

Game-Media Analysis

Summary

1. Subject(s): Critical Game Analysis
2. Topic or Unit of Study: Language Arts, ICT, Social Studies
3. Grade/Level: Middle and senior years
4. Objective: Develop analysis skills of game media and learn to present your analysis as a review or critique in a participatory culture project
5. Time Allotment: Typically 1 hour but can be extended.

Overview

Learning Context: This is a learning activity where students play games in class while completing an analysis concept map. This is a language arts, ICT, and possible social studies activity/assignment that uses playing games (digital or tabletop) as the central part of the lesson. It works best if student play and engage as a group. This is adaptable to different grade levels and abilities. You can use either digital video games or tabletop games (board or card games).

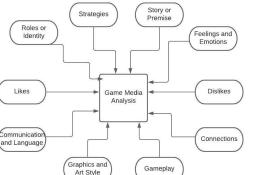
Sample Learning Outcomes

Senior 1 English Language Arts:

- Review and refine personal viewpoints through reflection, feedback, and self-assessment
- Structure and restructure ideas and information to extend current understanding and to broaden personal perspectives of the world
- Analyze and explain connections between previous experiences, prior knowledge, and a variety of texts [including books]
- Experience texts from a variety of forms and genres [such as essays, broadcast advertisements, romantic literature...] and cultural traditions; explain various interpretations of the same text
- Examine the use of a variety of techniques [including establishing setting, characterization, and stereotyping] to portray gender, cultures, and socioeconomic groups in oral, literary [including books], and media texts

Procedure

- a. **Introduction:** Ask:
 - a. Who plays video games?
 - b. Who plays board games?
 - c. What games do you play?
 - d. What do you like about them?
- b. **Direct Instruction:** Have a class discussion about how we analyze media and literature and develop a sample concept map for analysis and criticism. Touch on gameplay, graphics, perspective, art style, feelings, emotions, roles, identity, likes, dislikes, how you communicate or use language in the game, what connections you can make to other media or games, and what is the narrative, story, or premise of the game. Use the attached concept map as a guide



- c. **Guided Practice:** Analyze a sample game. Choose a game that everyone knows. Examples include: Fortnite, Among Us, Tetris, Monopoly, or Chess. Create a sample concept map on your whiteboard.

Ask lots of questions as this is ongoing to make sure everyone is understanding the process.

- e. **Independent Practice:** Students will play games in class while discussing and creating their own concept map as they play. Make groups of 3 or 4 students. Establish parameters and expectations on what types of games would be appropriate. Emphasize that discussion and recording is essential. Teacher check ins are important. Set firm time limits and use other staff if available. Allow approx 30 minutes for game time. Students should complete their concept map as a group during and after they play.

Suggestions for games: Mobile games such as Among Us work great. Digital web based games can be good if they allow multiple people to play. Short card games such as

Timeline also work well. If you have access to a gaming console, games such as the Super Smash Bros. series allow you to have up to eight players playing at once.

- f. **Closing:** Students groups should share their concept maps with the class when the activity has concluded. Display the concept maps on the walls of the classroom as well.
- g. **Next Steps:** Use the concept maps as a guide and resource for a participatory culture project. This could be a written game review that gets posted on a website such as Metacritic or BoardGameGeek. This could also be a more involved project like a video or podcast. *See my other resources at www.niallmcfadyen.ca or lnmedialab.blogspot.ca for ideas.

