

Transforming a Serious Game into an Expressive Game to Raise Awareness on Gender Issues

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**GABRIELLE
TREPANIER**



SERIOUS GAMES

- Educating, training, or informing are the primary goals before amusement (Michael and Chen, 2006: 17).
- Mobilize the affordances of the medium for “serious”, “highbrow”, and “useful” purposes, outside entertainment” in the specific contexts of “education, health care, or corporate training”, government agencies, military, and non-profit organizations (Bogost, 2011: 5).



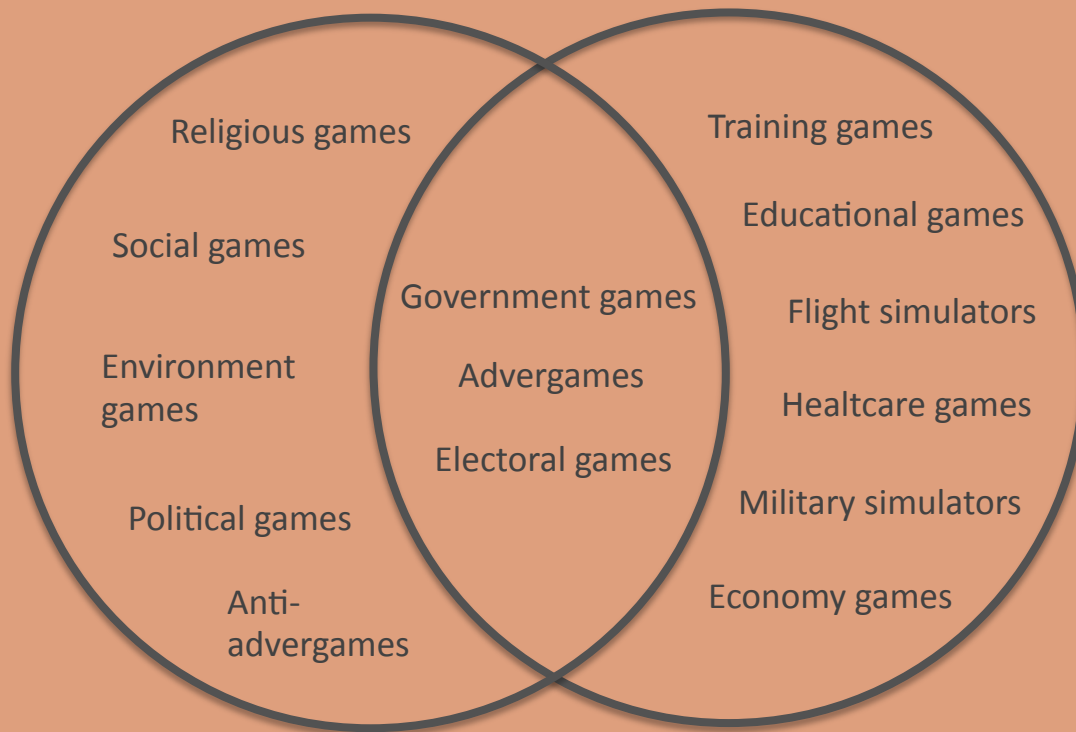
PERSUASIVE GAMES

- Convince the players to adopt a specific point of view, change their beliefs about the world and influence their behaviors (Bogost, 2007: ix).
- Involve procedural rhetoric i.e. the practice of “using persuasively rule-based representations and interactions rather than spoken word, writing, images, or moving pictures” (2007 : ix, 29).

