UC Davis
UC Davis Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Understanding the Modern Language Student: Where Spectator and Actor Meet in the Theater, in Front of the Screen, and in the L2 Classroom

Permalink

Author

Patterson, Kyle

Publication Date

2022

Understanding the Modern Language Student: Where Spectator and Actor Meet in the Theater, in Front of the Screen, and in the L2 Classroom

By

KYLE PATTERSON
DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

French

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

Approved:

Julia Simon, Chair

Noah Guynn

Robert Blake

Committee in Charge

2022

Abstract

This dissertation is to explore the academic efficacy and relevance of two comparatively new technologies, video games and Virtual Reality (VR), how they relate to an older cultural phenomenon, theater, and how a discussion of both topics can result in a better understanding of how to supply students in the classroom with the chance to improve various aspects of their L2 acquisition. Examples of these improved aspects within the field of SLA are more often associated with things like vocabulary and grammar. In fact, this has been an extremely popular direction to go in since games were first brought to language classrooms (vocabulary in particular). Aside from lexical and grammatical gains due to gamification, though, there are other aspects to be improved like students' sense of identification, their ability to interact with narratives, their various forms of engagement, and their sense of immersion within the classroom space. This dissertation will help to move the discussion of gaming in this other direction. This project aims to provide and detail an alternative to those looking for a technologically and/or theatrically relevant or game-based teaching method to support students' language learning; Digital Game Based Language Learning (DGBLL), a subfield of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), prizes and plays with various concepts that have come naturally to theater for centuries (e.g., contextualization and verisimilitude), while simultaneously extending a hand toward those who are technologically inclined or interested in incorporating gameful or theatrical tactics in their classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

From my first moments of teaching French at UC Davis, it has been a deep desire of mine to motivate learners and to connect them with the language and everything that cultural experiences bring: customs, food, music, art, etc. The bond built between a student and a language creates and supports a special kind of motivation, paving the way for learning and growth as an individual. It is an instructor's privilege to strengthen such a bond and to inspire future generations of language learners. From generation to generation, however, new inventions and technologies are born, altering the characteristics (or at least the tools) of a society. To succeed in capturing students' attention, instructors should be willing to *adapt* to the needs and features of that society when necessary. The term "adapt" here should be understood to mean something similar to "acclimate" or "adjust" rather than to change completely. There are surely things to be learned from the past, after all, and although the *faces* of language teaching and of technology may change, the *heart* of it usually reflects some lingering, constant desire or need over the long term. Technology fulfills the need to connect to and interact with others despite distance (e.g., Zoom, mail, cell phones, e-mail, texts, in-game chat, video chat), illness (COVID-19 being the most recent example), or the desire to make tasks easier to accomplish (i.e., industrialization).

One of the goals of this dissertation is to explore the academic efficacy and relevance of two comparatively new technologies, video games and Virtual Reality (VR), how they relate to an older cultural phenomenon, theater, and how a discussion of both topics can result in a better understanding of how to supply students in the classroom with the chance to improve various

aspects of their L2 acquisition. Examples of these improved aspects within the field of SLA are more often associated with things like vocabulary and grammar. In fact, this has been an extremely popular direction to go in since games were first brought to language classrooms (vocabulary in particular).

However, it should be stated that the discussion on gaming, just as it will go beyond a discussion of vocabulary and grammar, will also go further than "gamification," which is "the design approach of utilizing gameful design in various contexts for inducing experiences familiar from games to support different activities and behaviors" (Huotari and Hamari, 2017). One of the best examples of gamification that can be given is the grammar-translation-based language learning application Duolingo. As we can observe in image 1.1 below (the dashboard of the user "Nacho" who is learning English), there are several eye-catching features of the application: bright colors, progress bars, in-game currencies, rewards for practice streaks, opportunities to share progress, a friendly neon green mascot/owl who encourages you to continue, etc.

Image 1.1: Duolingo
This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

In their literature review of 128 empirical research papers in the field of gamification of learning, Majuri et al. (2018) analyzed how gamification has been implemented in the classroom. The results can be found in the image below (Image 1.2), but essentially, gamification has been used to cover five general categories of affordances: achievement/progression, social, immersion, non-digital elements, and miscellaneous. As the table shows, most conversations around the gamification of learning have to do with the achievement/progression category as well as the social category.

Image 1.2: Affordances of gamification studied in empirical research papers

Achievement/progression		Immersion	
Points, score, XP	67	Avatar, character, virtual identity	15
Challenges, quests, missions, tasks, clear goals	53	Narrative, narration, storytelling, dialogues, theme	13
Badges, achievements, medals, trophies	47	Virtual world, 3D world, game world, simulation	9
Leaderboards, ranking	47	In-game rewards	6
Levels	35	Role play	3
Quizzes, questions	25	**Non-digital elements**	
Progress, status bars, skill trees	19	Check-ins, location data	8
Performance stats, performance feedback	18	Real world/financial reward	2
Timer, speed	13	Motion tracking	1
Increasing difficulty	8	Physical objects as game resources	1
Social		**Miscellaneous**	
Cooperation, teams	31	Assistance, virtual helpers	9
Social networking features	14	Virtual currency	7
Competition	12	Retries, health, health points	6
Peer-rating	10	Full game (also board games), also undescribed commercial gamification systems	5
Customization, personalization	3	Adaptive difficulty	3
Multiplayer	2	Game rounds	2
		Onboarding (safe environment to practice)	2
		Reminders, cues, notifications, annotations	2
		Penalties	1

Points, badges, leaderboards, and social networking features are all excellent motivators for users. In fact, gamification has proven to be an excellent way to excite learners, get them to

build positive associations with new material, and improve retention, at least for a little while (Silalahi et al., 2022; Yancey and Settles 2020; Munday 2017).

As you may have experienced in your own language classroom, gamification can be utilized in tandem with or separate from technology. Perhaps you have had the experience of using Jeopardy, Kahoot, Blooket, Nearpod, or other applications and sites to engage students with embedded music, immediate feedback, competition, and top-3 scoreboards. On the other hand, maybe you have gamified your class without these tools, creating board games or card games, inciting conjugation competitions on the blackboard, or sending students on treasure hunts using various physical resources like textbooks. Whatever one's experience may be with gamification and technology, everyone has the opportunity to benefit from it with or without technology.

Aside from lexical and grammatical gains due to gamification, though, there are other aspects to be improved like students' sense of identification, their ability to interact with narratives, their various forms of engagement, and their sense of immersion within the classroom space. This dissertation will help to move the discussion of gaming in this other direction. This project aims to provide and detail an alternative to those looking for a technologically relevant or game-based teaching method to support students' language learning; Digital Game Based Language Learning (DGBLL), a subfield of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), prizes and plays with various concepts that have come naturally to theater for centuries (e.g., contextualization and verisimilitude), while simultaneously extending a hand toward those who are technologically inclined or interested in incorporating gameful or theatrical tactics in their classroom. My goal here is not to immortalize DGBLL but to explain its advantages and disadvantages, and to provide an example of how I applied this approach (via my pilot study).

While it is possible that the teaching technique spoken of here may not appeal to the reader, I should hope that the importance of what video games and theater have to offer still resonates and makes itself clear. After all, you do not exactly need to implement video games or theater to benefit from what has made them so successful. You only need to be aware of their strong, underlying foundations to apply them in the classroom in whatever manner you feel comfortable implementing them.

To accomplish these goals, there are four chapters in this interdisciplinary dissertation. The first chapter will detail Diderot's theatrical and aesthetic philosophies. The second incorporates many ludic (game-related) theories and examines important gaming concepts like narrative and identity. Next, chapter 3 explores related SLA theories and investigates the roles of students in the classroom. Finally, the last chapter will introduce possible approaches to language teaching and will present a study I have run to serve as an example of some of these approaches' strengths. The next few sections will provide more context and background for each chapter, thereby explaining their presence in the dissertation.

CHAPTER 1: DIDEROT'S THEATER, ACTOR, and SPECTATOR

Chapter 1 first introduces the reader to Denis Diderot's aesthetic and theatrical philosophies. In particular, it details the *drame bourgeois*, or the idea that what would be most impactful for a theatrical experience would be to include aesthetically relatable material with plots that could happen to your average family and language that these families would very likely use on a day-to-day basis. This discussion sets up concepts like immersion, absorption, and verisimilitude, concepts which will follow the rest of the dissertation. The next most

important aspect of the chapter is Diderot's perception of the ideal spectator(s). He details a kind of absorbed spectator (one who empathizes with the observed material and becomes enthralled in the experience) and a more critical spectator (one who remains distant and observant, sharing their critiques with others). Finally, there will be a discussion of Diderot's actor who is expected to imitate, practice, and perform on-stage. These discussions will prove useful, as they will be used as a basis for understanding how our students engage in the classroom (chapter 3) as well as how they navigate different roles in the classroom environment.

CHAPTER 2: GAME THEORY, VR, NARRATIVE, and IDENTITY

In the second chapter, I will relate concepts from chapter one to another field: game studies. I will also announce a few new concepts that are particularly impactful in the ludic realm. These include topics like contextualization, game feel, and transfer. Transfer is the idea that what someone practices (in Virtual Reality or otherwise) will be acquired, and they will be able to produce that same outcome later in a different setting. Various forms of narrative will also be presented since the different forms (embedded and emergent) have an impact on the player's gaming experience and on their ability to identify with certain characters and experiences. This portion of the chapter will serve as a basis for chapters 3 and 4 which will link narration and identity to the student experience.

CHAPTER 3: SLA THEORY, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, and STUDENT ROLES

Chapter 3 will ground the concepts brought from the first two chapters in Second Language Acquisition theory, providing a space for a discussion of how these concepts can be applied in the language classroom. It also offers an exploration of certain goals in the classroom that go beyond gamification (e.g., autonomy, critical thinking, etc.). Next, it discusses the role of students as spectators and actors in the classroom and how it is reflected in their engagement methods. both individually and with their peers and teachers. Lastly, the chapter points out that our students are almost never *only* spectators or *only* actors. They often, just like video game players, have a more fluid role in the classroom. This chapter offers some insight into how we can bring out different forms of engagement from students to activate the different degrees of participation in language learning.

CHAPTER 4: APPROACHES TO L2 TEACHING and SIMS STUDY ANALYSIS

The final chapter will offer a vison of how some of the theories and concepts from the first three chapters have been or could be applied in the language classroom. I will introduce a few key instructional approaches (e.g., TBLT, CALL, and GBLL) which will encourage some of the previously discussed theories. A detailed account of how these approaches have enhanced vocabulary, grammar, and culture acquisition will also be included. Of course, this section will also include a discussion of some of the deeper aspects of these teaching methods and approaches. I will accomplish this by presenting a pilot study that I ran which implemented the use of a mobile video game, The Sims Mobile, into the French language classroom. The study's analysis will present quantitative findings about the above information as well as qualitative

findings which detail students' perception of traditional versus gaming methods of language learning. The study will also point out an unintended discovery which is the power of narration on identity formation as discussed in previous chapters. After the analysis of this study, I will close with implications for the study and dissertation as well as areas of potential growth within the field.

Chapter One

Introduction

What does it mean to be a spectator or an actor? A straightforward answer might be that a spectator observes while an actor performs. Perhaps an actor's role is to evoke feelings and move the audience or maintain a certain degree of professionalism. One might ask of viewers their utmost attention and respect and even hope that they allow themselves to be entirely absorbed in what they see. However, what confounds these particular characteristics is when an audience member is invited to perform or, conversely, when an actor on stage assumes the spectator's role by observing others. To complicate things further, we see that these intertwined relationships are mirrored in the context of the Second Language (L2) classroom and virtual worlds within the gaming industry. Denis Diderot's texts on theater aesthetics, *Entretiens sur le Fils naturel* and *Paradoxe sur le comédien,* provide ways of navigating these challenging dynamics.

It is crucial to state, though, that while Diderot's theories were intended for understanding strictly theatrical environs, they prove useful in promoting our understanding of fields that, at first glance, appear not to have many commonalities with theater. I propose to apply them to SLA and Virtual Reality (VR) since all three of these arenas contain alternate and interactive spaces that depend on an understanding of the role of spectator and actor. First, I will describe what I perceive to be the characteristics of "alternate worlds" to provide a basic understanding of their role in our physical world. This step is necessary to recognize how the theatrical space (or any alternate space) relates to another. Then, from a Diderotian perspective, we will begin to understand how to perceive spectators and actors' roles, how they interact, and how they differ within a theatrical and artistic setting. By establishing this understanding in this first

9

chapter, we will connect it to various "alternate worlds" in the second chapter. The majority of this discussion will be rooted in Diderot's theories on theater and art, as they impact us in numerous ways to this day, given their understanding of absorptive effects (or, contrastingly, distancing effects) and the role of the spectator and actor. For example, Diderot has presented several paradoxes that will illuminate how a lack of distance, or on the contrary, a complete separation between actor and spectator, can bring about various experiences for those playing either of these roles. Finally, these ideas will be extrapolated briefly to the fields of SLA and VR to understand the extent to which Diderot's aesthetic theory is relevant today and to develop a new understanding of these fields from his perspective.

Alternate, Traversable Worlds

These "worlds" or "realms" of the stage, the virtual space and the classroom represent an alternate yet traversable space in which there are specific rules or guidelines. They still exist in our world, and so they are restricted to the confines of what our societies allow, but we also grant them some freedoms that could otherwise lack approval in our real spaces. Essentially, we understand that each of these spaces runs almost parallel to or within our own world. They are spaces with which one could engage and are, in fact, likely to be engaged with within a lifetime. However, though it might not occur as often, one could theoretically avoid involvement with them altogether. It is important to understand that within these alternate spaces, the content that is being experienced is staged to some extent. Nevertheless, we find that even these staged experiences can have a lasting effect on any person involved due to the interaction between the two worlds. This is due to the fact that they are usually based on, or are representations of, our world, a claim that will be explained further in this chapter.

In addition to being alternate yet engaging spaces, these worlds rely on us as participants; Without our acknowledgment and involvement, they could not function. To operate as they do now and as they need to, we must offer ourselves as engaged participants. The characteristics of this engagement depend on the role that the participant takes on as well as the rules or guidelines of the specific world that each participant finds themselves in. While this last point will be addressed throughout these chapters, for now, it suffices to say that one of the standard building blocks of these worlds is that a separate space is kept for us, and we choose to enter these spaces.

These spaces do not, however, create themselves; "Designers", as which they will be referred to here, build these spaces for us to inhabit according to their goals. They desire to get us to participate in their constructed worlds, but they are flexible in the way that they allow us to do so. In some worlds, a designer needs a spectator since they have already provided a performing actor. We are there to observe, but not engage directly with what we are viewing. An example of this is a world created by a playwright on stage. The designer (in this case, the playwright) has devised the space with a particular story to be performed by a select individual or group of actors. A spectator is needed here since it is the goal of the playwright to show his creation and the actors' work to an audience. It would not do for the play to be acted and observed solely among themselves.

In other realms, an actor is exactly what is needed because the function of that world is to observe something or react to what the participant demonstrates or accomplishes. In such cases, our direct input is essential to the experience's continuity. The language classroom is a decent model for this kind of dynamic. As the designer of this world, the language instructor seeks input from students and uses that input to understand which materials need to be

reviewed, which students have a solid understanding, or even to gauge if a change in approach is required. Different approaches to teaching may change this dynamic or the need for an actor, but this is simply one example.

Of course, there are also spaces that require something in-between that can offer participants the dual role of actor and spectator. Experiencing a video game, through VR or other means, allows a participant to observe a story or an action and to simultaneously participate in its development by controlling the in-game character. Even though the game "designers" have already programmed the game to contain a story, the story cannot come to fruition if there is no one to play or to make decisions in the game based on what they are observing.

To be clear, the role of spectator and actor can be played simultaneously or individually by each world's participants, depending on the parameters of the world. We are acknowledged and are encouraged to join these spaces because, not only can we provide a role that is lacking, but also because through our participation, we can accomplish the objective of the particular realm to which a designer has invited us.

Understanding these basic characteristics of an alternate, yet traversable space can help to identify them within our own world. Essentially, and to summarize the last few points, one can recognize such a space if they meet three basic criteria: 1) The world is an alternate one, separate from the reality that we experience every day. It provides a space in which we are safe(r) from the expectations, rules, or external pressures of the "real" world. 2) Participants feel welcomed into the world and there is a space reserved specifically for them, because the space's designer has done just that. Finally, 3) the realm's designer supports a spectator, an actor, or a mixture of both. For the purpose of this dissertation, there are three worlds that I have found that hold these characteristics, have much in common, and yet maintain several differences from

which designers, actors, and spectators of each of these spaces could learn. These places are the theater, the L2 classroom, and the virtual world space within a video game (VR or otherwise). Each of these realms, along with the reason behind the decision to incorporate these specific ones, will be further explained in the next segment of the chapter.

Attempting to understand these worlds, though, prompts the question of *why* one should feel the need to understand and identify these worlds. We want to take advantage of the experience that these worlds can offer when the realm we are in, alternate or actual, might not be able to provide us with what we need. As it stands, we have much to learn from each of these worlds as a designer, a spectator, or an actor in such a space. For example, the L2 class setting could learn more about enabling immersion from the world of gaming or of theater, while theater could inform (or has already informed) gaming on the benefits of certain aesthetics to capture a player's attention and keep it. Along with the need to understand the purpose of these spaces, however, we must also be able to identify them, since each may encourage different forms of growth.

These alternate worlds look like our "real" world, or at least they should according to Diderot. A Diderotian lens, as opposed to that of another author or playwright, grants the ability to analyze these worlds from two unique angles. First, his aesthetic theories on art and theater grant certain insights into the effects of realistic representations of life on the actor and spectator in various spaces. One such conclusion to be made from his texts suggests that relatable plots, clothes, gestures, and more would be ideal to capture the "ideal spectator's" attention and keep it. Secondly, and found in sections two and three of this chapter, the spectator(s) and actors which Diderot discusses in his works can illuminate the ways in which we understand these rolls, how they are related, and how they are separate. For now, it suffices to start with an

understanding of Diderot's aesthetic theories, which support the interconnectivity of the aforementioned worlds.

Diderot's Aesthetic Theories

Diderot's *genre sérieux* encapsulates various characteristics of theater which he hoped would attract and keep viewers enthralled, a task which has proved crucial and even difficult in many fields even to this day. This *genre sérieux* or *drame bourgeois*, as exemplified by Diderot's *Le Fils naturel*, promotes all attempts to retain as much of the "truth" and the "natural" as possible. It supports a portrayal of reality found in gestures, clothing, plot, and tone just to name a few. Additionally, to be impactful and to "frapper le spectateur, il faut que les hommes de théâtre (auteurs, acteurs, décorateurs) se rapprochent au plus près possible de la vérité, c'est-à-dire de la 'nature' (Diderot, p. 9). Understanding Diderot's *genre sérieux* and his intentions for the observer and the actor requires a discussion on the "vrai" and even more so on what the "vrai" is not. In *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, he writes:

> Réflichissez un moment sur ce qu'on appelle au théâtre être vrai. Est-ce y montrer les
> choses comme elles sont en nature? Aucunement. Le vrai en ce sens ne serait que
> le commun. Qu'est-ce donc que le vrai de la scène? C'est la conformité des actions,
> des discours, de la figure, de la voix, du mouvement, du geste, avec
> un modèle imaginé par le poète, et souvent exagéré par le comédien (285).

While this demonstrates what Diderot understands as "vrai" in terms of his genre, it also appears that he does not concern himself with the "untruth" occurring onstage. That is to say, real people are creating fictitious stories. The events are scripted, the characters are either imagined or are based on historical characters (or a combination of the two), and the décor is not authentic (e.g.

14

props). They are primarily representational of various aspects of things one would see in the world. That which one sees on stage is a collection of *images*. States, in his text *Dog on Stage*, posits that an image in a phenomenological sense is a likeness to or a representation of something (1987, p. 380). In this way, what the observer sees on stage is not "vrai" but is based on something that is so, whether it be aesthetically or otherwise. Diderot does not concern himself with the authenticity of the physical stage, though. Instead, and in connection with phenomenology, he centers in on how things on stage are representative of the real people, places, or objects in the world. To explain through the lens of the language classroom, instructors in a language strive to complete a mission likened to that of Diderot through contextualization. Skits, one-on-one conversations, printed newspaper clippings or menus, short films, et cetera, rely on the fact that although these objects or events are not presented or taking place in a "vrai" fashion or setting (happening in real time in the target language setting), they are similar if not identical to things and settings that a traveler would find abroad. They are *images* which are based on the real. In States' words, we are theatricalizing these items or actions, performing actions in and bringing objects to an intentional space, neutralizing "its objectivity and claim[ing] it as a *likeness*" (p. 380). Instructors are essentially creating their own theaters within the classroom space where they bring *images* to the stage and present them as opportunities from which to learn. Diderot's works contain ideas that are not only relevant today but are present and encouraged in many different domains. In summary, the *genre sérieux*'s quest for the natural, the truth and authenticity, and creating *images* onstage is a major factor that can develop increasingly successful experiences in the various domains.

Many of the characteristics of Diderot's genre can be found in *Le Fils naturel*. This play recounts the story of Dorval, a man who has been invited to stay with his friend Clairville, whose

15

love for Rosalie (Clairville's fiancé) proves to be an obstacle. Even before the play itself commences, though, Diderot demonstrates his inclination to avoid writing overly ornate lines within the piece. He begins with a Latin quote from Horace, which describes Diderot's authorial intentions: "Parfois, une pièce qui brille par les idées générales et où les mœurs sont bien observées, même sans beauté, sans force, sans art, charme plus vivement le public et le retient mieux que des vers pauvres de fond et des bagatelles mélodieuses" (p. 39). The intention, then, is to provide viewers an enticing story not through grand decoration, heavy exaggeration, or enticing trivialities. The desire here is to tell a story by simpler means that are collectively impactful to the experience.

Another early piece of evidence of Diderot's aim toward the natural takes place in the preface of the play where the story's narrator encounters Dorval, who informs the narrator of his father's task to recount his story each year for countless generations:

Il ne s'agit point d'élever ici des tréteaux, mais de conserver la mémoire d'un événement qui nous touche, et de le rendre comme il s'est passé… Nous le renouvellerions nous-mêmes tous les ans dans cette maison, dans ce salon. Les choses que nous avons dites, nous les redirions. Tes enfants en feraient autant, et les leurs, et leurs descendants. (p. 43)

The overarching goal of Dorval's retelling, according to Lysimond (Dorval's father), is to recite and preserve the story. However, as made obvious in the request, this cannot and should not be accomplished by any means that are not honest or natural. The transformation of Dorval's story into tradition demands a repeated truth-telling or at least a telling as close to the truth as possible. Lysimond's request, then, demonstrates Diderot's intent to create something natural, an

event that could be seen or imagined in everyday life, but most importantly, an honest depiction and reenactment.

Though his act of requesting that the story be retold is, in and of itself, a verbal announcement of the *genre sérieux*'s dogma, it is also through Lysimond's specific word choice that the genre is exemplified. The verbs in the above passage (or in one instance, the negation of the verb) present not only Lysimond's call to action, but also his insistence on remaining true to Dorval's story through repetition. His choice to use "conserver," "renouvellerions," and "redirions" encourages the conservation of the truth via replication and consistency. They are also are supported by Lysimond's action of self-repetition ("Les choses que nous avons dites, nous les redirions"). Alongside self-repetition, he emphasizes nature's form of repetition and renewal (generations of giving birth to children who are a sort of genetic copy of their parents). Furthermore, the verbs in this scene are not verbs of drastic change or embellishment. Lysimond states in the first sentence that retelling this story is an act of safeguarding memories as opposed to "élever des tréteaux", which references the previous, more common aesthetic characteristics of theatre: making an event grandiose and theatrical for theatricality's sake. The intention, as the *genre sérieux* necessitates, should be to act and retell events as closely to the original version as possible.

I have chosen to discuss two other "worlds" within this dissertation since they follow Diderot's genre at different intervals. These worlds are the language classroom and the virtual gaming world. These other "alternate worlds" exist within our physical world, and they share several traits. For example, all three include some degree of narrative (didactic or otherwise), a separation of the observers from the observed, a relationship between actors, spectators, and designers which makes the world function with purpose. Contrastingly, the inclusion of the

17

worlds of the classroom and the virtual space into this discussion is incredibly helpful for demonstrating the varying levels of engagement of spectators and actors alike. Additionally, these worlds complicate our understanding of what it means to be a spectator, an actor, or even a designer. Is it so black and white, even in the settings for which /within which these words are used? Undeniably, the inclusion of these two worlds gives us a greater grasp and appreciation of not only theatre, art, games, and teaching, but also of the roles that each of us play within these spaces: vigorous actors, designers, immersed spectators, critics, players, and so much more.

Diderot's Actor:

As previously mentioned, Diderot's *genre sérieux* offered a different experience from prior theatrical styles, such as Baroque theatre or French neoclassical theatre of the 17th century. Diderot's plays sought to transform the dramatic experience by reconceiving plot (moving from a grandiose plot to a relatable one) as well as role. More pointedly, his dramas shifted the expectations of what or how a *comédien* and a *spéctateur* are intended to be, do, and feel in their roles. These pieces of information can be pulled from Diderot's texts, plays, and artistic analyses such as those in his *Salons*.

Many of Diderot's ideals about what a good actor must be can be found in *Paradoxe sur le comédien*. In this text, Diderot's characters (primarily a "first" and "second" voice) exchange thoughts concerning the state of actors and their effects on spectators. It is through this text as well as others that we may come to understand what makes a successful actor and spectator according to his standards. The first role to be extracted and analyzed will be that of the actor, or the *grand comédien*.

First and foremost, Diderot's actor requires precision and consistency in their performance. In reference to his ideal actor, or the *grand comédien*, the "first" voice which is representative of Diderot's opinions claims, ""Ils excelleront dans celui qu'ils auront manqué la veille. Au lieu que le comédien qui jouera de réflexion, d'étude de la nature humaine, d'imitation, de mémoire, sera un, le même à toutes les représentations, toujours également parfait: tout a été mesuré, combiné, appris, ordonné dans sa tête"(p. 276). Diderot continues, "C'est une glace toujours disposée à montrer les objets et à les montrer avec la même précision, la même force et la même vérité". The actor, therefore, is required to put equal amounts of energy, measurement, and consistency into each effort made. This precision must be held both in thought and in action, and must reflect the same amount of truth, as opposed to some exaggeration which would be neither consistent nor truthful.

The next job of the actor, according to Diderot, is to appear to have certain feelings while not actually having them. Diderot writes, "L'acteur est las, et vous triste; c'est qu'il s'est démené sans rien sentir, et que vous avez senti sans vous démener […] il le joue et le joue si bien que vous le prenez pour tel: l'illusion n'est que pour vous; il sait bien, lui, qu'il ne l'est pas"(p. 281). Therefore, the ideal actor maintains an illusion of emotion but does not feel it. Melancholy, surprise, discomfort, and the like must be worn as a mask that appears believable yet does not permeate into the actor's heart. If they were to give in to feeling, they could not maintain their consistency and precision as outlined above. Diderot fears that such a *comédien* might play the role with the same passion and success for the first or second presentation but woud be "épuisé et froid comme un marbre à la troisième"(p. 275).

To this end, the *grand comédien* must make viewers believe that what they are seeing, hearing, or otherwise engaging with is true. Diderot furthers his description of the ideal actor :

"C'est qu'il s'écoute au moment où il vous trouble et que tout son talent consiste non pas à sentir, comme vous le supposez, mais à rendre si scrupuleusement les signes extérieurs du sentiment, que vous vous y trompiez" (p. 280). The actor must imitate all signs of emotion without feeling them or being overtaken by them him/herself. This is a major aspect of the *paradoxe* with which Diderot concerns himself in this work. The actor must replicate emotions externally without experiencing them internally.

While one of the actor's goals is essentially to deceive or *tromper*, this is not the only requirement of a *grand comédien*, according to Diderot. A *comédien* must be able to imitate anything and not withhold the emotions they portray, but additionally, they must have inside of them a kind of spectator who observes and can provide access to various roles and characters. Diderot writes, "Moi, je lui veux beaucoup de jugement; il me faut dans cet homme un spectateur froid et tranquille ; j'en exige, par conséquent, de la pénétration et nulle sensibilité, l'art de tout imiter, ou, ce qui revient au même, une égale aptitude à toutes sortes de caractères et de rôles » (p. 275). Not only must the actor reject any real reception of the emotions they demonstrate, but now one sees that that same actor must contain within themselves a "cold and peaceful", observant spectator who may help the actor-half to precisely imitate, to memorize, and to defend against any "sensibilité". This proves to be another side, or at least another angle, of the paradox. The actor must also contain an observer within them. The one playing the role needs to simultaneously be watching itself, thereby blurring two sides of this theatrical role that typically are not joined together.

This paradox, or at least certain aspects of it, has been a topic of debate among many philosophers. Rousseau, for example, wrote to Monsieur d'Alembert in a letter, attempting to dissuade him from adopting a theater in Geneva due to the actor's seemingly fraudulent and

morally corrosive role on stage and in society. Rousseau asks, for example, if someone might feel less threatened by the sins presented in *Phèdre* by Racine after having seen the play than before they saw it. By pushing this question, Rousseau implies that theatre has the power to normalize the things that we see on stage, and therefore, that we would be less impacted by them and/or equipped to sustain our moral high ground. Rousseau even states that we may become accustomed to seeing certain things during the theatrical experience and start thinking that certain things are possible or excusable (e.g. that we are "inclined to excuse Phèdre"). Aside from the impact of the work itself, though, Rousseau also discusses the (dis)honor held by actors themselves within our society, as they are led to observe other people, other events, etc., without emotionally involving themselves. Diderot described the actor's role in the "real" world as such: "Les grands poètes dramatiques surtout sont spectateurs assidus de ce qui se passe autour d'eux dans le monde physique et dans le monde moral"(p. 278). How does one trust someone who does not engage but simply observes?

The apparent deception, however, is not mindless. There is a reason for this tactic, a "method to the madness" so to speak. As previously mentioned, the actor must separate their own emotions from those which they portray in order to maintain the quality of their performance. Additionally, those who act must also observe simultaneously. The truth is that this paradox is consistently present in the fields of language education and gaming as well. Should we worry that we are deceiving students by providing a constructed, inauthentic setting and not having them learn in the target country? Could gaming be successful without its imaginative yet entirely programmed space, one that is not reality itself but is at most an alternate or virtual reality? In fields such as these, deception (to an extent) must be used to create a successful experience according to the goals of that field. Ultimately, truth must be found in the essential. It

does not have to be "vrai" in its deepest, most internal places. It need only be true to the feelings, words, appearances and actions on which those things are based to be successful. In the case of the actor, they don't need to actually feel the emotions they portray. They must simply portray them.

Those who act are in control of what, how, and when they do what they do. According to Diderot, they are perfect imitators. Additionally, though, the actor must contain inside of themselves a spectator who observes and helps the actor make choices of who to play next and how to play them. It makes sense of the situation and relays its information to the actor. This spectator/actor *mélange* is found in each L2 student and in every gamer. The spectator role in each of these fields is just as important as the acting role. In the L2 classroom, there are several internal factors which account for language education. Among these are the Monitor Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Both are posited by Krashen and both call upon observation and reflection to eventually aid in language uptake and production. Put in a theatrical sense, the spectator role observes and informs the actor, encouraging them to perform to the best of their ability. In the gaming environment, the player engages with the controller in a way that results in a positive outcome for them in order to succeed at whatever the game is. They practice via tutorials and gradual experience. However, they must continually observe what they must do and whom they are up against, and they must gauge what the right tactics are for the current situation. Their inner spectator guides the actor (or player) to accomplish the goal the best way they know how. Without these inner spectators, actors would not be ready to play different roles. Language learners would not as efficiently learn if they could not utilize these internal mechanics, and gamers would have a difficult time accomplishing games' goals if they were unable to adapt to various situations.

To summarize, Diderot's actor requires a few characteristics. First, they must act with precision and consistency in mind and in action. Secondly, they must portray certain emotions without sustaining them internally. "Sensibilité", according to Diderot, leads to inconsistent performances. Finally, they must contain an internal spectator which helps them to gauge their actions and to remain cool-tempered. Since we now understand not only what a *grand comédien* should offer and contain, it is crucial to understand Diderot's perception of spectators.

Diderot's Spectators:

Throughout his works, Diderot mentions and demonstrates two kinds of spectators: an ideal spectator and a critic or critical spectator. The former is an observer who, at one point, is absorbed into the work they are viewing despite and because of the presence of the fourth wall. They are the spectators who are swept away in the emotions that the *grand comédien* expresses on stage and who do not imagine themselves as spectators. Rather, they feel close to the story on stage. This kind of spectator is exemplified and detailed in *Paradoxe sur le comédien* and is also found in *Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel* where Diderot, as a hidden spectator, was so absorbed in the piece he was watching that he found himself wanting to go "onstage" and take part in the "représentation...si vraie" (p. 1234).

The critical spectators, however, are audience members who distance themselves, using the fourth wall and the actors' awareness of them to keep themselves at a critical distance from which they may fulfill their goal to analyze and critique the performance. Additionally, they are those who take note, who are less able, or, at the very least, are less willing to be emotionally invested. They are the viewers who are there to learn, record, and imitate what they see. Diderot writes about these kinds of spectators in *Paradoxe sur le comédien*:

23

Les grands poètes dramatiques surtout sont spectateurs assidus de ce qui se passe autour d'eux dans le monde physique et dans le monde moral [...] Les grands poètes, les grands acteurs, et peut-être en général tous les grands imitateurs de la nature, quels qu'ils soient, doués d'une belle imagination, d'un grand jugement, d'un tact fin, d'un goût très sûr, sont les êtres les moins sensibles… ils sont trop occupés à regarder, à reconnaître et à imiter, pour être vivement affectés au-dedans d'eux-mêmes. Je les vois sans cesse le portefeuille sur les genoux et le crayon à la main. Nous sentons, nous ; eux, ils observent, étudient et peignent. (pp. 278-279)

Diderot describes here a spectator who vigilantly captures details and has developed their capacity to understand, judge, and analyze various situations. The critical spectator is even frequently seen taking notes to make use of later. In this way, the critic is the opposite of the ideal spectator. Instead of being moved by a work and losing themselves in it, they can observe, study, and think/write about what they have seen. The critic may even use what they have observed and recorded in order to perform or write themselves, similarly (or differently), or potentially, to instruct others about how to perform in one way or another.

Although the ideal spectator and the critical spectator appear dichotomous (in this case, meaning that a viewer maintains solely one kind of spectatorship or the other), the spectator is likely to move between the two positions at some point during the time spent observing something. Diderot mentions a few scenes that describe this kind of shift. One noticeable shift commonly takes place in his *Salons*, where throughout the texts, Diderot does one of two things: On one hand, he offers a technical description of the art he is critiquing, detailing what he notices from an entirely different perspective than the ideal spectator would take. At this point, he embodies the critical spectator. There are moments, however, when he positions himself as an ideal spectator, within an art piece, speaking with a fictional character, or spinning tales about what the characters within the painting may have experienced. This will be explained further below after both the ideal and critical spectators have been fully detailed.

The Ideal Spectator

Throughout his work, Diderot describes three principles which create a target experience for the ideal spectator. According to his words and descriptions, each of the three is crucial to maximize the experience of the ideal spectator, enabling them to be entirely immersed in the theatrical experience. Each is a step taken toward that goal, consciously or otherwise. The first principle of an ideal spectator should be the ability to adopt a certain attitude, an openness to having an immersed experience. Secondly, they should be able to relate to what they see so that they may use that connection to follow the last principle. The last basis or foundation of the ideal spectator is that they should be engrossed in the play. In Diderot's texts, the boundaries between spectators and performers are often blended throughout the experience. Through many different media (e.g. art, literature, and plays), he has shown his interest in creating an immersive experience for spectators of many "worlds," and this propensity is supported when these principles are fulfilled by the ideal spectator.

