



**EDUC 500: Research Methodology in Education**  
**Example of Problem and Purpose**

**Video Gaming in the Classroom: Insights and Ideas From Teenage Students**

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**Background**

Video games are an increasingly important aspect of students' lives. This is supported by the fact that current high school students in North America are the major consumers of video games. For example, according to the Nielsen report on console and PC-based gaming, over 80 percent of youth aged 11-17 have access to video games (Nielsen Company, 2007). More specifically, in British Columbia (BC) in the late 1990s, over 80 percent of teenagers already owned at least one video game console and on average spent five hours per week playing video games (Media Analysis Laboratory, 1998). In more recent studies, it was found that over 86 percent of Canadian teenagers play internet-based video games (Media Awareness Network, 2005). Popularity of video game play is growing and series such as *Call of Duty* and *World of Warcraft* epitomize this by becoming the fastest selling and highest grossing forms of entertainment, beating out Hollywood movies like *Titanic*, *Avatar*, and *Harry Potter* (the series). Scholars such as Squire, Gee, Krug, and Prensky have indicated the potential of video gaming in schools along with the currency of game and gaming literacies, yet development and introduction of video gaming into our classrooms is far from the norm. There are many viable reasons why video gaming has not gained a stronger foothold in the classrooms some reasons are the lack of funding, video gaming inexperience of educators, novelty, and social issues.

Through my own experiences and those of my close friends, I have discovered that playing entertainment video games have benefited us in more than just ways of passing time in a leisurely way. Being very much a tactical and visual learner, playing video games as a high school student often helped me grasp concepts or spark interest in topics I would have otherwise glossed over. I would like to take this further and compare my views regarding video gaming against the current generation of high school aged students. Furthermore, I want to take these insights and use them as a framework to determine how we could effectively implement video gaming as a learning method in our classrooms.

**Gaming and I**

My own experiences have brought me to studying video gaming in relation to education. I grew up playing on the streets with fellow neighborhood kids in a smaller city in The Netherlands. I was not allowed to watch television except for Saturday morning cartoons; most of my early childhood was surrounded by Lego and the outdoors. My early childhood was also primarily violence free; guns were not welcome in our household. Most of this changed when my older brother got his Commodore 64, in came the amazing 5.25" floppy disk and games such as *Elite*, *Boulderdash*, and *PitStop*. I was amazed when my brother developed a very rudimentary game that featured dodge-able

dinosaurs running across the screen...

### **Rationale**

My personal experiences are shared amongst many of my generational friends and peers. More importantly, my experiences seem to be only amplified in many of my students' lives, their lives seemingly orbit the release date of the latest mainstream games. I consider myself to be extremely lucky to have experienced the proliferation of the internet and video gaming as a student, but I am now perplexed as to how I would describe myself in relation to the internet and video gaming. If I did not grow up with YouTube, Facebook, or cellphones (smartphones), does emerging into an environment like this separate the new generation from mine? Do these markedly different experiences growing up affect how students want to learn or how they learn?

During my master's program I wanted to accomplish several objectives and goals. My primary objective was to determine how mainstream video games could be implemented as an educational strategy within the classroom. At first, I wanted to conduct quasi-experimental research study analyzing the effectiveness of teaching architecture and design through the *Sims*. However, upon further investigation I found that I was primarily designing this research study based on my own and other educators' views and opinions about teaching with video games. Therefore, I decided that before I conduct such research I should first determine what students' insights are regarding video gaming in education. Students are the focus of my research; I want my research to benefit their learning experiences in the classroom. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the following:

### **Problem**

The problem of this research study is to document, analyse, and synthesise a group of teenagers' insights into the viability of gaming in the classroom.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are current students' opinions and values regarding video games?
2. How do these students like to learn?
3. How do these students envision themselves learning through video games?

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the viability of mainstream entertainment video games in the classroom:

1. Should mainstream video games be used for educational use?
2. What would be the optimal educational strategy involving video games?
3. How should and can video games be incorporated into a classroom?