MODEL INTRODUCTIONS: Academic Writing

Ferguson, Christopher J. "Video Games and Youth Violence: A Prospective Analysis in
    Adolescents." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 10 (2010). *SpringerLINK*. Web. 10 Jan. 2014.
Concerns about the potential influence of violent video games on serious acts of youth
aggression and violence have been debated in the general public, among policy makers and
among social scientists for several decades. At present, a general consensus on video game
violence effects has been elusive, with great debate occurring among scholars in this field.
Some scholars have concluded that strong video game violence effects on aggression have
been conclusively and causally demonstrated in wide segments of the population (e.g.,
Anderson et al. *2008*; Anderson *2004*). Others have concluded that video game violence may
have only weak effects on youth aggression, or may only influence some youth, particularly
those already at-risk for violence (e.g., Giumetti and Markey *2007*; Kirsh *1998*; Markey and
Scherer *2009*). Still others have concluded that video game violence effects on youth
aggression are either essentially null, or that the field of video game violence studies has
difficulties with methodological problems to such an extent that meaningful conclusions
cannot be made about the existing research (e.g., Durkin and Barber*2002*; Kutner and
Olson *2008*; Olson *2004*; Savage and Yancey *2008*; Sherry *2007*; Unsworth et al. *2007*). For
instance, as some have noted (e.g., Olson *2004*), the increased popularity of video game play
among youth has been correlated with a societal reduction in youth violence rather than an
increase in youth violence.

Martins, Nicole, Dmitri C. Williams, Kristen Harrison, and Rabindra A. Ratan. "A Content
    Analysis of Female Body Imagery in Video Games." *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*
    (2009). *SpringerLink*. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.
Body image dissatisfaction among adolescent girls and women is considered so common
that some researchers claim it is a normative component of life in Western society
(Grogan *2007*). Indeed, evidence indicates that 40% to 60% of adolescent girls and women
are dissatisfied with some aspect of their appearance (Thompson *2004*). This discontent with
body weight is associated with the prevalence of eating disorders: it is estimated that 10 to 15
million women suffer from anorexia or bulimia in the United States alone (National Eating
Disorders Association *2007*).
        The causes of disordered eating are complex, but one explanation for the link
between body dissatisfaction and disordered eating is sociocultural pressure. In particular,
researchers point to the mass media for perpetuating an unrealistic ideal of thinness as
attractive (Byrd-Bredbenner *2003*; Sypeck et al.*2006*; Wilcox and Laird *2000*). The research
in this arena demonstrates that exposure to the thin ideal results in women evaluating their
bodies more negatively, which in turn, leads to an increase in disordered eating
symptomology (Grabe et al. *2008*; Harrison et al. *2006*).

Sample Conclusions

Ferguson (2010).
In conclusion, the current study finds no evidence to support a long-term relationship between video game violence use and subsequent aggression. Although debates about video game violence effects on player aggression are likely to continue for some time, it is suggested that the degree of certainty and statements regarding the strength of causal effects should be revised in a conservative direction (similar calls have been made by other scholars, e.g., Cumberbatch *2008*, Freedman *2002*; Olson *2004*, Savage and Yancey*2008*; Sherry *2007*). A reasonable argument and debate for small influences could probably still be made (e.g., Markey and Scherer *2009*), although statements reflecting strong, broad effects generalizable to serious acts of youth violence are at current, likely unwarranted. This is particularly important to note given that, as video games have become more widespread over the past few decades, the incidence rate of criminal youth violence has declined sharply; it has not increased as feared (Childstats.gov *2009*). Naturally, video games are an unlikely cause of this youth violence decline (to conclude otherwise would be to indulge in the ecological fallacy), however these results suggest a mismatch between public fears of violent video games and actual trends in youth violence (i.e., fears of juvenile superpredators never materialized, see Muschert *2007*). It is argued here that scientists must be cautious to remain conservative in their conclusions lest the public be misinformed. A continued debate over violent video games will likely be positive and constructive, but such a debate must be made with restraint. It is hoped that the current article will contribute to such a debate.

Martins et al., 2009.
Clearly, descriptive data from content analyses raise interesting questions for academic researchers while providing knowledge and insight by detailing video game production practices. Williams (*2006a*) has suggested previously that games and gender work as a cycle: games feature more males and so attract more young males to play. Those males grow up and are more likely to become game makers than women, perpetuating the role of males in game creation, and so on. Indeed, a recent survey revealed that 89% of professionals in the video game industry were male (Game Developer Research *2007*). The survey did not specify if the 11% of the women were involved in design, but it does raise some questions as to who is creating these characters and why. Perhaps game designers are consciously trying to change the media landscape by creating larger women in some games. Or, designers are creating thinner characters at high levels of photorealism to emulate what viewers are accustomed to seeing in mainstream media. Future research should consider the intentions of the developers along with the nuances presented here. When combined with controlled experimental work, this would yield a greater understanding of games and their effects on body satisfaction.

SAMPLE INTRODUCTIONS: JOURNALISM

Gary Greenberg, Inside the Battle to Define Mental Illness
Every so often Al Frances says something that seems to surprise even him. Just now, for instance, in the predawn darkness of his comfortable, rambling home in Carmel, California, he has broken off his exercise routine to declare that "there is no definition of a mental disorder. It's bullshit. I mean, you just can't define it." Then an odd, reflective look crosses his face, as if he's taking in the strangeness of this scene: Allen Frances, lead editor of the fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (universally known as the DSM-IV), the guy who wrote the book on mental illness, confessing that "these concepts are virtually impossible to define precisely with bright lines at the boundaries." For the first time in two days, the conversation comes to an awkward halt.

Wired: http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/12/ff_dsmv/

David Foster Wallace, Federer as Religious Experience
Almost anyone who loves tennis and follows the men's tour on television has, over the last few years, had what might be termed Federer Moments. These are times, as you watch the young Swiss play, when the jaw drops and eyes protrude and sounds are made that bring spouses in from other rooms to see if you're okay.
       The Moments are more intense if you've played enough tennis to understand the impossibility of what you just saw him do. We've all got our examples. […] Anyway, that's one example of a Federer Moment, and that was merely on TV – and the truth is that TV tennis is to live tennis pretty much as video porn is to the felt reality of human love.
Nytimes.com. August 20, 2008

Zadie Smith, Joy
It might be useful to distinguish between pleasure and joy. But maybe everybody does this very easily, all the time, and only I am confused. A lot of people seem to feel that joy is only the most intense version of pleasure, arrived at by the same road—you simply have to go a little further down the track. That has not been my experience. And if you asked me if I wanted more joyful experiences in my life, I wouldn't be at all sure I did, exactly because it proves such a difficult emotion to manage. It's not at all obvious to me how we should make an accommodation between joy and the rest of our everyday lives.

http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/jan/10/joy/?pagination=false