



Increasing Mainstreaming of Games In Learning Policies

## Linguistic and Cultural Issues in EU Funded Game-Based Learning Projects

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## Objectives

Objectives of this study are to explore and understand culture and linguistic issues on GBL projects within European community and to provide suggestions for the future work in learning policies and culturally competent GBL projects

Roots of "Culture" come from Latin *cultura* stemming from *colere* meaning to cultivate (Harper, 2001). According to anthropologists and other behavioral scientists, culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns.

The term was first used in this way by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871.

Tylor said that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Of course, it is not limited to men. Women possess and create it as well.

Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.

Culture developed by beliefs, faith, practices, customs, way to live, art, intelligence, language, food habits, and economy etc.

"Culture: learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day- to-day living patterns. these patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism" (Damen, 1987, p. 367).

In general, it refers to human activity; culture reflect understanding, or criteria for valuing, human activity.

Culture consists on four elements that are passed on from generation to generation by learning alone:

- Values
- Norms
- Institutions
- Artifacts.

1. Values comprise ideas about what in life seems important. They guide the rest of the culture.
2. Norms consist of expectations of how people will behave in various situations. Each culture has methods, called sanctions, of enforcing its norms. Sanctions vary with the importance of the norm; norms that a society enforces formally have the status of laws.
3. Institutions are the structures of a society within which values and norms are transmitted.
4. Artifacts—things, or aspects of material culture—derive from a culture's values and norms.

## **Culture Reflects:**

1. The total way of life of a people
2. The social legacy the individual acquires from his group
3. A way of thinking, feeling, and believing
4. An abstraction from behavior
5. A theory about the way in which a group of people in fact behave
6. A storehouse of pooled learning
7. A set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems
8. Learned behavior
9. A mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior
10. A set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men
11. A precipitate of history
12. A behavioral map, sieve, or matrix

Cultural competency is the genuine sensitivity and respect given to people regardless of their ethnicity, race, language, culture or national origin.

It is the ability to anticipate and recognize misunderstandings that arise from the differing cultural assumptions and expectations of learners and to respond to such issues appropriately.

## **Games and Culture!**

- Race
- Class
- Nationality
- History
- Global Business
- Gender

## **Cultural Context in Games**

- Popular culture
  - the images in games
  - the ties between games and movies, manga, etc.
- Business
  - the ways in which games are made and marketed
  - the ancillary businesses around games (magazines, retailers, etc.)
- Fan-dom
  - the ways that devotees invest energy and creativity into particular games
  - the communities that rise up around games
- Technology
  - the technical requirements of games and their effect on the evolution of computer systems
- Gender
  - the way that male and female bodies and identities are rendered in games

## Designer borrows from the wider culture

- Signifiers
  - the red cross
- Themes
  - the hero tale
- Images
  - the witch
- Sounds
  - Fanfare
- Colors
- Symbols

## Culture-surrounding

- Players interpret the game
  - using their individual knowledge and cultural background
- Players play the game
  - using techniques and expectations derived from other games
  - using expectations derived from real-world experiences
- Players may play in a variety of environments
  - arcade or Internet cafe
  - solitary
  - group setting
  - public competitive setting

Designers can choose to ignore culture but that doesn't mean they are free of it. It just means they will be ignorant about it.

The presence of a particular cultural rhetoric may indicate an explicit design choice by the designer but not always

## Cultural Competency

The genuine sensitivity and respect given to people regardless of their ethnicity, race, language, culture or national origin.

The ability to anticipate and recognize misunderstandings that arise from the differing cultural assumptions and expectations of learners and to respond to such issues appropriately.

## In Game-Based Learning (GBL) projects:

Problems may arise because European Union has diverse audiences from different cultural backgrounds perceive values, norms, artifacts, colors and symbols in different ways.

Game designers should adopt values, norms, artifacts, colors and symbols to convey positive connotations to avoid negative interpretation of the games .

Linguistic problems may occur if designers without sufficient cultural background or linguistic knowledge translate one language into another. If game designers do not notice these problems, confusion or even failure to convey the right information will occur.

Linguistic problems become a major obstacle to the success of conveying information to targeted audiences.

An accessible game should be adapted to the special characteristics of natural languages and the commonly accepted rules for their use, or of cultures in a given geographic region to increase communication effectiveness, speed, accuracy, and retention.

Failure to appreciate the importance of culture and language issues in learning games in diverse communities can result in multiple adverse consequences, including difficulties with informed consent, miscommunication, inadequate understanding of content by students, dissatisfaction with the learning environments.

“Think global, be local”:

Understanding the background, cultural values, and beliefs of target learners, and applying it in game design.

## Results

- Most of learning games are in English.
- Culturally diverse partnership helps to develop culturally competent games.
- In general, games developed during the project are not available to evaluate or to test
- Multinational project helps to understand and appreciate different cultures and languages

## Suggestions

An accessible game should be adapted to the special characteristics of natural languages and the commonly accepted rules for their use, or of cultures in a given geographic region to increase communication effectiveness, speed, accuracy, and retention.

Failure to appreciate the importance of culture and language issues in learning games in diverse communities can result in multiple adverse consequences, including

- Miscommunication,
- Inadequate understanding of content by learners,
- Dissatisfaction with the learning environments.

Understanding the background, cultural values, and beliefs of target learners leads good game design in culturally diverse communities

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