

Learning@Europe



Quiz, questions, assignments

July 4th, 2007



HOC - Hypermedia Open Center (Lab)
Politecnico di Milano
Electronic and Information Department

phone: +39 031 332 7389
fax: +39 031 332 7365
www.learningateurope.net

Quiz, questions, assignments

During a L@E experience, students are provided with educational content about European history. Their knowledge and critical understanding of the materials is tested in many ways and under different perspectives.

During online sessions tutors ask questions and quizzes both in the 3D and the 2D environments; various assignments must be completed between one session and another.

The testing addresses the following aspects:

- Knowledge of the **history of one's own country**. Though this topic is addressed in schools, interviews provide new insights or provoke new points of view over an already known subject.
- Knowledge of the **history of other students' countries**. With very few expectations, students know very little about the history of European countries other than their own.
- Understanding of **historical processes at cross-national level**: for example, the role of religion in the formation of nation–states.
- Ability to **compare similar aspects** in the history of different countries
- Ability to **apply historical concepts** to one's own history: for example, what role did religion play in the formation of *my* nation–state.

Questions and quizzes come in different levels of difficulty. They always refers to the background materials provided to students (a *specific* set of interviews, chronologies, maps). No question is “out of topic”.

Quiz in the 3D chat

In the **3D chat** associated to the 3D environment the tutor asks quick questions requiring short and factual answers, for many reasons:

- first, the chat is overcrowded (8 students and the tutor interact simultaneously): carrying on one single line of discussion with lengthy contributions is almost impossible;
- second, communications in this chat also refer to what is going on in the 3D environment, integrating information conveyed by non verbal components of the context (e.g. Tutor: “follow me, I am the one wearing a white robe, I'm jumping, can you see me...?”);
- third, games and action take place in the 3D, therefore the rhythm of the experience must be fast: there is no time for brooding over complex questions, nor for developing elaborate answers.

Let's see some **examples**:

1. Questions on facts

Q. Which people forced the Austrian Empire to recognize their ethnic group?

A. The Hungarians

Q. When was the constitution of Cadiz signed?

A. in 1812; it was the most modern constitution in Europe at the time

2. “True or False” questions

Q. The Nation-State is a personal entity ruling above all social classes in a certain territory. This entity has the control of the army and it is legitimated by laws regulating dynastic succession. *True or false?*

A. False. It is an impersonal entity and it is legitimated by the citizens' support.

Q. The formation of the nation state is mainly a social process, the nation building process is a political one. *True or false?*

A. False. The formation of the nation state is a political process, the nation building process is a social one.

3. Multiple-choice questions

Q. the sense of “Spanishness” in South American colonies was:

- A. only felt by the elites (*correct; “we are speaking about much fragmented societies, in which pre-Colombian identities were very strong”*)
- B. felt by the elites and by peasants, especially in Peru, Argentina and Mexico (*partially correct: the national feeling was indeed felt by the elite; however, peasants did not have any national feeling*)
- C. much felt, at all levels of society (*wrong*)

Questions in the 2D chat

In the **2D chat**, on the other hand, the tutor asks questions that require reflection and cooperation. There are only 4 users, there is no 3D environment, and all the attention is focused on the cultural riddles. Again, all questions refer to the interviews students have read: they need to retrieve the information, understand the concept and reformulate it.

Let's some examples:

4. Open-ended questions

Q. What role does a common language play in the formation of a common identity?

Q. Explain the processes bringing to the formation of nation-states in Europe, with special reference to Rokkan's mapping of Europe along two axes.

Assignments

Between one session and the following, students must complete various kinds of assignments. The objectives are 3:

- to foster a deeper reflection over the issues students are facing,
- to encourage the comparison and understanding of different - though for many aspects similar - ways of living in Europe *today*
- and to make students cooperate with their remote peers.

Assignments range from the collection of material evidences of one's own country's history, such as monuments, street names, statues, to surveys: students interview people in the streets on the common perception of national identity. Students are also invited to describe their way of living, showing how they spend the week-end, their hobbies, etc.

More difficult assignments imply researching over a specific aspect of one's own history, then comparing results to those of the foreign team partners: the discovery of analogies among different European countries is one of the most culturally intense moments of the experience¹.

¹ To see some examples of assignments done by students, visit the Homework Gallery section of the website.