

Can Game-Based Learning Improve Outcomes for Nontraditional Students?

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SOURCE Muzzy Lane Software

Muzzy Lane research targets five areas for development

NEWBURYPORT, Mass., Jan. 20, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Muzzy Lane Software today released *The Potential for Game-Based Learning to Improve Outcomes for Nontraditional Students*, a report on the findings of a research grant awarded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



Muzzy Lane conducted one-on-one interviews with educators across the country, held focus groups and interactive design sessions with students from community colleges and adult education programs, and collected over 1,700 student surveys.

"Playing, practicing, and making mistakes without fear of failing empowers students," said Dr. William Hoover of Bunker Hill Community College. "They begin to believe in themselves, and maybe for the first time, they experience hope."

Students expressed a consistent need for mobile first activities and assessments that make productive use of their time and fit into their busy and unpredictable lives, helping them study on all of their devices while juggling the responsibilities of family, work, and school.

"Educators did not ask for big, disruptive games," said Bert Snow, VP of Design at Muzzy Lane and the Principal Investigator for the grant. "They're more interested in ways game-based learning can help their students while working alongside other course elements."

The composite that emerged from Muzzy Lane's research suggests five promising directions for game-based approaches:

1. Auto-assessing whether students can apply what they have learned
2. Building employment skills in real-world contexts
3. Providing safe environments where students can learn through trial and error
4. Developing and assessing critical thinking skills
5. Facilitating learning strategies and student success skills

"Practice in problem-solving teaches students to go beyond 'What do I do next?' and gets them unstuck," said Michelle Alvarez, Associate Dean of Social Sciences, College of Online and Continuing Education Academics at Southern New Hampshire University.

The report also highlights obstacles that have prevented game-based approaches from scaling in the past. The biggest factor is that most game-based projects have been custom developed, and many schools simply cannot afford the high cost to create or maintain them.

New business and development approaches that overcome these obstacles will be critical to unlocking game-based learning's potential to help nontraditional students now and in the future.

Muzzy Lane will share these findings, as well as details of its recently announced cloud-based Muzzy Lane Author platform, on January 22nd at the LearnLaunch Across Boundaries Conference on a panel discussing *Software to Support Competency-Based Learning*.

For a copy of the report, please email info@muzzylane.com

About Muzzy Lane:

Muzzy Lane Software powers game-based learning with the cloud-based Muzzy Lane Author platform. The company has developed award-winning products with McGraw-Hill Education, Cengage Learning, Pearson Education, National Geographic, and many other companies and institutions.

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