

## SAMPLE FIELD NOTE 2

FIELD NOTE #1

**Course:** [Town & Country Learning Center](#)

**Conference:** [week 6](#)

**Name:** <@ucsd.edu>

**Date of Visit:** 07 November 2007

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### **Kids:**

Deshon

Kurt

### **Activities:**

Sam Madness (45m; no taskcard)

### **General:**

Working with old/broken equipment is frustrating. I need to see if the Macs from my summer job are still around or if they've already been donated. They're probably fast enough to do video work, and they're much more stable (and the software is cheaper). I'll call tomorrow.

The usual crowd of girls was hanging around, but this was the first time I had seen them in the center (and not outside playing tetherball). Wonder if the cold weather will draw them in.

### **Narrative:**

Quickly ran over to LCHC to pick up Ivan and take him to our pick-up spot in front of my apartment. Sung-Jae rolled up just in time and we left right at 3:00 - I was anxious to get to the center early so I could help Rob with setting up SAM. There was very little traffic and we got there in about 20-25 minutes.

I walked over and found Rob in the blueroom, in the process of setting up the black ibook. Before we were able to get an internet connection going Rob took me to Ms. V's to show me some of the videos from last quarter - Delejah's coconut and another video that played with some filters. Pretty basic stuff, but we all started somewhere!

We encountered a ton of technical difficulties in trying to connect to Laurel. Our wireless connections were not working at first, PC sound card broken and a lack of Skype on both machines. As we troubleshooted, I went off to Ms. V's office to send Laurel an e-mail and let her know we were running behind schedule. While inside, I heard from Ms. V telling someone else she was going to be performing in a play soon. She described it as "Not one of those he-stole-my-shoes-I'm-going-to-knock-him-out plays" and I started laughing out loud. I told her I didn't think I'd ever seen of those before...

Slowly things began coming together in the blue room (the master SAM room for the day). While we were setting up, Noonie came in and asked us what we were doing. She certainly isn't bashful. She wanted to play with the PC (and expressed enough of a PC literacy to ask Rob 'Is the PC always like this or can I 'X' out of this window?'). We told her she unfortunately couldn't just yet, because we were upgrading, but she could come help us later if she wanted. Amy walked in and said she had a little work to be doing, so Noonie left us.

Later, another girl wandered in (whose name escapes me...). Rob asked her what she did in school today, and she said "Learn" which was cute. Then we started probing and trying to figure out what she learned - she seemed to have a lot of difficulty remembering, but made a lot of cute facial expressions and tugged on her chin trying to come up with the words. She kept on trying to tell us that she drew different shapes, but there was something more to the story that she couldn't articulate. Rob gave her a whiteboard and some markers and asked her if she wanted to draw. She happily got to work. At first I thought she was drawing her shapes, but then she revealed she had just drawn a shark (complete with gills, which she identified as such when Rob asked). After that she began to draw an outdoor scene.

Devonha and one other girl burst in at this time (this was the first time I had ever seen Devonha do anything that looked remotely like work - well, the first time I had seen her do anything other than use the tetherball), each wanting whiteboards and markers and a chance to draw. Soon all were coloring away (while Rob searched for some whiteboard spray at Devonha's request). Rob asked them if they would be willing to help us draw and use the computer when we got set up, and they all agreed. About a minute later Ricardo leaned his head in the door and poached all our subjects! He asked the girls if they were going to rehearse and they all went running out as quickly as they had come in.

We continued to set up - by this point Rob had the external video camera working and mounted on the tripod. I noticed a boy walking around looking at the camera closely - he asked me what was what, pointing to the lens, viewfinder (and asking what the point of having both was), tripod, handle, etc. I asked him if he liked video stuff and he nodded with great enthusiasm. Rob asked him if he wanted to stick around and he said sure.

