

## A Worked-Example Example

The next chapter presents an example of a worked example. It is meant to exemplify a few points that may not be apparent from my previous discussion. These points are:

1. Although in an area like digital media and learning we can and should expect an effective use of multimedia in worked examples, the point is not media presentation but the presentation of argument, thinking, or approach.
2. I argued earlier that DMAL is not just about digital media but the wider workings of production and participation in popular culture. Thus, my example is from a card game that is also a set of video games, books, Web sites, television shows, and movies (an example of what Henry Jenkins (2006a) calls “convergent media”).
3. A worked example does not have to be a big thing. It can also be about a small thing, or a small part of a big thing, as this example is.
4. This example comes out of my own disciplinary interests, which are not the disciplinary interests of most people in DMAL.

The point is: Do others see the claim I am making and my argument for it as a significant part of how they conceive the DMAL area or not, regardless of their own disciplinary affiliations? Such a judgment will reflect how they see DMAL taking shape in the future as a coherent area of study.

5. The point of the worked example is not to offer evidence—frankly we do not, as of yet, have much strong empirical evidence for many of the most interesting claims being made in DMAL. The point is to show the structure of the argument for which we need to collect evidence. It is impossible to match evidence and theory if we are not clear about the arguments underpinning our theories.

6. One purpose of a worked example is to allow for comments from others, and even comments from the authors themselves (I have put in some comments of my own). They are also meant to inspire people to add their own related worked examples so a larger family of examples could emerge. In this example I argue for how Yu-Gi-Oh! recruits what I call “specialized language” and what this has to do with learning in and out of school. Others have argued that games like Yu-Gi-Oh! recruit and develop “systems thinking.” Someone could add a worked example to mine along this line, extending the case. Someone else could add a worked example of how specialized language is recruited and developed in other games or other popular culture activities, or in Internet forums devoted to either. There would be many other ways to link to the example.

7. The worked example is meant to communicate to people outside my own discipline, so that one can see whether the ideas it contains resonate with the wider DMAL community or

some significant part of it. I may not have been completely successful here—it is a hard thing to do and one we all need to learn how to do better if we want to widen the impact of our work.

8. To avoid clutter, I have left out many of the references to research I could have included. This is meant to be merely an example to start off thinking on the nature and use of worked examples, so I wanted to stress the shape of the argument as much as I could.

9. In the end, one could see this worked example as a “bid” to see if a little bit of linguistics applied to DMAL would be seen as relevant to the area—something to build on and relate to—by those coming to DMAL from different disciplines. The larger enterprise of worked examples would have such cases from many different disciplines.