

Play and literacy in virtual worlds



Jackie Marsh, University of Sheffield

PLAY AND TECHNOLOGY

- Levin and Rosenquest (2001)
- Alliance for Childhood (2000)
- Palmer (2006)
- *Yelland (1999)*
- *Plowman (2005)*

SOCIAL NETWORKING

- Developed through use of Web 2.0 tools
- Involves online interaction with others
- Includes sites / services such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, virtual worlds

REAL AND VIRTUAL

I predict that in ten years we will be faced with a group of socially withdrawn teenagers who are “addicted” to living in their virtual worlds. The window of opportunity to anticipate this problem and to implement research, regulation and intervention efforts is rapidly closing.

(Putnam, 1997, p211)

REAL AND VIRTUAL

In the eyes of the debunkers, the “virtual” (the false, the inauthentic, the new, the disembodied) threatens to invade or pollute “the real” (the genuine, the authentic, the traditional, the embodied).

(Valentine and Holloway, 2002, p304)

PLAY AND LITERACY

- Cognitive (impact on comprehension, recall of stories, metacognitive abilities e.g. Pellegrini and Galda, 1993)
- Ecological (literacy resources in play contexts can increase engagement in 'authentic' literacy practices e.g. Neuman and Roskos, 1997)
- Socio-cultural (play can enhance social and cultural understandings of literacy e.g. Dyson, 1998)
- Ideological (play can reinforce gendered / classed literacy practices (Carrington, 2003; Davies, 1989; Marsh, 1999))

CLUB PENGUIN

- Club Penguin - aimed at children aged from six to fourteen
- Approximately 22 million registered users
- 2 levels of use - paid membership has more benefits





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‘play as a generative site for developing the agency of the cultural producer or worker’ (Ito, 2006:)



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**CHILD AS THE “SUBJECT OF
CONSUMPTION”, THE
INDIVIDUAL WHO IS IMAGINED
AND ACTED UPON BY THE
IMPERATIVE TO CONSUME’.**

(MILLER AND ROSE, 1997:1)

...it is important for scholars to be cognizant of the often unexamined assumption that posits children as somehow outside the realm of economic life who are then brought into it either by caring adults, like parents or teachers, or dragged in by media and marketers. That line which divides 'in' from 'out' fades every day as structures of capital help structure the imagining of the worlds into which a child enters well before its post-partum existence.

(Cook, 2008: 236)



- Hello ▶
- Good-Bye ▶
- Friend ▶
- Questions ▶
- Answers ▶
- Game ▶
- Activities ▶
- Grub! ▶
- Hurray! ▶
- Yes
- No
- Ok





WE NEED YOU!

THE PENGUIN TIMES

Issue #97

Free Club Penguin Newspaper - Delivered every Thursday

August 23, 2007

GET SPORTY
NEW PROJECT
UNDERWAY
PAGE A4



FEATURED GAME:
THIN ICE
PAGE B1



**ASK
AUNT
ARCTIC**

STAY PUT
PAGE B3

INSIDE

- Top Stories
- Tips & Secrets
- Aunt Arctic
- Jokes
- Riddles
- Poetry
- Events
- Comics



CAMP PENGUIN!

Follow the signs around town to find the Punt!



See More Inside →



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The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Club Penguin adoption page. The page is divided into two main columns for different puffle types. The left column is for a Blue Puffle, and the right column is for a Red Puffle. Each column contains a character illustration, descriptive text, and an 'ADOPT' button. The background features a cartoonish room with a newspaper, a birdhouse, a door labeled 'EMPLOYEES', and some boxes. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with icons for chat, emoticons, a map, and a home button. A coin counter at the bottom right shows 'YOUR COINS: 1197'.

BLUE PUFFLE

Attitude: Mild-tempered, content, loyal
Favorite toy: Ball



Blue Puffle 800  **ADOPT**

Can be adopted by anyone on Club Penguin!

RED PUFFLE

Attitude: Adventurous, enthusiastic
Favorite toys: Bowling Pins, Cannon
Special features: Originally from Rockhopper Island



Red Puffle 800  **ADOPT**

Can be adopted by anyone on Club Penguin!

