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Games, Gaming and Education*

Abstract

Video gaming is a pervasive activity in the lives of teens in many parts of the world. This paper theorizes videogames as semiotic resources and interrogates the literature bearing four fundamental questions in mind: What representations do video games foster? What are the learning outcomes generated by video games? What are the cognitive processes associated with videogame playing? How do teachers incorporate video games in their pedagogical designs? We seek to contribute to a better understanding of video games as cultural artifacts, indicative of the technological and cognitive development of our society and a driving force for the expansion of change.

Key words: *games, social semiotics, semiotic resources.*

Introduction

Different research initiatives have shown that video gaming is now pervasive in the lives of teenagers and young adults (Nielsen, 2008; Canovas, 2005). A study carried out in partnership with the Pew Internet & American Life Project has shown that 97% of American teenagers aged 12–17 play computer, web, portable, or console games. In Europe, The Entertainment Software Association (ESA) released its 2008 Essential Facts About the Computer and Video Game Industry (Nielsen, 2008). In this study, the UK, Finland and Spain were chosen to represent

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