RETHINKING GAMING & REPRESENTATION WITHIN DIGITAL PEDAGOGY: AN INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Hello! Welcome to *Rethinking Gaming & Representation Within Digital Pedagogy: An Instructor's Guide*! The purpose of this guide is to translate the research conducted for my thesis-capstone project for the CUNY Graduate Center's M.A. program in Digital Humanities into a tangible resource for instructors to successfully incorporate my digital game project into their classroom. This guide will also provide suggestions, sample materials, media, and more for if you want to incorporate your own ideas of game-based learning into the course you are teaching or plan to teach.

My work challenges the Digital Humanities specifically & Higher Education more generally to more expansively represent the perspectives/marginalized voices outside of the traditional westernized canon of scholarly essay writing. Excluding race and intersections of gender, culture, ableism, disability, and sexuality from public discussions through erasure and acceptance of larger discourses of colorblindness contribute to problematic understandings of video games as a cultural medium, and their significance in contemporary social, political, economic and cultural organization. Building a game from cultural experiences helps students develop a deeper understanding of not only their own identity experiences but also their peers' different identities, fostering a safer and more productive classroom space. I will be emphasizing the gaming content and the related source material and referencing Digital Humanities pedagogical practices that can be theorized into game-building strategies in order to structure equality and dismantle power dynamics in traditional classroom settings.

Through using *Twine*, a web-based open-source platform, my co-developer, Raven Gomez, and I have created a playable game that addresses all of these goals. Our idea was that by utilizing interactive mediums through gaming in the classroom, we could expose students to diverse experiences in terms of race, disability, gender, culture, and sexuality. In successfully scaffolding game-based learning into undergraduate-level classrooms, I believe that this can open up the possibility of furthering undergraduate participation in digital humanities projects as well as

create a need for more digital-oriented workshops for students to expand their knowledge and use alternative modes of scholarly communication.

Learning Goals:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to…

- Recognize problems within systematic structures, particularly higher education, involving exclusionary tactics of marginalized voices.
- Critically engage with non-traditional digital tools as a means of dismantling previously established structures for greater social change.
- Generate representation in digital media through writing.
- Comfortably explore the use of low-level coding languages and functions.
- Participate in the digital humanities as creators of knowledge, rather than as consumers via the banking model.

I implemented this research within my English Composition I class over the course of approximately 5 weeks. I provide suggestions based on my own implementation experience throughout this guide, but for a full analysis of the process, see my capstone whitepaper (separate PDF). This guide is broken into multiple sections, starting with an analysis of the methodologies that influenced the game, a description of Twine and its functionalities, essentials for scaffolding towards this project. The guide concludes with four sections describing how to implement this project within a digitally-focused curriculum.

EXPLAINING THE GAME: HOW HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES SHAPED YOUR PAPER?

The game explores the power of identity and demonstrates how games can restructure the standards of knowledge production in higher education. For instructors, the game was made to explore various perspectives and themes that can spark inquiry in imagining how games can be a tool for individualized expression as well as teaching digital humanities practices to undergraduate students.

As a tool for creating narratives, Twine can be utilized in introductory-level writing courses. When creating an opportunity for learning alternative methods of written expression, we can utilize digital humanities practices to encourage students to become producers rather than consumers in a growing digital world. As an interactive digital medium, video games like Twine

have the potential to integrate into settings of English Composition (or remediation) and/or first-year experience settings in which the core expectations of students' performance can be challenged to better meet the needs of students.

In designing the game, we wanted to be acutely conscious of the experiences we would be putting the player through by iterating sequences of dialogue that would help guide the player into understanding some of the broader themes and intentions we wanted to cover throughout the game. *How Have your Experiences Shaped your Paper?* portrays a reflective writing exercise through the perspective of a student, Alex Carter, as she attempts her first rough drafts which would be revealed depending on the player's choice of listed writing prompts. We crafted Alex's character with the idea that she would remain relatively ambiguous in terms of gender. There are hints throughout the narrative that suggest that she is female-identifying (she/her), but depending on the player, they may not read it that way. The ambiguity continues throughout several of the potential paths taken throughout the game. Alex is biracial, so she struggles with many issues surrounding her own race and cultures. We wanted to ensure that each essay prompt was reflective of each of these more painful aspects of Alex's identity (gender, sexuality, race, health/disability).