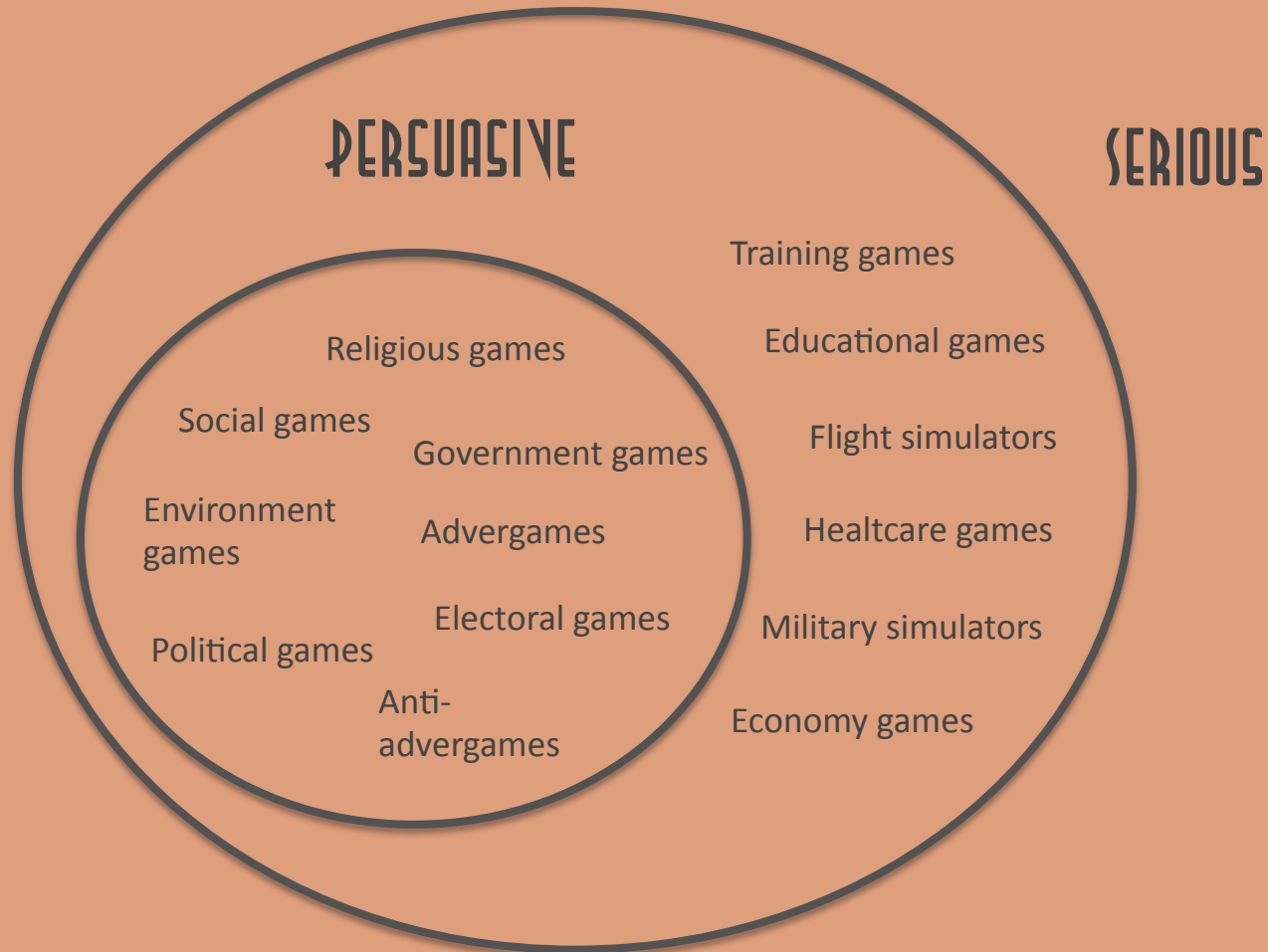
TYPES OF GAME

PERSUASIVE

SERIOUS



TYPES OF GAME?



EXPRESSIVE GAMES

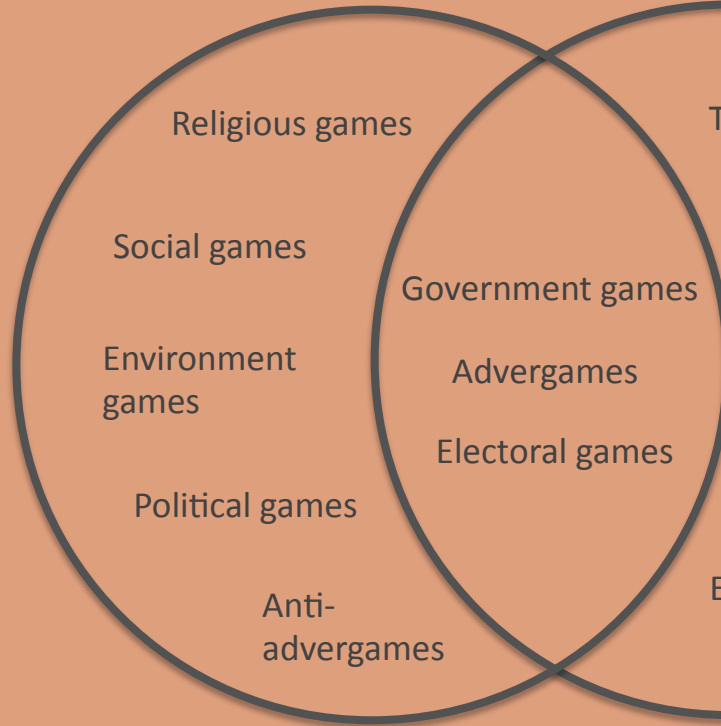
- Explore political, social, and psychological issues through an individual's perspective . Foster reflection and feed debates, while being entertaining (Cfp).
- Illustrate the feminist slogan “the personal is political”.
- [Artgames] encourage the players “to reflect on one or more themes during or after play, without a concern for resolution of effect” (Bogost, 2011: 14).
- [Artgames] deploy a more poetic and less direct way to express ideas” by favoring a subtle and “metaphoric treatment of ideas” (2011: 16-17).

TYPES OF GAME

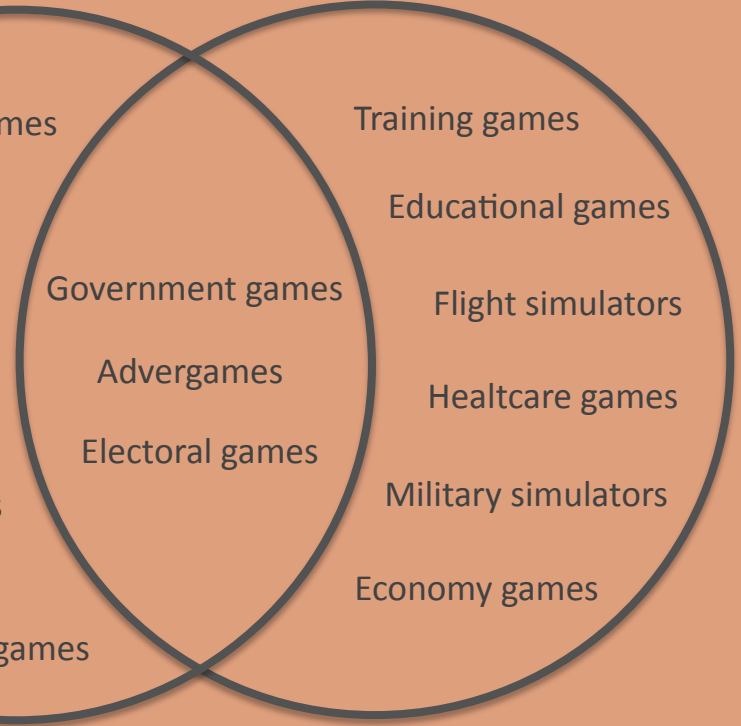
EXPRESSIVE



PERSUASIVE



SERIOUS





ENTERTAINMENT GAMES

- Oriented toward immediate gratification (Bogost 2011:14).
- Use techniques to simplify the gaming experience and to focus the players on the fun aspects (Michael and Chen, 2006: 34).

