

CASE STUDY: STARDEW VALLEY A TECHNOLOGICAL GAME AS TOOL TO ENRICH ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to present a case study with two first year high school students for the use of the Stardew Valley game in English learning. The theoretical framework is based on the principles of digital culture (PRENSKY, 2001, 2010; PALFREY; GASSER, 2011; ZOLTÁN, 2001; BRASIL, 2016; among others) as a way of integrating it into the classroom environment in the Brazilian context, in which students can consciously appropriate games and technologies. Regarding the methodology, this research is characterized as a qualitative case study (GERRING, 2019) and uses an interview as a research instrument. The data were generated in a sequence of classes given in the English language discipline at the Escola Estadual de Ensino Médio Melvin Jones (EEEMMJ). The results show that the Stardew Valley game can contribute to innovative learning for students, when leaving, for example, traditional teaching practices, as technologies allow students to connect to their everyday world outside the walls of the school. In addition, the teacher needs to adapt to the digital world and help the student to be autonomous in their learning. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that pedagogical innovation through games needs to be taught, to help the student from his needs.

KEYWORDS: Case study; Stardew valley; Motivation; Digital technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Games should be understood as integral tools in the educational process and not as underestimated tools, since, according to Mattar (2010) This is how the education of our young people is today, in school the content, which is decontextualized, the student has to memorize, passively and individually, but in games, learning in simulations that the player himself helps to build, is active and collaborative. In other words, integrating games into the educational

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context implies the possibility of performing multiple functional activities.

Thus, when analyzing the profiles of generation X (born between 1965 and early 1980), Y (born between 1983 and early 2000) and generation Z (born from 2000 onwards), it can be seen that in the first generation, people were born in a more analog environment, while the last two generations were born in a more digital environment. Prensky (2001) creates a definition for these two groups, the term digital immigrant, for people who were born and raised in the pre-digital era, and digital natives, for those who grew up with the digital world in their daily lives.

Prensky (2001) introduced these terms in an attempt to understand the universe of young people and adults in relation to the use of technologies. Shares that digital immigrants learn as such, some better than others, adapting to the environment, but always keeping their accent, that is, one foot in the past, almost always using technological resources in second place instead of first. Generations X and Y were socialized differently than Generation Z, who are learning a new language, and that language learned later, according to scientists, enters a different part of the brain. On the other hand, digital natives are frequent users of internet, video games, smartphones, computers, tablets, smartwatch, and other digital resources, that is, as stated by Prensky (2001), they are the new native speakers of digital language.

Thinking about all these aspects, Prensky (2012) introduces the term digital wisdom to everyone who was born, grew up and adapted to the digital world. He points out that digital wisdom arises from the combination of the mind with digital technologies for the development of the human being. Still according to the author, such combinations point out that digital wisdom can and should be taught and learned, regardless of age group, improving thinking and understanding of use of/with digital technologies. The immigrants of the past are increasingly accustomed and adapted to the use of technologies, as they learn to use a smartphone, social media, internet, computer, among others, in full and according to their needs.

In view of these considerations, the objective of this article is to present a case study with two students of the first year of high school for the use of the Stardew Valley game in learning English, which leads us to answer the focus question: “What is the perception of these two first year high school students for the use of games in teaching and learning English?”.

2. INTERNET

In Brazil, the Brazilian Media Survey 2016 (PBM, 2016) proven that teenagers and young adults aged 16 to 24 years are the ones who spend the most time using the internet. The

survey was conducted by the IBOPE³ institute, at the request of the Special Secretariat for Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic (SECOM), given the report, "the survey revealed frequent and abundant internet consumption" (BRASIL, 2016, p, 8). More than 15 thousand people were interviewed in all national territory from 23rd march of 2016 to 11th April of 2016.

