

Why is virtual gaming producing extreme learning skills in young people?

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More and more young people drop out of school, or are getting poor results from the many years in the classroom. At the same time millions of young people are deeply engaged in virtual gaming through which they develop skills much more advanced and efficient than in the classroom. It seems like the world of learning is falling apart: formal learning and real learning. The education system must react to this.

The first wave of virtual games was for fun and entertainment. Then within the last decade advanced and complicated strategic and epic games were developed. These games are very demanding and can go on for weeks or months. Now the third wave of virtual games emerges: *virtual games interacting with real life*.

Why are virtual games so attractive to young people?

Examples:

- 🖱 They send the gamer on a clear mission, often an important mission
- 🖱 The gamer must use all her skills and talents to work through the game world
- 🖱 The challenges cannot be foreseen, not be predicted
- 🖱 The gamer can work together with lots of other young people online
- 🖱 The gamer can take pride in her accomplishments and share the pride with other young people
- 🖱 The gamer is not dependent on external rewards, but on internal satisfaction
- 🖱 The gamer feels part of a story, of a narrative, and as its driver
- 🖱 The game allows the gamer to explore complex systems freely and voluntarily
- 🖱 The game offers meaningfulness to the gamer
- 🖱 The gaming is independent of all kinds of formal settings, educational rules and regulations



Graphics by Zlatan, Bulgaria, edited by JG

What kind of learning skills are produced through advanced gaming?

Examples:

- 🖱 Generic and transversal learning skills that can be linked to all kinds of topics
- 🖱 Methodological skills, independent of the content of the play or the theme
- 🖱 The ability to be deeply focused for a long time, sometimes for weeks and months
- 🖱 The ability to link concrete problem solving to strategic planning
- 🖱 Extremely strong explorative skills, trial and error, testing and piloting
- 🖱 Intense collaboration with hundreds or even thousands of young people from all over the world, regardless of status or social background
- 🖱 Extremely strong team work skills, as these are needed in many social and community game worlds
- 🖱 The ability to find and put into play clusters of knowledge, when this knowledge is needed to solve the problems and progress in the game
- 🖱 The ability to face, explore and conquer new fields and new topics
- 🖱 An extreme capacity to combine all sorts of information and useful elements from a diversity of sources, and an extreme capacity to navigate in these structures
- 🖱 Participation, initiative and taking action skills

How can the world of education benefit from the world of gaming?

Examples:

- 🖱 Advanced and systematic virtual gaming includes all the key methodological skills for creative learning. It does not matter in what content context these skills are produced: war games, social games, strategic games...
- 🖱 Virtual gaming is not depending on formal academic skills
- 🖱 Virtual gaming can be used in all kinds of educations, as the learning potential of gaming is not linked to content but to learning methodologies
- 🖱 The learning gaming must be interacting with the real world to be efficient
- 🖱 It is possible in all educations to define clear missions, clear goals, clear rules, and to rethink the topic to study in epic forms, as a part of a narrative; the specific epics must be extracted from each individual topic or field
- 🖱 The learning gaming will benefit heavily from the extremely strong collaborative structures in virtual gaming
- 🖱 The good game allows the gamer or the learner to produce solutions, not reproduce solutions, and must be open ended to function in long-term learning communities
- 🖱 All the genuine and basic features in virtual gaming must be intact in learning gaming; the game elements should be reinforced and taken further, not reduced
- 🖱 The educational settings must be able to offer free space for such exploring gaming activities in the curricula

