2013

This Could Be a Game!": Defining Gamification for the Classroom

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"THIS *COULD* BE A GAME!": DEFINING GAMIFICATION FOR THE CLASSROOM

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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May 2013

The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013

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ABSTRACT

"THIS *COULD* BE A GAME!": DEFINING GAMIFICATION FOR THE CLASSROOM

By Darcy E. Osheim

Instructors find a gap between what they experienced in school in the mid-to-late 20th century and the experiences of students entering college in 2012/13. In the United States, the influx of almost universal access to technology has marked this generation in a way the previous generations must work to understand, and gamification is a strategy used in areas like marketing to gain participation from this age group. Gamification is a strategy that employs game mechanics, techniques, and theory in areas that traditionally are not set up to function like a game. The purpose of this study was to define gamification in the context of a college classroom. Using Foucault's concept of heterotopia, this study employs the method of heterotopian rhetorical criticism and the methodology of autoethnography to analyze World of Warcraft and re-imagine experiences in the game through critical communication pedagogy to enact change in the traditional college classroom. Three fundamentals of gamification emerged from the findings and laid out a general definition of gamification. It must consist of high-choice, low-risk engagements in a clearly structured environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One: Introduction

> If you are a gamer, it's time to get over any regret you might feel about spending so much time playing games. You have not been wasting your time. You have been building up a wealth of virtual experience that… can teach you about your true self: What your core strengths are, what really motivates you, and what make you happiest.
> – Jane McGonigal from *Reality is Broken* (2011, p. 12)

Instructors find a gap between what they experienced in school in the mid to late 20th century and the experiences of students entering college in 2012/13. This generation, born in the 1990s and known as the Games Generation (Prensky, 2001), Generation Me, or Generation Y, interacts so differently with the world than the generations that came before, even including the Millennial Generation caught between X and Y, born 1980-1989, though these dates are disputed ("Generation of American history," 2012; "List of Generations," n.d.). According to the Beloit College, the class of 2016 entering college freshmen has "always lived in cyberspace, addicted to a new generation of 'electronic narcotics'" ("The Mindset List," 2012, List number 2). Yes, these children might be considered lucky, surrounded by technology that previous generations not only dreamed of, but also worked hard to bring to life. However, in the United States, this influx of almost universal access to technology has marked this generation in a way the previous generations must work to understand. The technology that has always been available to the Games Generation continues to change the way humans think about the world. It is clear that if this technology has changed our lives as adults, it has almost rewired this younger generation to think differently than previous generations.

A YouTube® video illustrates how this rewiring of the human brain works. The video shows a one-year-old baby who is familiar with how an iPad® functions. As far as she knows, when she touches the screen, things move. She understands how to scroll through the different screens and how to zoom in and out through pinching her fingers on the tablet. She is then given a magazine, but when she touches this "iPad," it does not work. Nothing moves. She looks to her parents filming and shows her finger while babbling in baby talk as if asking whether her finger is broken. She even checks to make sure her finger is not broken but finds that she can still use her fingers. Why then does the magazine not work? The clip ends with a message from one of her parents: "For my 1 year old daughter, a magazine is an iPad® that does not work. It will remain so for her whole life. Steve Jobs has coded a part of her OS" (UserExperiencesWorks, 2011). The change in how children think is apparent in the learning capabilities of a child who cannot yet talk.

This situation is not an isolated incident. Students now learn differently than students did even a generation ago. The problem is instructors use "…yesterday's education for tomorrow's [students]. Where is the programming, the genomics, the bioethics, the nanotech—the stuff of their time? It's not there. Not even once a week on Fridays" (Prensky, 2005, p. 62). Teachers of all levels of education risk losing the interest of students when the choice of curriculum falls short of student need (Cohen, 2011; Frymier & Shulman, 1994). Educators must start looking at how students learn, and why learning occurs.

Games

  Gamification is a strategy that employs game mechanics, techniques, and theory in areas that traditionally do not function like a game. The word can be traced back as early as 2004 ("Gamification," n.d.), but the concept goes back further. The boy scouts, sports, and the military uses forms gamification, in which a person can gain a "level" or rank when successfully completing enough tasks (Geuter, 2012). New and digital ranking takes shape in gamified apps like Foursquare, in which a "player" is able to earn points, badges, and "mayorships" of businesses, homes, and other points of interest by letting friends and companies know that they are "checked in." Facebook® , which is one of the largest continually used collection of gamified applications (Schell, 2010), has the Words with Friends application that maintains 7.3 million daily users (Ward, 2012). Applications like these improve mundane tasks, by making them not only more likely to get done, but also enjoyable while being simple, pervasive, and easy to use. Apps like Chorewars and EpicWin help encourage people to finish daily and tedious chores (Lee & Hammer, 2011). Players experience internal motivation when completing tasks because the tasks are low-risk.

  Games are low-risk because players are not just doing, they are having fun. Games are play (Huizinga, 2006; Wright, 2007), and play is primeval education technology (Wright, 2012). Play differs across cultures, but collectively culture is inundated by play, because "play and culture are actually interwoven" (Huizinga, 2006, p. 100). Even animals play as a way to teach offspring survival techniques. Play allows humans and other creatures to master skills, concepts, and conflict resolution without

deadly consequences. In fact, some of the largest growth experienced in the early human experience is centered on play, and "… games often do a better job of teaching than decontextualized, skill-and-drill instruction" (Renaud, 2011, p. 59). As children age, they are introduced to specific acts of play that encourage physical or mental growth. "Playing with blocks is thought to lead to learning about: the physical properties of objects, hand-eye coordination, cause and effect, object permanence, and specific concepts related to shape and gravity" (Yelland, 2011, p. 6). Humans learn how to survive through fun or play. "Play can be deferred or suspended at any time," allowing for play and education to make way for more pressing needs (Huizinga, 2006, p. 103). More specifically, games are play with rules and limits that help to define play from other parts of reality.

Games are important to American culture. However, it might not be obvious that the gaming industry is responsible for 25.1 billion dollars of revenue each year (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2011). A consumer not only buy games, which is where he spend majority of the money, he also buys the platforms and accessories. Part of the reason that the gaming industry commands so much money from the economy is games are now marketed towards both men and women, young and old. Families also play together, meaning that games influence entire households. Mobile gaming has also expanded how we interact with games. As a new handheld platform, cell phones allow for constant connectivity not only to social networks, but also to games. For example, "65 percent of the 2 billion apps downloaded are games," reports Brian Chen of the Apple app store (2009, p. 1). This equates to over $175,000 per day as of

March 2012 (Hamilton, 2012). What motivates someone to play a game, whether video, computer, board or other? People do not play games for the thrill of beating Halo 4 or Skyrim, but rather for the experience each game creates: an adrenaline rush, a vicarious adventure, a mental challenge (*Why we play games*, 2004). Gaming is such a layered experience that it captures the interest of millions of people, or just over 63 percent of the United States population (Kuchera, 2007). The draw of this overall experience is apparent when examining who is playing games.

The average gamer has changed over the last few decades. In youth aged 12-17, 97 percent play computer or video games, and the average player has been playing for almost half of his/her life ("Video Games," 2012). The United States boasts over 183 million active gamers, outranking any other country besides China who has 200 million gamers (Brooke-deBock, 2012). Games are becoming the number one pastime in America. The average player spends roughly 13 hours a week, with hardcore gamers spending up to 45 hours a week in virtual worlds (McGonigal, 2011). However, these players are no longer fitting the stereotype joked about in so many sitcoms like *South Park* (Parker, 2006; Evey & Day, 2007), because players no longer uphold the stereotype of a 40 year old virgin playing in *his* parents' basement. Now, 47 percent of players are women, representing a section of gamers larger than teenage boys (ESA, 2012). According to the ESA (2011), the average player is 37 years old and has been playing for 12 years. Players also hold down normal jobs, have families, homes, and maintain lives outside of the games, but they choose to spend leisure time getting a particular type of fulfillment in a game that the "real world" does not provide. Games are no longer just a

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fun pastime; games are a normal pastime (Juul, 2010). Not so long ago, gaming was considered to be an "escapist" way of dealing with life's problems.

As the rules separate play from reality, one thing is for sure. Games are different from ordinary life (Huizinga, 2006; Wright, 2012). This is sometimes through simulation in which a game takes on a portion of real life, and distorts or changes it. Other times this is apparent when games parse reality, and they alter how life normally functions (Wright, 2012) such as Foursquare. Games are generally simple concepts that follow simple sets of rules that regulate game play. Those rules show players correct behavior through feedback of either success or failure. "A well-built game is, in essence, a series of short-term feedback loops, delivering assessment in small, frequent doses" (Corbett, 2010, para. 15). Unlike most institutional learning systems, "games associate learning with fun and allow for trial and error (basically the freedom to make mistakes)" (Cohen, 2011, p. 17). Gaming works because players do not fear failure. Even death is just a minor setback in the course of a game. In games, failure presents an opportunity for improvement/adjustment to player behavior. Players can make multiple attempts at a quest, fight or engagement, with low risk to the fun or motivation of the player. This low-risk failure changes learning from a short-term to a long-term endeavor, in which mastery is the end result, not scores. By adopting a gamified mindset, learning returns to its historical function, allowing students to learn through low-risk fun, which increases participation (Lui, Alexandrova, & Nakajima, 2011). The participation increases in subtle ways as the general population becomes more enthralled with all things gamified.

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Now the public finds that the activities required for normal daily life do not challenge, excite or enthrall anymore, and many people play games for hours a week without realizing that they fit into the "gamer" profile. The app DrawSomething is a useful example of how nontraditional gamers are experiencing games on a level they might not realize:

> The app has generated about 2 billion drawings and is still being played daily by more than half of its users, who are exchanging pictures at a rate of 2,000 to 3,000 a second. And DrawSomething, which is adding more than 1 million users a day, is pulling in low six figures in revenue a day. ("Draw Something Stats," 2012, p. 1)

The ability to start and stop a game and play remotely with friends has opened up whole new demographics to games. Many people might not even know why they are drawn to a particular game. Gamers and non-gamers alike are looking and longing for something that real life is not giving them. People can turn to games such as *Everquest 2* (EQ2) for raiding opportunities in order to play out their true management skills, The Sims or Minecraft for a creative outlet and god-like control, and the Lord of the Rings Online for social interaction with other players. Every area of life creates a chance to feel unfulfilled, unmotivated or disconnected. Gamification is a way to reconnect with these emotions and sensations even when not playing a game.

Games are Work

Gamification is so rich in possibilities because gamers of all skill levels happily work hard and rely on internal motivation to complete game-like tasks. However, motivation is just one of the components that make gaming successful, potentially

productive, and ever evolving. Gamers are willing to work, as long as this work challenges them in some way, because, "in a game, players (learners) will endure frustration and challenges that in other situations would cause them to give up" (Ladley, 2011, p. 3). This challenging play/work is more fun and healthier for people than entertainment (*Why we play games*, 2004). While watching TV can be relaxing, watching large amounts stops being fun, and quickly drains personal resources, such as happiness and stamina. To best understand the hard, yet satisfying, play/work found in games, it breaks down in the following ways: high stakes/hard work, busy work, mental work, physical work, discovery work, team work, and creative work (McGonigal, 2011; *Why we play games*, 2004). Perhaps the hardest to understand is why hard work is a beneficial mechanism of games.

High stakes, or hard work, is a type of work that players easily find in video games. A player might experience fantastic success, but she/he might also fail spectacularly. Part of what makes games fun is the challenge that a game presents to the body and mind of player in ways that are not monotonous and that are not so hard that she becomes discouraged (Jegers, 2007). A player enjoys this work when she is down to her last health bar, surrounded by enemies, relying on skill, and a little luck to get her past the zombies, monsters, or bad guys without dying. If she does die, death occurs because of overwhelming odds, but if she succeeds she becomes a goddess of gaming (McGonigal, 2011). Problems such as numerous deaths on a single quest, or slow feedback make the game too challenging and not fun. Game designers must balance quests to be challenging, without being impossible for a new player or monotonous for an

experienced player (*Why we play games*, 2004). When the high stakes work becomes too overwhelming, a gamer can seek out busy work, sometimes within the same game.

Busy work keeps the mind entertained but with minimal effort, even though busy work sounds like a bad thing. After all, many adults can remember being given coloring activities, repetitive math sheets or crosswords by an elementary school teacher as work to keep busy while the teacher struggled to address the needs of the entire class. However, busy work is meaningful and necessary. Unlike watching television, busy work still adds to happiness because busy work is easy fun. Games encourage easy and fun completion of tasks allowing for quick feedback and easy turnover (Juul, 2010). Though World of Warcraft (WoW) is discussed in length later, it is important to note that WoW offers "busy work" or world events such as Winter's Veil (Christmas) and Hallow's End (Halloween) that involve easily completable quests that involve activities such as making Father Winter (Santa Claus) cookies and milk or trick-o-treating at different cities in the game world. Players look forward to the world events, 12 in all, and earn achievements that encourage the completion of these quests. Busy work is also found in games like Tetris, Temple Run, Bejeweled Blitz, and Solitaire that require no mental or physical work.

It is common to find mental and physical work separately, but each functions best when combined together. Mental work is found in strategy games like Risk or Settlers of Catan, or quiz-based games like Trivial Pursuit, in which the thrill of a correct answer or a winning strategy stimulates the brain. Brain training games like Big Brain Academy or the website Luminosity are just as popular and claim to "make you smarter and more

mentally fit" (Lumos Labs, 2012, para. 1). Physical work, also known as exertion games, stimulates the body instead of the mind and causes the body to rush endorphins to the brain in games such as Dance Central 2, Kinect Adventures, or Dance Dance Revolution (Behrenshausen, 2007). Players not only feel physically good from playing, but have the feeling of fun (Mueller, Gibbs, & Vetere, 2009). Combining the mental and physical work leads to deeper learning for hands-on learners. Paintball or laser tag combines mental and physical work, as players use both body and mind to navigate the course and formulate a strategy to win. Sports are also a historical example wherein physical and mental work meet as sports are physically invigorating and mentally stimulating which contributes to player happiness. Happiness also increases when a player discovers something new.

Many gaming situations incorporate an element of exploration. Exploring in a game gives a gamer the experience and thrill of discovery. As players fly around as a superhero in DC Universe, they discover new cities as well as new perspectives that players cannot easily find in real life. The new environments, especially when not filled with hostile creatures or humanoids, offer a real opportunity for a player to gaze in wonder in a virtual world. "Computer technology simulates new territories to explore, to conquer, and to settle" that would be otherwise impossible (Gunkel & Gunkel, 2009, p. 117). Many video games offer ways of exploring, where players can fly, ride or walk around a new world that gives them some insight into the world's map. While traditional video games offer one way of exploring, Foldit uses the strength of human discovery to find patterns in proteins that are linked to AIDS (Spotts, 2011). According to the Foldit

website, humans recognize patterns in proteins and learn to fold them differently, much faster than a computer. Gamers contribute to the collective understanding of cancer and Alzheimer's. As players work together they experience the thrill of teamwork and, more importantly, success.

