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Simulation games as educational texts and mediational tools for intercultural learning

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Abstract

This article reports the results of research carried out with university students using simulation games as educational resources. The aim of the study was to analyse the role of simulation games as mediational tools in the creation of playful, creativity-based educational interaction and the development of intercultural competence. Our approach is grounded in Moeglin's (2008) discussion of the role of mediatisation in the process of learning, Huizinga's (1971) theory of play (as it relates to learning), and Vygotsky's (1978) idea of a social constructivist pedagogy. The results suggest that simulation games exhibit the potential to develop important elements of intercultural competence, by helping to: turn learning into play, develop decision-making and other intercultural skills (as opposed to simply providing knowledge), and maximise students' potential learning outcomes. In addition, simulation games provide a multimodal platform, encouraging the development of students' ability to create, read and interpret multimodal texts. It is proposed that simulation games can perform an important role as auxiliary tools to be used alongside traditional modes of education.

Keywords: simulation games, mediatisation, intercultural competence, multimodal texts