

Prehistoric societies. An educational proposal with Far Cry Primal

Jorge Guerra Antequera
Education Sciences
Extremadura University
Cáceres, Spain
guerra@unex.es

Karen Sanz Ramos
Independent Researcher
Extremadura University
Cáceres, Spain
karen.sanz@hotmail.com

Abstract— In this paper we reflect about the link between videogames an education. We know videogames are in the life of our children, our teenagers and in our lives. So, why we don't use it for education? From this questioning we propose the use of a commercial game, Far Cry Primal, as a tool for learning about prehistoric human societies.

Keywords—*videogames; Digital Game Based Learning; prehistoric; society; learning*

I. INTRODUCTION

The game has been an important educational tool in all human culture. This consideration has been changing over time. Actually, videogames are included in an educational paradigm as known as Digital Game Based Learning which consider videogames as a relevant educational tool [1].

Therefore, videogames are used for researchers, formers, teachers, professors and others professionals linked whit different educational context [2] and [3]

This paper contains a proposal under development and that is part of a subsequent research which is based on the use of a commercial videogame as a teaching tool under the thinking about usefulness in different educational context, primly in schools and institutes classrooms (boys and girls between 12 and 18 years). To formalize this proposal, we developed a set of activities which contains different learning about different settlements, social organization and tasks within the group in prehistoric societies. We base our proposal in a fun effective learning. Where students acquire different learning in the same time that they are involved in a funny challenge.

II. VIDEOGAMES IN EDUCATION

The prospect of the acquisition of learning from videogames is based on the interactivity. Therefore, videogames have changed leisure preferences introducing the interaction between man and TV. This it leds the natural interaction of videogames in the social, cultural, family and some educational contexts. In this way [4], [5], [6] and [7]. Thus, videogames have been incorporated to popular culture and conquered leisure time of a big percentage of us. But we had to remember that games and videogames not are many different. Videogames are the evolution of traditional games incorporating technologies that allow them ubiquity, synchrony, abstraction, multifunctionality, multidisciplinary

and dependence on the interconnection of content and players mediated by the need for electronic gadgets. But rules, prizes, goals, randomness and players have not change. The major change is over the interactivity [8]

For other side, videogames are important for education for another reason, they make us happy. In this sense, the use of video games in the classroom can imply an extra boost to students' motivation regarding learning. Videogames have demonstrated their ability to involve students in learning through empathy, experiences, exploration and different semiotic areas that converge within the tool. [9] y [10]

The appropriateness of video games for the educational field lies in the organization and difficulty of the proposed quest or levels, which in turn generate incentives (feedback). In learning per se the incentive is learning itself, and through learning with videogames the acquisition way is very different, it is not just about learning, it is about experiencing what you learn.

III. PREHISTORIC SOCIETIES

The proposal presented in this paper addresses the knowledge of human prehistoric societies of the Mesolithic through the social organization of these human groups and their relationship and adaptation to the environment. On the other hand, the different types of settlements will also be treated during this period [11]:

- Base camps: they are spaces with prolonged occupations near spaces of collection and hunting.
- Seasonal camps: spaces occupied by hunters and gatherers during hunting or gathering activities far from the base camp.
- Kill-sites are areas used to hunt animals. Generally close to marshy areas or close to natural enclosures such as caves or ravines.
- Cache: they are areas where they kept resources for hunter-gatherers and regulate their consumption.

Regarding the internal organization of these societies, there were predefined roles according to gender. Where men were engaged in hunting, carving and harvesting far from the camp.

On the other hand, the women carry out collecting and carving work close to the camp, as well as the care of the children.

From a holistic perspective, we can point out that both social organization and adaptation to the environment are appreciable in Far Cry Primal since the game strategies are based on the exploration and conquest of territory.

IV. FAR CRY PRIMAL FROM EDUCATIVE APPROACH: DEFINITION AND PROPOSAL

Far Cry Primal is a game that places its historical action in the Stone Age. In it we are *Takkar*, a warrior belonging to the tribe of the *Wenja* at war with the *Udams* (inspired by the Neanderthals) and *Izila* (connoisseurs of fire). The main purpose of the game is to gather its people, dispersed by enemy incursions to rebuild their village by collecting various materials such as: stone, wood, clay, meat, leather, beehives, healing herbs, bones ... Rebuild the village. As well as, develop weapons and tools necessary for cooking, hunting, taming, eating, climbing and fighting.

The action in the game is divided into several ecosystems present in the fictional region of *Oros*, which we could divide into European forest, mountainous and tundra. Each ecosystem or biome has its own vegetation and its own animals. And therefore, the materials present in each biome change. For example, in the climatic zone of tundra we will have to light fires constantly to warm us and not to die of cold or to take as an alternative to obtain better clothes. On the other hand, there is a day and night cycle. In which the interactions change, necessitating the presence of torches and the search for shelter when night falls due to the defenselessness of other predators.

