Wargaming in Education

High School “C. and N. Rosselli”
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Italy
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The Project

Is it possible using the Board Wargame as a tool to teach? Yes, absolutely but all that glitters is not gold and in Italy it’s very difficult because there is a refusal of the word “Game” (not to speak of war...) as a teaching tool in the High School. You are going to see what we did to “breach” the wall and Headmaster’s doubts! At the end it has been a success because the Ministry of Education has funded our project in the last two years.
Wargaming is essentially an open ended exercise but three main aims can be identified:

1) To engage each student to “handle” directly the Historical event
2) To improve the personal vocabulary about a foreign language (English)
3) Self confidence and Leadership
Last year we used mainly two games: Wings of War and Commands and Colors Ancients. Wings of War allowed me to introduce some pupils to the WWI whereas the younger students could know something more about the Roman and Macedonian Wars by using the Borg’s games.
Equipment

- The equipment consists of about twenty boxes and some introductory slides about the Historical period, the main battles and the rules concerning each game.
Pictures from C3I mag
Operating procedures

• As concerns the second part of the School year 2016-2017 the Board Wargaming was taught by using the game system Commands and Colors (Ancients). Three students each table, two players and an assistant who already knew the rules.
A new way to run the class

- In the previous video you have realized the procedures applied for the classes. Please note that the teacher introduces both the Historical period and the game. Thereafter the role of the teacher becomes passive. Anyway please don’t put aside completely the traditional way to teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20th century classroom</th>
<th>21st century classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher centered</td>
<td>Student centered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passive learning</td>
<td>Active learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textbook driven</td>
<td>Research driven</td>
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<td>Focus is on memorization of facts</td>
<td>Focus is on what students know and can do</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners work in isolation</td>
<td>Learners work in collaboration</td>
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Six aspects of post game discussions

- Initial perception of the simulation
- The operating session
- The results of the simulation itself
- The learning achievements
- Feedback on the whole system

Students react in a variety of ways! Rules lawyers, loose cannons, shy students that are ruled by indecision. The experienced with computer games and others that had better to do something else!
Debriefing

• The aim of this project is to have a Didactic perspective. The teacher has to check what the pupils have learnt and which skills they have developed. But often our expectations are too high
Assessment

• A final test to assess the Historical topics
• Another one about the English Language (vocabulary)
• A final feedback about personal opinion
Numbers

• Participants: 48 students and three teachers
• (34 as regards the Board Wargame, 14 in creating a diorama about Waterloo, and other 22 attended the Role Playing School)
• One session a week (2 hours) from October to May
• School Championship and final Prize Ceremony
Future Developments

• Can the Board Wargaming become a real subject in the school? Surely we need to precise better the didactic objectives but above all in the Italian School I’m sure that we are far from that.
Syllabus 2017-2018

• However we keep fighting and also next year there will be a yearly course dedicated to the Board Wargaming. We are introducing new concepts like ZOC and Supply. Twilight Struggle (Cold War) and Churchill (WWII) will be introduced beyond the traditional hex and counter wargames.
Final notes

- A modified and simplified Metagame as Dire Straits can work at School too (role playing, wargaming and learning at the same time). Learn by doing that’s the priority. Wargaming could be considered also a professional activity tied to the Education beyond an obvious military approach.