



OHHS involved in Globaloria education game design class

Steve Keenan (Staff Writer) – November 6, 2013



Teacher Roberta McGuire, standing, observes the work of students Tyler Painter, left, Jacob Ashcraft, Andrew Ash, Jarrell Green, Cody Treadway and Nick Price (behind) in the school's Globaloria class. Photo credit: Steve Keenan

OAK HILL — It's not all fun and games in Roberta McGuire's Globaloria class at Oak Hill High School.

McGuire — the OHHS librarian/media specialist — is instructing students in a class centered around Globaloria, which is labeled as “the first-of-its-kind K-12 learning platform and courses for teaching computer science, game design and coding.”

Promotional material points out that Globaloria has served over 8,000 students and educators in eight states to date, and earlier this fall was serving 3,500 participants in five states — California, New York, Texas, West Virginia and Wyoming.

According to the company, research has shown that Globaloria is “scalable and effective, educates students in technical and computational skills and content knowledge that results in improved academic performance and increased content and digital learning abilities.” Globaloria “helps rethink learning and education systems to engage youth in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and prepare them for college studies, digital citizenship and careers in the global knowledge economy.”

“There are many students interested in learning how to program video games and this class gives them the opportunity to start looking at that process. During this class they actually program an educational video game,” said Oak Hill High principal Tim Payton, whose school is the only one in Fayette County to offer the class. “One of the goals of Globaloria is to give the students a high interest class that will basically give them a reason to come to school.

“This class isn't necessarily for the traditional student that will do well in school no matter what, but is geared more toward that student that needs a class like this to keep

them coming back every day; in the same way that band, show choir, athletics or other extracurricular activities motivate some students to do well in school and show up every day. We have had students recognized for their accomplishments in this class, and that can't help but raise their self-esteem.

“I hope to be able to continue to offer this class for our students here at Oak Hill High School.”

Payton says he's appreciative of the participating students and McGuire.

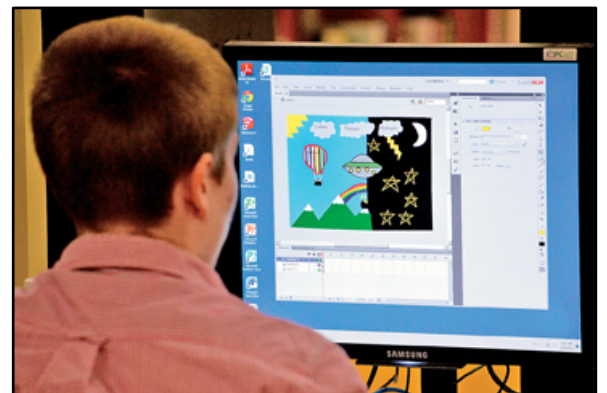
“I'm proud of the effort many of our students have made and I am really glad to have Roberta McGuire as their teacher,” he said. “She is an integral part of the success of the program.”

“It's a very difficult class,” said McGuire, who spent the majority of her teaching career in elementary education before moving to high school. “It's not just kids playing games.”

Depending on their interest (math, music, health, etc.), students begin the game-making process. “Globaloria talks them through each step of the way,” McGuire said of the year-long course that features about 30 students.

While designing their games, students also participate in blogs discussing their projects and have a project page and a learning log. They are graded on the totality of their unit project, McGuire said.

The game of an OHHS student, Tabytha Varn, who was a finalist last year in the state competition, is being used as one of the portals on the Globaloria website. Varn's game is based on finding mythological creatures hidden in a forest scene.



Jacob Ashcraft works on his game design. Photo credit: Steve Keenan

According to information supplied by Globaloria, video games are played by a large percentage of school children. Literacy can be facilitated by interactive media, and STEM learning can grow from games to support formal learning.

Students learn, among other things, technological literacy, scientific thinking, STEM academic content, and college and career readiness for a digital economy.

Throughout the game-designing process, the students' work drives design, research, programming, team work and the production process. They learn how to take an original idea and turn it into a finished product, all while working in a self-paced digital curriculum.

To prepare to offer instruction for the class, McGuire had to undergo "intense" training and has had the opportunity for follow-up tutoring from a mentor assigned to her. Additionally, there are monthly online seminars with Globaloria staff and other educators.

She said there is also an online help desk on which teachers and students can post questions and seek information. Responses are usually given within 24 hours, she said.

Earlier this fall, Globaloria was named a 2013 Laureate of The Tech Awards. In that program, 10 global innovators are recognized each year for applying technology to benefit humanity and spark global change. The Tech Awards is a signature program of The Tech Museum of Innovation, and presented by Applied Materials. Globaloria is a laureate in the 'Microsoft Education Award.'

"My team and I are humbled to be among the 2013 recipients of this amazing award," said Dr. Idit Harel Caperton, founder and CEO of Globaloria. "Receiving the Tech Awards is an incredible honor for organizations whose ideas are changing the world."

In the past seven years, Harel Caperton and her team have partnered with educators around the globe to "demonstrate the power of smart technology to transform teaching for every teacher and learning for every child." They have seen great results in various human cognitive and leadership abilities stemming from the Globaloria platforms and programs.

"The global challenges of the day have become increasingly strident, more deeply rooted," said David Whitman, vice president of The Tech Awards. "Still, there is hope.

"These incredibly impressive laureates have all proven to be equal to, or better than, the challenge to make the world a better place."

For more information on the program, visit <http://www.Globaloria.org>.

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