

POGO - active tools for a virtual story world



The Pogo project aims at developing new interaction paradigms for children's learning practice. In the classroom of tomorrow, children will have access to large amounts of digital information. Our research into children, story telling and social aspects of learning has resulted in a number of physical interaction tools that have proven to support children's social story telling.

In our project we have used a multidisciplinary process involving pedagogy experts, content

developers, technologists and designers.

Through an iterative cycle of conceptualization, prototyping and evaluation, new interaction paradigms have been investigated.

As a result, we have developed a prototype environment that consists of a 'Virtual Story World', interfaced by 'Active Tools'. Children are invited to participate, collaborate and play with digital media in new and inspiring ways. These inspire children by appealing their natural creativity, their sense of →

exploration and they help them develop their social skills in sharing stories with each other.

In our project we have used as starting point (a/o) Vygotsky's notion of the 'Zone of Proximal Development'. We have interpreted Vygotsky's notion into the statement that learning is in essence a social process: children learn more from each other rather than from a teacher.



Children's narrative activities were observed in number of different classrooms in Italy and Belgium. The output of this research resulted into the definition of the narrative-activity model. This theoretical model provides the pedagogical foundation for the Pogo environment and is described by four phases: (collaborative) Exploration, Inspiration, Production and Sharing. Children's social dynamics as understood within the framework of the narrative-

activity model form the basis for design and development of socially 'situated' computer tools. These tools enhance and support the 'real world' interaction between children in the classroom rather than replacing or distorting the social process.

The project has resulted in a working prototype system, invention disclosures and has been judged as a 'European Best Practice'. ←

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