ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 2 - number 34 Wednesday 18 july 2018

e-Learning and gamification: what is possible to learn from videogames?

Peole who start working in a fast food expects to be trained with for a necessary (and boring) training video. But the initiation rite for the new chefs at KFC is much more original. What does it consist of?

Training can become more efficient if it is structured using new technologies and the potential offered by digitization. Games, thanks to the playful structure and the involvement that characterizes them, are an excellent learning tool. Learning by playing is possible: this method is better identified with the term **gamification**.

The term refers to the application of general concepts used in video games (role-playing games, rankings, earning points, problem solving embedded in a narrative, etc.), but also to modules that do not affect video games.

Scholar Michelle Miller has identified several pros and cons of eLearning in her work "*Teaching Effectively with Technology*". Among the disadvantages she identified we find the physical distance between teacher and learner and the inability to personalize the educational process.

By applying the playful logic of videogames, **eLearning courses can overcome these obstacles by becoming extremely engaging and personalized** (always taking into account the student's actions).

For example, from KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken, a well-known fast-food chain specializing in fried chicken), new employees receive an Oculus Rift VR to wear. What will they have to do? A very simple game, described as a crazy escape room in virtual reality where it is possible to advance towards the output only by reproducing the five steps of the KFC cooking process. It is Colonel Sanders himself (the stylized face reproduced in the KFC logo) who controls the work of each employee during the process.

The new system might seem like a really strange publicity stunt, but KFC claims that it takes an average of 10 minutes to finish the game, whereas the previous teaching method required 25 minutes.

No one from KFC expects the game to replace reality: "*The game aims to supplement the current Chicken Mastery program, not to replace it*" a KFC spokesperson said in a press release.

KFC's methods may seem bizarre, but they are part of the growing tendency to include gamification in eLlearning.
KFC is not the only fast food chain that trains its employees with "playful" e-learning modules: McDonald's also accompanies new employees through an online game (even if it looks definitely less interesting than the KFC solution) trying to make the learning process as immersive as possible. Simply consider that even if the company did not make the game compulsory for new employees, 85% of McDonald's new employees not only played the game, but said it helped them learn about their jobs.

Professor Michele Dickey highlighted **the benefits of combining playful logic with eLearning**: online role-playing games can motivate users, adventure scenarios can be useful learning tools and, above all, gamification is very addictive in the eLearning process.

Read the complete article...