PIXEL PUSHERS

EVALUATION TOOL

We have a successful "gold spike" of our evaluation tool up and running. We've implemented metadata gathering in the Minecraft client, with blocks created or placed, the types of blocks, the time of those actions, and the player performing those actions all being successfully exported from the game. Further, we can plug these data into our modified version of Minecraft X-Ray, an open-source map viewing program, to highlight and filter these blocks based on which player interacted with them.

Now that the core concept is working, our priority is the user interface that will define our evaluation tool. After two incredibly helpful calls with our client, we now have a comprehensive roadmap of our UI, which encapsulates every feature the final product will possess. In addition to outlining all of the program's functionality and use-cases, it provides a great internal roadmap to track our progress in developing the software. We're optimistic that we can have a feature-complete evaluation tool by Half Presentations.

TEACHER TESTING

We've been fortunate to be introduced to a local school district that's been amazingly gracious and accommodating in our desire to test the MinecraftEdu software with actual teachers. We've outlined a series of questions and a playtesting script to take with us when we test next Wednesday. We'll be testing with at least five 6th and 7th grade teachers.

LESSON PLANNING

As our team is heavy with design talent, we've also begun the process of creating prototype lessons within Minecraft as a side project. With our backgrounds and skillsets, we've targeted 5th and 6th grade students – we feel that it's a grade level we can effectively design content for, and is a nice middle-ground for MinecraftEdu's targeted age range, straddling the challenges and advantages of working with comparatively younger or older students.

We've begun research on what subjects may be the most effectively taught within the world of Minecraft, as we feel it's an area in which the Game-Based Learning community is particularly interested in examining. One current concern is developing lessons that require little to no modification of the game – our programmers are fully tasked, while we can also explore what's possible for teachers with little or no programming experience. With the lessons themselves, positive or negative outcomes are both instructive, but it is our goal to design lessons that educators find valuable and would use in their own classrooms.