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D3. Present & Discuss session  
Room: Dynamo Level 5 - ROOM D505  
Timing: Thursday Nov 29 – 10.50-12.20

iLIFT: Meaningful play through metaphorical recontextualisation in Serious Gaming

What are your goal(s)/question(s)/problem(s)?
Studies on serious gaming offer insights on how these should be designed to facilitate learning. Most of them focus on design principles or provide guidelines to ensure the presence and form of educational content. According to beliefs on education and learning, suggested ways of appearance and the way the game facilitates learning, may vary. Since they focus on the same instrument, the question arises if these proposed and mostly research-based guidelines will result in good serious games. An often-observed phenomenon is that despite rules and guidelines, efforts in making a serious game don’t result in a good serious game. iLift is a practice-based applied research project that focuses on an innovative approach in educating healthcare professionals by letting them play specifically designed games. Underneath this game lies the hypothesis that in-game learning will occur by figural transfer using metaphorical recontextualization as key element for success in learning and gameplay.

How relevant are your results to the wider population (outside of your sample)?
For a while now serious games are held for having great potential for education and learning. Studies show guidelines and design principles, mostly from an educator’s point of view. Reality shows that in many cases the serious game lacks the feel of a leisure game and cannot provide the same levels of flow and immersiveness. In iLift (amongst other projects) our experience with developing serious games is that the educational content doesn’t seem to merge with the game scenario. By proven success and feasibility we contribute to the field of serious gaming research by adding a new possibility in approaching designing serious games. The theory on metaphorical recontextualization will give educational designers and learning practitioners on all fields new tools and insights to help make future serious games more effective.

Is your design/report transparent, reliable and explicit?
In the practice-based research project iLift we aim for results on two main lines: development of a serious (exer)game as a valid learning instrument and the quasi experimental designed research to establish if there is an effect on the experienced workload of Healthcare professionals. Underneath the visual targets of the iLift project lies the hypothesis on metaphorical recontextualization. The latter is the backbone of my PhD study, supported by professors and a research group.
How are you contributing to a growing body of knowledge?

iLift is a project with many partners and stakeholders. We cooperate with three major healthcare institutes, including the biggest hospital in the area. From this institutes we mainly deal with the educational departments, providing us with their needs and goals and wishes for innovating their curricula. Another partner is a commercial game studio, known and rewarded for their contribution to the field of serious gaming. For specialized know-how and review of our gaming prototypes we work with the best ergonomic and occupational health expert of The Netherlands. In the development of the prototypes (design and programming) we work with students of NHL Hogeschool. The innovative character of the iLift project makes it exiting and beneficial for all participants. Next to intensive collaboration between the consortium, my studies result in articles and publications, contributions to congresses and symposia.

How comprehensible and accessible are your results?

I would say 'very'. The iLift project has a website (www.raakilift.nl) with regular updates, the consortium organizes symposia, hosting several sub domains within the scope of the project, the future articles will be reviewed and published in relevant magazines and online libraries. As a strong believer in open access and creative commons, I will share as much as possible.

How does your study contribute to the improvement of educational practice and learning?

The results of my research will provide new insights and elaborate on several facets in thinking on serious game design. Taking the gaming in serious gaming serious, will lead to a different view on how games can be used for learning and will sometimes ask to redefine the way we think about learning. I believe that this understanding of learning in educational game design will help game developers and learning practitioners in their quest for making serious games work.

How are you going to make your session interactive?

For now I will design a keynote-presentation, using slides, pictures, photos, cartoons, graphs and short movies to illustrate and clarify my contribution. In November there is a fast chance that there’s more to show regarding the iLift research. It would be great to show our prototype of the iLift game, using a big screen and a kinect device. Seeing is believing!