

## Designing Videogames for Foreign Language Learning

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### Abstract

In recent years serious games have been recognized as a powerful tool in education, attracting the interest of researchers from a huge variety of areas. Nevertheless, there is still a considerable lack of good videogames in the area of foreign language teaching. The present paper sets out to explore the use of videogames in the language learning process by describing the experiences the authors made while designing various computer games in a 3-D virtual environment. The paper will therefore start first with a short analysis of the specific features of videogames as well as their deployment in educational games and then continue by outlining the advantages of integrating them into a blended learning process. The aim of this analysis is to explore new ways of guaranteeing a highly interactive, motivating and effective environment not only in a face-to-face learning context, but also in an online learning environment. The latter is considered to be complementary rather than different from the dynamic of the face-to-face learning situation. Our work combines theoretical research in language learning with a number of empirical studies using a highly immersive environment developed to measure the effectiveness of serious games on the foreign language learning process. Additionally, the paper includes an evaluation of a large number of data based on pre- and posttests as well as student questionnaires, involving students who have been enrolled in the research project. This included different sets of Spanish university students. All of them have been enrolled for more than 8 months in a basic German language course (A 1) at the University of Cádiz and were used to communicating only in the target language. The project was carried out by various researchers from the University Autonomous of Madrid (UAM) and the University of Cádiz.