

New Minecraft Mode 'RiverCraft' Teaches Students About The Real-world Effects Of Climate Change

In conjunction with the UK Environment Agency, Microsoft has launched a new mode for Minecraft: Education Edition (opens in new tab). Labeled as 'Rivercraft (opens in new tab)', the mode is designed to teach students about the impact of climate-change-induced flooding on local communities.

RiverCraft focusses on the £54.7m flood defence scheme currently being built in Preston, a combination of flood walls, glass panels and embankments, designed to reduce flood-risk to almost 5,000 homes in the area.

The mode contains three different games, each of which focus on a different area of tackling flooding induced by climate change. "Managing Flooding" sees players build their own version of Preston's flood-defences, before flooding the area to measure their success. "Flood Prevention" sees players explore how individuals can help alleviate climate change. Finally "Our Local Environment" involves conducting an in-game ecological survey to locate and record local wildlife species.

The mode was built on behalf of the Environment Agency by BlockBuilders, a Brighton-based company that specialises in building Minecraft worlds for educational purposes. "We got the 3D data of Preston, which is freely available online, and turned it into a Minecraft world," Megan Leckie, Co-founder of Blockbuilders, told Microsoft.