

Understanding / Reducing Inequity and Cultural Appropriation

Today's Goals / Flow

Understanding the Problems

Poverty and bias negatively affects educational opportunities

Designs fail for women and minorities

Previous Class
(a while ago)

Female representation in media

Cultural representation in games

Different lived experiences of different groups

Exploring some Solutions

Culturally Relevant Design in Education

Culturally Relevant Design in Game

Today's Class

Warm-up

We're going to watch a short video together!

Your task: Decide whether the video PASSES or FAILS the following test.

It passes the test if:

- (1) It has at least two women in it
- (2) Who talk to each other
- (3) About something other than a man

*Transcript is available on Gradescope to make it easier for you!
Put in your best guess – it won't be graded for correctness.*

Cars (2006)

Lightning McQueen's trial



Bechdel–Wallace Test

A shorthand for measuring the representation of women in film and other fiction.

The test asks whether a work features at least two (named) women who have a conversation about something other than a man.

Movies that surprisingly fail this test includes The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Mulan, Ratatouille, and Up...

Bechdel–Wallace Test

It isn't perfect – too simple for measuring accurate depiction and representation of women in media.

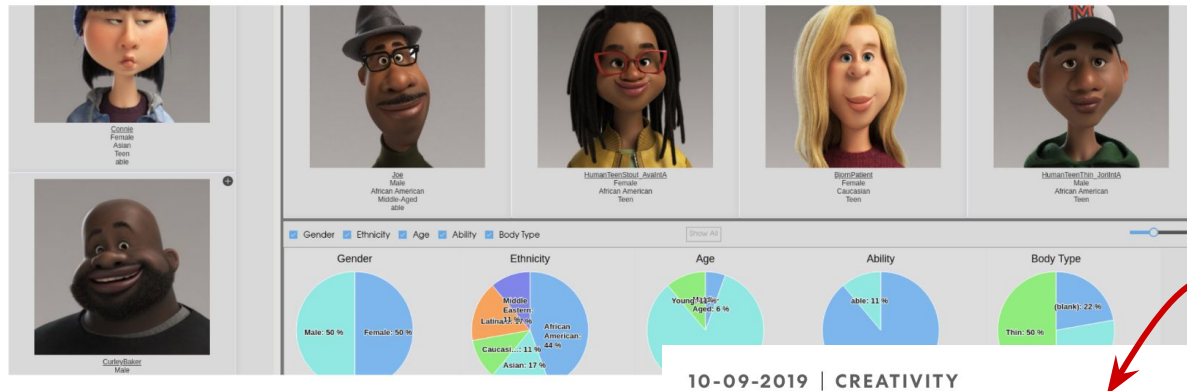
Diversity is more than just gender!!!

Why Bechdel–Wallace Test Matters?

- Very simple but so many don't pass it
- Drawing attention to the roles of women → open broader discussions

Understanding the Problems:

Ways to measure character diversity in movies



This is another story! We'll revisit this later in the quarter

10-09-2019 | CREATIVITY

Disney is using AI developed by Geena Davis to correct gender bias and lack of inclusivity in scripts

Disney is embracing a new tool called “GD-IQ: Spellcheck for Bias” in an effort to improve diversity in storytelling.

PNAS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIAL SCIENCES
COMPUTER SCIENCES

OPEN ACCESS



Measuring diversity in Hollywood through the large-scale computational analysis of film

David Bamman^{a,1} , Rachael Samberg^b, Richard Jean So^c , and Naitian Zhou^a

Edited by Paul DiMaggio, New York University, Princeton, NJ; received May 20, 2024; accepted August 28, 2024

Solutions:

How do filmmakers make sure their films are culturally conscious? *(the best case)*



Breakout #1:

Designers' Challenges and Potential Solutions

Group with your neighbors

Discussion (8 min):

- What are some challenges in attempting to design a culturally conscious movie?
- What are some potential solutions or alternative approaches?