We got ahold of Laurel via skype, and then spent some time angling the computers while she introduced herself to Kurt. What's hilarious is that for some reason she thought Kurt was me (he was off camera speaking for most time). When I sat down in front of the camera she began speaking to me as if I was Kurt until I was able to rotate the camera and show her the real Kurt. She started laughing as well - Kurt has quite a distinct voice and imagining it coming from me was extremely amusing. He also described to us, in detail, a science project he had participated in earlier that day (take 6 flowers, subject two to no water, two to no air, and two to water and air, and predict the outcome).

The setup was a little awkward (using the onboard cameras on both iBooks meant we had to have the Skyping ibook's camera pointed toward the SAM ibook (so Kurt couldn't see

Laurel without rotating his head 90 degrees to the left). We made do, however.

Laurel began to walk through Kurt through the software - she had him make a simple movie w/ 4 frames - "Kurt / Kurt is / Kurt is cool?" (Kurt added the ? on his own accord). He was quite good at listening to her directions and managed to go through the software with little intervention by me. I noticed that he is a bit of a perfectionist, erasing and re-drawing multiple times until he was satisfied. His face when the final movie was played was priceless, though! "That's tight!"

The only thing I needed to help with was showing him the small FPS scrollbar - he had a little trouble manipulating it with his own hand. He even understood the save/new functions. Laurel tried to encourage Kurt to think about starting a new video with the science project as a basis (she had overheard him explain it to us).

At this point, I noticed Kurt wasn't totally following. I hypothesized that he may have had a little trouble with this as it asked him to 1) Think of how to describe a science experiment visually and 2) She was encouraging him to storyboard the process, another concept that seemed foreign. He had a little trouble getting started, and then Laurel realized that it was almost time for her to leave. I told her that was fine and thanked her for her help.

While Kurt & I had been working with Laurel, the blue room was frequently invaded by a number of people. Kurt managed to keep his focus on the SAM the entire time, while Rob tried to get the girls to remain quiet (and found activities for them to do outside of the room) so we could hear Laurel more clearly. We need to figure out a larger setup so everyone can participate - we were burdened by the second camera a little too much this time - having an external will help greatly.

I'm not 100% sure - what is her role in this program? She said she was there to "help" but there wasn't much for her to do, so I was a little confused. Is the end goal a collaboration between our end and hers, or just a chance for her to see how the software is working?

With Laurel off, I asked Kurt to tell me about the most recent story he had heard. He thought and then related to me that he heard "People were spreading rumors that children started the fires." Even though this was a slightly abstract concept, I asked him if he could think about how he would draw it. I hoped that this might have been a story that he was a little familiar with (he stumbled over his explanation of the science project, so I don't know how much of it he actually remembered), and he would be able to draw it a little better. He started to loosely draw something. At first I thought he was going to do a stop motion of a story slowly spreading by drawing multiple individuals and lines to represent the spread of a rumor, but then I realized he wanted to draw an individual and a thought bubble.

Suddenly, something in him clicked and he realized the whole point of stop motion animation. He erased his man, and just drew a circle for a head. IT was a little difficult for him to hold the board with one hand and click with the other, so I offered to be in

charge of clicking when he told me to. We went through this process, slowly drawing the man and then snapping shots. After a few frames he asked me to play it, and clasped his hands together with glee. "That's tight!" He kept drawing.

Deshon entered at this point and began to hang out on the couch. I talked to him while Kurt was working - asking him if he wanted to participate as well. He said he was interested, but we had no additional whiteboards. I told him to hold on a second and then he could start another one once Kurt was finished. Kurt asked me for help spelling "children" and I spelled it slowly - while I was, I realized Deshon was in the background spelling it as well. I realized this too late to have Deshon help Kurt instead of me, but I gave Deshon a big smile after he finished spelling it.

Finally we played it through one last time for Kurt when everything was all finished, and he was quite happy. "Look at all I did!" (Probably about 15 frames). I had Deshon come over and started to explain SAM to him. I asked him what he wanted to draw - at first he said football, then he changed his mind and said "no, L.O.Z., L.O.Z." I asked him what "L.O.Z." was and he said "I mean LC!" I don't know if he really wanted to draw that, or if he thought that was the right answer. I asked him what he wanted to draw, and he started to narrate "It's a place where you come to do your work, and you can't act up..." I tried to encourage him to think of it with a little more action in it - I then realized that he had no real model for what the software was capable of (I think Delajah's coconut is a great introductory example actually).

