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Game Clip Analysis Reflections

The Method:

I initially went through the video catalog looking at all of the different recordings to see what was available. I then decided on two types of games that I knew would be quite different, Gears of War and Wii Sports Baseball. I proceeded to view both clips in their entirety to have an overall sense of the flow and content. I then re-watched them, pausing and replaying portions as needed.

For the Gears of War clip I decided to document each learning/instructional instance (mm:ss start and stop) that I believed to be present. As I completed each entry I would then review Bloom's updated taxonomy to see how many categories may be appropriate, type up the listing (category:subcategory – explanation), fill in the implications for instruction, and then list my general thoughts before moving on the next instance. This approach was very time consuming and towards the end of it I started to use notations like "see above," "see earlier," and "ditto" if I had already typed roughly the same explanation.

For the Wii Sports Baseball clip I had to decide when I would stop watching since the clip was about two times longer than then Gears of War clip. Not that the two clips had to be equal, but I liked the potential for symmetry and stopped viewing at roughly five minutes into it. This time I only documented (mostly) unique instances, but saved the classifications and explanations for later. This made the initial part of this go much faster, but I was slowed down by technical difficulties (the wireless mouse in the lounge was not responding well). Without the pressure of more instances to come I was able to solely focus on classification and explanation. However I probably still spent the same amount of time documenting both clips.

I limited myself to only using Bloom's Taxonomy at this time. In the future I will go back through and apply other models one at a time.

Reflections on the Method:

I believe the latter approach is more conducive for thoughtful reflection and better use of resources. The "and" is important here. The former approach also yielded thoughtful reflections, but I took up the lounge for a good chunk of time which could have potentially kept others from using it. I also felt that I was rushing myself with the former approach since I still had additional instances to document and wasn't able to solely focus on classification.

I could potentially see doing multiple models at the same time, but that would seem like it would make the process even slower and introduce great chances of overlooking instances. I think one filter at a time is for the best.

The Good:

Going through this process isn't bad and with the video stored it can be viewed at the user's leisure. It is also easy (assuming the mouse is cooperating) to adjust the slider bar and get to specific scenes as needed.

The Bad:

Picking apart games like this really does removes almost all of the pleasure of games.

The Ugly:

Some of the footage has text that is so small that it is very difficult to read with out getting very close to the television and squinting. I imagine this is a result of the resolution the game was captured at and the resolution in which it is being played back. These appeared to be PC games that had this problem.

Considerations for the Future:

Inter-rater reliability will need to be addressed. Each clip will need to reviewed by at least two instructional designers (if not three) to better assure that educational/instances are being accurately documented.

Standardization of language will also need to be considered. This will better facilitate keyword searching in the future. If one reviewer classifies something as "discovery learning" and another classifies it as "problem-based learning" and still another classifies it as "case-based learning" then we may end up with a snow ball effect over time.

A better way to visualize the clips, scene selection, and documented segments (this is getting into the realm of what Aaron and I were talking about) is imperative. In its current incarnation it is an easy, yet highly disjointed process that takes a good amount of time. I think this is the place where we can really create a must have feel. I have few software examples beyond what Aaron and I discussed that I'd like to show you. Some of them have source code available which could facilitate re-engineering (this however may be a little too "out there").

We need a way to access the thoughts of the players. Even if it's something as simple as wiring them with a microphone and having them do a think aloud, this kind of evidence will go a long way towards supporting the learning we're documenting.

Advice to Others:

- Select a small clip, no more than five minutes
- Document your instances first and then classify and explain them
- Only reference one model at a time (e.g. Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning)
- Explore working in pairs or compare notes with someone who has worked through the same clips to develop inter-rater reliability