

# BLOCKALOT: The Creative Minetest Server for Future-Oriented Learning



The sandbox video game engine Minetest provides an infinite number of possibilities to be creative, to collaboratively build worlds and to learn in a flexible and problem-oriented way. Learners are able to make meaningful experiences that they could not make in the physical world. By combining knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in a task-based setting, the learners will develop competencies that will provide them with agency in the future. This includes dealing with in-world simulations that give them a taste of the consequences of their actions. Therefore, learners can experience self-efficacy and agency, and they can take responsibility for their learning - and ultimately their (and our) future. In order to guarantee immersion in the learning process, a narrative can help tremendously. All this and much more makes Minetest a very good tool for game-based learning and makes a sustainable transformation of learning possible. By simulating various aspects of the physical world, Minetest also makes [future-oriented learning](#) possible in many ways. This is because the learners can try to tackle urgent challenges of the physical world in the virtual world, learn from their mistakes and then transfer what they have learned to the physical world. The server dashboard BLOCKALOT represents the interface between technology and learning adventures in the Minetest world. It enables teachers and staff of other educational institutions to create and manage learning spaces for individual learning experiences. Through game-based learning, the teacher's role transforms into that of a learning partners for their younger peers in an effort to create a better future.

## [First Project Period](#)

The first part of the project, from January to August 2021, was about creating the technical infrastructure for BLOCKALOT and designing and testing the first learning scenarios. The [first booklet](#) (□□), which is quite technical in nature, accompanied this first project period.

## Second Project Period

Building on the experiences of the first project period, the second project period, which started in September 2021, has put an emphasis on the pedagogical background of game-based learning. As a result, we have replaced the term “contemporary education” with [future-oriented learning](#). In the future, we want the community of users to grow and provide even more targeted support for the learning partners (formerly known as teachers) involved. For example, we plan to offer more practical training, continue with regular community events, and develop more templates. The [second booklet](#) (PDF) reflects these more recent developments and contains practical examples from various authors who use Minetest in their educational practice.

## The Emergence of the Project

Originally, the project was a student project entitled “Minetest: Build the Future! The Creative Minetest Server for Contemporary Education” and covered the winter term of 2020. The project team of Pinkinelli & Partner consisted of the following members: Alexander Berndt, Tim Budras, Christian Reski, Lucas Kornmüller, Fabian Metz, Lars Schneider, and Silas Pinkinelli. Over a period of eleven weeks, the team created BLOCKALOT as their applied project at the University of Applied Sciences Karlsruhe. The creation of BLOCKALOT was commissioned by the Landesmedienzentrum Baden-Württemberg (LMZ BW). The platform was intended to give teachers the chance to easily explore the use of game-based learning without much technological expertise and without having to set up their own server. Thus, they will be able to join like-minded colleagues on their way into the 21st century. Since the completion of the student project, part of the project team has been working on maintenance and further development of the BLOCKALOT platform.

The project’s declared goal is to build a German (or even European/international) network, a *community of practice* that will establish game-based learning with Minetest as a clear alternative for traditional teaching.

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