As pointed out by the research Brazil (2016),

The data obtained by the Brazilian Media Survey 2016 confirm the importance of using the internet as a resource for obtaining information. Almost half of the interviewees (49%) mentioned, in first or second place, the world wide web as a means of "getting more information about what happens in Brazil". (p.48)

The percentual is high, and the numbers are impressive, according to the research, the PBM 2016 verify that teenagers and young adults between 16 to 24 years are connected to the internet during the week for 06 hours and 17 minutes average, on the weekend in the Midwest of Brazil the average is 05 hours and 04 minutes that is significantly superior to the average of all country that is marked by 04 hours and 32 minutes, 40% of the adults between 25 to 34 years old are connected with the same frequency. The number falls for 34% between 35 to 54, and the number becomes interesting when compares with adults of 55 to 64 years old because, in this age range, the percentage of daily use of the internet increases again to 40%.

Assuming that average is constant, in a year, we would have young people more than twelve thousand hours connected, producing, sharing, and consuming information on the network. Thinking about the daily hours of a young people and adults, we can conclude that they are practically the same, and technically the adults would be their teachers.

As we analyzed, due to the introduction of technology in this century, our society is going through significant changes and significant transmutation. Technological tools increase our capacity for communication, sharing and distribution of information. The internet has brought with it a new universe, full of possibilities and resources to facilitate our daily lives. Prensky (2001) affirms that,

Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer people our educational system was designed to teach. Thus, is fundamental to rethink our educations methods in a way to comply with these 'new' students that, according to the author, are called "Digital Natives." (p.1).

³ Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e Estatística.

This term is because they are linked in this digital era, and these students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors (PRENSKY, 2001). In their book Palfrey, J. G., & Gasser, U. (2011) says,

Digital Natives live much of their lives online, without distinguishing between the online and the offline. Instead of thinking of their digital identity and their real-space identity as separate things, they just have an identity (with representations in two, or three, or more different spaces). (p.4)

We observe that the Digital Natives are immersed in daily technological life, they do not think about it, it is natural, automatic, they born and grow up living with digital tools in their lives, so in an educational environment it should not change. Prensky says Digital Natives can learn quite quickly, as well as being able to perform multiple tasks at the same time and in parallel. They prefer graphics to text, like to be connected, wait for instant gratification, and frequent rewards, and prefer games to 'serious' work (PRENSKY, 2001, p. 3).

Until these days, teachers who did not born in the digital world, who according to the author, are called 'Digital Immigrants', are facing issues to teach digital natives, Prensky (2001, p. 3) explain that "It's very serious, because the single biggest problem facing education today is that our Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language." As the author says, Digital Immigrants generally appreciate truly little the new improved skills that digital natives have acquired and perfected over the long years of interaction and practice, and these skills for immigrants are almost entirely foreign, and so they choose to teach how they learned, slowly, step by step, one thing at a time, individually, and above all, seriously (PRENSKY, 2001, p. 4).

According to Prensky (2001),

Unfortunately for our Digital Immigrant teachers, the people sitting in their classes grew up on the "twitch speed" of video games and MTV. They are used to the instantaneity of hypertext, downloaded music, phones in their pockets, a library on their laptops, beamed messages and instant messaging. They have been networked most or all of their lives. They have little patience for lectures, step-by-step logic, and "tell-test" instruction. (p.4)

Digital Immigrants believe that the students are the same as they have always been, and the same methods that worked for the teachers when they were students will work for their students now, but this hypothesis do not work anymore, they are different now (PRENSKY, 2001, p. 4).

So, what should happen? Should the Digital Native students learn the old ways, or should their Digital Immigrant educators learn the news? Prensky (2001) says, no matter how much immigrants may wish it, it is highly unlikely that the Digital Natives will go backwards, may be impossible, because in the first place, their brains may be already different, kids born into any different culture learn the new language easily, and forcefully resist using the old. And so, unless we want to just forget about educating Digital Natives until they grow up and do it themselves, we had better confront this issue. And in so doing we need to reconsider both our methodology and our content.