It was that time that Sungjae came in and let me know it was time to go (so I wouldn't be late for class). I was bummed as I could have stayed for a few more hours. I think I was having more fun than Kurt was. This was a fortuitous intervention though, because it gave me the idea to see if Kurt was capable of walking Deshon through the program. As I was walking I noticed Kurt giving Deshon some instruction - he couldn't really articulate why he was doing things "Push this button, then hold it up, then push that button," but I think he got the process down.

As we waited in the lobby for Ivan to wrap up I got a chance to talk with Amy. Apparently Noonie was upset with her (Amy wasn't sure of the reason but speculated that Noonie was just testing her loyalty or their friendship).

### **Game-task Level Summary:**

#### **Reflection:**

Probably my favorite day at the center so far. I got to spend a decent chunk of change with a student for once (Kurt) and seeing him so into the software (SAM) made me really happy we were there to share it with him. I also saw how willing everyone was to participate if you just laid something out for them to do. I plan on going back in and setting up SAM first thing tomorrow to walk a few more kids through it, hopefully in a collaborative activity to include more individuals who want to participate.

It'll be interesting to sit down with Kurt/Deshon tomorrow and see what they think of the

program and if they might use it differently. Kurt may be ready to apply some school based examples to it as well.

I think part of the reason I enjoyed today so much is that it reminded me of sitting in front of a computer playing games while getting taped (as part of my dad's dissertation), and seeing Kurt approach everything with such enthusiasm was refreshing.

#### FIELD NOTE#2

**Course:** [Town & Country Learning Center](#)

**Conference:** [week 10](#)

**Name:** <@ucsd.edu>

**Date of Visit:** 05 December 2007

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#### **Kids:**

Kurt

#### **Activities:**

Sam Madness (50m; no taskcard)

#### **General:**

Spent most of the day in the SAM room so I didn't really get a chance to do much exploring across the center. Looked quite busy from what I saw when I came/left, though, in terms of # of people and general activity level.

#### **Narrative:**

Arrived at the site around 3:40 and ran into the Blue Room where I found Rob and Nunni. The second I arrived Nunni looked at me, then rotated in her seat and started banging/typing vigorously on a keyboard (that was attached to a computer that was off). I thought this was hilarious, and would love to know why she did it.

Rob and I began the usual connection/configuration dance - we were getting some random problems with Skype (I think the culprit was that Speech to Text recognition was randomly enabled on the Mac, and this would cause a burst of static to occur approx 2 minutes into every call - after I disabled it, it went away). It was mostly back and forth technical stuff between Laurel and I that lasted a fair amount of time (while Rob set up the cameras and tried to deal with Nunni who was a little more aggressive than usual). At one point a girl came in with a clipboard asking me to ID myself and who I was working with - this was shortly after Rob had explained to Nunni we would be working with Kurt - Nunni came running up to me and said "WHO ARE YOU WORKING WITH???" I told her Kurt, saw a forlorn look in her eyes and then added "and maybe you if you're well behaved. How do you spell your name?" She spelled it out for me and then smiled and

walked away (but sadly this didn't seem to have much of an effect on her as she later proceeded to slam on a keyboard which forced Rob to call in Ms. V to escort her away).

Selena and Nunni were looking at the computers when Nunni said "I WANT TO SEE THIS" (she does indeed have a high reading proficiency - she was reading all the names and titles fluently). Rob at one point joked "What? You can read?" But this seemed to go over her head/or she was too distracted to hear it. Rob asked Selena to show Nunni how to play the videos, which prompted a minor disturbance. Nunni was insistent on wanting to do it herself - "I know how, I know how!" Selena pointed out it was Rob who asked her to, and Rob affirmed, and then Nunni shot back "Why should I let her do it she's always mean to me!" and then Selena retorted "You're always mean to me!" I've seen this scenario play out too many times to count now between assorted girls, I guess it's just their thing. I would love to meet them 10 years from now and see if they're still up to it. I can't even remember what the final resolution of the argument was, as I was once again focused on SAM.

