

# Global Games Education Now: Regional Realities and Pedagogical Innovations

## **Andrew Phelps**

American University (and  
Uppsala University)  
4400 Massachusetts Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20016, USA  
[andymphelps@gmail.com](mailto:andymphelps@gmail.com)

## **Lindsay Grace, Hartmut Koenitz, Mia Consalvo, Kelly Boudreau**

University of Miami, United States  
5100 Brunson Drive, Coral  
Gables, FL 33146, USA  
[l.grace@miami.edu](mailto:l.grace@miami.edu)

Södertörn University, Sweden  
Alfred Nobels allé 7, 141 89  
Huddinge, Sweden  
[hkoenitz@gmail.com](mailto:hkoenitz@gmail.com)

Concordia University, Canada  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd.  
W., Montreal, QC H3G 1M8,  
Canada

[mia.consalvo@concordia.ca](mailto:mia.consalvo@concordia.ca)

Harrisburg University of  
Technology (and Concordia  
University), Canada  
326 Market St., Harrisburg,  
PA 17101, USA

[KBoudreau@harrisburgu.edu](mailto:KBoudreau@harrisburgu.edu)

## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

### **Keywords**

Game Education, Pedagogy, Curriculum Design, Global Perspectives, Decolonization, Generative AI

## INTRODUCTION

The institutionalization of game education has historically relied on curriculum models exported from North America and Western Europe. However, as game development democratizes globally, a one-size-fits-all pedagogical approach is becoming increasingly insufficient. As Grace notes in the inaugural issue of the ACM Global Games Education Now Series, the current era of global games education is defined by a rapid diversification of methods, where the "now" of game education requires a distinct focus on regional context and adaptability (Grace, 2024). This presentation, informed by findings from Global Games Education Now workshops in June and November of 2025 helps widen the discourse around challenges and standards for games focused curricula higher education. The work draws upon the comparative analysis of syllabi (Gandolfi, 2021) to explore how educators across continents are delivering games education to meet changing regional needs.

The research features observations about the unique needs and points of address for Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East/North Africa (MENA), Oceania, and the Global North. By highlighting regional realities, this work moves beyond theoretical discourse to offer actionable frameworks for inclusive, culturally responsible, and forward-looking game education. It draws from work on educational communities as

### Proceedings of DiGRA 2026

© 2026 Authors & Digital Games Research Association DiGRA. Personal and educational classroom use of this paper is allowed, commercial use requires specific permission from the author.

varied as Türkiye (Catak, 2025), Indonesia (Wibow et al., 2024), and Kenya (Aseev, 2021).

## **Framework and Context**

Contemporary game pedagogy faces a dual challenge: the rapid technological shift introduced by Generative AI and the socio-political imperative to decolonize the curriculum. Recent scholarship suggests that successful game education is no longer solely about technical proficiency but about "teaching the game" as a cultural and contextual artifact (Gandolfi, 2021). This requires an intersectional perspective that is not solely about what has worked for the early games programs from North American and Europe, for example.

The implementation of these program's educational goals varies wildly based on local constraints. In some regions, infrastructure gaps necessitate mobile-first design. In others, colonial histories demand a complete restructuring of narrative design. This session argues that these constraints are not merely obstacles but catalysts for pedagogical innovation that can benefit the global community.

## **Core Observations by Region**

As a kind of recent literature review, drawing from the peer reviewed work of prior workshops organized by the extended abstract authors the content is organized around five distinct geographical and pedagogical interventions:

1. Southeast Asia: Hybrid Learning and Local Storytelling Focus: Infrastructure as Constraint and Aesthetic. This segment addresses the challenge of infrastructure gaps and the prevalence of colonial curriculum models. The researchers will present a case study on "mobile-first teaching" and community-based games, demonstrating how educators utilize accessible hardware to foster distinct local storytelling mechanics, turning technical limitations into a specific regional aesthetic.

2. Latin America: Decolonizing the Game Design Classroom Focus: Reclaiming the Syllabus. Building on the analysis of global syllabi this work explores the friction between imported Western design dogma and Latin American cultural realities. The presentation outlines a "ground-up" curriculum design strategy that centers regional mythology and indigenous practices, effectively replacing the "Hero's Journey" with collective narrative structures relevant to local students.

3. Middle East/North Africa (MENA): Game Education as Diplomacy Focus: Institutional Innovation. In regions where academic support for game studies is nascent or complex, educators often look outward. This work highlights the use of Game Jams and partnerships with cultural embassies as a primary vehicle for education. It reframes game education not just as vocational training, but as a form of soft power and cultural diplomacy.

4. New Zealand and Australia: Creative Resourcefulness and Post-Colonial Respect Focus: History and Scaling. This segment explores the challenges of scaling new programs while adhering to the imperatives of post-colonial respect. The educator will share specific assignments that integrate

indigenous history and Treaty principles into game mechanics, offering a framework for how global educators can navigate the ethics of representation.

5. Europe/North America: Reimagining the Classroom with Generative AI Focus: Authorship and Technology. Addressing the universal challenge of student disengagement and "tech overwhelm," this discussion pivots to the integration of Generative AI. Rather than banning these tools, the pattern seems to indicate educator adoption of a co-creation model where students and AI collaborate, forcing a pedagogical rethink of what "authorship" means in the modern game design degree.

The aim of this work is to help illuminate some noted patterns including some educators moving away from standard textbooks toward living, regionally responsive documents. It also aims to highlight how resource scarcity in the Global South is generating design methodologies applicable to the Global North. Lastly it offers the value and necessity of global games education advocacy networks (e.g. DIGRA, ARDIN, Global Game Jam, Games for Change, HEVGA) in facilitating the exchange of these new pedagogical frameworks.

## Conclusion and Takeaways

This work concludes that global game education is resilient precisely because of its heterogeneity. By examining how educators teach across borders, we help equip the next generation of curriculum developers with the tools to build environments that are not only industry-ready but culturally sustainable.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported in part by the United States Department of State, the Knight Foundation, the New Zealand AIGI Grant and University of Canterbury, the European ICORE program, and the Canadian Research Chair program, among others..

## REFERENCES

- Aseey, A. A. (2021). Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Learning and Teaching in Kenya: Use of Video Games in Education. *Hungarian J. Afr. Stud.*, 15, 61.
- Catak, G. (2025). Gaming Industry in Türkiye Through the Lens of Education. *ACM Games: Research and Practice*, 3(3), 1-3.
- Grace, L. D. (2024). Global Games Education Now. *ACM Games*, 1(4), Article 26. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3632364>
- Gandolfi, E. (2021). *Teaching The Game: A Collection of Syllabi for Game Design, Development, and Implementation, Vol. 1*. Carnegie Mellon University EBooks. doi:10.1007/S11469-019-00164-4
- Wibowo, T., Pee, A. N. C., & Ahmad, I. (2024). The barriers of using video games as a media for teaching and learning purposes: A case study in Indonesia. *Journal of Informatics and Telecommunication Engineering*, 7(2), 587-596.