Principle #1: The Ability to Empathize

Parallel to the *grand comédien* must be able to imitate certain emotions superficially while not actually feeling them and convey them to the audience, Diderot desires that the ideal spectator remain open to receiving and feeling those emotions. In his works, Diderot sees the spectator as one who feels, relates, and empathizes. Ideally, this "feeling" must happen naturally and without going out of one's way to really achieve it. In his text, *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, Diderot writes, "L'acteur est las, et vous triste; c'est qu'il s'est démené sans rien sentir, et que vous avez senti sans vous démener... il le joue et le joue si bien que vous le prenez pour tel: l'illusion n'est que pour vous; il le sait bien, lui, qu'il ne l'est pas" (p. 281). In this observation,

25

Diderot separates the measured actor from the empathetic observer. The actor must feel nothing while the spectators must feel everything. They are led to believe the illusion, to feel for the characters presented on the stage, and again, this must not come as a challenge to them (i.e. "sans vous démener"), according to Diderot. Evidently, feeling these emotions, or being capable of doing so, is important to Diderot. It can be challenging, though, to feel connected to something if what we are observing is not something that we can relate to, in terms of either character or plot. This is why, in Diderot's eyes, it is imperative that what is shown on stage portrays something accessible and analogous to the ideal spectator's real-life experience.

Principle #2: The Ability to Connect with the Scene or "Buy In"

The second principle for the ideal spectator is that they must be able to connect with the scene presented to them. At this point, based on the first principle, they have already held an openness to be immersed. However, now comes the time when they connect, and any sense of self-awareness that comes with voyeurism is gone. The full immersion, which is, in fact, the last step for the ideal spectator, has not happened quite yet. Rather, this is the moment when the ideal spectator has bought into the experience.

Although this principle is used to characterize the ideal spectator, much of the weight of this principle falls on the shoulders of the play or artwork itself. In order for the spectator to connect with the scene, they must be able to identify aspects that relate to their lived experience. The closer the observed material is with the spectator's life outside of the theater or salon, the better. Diderot's appreciation for various pieces of art like Greuze's *Fille qui pleure son oiseau mort* demonstrate that what really excites him are pieces that make the spectator relate to / believe what they are seeing due to the familiarity of the subject matter and naturalistic characteristics of the representation. This is the basis of his *drame sérieux/bourgeois*,

26

after all. The pieces themselves could, for example, contain the right gestures, just the right positioning, the proper ratios for parts of the body, and even the believable emotions that are commonly expressed in everyday life. Diderot comments on some of these aspects of Greuze's piece, stating,

> A delicious painting, the most attractive and perhaps the most interesting in the Salon. She faces us, her head rests on her left hand. The dead bird lies on top of the cage, its head hanging down, its wings limp, its feet in the air. How natural her pose! How beautiful her head! How elegantly her hair is arranged! How expressive her face! Her pain is profound, she feels the full brunt of her misfortune. She's consumed by it […] Note the truthful detailing of her fingers. 97

While Diderot mentions some of the more technical aspects of the "realness" presented in the work, we recognize that this painting would be successful at capturing the ideal spectator's attention, allowing them to achieve the second principle (connecting with the painting). The girl's pose and her fingers are believable and natural, so much so that Diderot here is able to make a connection with her, gifting him the chance to seemingly measure and understand the "profound" pain she feels. There is a kind of sympathy established on Diderot's part. This is the connection that Diderot craves for the ideal spectator. Finding the familiar in a work grants the viewer the chance to connect in a way that is more meaningful, or perhaps, more relatable, than what neoclassical theatre of the 17th century and all its characteristics could offer. While neoclassicism proposed grandiosity through its scenery, costumes, characters (e.g., royals, nobles, etc.), movement, and plot, Diderot pushed for more "natural" forms of these theatrical elements, ultimately desiring to display common experiences and characters that all people relate to through their own encounters. This would allow the spectator to achieve what Diderot has accomplished here. That is, the spectator will be able to understand situations and people in a

way that the critic could not. They can empathize and attach their own meaning and understanding to what they see.

Another work by Greuze that Diderot has praised as a masterpiece due to its truthful rendition of lifelike events is *Le Fils puni*. In this tableau, we are shown a sorrowful scene where a father is on his deathbed and the other members of the family are around him on all sides. One of the older women of the family, potentially the mother or sister, is seen presenting the dead/dying man to another man (presumably the *fils puni*), gesturing with great emotion. In this tableau, most of the attention is drawn to the left center side of the painting. Many of the family members are shown in distress, one reaching upward with a hand close to her chest, another is shown crying by the father's bed. The "punished son" is shown walking through the door in emotional distress upon realizing that his father is dead. Everyone but the dog has their bodies pointing toward the bed. It is clear that our focus must be on the father just as it is the focus of the other subjects in the painting. Once the onlooker recognizes where they must look, they can then uncover the role of each personage in the painting as well as their relationship to that point of focus. The father is shown, surrounded by some who are already in the process of grieving. It would seem that those surrounding him have been there for some time, as they are seated or kneeling, indicating that they are all more than likely members of the family. Diderot compliments Greuze's authentic posturing, writing, "None of the postures is awkward or forced; the actions are true and appropriate for painting; and this last one especially has an intensity that is unified and pervasive." On a parallel note, his appreciation for Greuze's thoughtful inclusion of various accessories likely stems from his support of authentic, "real," or "relatable" content. He praises Greuze's use of accessories in the painting, such as a bible on the table (probably

28

assigned to the eldest daughter who would recite prayers), a flask beside the bible, and a warming-pan on the floor, which would be used to warm the father's feet.

One of the intriguing things about this painting is the way in which it demonstrates a realistic sense of the events taking place and what the timeline is. The son coming through the doorway has just arrived, it seems. The gesturing of the mother toward the father leads us to this conclusion as well. Even the dog comes to investigate the newcomer. As we move toward the left of the painting, though, it appears that the characters have been in the room longer. A boy in the center foreground has been stricken with grief and is crying by the bed. A woman has her hand resting on the father's arm. This story is a realistic and relatable one not only in the way that those portrayed in the painting are reacting, but also due to the temporal aspect. Greuze is demonstrating the impact of this "reality" in a frozen moment of time. While the relatable aesthetics may be what first attracts the ideal spectator, this temporal dimension, cued by the positioning of characters within the painting, helps to establish a narrative, which is essential to holding their attention. As we will see later in his *Salons*, Diderot creates his own narratives based on works of art. He uses the positioning of the paintings subject(s), as well as the position left open for the spectator, to write pages upon pages of imagined narrative. These various works of art, be they creations of Greuze or others, are enticing due to their realistic features. However, what sets them apart for Diderot seems to be their attention to positioning and posturing, which give hints of time/timing, thereby inspiring various narratives in the spectators' minds. This is another tool for the ideal spectator to feel engaged in the story, as it shifts the essence of what is observed from a relatable yet *static* experience to a relatable and *dynamic* one. It engages the spectator in a deeper way, asking them not simply to observe, but also to create.

In this way, there appear to be ties between Greuze and Diderot's own work, as the composition of this painting is strikingly similar to a scene in *Le Fils naturel*. One of the most conspicuous picturesque scenes in the play is when Clairville is told by Charles that he has a man at the door who has been waiting for some time. He tells Charles to let the man inside, and the scene ends. The next scene (Act 3, scene 6) then opens to the introduction of this man, but only shortly after, the stage directions provide the readers and actors with the following notes: "Dorval, Clairville, Justine, Charles, Sylvestre, André et les autres domestiques de la maison, *attirés par la curiosité et diversement répandus sur la scène. Justine arrive un peu plus tard que les autres*" (p. 72). These stage notes contain a similar temporal placement or demonstration as the one depicted in *Le Fils puni*. In fact, if one were to freeze the image of this scene, it would appear similar to the staging in *Le Fils puni*.

Notedly, both *Le Fils naturel* and *Le Fils puni* have a focal point on which most of the characters are fixating. In Diderot's theatrical scene, the characters are focused on the door and the man who has just arrived. In Greuze's piece, most eyes are on the father. There are few to no distractions which could strongly pull the observer from this focus. Comparably, they also contain a series of characters who are already in position and/or who seem to have arrived later than others. *Le Fils puni* shows the son being introduced to this macabre event. During the aforementioned scene in *Le Fils naturel*, many of the characters are already present near the door, while others are written to have come later (distancing them from the focal point but still focused on it). The space is closed off by Justine, for example, who arrives last.

This scene is intriguing because it demonstrates that Diderot wants to support his theatrical pieces with various artistic elements (gesturing, posturing, etc.). While it is true that *Le Fils Puni* did not come to light until twenty years after *Le Fils naturel* was published, similar

artistic tendencies are seen throughout the century. The key here, however, is that Diderot accomplishes three feats in his plays by utilizing artistic form as well as such posturing and gesturing via stage directions. The first achievement is that it imitates an artistic style which provides a sense of familiarity ("This visual construction/form is familiar to me"). The second is that by adopting this sort of staging, it promotes "vraisemblance" by demonstrating how people would react to similar situations ("I can relate to the truthfully/realistically portrayed events"). Cumulatively, though, the use of stage directions, gestures, and artistic focal points, as well as the resulting sentiment of vraisemblance, supply spectators with an all-encompassing, absorptive experience by providing a temporal narrative ("The events are unfolding in a way that tells a credible story in real time"). This last achievement pertains strictly to theatre as a fluid medium.

There is a distinction to be made, which is to say that art and theatre have distinctive methods of viewing time and, therefore, accessing a narrative. This, in turn, may benefit one kind of spectator over another. Due to its static and occasionally vague nature, visual art is difficult to decipher, as its story is subjective. It grants no more insight than one can glimpse from its singular captured moment. Perhaps the themes of the artwork are understood as well as some of the more obvious events taking place in these *tableaux*, but the minute details are often left to the imagination of the viewer. It is up to them to fill in the stories' gaps, as there is no explicit narration to guide them. This kind of medium could favor the critical spectator, since it allows unlimited time to study the frozen scene and apply an outside perspective to it. However, this is not to say that the ideal spectator could not imagine some narrative to accompany the tableau or could not find themselves immersed while doing so. As mentioned before, narrative is a tool in this spectator's toolbox to achieve an absorbed state. Rather, the spectators are given a larger,

more explicit information gap to fill than with theatre, and therefore, these gaps could favor the critical spectator.

On the contrary, as a dynamic medium which uses time/timing in its favor to set the tone of a scene (e.g. hesitations, quick speech and movements, etc.), plays equip the spectator with much of the story already. Character development is established through actions and words, the settings change throughout various scenes, and viewers perceive both subtle and excessive expressions of body language. This medium could naturally favor the ideal spectator who would find themselves wrapped up in a story which unfolds in real time before them. Again, it is not impossible for a critical spectator to thrive here. After all, critics have been analyzing the performing arts for centuries. However, theatre's characteristics seem to support its ideal spectator due to its absorptive focus on narrative.

Throughout this scene within *Le Fils naturel* and others within the piece, readers and observers witness Diderot's reliance on emotion accompanied by body language and/or placement of a certain kind. The characters posture themselves in "familiar" places and based on typically "negative" emotions such as sadness, surprise, and anger, among others. At the very beginning of the play, Dorval is pacing back and forth and ultimately collapses out of despair onto his friend's armchair since he is overcome with sadness. There are numerous periods of silence and pauses that indicate that the characters are conflicted about something. Diderot writes stage directions for characters that involve resting their bent heads on their hands as well as other defeatist postures. It seems that Diderot relies on this kind of representation of mournful realism, a representation of what life "truly is," which to him seems to be a life of turmoil.

These emotions lead the ideal spectator to identify with the characters on stage, since these emotions are familiar to spectators who, at one time or another, have felt these same

32

emotions. Even if they have not been in the same exact situations, they could at least empathize with the character whether or not their own experiences align. When they identify with the characters, they feel that the characters are representing them. This sense of identification through emotion is another way to connect with the scene, to find oneself in the observed form of art.

Additionally, this posturing and focus on emotion relate to Diderot's analysis of several art pieces in his *Salons*. To this point, we can return to Greuze's work, *La jeune fille qui pleure son oiseau mort*. In this painting, one sees a girl next to a bird cage, within which she finds her dead bird. The first similarity that I see here is that despite his critique that the girl's arms were painted too widely (indicating that the girl's arm looks older than the rest of her body), he praises the girl's melancholy appearance as well as her posturing. She has sunken eyes, a bent head resting on her hand, and she is depicted as being resigned.

For Diderot, these combined facets provide a profound visual experience. He believes in the sentiments that the girl portrays so much that he essentially imagines a story for her. Although the title indicates that she is crying over finding her bird deceased, Diderot seems to be so stricken by the girl's deep sadness that he is certain that the real cause for her sorrow is that she has lost her virginity. For Diderot, what is "vrai" in life is the sadness and turmoil that one feels. Not only is this the case, but this sadness permeates throughout our body and is demonstrated through visible features like the ones we see in this tableau. These are the kinds of traits found in Diderot's play *Le Fils naturel*. What is real or believable is often easier to represent through melancholic gestures, so he would want to design a play throughout which such melancholia is seen and felt. For this reason, the characters must cry out, they must sigh and

pace and collapse. They must have difficulty finding happiness because happiness is difficult to portray and to identify with.

The emotions found in his analyses of his favored pieces of art as well as in his plays are vital to understanding his intentions for the genre. A portrayal of relatable emotions, which for Diderot were not typically demonstrated by gestures of happiness, is very much felt and is entirely present but is not typically so obvious or on such a large scale. Such was Diderot's design for the *genre sérieux*. It is about having emotional weight that is understood but is not ornate. It does not inspire over-the-top gestures, nor does it favor them. Additionally, the characters found in Diderot's work are shown to be in a constant state of torment, and while this feeling is occasionally demonstrated through external means (throwing oneself in a chair, crying out, etc.), it is also through unseen, unheard, or unspoken means that viewers/readers may observe these emotions. Diderot uses various internal, emotional states, placing his characters in a state of "rêverie" (p. 62), "trouble extreme," and "silence" (p. 63), for example. These emotional states are typically found in the stage directions within the pages of the play.

But what is the significance of any of this content, the posturing, the narration (e.g., stage directions), or the emotion? Each of these aspects of content is a way in which Diderot encourages the spectator to feel absorbed. In a way, these characteristics, this genre (the *genre sérieux/bourgeois)* is an homage to the ideal spectator. It feeds into the second principle, the notion that the ideal spectator should be able to connect with what they are observing. They connect through familiar movements, relatable emotions, plausible actions. In a word, they relate to what they find to be "vraisemblable." In Justine's scene in *Le Fils naturel*, for example, Justine arrives a bit late to the scene, which could potentially feel more realistic than if she had arrived

alongside the others in the group. When someone knocks on a door, it is likely that not everyone will hear it simultaneously, get to it at the same time, or even bother at all.

But these artistic moments may simply be an homage to art instead of a concrete representation of what Diderot wants his theatre to be or to become. In fact, the character Lysimond holds a strong opinion of the differences between art and theater. He questions, "Dorval, penses-tu qu'un ouvrage qui leur transmettrait nos propres idées, nos vrais sentiments, les discours que nous avons tenus dans une des circonstances les plus importantes de notre vie, ne valût pas mieux que des *portraits de famille, qui ne montrent de nous qu'un moment de notre visage* ? » (p. 43). The point that Lysimond is making seems to reference the idea of static versus dynamic forms of the observed. He believes that by performing a play, Dorval will be able to portray more true feelings and ideas, which is what he values most. Depicting Dorval's story via something like a painting would not be sufficient for Lysimond. He, as a mouthpiece for Diderot, wishes to provide onlookers with a moving, immersive, familiar, and dynamic experience.

Even outside of his plays, Diderot seems to be aware of this shift or difference between the static and dynamic moments of his works, and he uses them to his advantage. In his *Salons*, he writes about various scenic spaces that he explores, detailing the various paths he takes. He describes mountainous regions, the open sky, the flowers, large bodies of water, etc., in ways that seem to prove to his reader that these are real lived experiences. Indeed, he even positions the reader in an engaging position of the scene, leaving space for them. He begins the section discussing the landscape artist Claude-Joseph Vernet with a note that he was about to review Vernet's works when he decided to leave "for a country close to the sea" (p. 86). When he arrived, he encountered several people discussing music and literature among other things, as

well as those more concerned with their alcohol. He claims that he set out with two children and their tutor toward various beautiful sites in the world. He then explains in full detail all of the sites that he has seen: A mountainside with fishermen, the banks of a cove at sea which hosts a Gothic *chateau,* misty mountains in the distance, lighthouses, etc. All of these sites are linked by Diderot's narrative. However, near the end of the sixth site, he claims that the sites he has described are actually paintings by Vernet, that he has been "carried away by the charm of Vernet's *Moonlight"* (p.119). He even continues to say that he has been imagining himself in nature, the subject of these paintings, and then finally finds himself, once again, "in the landscape of the Salon" (p. 119). These dynamic descriptions face off against the reality that Diderot abruptly presents to us: These descriptions are, in fact, Vernet's paintings. Everything described to the reader, these tales that gave the story life and engaged the ideal spectators, are paintings. By shaking up the spectators' experience in this way, Diderot shows us that each medium has a different way of making an observer feel, think, react, and engage. The dynamic narrative captures the ideal spectator's attention, whereas the static presentation supports the critical spectator, as it takes them out of their absorbed experience, and breaks the fourth wall. The crucial takeaway here, however, is how can these static and dynamic elements be used interchangeably, and to the fullest, in other fields?

To apply these analyses broadly to the fields of SLA and gaming, what makes each of these worlds feel successful is finding the balance between static (demonstrative) aspects and dynamic (engaging) aspects. A game is not entirely narrative and guidelines. Nor is the game a lawless space in which anything goes and there is no goal to accomplish. There must be both moments of engagement and input from the player alongside a system of rules by which they must abide. Similarly, a language classroom should not be a setting where the instructor talks at

the students for the entirety of the class (although this is a good example of a static setting…).

Nor should students be in the class without some goal in mind. Each requires balance, and every

action, plot, and decision must have some intention behind it. Finally, each of these moments,

whether they are static or dynamic, favor either the ideal spectator or the critical spectator. While

the ideal spectator searches for the immersive experience brought by dynamic and engaging

moments of the piece (e.g. Diderot's engagement with *la jeune fille* or his pull of spectators into a

piece of Vernet's art), the critic prefers to stay on the surface level and use any perceived analysis

to some individually conceived end. More will be said about this after the critical spectator has

been explained fully.

It becomes much easier for the ideal spectator to connect to the experience when they are

able to relate to the content and characteristics of the play. As explained here, this comes in

many forms: content, narration, posturing, etc. Each of these forms prompt a different level of

engagement, adding layers of familiarity and interest, which will help to maximize the absorptive

experience for the ideal spectator, which is the final principle/step that they must follow.

Principle #3: Full Absorption

Another characteristic of spectatorship, according to Diderot, is the ability to be

immersed in what is being observed. Diderot wants the boundaries between the ideal spectator

and the scene to be blurred. To exemplify Diderot's wishes, we can observe a couple of pieces in

his *Salons*, the first of which is found in his *Salon de 1765*. In his *Salons*, Diderot is commenting

on various pieces of art that he is observing. Of course, looking at a painting is a different

experience than watching a play. This is an echo back to the scene described earlier, where

Lysimond's desire for Dorval to act out his story rather than to present a *portrait de famille* is

firmly and clearly stated. However, like in a theatrical setting, there is a space for both the observed (in whatever artform it takes) and the observer, even if the amount of physical space between them might differ.

Returning to his critique of Jean-Baptiste Greuze's painting, *La jeune fille qui pleure son oiseau mort,* we see that Diderot begins to tell a story about her that, according to him, would better explain the reason for which she is crying. He recounts a story of the girl who, in his mind, has been intimate with a boy and who worries about his faithfulness to her. He describes her as being lost inside her own mind, forgetful of the duties given to her by her mother, and forgetful, too, of her pet bird's need for water and seed. These dynamic imaginings do wonders for both Diderot and those who are reading his literature (yet another medium of art).

Diderot seems to confront the emotional and physical boundaries, simultaneously, by speaking directly to the painted girl and asking her for the reason why she is crying. He writes,

> Bientôt on se surprend conversant avec cette enfant, et la consolant. Cela est si vrai, que voici ce que je me souviens de lui avoir dit à différentes reprises. 'Mais, petite, votre douleur est bien profonde, bien réfléchie! […] Quoi! Pour un oiseau! Vous ne pleurez pas. Vous êtes affligée, et la pensée accompagne votre affliction. Ça, petite, ouvrez-moi votre cœur: parlez-moi vrai; est-ce bien la mort de cet oiseau qui vous retire si fortement et si tristement en vous-même?... Vous baissez les yeux; vous ne me répondez pas. (p. 98)

The difference between looking at a painting and imagining that you are speaking with the painting's subject(s) is palpable. He changes from the third person *(elle)*, which he used to describe her at the beginning of his critique (prior to this citation), to the second person (*vous)* to engage with her directly. This shift accomplishes two things: First (and in no particular order), it engages with the emotional/imaginational boundary. He is not making superficial observations which would enable his feeling of voyeuristic presence by prompting his duty as a critic. Instead, his critical instincts are set aside, shifting to an engaged spectator, nearly an actor. By speaking with her, he no longer believes that his role is to observe. He is absorbed in the moment, and his duty

of spectatorship has gone. As proof, we see he speaks to her directly and that she has gone from being a static or motionless character to a dynamic one, moving, gesturing, and even speaking to Diderot (further on in the encounter). Secondly, and intertwined with my previous claim, the shift from *elle* to *vous* allows for a breach of the physical barrier. Feeling absorbed by what he is seeing in the painting, he has freed himself from his spectatorial duties (emotional barrier / a sort of "buying-in") and has, in his mind, moved from outside of the painting to sharing the painting's space with the girl (physical barrier). Although this is happening in his mind, the distance between the two has reduced drastically.

Another example of Diderot's complicated desire to absorb the ideal spectator is found in his aforementioned trick on his readers, jarringly presenting pages of narrative about various visited "sites" only to later them to be paintings. Trickery aside, Diderot is seen, for a time, to favor an absorptive experience. Once again, Diderot inspires a crossing of boundaries, both physical and imaginary. First, he removes the reader's/spectator's voyeuristic responsibilities (imaginary boundary), stating that he was supposed to review Vernet's artistic pieces, but that instead, he had to leave for the countryside. Diderot also appears to set aside his critiques, claiming to "imagine himself in nature." In doing so, he has placed himself and his audience inside of Vernet's works (physical boundary). Of course, by the end, the observer's responsibility returns to both him and us as we go back to the "landscape of the Salon." Diderot's playfulness here proves that he wishes for us to see the effects of absorption, that is, that due to the immersive nature of the stories he told, we would be oblivious to the fact that what he was describing was a collection of paintings instead of real locations around the world.

These three characteristics of people as ideal spectators are crucial, as each step from beginning to end allows Diderot's objective to be complete, which is to say that he desires for the

ideal spectator to feel immersed in what is being portrayed onstage. First, the audience member is made to feel things or be open to feeling things even when the events they are witnessing on stage are nothing more than precise and calculated illusions. Immersion cannot happen if the spectator neither feels nor wants to feel absorbed in something. Secondly, according to Diderot's framework, the spectator should be able to relate to or find reality in what they are observing, believing that what they are seeing has indeed happened or could potentially happen. It can be challenging, though, to feel connected to something that you do not recognize, so the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the play itself. For example, the posturing, stage directions, etc., must be relevant. Hosting characters on-stage that are royal, exaggerated, and/or out of touch will not be familiar to those who do not align as such, just as plots that support these kinds of characters would not be familiar. Finally, Diderot seeks to bring ideal spectators and actors closer, removing the *physical* and *emotional/imaginational* divides between the groups. He wants to blur these lines so that, ultimately, the spectator can be fully immersed in the theatrical experience as Diderot was when imagining a conversation with *la jeune fille*. What is offered, though, for the absorbed spectator? Why does Diderot concern himself with captivating experiences such as these?

The closeness between the observer and the observed offers an engaged, relevant, memorable, and emotionally full experience. The ideal spectator is meant to confront things in a way that neither the actor nor the critical spectator, alone or together, could experience. They are moved to tears, joyful, or angry alongside the actors, essentially empathetic to the position of the characters who are representatives of their own lives. They envision themselves in what they see because it is so familiar to them or because they want it to be familiar to them. This is the power of the position of the ideal spectator.

Although this is the mandate of Diderot's genre for the ideal spectator, there are strategies, characteristics, and consequences within a setting (in this case, it is the theatrical setting) that can alter or affect the extent to which the setting succeeds at following this mandate. Indeed, there are multiple ways in which the setting may pursue, reflect, reject, or achieve "truthfulness". Additionally, each of these influences the viewer. For example, the manner in which the play utilizes genre as well as metatheatrical or play-within-a-play tactics impacts the portrayal, its believability, and therefore, the spectator. Additionally, the ideal spectator's ability to self-identify with or find "vraisemblance" in what occurs in the scene will also influence the success with which a play absorbs them. These factors will be explained in more depth to discover the extent to which they can affect an ideal spectator.

1. **Vraisemblance**

As mentioned before, an important step to being absorbed in a theatrical piece is to feel that there is something recognizable or relatable, whether it is something physical, such as the actors' clothes or their way of speaking, or something conceptual, such as the event taking place or the kinds of relationships between characters. Put another way, « Pour frapper le spectateur, il faut que les hommes de théâtre (auteurs, acteurs, décorateurs) se rapprochent au plus près possible de la vérité, c'est-à-dire de la "nature", dans le choix des sujets, des décors, des costumes, de la diction, de la gestuelle » (Diderot, 2018, p. 9). « Vraisemblance » reflects exactly this idea ; It describes the « caractère de ce qui, dans son aspect physique, ressemble le plus à la réalité, à la vérité », as well as the « caractère de ce qui semble vrai, juste, aux yeux du sens commun » (cnrtl.fr). It designates something that is, therefore, physically similar, and conceptually likely.

Many of the playwrights mentioned early either mention, write about, or are the subject of a discussion where "vraisemblance" is key. Diderot's play *Le Fils naturel*, for example, is a retelling of past events in a way that conserves "la mémoire d'un évenement qui nous touche" and whose character Dorval must "le rendre comme il s'est passé" (p. 43). In Molière's *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, the character Molière chastises a member of his company for not appropriately assuming the characteristics of a marquis. He commands, « Mon Dieu! Ce n'est point là le ton d'un marquis : il faut le prendre un peu plus haut ; et la plupart de ces messieurs affectent une manière de parler particulière, pour se distinguer du commun » (p. 86). Joseph Harris writes about Corneille's refusal to abide completely by the rules of vraisemblance, since spectators have no reason to believe what they see as long as history says it is so (2009, p. 79). His lack of the recognition of "vraisemblance" is the subject of discussion around "La Querelle du Cid," which argues that Corneille did not follow the rules of classic theater (i.e. *les unités du théâtre classiques*).

2. <u>Metatheatrical Characteristics and Distance</u>

Coined by Lionel Abel in 1963, *Metatheatre* describes the way in which a theatrical piece blurs the line between actors and spectators such as addressing the audience directly, writing plays about plays, or bringing attention to the idea of actors or spectators in a play, to name a few. Reminding those watching a play in any of these manners is essentially a prompt that what they are experiencing is not real, possibly negatively affecting their level of absorption with the piece, since it commands a certain distance between the audience and the actors. However, given that the role of observer has shifted in this scene of *Le Fils naturel* from the live spectators to the narrator, "absorption" could be more easily fulfilled. As Michael Fried has suggested in his text

Absorption and Theatricality, viewers can be entirely entranced, but this can only be achieved by "negating the beholder's presence" (a point and topic which is to be further explained later in the chapter), which is achieved in Diderot's text. To exemplify this point, let us return to *Le Fils naturel*.

After Dorval decides to put on a play with the others for the first time, he invites the narrator to watch it. The narrator's observance does not take place in a typical fashion, however, as he enters the room through a window and hides in a corner: "J'entrai dans le salon par la fenêtre ; et Dorval, qui avait écarté tout le monde, me plaça dans un coin, d'où, sans être vu, je vis et j'entendis ce qu'on va lire" (p. 44). Evidently, the narrator does not jauntily walk to the front row and sit down, making his presence known. Instead, and with intent, Dorval acts as a distraction while the narrator hides to observe the actors performing the play. The act of hiding while spectating serves to demonstrate the genre's manifesto of clinging to the "natural" and resisting theatrical grandeur. By demonstrating an unaware group of performers within the play, we understand that within the world of the play, any effects on the formers, in terms of their recital, are minimized. The portrayal, at least within the world of the play, is "authentic" and unaffected. On the other hand, any attempt of the narrator to make himself known would result in a kind of "observer's paradox" (Labov, 1972).

Additionally, the narrator's act of hiding has seemingly reduced theatricality and has potentially encouraged absorption for those in front of the fourth wall (e.g. the actual spectators) just as much as those performing within all four. It is as if by hiding, the narrator has taken on the responsibility of the real spectators, removing their sense of voyeuristic presence, and allowing them to focus solely on being pulled into the experience. To understand this point, though, it is crucial to more thoroughly explain Michael Fried's idea of absorption.

According to Fried, "absorption" is a state in which a figure appears to be occupied in what they are doing or thinking (1988, p. 10). Fried demonstrates absorbed characters with the help of many paintings throughout his book. For example, in Carle Van Loo's *St. Augustin disputant contre les Donatistes*, we observe a debate between the Catholic party, spearheaded by Augustin, and the claims by Donatist bishops. While every other secretary is seen to be transcribing his words, one of them secretaries is seen to be completely absorbed by Augustin's words, gazing at him. He appears to be taken aback by Augustine's passion and abandons his duties. In Joseph-Marie Vien's *Ermite endormi,* we observe a man who appears to be absorbed in the act of sleeping, which is reflected in every physical characterization possible. His head is back, his eyes are closed, and one of his shoes is about to fall off his foot. The recluse's attention is on nothing other than his rest.

While Fried uses this term to discuss art and the state of the characters' being in paintings such as these, Fried's idea of absorption could be adapted to theatrical pieces as well. This is due to the presence of the spectator and their self-realization (or lack thereof) as spectators. Fried explains,

As we have seen, the recognition that paintings are made to be beheld and therefore presupposed the existence of a beholder led to the demand for the actualization of his presence: a painting, it was insisted, had to attract the beholder, to stop him in front of itself, and to hold him there in a perfect trance of involvement… It was only by negating the beholder's presence that this could be achieved: only by establishing the fiction of his absence or nonexistence could his actual placement before and enthrallment by the painting be secured. (Fried, 1988, p. 103)

Therefore, if the goal of art is to acknowledge a beholder, to arrest them, and to keep them entranced, the painter must find a way to eliminate the viewer's sense of being a beholder or to "deny his presence." History paintings, according to Fried, accomplished this best. He writes, "In the case of history painting, however, the beholder's vastly greater interest in the actions and passions of human beings relieved the pressure on technique… The painter could aim to engross or absorb his figures in action or feeling… and thereby to declare their aloneness relative to the beholder or at any rate their obliviousness of his presence" (p. 103). Fried claims that artists accomplish this by painting characters who are extremely focused on their task. In Carle Van Loo's *La Lecture espagnole*, for example, most of the family presented are absorbed in listening to a young man dressed *à l'Espagnole* (p. 27). The absorption occurring in the piece does not allow for the viewer to feel as if they are, indeed, spectating. The characters appear to be alone, unobserved, and therefore, the art can fulfill the act of enthrallment on the spectator.

Similarly, in the aforementioned scene in *Le Fils naturel*, the narrator is taking on the role of spectator as he hides, observing the play in front of him. His role now is dually spectator and actor. Some of the pressure of spectating, then, has been shifted from the live audience to the new, artificial one: himself. This makes Fried's task of absorption an easier one for a play's audience, as some of their self-realized, voyeuristic responsibility has been given away to someone else. Instead of the audience watching the play (within the play), the audience is now watching someone else watching the play. The person who may be "discovered" is no longer the one sitting in their seat in the theater but is, instead, an audience member within the world of the play itself. In one way, the fourth wall has been doubled, since there are multiple sets of observers: those who are, onstage, observing the play (the narrator) and those who are observing the narrator and the play on stage (the live audience). In a counterintuitive manner, though, this

45

doubling of the fourth wall (or the creation of more layers between actors and spectators) permits spectators to feel even more absorbed (reducing the distance between them). In this way, it is possible for multiple fourth walls to be broken, or perhaps it is possible that given this shift in spectatorial duties, the fourth wall itself can be shifted, or at the very least, it feels as if it can be. To this point, absorption and theatricality are the ways in which the ideal spectator can interact with and access these alternate worlds. "Negating the beholder's presence" is the way for viewers to be entranced.

3. Self-Identification

Vraisemblance and metatheatrical techniques can help to quicken the transition from finding someone relatable to identifying with the character. Being absorbed in a theatrical piece might depend on the spectator's self-identification with one of the personas on stage. For some, this self-identification is more easily (and harshly) felt when a famous playwright like Molière mocks their judgments on his work, as we see in *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. For the average viewer who is not blatantly called out, should they feel connected to a character, they will come away with a meaningful experience that is unique to them or their life experiences. One could imagine that some lower-class spectators may have seen Arlequin and Lisette in Marivaux's *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hazard* and imagined themselves climbing the social ladder (even for a short while) before the characters reassumed their status at the end of the play.

I should mention here the literature that describes the other side of this coin. It could be that while watching Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, a citizen of the middle class might have a hard time relating to Monsieur Jourdain, who attempts to dress and act like an aristocrat only to occasionally slip up, revealing his middle-class upbringing. There is danger, according to Harris

and Rousseau, of a spectator becoming alienated from the experience, "so absorbed in their own self-interest that they end up filtering out their experience anything that does not correspond to or confirm their own concerns, desires, and preoccupations" (Harris, 2009, p. 221). If an absorbed viewer seeks to relate too much and fails or perhaps relates too little with what they are seeing from the start, they could lose their position as an ideal spectator, thereby limiting their view of the spectacle to a fraction of what it was intended to be. Alternatively, they will become completely disinterested and disengage with it. Rousseau and Harris' description of what I can only describe as spectator tunnel vision must be recognized as a possibility.

4. <u>**Genre and Sub-Genre**</u>

It will be necessary to think about whether genre affects a spectator's relationship with a piece. In Fried's text, he mentions the hierarchy of the genres, an attempt to rank genres of paintings according to their ability to demonstrate moral force. History paintings, as argued by Art Academies such as the French Academy or the Academy of Art in Rome, had the highest chance of portraying ethical contexts. Fried also explains the importance of history paintings after having revealed this artistic paradox:

> As we have seen, the recognition that paintings are made to be beheld and therefore presupposed the existence of a beholder led to the demand for the actualization of his presence: a painting, it was insisted, had to attract the beholder, to stop him in front of itself, and to hold him there in a perfect trance of involvement… It was only by negating the beholder's presence that this could be achieved: only by establishing the fiction of his absence or nonexistence could his actual placement before and enthrallment by the painting be secured. (p. 103)

Therefore, if the goal of art is to acknowledge a beholder, to arrest them, and to keep them entranced, the painter must find a way to eliminate the viewer's sense of being a beholder or to "deny his presence." History paintings, according to Fried, accomplished this best. From previous discussions of Diderot's *Salons*, we have also seen how successful landscape paintings can be at absorption, exemplified by Vernet's paintings which have left space for the viewer, be it with or without narration.