No matter which path is taken, you find that there exists a frustration in terms of Alex's identity. However, no matter what you choose to have Alex write about, Professor Michael Charleston will always reply with pushback against Alex's intense interpretation of the prompts. Charleston's responses are reflective of the impossible task of isolating various "intersecting" aspects of Alex's identity into a singular aspect within each prompt. Furthermore within each prompt, for example, "gender," the player is posed with making a choice within two narrative "drafts" of an intended memory she will choose to write about. Each narrative choice is a parallel story that requires the player to painfully pick apart at Alex's lived experience in a way that can feel more invasive than introspective. Our *Twine* narrative tree branches out into a sequence of 4 possible writing prompts with 5 or so story panels per prompt, which is split within two narrative arch options with the final sequence resulting in the "feedback" response by Professor Charleston.

In constructing this game from a digital pedagogical perspective, we drew information from scholars surrounding these topics, specifically in terms of educational facilities. Often in higher education settings, we see that students are forced to acclimate to a cultural setting that does not consider their individualized identity in spite of an institution marketed heavily on diversity. Inspired by Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, the conception of our game revolved heavily around the notions of identity politics and the myth of what Crenshaw describes as the danger in treating experiences of women of color as isolated based on only one aspect of

their identity. We believe that by utilizing gaming in the classroom we can expose students to diverse experiences in terms of race, disability, gender, and sexuality. The heart of Crenshaw's theory of utilizing intersectionality as: "a way to articulate the interaction of racism and patriarchy," is doing the work of combating the discourse often pervading spaces of higher education which is often perpetuating and "permitting silence around these issues" of race and gender (Crenshaw 1991). With this aspect of intersectionality in mind, our aim is to think of Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality as a game mechanic which set much of the foundation of the game narrative.

In reference to *No Fun: The Queer Potential of Video Games that Annoy, Anger, Disappoint, Sadden, and Hurt* by Bonnie "Bo" Ruberg, we want to address the concept of gameplay. Ruberg discusses how "no-fun" can be a tool for addressing uncomfortable topics that need to be talked about. We are using a game as a platform to widen the perspective of students using emotional experiences linked to the game in order to address specific prejudices. The methodologies behind these are seen through Alex's deep internal engagement with her identity while reflecting on the assignment as a whole. These experiences are indeed uncomfortable, and especially so to individuals who experience these hardships rooted in identity regularly. Higher education is generally a place where kids become the adults that they want to be, and identity plays a crucial role in their learning process. Additionally, as both Ruberg and Crenshaw highlight, there is a danger in attempting to represent an "all-encompassing" experience that not only takes away from the notion of "play" but further problematizes the expectations of any expressive medium as the sole method towards understanding others' lived experiences. Through Alex's gameplay, this notion is not only interrogated but realized as the player is required to play the game multiple times in order to grasp a broader understanding of her life and personality.

Furthermore, we hope that this work has the potential to increase student exposure to alternative forms of writing and expression. There is a danger in assuming any singular form of knowledge production should be deemed the dominant platform through which students from various backgrounds are forced to engage. There is currently work being done in spaces such as Wikipedia and other open-source digital spaces that are undoing the work of centuries of Western knowledge production. Video games as an interactive medium are just one of the many ways we can encourage students to *see themselves* within the process of curating and producing information to be passed down within institutionalized spaces. It is a genuinely cathartic experience to have been given the privilege to work on a project that allowed for engagement with alternative forms of media literacy, and we hope to expand this work both pedagogically and as a method of practicing self-care within higher education.

TWINE

As previously mentioned, our game was created using Twine (https://twinery.org/), a free open-source software that is used to create interactive texts (similar to a hypertext format). Twine is a registered trademark of the Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation, which is dedicated to the preservation of interactive fiction. You do not need to know any coding languages to create a simple story with Twine, but you can incorporate variables, conditional logic, images, Python, HTML/CSS, and JavaScript when you are able to. Twine can be used within your browser for short term use, but it is recommended that you download the desktop version to your computer in order to avoid certain complications (unsaved work, faulty downloads, etc.). However, if you choose not to download it, it is recommended that you use Twine in Google Chrome or Safari. The games created in Twine are saved as HTML files and are run using most browsers, however, I have found that Firefox does not always correctly download/read Twine-HTML files correctly.

