

Learning Scenario for Better Understanding of Fairy Tales Using Role-playing and Serious Games Methods

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Abstract. The paper examines how the understanding of fairy tales of little child could be improved with help of two contemporary learning methods - role-playing and serious games. A scenario for non-formal and fascinated study of fairy tales was explained with some actual examples using serious game environment ADAPTIVES.

Keywords: Learning Methods, Fairy Tales, Advanced Learning, Serious Games, Role-playing

1 Introduction

The traditions and customs are things that unite people and form their identity. Parts of cultural heritage of every nation are their music, traditional clothes, crafts, drawings and not on last place their fairy tales and legends.

In last ten years it was noticed that most of the children don't want to read books. They prefer to play computer games or to watch TV. They often identify themselves with cartoon heroes, impressed of their unbelievable power. The children drift apart from their native and their understanding for the world are based on products which were developed mostly for fun and entertainment (not for education) and for large share of market (not for behave). Here came the question how the children could be involved in a process of education with suitable methods including contemporary technologies.

In this article will be presented two methods for learning – serious games and role-playing. With their help children could check their knowledges (or learn new one) about one of the most important parts of the cultural heritage – fairy tales.

Fairy tales show believes of our ancestors and their understanding for justice and happiness. Through them ancient people tried to explain different natural phenomenon (angry gods); to tell story for their cruel lords (avoiding punishment); to complain of heavy fate (using fiction characters); to explain in love; to inspire hope that the good will win, the beauty will be the most strongest than any evil. Fairy tales were some kind of ridicule for all human faults like greed, envy, anger, stupidity, fear. They were also praise of brave, honest and friendship.

2 Learning Methods

Learning methods which are suitable to meet children with fairy tales and which will be described here are two: serious games and role-playing. The combination between them allows child to get closer to the model which is represent in cartoon movies (the hero who win). In the same time the child is still in the fairy tale, but seems like a game.

2.1 Role-playing

Role-playing method [4] helps child to be somebody else but without being hurt. The main strategy is for activity and independence in process of learning. Role-playing gives opportunity to the child to be main hero, which actions managing the story. This helps his critical reflection, ability for self-evaluation, creative thinking, fantasy. Learning in this way from process of receiving knowledges became active process. With help of creative thinking the child analyses problems generates possible decisions, make choice and use best of them. One of classifications sort methods for simulation of creative thinking in four groups: analytic technics, technics for free associations, technics for forced relation, eclectic technics.

Getting into a role helps the child to become someone else without any harm. The underlying strategy is all about activity and independence throughout the learning process. This being said, it helps the child to become the main hero, whose actions build the scenario of the fairytale. This helps its critical reflection, its capability for self-evaluation, independent thinking and imagination. This way, from conventional receiving of knowledge, the learning turns into active process, during which the person constructs individual cognitive image. Utilizing creative thinking, the child analyses the problem, generates possible decisions, follow a choice and application of the best of these decisions. There is classification separates the methods for stimulating the creative thinking into four groups: analytical techniques, free associations techniques, compulsory ratios' techniques and eclectic techniques.

Analytical techniques are used for the conscious focusing of the mental process on the basis of given in advance information, toward achieving of particular goal. The learning process participants are put in conditions of activating and intensifying of the thinking process. In result an "insight" or "sudden realization" happens or in other words the process of entire comprehension of all connections and possibilities in given problematic situation and the generation of ideas for the solving of the later. The "getting into role" could be put in this category as well.

Creative process scheme when getting into role:

- Logical analyses – the children are getting into role with high interest, study the role in which they have to get into, its story, physical characteristics and behavior, improvise with different techniques how best to present it in front of their public. All of this is precursor for intuitive creation of new idea.
- Intuitive decision, maturing, incubation of the underlying idea. Once they received their role, using their own experience, the children project their role's characteris-

tics, which characteristics are important to them and are related to their understandings for their own participation in the scenario's project

- Verbalization of the intuitive decision – in result of the subconscious process of putting the initial idea into the mind. The children give proposals for the proper visualization of the role, while putting an accent and focus on the characteristics of the role, its behavior and its collaboration with the rest of the personas of the scenario project.
- Formalization of the verbalized decision – giving the decision a logically accomplished form, development of the idea, its final completion and subsequent inspection.

