Incorporating Computer Assisted Learning into the Teaching of Cultural Studies: The Virtual Shopping Mall Case Study

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The Virtual Shopping Mall introduces first-year students to the critical study of consumerism and commodity culture via a web-based learning environment that interpellates and motivates student learning through the strategic adoption of the architectures of computer games. Using hybridized learning and game protocols, the Virtual Shopping Mall provides a thematically coherent environment - the mall - to afford situated learning. This paper describes the development of the project, locating it within the research fields relating to game-based and situated learning. It describes each of the four components of the module - Sales Pitch, Just Looking, Quiz Zone and Retail Therapy - and the ludic motivations and critical competencies they are designed to elicit. This paper describes the three-pronged evaluation strategy put in place to test the pedagogic hypotheses of the pilot module and ensure effective redesign as necessary.