



Representations of Students' Experience of their Local Environment in their Constructions of Digital Games

Maria Deveraki, *mdvaki@yahoo.gr*

Environmental Education Lab, Dept of Pedagogy, School of Philosophy, University of Athens

Marios Xenos, *mariosxenos@gmail.com*

Educational Technology Lab, Dept of Pedagogy, School of Philosophy, University of Athens

Maria Daskolia, *mdaskol@ppp.uoa.gr*

Environmental Education Lab, Dept of Pedagogy, School of Philosophy, University of Athens

Abstract

The study reported in this poster presents a work-in-progress focusing on unveiling students' representations of their experience of the local environment while interacting with pedagogically designed game microworlds within the context of a place-based educational program.

Keywords

Place-based education, Constructionism, Environmental Education, game microworlds, local environment, representations, city

Rationale and Context of the Study in Brief

Place-based education (PBE) (Gruenewald, 2003; Smith, 2007) is identified as one of the strands of current Environmental Education. By stressing the learners' direct (unmediated) experience of the environment, it almost by definition precludes the use of computer-mediated processes and tools. However, we argue that PBE would have a lot to gain from opening to constructionist frameworks of learning, such as the one we applied in our study. We designed a PBE school program by engaging students 13 to 15 yrs old Greek students first in collaboratively de-constructing a game microworld (PerfectVille) (http://etl.ppp.uoa.gr/content/download/eslate_kits.htm) and then in collaboratively constructing new game microworlds that would better represent their experience of the city. We aim to explore whether and how meaning generation on concepts and issues related to the students' experience of their city environment is enhanced and shaped through the construction and de-constructing of digital artefacts. We focused on studying the students' artefacts and their discursive exchange on concepts and practices related to their local environments, such as their school, neighborhood, or other community places, while they were interacting with the artefacts. The study is a work-in-progress. It is conducted within the context of Metafora, a 3-year EU funded project.

References

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