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COMM 110

Dr. Darnell

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## **An Unfair Reputation**

**Topic:** How video games improve overall learning.

**Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience about the beneficial role video games play in modern society.

**Thesis Statement:** As it now stands, the greater part of society is unaware of the positive effects video games may have on one's learning and values.

### **Introduction**

**Attention Material:** (Show striking background image/PPT.) Imagine; expansive worlds filled with lavish scenery, well-fashioned plots, and endless adventure. Where the moral choice is not always apparent. A true test of one's critical thinking and split-second decision making skills. Ladies and gentlemen, *this* is the realm of video games (mute PPT). First originating in the late 1950s, video games have gradually been integrated into everyday life. Authors John C. Beck and Mitchell Wade state in their book, *The Kids Are Alright*: "Some 92 percent of American kids from age two to age seventeen have regular access to video games. Only 80 percent live in households with computers. By definition, anyone with a computer or an Internet connection has game-playing hardware" (3). Over the years video games have earned a negative reputation, their impact on society's youth being continuously disputed.

**Credibility Material:** I have grown up playing video games for the majority of my life, and find it offensive when others say they serve no purpose besides leading to violence and rotting brains. I personally like to believe my brain is well intact.

**Thesis Statement:** As it now stands, the greater part of society is unaware of the positive effects video games may have on one's learning and values.

**Preview:** When used in the right setting, video games have the capacity to help, from doctors in the operating room to new recruits in the military. A 2007 study conducted by Dr. James C. Rosser Jr. at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, NY, showed how surgeons in his laparoscopic surgery and suturing training program who had played video games greater than 3 hours per week performed 37% fewer errors than those who had played for less than 0.02 hours per week. Outside of the medical community, video games offer an innumerable amount of subtle rewards more applicable to us every day folks.

(**Transition:** Most opposition towards video games stems from the absence of experience and knowledge of actually playing a video game.)

### **Body**

- I. First, there are the benefits to one's mental and physical state.
  - A. According to Oberlin, Harvard, and Yale alum Marc Prensky, author of *"Don't Bother Me Mom-I'm Learning!"*, there are five "thinking skills that research shows enhanced by repeated exposure to [video] games..." (35).
    1. Representational competence is the ability to interpret visual images even in a 3-D context (35).
    2. Multidimensional visual-spatial skills is creating a mental map and/or strategy and determining the likely results (35).

3. Inductive discovery is also known as the Scientific Method (36).
4. Attentional Deployment is multitasking with killer reaction time (36).
5. Reflection is learning from experience (37).

B. Lea Lebrilla's 2010 article, *Top 5 Advantages of Playing Video Games*, published on EzineArticles.com examines how video games have improved certain health disorders.

1. They are most often used in the forms of physiotherapy.
2. They improve one's hand-eye coordination, and motor skills in a fun, enjoyable manner.

**(Transition:** In order for the mental and physical gains to be available, a video game must be of a good quality for learning.)

II. Apart from these mental and physical gains, Prensky also states how at its core, a good video game will provide five basic levels of learning: How, What, Why, Where, and Whether (64).

A. The first learning level is "How," or how one does something (64-65).

1. Encompasses anything from learning how to make your Pokémon evolve to the controls of a flight simulator.
2. Proof of this learning level working exists in everyday life, where we tend to get better at what we repeatedly practice.

B. The second learning level is "What," or "What are the rules?" (65-66).

1. Players learn the rules of the game as they play.
2. At some level, players are constantly comparing the rules and results of actions in the game to what they know about real life.

- C. The third learning level is “Why,” or the strategy within a game (66-68).
  - 1. Here again, players are constantly referencing real life to know the likelihood of how a situation should play out in a game.
  - 2. Players learn basic reasoning’s such as Cause & Effect, Long-term vs. Short-term profits, and the concepts of obstacles as motivators and perseverance presenting rewards.
- D. The fourth learning level is “Where,” or the surrounding environment (68-69).
  - 1. This stage is also called the *context* stage
  - 2. Cultural relativity comes into play, as well as how to deal with the characters in said environments.
- E. The fifth learning level is “Whether,” or the moral-based decisions (69-70).
  - 1. At this stage, many players ask themselves, “Am I doing the right thing?”
  - 2. Ideally this is where Reflection occurs and players think about the consequences their actions may have.

**(Transition:** In order to help clarify this information, please excuse me as I nerd out on you all to apply these five stages to an actual video game.)

- III. I present to you all a game I find to be an excellent representation of these learning stages: Dragon Age: Origins (show PPT).
  - A. The Hows the player have learned include basic input device function and game mechanics (i.e. how to attack, defend, heal, or persuade).
  - B. The Whats the player has learned include simple applications such as if you play with fire, it cause health loss.

- C. A Why the character has learned includes making his main player a tank and setting up his Artificial Intelligence Tactics.
- D. A few Wheres the player has adjusted for include the transition between an outside and inside environment.
- E. The big Whether for this area is yet another one of Bioware's staple dilemmas (mute PPT).

**(Transition:** The research I have presented today is only miniscule compared to the volumes of information available.)

**Summary Statement:** Despite their unfair reputation, video games have been studied and proven to provide benefits in regards to one's mental and physical state. In addition, the five learning levels of How, What, Why, Where, and Whether have taught us what it takes for a video game to be beneficial.

**Concluding Remarks:** (Show striking background image/PPT) I thank all of you for letting me share this personal part of my life with you. Hopefully you now consider video games to be more advantageous than what first meets the eye.

### **Works Cited**

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