

2nd session Summary

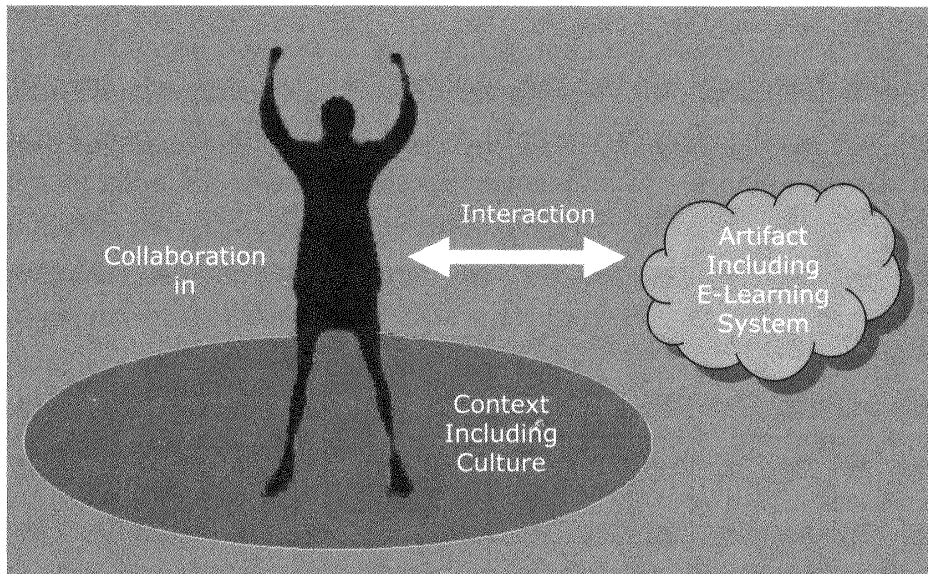
E-learning Interface for Multicultural Co-existence

Masaaki Kurosu
Moderator of Session 2

1. Purpose

With the spread of PCs and the improvement in both the quantity and quality of networks, we are now entering a real E-learning age that makes the best use of multimedia. In order to realize effective E-learning, however, we must improve its user interface.

The concept of interface was previously defined as the border between two entities, i.e. the user and the system. Recently, it is understood as a total of the artifact including the E-learning system, the user situated in the context including culture who are also collaborating with other people, and the interaction between the artifact and the user. In this symposium, we discussed about the future of E-learning interface within the conceptual framework of the interface described above.



2. Participants

Session Chair

Masaaki Kurosu (NIME)

Presenters

Donald L. Day (Products and Systems Internationalization, Inc.)

Vanessa Evers (U. Amsterdam)

Robert Fox (U. Hong Kong)

3. Session

In this session, Donald Day gave a presentation on “E-learning in Context: Issues and Opportunities on the Way to Effective Multimedia Interfaces” in terms of the context including culture in the above figure, Vanessa Evers presented “Cross-cultural Aspects of Using Virtual Learning Environment” in terms of the interaction, and Robert Fox presented “Pedagogy First: Developing Collaborative E-learning Environments” in terms of the collaboration.

In his presentation, Donald Day pointed that the context and the internal status are two factors for learning, that the culture is playing an important role as a determinant of context, and that the cultural context will effectively minimize the cognitive load of the learner if used adequately. Then he cited the concept of cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede, and explained the meaning of each dimension in relation to the learning, thus concluded it is important to use the cultural context adequately.

Vanessa Evers pointed that the culture is located between the universal human nature and the individual personality and that it is specific to nation, region, gender, generation and organization. She also pointed that previous researches have only been dealing with the behavioral characteristics regarding the general interface, and that there are few researches regarding the difference between the localized interface and the un-localized interface. She then introduced an example of the cross-cultural study of interaction regarding the Virtual Campus Website.

Robert Fox gave a presentation on the importance of 3Cs, i.e. the communication, the cooperation and the collaboration, in order to improve the quality of E-learning because they are playing important roles in the development, the evaluation and the modification of the courseware. He then explained the importance of 3Cs in relation to the concept of the proximal zone of development originally proposed by Vygotsky, and introduced the examples of the courseware that he developed.

In this session, we could discuss about the relationship between the E-learning interface and the culture more deeply than I previously intended. I would like to express my sincere thanks to three participants for their great contribution.