CASE EXAMPLE



PLAY

credits français

A conversation with



HUGO

Hugo just turned 8 years old. He is in grade 3 and he never had problems at school. However, he recently started to make up excuses in order to stay at home during the weekdays. Imagine that you are his parent, sitter or guardian. Can you gain his trust and help him?

CASE EXAMPLE



CASE EXAMPLE



CASE EXAMPLE



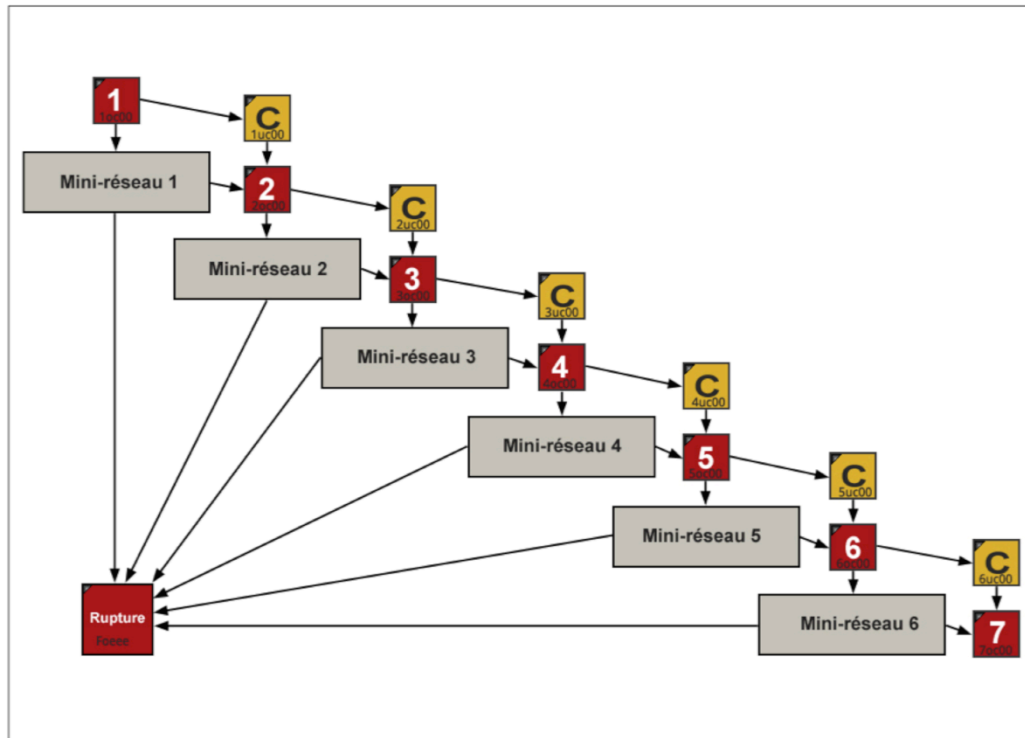
CASE EXAMPLE



CASE EXAMPLE



PROCEDURES



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SIX ATTITUDES

Mucchielli, 1966 and Gordon, 1979:

- **Interpretive:** diagnose, analyse, or try to find underlying meanings or intentions.
- **Evaluative:** judge, criticise, blame, moralize, humiliate, or ridicule on the basis of norms, stereotypes and bias.
- **Supportive:** reassure, console, or encourage.



SIX ATTITUDES

- **Investigative** : inquire, interrogate, test, and ask probing questions.
- **Immediate solution** : direct, threaten or give advices.
- **Understanding**: reformulate the person's ideas while pointing out the perceived feelings involved.

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PROCEDURAL EXPRESSIVITY

Encourage players to reflect upon:

- the attitude that they instinctively adopted when facing gender issues and bullying,
- how rewarding is active listening compared to judging, trivializing, being intrusive, sexist and homophobic,

