Literacy, learning and online games: challenge and possibility in the digital age
new worlds
communication
engagement challenge
friendship
skill
strategy
critical evaluation
identity
text and image
sound and movement
'reading'
'rewriting'
'interactive'
contexts
digital culture
cultural forms
online games
new representations
'embodied and online'
'new worlds'
communication
friendship
strategy
'interactivity'
learning
participatory culture
competition
identity
'reading'
enagement
symbol and space
'real world'
relationships
interactions
experiences
actions
relationships
'modernity'
new representations
online and sequencing
'Interactive digital cultural objects such as websites, DVDs, or online gaming environments are welcomed as unique learning environments where meaning is negotiated and constructed because users can manipulate, enter, explore, perform or even partially create their own forms of literary and representational content.'

Trifonas 2009 p.126
Engagement
Communities
Constructive
Enabling
Exploitive
Toxic values
Stereotypes
Unsavory
Unimaginative
ATTENTION!

I. Twitch Speed vs. Conventional Speed
II. Parallel Processing vs. Linear Processing
III. Random Access vs. Linear Thinking
IV. Graphics First vs. Text First
V. Connected vs. Stand-alone
VI. Active vs. Passive
VII. Play vs. Work
VIII. Payoff vs. Patience
IX. Fantasy vs. Reality
X. Technology as Friend vs. Technology as Foe
social
communicative
worlds
perspectives
knowledge
identity
energy
time
producer & consumer
play
avatars
‘cheating’
modding
forum
Games, literacy and curriculum
Learning Principles

3 The semiotic principle
20 The multimodal principle
36 The text principle
18 The intertextual principle
19 WHAT VIDEO GAMES HAVE TO TEACH US ABOUT LEARNING AND LITERACY
Literacy in the digital world of the twenty first century: learning from computer games

Australian Research Council 2007 – 2010
(Beavis, Bradford, O’Mara, Walsh; Applerley & Gutierrez)

Games
• 2 metro secondary state schools
• 1 metro Catholic boys college
• 1 regional Catholic boys college
• 1 independent metro school

Young people

Teachers

Professor Catherine Beavis
Griffith University
c.beavis@griffith.edu.au
Literacy in the digital world of the twenty first century: learning from computer games

- Games as cultural forms
- Students as gamers and participants in global culture
- Teachers, curriculum and pedagogy

Education: Joanne O’Mara, Christopher Walsh, Catherine Beavis, Amanda Gutierrez
Arts: Clare Bradford
Media & cultural studies: Tom Apperley
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melbourne High School</th>
<th>Melbourne High School</th>
<th>Melbourne boys Catholic School</th>
<th>Country boys Catholic School</th>
<th>Melbourne independent School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious games unit (Macdonalds game)</td>
<td>Game on research and assignment</td>
<td>Supercoach play and analysis</td>
<td>Game maker (ongoing)</td>
<td>Extended study of games, play, archetype, pitch etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamorama - class wiki</td>
<td></td>
<td>Younger children’s game play</td>
<td>Drama and games (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPT games</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rep’ntation of violence, GTA, Simpsons Hit and Run, News Media</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to the Herald Sun TAC SuperCoach Season. Take the role of AFL coach and selector and guide your hand-picked team to glory. Each week, the real-life performances of your chosen players - as assessed by Champion Data - will score points for your team. Coach the highest-scoring team of the week and you’ll win $1000 cash.

If your team tops the overall ladder after 22 weeks, you’ll win $50,000 cash and $5000 for a local footy club of your choice. Plus, a Ford Falcon XR6 utility for the best round score this season. Like a real coach, you’ll select, trade & bench your players in pursuit of the ultimate prize. The game is difficult to master, but easy and absolutely free to play.

Fix your Car Insurance price for 2 years.

Find out more
1 What kinds of literacy & learning, what kinds of texts are games?