School, work, and play require individuals to work together in order to succeed. Teamwork requires players to contribute to and collaborate with a group, as well as socialize with others. Players play games for relaxation, fulfillment of social needs or for excitement. As many gamers can attest, unlike the "real world", "within these groupings, players can communicate easily, meet, support one another, and share resources" (Williams, 2006, p. 655). The sense of community changes how a person interacts with a game and how a game interacts with a person. People enjoy contributing to a larger cause, even if that cause works towards a mutual virtual end. EQ2 has raids in which up to 24 players work together to complete larger tasks that would be impossible to complete with a single player ("Community News," 2009). As part of a raid group players bond not only as a team, but also as a family. Groups learn each individual's strengths and weaknesses, as well as learn how to deal with undesirable traits. Virtual teamwork gives the satisfaction of gaming and live teamwork that is hard to find in the "real world." People are able to enter into friendly competition within a game and have that competition stay within the space of the game. When players can experience failure or success in teamwork in a low-stakes situation, they transfer the abilities and concepts into a "real world" situation. Games and actions that fall within a virtual realm rely on

teamwork via social interaction or networking. Creative work also has transferable qualities that make it valuable to both players and non-players.

Creative work allows players to feel capable, and is necessary for humans to thrive. Players can manifest creativity in the creation of a backstory for a Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG), the singing of karaoke in SingStar, or the wailing on a guitar during Guitar Hero or Rockband. A Michigan University study (Jackson et al., 2011) found that children who play video games have higher creativity inside and outside the game instances. So, not only does creative work function within a game, creativity affects how students behave in the "real world." In fact, roleplaying games like EQ2 are not so far from a child's make-believe on the playground. Creative work, such as roleplaying, "can be further justified by the greater degree of freedom of experimentation with explicit and implicit rules which [are] available in RPGs than in the usual organizational realities" (Kociatkiewicz, 2000, p. 85). Just as with the other kinds of work, creative work makes a space where players have the ability and comfort to succeed and fail creatively without any embarrassment or humiliation. All of these kinds of work enhance the internal motivation that many gamers experience.

In games, players are motivated internally more so than externally, however in other areas of life individuals must rely on external or extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation comes from a source outside of one's self (Fried, 2010). Sometimes resources like money, shelter, and food to live, are a necessary external motivation. However, reliance on external motivation in classroom settings actually *demotivates* students (Falout, Elwood, & Hood, 2009), and 71 percent of the demotivational factors are related

to teachers' perceived performance (Christophel & Gorham, 1995). Grades are another form of extrinsic motivation that has been failing and demotivating students, parents, and teachers for years. The mandatory restrictions the school places upon students cause stress, and when an external source places too much stress upon a person, his/her body starts to combat that stress through emotional responses like anger or escapism (Smith & Segal, 2012). Extrinsic motivation does not contribute to happiness of a person the way intrinsic motivation does.

Internal or intrinsic motivation is self-rewarding work, meaning that a gamer or student needs nor wants external rewards for the work required. Internal motivation is not changed by the amount or difficulty of work and hard work leads to greater inspiration. The emotions associated with internal motivation are a driving force towards success (Fried, 2010), as failure or success is partially self-determined. Failure looks different for different situations, such as for school, gaming, social, and relational situations. In an educational situation, students who are internally motivated prove to work harder and longer than those who rely on motivation from grades or teacher praise. This internalized motivation is "inherently constructive and self-directed" (Boekaerts, 1999, p. 446). According to Gee (2007), players experience game play, receive feedback, and then reevaluate previous actions to change the outcome. This view of feedback reduces the stress associated with failure and relies on internal motivation to continue going after the feedback process. Internal motivation makes learning, work, chores or anything else that is normally hard not only bearable, but a renewable source of happiness.

Gamification

Gamification encourages people to rely on internal motivation by making seemingly mundane tasks fun. While games in an everyday part of life is still a fledgling concept (Schell, 2010), gamification of life is the way much of our consumer world, especially in the United States, is heading (Lee & Hammer, 2011). Some think that gamification will

> …better contextualiz[e] our work [school] and making sure that the theme or setting is psychologically conducive to the activity itself. Kinda like how you go to Disneyworld and everything, down to the trash bins near the line for the rides all fit within the setting and don't break you out of that mindset of enjoying the ride. (Portnow & Floyd, n.d.)

Games are designed to engage the player as a participant. Gee (2007) explains the insider principle with gaming by showing that a player is not just a consumer of the game, but also customizes his experiences within the game. The idea that a person acts as a participant instead of just a player might help to involve non-players, and those who doubt the purpose of games in everyday life in the concept of gamification.

Many areas of life are already being gamified, such as politics, marketing, and even healthcare. Gamification offers distinct advantages when reaching new and younger audiences. In politics, the different parties try to find a way to reach the youth of America, and the app Anonymous accomplished that: "In a relatively short period of three to four years, Anonymous as a politically active entity managed to gain the admiration of many young people around the world, while antagonizing existing commercial and governmental structures (Gekker, 2012, p. 58). Politicians are always

trying to get more people in the voting polls, just as business' try to market to an ever

expanding market. White Castle works to enhance loyalty to keep their customers.

> At White Castle's CraverNation website, Cravers upload photos and
> participate in challenges to work their way to the top of the leaderboard.
> In addition to virtual rewards such as earning community status as a
> Lunchtime Legend, White Castle gives away weekly prizes like tablets,
> lifetime sliders, and bags of swag. (Miller & Washington, 2013, p. 521)

And while prizes and swag can be inspiring, researchers are also exploring how games

could be a "medium" for cognitive behavioral therapy, as a way to overcome phobias

(Haworth, Baljko, & Faloutsos, 2012, p. 374). It seems that each facet of life has a

reason to use gamification to enhance functionality. However, instructors are still wary

of using what could be an empty strategy to teach the next generation of students.

While the rest of the world quickly capitalized on the potential benefits of

everyday gamification, the academic world continues to assess whether the benefits of

gamification are just a fad, or if they have any longevity (Lee & Hammer, 2011). Rigby

and Ryan (2011) state that the "motivational power of games… [has] strong appeal both

today and long into the future" (p. xiii). Because researchers today decide what happens

to the collective education of the next generation, we must create a more narrow

definition of gamification. If writers and researchers continue defining gamification as a

monetized mechanism, instructors may not realize the potential of a gamified classroom.

Many people, including teachers, politicians, and parents, have decided already

that games and gamification wastes time (Bogost, 2011). Teachers who are not gamers

themselves are frustrated by learning or teaching strategies with which they are

unfamiliar (Gee, 2007). Also, the current definition of gamification is vague, but

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promising (Albrecht, 2012), and many instructors do not know how gamification might function in the classroom. If we are to determine whether instructors and institutions should embrace what gamification offers, we must determine whether gamification can improve the classroom.

Defining gamification in relation to the classroom is important because some people outside the education research field, such as parents, politicians, and journalists, criticize the lack of change and innovation in the classroom. While becoming more inclusive for students of color, those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender (LGBT), or those who have disabilities, school has not changed much since the 19th century. Researchers who are working to change the classroom and the world with gamification are desperate for it to happen (Gee, 2007). Educators are fighting for a better school experience for all students based on better methods of learning, performing, and succeeding. With the financial crisis looming over the population and entire public educational system, educators have a greater responsibility to find economically sound ways to improve students' outlook on education. Although many colleges are employing smart classrooms or even virtual gamification, encompassing technology remains a privilege for only some of the student population. A majority of gaming in education research concentrates on bringing actual video games or game building software into the classroom, therefore saving money and physical resources (Corbett, 2010). Although some researchers embrace video games in the classroom, others argue that gamification is not a worthy endeavor to pursue.

While some see potential in the idea of gamification, others believe that the concept is too connected with capitalism to carry any real merit. Experts see gamification as a quick fix for many companies who are eager to increase profits without changing basic operations. Instead of just making applications for Apple or Android devices, companies implement a gamified version of the information. Skeptics say that,

> Gamification is easy. It offers simple, repeatable approaches in which benefit, honor, and aesthetics are less important than facility. For the consultants and the startups, that means selling the same bullshit in book, workshop, platform, or API form over and over again, at limited incremental cost. It ticks a box. Social media strategy? Check. Games strategy? Check. (Bogost, 2011, para. 8)

For Bogost and others, gamification offers little real reward, and generally lacks substance. It seems to be missing the point of gaming and focuses instead on layering fun over a broken system (Owen's blog, 2011). "Gamified environments pacify the player in an attempt to get them to go through the mechanical motions of game mechanics" (Chorney, 2012, p. 9). In many applications, gamification has been watered down to little more than a fill-in-the-blank reward system. Websites such as Badgeville and Lithium offer companies the ability to insert their products in to pre-arranged systems that produce monetary gains for little work because these companies focus on manipulation of behavior instead of fixing how the products work in the first place (Badgeville, 2012). A new definition of gamification will limit empty application to the classroom. Some researchers pose that "some activities can be enriched with game elements more easily than other" (Albrecht, 2012, p. 46), and so far it is unclear if the classroom has the activities that will do well with gamification. Even among the

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supporters of gamification, there is a distinct difference between those who want gaming

within the classroom, and those who want the classroom to perform like a game.

Gamification of the Classroom

Some people are starting to define gamification through action. Embracing the

gaming in the classroom sensibility, programs like Quest to Learn reject the 19th century

model that traditional classrooms use, favoring only the new and digital. Already enacted

in an elementary school in New York, this program uses the digital games to promote

learning, on which the students of the Games Generation thrive (Prensky, 2001). Unlike

the millennial generation who became adept at computers and electronics in middle or

high school, this new generation understood how a mouse worked since they could walk

and talk (Corbett, 2010). The creator of Quest to Learn, Katie Salen, advocates that these

digital kids need a home, and that a gamified classroom can give it to them. "Quest to

Learn is organized specifically around the idea that digital games are central to the lives

of today's children and also increasingly as their speed and capability grow, powerful

tools for intellectual exploration" (Corbett, 2010, para. 13). Students spend the whole

day playing games to learn and even competing with others for the privilege to learn. If

students are excited to compete for the chance to learn, gamification of the classroom has

incredible potential. However, a gamified classroom at the college level does not have to

rely on digital technology.

It is difficult to successfully define gamification through a merge the 19th century

model of teaching and the 21st model of learning. However, some have had success. Lee

Sheldon, a professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and co-director of the Games and

Simulation Arts and Sciences program, is part of a "small but increasingly influential group of education specialists who believe that going to school can and should be more like playing a game, which is to say it could be more participatory, more immersive and also, well, fun" (Corbett, 2010, para. 15). Sheldon uses the class to actively define gamification in which every part of the class performs like a game. Even his syllabus functions like a quest log (Laster, 2010). Instead of grades presented to the students in a typical points lost configuration, Sheldon approaches earning grades as a player earns experience points in a MMORPG (Laster, 2010). Though this is a different way of approaching the classroom, changing the function of grades is not implausible as grades are a primitive, although not often thought of, form of gamification (Lee & Hammer, 2011). This gamification of the classroom puts the power in the hands of the student, placing responsibility for his/her gaining "experience" by performing tasks within the classroom. Students no longer lose points for errors due to confusing and sometimes unknown grading systems implemented differently by each teacher, and in this gamified sense, grades might have a more internally motivating affect. This gamified classroom is also set up so the assignments are weighted differently as difficulty increases, just as players would find in a game. Group projects are worth more points, but they also require a more involved stance with both the assignment and the other students. Unlike so many instructors, Sheldon (2010) does not require students to work in groups but rewards those who are willing to take on the harder task of group work. Sheldon's classroom is an example of what could be possible. Gee (2007), a self-proclaimed academic Baby Boomer turned gamer, argues that since the world has changed but the

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education system has not, he is not surprised that students of today's fast-paced gamified world are lacking motivation and enthusiasm for school. By implementing an inverse grading system and classroom power structure, Sheldon's model allows others to imagine and construct the future of college classrooms.

In the interest of future classrooms and students, a focused definition of gamification of the classroom will take into consideration that Generation Me does not need actual games in the classroom to have an ideal class but needs a classroom in which "every course, every activity, every assignment, every moment of instruction and assessment would be designed by borrowing key mechanics and participation strategies" from games that successfully engage players on an everyday basis (McGonigal, 2011, p. 128). In an MMORPG, raiding is a constant trial and error as leaders try to find the perfect combination of skills, knowledge and sheer dumb luck in order to defeat the handful of bosses the raid presents. Games allow for achievable levels of difficulty, and the feeling that even if there is failure, that the failure helps the player learn for future success. To figure out and master the raid can take weeks of work, more than 80 hours of trial and error, usually four to six hours at a time. Coupling this kind of commitment with a full-time job and/or a family is the point of an "epic" game: "The industry wants to create *lifelong gamers*: people who can balance their favorite games with full and active lives [emphasis in original]" (McGonigal, 2011, p. 43). This joy in failure, struggle, and extracurricular commitment that players experience in a game could be a strategy to change how students and teachers interact with a subject and each other. Most games are rooted in the model of "reflection in action" (Salen, 2008, p. 14) or what Gee calls

"active learning" (2007, p. 25), which are concepts already used in the classroom. If gamification is to be a strategy to improve the classroom, instructors and researchers need to understand not only a history of classroom strategies and how gamification relates to them, but also how our communication practices helps to name what is important in the classroom.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Gamification has clearly caught the attention of our culture. It is important to name why gamification shows promise as a framework or strategy in the classroom and what strategies are already in place (if any) that work to solve student apathy. Where chapter one defines gamification as it stands, chapter two examines the needs of students as well as the strategies and tactics instructors use in the classroom. Critical communication pedagogy gives us a framework that helps researchers examine these as well as understand how gamification might fit in the classroom.

Critical Communication Pedagogy

Critical communication pedagogy (CCP) combines critical pedagogy, inspired by Paulo Freire and others, and communication education, inspired by Jo Sprague's introduction of critical pedagogy into the communication field (Fassett & Warren, 2007). As a method of study and a pedagogical practice, CCP brings education research across interdisciplinary lines and uses the communication within the subject to order, label, and urge to change. "…In our communication practices…we produce knowledge, define how identities are negotiated and maintained, and imply that power is something only the powerful possess" (Fassett & Warren, 2007, p. 45), and CCP gives the opportunity and responsibility to find meaningful moments in everyday classroom situations. CCP highlights specific moments of reflexivity in which instructors, researchers, and students are able to name a problem and postulate ways that each participate in upholding or breaking the invisible structures of the physical and ephemeral classroom that control

behavior. How CCP researchers interpret or process that language determines what strategies and tactics are formed from the information.