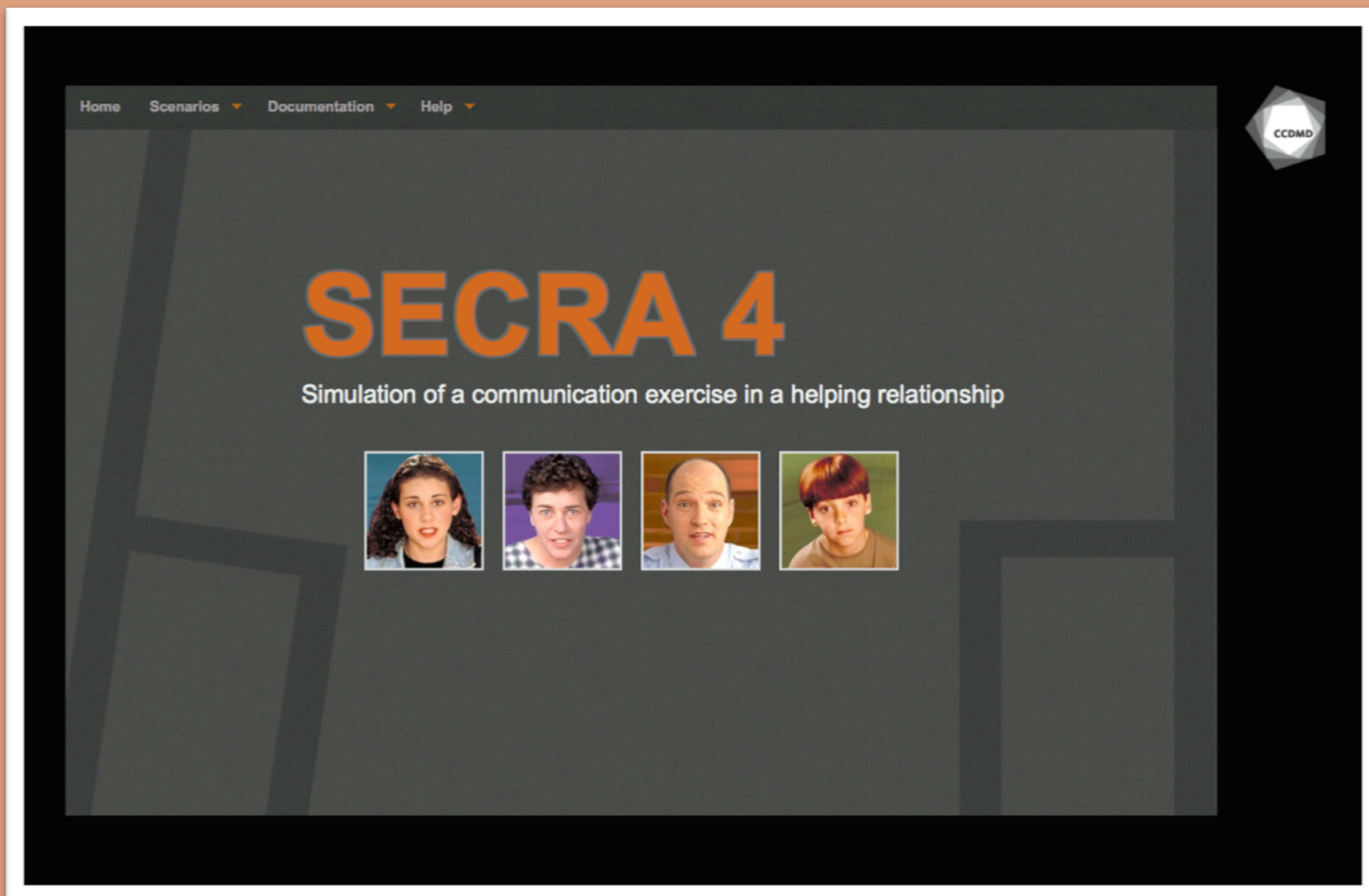
without pointing them “toward definitive answers” (Bogost, 2011:14).



CONTEXT OF PLAY

- Decisive factor to determine the game's status.
- Influence the players' interpretations.
- An educational context can increase the chances a game will teach something or challenge the players' perception.

CONTEXT OF PLAY



CONTEXT OF PLAY



PLAY

credits

français

A conversation with



Hugo just turned 8 years old. He is in grade 3 and he never had problems at school. However, he recently started to make up excuses in order to stay at home during the weekdays. Imagine that you are his parent, sitter or guardian. Can you gain his trust and help him?

HUGO

A dark grey banner with a ribbon-like shape, featuring a central rectangular section and two flared ends. The word "CONTENT" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font in the center. Four dots are arranged horizontally on each side of the banner.

