HOW WII TEACH PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

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Background

The potential use of exergames in Physical Education and Health is surrounded by a growing discussion among practitioners, policy makers and researchers focusing on different expectations about the games. In this discussion there is, however, a need to further include issues about the learning content offered by these games, how the content is expected to be taught and about the potential consequences the use of games may have for learning and socialisation. This study focus on how meanings about health and the human body are offered by the game: What kind of teaching is delegated to the artifact when used in Physical Education and Health?

Focus of inquiry

The aim of this article is to investigate how images of health and the human body and are taught by using exergames.

Analytical framework and Research methods

The empirical study builds on the use of an analytical tool called “Epistemological move analysis”. Studies of teaching and learning have shown how teachers use different kinds of actions (for example instructive, confirming, re-orienting, generative, re-constructive and evaluative moves) in order to try to direct the meaning making in educational settings. In this study, these categories are used, developed and specified in the context of teaching in Physical Education and Health. The empirical material used consists of video recordings from sessions where the games Wii Fit Plus and EA Sports Active were played.

Research findings

The results of the analyses show how the games offer different kinds of epistemological moves: Instructive moves about the fit body and how to play the game, re-orienting moves used in order to help the players to modify their action towards a more relevant and effective way, generative moves used to help the players to think about how to play the game and confirming move about the players’ gaming. In sum, the “teacher” constituted in the game is a teachers who instructs, confirms and encourages the players to move and exercise their bodies. But it is not a teacher who, in contrast to teaching in other contexts, is able to help the learners to make investigations or to participate in argumentation and discussion about for example images of health and the human body. Teaching in these games is constituted as a behavioral modification focused on an idea about a pre-defined and ideal body not expected to be discussed in education.