In education research, researchers look at specific parts of the classroom experience in order to label and organize what happens. To challenge the norms of the classroom or any space, it is not about criticizing what came before, but building upon the concepts that have value (Fassett & Warren, 2007). "Critical approaches to pedagogy must, by necessity, exist in relation to traditional or conservative approaches to pedagogy; we argue that critical pedagogies are most effective as means to interrupt, to call out, and call into question the traditional" (Fassett & Warren, 2007, p. 83). Instructors through CCP use tactics in order to call into question the traditional. Strategies are calculated maneuvers that exist in arbitrary but normalized relationships (de Certeau, 1984). Strategies are long term overarching ideas about how to achieve a goal, while tactics are reflexive actions taken that fulfill the strategy. Each strategy highlights some relationships and aids in the understanding of the current classroom, while tactics, such as gamification give different options of how to reach the goal of student learning. Many of the current tactics are based in a post-positive paradigm, but as CCP examines what came before, so must this chapter.

Student Interest

One of the areas researchers work to understand is student interest. A student's interest in a subject influences joy and classroom performance. "Interest is seen as being central in determining how students select and persist in processing certain types of information in preference to others" (Weber, 2004, p. 428). A student's involvement in a

task positively relates to his/her interest with the task and it is important to manipulate the curriculum to improve it.

> Though it might be tempting to tell ourselves that certain students are naïve or confrontational or even deluded, we must work to listen to our students, to understand why they consider some topics inappropriate or irrelevant, so that we and our students might more fully understand each other (Fassett & Warren, 2007, p. 43).

Researchers can do this by choosing a framework that speaks to the needs of both the student and instructor. Factors that affect interest, such as the relationship of the learner and instructional activities or environment researchers fin in three dimensions of student interest: Meaningfulness, competence (or feelings of competence), and impact (Weber, Martin, & Cayanus, 2005; Weber & Patterson, 2000; Frymier & Shulman, 1994). Student interest is a way to measure if these tactics work.

As a way to increase student interest, instructors work to increase meaningfulness, which encourages the student to feel the importance of the task. "Meaningfulness relates to the perceived value of a task" (Weber et al., 2005, p. 72). A student perceives meaningfulness as s/he perceives the significance or relevance of the task (Frymier & Shulman, 1994). The more active a student remains in a task, the more involved s/he feels. To experience meaningfulness, a student must consider the value attached to the task. As the feelings of value increase, so does interest (Weber & Patterson, 2000), which leads to the perceived value of task completion. Meaningfulness has also been linked to interest and empowerment, and has become "synonymous with internal motivation" (Weber & Patterson, 2000, p. 28). Fortifying internal motivation are

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students' feelings of competence. Strategies that increase meaningfulness should enhance a students' feeling of competence.

When students feel important and heard in the classroom, they have a greater sense of competence. The evaluation of a student's own abilities and knowledge or competence, influences how interested s/he is in the task (Weber et al., 2005; Weber & Patterson, 2000). When students feel included in the classroom, they are more likely to continue participating. Spitzberg (1983) shows that competence in communication enhances and assists in skill building. Competence represents how a student feels about his/her abilities (Weber & Patterson, 2000). When a student evaluates his/her abilities with a subject or class, they perform competency.

Along with the evaluation of skills, the impact of the task influences how the student feels about the learning process. The impact of a task denotes how important and valuable the task or the completion of the task is to the student (Weber & Patterson, 2000), and in the larger picture of the student's life (Frymier & Shulman, 1994). Students are willing to do work that has impact on their life and education. When a task is meaningful to a student, the more internal motivation s/he has to complete that task. Belief in the positive impact of a task influences students to complete said task, feel its meaningfulness and increase feelings of competence.

In order to impact student learning, researchers identify behaviors or strategies that create positive reactions. "An important goal of scholars in the area of instructional communication is that of identifying teacher's communication behaviors that positively impact student outcomes" (King & Witt, 2009, p. 110). Students and teachers report

communication satisfaction both parties meet with positive expectations. When an instructor effectively communicates to a student, the function of the classroom changes. Weber (2004) shows a correlation between teacher behavior and student interest, and shares that teacher behavior should be manipulated and measured to see explore the "effect on student interest scores and cognitive learning scores" (p. 435), though CCP scholars might argue that manipulation of behavior only hides the power that both the instructor and administration holds. Many teacher behaviors influence student emotion, which affects learning, within the classroom such as immediacy, confirmation, and affinity seeking.

Instructors perform "ideal" teacher through careful use of immediacy in the classroom. Teacher immediacy "generates increased involvement and enthusiasm for the material and the instruction" (Allen et al., 2006, p. 21) within students. Immediacy in the educational sense is the perceived closeness (physical or psychological) between student and teacher that is presented in both nonverbal and verbal behaviors (Burroughs, 2007). Perceptions of teachers and their verbal and nonverbal behavior are initially based on stereotypes (McCroskey, Valencic, & Richmond, 2004). Immediacy behaviors reduce the relational distance between students and teachers (Christophel, 1990), and lead to the perception of closeness and positively influence cognitive and affective learning and connectedness (King & Witt, 2009), and these new perceptions work to counteract initial stereotypes. Nonverbal immediacy includes behaviors "such as eye contact, smiling…using vocal variety" (Frymier & Shulman, 1994, p. 7) and is related to a myriad of student relations such as affective and cognitive learning, affect for course or

instructor, and state motivation (Tibbles, Richmond, McCroskey, & Weber, 2008; Wei & Wang, 2010). Many instructors use immediacy and compliance gaining together without reflexivity because, "a teacher exhibiting enthusiasm and trying to engage the student in the material and the classroom would likely be perceived as positive" (Allen et al., 2006, p. 23). Immediacy used as one aspect of teaching can improve student motivation and thus student learning outcomes. Katt et al. (2009) stress that new teachers should be immediate to gain compliance in the classroom. This however discounts research done that shows that non-traditional students prefer a less immediate instructor. Intrinsic attractiveness towards the instructor can result in behaviors that are more desirable, whereas negative experiences in the classroom can undermine teachers (Titsworth et al., 2010). Immediacy, if not genuine, lowers student interest in the course because "the more a student feels a positive affective reaction to the instructors and the environment, the more likely the person is to continue enrollment and not drop out" (Allen et al., 2006, p. 28). Teachers cannot use immediacy just to fulfill short-term goals, but should combine such goals with other lasting interactions.

Strategies that Enhance Learning

Just like student interest, trust is important to classroom dynamics, and teachers use many strategies to illicit trust. If a student does not trust the instructor to have fair procedures in dealing with the classroom, s/he is more likely to show resistance towards the teacher through hostility and aggression, both directly and indirectly (Chesebro & Martin, 2010). A student must trust an instructor with her educational goals and expect the teacher to be a clear and effective communicator. A clear instructor is well organized

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in course expectations and content, and has effective transitions and summarized topics

through the lecture (Comadena et al., 2007). Effective communication from teacher to

student is essential to the learning process. While this is mediated through immediacy,

effective communication happens through clear and concise presentation the course and

material.

One way to build trust is instructor credibility. Instructor credibility reflects the

students' faith or belief that an instructor is a competent source of course information and

communication (Schrodt et al., 2009). Competency is the assumed qualifications or

expertise of an individual and is expressed through clarity. However, we must examine

the bigger picture and realize that what students see in an individual teacher is just hint at

what they want from the ideal teacher (Potter & Emanuel, 1990). Many scholars have

concentrated research on trying to identify particular behaviors that increase credibility,

as well as behaviors that undermine an instructor's competency.

> Instructors who are argumentative without being verbally aggressive, who
> communicate in ways that generate understanding in the minds of their
> students, who use appropriate humor, manage compulsive communicators
> with prosocial management strategies, and who are immediate are
> generally perceived as being more competent, trustworthy, and caring in
> the classroom. (Schrodt et al., 2009, pp. 352-353)

The importance of credibility of the teacher is no surprise, as each instructor relies on

credibility to enhance learning. When a student views an instructor as a competent or

trustworthy source, he acknowledges the instructor's source credibility, but a student

who is already motivated are more likely to perceive that teachers are using immediate

behaviors. The more often an instructor successfully uses strategies that promote

competence and credibility, the more likely s/he will have positive effect on the classroom.

Teachers are under tremendous stress to perform for administrators and students alike, and many times will rely on strategies like Behavior Alteration Techniques (BATs) in order to gain compliance in order to perform competency, credibility, and authority. When instructors try to mediate effects of student behavior, the result has a direct and explicit effect to student learning. Compliance gaining implies instructors are manipulating students into learning instead of engaging and changing to meet student needs. Richmond (1990) defines compliance as doing something because someone else wants, even though it contends with a person's own desires and is use of extrinsic motivation. Reward power encourages prosocial BATs, while coercive power encourages antisocial BATs. Richmond (1990) shows that the choice of one compliance-gaining technique over another should be driven by both the short and long term impact on the students as well as the ease of choice for the instructor. Much of the student behavior alteration desired by teachers represents mundane compliance concerns. Teachers struggle to get students to respond in class, turn in work, and to minimize distractions in class.

At the basis of the strategic use of BATs, power over classroom is not held by the student, but rather by instructors. Chesebro and Martin (2010) show that there are five key bases of power: Coercive and legitimate powers are both considered to be negative, and referent, reward and expert power, which are considered positive. Coercive power is the students' understanding of the power that the instructor has to punish in the

classroom, penalize on an assignment, or express disappointment. Legitimate power is the power the teacher controls based on his/her position within the university. Referent power is interpersonal power that comes from the students' personal identification or regard for the instructor. Expert power is the power the teacher derives from possessing a professional background as well as expertise on the curriculum, and is often expressed through strong delivery methods (Schrodt et al., 2008). Use of compliance gaining strategies can be positive, as BATs can engage student in ways that enhance learning. Through compliance and immediacy teachers can change the way that a message is framed and "the selected information will be more noticeable and likely to be remembered" (Chesebro and Martin, 2010, p.161), and help to alleviate some of the potential resistance from students. CCP scholars recognize that the use of BATs mask underlying issues of power and serve to limit reflexive work in the classroom. The key is presenting the information to the students using a strategy that they will relate to. However, while compliance gaining techniques work for traditional students, non-traditional students have different needs.

Students Outside the Norm

While many students, especially in lower division classrooms fall under the label of traditional student, the educational institutions label a large number of students as non-traditional. Nontraditional students, who are over the age of 24, ("Definitions and Data," n.d., para. 1) thrive in vastly different classroom environments. Nontraditional students expect experiences in the classroom to be experiential, self-directed, and have a practical application, while traditional students expect a classroom to be based on grades, open

teaching, and immediate and attentive teachers. An adult learner desires a focus on

practical application of the information to his/her life, which may be linked to a greater

feeling of intrinsic motivation. "The instructor use of verbal immediacy, nonverbal

immediacy, affinity-seeking, and clarity are not needed or appreciated similarly by these

two diverse groups" (Houser, 2006, p. 343). In order to understand any student,

instructors and researchers need to look beyond the "type" of student. No strategy is the

only or best answer. Instructors need to make sure that they are reflexive with the

strategies we do choose.

At-risk students, who are also non-traditional students, need a different set of

strategies to enhance their learning. "At-risk factors are designed to predict the

likelihood of academic difficulties in school" (Chesebro et al., 1992, p. 346). At-risk

students traditionally do not achieve minimum standards in school, regardless of ability.

Often, the educational system labels at-risk students as such because of geographic

location (urban vs. rural/suburban) and race/ethnicity. Researchers assume that at-risk

students, especially with limitedly proficiency in English, "encounter exceptional

circumstances that uniquely affect their fears and self-perceived competencies as oral

communicators" (Chesebro et al., 1992, p. 347). Some researchers position these fears

and anxieties as demotivational factors and hindrances.

> By definitions, at-risk students already have experienced 'school failure'
> in classrooms and, for many of them, their classroom experiences are
> reinforced by the fact that their parents also were unable to secure a high
> school diploma and that at least one of their siblings already has dropped
> out of school. (Chesebro et al., 1992, p. 348)

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Chesebro et al. (1992) found that students in at-risk environments not only tend to fear communication with others, each student usually has a low perception of his own competence. The authors also argue that in order to achieve effective instruction, teachers and students must have effective communication, and the strategies that work with traditional students do not work with at-risk students.

Researchers need to find strategies that can address the needs of these "othered" students. Fassett and Warren (2005) take a critical perspective look at the educational system and find frustration at the all too common description of at-risk students, which usually involves economic, racial and other statistical identities that researchers have determined to be markers for failure in education and the strategies used to deal with them. Fassett and Warren show that this labeling overlooks "institutional and rhetorical norms that constitute the very constructs" that researchers are studying (2004, p. 22), the lived experiences of both student and teacher. They argue that rather than looking at these pieces of identity individually, researchers should look at how these pieces make an entire student identity that create a "more complex picture of how schooling, individual traits and institutional barriers to success" can inhibit success for a student (Fassett & Warren, 2004, p. 22). When a student is judged as a failure by a single trait, any strengths s/he possesses are overshadowed by the one perceived weakness.

At-riskness has been reduced to innate traits that make failure seemingly inevitable. Fassett and Warren (2005) use an interview with a student named "Jane" to illustrate how being labeled as at-risk shapes her, and consequently other at-risk students' lives. A majority of at-risk students use an "approach that implies that the problem of

educational failure lies within seemingly stable, enduring traits of individuals" (Fassett &

Warren, 2005, p. 240). If a student possesses one or more of at-risk traits, s/he is more

likely to fail in a traditional education setting. At risk traits include but are not exclusive

to students who have one or more disabilities, who have been retained a grade, as well as

having a parent or guardian unemployed, emigrated or with a combined family income of

less than $10,000 (Kominski, Jamieson, & Martinez, 2001). These current strategies that

the educational system uses to understand students "inevitably narrow(s) our

understanding of these students and their needs, failing once again to listen to *them*

[emphasis added]" (Fassett & Warren, 2005, p. 253). At-risk students are not the only

marginalized students in the classroom.

Students are voluntarily labeled as "at-risk" but have to *prove* a disability, even

when some disabilities are worn on the body. As a society, we still show disability as a

disease or brokenness. "A critical pedagogy that includes consideration of ability

necessitates an emphasis on the ways identities are communicatively constructed"

(Lindemann, 2011, p. 286). Discourse around pedagogy is able-ist not just with

measurable disabilities, but also with at-risk students who are labeled as such.

> These choices, whether to refer to someone as dyslexic or normal, as able
> or disabled [as at-risk or functional] are consequential; by placing ability
> and disability in contention or contrast with one another rather than
> tension or paradox, we unreflectively encourage all people to think of
> ability as presence or absence. (Fassett & Morella, 2008, p. 140)

By placing students in groups by assumed identity, the institution builds larger hurdles

for the students to climb over in order to achieve success: "Each iteration, each action and

inaction, what is said and unsaid, disciplines us to understand, to accept a given norm as

'natural' or inevitable" (Fassett & Morella, 2008, p. 141). When we label students as disabled or at-risk, we mark students who statistically struggle, as well as those who do not.