Sharing the same opinion as Cortella (2014, p.53) who says, “it is not technology that makes a modern mind. But a modern mind does not refuse technology when it is needed.”⁴ The innovation is it not only in the technology, but either in accept and make projects to change this reality and include technology in the classrooms. According to Valente (2008) technologies and digital recourses need to be join in the classroom in a balanced way, have to be meaning and the use have to make sense, used to encourage knowledge construction, otherwise, for students will be just to be a digital recurse and no changes will be taken place in the teaching and learning process.

2.1. STARDEW VALLEY

A role-playing video game (RPG) is a video game genre where the player controls the actions of a character immersed in some well-defined world, usually involving some form of character development. Many role-playing video games have origins in tabletop role-playing games and use much of the same terminology, settings, and game mechanics. Other major similarities with pen-and-paper games include developed story-telling and narrative elements, player character development, complexity, as well as replay value and immersion. The electronic medium removes the necessity for a gamemaster. RPGs have evolved from simple text-based console-window games into visually rich 3D experiences.

Stardew Valley is a simulation role-playing video game (RPG) developed by Eric Barone “ConcernedApe” and published by Chucklefish. Initially released for Microsoft Windows in February 2016, versions became available for the major eighth-generation video game consoles, the PlayStation 4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch, from late 2016 to late 2017. Mobile operating systems iOS and Android received versions in 2018 and 2019. In Stardew Valley world the player assumes the role of a character who inherits their grandfather's

⁴ Our translation.

dilapidated farm. The game is open-ended, allowing players to take on a variety of activities. These include growing crops, raising livestock, mining, foraging, selling produce, and socializing with the residents (Non-player character) of the nearby Pelican Town, and to other players online, including the ability to marry and have children. The multiplayer feature supports both local area network and remote online connectivity.

This game, in my opinion, it is especially useful for English classes due to the open-ended style, which make the game explorable, making possible to use the components of it, like, teach students the seasons of the year, parts of house, furniture, fruits, vegetables, how to sell or buy something, learn how some recipe is written in English, learn colors, flowers, name of some clothing, name of animals, and a bunch of other things. It is an amazing game, for the reason that it is simple, fun, and accessible in all electronic platforms.

3. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES ALLY TO MOTIVATION

These good feelings and energy that moves a learner to learn, we can call it, motivation. Zoltán (2001, p. 2) summarize that motivation is related to one of the most basic aspects of the human mind, and most teachers and researchers would agree that it has an especially significant role in determining success or failure in any learning situation.

Motivation strategies are particularly important to help learner do not give up his/her journey, even the most skilled adventurer can get lost along the way and feel unmotivated to continue. The learning process is not different, mastering a new language can be often lengthy and tedious, and the learner's enthusiasm and persistence are key determinants for success or failure and without motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language (ZOLTÁN, 2001, p. 5).

Which motivational approach could teachers use to help digital natives in the classroom? Bandura (1997) has a theory about motivation which he calls *self-efficacy theory* that refers to people's judgement about their capabilities to conduct certain specific tasks, and, accordingly, their sense of efficacy will determine their choice of attempted activities, the amount of effort exerted, and the persistence displayed, Zoltán (2001, p. 11). When we think about digital natives, one of the first possible activities that come to our minds that they might feel able to carry out, would be a task with technological methods. As it has been said before, they born and grown-up living with digital tools in their lives, so tasks that involve technology are part of their daily lives, they are already naturalized with them.

Another motivational approach that can be used it is called *self-determination theory*, this theory was created by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Vallerand (1997), it is compose for

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but in this case, only intrinsic motivation will be used to exemplify a good method, because intrinsic motivation concerns about behavior performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity, Zoltán (2001). What better than doing an activity that you enjoy doing it? In addition to learning, you will be dealing with something that makes you happy doing it. One more time we can stop and think technological activities can be sure-fire for digital natives, they are everyday in their phones or laptops, playing a game, surfing on a social network, or attending a class, and this event stay even more common in this tragic moment in which we are living, that we are mostly just connecting through technological means.

