Atlantis Remixed – The Doctor’s Cure: Impact Guide

For Players

The Atlantis Remixed (ARX) Project is an international learning and teaching project that uses 3D multi-user environments to immerse children, ages 9-16, in educational tasks. Students enter roles as “Remixers” who are sent into different worlds and tasked with the responsibility of making impactful decisions. They experience the importance and outcomes of applying what they learn in their adventures. Through interactions with in-game mentors, Remixers are supplied with the tools necessary to make influential decisions within their world.

ARX’s The Doctor’s Cure, a unit inspired by Mark Shelley’s Frankenstein, was designed to help young people understand the role that ethics play in science and technology. As Remixers, students become responsible for driving the fate of a town, called Ingolstadt, suffering from a devastating plague. In this world the player becomes invested by experiencing first hand the stress that the plague has placed on the town. The plot will center on controversy about whether or not Dr. Frank, the only person working on a cure, and his research methods can be trusted. The player is recruited by the local newspaper to investigate the issue and eventually is tasked with writing a persuasive article that will decide the fate of the town.

How to use this guide: Players – We’ve identified several interesting or important themes in the game. As you play through, reflect on your play. How have you experienced these themes? Are there other important ones present in the game? What kind of impact does your play allow in the larger world? Answer the questions we’ve provided – but feel free to add more at www.gamesandimpact.org.

Warning: Questions contain some spoilers about the games.

Theme: Ethics and Decision Making

The Doctor’s Cure places the player in a powerful position that ultimately decides the fate of Ingolstadt. As a part of the mission, the player is required to interact with a lot of characters to help them build their argument. They are asked to make difficult decisions and are able to explore the effects of those decisions. In the end the player will have made a sacrifice; neither outcome of the article they write will make everyone happy.

Game

• How important did you feel your responses were? Did you care about the impression you made on the characters?
• Did you feel it was important to build the argument as soon as possible? Did you care that you had a time limit? How did this affect how you chose to look for sources, if at all?
• How did you decide to build your argument with the PAT tool? Did you have an idea of the reasons and sources you would use? Did you practice trial and error to get a good score? Was it easy or hard to get a good score?

Player

• Did you feel your role in the town, as investigative reporter, was important? Did you want to be important? Were you interested in helping the town make a decision?
• Did you do things you aren’t proud of? Why? Was it worth it in the end for you to make those decisions?
• Were you surprised by the opinions of the characters? Did you ever disagree with how they reacted to events?

World

• When you saw the effect your article has on the outcome of the town, were you surprised? Did the outcome cause you to regret the thesis you chose? Why or why not?
• Did you make decisions in the game you wouldn’t consider in the real world? What would you do different if this was actually happening to you?

Theme: Science and Technology

The player is supplied with a lot of tools that make carrying out their mission easier. Different people provide them with these tools in order to serve different purposes. The ultimate “tool” created in the game to help the town is Tim. As the mission progresses, the player is asked to evaluate the limits science should have in order to help society.

Game

• Did you find the PAT tool useful when building you argument? What did you learn from its scores? Did you agree with them? Why or why not?
• The slime sprayer was a tool the doctor created to clear slime as you walk through it; did his invention of it affect your view of him? How did you feel when you found out that he used unusual methods to create a tool you were using?

Player

• Did you feel that the thesis you chose would affect the future of medicine? What do you think Ingolstadt would look like 10 years after Mission 6? How about 50 or 100? Would it still exist?
• Tim was initially a science project created by Dr. Frank’s research. Did this affect your views of what research is and isn’t acceptable? How did this influence your feelings on whether or not he was human?

World

• If science today created a robot that started showing human like qualities, would you care? If using this robot became crucial to a functioning society, would that affect how you think the robot should be treated?
• How important did you feel science was to help the town? Did your opinion on what the boundaries of science should be change while you were playing the game?

Theme: Persuasive Argumentation

In mission 4 and 5 the player is charged with defending their thesis to the best of their ability, in order to persuade the town that they should or shouldn’t allow the doctor to continue with his research for the cure. Through advice from Scoop and Gracie, as well as the PAT tool, the player is guided on what makes a good persuasive argument.

Game

• Did Scoop and Gracie make you feel safe in asking for their guidance? Were their explanations of having a THESIS, REASONS, and SUPPORT clear or did you still feel confused? Did you ever ask them to repeat explanations?
• Did you feel the limit on the amount of sources you could store was useful? Were you ever frustrated by it? If so, what did you do about it?
• Were you ever confused about the difference between a strong source and a weak source? If so, what did you do about it?

Player

• Did the side you decided to take in the persuasive article surprise you? If so, why? What changed your mind?
• How did you decide on your thesis? Did you choose one and later changed your mind? How did this affect which sources you decided to keep in your journal?
• Did you ever feel stuck on finding sources deemed good enough by the PAT tool? If the score wasn’t good enough, did you feel motivated to find better sources? Why or why not?
• Did the PAT tool ever give you an evaluation that surprised you? How did you feel if the score wasn’t as high as you expected? How did this affect your motivation to convince the town?
World

- *How early did you start forming an opinion on the controversy of Dr. Frank? Do you think any personal experiences influenced your initial impression?*
- *Did you finish the game with a better idea of why counter arguments are important to being persuasive? How do you think this will affect how you express your opinions in the future?*
- *Was it difficult to decide your thesis? Do you feel there was a completely wrong or completely right answer? Why or why not? How do you think this compares to the decisions we make in the real world, are there always right or wrong answers?*