

Maplenima

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Abstract: In this paper, we describe the learning design for a work in progress implemented in a Singapore primary school project that investigates an interface learning environment between pupils' informal Maple Story (a massive multi-player online role playing game) games play and formal English Language narrative writing tasks.

Keywords: English language, games, metalinguistics, text structure, narrative writing,

1. Introduction

One of the instructional outcomes of primary school English Language instruction in Singapore is a degree of mastery in narrative writing practice. Difficulty in writing across various contexts and purposes includes limited meta-cognitive knowledge and control of idea generation, planning and text organization [4] [1]. Englert et al. [2] found strong correlation between students writing ability and their ability to articulate their meta-linguistic knowledge of text structures. Such meta-cognitive knowledge is inextricably tied to the ability to recognize and write on patterns of experiences and emotions.

Insofar as there are efforts to adopt meta-cognitive prompting and structured peer interaction in collaborative writing tasks to improve students' writing [6], the difficulty for primary school pupils to retrieve ideas from their limited background knowledge and life experiences may hinder the social writing process.

Recent studies by Gee [3] and Shaffer [5] have examined learning that leverages on situated meaning in computer games. We posit that the embodied experiences and complex systems of interactivity in some computer games can provide the rich contexts for learners to take on different perspectives and socially construct new imagined narrative scenarios.

Given this, we design an interface learning environment between informal computer game play and formal writing task. It aims to empower pupils to construct group cognition of narrative text structures that exceed what pupils can achieve as individuals.

2. Design for the interface learning environment

We harness pupils' enthusiasm in playing Maple Story, a popular MMORPG, by allowing them to express their embodied game play experiences and knowledge in the medium of producing an animated movie named Maplenima. We opt for a project based approach, in which smaller writing tasks of writing the introduction, development of complexities, resolution, climax/anticlimax and conclusion parts of the storyboard serve

to scaffold the larger task of writing for the storyboard of the Maplenima movie. The interface learning environment is iteratively designed (see Figure 1) to provide pupils with the opportunities to translate their embodied game play experiences into the meta-linguistic learning experiences of narrative writing. Pupils' learning at this task is facilitated and scaffolded by guiding questions to ensure that the development of the Maplenima storyboard remains coherent. This set of guiding questions will be used iteratively, albeit in greater depth with each subsequent cycle, to heighten pupils' meta-linguistic awareness of narrative writing.

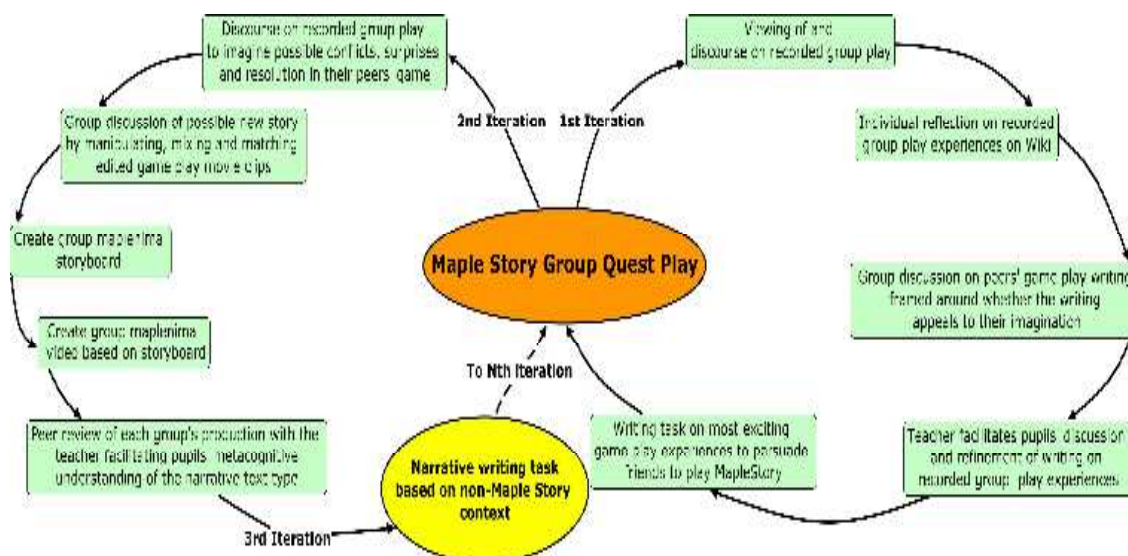


Figure 1 Schematic diagram on the Maplenima Learning Design

3. Conclusion

Based on the described learning design, we foresee that pupils' social constructive spinning of these game play scenes, experiences and emotions can be the dynamic that helps pupils to become more meta-cognizant of the narrative text type.

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