educational environment for children aged about 1 to 10 that offers diverse types of activities that teach toward educational objectives within the full complement of subjects and includes features and functionality that are truly fun so as to effectively engage children of this age.

[010] In one aspect, disclosed herein are computer-based educational systems for a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the system comprising: a digital processing device comprising a memory and an operating system configured to perform executable instructions; visual and audio content provided to the digital processing device, and at least partially stored in the memory of the digital processing device, that creates an immersive and interactive educational environment for the child, wherein the educational environment is further characterized by comprising: at least three subjects, wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning; a plurality of learning activities associated with each subject; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein the plurality of learning activities teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; wherein the plurality of activities consists essentially of activities teaching toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; a software module for creating an avatar to represent the child; and a software module for monitoring the progress of the child in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment; provided that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty. In some embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome. In further embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region, wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment. In some embodiments, at least one subject is selected from: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music and other performing arts, visual art,

additional languages, health, fitness and sports, and information technology. ~~In some embodiments, the learning activities associated with each subject include at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity~~. In

some embodiments, one or more learning activities comprise a plurality of skill levels. In some embodiments, the software module for creating an avatar to represent the child includes features for selecting clothing, physical features, and items associated with the child's avatar used in the educational environment. In some embodiments, the educational environment further comprises a software module for rewarding the child for completing an activity.

[011] In another aspect, disclosed herein are non-transitory computer-readable storage media encoded with a computer program including instructions executable by a processor to create an educational environment for a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the educational environment comprising: at least three subjects, wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning; a plurality of learning activities associated with each subject; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein the plurality of learning activities teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; wherein the plurality of activities consists essentially of activities teaching toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; a software module for creating an avatar to represent the child; and a software module for monitoring the progress of the child in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment; provided that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment. In some embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome. In further embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region, wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep.

[012] In another aspect, disclosed herein are computer-implemented methods of educating a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the method comprising the steps of: providing, by a computer, a

plurality of learning activities associated with each of three subjects; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning, wherein each learning activity ~~teaching~~ teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject and ~~consisting~~ consists essentially of content teaching toward the one or more

educational objectives; providing, by the computer, a software module for the child to create an avatar to represent the child; and providing, by the computer, a software module for the child to monitor their progress in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment; with the proviso that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment. In some embodiments, the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment. In some embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome. In further embodiments, the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region, wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep.

[013] Also disclosed herein, in certain embodiments, are computer-based immersive and interactive educational systems, methods of education, and media encoded with computer programs. In some embodiments, the computer-based immersive and interactive educational systems are World Wide Web-based. In other embodiments, the educational systems are based on data storage devices including, by way of non-limiting examples, CD-ROMs, DVDs, flash memory devices, magnetic disk drives, and optical disk drives. In other embodiments, the educational systems are intranet-based. In still other embodiments, the educational systems are cloud computing-based.

[014] In some embodiments, the educational systems for a child aged about 1 to 10 comprise a digital processing device that is connected to the Internet, and visual and audio content provided to the digital processing device via the Internet that creates an immersive and interactive educational environment. In further embodiments, the digital processing device is suitable for use by a child and comprises an operating system configured to perform executable instructions, a memory device, a display, a sound output device, and an input device. The visual and audio content provided to the digital processing device is at least partially stored in the memory of the digital processing device. In some embodiments, the immersive and interactive educational environment is

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-based educational system for a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the system comprising:

   a. a digital processing device comprising a memory and an operating system configured to perform executable instructions;

   b. visual and audio content provided to the digital processing device, and at least partially stored in the memory of the digital processing device, that creates an immersive and interactive educational environment for the child, wherein the educational environment is further characterized by comprising:

      i. at least three subjects, wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning;

      ii. a plurality of learning activities associated with each subject; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein the plurality of learning activities teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; wherein the plurality of activities consists essentially of activities teaching toward one or more educational objectives in a subject;

      iii. a software module for creating an avatar to represent the child; and

      iv. a software module for monitoring the progress of the child in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment;

   provided that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty.

2. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome.

3. The educational system of claim 2, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region,

wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep.

4. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment.

5. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment.

6. The educational system of claim 1, wherein at least one subject is selected from: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music and other performing arts, visual art, additional languages, health, fitness and sports, and information technology.

~~7. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the learning activities associated with each subject include at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity.~~

~~8.~~7. The educational system of claim 1, wherein one or more learning activities comprise a plurality of skill levels.

~~9.~~8. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the software module for creating an avatar to represent the child includes features for selecting clothing, physical features, and items associated with the child's avatar used in the educational environment.

~~10.~~9. The educational system of claim 1, wherein the educational environment further comprises a software module for rewarding the child for completing an activity.

~~11.~~10. Non-transitory computer-readable storage media encoded with a computer program including instructions executable by a processor to create an educational environment for a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the educational environment comprising:

a. at least three subjects, wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning;

b. a plurality of learning activities associated with each subject; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein the plurality of learning activities teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject; wherein the plurality of activities consists essentially of activities teaching toward one or more educational objectives in a subject;

c. a software module for creating an avatar to represent the child; and

d. a software module for monitoring the progress of the child in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment;

provided that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty.

~~12.~~11. The media of claim ~~11~~10, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment.

~~13.~~12. The media of claim ~~11~~10, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment.

~~14.~~13. The media of claim ~~11~~10, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome.

~~15.~~14. The media of claim ~~14~~13, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region, wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep.

~~16.~~15. A computer-implemented method of educating a child aged about 1 to about 10 years, the method comprising the steps of:

a. providing, by a computer, a plurality of learning activities associated with each of three subjects; wherein the plurality of learning activities includes at least one of: a book, an audiovisual presentation, a puzzle, a song or other music activity, a game, a printable or other art activity; wherein each subject comprises a plurality of levels of learning, wherein each learning activity ~~teaching~~ teaches toward one or more educational objectives in a subject and ~~consisting~~ consists essentially of content teaching toward the one or more educational objectives;

b. providing, by the computer, a software module for the child to create an avatar to represent the child; and

c. providing, by the computer, a software module for the child to monitor their progress in each of the subjects, wherein the software module for monitoring the

progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising ~~the avatar representing the child,~~ a learning path comprising a sequence of lessons or learning activities, the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment, and interactive elements configured to teach facts associated with the environment;

provided that the subjects and the activities are suitable for the child with regard to educational objective, content, interface, and difficulty.

~~17.~~16. The method of claim 15~~16~~, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child represents progress of the child by displaying the avatar representing the child moving along the learning path in the explorable environment.

~~18.~~17. The method of claim 15~~16~~, wherein the software module for monitoring the progress of the child displays an explorable environment comprising one or more quizzes covering facts associated with the environment.

~~19.~~18. The method of claim 15~~16~~, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a terrestrial environment that is representative of a biome or an aquatic environment that is representative of a biome.

~~20.~~19. The method of claim 18~~19~~, wherein the explorable environment comprises a representation of a desert, tundra, taiga, boreal forest, grassland, shrubland, savanna, woodland, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, jungle, tropical island, riparian region, wetland, pond, intertidal zone, mangrove forest, kelp forest, coral reef, continental shelf, pelagic zone, benthic zone, hydrothermal vent, or cold seep.