

VIDEO ESSAY

Society views video games in a negative light. Violent video games make children more violent, is the battle cry of many parents. Unfortunately, the way society categorizes video games becomes stereo typical and one-sided. Educators, and gaming enthusiast, believe certain video games can play a valuable role in society and the modern curriculum. Many well-known authors support this view.

James Paul Gee, the author of *Good Learning, Good Video* states, "Good video games are thinking tools. Their deepest pleasures are cognitive. The drug the video game industry discovered was learning - humans love it when it is done right." Interactive games can teach cognitive skills where arcade games teach hand/eye coordination and fine motor skills.

In the 1950's Vygotsky wrote, in his book "Mind in Society", children satisfy certain needs through play. Creating imaginary situations can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought. What better way to develop imaginary situations than today's role playing games, for instance, Sims, Roller Coaster Tycoon or Hot Dog Stand.

Perhaps, Johnson said it best, in "Everything Bad is Good for You" when he said, "Learning how to think is about learning to make the right decisions". One of the best problem solving, or decision making games, is Lemmings. This game teaches students to stop and think while strategizing and planning complex ways to save their Lemmings from imminent death.

Children learn through all different kinds of experiences. Video games may provide experiences they would not otherwise have. Simulation games, strategy games, and problem solving games bring fun into the classroom while teaching valuable learning skills.

Not all video games are appropriate for education; however not all video games should be viewed negatively. Eliminating all video games from the classroom would be eliminating creative vehicles for student learning. Play is fun, play is learning. Keeping play in learning will keep you forever yearning.