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GAMIFICATED FORMS: GAMIFICATION AND STORYTELLING AS TOOLS FOR TEACHING HISTORY

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Abstract: Debates surrounding the potential of games within new contexts have mobilized educators to search for applicable solutions that effectively contribute to student learning. Integrating gamification into educational environments proposes a dynamic that can promote knowledge sharing and active participation of students in the construction of their own knowledge. This article aims to analyze the application of a gamified proposal for the History subject with the aim of motivating and enhancing the learning of students in the final years of elementary school, through the development and application of a gamified form.
Keywords: Gamification; Teaching History; Engagement; Active Methodologies;

INTRODUCTION

We are part of a society marked by rapid advances in technology and science. Information sharing on a global scale has never occurred so quickly and effectively, so that the "short term" replaced the "long term", making instantaneity its ultimate ideal (BAUMAN, 2011). On the other hand, the educational scenario is still very much marked by traditional teaching models, in which the teacher is seen as transmitter of content and students are placed in the role of passive learners, with the duty to absorb as much as possible, in a mass manner.

Faced with new needs and a changing society, the paradigms of traditional education are being increasingly questioned. Technology, combined with academic discussions about the need to modify the educational scenario, has led to the emergence of many possibilities and approaches, which, for the most part, fall into the group of active methodologies. This set of methodologies and practices are helping to transform education and place students at the center of the teaching-learning process, so that it can occur in a meaningful and lasting way, transmitting the skills necessary for the new demands of the 21st century.

However, despite being a central theme in many current educational discussions, these changes face doubts and uncertainties on the part of educators. Implementing these transformations in the classroom is challenging, especially due to the persistent pressure for content and the high workload that teachers face in preparing plans and other activities.

A classic example of pedagogical practice is the application of questionnaires to consolidate content. Generally, this approach follows a simple dynamic: the teacher creates questions to be answered by the students, and at the end of the process, these questions are corrected. However, questionnaires are often seen by students as a mere assessment activity, where the only motivation is to obtain a grade. In this context, students tend to take quizzes superficially, without deep engagement or reflection, as the only motivation is the numerical result rather than the learning itself.

Especially in the context of History teaching, this reality becomes even more evident, since a predominant conception persists that this discipline is associated with a model of classes that are not very interactive, where the memorization of facts and dates is often prioritized. As a result, it is common for students not to feel connected to the content presented, facing difficulties in relating the knowledge transmitted to their daily lives. Faced with these challenges, the very essence of History teaching, which promote the appropriation of past events with the aim of associating them with the present and stimulating the conscious projection of the future, together with the stimulation of intellectual autonomy and critical thinking (SOBRINHO, 2014), often ends up getting lost.

As highlighted by Bacich and Moran (2018), active methodologies seek to emphasize the student's protagonist role, encouraging their direct, participatory and reflective involvement in all stages of the educational process. Among these methodologies, Gamification stands out as a relevant approach. According to Karl Kapp (2012), gamification involves the application of game mechanics, aesthetics and principles to engage people, motivate actions, promote learning and solve problems. By mobilizing strategies and tools that enable the active and autonomous participation of students, gamification is configured as an active methodology in the educational context.

Furthermore, it is imperative to consider the guidance of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), especially in its 5th competence on Digital Culture (BRASIL, 2017). This highlights the importance of using digital communication and information technologies in a critical, meaningful, reflective and ethical way, in order to allow students to become protagonists of their learning in a meaningful way. In this sense, the integration of digital technologies with gamification strategies aligns with the objectives proposed by this document, contributing to incorporating the new guiding principles of education in the 21st century.

The purpose of this article is to present a gamification initiative for the History discipline, using the Google forms tool. Inspired by an experience with 6th year students about democracy in Ancient Greece, the work seeks to contribute to the development of more critical and reflective teaching, aligned with the educational principles of the 21st century.

GAMIFICATION AND LEARNING

The concept of gamification refers to the incorporation of game elements in new contexts, aiming to increase people's motivation to carry out specific activities. However, it is crucial to understand that gamification is not just about introducing games; This approach does not necessarily imply participating in a game, but rather taking advantage of the aesthetics, structure and mode of reasoning present in games. The desired result is both to motivate actions and to facilitate learning or solve problems (MURR; FERRARI, 2020).

Given these considerations, the following question arises: when using a game to address specific content in the classroom, are we applying gamification or not? At this point, it is crucial to make a clear distinction between what constitutes gamification and what are known as serious games. Serious games can be defined as games created with the main objective of stimulating specific learning, that is, the purpose of teaching something through game elements is a priority since its conception (RANGEL, 2020).

Gamification is a broader process in which, according to Kapp (2012), game mechanics, aesthetics and characteristics are used to engage and motivate people to learn and/or solve problems. This way, the gamification process can be understood as the use of game design elements, for example, gaining visibility and rewards, medals, prizes for activities completed, launching challenges, using strategies, obtaining points to achieve objectives, to motivate people to achieve common purposes (ALVES; TEIXEIRA, 2014).

