

**Title of Session:** Cultural Diversity in Games

**Moderator:** James Neusom

**Title of File:** culturaldiversity

**Date:** July 25, 2007

Room: Playing to Learn Group

**JamesIN:** I would like to do a quick roll call to see how many are teachers and how many are students

**DoloresG:** teacher

**MaryGst5:** TEACHER

**KimFl:** teacher

**VickiLM:** teacher

**AngelicaH:** STUDENT!

**BarbSa:** teacher

**JosephWi:** teacher

**BjB:** Welcome, everyone, to the second of our Festival Events!

**SherylM:** teacher/parent

**BjB:** This discussion is Cultural Diversity in Games and is being presented by James Neusom.

**SherryC1:** teacher

**JamesIN:** Seeing that a majority are teachers...I guess we should focus on organizational planning and team concept

**JaniceSG:** student

**RogerMG:** teacher

**ShayneTr:** teacher

**JamesIN:** How many have read the setup info in my room...How to make a video game

**CelesteR:** Not I

**RogerMG:** No

**MaryGst5:** no, sorry

**DoloresG:** No, sorry

**BarbSa:** no

**JaniceSG:** No, sorry

**JosephWi:** I have not read it.

**KathleenAF:** no, sorry

**AngelicaH:** NOPE NOT YET

**VickiLM:** started to but did not get back to finish

**SarahJF:** sorry not yet

**BjB** . o O ( they're TEACHERS, Jim! Teachers don't read ahead ;- )

**JamesIN:** Well I'm new at this but I'm going to try and cut and paste a quick piece

**BarbSa:** True

**JamesIN:** let's begin "Gaming 101". As always, nothing begins without a plan. The first step is to write down your ideas in an understandable and logical process. This is called a White Paper and/or Design Document. The White Paper contains the who, what, when, and how of the game. Then you must organize a team to help you take your idea from paper to reality. Look for people who have skills that you lack and more importantly, that are willing to commit to the plan you have outlined in your White Paper. A good place to find help is at Garage Games ([www.garagegames.com](http://www.garagegames.com)).

**JamesIN:** Garage Games was founded by Jeff Tunnell formally of Dynamix ([www.dynamix.com](http://www.dynamix.com)). Jeff set up Garage Games as a one-stop shop to help fledgling game creators. This site will give you access to free technology, developers and graphic artists. In the chat rooms and forums, you will find not only teammates with specific skills and experience, but advice and assistance in game evaluation, quality control and publishing. Next, you will need the tools to actually get your game made into a prototype or beta version.

**JamesIN:** There are many free tools available on the web. Discreet.com has free 3D modeling/animation software ([www.discreet.com/products/gmax](http://www.discreet.com/products/gmax)). IdSoftware offers a free game engine called Quake II GNU ([www.idsoftware.com](http://www.idsoftware.com)). GCC has a free software

compiler available on their site ([www.gcc.gnu.org](http://www.gcc.gnu.org)). At Blender ([www.blender3d.org](http://www.blender3d.org)) you will find a free all-in-one software authoring program designed for the novice game developer. Now all you have to do is take these tools and get to work creating the game of your dreams.

**JamesIN:** Now the game is done. Your buddies and you think it's the next best thing since sliced bread. How do you get it to the masses? Well business is business and the fundamentals never change. Just like publishing a book, a song, a movie or any new consumer item, you've got to make some noise and create brand recognition. One way to do that is by entering business plan and game competitions. As stated in the past (see issue 3-15 ) competitions are a great way to raise seed capital as well as generate publicity and notoriety for your project. In the Gaming world, the Independent Games Festival (IGF) is a great place to start.

**JamesIN:** The IGF was founded by the Gama Network ([www.cmpgame.com](http://www.cmpgame.com)) in 1998 for independent game developers and publishers to showcase their weirs on an international stage. The goal of the IGF is to pick the games that show the greatest overall promise and contribute most toward the evolution of the art of game development. They offer cash prizes for innovation in visual arts, audio, game design and technical excellence. The top prize is a \$15,000 purse for the Seumas McNally Award of Independent Game of the Year.

**CelesteR:** BJB, not fair! I thought I had all of the materials before today...I apologize.

**BJB** chuckles...just teasing, Celeste

**JeffC:** yes you can James... you did just fine... everyone: Actions-- Detach

**JeffC:** then you can read his entire post.

**JamesIN:** As teachers you are already well trained in organizing students

**JamesIN:** So the issue is just where to find the resource material and links

**JamesIN:** Planning is always the key...and the primary learning experience

**SherylM:** At the end you can sign up for the certificate of participation for verification of your attendance, if you use CEU points or whatever your state call professional development credit.