Theatre has tools of its own, though, that can enthrall or absorb the audience into the scene while removing their position as spectator. Diderot's concept of the fourth wall fulfills a similar goal. In *Entretiens sur le Fils naturel*, Diderot writes, « Dans une représentation dramatique, il ne s'agit non plus du spectateur que s'il n'existait pas » (p. 91). In his *Discours de la poésie dramatique*, he explores the concept further : « Si l'on avait conçu que, quoiqu'un ouvrage dramatique ait été fait pour être représenté, il fallait cependant que l'auteur et l'acteur oubliassent le spectateur, et que tout l'intérêt fût relatif aux personnages… » (Fried, 1988, p. 94). The fourth wall, therefore, is a way of guaranteeing that the actors stay professionally absorbed in their act. Their absorption in their work within the four walls removes the spectator's feeling of presence as a spectator and allows for the audience to become enthralled.

Making a claim such as Fried's that history paintings are the most successful at accomplishing the goal of obliviating the spectator also provides an opening to discuss the ability of certain theatrical genres to accomplish a similar goal of enthralling an observer. Given the rules of classic theater, tragedies were expected to end in death and comedies were expected to end with a wedding, while Corneille decided to throw everyone off with something in between (*Le Cid*) and called it a tragicomedy! These classical genres (despite Corneille's rule-breaking) necessitated the main action of a play to take place in a single location in a single day. A comedy

in Molière's day demanded certain kinds of characters as well. In *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, the character Molière claims, « Le marquis aujourd'hui est le plaisant de la comédie; et comme, dans toutes les comédies anciennes, on voit toujours un valet bouffon qui fait rire les auditeurs, de même, dans toutes nos pièces de maintenant, il faut toujours un marquis ridicule qui divertisse la compagnie » (p. 80). Diderot created the *genre sérieux* which is supposed to mirror reality in terms of dress, gestures, emotions, actions, and language, to name a few (Diderot, 2018, p. 9). It is necessary to think critically about what the different artistic and theatrical genres and sub-genres have to offer, as these expectations set the tone for the spectator, laying out popular themes, customs, events, and characteristics within each genre and subgenre.

While these four topics influence the success with which the ideal spectator experiences a play, the critical spectator is not as affected, since their goal is entirely different. Rather than being absorbed, for example, the critical spectator prefers to maintain a distance. In the following section, I will characterize the critical spectator, their goals, and how she/he interacts with the ideal spectator.

The Critical Spectator

There are many moments in Diderot's works that demonstrate that there is a time for a spectator to be distant and/or to use that distance for a purpose. This is the path of the critical spectator. In his *Salons*, Diderot observes various art pieces by artists such as Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Carle Van Loo, Jean-Baptise Perroneau, and Claude-Joseph Vernet. His goal is to describe and to judge, claiming, "I'll describe the paintings for you, and my descriptions will be such that, with a bit of imagination and taste, you'll be able to envision them spatially, disposing the objects within them more or less as we see them on the canvas; and to facilitate judgment

about the grounds of my criticism or praise, I'll close the Salons with some reflections..." (1798, p. 7). Contrary to the ideal spectator who stays close to the observed artifact despite the presence of some kind of barrier, this critical spectator is one who refuses to be immersed in the visual experience and uses that barrier as a chance to examine and detail the experience. A critical distance is created and used as a tool. In the previous passage, we understand that his descriptions, due to the distance he places between himself and the work, will allow the reader to imagine the painting for themselves. Additionally, and as Diderot acknowledges, the critical spectator judges various works by addressing, maintaining, and reporting certain aesthetic standards that confirm or refute the "artist's" success across various topics through "criticism or praise".

The critical spectator also tends to apply the observed material to the outside world. One such example is Diderot's critique of Louis-Simon Boizot's sculpture, claiming that, "The scene is set in the open air and features a wriggling cupid and Graces that are heavier, stouter, more chubby-cheeked than the ones I see behind the fish and fruit stands on my way home along the rue des Boucheries" (1798, p. 68). We see that instead of losing himself in the artwork, he distances himself and compares what he sees with his experiences in the "real" world. In this instance, he compares the Graces in Greek mythology presented in Boizot's sculpture to the women working at the various stands that he sees on his way home. Through his critique, however, he is still able to help his own spectators imagine. Some of his other critiques are seemingly less helpful for imagining a piece and are more critical, though, such as when he simply writes, "I can't imagine how this one got into the Academy. I must take a look at his reception piece." when describing Donat Nonotte's work. Despite the frankness of the

critique, though, we as readers can at least imagine some kind of poorly accomplished artwork, even if we are not knowledgeable about Nonotte's work.

Of course, the critical spectator is one who initially makes sense of a situation for their own understanding. In order for Diderot (in this case) to share his knowledge and perspective, he must first be able to find a connection for himself. Here, he finds similarities between the women in the painting and the women he sees working at the markets. Additionally, the critic gains a analytical distance that is advantageous to completing a goal. In the case of Diderot for this specific description, the goal is to replicate the observed material for someone else who may not be in a position to see the piece for themselves. The point is to inform others. Therefore, the critical spectator 1) makes judgments and real-world connections of her own and 2) shares her understanding and perspective with someone else.

The Spectator's Duality

These two forms of spectatorship, "ideal" or "critical," are not completely separate, however. The spectator has the amazing ability to switch forms of spectatorship at any time depending on their willingness to "buy in" and depending on the successful/failed ability of the play or painting itself to absorb the spectator. It is difficult to maintain only one kind of spectatorship, and Diderot uses this fact to host several spectatorial shifts of his own. In his *Salons*, Diderot is distancing himself from the art he is critiquing, detailing what he notices from an entirely different perspective than the ideal spectator would take. However, there are also moments when he immerses himself in a painting. This shift from ideal spectator to critical spectator (and vice versa) runs throughout his texts. We have seen this before in Diderot's discussion of Greuze's painting, *La jeune fille qui pleure son oiseau mort*. At the beginning of his critique, we see that Diderot is reflecting on the appearance of the young girl, commenting on her

sunken eyes and dimples, the proper and improper ratios of her fingers and arms, or the way in which her head rests on her hands. However, as previously mentioned, he becomes wrapped up in creating a story for her and even engages with her directly. Another example of movement between multiple spectatorships is another previously mentioned text, Diderot's *Salon de 1767*, where, in one section, he first immerses the reader in an adventure in nature until we come to find later, in a very explicit and jarring way, that these adventures are neither real nor lived, but that they are narrations of Vernet's paintings.

The advantage of shifting positions is that the spectator is allowed to experience both the immersive, affect-based aspect of the ideal spectator and the critical analysis gained from the distance of the critical spectator's position. Just as Diderot takes advantage of this dualistic opportunity for spectators, he also realizes that spectators are not the only ones to have interrelated or exchangeable positions.

The Actor/Spectator Division

Now that the spectators have been described, we may call back to this chapter's first discussion on actors, which states that the *grand comédien* must accomplish four things. First, they must maintain precision and consistent enactment of a memorized piece. Secondly, they must portray emotions strong enough to impact the spectator, but they must not give into those emotions themselves. Third, due to their emotional impact, they are required to make spectators believe what they see. Finally, they must maintain an internal spectator. Indeed, just as spectators can jump between forms of spectatorship (or can hold both within themselves), actors may include a spectator within themselves, according to Diderot. As a fresh example, let us look at an actor mentioned in Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le comédien*: Clairon. First, however, let us remember

Diderot's claim that it is necessary for an actor to host a "spectateur froid et tranquille". He demands that the actor be calm, refrain from sensibility, and to be able to imitate anything. Aside from his insistence on a specific kind of actor, though, we understand that he recognizes the duality of spectator and actor. He claims that the actor must contain a spectator within themselves. It would seem that by making this claim, Diderot is stating that the spectator can offer something that the actor alone needs or does not have. He later gives the example of Clairon, an actress who is called to play, in this scene, the role of Agrippine. He describes her duality in her scene as follows: "Nonchalamment étendue sur une chaise longue, les bras croisés, les yeux fermés, immobile, elle peut, en suivant son rêve de mémoire, s'entendre, se voir, se juger et juger les impressions qu'elle excitera. Dans ce moment, elle est double : la petite Clairon et la grande Agrippine » (2019, p. 277). At this moment, Clairon is housing two personas. First, she is projecting the role of Agrippine, portraying various emotions and playing out several memorized scenes. However, she is also the inner spectator of the role, making analytical judgments about her performance, and measuring certain aspects of what is needed.

Notably, because of the advantage gained from each role (one entity who is a critical/analytical spectator and another who can perform), this combination may accomplish a goal that neither role could achieve individually. A *spectateur froid et tranquille* can be analytical but could not perform. Likewise, the *grand comédien* could attempt to act to the best of their ability, but they lose the ability to remain disconnected from the emotions they wish to perfectly portray. This duality between actor and spectator echoes the relationship between the ideal and critical spectators. That is, while they accomplish different goals, it is difficult to separate the two. One may pass between an immersive state and a disengaged one at any time. While it may not be occurring simultaneously like the actor/spectator is able to achieve (who can

watch themselves performing), the shift between the critical and ideal role may happen at any speed.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Diderot's description of each of these roles for both spectator and actor allow us to recognize and analyze the different roles that we play in our lives. There are times we may be led to act, containing (or perhaps suppressing) a cold spectator who keeps us level-headed and allows us to get our point across with vigor. We may also find ourselves in a spectatorial position, feeling entirely absorbed in an event and not feeling any kind of criticism for ourselves or others. On the other hand, we may be in a position where a critical distance is necessary to understand and/or remove ourselves from a situation. In our daily lives, we wear different masks, playing various roles to accomplish different tasks. Understanding these roles is the groundwork of this dissertation, as they allow us to observe similar roles both in the gaming world and in the world of the language classroom. If we can more fully understand the roles our students play, and if they recognize that role themselves, we may all take advantage of it, making the most of their language education. Additionally, we as teachers can confidently design lessons and interactions that take advantage of these role shifts.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I will introduce similar concepts as the ones mentioned here, but I will detail and exemplify them in two additional "worlds": the world of video games and the world of the language classroom. An understanding of "actors" and "spectators" in the gaming world will complicate and further explain what it means to fulfill these roles. Finally, the information gathered from art and French theatre in this chapter will

work alongside gaming and Second Language Acquisition to maximize results in the L2

classroom.

Chapter 2

As a beginning mage-in-training from Stormwind City, you have been tasked to investigate

rumors that Blackrock orcs have successfully snuck into Northshire. On your way to meet

Marshal McBride, you come across Blackrock worgs, fighting tirelessly to fend them off. This

certainly confirms the arrival of the orcs! After reporting to McBride, he tells you that their

leader, Kurtok the Slayer, must be defeated if the invasion is to be prevented. As you make your

way east of the Northshire Abbey toward Kurtok, you see a fellow traveler. It is a hunter

accompanied by her newly acquired pet wolf. The two appear overwhelmed by worgs, you

instinctively send a firebolt at each of the two enemies chasing them. With a surge of newfound

confidence, the hunter and her pet turn around and unleash finishing blows on one worg while

you finish off the other with another well-executed fireball. The hunter runs over to you, waving

and dancing, and says, "w00t! thx for the help! close one." You know you have better chances

defeating Kurtok the Slayer with her on your team, especially since Kurtok is eight levels above

you. You ask her, "wanna party up to take down kurtok?". "Sure," she says, "send me a party

inv. ur a mage, right? take this staff. not great 4 strength but gives you int." You take it gladly

and find Kurtok, who seems to be in the middle of planning his assault on Northshire. With the

help of your hunter friend, her pet wolf, and your fireballs, you defeat him and split the spoils: a

small green pouch, a greater healing potion, a feeble sword, and eighteen copper coins. Feeling

accomplished, the three of you report back to Marshall McBride and collect your quest reward:

Peacebringer's Staff. You find the hunter and ask her to be your friend, and she accepts, telling

you she will be questing today and tomorrow, and to find her in the area if you want to meet up.

Excited to discover what tomorrow's quests will have in store, you wave goodbye, sit down, and

then log off.

This is only one of the beginning missions for players of *World of Warcraft* (*WOW*), a fantasy-themed massively multiplayer online role-playing game *(MMORPG)* that asks players to create an avatar, choosing between two factions ("Alliance" and "Horde"), 19 possible races, and 12 classes. Each player will experience something different because, while everyone has access to the same quests, the players can decide which quests to go on, whom to speak with, and what their specialties will be. On the ludic level, the virtual world such as the one provided in *WOW* offers an interactive experience. In fact, Ludology (Game Studies) as a field focuses on these exchanges. In games (and especially *MMORPGs*), there are inevitably interactions that take place between the player and the game system, the virtual environment, or other players. Even in the short, imagined adventure described above, we can observe an abundance of principle-based interactions and decisions made by the mage as well as the hunter. More than this, though, by looking at the outcomes of these interactions, we can understand their effects on each of those parties. A few examples of these interactions, effects, and the theories that back them are introduced below in *Table 2.1*. One of the goals of this discussion is to synthesize and promote various theories and aspects of the video game, its technological accessories, the interactions which stem from them, and their effects. If we can understand the innate characteristics of games and how to learn from them, we can utilize the knowledge to discuss their role in fields such as Theater or SLA. I will first introduce various ludic theories and characteristics (interaction-based, general features, etc.) of the video game including: *Contextualization*, *Identification*, *Game Feel*, and *Transfer*. Since virtual reality (VR) technology and gaming has been growing exponentially over the last decade, the discussion will also include the field of VR, which will deepen our understanding of these topics.

Table 2.1

Theory	Interaction	Effect
Active, Critical Learning Principle (Gee)	Observing the hunter retreat from the worgs, helping, then teaming up to confront Kurtok	Affiliating the worgs and skilled enemy characters with danger; Recognizing the benefit of working together
Situated Meaning Principle (Gee)	Being told, "w00t", while the speaker waves and dances; Being given a staff, then being told "not great 4 strength but gives you int".	Coming to understand that "w00t" is said to celebrate something; recognizing that mages want or need 'int', most likely 'intelligence' or 'intellect'
Autonomy (Van Lier; Laurillard)	Choosing faction, race, class, individualistic vs mutualistic relationships, weapons, etc.	Development of critical thinking, autonomy, and motivation

After this ludic presentation, I will discuss the benefits of analyzing video games through a narratological lens (one derived from narratology) which can help to acknowledge and appreciate the role of narrative and its effect on those playing the video game. As a field, narratology aims to define narrative, but it also determines the function of the narration itself. Narratologists do not concern themselves with the ludic interactions created by a video game. Instead, they focus on distinguishing between different kinds of narrative, the identity of a narrative persona, inspecting the point of view from which the story is told, or the relationship

between the telling and the told. They study the making of narratives by considering the effects

of devices and elements in their functional interrelation, etc. Since video games exist in a

different medium than those used in film or theater, it would benefit participants in many fields

(e.g. SLA, literature, or theater) to understand the complexities of video game narrative.

Therefore, the second goal of this chapter is to exemplify narratives found within video games

and analyze them, thereby highlighting ways in which narrative can be found and used in other

fields.

Ludic Elements of Gameplay

Contextualization

A video game has the natural ability to drop players into a digital context. Perhaps they are

positioned as a disruptive goose, causing havoc among the locals (*Untitled Goose Game*). They

could be tasked with trying to covertly take over the world as an evil mastermind (*Evil Genius*)

or connecting hearts and worlds with Donald and Goofy (*Kingdom Hearts)*. No matter the

content, the virtual world requires the player to discover their surroundings conceptually and

spatially. Each game offers a unique, contextualized experience for the players which they might

not otherwise find immediately available to them (e.g., becoming a goose). When a player gains

experience in a game, they learn contextually.

James Gee, author of *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*

provides and describes 36 learning principles that present various characteristics of video games,

one of which relates to the concept of contextualization: the Situated Meaning Principle. This

principle states, "The meanings of signs (words, actions, objects, artifacts, symbols, texts, etc.)

are situated in embodied experience. Meanings are not general or decontextualized. Whatever generality meanings come to have is discovered bottom-up via embodied experiences" (2007, p. 224). Gee explains that contextualization is crucial to understanding what one experiences in a game, and that this understanding stems only from having a constructed and interactive space in which to learn.

In some games, this contextualization acts as a survival tool: Players must understand their surroundings quickly, learning to recognize and use the different symbols or texts shown to them in order to succeed. Referring back to the *WOW* story, the player of the mage implicitly discovers through the chat with the hunter that "w00t" is something one says to celebrate an event and that "int" is most likely referring to "intellect" or "intelligence." At the very least, they know it suggests something that mages within *WOW* need. If the player does not make these connections, at least initially, there could be consequences. They may be less likely to pick up textual social cues, potentially causing them to miss chances to group with other players to take down challenging characters in the game. If they do not understand what "int" means, they may not build their avatar's statistics correctly, making them fight inefficiently. No matter the game, contextualization exposes players to new, different, and vast worlds.

Further, despite its status as an alternate world (one that is not treated as our current and lived reality) a video game is designed to be an authentic space. The world that the player is immersed in is not real per se, but it is authentic in that it presents life in a way that is specific to that game. When one player interacts with another in the game (e.g., the interaction between the mage and the hunter), the interaction is genuine inside of that space (e.g., the mage now has a questing buddy). The stories told and the challenges overcome feel real, and therefore they *are* real to the player in that moment. Of course, video games are not the only medium to house this

phenomenon. In theater, the ideal spectator emotionally invests in the story unfolding on stage as if he or she is *really there*, as Diderot's character felt when he wished to jump up on stage with Dorval's group. In his theatrical works and textual artistic critiques, Diderot counts on the feeling of authenticity through read and observed experiences to persuade the reader or observer that what they are witnessing is indeed happening or could actually happen. He accomplishes this despite the artificiality of his creations because alternate worlds are intrinsically authentic within their own space, and they create authentic feelings.

Through these experiences, video games (and other media) provide people with more tools to use not just within the game but also in other areas of their own lives outside of it. *Situated cognition*, the theory that knowing is inseparable from doing (in social, cultural, and physical contexts), aligns with this idea. For example, soldiers learning to cooperate as a team, math students, those undergoing psychological treatments for various phobias, and pilots-in-training all apply the contexts within games and the signs they produce to inform and improve certain skills or traits they have in their real lives. Since this applies more directly to the concept of (knowledge) *transfer*, this will be addressed in more detail in a later section.

Identification

These embodied experiences certainly offer the opportunity to learn by seeing and doing in an authentic and contextualized space, but additionally, the player begins to identify with the character or *avatar* that they play as. This is especially true when someone can create their own avatar, such as those found in *WOW*, *The Sims*, or like the avatars created within the Nintendo Wii system, ingeniously called a "mii" (pronounced as 'me'). In the realm of game-studies and

psychology, the concept of identifying with your avatar (or any observed character), which will henceforth be referred to as *player-avatar identification*, has been studied and broken down into various categories. The most relevant ones to be discussed here are similarity identification, embodied identification/presence, wishful identification, group identification, and game identification. Each of these evokes a sense of identification that will impact the player's experience in a meaningful way and can certainly be related to the fields of SLA and theater.

Originally described by Hoffner and Buchanan in 2005, Van Looy et al. describe *similarity identification* as a feeling that "relates to the experience during the time of media exposure and refers to the process whereby an individual puts themselves in the place of a character and vicariously participates in their experiences" (2012, p. 202). It is essentially the feeling of becoming one with the avatar or that the avatar is an extension of the player whenever they experience something in the game. This seems to be an expansion of Biocca's theory in 1997, which focuses on a physical similarity, that "graphic visualization of the self in a digital environment would allow an individual to construct both a physical and mental model of the self that could be reflected on". No matter the model, though, what is crucial here is that the players equate the avatar with themselves and adopt the experiences and characteristics of the avatar as their own or vice-versa. This is especially the case when it comes to non-competitive games or genres (e.g., Trepte and Reinecke, 2009 and 2010; Klimmt, Hartmann, and Frey, 2007) like simulation games, sandbox games (a game which encourages free play with minimal to no rules) and the like.

The concept of similarity identification is certainly not unique to video games though. It is a topic of interest (and occasionally, of worry) even for philosophers like Rousseau who claimed in his *Lettre à d'Alembert* that the plays written and portrayed on stage, along with the

characters' actions, often reflect the values of a society. Put another way, the individuals within a society would want to see their own values presented on the stage (whether those values are reflected in terms of physical appearance, ethics, social systems, etc.) so that they can relate to the performance. This is connected to what Downs et al. (2019) describes as *value homophily*. Within the language classroom, too, we see students adopting a certain persona modeling the target culture's identity in name (e.g., being referred to as Camilo instead of Kyle in the Spanish classroom) and action, but also finding a way to fit themselves and their beliefs into that created persona.

Embodied identification or presence is "the emotion of being embodied in the character" (Van Looy et al., 2012). They experience the gaming world through the eyes of their avatar, and they develop a mental connection to the virtual space. It is the feeling of existing in the virtual environment. This concept is made obvious to those who play VR games or watch users of VR reacting to the experience. As they navigate the virtual space, many users will express emotions appropriate to the VR setting, even if the virtual space does not reflect their immediate, physical surroundings or experiences. For example, VR rollercoasters that make users believe that they are hundreds of feet above the ground will cause them to scream even though they are mere feet from the floor. Horror VR games cause players to scream and fall to the ground in fear. It is presence that deals with gamers believing (or not) that what they are experiencing in the game is happening to them in real life. VR can make a user believe that something not actually occurring is real, dangerous, exciting, and personal. This kind of identification is likely felt by Diderot, and it is the type of identification he would hope that others feel while observing his favorite pieces of art, watching plays, or reading his art critiques.

It supports his vision of the ideal spectator, someone who is entirely absorbed into an experience, someone who feels connected to the observed material.

An extension of embodied identification is wishful identification, which "designates a process that can extend beyond the viewing situation and that involves a desire of the audience member to be (more like) the media character" (Konijn et al., 2007). It is not farfetched to suggest that many people have found a character in one medium or another whom they feel they want to be more like. In the case of wishful identification, this "likeness" can refer to the physical sense (e.g., copying a haircut seen in a video game set in the year 2077, *Cyberpunk 2077*) or in a way that reflects a desire to share a likeness to someone's character (e.g., honoring Captain America's ethical or moral values). This is akin to similarity identification, but instead of comparing the similarity between the observer and the observed, it is the desire of the observer to become more like the observed.

Group identification is the player's mental association with their in-game group (Van Looy et al., 2012). The *WOW* story from the beginning of this chapter exemplifies the connections that players can build while playing, and there are certainly many kinds of groups that can form in MMORPGs such as *WOW*. You can form questing parties, dungeon parties, battleground groups (which entail *player vs. player* (*PVP*) battles), guilds, and much more. Depending on the kind of group, players begin to identify a certain way both among their peers within the group and *because* of the group. For example, I might join a more relaxed guild which focuses on herbalism and alchemy, professions which depend on gathering herbs and creating powerful potions to aid during combat or to complete quests. Since I am part of this guild, I identify as a more casual player as well as herbalist and alchemist. However, among all the guild members, I might consider myself to be a player that can be relied upon to supply health and

mana potions for other guild members. In essence, group identification is the way in which a player connects to and is represented within their in-game group.

Game identification is their identification with the game itself and the community surrounding it (Van Looy et al., 2012). Just as players can build a sense of identification in their groups, they also form a connection to the game and to the players of that game in an external sense. For example, the player base of the Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) *League of Legends* (LOL) is incredibly large, reaching 115 million monthly players as of this year (leaguefeed.net). Not only do these players identify as LOL players, but they have also built a community in the real world which focuses on their appreciation for the game and other players. There are also professional competitions such as the LOL World Championships, which host rewards of over two million dollars and brings together nearly a hundred million people virtually or otherwise together to celebrate, commune, and compete with other players. This kind of identification through external connection and community relates to what Reinhardt calls *Technology-as-ecology*, which establishes the idea that players of a game connect not only through the game as a medium, but they also connect through the web of resources created by players outside of the game (e.g., blogs, streaming, fan fiction, etc.). This will be explained further in the next chapter as something that can inspire language learning.

Identification formation is one of the strongest characteristics of video games. No matter the category, identification leads to some of the most meaningful gains for this medium. Games can connect you to other players, give you a sense of identity among groups, with certain portrayed characters, encourage changes in behavior to match someone you admire, and it helps to build community outside of the game as well. While this is true in the ludic sense, it is especially impactful in the narratological sense, as narration fuels identification and vice versa.

While this statement will be analyzed further in the narratology section below, for now, we will continue to detail important ludic aspects of games such as "game feel".

Game Feel:

Along with a contextualized experience and feeling a sense of identification with certain characters or community members within or outside of the game, part of what makes games so appealing is the "game feel," a term made popular by Steve Swink, author of the book *Game Feel: A Game Designer's Guide to Virtual Sensation* (2008). While *game feel* is topic of discussion throughout the text, Swink does not maintain a singular, standard definition. "Try to define it and the explanation quickly unravels into the best practices and personal experiences," he writes (2008, p. 1). However, he does try his hand at one, stating that it is "Real-time control of virtual objects in a simulated space, within interactions emphasized by polish. The player controls the avatar, the avatar interacts with the game environment and polish effects emphasize those interactions and provide additional appeal" (2008, p. 6). He bases this definition on his understanding of the three "building blocks" that make up *game feel*: real-time control, simulated space, and polish. These concepts are crucial to understanding the motivation and the experience that video game players have, and they also can be linked to theatrical experiences and those within the language-learning space.

Real-time control

Swink explains that *real-time control* is a certain kind of interactivity with at least two participants (e.g., computer and user) who form a closed loop, exchanging information and

action (2). Image 2.2 (Swink, 2008, p. 4, below) demonstrates this exchange, which includes a process of reception, analysis, and then action, which is to be received by the other party and is continued on a loop until the interaction is finished. Part of the interest in gaming comes from the engagement and the vast amounts of reactions built into a game. Players enjoy trying different things, predictable or otherwise, to see what happens. They act, the game receives it and then reacts, providing the player with a new situation which they must think about. This can be compared to improvisational theater, where one must observe and listen to another person and then think and react accordingly, always saying to yourself, "yes, and…!" to continue the scene. In the second language classroom, we have moved away from one-directional approaches such as the grammar-translation method which emphasized the study of grammatical rules and then required students to translate sentences between the target language and the native language. Now, instructors tend to follow more interactive and engaging methods such as the communicative approach or through task-based or task-supported language learning, for example. While exchanges with and within the game are important for the player, the constructed virtual space in the game also inform the gamer's experience.

Image 2.2: The conversation between human and computer
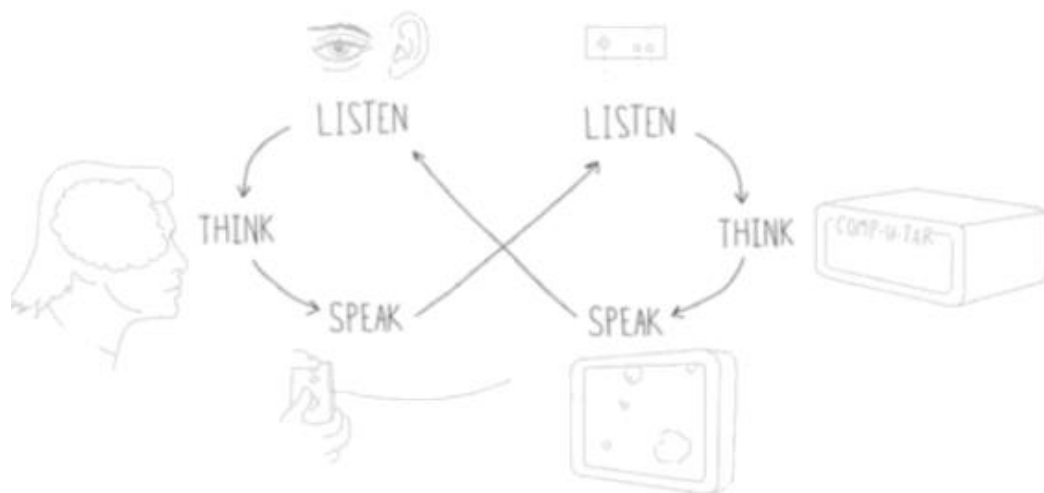
Simulated space

The *simulated space*, which "refers to simulated physical interactions in virtual space, perceived actively by the player," includes collision detection and response between an avatar and the environment of the game, as well as the "construction and spacing of objects relative to the speed of the avatar's movements" (Swink, 2008, p. 4). Essentially, there must be a space in which the user can experience a sense of movement and engagement with the 'physical' space inside of the virtual world.

While this particular building block is observed in many video games, virtual reality relies heavily on the simulated space to develop a sense of *presence* and *immersion* for players. Presence is the feeling of existing in the virtual environment. More precisely, it is the "subjective experience of actually existing within the computer-mediated environment even when one is physically situated in another" (Alexander et al., 2005, p. 6) In the context of gaming, this concept is concretely experienced by those who engage with VR themselves or watch users of VR reacting to the experience. As they navigate the virtual space, many users will feel and/or express emotions appropriate to the VR setting due to the interactions with the simulated space. In a study conducted by Servotte et al in 2020, participants (in this case, undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare students) were placed in a mass casualty incident-immersive simulation. It was found that the sense of presence was high for both groups, was positively correlated to immersion propensity, and that the simulation induced a feeling of stress among participants. Ultimately, it is presence, supported by the simulated space, that deals with gamers believing (or not) that what they are experiencing in the game is really happening.

The simulated space and presence are most closely associated with another concept explained in the previous chapter: absorption and the ideal spectator. Just as a moving and theatrically constructed portrayal on stage can make the ideal spectator feel directly involved with what is taking place, VR can make a user believe that something not actually occurring is real, dangerous, exciting, and personal. Also, just like VR, watching a play or musical can make the ideal spectator feel transported into the created space, even if they have not moved physically. Both the theater and VR create a mental transportation of the body even though the physical body stays in the same general space (in the audience seat or within the VR movement area).

Next, the simulated space and the boundaries created within that space are tied to the sentiment of *immersion*, which is the degree to which a player feels *physically* absorbed by an experience. It is important to note that this term in the field of VR has to do with the technological equipment provided during the experience. For example, does the user have access to a computer, a headset, controllers, or other devices? How do these devices affect the experience? Are players hooked up to machines that allow *matching*, the concept that the movements that players make in real life match the movements that their character makes in the game (Slater and Wilbur, 1997)? VR allows for a physical user to connect to a virtual world using special equipment such as headsets, computers, motion detectors, controllers, or other forms of equipment. Unlike Augmented Reality (AR), which allows for virtual characters or concepts to come to the physical world (e.g., Pokemon Go), VR tasks itself with leaving the physical world behind and navigating virtual worlds and spaces.

While VR equipment continues to evolve to improve a player's sense of immersion, other consoles and games that do not use VR are also attempting to include a more physical and tactile

experience, such as Sony's PlayStation 4 and 5. For example, the controllers have a microphone you can speak into to access various in-game features and a touch pad which you can swipe to turn pages in a book or map in the game (*Rise of the Tomb Raider*). The new PS5 DualSense controller now includes haptic feedback, gifting players the following experience:

Feel physically responsive feedback to your in-game actions with dual actuators which replace traditional rumble motors. In your hands, these dynamic vibrations can simulate the feeling of everything from environments to the recoil of different weapons… Experience varying levels of force and tension as you interact with your in-game gear and environments. From pulling back an increasingly tight bowstring to hitting the brakes on a speeding car, feel physically connected to your on-screen actions. (www.playstation.com)

As made evident by the recent push for technology such as this, gaming industries are trying to create as much of a sense of presence and immersion as they can. They wish to blur the line between the physical reality of the user and their virtual or observed reality. Certainly, this wish is not new. Society has seen this push in a variety of fields for decades to centuries. Via his theatrical pieces and art criticism in the eighteenth century, Diderot wished to immerse his ideal spectator in whatever work the spectators were viewing by using various metatheatrical tactics (e.g., breaking the fourth wall, presenting plays within plays, etc.). However, just as Diderot did not wish to rely solely on metatheatrics, video game companies cannot develop a sense of presence through real-time control and the simulated space alone. Both require something more aesthetically persuasive.

Polish

Alongside Diderot who emphasized an establishment of "vraisemblance" or portrayal of believable actions and appearances via his *genre bourgeois/sérieux*, modern video game companies rely heavily on *polish* to wow the player and develop a sense of presence. Swink mentions that *polish* refers to the effects which improve the interaction with the material without changing the simulation. Some examples are adding a crashing sound when two cars collide or dust particles when a character's foot slides across the ground. For Swink, these aesthetic adjustments help to persuade the player that those actions are real (Swink, 2008, p. 5), ultimately feeding the player's sense of presence. Image 2.3, below, demonstrates the visual effects which exemplify *polish*, showing how without the added visuals which give Street Fighter characters their humanoid appearances, those same characters would simply be fighting boxes. Polish does not change anything but the appearance of the game in order to develop something closer to reality.

Image 2.3: Visual effects/examples of *polish*
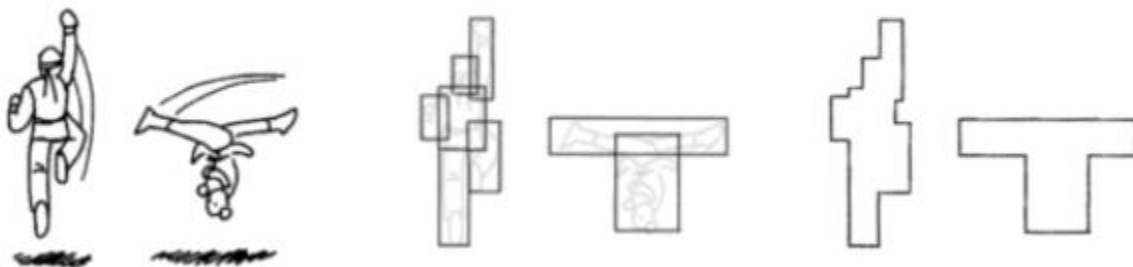
Swink's term "polish" is similar to a few other concepts, the first that comes to mind being "fidelity." Within the realm of VR, the term "fidelity" has to do with the extent to which the virtual environment in the game reflects the physical characteristics of the real world. Simply put, it reflects how "real" something is. For example, when soldiers in Shawn Weil's study were exposed to two similar strategic VR missions with two different appearances (soldier avatars that wear modern clothes and equipment as opposed to those beckoning back to WWII), soldiers reported preferring modern clothes and equipment because those were what they were to wear and use in real battle. (Weil et al., 2005) This, of course, is an excellent marker for the relevance of *vraisemblance* in a modern era, since they preferred clothes that reflected what they saw in their everyday lives, ultimately a more realistic and relatable encounter. In this case, the soldiers seemed to develop a higher sense of presence when there was more fidelity, according to the soldiers' experiences. In short, a game's fidelity is defined by how realistic and relatable a certain physical trait is.

Within this realm, the video game industry is currently striving to build games with the most realistic graphics, now more than ever, due to the development of advanced technologies. Death Stranding, an action game developed in 2019 by Kojima Productions, is a prime example of a game that favors a strong aesthetic to accompany incredibly complex game mechanics and interactions within a simulated space. Image 2.4, below, demonstrates how incredibly life-like a video game can be. You can observe detailed clothing, individual hair strands, wrinkles in the clothing, and more.