Pathways to Learner Empowerment

In order to keep student interest and treat students as whole individuals, researchers have created strategies such as cognitive and affective learning, learner empowerment, and online classroom elements. If researchers can name "in-class factors which may affect students' state motivation could help teachers design instruction to reach previously unmotivated students" (Tibbles et al., 2008, p. 394). Critical researchers are striving to find alternative teaching methods to techniques such as BATs (Sprague, 1992). When examining these techniques, teachers/researchers need to keep in mind that the decisions on "good teaching" affect student-learning experiences. Therefore, the research needs to focus on effective overarching strategies so instructors are not just gaining compliance but are really working for what is best for the entire student population in the long term. "Teachers will need to be both critical and creative, both autonomous and collaborative … they will need to develop enough organizational savvy and practical technique to keep their jobs and control their classes" (Sprague, 1992, p. 196). Critical scholars uphold the idea that transformative change is possible within the classroom as long as research is not done *about* or *for* instructors, but is done *with* them (Freire, 2000). The research done about instructors, while academically stimulating, lacks the personal narratives that make critical research accessible, intriguing, and transformative (Sprague, 1992). Strategies for increasing interest include "promoting

student autonomy in the classroom, providing challenging activities, provoking curiosity through discussion or the materials one chooses, and highlighting the functionality of information" (Weber, 2004, p. 429). By employing cognitive learning, affective learning, learner empowerment and new ways of presenting material to engage students fully in the classroom, teachers and students experience success.

When students engage in cognitive learning, they engage fully in the classroom. Cognitive learning enforces that "the concepts learned in the communication classroom are intended to apply to life beyond it" (Ahlfeldt, 2009, p. 1). Communication instruction is attempting to increase learning at the cognitive level across the board (Johnson & Mrowka, 2010) and is focused on the retention and comprehension of knowledge (Allen, Witt, & Wheeless, 2006; Burroughs, 2007; Russo & Koesten, 2005; Wei & Wang, 2010). Cognitive learning is also influenced positively when students report satisfaction with the course or instructor (Comadena et al., 2007). "Cognitive learning is estimated by the learning-loss measure, which measures how much students thought they learned in the class of a given teacher against what they felt they could have learned with an ideal teacher" (Katt et al., 2009, p. 242). Cognitive learning is affected by a combination of many things as the relationship may reflect the student success and internal motivation, or emotional attachment.

Affect learning encourages emotional connection with the teacher, classroom or subject. "The clarity with which teachers present information, their immediacy behaviors, and how they listen and react to students are intuitive, though not exhaustive ways, through which teachers potentially influence students emotions" (Titsworth et al.,

2010, p. 445). Crucial to the learning process is student preparedness for class, including completion of assignments and class readings. As many teachers and students can testify, students resist assignments and frequently show up to class underprepared. Part of the reason for this is because students are not connected emotionally to the reading. Adding to the problem is the fact that quizzes much of the time seem like busy work or passive aggressive "checks" to make sure students are not resisting (Johnson, 2007), and can lead to increased anxiety. Using Bloom's Taxonomy, Johnson (2007) shows a way to encourage student preparedness while not infantilizing the educational process. The five levels of involvement require students to be more deeply involved with the information, which leads to greater depth of discussions in class (Johnson, 2007). The three areas of learning that Bloom's Taxonomy stimulates are Cognition, Affect, and Psychomotor, or knowing, feeling and doing. Johnson's quiz structure implements affective learning to connect each student to the material by having each student create the questions as well as the answers. Because of the emotional link to student and teachers through nonverbal immediacy, students react have a heightened emotional state when immediacy techniques are used (Titsworth et al., 2010). Emotional connection to the course empowers students to go farther and deeper into course concepts.

One of the goals instructors have when employing these strategies is to empower students and help them find joy in learning. "Learner empowerment is much more than the internalization of positive attitudes or intrinsic motivation, as it includes a cognitive believe state of personal involvement and self-efficacy that ultimately results in a heightened sense of personal effectiveness among students" (Schrodt et al., 2008, p. 184).

Recently, a paradigm shift moves instructors from teacher-centered lecture based classrooms to more learner-centered classrooms that encourages and cultivates student involvement, and promotes student success, both short and long term. Students thrive in classrooms that minimize misbehaviors and maximize the opportunity to participate because students "generally want to learn and understand course material" (Sidelinger et al., 2011, p. 346). This participation does not have to take the form of only in-class discussions, but can include an online presence.

Online discussion is a strategy that encourages participation. Students are able to formulate answers and experiences freedom from the anxiety so often felt when called upon. Researchers and instructors are trying to determine the benefits of using online technologies while being aware of the "challenges, problems and limitations" (Campbell, 2004, p. 4). However, when used as a tool that is integrated rather than placed upon a classroom, online discussion has showed some instructors success. Online discussion has grown in popularity and interest with students in "secondary and tertiary levels" (Campbell, 2004, p. 4). Just as with daily conversations with partners, colleagues, classmates, and family, students and teachers normalize or monitor personal behavior.

> Our classroom spaces today occupy traditional, physical outlets, but also imaginary, online gathering places such as course management systems, blogs, and socials networks like Twitter and Facebook that have become extensions of our pedagogical bodies. How does teaching in the digital age complicate our performances…? (Stern, 2011, p. 250)

What students share online is a protected, although freer self. A student can simultaneously create a different online self with a combination of private and public self, from behind the safety of his/her computer. Stern (2011) notes how a classroom online

allows for the re-crafting of the body. This allows students who are marginalized to change how their bodies appear to other students in the class. "The Web affords us the flexibility of coming out quietly or living loudly and everything in between" (Stern, 2011, p. 257). Though Stern is speaking about queer bodies, this could also be said about disabilities, economic standing, or any other part of a student's secret self that in a physical classroom, a student might normally have to work hard to hide. "Because our students thrive in online environments, why not incorporate these elements into our pedagogical performances" (Stern, 2011, p. 256)? This does not have to manifest in a takeover of technology in the classroom, but rather an integration of online strategies to enhance the classroom.

This digital embodiment might help bridge the gap between student and teacher, as well as between student and course. Stern (2011) admits that as an instructor, it is impossible to reach every student, but embracing new ideas might change the culture of the classroom. "Given the transformation in education and communication is response to digital technologies that break down barriers between knowledge creation and consumption pedagogical performativity is increasingly transparent and malleable" (Stern, 2011, p. 262). However, before classes move completely online, researchers must explore this because:

> The younger the technology, the more unproven it is. We enthusiastically exposed your youngsters to new digital teachers and playmates, but we also express concern about the development of their rains, bodies, and spirits. Should we consider carefully the potential --- and irrevocable--- effects of this new electronic interface…? (Healy, 1998, p. 17)

The growing trend is a move towards fully online or heavily hybrid courses to serve the expanding student body. This comes about because merging the information with online tools saves money, and appeals to the institution as well as both student and teacher. An online class is a strategy that offers flexibility and functionality.

Researchers need to define gamification as a strategy through a game, in order to experience what the basis is for good gamification. World of Warcraft (WoW), a computer based game in which players "have collectively spent 5.93 million years" playing since 2004 (McGonigal, 2011, p. 52). While the popularity alone could serve as a reason to study WoW, it is important that the game be familiar. In order to be able to look at the structures and rhetoric that constitute WoW and the classroom, and thus how to challenge them, a prior knowledge of the game is necessary so that this thesis can focus attention not on learning how to succeed in the game. Familiarity with the game allows for a focused look at what happens when a player plays the game, as well as how the rhetoric might transfer to a classroom situation.

World of Warcraft

Since 1974, role-playing games have been popular on the gaming market. However, until 2004, there was not an online version that swept the world quite like World of Warcraft (WoW). With over 12 million monthly subscribers, WoW is the largest MMORPG on the market ("WoW," n.d.). Despite the number of players, there is little research on WoW in the field of communication studies. Since the game has been on the market for seven years, it is clear that the phenomenon is widely popular, and there are no signs of it losing that popularity any time soon. WoW is a crafted world, and

understanding the rhetoric behind the game can help us understand how these choices create a motivating situation. This is why I chose WoW as a site of analysis.

WoW encourages and implements role-playing as a part of the everyday game play. Players are able to "enact multiple identities" as they use avatars to complete quests, gain experience, and reputations (Gee, 2007, p. 7). As the players enter into the loading screen, s/he must choose to play either on a role play (RP) server, in which players become the character; a player vs. player (PVP) server, in which players choose to fight against each other at each turn; Normal server, in which players play as themselves; or PVP RP, a combination of the previously mentioned servers. After choosing how they will play, potential players must choose one of two factions (Horde or Alliance) and one of 10 races (Orc, Troll, Undead, Tauren, Blood Elf and Goblin for the horde side; Human, Gnome, Dwarf, Night Elf, Draeni and Worgan for the alliance side). Players then customize or randomize the "physical" appearance, such as skin and hair color, gender, and facial features of the character, as well as the name. The character must also possess one class ability from either a Warrior, Paladin, Mage, Priest, Shaman, Druid, Monk, Death Knight or Hunter; each class has their own unique talents that make fighting or healing, solo or group work an ever evolving experience. While playing Arcadium a MMORPG, Gee (2007) observes that since the character creation process is so diverse, each character interacts with the game differently and, "the game you have played is very different from what it would have been had you built your character differently initially and throughout the game" (p. 54). The choice a player makes here determines a path on which to start.

Once a player has committed to a character, at least for a time, the game starts and a video intro familiarizes the player with the "world" of Warcraft as well as the race that the player chose. Players proceed to a starting area in which each new quest shows the player how to play the new character. The combination of race and class in the game alters the questing experience as game play changes depending on where the character originates (starting zone) and the class (special quests available only to a particular class with class individual rewards). Movements, basic quests, spells and attacks are slowly introduced and practiced in order for the player to learn how to perform in this new virtual world. Even for advanced players, where movements and quests are familiar, learning the spells and attack capabilities are essential as a new class is still complicated.

Each quest consists of "backstory" that explains in a narrative why the player is on the quest. Underneath the narrative, a simplified series of quest instructions joins an explanation with a clickable icon that describes the rewards, or choice of rewards received for each completed quest. Experience gained by quest will help a character/player to level her character up to level 90. Quests vary by class and race, as stated above, as well as by region. However, each quest has similarities between different realms and with different classes. This allows for rhetorical study across different role-playing races and classes of fighting.

WoW serves as the site that provides the rhetoric needed to define gamification of the classroom. The classroom today already uses tools that work to help students connect with the material, but gamification has the potential to serve a larger body of students. Though gamification is widely used as a marketing tool, researchers and instructors see

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the potential in its application. Combining the site of analysis with the intention of learning how gamification interacts with task completion leads to a research question:

> **RQ**: How can heterotopic rhetorical criticism frame critical
>
> communication pedagogy to reveal structures that determine traditional
>
> student and teachers roles and highlight ways in which gamification could
>
> change that structure?

In order to answer this question, WoW was approached through heterotopian rhetorical criticism (HRC). Using autoethnographic narratives as artifacts enable an inside look at the game, I examine my experiences in WoW through the lens of HRC as a way to talk about the rhetorical creation of both WoW and the classroom, in order to find common themes. The themes construct a definition of gamification of the classroom through three highlighted fundamentals that use themes and ideas of CCP to change how the classroom works.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The definition of gamification in the classroom for the purpose of this study is

informed by the heterotopian rhetoric that constructs World of Warcraft, as well as my

observations and understandings of the rhetoric through a lens of autoethnography.

Because "the subject of criticism consists exclusively in human activities and their

results" (Black, 1965, p. 5), I used autoethnography to "find a balance between the story

of life as I have lived it and the stories of others' lives that have been spoken into

existence" (Goodall, 2000, p. 24), and how it all relates to gamification of the classroom.

The persuasion of rhetorical criticism (Black, 1965) cannot fully grasp the performance

of life events that are brought to light with autoethnography. Beale (1978) describes

performative rhetoric in which discourse is not just spoken or argued, but is performed.

Autoethnography goes beyond this idea of performance. Autoethnography highlights the

repetition of performance with specific habitual actions, and the development of new

actions as they are repeated to form new performances and also acts as a way to connect

gaps in the literature to lived experiences of the author.

Autoethnography

By merging qualitative autoethnographic research with heterotopian rhetorical

criticism, researchers can redefine gamification to suit the needs of students and

educators. "No method can answer all questions, which is why we need … multiple

methods and ways of asking and answering questions" (Fassett & Warren, 2007, p. 103).

Autoethnography is an essential component to my research process. Unlike any other

method, autoethnography highlights the intimate relationship that a researcher has with

the site, work or people encountered through researching. The depth to which an autoethnographer gets with the topic shows the authentic and vulnerable nature of the method. When a researcher is open and reflexive with her/his personal experience surrounding the cultural site, the reader is able to experience the culture vicariously.

For this project it is especially important to use autoethnography. As kids, many of us were encouraged by our parents to share video game time with siblings or friends, but Super Mario was never as exciting as when you were playing by yourself, because a game needs to be played in order to experience it. What I experience informs not only how I interpret the rhetorical information, but also ultimately how I define gamification. My experience as a gamer, student and instructor provides a "layered account" of experiences as my past affects how I function today and how I define gamification (Boylorn, 2008). Goodall (2000) shows how writing is a relational construct in which readers are able to discern patterns of lived experiences through living through the self-discovery the writer experiences. The analysis of that text, along with personal experiences will help to define the strengths and limitations of gamification in the classroom at least in a narrow definition.

Not every study benefits from this multi-method/ methodology approach, but there are a few authors who have already combined autoethnography with rhetoric. Research surrounding the classroom essentially requires a combination of methods like autoethnography and rhetorical criticism because not only does the classroom involve an abundance of text to analyze, but it also involves the personal and human experiences of both student and teacher. Wood and Fassett (2003) explored the use of power, personal

involvement and the use of words within online classes. Wood and Fassett (2003) take turns relating personal stories as moments of reflection, hoping that the narratives not only relate to each other, but also to the reader. While the authors engage much more heavily in autoethnography, they analyzed textual student interactions to highlight themes of power, body, and self. The use of italics to separate the narrative from the rest of the paper highlights the authors' desire to not only share the personal experiences but also that those experiences are separate rhetorical pieces. Joined together, the research and narrative serve to give a larger, albeit fractured, look into how text obfuscates of the instructor's power, especially in an online experience.