Ms. V poked in and then mentioned something about calling Kurt (my brain was in three different places - Skype, the cameras, and Nunni/Selena (who entered later) so I didn't hear exactly what she said but it was something about a man coming to pick Kurt up and bring him to the center, and he would arrive in 10 minutes. I thought it was cool/strange that Ms. V would call Kurt to get him over to work with us, but I'm really appreciative!

Finally Kurt arrived and we were able to get started. We had with us some new men (wooden) and a different camera set up (stationary white board positioned/propped on a chair, for hands free filming). Kurt initially didn't really see how to maximize the benefits of this new setup (or he was assuming the guys were magnetic, which I first did) and he drew his baseline (a reference point for all movement) in the middle of the board. This forced him to hold the man in place during future activities, which meant that he couldn't take the pictures himself, so we devised a little system of him holding and me snapping (sometimes he would vocally say "picture", once I noticed that I just started snapping them when he looked at me, not really thinking about it, but he adapted to this system very quickly).

One problem I think we had is that while Kurt had the previous topic of Constant Speed down pretty well, I didn't think he had fully mastered/understood acceleration. Switching from a car (last week, but much more difficult to physically draw on the whiteboard) to a man may not have helped things either. I was itching to give him a little basketball example about acceleration (he plays basketball), because I remembered from a few weeks ago that he responded extremely quickly to accessible examples when we were working together. However I didn't want to interrupt the lesson, so I just focused my efforts on giving Laurel (and her observer friend, John I think was her name) as much of an insight into what Kurt was doing as possible by manipulating the camera (although I realize that I am simultaneously framing the events taking place when I do this, so I have to try to do it in as objective and consistent a way as possible).

I'll be completely honest and say that there's simply too much going on for me to

accurately remember each step of the process while we're doing SAM without looking over some video later, but I'll put in what I know in what I hope is chronological order:

- When Kurt was setting up his lines, I noticed that he spaced them a little unevenly. We had a ruler nearby and thinking ahead/anticipating the lesson I really wanted to encourage Kurt to use it. Fortunately his drawing was pretty well done and the hashmarks were evenly spaced (thus communicating an equal distance between each for the purposes of representing movement), but I think pre-drawing the grid (with him, as Rob pointed out later) would be a good learning tool.

- Kurt is very good at reading intonations in voices and giving a "yes" or "right" when appropriate, even if he isn't listening. However, he gives the exact same response when he is paying attention, so sometimes it can be difficult to tell how into the activity he is.

- At one point we asked him if he had saved - he said he had, but I knew he hadn't because I had been watching him the whole time. I asked if he was sure, and he said yes again. Rob prompted him to do it one more time just to be sure, he leaned forward and then looked at me and we exchanged smiles and then I (without thinking about it) taught him the button features (I wish I had let Laurel walk him through them I just forgot).

- At one point I asked Laurel to explain FPS to him because we would have him manipulate the scrollwheel (by the way this is a learned ability, I would say he's about 80% more accurate with physically manipulating the bar now than he was 3-4 sessions ago when we first started), but I'm not sure how much of that lesson resonated. It's a tough one to explain - I tried teaching it to Devonah once, I don't know if she still remembers it.

- At one point during filming a teenage(?) boy walked in and looked around for a second and then said "Oh I'm interrupting something aren't I?" I found it humorous because he wasn't interrupting anything until he said it, in a rather loud and commanding voice. Rob told him he could just stick around and watch quietly, he stared at the board in the middle of the room again, then at Kurt, and then exited.

