MamApulia: Teaching Language, Culture, and Christopher Columbus

Alex Catti (October 03, 2017)

It’s never too soon for children to start learning a second language. In today's technology-driven society, learning other languages and cultures is becoming easier and more engaging than ever before. In order to help young students learn the Italian language and culture, and just in time for Columbus Day, the organization MamApulia is releasing a new "edugame" focused on the 15th century explorer.

It’s proven that the younger a child starts to learn a second language, the better he or she will actually learn that language. In modern society, technology is king, and it offers advantages to those studying world language. To help young students learn Italian is the organization MamApulia [2], and just in time for Columbus Day, MamApulia is launching a new "edugame" focused on the world-famous explorer Christopher Columbus. The game looks to teach both the Italian language and Italian culture to elementary-aged students.

Educating Young Minds

When teaching a foreign language, one of the most effective methodologies is to use the “target language” (the language to be learned) as the medium for instruction. A multimedia approach is also key in keeping students engaged, and it’s an easy way to obtain the latest content in the target language. MamApulia’s new “Columbus Game [3]” does just that; it allows young students to learn in the Italian language about the Italian culture.

The game begins with a brief introduction video in Italian about Christopher Columbus’s voyage. Following the video, the game consists of five short lessons and a brief quiz after each lesson. After all the lessons are completed, students are able to print their diplomas.

The Brains Behind the Game

The Columbus Game is part of a larger project called Italia in Gioco–The Beautiful Country Explained to Children [4]. Italia in Gioco is a series of edugames aimed at teaching students from ages 5-7 about Italy’s vibrant culture. The games include lessons on Julius Caesar, Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, and many more. Regarding the games, creator, curator, and art director Mirko M. Notarangelo believes that “through the use of new technologies, we can translate knowledge and skills in an eye-catching way for younger generations.”

Notarangelo is also the president of the MamApulia Association, an organization that aspires to “represent the meeting point between different cultures by engaging in projects that aim to create and spread a culture inspired by the protection of human rights, promoting the values of social solidarity, peace, multi-ethnic culture, hospitality and aggregation.” MamApulia additionally “aims to encourage the promotion and innovation of the Apulian local system, to represent the many excellences that abound in the region, not only tourism but also cultural, environmental, food, industrial and artisan, by promoting a better understanding of the success factors that characterize our region, ensuring the quality of its products and a high level of supply for the benefit of those who want to embark on a journey to know Apulia.”

To play the game, click here. >>> [3]

To learn more about MamApulia, click here. >>> [5]

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