When researchers are already deeply involved with the site of study and autoethnographic framework of a rhetorical criticism draws the reader into the site. Cline (2007) presented such a paper to a special interest group at NCA. Merging his own experiences during a church worship session with both the advantages and limits of rhetorical criticism, Cline examines this "empirical phenomena" through a rhetorical lens (2007, p. 8). By doing this, he showed how coming from a place within the community allowed him to discuss the rhetoric employed by the community in a deeper way. Cline admits that while this use of methods offered many insights, it is limited because of his perception of his own experiences within Campus Religious Organization (CRO). By nature, autoethnography highlights and obfuscates details about the information Cline found in the study. The research is always transformed by the researcher's experience with the cultural site, making few studies repeatable. Wilkins and Wolf (2011) explain that ethnography or autoethnography helps researchers understand what the participant or

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researcher is experiencing through a rhetorical lens. Once experiences are understood,

researchers can analyze performances, symbols, and systems of meaning within the

specific culture. Because Cline (2009) used autoethnography, as he examined CRO

through both lenses, he was able to see even more closely how neither method alone

could fully explain his spiritual experiences or place within the community. The

combination of methods shows the contradictions in the performances of spirituality and

as well as show rhetorical patterns in the community. While these two studies

represented a combination of autoethnography and traditional rhetorical criticism, this

thesis employs a more narrowly focused application, heterotopic rhetorical criticism.

Heterotopia

According to Foucault (1986), heterotopias are constructed by six principles that

define and separate them from all other types of spaces and places. Heterotopias are

liminal spaces that vary from culture to culture, and but all serve to "create a space of

illusion" that exposes a real space within society such as a brothel, or creates an "other"

space that is sterile and unadulterated and reflects the opposite of the messy unpredictable

world, like Disneyland. Heterotopias serve as a "safety valve" in which people can

release cultural tensions that surround deviant behavior in an acceptable manner. These

principles give researchers a common ground on which to define spaces and situations as

heterotopic.

Heterotopia creates a common place from which to view two seemingly opposing

spaces. Both the space of a classroom and the space of WoW perform as heterotopias

because they each follow the six principles (Blair, 2009). Both have open, fluid

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enrollment across the world, connect people both physically and virtually, and have a

specific purpose that functions in relation to culture, all within a space that exists separate

from "real life" (see Table 1).

Table 1		
Heterotopia	WoW	Classroom
Principle 1: Common in society	Anyone with internet access can play	Available around the world
Principle 2: Serves a purpose	A social place to digitally gather and play the game with others	Provides an education for those who are given permission to enter.
Principle 3: Gathers conflicting spaces	Brings together both virtual worlds and connects them to our physical world.	Brings together subjects into one physical or virtual space
Principle 4: Exists in a "slice of time"	Time functions differently in Wow, and revolves around quest completion rather than hours played.	Consists of 2-10 years' time. when participating in school, students are largely free from "adult life"
Principle 5: Fluidly accessible	Available to any who do not opt out by choice or circumstance, but the more people who play concurrently, the worse the server performs	Available to any who do not opt out by choice or circumstance. Limited by funding per institution.
Principle 6: Functions in relation to society	Creates an "other" space in which achievement is easily measured and risk of failure is low. Uses language that suggests that the outside world is more "real" or authentic than the experiences inside	Creates an "other" space in which participants are groomed and practice for careers in the "outside" world. Uses language that suggests that the outside world is more "real" or authentic than the experiences inside

Viewing WoW and the classroom through a heterotopic lens allows a discussion about

how each space is similar to the other. This highlights specific experiences and with the

addition of autoethnography, defines a specific slice of what gamification means for a

classroom. With a common understanding of space and heterotopia, researchers can have

a conversation about heterotopia through and about multiple subjects.

Heterotopic Rhetorical Criticism

Many times it is easy to forget that the classroom is part of a social construct and

therefore can change to meet society's changing needs. HRC introduces a practicality

into the research findings because by viewing both classroom and WoW as heterotopia,

we acknowledge that triumphs and achievements as well as "problems, struggles and

conflicts might also exist" in the opposing space (Spicer, Alvesson, & Kärreman, 2009, p.

551). By viewing both the classroom and World of Warcraft as heterotopias, it is clear

that communication not only defines space and participant, but also aids in the

construction of a communal culture. HRC examines the artifacts of one heterotopic space

in order to postulate the future possibilities in another heterotopic space. The artifacts,

which range from visual to textual rhetoric (narratives) from within the site, are analyzed

to explore and highlight social norms, common practices that shape the first space. The

elements that construct the first space are then applied to the second space as a way of

rhetorically manifesting change. By that reasoning, concepts and strategies that work in

in one space should work in a similar space.

For example, by using HRC, it is possible to study how the heterotopian space of

Disneyland can help us gain insight to major metropolitan city's gay districts.

Disneyland is a place that not only sells an image, it brands the consumer with that

image. In the most subtle ways, Disneyland paints a picture of a Utopia, of a place in

which there is no deviance, which masks the fact that Disneyland is a deviant heterotopia.

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A deviant heterotopia is a space in which individuals who behave outside the norm, such as adults who want to revisit a childhood experience in Disneyland, can move throughout the space without ridicule. Taking these rhetorical choices we could apply Disney's imaging to understand how gay districts could break the traditional label of a tourist attraction, or deviant space. It is possible to look at how Disney uses rhetoric to become an integral part of the city, and viewed not just as a place for kids. By using HRC, gay districts could use strategies used by Disneyland to become part of the city, not just a tourist attraction inside it. By viewing both the classroom and World of Warcraft as heterotopias, it is clear that communication not only defines space and participant, but also aids in the construction of a communal culture. By that reasoning, instructors could transfer the concepts and strategies that work in games into classroom.

I used a lens of autoethnography and HRC to analyze how the communication that constructs WoW encourages or discourages players to complete the quests. This involved examining not only the rhetoric of the quest logs (the main form of written communication), but also experiencing and analyzing how specific mechanics in the game transfers to the classroom. By using HRC as a way to highlight the space of the classroom, it allows researchers, teachers, and students to the CCP informed tactic of gamification to explore change to the classroom environment. I propose that this particular way of viewing gamification will expand the usefulness of its application in a college classroom setting. This research process involves my presence in a paid-for-access but public online space. However, while it is considered a social space, my research strictly chronicles my own journey in game play and the rhetoric that created it.

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My interaction with others in the space was limited to seeing characters and

conversational text, but is not included in my research. I wrote observations of my

behavior and experiences in a journal and then analyzed the patterns of structure found.

According to the Institutional Review Board at San José State University, I am exempt

from the need for approval because I did not interact with human participants.

Procedures

To view WoW from a new perspective, I approached the leveling process

differently than I had in the past. After leveling over 15 characters, I limited the

possibility of quest repetition by changing the faction in which my characters start. I

leveled four characters that belong to different races, one from each expansion within

World of Warcraft. This was my first time leveling each of the races and I worked

through the different regional quests until I hit level 20 with a Dwarf as a warlock from

the original game, a Dranei as a priest from the Burning Crusade expansion, a Worgen as

a warrior from the Cataclysm expansion and a Pandaren as a monk from the Mists of

Pandaria expansion. The different classes (warlock, priest, warrior, and monk) allowed

me to experience how the different classes function with the game mechanics. While all

except the Pandaren are from only the Alliance faction, my personal experience has made

me familiar with the faction of the Horde and therefore playing Alliance allowed me to

play a variety of new quests.

Each character took between five to seven hours to level and I took screenshots of

important visual rhetoric along the process. I also kept a written journal of my

experiences with the quests that consists of a single entry per level played (1-19) for each

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character, one entry encompassing the entire character with a total of 81 entries. Each

level entry contains observations about WoW and the potential application to the

classroom. The next chapter serves as a final journal entry encapsulating the entire

experience. The themes found are highlighted through CCP by the possibility of how

each might similarly function in the classroom.

Chapter Four: Findings

Critical communication pedagogy challenges the norms and traditional communication found in the classroom and heterotopian rhetorical criticism takes the artifacts in one space and imagines them in another space. CCP and HRC informed my research, allowing me to take my experiences in the game and re-imagine the experiences as tactics for the classroom in a practical way. I filled my notebook with ways to translate parts of the game into the classroom, drawing correlations between common game and school experiences. What I offer going forward is what I know of WoW, what I know of being a student, and what I know of being an instructor, and as well as an application of HRC to combine that all to challenge the culture's educational norms.

*   *   *

I sit down at the computer. My journal, favorite color pen and a plate of snacks sit on the table in front of me as I start up WoW and enter my password. It has been about six months since I have played at all and even longer since I have been able to really connect with the game. I took a sabbatical from the game in order to juggle school, work, and my thesis. In order to participate with my guild I needed to devote over 20 hours a week to the game, which was a luxury I did not have. Though the separation from the game helped me gain perspective as I started research, I missed playing the game. The game loads the start screen and I choose a Normal server, so I am not tempted to hang with my friends. I chose ahead of time to play strictly under the Alliance faction, in order to see the game anew, and between this and my sabbatical from the game, WoW felt new for a time. It felt weird to betray my past, but all in the name of research.

The new expansion, Mists of Pandaria came out in the fall of 2012. I had been

anxiously awaiting the new content, so the first character I made was a Pandaren monk,

which was the new race and class. I really have fun with the creation of a new character,

and am more invested when I can customize the character to fit an idea in my head of

what they should look like. I even customized the name. Once I create my character the

game starts and I am pulled into a different world.

Gamification Fundamental 1: Gamification is Low-Risk

Palei, my monk, started out on the Wandering Isle, which is a new continent

created within the game that accommodates the new content. Thankfully, leveling new

characters is familiar because of consistent game mechanics from class to class. This

creates low risk interaction because the skills learned with one class can be easily

transferred to another. The first quest pops up on the screen as soon as the intro video

stops, so I accept it and head to the non-player character (NPC) in front of me. The big

question mark hovering over his head, which signals that I need to talk to him, is almost

redundant as he is the only character I see. I turn the quest in and pick up the next

available quest.

The quest gives me a backstory for why Palei should complete it, and lets me

know that her training has begun. I head down to training dummies situated at the

bottom of the cobblestone path. The quest instructs me to practice a skill that Palei will

use when I fight mobs (NPC created for giving experience) later. As I follow directions,

bright gold letters flash across the screen updating me every time I land a hit. 1 of 5, 2 of

5, and 3 of 5…. and after completing the quest components, the question mark pops back up over the NPC's head.

This process repeats for each quest until I reach level three, which is the first time I encounter hostile mobs. Within the first few levels the only mobs that my character encountered were neutral and did not attack unless attacked first. By the time I reach level three, I have better mastery of the monk's basic skills, and so when the hostile mobs attack Palei kills them easily. As Palei and I prepare for an attack, I use the mouse to click the mob, while she crouches down, ready to leap into action. I push the number four on the keyboard, and she performs a flying kick right at the stork. For me, the attack is executed by pushing buttons on the keyboard that correspond to Palei's skills. But for her, it is a much different story. She throws and blocks punches, and uses her staff to inflict damage, all while risking her life. While she is *performing* the tasks, I am *practicing* how to use her skills in the right combination so I can have her do the most damage in the least amount of time. Each time she gains a new skill I learn how to use it in conjunction with the other skills while completing quests, and before long each new skill is second nature.

At level nine I hit a quest where I could not succeed. I died… and died …and died …and died. And each time I died, I ran as a ghost (a see-through version of my character that is physically able to move, but cannot fight or die) from the graveyard all the way back to where my corpse fell. Each time I tried to make subtle changes to my behavior to better protect Palei. Since I already leveled so many characters, I thought for

sure I knew how to finish each quest with ease. Though this process frustrated me, I knew I just had to run back to my body and get a second (or fifth) chance.

While in school it is rare to get even a second chance at an assignment, there are strategies teachers use to ease apprehension about classroom engagements. In my undergraduate forensics class, I had to compete in a debate tournament for the final. The entire class met bright and early on a Friday morning at SJSU. My partner Shawn and I headed to the Marie Carr room to get our score sheets and room assignments. With all the debate classes there for the same reason, we had to push just to get in the room. Though it was crowded, I did not mind because this process was more relaxing than taking a final and I also got an extra unit of credit just for participating. While our debates were graded, just like previous ones, this performance was credit/no credit. By allowing students to try to either win or lose instead of working to get a grade, our teacher allowed and encouraged fun. Students were fiercely competitive and fought for every win. Not only were we all competing against each other, but the whole class was determined to collectively win against the classes taught by other instructors. At the awards ceremony, not only were we each hoping our efforts during the day would get us a medal, but we were also waiting to see which class' hard work would pay off. We were able to concentrate on winning and not worry about the outcome because the instructor had given plenty of time to prepare our debate with a partner, which lessened the anxiety of solo public performance.

There are many other instances of low-risk engagements in the classroom. As a graduate teaching associate (GTA), I was introduced to a concept that I knew only by

experience. Three weeks into the semester I still struggled to get my students to speak up

and participate in class. My supervisor suggested that I employ a method to ease the

anxiety that my students experienced during speaking in the classroom. So I used think-

pair-share (TPS) to encourage the students talk about how they felt about the first

engagement, which had them sharing a cultural artifact in front of the class for two

minutes. The class period before, I had asked them to share what they felt about the

engagement and public speaking, but only a few shared. So the next class I asked them

to write about what they felt and share with a neighbor. After the students shared their

personal experiences with someone else, each pair realized they shared similar fears.

While students still did not want to divulge a lot of information with the class, having a

partner who understood the anxiety and self-doubt helped students to participate in a

conversation about the collective experience of the classroom. Through this conversation

the whole class recognized that everyone experiences nervousness when speaking. TPS

is a technique where students are given a topic to think about, and a time limit in which

each wrote down his/her thoughts about the topic. Then the students find someone to pair

with, and establish commonalities or important insights from their conversation. Finally,

one of the pair shares with the class. This structure for sharing became standard in my

class after experiencing success with it, and prompted me to make other engagements

low-risk as well.

In my fall '12 public speaking class I assigned my students an annotated

bibliography where they had to read, summarize, and evaluate four articles for an

upcoming speech. I told my class that they could complete the assignment with any four

articles they found, even if it was not useful to the speech. One of my students completed the assignment with only one usable article, as the other articles he found did not meet the guidelines for his speech. However, since he did the work to complete the annotated bibliography, I was able to give critique in a way that helped him for the speech, but did not punish him for lack of experience. I knew how frustrating finding good articles could be, especially if a student was new to college. While my students were still responsible for correct and valid sources at the time of the speech, this low-risk engagement helped them prepare for it.

Even my position as a GTA is a low-risk learning environment. As a student myself, I gain experience as a teacher in the classroom, and receive training in a week long intensive session before I start teaching. The training sessions introduced us to tools such as forum theatre (Freire, 2000) and micro teachings, which both simulate the classroom in a low-risk environment. The micro-teachings interaction was especially helpful. Each new GTA had the opportunity to go in front of the class and perform part of a prepared lecture. Audience members adopted personas to play to simulate a real, if not exaggerated, classroom space. While the first year GTAs were nervous, this was a much lower-risk engagement than teaching in front of the classroom for the first time without practice.