2.2 Serious games

For the first time Abt introduces the term “serious game” as he describes the utilization of situations in and outside the class room in his book “Serious games” [1]. He describes “serious game” as a “game having explicit and carefully-crystalized educational purpose, as the main goal is not entertainment”. With the development of the technologies, the digital video games also develop. They enter into the everyday life of more and more people. That is why in 2002 Sauer predefines the “serious game” notion. According to him “serious games” are collaboration between educational purpose and technologies via the video games. Zyda [7] clearly distinguishes between video game and “serious game”:

- The video game is a game which is being played against or via computer – some games are rather mental challenge which includes entertainment, recreation or some sort of prize.
- “Serious game” is a mental challenge which is being played on a computer, following specific rules which use the entertainment to assist the private or public education, healthcare, public order and strategic communication purposes,

Zyda shares the Chen's and Michael's opinions [3] that “serious game” is such when it has clear educational purpose. [5] In the English sources it's popular the term “Edutainment (EDUcation by means of enterTAINMENT) or education through entertainment. Edutainment is a course in the “serious games” which targets the children in the prep-schools and young children and is only a portion of the large target group of the “Serious games”. [6]

3 Scenario for Non-Formal and Fascinated Study of Fairy Tales

With the help of learning methods “serious game” and “role-playing” children under school age and students could meet Bulgarian national stories. Consistent to their ages, the story may be with audio (for the smaller ones) and like a comics for the bigger ones. If there are used some “old” words with hyperlinks they could be explained somewhere else.

An appropriate environment for introducing national stories is for example ADAPTIVES game [2]. With solving different tasks, the children could check what they remembered from the summer holiday read books. The purpose of this scenario is to check what the children from 1st and 2nd class understand from fairy tales for one of the most famous national characters – Hitar Petar, did they realize why his name is “Hitar” (“Clever”), may they explain what make him more cute and sympathetic than other heroes in fairy tales.

The ADAPTIVES game is with open source, logical questions could be input, also puzzles, dynamic elements. It is like a 3D maze with rooms and corridors and mini-game elements could be fixed in them. Audio music could be append and design of the floor, walls and roof could be changed. The game is flexible to the gamer emotions. With the help of face controlling software it recognize human emotions. If they are negative (fear and anger for example), the game suggest easier questions. The mini game in every room is with instructions.

All fairy tales with Hitar Petar are very short and consist some kind of life lessons. So these fairy tales could be input as mini game elements, which could be import in the game:

- Puzzle – arranged properly it will show the most popular and clever Bulgarian hero – Hitar Petar;
- Test with questions for fairy tale “How Hitar Petar punished his wife, who doesn’t want to bring some water because outside was raining?;

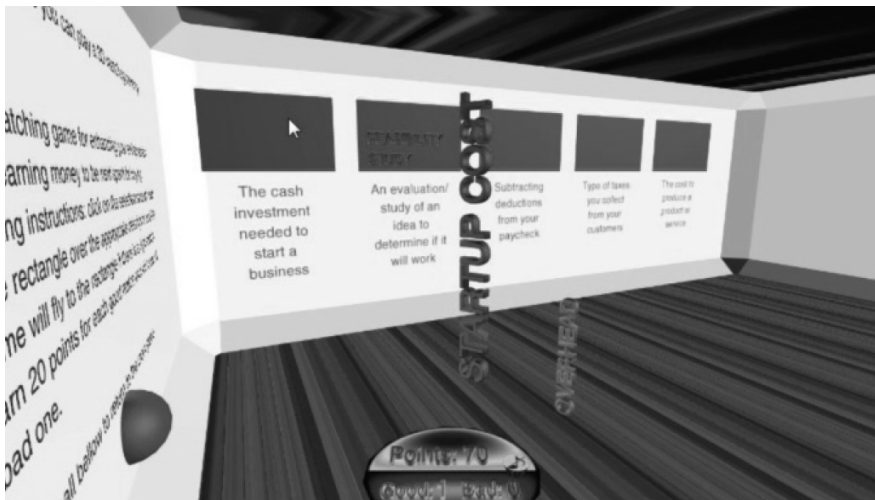


Fig. 1. The test room

- 3D Zoom Ordering Game – some pictures are fling, if they are arranged in order we will see the whole story. (This mini game is suitable for most of the fairy tales. One of the most popular stories for Hitar Petar is how he pay for the steam – 1st picture – Hitar Petar is on the marketplace. In next pictures he is trying to make his

dry bread more delicious holding it over a pot with hot meal. On third picture the cooker asked Hitar Petar to pay him for the steam. The last picture – Hitar Petar pay him with the ting of a coin (but keep the coin); Children have to arrange the pictures and to retail the story verbally.



Fig. 2. The puzzle room

- Logical tasks – the game allows logical tasks. For the purposes of this article they could be replaced with other content. For example with the questions which sultan asked Hitar Petar to check how clever is he: –“Which is this thing – higher than a man, smaller than a hen” (a hat). “The fastest thing all over the world” (mind). They also could be riddles - “What has an ear but can’t hear?”(a needle);
- It is possible to have a room used like a hint – the story can be here like a comics.
- All mini games allows children to pick out the wright answers, which could be accept as disadvantage – even they didn’t read the fairy tales, they could reach good result in points. As the children for whom this game is, are too small, may be it will be better to have teacher or other adult around them. He could explain the conditions of the game if necessary or asked them to retail some of the stories.

4 Conclusions

Contemporary world is very dynamic. To provoke in children some interest to the books there could be used some modern learning methods. Serious games and role – playing are good ways to be represent fairy tales and riddles. The next step is scenario for non-formal and fascinated study of fairy tales to be realized and tested by real kids’ users.

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