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**PROJECT: SING
LANGUAGE
RPG: EXCHANGE
EXPERIENCES AND
LEARNING FROM
EXPERIENCE**

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Keywords: RPG; Sign language; Teaching.

CONTEXT OF REPORT

Sign language RPG is a branch of the project “Libras Curriculum as L1: acquisition and teaching”, linked to the 2022 EPEC - Teaching, Extension and Culture notice.

Inspired by an observation made in class, we thought about the possibility of combining two subjects, initially unrelated, with the aim of filling (even if only a little) the lack of deaf entertainment for teenagers and working on their abstraction skills at the same time.

RPG is an acronym that, translated from English, means Character Role Playing Game. You could say that it is a gamified pretend game, with the application of some rules to bring weight to actions and consequences to partly simulate real life, but still with a fantastic aspect. The term covers several different systems with subjects ranging from insertion of players into the tales of The Chronicles of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table to great space odysseys in the distant future and can cover several important subjects for the learning process, which can be as broad as whoever is in the role of guide and storyteller in the group can develop.

With an interest in developing the playfulness of deaf teenagers in Rio Grande, the project uses the D&D 5th Edition system to show pilot students how to play in a medieval fantasy background. In a context where deaf leisure is limited, the game aims to present students with a form of entertainment that can be fully adapted and constructed by them and for them. Playing D&D provides a way to work on creativity by telling a story together, with them as protagonists in an adventure where the limit is only determined by the narrator’s imagination.

Its development took place at the Municipal School of Bilingual Education Prof.^a Carmem Regina Teixeira Baldino, with three students

from the ninth year class “Amizade”, assisted by the interpreter and teacher Lurdes H. G. R. dos Santos. The meetings consist of two hours a week on Monday mornings and began on March 20th. There is currently no deadline for the completion of the project by those involved in its execution.

ACTIVITY DETAILS

During the first two months, students were introduced to the game and rules, ways of creating a character and, finally, an example of a “campaign” through a film session (the title presented was the recent production: “D&D: Honor Among Rebels”).

Early on, the need to create a glossary was identified with terms that are highly used in the context of RPG and that are non-existent in Sign language to refer to species, classes, instruments, activities, among others. The preference is for these signs to be designed by the students participating in the project, giving them control over their own language and a leading role in a pioneering sign, given that research on the subject in digital media does not show consistent results on the subject in question. . Currently, there is discussion about a new branch of this specific project to focus only on the probability of this elaboration in a formal context. The game constantly worked with them on Portuguese vocabulary and reading and writing with intensity, especially during the process of building the cards.

Throughout the duration of the meetings, issues relating to the students’ experiences were also addressed, such as bullying and sexuality, with there always being space for moments of teaching breaks, clarification of doubts and discussions that went beyond the game specifically.

The project also presented itself as an opportunity for shared learning, as the applicator lacks fluency in the language and is acquiring vocabulary while exchanging

experiences with other members.

Beyond the classroom, there is involvement and interest on the part of the entire school community that accompanies the development and enjoyment of students who play with their entire body. After all, Sign language as a visual spatial language is not easily contained in the formal space of the table and chair. The entire room becomes the space where the characters are inserted and the description of their actions become the action itself. The game evolved into an improvised theatrical interpretation with the ecstasy of failure and success dictated by the roll of the dice and the consequences applicable based on the decisions made.



Figure 2: Film day, with example of the campaign

Source: Personal collection



Figure 1: First days, presentation of the game to students

Source: Personal collection



Figure 3: Elaboration and design of the characters

Source: Personal collection

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT

Suzuki and collaborators (2012) present, in the first chapter of *Playfulness and Education*, how important play is in a child's development. In later chapters he also classifies the types of games (the type used in the project falls into the "Fictional Games" category) and explains the skills and competencies worked in each typology.

The book also talks a lot about the importance of children having fun in the process, in addition to thinking about the pedagogization of each activity worked on, which is also what led me to think about starting the project in the first place: supplying, at least a little, the lack of entertainment in the deaf community. The children have shown a lot of interest and fun.

In the subchapter “1.3 The game and its contribution to childhood”, the authors then talk about the applicability and pedagogical potential of games. For the most part, these are competitive, develop protagonism (the winner and the loser) and tend to have pre-established rules (it is mainly from this chapter that my main reading interests lie. Cross-referencing the text with my RPG project in bilingual school, the main interest is to develop the protagonism of students - rejecting the roles of “winners and losers”, but reinforcing that of characters in an organic world where their actions have consequences - and improving their relationship with symbolism). Paraphrasing the authors:

[...] man is a symbolic being who constitutes collectively and who has the ability to think linked to the ability to play with reality, reproducing and learning as he can transform it. (Suzuki; et al, 2012)

To know the rules of the game in its entirety is essential for anyone who takes on the role of mediator. Your level of knowledge in the activity performed is what dictates whether the experience will be enjoyable for those who play or not, and pedagogical enjoyment is intrinsically linked to the fun and connection of participants.

Furthermore, rules are a way to develop a child's moral and ethical sense, talk about the consequences of cheating, how to deal with the frustrations of defeat, etc. Overall, it is a productive way to develop healthy behaviors if practiced regularly.

The authors also discuss Piagetian views on the game and its immeasurable importance for the constitution of human beings as part of a society.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the project is still ongoing, there are no definitive conclusions. However, not only has it proven to be a unique source of learning for pilot participants, it is also the source of entertainment that can give them the outlet to deal with the frustrations of being foreigners in their own country. By playing they discover things about themselves, the world around them, their interests and a whole universe of possibilities.

The applicator also acquires vocabulary and learns the language through experience and immersion, which in another context would be difficult, as she does not have easy access to other contexts where Sign language is as present and pulsating as within the deaf community itself.

We still see the possibility of evolving this subproject into an independent project, given that there is an educational and academic potential that has not yet been explored in the relationships between gamification of learning and the specificity of the deaf community.

REFERENCES

SUZUKI, J. T. F.; *et al.* **Ludicidade e Educação**. São Paulo: Pearson Education do Brasil, 2012.