My micro-teaching allowed me to construct a lecture and practice it, and I also learned how to react to unexpected situations. There I was in the middle of my practice lecture, trying to impress my peers and the instructors participating in the training session. Up until this point, I had no disciplinary problems like the other first years had

experienced, but I could hardly think about that as I was focused on finishing my lecture.

Our supervisor then stood up and interrupted, letting everyone know that a "fire alarm"

was happening. Despite how nervous as I was, I did my best to get everyone to "safety"

outside before returning to the classroom. This exercise helped me to understand what my

instincts are during an emergency in class. Afterwards we debriefed the exercise, so that

my fellow GTAs and I could understand what to do to keep our students and ourselves

safe while following university emergency plans. I was able to make mistakes without

anyone's life actually being at risk. This exercise gave me more confidence to enter the

classroom as a new instructor.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

The space of a classroom is heterotopian by nature. As a crisis heterotopia, a

privilege or sacred space used to conceal the messiness of physical, spiritual or

intellectual growth, the classroom allows students to experience failure and inexperience

without being subject to "real world" ridicule (Foucault, 1986). Heterotopias of crisis are

almost extinct (Foucault, 1986) as what society found to be crisis before, such as

menstruation, pregnancy, boarding schools, and even honeymoons, are not anymore.

Therefore, crisis heterotopias are also considered heterotopias of deviance. As a

heterotopia of deviation, in which behavior that is different from the cultural norm is

expected and encouraged, the classroom gives students a space in which learning (a

deviance from the norm of knowing) is not only acceptable, but is the *purpose* of the

heterotopia (Foucault, 1986). Just as with WoW, the space of the classroom is "othered"

when mainstream society places it outside "real" life. This results in those inside the

<p style="text-align:center">58</p>

heterotopia to balance a meaningful life for those in the mainstream while justifying their existence in the heterotopia. Students enter in an environment in which failure is expected and should be encouraged. However, low-risk is not part of the vocabulary of the classroom even if it is the basis of education. Traditionally, instructors and administrators have imposed the rhetoric that inadequacy is unacceptable, which the mainstream culture upholds upon the classroom. This takes away the power the classroom holds as both a crisis and deviate heterotopian space. Some instructors allow a rewrite of a paper or project, but most assignments that focus on evaluation of skill rely on students putting their best effort forward from the beginning. This does not always benefit the student because many times these types of assignments are worth a large portion of the classroom points.

In a similar sense, WoW is also a heterotopia of deviation. In a culture in which being idle is shunned, playing a game like WoW is deviant. One of the reasons that people continue to participate in this "deviance" is because low-risk interactions in the game provide a sense of accomplishment that the real world does not provide. By reflecting this deviant heterotopia into the similar classroom heterotopia, we can see how principles of low-risk interaction in WoW might function in the classroom.

The game and the classroom embrace low-risk encounters differently. Each class will not last as long as engagements with WoW do. The game does not require the player to critically think or theorize. In order to enact this first fundamental in the classroom, assignments must provide more low-risk interactions with the material and gradually increase the risk and reward of the interactions. The instructor needs to decide which

activities, assignments or engagements in the classroom teach, and which need

evaluating. Teaching assignments allow students to "…engage in the task, make

mistakes, get feedback, learn and have relatively few grade consequences" (Falk, 2012, p.

14), while an evaluation assignments test the knowledge or proficiency of the student.

This language focuses on assignments from a student perspective. Because all

assignments, whether evaluative in nature or not, teach, these labels highlight how the

student feels about the interaction. Engagements that are low risk are generally not

associated with evaluation, such as Johnson's (2007) out of class quizzes or homework,

and traditionally place the act of teaching upon the instructor. Higher risk engagements

force the student to assume more responsibility to prove her abilities. Researchers also

distinguish between these types of engagements through the use of formative and

summative assignments. By giving students more low-risk teaching engagements in the

classroom, instructors can simulate what happens in a game.

Gamification Fundamental 2: Form is Function

When leveling a character, I am guided through the world with quests and

purposeful interactions. Each quest goes into a log that I can look at any time I need to

refresh my memory of the criteria. Most quests are picked up by interacting with a NPC

who shows me the requirements before I take the quest. In addition to the quest giver,

there are many other ways that lead me to task completion. The structure of the game

continually reinforces criteria and quest completion.

The quest log window is the most basic and pervasive form of communication in

the game. A NPC has one or more quests to pick up, and each new quest shows in this

window so the player can read the quest before he accepts it. The small quest log isolates objectives for a single quest, and provides information about the rewards that come with completion. These rewards consist of money, experience, and possibly armor or a weapon. I use the small quest log when I need to reread a quest and familiarize myself with the criteria. The large quest log provides a way to look at multiple quests and simultaneously evaluate worth. I often pick up multiple quests because I am unsure which quests I want to do and which ones I might be able to skip. The larger quest log provides a ranking system that tells me how difficult a quest potentially is, using a red (hardest) to green (easiest) color scale. This helps me to choose the quest that gives the most experience for the least amount of work.

Functioning like the large quest log, the map-and-quest log helps me visualize where I need to go by placing a map above the quest text. If I click on a quest, the map shows me areas accented with numbers that correspond to a quest that directs me where to go to complete it. I see where multiple quests are and how I can easily complete more than one quest at a time. The map-and-quest log shows all the quests in the area, which allows me to step back and look at my overall goal of leveling. This tool helps me plot my next move. However, the map-and-quest log is too intrusive to the game for it to be constantly open. Because it blocks most of the screen, making self-preservation a lot harder, I often turn to the mini map which is a smaller map that is continually present in the upper right corner of my screen. Odd shaped blue segments highlight where a particular quest component can be found. The mini map also has the ability to show other game features, such as townsfolk, mailboxes, and class trainers. One of the other

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ways that I use the mini map is when I look for resources to gather. With my dwarf,

Braffen, I mined for ore and gathered herbs. Copper, tin, and silver are the first kinds of

ore that I could gather. Each item or node appears as a mound of rock that appears on the

side of mountains, hills and in caves. When I click to interact with the node, Braffen uses

a pick axe to break open the rock and retrieve the ore. Herbs on the other hand, tend to

settle around areas with trees or water, and look like different types of plants. Unlike ore,

which is harder to tell from afar what it is without scrolling over it, herbs can be

identified by sight as each plant varies widely species to species.   Each node is marked

with a golden dot, which only shows up on the mini map. The mini map shows what type

of node it is, so I can make an informed decision about the time and effort needed to go

gather it. This mini map helps to guide me to areas where I could gather resources, but

also where I could complete specific quests.

Other tools in WoW help me to understand more about the quests I am trying to

complete, and how to finish them. By turning on the optional quest tracker, I am able to

use WoW to keep track of what quests I have completed and which ones I still need to

finish. Unlike the maps however, the quest tracking text hovers unobtrusively away from

the middle of the screen. I organize the information so that the quests that require the

most components are tracked so I do not forget to do something and have to backtrack.

The mobs in the game also remind you of quest objectives as each creature in the game is

also labeled with information. As I mouse over the mob, I am able to see the name, level,

and how many of that particular mob I need to kill in order to complete the quest. This

informative pop-up, in addition to maps and quest logs, makes understanding game

criterion easier. When playing any character I take every quest I can find and then pick and complete the ones that are easiest to do. This is freeing because I can choose my own path, but sometimes I end up trying to skip a quest that is mandatory.

Mandatory quests are not marked in any special way, but will stop a player from making progress in that area of the game if not completed. I have run to new areas on the map to start different quests, only to find I have to return and complete a quest I skipped. This was frustrating because the freedom to choose what quests to do has been taken away from me. It was easy to tell when I was frustrated, because I wrote much more in my journal than when I was easily leveling. Sometimes I would get in a rhythm and forget to write about a level because each level blended so seamlessly with the next. When I was frustrated, I lost concentration with the game, and devoted more time to the journal, trying to figure out how I could use a setback to my benefit, and many times I note frustration with a particular level or quest moving slowly. When a quest chain is not marked as mandatory, the leveling process slows. Despite the plethora of information available through the game tools, the only thing I do not know about the quest is if it is mandatory.

In WoW, quest trackers, NPC quest givers, maps, and even the mobs provide information and direct a player through the quest. Using WoW as a research site allowed me to look at it in a different light, and I experienced the leveling process as more of a collaborator and less like a player. This new role for me helped me to focus on the rhetoric of the game mechanics to see why and how players are able to complete tasks without specific directions. A lot of the structures found in WoW seem invisible when I

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am playing, because powerful structures are hidden from those in close proximity. As a researcher, these structures, tools, and strategies that promote participation become more prominent. While these strategies in WoW cannot transfer directly to the classroom, the structure of the classroom must clearly reinforce continual mastery building behavior.

Unfortunately, I have encountered instructors who are structurally unclear, and who seem unsure of what they are doing. For a long time, I would become frustrated, promising that when I became a teacher, I would be transparent with my students about my grading methods and classroom organization. Then it came time for me to be an instructor, and I thought I was prepared to handle the classroom differently. I even brought in Johnson's (2007) quiz model and was thrilled to see it in action. The students turned in quizzes early, and made connections that I had previously not made. However, this was the only structure that I knew well enough to share openly with my students. I did not even make my grading rubric until I started evaluating the first round of speeches. I never did share with the students exactly what I was looking for, outside of the brief language used in the syllabus. As a new instructor, I did not have the experience to be able to know what needed to be made explicitly clear through structure.

However, some of my instructors over the years have been clear about expectations and the structure of their class. Whether the class is regimented and challenging, or relaxed and conversational, each of these instructors conveyed what s/he expected of the students. In my first pedagogy class in my undergraduate education, I had a teacher who changed how the classroom worked a few weeks into the semester, but still was clear with the classroom structure. Greg was a different kind of teacher. He was

the first teacher I was comfortable calling by his first name, and he had this "rebel *with* a cause" kind of personality, which was refreshing to see. But the thing that I liked most about Greg was what he did for our class. The class as a whole did not seem to enjoy or understand some of the supplementary reading, and so Greg threw it out. He changed how the class ran by giving us the power to find and share reading that interested us the most. By giving us a guided choice of what to do, he not only changed the structure of the classroom, but he allowed us to see that every class that functions the same is because both teacher and student are adhering to structures of which they may not even be aware.

Similarly in my graduate class on pedagogy, Gabby gave us a few exercises to show the structure of the classroom. For the first exercise, we got into groups and arranged the desks to change the function of the classroom. The first group arranged the classroom so that all the seats were shoved in the corner and even still, one or two students still climbed over to sit in a desk. Another group took away the ability to sit in desks at all by stacking some, and telling the class they could not sit in the desks. One group even took all the students outside and turned a section of the outdoor campus space into a "classroom." Each group then talked about why they chose to arrange the classroom in that particular way, and what they had hoped that configuration would do for the classroom dynamic. The other students in the class then talked about how they felt in the newly created space. Many of the comments mentioned physical and emotional discomfort with the new arrangements because it differed from the norm. After our discussion, it was clear to us that what we perceive to be a classroom, and

consequently proper classroom behavior, was subjective. This exercise exposed that classrooms are created, designed, and enforced by our silent compliance to the norms.

The other in-class exercise we dubbed the "Skittles" discussion. Gabby gave each of us two Skittles, which we were to eat after each time we talked. After the two skittles were gone, we lost the privilege to speak. We all followed the rules and each person only talked twice and had a great, but heated discussion. Those who had taken their turns would frantically write down points of contention and thoughts for our reflection due later. At the end, Gabby pointed out to us that we had no obligation to follow the rules, especially when the conversation got a bit out of control. At any time we all could have spoken up, even without a Skittle, though none of us did. The structure of the classroom has clear rules about student interaction that students adhere to, even when they do not recognize it.

To ensure a successful gamified classroom, structural clarity is important. As heterotopias of compensation, both WoW and the classroom are meticulously crafted to be better in some way than the "real world." Unlike the outside world, WoW has clear and precise objectives, supported by a system that constantly feeds information to the player. The classroom performs this same function by having regimented majors, physically or psychologically constructed classrooms, and overarching university standards that order both student and teacher. If the classroom changes, a students need to know his responsibilities, as well as what freedom a new structure gives him. Viewed through the lens of HRC, WoW becomes a template for possibility in the classroom.

This template allows us to change the structure of the classroom without compromising the quality of education.

However, using HRC does not mean that it is necessary to superimpose WoW directly onto the classroom. Just as Foucault (1986) wrote about heterotopias reflecting reality in order to unmake reality, the rhetoric of WoW must be unmade so it may be reflected in the classroom. By comparing these two spaces, any transfer of ideas from one to the other must be, as a heterotopia of compensation, ordered and fastidious. Plainly said, the principles of WoW's ordered structure must be present, but they must fit into the reflected space of the classroom. By restructuring the classroom to have open and ubiquitous communication with the students, instructors can simulate a game-like atmosphere within the classroom.

Gamification Fundamental 3: Choice is Essential

Each character I played for research is different, even though they all fit in to a damage-per-second (DPS) role. Some classes do damage that is big and brutal, while other class' damage is slow and stealthy. I normally choose characters that fight from afar (ranged), but I wanted to play classes that I had not experienced. Even still, half of my characters for this study are ranged. However, Palei the monk and Grumun the Worgen warrior are my melee (hand-to-hand combatant), and playing them was a different game experience from what I was used.

Palei was the first character I leveled. Monks are a new class of hero to the game and therefore work differently than other characters. Every character has a force inside from which they draw power to perform advanced actions. Monks rely on both energy

and chi (a more powerful but fragile source of energy) to do extra damage. Energy is a force that replenishes fairly quickly, and Palei has special attacking skills that use it that also build up chi to prepare for a larger attack. Therefore as I deplete her energy though one attack, I replenish her chi. Because I was constantly regenerating one form of force, I was hardly ever caught in an overwhelming situation.

Grumun however, was especially frustrating to level. Warriors use a slow building force called rage, and many of the high damage moves expend a lot of it. This meant that often, as I fought more than one mob, I ran out of rage and could not do enough damage to survive. Grumun died many times, and because I could not attack from afar, he could not sneak around to get quests done. Even fighting a solo mob was hard. Since Grumun is melee, there was no skill that I could use to remotely draw a mob near. I was usually fighting within 40 yards of another mob. If I succeeded in killing what I attacked, there was less than half of Grumun's health left. This meant that if a mob nearby targeted me, I would have to fight without time to rest and heal. After fighting with two melee characters, I was excited to work with two ranged characters.

