GAMES INFRASTRUCTURES

Activity 2: *Zooming in*

University students, M.A. level

Advanced

3 hours

3-6 participants

The ability to understand, summarize and synthesize knowledge, close reading of academic literature

Notebooks or laptops, digital or physical copies of selected literature sources

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CONTEXT

The influence of video games and digital media on the environment is unquestionable. However, it is usually the "old" media such as print, television and film that are associated with a negative climate impact caused by material production and consumption practices. As we will find out in this workshop, digital media and video games are as much anchored in the material world as their non-digital predecessors. The ubiquitous cloud computing is one the most illustrative examples of the problem. The majority of existing data centers are powered by non-green energy sources. Also, the amount of data humanity currently produces and consumes requires vast infrastructure that would be able to process and store it. Digitality then carries with it a certain paradox – the more virtualized our culture becomes, the more material resources it needs to sustain itself and the bigger its impact on the natural world.

TASK

This activity will give you the opportunity to further explore the question of the materiality of video games by performing a **close reading** of a selected literature source.

SUMMARY

The aim of this activity is to simulate team research at an early stage of development. The students are given a task to closely read a selected scientific text, annotate it, summarize it and prepare points of critique for an open discussion. This activity is part of a three-session workshop designed for M.A. students with the aim of preparing them for their final task of formulating their own novel research questions.

PREPARATION

Print-outs of the source text or a digital copy thereof; optionally: whiteboards, flipcharts, or digital collaborative spaces (such as Miro).

Expansion packs:

- Activity 1: Mapping out the field
- Activity 3: Finding your own path

This task may be scaled down to 60-90 minutes if the students prepare by reading and annotating the selected source text in advance to the session.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The aim of this activity is to learn how to perform **a close reading of a scientific article,** following its line of argumentation, taking notes and developing an informed opinion for the open discussion. By the end of this activity, the participants will have learned how to read and annotate a scholarly text in a structured manner. This task will not only help them in gaining specific knowledge but also teach them how to develop their own arguments.

Ready, steady, go!

In this activity, you are embodying a young research team. After activity 1 (Mapping out the field), you have gained a broad initial knowledge of your research topic. Now, it is time to delve deeper into the matter. Your task is to closely read a scholarly text that your team selected in session 1, annotate it and prepare for an open discussion and presentation of the results. You will not only learn how to summarize but most importantly, how to synthesize knowledge. In the best-case scenario, by the end of this task you will be able to raise your own points of critique and use what you have learned in an informed scholarly discussion.

Step 1 *Warm-up and Recap (30 minutes)*

Get back to your research team. If you have not joined one already in the previous session (see: Activity 1: Mapping out the field), form a research team of 3-6 participants. Remember to allocate one team member to document your research in a format that suits the entire group (whiteboard, notes, flipchart, online Miro board).

Before moving on to Step 2, you will recap your activity from the last session. The instructor acts as a facilitator and moderator of the discussion.

Step 2 *Close reading (60 minutes)*

Carefully read your literature source of choice. Take notes – write down questions, terms, concepts that may be useful in the group discussion. If the source is lengthy, at this stage of research, feel free to scan through it in order to gain an overview of the topic.

Break *Drink, exercise, snack (15 minutes)*

Step 3 *Team exchange (45 minutes)*

Exchange knowledge you gathered based on the reading. Discuss all the points in your research team.

Helpful questions (the instructor can prepare their own leading questions related to concrete articles the research teams will select):

- *What is the main argument or hypothesis of the piece?*
- *What have you learned?*
- *What supports the argument?*
- *What are the most essential concepts / theories / examples described in the text?*
- *Do you have any points of critique?*
- *If you could ask the author a question, what would it be?*

Take notes and based on those prepare a short presentation. You may use visual aids such as slide decks or you may prepare a well-structured oral presentation based on your notes and main points drawn on a whiteboard.

Step 4 *Open discussion (30 minutes)*

Summarize the findings from your text to other groups. Raise points for further consideration and open a discussion. Take 5-10 minutes (depending on the size of the entire group participating in the activity). After each presentation, leave at least 5 minutes to a Q&A session. Take notes of the comments coming from your peers and instructor.

Credits & Acknowledgements

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