Record your answers on Gradescope

Designers' Challenges

- Budget (not every company can afford immersive trips for their employees)
- Risks of cultural appropriation
- Hard to quantify representation
- Many sub-cultures within a culture → not a monolith

Solutions / Alternative Approaches

- Learning languages, watch other movies
- Hiring actors from that specific culture
- Have a diverse team (of people with actual, personal experiences)
- Working with non-profit organizations in a specific community as a means to understand the community
- Hire cultural consultants

Cultural Representation in Games

Case study: Fortnite



Context

These are case studies related to experiences of people from certain groups of populations

Not every person experiences it

Experiencing these negative experiences

Not so bad once or twice

Major effect if repeated over the long term

Hard to understand if you haven't experienced it

Context

Knowing the undesirable patterns helps us be aware of our own approaches and whether they contribute to the negative designs or not

We're not blaming any individuals

Breakout #2:

Cultural Appropriation

Recall the opinion piece about Fortnite you read before class.

Group with your neighbors and discuss (8 min):

- What are some issues discussed by the author, regarding to:
 - Cultural representation
 - Cultural appropriation
- What are some ways to do cultural representation in game in an appropriate way?

Record your answers on Gradescope.

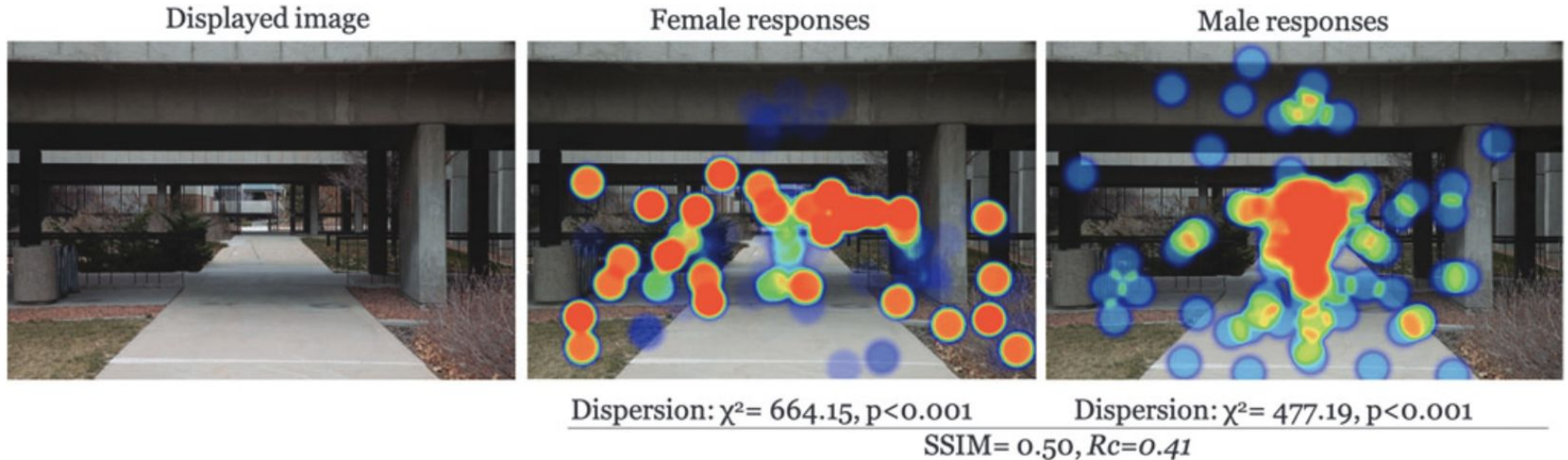
Issues

- All legendary skins are white or non-human
- Use materials without given accreditation
-

Appropriate Approaches

- Have cultural elements tie together
- Allow customization for players
- Giving more context / explanations about the cultural elements used

We're not all the same!



[Image: OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF) licensed under the [Open Data Commons Open Database License \(ODbL\)](#)]

574 participants were given 16 pictures of different locations at different times in the day and asked to picture **walking alone** through the picture.