Ranged characters allow me to play a more relaxed game as I can get away from trouble more easily than with melee. I can also isolate a mob in order to clear a path through an area. While both my priest and warlock have different types of damage, but both must use mana to do any damage. Mana is a force that, especially in low levels, replenishes quickly and fuels all damaging attacks. Because these characters that use mana are weak in melee combat, I use their high damage spells to kill mobs before they can land an attack. Briinia, my priest, accomplished that well because of her skills. I

could kill a mob that was five levels above her with no problem. Part of this is because Briinia is ranged, and part of it is because as a priest, she can heal herself. While healing was not her specialty, the skill was still powerful enough to heal her fully each time. Briinia's attacks were also more powerful than Grumun. Because she cannot defend herself in a melee attack for long, she does a lot of damage from a safe distance. Braffen, my warlock, also kills most mobs before they can land an attack. While he could not heal himself, he had a minion to take the brunt of the attack. The voidwalker minion acts like a shield and deflects the attention off the warlock, while the imp minion does damage alongside the warlock. The presence of either minion keeps me safe in most fights. This is especially helpful when fighting more than one mob at a time. The experience between ranged and melee was different and left me with a distinct knowledge of how I want to play in the future.

For some reason when I am a melee, I cannot play well. My sightline feels blocked and I feel powerless to control the fight. However when I am a ranged DPS, I feel powerful and safe during a fight. With WoW, I am able to easily choose and benefit from a customizable path. The customization starts when players choose what race and class they want to be. Each class has strengths and weaknesses that need different strategic game play. Each choice the character picks affects the future, and the players still has plenty of choice left in the game. At level 10 the player chooses a specialty for the character. Each has a specific type of role (tank, DPS, or healer) to play in groups, and each of these specialties affect solo play. At level 15, and every 15 levels afterward, the player has a choice of three skill ups that enhance the role the player chose. Each will

help the character improve, but not in the same way. The choice determines how a player should most effectively play a character. While there is not that much free choice in the classroom now, instructors can easily incorporate it into teaching strategies so that students can learn through their strengths.

As I sit staring at the screen willing my thesis to write itself, I think about all the times that I have been in this same position because I had little choice in school. Writing has always been a struggle for me. My whole academic career I have avoided writing as much as possible. Ever since I was in 7th grade, I felt that I could not write. As we were introduced to more difficult grammar and writing strategies, I fell behind. My parents tried to help me by hiring my English teacher to tutor me. I spent hours learning how to diagram a sentence into a bunch of parts of speech that did not seem to matter; nothing helped. This shocked me and my family. When I was younger, I had always assumed I was a good writer. I worked decently hard as a student, and I was just as smart as the other students in the class. My dad proofread my papers for me and was baffled that what I spoke and wrote seemed to come from two different people.

One of the reasons that I chose to write a thesis instead of doing a project/performance or exams was because I figured that at the end of my masters career (with no immediate plans to pursue a doctorate), I should have one great piece of writing to show for it. I was determined to come out of school as a good writer, though clearly, this was not always the case. Ever since I could remember, I preferred to explain what I mean by doing or speaking not writing. While I get a bit nervous, I like performing in front of large groups of people. From community theatre to sports, my childhood

prepared me for performing, not writing. It was not until college that I realized that I could choose how and what I wanted to learn.

My first public speaking class came after a year break from school. I had dropped out of college, and having no direction of where I wanted to be, I aimlessly went back to school multiple times to find what would work for me. First I was studying interior design, and after that, fashion design. I kept looking for a way in which I could *do* something instead of *write* about something. I had just transferred from one community college to another to join the water polo team. I still had no direction for my academic career, but as an athlete, I had a counselor who guided me to the classes that I needed to take to transfer to SJSU. It was my first semester back in a general education classroom, and she enrolled me in public speaking. Sitting in the classroom, I noticed that students seemed petrified of even the smallest time spent in the front of the classroom. I, on the other hand, always volunteered to go first, and I had a blast performing in front of the class. This continued on throughout the semester, and I was inspired to take another communication studies class. The next class allowed me to present even more, and I knew I had found something I wanted to study, because it let me use my strengths.

The choice to study communication by no means kept me away from writing, and I knew this from the beginning. However, since I had found a way to embrace the performer inside of me more often, the more mundane task of writing did not seem so threatening. I picked courses and assignments that helped me highlight my natural abilities, and the more I studied, the better I got at all forms of communication. I can see that the turning point in my education is when I made a choice. I made a choice to

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embrace what I knew, to embrace what I loved, to embrace who I am. Once that choice was made, I performed for fun, and used my academic energy for the writing assignments.

In WoW I have the freedom to do whatever I want to in order to level. Either in a combination or alone, I can quest, gather/craft, and run dungeons. How I level is my choice, and I can decide what my goals and needs are. This choice is only made available because of the structure of the game. This structure provides me with an overview of what I need to know about leveling, from rewards written out in quest logs to maps showing where the mobs are. These tools serve as check points along the way to keep on track or to change plans. Guided choice in games is foundational. I can choose any character to play at any time and act in the game as I please. Within that character, I can still customize her even further as she gains levels. Each choice determines play style down the line.

As a heterotopia of compliance, the educational system isolates students and their choices in order to regulate skill building and learning. Students are able to choose a major, minor and/or concentration, and even some classes within those categories. These choices help guide a student to a career path, and to some passion within that path. However, strict educational regulations make it difficult to deviate from tradition. Even within the classroom, the current structure limits choice. WoW, when viewed for a re-imagining of the classroom, functions as a heterotopia of deviance as the freedom for individualization found in the game is a stark contrast from the real world. This view of

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these two spaces gives us the ability to use HRC to combine the ordered nature of the classroom and the freedom of choice that comes when playing WoW.

By playing WoW and journaling my experiences, I was able to get a different view of the game. Using HRC allowed me to view the classroom and WoW as both heterotopias of deviance and heterotopias of compliance, and see the space and structure of the classroom more clearly when understanding these experiences through CCP. Different experiences in the classroom and WoW highlight the different ways these spaces act as these two types of heterotopias. HRC revealed fundamentals that are essential for gamification of the classroom. Fundamental one: a gamified classroom will have low-risk engagement in all "teaching" assignments. Fundamental two: a gamified class will use structure not only to call attention to how to do a quest, but what the benefits are of doing said quest. Fundamental three: within a gamified structure, the student must have choice in order to join learning style and time. A classroom that accomplishes this successfully brings gamification to the classroom.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Applications and Limitations

So, what does all this practically mean for the classroom? While I have mentioned some specific fundamentals for bringing gamification into the classroom, I do not recommend that the classroom become a video game. Though the three fundamentals show promise in part or in whole, gamification of the classroom still has limitations. I look to the three fundamentals of gamification as seen through the lens of WoW in order to apply this rhetoric to the classroom and offer a reimagining of the classroom. Heterotopian rhetorical criticism helps to transfer not only the fundamentals but also to take specific classroom functions (as I experienced it) and turn those into an actual quest format. By examining experiences I had in WoW through the view of the three gamification fundamentals and critical communication pedagogy I re-imagine specific parts of the classroom, as well as specific WoW quests, to rhetorically build a gamified classroom.

Structure of a Gamified Classroom

A gamified classroom can function in one of two ways. A teacher can implement just one or a few of the actual quests or structures or s/he can change the entire structure of the class. For a gamified classroom in either part or whole, the structure must not only be clear and tested, it must offer low-risk choice for the students because a lack of clarity in the classroom, whether through verbal or structural, can be detrimental (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001). For a fully gamified classroom, online components found in a learning management system (LMS) allow instructors to give quick feedback, which mimics the game mechanics. The structure of a gamified classroom should be laid out in

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the syllabus with clearly marked descriptions of the student responsibilities. Students should be able to understand how they will be assessed and how assignments function.

Grading in a Gamified Classroom

One problem in school is that grades are often subjective and, if assignments are done wrong, a student receives little credit with no hope of learning from her mistakes. Thankfully, a game is objective. Unless a player abandons a quest and/or chooses not to finish a quest, she gets full experience points every completed quest. While experience for killing different mobs is different, the quest experience is consistent and measurable. Any difference from what is projected and what is earned is (if performance stays on course) is a positive difference, with players killing and gathering more mobs and nodes for more experience than expected. So when gamifying the classroom, instructors need to not only restructure the grading system, but completely restructure what it means to earn a grade. While a leveling system from WoW cannot be transferred exactly to the classroom, small changes will allow the classroom to benefit from it. While most quest assignments can convert to a credit/no credit or a teaching assignment, other quests like speeches, performances, and research papers would be an evaluation assignment. This way students participate in more teaching assignments, which in will help students interact more with the material.

Characters level quickly at the start. Experience needed to level at first is much less than at towards the end of the level cap encourages players with quick rewards. This not only allows for players to bond with the character, but to get swept up into the game as they experience early success. This provides students with opportunities to participate

and ensures future quest/level completion. If teachers transfer this idea to the classroom, grading would function differently than it has traditionally. If instructors change grading from a loss function to a gain function, students would earn points and levels quickly, which encourages continued engagement with the material. This leveling system (Appendix A) could be changed to suit any class material. It could also be scaled down, but in order to promote a game-like atmosphere, a low point scale will not work. Low-risk quests cannot exist when each point affects a student's grade. This system could be implemented in a fully online, hybrid or even traditional classroom, and gives a student more power over her grades. This power includes the freedom to stop working when the student reaches her desired level. As this approach to grading is new and different for most students, the syllabus must clearly lay out what is expected of them.

The Structure of Quests

Changing the language in the classroom from assignments to quests or missions not only borrows from games, but also enhances the grading system by using consistent rhetoric. Quests are accomplished and assignments are simply done, so this gives back the power of learning to the students. In order for students to receive the quick feedback that is necessary for steady, measurable growth in the form of experience, some technology must be implemented for a fully gamified classroom. While trying to improve the student interaction with the course material, it is imperative not to add to the daily duties of an instructor. If technology were to be built to enhance gamification of assignments, a quest log might look and function something like it does in WoW.

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In this mock up log, the "backstory" provides a sense of meaningfulness. It is important for students to understand why an assignment is meaningful because meaningful tasks encourage the student to feel the importance of the task, which "…relates to the perceived value of a task" (Weber et al., 2005, p. 72). The criteria clearly shows a student what is expected to complete the quest, and the rewards show exactly what s/he will get if completed. This particular quest log only works with teaching quests. Most quests in WoW give both experience and some amount of in-game money. Though teachers generally do not give more than one reward per assignment, participation becomes a secondary reward because traditional compliance gaining techniques focus on compelling a student to engage and participate either through in-class behavior or within the assignment.

The meaning of participation varies widely from classroom to classroom. Participation points are often held over a student's head as an unknown grade at the end of the semester. In fact, a former grad student of Lehigh University is suing the school because "her teacher gave her a "zero" for class participation because she complained about having to take on an extra internship" (Cavaliere, 2013, para. 7). While this case fails to recognize the student's responsibility in the problem, it serves as an example of an all too common occurrence. Participation is extremely subjective, and most teachers prefer an active verbal participation within the class about the assigned reading. As both a teacher and student, there is one practice in the classroom I have avoided because it takes away student choice. Many instructors require students to take a reading quiz or write reading notes as a way of ensuring participation with the reading material. While some

teachers make this practice more meaningful by letting students use the notes on tests and quizzes, and for some learners, reading notes do not help comprehension and are just empty work. Outgoing and unabashed students are favored as their participation is publically performed.

While engaging in public discussion to learn benefits extroverted and outspoken student, this practiced assessment of participation leaves students who are ESL, introverted, or those who find the class challenging, in a high-risk situation. Many in the educational systems still consider silence in the classroom to be either resistance towards the instructor, or worse, a deficiency. "Silence is not limited to one's inability to speak, it has other purposes and meanings" such as a cultural norm or personality trait (Hao, 2011, p. 269). Forcing students to speak can lead to apprehension and anxiety, and emotional students are sometimes looked down upon and treated as weak (Sprague, 1992). All of these things work to counter-act a gamified classroom. Participation points should be joined with experience points so all forms of interaction with the material or class are acknowledged.

By following the game model, participation is attached to every interaction. Each assignment gives participation badges as well as experience as seen in the mock up quest log. For each 10 points of experience offered, students earn one participation badge. The badges are then turned in for extensions on assignments, an extra time cushion during speeches or presentations or any other benefit a teacher might implement. Those students with badges left over at the end could exchange badges for experience points. The instructor could decide how much each badge was worth, but the recommended

conversion is two badges for every one point of experience. This will honor the participation without discounting the importance of actually completing quests. By folding the participation badges into every point, however the student participates with the material teachers include students of more diverse learning styles, cultural differences, and disabilities. As shown by WoW, every small attempt at mastery contributes to overall success. Students could still earn participation points through any in class measurement the instructor wanted, as long as no student could lose points for not being verbal. This could range from giving bonus badges to those who show up to the lecture, free writing about the class, or even in-class participation. While some schools and instructors are unable to score participation by attendance, in a gamified system in which every opportunity of engagement is a way to *gain* and not lose points, rewards for attendance function like extra credit.

Another way to honor all the work that students do is to treat evaluation assignments differently. As shown earlier, evaluation assignments are larger and are meant to test a student's mastery of course content. If evaluation assignments were broken down into a few teaching assignments (rough drafts, outlines, etc.), then students could still have the freedom to experience failure and time to recover. For example, if the annotated bibliography as an evaluation engagement is broken into components then it would be complete only when enough correct teaching quests (individual annotated bibliographies) were complete. So when a student "kills" the wrong mob, or in this case reads an unhelpful article, he would have an opportunity to still get points that count towards his overall grade, just not to that particular assignment. Gamification causes a

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paradigm shift from only counting what is done correctly, to include all efforts made along the way. The naming of these opportunities can be a strategic and critical move if the instructor draws attention to why specific quests or assignments are required, using departmental or institutional learning objectives (LOs) (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001). This also eliminates student excuses for not understanding as gamification provides multiple check points to change and direct behavior and performance.

Group Structure

Just like participation, group work can cause anxiety for students. Many times students do not have a specific role, and therefore ambiguous responsibility within the group. Leaders can become frustrated with the lack of contribution from the group, and the other group members might resent the leader for taking over. In a gamified situation, the classroom group dynamic gives students a chance to choose a role ahead of time. In WoW, everyone looking to join a group chooses the part they want to play and the game matches up players accordingly. Each person then has a role and everyone knows the responsibility of each role. Players go into a group with a specific function, and as long as they follow that function, then the whole group experiences success. By assigning different responsibilities to the group structure and giving the students the freedom to choose their path, the traditional group structure changes. In a gamified classroom, group work would follow a pattern, pulling from WoW's structure; each position would have incentives that appeal to the different learning styles. The roles are first come, first serve and clearly lay out the responsibility of each group member: a leader, a facilitator, and three group members.