We still have a great lack of technology in our schools methods, and there is a huge paradox for educators, the place where the biggest changes have come is not our schools, it is in everywhere else but our schools (PRENSKY, 2010). In students' computes or smartphones, the access to information is more than immediate, and for this reason sometimes these young people are bored and resistant in our schools, Prensky (2010) explain that students are often hard at work learning *afterschool*, term he uses to “encompass informal learning through peers, the Internet, YouTube, television, games, cell phones and lots of other emerging opportunities”. These powerful tools are available to them 24/7⁵, and they are using them to learn and to grow more every day, for the reason that “they follow their interests and passions, often becoming quite expert in the process” (PRENSKY, 2010, p. 2).

Technology is a birthright of today's students, they want to learn with it, they want to learn differently than how it was in the past, schools need to keep up with the constant flow of information and different ways of communicating with the learners. Sharing the same opinion as Prensky (2010, p.2) “many of the same students who do not concentrate in school will sit for hours, for example, totally focused on movies or video games”. The author shares what we can easily see now every day in our English classes. Also, according to Prensky (2010) “they have learned to focus only on what interests them and on things that treat them as individuals rather than as part of a group or class (as we so often do in school)”. They yearn for something different in classes, but at the same time for a known choice for them, that is technology. Increasingly young people are now deeply and permanently technologically enhanced, connected to their peers and the world in ways no generation has ever been before (PRENSKY, 2010, p. 2). It is in the *afterschool* world, rather than in schools, that many of our kids are teaching themselves

⁵ 24/7 is an abbreviation that means "24 hours a day, 7 days a week".

and each other all kinds of important and truly useful things about their real present and future. (PRENSKY, 2010). The digital universe integrated into the school context can make students critical, creative, and reflective when acquiring information through the appropriation of technologies and digital media.

4. METHODOLOGY

This article is characterized as a qualitative case study (GERRING, 2019). As the author points out, the case study “is an intensive study of a particular case or a small number of cases that is based on data and promises to elucidate a larger population of cases”⁶ (GERRING, 2019, p. 69). Following this line of thought, Stake (1994, p. 236) says that “Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied.” Case study is not a specific method but a kind of knowledge.

The data for this research were generated in a first-year high school class, in the English subject at the *Escola Estadual de Ensino Médio Melvin Jones*⁷ (EEEMMJ). The teacher is graduated in Language Arts – English Language and it has been working in teaching field for twenty years. Twenty-six students in total were studying in person when generating data. The central purpose of the class was teaching students the subject of fruits and vegetables with vocabulary through the game *Stardew Valley*.

The classes occurred one time a week, with two 40 minutes classes. In total we had 160 minutes of classes, bearing in mind that I taught them two weeks. The materials used was: A television (which was used with an HDMI cable, generating audio and video), a laptop and a gamepad (both was my property).

In the first step, I took the students to the video room, and I introduced them to the game, illustrating them how to start in the game, how to create a new farmer, customize skin, hair, shirt, pants, and accessories. Besides, how to fill the blanks with name of farmer and farm, favorite thing, the way to choose animal preference, which was a cat or a dog and finally, choose a farm type.

⁶ Our translation.

