

Educational benefits of eConfidence serious games

Serious games – that is, games with an educational purpose – have become popular in schools and have been shown to support knowledge acquisition as well as bring about behavioural, perceptual and cognitive change. They can be an important learning method provided they have a sound underlying pedagogical design.

How can serious games support learning?

Serious games can:

- Motivate students, providing a different learning context. As some authors point out, "the generated diversion is the proof of the natural functioning of our brain" (Gallego et al. 2014, p. 10).
- Help develop learning that is more meaningful; there are more and more educational areas in which games can contribute (although the use of video games can better adapt to some curricula better than others).
- Facilitate problem solving activities; educational video games are particularly useful in this respect.
- Promote more innovative and fun learning. The mode of teaching and learning changes with serious games - learning aligns with new pedagogical approaches to competence development and access to knowledge by new generations.
- Encourage teamwork and learning collaboratively, essential in today's society where interdisciplinary teams are frequently found in business contexts.
- Encourage the acquisition of psychosocial skills, including critical thinking, communication, leadership, persistence, spatial vision and cognitive and social development skills.
- Help to learn in simulated situations that reproduce the real world.
- Encourage memorisation by allowing the student correct certain behaviours and repeating habits, learning behaviours that help them solve the game positively; improving memory by practical learning.
- Improve the digital competence of students. Video game players will have greater capacity to cope in the digital world, having the opportunity to become familiar with virtual challenges, interactive scenarios, surfing the Internet or the simple management of usernames and passwords.
- Have great flexibility of use, depending on the objectives that arise and different itineraries, scenarios or contexts students encounter in the games environment.



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Games and bullying

School bullying and peer victimisation are recognised as a widespread social problem among children and youngsters that peak during early adolescence. Most children are not directly involved in bullying incidents, but they are present as observers ('bystanders') and play an important role in encouraging or discouraging bullying behaviour. Among different approaches to intervention, serious games can be suitable tools for intervention with children and adolescents as they make the learning process more enjoyable and effective.

The goals of the eConfidence game tackling bullying are to help students:

- Improve the ability to recognize bullying situations, including incidents of verbal and relational violence
- Understand different roles children can play in bullying contexts
- Identify and use adequate, assertive ways of coping with bullying situations, either as a victim or a bystander
- Identify and use adequate, prosocial ways of interaction with peers (instead of aggression)

Games and safe use of internet

Due to the widespread use of the Internet in everyday life, its safe use is, nowadays, an essential skill in today's society. Children and young people should learn to use in a safe way the multiple possibilities offered by the internet, applicable already in their day-to-day life.

The objectives of the safe use of the internet game developed in the eConfidence project are that students receive support to:

- Identify the different types of risks they can encounter online
- Understand the consequences of potential online behaviour
- Develop successfully digital skills
- Improve their behaviour in a digital environment

We believe that approaches that complement, not replace, other ways to address the safe use of the internet and bullying in the classroom will add to these benefits and help change the behaviour of students on these issues. In the eConfidence games they become active agents in their learning and develop more sensitivity and empathy through direct engagement in realistic simulations.

Reference

Gallego, F.J., Villagr , C.; Satorre, R.; Compa , P., Molina, R. y Llorens, F. (2014). *Panor mica. Seriousgames, gamificaci n y mucho m s*. ReVisi n, 2(7), 1-19.

