

GAMIFICATION FOR LEARNING: A STRATEGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNER

It is generally accepted that the use of emergent technologies in education has evolved tremendously since the 21st century. For plenty of educators this has become a challenging task, most of all when 21st century learners fill the classrooms. But these digital natives differ tremendously from those who started the millennium. These students want to be challenged, engaged and motivated through a learning process, which connects them to a different learning experience. This has become a challenging task for educators due to the student profile and characteristics. Although to achieve the learning outcomes necessary for the 21st century, educators are adapting approaches suited for these learners, involving game theory, video games, and gamifying instruction.

As the 21st century moves forward, and technology continues to be an integral part of it, new pedagogical strategies have appeared. These strategies are developed based on the needs, the environment, and competences of the 21st century learner. This 21st century learner is called “digital native”. Many studies have shown that, a digital native learns and processes information different. They are described as living lives immersed in technology, “surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age” [2, p. 54].

We suggest that one of these new learning strategies is Gamification. It is basically new to education and has adjusted rapidly to the profile of the 21st century learner or digital native. Gamification in education let the instructor gamify an activity or a certain literacy skill. It integrates game elements and rewards mechanisms as part of the lecture, while motivating and engaging the student, and promoting healthy competition. The students learn a concept and practice skills just like if they were playing in a game. This makes the educational experience challenging and fun and at the same time motivates the learner to move forward. The objective for integrating Gamification towards education is to unchain a more attractive and effective learning experience for the student.

Drawing on data selected from our research, our analysis has found that nowadays, more educators are using Gamification as part of their teaching strategies. This is due in part to the recognizing that games designed in an effective form stimulate large gains in productivity and creativity. In addition, Gamification has been successful in non-traditional educational settings such as E-learning. Gamification in education offers the learners an opportunity to interact among themselves as it’s implied in a social game. Another detail is that when people perceive any form of social presence they tend to respond in a natural way to feelings such as happiness, empathy, and frustration, or even follow social rules like taking turns [3, p.32].

The general conclusion is that to have a successful Gamification teaching and learning experience, where the 21st century learner becomes engaged and motivated, the educator needs to plan accordingly. This requires that every instructor follow the five-step model for educational gamification, which is presented in the work of Huang and Soman [1, p.16].

REFERENCES

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