Image 2.4: (*Death Stranding*): Artificial human named 'Deadman' (middle) informing the protagonist, Sam Bridges (right) about how the 'Bridge Baby'/BB (left) facilitates a connection between the world of the dead and the world of the living.

Another related term, one mentioned in chapter 1, is "vraisemblance," which also concerns itself with the aesthetic experience which would make the spectator feel that what they are seeing is relatable and real. As discussed in the previous chapter, it describes the likelihood of a certain event or visual effect. A prime example is found in Diderot's *genre bourgeois*, which necessitated a visually and narratively relatable and appropriate display, a truthful representation of the clothes, gestures, decorations, and acts portrayed on stage.

No matter which term you use, however, they all point to the aesthetic connection to our reality. This aesthetic connection, be it theatrical or game-based, in combination with the mental connection to a virtual reality that often resembles our own, is an incredibly powerful tool. It allows us to build or replicate any context we wish. It is with these tools that we can improve the education of our students. Of course, the idea that video games have educational value is not entirely new, even if it has only recently become popular in academic fields. In the next section, I will describe *transfer* in a basic sense as well as the aspects of gaming which help to bolster it.

Transfer

Many video games, VR projects, and simulations were designed, initially, to aid in matters of war and business (Taylor and Walford, 1972) but have recently come to enter other fields, such as psychology or health care, to help acclimate patients to encountering their phobias to distract them from medical procedures (e.g., Beck et al., 2005), or to help develop social skills, cognition, and functioning in young adults with autism (Kandalaft et al., 2013). The development of such technology has also sparked conversations concerning the effect of VR and newer technologies on the general population's IQ (Passig, 2015). Of course, VR and gaming have entered the field of education, inspiring various courses like Italian (Simone Bregni, SLU) and even Shakespeare (Gina Bloom, UCD).

One of the most important terminologies of VR specifically is "transfer," which is the application of any skills or experiences acquired during use of VR to the environment in which they would normally be used (Alexander et al., 2005). This concept is the reason why the popularity of VR implementation has exponentially increased. These tools help to educate and prepare users, especially when accessing a certain environment is either not possible or not yet desired. For example, surrounding someone who has arachnophobia with real spiders would (probably) not be as helpful as letting that same person first get used to the *idea* of being around spiders in a virtual environment. Nor would it be ideal to send soldiers or pilots to their respective settings without first training them to coordinate, navigate, or work as a team. They will need to become familiar with certain tools, devices, and maneuvers to help them on their missions. VR can help to develop these skills (Weil et al., 2005). The amount of transfer, however, is affected by four popular concepts in the VR domain: Fidelity, Immersion, Presence, and Buy-in.

The term "fidelity," mentioned in the "polish" section of the chapter, has to do with the extent to which the virtual environment in the game reflects the physical characteristics of the real world (Weil et al., 2005). Simply put, it reflects how "real" something is. To return to a previous example, when soldiers were asked to complete a VR mission given the choice between two different appearances (modern clothes and equipment vs. those from WWII), soldiers reported preferring modern clothes and equipment because it was more relevant to the kinds of clothes and equipment they would normally wear (Weil et al., 2005).

Immersion, as noted earlier, is the degree to which a player feels physically absorbed by an experience with the aid of any technological equipment provided during gameplay (e.g., headsets, controllers, etc.). As previously noted, presence is the feeling of existing in the virtual environment. It is the feeling of embodiment within the virtual space, and as they navigate the space, they can be emotionally and even physically affected by what they experience.

Finally, buy-in is the extent to which the player believes that what they are experiencing in the game is useful for training (Weil et al., 2005). If a military group does not believe that a situation is believable, it could affect their feelings toward the experience and possibly reduce the efficacy of their training (Weil et al., 2005). Similarly, in the L2 classroom, instructors hope that students have a high level of buy-in. We want them to see the value in learning and using another language because otherwise, just as in the case of the soldiers whose training was not as successful because they did not believe in the efficacy of the training, students will be negatively affected, resulting in a lack of motivation, effort, and therefore, progress.

In the next chapter of my dissertation, I will 1) outline various theories of SLA which support gaming and game-based language learning and 2) present quantitative and qualitative work on a study I conducted which relate to the concepts mentioned in this chapter. For now, it

suffices to introduce and explain these terms in a basic, ludic sense in order to prepare the reader for the following chapter's SLA-oriented approach to video games.

Narratological Elements of Gameplay

It is true that the ludic elements of video games are important for understanding what physical, aesthetic, technological, or motivational behaviors the video game itself encourages and inherently provides to players. Extending beyond the 'intended audience,' this is especially true when you reflect on how immersion, realism, technology, and motivation could all have an effect on theatergoers and language students alike. However, it is also by analyzing video games from a narratological perspective that we will come to further understand fields like SLA and theater, as it will aid in fleshing out and applying yet another vital aspect of any given linguistic or theatrical experience: narration. As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, narratology and its followers aim to define narrative, as well as determine its function. In this section, I will argue that a game's form(s) of narration impact(s) a player's sense of self-identification and, therefore, their feeling of presence. I will accomplish this by introducing two forms of a video game's narrative style: *embedded narrative* and *emergent narrative*. Then, I will analyze the crucial connection between narrative and identification. Finally, I will prepare for the next chapter's discussion on the theories and applications of SLA in relation to video games by tying narration and its impact on identification to the concepts of immersion and presence via situated cognition.

Forms of Narrative: Embedded and Emergent

To understand the effects of narrative on a gamer's experiences, it is necessary to introduce a game's intrinsic forms of narration. According to Salen and Zimmerman, who do not

choose to separate narrative from video games, stating that it is not "*if* games are narrative but

how they are narrative" (2005, p. 379), there are two types of narrative we should take note of.

The first of these is 'embedded narrative', which "is pre-rendered narrative content that exists in

a final form before a player's interaction with the game" (Neville, 2010, p. 455). These are

commonly, and more recently, characterized by cutscenes, not unlike the image above taken

from a scene from *Death Stranding*. However, in older games, where the technology afforded to

companies was not as advanced, not utilized, or simply not invented yet, this embedded narrative

was created through written (and occasionally dubbed) dialogue as represented in the image

below (**Image 2.5**) taken from *Final Fantasy VII* (1997). Nevertheless, despite the form of the

embedded narration itself, the point remains the same: a story has been created for players, and it

delivers an undeviating narrational experience. Put differently, as explained by Neville, it

"provides the kind of narrative experiences that linear media forms such as cinema provide"

(2010, p. 455).

Image 2.5 (*Final Fantasy VII*): **The protagonist, Cloud, looking to get through a mission.
The unchangeable narrative is provided to players in the form of text boxes.**

In contrast to embedded narrative, which essentially disallows users to impact or alter said story, 'emergent narrative' grants players the chance to create and/or build a narrative of their own. Neville describes it as a form of narration that "occurs in unexpected and uniquely different ways when the player interacts with the underlying rules of a game system" (2010, p. 455). Within the video game industry over the last few decades, we have begun to see increasing quantities of video games that implement this style of narration. There has also been a diversification of the ways in which it fulfills its obligation to provide dynamic narrative. Now, the player may choose how to respond to other characters or, through textual choice, how to (re)act. They are given the opportunity to improvise or fulfill one of many possible outcomes. The images below depict an example of this narrative style from the game *The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim* (**Image 2.6**). Some games, such as the interactive drama horror game *Until Dawn* (2015) count on this function (a function which allows for the game to implement what is commonly known as the 'butterfly effect') to build suspense and to improve or decrease the player's chance of survival. Some images of this function are also demonstrated below (**Image 2.7 and 2.8**).

This focus on a dynamic, choice-based storytelling has come to us in the form of video games as well as social platforms and streaming sites such as YouTube or Netflix. This genre is called *Interactive Fiction*. A comedy theater company named Team StarKid, for example, offers YouTube viewers the chance to choose an ending to their 2015 musical, *The Trail to Oregon*, at the end of which they select one of the family members to perish from some unmentionable disease which harkens back to the inevitably frustrating demise of one of many characters you had to take care of in the 1971 PC game The *Oregon Trail*. Of course, there are plenty of movies on Netflix (currently 14) that also allow for the viewer to construct one of a variety of narratives in real time (e.g., *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. the*

Reverend, *Minecraft: Story Mode*, and *Captain Underpants Epic Choice-o-Rama* to name a few).

Each choice has the power to drastically alter the outcome of the story, and because of this

option, this autonomous power of choice, viewers feel more connected to and in control of their

experience.

There is more to be said about types of narrative. Specifically, one will find many created

narratives surrounding a video game, narratives that are created externally to the video game

itself. Players often create various kinds of texts such as blog posts, fanfiction, walkthroughs, and

more, which they normally write for entertainment, social, or educational purposes. While

crucial to the discussion on narrative, this subcategory is more directly related to and useful for

the next chapter's analysis of various theories of second language acquisition related to video

games.

Image 2.6 (The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim) Player may choose a narrative: to pay the fee to avoid jail, to be taken to jail, or to fight the guard.

Image 2.7 (Until Dawn): Matt, in this case, the player, must make the choice to support his friend, Jessica, or his girlfriend, Emily.
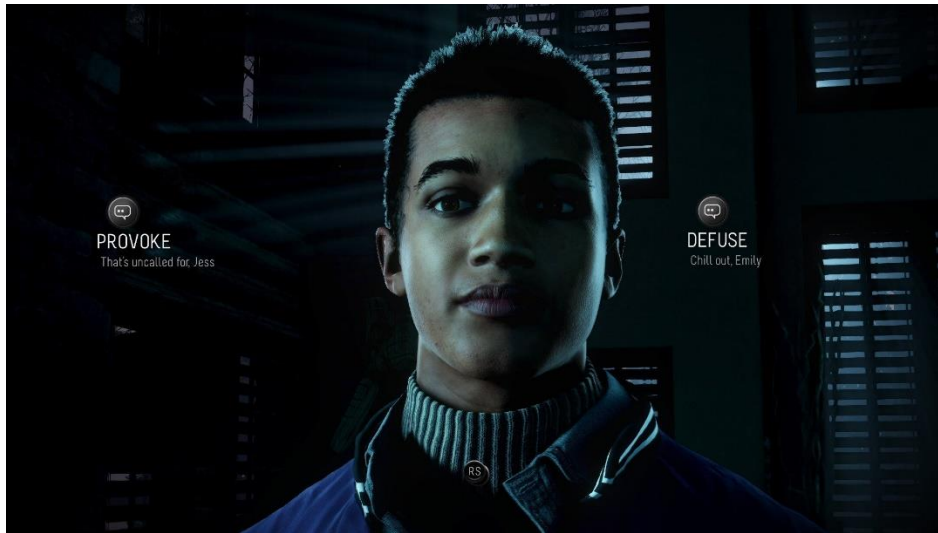
Image 2.8 (Until Dawn): Matt, the player, sided with Jess, so Emily became aggressive with him which is likely to result in more serious consequences later in the game.

Narrative and Identity Formation

Embedded narrative has the capacity to immerse players into a character's life and world.

The *Legend of Zelda* series is a good example of an embedded narrative game which provides

Link's (the protagonist's) backstory, lays out a storyline, and requires players to complete that storyline to complete the game. Despite the linear mode, however, the game provides cutscenes and dialogues between characters which aid the player in understanding Link's identity as well as his relationship to those around him.

While embedded narrative can certainly foster a sense of identification via taking on the identity of the protagonist, the emergent form of narration in video games empowers the player by granting them the ability to construct an identity that they wish to build themselves instead of having it handed to them. Additionally, this sense of identification can be achieved whether or not certain choices or actions are representative of the player and their innermost selves. In fact, direct similarity between avatar and player may not be as essential for identification in the world of video games as it is to have those choices available to the player in the first place. Bowey et al. (2019), in their study on identification through dialogue, indicated that a player's moral choices, when opposing each other (moral vs immoral), resulted in the highest amount of identification and transportation whether or not those choices reflected the participants' day-to-day personality (p. 1). This is because players desire the opportunity to develop different kinds of avatars and to build unique identities within the game world. Looking back at this chapter's introduction based in the world of *WOW*, an entire story (although imaginary in this case) has been built by the player's decisions. They chose to become a mage, to help a fellow player, and to team up against a difficult enemy. The player builds their identity from the ground up. That is where the power of narrative steps into the spotlight when referring to video games, and this is an aspect of the field which should be carried over and applied to other fields.

Attaining 'Presence' via Situated Cognition

Not only can narrative form help to construct a new identity, but it can also promote the development of one's sense of presence, the feeling of being 'transported' to the new space. Additionally, you will find narrative and identification working in tandem with situated cognition which essentially posits that you learn by doing. By helping to write the story (a story that is personalized to you and your decisions and wishes as a player, a human, and an avatar), you are 'doing' many things. Much more than just 'doing' though, you are performing actions according to certain contexts which have specific outcomes (e.g., as seen in *Until Dawn*, Matt siding with Jessica in an argument, leading to more aggressive behavior from Emily). The player learns through their in-game experiences, and it is through those actions that, according to Alf Seegart in his study on three Interactive Fiction games, a player generates a sense of presence. Seegart states that "what players are able to 'do' in fact contributes more to their sense of presence than graphical realism" (2009, p. 23). Video games provide their players with contextualized experiences during which one can provide input and see various outputs which the player can learn from and recall later to help them in the game.

For now, it suffices to introduce some of these analyses of presence, identification, and situated cognition. However, the discussion will continue in the following chapter which comprises several theories on second language acquisition which will more fully flesh out the impact of these aspects of gaming in the educational world, for language students and non-language students alike.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have laid out both ludic and narratological tools and functions of video games and their accessories. These include contextualization, game feel, transfer, visual effects rooted in polish, fidelity, and verisimilitude, as well as embedded and emergent forms of narration. These concepts serve mainly to introduce the reader to some of the most important aspects of gaming that can and should be applied to other fields such as in the language learning classroom. That said, not only is it necessary to point out these inherent functions, but it is crucial to link them to SLA theory.

Some links have been made here in the chapter, but now that a basis has been established, a fuller theoretical analysis is required to understand how we as instructors can provide our students with an impactful educational experience based on theories established by eighteenth-century French theater (Chapter 1) and pushed further by modern video game companies (Chapter 2). The next chapter will provide such an analysis. My study using *The Sims* in the classroom, provides a way of observing the quantitative and qualitative a simulation game to aid in the language-learning process, including vocabulary acquisition, identification, and narrative.

Chapter 3

My goal for this chapter is to offer instructors and students more ways of engaging with classroom content, especially for language classes. How can we, as language instructors, offer students more motivation, opportunities for autonomy, critical thinking and self-reflection, and feelings of immersion and connection, all while learning the target language? Until now, I have introduced various theories concerning French theatrical aesthetics and phenomenology (e.g., the role of actor/spectator, immersion, and critical distance), as well as those related to the ludic and narratological aspects of video games (e.g., identity, narration, and contextualization), and I have described them while demonstrating their ties to their corresponding fields: eighteenth-century French theater and the video game industry. At times, I have posited and illustrated their overlap both with each other and, to a minimal degree, with the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Although it is important to navigate these three fields independently, it is exponentially more important for the purposes of this chapter to understand how they may inform each other. For this reason, chapter 3 of this dissertation will contain a series of sections.

First, the chapter offers an exploration of goals of the classroom and the relevant and crucial concepts within SLA. Scholars have discussed, for example, the advantages of autonomous learning and critical thinking. This particular section will provide an understanding of the kind of educational space that can and should be inspired in language classrooms. Within that same section, I will review concepts mentioned in SLA which are related to (or are already present in) the aforementioned fields such as autonomy, transfer, or situated cognition.

In the second section of the chapter, I will discuss the role of students as spectators, offering explanations and SLA theories which support the presence of both an absorbed student

as well as a critical one. Additionally, I will present the ways in which each type of critical student engages in the classroom via Cognitive, Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Engagement.

In the final portion of this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which students are effectively actors in the classroom as they navigate through their learning experiences. Within this section, I will also describe ways that they form and support their various classroom identities through hypothesis formation and testing as well as building narration/storytelling. By the end of the chapter, it is my hope that at least four things will have happened: 1) the reader will be able to identify the ways in which instructors can support and help guide students; 2) they will understand that language students have different roles in the classroom which can shift at a moment's notice and that there are clear strengths for each role; and that 3) they will recognize the overlap between theatre and art, gaming, and the language space. As a fourth goal, and more of a personal one, I hope that the reader is able to find something of interest within the chapter that might inspire them in regard to their own teaching practices. Before this can occur, however, let us start at the beginning with a discussion of a handful of crucial goals of teaching and the SLA theories that support them.

The Goals of Teaching

Diana Laurillard, in her book *Rethinking University Teaching*, questions the goals of education and teaching. Without goals, one cannot set the parameters in the class, and students as well as instructors will be left to question their role and how they are supposed to accomplish the task before them. Laurillard claims that the goal of teaching is not simply to impart knowledge. Rather, the goal is to make student learning possible (2002, p. 23). However, instructors must

have the right expectations for students. For example, we want students to engage with the material in order for them to acquire, assess, and apply the information successfully to broader concepts. We wish for students to all receive the same information but to make the information their own. We hope they become motivated and analytical, study and do research at home, and go above and beyond. However, we're not always training them in the classroom to develop these skills or to foster this kind or relationship with the information they are learning. Though it may be easier for us to simply impart our knowledge and expect them to put in the footwork without any kind of training in the classroom, it is surely not a method worth striving for, as it is a paradoxical one: "Although I am helping you to learn and apply skill 'A' (e.g., telling you about this grammar point, news article, or piece of literature), you are required to learn and apply skill 'B' (e.g., write a masterful, synthetic composition) in this class." While learners must take the responsibility of engaging with the material, instructors have to make sure that their teaching methods are reflecting and encouraging a movement toward the goals that they set for students no matter the course material.

That said, when it comes to language learning, there are several aspects that we must consider in order to provide students with an educational experience such as the one mentioned above; some of these are entirely present and 'center stage' in Second Language Acquisition literature and discourse, while others are overlooked or overshadowed but are foregrounded in the worlds of gaming and theater. In this section, I will detail various concepts and theories that should be considered as some of the most essential for instructors to keep in mind as they develop and execute course material, since they will allow for students to develop an analytical, motivated, immersed, and involved mindset and language experience.

Relevant SLA Concepts/Theories

The first crucial concept that has become popular within the last few decades is the theory of *situated cognition* (e.g., Brown, Collins, and Duguid 1989). This is the idea that knowing comes from past social, physical, and cultural experience. This is a concept that should motivate instructors, especially language instructors, since they have the ability to prepare students for future multilingual experiences with various communities. For example, by placing students in a "natural" situation with the help of authentic materials, we hope that were students to encounter a similar situation, they could manage it, thereby applying what they've previously learned to some new experience (an idea closely related to *transfer*). This critical thinking and application of learned material is crucial to academic achievement. What becomes difficult, however, is when students are not able to extract the "big picture" from the small "situation," and those who were taught to ask "where is the bathroom" would not know how to ask "where is the train" even if they knew the word for train. Of course, instructors can point these things out to students, but then the critical learning opportunity is lost.

This loss of a learning opportunity due to the instructor's explicit form of instruction proves to be a risk of situated cognition. Laurillard gives an example of a math teacher who asks students to give her a story that goes with the multiplication (12 X 4) to which a student responds: "There were 12 jars, and each had 4 butterflies in it." The teacher draws the jars of butterflies on the board and says, " Now it will be easier for us to count how many butterflies there are altogether if we think of the jars in groups" (2002, p. 17). Ideally, the instructor would have asked students to think about what just happened and what it means to think of things in this new way. Instead, she tells students that grouping is a fundamental aspect of multiplication which, although true, is being handed to them as a recognized truth instead of being given to the

students as a learning opportunity that they may have been able to discover themselves and apply in other areas of their lives. In summary, Laurillard teaches that the methodology and the material in the class must support the goals of the classroom as well as the goal of academia in general, which is to say that students must be able to think critically and come to certain conclusions inductively, through observation and critical analysis. According to this line of thinking, instructors must guide learners to make discoveries, but they should not teach universal truths deductively. Otherwise, students may not benefit and risk the chance of missing a learning opportunity. Not only must we give students information surrounding the content of what we teach, but we must give them the tools and the freedom they need to see the information's utility in other areas of life. They must develop their own applications and not just be led to memorize or believe something so that they understand the real goals behind academic learning.

In his book entitled *Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity*, Leo van Lier (2014) supports similar claims using his AAA principles (presented in his title). He describes *awareness* in terms of noticing something and acknowledging its existence, which is "enhanced by paying attention to it" (p. 11). There must be a mindful engagement with the material. Van Lier writes, "It is an ancient principle of learning that all new learning will be impossible unless it can be related to existing knowledge (some of it innate, probably) and experience" (2014, p. 10). This concept is also related to Richard Schmidt's (1994) *noticing* hypothesis which posits that a learner cannot improve their linguistic abilities if they do not consciously notice the input. If students, with or without the help of the instructor, can become aware of a concept in the classroom, they will be more likely to become aware of similar perceptions in the world outside of the class and vice-versa. Awareness, however, does

not simply apply to students. Van Lier brings instructors into the fold, requiring that they be aware of and trained in current teaching practices, exercises, etc.

Van Lier calls his second term, *autonomy*, a truism. He writes, "The impetus for learning must come from the learner, who must want to learn, either because of a natural human propensity to do so, or because of an interest in the material" (2014, p. 12). Choice and responsibility are crucial in his discussion on autonomy. When students take responsibility for their learning, when they have control and ownership over it, they become active in their role, supporting the "high and sustained cognitive effort" required for complex learning (2014, p. 12). Without this sense of autonomy, students risk becoming passive and unfocused.

His third term, *authenticity*, proves to be quite complex. Van Lier claims that, "An action is authentic when it realizes a free choice and is an expression of what a person genuinely feels and believes. An authentic action is intrinsically motivated. Inauthentic actions, on the other hand, are undertaken because everyone else is doing them..." (2014, p. 13). In this first definition, then, authenticity has to do with the self and how it relates to others. The student must be self-motivated and act of his or her own accord. Van Lier's chapter on authenticity later in the book adds another layer to the subject. He writes that authenticity in the classroom is possible but is difficult to achieve due to the classroom's artificiality, caused by things like the instructor's "teacher talk," lexical/grammatical "simplification" (2014, p. 128), or the "paradoxical use of 'authentic' materials in an artificial setting" (2014, p. 126).

To summarize van Lier's points, a student must be in charge of his or her own learning. An instructor may guide the learner, but if students do not have the motivation to learn, do not know how to recognize and utilize a concept, or if they cannot react and interact authentically with a task (something they would likely do if they could relate to the material), it could

negatively impact their degree of acquisition and the scope of a concept's application outside of the classroom. Just as in the case of the students in Laurillard's book who must realize (ideally through their own discovery) that grouping is an essential aspect of multiplication, van Lier's terms enforce the idea that students must be given the tools with which they can build their critical learning skills through their own experience and discovery.

While Laurillard's and van Lier's theories prove useful as a starting point when thinking about what instructors should be fostering in their classrooms, there are a couple of theorists who can supply more specific details about what can be achieved in an L2 class in terms of autonomy, critical thinking, hypothesis formation, and providing students with explicit vs. implicit information. James Paul Gee and Mark Peterson are two such linguists who have presented work on what video games have to offer language learners specifically (Peterson) and learners in general (Gee). Both linguists have come to recognize the characteristics of games, some of which were included in chapter two of this dissertation, and authored several books on the educational advantages of video games. Incidentally, as supporters of situated cognition, both authors argue that gaming offers intrinsic and practical skills and opportunities that students and teachers alike can utilize. As an example, Gee's transformative text, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*, provides 36 learning principles that present various characteristics of games that must be taken advantage of. A few of these are directly related to Laurillard and van Lier's call to action concerning the importance of helping the learner become the best learner they can be. These are, for example, 1) the Active, Critical Learning Principle; and, 2) the Situated Meaning Principle. Two additional principles, 3) the Probing Principle; and, 4) the Explicit Information On-Demand and Just-In-Time Principle, will be tied into a discussion with

Peterson. These principles relate to the active learner, experience-based learning, the hypothesis-forming process, and presenting material at the correct moment, respectively.

Gee's Active, Critical Learning Principle states that "All aspects of the learning environment (including the ways in which the semiotic domain is designed and presented) are set up to encourage active and critical, not passive, learning" in a well-designed game (2007, p. 221). As previously stated with the help of van Lier, active learning is the ideal form of learning in order for students to absorb more difficult topics. For Gee, "experiencing the world in new ways, forming new affiliations, and preparation for future learning" (2007, p. 24) are all involved in active learning. Video games, therefore, naturally offer discovery, connection to new social practices and people, and preparation for the future.

When a player gains experience in a game, they learn contextually. This contextualization supports Gee's Situated Meaning Principle which claims that "The meanings of signs (words, actions, objects, artifacts, symbols, texts, etc.) are situated in embodied experience. Meanings are not general or decontextualized. Whatever generality meanings come to have is discovered bottom-up via embodied experiences" (2007, p. 224). Everything in a video game, especially in a simulation game, is contextualized. As van Lier points out, this proves to be more difficult to do naturally in the classroom, since it is an artificial space trying to become an authentic space. You can pretend to be in a coffee shop, but to what extent is the student going to imagine themselves in an actual coffee shop? A video game, however, is designed to be an authentic space even if the space is virtual. The world that the player is immersed in is not real per se, but it is authentic in that it presents life in a way that is specific to that game, and the interactions with fellow players/characters in the game are authentic inside of that space.

Thorne and Reinhart, for example, have spoken about the *ecology* reflected in video games via their theory of *technology-as-ecology*, an extension of the different metaphors of the utility of computers in the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). "Technology-as-ecology" has been described as a form of multiliteracies as well as a way for students to 'learn in the wild' (Thorne, 2010; Reinhardt and Thorne, 2016). Therefore, not only does language-as-ecology deal with the textual interactions between players, but it also concerns itself with how the players are communicating orally with the other players and characters within the game in order to learn language. Reinhardt and Thorne write, "From this perspective, gaming and games are ways to be in and to understand the world, and language is not learned only from or through games, but as constitutive of the ecology of the broader discourses surrounding games" (2016). This means that language students learn from experiencing the game itself and through extra-gaming experiences like game guides, online forums, etc.

Peterson believes, just as Gee does, that learning comes from experience. If we've experienced something, especially in a contextualized way as Gee states, we will learn it much more easily. The preface of Peterson's book *Computer Games and Language Learning* starts: "The human mind learns through experience, especially experiences where a person has an action to take whose outcome really matters to the person. Language is a tool for social and individual problem solving and it is our most crucial human tool for taking action in the world and learning from experience" (2016, p. xi). These experiences, although they would ideally be experienced in the real world, can also be experienced virtually. Peterson later states, "As goal-driven simulations where players have to take action and often today engage socially with others, video games are a promising platform for getting out of the isolation of the classroom and showing learners how to marry words, thoughts, actions, and goals that matter to them" (2016, p.

xii). Both experiences are legitimate, even the virtual one, because they provide the learner with information that they will later be able to use to overcome some obstacle, linguistic or otherwise. This is because through these experiences, learners can critically analyze what they've seen and experienced to form hypotheses which will help in decision making. Peterson claims, "Playing computer games supports learning processes such as hypothesis formation and generalizing conclusions" (2016, p. 34). Good video games are designed with a kind of scaffolding in mind. Every time the player experiences something, they take what they've learned and add on to it throughout the rest of the game. Gee's Probing Principle, which describes this very phenomenon, is about hypothesis formulation and reformulation. It is defined: "Learning is a cycle of probing the world (doing something); reflecting in and on this action and, on this basis, forming a hypothesis; reprobing the world to test this hypothesis; and then accepting or rethinking the hypothesis" (2007, p. 223). These hypotheses are a result of what Gee would call "deep learning," which, as Peterson describes, is "a form of learning that occurs when: game play elements that initially seem simple, and easy to learn, become more complex the more the player comes to master them" (2016, p. 38). It is difficult to have vast experiences and form/test hypotheses in a classroom, and if these hypotheses cannot be tested and experienced in a way that matters to students, it will become difficult for the student to develop critical thinking skills and to effectively learn material on their own.

There is, however, a time, a place, and a way for an instructor to properly guide a learner. In the example of the mathematics lesson in Laurillard's text, while one student proved to understand the lesson by answering the teacher's question (succeeding in using their critical thinking), other students were not given the chance as the instructor explicitly told students the rule. The lesson here, therefore, is that one must be cautious when instructing students so that

they may come to conclusions on their own if possible. Gee's Explicit Information On-Demand and Just-In-Time Principle explains just that. Gee defines it as, "The learner is given explicit information both on demand and just in time when the learner needs it or just at the point where the information can be understood and used in practice" (2016, p. 226). In video games, the tutorial is a good representation of this rule. At the beginning of most games, players are told the very basics for how to play the game. Afterwards, the player is more than likely on their own until they fail. Many games may give advice for defeating bosses or completing quests if the player fails repeatedly. The best way for players to learn is through experience, and only when their gameplay proves that they don't understand something or haven't grasped a certain skill, the game offers explicit help. In Laurillard's mathematics example, it was not yet evident that students needed to be told the rule explicitly. They should have been able to demonstrate their understanding (or lack thereof) before being explicitly told the mathematical truth.

Teachers owe it to students to set the right goals and to use the correct methods to guide them to those goals. Learning will become that much more difficult if students begin to feel out of touch with the material, if they cannot learn to become aware of certain concepts, do not feel motivated to learn, or if they are not guided at the right moments. While the traditional classroom has its advantages, using ludic or theatrical characteristics to help language learners can help organize the classroom and can expedite the process of making students into ideal learners. They provide students with contextualized and personal experiences, grant them control over their own learning, deliver timely advice to users, and give them the tools to develop active learning skills and critical thinking habits. To flesh out this idea further, we can use the metaphor of "students as spectators" and "students as actors." Later, I will argue that a more helpful metaphor will be

"students as players," but for now, a division between spectators and actors will help in understanding some of the cognitive processes and responsibilities of each.

STUDENTS AS SPECTATORS

Students are almost always spectators in the classroom. I include the word "almost" here because there are bound to be a select few whose attention is pulled away by their phone, fatigue, a daydream, or by some other factor. That being said, it would be fair to assume that the majority of students arrive *wanting* to learn something new and give a good effort to remain observant, take notes, apply their knowledge, and participate mentally and physically in the instructor's classroom activities. Aside from how they apply themselves (which is another matter to be discussed), this section's first sentence is a crucial piece of the metaphor: Students are almost always spectators in the classroom. They watch the teacher. They watch other students. They observe interactions between students or between students and teachers. They perceive the teacher's content on the board and compare with their own work. Spectatorship and exposure are a necessity if our students wish to learn.

Spectatorship, whether in the theatre, a French *salon*, or a modern language classroom, comes in different forms. As described in chapter 1, there exists an *ideal spectator* and a *critical spectator*, according to Diderot's theatrical works and critiques of various artistic pieces and installations. Translating these forms of spectatorship from a theatrical or artistic setting to the classroom will not be much of a stretch since, although the observed content within the space is different, the foundation is quite similar due to the ideal and critical spectators relying on similar characteristics in either setting. Regarding the *ideal spectator* within the classroom, we can try to

apply three characteristics described in the first chapter: this spectator must 1) empathize, 2) buy into the scene, and 3) become fully immersed. The *ideal spectator* in the classroom will be referred to as an *absorbed student* so as not to be thought of as the *ideal* student. As will be discussed later, both sides of the student, absorbed or critical, are helpful in the classroom, and there is not a "better" student to have.

The Absorbed Student

Principle #1: The Ability to Empathize through Culture

Studying a foreign language is not solely a linguistic journey. It also allows students to step outside of their own lived experiences and get a glimpse of others' realities via their cultural practices in addition to their linguistic ones. If you open the first chapter of a textbook used for learning the French language, you are likely to find a cultural reading. It might include socially acceptable practices like using "vous" vs. "tu" according to various formal, informal, or group settings, or being certain to greet a store owner as you enter their shop. It could be a lesson on how to perfect "la bise" in various Francophone countries. Regardless of the content, students are typically excited and intrigued by seeing how other citizens around the world live their lives. Culture is key to developing a sense of empathy. Though, how exactly does it invite intrigue and compassion?

Culture is vital for establishing empathy since it "is related to knowledge about the culture being studied and the sociocultural norms and practices required to be effective intercultural communicators" (Guth and Helm, 2016). What is important for our students is that they are exposed to cultures that they are unfamiliar with so that they can become compassionate

and introspective world citizens. In fact, according to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning, one of the five Cs in the 'Standards' for what should be taught is "Cultures" (As cited in Arens and Swaffar, 1996). More pointedly, the three Ps that characterize Cultures are *practices, perspectives,* and *products*. *Practices* are behaviors that are acceptable within a society. *Perspectives* are the ideas and attitudes of a culture, and *products* are intangible or tangible items/representations that are justified by the *perspectives* of that culture. All three Ps are important for understanding a target culture, becoming plurilingual, and developing *interculturality* (Guth and Helm, 2016). This term (*interculturality*), crucial to developing empathy, comes from Michael Byram's (1997) work, specifically a model of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC), which highlights the different types of knowledge one should attain, including curious attitudes, interpretive skills, knowledge of social groups and their practices and products, and critical cultural awareness. It is this knowledge, awareness, and exposure that invites understanding, since it forces the student to put themselves in others' shoes and, additionally, to think about how much they as individuals connect with a target culture.

Put differently, exposure to various cultures offers an introspective comparison of how they perceive or experience the world and how others do the same. James Gee (2007) offers a ludic/game-based interpretation of ICC via his Cultural Models Principle which states, "Learning is set up in such a way that learners come to think consciously and reflectively about some of their cultural models regarding the world, without denigration of their identities, abilities, or social affiliations, and juxtapose them to new models that may conflict with or otherwise relate to them in various ways" (p. 226). It is precisely this juxtaposition that provides players (or students) the opportunity to understand others. Recently, Arienne Ferchaud et al. conducted a study which aimed to reduce the stigma around mental health by attempting to build a sense of

identification with an avatar/character with psychosis within the carefully researched and

constructed (in reference to the creators' constant work with mental health professionals) video

game *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice* (2020). During the study, participants either played or

watched others play the first 45 minutes of the game and were asked for their perceived sense of

identification with the main character, Senua, as well as their desire to distance themselves

socially from those with mental illnesses. As it turns out, after playing the game or watching

others play, participants showed a lower desire to socially distance. This demonstrates that by

learning how others live, we can empathize with them, and it affects how we engage with people

within a certain community.

Principle #2: The Ability to Connect with the Scene or "Buy In"

Just as for the "ideal spectator" who connects to the scene on stage, the recently described

empathetic connection via culture opens the doorway for language students to "buy into" the

academic "scene" laid out for them for the duration of the course. This "buy in" is usually a

product of certain characteristics within a setting. In chapter one, I discussed how a spectator's

ability to connect with a scene depends on the play/artwork. I related it to Diderot's desire to use

socially and aesthetically relevant and realistic material via his idea of the *drame bourgeois*, and

really, via emphasis on the use of *vraisemblance*. Additionally, I voiced the importance of

dynamic moments to help viewers "buy into" the work through the creation of a narrative or an

imagined one. In chapter 2, I compared these aims to those of the ludic world by discussing

related terminology: fidelity and buy-in. Similar to Diderot's goal, game designers love to

incorporate realistic graphics (fidelity) and "polish" to try to immerse players. Scholars like Weil

(2005) even proposed a connection between fidelity and transfer due to the believability and "buy in" that it produces.

