



THE 10 COMMANDMENTS
OF
THE 21st CENTURY
OCCIDENTAL GAMELEARNER

A portrait of an emerging profile... to be continued

WHAT IS A GAMELEARNER?

Our young people are rapidly changing their relations to “education”, “learning” and “careering”.

Not according to some Master Plan; it just happens.

Globalization, digitalization and new psychological and social patterns are the reasons.

A giant cultural revolution at all levels: individual, collective, societal.

And moving so fast that the institutional world is left behind, desperately trying to adjust or catch up. Which it cannot, of course.

When the institutional world has taken a new step, the young people are long gone.

A gamelearner is not a learner or a gamer, but a gamelearner.

It's not about learning through games, or gaming your way through learning.

It's about a brand new mind-set among young people, penetrating to the very micro-physics of their mind and behaviour.

Our generations do not understand this, as we were not born into the digital world. They are. We “use” technology, they “live” technology. A totally different discourse is needed to comprehend this.

Prensky has been doing this for a long time - but perhaps from a somewhat romantic point of view; but at least he got the point...

So, a gamelearner refers to the fundamental characteristics of young people engaged in education, life or whatever. Even if they do not play games at all!

We insist that the discourse of digital gaming and cloudy networking defines the profiles of the 21st century learners.

At least in Europe and in the Occidental world at large - we will see what happens in China...

The discourse of digital gaming and cloudy networking re-defines all key parameters of learning: why, when, how, what - and why not.

It's not about different learning techniques; it's about changing everything related to what learning is: psychologically, energetically, micro-biologically, socially, anthropologically, evolutionary and stuff like that.

It cannot be defined through simple formula - the gamelearner discourse is a complex mix of numerous psychological and social parameters on the move.

And it just happens.

Think first, and then act is long gone. They just do.

Let's take a look at the emerging profile of our gamelearner:

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

OF THE 21st CENTURY OCCIDENTAL GAMELEARNER



1

I need instant **gratification**. I cannot postpone such gratification.

[Our institutional reaction: young people lacking the ability to be highly disciplined and to postpone gratification for long time spans cannot be educated in the traditional academic way - a fundamental academic competence and axiom is “lost”]



2

I need to **stay connected** at all times and in all places, and without any kind of disturbance. Disconnection means castration and I will react with anger, anxiety or aggression.

[Our institutional reaction: connectedness is king and without any reservation. The key focus of the gamelearner will continuously be on the screen, no matter the nature of the screen. All other activity forms will be challenged and be under pressure]



3

The **physical world** is for me just a necessary shell, a house or a body. In itself it is nothing; it simply serves as a meaningless framework for my real life, my real life in the cloud.

[Our institutional reaction: the radical reduction of the importance of the physical world is a bomb under the educational system. The gamelearner will not, unless forced to, take any interest in “this world”, in which most educational activities take place. The physical world appears primitive, slow and static compared to the constantly moving digital world and in particular compared to advanced globalised gaming and networking]



4

I cannot simply receive your messages or take part in primitive activities. I need to be able to **control and interact deeply** with my scenarios, no matter where, no matter when.

[Our institutional reaction: most school activities will be experienced as extremely poor, unengaging and boring by the gamelearner; no matter the subject, no matter the use of “digital learning tools” and no matter how entertaining the teacher might be]



5

I cannot engage in things that do not **interest** me - or do not offer sufficient direct interaction and instant gratification. Things that do not interest me take valuable time away from my real life in the cloud.

[Our institutional reaction: interest is master. Only the gamelearner's interest gives him or her pleasure and can offer sufficient manipulation, action and interaction opportunities. Any new emerging interest will need to pass the test: sufficient manipulation, action and interaction?]



6

I need to **get** the newest technology continuously; I need solutions and results here and now. I cannot fall behind; I would lose my self-respect and the respect of my cloud alliances.

[Our institutional reaction: this means increasing pressure on young people's and families' economy: the gamelearner needs to stay up front, on the edge and on the top of the digital world. Any short-fall will create considerable frustration. Will some young people need to create alternative and less official economies? The *here and now* is not only about getting things, but about results, solutions, answers. When the world is not responding like this, enormous amounts of frustration is produced.]



7

Any obligation from the **institutional world** is a disgrace. It is an insult to what I am doing in my real life and what is important. It is like a life-long imprisonment of my digital soul.

[Our institutional reaction: institutional education is by definition irrelevant to the gamelearner. Institutional education is simply taking valuable time away from the gamelearner's many missions, experienced by the gamelearner as the *real* missions. Basically the gamelearner needs to spend as much time as possible and impossible in the digital missions. Spending oceans of time in institutions is like a regression to the physical world.]