However, within the context of education, there are two ways to apply gamification strategies: through content gamification or structured gamification. According to Eugênio (2020), content gamification corresponds

to the application of game elements and aesthetics with the aim of changing content, making it more similar to a game.

Structured gamification would use the application of game elements to encourage the student to carry out tasks and activities, but without changing the content. In other words, they are mechanical proposals, such as points or medals, with the aim of encouraging the student to fulfill certain learning objectives, and may reward them.

In short, gamification, by proposing a learning process through the language and mechanisms of games, allows the construction of a pleasurable teaching-learning process. Therefore, its purpose is centered on awakening students' interest, in order to achieve their active participation, with a focus on developing skills such as: creativity, concentration and autonomy, in addition to helping to resolve problem situations.

REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY TEACHING

In recent centuries, pedagogical methods and the teacher/student relationship have often been marked by the authority of the textbook and the concentration of power and knowledge in the figure of the teacher, seen as an authoritarian figure. Faced with this scenario, the student was conditioned to a position of mere spectator, with a passive attitude, thus missing active, reflective and critical elements in the teaching/learning process (SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

Among the main strategies for carrying out activities were the preparation of "research", understood in this scenario as mere transcription work, in which students were instructed to copy texts from other books on the topics indicated by the teacher and the resolution of questionnaires to fixing content. Even with the advent of the internet and the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in education, such teaching practices were adopted by History teachers as a kind of "standard model", often used to this day. (FONSECA, 2011).

In the 1990s, Education historian Circe Bittencourt (1990) pointed to a tendency, on the part of students and even the school community, to place the Human Sciences in a position of disinterest and discredit. In the case of the History discipline, this situation can be related to a still prevailing view that this area of knowledge teaches things from a remote past, so that students experience great difficulty in establishing relationships with their lives and needs, especially when Pedagogical strategies are limited to the practice of copying and memorizing dates, names and even processes narrated by the teacher or the textbook.

The objectives for the History area for the final years of primary education, expressed in the National Common Curricular Base, propose the presentation of the dimension of space and time from the perspective of population mobility and the forms of insertion or marginalization of them in different cultures, in addition to developing skills focusing on processes such as contextualization, comparison, interpretation and proposing solutions (BRASIL, 2017).

However, these objectives disqualify the purposes of traditional teaching, aimed at the cumulative acquisition of information and, especially in the case of History teaching, characterized by the mechanical ordering of facts into causes and consequences, through a Eurocentric and linear chronology, highlighting only to the deeds of rulers, in a heroic and idealized view of the facts. According to researcher Flávia Caimi:

> "[...] All you need to do is talk to adults who have completed basic schooling, that is, people who have completed secondary studies, to understand how little remains of the knowledge studied in History classes.

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> Nothing more than disconnected fragments of facts, dates, names, often randomly superimposed, forming a "crazy Creole samba", as reported by Sérgio Porto in his song of the same name." (CAIMI, 2006)

From these reflections it is clear that there is a need to deepen research into new methodologies and teaching tools that can attract students' attention and motivate them in the study of the History discipline, justified by the need to renew this vision that has become consolidated regarding historical science and the essential duty of building a much more participatory and meaningful learning process.

GAMIFICATION AS A POSSIBILITY FOR TEACHING HISTORY

The development of gamification strategies, for any area of teaching, depends on the teacher's knowledge of game elements so that she can adapt them to gamify her content or build a structured gamification strategy.

However, to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to know which game elements are capable of allowing students to immerse and engage during an educational activity.

According to doctor in Engineering and Knowledge Management Raul Inácio Busarello (2016), in the construction of gamified proposals, for the creation and adaptation of the individual's experiences, it is necessary to appropriate the most efficient elements of a game - Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics. The Mechanics make up the elements for the game to function and allow guidance in the player's actions. Dynamics are the interactions between the player and the game mechanics. Finally, aesthetics can be related to the player's emotions during interaction with the game. Alves (2015) identifies the following elements of games: competition, cooperation, exploration, prizes and storytelling.

Characterizing these elements, competition can be understood as a resource that uses disputes with other participants as a way to boost participation. Cooperation, in turn, can be worked on within gamification through strategies that promote interaction between people, so that they can find solutions, arising from common questions or achieving goals proposed to the group. Exploration is based on the idea of, through games, promoting the discovery of new places, environments, times, people and cultures. The award is a resource to stimulate the participant's interest, through the attribution of rewards such as, for example, advancement to the next stage; virtual currencies that can be exchanged for other items; punctuation; experience bar that grows with each victory; medals of honor; trophies; highlights; positive feedback, among others. Finally, storytelling is the proposal to work with captivating narratives with the aim of involving the player who ends up being part of it, experiencing and participating in the development of the game.