CONTENT

- Shorter dialogues



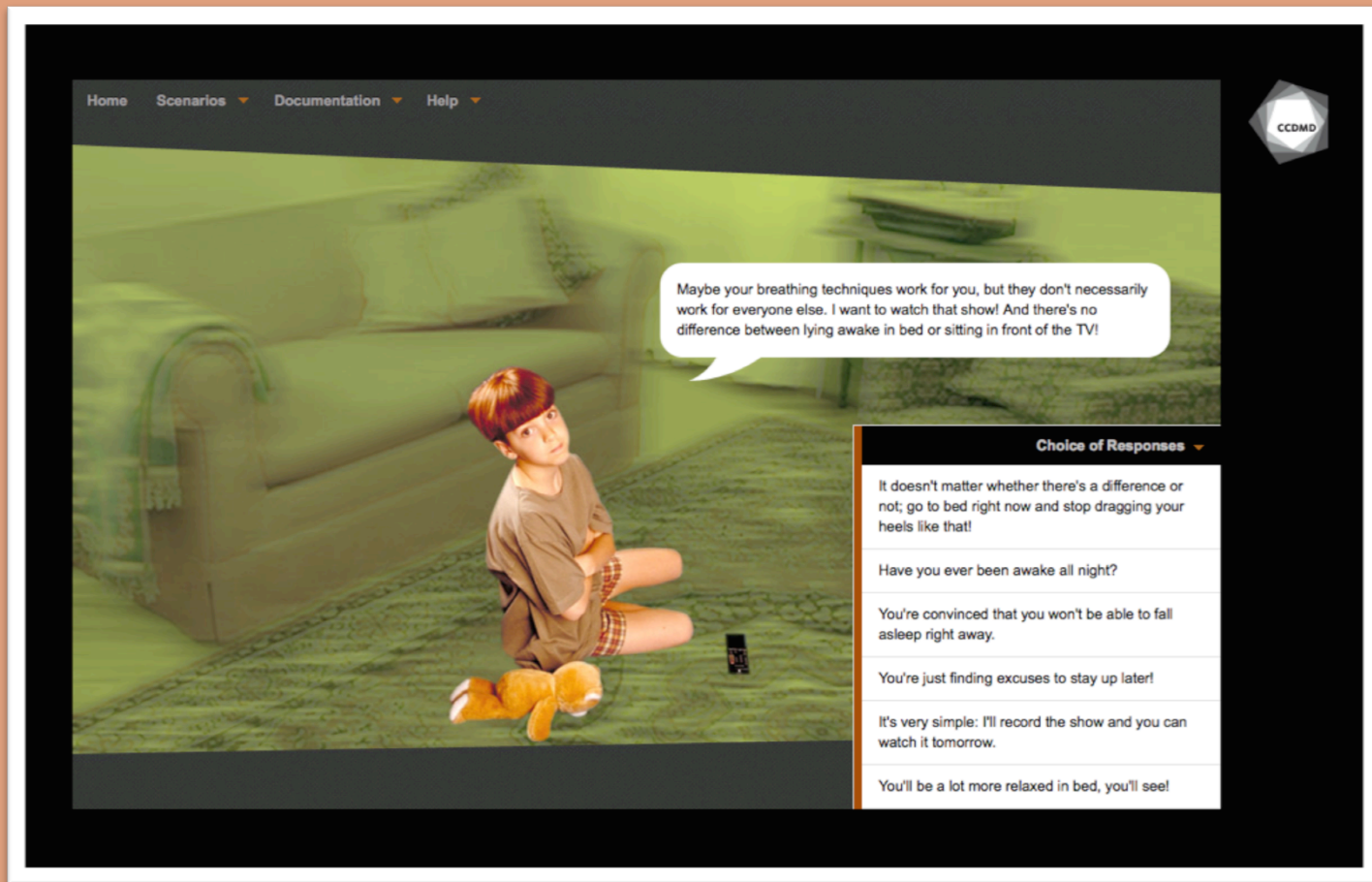
VISUAL DESIGN

Usefulness of serious games can be judged by:

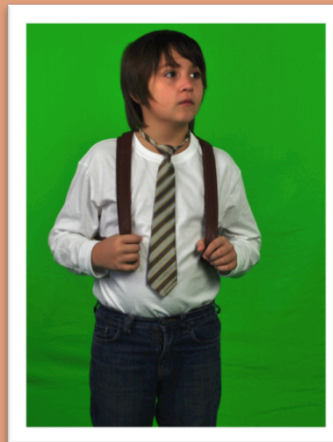
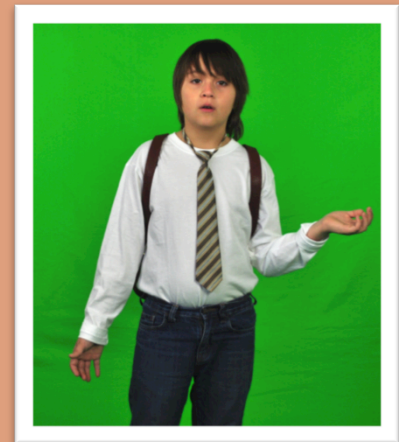
- the “sufficient realism” of their visual design, especially for military and flight simulators, training and healthcare games

(Michael and Chen, 2006: 38)

VISUAL DESIGN



VISUAL DESIGN



VISUAL DESIGN



VISUAL DESIGN



VISUAL DESIGN





PARATEXT

A serious game

- cannot “be successful if the players do not understand its rules, their objectives in the game, the consequences of their action, and the reasons for these consequences”
- should “respond more to the conscious decisions of the players than to an outside element of chance” (Abt cited in Michael and Chen, 2006: 35).

PARATEXT

The screenshot displays the PARATEXT software interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Scenarios', 'Documentation', and 'Help'. The 'Documentation' window is open, showing a table of contents on the left and a detailed view of 'Attitudes of the helper' on the right. The table of contents lists: Introduction, Attitudes of the helper, Attitudes of the person needing help, Nonverbal Expressions, and Pedagogical uses. The 'Attitudes of the helper' section on the right contains the following text:

Attitudes of the helper

This section summarizes how the helper's attitudes affect the outcome of an intervention with a person experiencing a problem. Two theoretical models of communication were used to categorize all of the different possible attitudes of the helper: the Roger Mucchielli model (1966) and the Thomas Gordon model (1979).

Roger Mucchielli's system of classification comprises five verbal attitudes called "non-facilitating" (evaluative, interpretative, supportive, immediate solution, investigative) and one "facilitating" attitude (understanding). Thomas Gordon's model comprises a total of sixteen types of verbal intervention, including twelve communication "roadblocks" (ordering, threatening, preaching, advising, lecturing, blaming, praising, ridiculing, interpreting, consoling, questioning, humouring) and four communication "facilitators" (passive listening, acknowledgment responses, invitations to talk, active listening).

Because they are fewer and more general, Mucchielli's categories were used in SECRA 4. However, verbal intervention types from the Thomas Gordon system have been included to clarify Mucchielli's categories and render them more workable.

The following are definitions of each of the six categories of helper's attitudes, together with examples and likely effects on the person needing help:

a. Evaluative Attitude

Replies in the evaluative category are statements that morally judge or criticize (approving or disapproving) the person needing help with reference to certain norms or values. In this category, we find the following types of behaviours:

Examples

- Blaming:* "It's your own fault if so many bad things happen to you."
- Moralizing:* "It's not nice to treat your friends like that."
- Judging:* "You didn't do the right thing."
- Preaching:* "A clean boy always washes his hands before a meal."
- Abusing:* "You think like an idiot."
- Humiliating:* "You're absolutely useless."
- Ridiculing:* "A baby is smarter than you."

The interface also shows a 'Dialogue' window on the left with a conversation between Malcolm and User (Interp), and a 'CCDM' logo in the top right corner.

PARATEXT

The screenshot displays the PARATEXT Documentation window. The window has a dark grey header with a navigation bar containing 'Home', 'Scenarios', 'Documentation', and 'Help'. The 'Documentation' tab is active, showing a sidebar with a table of contents and a main content area. The sidebar table of contents includes sections like 'Introduction', 'Attitudes of the helper', 'Attitudes of the person needing help' (which is selected), 'Nonverbal Expressions', and 'Pedagogical uses'. The main content area displays the text for 'Attitudes of the person needing help', which is divided into three parts: a general introduction, 'Level 1', and 'Level 2'. The text describes how different attitudes affect the person needing help and the simulation dialogue. A 'CCDM' logo is visible in the top right corner of the window.

