

## Guelph sci-fi video game to help teach Shakespeare

### *Shooting down spaceships to get students interested in Romeo and Juliet*

Macleans.ca staff | Apr 25, 2007 | 4:52 pm EST

The University of Guelph launched a new way to teach grade school students about Shakespeare's works: an interactive adaption of Romeo and Juliet fit for the 21st century, spacecraft and all.

The game, entitled "Speare," involves trying to save the world from evil spaceships that have captured the ancient text of Romeo and Juliet. To win the game, the player must "restore literature, knowledge and peace to the universe – to usher in a new age of compassion and learning," the game's narrator explains. They do this by getting knowledge "spheres" from enemy ships and reorganizing them into passages from the original work.

Daniel Fischlin, a Guelph English professor and one of the game's creators, says that new mediums are needed to appeal to young audiences in order to teach literature. "There is a tendency to simplify this sort of approach as a gimmicky approach, but it's a big mistake to do that," he **told** the CanWest News Service. "We're in an age where media are changing around us, and we don't pay attention to those media at our peril."

The game, which is aimed at 10 – 15 year olds, is intended to improve literacy. Fischlin said that literacy scores jumped by 72 per cent after an hour of playing the game.

You can try the game for yourself at [apollogames.ca](http://apollogames.ca).

Story from Macleans.ca:  
[http://www.macleans.ca/education/postsecondary/article.jsp?content=20070425\\_165216\\_8560](http://www.macleans.ca/education/postsecondary/article.jsp?content=20070425_165216_8560)

© Rogers Publishing