

FAQs



What is 3D GameLab & where did it come from?

3D GameLab is a quest-based learning platform where teachers and students play, design, and share quests and badges to create personalized learning. By earning experience points, rewards, and achievements, players “level up” through the curriculum, choosing quests they want to play, with the ability to align to Common Core Standards. Teachers literally turn class into a game, providing the opportunity for true mastery learning. (<http://3dgame.com/>)

Why is 3D GameLab used for tech. class at Heatherwood?

In my 10 years of teaching technology at Heatherwood, I found students to be so different in their knowledge base in regards to the curriculum and computer use, each individual seemed to be on his/her own level. Trying to keep an entire group moving in the same direction seemed virtually impossible. Some students were finishing projects so fast that they were sitting with nothing to do. Other students needed much more support that they felt like they could never catch up and would eventually give up. Additionally, when students were absent whether for sickness, vacation, or personal reasons, they would come back and we would have moved on to a new unit and it could be very frustrating to understand new content when you were not present for the other building pieces. 3D GameLab has such a unique structure where it allows students to be self-paced in their learning. They can move through the lessons one step at a time and not miss class curriculum if they are absent. It also allows them to work from home if they have access to a home computer. Using this format to teach the content of the technology class at Heatherwood allows for total active engagement on the part of students where they are actually pushing me, as the teacher, to hurry and check their lesson so they can do more work! It is amazing!

What is a quest?

A quest is essentially each lesson that is provided for the students in their class through 3D GameLab. Some quests are formative and others summative.

What does it mean when I hear about “*formative quests*” and “*summative quests*?”

When you hear teachers talk about those terms formative vs. summative what it really means is that all formative work is **for learning**. Ways that students can practice and learn new skills or refine and enhance prior learning. Summative work is **of learning**. This means that at the end of a unit of formative work, it is now time for students to demonstrate what they know. So a summative quest is

like a test or final project to demonstrate they have learned all the skills within the unit. In 3D GameLab, students are completing formative quests daily. Each quest is based on the one prior and they have to meet the “standard” set within that quest in order to be approved and move on to the next quest. Once they complete all the formative quests, they complete the summative quest and that is then reported on their online grades.

What does it mean if my student says their quest was “approved” or “sent back?”

The wonderful thing about this type of format is that students receive immediate feedback that is individual to them from me as the teacher. As each student submits quests, it comes in to a type of electronic “inbox” within my teacher side of 3D GameLab. At that point, I get to review their submission and either **approve** their quest which allows them to move on to the next one, or **return** their quest with feedback so they can make the adjustments and try again. Throughout the semester, students become much better critical readers because the quest directions and submission details are so specific that they can't be quick and try to shortcut things. Usually I tell them that “*slow and steady wins the race*” because those students who take time to read, typically end up passing those who try to take shortcuts. If they read too quickly, they miss an important piece of the quest and it can get sent back to them multiple times. This type of constant feedback model allows their learning to be more individualized and also the assurance on my end that as they complete quests, they are meeting the Washington State Technology standards because they know I won't allow them to turn in below standard work.

Why do I not see regular grades online? It looks like there is nothing there?

In 3D GameLab students complete formative and summative quests on a daily basis depending on where they are within the course. The grades that get reported are based on the summative quests that are 100% of their grade. Throughout the semester, the summative quests are averaged together to generate an overall grade. In the past, students would get penalized by a grade of “missing” and it would show their grade as an F if they did not turn it in. This would have an adverse effect on students in technology because although in a more traditional format they had time to turn it in, students would look at the overall grade of an F and basically give up. I would then get little to know make up work in and they could never “crawl” out of the whole that was created. In this quest-based format a student's grade will reflect the most recent or average of the most recent summative project(s) turned in. By approximately the end of the first month of each semester, students should be completing their first summative quest. As a result, you should see a grade appear. If you do not, that should be a “**red flag**” and it is time to make sure to ask your student where they are according to their class pacing guide. If they are “on track” then it should be a couple more days perhaps until they complete and submit the project. If they are “off track” it is time to figure out how to help them finish either by working from home or coming in to Mrs. Pewitt's open lab help times. Even if students feel behind, it is extremely helpful for them to come in because they can get caught up and feel so much better.

