



***Let's Build Some Language:
Using Minecraft to Teach English***

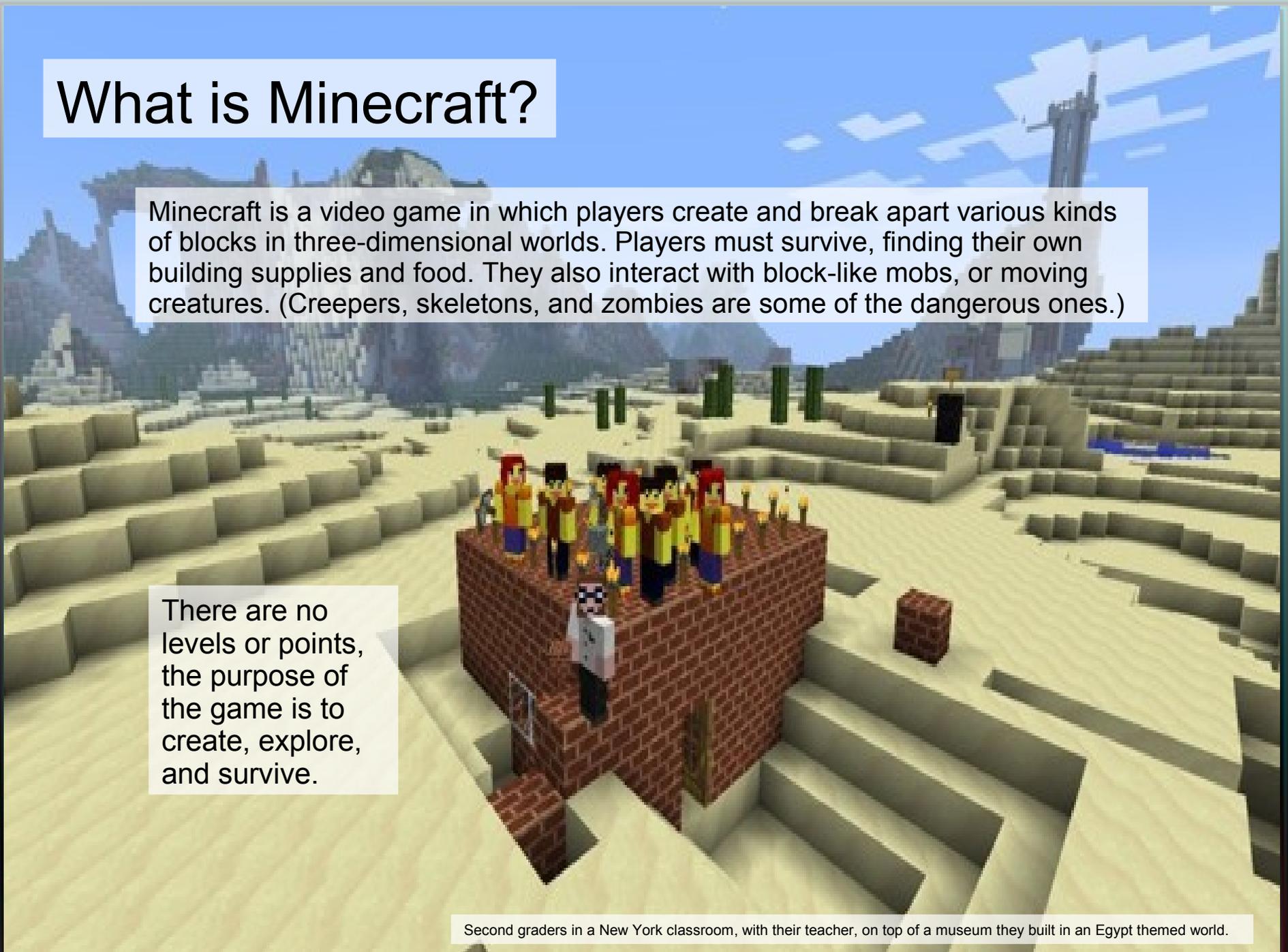
Ryan Patrick
SLS480U
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What is Minecraft?

Minecraft is a video game in which players create and break apart various kinds of blocks in three-dimensional worlds. Players must survive, finding their own building supplies and food. They also interact with block-like mobs, or moving creatures. (Creepers, skeletons, and zombies are some of the dangerous ones.)