YOUR COINS: 1197

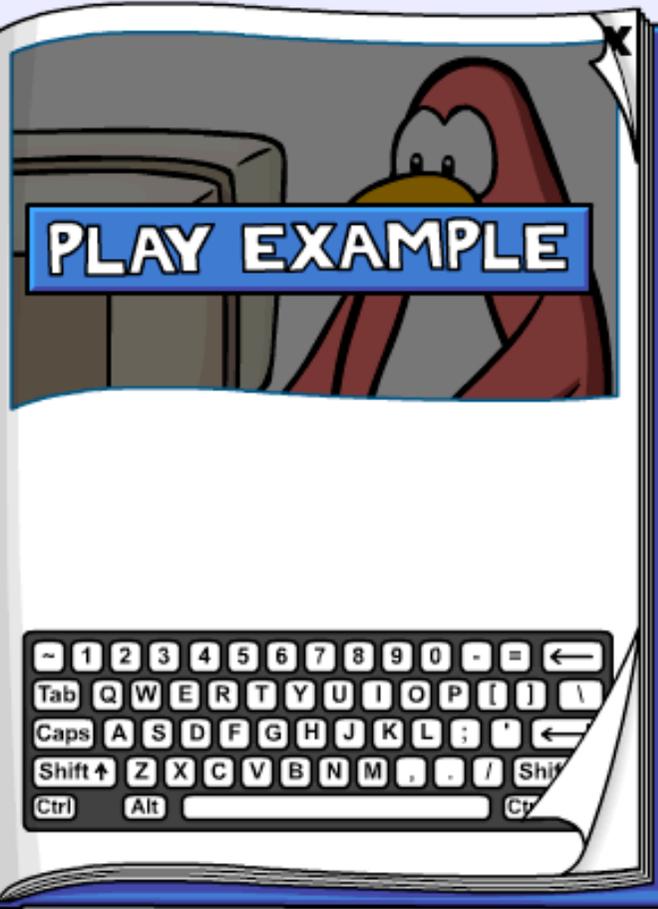
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FOREWORD

Tell your own story by typing the text to fill it in.

When there is more than one word together like this [\(one / two / three\)](#) you can choose one of the words to use.





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PAGE D1 **NOTICES**

SUBMIT YOUR CONTENT

If you have a review, tip of the week, question for Aunt Arctic or an **original** joke, riddle, or poem for the Club Penguin Times, please send it to us by clicking on the Submit buttons to the right.

Hover over the buttons to see more info.

send us your

- QUESTION
- TIPS
- REVIEW
- COMIC
- POEM
- JOKE
- RIDDLE

Did you know that we receive thousands of jokes, riddles, poems, and comic strip submissions every day? So don't be sad if yours doesn't get picked — just keep trying!

PAGE D2 **NOTICES**

Navigation icons: chat, smile, penguin, speech bubble, star, home, question mark.

STUDY

- Primarily white, working class community
- 175 children surveyed (52% use VWs); 38 children aged 5-8 (34% used VWs)
- 10 children in Year 2 interviewed
- Aim of study: to identify the nature and extent of children's engagement in virtual worlds and to examine their literacy and play practices in the VWs

PLAY IN CLUB PENGUIN

PLAYFUL ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORLD

- Fantasy play
- Socio-dramatic play
- Ritualised play
- Games with rules
- 'Rough and tumble' play

FANTASY PLAY

- Club Penguin producers introduce fantasy themes in which children can take on roles e.g. Pirates, mermaids, sleuths
- Narrative-driven

SOCIODRAMATIC PLAY: PARTIES

- Mine's 18. He keeps having a party and having crisps and fishcakes (Daniel, 7)
- Me and my friends and my cousins and strangers who come to my party, we all went to the disco room and then when we were all drunk we went back to my house and had a little lay down (Kyle, 7)
- I like dance around and check if they've been looking after their puffles and if they've got security cameras I throw snowballs at them and block them (Lisa, 7)

SMILANSKY (1968): SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY

- Imitative role play
- Make-believe with objects
- Make-believe with actions and situations
- Interaction
- Verbal communication
- Persistence

RITUALISED PLAY

I like reading messages and falling in love with girl penguins. I have got about five girlfriends. You have to win a loveheart and then you can send them to them.

(Billy, aged 7)

Steinkuehler (2005:12) noted that 'In-game social groups devise rituals and performances...and generate in-game antics and adventures' which develop social communities of practice.



Huge party at the dock

Unregistered HyperCam 2
<00 Miha UOX

COOL!!!!!!!!!!!!

