TOWARDS A SHARED NARRATIVE OF PLAYFULNESS IN ONLINE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

As teaching moves to be wholly online, problem based learning exercises can lose their sense of community. In an in-person computational thinking class, you might expect to see a room full of students gathered around robots or another interactive environment, working together to solve a problem while teachers and mentors mingle among them. When teaching moves online and becomes asynchronous, as well as losing the tangibility of physical interaction, some of the communal glue for these activities can be lost. This is the challenge we face creating a fully online diploma-level computational thinking unit, that (as well as introducing programming, modelling, sensors and data) attempts to produce the ambiance of a "grown-up" version of computational thinking exercises some modern school children receive.

In an attempt to address this, we have been creating playful environments that can be made more pervasive throughout the unit – so that they are live and interactive not just in problem-based exercises but also inside programmable lecture slides. By increasing the pervasiveness of the playful environments, our intent is to reinforce their role as part of the shared experience and shared narrative of the unit, even though the tasks are more often taken individually.