Just as in these alternate worlds, scholars analyzing students' experiences in the L2 classroom have had much to say about the role of realistic and relevant content which in this field is also known as "authentic materials" (materials that have been created for a 'real-world' purpose as opposed to being constructed solely for the classroom). For instance, Alex Gilmore (2007) posits a correlation with various communicative competencies (e.g., linguistic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, etc.). Ghanbari et al. (2015) also noted an impressive lexical development for those who used only authentic materials to learn English compared to those solely using a textbook. Most importantly for this discussion, though, is motivation; Alex Gilmore (2007) and Akira Shirai (2013) have both discussed the seemingly positive relationship between authenticity (i.e., authentic materials) and motivation. It seems that the more that students are exposed to authentic materials, the more motivated they become throughout the activity. In other words, they are able to enjoy and connect with the task at hand if the material being used is something that is also created and used by and/or for native speakers of the language.

While there is not much in the way of SLA research on the topic of buy-in, Cong Wang et al. (2021, p. 4) used a buy-in framework for STEM classes that was based on prior research from Cavanagh et al. (2016, 2018). As modeled below, this framework, EPIC (exposure, persuasion, identification, and commitment), proposed a connection between students' trust in instructors as well as their self-perceived growth mindset and college students' buy-in in relation to evidence-based teaching practices or EBPs (e.g., group work, answering questions with clickers, and presenting scientific ideas in writing). Cong Wang et al. (2021) writes, "For the

practices to which students indicated exposure [to EBPs], they were then prompted to indicate whether they felt each practice was beneficial (persuasion), whether they liked each practice (identification), and whether they would like to engage in the practice in future courses (commitment)" (p. 4).

Image 3.1: EPIC Model
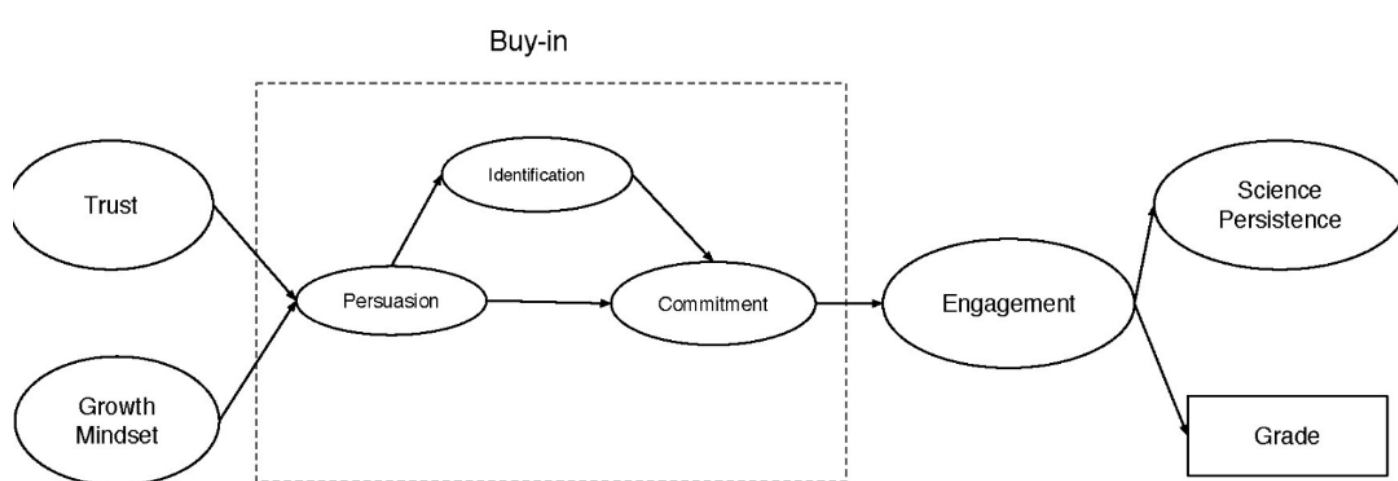
Although this particular model was meant for a scientific arena, this focus on utility, enjoyment, and continued engagement with certain classroom practices and content can certainly be linked to the language classroom as well, especially if we can apply them to features like authentic materials, though using such materials in the language classroom is not the only way to promote student buy-in.

Drama (in the theatrical sense) in education has been utilized and studied for decades if not centuries as a way to engage students and children in the educative process. Gavin Bolton, author of *Changes in Thinking about Drama in Education* (1985), describes a "new movement" in the pedagogical realm around 1870 which focused on the child instead of the content within the field of education. He claims that it was around this time that drama entered into the scene as

a possible approach to teaching and learning, positing, "Acting behavior seemed close to children's play, was child-centered rather than subject-centered, process rather than product oriented, active rather than passive and, above all, self-expressive" (p. 152). He continues on to say that drama was seen as "the play-way" to education. From then to now, drama use within the classroom or learning environment has been shown to increase understanding and content acquisition through experience (Via, 1987) and be a synthetic way to incorporate listening, speaking, writing, and reading into the classroom while having students focus on meaning and fluency rather than form (Dodson, 2000), among other rich characteristics. More recently, scholars have been attempting to find benefits to various theatrical activities. For example, Sehriban Dundar (2013) described the benefits and challenges to nine drama activities for foreign language classrooms. These activities include role play, improvisation, miming, simulation, skits, scriptwriting, and more. The advantages Dundar gave to these activities continue to relate to several of this dissertation's themes, such as "motivation," "connectivity," "vocabulary in context," and "simulation environments," demonstrating that, 1) despite the continued passage of time, drama's educational potential has not slowed, but has continued to offer pedagogical impacts if we can effectively utilize and implement it and, that, 2) drama has shown vast potential as a way to increase buy-in via Cavanagh's EPIC buy-in model (exposure, persuasion, identification, and commitment). After all, not only are participants taking part in contextualized learning, but they are entertained and motivated by it, and they have been for at least a century and a half.

Principle #3: Full Absorption and Engagement

Once the language student has "bought into" the course material and experience (as represented by the EPIC model), then they can achieve absorption. Revisiting chapter one's explanation, absorption for a spectator occurs when they feel so enthralled by the scene on-stage that the line separating reality from fiction is blurred. They are emotionally invested in certain characters or plots. Similarly, in his critiques of various artworks, Diderot creates plots/narratives for his readers that bring paintings to life, offering creative details and switching between pronouns (e.g., third person to second person) to involve the reader. Chapter 2 describes a ludic absorption of the player as they are led to embody mentally, physically, and/or emotionally someone else within a game space via virtual reality technology, empathy, and through the establishment or connection of identities with their avatar through embedded and emergent narrative.

Within the field of SLA, the characteristics or representation of a student's "absorption" presents itself in a variety of forms, but the term most apt to qualify as a marker for absorption would be "engagement." Jenefer Philp and Susan Duchesne break down engagement and its various characteristics in their article, "Exploring Engagement in Tasks in the Language Classroom" (2016). They write, "Engagement refers to a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in the cognitive dimension, but in social, behavioral and affective dimensions as well" (p. 52). Philp and Duchesne break the concept of engagement into separate subcategories, since definitions of "engagement" have been "highly variable, with a lack of consensus in the literature" (p. 51). This division into separate categories will help to understand what an absorbed student (and consequently, a "critical" student) look(s) like in terms of engagement. It is important to note, however, that engagement

does not necessarily equate to absorption. After all, a student who is absorbed in the material is likely engaged in a task just as much as a student who is more "critical" of certain content. To understand our students' role in the classroom, what matters is *how* they are engaged and not *if* they are engaged that equates to them being either absorbed or critical, at least according to the theatrical and ludic frameworks from chapters 1 and 2. As we have understood from the recently described principles, the absorbed student experiences empathy and motivation and "buys into" the academic setting. This student is someone who feels emotionally attached to the experienced material and to their peers. The "critical student," similar to the critical spectator from chapter 1, creates distance from the material in order to analyze it, problem-solve, and develop their metalinguistic skills. The critical student will be discussed further on in the dissertation, but for now, there will be an analysis of the absorbed student's form of engagement via four subcategories: *cognitive engagement*, *behavioral engagement*, *emotional engagement*, and *social engagement*.

Some variations of engagement (e.g., emotional or social) can be thought of as a scale, containing different characteristics at any point along the scale. Some academics might refer to the ends of a scale as either more positive or negative (as Philp and Duchesne do when discussing emotional engagement), but for the purposes of this discussion, we will use these scales of engagement solely for identifying what kinds of characteristics can be ascribed to either the absorbed or critical student. It is also important to reiterate that, although some forms of engagement have positive/negative ends of the scale, it does not afford a positive/negative view of the absorbed/critical student.

The Absorbed Student and Engagement

Cognitive Engagement (CE)

In their article, Philp and Duchesne first discuss cognitive engagement (CE), a form that "involves processes such as sustained attention and mental effort, often including self-regulation strategies" (p. 53). CE can be used to "distinguish active mental involvement from the motivational and emotional aspects of engagement" and is reflected in actions like actively participating in activities, completing tasks, and being resistant to interruptions (Helme and Clarke, 2001). Actions such as verbalization of thinking, asking questions, and/or explaining things to others are also forms of CE but are more related to the "critical student" and will be aligned with that student later in this section. For now, though, the absorbed student will be the focus of the discussion. How does the absorbed student stay cognitively engaged? As mentioned above, this student actively participates in the provided exercises, and they are so invested in them that they can resist outside interruptions while exploring the provided content. Philp and Duchesne provide an example of CE where students worked to synthesize a story about designing a platypus enclosure at a zoo:

1 **Joseph:** So… if we have a sign that says… if you find a platypus take it… take him to… a… no… a staff member.
2 **Patrick:** No, no… don't touch it… please don't touch… yes yes that's what we'll do… we'll put… please don't… no… please don't touch platypus spine.
3 **Joseph:** No… what is it?... what is it?... it's got something that's poisonous.
4 **Patrick:** So that'll make the people walk away… because they aren't going to take it home if it's got something poisonous on it.
5 **Joseph:** Please… please don't touch the platypus because it has… a poisonous spur.
6 **Patrick:** Yes… please do not touch the platypus because of its spur… its spur is dangerous and you will have to be taken to hospital… right? (p. 54)

Just as theatergoers and gamers are often invested in a work's plot/narrative and can have embodied experiences, so can our absorbed students through CE. Patrick and Joseph are acting

as if they have been hired to build enclosures at a zoo, and they are exploring what that would be like and what they would do. By the end of the conversation, we can observe the various points of their storyline, which is to say, that there is a platypus at the zoo, but that people might want to take it home, so they decided to remind the zoo's visitors (likely via a sign) that it has a poisonous spur which would send someone to the hospital if touched.

The creation of and investment in a narrative is only one way for an absorbed student to demonstrate CE, however. Helme and Clarke (2001) discuss more characteristics, claiming, "Non-verbal correlates of cognitive engagement such as gestures, eye contact, and body orientation have also been taken into account, as well as indicators of emotional involvement such as expressions of enthusiasm, enjoyment, and satisfaction" (p. 139). Although CE has been used to separate emotional aspects of engagement (also known as emotional engagement), Helme and Clarke do note an interdependence of cognitive and motivational aspects of engagement. In other words, representations of motivation through the demonstration of emotion can assist us in identifying when there are moments of cognitive engagement. To further exemplify these forms of CE, we can observe another interaction between students in a math class as explained in Helme and Clarke's (2001) article. Students were required to calculate how many blood cells they had lost in their entire lifetime. The following is an interaction between the teacher (T) and two students (K and L). Two students are also included (S1 and S2) as relevant side discussions:

1 **T:** I want you to tell me how many blood cells to the *day* you have lost.
2 **K:** [To L] Does that mean how many up to now? [Overlapping talk between T and L for the next three lines]
3 **T:** So you've got to multiply by the years, by the months—
4 **L:** And the months, and the days.
5 **T:** By the days. OK?
6 **L:** Wow!

7 T: That's when you've finished that.

8 K: Seven hundred and thirty million a day, no, per year, times fourteen years. Shit.

9 S1: In your lifetime?

10 T: Yes, how many blood cells have you lost in a lifetime. If it's two million a day.

11 S2: I'm not dead yet. We've got to do so many months, so many days. Oh oh.

12 T: I'll go round and check the rest [T goes around room and checks work].

13 L: [Counts on fingers, talks to self] May, June, July, August, September, October. That's six. And how many days have we had in October? [Looks at diary] The nineteenth.

14 K: [Working aloud] You times that by fourteen, equals one point oh two two to the power of ten. Oh yeah, I understand that. One oh two two. One, to three, four five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Would that be right? [Looks towards L] How many days in a month approximately?

15 L: [Working aloud] Times nineteen. [looks towards K]

16 K: [To L] Would you do approximately thirty days for the month? It would be thirty point five days. No it'd be twenty-nine point nine days or something.

17 L: Hang on. [goes back to own work] Times, times [inaudible].

18 K: Would it be this? Do you reckon, L? Um, L, can I borrow your calculator? L.

19 L: Yeah [inaudible, working aloud].

20 K: [Talking as she works, L does not appear to be listening] That equals one point oh, oh, oh, no, one point oh two two to the power of ten, make it—

21 L: [To herself] That's wrong.

22 K: [To herself]—ten billion, two hundred and twenty million. [Looks toward L] Ten billion, two hundred and twenty million. Is that right? [No response, L is bent over work] Don't worry.

23 L: I hate you Mrs B! [Possible emotive response related to frustration of challenging task] (Helme and Clarke, 2001, pp. 142-143)

The students exhibit CE at various moments throughout the encounter, many of which are related to the absorbed student. Beginning with our earlier description of CE, we can see L's resistance to K's questions and interruptions as shown in lines 17 and 19. L was entirely focused on her own work, oftentimes thinking aloud. Next, she used different gestures to aid her thought processes, counting on her fingers the number of months she should apply to the math problem (line 13). She also demonstrated CE when she expresses shock and potential frustration in lines 6 and 23. She is not the only student to show her feelings, though. K also presents her thoughts of the challenge at the end of line 8 with her very telling exclamation: "Shit."

Although these verbal emotes (e.g., "wow", "I hate you", and "shit") could be aligned with the emotional engagement category, they are also a verbal acknowledgment of the heavy cognitive requirements of the task. As previously mentioned, there is an interdependence of cognitive and motivational aspects of engagement. The verbal expressions of K and L are manifestations of the cognitive (and emotional) connection with the material as they have become invested in the task, engaging their minds, and, ultimately, realizing that the task was difficult, perhaps more difficult than they believed they could manage. We will return to this example later when the critical student is discussed, since there are several instances when the students apply more of a critical approach to the task, such as when students ask the teacher and other students questions or monitor themselves. For now, however, we will continue to analyze the absorbed student through the lenses of the different forms of engagement.

Behavioral Engagement (BE)

Behavioral engagement (BE) is similar to CE in that it marks a student's participation in various classroom activities. However, it expands beyond the act of participating and, as the name suggests, looks at the demonstrated behaviors of the students as well as the time spent on-task. As Philp and Duchesne explain, researchers like Anderson (1975) have proposed BE to be dichotomous (either that the student is engaged or disengaged) while others (e.g., Finn and Zimmer, 2012; Mahatmya et al. 2012) see it as a kind of scale along which there are varying amounts and qualifications of behavioral engagement, using measurements of effort or persistence as markers of student engagement (p. 55). Regardless of which framework is utilized, we can observe a couple of instances that demonstrate various on-task and off-task behavior. Below are two examples from Oliver, Philp, and Mackey's book *Second Language*

Acquisition and the Younger Learner: Child's Play? (2008). In these examples, pairs of children

are working to identify/count shapes within a picture.

Example 1: on-task behavior
1 O: I call this one, I already know this one I already know this one
2 R: These are not triangles.
3 O: 16 this one 16
4 R: 16 [rising intonation]
5 O: OK and this and triangle, do you see the other triangle?
6 R: No that's a rectangle. What is that number?

Example 2: off-task behavior
1 D: Hey xx xx my turn=
2 G: Thank you Mr. xx
3 D: How many square= how many square did you find?
4 G: A billion
5 D: No… stop laughing (Oliver, Philp, and Mackey, 2008, p. 55)

As we can see, the students in the first example are completing the task while remaining focused

taking turns noting the various shapes. The second example shows student G off-task,

responding to questions in a goofy manner (e.g., calling his fellow student "Mr." and greatly

exaggerating the number of squares in the photo), and frustrating student D.

In terms of behavioral engagement, the absorbed student remains on-task (or attempts to

remain so) throughout the encounter. They will answer questions appropriately according to the

exercise instructions provided by the teacher, and they maintain effort/persistence. Of the four

students provided in these examples, students O, R, and D all remain behaviorally engaged in

these ways. Student G, on the other hand, does not exhibit strong BE, since they are not taking

the exercise seriously and are disrupting their fellow student's ability to stay on-task.

Additionally, we could pull from previous SLA research to show higher levels of BE in those

three students by looking at their word counts and turn counts (Bygate and Samuda, 2009;

Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000) when compared to student G in these examples. Student G uses

fewer words and takes fewer turns than the other students. These examples are, of course, only a sampling from Oliver, Philp, and Mackey's data. However, it goes to show that there are various methods used to measure BE and different actions that can characterize it.

Emotional Engagement (EE)

Emotional engagement (EE) has gathered a variety of definitions over the last couple of decades, being defined as students' relationship with their school (Yazzie-Mintz, 2012), their motivation and enthusiasm during learning activities (Skinner, Kindermann, and Furrer, 2009), their autonomy and purposefulness (Baralt, Gurzynski-Weiss, and Kim, 2016), and any sentiments of connection with their fellow classmates (Early and Marshall, 2008). Philp and Duchesne describe it as the following; "Emotional engagement relates to motivation and refers to the affective nature of learners' involvement. Emotions, whether positive or negative, influence effort and strategies for learning" (p. 57). If students feel more positively about a situation, there would be more motivation, and therefore more EE (and vice versa). To give an example of what EE can look like, below are examples of both a positive and negative emotional engagement, that is to say, times when a student experiences more EE (connection via positive emotions) and less EE (disconnection via negative emotion).

Example 1: Positive EE
  It was great to show up and know that I have conversations with friends. We talked about the project the whole time. Sometimes I would think of an answer of something I didn't know in class. I would ask them right away. It is funny… projects aren't usually like that (Early and Marshall, 2008, p. 388).

Example 2: Negative EE
  To be honest I hated this task. I didn't really know the person I was chatting with, and I don't think he really cared about working with me. He just wanted to get the task done

and didn't really talk to me at all (…) I tried but he just kept going so finally I just let him retell the story and mentally checked out. (Baralt et al., 2016, p. 233)

For each scenario, we can observe experienced emotions and witness their effects. In the first example, the student was very motivated, feeling "great" about showing up and socializing with friends. More pointedly, we see that through positive EE, the student's group was able to remain on task and recall/solve various questions from when they were in class. In the second example, however, the student did not maintain a sense of motivation. They "hated" the task because their partner for the exercise did not want to socially engage. Because of this negative EE, the student disengaged and let the partner do the work while they "mentally checked out." We can see a direct effect that emotions have on motivation. Odds are that as instructors, we would like to see our students engage through positive emotional engagement, to build optimistic associations with their work, their peers, and with us. This is especially the case when we know that these associations will result in either more or less motivation in the classroom. That being said, how can we assure that this will happen? After all, the literature has shown that much of the discussion around motivation and emotion in language classrooms often comes down to individual differences. Perhaps this conclusion, as vague as it may sound, is actually the most clear, straightforward method for engaging students. One method, according to Nakamura, Phung, and Reinders (2021), is to offer learners autonomy and choice. Lambert, Philp, and Nakamura (2016) banked on the same philosophy a few years back, finding that tasks operating on "learner-generated as opposed to teacher-generated content had positive effects on all aspects of engagement in L2 use during task performance" and that learners were more emotionally engaged in the performance of their learner-generated content than the teacher-generated content.

It is with the help of learner-generated content that the absorbed student can really flourish, since they can personalize the learning experience according to their interests, decide what content to discuss, and have more overall autonomy (Nakamura et al., 2021). Similar to the cognitively engaged absorbed student, the absorbed student here can create a narrative of their own to build and remain in. Just as importantly as the narrative, though, is the ability to create freedom through choice. Looking back to example 1 on the previous page, we can observe that due to the freedom granted during the group project (e.g., being able to ask any questions and interact with classmates), the student maintained a positive relationship with the work material and group. However, in the second example, the student was more-or-less forced to participate solely in the ways required by the task and by the partner's (and likely the teacher's) standard. Because of this, the student disengaged emotionally and was no longer absorbed in the activity. As we see in both examples, though, emotional engagement is often linked to another style: *social engagement*.

Social Engagement (SE)

Social Engagement (SE) is defined by the connections created by and sustained between students. Philp and Duchesne describe it as a form of engagement that favors affiliation as a "powerful social goal", where peers can support each other's education by listening to each other, providing any mutual expertise or feedback during an activity or interaction (57). Unfortunately, SE is not always brought into the discussion alongside the other forms of engagement, but it certainly presents us with an incredibly valuable opportunity to give instructors more understanding of the impact of student-to-student interactions. Researchers have proposed that students have a better chance of learning languages if they are engaged with their

peers (Moranski and Toth, 2016; Sato and Ballinger, 2012; Storch, 2008). This is due to heightened level of awareness, understanding, mutual aid, and reciprocity that comes with peer work. The following examples will demonstrate these characteristics of SE. The first example shows two students who are trying to understand and work through reflexive verbs in Spanish, and the second example shows how three kindergartners figure out what to eat for lunch.

Example 1:

10-12	Diego:	This is like, stuff that's like, basically this is kind of indirect. So like things happen to her.
13	Raquel:	Yeah that's what [reflexive
14	Diego:	umm]
15	Raquel:	=is. Something that you do to yourself.
16	Diego:	No that's not re (.) [no
17	Raquel:	That's] the [things with the SE ME =
18	Diego:	Well kind of]
19	Raquel:	=at the ends
20	Diego:	Yeah.
21	Raquel:	Yeah, which is reflexive, right?
22-24	Diego:	Well it's just (.) member, you know, it's kind of like indirect where it's (.)(they) did it to her like

[8 turns later]

36-37	Raquel:	Why's it "me sentaron"? It doesn't it [mean Ustedes (form)?
38-39	Diego:	Cuz they sat her down.] And she was saying it (.) like they did it to me. (Philp and Duchesne, 2016, p. 58)

This example shows the two students' mutual efforts to understand a grammatical point, and each student ends up benefitting by socially engaging. Raquel asks Diego several questions about the content while Diego has to think critically about it and attempt to explain it to her (lines 10-24, 36-39). Additionally, though, Raquel argues her reasoning for which she believes a certain form can be identified as reflexive, negotiating with Diego, and testing her expertise with the material (lines 13-21). If the two were to work alone instead of together, neither would have

the chance to negotiate understanding, practice talking about what they know, or deepen their

academic relationship (e.g., feeling more comfortable working with each other in class).

Example 2:

5. B   Yessara are you lunch ordering?
6. Y   yes
7. B   oh all three of us are! [delighted]
8. Y   Yessara my name is [single contour]
9. R   Roberta my name is [copying] too and chicken nugget
10. Y   chicken=
11. B   =two chicken nuggets (Philp and Duchesne, 2016, p. 58)

In example two above, we can further observe the effect of social engagement via

mimicry. Yessara and the others not only say similar things, but they also decide to get the same

food for lunch thanks to their group discussion. This reciprocity demonstrates the impact that

working with others has on someone's behavior, "both in speech and in action" as Philp and

Duchesne describe (p. 58).

Social engagement can impact the success of the absorbed student through reinforcement

of the previously described methods of engagement. In fact, we have already seen how

interconnected SE is with other forms of engagement. In terms of its ties with CE, it allows

opportunities to create a narrative with others, to build a connection with the material, and share

any frustrations or excitement about it through gestures or words. SE also supports BE for an

absorbed student to stay absorbed and on-task by being around others who are working diligently

alongside them (e.g., a study group in college).

Finally, engaging with others offers emotional support which can help keep the student

absorbed in the work. If the student is excited about their group project, it will motivate them to

show up and remain on-task. Of course, this is not the first time that the interconnectivity

between the different forms of engagement has been discussed. As has been teased throughout these sections on engagement, the ways in which someone remains connected to a task and to others can vary, just as it can dissolve and remanifest itself from second to second or activity to activity. This particular discussion will resume after the following presentation of the critical student in order to offer a more fruitful and persuasive argument for the engaged student with multiple roles in the classroom.

The Critical Student

The absorbed student sits opposite in purpose from the critical student. The former empathizes and "buys into" an experience, while the latter remains analytical and at a distance. The first of the two allows an experience to become a sort of lived reality, while the second uses the experience as a lens through which they may make their own connections with their reality or the "real world." The absorbed student participates in activities without question, while the critical student is inquisitive and shares outside knowledge and perspectives with others. Just as there are certain characteristics of an absorbed student, there are ways in which a student can align with a more critical way of presenting themselves and performing in a classroom.

Principle #1: Analyzing and making judgments and real-world connections

In chapter 1, the "critical" role came in the form of Diderot's written critiques of various artworks in the *salons*. Diderot's goal was to "describe" and "facilitate judgment" of the observed pieces so that the reader could envision them (e.g., Diderot's (1798) description of Greuze's *La fille qui pleure son oiseau mort*). In addition to offering a physical description,

Diderot often used his role as critical spectator to compare what he saw in a work with what he had seen in real life (e.g., his description of Boizot's *Les Trois Grâces Cariatides portant un amour dans une corbeille).* Of course, Diderot is simply one example of a critical spectator.

Within the ludic realm, spectators and players alike often turn to video game streamers on internet sites and platforms like Twitch or YouTube. In fact, Twitch stream viewers alone spent 250 billion hours watching their favorite content creators in 2021 (The Statistics Portal, 2022). While it may sound strange to some that viewers would spend this much time watching *other people* play games, there are indeed many reasons why it is such a popular activity. Some enjoy interacting with their fellow viewers, using Twitch as a social space to build community. Others enjoy asking the streamer questions in hopes of being able to directly engage with them. Many are there to learn about the game and/or how to play it from the streamer, and others are there to "troll" the streamer or other viewers, deliberately trying to offend people to obtain some kind of reaction.
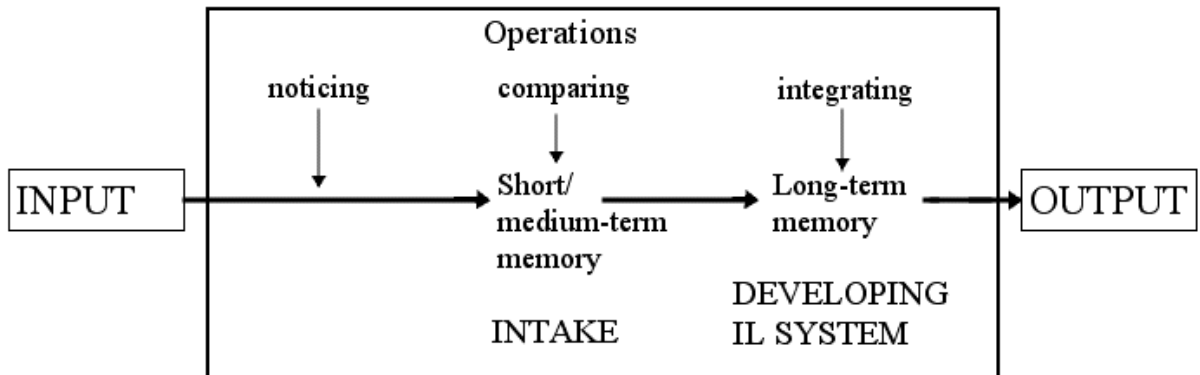
No matter the setting or the reason for viewing, though, the critical spectator is great at noticing things. It is particularly easier to notice things when one is somewhat knowledgeable of the content already (e.g., a singer who has had a year of choir practice might notice a karaoke vocalist singing notes that are not quite right, recognizing that they are perhaps too sharp or flat for the key). However, those with minimal to no experience with specific content are also sometimes able to notice things, even if they may not be able to explain what may be occurring in the moment (e.g., a stranger hears a person singing notes that are too sharp or flat, recognizing that the singer's voice isn't blending well with the other musical sounds/instruments, etc.).

Supporting students, and in this case, critical students, in the classroom via "noticing" is especially important and is supported by various SLA theories and models. The most

immediately relevant theory for "noticing" is, of course, Schmidt's (1994) Noticing Hypothesis, a "hypothesis that input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered" (Schmidt, 1990). This can be applied to many different aspects of language learning and various categories within the field such as approaches to teaching or providing corrective feedback. Focus on form is an example of an approach to language learning that aligns with the Noticing Hypothesis. To accomplish this approach, students are made aware of various linguistic elements that are needed (and are already known) to perform different communicative tasks (e.g., being told to use the conditional mood as a persuasive linguistic tool to write a speech to be elected to the position of town mayor). Approaches like this favor the critical spectator since it supports metalinguistic awareness. As an inherently more explicit theory of learning, the Noticing Hypothesis has been brought into the fold during many discussions of explicit vs implicit aspects of language learning and teaching. Rod Ellis (1997), for example, wrote about the stages during which input eventually becomes implicit knowledge, citing "noticing" as the first step, requiring learners to notice language features, absorb them into their short-term memories, and then integrate and compare them. The model below (Ellis 1997, 2002) provides a visualization of these theories. It is due to the explicit nature of the Noticing Hypothesis that makes it a proponent of the critical student.

Image 3.2: Process of learning implicit knowledge

Operations

noticing   comparing   integrating

INPUT → Short/medium-term memory → Long-term memory → OUTPUT

DEVELOPING IL SYSTEM

INTAKE

Similarly, when instructors provide students with certain kinds of feedback (e.g., recasting, clarification requests, elicitation, repetition, etc.), they are providing students with opportunities to notice any potential mistakes so that they may not simply correct them, but also avoid making those mistakes later on. Of course, certain approaches to giving feedback can be more implicit rather than explicit. However, even the act of drawing students' attention to a mistake they have made is, by nature, tapping into their linguistic awareness, making them question what they have said and then attempt to problem-solve.

James Gee (2007) has a theory in gaming related to the Noticing Hypothesis called the Metalevel Thinking about Semiotic Domains Principle. This principle states, "Learning involves active and critical thinking about the relationships of the semiotic domain being learned to other semiotic domains" (p. 222). Similar to the Noticing Hypothesis in its explicitness, this principle supports the gamer by recognizing a game's ability to provide a player with opportunities to identify and build overt meta-knowledge within and between spaces (e.g., the virtual world in relation to another game or to the 'real' world). Certainly, this principle does not only apply to video games. In the previous example of Diderot and the Three Graces, we see that he is able to

find connections between the women represented in the statue and the women that he sees as he passes through the marketplace. Just as Diderot can make real-world connections based on his observations, so can students. In fact, this plays a major role for many language classrooms, and this goal is supported by *situated cognition*.

Brown, Collins, and Duguid's (1889) article, "Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning", posits that knowledge is found in the activities, cultures, and contexts where it is produced. Situated Cognition (SitCog) has supported many methodologies and approaches within the field of SLA and has maintained a large presence in the field for quite some time. Roth and Jornet (2013) summarize many of SitCog's descriptors from various periods of its reign. The first three are found below:

> **1.** Cognition arises from, and is connected to, the interactions that the material body of an agent entertains with its physical environment; cognition is *embodied* and *situated*.
>
> **2.** Cognition arises from, and is connected to, the interactions that an agent entertains with its social environment: cognition is situated in its social context. This context may be immediate, when typical behavior arises in relation to other agents, or mediate, such as when typical behavior arises within larger social contexts (communities, social networks, society).
>
> **3.** Cognition arises in, and for the purpose of, action: cognition is enacted. Relations of reference to the surrounding world and purposes (intentions) characterize human behavior and tool-use: *in-order-to*, *what-for*, *what-in*, and *for the-sake-of-which*. (Roth and Jornet, 2013, p. 464)

In essence, cognition (and therefore SitCog) is tangible and rooted in action and social interaction. It is something that is embodied, lived, experienced, and felt. Therefore, when we come into contact with something, someone, or some idea, we remember and learn from it. When we *notice* a linguistic feature, it helps us to acquire and recall it. In Diderot's case, when we see a painting that strikes us in some way, it is often because it reminds of someone or some feeling that we have seen or had before. Watching a play or playing a video game, spectators and

players will appreciate certain characters because they have lived through a similar experience or because the character inspires them to act in a certain way in the future. Beyond making judgments and real-world connections, however, the critical student (or the critical spectator) is called to share what they know with others.

Principle #2: Sharing knowledge and perspectives with others

In chapter one, Diderot played the role of the critical spectator very well. Not only did he make judgments and found ways to relate the observed content (paintings, sculptures, etc.) to the "real" world, but he also shared his findings with the public through his writings. This is key for the critical spectator and student, since the act of sharing knowledge and opinions explicitly will inherently bring attention to it and spark meta-level discussions about the content itself. Giving feedback to students and finding ways to establish metalinguistic levels of discussion are ideal ways of engaging students no matter whether you are a student or an instructor.

Calling back to the previous section on engagement for the absorbed student, we remember that the student remains engaged by creating and fulfilling narratives, staying on-task and supporting others' focus on the task at hand, creating meaningful emotional connection with the material, and influencing others' relationship with classroom content by offering social connection. The following section on the modes of engagement for the critical student will explore in more detail how the CS performs and supports others in the classroom, proving the CS to be both analytical and someone who brings explicit attention to the content itself in order to improve the language-learning process.

The Critical Student and Engagement

Cognitive Engagement (CE)

As noted in the previous section on the different types of engagement, Cognitive Engagement involves sustained effort and attention as well as self-regulation strategies. For the absorbed student, this looked like gestures and facial expressions, eye contact, verbal emotes, and building a narrative (such as the platypus storyline between Joseph and Patrick). The critical student, on the other hand, will cognitively engage in a different manner. This is because the goal of an absorbed student is different from a critical one. After all, the critical student favors more explicit practices over implicit ones, has metalinguistic knowledge and tendencies, and shares their findings with others. For this type of student in the classroom, this might look like asking clarification questions, completing peer utterances and/or exchanging ideas, or making evaluative comments and giving directions or explanations among other possibilities (Philp and Duchesne, 2016). To demonstrate, we can return to the activity where students had to calculate how many blood cells they had lost in their entire lifetime:

24 **T:** I want you to tell me how many blood cells to the *day* you have lost.
25 **K:** [To L] Does that mean how many up to now? [Overlapping talk between T and L for the next three lines]
26 **T:** So you've got to multiply by the years, by the months—
27 **L:** And the months, and the days.
28 **T:** By the days. OK?
29 **L:** Wow!
30 **T:** That's when you've finished that.
31 **K:** Seven hundred and thirty million a day, no, per year, times fourteen years. Shit.
32 **S1:** In your lifetime?
33 **T:** Yes, how many blood cells have you lost in a lifetime. If it's two million a day.
34 **S2:** I'm not dead yet. We've got to do so many months, so many days. Oh oh.
35 **T:** I'll go round and check the rest [T goes around room and checks work].

36 L: [Counts on fingers, talks to self] May, June, July, August, September, October. That's six. And how many days have we had in October? [Looks at diary] The nineteenth.

37 K: [Working aloud] You times that by fourteen, equals one point oh two two to the power of ten. Oh yeah, I understand that. One oh two two. One, to three, four five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Would that be right? [Looks towards L] How many days in a month approximately?

38 L: [Working aloud] Times nineteen. [looks towards K]

39 K: [To L] Would you do approximately thirty days for the month? It would be thirty point five days. No it'd be twenty-nine point nine days or something.

