

Level-Up Script

Lawrence Deang

Instructor: Christopher Dean

[Intro Music: Mario 8-Bit Theme Song]

Host: Hello UC Santa Barbara! This is Larry, and you're listening to UCSB's only gaming podcast where we talk about everything video game — retro to newest releases. Listen up, parents, because today we'll be breaking down a bad misconception about video games and the effects they have on your kids who play them. Now most people think that video games do nothing more than rot your brain and attention span. And, being a gamer, I will admit that this can be true for *some* of the games out there. *SOME*. But definitely not all! Games like “Legend of Zelda,” “Tetris,” and “Portal” are all perfect examples, just to name a few. But for time's sake, we will just be focusing on one game. And if you've been listening to the background music, you know that it must be Mario.

[Insert Sound Effect: Its-a-Me Mario! & Coin sounds]

[Another Theme]

Host: Now for all you old timers, if you don't know who Mario is, then prepare to be schooled. Mario has been on the gaming scene since 1981, first appearing in the arcade game called “Donkey Kong” (McLaughlin). Since then, he has appeared on over 200 Nintendo video games, granting him more fame than Mickey Mouse (McLaughlin). His most popular games are platformers, and those are the type of Mario games we will be using in our discussion. More

specifically we're going to look at "Super Mario Bros" and the more recent game "Super Mario Galaxy 2."

Now back to the subject at hand. Playing video games has been said to do nothing but waste your child's time and rot their brains. But good games offer more than mindless fun. According to author James Gee, "games operate at the outer and growing edge of a player's competence, remaining changing, but do-able, while schools often operate at the lowest common denominator" (Gee 2). That means that the player has to use problem-solving skills learned throughout the earlier levels to combat the challenges in the later levels. In a game like Mario — **Insert: Its-a-Me Mario!** — one does not simply just save Princess Peach, one must learn how to use power ups and how to defeat enemies. Now in the earlier 2D scrolling "Super Mario Bros." game, it was a lot easier to save the princess due to its simple yet challenging gameplay. But Mario has come a long way since then, and so has the difficulty and learning curve needed to play games in today's generation. An example is "Super Mario Galaxy 2."

[Insert Music: Super Mario Galaxy 2]

Host: "Super Mario Galaxy 2" takes place in — well the Galaxy! The game's physics simulate actually being in space; you run around small planets, fly in space, and use a variety of different power ups in your quest to yet again save the princess. In this game, and like many other games played today, players are pushed to solve problems in order to advance. This can help children apply these problem-solving skills in real-life situations. Motivation is another thing children gain from playing video games. In "Super Mario Galaxy 2," the learning curve is definitely much steeper than its previous games, but keeps that learning curve is manageable due to power ups and tips from other characters in the game. Motivation is the willingness to make an

extended commitment to engage in a new area of learning. It is a driving force; if motivation dies, learning dies and playing stops. And since good games like “Super Mario Galaxy 2” are highly motivating, players learn how motivation is created and sustained (Gee 2).

Host: It’s time to get – **Insert: Dramatic Sound Affect DUN DUN DUUUUNNNNNN —**
SERIOUS (Deepen pitch and dramatize)

[Insert: Mario Boss Battle Music]

Host: Let’s try and take a step back from Mario and look at gaming as a whole. Playing is considered fundamental to the stabilizing processes that are essential for the development of cognitive structures. Through playing video games, children rehearse basic cognitive operations such as conservation, classification, and reversibility (Rosas 72). In video games, players also engage in “action at a distance,” where they control the actions of the character on screen. Cognitive research suggests that this fine-grained action at a distance actually causes humans to feel as if their bodies and minds have stretched into a new space (Gee 3). And with today’s games, multiplayer mode adds a whole new dimension in the ways kids interact and learn. When gamers play in multiplayer games, they often collaborate in teams, each using a different set of skills and sharing knowledge. In this way, video games may be a better site for preparing players for modern workplaces than traditional schools (Gee 1). They offer a place where gamers can congregate and team up to accomplish a similar objective — and that’s to win!

