

Summary: Combining Software Games with Education: Evaluation of its Educational Effectiveness.

Title: "Combining Software Games with Education: Evaluation of its Educational Effectiveness."

Name: Virvou M., Katsionis, & Manos, K. (2005)

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Problem: There is a serious lack of motivation in learning especially for a newer generation of learners. As young adults develop more and more learning disabilities it becomes increasingly harder to gain their attention and keep them learning. The synthesis of games and learning presents an opportunity to gain the attention of kids and young adults. However, learning based software games has not made a significant impact schools. Some schools are even skeptical because the games challenges the learning structure of the classroom.

Context: The VR-ENGAGE, an Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS) is tested on a group of 127 students (ages 9-10) from 7 different classroom settings. Each student is given a chance to play in the virtual reality game. Students are broken up into equal groups by the letter grade their teacher had given them in the subject of Geography. Those who received an "A" mark participated in part 1 of the game, students who received a "B" mark participated in part 2, and those who received a "C" participated in part 3. Each group was separated randomly into 2 smaller subgroups to participate in two different versions of the game, "VR-ENGAGE and ITS (Simple User Interface) the game. Before entering the game, all the students were given a geography pre-test, like any standard multiple choice test. After using the different versions students were given a post test.

Findings: After playing the game, all students showed a significant improvement in test performance. Those who used the VR-ENGAGE over the ITS "made 43.15% less mistakes" on the test. Those who used ITS "made 32.48% less mistakes."

Recommendations: I agree with the tone and the direction of the article. I strongly recommend the use of educational games in the classroom. I think that this direction would lead to developing and strengthening young minds.

1. *Use at least one piece of educational gaming software in the classroom.*

2. *Usability tests: Mix classing teaching with teaching with technology. Find your own results by doing a similar test with your students. Make it fun!*

3. *Student/Parent Feedback: Find out what the students think! Also, get parents involved in the fun. Demonstrate the gaming software via a gathering or open house.*