40 L: Hang on. [goes back to own work] Times, times [inaudible].

41 K: Would it be this? Do you reckon, L? Um, L, can I borrow your calculator? L.

42 L: Yeah [inaudible, working aloud].

43 K: [Talking as she works, L does not appear to be listening] That equals one point oh, oh, oh, no, one point oh two two to the power of ten, make it—

44 L: [To herself] That's wrong.

45 K: [To herself]—ten billion, two hundred and twenty million. [Looks toward L] Ten billion, two hundred and twenty million. Is that right? [No response, L is bent over work] Don't worry.

46 L: I hate you Mrs B! [Possible emotive response related to frustration of challenging task] (Helme and Clarke, 2001, p. 142-143)

The critical students demonstrate several examples of CE. K and L start by asking for clarification from the teacher (lines 24-33) to make sure they are on the right track. Of course, they also ask each other and themselves questions (lines 36-45), seeking confirmation that their line of thinking is correct or acceptable. Lines 31 through 37 also express exploratory talk, showing K's and L's attempt to work through the problem aloud and exchange ideas for how to solve it. Finally, we see the critical student(s) offering evaluative comments in lines 31 ("Shit"), 44 ("That's wrong"), and 46 ("I hate you Mrs B!"). Throughout these lines, the critical student is seeking and offering information and help, remaining outside of the problem itself. This is not to say the student is not engaged. Rather, the way in which the critical student engages is different from that of an absorbed student. In the next few sub-sections, we will see how the critical student displays the three other forms of engagement.

Behavioral Engagement (BE)

In terms of Behavioral engagement, the critical student has the same goal as the absorbed student: stay on task and contribute to its completion. Like the absorbed student, the critical student takes the activity seriously, does not distract others, and takes several turns during an activity. Since this form of engagement has more to do with behavior and staying on task, what is important here is the students' insistence to remain focused on the exercise rather than the specific ways that the students demonstrate BE, which would ultimately be reflected by the manifestation of the other individual forms of engagement (e.g., asking clarification questions vs remaining in a narrative, etc.).

Emotional Engagement (EE)

The same rings true when discussing Emotional Engagement: What is most vital to state in the first part of this discussion is that the critical student (CS), just as for the absorbed student (AS), can be emotionally encouraged or, conversely, discouraged to participate in an activity based on the emotions elicited in an interaction. Whether we observe a CS or an AS, the student can be inspired to socialize, engage, and complete tasks, however they are known to do so, or they might hate an interaction (like when a student clearly does not want to work on a task with another student) and ultimately create a sense of frustration and less desire to work.

Social Engagement (SE)

Social Engagement is another area where the critical student shines. As previously stated, SE is defined by the connections created by and sustained between students. It reflects periods of time when peers can support each other's education by listening to each other, giving feedback during a classroom activity, etc. SE promotes awareness, knowledge, and collaboration via peer

122

work. The first example given in the section on SE for the absorbed student showed us two students who are trying to acquire reflexive verbs in Spanish. We can use the same to demonstrate the critical students' approach to social engagement:

Example 1:

10-12	Diego:	This is like, stuff that's like, basically this is kind of indirect. So like things happen to her.
13	Raquel:	Yeah that's what [reflexive
14	Diego:	umm]
15	Raquel:	=is. Something that you do to yourself.
16	Diego:	No that's not re (.) [no
17	Raquel:	That's] the [things with the SE ME =
18	Diego:	Well kind of]
19	Raquel:	=at the ends
20	Diego:	Yeah.
21	Raquel:	Yeah, which is reflexive, right?
22-24	Diego:	Well it's just (.) member, you know, it's kind of like indirect where it's (.)(they) did it to her like

[8 turns later]		
36-37	Raquel:	Why's it "me sentaron"? It doesn't it [mean Ustedes (form)?
38-39	Diego:	Cuz they sat her down.] And she was saying it (.) like they did it to me. (Philp and Duchesne, 2016, p. 58)

As previously noted, and according to Philp and Duchesne's (2016) article, SE is manifested during an activity when students listen to each other, draw from one another's expertise and ideas, and mutually provide feedback about a topic. This is especially powerful for the critical student who, as one may recall from the previous section on the CS, is known to make judgment calls and share their knowledge and experiences with other students. We see this tendency throughout the example above where Raquel proposes her idea of what reflexive verbs are (lines 13, 15, and 21), Diego provides Raquel with his own understanding of the topic (lines 10-12, 22-24, and 38-39), and then he provides feedback according to her understanding of it (lines 16, 18, and 20). This example not only proves that there are many advantages to a more

explicit approach to learning a language, but also that the mutuality of critical students'

conversations and their discussions of metalinguistic features of language invite moments of

language acquisition that can only be brought to light through critical thinking and analysis

rather than through immersion.

Interconnectivity of the Forms of Engagement and Student Roles

As we can see from the analysis of these examples, many of the moments that mark

engagement are overlapping, meaning that the same words, expressions, sentences, or actions

can be linked to more than one form of engagement. This is due to the fact that words are never

simply words. Rather, they have effects and carry certain pragmatic, emotional, or social goals.

Someone who exhibits behavioral engagement with their group may also want to be seen as

someone who is reliable to their peers, contributing and eliciting positive emotions during an

interaction. Someone who is disenchanted by a language class might hope to disengage from an

activity, isolate, and/or distract others. Whatever the case may be, we can recognize that

engagement comes in different forms and often comes layered with complexities.

Just as the forms of engagement are interconnected and complex, so too are the roles of

the students in our classrooms. At any moment, a student can shift from a critical participant to

an absorbed one or vice-versa. We can observe this in the aforementioned examples where

students go from asking the teacher questions to using hand gestures and talking to themselves,

from having a deep interest in participating in group activities to wanting to work alone or not at

all, or from working to create an immersive narrative to engaging in metalinguistic discussions

about grammatical features of a language. However, the fluidity of students' roles does not stop

there. Students also shift from a "spectator" role to an "acting" role, moving from acquiring

content to producing it, repeating, practicing, and mastering it, or more importantly, *creating* it.

Students as Actors

Of course, students are not simply grammatical and lexical sponges, watching and

listening with no intent to act. After all, we have seen some of the active steps that our students

might take to engage outwardly with their peers or instructors in class. Therefore, it goes to show

that our students should be perceived as active participants or *classroom actors*. Alongside

understanding how to get students to *think* and *engage* with the material, we should also

investigate how students can *act on* or *react to* what they are learning. After all, language

instructors are in the business of preparing students to host and participate in multilingual

conversations. Due to the performative nature of having students respond to questions, role-play

conversations, or demonstrate in another fashion their understanding of some linguistic point, we

can acknowledge the students' position as 'actor' in these moments. To aid in our understanding

of some of the ways in which this case can be made, we will review characteristics of the 'actor'

according to Diderot as discussed in chapter 1 and will analyze some of the theories that Gee has

posited for the educational benefits of gaming. I should preface this part of the discussion by

mentioning that we should probably not hold students to the same level of accountability as

Diderot did his ideal actor (e.g., perfect memorization and performance), but rather, we can use

the lens through which he saw the actor to learn from the field and see how much of that

perspective can be applied to the field of SLA.

First, in Diderot's (2019) text *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, he describes the ideal actor as

one who imitates perfectly what they have seen, heard, and learned. This ability (supposedly)

comes to the actor after practicing endlessly until perfection and, according to Diderot, is always

equally perfect during each presentation (p. 276). Needless to say, this is quite a feat for a

performer, including ones found in the language classroom. In his book *Brave New Digital*

Classroom (2013), Robert Blake claims, "As with any type of learning, there needs to be

reinforcement of what is being learned. In other words, acquisition appears to be gradual and,

simplistically, takes time requiring numerous exposures" (p. 31). Essentially, just as "practice

makes perfect" on the stage, it also rings true in the language classroom in that it takes repetition

and exposure to be able to apply successfully and correctly whatever we aim to teach.

Next, the actor must be able to manage their 'inner voice' or, as Diderot puts it, their

inner "spéctateur froid et tranquille (p. 275)" who helps them make certain choices and judgment

calls by observing everything objectively and communicating the best course of action. In the

field of SLA, there are a few theories that relate to this call for an inner spectator. Two are

Krashen's *Monitor Hypothesis* and *Affective Filter Hypothesis*. The first of these "states that

'learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor or editor' and that learning comes into

play only to 'make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been "produced" by the

acquired system'" (Mitchell et al,. 2019). According to this model, then, language is used as an

editor to manage linguistic output. Similar to the idea of Diderot's ideal *comédien*, though, is

Krashen's idea that "it is possible to find Monitor 'over-users' who do not like making mistakes

and are therefore constantly checking what they produce against the conscious stock of rules they

possess" (p. 43). The learner's inner voice is attempting to navigate the current situation and

makes specific linguistic decisions depending on what is required of them in the moment.

What is interesting about Diderot's take on the inner spectator is the logical objectivity

that the inner voice holds, especially when compared with Krashen's *Affective Filter Hypothesis*,

which "captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters" (Krashen, 1982, p. 31). To summarize the hypothesis, emotion is an important variable with respect to language learning and, more specifically, to language output. According to this theory, people who have anxiety or a lack of motivation, for example, will struggle to be primed for comprehensible input which will, in turn, affect language output. In contrast, we can assume that those who are not experiencing anxiety or who are feeling particularly motivated will be more open to input and will be able to produce more language. Regardless of the criticism of this theory (which Mitchel et al., 2019, p. 45 labels as "vague and atheoretical") and Diderot's high standards for actors, there is still much to be said about establishing a sense of motivation in students while keeping the level of anxiety and other potentially overwhelming emotions low. More than simply parroting received input or maintaining an inner objective spectator, though, it is important to mention the skills that are gained by anyone who "performs" within a space, be it some alternate world or our "real" or "physical" one. Beyond theatrical borders, for example, Gee shares the many ways in which, through their actions, players of games navigate their experiences within and outside of the video game space. We will see how these characteristics and advantages are maintained, not only in the virtual world, but in others like the language classroom.

As was previously introduced and discussed, Gee's *Probing Principle* (2007) is a good principle to discuss when thinking about the importance of acting or agency within a space. In reference to this principle, Gee writes, "Learning is a cycle of probing the world (doing something); reflecting in and on this action and, on this basis, forming a hypothesis; reprobing the world to test this hypothesis; and then accepting or rethinking [it]" (p. 223). This principle

clearly relates to Laurillard's emphasis on having students come to conclusions on their own (e.g., forming a hypothesis and testing it for accuracy). Applied specifically to the language classroom, though, students' actions via speaking or writing (actions which are outwardly performative) are all reflections of their own language hypotheses. Each written or spoken utterance from a student is their way of formulating an idea of what the language is supposed to accomplish grammatically, phonetically, pragmatically, etc. To use Gee's words, language students are "probing" the linguistic "world." In addition to this, they receive feedback from another speaker, such as an instructor or a peer, and then they "reprobe" the "world" after forming a new linguistic hypothesis. This concept is reflected in Gass's (1998) model (presented on the next page), proposed in her book *Integrating Research Areas: A Framework for Second Language Studies* seen on the following page (1988). We can see in the model the impact of hypothesis formation and testing on language output (noted in the "Intake" section), as the only way to produce language is to make a linguistic hypothesis and then either have it rejected, modified, or confirmed. The process of input, hypothesis formation and testing, and production of language (oral or written, as noted in Gass's model) continually repeats itself for every utterance.

To take hypothesis formation and testing one step further, let's look at another of Gee's gaming principles, the *Intuitive Knowledge Principle,* which will explain how gaming (or other forms of exposure to certain content) grants access to different kinds of knowledge by learning through experience. Gee claims that "intuitive or tacit knowledge built up in repeated practice and experience, often in association with an affinity group, counts a great deal and is honored. Not just verbal and conscious knowledge is rewarded" (p. 225). Intuitive knowledge, then,

expresses the idea that someone is familiar with a concept because of their repeated exposure to

it within that specific context.

Image 3.3: Gass's Model of Second Language Acquisition

AN INTEGRATED VIEW OF SLA
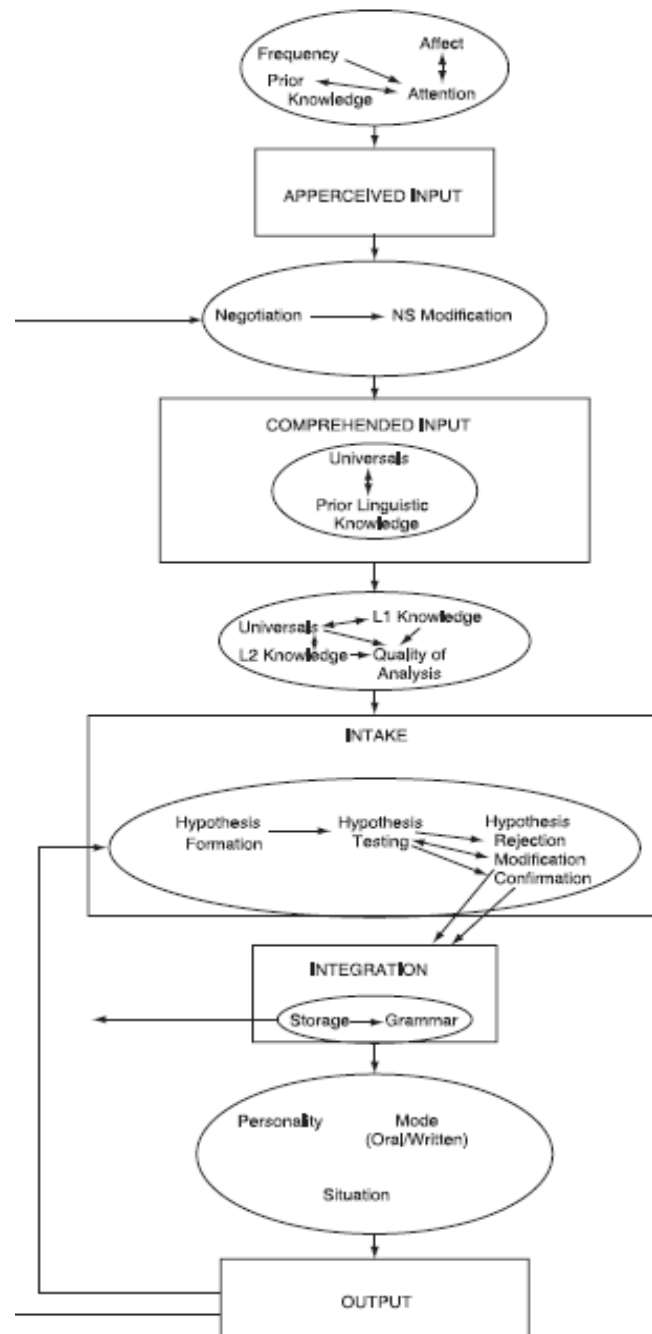
In both of these situations, the language being learned comes from first observing and later engaging with or socializing within a contextualized situation. Along these lines, we can think of the language classroom as a simulated space where students are exposed to simplified or smaller versions of the target cultures and languages. This is how Gee's (2007) Subset Principle for gaming works: "Learning even at its start takes place in a (simplified) subset of the real domain" (p. 225). Whether it is gaming, theater, or the language classroom, participants are shown material that is representative of a certain setting, group of people, language system, etc. Whether or not the content is based on reality, the participants' exposure to it can certainly prepare them for a future situation that is similar to the one that they are currently being exposed to. In the language classroom, the communicative method is one such approach to learning, having students practice speaking about various prompts to prepare them for a similar conversation that they might have in the target country.

This kind of contextualized and preparatory experience can inspire teachers to implement and encourage certain aspects of narration and identification as well. As one might recall in chapter 2, narrative came into the fold as either embedded or emergent narrative. The first of these presents a linear story that has no alternate endings or changeable courses of action. There is essentially only one story to be told. Emergent narrative, however, grants players (in the case of video games) the opportunity to construct different narratives according to their own preferences and choices. Applying this to the language classroom would equate to instructors choosing to offer students a prompt with specific questions to respond to or giving them agency to think of their own situation and things to say. This could also relate to having students complete certain kinds of practice exercises such as mechanical questions (e.g., true/false, fill-in-the-blank, complete the sentence, etc.) as opposed to communicative questions (e.g., free-

response). Activities aside, students (and human beings in general) love to tell stories. In Robert

Blake's (2013) book, *Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language*

Learning, he discusses various human instincts surrounding language, one of which includes the

human capacity and admiration for storytelling: *homo fabulans*. Blake states, "That's where

homo fabulans comes in; we are quintessential storytellers. We delight in telling stories from the

trivial to the sublime […] We love to tell stories that are true, false, a bit of both, or just plain

believable" (p. 166). However storytelling and narrative come about, and in whatever way we

choose to apply the them to the classroom, we have seen in various studies and articles presented

in chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter that building an individual's autonomy by giving them

more choice and the freedom to create or enact something of their own design fosters a higher

sense of identification, and this can certainly apply to language students as well. As was

considered in previous chapters, there are multiple facets of identification, and its complexities

only grow when you add additional fields of study into the mix. That said, perhaps it would be

best, for now, to defer to the American Psychological Association's definition, which is to say

that identification is "the process of associating the self closely with other individuals and their

characteristics or views." Through the lens of this definition, we understand that there is a bond

built between the self and another. The reasons for this bond could be infinite: a connection from

shared ties, similarity or sheer difference, wishful thinking, social or emotional necessities, etc.

Whatever the reason, an identity is formed by who we are and/or wish to be as well as our own

actions. In the words of Stets and Burke (2000), "being and doing are both central features of

one's identity." This is true in life as much as it is true in the classroom: the identities that our

language students build are inspired not only by what they bring from the outside world (who

they really are) into the classroom, but also by who they create or are inspired by within the

classroom space. Students may hold historical figures or fictional characters in high regard, find

connections with fellow classmates or with cultural norms in a particular country, or even admire

a peer who raises their hand and volunteers to answer questions. Assignments within a project-

based language class may engage narration to create entirely new personas by, for example,

asking students to write about future aspirations. These actions, Gee (2007) would posit, are all

characteristic of students' multiple identities in the classroom. He writes,

> Learning involves taking on and playing with identities in such a way that the learner has
>
> real choices (in developing the virtual identity) and ample opportunity to meditate on the
>
> relationship between new identities and old ones. There is a tripartite play of identities as
>
> learners relate, and reflect on, their multiple real-world identities, a virtual identity, and a
>
> projective identity (p. 222).

These three identities (real-world, virtual, and projective) are, according to Gee, present in each

of our students at any given time. The real-world identity is grounded in who we are outside of

the classroom and who we have grown to become. A *real-world identity* is characterized by race

or socioeconomic status, hobbies or interests (e.g., gamer, plant mom or slam poet), sexual

orientation or gender, or any other vital part of person's life brought into the space. This identity

is what makes every class unique since every person is different and has access to different

experiences in their lives. A *virtual identity* is whatever identity the students are attempting to

play within a space. Gee gives an example of students in a science class performing as scientists.

While Gee admittedly claims that the learners are "not real scientists and are not going to

become scientists any time soon" (p. 55), the idea here is that when we enter a space, we are

choosing to step into a role that has been created for us. The science class is a place for scientists

to gather, test hypothesis, and explore theories just as a French class is a place for Francophones

132

to connect, collaborate, and create via language, literature, art, history, etc. Finally, the *projective identity* is a projection of who the learner wants to be within a space. Gee describes it as something that is built or created, a "project in the making" that "creates ownership" (p. 62), an intermediary space between a learner's real-world identity and virtual identity. Our students are navigating, negotiating, and creating these identities as they go along. Many of them would likely cherish the opportunity to create and share these identities through storytelling with their peers or with us.

Conclusion

In the following chapter, we will be able to see the impact that identification through storytelling can have on students' experience and language learning. Much more than this, in fact, we will observe an amalgamation of the impact of several concepts mentioned since this dissertation's beginning. After all, my goal has been to share ways in which we can push our students, motivate, and inspire them, immerse them, activate their critical thinking skills, and encourage autonomy. Of course, we could not forget about the part where we want them to *learn*. Indeed, instructors want to see students' knowledge grow and to know that students can take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it out "in the wild," especially for our language students. Gee's (2007) Transfer Principle, although it was prompted in a gaming setting, reflects this same intent for the classroom: "Learners are given ample opportunity to practice […], transferring what they have learned earlier to later problems, including problems that require adapting and transforming that earlier learning" (p. 226). While the content is certainly an incredibly important discussion to be had, the theme of this dissertation is centered around the "how" (as in "how to teach") and the "who" (as in "who are we teaching" but also as

a focus on the students) rather than the "what." Therefore, my next and final chapter will demonstrate this dissertation's "how" in action through the analysis of my pilot study, which tests the use of traditional materials and video games as a supporting tool to aid in the language learning process. While this chapter focuses on theory, chapter four will provide more tangible evidence of what I am arguing for. That is to say, the next chapter will show these theories in action.

Chapter 4

The first three chapters of this dissertation have focused on the theories surrounding the impact of providing an immersive or, for some, an analytical space for participants of a given "alternate world," be they in a theater, an artistic space, a virtual game environment, or in a classroom. This final chapter will offer a vision of how some of these theories have actually been applied in language classrooms, a chapter with "boots-on-the-ground" so to speak. Theories work well on paper, but we need to know how they can be applied to the classroom and how they actually impact the process of language acquisition. To do this, I will first present a few instructional approaches which contain and encourage some of the theories discussed throughout the dissertation. This segment will include Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Game-Based Language Learning (GBLL), offering explanations of their history, a few of their more important features, and some distinctions. Throughout these discussions, we will observe how these approaches have supported language learning via the transfer of lexical, grammatical, and cultural skills. This aspect of the discussion will help to understand not only the "how" or "why" of teaching but also the "what," the content of the language class.

I will then offer an analysis of a pilot study that I conducted using the Sims Mobile smartphone application as a supplementary learning tool in the language classroom, aiming to both further exemplify the previously mentioned methodologies and to demonstrate how much further we can go with gaming and computer systems to impact our students' language experiences. That is to say, video games, computers, and other forms of technology can do more than strengthen lexical, grammatical, and cultural awareness. They also provide opportunities to motivate students and strengthen their sense of identity and immersion via narration and

interaction through play. After this analysis, I will discuss the study's implications and some potential areas of growth or possibilities for future applications within the field.

Approaches to Language Teaching: TBLT, CALL, and GBLL

Before beginning the chapter with a detailed description of TBLT, CALL and GBLL, I would like to establish the reasoning behind their presence here in the chapter. After all, there are a vast number of approaches to and methods of language instruction (e.g., Audiolingualism, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Total Physical Response, to name a few). I have chosen to incorporate these approaches because they are all within the same lineage of sorts, starting with TBLT, continuing with a subcategory, CALL, which holds another sub-category, GBLL. The following "family tree" of sorts might be helpful for understanding their relationship:

TBLT (1st generation)

CALL (2nd generation)

GBLL (3rd generation)
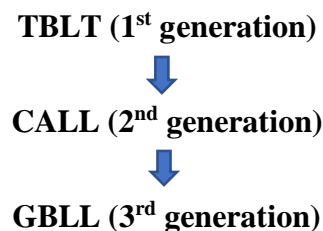
What they have in common, despite their superficial differences in practice (which we will discuss shortly), is that they are all rooted in the same principles. TBLT "refers to the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching" (Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p. 174). These tasks involve real communication that is essential for language learning and include language used for performing meaningful tasks. Richards and Rogers further describe TBLT as an approach that 1) requires students to use all of their language resources rather than

just one pre-selected item, 2) offers students an experience with the language that is personalized

to their interests and needs, and 3) is enjoyable and motivating, among other characteristics

(2014, p. 175). These principles reflect the goals of teaching and helping to create thoughtful

students that I outlined in chapter 3: Laurillard's concept of situated cognition, Van Lier's

principles of Awareness, Autonomy, and Authenticity, Gee's Active, Critical Learning Principle,

and Peterson's take on contextualization. TBLT and its descendants are great approaches to

language teaching and learning when the instructor's goal is to elicit meaningful, personal,

analytical, and motivational learning experiences. While TBLT hosts the roots of CALL and

GBLL, we will continue this discussion with the latter two, since they can offer more nuance and

specific direction to this chapter. As mentioned, one goal of this chapter is to observe the

application and performance of previously mentioned concepts and ideas. Another objective is to

present and analyze my pilot study (a study rooted in CALL and GBLL), while a third, related

aim is to establish these theories' actual application to the students' learning experiences in the

classroom. Focusing on these two approaches, then, will allow me to accomplish all three of

these aims simultaneously. Since CALL is the "parent" of sorts of GBLL, we may start there.

However, we will be moving between the two throughout the chapter due to their related nature.

CALL

Computer-Assisted Language Learning or CALL can be defined as 'the search for and

study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning' (Levy, 1997). With its

creation in the 1970s comes the foundations on which the field stands. Two such foundations are

'tutorial CALL' and 'nontutorial CALL' or 'Social CALL.' The former focuses on repetitive

input provided to the learner by the computer while also providing targeted feedback (Reinhardt et al., 2016). It is no mystery that tutorial CALL has been particularly successful in terms of teaching vocabulary and grammar due to its ability to check a learner's accuracy quickly and easily as well as to provide endless and repetitive input. Nontutorial/Social call, on the other hand, has less to do with drilling students with questions and providing feedback. It is instead oriented toward the utility of the technology itself, which can be used to communicate with someone on the other side of the planet, for example (Reinhardt et al., 2016). Levy (1997) later transforms these terms into their more popular forms, "computer-as-tutor" and "computer-as-tool". Hubbard and Siskin (2004) provide more insight into these two frameworks: "In the *tutor* role*,* the computer evaluates the learner, controls the learning process, and temporarily substitutes for the human teacher. In the *tool* role, the computer does not evaluate; rather, it increases the efficiency or effectiveness of actions related to learning and may involve the teacher and learner both". Each of these conceptualizations offers learners and teachers alike certain opportunities to enhance their language experience.

An example of how computer-as-tutor is reflected in CALL is the platform called *VHL* which is used in introductory and intermediate French classes at UC Davis. It provides students with text-based, audio-based, or image-based input, and students are required to answer questions about the material. Once they respond, the system checks their accuracy and provides them feedback for where they can find relevant material in the textbook as well as personalized comments for how they should be studying to improve certain skills. Evaluation is a key part of computer-as tutor (Turkle, 2016). These evaluations are often lexically and grammatically oriented, as it is difficult for such a program to successfully test pragmatics, pronunciation, etc. without the help of an instructor. However, there are those who are continually developing and

138

implementing *Automatic Speech Recognition* Software and online platforms for college classes are moving in that direction to be able to provide accurate feedback regarding pronunciation (Neri et al., 2003; Doremalen et al., 2016).

While there have been many myths concerning the efficacy of computer-as-tutor in CALL (Hubbard and Siskin, 2004), the idea of computer-as-tool has been thoroughly celebrated as CALL's more useful metaphor for the role of the computer. It is less focused on input, output, and feedback, and is instead attentive to the utility of the technology itself. The first and more common use of this characteristic is technology's ability to connect people from across different continents throughout the world. *Computer Mediated Communication* (CMC) is closely tied to this characteristic of CALL. Richard Kern and Christine Develotte (2018) developed an experiment where they connected University of California, Berkeley students who were learning French to native French speakers at the University of Lyon through the 'Français en ligne' project. After their video conferences with the French students, the Berkeley students were then asked to draw pictures that represented the dialogues with their partner. This global connection allowed for an increase in students' cultural and critical awareness.

The use of technology as a tool also allows the user to discover different modalities of writing. This relevant characterization is also known as the *multiliteracies approach* which explores and assesses not only various internet-mediated writing but also speech in different languages (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Cazden et al., 1996; Kress, 2003). Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) present various ways in which technology users can take advantage of the approach, examining instant messaging and synchronous chat, blogs and wikis, remixed texts (i.e., fanfiction), and multiplayer online gaming. This approach encourages the analysis of a writer's use of different linguistic registers, modes, moods, and more.

GBLL

Game-Based Language Learning has been defined several ways, but many definitions conclude that it is a type of gameplay that has specific desired learning outcomes depending on the subject and material taught. What problematizes a definition for this field are two things. The first is that many scholars and researchers including myself reserve the title of GBLL for digital games such as *World of Warcraft* or *The SIMS* (Plass, Homer, and Kinzer, 2015). Others use the term for all genres and types of games and simply transform GBLL into DGBLL to convey that they are speaking specifically about digital games. What further problematizes GBLL's definition is the lack of consensus of what a 'game' is and what its limitations are. Tekinbas and Zimmerman (2004) certainly outline this challenge in their book *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Regardless of its definition(s), though, what the field holds dear can certainly align with the same foundations of CALL.

Computer-as-tutor can apply to video games that typically provide endless amounts of input and can be easily repeated, while providing contextualization and feedback often in the form of negative or positive consequences. For example, *The Walking Dead* by Telltale Games is a decision-based game where players need to survive a zombie apocalypse. While at first it is apparent that the enemy is the ever-increasing army of the undead, the player discovers that what is actually quite difficult to maneuver through are the interactions and choices surrounding the fellow human survivors in the party. Players are constantly building relationships (or tearing them down) through their words and actions, and with every oration and decision, players affect who lives and dies or how well the characters connect with each other. Image 4.1, below, shows how complicated the storyline becomes in chapter 4 of the first season and how each decision can alter the future, creating various versions of the story. What would make this game teachable

to students learning a language is the access to written and spoken language as well as the

exposure to the pragmatic implications of your actions and words. This game also encourages

repeats and multiple plays to see how different actions can affect the storyline.

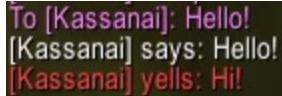**Image 4.1: Decision Outcomes for Episodes 4 and 5 of *The Walking Dead:***

While there are some events in the game that are concrete to move the plot forward, there are still some decisions that create alternate paths and sub-paths such as the one(s) seen at the beginning of episode 5 (orange and green).
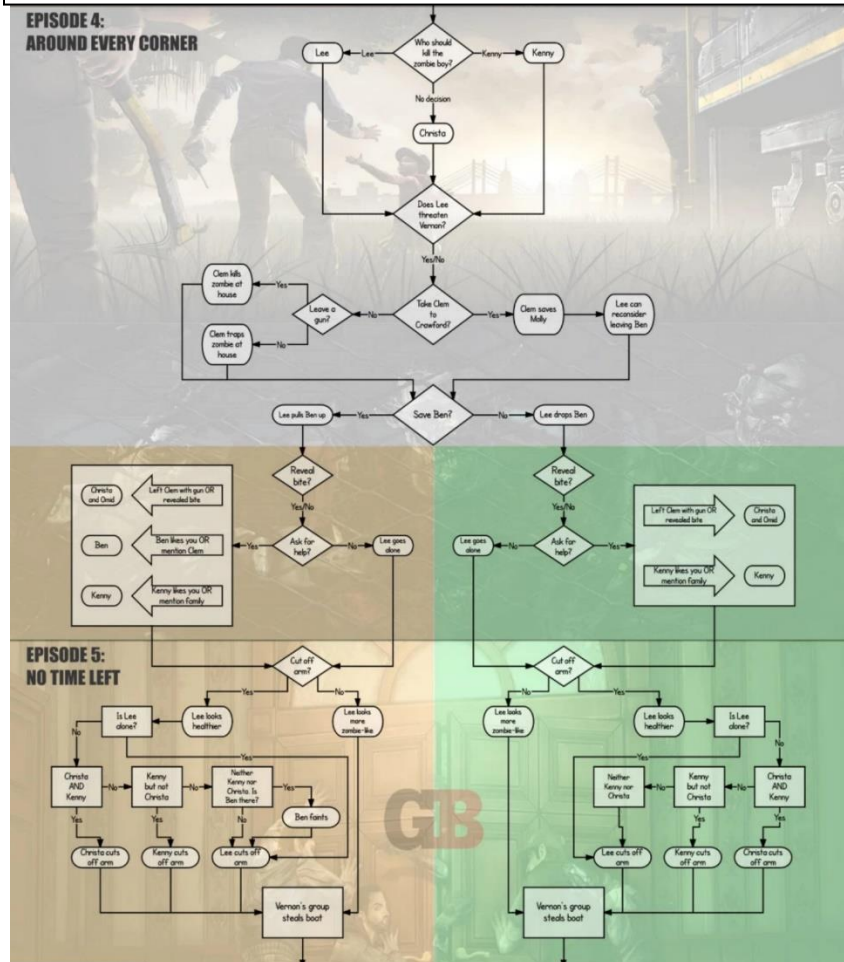
Computer-as-tool has a strong presence in online digital games through the use of chat,

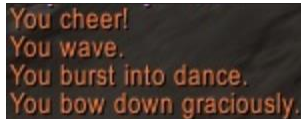forums, guides, or in-game letters. *World of Warcraft* (*WOW*), a *Massively Multiplayer Online*

Role-Playing Game (MMORPG), asks players to create an avatar, choosing from two factions, "Alliance" and "Horde," 19 possible races, and 12 classes. Within the game, players can communicate with other players through a local chat system (see image 4.2 on the next page) or have their characters perform emotes face-to-face, such as bowing, waving, cheering, being silly, being rude, smiling, etc. (see image 4.3). Each action is performed differently according to your character's race. Players can also create parties of up to five people to go 'questing' or go on dungeon raids to defeat large numbers of monsters and receive better gear to equip themselves with (image 4.4 shows the friends list which can help to easily create parties). Joining a 'chat channel' allows for communication with the community itself where one can ask for help accomplishing a task or to get general tips for playing. More serious players can gather forces within their faction and attack the opposing faction (see image 4.5). Guilds offer players a smaller community of friends who have particular goals outlined in the guild description (see image 1.6). For example, some guilds are created to help beginner players while others are only interested in 'running (completing) dungeons' or progressing professions (i.e., alchemy, blacksmithing, herbalism, etc.). Finally, players can send each other letters with items attached to them and must even pay for postage depending on the weight of the virtual package. Evidently, the amount of communication that can happen online (not to mention the offline capabilities) is impressively high. Players access communities within communities, each offering various options according to the player's wishes and needs. One may choose to have one or two friends to quest with, a party to run dungeons, can sign up to participate in a faction raid, and/or can join a guild to level up their professions (Steinkuehler and Duncan, 2008). Whatever the goals are of

a specific social group, the communicative capabilities are the real advantage for language

learners, especially if they want to succeed in their gaming ventures.

Image 4.2- WOW chat features: Pink = whisper, private chat; White = local chat ; Red = a yell, reaches further distances than local chat.

Image 4.3- WOW Emotes: These actions can be performed to/with another player or to NPCs (Non-playable characters).

Image 4.4- WOW Friends List:

From this list, players can accept, ignore, or check the status of their friend requests. They can also see if their friends are online and/or locate them to find them in-game and join them on quests.

Image 4.5- WOW Chat Channels:

From this list, players can accept, ignore, or check the status of their friend requests. They can also see if their friends are online and/or locate them to find them in-game and join them on quests.

Image 4.6- WOW Guild Finder:

From this menu, players can search for the kind of guild they are looking for. While the interests do cover some basic aspects of the game like questing or running dungeons, it doesn't cover all possible guild interests. Players can also mark their availability during the week as well as the role that they wish to play.

Due to the various modes of communication, players will find that each of these communities have certain expectations for what will be discussed and how it is discussed. While there can be overlap between and among them, it is important that the player learns how to get the most out of each community. For example, one can ask a friend on *WOW* for information regarding faction raids, but because faction raids are typically for players that have been gaming for a long period of time, odds are that the friend won't know much about it unless they are also a serious gamer with more experience. However, even if that is the case, two players are not recommended to run a faction raid because it won't be as successful due to a lack of fighters. The player needs to access the chat channel just as those looking to upgrade their professions quickly would do better to find a professions guild than to ask members of their party.

