliverables: the lesson review tool, quiz block, and our lessons and associated research. It's a chance for them to provide feedback so that we can use our last two weeks to focus on any holes or opportunities, and really polish our final deliverables to a shine.

As it is, we're content complete, but filling in the details. Dave Bennett and Romain are implementing our user interface design now that the review tool has all of its core functionalities working together. The rest of the team will be finishing up our playtest notes from Wednesday, and then delving more into actual analysis and conclusions from our research, leading up to publication and sharing our findings.