Abstract

Computer games and other forms of interactive media have been said to narrow the gap between representation and represented phenomena. Elements like immersion, interactivity and fidelity are then seen as components which make games more likely to influence knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of the reader/user, than older media. Since the actual process of computer gaming seldom is studied the purpose of this study was to identify and depict structures in the meaning that emerges in children's interaction when playing computer games.

Interaction analysis was conducted on 23,5 hours of video data from 24 gaming session with totally 36 children in the age of 6 to 11. Data was collected both in home and school environments and on gamming sessions with different game genres. The theoretical tools in the analysis were assembled from a situative/pragmatist-sociohistoric perspective on learning and cognition.

The results showed that children establish their interaction when playing computer games by shifting between different frameworks for handling the things they see on the screen and by relating, transforming and/or dissociating aspects of the world outside the gaming situation. Five patterns of interaction can be identified in this process. Three patterns are described as sorts of frameworks were children relate features in the game either to the: *rules* of the game, the *theme* of the game or the *aesthetics* of the game. The other two patterns are described as structures in the dynamics of game play i.e. *internal dynamics* between different frames, such as frame conflicts, confusions and parallel frames and *external dynamics* were circumstances from other contexts must be handled in the gaming situation. In rule focused interaction, which is a common interaction pattern, the meaning of the game is to see and act upon different affordances built into the rules of the game. The children are thus interested in what can be done with different game features and not what they represent. This finding suggests that we must reconsider the way we understand games and what the effects of gaming might be.