Materials & Resources

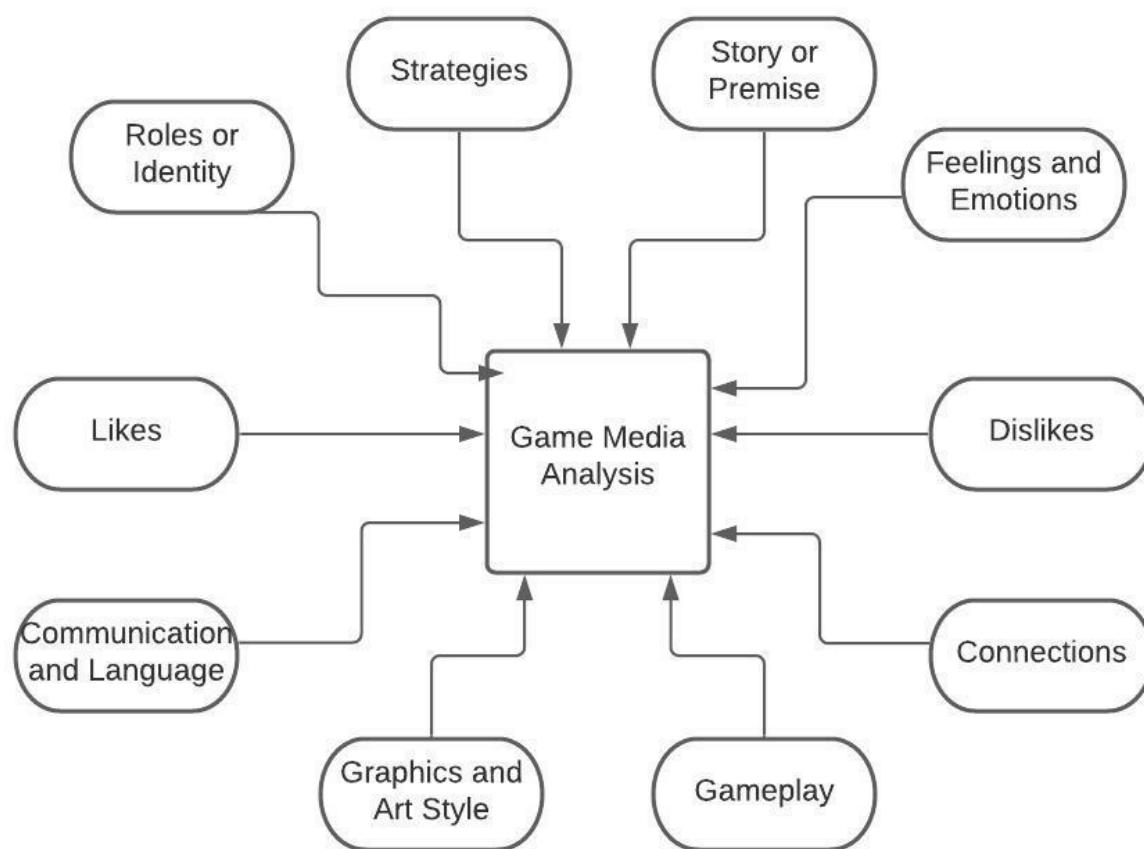
- a. Poster or chart paper
- b. Markers
- c. Games (either digital or tabletop)

Optional: Gaming console, computers, mobile devices.

Assessment: Take observational notes on discussions and student interactions as they play. Offer suggestions and ask questions as students play the games. Assess concepts maps and sharing when complete. In addition participatory culture projects can be assessed using different methods as well..



Concept Map Template



Sample Student Instructions

Name:

Date:

Games and Multimedia Analysis

Multimedia can be in many forms that include movies, websites, magazines, newspapers, video games, podcasts, and more. Sometimes you can define or analyze a form of media by its content and form. Form often refers to the technical, aesthetic, creative, or perspective-based aspects. Content often refers to what information or narrative it contains. Sometimes the form and content are intertwined.

When you watch or experience different forms of multimedia it can bring about different emotions and feelings. It may make you laugh, make you feel happy, you might get excited, you might get angry, or it might make you feel something else. At the same time, you may think about different things after or during your experience.

For example, I played the new Animal Crossing game for the Nintendo Switch. The game made me feel relaxed. This game does not feature violent content or any fast-paced gameplay. After playing it I was asking myself the question as to whether or not fast-paced or violent content is needed to make a "good video game".