EVERYONE SAY
CLICK ME!
FANG OVERE
HERE

IM HQRED

I AM
EMPOLEONCOOL

Ed324

2:38 / 5:53

The screenshot shows a virtual party scene with numerous avatars and chat bubbles. The avatars are diverse, including some with animal-like features and others with human-like forms. The chat bubbles contain various messages, such as "EVERYONE SAY CLICK ME! FANG OVERE HERE", "IM HQRED", and "I AM EMPOLEONCOOL". The scene is set in a virtual environment with a dock and a table with coffee cups. The video player interface at the bottom shows a progress bar at 2:38 / 5:53, a play button, and a volume icon.

Huge party at the dock

Unregistered HyperCam 2 EVERYBODY AT ICEBURG NOW!

CLICK ME

COLEWALKER LICK ME
FANS OVERE
HERE

CLICK MY
PLAYER CARD

IM HQRED

What do you call a
penguin in the
desert?

Monkey Star Colewalker Buster
Hatched 500 Dinodan
Getb109
007
394

3:09 / 5:53

The image shows a screenshot of a game lobby with a white background and a blue border. At the top, there is a black banner with the text "Unregistered HyperCam 2 EVERYBODY AT ICEBURG NOW!". Below the banner, there are several chat bubbles and player names. A large chat bubble in the center contains the text "COLEWALKER LICK ME FANS OVERE HERE". To its right, another bubble says "CLICK MY PLAYER CARD". Below these, a bubble asks "What do you call a penguin in the desert?". The bottom of the screen shows a video player interface with a red progress bar, a play button, and a volume icon. The time "3:09 / 5:53" is displayed on the right side of the player.

...rather than being removed from real life, secluded within a 'magic circle', play is ritualistic, concerned with establishing and maintaining social norms and policing borders between social inclusion and exclusion. This is not to deny the phantasmagorical dimension of play, its level of pretence and mimicry, or the pleasure it generates. But it is to frame play as a social practice, embedded in social rituals, with its own 'instrumental' behaviours, and within - rather than outside - the broad functioning of society.

(Pelletier, in press).

GAMES WITH RULES

- Games developed by producers
- Hide and seek
- Musical chairs

It's [Club Penguin] got some ski game. It's really good so I can ride on sleds and it goes really, really fast. (Leo, aged 7)

It's all games. I like the games. (Ewan, aged 5)

'ROUGH AND TUMBLE' PLAY

- Chasing / tag
- Physical fights (snowball fights)
- Sinking the iceberg

PLAYFUL ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORLD

- Fantasy play
- Socio-dramatic play
- Ritualised play
- Games with rules
- 'Rough and tumble' play

IDENTITY PLAY

...I suggest that the 'figured worlds' of console games such as Spyro and Super Mario offer an opportunity for children to 'play' with different identities, and to re-fashion identities in relation to those worlds.

(Pahl, 2005: 128)

ADVENTURE ROCK (GAUNTLETT AND JACKSON, 2008)

- Nurturers
- Explorer-investigators
- Self-stampers
- Social climbers
- Fighters
- Power-users
- Life-system builders
- Collector-consumers

NURTURERS

It's good because you get to feed the pet and play with it. (Ruth, aged 7)



Your puffle was feeling sad because it wasn't being played with or fed properly. If you decide to adopt another puffle, please try to take better care of him.

He should be fed and played with as often as possible. See the puffle catalog in the pet store for more information.

Continue

PET TROUBLES



Lisa (7): I go on the games...all the money I get back I save it up to buy furniture and pets and things. And I've already got some pets but one of them ran away.

Jackie: Why did it run away?

Lisa: I weren't feeding it – I left it at home. They're supposed to be left at home. I can't take all 15 of them out for a walk. It were called 'Princess'.

FIGHTERS

The Club Penguin War [Part 1]

Club Penguin
Wars
Filmed By Fever



Lisa (7): I got it this mermaid's costume with this tiara. And I got it a wig and it's just like that *[makes shape of a beehive]* ... The thing I thought in the end, I should have never bought the wig or the tiara.



Jackie: Why?

Lisa: 'Cos I thought I could wear the wig underneath and then the tiara on the top, it would be a lot more nicer.

Jackie: And can't you?

Lisa: No, it just takes it off. I wish there were a reverse button where you could get your money back. Like a garage sale.

LITERACY IN CLUB
PENGUIN

Literacy for establishing or maintaining relationships

- * Communicating to other penguins via chat/ safe chat
- * Using emoticons to express emotions to other penguins
- * Sending postcards to other penguins
- * Using Club Penguin to instant message others

Literacy for accessing or displaying information

- * Using environmental print to navigate the virtual world e.g. signs
- * Reading game instructions
- * Reading clues on quests
- * Reading catalogues
- * Reading the newspaper to find out about events/ tips etc.

