Chapter 4
DATA COLLECTION: CASE STUDY

4.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the procedures to conduct the qualitative study in this computer game making workshop. The study was held in eight sessions. Each session took one hour. The study setting was influenced by two successful game authoring researches (Kafai, 1996; Robertson, 2004). The details of the context setting are described in this chapter.

4.2 Research Design
4.2.1 The participants
A usability evaluation on the interaction aspect of RPGMaker was conducted with a small group of college freshman. Five of the undergraduates at International University College of Technology Twintech (IUCTT) were chosen for this game authoring workshop. Four were boys and one was girl. They were a group of undergraduate who like to play computer games, and actively participate in college activities. However, some of them are not familiar with RPG. Table 4.1 shows the participants’ backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Computer literacy</th>
<th>Programming language learned</th>
<th>Computer gaming experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad Hafiz Selamat (Hafiz)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Familiar with Windows environment, Multimedia Application.</td>
<td>C, Java, PHP, Visual Basic</td>
<td>Usually prefer to play computer game in game console. Prefer strategic games and combat games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Familiar with Environment</td>
<td>Proficiency in Languages</td>
<td>Preferences</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azila Ahmad (Azila)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Familiar with Windows environment.</td>
<td>C, HTML</td>
<td>Prefer solitaire, Super Mario series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ridhuan bin Sidek (Ridhuan)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Familiar with Windows and Mac OS environment. Advanced skill in website design and multimedia authoring tools.</td>
<td>C, C++, Java, PHP, HTML</td>
<td>Prefer sport game and has little experience in RPG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharif Sharmizi bin Shahimi (Mizi)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Familiar with Windows, Mac OS and Linux environment. Good in Multimedia authoring tools and Multimedia application.</td>
<td>C, C++, Java</td>
<td>Prefer RPG games and those games involved in story telling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 The tool

RPG Maker is a game authoring tool that allows the player to create their own turn-based RPGs. The first Windows-based RPG Maker was released on 1995 by ASCII from Japan (http://www.enterbrain.com/). In this game authoring workshop, RPG Maker 2003 has been chosen as the tool because it has enhanced the functionalities and the user interface of the tool. The drag-and-drop interaction has made the game authoring session become easier. Figure 4.1 illustrates the interface of the RPG Maker 2003.

![RPG Maker 2003 Interface](image)

**Figure 4.1: Graphic User Interface in RPG Maker 2003**

RPG Maker 2003 consists of tile set (also known as Chipset for version before RPGMaker 2003) based map editor. Participants only need to choose a suitable tile set from the list, and then place it on the map area. These tile-sets available for download from http://www.rpg-palace.net. User can download suitable tile set for map creation.
RPG Maker uses simple scripting in event handling. User can choose appropriate script from the Event Command List. Then, the user can alter the parameters from the selected script to fit their needs. Figure 4.2 illustrate the Event Command List in RPG Maker.

![Event Command List](image)

Figure 4.2: Event Command List in RPG Maker

As a conclusion, RPG Maker is a simple tool that can be used to create RPG without much knowledge in programming and mathematic. In this study, participants would provide feedbacks on the capabilities and usability issue of RPG Maker in supporting constructionist learning context. The feedbacks are hope could help to be the inputs to shape a new system’s design and user interface in a game authoring tool.

4.2.3 The environment

The workshop was mainly held at the computer lab which participants are familiar with. This is to create a comfortable environment for the participants. Each participant will have their working machine during game tailoring workshop. However, Mizi had chosen to work with his own laptop.
The workshop has been conducted for eight sessions. The participants were able to attend only one session in a week, and each session took between 75 to 90 minutes. Generally, the participants spent 5 to 10 minutes to discuss their plan among themselves. After that, they will work with their computer. As participants worked on their games, they were allowed to walk around the lab to see and discuss among each others’ projects.