Despite the game-making process being inherently collaborative, *Twine* as a platform is not suited for an interactively collaborative interface. Meaning, it was virtually impossible for my co-developer and I to work on the game without sharing the same computer. As co-developers, this meant we had to block out time to meet up if we wanted to build the game out together. This time consisted of extensively writing on whiteboards as we strung our concepts together slowly in order to establish a coherent experience for the student/player. Ideally, this sort of project would be conducted in-part within a classroom setting, thus fostering a better collaborative environment. However, it was disappointing for a free-browser based software to have such a simple yet difficult constraint to work with. Despite the limitations on collaboration that are inherent in Twine, it is inexpensive and requires minimal STEM-based knowledge and technology. Thus, *Twine* became the most accessible option based on our own skill level and intended application towards lower-level college students.

ESSENTIALS FOR SCAFFOLDING TOWARDS THE PROJECT

Before starting, it is important to determine if your course fits the parameters of topics addressed in-game. It is generally suggested that this game is implemented within a humanities or social science-based classroom (such as English, education, sociology, etc), where you can scaffold in discussions on class, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and more. That being said, with the focus being on identity and individuality, it's important for the instructor to craft their curriculum leading up to this digital unit in a way that allows students to explore these topics in

the form of **experiential writing assignments**. Allowing students to express themselves, their ideas, and their understandings of the world in which they live to allow for deeper reflection on how they have come to be the people they are, sitting within these classroom walls. It's also suggested that the instructor **incorporates a technical aspect into the course before introducing the game**, such as blogging on a class site, so that there is already an alternative interactive medium present.

In addition to this, it is *crucial* that the instructor fosters a safe space. In order to maximize success, the instructor should establish a strong sense of ethos within their classroom. It's imperative for this type of work that the **instructor humanizes themself**. Instructors should be prepared to discuss the students' lives outside the classroom, engage with their experiential writing, conduct wellness check-ins, allow space for appropriate humor, allow for a wide range of discourses to take place, and more. It's equally as important to establish that sense of community within the classroom as it is to prepare solid content, especially when the plan is to eventually ask students to gamify their own experiences.

The last major thing to be sure to do beforehand, **play the game!** The instructor should do a thorough playthrough and take note of how they feel with each conclusion. This will help later when constructing questions so that the class can probe the implications of the game further.

Suggested Instructor Reading(s):

1. Ryan Cordell's essay, "How Not to Teach Digital Humanities," which addresses the technique in which one should aim to implement this type of project to undergraduate students. He explains the process of how one should introduce the conceptual pedagogical thinking of digital humanities in pieces in order to slowly build up student confidence in participating in larger digital humanities projects and studies.
2. Amanda Phillips' course syllabi at Georgetown University have built a remarkable reputation within Digital Humanities for their usage of game studies within the classroom at the undergraduate level. Specifically, her syllabus for "FMST 398: Gaming and Justice" is striking in its work with students revolving around topics of representation, marginalization, and accessibility as prioritized topics of discussion within the framework of the course. It's recommended to consider not only the sequences of assignments but the Statement About Community that Phillips is sure to include.

PART I: INTRODUCING GAMES – THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

In the first week, the instructor will introduce *How Have your Experiences Shaped Your Paper?* in order to set up the remainder of the unit. There are a couple of different approaches one could take to introducing it:

A. **(Recommended approach)** Locate a computer lab that is available to reserve the day the instructor is planning to introduce the game. Having everyone play the game synchronously allows the instructor to facilitate and assist with any technical confusion as the students progress through the game.

B. Provide the link to the game and assign it as homework. This approach does yield more class time to discuss the game but does not guarantee that everyone will have participated. If chosen, an assignment will have to be incorporated to ensure completion.

No matter the approach taken, it's important to have students take a few minutes to consider the various ways in which the game made them feel. Why did they play it the way they did? What influenced the outcome they reached? It's strongly suggested the instructor incorporate some type of **post-game questionnaire/survey** that results in deeper thought about the experience students had just undergone. This is also the instructor's opportunity to figure out which students are interested in the idea of video games and which are not because this will play a role in how the instructor talks about games moving forward. Some survey question examples could be:

1. How do you think the character in the game felt upon reading the feedback they received?
2. How do you think the professor felt about his performance/the feedback he gave?
3. How do you think the professor's comments affected the character?

Following the game/survey, the class should hold a discussion surrounding what the game was trying to do. The instructor should carefully consider what type of questions they want to ask the class post-gameplay. Be sure to consider how this game aims to spark inquiry in students in regards to how we conduct learning in settings of higher education (see Learning Goals section above for examples) while keeping the ultimate question in mind: **how do we dismantle these issues in order to work towards greater social change?** The game often ignites passion in the students, for many of them undergo a strong sense of catharsis, and they will begin to speak to their own ideas and experiences within education.

