

THE CHALLENGE OF STUDYING INTERACTIONS IN VIRTUAL WORLDS

Dr. Elhanan Gazit

*The Israeli DIGRA Chapter, Instructional Systems Technologies Department,
Holon Institute of Technology, 58102 Holon. E-mail: digraisrael@gmail.com*

Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVES) and digital games have become the building blocks of today's children's worlds. There are many indications that MUVES such as Second Life and digital games change the way people communicate and learn by provide meaningful learning experiences, and serving as a cognitive bridge between concrete experiences and complex abstractions (Prensky, 2001). Thus far, there have been few empirical studies which systematically studied the interactions dynamics within virtual worlds. There is a need to address key issues such as: What appropriate instructional and pedagogical approaches should be implemented within virtual worlds? How to assess the learning within virtual worlds? The complex relationships between virtual worlds and real world learning? Innovative methodologies are needed for bridging between micro and macro levels of interactions (individual and collaborative) which occur in different space and time scales.

A conceptual framework, based on active theory and the micodevelopment approach is currently developed by the Israeli DiGRA Chapter for studying multimodal interactions in virtual worlds and digital games by using computerized tools (Gazit et al., 2006; Gazit, in press). Digital Games Research Association is a non-profit, international association. It is a network for academics and practitioners whose work focuses on digital games, virtual worlds and associated activities. DiGRA ISRAEL promotes the DIGRA's vision and the Serious Games agenda of using virtual worlds and digital games as *ILA tools in all sectors. *ILA stands for: Instruction, Learning & Assessment.

References

- Gazit, E. (in press). A window on digital games interactions in home settings. *Handbook of Research on Effective Electronic Gaming in Education*. IGI Global Publishers.
- Gazit, E., Yair, Y., & Chen, D. (2006). The gain and pain in taking the pilot seat: Learning dynamics in a non immersive virtual solar system, *Virtual Reality*, **10** (3-4), 271-282.
- Prensky, M. (2001). *Digital game-based learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.