For this assignment, you will create "A Visual Concept Map about the Game(s)"

In class, you will play a game as a group of 2-4 students. As you play, you will discuss the game. There will be a time limit of 20-30 minutes set for playtime. You are expected to play the same game together or at the same time.

This is a "Gameplay Media Analysis".

Use Google Docs or have one person fill out a poster paper.

Each person should use a different color

Discuss the games as deeply as you can.

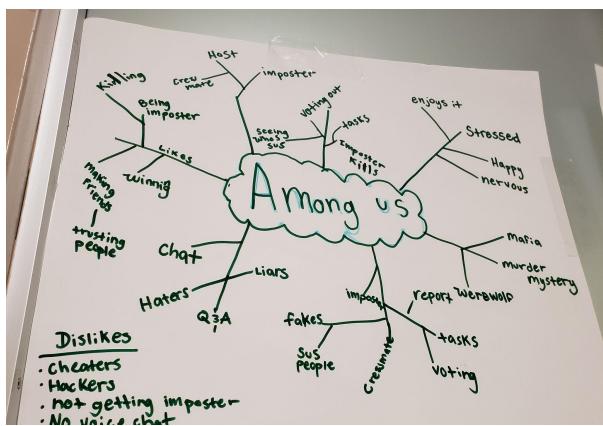
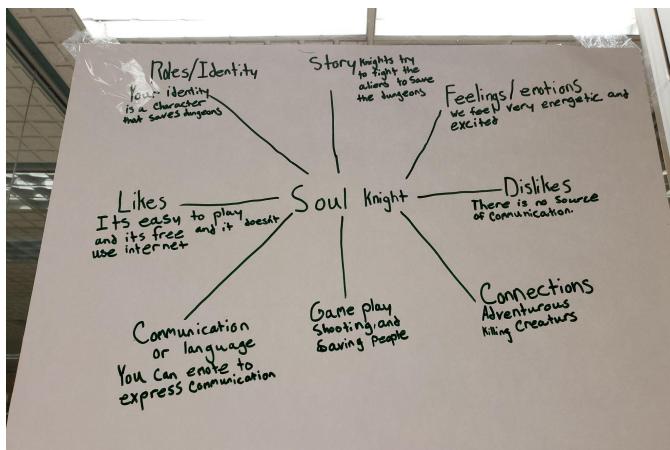
Talk about gameplay, graphics, perspective, art style, feelings, emotions, roles, identity, likes, dislikes, how you communicate or use language in the game, what connections you can make to other media or games, and what is the narrative, story, or premise of the game.

Write your group members' opinions and ideas on one sheet of paper

Organize your ideas in a logical, easy to read way (you may want to plan your organization before you start)

Possible Topics about the game:

Sample Student Concept Maps



References and further reading

deHaan, J. (2020). Game Terakoya class 1 walkthrough: Directing students' post-game discussions, academic work and participatory work through goals, curriculum, materials and interactions. *Ludic Language Pedagogy* (2), 42-69

deHaan, J. (2019). Teaching language and literacy with games: What? How? Why? *Ludic Language Pedagogy* (1), 1-59

Gee, J. P. (2003). What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. *Computers in Entertainment (CIE)*, 1(1), 20-24

Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A. J. (2009). Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century . MIT Press.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Video Game Theory and Analysis Course Resources:
<https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/comparative-media-studies-writing/cms-600-videogame-theory-and-analysis-fall-2007/>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Introduction to Video Game Studies Course Resources:
<https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/comparative-media-studies-writing/cms-300-introduction-to-videogame-studies-fall-2011/index.htm>

Squire, K. (2008). Video-game literacy: A literacy of expertise. *Handbook of research on new literacies*, 635-670.

The New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard educational review*, 66(1), 60-93.

York, J. (2019). "Kotoba Rollers" walkthrough: Board games, TBLT, and player progression in a university EFL classroom. *Ludic Language Pedagogy* (1), 58-114.