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UK Teachers want computer games in the classroom

Fifty-nine per cent would consider using them in the classroom for educational purposes even though most tabloid papers brandish videos games as causing violence in teenagers

by Stuart Miles published on 14 January 2006

A MORI Poll investigating teachers' attitudes to mainstream computer games has revealed that 59% would consider using them in the classroom for educational purposes even though most tabloid papers brandish videos games as causing violence in teenagers. The poll was commissioned as part of Teaching with Games, a research project by NESTA Futurelab, an organisation that looks at the use of technology to transform the way people learn, and the gaming publisher Electronic Arts. The majority of teachers polled believe that playing mainstream games, such as The Sims 2, RollerCoaster Tycoon 3 and Knights of Honor as used in the test, can lead to improved skills and knowledge. For example, 91% felt that players developed their motor-cognitive skills, while over 60% thought that users would develop their higher order thinking skills and could also acquire topic-specific knowledge. The study also found that 53% of those who would consider using computer games in school would do so because they are an interactive way of motivating and engaging pupils. The Poll findings also highlights some barriers to the use of games in schools, noting a lack of access to equipment capable of running the games as well as a lack of strong evidence of the educational value of games. Angela McFarlane, Professor of Education at the University of Bristol and Chair of the 'Futures Group', comments: "Early research has shown some powerful outcomes in the classroom, but we need to understand how, when and when not to use games to support education".