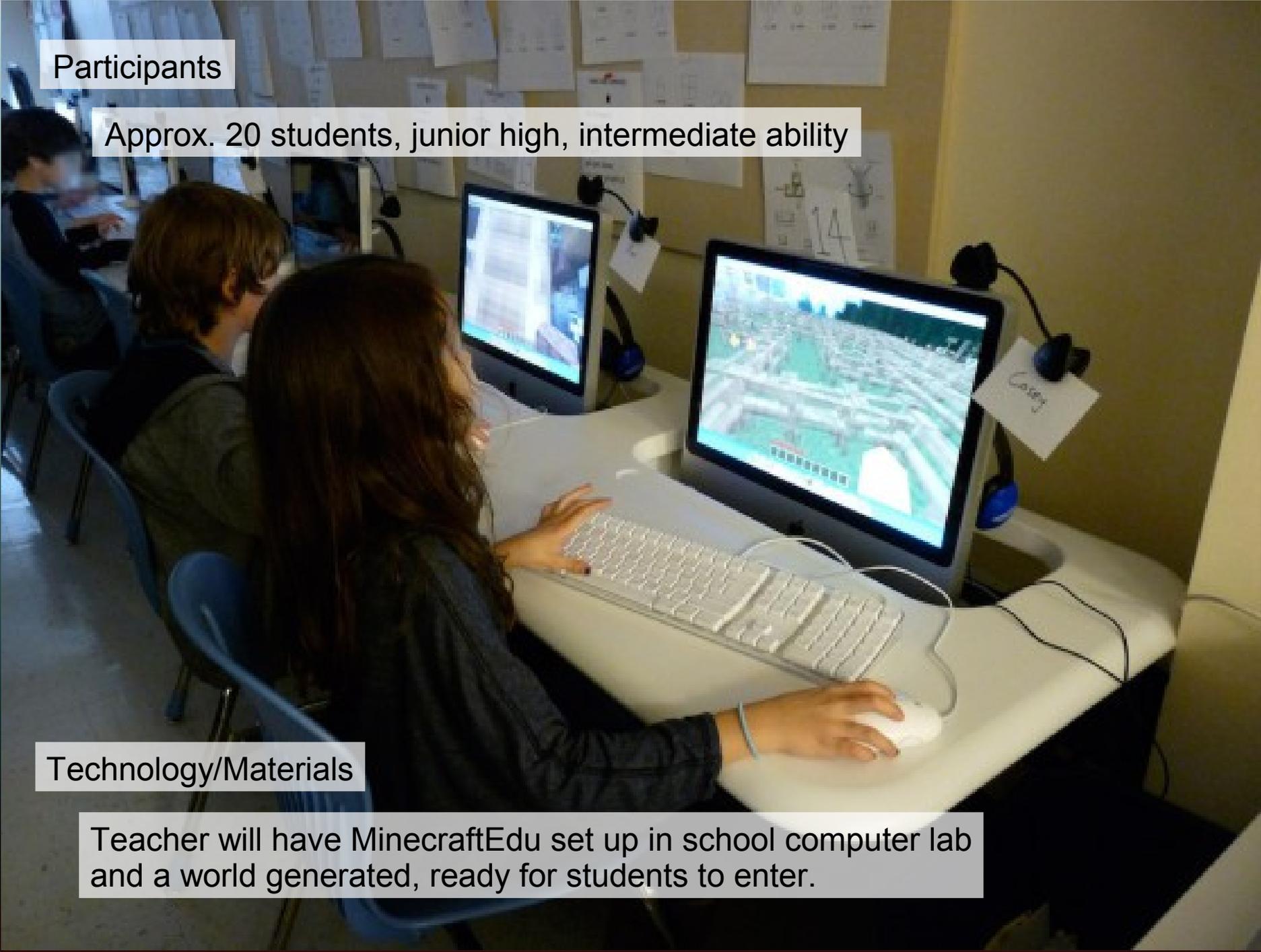
There are no levels or points, the purpose of the game is to create, explore, and survive.

Second graders in a New York classroom, with their teacher, on top of a museum they built in an Egypt themed world.



Though the game can be played offline, the main mode of play is online cooperative play. Players work together to gather resources, build creative things, and help each other survive. Communication is a necessity of the game.





Participants

Approx. 20 students, junior high, intermediate ability

Technology/Materials

Teacher will have MinecraftEdu set up in school computer lab and a world generated, ready for students to enter.

Activity 1: Let's Build a Town

Objective: Students will collect their own materials, build a house and farm, working together using English to accomplish the tasks. The following day, students will give a tour to the teacher and class in English.



After an initial class period to learn the basics, students will start the game.

- Students will get into groups and name their group
- Students will work out who will accomplish certain tasks and coordinate the gathering of resources using English
- Students must build a house and a garden, but can build it as creatively as they like

Current Assignment

Digging in...

Assignment Description

Now that you know how to play the game, it is time to get busy! Make some tools and then start building!

