

Book Reviews

Making and Using Machinima in the Language Classroom

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Rainbow, C & Schneider, C (2014) *Machinima* (Kindle Edition). The Round (161 pages, US\$ 8.75 (price can change depending upon the location))

Machinima is a short animated screencast video created in video games or multi-users virtual environments (MUVE) such as Second Life. “Machinima is simply a word

composed from ‘machine’ and ‘cinema’, and it has become the collective name for films or videos made in virtual worlds and gaming environments,” the machinimators and the authors of the book, Rainbow and Schneider write. Carol Rainbow is a teacher and teacher trainer, and Christel Schneider is a teacher and founder as well as managing director of CSiTRAIN. The company focuses on language teacher development. The other scholars like Hancock and Ingram (2007), and Kirshner (2005) state that machinima is a neologism of ‘machine’, ‘animation’ and ‘cinema’ having a typo in its original form (at first, derived from ‘machine’ and ‘cinema’) and later the term ‘animation’ was integrated in it. In this book, Rainbow and Schneider have not dealt with the machinima created elsewhere, however, they have dealt amply with creating machinima in Second Life, a virtual environment/world developed by Linden Lab in 2003. They also claim that the techniques learnt in this book to create machinima can also be used to create machinima in other virtual worlds.

‘Making and using machinima in the language classroom’ has only a Kindle edition (digital version) which can be run in Kindle and other devices such as PC,

Mac, iPad, tablet and smart phones through the Kindle application that can be downloaded for free of cost. This book is divided into two sections- the first section talks about a range of machinima that fall under several genres, albeit the list of genre the authors have listed in relation to machinima production does not seem exhaustive, and the second section deals with creating machinima in a virtual world, the challenges of creating machinima and more advanced machinima techniques. Both sections have case studies carried out by authors. The case studies in the first section give learners opportunities to see how machinima were used by authors for language teaching and learning, and they also provide some clues to the readers to use similar techniques in their teaching context. The other case studies in second section reveal how the authors got involved as machinimators. They provide details on different stages of making a video - such as getting an idea, writing a script, the machinima plan, filming, the editing process and post production. The appendices at the end comprise other useful materials for the readers thereby providing lesson plans, details about other virtual environments, downloadable resources and so on. In this sense, this book seems to be a complete package for the machinimators to create their own machinima for language teaching. It is a step-by-step guide for teachers, teacher trainers and other practitioners including students on creating and using machinima in language classrooms.

To involve students in creating machinima for language learning, which authors have mentioned in this book, might sound only ideal in the developing countries as students hardly have access to the resources needed to create machinima in these places. In the developing countries like Nepal, teachers

with the support of other machinimators can produce machinima as contextualized video teaching materials and use them for effective language teaching and learning (Shrestha, 2017). In Nepal, teachers mostly have or can have access to all kinds of technology required to create machinima, such as a computer with large storage to run Second Life and to store video clips, screencast software and high speed internet vis-à-vis students' accessibility to these resources. In such a case, at first, teachers can create machinima as a teaching material with the support from a wider community of practitioners or machinimators available in a virtual world like Second Life or through the available guidebooks on creating machinima; and once the teachers find that their schools have ample facilities to involve students in machinima creation or students are equipped with the technology required to create machinima, teachers can involve students in creating machinima as done by the authors. The goal of doing this will be to teach language through learners' engagement.

A lot of YouTube links of the examples of machinima that fall under different genres such as idiom machinima, grammar machinima, role-play machinima and so on are presented in this book. Similarly, there are also other web links that connect to other resources such as machinima open studio project sim (MOSP), machinima blogs, etc. Thus, reading this book will be much exciting and we can have a lot of audio-visual experience connecting ourselves to a load of other useful resources if we can remain online. Next, there is also an option of using Aurasma (now HP Reveal, name got changed), the augmented reality program app that can scan the picture in the book if we are reading through e-reader or a printed form (the

author of this review has not seen a printed copy yet). In this case, through HP Reveal app (formerly Aurasma), we can also have audio-visual experience even if we remain offline. Nevertheless, the readers might not be able to play all the videos through the HP Reveal app, and the readers in some cases might not be able to get the clear visuals of machinima due to the small size of the screen - provided they use the HP Reveal app in their cell phone.

Rainbow and Schneider in the preliminary section 'Who this book is for' state, "You do not have to have experience of Second Life® to make machinima though it would help." Therefore, the readers who are still new to Second Life can create machinima with the support of this guidebook. Readers can enjoy their further journey as a machinimator which means they will be a film director, actor, script writer, editor and publisher all at the same time, aside having their professional role as a teacher or a teacher trainer or a language learner.

References

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