[I read] newspapers because it tells you what's new and what you can buy. I read it every single day. (Ewan, 7)

I read them letters what tell you if they are your buddies or not and when they send you postcards and things. (Lisa, 7)

I send some [instant messages] to my cousins and once I said, “Hello, can I come over?” because he lives near Morrisons. Sometimes I say, “Can I come over, but sometimes his mum doesn’t let me...so I say, “OK, I’ll see you later”.

(Terence, aged 7)

Literacy for pleasure and/ or self-expression

- * Reading poems, jokes and stories in the newspaper
- * Reading books in the library
- * Submitting jokes, poems and stories to the newspaper
- * Creating machinima/ 'collages'
- * Language play
- * Literacy integral to play - fantasy play, socio-dramatic play, role play

David (7): When I go fishing I take a book to learn how to do it.

Jackie: Do you like reading in real life?

David: No

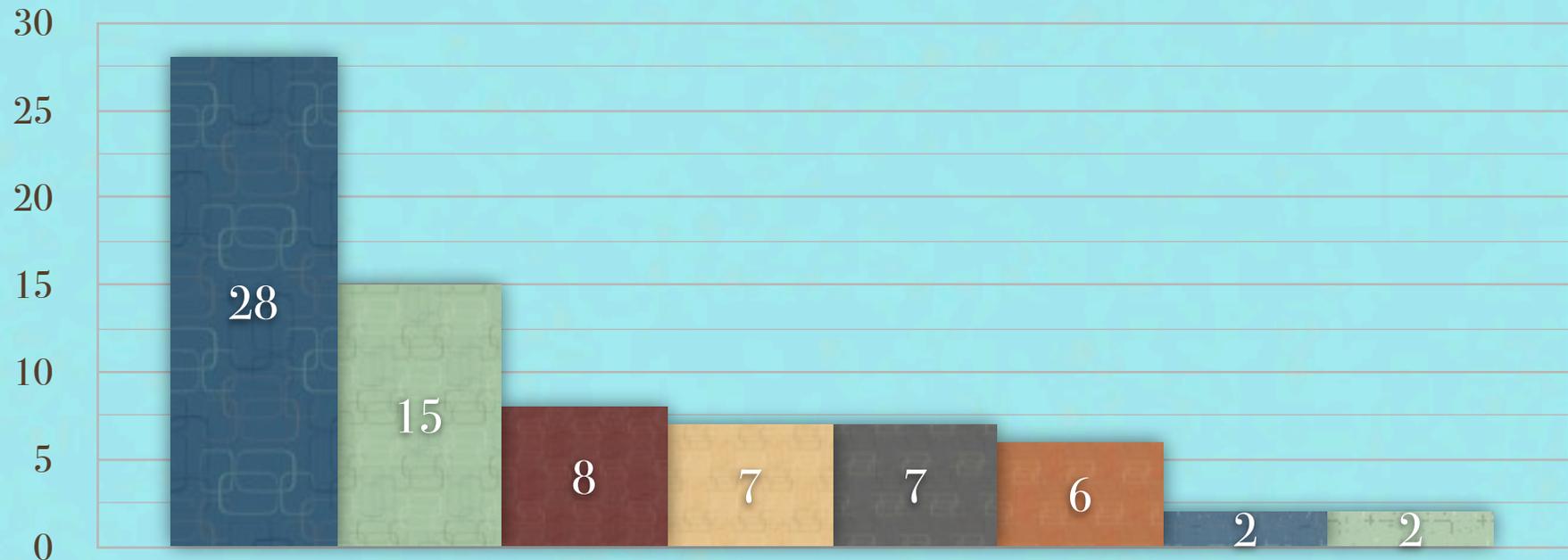
Jackie: Why?

David: Because it just gets me stressed out.

Jackie: So why do you like reading in Club Penguin?

David: Because it's got exciting stuff.

