

Throwing Out the Dopamine Shots: Reward Psychology Without the Neurotrash

How to make a good videogame tutorial

One of the most important things of a game that it is commonly left out by many game designers are tutorials. Tutorials are the first thing that players experiment when playing a videogame, where they learn how to play and see if the game is worth the time. Even if they tend to be short and simple, they hide little tricks which play an important role over the player's addiction.

One of the main concepts that involve tutorials is progression, where clear goals are defined and a reward is assigned to it. In tutorials there are not physical rewards, they tend to be related with an immediate feedback, which is the key of getting the player addicted, that way they will want to achieve another immediate feedback. The crucial thing for that is to show the player how to do a certain action and afterwards leave them the control and let them show it because that is the other key to success, control.

Control is about letting the player feel that they pilot the plane, unless they choose to be controlled by the autopilot. So, in tutorials, they need a little guidance first and then the control is given to them. That little leading has to be clear (no ramblings and extra), with short phrases and given step by step, so the designer needs to know what players have to learn.

Another critical factor is that tutorials have to be a gameplay, this is because they need to be played through actions as a way to see if the player understands what the tutorial wants to teach because then, players want to know how are they going to apply those skills. Optional skill tokens in tutorials are a good way to put together what they have learnt before and show they master the controls.

Also tutorials do not need to be easy, they just need to have what it has been said before, a minimum representation of the gameplay. An example of that is the Dark Souls tutorial, where there is a series of enemies that help the player to test the combat skills, after they kill all that minions using the different skills, the player has to put together all that he has learnt in order to beat the boss, which is a representation of what the player is going to find later on the game.

To sum up, players need to play a minimal expression of a gameplay. The Dark Souls' way forces players to learn faster whereas another gameplay-tutorial, where is given a more peaceful space, like FEZ does not force players to learn faster but also they make them think better.

"Short version is not highlighted:150 words"

