Procedural Rhetoric to Challenge Emotional Intelligence and Encourage Empathy and Compassion

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Abstract—Gathering a large team around emotionally challenging game projects is difficult, as there is no fixed vocabulary to share a strong vision of the game design of emotional intelligence-based games. This research connects research from psychology and game design theory, to establish principles and lexicon around emotional skills and mechanics.

Keywords—Player skill; Emotions; Procedural rhetoric

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence [1] is a set of skills that is rarely exploited in games as a challenge in a game loop, and if it is, rarely with a language proper to interactive media. Game projects like “Journey” and “Life is Strange” had to construct their own internal vocabulary, dancing for years around notions that in other type of game, could be described in a sentence. Thus, emotions are not treated as a skill, but a flavor element.

II. METHOD

In order to define procedural rhetoric mechanics coercing compassion and empathy, we transposed the RULER approach [2] to the player skill model and attempted to design and collect mechanics using or challenging them.

- R; Recognizing emotions in self and others
- U; Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L; Labeling emotions accurately
- E; Expressing emotions appropriately
- R; Regulating emotions effectively

Once completed, the players are asked to fill a survey to determine if they recognize the used mechanic, how they feel about it and how would they see it fit in a game loop.

III. PROTOTYPE IMPLEMENTATION

Using color theory, mimetism [6] and non-verbal symbols to construct isolated design features, we are using the game engine “Unity” to prototype a collection of games.

Fig. 1. Screenshots of the prototype

IV. FUTURE

Now that the prototype has been completed, a paper with the result of the surveys is to be published and updated on the project website [8], where the community can discuss the concept as a community. The paper is to be updated with new lexicon so we can describe better and better what kind of experience we want to offer to players.

Other mechanics, challenge and use of the player skills will be explored.

REFERENCES