The "mise en abyme" of communities in *WOW* or similar MMORPGs also reflects the various needs and characteristics of a real society. Humans typically have a few good friends with whom they spend time and 'go questing' together, but they also belong to other communities like a cohort in graduate school who helps them to settle into academic life, religious communities who fulfill spiritual needs, or a gay/straight alliance to promote a sense of belonging and acceptance in the world. Once again, these communities might overlap in some areas, but each community has a particular role that they play. This realization that game systems, dynamics and discourses are representative of reality is reflective of *digital multiliteracies* and what has also been called *game literacy* (Bogost, 2007; Gee, 2007; Squire, 2008; Reinhardt and Thorne, 2016). This is where GBLL starts to branch off of CALL. While both fields can use computer-as-tool to reflect on their own culture or a target culture, only GBLL can use this idea of *game literacy* to access cultural information from *within* the technology itself (to be discussed further later). Virtual online worlds like *WOW, Second Life,*

and *The SIMS* have their own culture and community waiting to be discovered and explored further by language researchers. Metaphors such as computer-as-tutor and computer-as-tool don't capture this next capacity of language-teaching opportunities within GBLL. Even Levy (1997) recognized that CALL was created due to the advancement of technology, and that because of that, it is important to consider any new technological advances so as not to be left behind. Therefore, another metaphor became necessary. This metaphor, however, applies less to CALL and more to GBLL, in my opinion.

TECHNOLOGY-AS-ECOLOGY

In the previous chapter, we learned that "Technology-as-ecology" has been described as a form of multiliteracies as well as a way for students to 'learn in the wild' (Thorne, 2010; Reinhardt and Thorne, 2016). I also discussed how the goal of this metaphor is to see how the participants are engaging with other players within the space in order to learn language. What is interesting about this new metaphor, though, is that it hints at what games can offer without fully going into detail. It stays closer to the surface, deeper than computer-as-tool, but not much further. Reinhardt and Thorne mention studies that use this metaphor such as those discussing paratexts (Apperly and Beavis, 2011) or attendant discourses (Thorne, Black, and Sykes, 2009; Reinhardt and Sykes, 2012). Thorne et al. (2012) talk about linguistic registers, genres, and functions used in *WOW*. Holden and Sykes (2011) also found that a mobile game could increase Spanish learners' awareness of nearby language ecologies. These are wonderful advancements to the field, but this new metaphor could also allow for a more in-depth understanding of GBLL. If ecology is a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their

145

environments (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ecology), then technology-as-ecology should deal with more than just the language learned in game with other people and through analysis of *multiliteracies*. While these are incredibly important features, there are more characteristics to be examined which are equally as significant. Technology-as-ecology should also encourage the analysis of organisms' *cultural practices* within the environment of the game. Successful games are rich in lore, culture, and/or history just like real life. Many observations within the game should allow for both language acquisition and cultural reflection. Unfortunately, there is an extreme lack of acknowledgment and development in this direction.

While aspects of language such as *multiliteracies* and vocabulary have thrived in the field of GBLL, grammar and culture in the sense mentioned above are few and far between. That said, there has been a discussion of vocabulary and culture within these fields. The next few sections will demonstrate the previous work done within these fields in reference to vocabulary and culture.

VOCABULARY IN CALL AND GBLL

Vocabulary is crucial for progressing in a language. It has been posited that language learners need between 3,000 and 5,000 words in their repertoire so that they may communicate effectively (Schmitt, 2010; Nation, 2001). Without vocabulary, learners' reading, writing, speaking, and listening would suffer. Wilkins (1972) even goes so far as to say that 'without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.' It makes sense, therefore, that people would dedicate a large portion of time and resources to teach vocabulary using CALL. While teaching vocabulary traditionally in the classroom has been neglected (Richards, 1976), many researchers have

performed studies utilizing a multitude of applications and websites. Teixeira (2015) looked at a program called eyeVocab which helps students learn vocabulary through images, storytelling, etc. Teixeira's study found that students were able to acquire and retain vocabulary much easier than students that didn't have access to the program. Godwin-Jones (2015) claimed that *Linguee.com* is an effective and quick way for students of several world languages to improve their writing. Arispe (2012) analyzed vocabulary extensiveness of Spanish L2 students after the use of Langbot, an automated vocabulary instant message bot that responded to students' messages with texts and translations pulled from the web. It appeared that the amount of Langbot use was linked to an increased vocabulary breadth.

The presence of lexical studies in GBLL is also quite strong. Miller and Heigelheimer (2006) wanted to know how computer simulation games, specifically *The SIMS,* could aid in language development. They discovered that with supplementary materials, simulation games can excel in teaching vocabulary. Ranalli (2008) ran a study based off of Miller and Heigelheimer's that asked if *The SIMS* could be rendered pedagogically beneficial to university-level ESL students by adding supplementary materials. He produced similar results which stated that combining supplementary materials with structured play of *The SIMS* did indeed contribute to vocabulary acquisition.

Neville, Shelton, and McInnus (2009) had L2 German students play a game where they interact with a text and are virtually 'immersed' in Germany at a train station. The goal of the study was to see if player presence and engagement would equal a stronger sense of immersion and to test the hypothesis that immersion resulted in increased vocabulary retention scores versus students who used traditional learning methods. It was found that students using the game wrote longer essays, used more relevant vocabulary words in the essay and had a higher vocabulary to

non-vocabulary ratio. The cultural implications will be discussed in the next in the German culture section.

Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012) took gameplay outside of the classroom, asking how extramural digital gaming among young learners in Sweden correlates positively with their English vocabulary knowledge and receptive proficiency measured in school. They discovered that the results on the vocabulary tests clearly correlated with the amount of time students spent gaming at home. Results also concluded that boys scored higher than girls, which was potentially due to the fact that the male students had more prior knowledge of and experience with video games than the female students did. Hitosugi, Schmidt, and Hayashi (2014) explored the impact of Food Force, a UN-sponsored video game, on learner affect as well as on students' ability to learn and retain vocabulary in an L2 Japanese classroom. They discovered that DGBL facilitates 'deep learning' and, that although there was a significant positive impact on average, individual differences were found in students' attitudes and vocabulary retention which could have had an effect on their performance.

Yamazaki (2018) had students access a 3D virtual world based on the city of Tokyo for fifteen weeks. She wanted to know if using this environment could promote successful target language acquisition and how acquisition could occur in the context. Her results displayed that students gained not only a larger repertoire of vocabulary, but they also gained various communicative competencies including persuasive talk, concept of audience, and collaborative communication. Finally, Casañ-Pitarch (2018) gives an overview of DGBL and how it can be applied to foreign language classes. He states that video games can help learners develop their reading, writing, and speaking skills as well as provide them with new lexical and grammatical structures.

148

Both fields have amassed a large collection of data surrounding vocabulary. The similarities between these two fields are shown in how they approach teaching vocabulary. The primary commonality is that both CALL and GBLL offer acquisition through images and storytelling. Evidently, there are benefits to having students learn words with more than just a list located at the back of a chapter. Instead, students are able to make more connections to a word by associating and applying images (Jones, 2003) to it. Both fields have also engaged the student to create or interact with vocabulary/text in contextualized ways. However, where these fields are similar in some ways, they are crucially different in how they portray, analyze, and use culture.

CULTURE IN CALL AND GBLL

Culture is seen as vital for both teaching and learning in the L2 classroom and "is related to knowledge about the culture being studied and the sociocultural norms and practices required to be effective intercultural communicators" (Guth and Helm, 2016). What is important for our students is that they are exposed to cultures that they are unfamiliar with so that they can become successful and analytical world citizens. According to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2016), one of the five Cs in the 'Standards' for what should be taught is Cultures. The others are Communication, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The three Ps that characterize Cultures are *practices, perspectives,* and *products. Practices* are behaviors that are acceptable within a society. *Perspectives* are the ideas and attitudes of a culture, and *products* are intangible or tangible items/representations that are justified by the *perspectives* of that culture. All three Ps are important for understanding a target culture, becoming plurilingual, and

developing *interculturality* (Guth and Helm, 2016). This term comes from Michael Byram's (1997) work, specifically a model of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) which highlights the different types of knowledge one should attain, including curious attitudes, interpretive skills, knowledge of social groups and their practices and products, and critical cultural awareness. With these aspects of culture and ICC in mind, we can now begin to analyze the ways in which CALL and GBLL actively teach them.

The first uses of CALL to teach culture were seen via CDs. *A la rencontre de Philippe* (Furstenberg, 1993) and *Dans un Quartier de Paris* (Furstenberg and Levet, 1999) used video segments in cultural contexts to show that similar words could have different definitions or usages depending on the context or person (Furstenberg, Levet, English and Maillet, 2001). The internet also allowed for the creation and accessibility of authentic cultural resources such as online newspapers, governmental, commercial, and/or educational resources. Instructors were also able to gather differing opinions, perspectives, and cultural products (Guth and Helm, 2016). The discussion has since moved from accessible <u>resources</u> to accessible <u>people</u>. For this reason, *Computer Mediated Communication* (and therefore computer-as-tool) has become an obsession of sorts in both CALL and GBLL. Now that the excitement of "accessible authentic online materials" has come and gone, instructors and researchers are focused on what happens when a native speaker is connected with a non-native speaker using technology and what kind of learning comes out of it. Kern and Develotte's study connecting French students in Lyon to Berkeley students is a prime example.

Throughout these periods of interaction, there is a steady presence of the three Ps. By watching contextualized videos, students can observe a target culture's *practices*. By gaining access to newspapers, websites, and images, they can also familiarize themselves with a culture's

perspectives and *products*. Now that researchers are focused on connecting native speakers to L2 students, previously praised cultural discoveries like online contextualized videos, newspaper articles, and websites don't receive as much attention. The burden to deliver culture to students is on the native speakers. They are the ones who must administer *practices*, *perspectives*, and *products*. While this can be advantageous in terms of language-as-tutor (if the native speakers provide feedback on lexical/grammatical mistakes) and can potentially teach pragmatics (if the native speaker catches a misuse of register), being told the 3 Ps by one person who represents an entire culture can possibly be a slippery slope. If the native speaker is biased against particular groups of people or practices, it could affect or alter the learner's perception of a target culture. This is not to negate the efficacy or the importance of any collected material related to this, but it does leave a space for DGBLL to fill.

Video games contain virtual worlds with history, communities, and traditions. MMORPGs especially offer social interaction and open-world gameplay where players can fulfill the destiny that they create for themselves. It is therefore quite shocking that most culture-related terminology surrounding GBLL has been lacking. Studies commonly refer to communication, interaction, instances of negotiated meaning (Sylvén and Sundqvist, 2012), target-language community and its speakers (Schwienhorst, 2008), and contextualized communicative competence; communicative competencies specific to the context (Yamizaki, 2018). The studies mention these words but do not expand what these terms mean in terms of culture itself. This is not enough to describe culture, and it does not reflect the goals of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Looking back at the description of CALL and GBLL's understanding and use of culture, I ask the reader to think of my extended definition or characterization of technology-as-ecology, as this will illuminate a great difference between CALL and GBLL. Technology-as-ecology is about connecting the *organisms* to the *environment*, especially to learn culture and develop ICC. CALL can provide many things: authentic materials, contextualized videos, native speakers, etc. However, as we've seen, these aspects of CALL really specialize in contextualization, pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical gains. At worst, the 'cultural' aspects of speaking with native speakers or watching videos of life abroad could result in a misunderstanding or a bias towards a population. At best, these are only small snippets of "reality" and make it difficult for L2 students to meaningfully relate or to really see how all of those pieces fit together. Therefore, the technology-as-ecology metaphor doesn't work well. It also means that Culture appears difficult to comprehend and is potentially different than what it is in the real world, and that *Intercultural Communicative Competence* is very difficult to achieve, especially at early levels in language learning.

Since a video game generally contains worlds and cultures of their own, players can view and interact with a culture in its entirety. Every interaction and observation is "authentic," and every player goes through the same experience (at least up to a certain point). By "authentic" interactions and observations, I mean to say that even though the game itself is virtual and not "real," every interaction is authentic to what the player is experiencing. There are no biased filters like native speakers, misinformed instructors, or apparently "authentic" materials to interfere with players' cultural experiences. Each gamer is playing as if they were born within that society, and so they are naturally exhibiting and experiencing the culture as it was meant to be discovered. This is especially the case for MMOs that often have players create an avatar and

go through a tutorial to socialize them into the (virtual) world. Because there are no interferences, players can (and do) start to question everything they are seeing and experiencing. Instead of being fed information about why something is what it is, they are active in their analyses of the culture they are immersed in. Their experiences are their guide. As a result of becoming an independent and dynamic thinker and learner, gamers quickly develop ICC. They are curious and explore, they interact, they become knowledgeable about social groups, products, and practices, and they also develop critical cultural awareness. These are the kind of students that GBLL can offer if we are willing to harness its strengths.

As for the inevitable question of "How can a target culture be taught using a video game that does not reflect the target culture?", the answer is difficult and a bit philosophical but is important to discuss. In most language classes, students are exposed to snippets of cultural information throughout their textbooks or in their instructors' PowerPoints or handouts. Students are often told "how things are" without being able or willing to question or experience these things themselves because they haven't been trained to do so. Video games can offer learners the tools that they need to become independent and critical thinkers so that when cultural elements are approached in the classroom, they can become the authors of their own cultural experiences and education. Therefore, video games may not necessarily reflect a target culture (although some do to an extent), but they do help players develop ICC which gives them the ability to learn how to learn about cultures. Without ICC, students may just as well be learning culture the same way they learn vocabulary words or grammatical expressions. Culture is not just something to be memorized but is something to engage with, analyze, compare, and contemplate. Students who travel abroad are required to do this, if they hope to be able to successfully interact with native speakers of the target culture during their travels. Those who are left behind in the L2 classroom

don't have this opportunity and lose the chance to develop these crucial skills. If paired with the L2 classroom, GBLL can help to bridge that gap to make for better language learners and global citizens.

Conclusion

CALL and GBLL agreed during the stages of computer-as-tutor and computer-as-tool, but they parted ways when a new metaphor was offered: technology-as-ecology. This new metaphor offered a perspective of *digital literacy*, and I furthered this metaphor by claiming that an ecology offers us the chance to equate game players to organisms and video games to the virtual game/*environment*. Through this extended metaphor, players are seen as those who interact not only with other players, but with the environment and all of the cultural aspects that come along with it: *practices*, *perspectives*, and *products*. Whereas culture is hard to piece together, understand, and analyze via CALL, GBLL gives learners the chance to engage with a culture and become active in their journey to develop *Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Some games reflect a target culture and can therefore help develop ICC, but there are still benefits to games that don't represent a target culture for similar reasons as those that do. The discovery of this new characteristic in GBLL calls for more research in how GBLL can increase ICC and for the development of pedagogical materials through the use of various digital games such as the ones mentioned here.

Study Introduction

In the past, researchers such as Ranalli (2008) and Miller and Hegelheimer (2006) have implemented The Sims computer game into an ESL classroom, testing vocabulary, grammar, and cultural knowledge acquisition. However, they used the game as the sole educational resource. They were also using the game to learn English. Very minimal work, if any, has been done using The Sims to learn French specifically, especially as an aid in the classroom instead of as the sole instructive tool. My hope for conducting this pilot study was to reveal important information concerning the efficacy of video games in the language classroom that will add to the discussion of DGBLL's pedagogical advantages in terms of vocabulary and/or grammar. Since most of the research using The Sims involves the acquisition of English, studies such as this one might also benefit the push for the acquisition of other languages such as French. One purpose of this pilot study is to observe the effect that simulation video games like The Sims Mobile have on student motivation and the acquisition and retention of vocabulary and grammatical structures in an introductory French class when used as a supplemental material/aid in the classroom.

Research Questions

There were two main research questions for this pilot study. The first question (1a-1d) is more quantitative and examines the acquisition and retention of various lexical and grammatical points. The second question (2a-2b) is qualitative and investigates the motivational effects of video games on students' learning experiences as well as their associations with them. The exact questions are found below:

1a. Do students *acquire more vocabulary* using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?

1b. Do students *retain more vocabulary* using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?

1c. Do students *acquire more grammar* using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?

1d. Do students *retain more grammar* using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?

2. What notions do students associate with gaming versus with traditional methods of instruction?

Questions 1a, 1b, and 1d were later removed from the study due to data availability

complications caused by COVID-19. Therefore, this study will attempt to answer only the

following questions:

1. Do students acquire more grammar using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?
2. What notions do students associate with gaming versus with traditional methods of instruction?

Methods and Materials

Participants:

Twenty-six students enrolled in an elementary French course who were studying at a

major U.S. university participated in this study. 18 of these students were in the control group,

while 8 of the students were in the experimental group. Within the control group as well as the

experimental group, a majority of participants used she/her pronouns and were in the age group

of 18-19, though some used he/him or they/them pronouns and/or fell into the 20-21 range, with

one participant in the experimental group being older than 28. Numerous students had some

experience with French in middle school or high school, ranging anywhere from one to three

years. Others' first exposure to French was in college. Many of them also spoke other languages such as Spanish, Cantonese, Arabic, German, Vietnamese, or Farsi to name a few languages mentioned by students. Others were monolingual speakers of English. Their background information can be found in more detail in *Appendix A* at the end of the chapter, following the study analysis.

The Sims Mobile:

The Sims Mobile is part of a large selection of simulation video games which imitate life in various ways called The Sims. As a sandbox game, one that provides the player with vast creative opportunities, players create virtual avatars (sims), make families, construct a house for them, and help to take care of their needs and aspirations. The sims go through a full life cycle as time passes within the game. The games are playable on gaming consoles, computers, and even smartphones. This study will have students download the game The Sims Mobile onto their smartphones in order to play and complete tasks.

SPSS:

SPSS is a software used for the management and analysis of statistical data. This program was used to analyze, visualize, and make conclusions about the quantitative portion of the study: the acquisition and retention of vocabulary and grammar.

MAXQDA:

MAXQDA is a software program that is designed for both qualitative data and mixed methods data. This program was used to analyze, visualize, and make conclusions about the qualitative portion of the study: the motivational aspects of the study as well as students' associations with traditional and experimental methods (textbook vs. video games).

Procedures:

The study took place during two separate sessions. The first session of the study took place between 4/1/2020 and 6/6/2020. The second session of the study took place between 10/5/2020 to 12/13/2020. Each session contained a control group that does not use the app. They receive traditional instruction, and they practice the learned material via traditional means (e.g., exercises in the course textbook). Each session of the study also contained one experimental group which used the Sims Mobile app as a supplementary educational tool in class. They received traditional instruction, and they practice the material via the Sims Mobile application. For each session, there were two different instructors. Each instructor was responsible for the control group during one session and the experimental group for another session. By the end of the complete study, each instructor led each group once.

Before beginning the study, participants answered a background questionnaire explaining their relationship to languages in general, to French specifically, to gaming (if they are in the experimental group), and to their perceptions of traditional and experimental methods of learning. The students then receive "tests" covering different French topics. The first was a vocabulary test. Due to complications of the study preparation and the collection of data caused

by COVID-19, a vast majority of the sample (six out of eight participants) had missing data for the vocabulary pre-test, thereby making its quantitative analysis extremely unreliable. Students also received three tests covering three grammatical concepts: 1) reflexive verb conjugations in the present tense, 2) the conditional mood and 3) the subjunctive mood. In order to test acquisition and retention, each of the 4 tests was given at 3 different stages: before the content was covered in class (pre-test), right after the content was covered (post-test), and at the end of the term (delayed post-test). The goal here was to record how much students knew before exposure to the traditional or experimental material versus after. The delayed post-tests (at the end of the term) were given to test retention of the material. Unfortunately, due to large amounts of missing data from both the control and experimental groups for the delayed post-tests, it was excluded from the exploratory analysis. Only pre-/post-tests are reported in the quantitative analysis section. All four tests were modeled after the unit tests offered by an online platform built by Vista Higher Learning, the company who created the textbook (Promenades) that students used in class. These tests were given to participants to complete in class. They also received a number which they used on their tests and surveys so that their progression and reflections may be tracked as time goes on without exposing their identity. Details about the activities can be found in the appendix.

After traditional instruction and just before each post-test, students performed an activity in-class which would prepare them for the post-test. The control group completed a pre-selected textbook activity, while the experimental group would perform an activity using the Sims Mobile app which focused on the same goals of language production as the textbook.

At the end of the study, after the delayed post-tests, students completed a post-study survey where they reflected on their perceptions of the traditional/experimental methods, how

159

well each method fit into their learning requirements, their performance on the tests, how the methods helped to prepare them for the tests, and how they think their performance compared to others'. The background questionnaire and the post-study surveys were used to capture aspects of motivation and other notions that students had toward both traditional and gamified learning methods.

Results:

Research Question 1: Quantitative Approach

The research question posed for the qualitative portion of this pilot study had to do with students' acquisition of grammar. The exact question is below:

1. Do students acquire more grammar using The Sims Mobile in addition to traditional methods?

In order to answer this question, we had to perform statistical analyses of the collected data from the tests (pre and post). For each test, only the targeted grammar point was considered. The question was considered correct if the verb tense/mood was conjugated/used correctly. Language not considered as immediately part of the grammar point was not connected to accuracy. For example, for the conditional mood test, a student might write the following sentence: "J'achèterais une nouvelle maison." Only "achèterais" would be weighed for a response's accuracy, since other language like "une nouvelle maison" is not a verb mood or tense. For each of the three analyses (Conditional, Reflexive, and Subjunctive), the data was analyzed to compare amounts of acquired grammar. Once again, the goal was to see if there was a difference in the accuracy of the learned material due to solely traditional instruction or traditional instruction with the aid of The Sims Mobile as a supplemental learning tool.
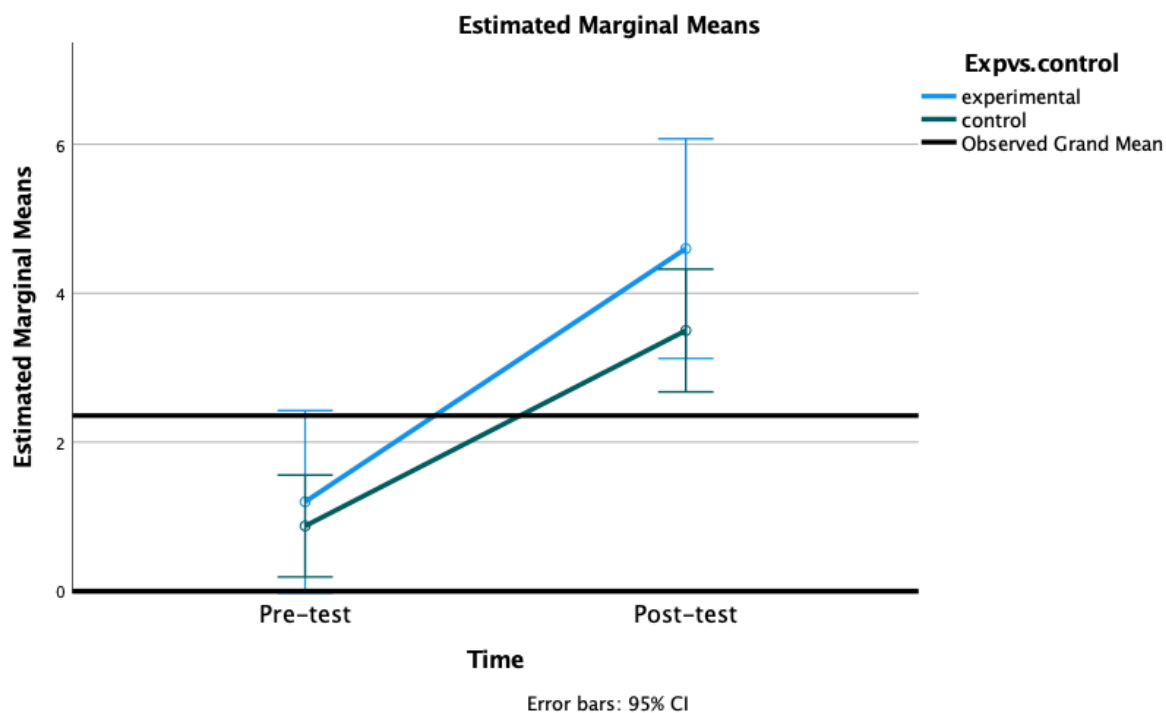
1. Conditional

A two-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of traditional teaching approaches (control group/ n=16) and a mobile-assisted language approach (experimental group/ n=5) on the acquisition of the French conditional tense using a pre-/post-test design (time1 and time 2). The analysis presented several limitations and failed to meet the following assumptions: normality and sphericity; thus, increasing the risk of a Type 1 error, rendering the results and generalizability of these findings questionable, and even invalid under certain SLA criteria for transparent quantitative practices. In addition, the groups are severely under-power, which hinders the test's ability of capturing meaningful differences and main effects between and within subjects.

As result, there was not a statistically significant difference between the two groups (F(1, 1)= 1.379, p= .225). This means that no one method of practicing the conditional leads to greater gains in its acquisition. Rather, graph one shows an increase in scores from the pre-test to the post-test in the conditional task in relation to *time* (p= .000).

Image 4.7: Two-way ANOVA for the conditional tense

Source of Variation	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	69.144	1	69.144	49.622	.000	.723
Within Group (Time*Group Interaction)	1.144	1	1.144	.821	.376	.041
Between Group	3.868	1	3.868	1.379	.225	.068
Error	26.475	19	1.393			

Image 4.8: Profile plot for the conditional tense
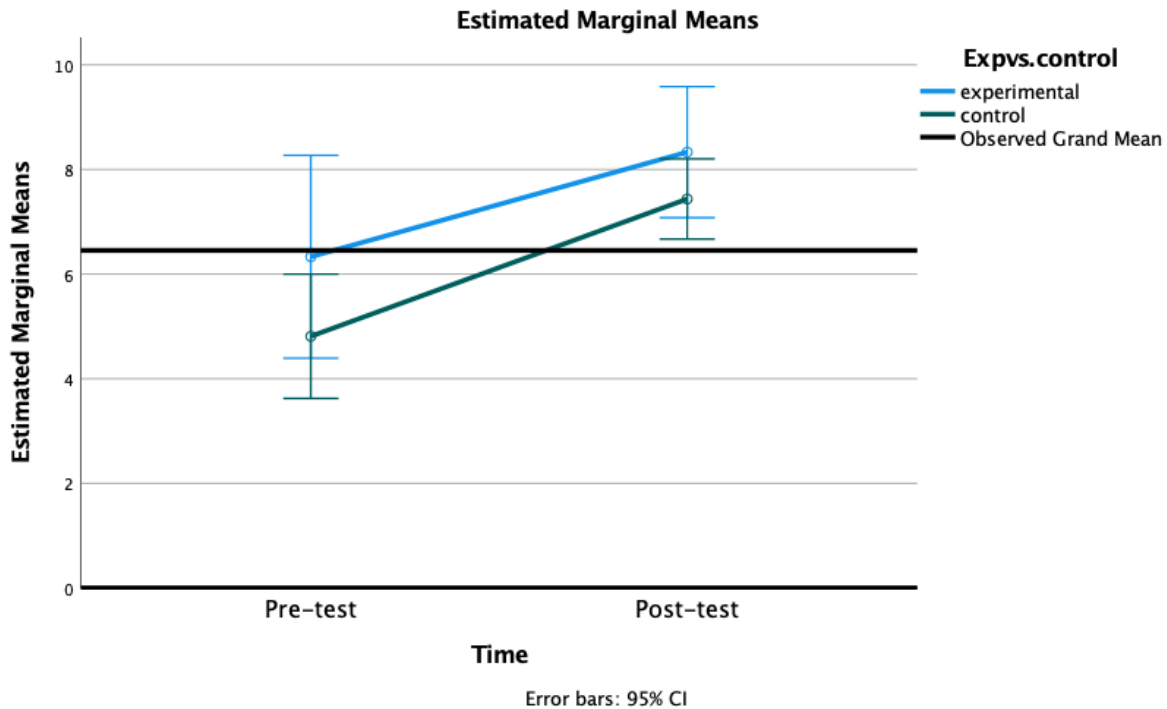

Error bars: 95% CI

2. Reflexive verbs

A two-way repeated measure ANOVA was performed to determine the effect of
traditional teaching approaches (control group/ n=16) and a mobile-assisted language approach
(experimental group/ n=6) on the acquisition of the reflexive pronouns using a pre-/post- test
design (time1 and time 2). Much like the previous analysis, the inspection of the data revealed
the same limitations and failed to meet the following assumptions: small effect sizes, normality
and sphericity; thus, the risk of a Type 1 error, rendering the results and generalizability of these
findings questionable, and even invalid under certain SLA criteria for transparent quantitative
practices (see Plonsky, L. (Ed.). (2015) for a full review).

As result, Table 2. Shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups (F(1, 1)= 2.858, p= .106), meaning that, in this sample, it is unclear whether one method of teaching is more effective than the other.

Image 4.9: Two-way ANOVA for the reflexive verbs

Source of Variation	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	46.670	1	46.670	16.128	.001	46.670
Within Group (Time*Group Interaction)	.852	1	.852	.295	.593	.015
Between Group	12.742	1	12.742	2.858	.125	.068
Error	89.167	20	4.458			

Image 4.10: Profile plot for the reflexive verbs


163

3. Subjunctive mood

Finally, a third two-way repeated measure ANOVA was performed to determine the
effect of traditional teaching approaches (control group/ n=8) and a mobile-assisted language
approach (experimental group/ n=4) on the acquisition of the subjunctive using a pre-/post- test
design (time1 and time 2). Further inspection of the data revealed the same limitations as the
earlier analysis and failed to meet the following assumptions: small effect sizes, normality, and
sphericity; thus, the risk of a Type 1 error, rendering the results and generalizability of these
findings questionable, and they should be taken with caution.

As result, Table 3. Shows that there was not a statistically significant difference between
the control and experimental groups (F(1, 1)= 1.069, p= .326), meaning that, in this sample, we
are unable to determine if one method leads to higher linguistics gains versus the other.

Image 4.11: Two-way ANOVA for the subjunctive mood

Source of Variation	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	50.021	1	50.021	32.402	.000	.764
Within Group (Time*Group Interaction)	1.688	1	1.688	1.093	.320	.099
Between Group	9.187	1	9.187	1.069	.326	.068
Error	85.937	10	8.594			

Image 4.12: Profile plot for the reflexive verbs

Error bars: 95% CI
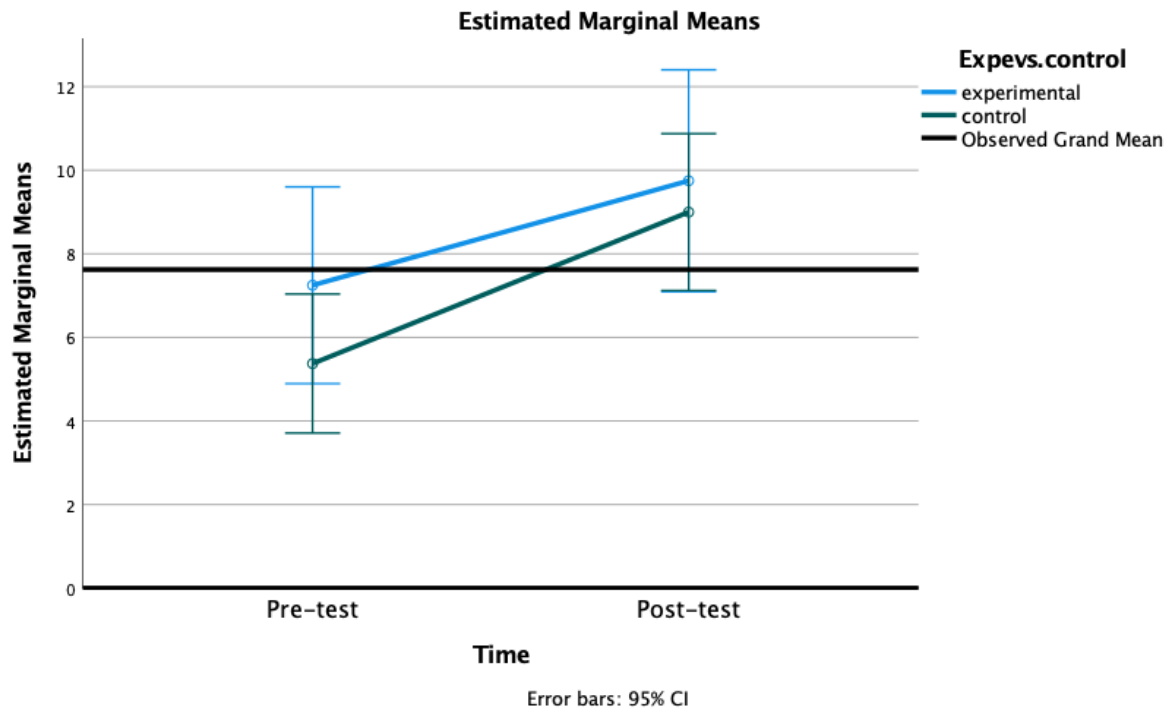
Research Question 2: Qualitative Approach (Thematic Analysis)

The research question posed for the qualitative portion of this pilot study had to do with students' associations with gaming and traditional instruction. Below is the research question:

2. What notions do students associate with gaming versus with traditional methods of instruction?

To answer this research question, all background information and post-surveys were gathered and coded using MAXQDA. The data was coded into two categories: Traditional/Textbook and Experimental/Gaming. Sentences which contained language detailing either the traditional or experimental method of language learning were coded into their individual categories. To give some examples from the participants, sentences like "I think playing games would make learning

the vocabulary more fun" would be coded into the Experimental/Gaming category while sentences like "The textbook helps me understand and learn the grammar and improves reading comprehension" would be coded into the Traditional/Textbook category. Sentences that include language about both traditional and gaming methods were doubly coded (e.g., "I think both traditional and video game formats have repetition in common").

After this data was coded into their categories, MAXQDA formed word frequency tables and word clouds which collected and showed the most common words used in relation to each category of instruction. These tables and word clouds can be used to discuss some of the potential ideologies and associations that students have constructed. First, the solely traditional method of instruction and practice will be presented and discussed with the help of the table and word cloud that MAXQDA has constructed. Then, attitudes toward gaming methods will be examined.