8

I need to **manipulate** things here and now, to react, to interact, to control, to change, to advance - any activity not allowing this is by definition boring and irrelevant. I need to manipulate the rules of the real

world in the same way as I can manipulate my digital missions: the old rules of the real world cannot get in my way.

[Our institutional reaction: so, no matter how “digital” or “online” we design education (even using social networks!!), this is not the point. The point for the gamelearner is not to use technology, but to be part of the globally networked game world: manipulate game stuff to the max, react instantly to actions and events, control complex scenarios and constantly seeking new challenges and new interactive fascinations.

The ability to manipulate the digital game world produces different reactions to what we call the real world: the gamelearner ignores it, and if this does not work he wants to manipulate it like the digital world - in any case the gamelearner simply loses sense of the so-called real world. Of course, the increasing access to change game rules in the digital world reinforces such reactions.

Credo: I should be able to manipulate the physical world in the same way I can manipulate the digital game world. And if not, I will lose interest in the physical world.]



9

I basically do not need any kind of **information**. I will find what I need, when I need it and when I want to.

[Our institutional reaction: knowledge is totally irrelevant to the gamelearner! The gamelearner does not live-learn through knowledge or even make use of knowledge, but through digital action. Any educational information or knowledge element is therefore by definition uninteresting and useless. The gamelearner game-learn his or her way to any information when needed to advance in the digital missions.]



10

I do not need **social contact** with peers, friends or family. It's trivial, slow, boring and does not help me advance in my digital missions. I will find my peers in the cloud, when I need them.

[Our institutional reaction: the radical consequence of the gamelearner life is that the gamelearner does not need what we call social contact or interaction. The gamelearner's social needs are transcended to the digital mission world, in which peers will be in contact why relevant and needed - to the missions. A traditional-critical approach will say: the gamelearner develops no social competences and this will compromise his or her educational capacity as well as labour market capacity - and most likely the gamelearner's personal life at large]

WHAT R U GOING 2 DO ABOUT IT?

Chocked, are we?

Well, my friend, you ain't seen nothing yet!
It's just the beginning... Top of the iceberg...

It's not about "like" or "no like". It is what it is. Any moralistic approach will fail by definition.

"And, me - I just don't care at all" (Lou Reed).

No, I really don't care.

Is this gamelearner a good or a bad thing? It doesn't really matter, does it?
It is what it is, and this is what we will have to face in the entire institutional world.

The gamelearner is an anthropological fact, and that's it!

The energies of digital gaming and cloudy networking are so powerful that most institutional counter-strikes will fall short.

It's not simply about "a period of deep fascination" that will pass. It is more like fascination itself, spell-binding, magic - the digital manifestation of Hegel's Welt Geist or Wagner's Valhalla to which the young generations are migrating.

Youth addictions like drugs, television or alcohol will look like kindergarten stuff compared to the fascination of digital life.

Will the educational-institutional world ever be able to catch up with this generation, and with the new generations coming up, and offer what the young people would consider attractive learning?

Of course not...

For each step education takes, the young gamelearners have already taken 10 new.

Then what?

Well, obviously what education can strive towards is creating such innovative learning activities that:

- produce as little resistance and disengagement as possible (the defensive strategy)
- offer young people learning missions that might compete with the fascination and attractiveness of the digital game world (the offensive strategy - real-life missions)
- directly use gamification as a general learning strategy (the radical strategy)

The point is not to use as much technology as possible with the young people. Much technology is extremely boring for those young people. To them technology is nothing in itself; only the older generations are fascinated by "technology"...

So, teacher, stop using Power Points or Facebook. You will make a fool of yourself.

What the young people are immersed into is not technology but game mechanics, game worlds and the discourse of gaming.

Some learning strategies might manage to demonstrate to some young people that what we call "real-life" mission can be even more challenging than digital game missions.

However, realistically, we are still light years from understanding how to engage the 21st century occidental gamelearner in what was once called "education".

The thing is that “education” as such might be obsolete, irrelevant and totally outdated to the new generations.
That’s something to think about!

In general the institutional world, at least in Europe, seems to react in a very dangerous way (in complete opposition, by the way, to for example the European Commission’s recommendations):

- back to basics and academic discipline
- more control, testing and exams
- paying less attention to non-conventional learners and learning

It is, as we well know, difficult to predict the future, but in this case it is not difficult at all: this reactionary educational “strategy” is deemed to fail big time and to create increasing resistance and disengagement.
Stupidity is not an option.

A minimum programme for education should at least be:

- avoiding deepening the gap between institution and gamelearner, forcing the gamelearner into increasing isolation
- connecting to the gamelearner’s world instead of excluding it
- acknowledging the (in principle) great learning potential in the gamelearner, if well connected

Are we in fact witnessing the first phases of the death of what we know as “education”?