Before giving the first game-related assignment, it's strongly recommended that the instructor considers how they can make this a **collaborative experience**. While running this unit, I had students break into what we referred to as **"game groups."** Within these groups, students would continuously share ideas, give feedback, and help one another as we tried something entirely new as a class.

Assignment Suggestion:

Within humanities/social science classrooms and degrees, students are not often learning software outside of essay and presentation tools. As a result, it is recommended that the instructor rolls out the expectations and due dates of the assignment in smaller pieces. This way, students are not taken aback by the overwhelming pressure of learning an entirely new computer program that requires inputting functions.

For the following class, **have students write a paragraph or a blog post explaining what experience they would like to gamify and why**. Tell them to consider the reasons that experience helped to mold their identity and how things would be different had it never happened.

Suggestions for Supplemental Materials:

1. Kishonna Gray & David J Leonard's (2018) *Woke Gaming*, more specifically, the introduction of the book titled "Not a Post-Racism and Post-Misogyny Promised Land: Video Games as Instruments of (In)Justice." This provides a great introduction to games while remaining under the same lens as *How Have Your Experiences Shaped Your Paper?*. This piece (and book as a whole) explores how the United States' 2016 presidential election has radicalized the current political climate, and how video games as a cultural and digital medium have been influenced as a result of our socio-political society. It emphasizes the need to recognize game studies as a platform for critical engagement within the humanities as a tool for addressing issues of race, gender, sexuality, and health disability.
2. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (2009) "The Danger of a Single Story" TED Talk brings the concept of identity to the forefront. Showing this during a class lecture provides an excellent platform to discuss the power of identity and how assumptions can be dangerous/harmful to an individual.

PART II: MACHINES & LEARNING – EXPERIENCE AT OUR FINGERTIPS

As the classroom conversations continue, it is essential to remember that this unit is focused on the ways in which technology has permeated every aspect of the modern world while falling back on a video game lens to think critically about real-life challenges through game design. How do technology and video games both **perpetuate and challenge** these imbalances? The instructor should continue to **introduce other games** outside of *How Have Your Experiences Shaped Your Paper?* to show students the various ways in which video games engage with all of these conversations. Explore websites, such as Itch.io, to find a plethora of amazing open games to play during lectures (see an example in the suggestions below)!

You cannot talk about technology and game design without weaving them into the curriculum, so once a week or so the instructor should **find an intriguing game to play as a class**. (Yes, as a class.) The way I executed this was by projecting the game onto the screen and having us read it out loud, voting on what decisions to make together, weighing the pros and cons of each move. Post-game we would then have a more in-depth conversation about certain functionalities of the game (such as a timer) and how it influenced the message of the game.

An important conversation to have is one about the emotional response a player can have with certain games. Can video games be used as tools to teach a person how to be emotional or empathetic? Or, are they simply mimicking a real experience through fantasy, causing a disconnect? This a good construct to dissect because a lot of contemporary gamers partake in violent games, causing pushback against video game culture as a whole. The instructor should take advantage of the striking **correlation between things like #GamerGate and political happenings in society**.

Assignment Suggestion:

At this point in the process, it is fair to request that students **prepare a narrative story draft**. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to decide whether or not they would like to collect these, but students should have a full narrative depicting an impactful experience of theirs, gamified into however many paths they desire. While ultimately it is up to the instructor, I did not set a requirement in terms of game length, just that it reflected something significant. Students should type this in a tool they can access from both home and campus, such as Google Docs. This is so that when it comes to learning *Twine*, they can easily copy and paste their narrative chunks into the software.

Suggestions for Supplemental Material:

1. Nicholas Carr's (2013) "All Can Be Lost: The Risk of Putting Our Knowledge in the Hands of Machines" can promote a very interesting discussion around technology and its

relationship to our skills as workers. These conversations are quite constant for young adults since they are the ones experiencing machines replacing humans in many professional spaces and are facing that concern as they pursue their education/careers.

2. Ian Bogost's (2011) *How to Do Things with Videogames*, specifically Chapter 2: Empathy, offers interesting yet arguable points around the idea of empathy within gaming. Are we able to force the player to feel something? Is there a lesson in this? Can empathy be taught? Why or why not? We talked extensively about the sensitivity of content within certain realms of media, gaming, and non-gaming.