On the other hand, interactions with *NPCs* (Non Playable Character) are made through conversations with a language invented by the same video game. We can interact with any human or animal in the video game. The interesting thing is a system of recruiting specialists to improve the prosperity of the town of *Wenja*. To do this, *Takkar* must search for shamans, inventors, hunters, tamers, herbalists, cooks and other specialists who will guide us to obtain their talents through knowledge of the acquisition of them.

It is a videogame of the category sandbox, of free exploration with principal, secondary missions and random events. The game system is simple, explore and learn about the environment. And based on that, it proposes a system of crafting in which we use the resources of the environment to make various weapons, food and ointments.

First of all, we need to impart three theoretical classes with traditional explanations and activities on prehistoric societies. These will be realized in order to balance the level of knowledge of the individuals involved in the research.

The activities we have proposed for the treatment of prehistoric societies and their development context. These activities have to be realized individual. Regarding the role of

the teacher, he should guide the students through the experience helping with indications and clues.

It is for this reason that the following activities have been proposed following the above mentioned indications.

TABLE I. TABLE OF ACTIVITIES WITH FAR CRY PRIMAL

Noun	Activities	
	Definition	Objectives
<i>Our nature friend</i>	In this activity students have 5 minutes to explore the environment around them. After that they have 5 minutes to collect materials, which they think are useful for some action in the game. The following is a brief explanation contextualizing the materials and uses given by these prehistoric peoples	-Evaluate the ability to observe. -Know the relationships you are able to establish regarding materials you know -Provide a new knowledge base on prehistoric peoples and the materials they used.
<i>The settlers</i>	After explaining the different settlements. We let them play freely for 5 days in the game to explore the world with the objective of finding types of settlement.	- Know the medium and adapt to the circumstances - Evaluate the decision making regarding unforeseen situations. - Determine the acquisition of knowledge
<i>We are not alone</i>	Previous explanation on the coexistence of Homo Sapiens and Neanderthals and the organization of prehistoric societies. Students must undertake a trip to see how the other two villages Udam and Izila are hunting and living. At the end of the activity you should make a small report and contrast it with the information given previously	-Knowing the organization of prehistoric societies. -Differentiate between Homo sapiens and Neanderthals by their morphology, cultural and religious organization.

We can observe that the proposed activities are adaptable to the academic level, being able to deepen in different aspects. On this way, we will complement this treatment with other resources such as books, articles, videos and other.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper is part of a larger study that is underway. In this study we are implementing theories, activities, challenges and discussion groups. Currently, we are making up the research so it has not been decided which methodology is the most appropriate, although qualitative tests (observation, anecdotal, discussion groups, etc.) and quantitative tests (pretest-posttest studies).

Concerning this research we hope to be able to get the students involved to acquire knowledge about prehistoric societies through the treatment of learning with commercial video games.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. Prensky, *Digital game-based learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001
- [2] J. McGonigal, *Reality is broken: why games make us better and how they can change the world*. New York: Penguin Press, 2011
- [3] J. P. Gee, *Lo que nos enseñan los videojuegos sobre el aprendizaje y el alfabetismo*. Archidona, Málaga: Ediciones Aljibe, 2004.
- [4] D. Levis, *Los videojuegos, un fenómeno de masas: qué impacto produce sobre la infancia y la juventud la industria más próspera del sistema audiovisual*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1997.
- [5] Navarrete, J. L., Pérez, J. P., y Gómez, F. J., «El pensamiento abductivo como fundamento ontológico de los videojuegos», *ICONO14*, vol. 12, n.º 2, pp. 416-440, 2014.
- [6] P. Lacasa, *Los videojuegos: aprender en mundos reales y virtuales*. Madrid: Morata, 2011.
- [7] G. Tost y O. Boira, *Vida extra*. 2015.
- [8] J. P. Gee, *Good video games*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007.
- [9] J.P. Gee, *Lo que nos enseñan los videojuegos sobre el aprendizaje y el alfabetismo*. Archidona, Málaga: Ediciones Aljibe, 2004.
- [10] F.I. Revuelta & J. Guerra, J. “¿Qué aprendo con videojuegos? Una perspectiva de meta-aprendizaje del videojugador”. *Revista de Educación a Distancia (RED)*, vol. 33, 2012
- [11] J.A. Fullola y M.A. Petit, *La puerta del pasado. La vida cotidiana del hombre prehistórico en la península ibérica*. Barcelona: Martínez Roca, 1998.