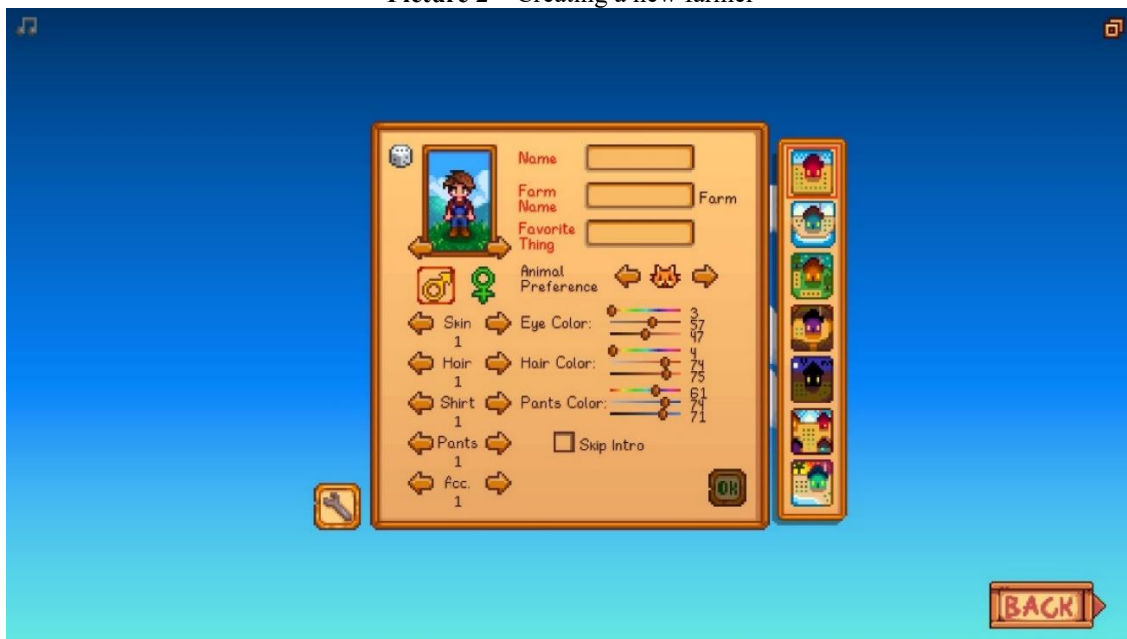
⁷ Melvin Jones State High School in portuguese

Picture 1 – Introducing the game



Source: Prepared by the author

Picture 2 – Creating a new farmer



Source: Prepared by the author

In the second step, I presented them how to start in a new farm, cleaning farm space to prepare the planting site, showing which tools to use for each situation and how to plant seeds and water them. After explaining the basic function of the game, I exhibited four game saves⁸, separated by seasons: winter, spring, fall and summer to facilitate the activity. In each save, I showed them fruits and vegetables available for planting and growing at that season. In each

⁸ Save is a player's progress information that is saved in the electronic game, available to be accessed later ensuring that the player can continue where they left off.

crop there was a plate with the image of the fruit or vegetable, I would move the character close to some plantation and ask students if they could identify the fruit or vegetable by the plate, if they didn't, I would give them tips until they got it right, then I spoke the name of the vegetable or fruit in English and asked them to repeat it, after I showed them the writing I requested them to add it to vocabulary in notebook.

Picture 3 – Cleaning farm space



Source: Prepared by the author

Picture 4 – Showing game saves



Source: Prepared by the author

Picture 5 – Showing fruits and vegetables



Source: Prepared by the author

In the third step, I informed them the task they would perform. I asked them to use fruits they had learned in the game to make a fruit salad recipe, and to do a group presentation in English saying which fruits were included in the recipe. On the agreed day, the presentations were made. The order of presentation of the groups was made by which groups were organized first, each group had 7 minutes to share what they had produced. After presentations were concluded, the tasting was allowed, the recipes were delicious.

In the fourth and final stage, two students from the class participated in the research for the case study, and the fictitious names chosen by them were Barbara and Jotaro. The first participant was 16 years old at the time of research, she has studied in public school since ever. The second participant was 15 years old at the time of research, she has studied in private school since kindergarten until elementary school and joined a public one in high school. The data generation process involved an interview, an instrument characteristic of qualitative research, the interview was audio recorded using an app.

Therefore, this article aims to present a case study with two public high school students about the use of the Stardew valley game in the English language learning process.

5. DATA ANALYSES

In this section, I present excerpts from the speeches and conclusions of the two research participants (Barbara and Jotaro), from the point of view of theoretical foundations and through data generation instruments.

5.1. Jotaro's Perception

Asking about the game Stardew Valley as an English language teaching tool, Jotaro demonstrates how pleased he was to see the game being used in the classroom. The excerpts below illustrate the observations:

Transcript 1: interview⁹

Jhessy: Did you like the game being used as an English language teaching tool?

Jotaro: **Yes, I liked it**¹⁰. SV¹¹ is a very educational game that is simple and easy to play.