**PabloF:** great

**SarahJF:** sounds good

**SherylM:** It's all good at Tapped In.

**SherylM** smiles

**PabloF**: haha

**KimFl** smiles

**PabloF**: shall we get started?

**AngelicaH**: lol

**JamesIN**: The subject is Cultural Diversity...so does anyone have any questions?

**DavidWek** smiles

**BarbSa**: The games that you use are they just for one ethnic group or can they be used for any

**JamesIN**: Let's start with the basics...like stick ball. There are only so many things/moves you can create

**MaryGst5**: How do you make sure that the game is culturally diverse and promotes acceptance of cultural diversity

**JamesIN**: So ethnicity is only the outside...not the core

**BjB** listens to Jim

**MaryGst5**: please explain

**JamesIN**: I posted up some examples of African Math games...but they could just as easily be Irish games

**AngelicaH**: yes please...

**SarahJF**: Do research

**BarbSa**: so why are they culturally diverse?

**JamesIN**: As teachers you understand that Math knows no color

**JamesIN**: Because of the historical background

**JamesIN**: Our primary learning comes from European and old Greek teaching

**ChristophJ**: yep

**JamesIN:** But the games I posted up were created during the time of the pyramids

**JamesIN:** How many of you teach about the contributions of other cultures

**BarbSa:** So if I use a game designed from an European perspective, I then must explain the background to the non-euros

**AlyssaYS:** I suppose music would

**JamesIN:** What we are talking about here is simply applying that social studies info to a game

**MaryGst5:** I do through my art classes

**AngelicaH:** well I have always been taught to respect other cultures

**SarahJF:** same here

**BarbSa:** I always use other cultures in vocab and games, but I am big on History and I travel

**PabloF:** social tolerance...mutual respect

**ShayneTr:** I need to teach about the art of different cultures

**JamesIN:** See Barb...that's what I'm talking about

**CelesteR:** I teach Social Studies, 10-12

**KimFl:** I also try to use resources incorporating native languages of students if possible (i.e. Navajo)

**JaniceSG:** How often are games "localized" -- as software programs usually are?

**JamesIN:** Let me show an example from the movie industry

**BarbSa:** So not only do you develop a math problem, but you explain the history behind it

**AngelicaH:** how do you incorporate different cultures into a game without offending anyone??

**JamesIN:** Janice..I will answer you in a min

**JaniceSG:** OK

**JamesIN:** In the movies there are only a few basic story lines

**JamesIN:** Boy meets girl

**JamesIN:** Boy loses girl

**JamesIN:** Boy finds girl

**DorethiaM:** does anyone have any good projects they have presented to students.

**JamesIN:** In the gaming industry you have the same limitations

**JamesIN:** The only thing is we take the opportunity to expand on the knowledge base

**BjB . o O** ( basic plot or theme )

**JamesIN:** Take an underground railroad game

**JamesIN:** The basic foundation is a Point and Click geography structure

**AlyssaYS:** how would you incorporate these games in a music curriculum?

**ArturoM:** are most diverse games made up by the teacher

**AngelicaH:** true... music is the same in every language

**JamesIN:** The difference is that you use the history of slavery as the theme

**BjB** waits for Jim to complete his explanation

**TrinidadS:** should one be afraid to offend by exploring different cultures

**AngelicaH:** I know today anything you say can offend anyone and then you get sued or something

**AngelicaH:** so how do you do it not to offend people?

**JamesIN:** Trinidad...hopefully we are promoting the beauty of a culture and not offending

**TrinidadS:** right, but there are always ppl that get offended

**TrinidadS:** or at least most of the time

**BarbSa:** I have the student him/herself explain the history or background and I teach the concept

**JamesIN:** Your basics for the study/development group is approved school material

**TrinidadS:** are you afraid of spotlighting the student

**MaryGst5:** No, Trinidad, I don't believe exploring other cultures is offensive as long as the project or activity is presented in a respectful manner

**BjB:** good point, Jim

**JamesIN:** So anything you say is based on fact...not stereotypes

**AlyssaYS:** that's is true

**AngelicaH:** okay... I see

**ChristophJ:** yes

**TrinidadS:** ok

**SarahJF:** I see

**CelesteR:** I wait to see the explanation...

**AngelicaH:** so you're saying stick to the facts and no one gets offended?

**ChristophJ:** that's right

**JamesIN:** If I understand the goals here...it is to organize the students and let them develop the game while learning about other cultures