4.3 Workshop activities
The workshop involved a series of activities. Before the workshop was carried out, participants were given a chance to play with RPG for a session. This was to build up the fundamental knowledge about the nature of RPG.

4.3.1 Group discussion about games
During the first session, participants were informed about the aim of the workshop. The researcher shaped a focus group to discuss about the sort of games that they enjoyed playing at home. The participants had no problems in sharing their thought at this session since they knew each other well before the workshop. They were given the freedom to decide a common topic on their own RPG. At the end of the discussion, the participants have came out with a historical topic which they were interested to work on.

4.3.2 Working with the RPG Maker
Before the storyline is created, they were introduced to the game authoring tool that they will use in the workshop. This was held during the second session of the workshop which lasted for 45 minutes to increase the familiarity of the tool to the participants and the constraint of the tool which allowed them to author their game. This could give brief ideas to the participant when they create their own game. At this phase, the researcher shared the knowledge of creating RPG with the participants. The participants had gained clear ideas and had spent time in thinking about game designing issues.
4.3.3 Studying on the subject matter
The participants studied on the chosen topic before they created their characters and plot in RPG Maker. They had chosen to develop the history about Robin Hood. Internet was the main source for them to find the information. However, some participants tried to learn from the textbook and video/movie available in the market. All the participants have prior knowledge about Robin Hood; peer discussion also was performed to exchange options to gain deeper understanding the history topic. This session was conducted for 70 minutes.

4.3.4 Characters and the environment in game design
At the beginning of this session, the participants drew the pictures about the characters for their game. They wrote short notes to describe the attributes of the characters. These included their motives, background information, characteristic, and mission within the game.

Next, the participants created the main map that will represent the world in the game for their RPG. Thus, the participants had to work hard in studying the culture and environment on the particular year. Next, the participants had to search from the internet for a variety of tile set which will be used to create objects and terrains in the game. These tile sets were shared among the participants when required. The researcher facilitated on the way to import the tile set into RPGMaker. This is because the participants were not familiar with the tool at this phase.

Once the characters had been decided, their attributes are created into the character’s respective database. At the same time, the participants decided on the parties of the heroes before the game is begun.
4.3.5 Plot Planning
The participants continued to work on their story planning. Each participant started with their planning in a blank sheet paper. They drew the storyline sketches and exchange ideas among themselves. They planned when and how the antagonist in the story would appear in the game. The participants also planned how to begin the new episode before it ends. This activity took around 60 minutes.

4.3.6 Game authoring session
Throughout the game authoring workshop, participants were encouraged to work with RPG Maker using their own creativity in producing a historical RPG. The researcher provided the participants with tasks that could help them to start with game authoring. The tasks were handed during selected session, based on their progress (See Appendix A). The researcher was available to answer questions raised by the participants during the workshop.

At the beginning, the participants started by exploring the functionalities which are available in RPG Maker. They tried to create a simple game in the RPG Maker. When they became familiar with the basic controls, they tended to shift to learn more advanced functions. The participants tried to make auto-trigger event at the introductory of the RPG, interactive dialogues, changing the splash screen to conform to the nature of their game, manipulate the treasure chest, and event-handling. They enjoyed in sharing their finding with each others. When the participants mastered the tool, they started to create their own RPG. In the process of creating the game, they faced some problems. However, they helped each other to overcome them. At the end of the session, they played each other’s game when it was ready. The participants spent five hours to complete.

4.3.7 RPG presentation
At the final stage, the participants would present their RPG in a presentation session. The first part of the session would focus on presenting the game that was created by the
participants and the outcomes of the workshop. The second part of the session was a focus group session where the participants share their experience in using RPG Maker as an authoring tool in this workshop.

4.4 Conclusion
As a conclusion, this chapter gave an overall idea of how the game authoring workshop was conducted. This includes software tool being used and tasks need to be carried out for each session. The game authoring workshop was conducted successfully as planned. The researcher received positive good response from the participants.