They were then asked to click the areas of the picture that stood out most to them, creating a heat map.

Walking Alone Guidance

For women

- Have a plan
- Inform someone about your plan
- Always carry your phone
- Be aware of your Surroundings
- Avoid suspicious areas and people
- Carry non-violent deterrents
- Establish your safe return

For men

- The same strategies as for women, and...
- Avoid walking directly behind a woman
- Walk to the side or cross the road so others can see you
- Be mindful that your presence alone can be intimidating

Male guidance includes being non-threatening to women

We're not all the same!



From Youtube video "Black Parents Explain How to Deal with the Police | Cut"
Another video: "The Talk - Black parents share how they teach their children what to do when approached by police"

Why does it matter?

Different sub-populations have different experiences in the same culture.

What works for you may not work for them

We're all equal but NOT all the same

Being mindful of common, challenging experiences some sub-populations have

Not accidentally bring up negative experiences and really painful memories

Levels of Design (from first lecture)

Design success for
many people unlike you

Flexibility

Design success for
someone **unlike** you

**Listening,
Empathy**

Design **success** for
someone like you

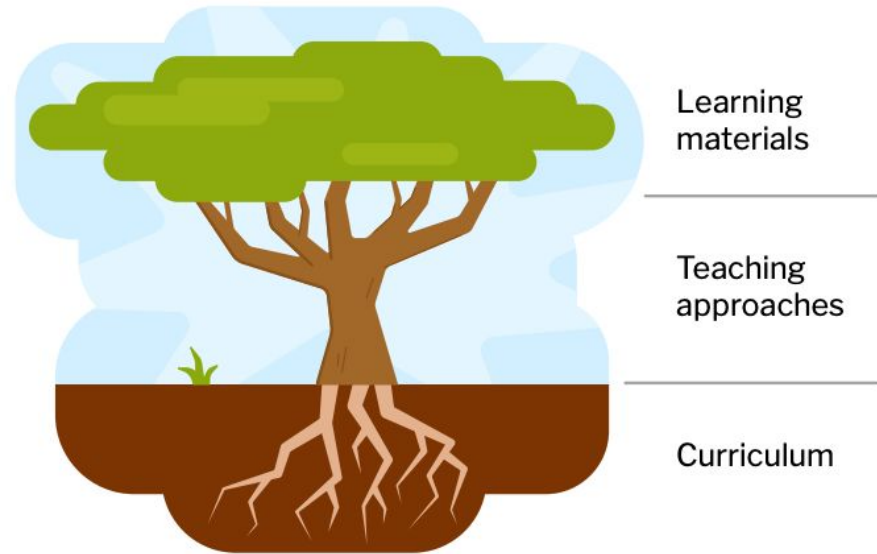