Each group needs a leader, and to reward a person who is willing to take on the responsibility, an extra 10 percent is added to the total points available for the assignment. The leader is in charge of the entire project, and is therefore responsible for success or failure in the group. The leader would also be responsible for topic selection and other students could choose what group they were in based on the topic. The healer or group facilitator would be in charge of the management of the team by mediating the needs of the group and acting as the liaison with the instructor. The facilitator would also be responsible for the aesthetic portion of the project (visuals, editing, etc.). The three remaining roles of the group could be in charge of finding research, understanding it, and sharing it with the rest of the group. The roles could change based on the needs of the assignment and/or class and a teacher could add responsibilities to any position as is needed by the course content. With every student understanding her role in the group, she can perform her duties without fear that the project will ruin her grade.

In the game, there are checks and balances to make sure a group functions well, and this is needed in the classroom as well. In WoW, if someone does not fulfill his responsibility another player can vote to kick him out of the group. This function could be included in the classroom through the use of student distributed participation points. Each student would work with a hypothetical 100 participation badges and use the points to reward good behavior in the group. The average for each student would determine the total points earned, and if for some reason a student does not fulfill her role, the instructor can choose if the student needs to re-do her section of the assignment.

Death Structure

While the rhetoric of "death" even in a gamified setting might not appeal to students, labeling this function as a re-do would allow a student to have an opportunity to revisit his work for an edit, a re-work or even a re-imagine of the material. With only a few re-dos per student, the instructor could limit extra work, while giving the student a way to learn from the mistakes they made. Instructors would still be able to navigate exactly what a re-do looked like for the individual courses based on time and preference. Many times, students are able to get close to a higher level of mastery (such as a C+ or B+), but fall short without any chance of improvement. A re-do would take the stigma out of failure, even for evaluation quests, and hopefully set the students up to take on other challenges.

Customization

To further the low-risk atmosphere and to engage students with the material, it is important for students to have choice. Re-imagining WoW's character customization for the classroom gives students a choice in how not only their preparedness counts but also their interaction with the reading material functions in the classroom. This kind of choice mimics the skill ups in WoW by having distinct advantages and disadvantages. Each student would choose between quizzes, chapter lectures or leading discussions.

In this example, because quizzes take the least amount of time and are worth the least amount of points, a student would have to complete more over the course of the semester. Students who choose to do the quizzes must create their own quiz each week. Each quiz will include one question from each of the five levels of Bloom's taxonomy to ensure cognitive learning for each chapter or reading:

Knowledge: Surface level questions that express/explain overall ideas from the reading.

Application: A question that shows application of student's/avatar's experiences to core concepts in the reading.

Analysis: A compare/contrast application of two concepts from the reading.

Synthesis: A question that uses a previously discussed concept from the class to relate to the current reading.

Evaluation: Students evaluate a direct quote of their choosing, and explain why they agree or disagree (Johnson, 2007).

Each question is worth two points for a total of 10 points. One point is for the construction of a question that follows one of the five levels. The other point is for a thoughtful and correct answer to the question. The quizzes are a high-choice, low-risk way of interacting with the readings.

A chapter lecture, while functioning like reading notes, helps students gain skills in media presentation, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of concepts. Creating a lecture takes time and effort, especially when using presentation software such as Prezi or PowerPoint. Examples, in video or picture form take time to find and apply to the software. This type of preparedness helps students to grasp the knowledge of the lesson through key self-chosen examples. Here, like the quizzes, students are not focused on coverage, but on deep comprehension on highlighted topics.

Leading a classroom discussion, while intimidating to some, is thrilling for others. Students would have to prepare and know the selected chapters enough to answer

questions and with the instructor's guidance, would lead and facilitate the discussion in the classroom. Students would be responsible for preparing 15 questions that follow Johnson's (2007) quiz model. Each of these reading interactions not only enforce the subject matter, but gives students a way to practice different skills, depending on a student's preferences or strengths. The deadlines could be worked out by the individual instructor or by the student depending on course restrictions. When a student feels in control of her learning, whether inside or outside of the classroom, she is motivated to learn. "Learner empowerment addresses the extent to which students feel motivated and in control of their academic task, and is associated with cognitive learning and affective learning" (Kranstuber, Carr, & Hosek, 2011, p. 49). Choice not only empowers the student, but increases participation.

Deadlines

Customizable deadlines are also a way of creating an opportunity for choice in the classroom. In WoW, each time a player kills something or gathers something, s/he gains experience. However, if s/he happens to level from killing a mob and still has completed quests to turn in, it is rewarding to turn in multiple quests at the same time and rush through a level. By letting the student determine when the deadlines are or choose to turn in assignments every week, nontraditional students who might have to work 30-40 hours a week on top of full time classes are served as well as those students who need more structured deadlines. Students would have to decide, not which road is easiest, but which road is best for their learning style. While this may not work for evaluation quests such as speeches, it could still work on teaching quests.

Application of Quests

Mimicking the structure found in WoW, these quests are reimagined to work in conjunction with the classroom structure or as a gamified piece in a traditional classroom. Each is crafted by merging actual quests and opportunities in WoW with classroom situations. In WoW there is a type of a quest that gives a character something to protect (a totem, a person doing a ritual, etc.), and a length of time for the encounter. It functions as a speed test of the players' skill and strategy in the game. While instructors cannot attack the students to test their knowledge, this quest could become "survival quiz" in which students answer as many questions as possible in five minutes. The questions would be simple and straightforward and all true or false. This reinforces classroom ideas as well rewarding those students who are prepared. The use of true or false will help to ease student apprehension, and used in combination with the new leveling system, students would not experience punishment for a wrong answer. Special accommodations would still be made for students with registered disabilities, so each student has a chance at as many points as possible. A survival quest could also function as a way to encourage greater participation in class performance.

A survival quest could also function as an addition to engagements in the class. During speeches or presentations students often speak too quickly or do not prepare enough to fill the allotted time. The survival quest, or "survival mode" as it would be called, would direct students to talk for the entire required time. If the prepared material did not fill the time, a student would have to "survive" the whole time by standing for the allotted time in silence. This would not only encourage students to practice and prepare,

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it would also ensure a more accurate way for teachers to plan for the class, leaving less time to improvise when engagements run short. Students would be limited to experiencing a small amount of failure, instead of something as traumatic as a failing grade as they prepare for a bigger evaluation assignment.

Teachers try to get students involved with the classroom material with minimal failure, and a gathering quest could encourage that. Gathering herbs and ore is one way to gain experience in WoW. Some people and guilds are challenging how WoW works by leveling exclusively through non-violent game interactions like gathering resources. The guild Peace Corps "is based on the premise of leveling to level cap without killing anything" ("Guild: Peace Corps," n.d., para. 2). However, for most players, gathering or crafting is supplementary to the leveling process. In WoW, crafting and gathering professions encourage the making and gathering of goods to make either items that will help as players level, or money (beneficial in the long term). If we name assignments as gathering, we can change the structure of supplementary learning. Students would have the opportunity to supplement the reading, by exploring and writing on something they know about, something they care about or something that could add to the collective knowledge of the classroom. This could be as simple as finding a video or picture that illustrates a lecture moment for the student better than what the instructor used, or a blog that defines a concept from the student's experiences. This kind of quest would not only give experience points, but would also enhance learning, as students are reinforcing and applying their knowledge on the reading material.

As characters complete quests in the game interactions with the game expand the area that the player has explored. This not only gives the players a larger knowledge of the world, but also gives the chance to find extra quest or achievement opportunities. In a gamified classroom, these exploring achievements could act as a way for students to get to know their department. Exploring quests would send students to attend lectures or presentations, interview a department head or instructor, or attend a meeting with an advisor. Gamification offers a chance for an "exploring" quest could help students feel more connected not only to the department and school, but also to their own education.

Limitations

As exciting as it is for me to implement gamification in the classroom, some important limitations surfaced during the research process. One of the greatest things about playing a game is the idea that death is not an end. In WoW when a character dies, not only does the player not have to start the whole game over, his progress within a quest is saved as well. This can cause the player to be reckless when fighting because death is a small consequence. If failure is reconstituted as a death, will the students experience the same reckless behavior? The extra help given through the variety of quests, skill ups, and the gamification of the classroom might give the students the impression that the classroom is a game, and is not serious. This is something researchers and instructors need explore through practical application.

Because of the time it would take to test and implement such a system, an instructor would have to learn how to adapt the new system to the current system, or create a new online system, while making sure that the grading system does not disrupt

the overarching school grading structure. The extra work of learning and testing a new system can be daunting if an instructor that does not possess passion for it. Without a way to see the benefits of gamification outweigh the initial extra work, teachers will not implement a new system. This is why it is crucial that instructors understand the gamification fundamentals and know which ones can be implemented easily and independently.

There are certain things can only be learned by doing, testing or practicing. And by participating in WoW from a new perspective, it became clear that players often do not read the quest logs, unless more information is needed. Similarly students do not fully read the syllabus, and if much of gamification is based on clearly written instructions and structure, this could affect how a gamified classroom functions. Though in the game, mechanics compensate for player apathy towards reading quest logs. If instructors change the way that the classroom functions, and gamify it, there are no game mechanics to help ensure success in the classroom. The future success of gamification of the classroom rests on the success of the students who participate in it, and the clarity of the instructor's communication, in all forms, with the students. This means that educators may not be able to craft a clean and informative syllabus and expect that to be enough to implement gamification.

Another limitation of this study comes from the method and methodology I used. While heterotopia is a widely used concept and way of viewing spaces, HRC as a method was crafted to specifically for this study. Geuter (2012) uses heterotopia as way to inform his criticism of science fiction novels, but no other study has used HRC. This means that

it has yet to be tested and evaluated on a larger scale. Because the methodology that

informs HRC in this study is autoethnography, my experiences in the game before and

during the research process, affect the conclusions I drew. While have a deep knowledge

of the game was beneficial in many ways, without a replicate study from another

researcher who has little or no experience with WoW, it is unclear if that previous

knowledge informed not only the experiences, but also the creation of HRC. Since past

experiences may have led to assumptions about the game, thus informing HRC, it is

important that we test this method further in order to ensure future success of both HRC

and gamification of the classroom.

Possibly the biggest limitations surrounds the gamification potential. As

mentioned in chapter one, gamification has been surrounded by companies that want to

layer this tactic over a broken strategy, which results in meaningless interactions.

Unfortunately, this is a risk when gamifying the classroom. Administrators are looking

for ways to remove the teacher from the classroom, by replacing seemingly mundane

tasks with electronic or gamified components. This is not what I advocate for with this

thesis. The teacher is an important and meaningful component, especially as a gamified

classroom is tested and monitored for value. Critical thinking does not happen in a

vacuum, and if we remove the direct access between student and teacher, students will

leave the educational system without the skills necessary for critical thinking. Without a

teacher available to mediate and create discussions, a student would miss valuable

opportunities to explore important and potentially volatile subjects in a safe environment

in which other students challenge her belief systems. Gamification is a tactic that shows

how learning changes when the space changes. Viewing the classroom through the use of different tactics expands CCP as well as changes the way we view the classroom. These tactics must be integrated into the current classroom environment, not by removing interactions with both other students and the instructor.

Future Success

In order to ensure the future success of gamification, instructors need to implement tactics to make sure that they meet the students' needs. This means that not only does the instructor need to prepare the class, set up point systems to allow for a gamified classroom, and adopt current curriculum to a gamified classroom, s/he also has to test the class. In games, this is called beta-testing. Before Mists of Pandaria came out, I was part of the lucky few (hundred thousand in this case) who got to test the game, looking for bugs and other issues and reporting any problem I found. This same practice would help to ensure that any mishaps or trouble spots are taken care of before students even interact with the class. Even still, beta testing does not find all the problems. This means that during the process of gamifying the classroom in whole or in part, instructors need to put in place some system checks to allow for students express spots of confusion.

One strategy to ensure clarity is a small group instructional diagnosis (SGID). A SGID is one tool originated at the University of Washington (Clark & Redmond, 1982) and implemented at the GTA program at SJSU. Sometime during the middle of the semester, a colleague comes into the classroom and talks with the students about how the classroom is working, how the teacher can improve the classroom, and how each student can contribute to these improvements. This allows for students to open a conversation

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about the classroom and make sure that their collective needs are being met. This practice helps the teacher understand the needs of her students while there is still time correct and improve. This way, if there was a problem with the gamified classroom, the students could let the instructor know before it affects their grades or instructor's evaluations. With students also taking responsibility, the class can grow and evolve as a community.

If a classroom is conducted as a hybrid or fully online, the learning management system will have other ways of reminding student of assignments/quests. While a restructure of the classroom might feel authoritarian, construction of a solid structure of borrowed and enhanced rhetoric will not only allow students to meet the objectives of a college but give the students freedom within the institutional rules to take control of their education.

Conclusion

A lot of the time during the research process, I was concentrating so hard on making sure I was "researching" and journaling about my experiences, that I actually did not have fun. While it was a lot more enjoyable than re-reading my thesis for passive voice again, I sometimes just wanted to have fun. Originally, I was planning on restricting my characters from the extra game mechanics like dungeons and profession (gathering). This was so I would be able to avoid replicating past experiences. In many ways, this was good, because my lack of knowledge of the Alliance quests not only caused me to get lost allowed me to feel frustration, it also led me to quests I was not expecting. I was able to keep this up for three characters, but when I leveled Braffen, I

was so burned out that after level 16, I changed my strategy. At that point I decided that if I was going to get the perspective of how a game functions, I should play it like a game.

So I just played.

Once I did, not only did I have fun, but I learned a lot about a few of the other parts of the game that I would have missed, like group interactions and gathering. More importantly, I got to experience what it felt like to play the game. Quests flowed from one to another, reminding me of what it meant to play. Gaming has a rhythm that keeps a player going and makes tasks fun to do.

Gamification does not make assignments fun all the time. It is not magic or a switch to turn on that all of a sudden makes every mundane or unappealing task the most fun activity in the world. Even games have quests or components that require patience, perseverance and some external motivation. Rather, gamification makes the process better overall. As instructors, even with this new working definition of gamification, we cannot expect one solution to be the answer for every student. The three fundamentals of gamification as it pertains to the classroom lay out a general definition; Gamification must consist of high-choice, low-risk engagements in a clearly structured environment. Gamification is by no means a guarantee for a higher GPA, but as a fledgling classroom strategy, there is potential for real and long-term change in the class, because "this *could* be a game [emphasis original]" (McGonigal, 2011, p. 34).

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Level	Total XP needed	Letter Grade
Level 1	10	
Level 2	30	
Level 3	70	
Level 4	135	
Level 5	230	
Level 6	330	
Level 7	460	
Level 8	620	
Level 9	800	
Level 10	960	
Level 11	1090	
Level 12	1150	
Level 13	1300	
Level 14	1400	
Level 15	1480	C
Level 16	1560	C+
Level 17	1680	B
Level 18	1760	B+
Level 19	1880	A
Level 20	1960+	A+

Gamified grading scale
For institutional reasons, I am considering a 74 percent as a C, which is what students need to pass a general education class.