Chapter 5

Avatar Manager and Student Reflective Conversations as the Base for Describing Meta-Communication Model

Vardan Mkrtchian

HHH Technology Incorporation, Australia

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the meta-communication model and illustrates its applicability. The model integrates previous discursive approaches to reflective practice and extends them with additional relevant concepts. The meta-communication model concepts are mainly based on Avatar Manager and Student Reflective Conversations pedagogical theory. By means of the case examples, this chapter also illustrates how the model can be used for making meaning in experiential and theoretical based online educational courses and collective sense-making, i.e. the articulation and contesting the meaning and relevance of ideas. This chapter argues that the model provides a way for systematically and meaningfully structuring and organizing meta-level conversations in virtual classroom. The use of reflective pedagogies has long been considered as critical to facilitating meaningful learning through experientially based curricula; however, the use of such methods has not been extensively explored as implemented in virtual environments. The study reviewed utilizes a combination of survey research and individual interviews to examine the student perceptions of the meaningful learning which occurred as a result of their participation in two Web-based courses which are utilized reflective pedagogies. One course focuses on topics related to the service-learning and the second on the placement-based internships. All of them were instructed using online coursework based in reflective pedagogies to the compliment on-site placements within

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-071-2.ch005
Avatar Manager and Student Reflective Conversations

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a process of conveying ideas to the students. Good teaching means, mostly, more effective communication between learners. The prerequisite has been due to the fact that because teachers “maybe” have studied ideas longer, they understand them better and are therefore better able to communicate them. Other requirements, which are important to control, are that the strategies and methods used by us are empirically based and validated. Whatever, the level of the distance education or teaching organization, many factors make teaching a distance education course different from the teaching in traditional classroom. When using the technology tools the material should be developed from the good point of learning theories. Our work experience in virtual classroom explains what intelligent avatars or computer characters could be used to support or even to replace teachers in the classroom. The devotee is the human that makes sure the avatar and the student are properly matched. Virtual classroom is a social network service environment focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., who shares interest and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of the representation of every user (often a profile), his/her social connections, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Although online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. Information- and communication technology (ICT) provides us with a better prerequisite for open distance learning. Now although the region has yet to fully tap the immense learning potential of a 3D virtual environment, educators believe it’s the only matter of time. HHH University’s latest release Avatar has made online virtual worlds such as the Second Life (SL) more popular than ever as audiences sit up and take notice of the possibilities of these sites. Users are currently using these sites to socialize and to connect using free voice and the text chat through personalized avatars or computerized self-representations. However, these sites also hold out the possibility to become places where educators are discovering academic possibilities. SL, for example, provides virtual homes for some of the world’s most prestigious universities such as Harvard and Stanford who have bought virtual land with Linden Dollars. Although this seems to be somewhat of a trend in the West it has yet to catch on in the South Caucasus. Campus Notes spoke to educators in the Armenia to gauge how long it will take before students take their seats in the virtual classroom. There is a widely accepted view that information systems entail a multitude of assumptions and claims, and that they serve some interest at the others expense. Therefore, discussions among all stakeholders for reaching mutual understanding about the desired features of systems are viewed as essential. For example, by regarding an information system in principle as a complex communication tool, several authors in the Language-Action Perspective used the notion of meta-communication to refer to communica-
Related Content

Religion and Online Learning
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/religion-online-learning/11983?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/religion-online-learning/11983?camid=4v1a)

Ensuring Usability in International Web-Based E-Learning Systems
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/ensuring-usability-international-web-based/8958?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/ensuring-usability-international-web-based/8958?camid=4v1a)

Automatic Online Educational Game Content Creation by Identifying Similar Chinese Characters with Radical Extraction and Graph Matching Algorithms
[www.igi-global.com/article/automatic-online-educational-game-content/45143?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/automatic-online-educational-game-content/45143?camid=4v1a)

Choosing Web 2.0 Tools for Instruction: An Extension of Task-Technology Fit
[www.igi-global.com/article/choosing-web-20-tools-for-instruction/110367?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/choosing-web-20-tools-for-instruction/110367?camid=4v1a)