[Insert: Mario Underwater Theme]

Host: So are all games beneficial like Mario? No, but the point is that not all games are bad games that rot your kids’ brains. Video games hold more than just entertainment. They can teach

kids in ways most parents would never think of. Now if you're concerned about which games are like Mario, I would recommend you buy your child games like "Skyrim," "Pikman," "Rise of Nations," "Portal," "Legend of Zelda," "Tetris," and many more. Let your kids play video games with an open mind and remember, the most important reason they play them is to have fun. And on that note, I'll be talking to you gamers on the next podcast about "Halo 4" vs. "Call of Duty: Black Ops 2." Until next time, gamers! This is Larry, signing out!

[Insert Sound Affect: GAME OVER]

Works Cited

- Gee, James Paul. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. *ACM Digital Library*. Web. 24 Nov. 2012.
- McLaughlin, Rus. "IGN Presents: The History of Super Mario Bros." *It's-a Mario! A Look Back at the Greatest Franchise in Gaming*. (2010): 1-5. *IGN*. Web. 24 Nov. 2012.
- Rosas, Ricardo. "Beyond Nintendo." *Design and Assessment of Educational Videogames for First and Second Grade Students* 40.1 (2003): 71-94. *Science Direct*. Web. 25 Nov. 2012.

Metacognitive Essay

In writing class, our third big assignment was to write a script for a podcast which we would then record after. I will admit, when I first heard about this assignment I was completely put off by it. First of all, I had never done or heard a podcast beforehand. Second, it was vastly different from the past two big assignments and from any other assignment I have ever done for writing. Lastly, I hate the sound of my voice. So when the podcast was first assigned to us, I had a very negative view on the entire thing.

When starting to write my script, I didn't know what I wanted to talk about. Since you can talk about anything in a podcast, I didn't know which direction I wanted to take it. Some initial ideas I had was having an educational podcast for kids, an informational podcast about what types of tennis gear people should buy, or having a podcast about the 1990s. After some thought, I decided on writing about the 90s since I would have more content to talk about. But there was another problem; the 90s holds too much content, and it would be too broad. In order to get some help on what I should write about, I decided to go to office hours and ask Professor Dean about how I should narrow it down. He asked me what the first thing is that comes to mind when I think about the 90s and I told him "video games." After a good discussion, I was able to restrict my topic to writing about how video games can be beneficial to gamers and using Super Mario as an example to support my claim.

Writing the script was surprisingly very fun. Professor Dean helped me find sources by suggesting the author James Gee. I found his work was perfect for my topic and was very informative. While I was writing the script, I kept in mind that this is not like the last two papers in which I had a sense of professionalism. Here, it was different. I still had to have concrete

details and arguments, but I also had to make sure it was entertaining enough for people to actually want to listen. In order to keep it entertaining, I came up with the idea of making my podcast like a video game. In video games, there would always be background music playing that fit the types of stages presented. If it was a beginning stage, the music would be simple. If it was a stage far into the game, it would be more powerful. If it was the end boss stage, then the music must be very dramatic. If it were the end of the game, the music would be peaceful credit music to fit the end of the adventure. And finally to end off the podcast, it must be with the sound effect used for a “Game Over.” While writing, I thought about the background music that would go well with my podcast. The podcast soon became less of an assignment and more of a fun project.

When recording the podcast, I had more fun than I ever thought I would. Some challenges I had while making the podcast was learning how to use Garage Band and how to record my voice and insert music. Another challenge was that I was sick while recording the podcast, so talking for long periods of time became exhausting. Regardless, I was having so much fun learning how to use Garage Band and recording that it didn't really hinder me. I knew I wouldn't like the sound of my voice so instead of taking it really seriously, I decided to be more silly and record it how I think most radio people talk. I had fun with it, and I think the end result was that the way I projected my voice fit my topic well.

In the end, this podcast assignment became my favorite and the most fun I had out of the three papers we had. It was less serious than the rest, yet still challenged me in ways I have never been challenged before. The end result was an informative podcast about the benefits of playing

video games with Mario as the main mascot of the whole discussion. I had a lot of fun, and hopefully that joy is reflected in my podcast.

Author Profile: My name is Lawrence Deang, and I am currently a freshman at UCSB. My hometown is South San Francisco, and I am 19 years old. I m a biology major, but literature and writing have always been passions of mine. I hope to write a novel of my own one day.

Text Box: “Video games hold more than just entertainment. They can teach kids in ways most parents would never think of.”