The Role of Video Game in the Cultivation of Literacy:

A Medium Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the connection between video games and literacy from a medium perspective. It examines how the form of video game will shape the content, and in turn induce influence on the cultivation of literacy. It also explores the relevance of video gaming to literacy in the context of literacy paradigm shift and the transformation of media environments.

Findings in the research suggest that the unique features of the video game medium lead to the formation of sensory, emotional, intellectual and content biases. Industry practices, derived from these biases, may then influence the selection, nature and presentation of the game content. The choice of content and the room to deliver high level conceptual knowledge are confined by the form. Hence the presentation of content tends to be graphical, simplified, gamified and modified.

Furthermore, this study indicates that the form of video game works on its content through several ways. The form of video game excludes the content which does not fit into its features, such as academic and in-depth content. On the other hand, the medium creates new forms of content by choosing plots and messages that work along its biases; and the content is often modified to fit the form. Through these ways, unique content for the video game medium is produced.

This study found that gamers can acquire a number of basic and fundamental literacy skills which can be applied to their daily life through video gaming. The video game medium also contributes to literacy skills necessary for social interaction, connection and participation. However, the medium does not play a positive role in cultivating high order thinking and reflection skills.

The study also found that gamers themselves play a role in the development of their literacy skills through video gaming. The results suggest that gamers acquired new sense ratio and have got adapted to a collaboration mode through video gaming. It is predicted that along with the advancement in communication technology and the transformation of media environment, the relevance of the game medium to literacy development may be increased.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION........................................................................................................... i
ABSTRACT................................................................................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..........................................................................................iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS...............................................................................................iv
LIST OF TABLES..........................................................................................................ix
LIST OF FIGURES.......................................................................................................xi
LIST OF APPENDICES...............................................................................................xii

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION...................................................................................1
  1.1 The debates: video game and literacy...............................................................2
  1.2 The medium of video game..............................................................................5
  1.3 The cultivation of new literacy.........................................................................7
  1.4 Research objectives..........................................................................................8
  1.5 Significance of the study..................................................................................8
  1.6 Organization of the Dissertation......................................................................9

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW........................................................................11
  2.1 The medium perspective..................................................................................11
    2.1.1 The form of the medium.........................................................................12
    2.1.2 Media as environments...........................................................................17
      2.1.2.1. The concept of media environments...........................................18
      2.1.2.2. The scope: media environment verses medium environment.....21
    2.1.3 The form and the content...........................................................................23
    2.1.4 Industry Practices...................................................................................26
  2.2 The study of video games..................................................................................28
    2.2.1. Defining video game: the nature, the elements and the scope..............28
2.2.2 The context: its gamers and its function.................................................33
2.2.3 Studying video games.................................................................34
  2.2.3.1 The study of game form and content...........................................35
  2.2.3.2 The study of gaming effects......................................................37
  2.2.3.3 Uses and consumptions of video gaming.................................39
  2.2.3.4. The existing gap......................................................................40
2.3 Conceptualizing literacy......................................................................41
  2.3.1 Basic, functional and critical literacy..............................................41
    2.3.1.1. The concept of literacy............................................................41
    2.3.1.2. Literacy and knowledge.........................................................45
  2.3.2 New epoch, new literacy...............................................................47
    2.3.2.1 Essential elements of literacy for today.................................47
    2.3.2.2. Torn between Traditional literacy and new literacy.............51
  2.3.3 Media, video game and literacy....................................................53
2.4 The approach of the study..................................................................59
  2.4.1 The technological and the social..................................................59
    2.4.1.1. Technological determinism versus Social constructivism.....59
    2.4.4.2 A modified medium perspective with a middle ground
      approach..........................................................................................62
  2.4.2 Research questions and framework.............................................64

**CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD**.........................................................68

  3.1 Research phases...............................................................................68
  3.2 Qualitative Interview........................................................................70
    3.2.1 Procedures..................................................................................71
    3.2.2 Profile of interviewees.................................................................72
    3.2.3 Interview questions.....................................................................72
3.2.4 Data Analysis Strategies.................................................................72
3.3 Quantitative survey...............................................................................73
  3.3.1 Respondents..................................................................................73
  3.3.2 Measurement................................................................................75
    3.3.2.1 Form variables.................................................................75
    3.3.2.2 Content variables.........................................................76
    3.3.2.3 Gamer variables.........................................................78
    3.3.2.4 Literacy variables.......................................................80
  3.3.3 Procedure....................................................................................84
3.4 Focus group study...............................................................................85
  3.4.1 Procedures..................................................................................85
  3.4.2 Participants................................................................................85
  3.4.3 Interview questions.................................................................86

CHAPTER IV THE MEDIUM OF VIDEO GAME...........................................88
  4.1. Medium features.............................................................................88
    4.1.1. Medium features of the video game.................................88
    4.1.2 Video game versus traditional game.................................94
  4.2 Medium biases...............................................................................95
  4.3 Industry practices..........................................................................99
    4.3.1. Industry practices driven by the medium.......................99
    4.3.2 Industry practice reinforcing the biases..........................104
  4.4 The forms shape the content.......................................................105
    4.4.1 The content of video games..............................................105
      4.4.1.1 Selection, nature and presentation............................105
      4.4.1.2 Entertainment versus Education............................111
    4.4.2 The form works on the content.......................................112
4.4.3 The adjustment by genres and platforms.............................................114
4.4.4. Non-formal factors..............................................................................116
4.5 Chapter Summary............................................................................................117

CHAPTER V VIDEO GAMING AND GAMING LITERACY..............................120
5.1 Gaming literacy of gamers..............................................................................120
5.1.1 Basic gaming literacy...........................................................................120
5.1.2 Functional gaming literacy...................................................................125
5.1.3 Critical gaming literacy........................................................................128
5.2 Variables predicting the level of gaming literacy...........................................132
5.2.1. General findings..................................................................................133
5.2.2. Hypotheses testing..............................................................................134
5.3 Chapter summary............................................................................................139

CHAPTER VI VIDEO GAMING AND DAILY LITERACY...............................142
6.1 Transferability of literacy skills....................................................................142
6.1.1 Basic daily literacy................................................................................142
6.1.2 Functional daily literacy.......................................................................143
6.1.3 Critical daily literacy............................................................................145
6.1.4 Factors influencing the transfer of skills and knowledge.....................147
6.2 Form, content and gamer variables.................................................................149
6.3 Chapter summary............................................................................................151

CHAPTER VII DISCUSSION.............................................................................154
7.1 The relevance of video gaming on the development of literacy...............154
7.1.1 Daily literacy for today’s society............................................................154
7.1.1.1 Limited relevance......................................................................154
7.1.1.2 The critical mass.......................................................................156
7.1.2 Evolution of gamers.............................................................................157