- Kurt loved watching the entire movie (from beginning to end) each time. Laurel taught him a trick to just start where you want to, but it can be difficult to identify the different frames so I'm not sure if he did this merely because he got a kick out of his creation or he wasn't that sure how to operate the triangle (although to be 100% honest I have trouble with the seek feature sometimes as the preview images are extremely small). I tried to point out to Kurt that he could identify subtle differences in the pictures to try to understand where a block of scenes began and ended, but I don't think I articulated myself very well.

- When we were talking about acceleration and trying to have Kurt visualize it, at one point I tried to start a little mini-lesson (I don't really remember why I did this, I think I just had an idea and started to run with it and completely forgot about everyone else in the room). I tried to get Kurt to count the number of hashmarks the man traversed in

between each picture. This ended up being a relative disaster - I had trouble counting the number of hashes to begin with (there was one on the edge that I didn't see but Kurt did), and then I threw him off slightly. Then after we rectified that we tried to count the number in between but his positioning of the figure varied (sometimes on the hash, sometimes in between it). I was trying to get him to identify by counting how many spaces were in between each frame (although looking back on it I think I made a huge mistake in not actually communicating that this was our end goal, I may have just jumped in to counting...)

- When we wrapped up Kurt seemed a little relieved (I noticed Rob mentioned something similar). I think these lessons might be stressing him out just a wee bit, and if we can do something to scale it back or break up the intensity it might be nice.

- When 4:50 rolled around we all decided it would be a good time to wrap up and spoke briefly about opportunities to work on it next quarter. Kurt and I plan to meet for 10 quick minutes today and I'll show him how to put all his stuff together in iMovie for the block party (he was quite positive/hinted at excitement when I mentioned we'd show it at the block party). I sat down with him on the couch and Rob filmed a short intro with the two of us to go along with it the movie itself.

- Found Sung-Jae and headed on out of there.

### **Game-task Level Summary:**

#### **Reflection:**

These sessions are so intense I feel completely drained (but in a good way) after they're finished. I was glad to see that Rob was having the same questions in his head about when we should intervene, what our roles are, etc. The best part is to see Kurt actually LEARNING. I realized that I've come to take learning and acquiring knowledge completely for granted, but to see Kurt acquiring new skills (and gaining confidence in himself in the process) is really really cool. I think he's done more learning in 3 hours than I have this whole quarter (outside of TCLC, of course).

There are moments when I just KNOW that Kurt is not understanding something, but I have no idea if/how/when I should communicate that to Laurel & co. or just sit back and let it happen. Similarly, if I see him doing something that's clearly incorrect on the white board, I allow him to proceed, but the problem is not always caught on the other end (visually it's tough to get a read on what's happening in the room through a very small window into TCLC).

I got a chance to watch some of the capture footage from our earlier session and I was actually pleasantly surprised with how well I managed to hide this internal turmoil (although I've noticed I tend to adopt a facial expression/posture that would probably suggest to most that I'm "checked out" but in reality my mind is on fire and I'm struggling to keep my mouth shut). I also made a conscious effort to compliment and encourage Kurt a little bit more this time around because I am pretty feedback less in the early

sessions.

Another thing I'm noticing is that the individual pieces of the activity (the figure, the board, the hashmarks, and the subject at hand) don't really seem to make sense to Kurt and I think he's dealing with them in abstract - i.e. he understands that moving the man in a certain way across the hashes is the correct response when asked to make a movie about acceleration, but I'm not 100% sure if he would be able to identify acceleration if it was present in some other form (like a moving vehicle, for example). There were numerous instances when I wanted to poke at this because it's clear that he is EXTREMELY bright and I just think reinforcing these relationships would help him a lot in terms of developing a sense of agency when going throughout the projects - less about following instructions and more about creating. I've never seen him as comfortable with the software as when I just told him to do his own thing the very first time we ever used it, maybe he just feels like he has to perform out of his domain and it makes him nervous?

I need a thesaurus - I am apparently in love with the transition "At one point."

I'm also really glad I won't be rushing to leave to make any classes after TCLC next quarter as there are times when I really want to stick around and get to know some of the kids better but I have to scurry out.