Jhessy: Describe your experience.

Jotaro: SV was really simple, the class was basic and straightforward, taught a lot, we were studying about fruits and vegetables, and **it was great**.

Through his statements, Jotaro demonstrates how using a game in the classroom as a teaching tool can be rewarding. The student already declare that SV was an useful method to teach, being simple and easy to learn and play, he feels that he learned a lot. With Jotaro's considerations, we can see how the use of the game can involve and attract students' attention, and thus he agrees with the statements of Prensky (2012) and Silva (2013) when they point out that children and young people arrive in the classroom with little patience for lectures, systematic instructions for tests and are more distracted, when the subject does not attract your attention. Using a tool that students are familiar with on a daily basis, makes learning easier and adds a sparkle in the student's eye.

Still sharing the same thoughts, Jotaro agrees with Prensky (2010) when affirms today's students want ways of learning that make them see immediately that the time, they are spending on their formal education is valuable. Other observations by Jotaro were shared in the interview, when he pointed out, again, that a game used as a teaching tool, for him as a student, was something very motivational. The excerpt below illustrates this student's position:

Transcript 2: interview¹²

Jhessy: If games, as a teaching tool, were more present in foreign language classes, would you feel more motivated to learn?

⁹ Our translation.

¹⁰ I decided to highlight in bold some excerpts from the students in order to highlight relevant information, so that they can help me analyze the results of this research.

¹¹ Stardew Valley

¹² Our translation.

Jotaro: **Much more motivated. It would be a 'one hell of a cheer'.**

Jhessy: Did you feel that the vocabulary of fruits and vegetables became easier to understand through the game? What about reading and writing words?

Jotaro: **Yeah, it makes it a lot easier when you have writing, and you work on it at the same time.**

It can be seen that Jotaro was very satisfied with the use of the game with an interactive character in the classroom, and, for him, if this became something more present in the English language teaching method, he would feel much more motivated to learn. Possibly, the printed textbook and its static character will contribute to tedious and boring classes. Considering that Jotaro says the game in the classroom would give him a “one hell of a cheer”, we can analyze that he felt something was missing, and the game allows this to him, a reason to want to learn even more. The motivation fact can be understood, considering that Jotaro, as a generation Z teenager, has mastery of technologies and uses them frequently for various activities of his daily life as he grew up and developed in this digital environment. Therefore, Jotaro's ideas are in line with those of Prensky (2010) when he points out that today’s students want ways to learn that make good use of the technology because our students see a new world, their world, we need to teach kids to respect the past but to live in the future.

Considering that technology and games can transform the social practices of students and teachers and can make the environment participatory and interactive, in addition the learning English process can become interesting. I asked Jotaro about the game being used for the purpose of aiding vocabulary learning. As can be seen in the excerpt below:

Transcript 3: interview¹³

Jhessy: Do you think that, if the teacher used these games to teach the vocabulary of other subjects such as: seasons, places in the house, furniture, and others, that would be an interesting proposal?

Jotaro: **Yes, it would be. It would actually help a lot for those who don't understand**, because you see an object, work with the object, and speak, repeating the object's name in English **would make it a lot easier.**

In Jotaro's view, the use of RPG games would add a lot to the classes, helping students who have difficulty understanding, as the games have an interactive interface that allows students to see the object in focus and consequently interact with it. Thus, it seems pertinent to mention, considering Jotaro's speech excerpts, that technology and games can improve the

¹³ Our translation.

teaching and learning of the English language in the context of vocabulary acquisition and in the classroom, also adding that when students are engaged in a reading through a tool that drives them, this makes everything easier. This reality confirms what was pointed out by Yoshii (200, p. 151) apud Foohs, M. M., Tarouco, L. M. R., & Axt, M. (2005) “Through the use of electronic texts with the help of glossaries, it is possible to involve the student in vocabulary learning in a fun and captivating way.”¹⁴

Based on Jotaro's considerations, it is easy to see that pedagogical practice will be very favorable and benefit from the use of games and technology. For the student, this game can greatly contribute to pedagogical practices, updating and adapting to their reality, and naturally this vision can make a teacher seek new ways of teaching English. Teachers need to change their teaching practice to make it pedagogically mediated by digital technologies. Reinforcing with one of the specific competence skills of the BNCC¹⁵ Brasil (2018) which says we must explore digital technologies, understanding their principles and functionalities and use them in language practices in different contexts.

