

Experiencing the Journey of Confucius and Learning in a Virtual Reality-based Game

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Abstract: To enhance students' interest and motivation in learning Confucian analects, in this paper, we describe a participatory storytelling framework to guide the development of a virtual reality-based game environment, in which students might have an engaging learning experience and a macro perspective on the holistic learning context through sequencing the significant events in the life of Confucius. According to this framework, a digital game system is implemented and described. In the near future, the influence of the system on student performance, perception, and attitude would be examined.

Keywords: Virtual reality, Confucius, Digital Game, Storytelling

1. Introduction

Chinese philosopher Confucius has great impacts on Asian cultures, and is regarded as a significant role model for teachers in numerous Asian countries. Because of his significance and the pervasive influences, how to understand the Confucianism has also become a critical issue. Among related books and materials, Confucian analects are a valuable resource to understand the ways how Confucius thinks, behave, and interact with his students. In other words, if students could comprehend the text of Confucian analects, they would have a deep understanding on Confucius himself and Confucianism, a system of social and ethical philosophy in traditional Chinese society. However, it seems that nowadays most students have no sufficient interest in learning Confucian analects or related materials. The reasons might be due to two dimensions: text and pedagogy.

On the one hand, Confucian analects are a collection of sayings and ideas attributed to the Chinese philosopher Confucius and his contemporaries. Thus, it is written by classical Chinese, which is somehow different from the normal usage today, and more explanations or articulations are required. In addition, Confucian analects is not organized by time, resulting in the difficulty of understanding the whole context, especial the relationships between what the Confucius and students discuss, and its background and context in the Zhou Dynasty. On the other hand, the pedagogy adopted by most students focuses on the micro perspective (i.e., comprehension of each article) rather than the macro perspective (i.e., the holistic description and linkage among articles). Therefore, student learning and understanding is fragmented into a piece of facts or events, instead of deep understanding. These difficulties might confuse students why they should cram up these materials, which further decrease the interest in learning and understanding Confucian analects.

Digital games with virtual reality could offer students immersive and participatory learning experience, which is different from the traditional teacher-centered approach. Teaching methods. When students play the role of Confucius to travel around the world, they might not only have enhanced motivation and deeper understanding on the text of Confucian analects, their self-identity on Chinese culture and Confucianism might be also shaped. Thus, this study aims to develop a virtual reality-based digital game to facilitate student learning in Confucian analects.

2. System Development

To guide the development of virtual reality-based games, a participatory storytelling framework is proposed in this paper, as shown in Figure 1. The framework emphasizes interactive storytelling which organizes learning content as storylines and present to students through interactive designs.

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