**Introspection,
self awareness**

Design **fail** for
someone like you

**Lack of self
awareness**

Culturally-Relevant Design

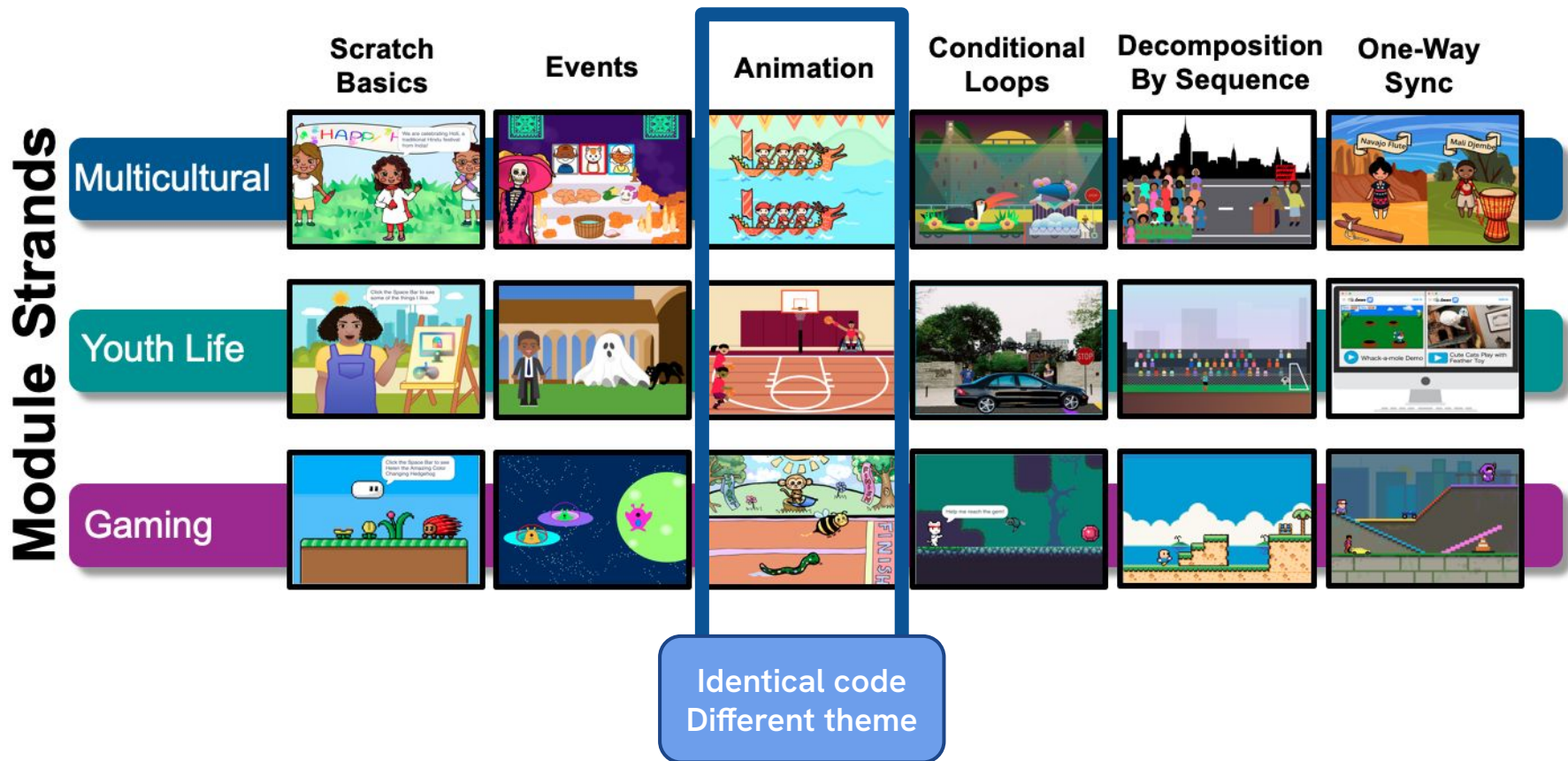
- Cultural Background
- Contemporary Culture
- Personalization
- Teaching style



Culturally-Relevant Design In Education

- Cultural Background
 - Role models
 - Identity
 - Use examples from that culture
- Personalization
 - Identity
 - Engagement
- Contemporary Culture
 - Shared experience
 - Engagement
- Teaching Style
 - Academic Learning

Culturally-Relevant Design in Education: An Example



Breakout #3: Different Approaches for Culturally-Relevant Design in Games

- Group up with project partners (if possible)
- Think of all the different elements of games
 - Premise, narrative, aesthetics, rules, characters, dialog...
- Brainstorm your own list of ideas (5 min)
 - List and add to Gradescope

Culturally-Relevant Design In Games

- Cultural Background
- Contemporary Culture
- Personalization
- Teaching style
- Premise
- Narrative
- Aesthetics
- Rules
- Characters
- Dialog
- ...

Breakout #3: Different Approaches for Culturally-Relevant Design in Games

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- Get together with another group and share your ideas (3 min)
- Choose 3 ideas your group wants to share out

Ideas

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