
October – 2003

Reviewer Commentary

From Cognitive Landscapes to Digital Hyperscapes

Wim Van Petegam

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Belgium

Editor's Note: *All correspondence between the authors and reviewers, until date of publication, has been blind.*

The author takes readers on a surprising mental journey from cognitive landscapes to digital hyperscapes. Attempting to escape from the limited boundaries of already explored trails, the author(s) takes us along the beautiful, futuristic scenery of a diversified learning space in more dimensions. We can follow the author(s) in this exercise, sense the experience and appreciate their attention for our own cognitive profiles or learning styles. The concept of mind mapping techniques as a base for the creation of digital hyperscapes is an interesting idea, and invites further research and development, both by educationalists and technologists.

As an engineer myself, I appreciate the reference to “playing with blocks of LEGO” as a paradigm for the use of learning objects in a L(C)MS as (part of) the implementation of a digital hyperscape. However, I wonder why the author in this context fails to mention the theory of constructivism, and more specifically of socio-constructivism (inspired by the work of Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist). Nowadays, this is a well-accepted pedagogical concept that learners take responsibility for their own learning process by building new knowledge on what they have already mastered while interacting with their peers and experts. I believe it an interesting exercise to explore how this socio-constructivism could enforce and enhance the creation of digital hyperscapes as intended by the author(s).

Finally, I have a more philosophical comment: Why should digital hyperscapes as a learning environment be superior to than traditional delivery methods? Has someone ever doubted about the usability of paper as a learning tool? We just assume that since Gutenberg invented the art of publishing, books are the best way to share knowledge with others. Children nowadays grow up in a diversified multimedia and highly technological world; they probably wonder why their learning is not taking place in a similar way as their favourite games. I simply think we *should* develop rich and diversified digital hyperscapes, without asking the question if they could be better than existing learning environments. By taking into account the feelings and expectations of new learners in a sophisticated world, we will better address their learning needs.

