

Internal Adoption of Interactive Environments

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As is usually the case with any "non-traditional" instructional strategy, it is often difficult to internally "sell" your use of an interactive environment. Internally would refer to the stakeholders of your classroom, be it virtual or physical. These stakeholders might include administrators, department heads, colleagues, parents, and students.

Building support for interactive environments can be difficult to accomplish, depending, of course, on your particular situation. John Kirriemuir (2005)¹, a researcher in the use of computer and video games for learning and teaching, created a list of concerns about adopting simulations:

1. Potential reaction from fellow instructors and governors
2. Potentially adverse reaction from parents
3. Lack of examples of real educational situations where games had been used successfully
4. Possibly losing lesson control, and focus, to students who are far more familiar with the game
5. Commercial games not being validated by education-oriented standards bodies
6. Campus computers being insufficiently powerful to run contemporary computer games
7. Faculty have to learn about games, and learn a game very well, in their own time
8. The time consideration, with classroom timetables being "salami-sliced"

To counteract these potential hurdles, some sales work is often necessary. Clark Aldrich² sets out ten possible strategies:

1. Address Learning Goals
2. Be part of a bigger strategy
3. Clarify concepts to deans
4. Stress the shift in tools, students, and approaches
5. Present a tight project plan
6. Use the right terms (*simulations* or *sims*, not *games*; *rules*, not *gameplay*; *immersive* or *compelling*, not *fun*; *virtual lab*, not *virtual world*; *student* or *participant*, not *player*)
7. Many classes have achieved great results (be prepared to show them)
8. Can be done in a low-risk way
9. Try it, you'll like it (let them test drive)
10. Do something else well, earn political capital, then spend it

¹ Kirriemuir, J. 2005. March. Presentation at Serious Games Summit, Game Developers Conference, San Francisco.

² Aldrich, C. 2010. *Learning Online with Games, Simulations, and Virtual Worlds: Strategies for Online Instruction* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).