**BarbSa:** What if fact in history or culture. Most history is written by the winners

**DorethiaM:** Do you have students research the background?

**JamesIN:** Barb...we can only deal with what we have available...

**AngelicaH:** I think that would be nice because they learn about different cultures

**JamesIN:** The key is to let the students do the work

**BjB . o O** ( I would assume that the teacher would encourage students to use a variety of sources for research )

**BarbSa:** Students love to explain their culture and the Internet gives them a way to validate it

**SarahJF:** It has to be fun for the students

**BJB** . o O ( as long as the internet sites are authentic and reliable )

**SarahJF:** that's true

**MaryGst5:** GOOD POINT BJ

**BarbSa:** I have a rubric that I go over with students so that they are aware that not everything on the net is correct

**DorethiaM:** if you use Nettekker, edgate, unitedstreaming you have sites and resources that are approved. Also renzulli.com

**BJB:** So Jim is giving us an opportunity to give our students a reason to do research on a topic to accomplish a fun objective: a game

**ArturoM:** can you have a show and tell about their family to find out about them?

**BarbSa:** James, do you have the students gather the material and then you create the game?

**BJB:** Arturo, that depends on your student population

**SarahJF:** we did that in high school

**TrinidadS:** so would it be a good idea to separate the class and give them a culture to research

**JamesIN:** All I'm saying is as educators we must think outside the box and incorporate technology into the studies

**AngelicaH:** that might be smart

**ArturoM:** I see

**RogerMG:** It sounded to me like the students develop the game out of resources available to them.

**SarahJF:** It was done in our Spanish class

**ShayneTr:** Also, do you go over types of games with them?

**AngelicaH:** well technology now a days is a big part of peoples lives

**JamesIN:** Yes Trinidad, make it a class competition

**BjB:** Shayne, I think that is what the resources Jim provided do for you

**AlyssaYS:** that sounds like a good idea

**BjB:** . o O ( look under featured Items for the folder Cultural Diversity in Games )

**JosephWi** left the room (signed off).

**JamesIN:** The basic authoring software is free

**JamesIN:** Simply download it and apply it to your class subject ie. math, history, music

**AngelicaH:** what is that?

**JamesIN:** I often say...if you want to reach our youth...you have to hit them up on their hip

**BjB:** another good resource is a note that is featured on the welcome screen: African Mathematical Games

**JamesIN:** You can develop java games for cell phones in the class room and download for use after school

**KimFl:** very cool

**JamesIN:** When we talk about learning we must look beyond the classroom

**DeE:** can you briefly tell us how to

**AngelicaH:** but a lot of schools don't allow cell phones

**JamesIN:** and as we all know...every student has a cell phone or Myspace/facebook/ whatever site

**AlyssaYS:** that's true about the myspace

**ArturoM:** yes everyone has a cell phone

**TrinidadS:** so when it comes to incorporating music into cultures, is it a good idea to explore a culture that may be frowned upon, like gangster rap?

**BarbSa:** Not in adult ed, students are behind in tech

**TrinidadS:** if done in a positive way

**TrinidadS**: to explore a different side

**JamesIN**: Let's turn that around Trinidad....how about the fundamentals of business...visa v the music business

**DorethiaM**: yes and be careful with those that have bluetooth. If you are projecting a lesson , you may end up projecting a text message from a student.

**BjB** : going back to the purpose of games for just a sec...there is a note featured in this room that I think explains why games are so important...

**BjB** : Why are games suddenly so important and so potentially useful in education? For many reasons. Here's one: they epitomize the successful blending of the two most important pedagogical tools in a teacher's toolkit: critical thinking and storytelling.

**JamesIN**: Don't let the students create the parameters...set the guidelines and let them go at it

**BjB** . o O ( from one of my favorite authors and educators, Jason Ohler )

**DorethiaM**: do you have examples of projects you have done with students.

**BarbSa**: Games also offer to use multiple learning styles

**JosephWi**: To use bluetooth both devices have to accept the connection. If your computer isn't set to just broadcast that it's open, you shouldn't have that problem.