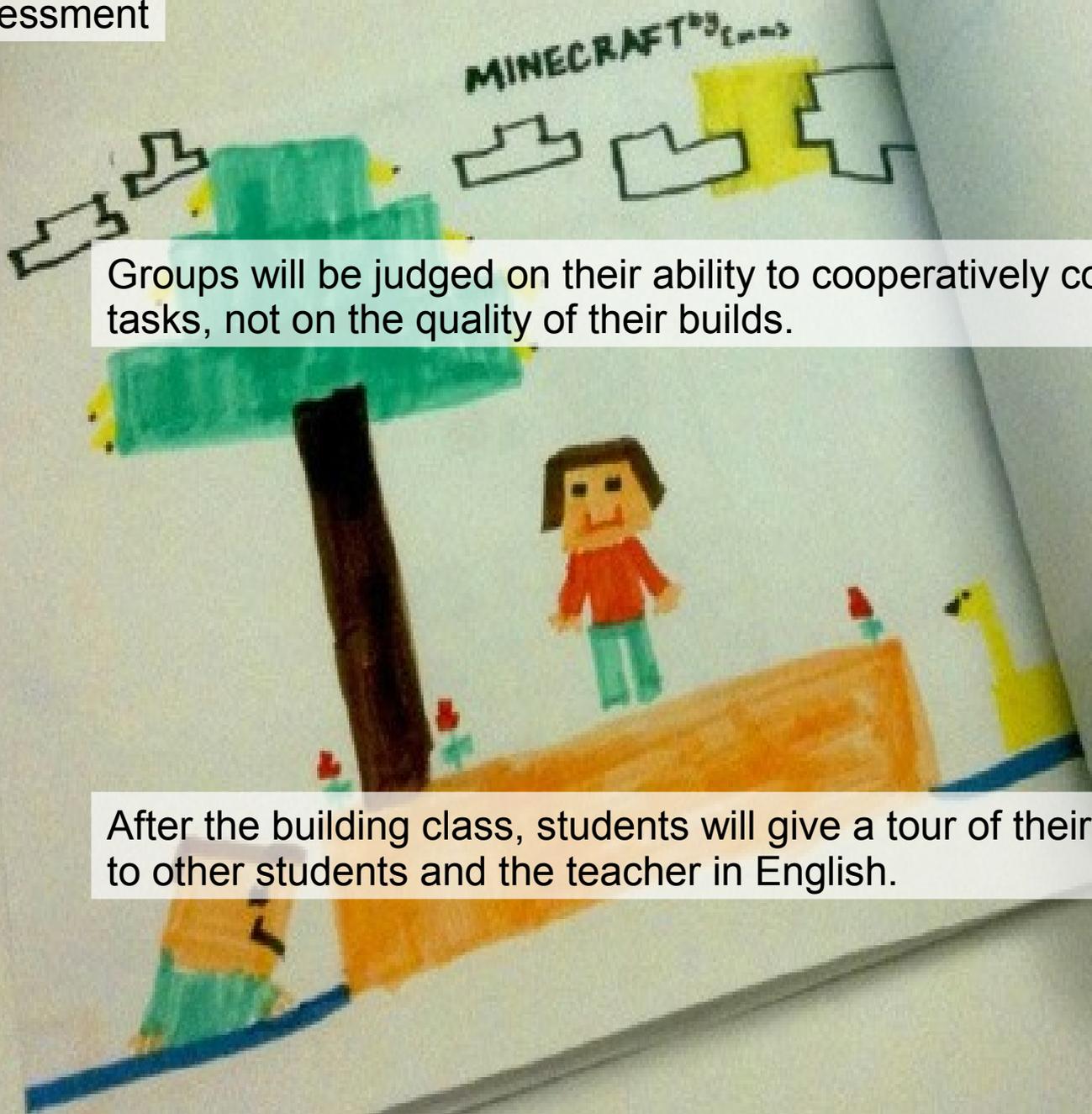
Teleport to Spawn

Teleport Back to Surface



The teacher will monitor to ensure that students are using English, but the teacher will only intervene if there are issues: errors or the student needs clarification. The teacher will have access to “creative mode,” enabling him/her to fly at will, teleport to students, and to break or place blocks instantly.

Assessment



Groups will be judged on their ability to cooperatively complete tasks, not on the quality of their builds.

After the building class, students will give a tour of their builds to other students and the teacher in English.

