1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

Exploring Moral Dilemmas Through Video Game Playing

Abstract
The benefits and role video games play has been contentiously debated since their creation. Whether detrimental or developmental, researchers are finding, given the right environment and context, these diversions can be used not only to enhance problem solving and reasoning skills, but to provide a lasting ethical foundation for 'gamers' (Rice, 2007; Zagal, 2009). In this session, we outline benefits to be gained by incorporating ethically notable video games in the classroom, set aside time for teams to come together and 'live' in a virtual world, and dialogue about ethical experiences shared.

Keywords: Ethics, Moral Dilemma, Video Game, Technology

2) Teaching Implications:

Yong and Gates (2014) write, "Before leaving the college, today's digital native students will have spent over 10,000 hours playing videogames, over 20,000 hours watching television and over 210,000 hours communicating through emails, cell phones and instant messaging" (p. 102), defining 'digital native students' as those individuals who have developed and matured with modern technological advances around them. Yong and Gates (2014) problematize the situation, courses in this day and age are almost exclusively taught by digital immigrants, or those who have taught themselves how to use and speak this new language but operate with a pre-digital foundation.

What do we as educators and gatekeepers of knowledge do with this information? How do we work towards integrating two seemingly incompatible worlds; that of the invisible digital realm and the traditional and tangible classroom? Simpson (2005) suggests 'embracing the change', as "many commercially available video games can be used as learning tools in the classroom" (p. 21). Simpson (2005) makes note of video gameplay's role in teaching 'gamers' to be autonomous, to be competitive yet collaborative, to search for answers, and that there may be many routes that lead to the same end, among other lessons. Through the integration of new and old, professors and students are able to build a collection of shared experiences, extend learning beyond the classroom, and begin redefining roles of 'pupil' and 'teacher' (Simpson, 2005).

Research by Zagal (2009) expands teachings to include increased moral and ethical reasoning in students through gameplay. Zagal (2009) reports students reflect on their moral attitudes and behaviors through exploration of moral systems and tension created through diverse perspectives between players. In addition to provide valuable learning opportunities, ethically based video games help shape attitudes and behaviors as students are personally invested in the games they play and feel a sense of responsibility for in-game decisions (Zagal, 2009).

Video gaming is following a trend as it pertains to technological innovation. Rollag and Billsberry (2012) make special mention of how PowerPoint presentations and video clips and movies, once cutting edge innovations, have become commonplace and expected in the classroom. What is most intriguing is through utilizing students' personal digital devices, such as tablets, laptops, and cell phones, professors are able to build environments conducive to active learning and engagement, whether in a virtual classroom or one of brick and mortar (Rollag and Billsberry, 2012).

Having been dubbed the "Future of Education" (Chaudhary, 2008), game-based learning has the potential to revolutionize academe in ways the Academy has yet to see. However, as Becker (2007) writes, "the success of digital games as a medium for learning depends to a large extent on the abilities of new and practicing teachers to take full advantage of this medium." (p. 478). It is our hope as facilitators of this session to do just that, to help professors and future-faculty hone their craft in a way that not only allows their students to learn in the classroom, but via the digital world.

Learning Objectives
Participants will leave the activity achieving the following learning objectives:
1. Understand how to enhance ethical conversations through use of video games.
2. Understand how to create open discussions on ethical decision making that explore perspectives potentially different from those held.
3. Learn new techniques for incorporation of digital media for reaching students.
4. Experience alternative moral dilemmas through virtual play.
5. Learn about self, others, and ethical issues in society through experience sharing, inside and outside game play.
6. Leave with a new practice that can be applied in each person's individual classroom.

3) Session Description and Plan:

We believe the best method for demonstrating how to utilize 'gaming' and how effective they can be is through experiential learning. We have devised our agenda to maximize participants' ability to fully immerse themselves in the games and adequately reflect on their experiences. Each game takes roughly 30 minutes to complete. We have included a few minutes to introduce the objectives of our session and ourselves, time to get into teams and log in, and regroup afterward to discuss how the games encouraged ethical reasoning and reflection. We initially provide time after they have completed the exercise to synthesize lessons learned and how it applies to their own lives with a series of small group questions to consider. We then bring all teams together and debrief, concluding with ways they may implement these and similar activities into courses they might teach in management, ethics, organizational behavior, or social justice.

Agenda
Time Duration: 90 minutes

Welcome (5 minutes)
- Learning Objectives
- How video games can enhance the classroom - the student and instructor experience.

Introduction (40 minutes)
- Experiential Activity: Game Play. Split groups into teams of 3-4. Assign a game per each team.
  - Spent: www.playspent.org
  - Darfur is Dying: http://www.darfurisdying.com/
  - Ayiti – The Cost of Life: https://ayiti.globalkids.org/game/
  - Japanese American Internment: http://textadventures.co.uk/games/view/0zb070zmjuqe7_7-mg3aaw/inside-the-japanese-american-internment

Small Group Dialogue (15 minutes)
- What was it like for you to play these games?
- Did the games make you reflect on moral /ethical issues? If so, what ones? In what ways?
- Were your ethical views challenged? How?
- What dilemmas did you as a player face?
- Did you personally feel invested or responsible for the decisions you made in the games? How so?

Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)
- What was your experience like?
- How did the video games you played encourage ethical reasoning and reflection? Is the ethical framework desirable? Consistent?
- What role did a moral dilemma play in each game?
- How were ethical issues implemented?
- Were their moral rules you needed to follow? Was moral judgment utilized?
- What game actions were defined as "good" by the game? Explain.

Wrap-up (15 minutes)
- How could ethical thinking be enhanced in the games you played?
- As educators, how might you incorporate games into your courses?
- How might you find new ways of connecting to students through video games?

4) Application to Conference theme:

We as a society are well past the advent of digitized gaming. We are now able to look back and study trends. Moreover, Millennials, the generation that has had the opportunity to take full advantage of these technological advances, have inundated collegiate classrooms and are entering the academic workforce. Many grew up playing video games. In a traditional classroom, what is left out of its structure, content and process? What identities and interests are left at the door? We find the inclusion of such technology one method for 'Navigating the Changing Currents'. Our activity addresses all of the five proposed goals: developing effective classroom experiences for our students in the changing academic environment; providing unique ideas for utilizing changing and evolving technology to enhance the learning experience; creating a forum for demonstrating ethical video games as an effective tool to be utilized in higher education; generating dialogue on important topics related to the changing demands of higher education that need to be navigated; and as one of us has been teaching for more than 50 years, understanding the changing role of the educator through one's career and how one can navigate these changes.

The games chosen are oriented towards increasing awareness of social justice issues by allowing users to virtually "walk a mile in someone else's shoes." As one student wrote on the video game playing reflection assignment:

> "I found myself reflecting on which values in life I typically hold higher than others, and why I should balance each of these values more. I was often faced with ethical issues that involved working hard for my family, and putting aside the well-being of some of the characters, in order to save the rest of the family. Because I often hold education and happiness higher than other values, my ethical views were challenged, as [Ayiti – The Cost of Life] encouraged me to think more about how balancing all values is best. I faced dilemmas throughout the game that involved favoring a certain character over another, which resulted in death or health issues. I felt more invested and responsible for the actions I made in this game, because I was able to see how each decision I made personally affected the health, happiness, and education of each character."

5) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

This work has not been presented at any conference nor is it under review. We have not experienced use of video games for pedagogical uses at other OBTC conferences.

References

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