3. *Date Night* (2018) (creator not named) is a simple narrative in which the player makes decisions during a date. However, the twist is that there is utter chaos happening in the world surrounding the date. There is a Nazi protest outside the restaurant and there's violence occurring, but the protagonist is only fixated on how the date is going/how it went. This could inspire a conversation surrounding privilege, the political happenings around the world, and where our priorities lie as a society.

PART III: CONDUCTING AN INTRODUCTION TO TWINE LAB

Now that students have prepared their narrative drafts, it is finally time to teach them about how to use *Twine*. This lesson could take many forms, ranging from a video guide (see supplemental materials below for a useful video link) created by the instructor so they could tailor it to the aims of the project, to doing it in person by holding class in a computer lab space. While both are viable options, **it's recommended that the instructor walk their students through learning *Twine* in person** in order to mitigate any issues students encounter as they attempt to learn this new software.

It is *extremely* important for the instructor to be explicit with their students in regards to which version of *Twine* to use and in which browsers. It is strongly recommended that students **download the desktop version of *Twine*** onto their personal computers/laptops if they have them or if they are working at home. The reason for this is because **the online version does not always save your work**, and if they are using an incorrect browser, they may not be able to download whatever progress they have made. I, nor any of my students, have experienced problems using the online version within browsers such as Google Chrome or Safari, however, when going to download work on Mozilla Firefox or Internet Explorer, one may find that they are unresponsive, resulting in the inability to save and send the interactive text (Mozilla Firefox will sometimes work, but not always).

Some important things the instructor should be sure to do/cover in the lab include but are not limited to:

1. **Creating a new story** and how to rename the story in *Twine*.
2. How to create new story panels and **how to link between one or multiple different panels**.
   > **TIP**: When blank, the story panels will reveal the various source code required in-text to perform certain functionalities.
3. How to utilize things like **tags** within *Twine*.
4. Create a very short, few panel story as a class so that students can see how the basics work.
5. How to **playtest** their work so far. As students make progress, they should be ready to replay the game multiple times in order to make sure everything is functioning as intended.
6. **IMPORTANT**: How to **export** their games as HTML files, share/send them, and re-upload them to *Twine*.

These are very basic functionalities behind the platform, but that is what we want. Our aim is to introduce these alternative technical writing forms in a way that is not intimidating and encourages students to further their curiosity.

Formatting	Source Code	Appears As (While Playing)	HTML
Italics	//text//	*text*	text
Boldface	"text"	**text**	text
Underline	__text__	<u>text</u>	<u>text</u>
Strikethrough	==text==	text	<strike>text</strike>
Subscript	H~~2~~O	H_2O	H₂O
Superscript	meters/second^^2^^	meters/second^2	meters/second²

Table 1. Formatting Passages (Twine Wiki 2017)

Students should take their previously written narrative drafts and begin to copy/paste chunks into story panels in Twine, figuring out where to cause breaks and how to link between sections of their stories. For students who have displayed more intuition with the software, they can also consider what textual formatting they can do to boost the effects of what is written. See above in *Table 1* for a table pulled from Twine Wiki on how to do some basic formatting.

Before moving onto the next phase of the project, students should be given another opportunity to get into their game groups in order to share their narrative drafts or even a beta version of their games. We want the experience to remain collaborative and allow them to draw on inspiration from one another, as well as get constructive criticism and feedback.

Assignment Suggestion:

We have now reached the pinnacle of the project! At this point, students should feel comfortable polishing their games on their own. The instructor should ask students to **edit their stories based on the feedback they received**, as well as **finalize their Twines**! The instructor should encourage students to take risks and ask questions as needed, and the instructor should be available to answer these questions as they tackle this new challenge.

I suggest having students download their games into HTML files and email them to the instructor. That way, there is an easy way to access them from campus, and so that the instructor has them all to review at a later date.

Suggestions for Supplemental Material:

1. YouTube user DigitalExposureTV (2017) has multiple efficient *Twine* tutorial videos that are helpful in the case that a student is unable to attend class on the day of the lab. The beginning video, *Twine 2.0 - Introduction / Tutorial #1*, walks the viewer through the essential skills required of the project. Students can watch more of these videos if they would like to get creative as well.

2. Nicholas Carr's (2008) "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" and Clay Shirkey's (2010) "Does the Internet Make You Smarter?" work well together in a lesson because they act as a foil to one another. These readings yield and opportunity for the class to have a brief discussion surrounding these topics, followed by the instructor breaking them up into two teams so that students could debate these ideas from a more objective standpoint.

