

Learning08: Methodologies and Practices for Approaching Learning as a Social Phenomenon Inside and Outside of School

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Video-playing as a site for developing media literacy

Literacy in today's world involves more than a capability to read and write (printed) texts competently. The multiplicity of communication channels and technologies, and the variety of cultural, ethnic and linguistic influences call for diverse and, at the same time, specified multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996). Children and young people's increased involvement in technologically mediated discourses sets new demands for both research and literacy pedagogies. Yet there is very little research investigating how young people interpret, evaluate and respond to discourses available through digital media. This paper aims to contribute to research in this area by analysing informal video gaming sessions as media literacy events and social activities.

The study is part of two ongoing research projects: 'Gender awareness in teacher education' and 'Gaming as a site for social interaction, literacy and learning'. The data is drawn from interactions involving two or more teenagers playing console-operated video games. In this paper we examine one session in which two participants are playing *Final Fantasy X*, a Japanese adventure game. Drawing on Conversation Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis we examine how players co-construct their interpretations and critically evaluate aspects of the game, for instance, the prevalent gender ideologies in the game world. Through the analysis of the discourses of the game and the interaction between the boys we show how the players enact media literacy by critically seeing and judging the ideologies and discourses of the game. Since video-games are designed as motivating and entertaining (informal) learning environments (Gee, 2004), we suggest, that the development of new pedagogies for media literacy could start by investigating these complex and multifaceted learning events and observing the ability and enthusiasm of young media users to critically explore the ideological discourses of the games and to participate in the activities and communities around game-playing.