Shalom/Salaam: Designing for Collaboration in Peacemaking

Barbara K. Stuart and Corrina Perrone
Center for LifeLong Learning and Design, Institute for Cognitive Science and Department of Computer Science
University of Colorado, Boulder
bstuart@uswest.net, corrina@cs.colorado.edu

Introduction

Collaborating across disciplines is suggesting new research agendas for cognitive scientists. Through Harvard's Mind, Brain and Behavior Initiative, Kosslyn now studies the imagery of literature and gets new ideas from collaborating with another discipline (Magner, 1997 p. A13). J.B. Smith (1994) describes cognitive processes that are closely entwined with social science disciplines like anthropology, ethnography, management science, communications and group dynamics. He proposes a concept of collective group intelligence and suggests research initiatives to support computer mediated collaboration. Shalom/Salaam will support such a collaborative effort, by providing a structured environment for developing a dialogue, common language and shared meaning, among colleagues distributed across disciplines and communities.

To enhance group learning, Peter Senge at MIT's Sloan School of Management, suggests clarifying mental models including images, values, beliefs and assumptions. These tacit mental navigational tools require reflection and inquiry to understand the reasoning and attitudes that underlie human action (Senge, et al 1994 pp. 246). Making thinking public is a common phrase in management, education and psychology literature. Bruner (1996) describes man's capacity for intersubjectivity --[how humans come to know each other's minds] as a crucial cultural adaptation (p. 184).

Shalom/Salaam

Shalom/Salaam will support collaborative knowledge building in both novices and experts. In a structured space, "consultants" will role-play, make their thinking public, and through discourse, construct shared-meaning. They will first, construct individual metaphors of current knowledge of Middle East peacemaking, then review data posted on the WWW by Middle East stakeholders including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestinians, and the United States. Consultants will review the compiled metaphors posted by all participants, and suggest any changes to their own thinking as a result of being informed by the thinking of colleagues, data and research on the World Wide Web.

Participants will evaluate the effectiveness of dialogic learning, knowledge building, and site capabilities, as well as identify future collaborators and improvements. Researchers will study the formulation of metaphors, cross-domain applications, specificity, clarity, richness, systematicity/abstractness, scope and validity using Gentner's study of analogies and metaphors (1982). The work of Lakoff (1993) and Wertsch (1987) will also inform the analysis.

Technology

The Webquest (Perrone, 1996) system, developed at the Center for LifeLong Learning and Design is the model for developing the site. Future design tasks include integrating a database, archival properties, ethnographic coding, maps and other interactive research tools to enhance shared understanding and conflict resolution in collaborating groups.

References

Bruner, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gentner, D. (1982). Are scientific analogies metaphors? In Miall, D.S., Ed. *Metaphor: Problems and perspectives.* Sussex, England: The Harvester Press.

Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In Ortony, A., Ed. *Metaphor and Thought*, second ed. New York: Cambridge Press. pp. 202 - 251.

Magner, D.K. (1997). A program on the mind changes faculty work at Harvard. In *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* (pp A12 - 13). February 28.

Perrone, C. Clark, D. and Repenning, A. (1996). Webquest: Combining the WWW with Interactive Simulation Games. In *Proceedings of WWW5 '96*, Paris: Elsevier Science.

Senge, P.et al (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization.* New York: Doubleday.

Smith, J.B. (1994). *Collective Intelligence in Computer-based Collaboration.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wertsch, J.V. (1987) Modes of discourse in the nuclear arms debate. *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10, (2-3) 102 - 112.