

Our Language Classroom: Our Own Private Discovery Island.



José Luis Morales - September, 2011.

What fascinates us about an island?

- We expect it to be exotic!
- We expect to experience a sense of freedom.
- We expect to go on a quest for new and exciting adventures.

What fascinates kids about their online 'islands'?

- They feel **Connected**.
- They feel **Capable**.
- They feel **Creative**.
- They feel **Confident**.
- They feel **Committed**.

By comparison, how can classroom experiences seem to our kids?

Routine

Predictable

Embarrassing

Lonely

It's not attention deficit.
I'm just not listening!

"Where
do I
click?"

Too hard!

Too easy!

Slow

Do kids learn anything on their “islands”?

Jenkins, H. et al, 2006

- PLAY
- PERFORMANCE
- SIMULATION
- APPROPRIATION
- MULTITASKING
- DISTRIBUTED
COGNITION

What do kids learn on their “islands”?

Jenkins, H. et al, 2006

- COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE
- JUDGMENT
- TRANSMEDIA NAVIGATION
- NETWORKING
- NEGOTIATION

The “million dollar” question:

Gee, J.P., 2006

- How can we give our learners lots of practice
“...in a more ‘forgiving’ context where the practice is not boring and where they experience ongoing success?”

From teaching to 'partnering'

Prensky, M., 2010

Teachers and learners do what they are best at:

Teachers infuse learning (vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing for communication) with a sense of **discovery**.

Learners – whenever possible - blend in the 'digital' media they are so familiar with. They share their work digitally and get extra practice online at home or at school.



Discover “*Judgment*”

Shaffer, D.W., 2006

- How can we best help our students learn English but also “...think more deeply, compassionately and effectively about the problems and situations they will encounter in the world?”
- Our answer to this question is the **Values** and the **Think!** Tasks, both with simple instructions found in the Teacher’s Books.

Discover how to be a better person.

Discover essential competencies for life.

Why aren't online/video games a waste of time?

Gee, J.P. (2007) p40

- Because, when played actively and critically: “They situate meaning in a multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world.”



Some conclusions:

- Children want to learn and are motivated.
- They learn many essential 21st century competencies from online/video gaming outside school but miss the excitement and freedom of these experiences in school.
- We can **reach** the learners, **teach** them and **achieve results** by “**partnering**” with them on **Our Discovery Island**.
- Join the adventure at: www.ourdiscoveryisland.com

Thank you for your participation.

Handout downloadable from:

www.scribd.com/joselomora



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