3. *Autowrong*, by Nuha Alkadi (2019), is a unique *Twine* game formatted like the iMessage application featured on Apple devices. It is simply a narrative about a young married couple communicating, but both were relying on autocorrect, as most of us do. Play as a class and designate a student to control the computer. Sometimes there would be an autocorrect typo, which the game gave us varying timers to correct before eliciting a response from our spouse based on what our phone corrected our chosen message to. Most current university students have spent their entire lives with autocorrect, so this is a fun opportunity for the instructor to enact an activity where for the weekend everybody

turns off their autocorrect and auto-capitalization features. In the following class, discuss in detail any struggles and the implications behind this dependency.

PART IV: GAMING SHOWCASE – REFLECTING ON TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND THE CREATION PROCESS

Now that students have successfully created their own interactive text games, it is important to acknowledge how much of an accomplishment this is. In order to celebrate this collaborative experience in digital creation, it's recommended that the instructor blocks out a class session to reserve a computer lab just once more. Upon coming to class, the instructor should ask students to pull up their games onto a computer and allow for a digital showcase to take place! The instructor should also feel free to participate, play games alongside their students, encourage students to play some games together, and overall really immerse themselves in the games. This has the ability to really establish a great sense of community as members of the class explore each others' creative and personal side.

Upon finishing playing all of the games, the instructor should consider implementing some sort of exit survey to measure the impact and level of success the project had within their specific course. Some examples from the survey I implemented within my writing class were as follows:

1. How was the transition from focusing solely on classroom readings to including video games? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
2. What were some of the challenges you faced while making your game? Did you overcome them or change routes?
3. Now that you've created and played games alongside your classmates, do you feel it was different being the creators of knowledge/experience rather than just reading someone else's work?
4. How will creating this game help you tackle projects in the future?
5. Has your attitude towards the concept of video games changed since the first game we played?

The major reasons for these surveys are for the instructor to be able to polish and further tailor the unit in a way that is effective while remaining relevant to the context of the course. This, of course, is entirely up to the discretion of the instructor.

Assignment Suggestion:

There are plenty of ways for instructors to round out this experience. Given that digital humanities work is very much about the process, the successes, the pitfalls, and everything in

between, I recommend using a **reflective essay assignment** to give students the chance to really sink their teeth into what it means to become digital creators of knowledge, rather than the traditional consumer. A sample introduction to a reflective essay, based on what I have done within a composition course, would be something along these lines (with additional specific requirements):

"For your final paper, you will write a 5-page paper analyzing your own development as a writer throughout the semester. I want you to think back to the first essay and blog posts, think about the experience of writing those and how technology played a role in your productivity, or your procrastination. We've spent the last unit discussing discourses of technology and its role in modern society, so write about the discourse in relation to your own experience, and finally, reflect on how making it part of the writing, such as creating our games, altered that experience and made it easier or worse."

If the instructor does decide to pursue the reflective essay route, I strongly encourage you to **allow students to cite their own work**, in addition to other sourcing requirements. Given this digital game-based pedagogy is very experimental, allow for them to acknowledge that they are now producers who are contributing to whatever topics their games were about.

Suggestions for Supplemental Material:

1. Jamie Woodcock's (2019) book, *Marx at the Arcade*, features a chapter titled "Role-Playing, Simulation, and Strategy," which opens up the conversation in which students can think about the idea of simulation and how we as players/humans place ourselves in fantasy scenarios. While having a gamic-focus, it is also a solid starter to discuss the ways in which we do this across all forms of media and interaction.

CONCLUSION

As our world continues to make technological advances every day, it is important that education (of all levels) stays relevant and maintains a steady pace with our innovative teaching strategies in addition to allowing for our literary canon to evolve alongside us. It is very much our duty as educators to provide our students with tools that provide an extended level of digital literacy so that students are able to properly experiment and learn with developing tools. That being said, teachers should also be adapting to these new technologies, for they are slowly making their way into every classroom. Digital competency in tandem with current, more relevant classroom content can make for a powerfully impactful experience for everyone involved.

On a final note, our education facilities should not only be places where we raise awareness in terms of systematic discrepancies but where we celebrate the different bits of intelligence and experiences present within our classrooms. I hope this work can help instructors to continue to adopt new pedagogies & technologies for students who feel displaced within the classroom and even their communities. I believe bell hooks (2017) best said what our power as educators is and how it affects students: "Commitment to engaged pedagogy carries with it the willingness to be responsible, not to pretend that professors do not have the power to change the direction of our students' lives."

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