Parallels Between the Gaming Experience and Rosenblatt’s Reader Response Theory

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Abstract
The world of literacy has expanded alongside technology, and new literacies are being used as an alternative or an addition to traditional text. By including video gaming as literacy, the connection can be made between students’ multimodal world outside of school and the world of literacy they encounter in school. This study took the approaches of a content study and a case study. A collective case study was used to examine the gaming experience of participants with three commercial video games from three separate genres: Sims FreePlay (simulation); Halo 1 (first person shooter); and World of Warcraft (role playing game). The 15 gamers were placed into three sets of five participants for each video game, and interviews were conducted to explore their gaming experience in relation to stance and transaction, which are major components of Louise Rosenblatt’s reader response theory. Content study of the three games enabled comparison of experience across genre.

Practical Application

The literature does not currently contain substantial research regarding how to assess the literary value of video games, so this study begins to add to the present literature by demonstrating that, at least for these games, the presence of components of relevant theory can be evaluated. This analysis of both the game and the experience demonstrated substantial parallels between the gaming experience and the reading transaction and the viability of using gaming literacy theory to evaluate literacy value. The strong motivation provided by video games could help teachers better execute strategies already used in the language arts classroom like researching and collaborating. By, The implication of combining a theory that has typically been paired with print text with video gaming widens the boundaries of literacy to include much more than traditionally considered.

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