

Video Games Influence on Learning

The video game generation fills the corridors of corporate America. These gamers acquired many of their critical thinking, problem solving, and strategy skills playing video games. What we can learn from the gamers is that video games can support learning when used properly. When using sound learning principles the games create an engaging experience that supports development of new skills and behaviors.

It used to be cost-prohibitive to create a 3D immersion learning game, with price tags in the millions, and taking years to complete. Fortunately the cost barrier has been drastically reduced where in today's market they can be developed for a couple hundred thousand dollars and delivered within six months. Even more quick and cheap, but still effective, are the 2D games.

Games can be classified into different types:

1. Strategy
2. Simulations
3. Platform
4. Puzzles
5. Role-playing
6. Multiplayer



Each of these types support learning in a unique fashion. Let's explore each type.

Strategy

These games support strategic decision making. Real time strategy, otherwise known in the jargon as RTS, uses time as a pacing factor where multiple scenario consequences can be explored based upon the learner's decision-making. Data is collected, analyzed, and decisions made within a limited time. These typically are used for the more advanced training.

Another strategy game, turn-based strategy, allows learners to observe factors, collect data, conduct analyses, and think about options. The learner initiates the game when ready and the game progresses based upon the learner's input.

Simulations

Simulations help learners explore interactions and behaviors. A learner interacts, the game responds, and the learner can alter the interaction to observe a new pattern. This type can be used for

many business scenarios from customer service skills, to complex market strategy.

Platform

Best used for spatial learning, the learner controls a character's movements from point A to point B, exploring the geography of the world. Think about this application when dealing with learning about physical spaces, such as putting together a car, or performing surgery.

Puzzles

Business procedures can be learned well with this type. Whether operational, functional, or behavioral, a puzzle game will engage the learner.

Role-Playing

Role playing games give global accessibility to the traditional role-playing workshops. The learner can take on the role of an assembly-line worker, grocery store checker or administrative assistant. These are best used for task-oriented jobs

where specific skills and behaviors can be learned.

Multiplayer

Multiplayer games encompass the virtual worlds and massively multiplayer online (MMO) genres. Only within the last couple of years has this genre been within the reach of most corporations and are still within their infancy.

The virtual world is best used when numerous objectives, tasks, and behaviors are to be achieved. This multi-faceted game type closely mirrors real life.

MMOs depend upon other people to collaborate and compete against. It is an immersion environment that is well suited to team learning.

Getting the organization to pony up the cost for learning games will no doubt be a very tough sell in today's business environment. Learning executives that stick to identifying workplace performance gaps in key business areas will offer the highest payback when implementing learning games.