All the elements mentioned above, with the necessary adaptations and through different tools and/or platforms, can be used in work that involves the use of gamification for History Teaching. However, considering that storytelling is a human act that dates back to time immemorial, even before the emergence of writing, when the knowledge obtained was passed orally from generation to generation as a way of safeguarding the memories and traditions of a people, we noticed an interesting possibility for working with storytelling within the History discipline.

If in the universe of games storytelling adds ingredients to turn captivating narratives into stories, involving the player who ends up being part of it, within the context of the classroom it can motivate students to place themselves collaboratively in a simulated

situation that requires strong reflection from them (COSTA, 2020). Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that the act of telling stories has the capacity to activate students' previous experiences and understandings about the topic, therefore being a pillar for the construction of knowledge.

A GAMIFICATION PROPOSAL THROUGH GOOGLE FORMS: AN EXPERIENCE IN ANCIENT GREECE

Starting from reflection on the potential of using gamification strategies, such as storytelling, to promote meaningful learning, we will now discuss an experience of developing a gamified activity using the Google Forms platform, which was carried out in 2021, with 28 students from the 6th year of the final years of Elementary School.

When starting work on the emergence of democracy in Ancient Greece, a great personal discomfort was always the extremely content-based and linear approach to the topic. In general, the teaching materials dedicate a few paragraphs to this topic where they briefly present the main discontents that emerged among the Athenian population and then present the main legislators and the measures they adopted and led to the emergence of the democratic system. Thus, working merely with the presentation of facts, this topic ended up being evaluated by students as difficult, boring or uninteresting.

Studying about gamification, I started to incorporate many tools into my classes that worked on aspects of competition, cooperation and awards. As examples, I could mention the use of templates and quizzes to gamify certain content. However, to motivate them to understand the historical context of democracy in Greece, I felt it was necessary for them to have the possibility of "traveling in time", of placing themselves within situations experienced by Athenian society at that time. After all, as seen previously, using stories as an element within gamified systems helps to provide relevance and significance to the experiences lived by the subjects.

Therefore, seeking to combine game concepts with narrative concepts, my objective was to create an interactive story, which would enable students to engage in the task and in relation to the content. Analyzing courses and material available on the internet, I realized that there was a possibility of developing a gamified activity, based on storytelling, through the Google Forms tool. Until then, the use that had been made of this tool had been aimed at preparing traditional questionnaires and evaluation activities, especially in the context of the pandemic. However, upon discovering the possibility of working with sections, I realized that it was possible to create interactive stories, since by asking an initial question with two or more options, and leaving the "go to section based on answer" option selected, the student it was directed to a different section, based on the answer given to that question.

The functioning of the gamified form can be compared to the "gamebooks" that became popular in the 1980s. According to Silva (2019), gamebooks are a hybrid textual genre that combined the "tree narrative" – a narrative that begins sequentially, like a trunk, and branches out over time, like branches - with an RPG-style rules system (acronym for Role-playing Game, a game in which participants interpret characters through rules and improvisation).

This is how the activity "An experience in Ancient Greece" was born. In this activity, the player assumes the identity of Niko, an Athenian olive oil merchant from the 7th century BC, and must help him, through his choices, to make important decisions about his work and personal life. The student's

choices can lead the character to good or bad situations, resulting in five possible endings for the character. However, considering that the main objective of the game is to work on the context of the emergence of democracy, throughout the character's trajectory, the student is forced to come to terms with problems of the period such as: debt slavery, the excesses of the elite eupatrid and how the lack of political representation affected the daily lives of Athenians.

But even without the use of badges, points and rewards, can the proposal presented above be considered a gamified activity? Despite being commonly used strategies within gamified applications, the use of these resources is often linked to extrinsic motivations, which can harm engagement and compromise student motivation. On the other hand, elements such as narrative, character visualization and problem-solving act exactly on the foundations of gamification, thus favoring engagement and learning to actually occur (KAPP, 2012).

According to Boller and Kapp (2018), when designing learning games, it is essential that they present two elements: a game goal and instructional objectives. The "goal of the game" would be what the player will have to do to win the game. In the case of the activity developed on Google Forms, the goal of the game would be to reach a "happy ending", that is, one where the main character does not end up dead, imprisoned or forced into exile from Athens. The instructional objectives would correspond to what the player must learn from the game, in this case, the social and political context of Athens at the time of the emergence of democracy.

Another element that is part of the reality of games, and can be incorporated into gamification strategies, is the possibility of the individual making mistakes and having the chance to recover, being able to repeat a given mission several times. In the learning process, this freedom to fail in activities allows students to increase their involvement through fearless experimentation (BUSSARELO, 2016). In the proposal with a gamified form, students had the possibility of playing it several times in search of other possible endings, being able to review their choices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After applying the activity, in order to analyze the results regarding student engagement, a questionnaire was administered to the two 6th Year classes, totaling 28 students. The following questions were asked:

1) Have you already carried out any activity on Forms?