Jotaro shows us how much potential has a game and technology in the educational context these days, because a classroom without the digital world is very outdated. Jotaro shares how pedagogical practices could become easier integrated with games and digital technologies, because as a generation Z student, he shows that when the classroom is part of his world, it helps him learn English in a more interactive, motivating, and participatory way.

5.1. Barbara's Perception

In Barbara's comments, games are already part of her English language learning journey. According to her thinking, games could be used in the educational context and would enable new study conditions. Here is a snippet of her statement:

Transcript 4: interview¹⁶

Jhessy: Have you ever learned anything in English through video games?

Barbara: Oh, yes. **Already learned.**

Jhessy: What was the game?

Barbara: Minecraft.

Jhessy: Have you ever thought that a game could be used as a teaching tool?

¹⁴ Our translation.

¹⁵ *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*. (Curriculum National Common Base)

¹⁶ Our translation.

Barbara: **Yes.**

Jhessy: Considering the fact that we live in a technological society, do you think it is relevant for teachers to use games in the teaching process?

Barbara: **Yes.** I think it would be really cool like you did in the last class, **I think you explained it cool about other ways, 'get it?'** We get to know the game more **and it becomes a dynamic thing.**

It is interesting to observe Barbara's perception that technologies can help students move away from the traditional and possess more dynamic experiences in the classroom. Apparently, the use of technologies by the teacher immediately contributes to modern practices, according to Barbara's perception, who mentioned the differentiated method with the SV game that I used in the class, as something fun to use in the process of teaching the English language.

Following Barbara and Jotaro's reports, we can clearly see that, yes, technology makes all the difference when it is included in the teacher's pedagogical process, but we also know that this requires a new attitude from teachers to meet the new demands so that the changes really can happen. Moran (2012, p.119) says that teacher training cannot be punctual, but continuous and procedural, since pedagogical training has the ability to correlate between online and offline, as an example the English language, which has multiple digital technological interfaces at its disposal, and he completes saying that “in relation to students, today, it is important that they have a technological and pedagogical environment in virtual environments.”¹⁷

As mentioned in the excerpt of the interview, it is important to note that Barbara said she had already learned English with games before, which shows us again that today's students, living always in contact with technological resources, use games in their daily lives to have fun and also, to learn, reinforcing how games are something present every day in the lives of Generation Z students and how this makes games a motivational tool and ready to be explored in the teaching and learning process. I agree with Sandford, R., & Williamson, B. (2005). When they say:

“Games are seen to offer increasing levels of challenge, the gradual revelation by the learner of systems and rules governing individual interactions, and the experience of exploring and developing different identities and the tools and practices that support these. It is for these reasons that games are often held up as examples of powerful learning environments.” (p.4)

It is remarkable how games are a powerful tool for learning, in every game we can find a range of possibilities for use them as a method to improve our English or foreign language

¹⁷ Our translation.

classes.

Still from the perspective of learning through games, Barbara demonstrates with her reports that classroom needs to be an extension of the digital world. And this reality is confirmed by Leffa (2016, p. 82) when he reinforces that “the classroom is not a glass dome, isolated from the world, and what happens inside the classroom is conditioned by what happens outside”¹⁸. The digital world integrated with the classroom, according to Barbara, would be crucial to show other ways of explaining the subjects proposed in the classroom in a more interesting way. As we will observe once again in the excerpt of the speech below, which was also asked from Jotaro:

Transcript 5: interview¹⁹

Jhessy: Did you feel that the vocabulary of fruits and vegetables became easier to understand through the game?

Barbara: **Absolutely!** I learned **much easier**; I didn't even know that the apple wasn't ‘epəl’²⁰ (laughs).