How is their overall grade calculated?

A student's overall grade is calculated by taking the average of all the summative projects turned in. As each new summative project is entered in to the online grading system, it automatically averages with any previously entered summative grades.

Why is there only one due date?

In order for the 3D GameLab to be completely self-paced, there needs to be one due date at the end of the semester. If there were due dates on the quests then the quests would be “unavailable” and lock the student out so they couldn't complete it. This would defeat the purpose of them being able to catch up if they are behind for any reason. On the day of the final due date, students will be locked out and they will no longer be able to turn in any more work for approval.

What does it mean if my student is “ON track” or “OFF track”?

After the first year of using 3D GameLab I put together a “pacing guide” for each class. This gives them a week by week task list for which quests they should be working on. There will be times that they are not on track and times that they are consistently on track. The important thing is for them to develop independence and be in charge of their own learning. This year, I also added a layer of them completing a weekly reflection on their pacing guide. Each Friday, they have to look at the past week and self-assess if they are “on track” or “off track”. Then we discuss what strategies they could use to get to where they want to be. Self-reflection works on that tough skill of metacognition...“thinking about your thinking.” This can be very tricky for the middle school mind so we continually reinforce why this is a good life skill; figuring out where they are and how to get where you want to be to achieve their goals. A copy of the pacing guide specific to each class is found on that class' page on Mrs. Pewitt's website. It would be a good idea to print it for a common place at home so that you can be asking your student if they are on/off track each week and what they have planned to do about it.

When do all student quests need to be completed?

The end of the first trimester is **January 24, 2014**. Therefore, all student quests need to be **submitted and approved** by **January 22, 2014**. This is not new to the students' ears and we talk about it at least once or more each week.

How do I know my student going to complete all the quests by the end of the semester?

Every student can experience success in this type of self-paced, quest-based learning model. However, it won't happen if they are not committed to working on quests in class. There is no technical homework for the class unless students choose to complete quests at home. If your student is consistently “on track” they will definitely complete all quests by the end of the trimester. If they are struggling and feel like their pacing guide is showing mostly “off track” progress, then we need to come up with a concrete plan of action for them to receive additional help from me. We can set up a schedule of regular times for them to come and get additional help and usually that does the trick!

What should their grade be if they complete all their quests by the end of the semester?

Due to the fact that when quests are submitted by students they have to complete specific tasks and meet specific submission details to be “at standard”, if all quests are completed by the final due date, students will achieve a minimum of an 80% (B grade) as their final grade in the class.

What if they don't complete all summative quests by the end of the semester?

If students do not complete all the summative quests by the end of the semester, their overall grade will be calculated according to how many summative quests they turned in out of the total possible.

For example, if there are 7 summative quests and they completed 4, the remaining summative quests would reflect a zero if they are never turned in and thus their final semester grade would be approximately 57%.

What can my student do if they need additional help on their quests or is falling behind according to the pacing guide?

Students can look at the weekly calendar online using Mrs. Pewitt's website and/or look at the hard copies of the weekly schedule posted inside the tech. classroom and outside the door of the tech. classroom. They can also talk with Mrs. Pewitt or email her at spewitt@everettsd.org .

Can students access 3D GameLab from home?

YES! If students have an internet connection they can access the 3D GameLab portal by going to the Heatherwood technology website and clicking on the icon or by going to http://portal.3dgameLab.org/users/sign_in .

Where are all the resources for students to use on their quests?

To complete all the quests within 3D GameLab, students need the 3D GameLab portal, the Heatherwood technology website, and primarily Microsoft Office 2007 or higher. We will also be working with Photoshop Elements 11 which is on all district computers.

If I have any additional questions, who do I contact?

Please contact Mrs. Pewitt at 425-385-6300 or 425-385-6426 preferably before or after school Monday-Friday or by email at spewitt@everettsd.org any time of day. Email is my preferred method of communication.