

## Thinking Creatively and Critically: Conveying the Creative Scope of Computer Games

### *Initiative Creative Gaming*



Student working in *Initiative Creative Gaming* workshop.

In an increasingly digital world, the need for media literacy is large. Electronic games are one link between digital art and media education. The guiding philosophy of the *Initiative Creative Gaming* is that those who play and enjoy games should also be able to think critically about media. Through electronic games, youth can learn about social biases and cultural touchpoints in media. They come to understand that as forms of cultural communication, games have a tremendous potential for creative expression and should be guided by more than just commercial interests.

Launched in 2007 by a group of media artists and educational organisations,

*Initiative Creative Gaming* places media educators into schools nationwide, where they instruct pupils on the art of creating electronic games. Through hands-on workshops and seminars participants learn that electronic games are both toys for entertainment as well as tools for storytelling.

The project also trains teachers in creative gaming, so that they can incorporate its methods into the formal classroom. In-school workshops culminate in an annual festival for project participants to showcase their creations. The festival also offers an open laboratory where members of the general public have an opportunity to explore their own creative potential through games.

*Initiative Creative Gaming* is independent from the electronic game industry and supported by various public funders including the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), *Landesmedienanstalt Berlin Brandenburg*, *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, and *Jugendinformationszentrum Hamburg*.

To read about the workshops and their final projects visit [www.creative-gaming.eu](http://www.creative-gaming.eu)

(“knowledge is based on sensory impressions”) and Pestalozzi (“learning with head, heart, and hand”). Nowadays, the validity of this approach can be verified with findings from cognitive and educational research. The assumption that head, heart, and hand constitute a learning unit is now an empirically verified certainty. Our senses and our thinking are inseparable. Successful co-operation projects between schools and cultural/arts education institutions provide a wide range of holistic forms of learning, including affective-emotional and cognitive-intellectual requirements, emotion and reason, action and relaxation, concentration and wild activities.

They provide differentiated access to the subjects to be worked on.

Self-efficacy is an experience that many children and adolescents do not take for granted. Self-efficacy means to experience subjective control and to feel competent in different situations in life. Experiencing self-efficacy is the basis for self-esteem and self-confidence. Children and adolescents need to be able to realise that their contribution has an effect and a purpose. They need to feel that their peers and adults accept and appreciate what they are drawing on: motivation, emotions, and ideas. Cultural educational projects provide such

Extracurricular cultural education is always focused on the individual’s strengths.