Home Scenarios Documentation Help

Documentation

Introduction

Attitudes of the helper

Attitudes of the person needing help

Nonverbal Expressions

Pedagogical uses

Dialogue

Malcolm
There's a problem here.

User (Interrogator)
Hmm... You're not sure.

Malcolm
No way! I just don't know.

User (Immersion)
The best way to solve this is to...

Malcolm
Maybe your idea is not the best.

User (Evaluation)
It doesn't make sense.

Malcolm
Oh alright! I'll try to find a solution.

Attitudes of the person needing help

According to most authors in the field, evaluative, supportive, interpretative, immediate solution, and investigative attitudes are likely to interfere with a helping relationship (as noted in the consequences listed in the "Attitudes of the helper" section). They may elicit resistance on the part of the person needing help, interfere with further investigation of the problem and eventually lead the individual to break off the dialogue if his or her call for help is still not heard.

In SECRA 4, if you choose a reply that sets up a roadblock to communication, the on-screen character will react negatively (with indignation, anger, aggression, frustration, impatience, etc.) followed by a new call for help. After a certain number of consecutive replies that create obstacles, the character will terminate the conversation altogether.

On the other hand, if you systematically choose an understanding attitude, you will notice that the person needing help reacts with increasing trust and a sense of being understood. As a result, the character continues to talk about and explore the problem in greater depth.

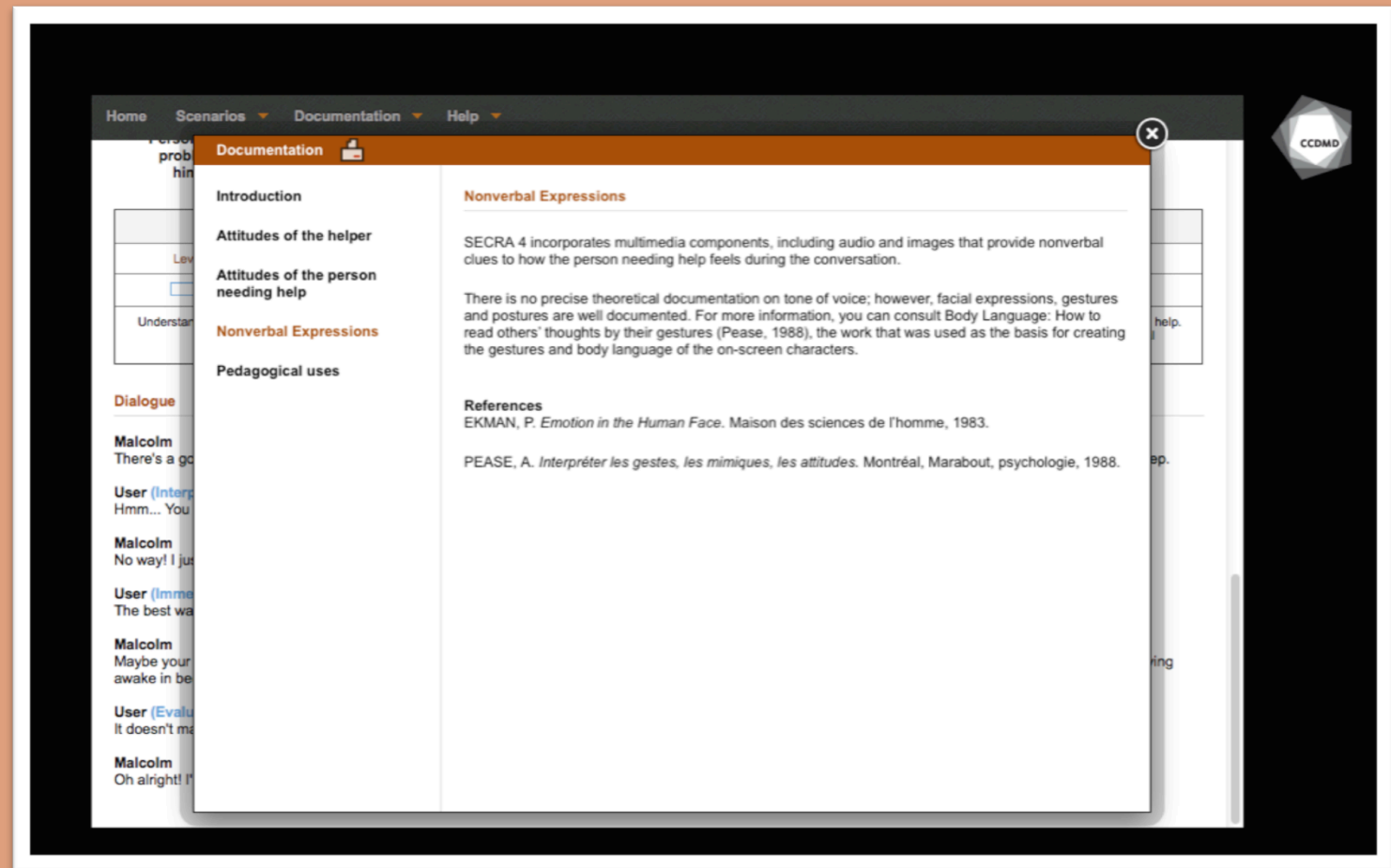
In the simulation dialogues of SECRA 4, the "scale of experiencing" proposed by Klein, Mathieu, Gendlin and Kiesler in 1969 guided the script development of on-screen characters' reactions to replies chosen from the "understanding" category. This scale has seven levels that affect the person needing help in the following ways: increased awareness of his or her emotions, improvement in the quality of his or her experience, significant changes related to his or her personal experience, and an increased ability to own his or her feelings and personal reactions. A brief description of these levels follows.