% of time spent on these activities



■ Playing games

■ Sustained reading

■ Visiting others' igloos

■ Skim reading

■ Writing

■ In own igloo

■ Managing avatar

■ Shopping

Steinkhueler (2007) Constellation of literacy practices - adapted for 'Club Penguin'

Club Penguin site

Official fandom space

Unofficial fandom space

blogs, chat
forums, role play
forums, fan
fiction, YouTube

*Literacy practices
within Club Penguin*

Reading: messages, postcards,
invitations, signs, labels, catalogues, books,
playscripts, instructions, newspapers,
quest clues

Writing: messages, answers in games,
poems, riddles
and stories for the newspaper

Machinima

Owen: I go on YouTube sometimes and they have like little presentations on..it's funny because it's like the funniest clips of Club Penguin and stuff and they fall and stuff...

Stacey: You can type 'Club Penguin' and it comes up and there'll be like and there's music in' background and it can show you slideshows.

You had a bad
day



Literacy skills fostered in CP

- * Reading skills and strategies including: word recognition (e.g. the vocabulary choices in 'safe chat' mode, instructions; in-world environmental text); comprehension; scanning text in order to retrieve appropriate information; familiarity with how different texts are structured and organised; understanding of authors' viewpoint, purposes and overall effect of the text on the reader.
- * Writing skills and strategies including: using language for particular effect; writing for known and unknown audiences; using text to negotiate, collaborate and evaluate.

Multimodal skills fostered in CP

- * Understanding of the affordances of different modes
- * Ability to understand salience of visual images and icons
- * Ability to manipulate images to achieve specific purposes
- * Ability to navigate within and across screens
- * Use gesture/ sound appropriately for purpose and audience

IMPLICATIONS

- Many children are engaged in online play from a young age and we need to identify both the positive impacts of this and any potentially negative impact
- Educators need to monitor the interaction between online and offline networks - is it leading to further exclusion?
- Play and literacy activities could be linked to children's engagement in these virtual worlds e.g. Club Penguin Times Newsroom? Multimodal production?



IMPLICATIONS

- Virtual worlds are one example of Web 2.0 social networking sites - there are many more which could prove valuable in early years settings and classrooms

THE ADVENTURES OF BRIX AND MORTA

THURSDAY, 24 APRIL 2008

Adventures with Phoenix: Episode 4



Brix and Morta were swinging on the swings and then they came in and ate some fruit. They washed their hands with Scooby Doo handwash. I bought it from the shop. They didn't wash the apples.

POSTED BY JACKIE MARSH AT [02:48](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)

Adventures with Phoenix: Episode 3



Brix and Morta slept in my bed. I went to mummy's bed because I was shouting because they were noisy and I couldn't go to sleep.

SHARROW SCHOOLS

ABOUT THIS BLOG

This blog has been created for pupils in the Foundation Stage at Sharrow Primary School, Sheffield, UK. Children take it in turns to take home Brix and Morta, two toys who kept everybody up to date with news when the new school was being built. Children take photographs of Brix and Morta having adventures in their homes and then they tell stories about the toys' adventures to appear on this blog. Write a comment letting the children know what you think of the adventures of Brix and Morta!

BRIX AND MORTA



THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 2008

Adentures with Zakariya: Episode 5



Zakariya was feeling poorly and so Brix and Morta helped him feel better.

They made me better with the doctor toys. They listened to my heart.

POSTED BY JACKIE MARSH AT [02:53](#) 9 COMMENTS





anonymous said...

i am happy to see zakaria work.i am zakaria uncle
Bangladesh

08 March 2008 01:42

Flickr/ Bubblr

cat by harry

bubblr is made by www.pimpa.com
with love from

Rate this strip: ☆☆☆



flickr: DSCN9633



flickr: DSC08098



flickr: Eowyn



GiraffeClass

✓ Following



we bin printin wiv botl tops and pant

30 minutes ago from web

@The_Book_Manw we heve red uabt foobl

about 21 hours ago from web

@jackiemarsh yes we rot abat the tedys.

about 21 hours ago from web in reply to jackiemarsh

we hav bein ascig qesjens and kwontig too ten.

11:50 AM Sep 29th from web

we hav ben lukin at infurmashan bux and nمبرز to ten.

11:59 AM Sep 28th from web

Name Giraffe Class

Bio We are a Year 1 class! Come here everyday to find out what we have been doing!

5 following 14 followers

Tweets 20

Favorites

Actions

block GiraffeClass

Following



RSS feed of GiraffeClass's tweets

Watch for a nascent culture of virtual reality that underscores the ways in which we construct gender and the self, the ways in which we *become* what we play, argue about, and build. And watch for a culture that leaves new space for the idea that he or she who plays, argues, and builds might be doing so with a machine.

(Turkle, 1994 p167)

THE FUTURE IS NOW!