**SusanR** . o O ( also increases self esteem )

**DeE**: yeah your the blue tooth option of the cell phone needs to be turned on

**DorethiaM**: on my mac it is bluetooth enabled and students figured out how to locate teachers on their phones. can be embarrassing. we are wireless and I disable Bluetooth on my computer now.

**SherylM**: All the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, Frank Sutman's theories of project selection, and metacognitive skills are also involved in games.

**RogerMG**: Jim . . .I'd like to hear more about the parameters you set for students. . .how you determine them?

**BarbSa**: James, can you give us an example of your guidelines

**AlyssaYS**: technology is overwhelming

**DorethiaM**: Do you differentiate. I teach special ed, resource students as well as ELL mainly Spanish speaking students. . yes I agree technology is overwhelming.

**JamesIN**: Roger, if you read my article on making video games...you will see what I'm talking about

**RogerMG**: Are there any 'rules of thumb'?

**BjB**: Alyssa, are you teaching the technology or are you teaching the creation of games as the result of or end product of research?

**BjB** . o O ( lots of formats for games. )

**JamesIN**: Like any class project...you set guidelines. multi user vs. single, Math vs. music, study materials etc

**RogerMG**: OK . . .

**SarahJF**: that sounds good

**RogerMG**: I assume you could create such a game in Second Life too?

**JamesIN**: The technology of games is just another learning tool..like books.

**BarbSa**: Second life becomes overwhelming at times and distracts from the learning objective

**JamesIN**: It is what the students do with it that makes books and/or technology an effective learning device

**RogerMG**: IC . . .the big difference between the tech. game and books is one is more highly interactive?

**AlyssaYS**: the wireless capabilities are great

**JamesIN**: As we all know in a classroom environment books can be very interactive

**BarbSa**: Are tech games more interactive than books. A class can create some great interactivity from book

**AngelicaH**: but a lot of students can not afford internet so books might be more accessible

**SarahJF**: that's very true

**TrinidadS**: yeah

**ChristophJ**: yes it is

**BarbSa**: With library usage, almost anyone in the US can have Internet

**AngelicaH**: very true

**TrinidadS**: yeah, we're all in the library now

**ArturoM**: I did that in high school

**BarbSa**: Even in China, the Internet was everywhere

**ChristophJ**: in China everything is every where

**JamesIN**: Remember we are talking about games within the construct of a classroom study project

**RogerMG**: Having just attended Midge's presentation, it sounds like the games are more visual in some ways than books (excluding perhaps comics, illustrated picture books.)

**ChristophJ**: yes strictly games

**SarahJF**: Can afford it some school districts don't have resources

**BarbSa**: With the new hand crank computers and satellite feeds, the Internet can even go to the poor

**AlyssaYS**: I concur with that

**ArturoM**: my school did not have computers

**SusanR**: many books morph themselves into games

**ShayneTr**: Technology is a terrific tool, but there's lots of ways to create games :)

**TrinidadS**: so if a game uses stereotypes, is it important to discuss or dismiss them?

**TrinidadS**: video games

**JamesIN**: Dismiss..

**TrinidadS**: ok

**RogerMG**: James, are the games the center of the project?

**DorethiaM**: Do you embed videos into your games

**BjB**: We have ten minutes left for this discussion....

**JamesIN**: That's the purpose of this discussion

**ArturoM**: will multi media enhance the games?

**JamesIN**: To break down stereotypes and build self respect through classroom environment

**JamesIN**: Arturo...we want to keep it simple as possible

**JamesIN**: Do any of the students have a question before we close

**TrinidadS**: I think my questions have been answered

**BarbSa**: thanks for the leads and the info

**AngelicaH**: I think so too

**BjB**: Thanks, Jim, for agreeing to be a presenter during the festival!

**SarahJF**: no I'm glad I entered this room

**ChristophJ**: no I'm glad I entered this room

**AngelicaH**: Thank you Jim

**RosinaGu**: Thanks you guys.

**BjB**: I hope you will want to come back and lead more discussions for the Tapped In community

**AlyssaYS**: thanks

**ArturoM**: thank you Jim

**RogerMG**: Thank you James. I am already thinking of ways to use this in my classes.

**KimFl**: ty Jim

**ArturoM**: I am very grateful

**MichaelM**: Thank you James

**TrinidadS** : bye

**ArturoM**: you have been a tremendous help

**JamesIN**: Y'all humble a brother...teachers are the ones who deserve thanks

**BjB** hugs. Talk to you soon, I hope, Jim

**JamesIN**: Thanks for inviting me Bj