Level 1
Speech is impersonal and detached. The content is limited to general and superficial statements of ideas, facts and events. The person needing help does not reveal anything important about him or herself. If the individual speaks about him or herself, it is in a detached fashion.

Level 2
The link between the person needing help and the content of his or her words is more explicit. The person either talks primarily about him or herself, or clearly demonstrates interest in the subject. However, personal reactions or feelings are not expressed explicitly. The person's words only provide an external, superficial and intellectual description.

CCDM

PARATEXT



PARATEXT

Home Scenarios Documentation Help



Detailed Results

Game report

Sorry! The replies you have selected did not help to solve Malcolm's problem. If you wish to start the conversation over or to try again with other on-screen characters, either go to the "Home" menu or choose a first name in the "Scenarios" menu. But before you do, you can review the entire game report below and print it.

Statistics

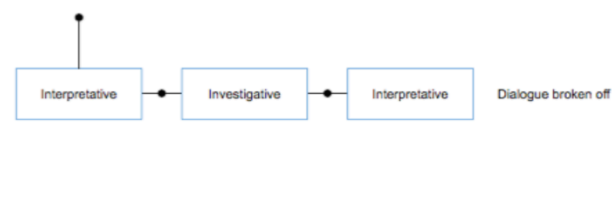
Category of attitude	Number of replies
Evaluative	0
Interpretative	2
Investigative	1
Immediate Solution	0
Supportive	0
Understanding	0

Conversation Path

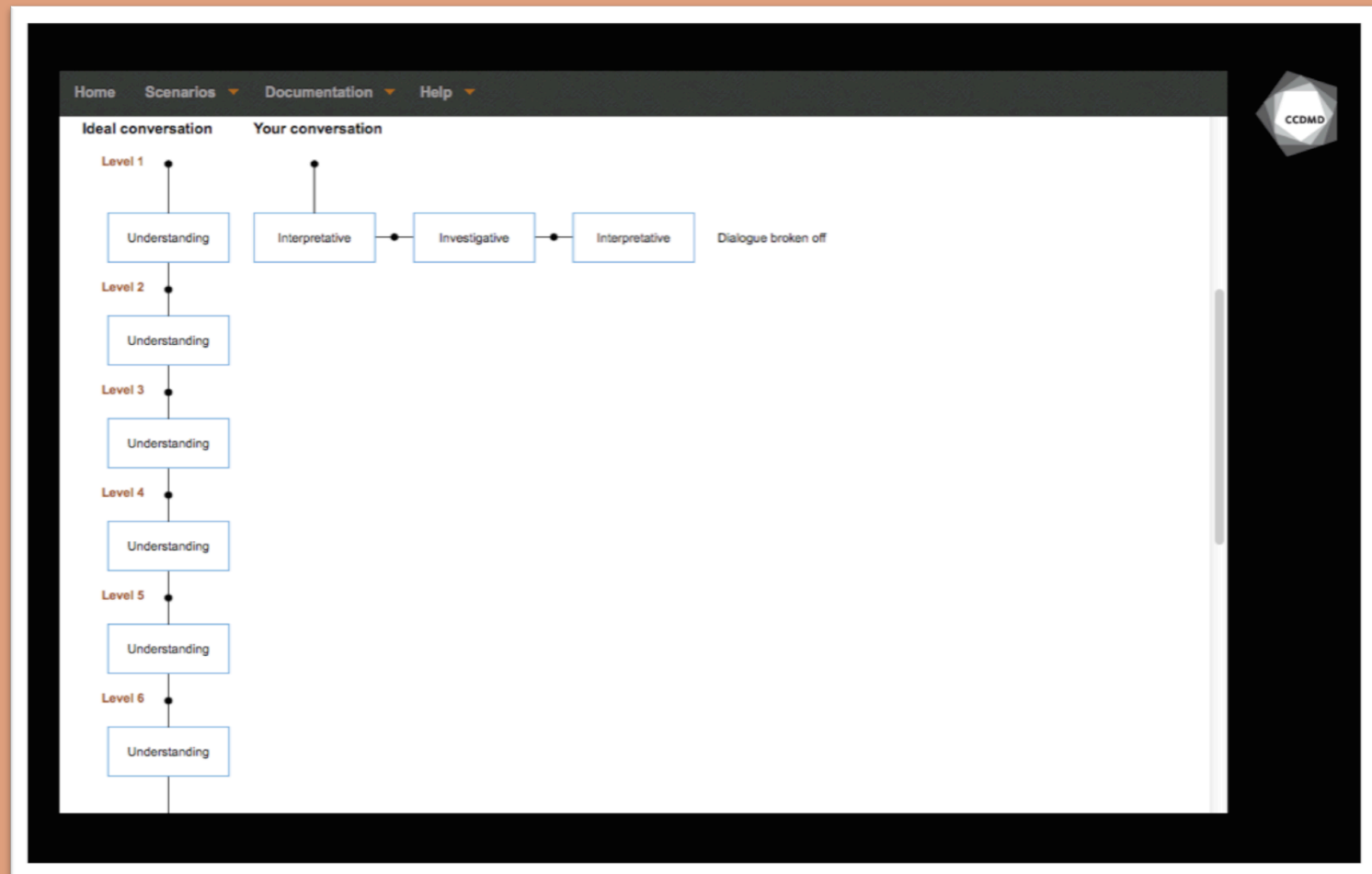
Ideal conversation



Your conversation



PARATEXT



PARATEXT

Home

Results

Sorry! The replies that you selected did not help to solve Hugo's problem. Adopt a more comprehensive attitude, avoid trivializing the situation or making value judgments. If you wish to start the conversation over, go to the "Home" menu. But before you do, you can review your statistics to see what attitudes you adopted and understand how you can help Hugo.