2) Did you enjoy the experience of carrying out a gamified activity on Forms?

3) Do you think that an activity like this helped you in learning the content…

4) From the list below, which tools do you think help your learning the most?

5) What did you like most about this activity? (Ancient Greek Gamified Form)

6) Would you like to carry out more activities in this format? Why?

Regarding the first two questions, all students responded affirmatively, showing that they were familiar with the platform and interested in the new format of the activity. When asked how this activity helped in learning the content (Emergence of Democracy in Ancient Greece), the answers were as follows:

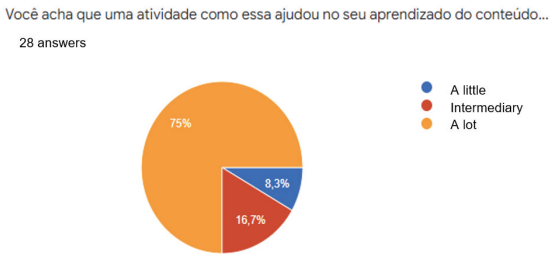

Figure 1 - Question on the applied form

The data shows that the majority of students had a very positive perception of the activity and its impact on learning content that, until then, was normally seen as boring and boring. Furthermore, another interesting piece of evidence, relating to gamification, appeared in the question regarding the tools that, in their opinion, most helped learning:

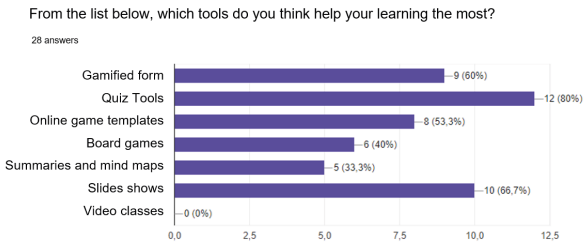

Figure 2 - Question on the applied form

The results show that students prefer gamified teaching strategies, to the detriment of more traditional approaches such as preparing summaries and mind maps. However, our attention was drawn to the large number of students who opted for the "slide show", which may be an indication that students still feel the need to resort to more traditional forms of study when being assessed through tests. written. In the last question, when asked if they would like to carry out more activities in this format, all students responded affirmatively.

In the open questions, in relation to which aspect of the activity they liked most, the answers from most students indicated that they liked the interactivity and the possibility of exploring different scenarios. Regarding how the activity helped in understanding the content, the vast majority of responses highlighted that they were able to understand more clearly the political situation at the time.

This way, the analysis of the students' responses shows that it is not the History subject that is difficult to understand or uninteresting in itself, but the way it is taught has a direct impact on the way it is seen and learned.

In this sense, we realize that the current pedagogical context encourages us to adopt new languages to mediate the teaching and learning process, such as video, music, photography and, more recently, games, which support the teaching process. and researching historical facts, opening our horizons to new historiographical perspectives (MOITA, 2010).

Another important element to highlight is that, throughout the application of the activity, according to the end that was reached by the student and the time it took them to complete the activity, it was possible to identify the students who had more ease with the subject and those who were experiencing greater difficulties. According to Schneider (2015), personalizing means that the activities to be developed must consider what the student is learning, their needs, difficulties and evolution. Therefore, an activity in this format can also provide the teacher with mechanisms for personalizing teaching, by providing data about the student's decision-making process and which outcome he was able to obtain. This way, it is possible to plan differentiated learning paths for students who have more difficulties or who require greater challenges.

CONCLUSION

Given the thorough analysis of the results and the theoretical foundation presented, we infer that the gamified pedagogical practice, implemented through the innovative use of a tool already inserted in the school routine, was effective in motivating students to assimilate the history content in an interactive way. This method sparked interest in a topic often considered difficult and uninteresting.

It is crucial to highlight that the proposal outlined here, with the necessary adaptations, has the potential to be adopted by educators from other disciplines, encouraging student engagement in different areas of knowledge. Furthermore, this approach can be integrated with other tools and applications, becoming an integral part of a more comprehensive approach to learning. However, we emphasize the importance of a careful analysis of the context to be gamified, to select the mechanisms that best suit the situation and educational objectives.

Although the concept of gamification is relatively new, its elements are constantly evolving, driven by the frequent launches of new digital games. This dynamic expands the possibilities of application in the educational context. Promising in the current scenario, gamification strategies prove to be valuable tools for overcoming historical challenges in the school environment, such as a lack of interest in certain subjects and, to a certain extent, undisciplined behavior. Therefore, I hope that this article can be an impetus for future investigations into Gamification in Education and History teaching, inspiring the continuous development of innovative practices.

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