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Interdisciplinary Programs

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Understanding Social Presence and Subject Position in Online Environments

Within various fields of linguistics, language is perceived as a social mechanism, always carrying the meanings and values of community, social groups, networks, culture, identity, and more. Language is at the heart of our interaction with the world around us. In a gaming environment, this translates in discursively created actions and interactions that regulate the relationships between players and, consequently, the outcome of the game. In order to be successful in such environments, players will need to develop a strong social presence, that is to say, the ability to project themselves through their characters in the social community and present themselves as 'real people'. By examining how players successfully navigate the game space by developing effective collaborative strategies and learning how to beat the game, this study will provide better understanding of the ecology of online learning. This could in turn have three important implications: (1) better understanding of how people do develop media literacy; (2) recommend how to best use media for education; and (3) insight into how to design technology-rich environments to achieve these first two goals.