2 Definitions of text & literacy, constructions of English, pedagogy, ass’t, challenges

3 How to recognise multi-faceted nature of games as text, action, narrative, play, socially, cult’rly
1. Exploring Digital Worlds

- Year 9 English
- ACMI
- Engaging learners
- Gee

Recommended games included:
- Cleopatra
- Myst
- Sherlock Holmes
- Nemesis
- The Godfather
- Beowulf
- Treasure Island
- Desperate housewives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Games as text</th>
<th>Games as action</th>
<th>Paratexts</th>
<th>Gaming Capital</th>
<th>Intertextuality</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on narrative games</td>
<td>Focus on the function of narrative elements in the game</td>
<td>No explicit invitation to draw on games paratexts.</td>
<td>Teachers developed gaming capital (and attendant insights) in order to design and teach unit</td>
<td>narrative games</td>
<td>Understand how mode shapes iteration, use and representation of narrative elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the quest narrative in games</td>
<td>Pitch requires recognition of play as well as narrative features</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ gaming capital, combined with the task, created a context for authority and confidence in presenting tasks</td>
<td>Use of games deriving from existing texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on narrative elements: plot, setting, character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compare digital worlds with worlds created in print texts</td>
<td>Compare and contrast how digital worlds are alike and different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guided essay task archetypes in novel and film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach about archetypes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Production: Create a pitch, use of ‘format of choice’ – ppt, webpage, word doc, Publisher etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporation of images into pitch</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Supercoach

- Fantasy Football
- Select team to score points
- Convergence media forms
- Different texts, critical distance & evaluations
- Intertextuality

“...you have to integrate the text with its fellow travellers, cross-contextualising them by one another, to get at the kinds of meanings being made and stored”

(Lemke 2007, cited in Alvermann 2008 p 15)

“Communication through images, sounds and digital media, when combined with print literacy may be changing the way we read certain kinds of texts, but online and offline literacies are not polar opposites. To reify distinctions between them serves mainly to limit understandings of how each informs the other”

(Alvermann 2008 p 16)
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>written format exists to frame action and change.</td>
<td>Playing the game requires constant input, refinement and change.</td>
<td>Players draw on texts specifically related to the game, eg HeraldSun statistics and advice, online forums</td>
<td>Players benefit from previous gaming capital derived from earlier playing of the game.</td>
<td>Players draw on multiple textual sources of many kinds: The Footy Show, Footy replays, Footy cards, photos, points tallies, radio commentaries.</td>
<td>print, still images Audio replays audio Visual replays presentations, statistical forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time not spent advancing game-based story lines ‘narrative’: players’ picks Team modifications dependent on ‘real world’ progress of ‘real world’ football players and their teams.</td>
<td>The game records action</td>
<td>In game online: commentary, tips top 5 players top 5 teams</td>
<td>Success builds gaming capital</td>
<td>Players rely on preexistent knowledge of AFL</td>
<td>Players create and modify their own teams online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Game provides a trigger for more action, into the future</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gaming capital contributes to ‘real life’ habitus and capita</td>
<td>Preexistent knowledge of fantasy sports games</td>
<td>Players create website postings on Supercoach forums, provide advice to others, gloat etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Game Maker

• Easy to develop games without C++ or Java
• Forms of literacy in game development
• Game genres, models, gameplay
• Community
• Narrative & progression
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient narrative and structural components for players to recognize: Genre Aim Purpose of play.</td>
<td>Games conceived of in terms of: action fun to be played. Design to facilitate action</td>
<td>Students draw on examples from: other students Game Maker website. Video tutorials Game Maker WIKI postings and discussion</td>
<td>Preexisting gaming capital increased through making Gaming capital created if not existing previously. Gaming capital enters the classroom</td>
<td>generic conventions of other games: Shooter Find and seek Strategy Adventure Arcade, puzzle. Plot and narrative conventions. Wit and humour</td>
<td>Design as central to game making. Game making requires: visual spatial temporal imagination and design. Wide range of traditional and multi-literacies required in Design Creation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>