Chapter 14
It Takes a Guild– Social Metacognition and Collaborative Creation of a Learning Organization:
Massively Multiplayer Online Game

Kae Novak
Front Range Community College, USA

ABSTRACT

Educators need to understand how virtual learning has advanced outside of institutional learning management systems and how people think, interact and perceive themselves in virtual spaces that are not tied to traditional learning. This chapter is a case study of an educator's gaming guild that explored virtual learning when transitioning from a social guild, which participated in casual raiding to embarking on progressive raiding. Guild leaders and members approached this progressive raiding as an opportunity to use their knowledge of learning strategies to develop the group's social metacognition. If educators want to transcend the limitations of learning management systems in predominantly text based courses, they need to understand and appreciate the identity and roles taken on by learners in virtual environments and the networked presence that takes place in organizations such as guilds. Guilds function as a learning organization that fosters identity development among members especially as data analytics are reviewed during collective and individual debriefing after raids.

OPENING VIGNETTE

For the past two weeks, a group of distributed educators, who play in the Inevitable Betrayal Guild, gathered with one goal in mind. How would they dispel the corruption from the once benevolent guardian of the life giving Pools of Power? This new foe or monster, was called was Immerseus. He was the first challenge or raid boss that the Guild needed to complete in the Siege of Orgrimmar expansion.

Immerseus is a frightful creature standing twenty times higher than any of the players' characters. He is positioned at the bottom of a deserted yet beautiful underground aqueduct in a pool of swirling water. The raid group determined how to make their way through all the mobs of smaller monsters underground to try and fight this foe. To be successful, the Guild needed the coordinated effort of everyone expertly executing their roles, paying attention to all the game mechanics, and coordinating their movements over a voice channel. All players needed to be almost perfect in their roles to be able to defeat this Boss.

In the game, World of Warcraft, and many massively multiplayer online games (MMOs), there are three roles in groups. The roles are tank, healer and dps, which means damage per second. In a raid, tanks stand in front of the raid group and attract the attention of the Boss. They are responsible for directing the focus of each boss attacks away from the rest of the players. Most damage taken from the Boss is directed toward the tanks. Often when there is so much damage in the fight, two tanks must coordinate and swap off duties to minimize the possibility of their character dying. If a tank dies, the damage in most raids is so great that the other tank cannot usually take the rest of the damage. If one tank dies, there is usually a domino effect with the second tank dying and then the Boss turning on dps players or healers one at a time until each player is killed off by the Boss. When the whole raid dies in this fashion, this is known as a *wipe*.

Healers keep up the health of all the players during the fight and also make sure that any damage to players over time is taken off or healed. To manage damage to tanks, in a group of three or four healers, one healer is assigned to each of the two tanks. The remaining healers heal the rest of the raid group. Even though tanks take the majority of damage, there is constant raid-wide damage happening to all players requiring the healers to coordinate their abilities and share healing responsibilities.

Lastly, the damage role or damage per second (dps) role is responsible for generating damage as quickly and efficiently as possible to defeat the foe. This dps capability is the reason why they are referred to as the metric used to evaluate their performance. Dps focuses on maximizing damage output and are responsible for generating enough damage that the Raid Boss is defeated in a reasonable amount of time. DPS performance also directly affects the other two roles because the higher the dps the faster the Raid Boss is downed, which requires less healing and damage taken by the group.

Unfortunately, as Figure 1 illustrates, the fight proved unsuccessful this evening. However, enough data was collected for the Guild to review and improve their performance for next time. The communications officer, one of the raid healers, screen captured the fight from a healer viewpoint. The screen-based add-ons he used to monitor and heal centered squarely in this recording that allowed all of the raid members to see when health of each player dropped. The raid leaders also recorded the game play. Later that night, members reviewed the recording. The screen was cropped down so that everyone could review the add-on called Recount. Recount is a visual add-on that tracks the activity each player does during the fight and is shown in Figure 2. From this recorded activity, the Recount add-on allows individuals and the group to see what their overall performance was, what attacks or heals were used, how long players stayed alive, and from what each player died. The Inevitable Betrayal Guild uses Recount's real time window to see how much dps is being done during any specific moment in the raid. Those screenshots were also uploaded to the Inevitable Betrayal Flickr site for further analysis.

All of this information would be aggregated and analyzed by the guild raid to prepare for their next attempt to defeat Immerseus. The learning artifacts would also be used by the educators of the guild for presentations, papers and discussions in state, national and international organizations. Lessons learned regarding resource management, critical thinking, quantitative analysis, communications, technology literacy, team building and even on metacognition and social metacognition would be shared as widely

Related Content

Web-Based Implementation of the Personalised System of Instruction: A Case Study of Teaching Mathematics in an Online Learning Environment
Willem-Paul Brinkman, Andrew Raeand Yogesh Kumar Dwivedi (2007). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (pp. 39-69).*
www.irma-international.org/article/web-based-implementation-personalised-system/2978

An Evaluation of E-Learning and User Satisfaction
Vijay Anand Rajasekaran, Kumar K. R., Susi S., Mohan Y. C., Muntha Rajuand Mohammed Waheeduddin Hssain (2022). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (pp. 1-11).*
www.irma-international.org/article/an-evaluation-of-e-learning-and-user-satisfaction/281237

Cloud Computing Assessment for Students' Social Presence in Relation to Satisfaction and Perceived Learning
Marva Mirabolghasemi, Noorminshah A. Iahadand Sahar Hosseinikhah Choshaly (2018). *Optimizing Student Engagement in Online Learning Environments (pp. 59-82).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/cloud-computing-assessment-for-students-social-presence-in-relation-to-satisfaction-and-perceived-learning/192448

Constructivist Communications Strategies for 21st Century Faculties and Graduate Students
Ann W. Armstrongand Albert J. Gales (2018). *Fostering Effective Student Communication in Online Graduate Courses (pp. 76-101).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/constructivist-communications-strategies-for-21st-century-faculties-and-graduate-students/187815

Web-Based Implementation of the Personalised System of Instruction: A Case Study of Teaching Mathematics in an Online Learning Environment
Willem-Paul Brinkman, Andrew Raeand Yogesh Kumar Dwivedi (2007). *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies (pp. 39-69).*
www.irma-international.org/article/web-based-implementation-personalised-system/2978