Statistics

Category of attitude	Number of replies
Evaluative	0
Interpretative	0
Investigative	2
Immediate Solution	0
Supportive	1
Understanding	0

The logo features the word "PARATEXT" in a white, monospace-style font, centered within a dark gray rectangular banner. The banner has a ribbon-like appearance with folded ends. On either side of the banner, there are four small black dots arranged horizontally.

PARATEXT

Serious games:

- can be distinguished by their “learning feedback”,
- need to be integrated in the education process and teaching methods,
- often provide testing and progress tracking tools

(Michael and Chen, 2006: 36-38).

PARATEXT

The screenshot displays the 'Documentation' page of the PARATEXT application. The interface includes a top navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Scenarios', 'Documentation', and 'Help'. A sidebar on the left contains a 'Dialogue' section with a list of conversation topics and a 'Pedagogical uses' section. The main content area is titled 'Pedagogical uses' and contains three paragraphs of text. The first paragraph describes how the application can be used in communication courses to illustrate the flow of dialogue. The second paragraph explains how instructors can use the website to illustrate the dynamic of a helping relationship. The third paragraph discusses how students can evaluate their spontaneous attitudes by trying the simulations in SECRA 4 themselves. The fourth paragraph provides a link to the application's website and describes how students can print reports of their conversations. The fifth paragraph explains how students can analyse their skills by attempting to associate their replies with the different categories of helper's attitudes. The sixth paragraph describes how students can restart a conversation and delete everything that has come before. The seventh paragraph explains how students can experiment with various replies and combinations of replies in a single conversation. The eighth paragraph describes how students can observe the effects of different attitudes.

Home Scenarios Documentation Help

Documentation

Introduction

Attitudes of the helper

Attitudes of the person needing help

Nonverbal Expressions

Pedagogical uses

Pedagogical uses

For courses in communication, SECRA 4 communication exercises for helping relationships can provide an excellent illustration of the flow of dialogue resulting from the adoption of different types of attitudes by a helper. This multimedia exercise can be used in many ways to achieve a variety of course objectives.

Instructors can use the website to illustrate the dynamic of a helping relationship. For example, the instructor may systematically select replies from the same category throughout a conversation, while students in the class observe the effects on the person needing help. The instructor can then restart the conversation using another category and proceed through all six categories. At the end of the demonstration, students could discuss the impact of each attitude.

Instructors may also ask students to evaluate their spontaneous attitudes by trying the simulations in SECRA 4 themselves. Following each conversation with an on-screen character, students can print their detailed results (game report, statistics on reply choices, graph comparing the course of the conversation compared with that of a theoretically ideal conversation, and the transcript of the conversation, associating each reply with a category of helper's attitude).

If the instructor would prefer that students evaluate their skills without consulting the detailed report, the following link can be provided: <http://secra.ccdmd.qc.ca/sites/scenarios/ens> (SECRA 4's address with an «s» added). Students can then converse with the same characters and print reports of their conversations without comments. Once the material has been covered in class, students can then analyse their skills by attempting to associate their replies with the different categories of helper's attitudes. Because they are exposed to numerous dialogues involving individuals with very different problems, students will likely come to the conclusion that they should adopt different attitudes based on the type of problem presented. Instructors who wish to use an interface that includes a specific selection of on-screen characters may contact the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development (CCDMD) for more information.

One of the major advantages of SECRA 4 is that it allows the user to restart a conversation and delete everything that has come before, something one could never do in real life when conversing with an actual person needing help. Instructors can therefore encourage their students to experiment with various replies and combinations of replies in a single conversation in order to observe the effects of different attitudes.

PARATEXT

Home Scenarios Documentation Help

Person solves
problem by
himself

CCDMO

Legend	
Level	Confidences from the person needing help
<input type="text"/>	Category of attitude of the helper
Understanding (D)	Understanding reply following an investigative query which had caused (D) the conversation to deviate from its main subject, the problem of the person needing help. This understanding reply does not encourage the person needing help to delve deeper into the problem, but it does allow the conversation to return to its normal course.

Dialogue

Malcolm

There's a good show on TV. I want to watch it. Anyway, it's too early to go to bed. There's no use going to bed when you're not tired and won't be able to fall asleep.

User (Interpretative)

Hmm... You don't want to go to bed... I have a feeling something's bothering you...

Malcolm

No way! I just want to watch that show. There's no use going to bed too early, I tell you! You don't fall asleep right away!

User (Investigative)

Do you know anyone who falls asleep as soon as they go to bed?

Malcolm

Yes. My sister's asleep before her head hits the pillow and is snoring up a storm. She's so lucky! My cousin's the same... But not everyone is like that!

User (Interpretative)

You're trying too hard to fall asleep quickly like your sister. That's probably what's stressing you when you go to bed.

Malcolm

Oh alright! I'll go to bed even though I won't be able to go to sleep before midnight! I hate that, but... Good night!



AUTHORSHIP

Art/expressive games

- contain subjective representations,
- can be distinguished by their stronger authorship

(Bogost, 2011).

AUTHORSHIP



A dark grey banner with a ribbon-like shape, featuring the word "CONCLUSION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The banner is flanked by four dots on each side, suggesting a continuation of a sequence.

CONCLUSION

Elements that help identifying expressive games:

- More casual context of play
- Vague perceived intention
- More entertaining content
- Procedural expressivity
- Less realistic visual design
- Minimalistic paratext
- Stronger authorship