Sam Houston State University
2014 Bearkats Read to Succeed
Freshman Research Poster Contest

Purpose

This research poster competition encourages and recognizes incoming freshmen who investigate and design a research project based on the central theme of the 2013-2014 Bearkats Read to Succeed common reader, *Reader Player One,* by Ernest Cline.

Common Reading Research Prompt

The story in *Reader Player One* is set in a near-term future in which the new form of the Internet is a realistic virtual multi-verse. Most human interaction takes place via goggles and gloves in millions of unique worlds, including the boring (and free) "public education" world from which our teenage protagonist must escape. The author describes this new model of education where avatars attend classes. Although "fantasy" fiction, the book often feels quite realistic, as if it were set in our world, only a few decades into the future**.**

Develop a research project and produce a research poster presentation in which you analyze one of the topics suggested by the Curriculum Infusion Committee, or develop your own topic in collaboration with your faculty advisor. Suggested topics include:

Research the role of social media in communications skills. Does social media affect developing healthy self-esteem, communication skills, and social skills? How? Investigate the pros and cons of social media's effects on self-esteem, communication skills, and social skills. Use news and research articles to help develop a literature review and support your arguments and conclusions with relevant information in the book.

Research the development of the gaming industry on the U.S. economy. Compare and contrast the gaming industry in the 1980's and the gaming industry in 2014**.** What are reasons for any major changes? How does the gaming industry effect the U.S. and global economies? How does gaming industry reach minority populations.

Research the trends in educational gaming and teaching through games from elementary school through college. What are the current trends? When is gaming considered a success? When is it considered an ineffective method? Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of gaming on education and develop recommendations for utilizing gaming in higher education.

Research the value of Massively Multiplayer Online (MMOs) games. MMOs have generated very large markets for goods that are purely virtual, with consumers paying real-world money for virtual weapons and clothing to use in games. In Second Life, for example, there are entire malls of shops selling clothing for avatars using virtual dollars people invest real money to obtain. Interestingly, the goods being sold cost their creators nearly nothing to make after the creation of the original virtual object.

Discuss how such virtual goods obtain real world value, and what the risks and rewards are of setting up a business selling virtual goods.

Research the laws that govern online games and players. Investigate and analyze the current laws that address copyright and gaming. Cite cases/suits and compare. How do laws govern online games and players?

Research the influence of virtual education on pedagogy. How does the virtual education discussed in the novel differ from today's online course work? Which of the two pedagogical models do you think provides a more authentic learning environment for the students? How can you improve each of these models to more closely simulate the experiences in face-to-face classrooms? Is simulation of face-to-face classrooms a goal toward which we should strive? Provide evidence for your conclusion.

Research the development of gaming music. How does gaming music work? If you had a game to which you wanted to add music, to whom would you turn? How does one create/compose/orchestrate such music. Research this phenomenon and analyze music created today for gaming compared to gaming music from the 1980's as portrayed in the story.

Research art depicting a post-apocalyptic world. What sort of symbols represent certain ideas? What color schemes are often used and why? Pick an era in art or an artistic movement and discuss any post-apocalyptic or apocalyptic portrayals.

Research the visual art of the 1970's and 1980's. Compare and contrast the art of those two decades, paying particular attention to the themes of the art and the media used to create the pieces. Discuss distinguishing elements about the art of the 1970's, and compare to the art of the 1980's, with a focus on the relevance to the story in the book.

Research the feasibility of a virtual campus. In your research, address the challenges of designing and implementing a virtual university. How would students and faculty adapt to this futuristic way of schooling? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the author's far-out premise to create avatars and a virtual platform of higher education? By investigating the features and components in the book, expand on your findings and address the challenges in creating a virtual university at SHSU.

Eligibility

The contest is open to all freshmen who enroll full-time (minimum 12 hours) at Sam Houston State University in the fall 2014 semester.

Prize

A scholarship valued at $500 will be awarded to the freshman student submitting the winning poster. The winner will also be recognized at the author's lunch with Ernest Cline on November 12, 2014.

Application

Posters must be submitted by 4:00 pm, Monday November 3, 2014, to the Honors College office, AV4, Room 201. Electronic submissions of the research paper are required and must be submitted to honor@shsu.edu. Submissions should be sent as email attachments (Microsoft Word documents, RTF files, or PDF files only). Submissions by traditional mail are also acceptable. Please mail submissions to:

<div align="center">

Dr. Maria Holmes
Assistant Director
Honors College
Box 2479
Huntsville, TX 77341

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Rules of the Contest

1. All applicants must be freshmen enrolled at Sam Houston State University full-time during the fall 2014 academic term.

2. All research posters will be standard size according to the NGL requirements.

3. Standard poster sizes are 4' w x 3' h. Tech services in the library will print posters. Go to http://library.shsu.edu/services/techshop.html for more information. Also note that there is a fee for poster printing and check with your advisor, they may be able to find money to help cover costs.

4. All submissions must include the submission cover form information on the next page. The poster itself must not contain the student's name since posters will be evaluated anonymously.

5. A student may submit only one entry.

6. Winners will be notified by the Sam Houston State University Honors College.

SUBMISSION COVER FORM

The 2014 – 2015

Sam Houston State University

Bearkats Read to Succeed

Fall 2014 Freshman Research Poster Contest

Entry due no later than 4 p.m. Monday November 3, 2014

Elliott T. Bowers Honors College
Dr. Maria Holmes, Assistant Director
Sam Houston State University
Campus Box 2479
Huntsville, TX 77341

Student's Full Name   _____

Student's ID Number   _____

Student Email Address   _____

Telephone Number   _____

Faculty Advisor Signature _____Date _____

I am submitting an original research poster for the Bearkats Read to Succeed
2014 Freshman Research Poster Contest. I certify that this research is my own work.
I understand that my research poster will be submitted to the
2014 Undergraduate Research Symposium.
The poster may be used by Sam Houston State University for publication in promotional materials.

_____   _____

Student Signature   Date