Activity 2: Let's Navigate a Puzzle

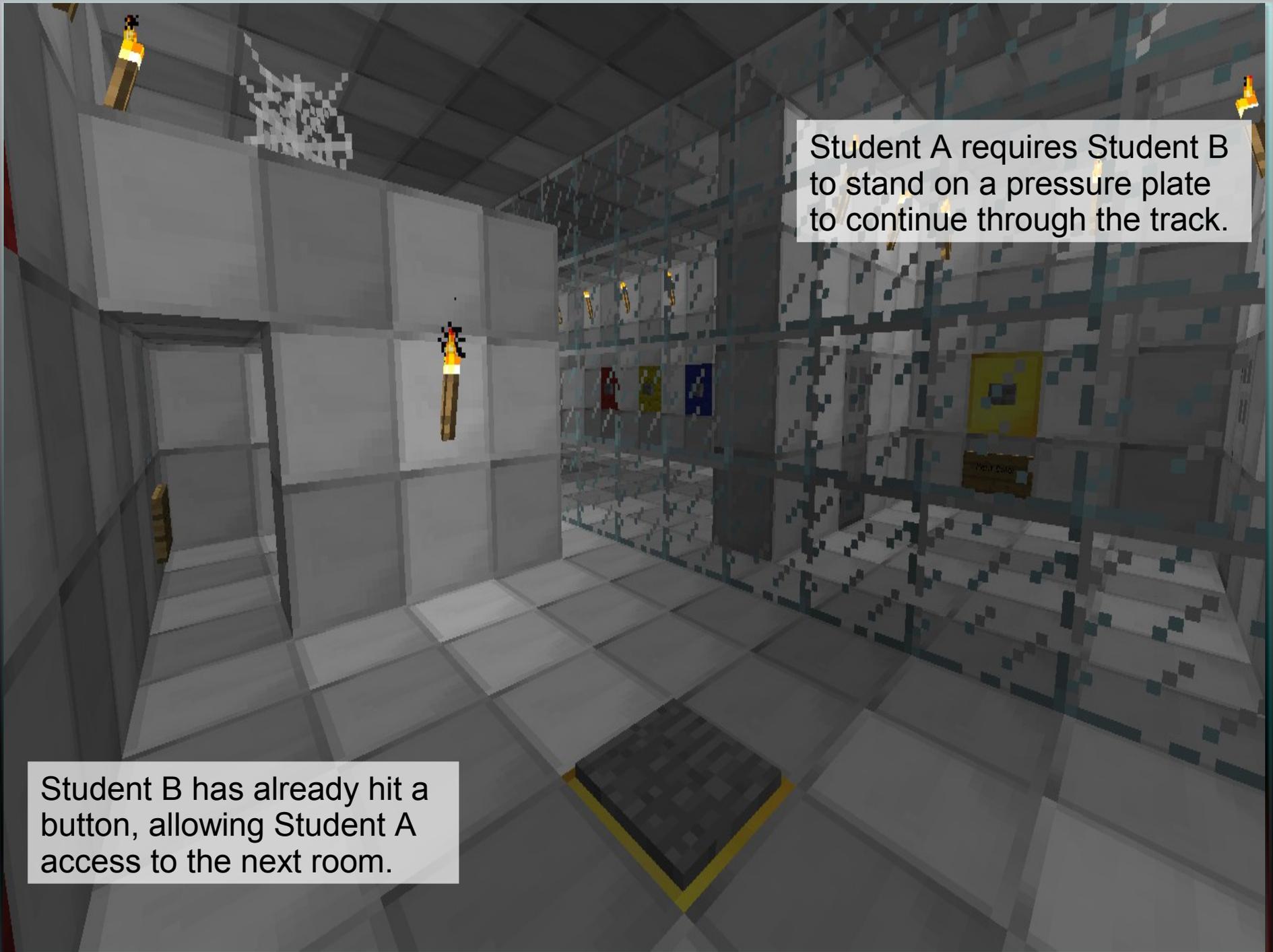
Minecraft has an in game wiring system called redstone. Combined with other mechanical blocks, interesting contraptions can be made.

Users have built entire computers out of this material, simulating the interior workings of a CPU, RAM, and other parts of a computer.

Rising-edge-
trigger

Falling-edge-
trigger

For the purposes of this lesson, the teacher will build two tracks and place the students in pairs at computers where they can't see each others' screens. The tracks won't allow the students to cross into each others' sections, but will require them to work together to solve puzzles.



Student A requires Student B to stand on a pressure plate to continue through the track.

Student B has already hit a button, allowing Student A access to the next room.

Activity 3: Let's Explore a World!

Many users design elaborate, story-driven maps for other players to play through.

This activity would build off the previous one. There will still be puzzles to work through cooperatively, but the students will also have a story driven world to traverse. This activity may take multiple class sessions, depending on the adventure map used.

Questions?

Advice and comments
greatly appreciated!



Thanks for listening!