



How Computer Games Help Children Learn

By David Williamson Shaffer

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How can we make sure that our children are learning to be creative thinkers in a world of global competition - and what does that mean for the future of education in the digital age? David Williamson Shaffer offers a fresh and powerful perspective on computer games and learning. *How Computer Games Help Children Learn* shows how video and computer games can help teach children to build successful futures - but only if we think in new ways about education itself. Shaffer shows how computer and video games can help students learn to think like engineers, urban planners, journalists, lawyers, and other innovative professionals, giving them the tools they need to survive in a changing world. Based on more than a decade of research in technology, game science, and education, *How Computer Games Help Children Learn* revolutionizes the ongoing debate about the pros and cons of digital learning.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Shaffer offers practical advice to assist parents and educators to respond to his call to radically transform an increasingly outdated educational system..." Barry Joseph, Online Leadership Director, Global Kids

"This totally enchanting book shows what education in the 21st century could look like if we are willing to expand our notions of learning in ways that foster productive inquiry and design. An extremely readable book that should be on the bookshelf of anyone who cares about having schools that help young people prepare to compete in the global economy." John Seely Brown, Former Chief Scientist of Xerox Corporation and Director of its Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), Senior Fellow, Annenberg Center, USC, and co-author, *The Social Life of Information* and *The Only Sustainable Edge*

"Beautifully written...*How Computer Games Help Children Learn* breaks new ground in exciting ways. What a treat! A book about the development of innovative thinking that is refreshingly innovative...A tour de force." Deborah Lowe Vandell, Chair, Department of Education, University of California, Irvine

"You may have asked yourself if computer games are destroying the minds of our nation's children. *How Computer Games Help Children Learn* shows that the exact opposite is true. Parents, educators, and computer game makers take note: by combining years of research and his front-line classroom experiences, Shaffer makes a cogent and compelling argument for the educational power of intelligently crafted games that can serve as tools to help children think and learn about real world problems and their solutions." Michael McCormick, Senior Designer, Backbone Entertainment, and Lead Designer of *SimCity 4*

"Shaffer's book moves from vivid case studies and accessible accounts of key ideas from the learning sciences to practical advice on how parents can help their children learn more from the games they play. This book represents the logical next step in a conversation started by James Paul Gee's *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy* and Steven Johnson's *Everything Bad Is Good For You*." Henry Jenkins, Director, Comparative Media Studies Program, MIT

"This well-written and important book will introduce parents and teachers to a radical idea: video games can be good for children. When children play games like *Sim City* or *The Oregon Trail*, they learn about urban planning or the American West in spite of themselves. But these games are just the tip of the iceberg; Shaffer describes a wide range of fascinating new learning games that are just now emerging...Because these games give children the chance to creatively manipulate a virtual world, they can teach creativity and innovation, abilities that are more important than ever in today's competitive global economy. Shaffer advises parents how to pick out a good learning game, how to play it with your children, and how to make sure they are learning from it." R. Keith Sawyer, author of *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*

"Shaffer's book points out forcefully a paradigm of future schooling: to better prepare our kids for a globally competitive world, we have to bring the thinking, practices, and cultures of various professions into school learning. With convincing examples of simulated professional games that can integrate learning, working, and playing, he proves that this is feasible." Tak-Wai Chan, National Central University, Taiwan

"This groundbreaking book raises fundamental issues concerning the goals of education and highlights the need for innovative thinkers in the 21st century. Written in a clear, lucid, and direct manner, Shaffer makes

his ideas easily accessible to professional as well as lay readers. The book will benefit educators, school administrators, policy makers, and, most importantly, parents.' Yam San Chee, Associate Professor, Learning Sciences & Technologies Academic Group & Learning Sciences Lab, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

"Deep learning, technical learning, learning that leads to the ability to innovate: these are the most important natural resources in our global high-tech world. Will our children be able to compete with kids in China and India? Shaffer shows us how to mine the potential of video game technologies to transform learning at home, in communities, and in schools." James Paul Gee, University of Wisconsin-Madison, author of *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*

"Like Dewey, Piaget, and Papert before him, Shaffer challenges us to rethink learning in a new age. He uses vivid examples - backed by solid research - to show what education should look like in the 21st century." - Kurt D. Squire, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Game Designer "A must read for anyone who cares about learning. Game designers depend on having millions of people voluntarily learn more than anyone would dare put into a school curriculum. So studying games - how they are designed and how they are played - is one of the best sources of insight about learning, and Shaffer is an excellent guide to making the most of it." - Seymour Papert, Professor Emeritus, Media and Education Technology, MIT Media Lab

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

DAVID WILLIAMSON SHAFFER is Associate Professor of Learning Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, and Game Scientist at the Academic Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Laboratory. A former teacher, curriculum developer, teacher-trainer, and game designer, he has taught in the United States and with the U.S. Peace Corps in Nepal.

JAMES PAUL GEE has written the Foreword to this book. He is one of the most well-known professors of education in the United States. He teaches at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and is the author of several books, including *What Video Games Have To Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Users Review

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