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2018 Impact Stories

Ninja Kitchen

Learning Games Lab: User Testing and Related Research

100-word version:

The Learning Games Lab is a user testing and game research space; annually hosting youth for game testing, workshops and digital media activities, including nine sessions with 92 students in 2018. With IRB clearance, these “learning games consultants” provided important feedback for games and products in development. Two sessions, hosted by iThrive, focused on building the socio-emotional skills of teens. In these sessions, youth created a game pitch on an issue that concerns them. One proposed game helped teens learn how to counsel friends who suffering loss; another helped families of veterans with PTSD understand special needs of loved one.

Longer version available for federal report:

The Learning Games Lab serves as a user testing space as well as a game research space. Annually, Games Lab staff host youth to test games in development and also offer various workshops and activities on digital media. In 2018, the lab hosted nine sessions with 92 students. With IRB clearance, these “learning games consultants” provided important feedback for games and products in development. Two of the sessions were hosted by iThrive, a non-profit organization focused on building the socio-emotional skills of teens. In these sessions, youth designed and created a game pitch on a specific issue that concerns them. For example, one game was proposed to help teens learn how to counsel their friends who had suffered a loss, another was designed to help families of veterans with PTSD understand the special needs of their loved one. iThrive is working to document the curriculum created in the lab to use nationally in other settings.

