Chapter 26
Case Study of Game-Based Learning in a Citizenship Education K-12 Classroom:
Opportunities and Challenges

Venus Olla
University of Nottingham, UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on a case study that involves the incorporation of ICT in particular gaming technology into the subject area of Citizenship Education (CE), a non-traditional ICT focused subject. The case study is within the context of a K-12 classroom and it explores the processes in which a classroom teacher may have to navigate to be able to use innovative ICT within their classroom. The case highlights the main issues as relating to pedagogical and institutional considerations.

BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

This introduction presents the research conducted as part of a larger research project which focused on the use of ICT and student voice as pedagogical tools within the K-12 classroom for the teaching and learning of Citizenship Education. The participants involved in the case study were members of a specialized educational

program for minority at-risk youth in high school. We begin with the background of Citizenship Education CE) as the school subject.

This section provides a discussion of Citizenship Education's introduction into the K-12 curriculum in many Western countries, the contentious issues associated with CE as a curriculum subject, the different pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning, and how game-based learning has been suggested as an adequate pedagogy for CE. The benefits of game-based learning will also be discussed as they relate to teaching and learning within today's educational systems.

This will be followed by a description of the contextual circumstances in which the case study was conducted as well as its design and implementation. Additionally, the current challenges to the K-12 classroom teacher attempting to incorporate game-based learning into their classroom will be presented. Finally, this section will conclude with recommendations and future research directions for the use of game-based learning.

BACKGROUND

Over the last twenty years (Osler & Starkey 2006), many developed democratic nations have experienced a reduction in voting during elections. Many countries, fueled in part by media anecdotes, believe there is a moral deficit and lack of civic and political engagement among young people. These observations coupled with issues of religion and state in many parts of the world, have created a perceived fear of the demise of democracy (Hébert & Sears 2001; Bennett 2008; Osler & Starkey 2003). In order to counteract these trends CE was introduced as a specific school subject through which young people could be taught how to be good citizens (Hébert & Sears 2001). The use of games in certain subject areas produce easier evaluation of assessment outcomes such as in the subject areas of mathematics, science and geography. Such use of games in those subject areas are probably easier to defend compared to subjects such as Citizenship Education which is a contested subject area already. However it is due to the complexity of the subject area of CE that I believe the use of gaming and ICT is particularly appropriate because they have the potential to allow young people to explore the different facets of CE within the classroom.

The presence of ICT in secondary education is claimed to have begun in the eighties and its presence has increased and diversified over the decades. This ranges in scope from traditional Web 1.0 uses of the world wide web as a means of accessing information from the internet (Web 1.0), to the use of Web 2.0 applications such as social networking tools to create user-generated content and software as learning tools in the classroom (Paas & Creech 2008; White 2005). This expansion of use has also been driven in part by Government policy of many Western countries such

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