Jhessy: Do you think that if the teacher used these games to teach the vocabulary of other subjects such as: seasons, places in the house, furniture, and others, that would be an interesting proposal?

Barbara: It would. **It would be very interesting, and it would be very dynamic, we would learn playing**, just like using a computer and these things **we would learn more easily**.

Like Jotaro, Barbara also agrees that the SV game has helped and would continue to help in the process of teaching and learning the English language. Barbara shared that until the time she studied fruits with the differentiated class in the game, she didn't know that the pronunciation she had learned with Steve Jobs' electronics brand, Apple, was not the same as the apple fruit. With this thought in mind, we can analyze that together with game in the classroom, the teacher has the opportunity to explore all the possibilities which this technology can contribute to teaching in the classroom, in this context, in addition to Barbara learning very easily the vocabulary of fruits and vegetables, he also had the opportunity to learn a little more about the pronunciation of foods.

As noted, Barbara shows that the benefits of using games for pedagogical practice refer to:

- search for new ways of teaching English;

¹⁸ Our translation.

¹⁹ Our translation.

²⁰ “epəl” is the phonetic transcription of Steve Jobs' multi-million brand, which Barbara thought was the same as the apple “æpl”.

- an interaction tool;
- a dynamic tool;
- an innovation for the teaching and learning process;
- a known and motivational method for learning.

Based on Barbara's considerations, there is a favorable inclination for learning through the use of games.

Barbara shares that the opportunity to learn by playing in the classroom would be the same when she was using the computer or other technological resource outside of it, and with this thought, we can analyze that even though today's students are not learning with games inside the classroom, they do not think this reality is separated of it. This reality is confirmed by Mattar (2010) when he says we are returning to multiple choice exams as students are playing richer and more complex games, we feel the lack of an educational future vision that deals with technology and works on the skills and competences necessary for young people to be able to participate properly in today's world, most of these skills have been little taught in schools and much more practiced by young people in the past moments of leisure, in games and virtual worlds.

6. CONCLUSIONS

“Anyone who makes a distinction between games and learning doesn’t know the first thing about either.” - Marshall McLuhan

This research intended to investigate the use of the Stardew Valley game in teaching of English language in a regular public school context. The theoretical framework was elaborated from authors who studied this issue and fields included in it. In this study we propose to discuss the use of the game and its applications as an important tool in teaching and learning of a foreign language, specifically, English language. Emphasizing games as learning resources, due to their great potential to be explored.

Teaching must be challenging for the student, which leads the teacher to increasingly seek and understand the specifics of digital technological interfaces. As we can see in this research, the two students felt more motivated through class. They emphasized that the game as a teaching tool promotes a more dynamic, motivational, participatory environment which facilitates their understanding. They claimed to have learned new words and new pronunciations, saying the game has an educational bias, well-designed and simple, which allowed for a more interesting learning process and, consequently, they learned a lot. They commented that games had already helped them in the learning journey and learning by playing

brought elements of their daily routine.

I emphasize, therefore, that the present research fulfilled the proposed objective, which was the Stardew Valley game as a tool to enrich English classes, as both students interviewed shared with their reports that the game used as an instrument added to the learning and teaching of English language.

In this perspective, I defend a digital pedagogical practice in which technological resources are used to seek creativity, creation, knowledge, and research for the teacher in the teaching and learning of the English language. Helping the student, who, when contemplated through this practice, can become autonomous and critical to manage their own learning, in an attempt to select, reflect, learn, share, and produce information with the potential and educational help of technologies.

Through this work, I hope to have contributed to show how the use of games are important and can be pedagogical tools in foreign language teaching. I demonstrate that these resources are available for use, however, it is essential to discuss their use in language teaching. Affirming through this research that it is necessary to reflect on the deconstruction of the idea that games as a learning resource are not suitable for the school context, and to discuss the availability of training that provide conditions for professionals to use games in an educational bias, thus contributing to the achievement of a more effective didactic work.

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