

Writing Across the Curriculum: A Focus on Video Game in the Classroom

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Ever since I was a kid I have loved video games. As I grew older I did not grow out of this love. I enjoy talking about the new game that are coming out with my students. There are quite a few things they are doing in the games that can apply to learning that they don't even know they are doing. As an avid gamer I was surprised to hear about Minecrafterdu at the Michigan Science Teacher Association Conference in 2014. The presenter discussed the many educational applications of this video game I loved just as much as my student. Since then I have been inspired to find ways to bring gaming into my classroom. This past year I received a mini grant to purchase the Minecrafterdu program and have been playing around with it ever since. In the past year there has been tension on the idea that subjects are stand alone, each with their own block in the day. Much of the staff believes in teaching across curriculums. With this continuous discussion I was brought back to Minecraft. This program was built to be cross-curricular. My current research is a starting platform to look at the merits of other video game in the classroom and if they can aid in the idea of writing across the curriculum

[Dalporto, Deva. "WeAreTeachers: Writing Across the Curriculum: What, How and Why." Writing Across the Curriculum: What, How and Why. WeAreTeachers Staff. 2015. Web. 14 July 2015.](#)

We Are Teachers is a hub every educational need you can think of. There are focused blogs, worksheets and lesson ideas for science, math, social studies, ELA, digital learning and much more. The grade level of content appears to be widespread or easily adaptable. Teachers can easily use this source to find lessons they could implement in their classroom tomorrow. We Are Teachers is a community for educators who know what they are looking for. If someone were to stumble upon the site without purpose they would likely be overwhelmed but the sheer volume of information.

This is a good source to share with teachers that know they want to work across the curriculum or just want to expand their own subject base. If someone was unsure of what WoC meant they could find research through the blogs or article tabs. I would share this resource with teachers.

[Khine, Myint Swe. Playful Teaching, Learning Games New Tool for Digital Classrooms. Rotterdam: Sense, 2011. Print.](#)

Playful Teaching, Learning Games New Tool for Digital Classrooms is a collection of writings on video games and their influence on digital learning. One reading talks about how games allow for exploration in a way where students need to problem solve

and learn from their mistakes. To proceed students need to make changes to their approach. This can build on problem solving strategies. Unfortunately they address that commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) games are typically too expensive for whole class sizes. Then you use more independent game developers you can lose some of the great aspects of a game that was professionally developed. Another chapter goes on to address social protocol within gaming. This is likely something teachers will need to build and model with their students. An interesting aspect that Ang, Zaphiris and Wilson bring up in chapter 4 is that certain games can help foster language learning with the pairing of subtitles and speech. The book even goes on to talk about games and how they can prepare students for careers. This being an ultimate goal of almost every school.

Carson City philosophy is career readiness. We also have quite a few student especially at the elementary level that can struggle with language. This article adds great research in support in video games in assisting instruction.

[Squire, Kurt \(2005\) "Changing the Game: What Happens When Video Games Enter the Classroom?," Innovate: Journal of Online Education: Vol. 1: Iss. 6, Article 5.](#)

Squire starts his paper with an interesting idea. With the massive interest in video games of current students and the push for digital literacy "it seems the important question is not whether educators can use games to support learning, but how we can use games most effectively as educational tools." Kurt discusses how teachers through the years have always embraced technology until it did not fit with the social workings of school. Many teachers are hesitant about the appropriateness of games as well as dealing with some of the social issues that can come with online gaming. Squire observed a classroom that was using Civilization III to teach history. In his research he found a quarter of the students found the game too challenging and did not see the point. On the other end a quarter of the students absolutely loved the game and thought it was a great way to learn history. He brings up that not everyone is motivated to game. Some games are also just too difficult for some users. Kurt expands on the discussion of offering choice. This can address interest as well as reduce the difficulty of certain abilities.

Kurt shows that games can be used to teach. He also addresses a major counterpoint to video games in the classroom. Not every student will be interested in every game. He gives ideas on how to differentiate for students so that all interest and ability levels are met. This could be a great piece of data to address concerns for those who do not identify as a gamer.

[Kirriemuir, John. "Online Computer and Video Games." OECD Digital Economy Papers \(2005\): n. pag. Www.digra.org. University of Bristol. Web. 12 July 2015.](#)

Kirriemuir examines the obstacles that can come with video games in the classroom. The game itself is not the only thing involved Teachers have to think about the software and how it interacts with the computer itself. It is an online based game teachers need to look at things like servers and how to bring up the programs during instruction. Kirriemuir conducts a study that looks at two schools that are using games in the classroom. He calls these "pure games". This means the video game was originally created for entertainment purposes before it was utilized in the classroom. Kirriemuir addresses the obstacle that these games meet resistance because of this. In rebuttal he displays the many practical uses for "pure games" in the curriculum.

John describes how games can be used for a research project of a certain genre or time period. They are also useful in competitions and computer clubs for building technology skills. Teachers developed character analysis in the games much like they would do for a piece of literature. A science teacher at the school Kirriemuir was observing used a game to teach the physics in roller coasters. On page eight, Kirriemuir addresses issues teachers may come across with PC gaming software. These topics range from saving, price, appropriateness, and compatibility.

Kirriemuir looks at games that are what I believe more readily available for students. They do not go out of their way to find "educational" games on their own. I believe this takes a realistic approach to gaming in the classroom and closely relates the Minecrafteredu. The positive results experienced in these classrooms, although in England, can translate into an American classroom. There are many examples of how games were used across subjects adding evidence for writing across the curriculum debate at my district.

There is still much to research about video games in the classroom. Administration and parents may not easily believe that video games can be education. The data I have found builds a strong base about situations where gaming has already been implanted into the curriculum as well as how it can be used to write across the curriculum. I know of other teachers in the district that have had a strong focus on researching writing across the curriculum. I believe pairing our findings makes our cases that much stronger. Games are becoming more advanced with richer story lines, many of which touch on important social issues of today. There are many cons that these resources also addressed. I will need to evaluate what games are considered for use and how wide spread they will be in not only the classroom but the district. The pros of video games in our digital age are still plentiful.

Mode	Annotated Bibliography
Media	Paper/word processor
Audience	Teachers and administrators
Purpose	Provide evidence that video games can have a place in the classroom.
Situation	Working with our goal of promoting writing across the curriculum I took a closer look at how video game can help.