Image 4.13: Traditional Word Frequency Table (Freq. 3+)

	Word	Word length	Frequency ▼	%	Rank	Documents	Documents %
◆	learning	8	14	5.96	1	12	63.16
◆	textbook	8	9	3.83	2	8	42.11
◆	grammar	7	6	2.55	3	5	26.32
◆	vocabulary	10	5	2.13	4	5	26.32
◆	classroom	9	4	1.70	5	4	21.05
◆	language	8	4	1.70	5	4	21.05
◆	learn	5	4	1.70	5	3	15.79
◆	more	4	4	1.70	5	4	21.05
◆	better	6	3	1.28	9	2	10.53
◆	environment	11	3	1.28	9	3	15.79
◆	good	4	3	1.28	9	3	15.79
◆	helpful	7	3	1.28	9	2	10.53
◆	like	4	3	1.28	9	3	15.79
◆	methods	7	3	1.28	9	3	15.79
◆	rules	5	3	1.28	9	2	10.53
◆	specific	8	3	1.28	9	2	10.53
◆	teaching	8	3	1.28	9	2	10.53
◆	understand	10	3	1.28	9	3	15.79

166

Image 4.14: Traditional Word Cloud (Freq. 2+)
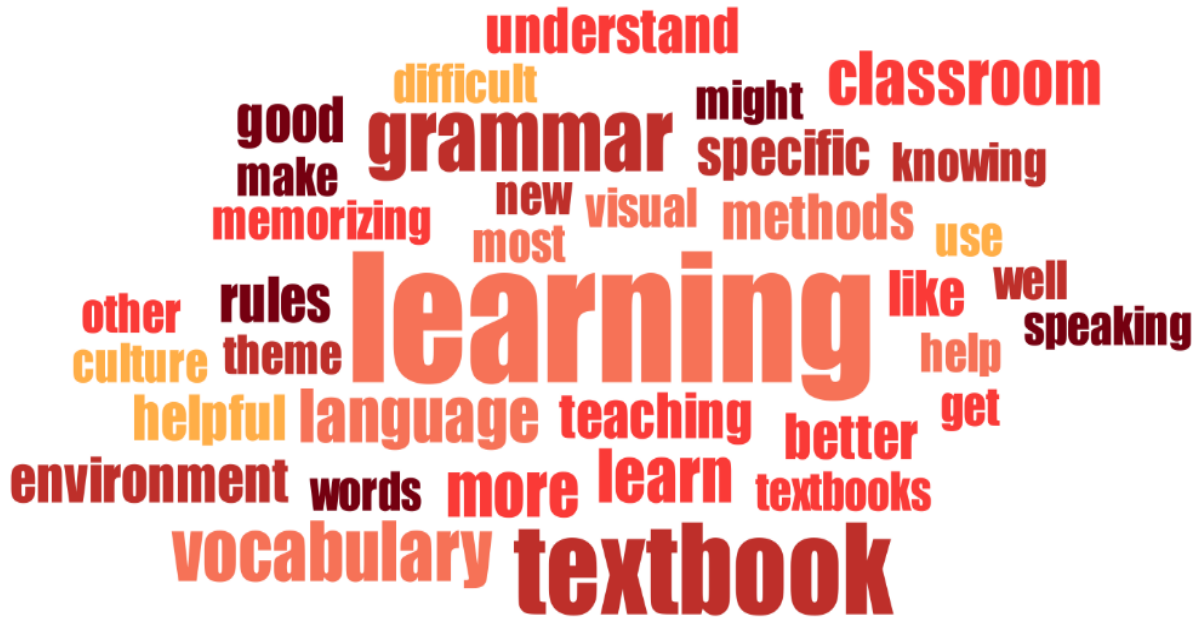
Discussion on Associations/Beliefs toward Traditional/Textbook Methods

General Observations

Looking at the word frequency table and word cloud for traditional instruction, we can

see that "learning" (14x) is the most common word. This might have been expected, since

traditional methods of instruction like using textbooks are often the principal means of learning

course content. Words like grammar (6x) and vocabulary (5x) are also high up on the list for

learning via traditional methods in a language class. We observe categorically positive words as

well, such as "better," "good," and "helpful" (3x each). Finally, we see more language and

references to perceived characteristics of traditional approaches, like "rules" (3x) and

"memorizing" (2x).

A Closer Look

As mentioned before, we can observe that "learning" is the most frequent association that

students make. This may show that students have a belief system about what "learning" should

look like in an academic setting: traditional methods with a textbook as the main resource.

Another point of interest here is that more associations were made with grammar (6x)

than with vocabulary (5x) and even fewer for culture (2x). All three have been paramount in the

creation of language textbooks and traditional materials, but perhaps these frequencies

demonstrate a perceived emphasis or focus on grammar and a lesser emphasis on culture either

from the students' or instructors' part. Using students' full responses, we can see some of the

nuances:

- **Grammar:**
    - "I think [the] textbook helps me understand and learn the grammar and improves reading comprehension"
    - "I think the textbook method works well when learning a language because it's helpful knowing specific grammar rules"
    - "I think it is a productive way to teach grammar and vocab"
- **Vocabulary:**
    - "I learn better in a classroom environment with textbooks and vocabulary lists"
    - "It's helpful knowing specific grammar rules and having a theme when learning vocabulary, culture, etc."
- **Culture:**
    - "I think it is […] not a great way to learn culture, unless it is historical."

In these descriptions, the textbook and other traditional means of learning are seen as more of an

explicit tool or resource that can be relied upon to provide explicit instructional material via

explanations of grammatical rules and vocabulary lists with chapter themes that tie it all together. For these students, it is a reliable source of knowledge.

For one student, an aspect which the textbook lacks is the sharing of cultural information, mentioning that it is not a great way to learn culture. More detail was not provided in this participant's response, so it is not clear exactly what they were referring to. It seems that in this student's opinion, however, textbooks do not promote cultural acquisition well enough, at least outside of its historical context.

Next, the positive words that students had most frequently associated with traditional methods were "better," "good," and "helpful." For participants, traditional instruction evoked "better" learning and understanding, a "good" basis and method of instruction, and "helpful" for knowing grammar rules and learning accent marks. Associations with a sense of strictness were also made through students' use of words like "rules" (usually grammatical rules) and memorizing (grammar and vocabulary).

Image 4.15: Experimental Word Frequency Table (Freq. 6+)

Word	Word length	Frequency ▼	%	Rank	Documents	Documents %
more	4	35	4.56	1	23	63.89
would	5	26	3.39	2	19	52.78
learning	8	25	3.26	3	20	55.56
language	8	15	1.95	4	10	27.78
learn	5	15	1.95	4	13	36.11
could	5	13	1.69	6	10	27.78
fun	3	12	1.56	7	11	30.56
helpful	7	11	1.43	8	8	22.22
video	5	11	1.43	8	9	25.00
words	5	11	1.43	8	8	22.22
practice	8	10	1.30	11	10	27.78
vocabulary	10	10	1.30	11	9	25.00
playing	7	9	1.17	13	8	22.22
better	6	8	1.04	14	8	22.22
remember	8	7	0.91	15	6	16.67
interesting	11	6	0.78	16	6	16.67

Image 4.16: Experimental Word Cloud (Freq. 3+)
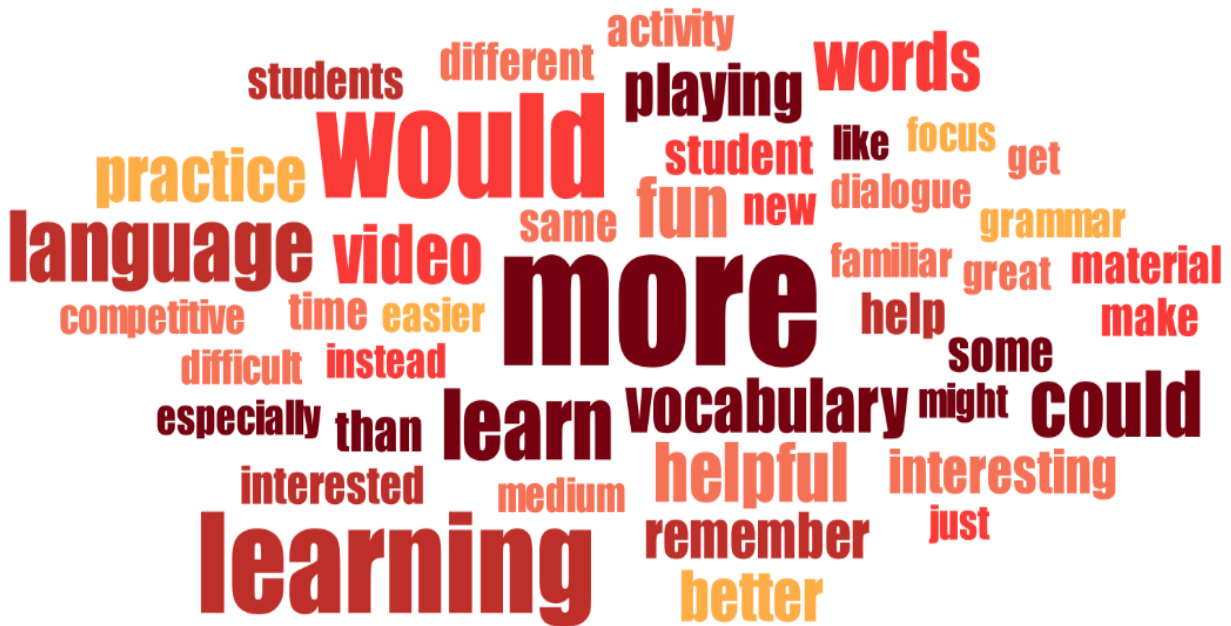
Discussion on Associations/Beliefs toward Experimental/Gaming Methods

General Observations

While "learning" was the most frequently used word when discussing traditional teaching methods, the word that students often used the word "more" (35x) when describing gaming methods while "learning" placed third. Interestingly, words/modal verbs like "would" (26x) or "could" (13x) were among the most common among participants. A few categorically positive words were used such as "fun" and "helpful." Additionally, "vocabulary was mentioned (10x) as well as grammar (3x). Some lexicon surrounding learning was also used: "practice" (10x) and "remember" (7x) were among the most frequent.

<u>A Closer Look</u>

"More" is quite an interesting word to be used most repeatedly. The word itself indicates a comparison, an increased amount of something, but the kind of association made and what it measures depends on the word that follows it. Some positive associations with gaming using the word "more" were "more enjoyable," "more memorable," "learned vocabulary more efficiently," "more engrossing," "more applicable," "more engagement" and "more natural." Contrastingly, there was one negative association using the word "more." One student said, "Depending on the student a form of video game could be more of a distraction rather than a learning tool." Still, most participants seemed to hold positive beliefs about the potential of gaming, using modal language like "would" or "could" to discuss their opinions about its potential to be advantageous for vocabulary acquisition in particular but also for grammar.

Opposite to students' views of textbook learning, language surrounding the course content changed. For the previous group, grammar was brought up more often. Here, vocabulary was repeated the most. Also, in contrast to the previous topic, culture was not mentioned in relation to gameful learning. In their responses, students were able to see the potential benefits for learning and practicing vocabulary and even some grammatical points (sometimes mentioning that it depends on the game), but the lack of input on culture is fascinating, especially since earlier in the chapter, it was demonstrated that learning culture in video games has not been entirely searched or studied.

Lastly, participants used words like "practice" and "remember" when talking about the vocabulary, especially in relation to the test that they had to complete and turn in. Additionally, students marked gameful learning as "helpful" (e.g., "helpful for vocabulary) because you could "see the information presented in a different way." Another had said that "words matched with

171

an image is most times helpful." This reflects the power that multimedia input (e.g., providing images with sound or with words) has on the acquisition of vocabulary (e.g., Jones, 2003).

Additional Thoughts: Identification and Narration

While this pilot study's purpose was not to answer questions about identification and narration, it nevertheless resulted in interesting findings regarding how students chose to create their avatars in the game and create a narrative for them. Inspiration for this new discussion came from reading and writing about identification in the previous two chapters. Specifically, the discussion of "similarity identification" (a form of identification which examines the similarities and differences in character or aesthetics with an avatar) proves to be the most relatable. The related findings are presented in one of the in-class activities in particular (Sims App Activity 1), where students were required to make their sims complete a list of actions, take photos of the sims performing the actions, and then write a few sentences to construct a story of their sims' daily routine. Below, we will see two students' work. We will call these students "Jane" and "John." Jane's work will be presented first:

Jane's work provides an example of how players of a video game will often build an avatar that is similar to who they are in the "real" world. While there is no recorded data of the physical characteristics of the participants to corroborate any matching aesthetics, there is, at the very least, a matching name (which has been altered here to protect the participant's identity) and a sim whose given gender matches Jane's stated gender (according to her background information). "Jane" matched her name and gender to her avatar, demonstrating her interest in visualizing herself in a virtual form.

Image 4.17: Jane's Sim Narration

	Mon sim, Jane, se couche à onze heures du soir.
	Après, elle se lève à six heures du matin.
	À dix heures du matin, elle prend une douche. Dans la douche, elle se rase les jambes et les bras.
	Puis, elle s'assied sur le canapé. Après vingt-cinq minutes, elle s'endort sur le canapé dans le salon.

Below, we will observe John's work which is starkly different from Jane's. For his gaming experience, John chose to replicate the fictional character "Shrek" from the Shrek movie franchise. He designed the avatar to match Shrek physically, presenting as a being with green skin and no hair with a larger build. His writing also focused on detailing those physical characteristics, stating for example, "Il ne se brosse pas les cheveux parce qu' il n'a pas des cheveux" (He doesn't brush his hair because he doesn't have any hair). This shows a user's potential desire to see themselves represented in a whole new way, or rather, a way in which they explore what it would be like to look or act like someone or something else (in this case, as a fictional, green ogre).

Whether a student decided to build an avatar based on who they present as or wish to present as, with the help this video game, they were given a chance to create something of their own and to write about their sim's imagined life (emergent narrative). Of course, the game provides only certain kinds of experiences based on the provided list of vocabulary and the limitations of the game (ultimately decided by the game's designers). Students could have more flexibility with their stories if the vocabulary list were larger or if the game included more activities (e.g., adding in an ogre's swamp).

Image 4.18: John's Sim Narration

	Mon sim, Shrek, se réveille à six heures du matin.
	Après, il se douche pour dix minutes. Il n'oublie pas se laver derrière ses oreilles.
	Ensuite, il se brosse les dents. Il ne se brosse les cheveux pas parce qu'il n'a pas des cheveux.
	Puis, il s'habille. Il ne porte rien sur sa tête parce qu'il a une belle tête verte.

Limitations

Due to the study taking place at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and a week after in-person courses were abruptly shifted to the online setting, the study encountered several issues, especially when it came to the quantitative data.

First, the sample size for the study was extremely low for a quantitative analysis. With only 18 students in the control group and 8 students in the experimental group, the data is severely underpowered and cannot be representative of what other groups would presumably experience.

Next, due to the abrupt shift online and the inability to collect data from all participants at once in the same space, much of the data is missing. This is especially true for the experimental group, since the participants must be given time to download the Sims Mobile, complete the tutorial, and familiarize themselves with the controls before completing the in-class gaming activities. Since the vocabulary test was the first test and was required very early on in the study, the participation for that test was most affected.

Additionally, because the experimental group was playing individually during an online class, there was no real way of knowing if they were remaining on task (playing the game to complete the activity), even if they had turned in a tangible product.

Discussion

For the quantitative aspect of the study, participants showed growth both for the control and experimental groups. However, there was no significant statistical difference between groups

which would or could suggest that the growth was caused by the added implementation of the Sims Mobile. The qualitative portion of the study demonstrated that students have built certain associations between traditional teaching methods and gaming methods. For example, concepts like grammar, memorization, rules, and lack of culture were associated with traditional learning while concepts like vocabulary, fun, and remembering were associated with gaming methods of learning. Finally, while it was it was not explicitly part of the original design of the study, we can also observe that games can be a good space for students to create an avatar that reflects either who they see themselves as or who they wish to be as well as a space for creating their own storylines, depending on the limitations of the assignment and/or the game design.

Future Trends

The literature on gaming and learning languages tends to focus on the acquisition of vocabulary. However, more information is needed when looking at the acquisition of grammar and cultural content. This study presents one way of looking at the learning of such knowledge. Also, many games have their own culture or are based on a particular culture (e.g., The Sims being based on capitalistic U.S. culture). It would be interesting to see more focus on grammatical and cultural aspects of language learning.

There have been many studies which observe the effect of video games on students participating in ESL classes. However, another direction would be to include other languages. Many games like The Sims offer the ability to switch the written language into the target language. Other games offered multilingual dubbed experiences. Learning other languages via games would be a very fruitful avenue.

Next, this study looks at students' perceived notions of gaming and traditional learning. Someone could run with a similar idea to see how these perceptions impact student performance, especially within the realm of gaming and language learning.

Finally, this study revealed ways in which students can present themselves in the virtual world to navigate a self-created storyline. It would be very interesting to build more in-depth studies to see how avatar creation aligns with narration and the acquisition of various vocabulary. It would be increasingly interesting to give students the opportunity to explore the life experiences and reality of a target culture and have them attempt to replicate them with video games. For example, students could design and interact in their virtual homes in the Sims Mobile after learning about how a target society constructs its homes. This could be a way for students to interact with the "ecology" of a target culture as reflected in a game space.

Conclusion

There is still much to learn concerning the effectiveness of simulation games in the (French) language classroom, especially when using (mobile) games as a supplementary tool. There is also a large gap surrounding students' perceived notions of gamified versus traditional methods in the language classroom. This pilot study offers some foundations for looking into these nuances in the future and permits us to draw some conclusions which future studies may use.

A Final Word for the Chapter:

As has been previously outlined, much has been said about students' ability to grow in relation to lexicon and grammar with the help of computers and video games. However, in comparison with this quantity of data, minimal efforts have been made to analyze the deeper effects of video games on language acquisition. In other words, researchers have concentrated their efforts on games' effects on learning vocabulary and grammar and not as much on how the language student's sense of identification and their ability to construct a narrative could be fostered in the classroom. This pilot study has shown that students have associated traditional teaching methods to rules, grammar, and memorization. What if we could implement tools pulled from other fields like video games or theater to motivate students and give them the chance to build new associations or even simply "more" associations with their language learning? This study gives us a glimpse into what that may look like. Video games offer a multimodal experience where players have the autonomy to become who they want, create language that is important to them, motivate them to explore a language as well as an alternate space, and to ultimately find a sense of importance and utility in the language. No matter the approach to language learning (TBLT, CALL, DGBLL, etc.) these facets of the student experience within the language classroom are crucial to support autonomous, motivating, and positive language learning experiences which will likely end in more engagement and language acquisition in the classroom.

Dissertation Conclusion

This dissertation has been an exploration of the student learning experience. The goal was to see what kinds of practices and worlds we can hope to provide students. One way this is accomplished is through the analysis of the learning space itself. By characterizing some of the important features marked in other fields such as Diderotian French theater or in game studies, we can begin to understand that some of the most crucial aspects of an immersive, instructive, and/or entertaining space have been present for centuries. However, simultaneously (and rather unfortunately), these fields have not been brought into the pedagogical fold in any thorough or complete manner. In fact, I would argue that researchers within the field of SLA have scratched only the surface of what fields like theater and gaming have to offer language students. This dissertation aims to begin to remedy this by opening up a philosophically and pedagogically supported discussion around learning spaces, student roles, and the ways in which certain aspects of the language student experience can be amplified by incorporating facets of these fields into the classroom.

Throughout the dissertation, we looked at what these three fields could offer to their own "world's" participants and, by extension, could offer to those of other "worlds." For example, spaces such as these grant participants access to realistic and authentic contexts (despite their own arguable inauthenticity as a constructed space). For Diderot, the best theater is an authentic one in appearance, probability of plot, emotion, and so on. In his written critiques on various artworks, as well, he paints pictures and stories with his words with such detail that he made us question whether he was talking about a painting or something he was experiencing in the "real" world. One step beyond authenticity and believability, though, is where we can find application and utility or, in another word, transfer. Virtual reality as a space has been implemented as a tool

for transfer since its creation as a military, medical, and psychological innovation. It has been used to provide players with a situation with a specific goal in mind (e.g., hostage scenarios, phobia recovery, etc.) so that by the time the player has finished training, they are able to apply the skills that they have learned to their intended fields. I don't believe that this goal of utility and application has changed for many teachers of language. However, as there are many approaches and methods to teaching and learning language (Communicative, Direct-Translation, Audiolingual, TBLT, etc.), this is a great reminder that the ways that we encourage students to engage with language in the classroom will have an impact on how well they are going to replicate the language and/or the action that they have been taught to associate with that language. As an example, students who are made to simply write down lists of verb conjugations during class and at home will very likely remember the conjugation by itself very well but may be less apt to use it in a sentence, pronounce it, or recognize it if it is heard.

Along these lines, we also want to establish the students' ability to connect any current material with previously learned content (and even more impressive would be a connection across fields). Language, like many other subjects, is like a house of blocks where certain linguistic foundations are made at the beginning to support the growth and expansion of any future material. In a French class, for example, the verb "être" (to be) is usually taught as the first verb in the textbook and is normally students' first explicit exposure to a verb conjugation in French. That said, the verb "être" will be observed again later with the "passé compose," where there are some verbs that use "être" to form the past tense. It will be seen again for all associated moods and tenses for the verb itself, and it will be brought up every time there is a small, grammatically nuanced rule about it. This is why providing the right amount of information at the right time, like Gee suggests with his Just-In-Time Principle, is so important. This is also

181

why tutorials are also so vital in video games. Students, like game-players, need to develop a strong basic understanding of the material and what to do with it so that when they come across new information regarding that material, they will not be overwhelmed by it, but will be able to digest it and engage with it accordingly.

Within the realm of engagement, we have also discussed a few principal ways in which participants of any alternate world may engage in the space. That is to say, they may be spectators, actors, or players (or any combination of these at any time). Spectators engage with material in a variety of ways. An absorbed spectator in a theater, for example, may be moved to tears, swept up in the emotional current of the play, or imagine themselves as a certain on-stage character. In their more critical role, they might be led to question things, facilitate judgment, and share their critiques with others. Similarly, in the gaming realm, players often engage with the narrative (embedded or emergent), resulting in a feeling of connection through identification. However, they also engage with other players via streaming platforms or sites like YouTube to ask questions, provide their own opinions about things, or to learn more about how the game is played. In the classroom, students can show engagement as spectators in various ways, too. They do so by sustaining attention and mental effort, constructing their own learning path (like with an in-depth story), demonstrating gestures and eye-contact, using verbal emotes, and listening to each other. In a more critical role, they notice certain linguistic patterns, provide each other with feedback, ask their classmates and teachers questions, and build their metalinguistic skills through these actions. While each of these "worlds" incorporates means of absorption or explicitness, they each carry slightly different tools and opportunities that can be borrowed. For example, language students could watch a video game streamer on Twitch to hear a language and interact with a language community of their choice via chat. They could also be asked to role

182

play characters from a francophone play to work on enunciation, understand the weight of certain idiomatic expressions, or know where to put emphasis in words, and how people might react in response to certain words, expressions, or situations, etc. They could also pretend to be theater critics to work on how to use language to form opinions, write a persuasive essay, or to even copy actual critics of art and drama.

Also accessible within alternate worlds, engagement through acting is presented differently within these spaces. Video games, for example, offer players the freedom to play how they would like. In other words, they grant autonomy through avatar creation, emergent narrative, and, in MMORPGs like World of Warcraft, social interactions, specialties, and roles. In many games, no two player experiences are the same. In the theater realm, actors are meant to learn, memorize, and emote in order to impact the spectators and make them feel the intended emotion, at least according to Diderot. Though vastly different on the surface, what these two spaces have in common is that gamers and actors are both storytellers. Whether just the general concept or storyline is given to them or whether they are provided with an entire script to go by, they are both recounting tales. Both groups of people are sharing with the world, receiving feedback, and altering their methods based on what works (or does not work) for them. Most importantly, though, both of these spaces give their actors several identities to work with: their real-world identity/identities, a virtual identity, and a projective identity. The same can be said for our language students. As actors in our classrooms, they accomplish many of the same goals: They learn, repeat, imitate, create, interact, emote, and share their stories with us. Additionally, though, each student has different aspects of themselves that they bring to the classroom. Each student has a version of themself as they are outside of the classroom with their friends. Each one brings a separate and "perfect" version of themself which they think is necessary for the class,

and they also have a version which they wish to improve upon to get to that idealized version. This is why learning from other fields like theater and gaming could improve upon the language learning experience. Students bring multiple versions of themselves, so it would make sense to implement tools from other fields which allow participants access to those other "selves" and any other "self" that can be explored. We should allow students to discover themselves through storytelling and language just as we encourage them to discover other people and cultures throughout the world via language, texts, videos, etc. Theater and gaming are two great places to start to accomplish this.

There is still so much to be learned about the impact of theater and gaming on language education. The field of SLA is still relatively new, and gaming specifically as a very small branch of it is even newer. This is, therefore, the perfect time to reach into these different fields, plant some pedagogical and research-based seedlings and see what grows. Of course, studies that are similar to the study I conducted in the previous chapter could be done to see how games (or theater) could mark lexical or grammatical growth. However, I believe that research should go in the same direction as the unexpected findings from my pilot study. How can theater and/or gaming impact students' beliefs about what education looks like in a language class? How can we get them to move beyond simply the "rigid" concepts of language like vocabulary, grammar, and textbooks to more impactful and cross-disciplinary concepts of language like autonomy, identity, cultural practices, motivation, and engagement? How can we use narrative within these other fields to support confidence in the target language? How do we motivate and immerse our students in a space which is designed for them to explore and also prepares them to present themselves to the world using any identity that is meaningful to them? From now on, let us dig deeper into the student experience to do future generations of language students justice.

Appendix A: Equivalent and Related Terminology across Fields

Concept Essence	Theater Term	Gaming Term	SLA Term
A space constructed by someone in the real world, yet positioned separately from reality and designed for a specific purpose (an "alternate world")	Theater/Stage	Virtual World	Classroom
Someone who is expected to act in an "alternate world"	Actor/*Comédien*	Player	(Acting) Student
Someone who is expected to observe in an "alternate world"	Spectator/ *Spéctateur*	Player	(Absorbed / Critical) Student
An ability within an individual to observe and reflect in order to make the best decision	*Spéctateur froid et tranquille*	Critical Thinking	Krashen's *Monitor Hypothesis* and *Affective Filter Hypothesis*
Something that appears to rely on believable, relatable, truthful, or familiar representations of content	*Vraisemblance*	Polish and Fidelity	Van Lier's *Authenticity*, Authentic Materials,
A genre of presentation within an alternate world which relies on believable, relatable, truthful, or familiar representations of content based on reality	*Genre sérieux*	Graphic Realism	Meaningful language use within communicative framework Task-Based / Task-Supported Language Learning
A state in which a figure appears to be occupied in what they are doing, thinking, or observing within an alternate world	Absorption	Immersion and Presence	Engagement: Cognitive, Behavioral, Emotional, and Social
The experience of putting yourself in the place of someone else and finding meaning	Identification and Embodiment ; Role Play	Player-Avatar Identification; Gee's Situated Meaning Principle	Identification
The shared process of receiving information, processing it, and then producing information	Improvisational Theater	Gee and Peterson's "Deep Learning"; Real-time Control	Gass's model of SLA ; Gee's Probing Principle

Concept Essence	Theater Term	Gaming Term	SLA Term
The extent to which a participant believes that the content or experience is important or useful	Vraisemblance	Buy-in	Cong Wang et al.: Buy-in framework (EPIC)
The application of skills gained within an alternate world into the real world	Diderot and Moral lessons	Transfer	Transfer
A form of pre-rendered narrative which is given to the participant to follow	Role Play	Embedded Narrative	N/A
A form of narrative given to the participant which they will then help to create	Improvisational Theater; Experimental Theater	Emergent Narrative	N/A
Mindfully engaging with specific content and connecting it to previous knowledge	Vraisemblance Diderot and Graces	Game Tutorials Progression of difficulty and relying on past Gee's principle	Van Lier's *Awareness* ; Situated Cognition ; Schmidt's *Noticing Hypothesis*
Taking responsibility for and ownership of one's own role in a space	Actor's Creativity	Autonomy	Van Lier's *Autonomy*
The process of providing information at the "right" time.	Plot Progression	Gee's Explicit Information On-Demand Principle and Just-In-Time Principle	Scaffolding; Giving Feedback; Implicit and Explicit Instruction
The ability to find a connection between the content of two different "worlds", alternate or real	Vraisemblance	Gee's Metalevel Thinking about Semiotic Domains Principle	Intercultural Communicative Competence;

Appendix B: Student Background Information

Participant #	Group	Pronoun(s)	Age Group	Experience w/ French	Experience w/ Other languages
1	Control	N/A	N/A	Yes, 2 years as a second language, 5th and 6th grade. 2 months with the Duolingo app.	Telegu (spoken at home with family), English (learned it at school for 14+ year, and spoken at home), Hindi (learned it at school for four years, spoken with friends often.
2	Control	N/A	N/A	Learned at school for 6 months.	English, speaking at home with family for 20 years
3	Control	N/A	N/A	I took 3 years of French in high school and an additional semester of French 4 online	N/A
4	Control	N/A	N/A	Yes: 4 years	Cantonese and Mandarin (speak at home), English (at school and with friends)
5	Control	N/A	N/A	No	English; learned speaking the language at home with family and at school with teachers and friends.
6	Control	N/A	N/A	Yes, I have: 1(?)	English, Cantonese
7	Control	She/her	20-21	Three years in high school	I speak English and some Malayalam, both of which I learned at home.
8	Control	She/her	18-19	Only French 1 and 2 this year in	English

				fall and winter quarter	
9	Control	She/her	18-19	I tried to study French on my own using the app Duolingo for a year, but it never helped me fully grasp the language. This would be my third quarter taking French.	I grew up speaking Spanish and English, and I took Arabic in high school for two years. However, I am only fluent in English.
10	Control	She	18-19	Yes. 3 years in high school. 2 quarters in college.	English only.
11	Control	Elle/ she/ her/ hers	18-19	Yes, I have studied French for a total of two quarters in college.	I speak English. I grew up speaking it at home and developing its vocabulary in school.
12	Control	She/her	18-19	Yes. I studied it in high school for 3 years.	I speak English. I learned it at home and in school since I was a child.
13	Control	Elle	20-21	Yes- for the past 2 quarters (French 1 and French 2)	I speak English and German. I learned both of those at home growing up and then in high school I took 4 semesters of German.
14	Control	N/A	Data Corrupt	Data Corrupt	Data Corrupt
15	Control	They/ Them	18-19	In high school for 3 years.	My mom speaks Hmong to me so I hear it frequently.
16	Control	She/her	18-19	Yes, I took 3 years of French in high school.	I speak Farsi and English. I learned Farsi in a home setting through my

					parents, and I learned English just by going to English-speaking schools and watching TV.
17	Control	She/her	20-21	Learned (French) at school for three years and have taken French 1 and 2 at college.	English: learned to speak at home with family for 20 years.
18	Control	She/her	20-21	I studied French in HS for two years and one semester of community college (while still in HS). Reviewed French in college a little on Duolingo for a couple months.	Only fluently speak English
19	Experimental	N/A	N/A	Yes, 2 quarters in college French	English is my first language
20	Experimental	N/A	N/A	Yes, 3 years in high school	English
21	Experimental	N/A	N/A	Took two quarters of French in college	Grew up speaking Vietnamese, took Mandarin in high school for three years, self-studied Japanese via Lang-8 for 6 years
22	Experimental	N/A	N/A	No	I speak English and Spanish. I grew up in a Spanish speaking household and also took the advanced Spanish courses as my language in high school for four years.
23	Experimental	N/A	N/A	I took French in HS for two years. I've taken two	I speak English at home unless I'm travelling or

				quarters (of French in a college setting)	preparing for a test. I've known English all of my life (52 years).
24	Experimental	N/A	N/A	1 year in high school, 2 in college thus far.	English only, native speaker
25	Experimental	N/A	N/A	No	I speak English at home, it is my first language. I took Spanish in high school for 2 years.
26	Experimental	N/A	N/A	Yes, in high school for three years	I have spoken Spanish at home and in school since I was a kid. I learned English at the same time as Spanish, I have always been in a bilingual school, everyone in my family speaks English

Appendix C: Student Activity Descriptions

Vocabulary and Grammar Activities

- **Traditional**
  - **Traditional Activity 1:** Students will look at the images on page 370 (activity 5) and write down as many details about the photo as they can, discussing actions and the objects being used. Finally, they will take turns reading their descriptions for the photos. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the first test of this portion of the study.

- **Experimental (SIMS)**
  - **Sims App Activity 1:** Students will be given a list of actions that they must make their sim (avatar) complete. These will be the same actions that are modeled in activity 5 on page 370 of the textbook (which they will not be completing in class). They must then take screenshots of each action as proof that their sim has completed the activity. They must then write down as many details about the photo as they can, discussing actions and the objects being used. Finally, they will take turns showing the screenshot and reading their descriptions. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the first test of this portion of the study.

Grammar Selection and Exercises

- **Traditional**
  - **Traditional Activity 2:** Students will look at the list of reflexive verbs given to them on page 383 (activity 4). They must ask if their partner has completed those activities. This activity is designed to be an oral activity, but the instructor will ask them to write down their responses as well. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the second test of this portion of the study.

  - **Traditional Activity 3:** Students will be given a list of questions which they must ask their partners. This is activity 2 on page 440 of *Promenades*. This activity is designed to be an oral activity, but the instructor will ask them to write down their responses as well. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the third test of this portion of the study.

  - **Traditional Activity 4:** Students will be put into groups of 4. Each student will take turns transforming indicative sentences into subjunctive sentences (activity 2, p. 506). The goal of this activity is to notice the difference between using the indicative mood and the subjunctive mood of

191

verbs as well as for students to be able to produce the subjunctive mood. Students will write down their responses and turn them in.

- In the same groups, students will then be asked to complete activity 5 on page 507 which requires them to recognize question formation with the subjunctive mood as well as producing sentences with the subjunctive. Students will write down their responses and turn them in. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the fourth test of this portion of the study.

- After each activity and before each test, students will take a survey where they will express their thoughts on the activity and its implementation into the classroom for the chapter as well as their sense of motivation while using the app. Finally, on the last instructional day of the course, participants will take the same four tests, in class, to demonstrate how much they remember. Tests will be completed in class in order to minimize the risk of participants' use of dictionaries, translators, or other materials.

- **Experimental (SIMS)**
  - **Sims App Activity 2:** Students will be given a list of reflexive verbs. They must ask if their partner's Sims complete those activities. This activity runs parallel to activity 4 on page 379 in *Promenades*. This activity is designed to be an oral activity, but the instructor will ask them to write down their responses as well. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the second test of this portion of the study.

  - **Sims App Activity 3:** Students will be given a list of questions which they must ask their partners. These questions will be targeted at their partner's Sims. These questions are modeled after activity 2 on page 440 of *Promenades*. This activity is designed to be an oral activity, but the instructor will ask them to write down their responses as well. Their written work will be collected. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the third test of this portion of the study.

  - **Sims App Activity 4:** Students will be put into groups of 4. One of the students will be a host of a party while others are a guest. The host will throw a party in the Sims Mobile app and will invite their group's Sims to their sim's home. They will complete the activity using the party chat feature in the game. The goal of this activity is to notice the difference between using the indicative mood and the subjunctive mood of verbs as well as for students to be able to produce the subjunctive mood in the form of statements and questions. The equivalents of this activity are activity 2 on page 506 and activity 5 on page 507 of *Promenades*. Students will be asked to take screenshots of their party chat and will send them to the instructor. This will be the last activity of the class before retaking the fourth test of this portion of the study.

Works Cited

Alexander, A. L., Brunyé, T., Sidman, J., & Weil, S. A. "From Gaming to Training: A Review of Studies on Fidelity, Immersion, Presence, and Buy-In and Their Effects on Transfer in PC-Based Simulations and Games." *DARWARS Training Impact Group* 5 (2005): pp. 1–14.

Anderson, L. W. "Student Involvement in Learning and School Achievement." *California Journal of Educational Research* (1975): pp. 53–62.

Apperley, Thomas, and Catherine Beavis. "Literacy into Action: Digital Games as Action and Text in the English and Literacy Classroom." *Pedagogies: An International Journal* 6.2 (2011): pp. 130–43.

Arens, Katherine, and Janet Swaffar. "Reading Goals and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning." *Foreign Language Annals* 33.1 (2000): pp. 104–22.

Arispe, Kelly. *Why Vocabulary Still Matters: L2 Lexical Development and Learner Autonomy as Mediated through an ICALL Tool, Langbot*. 2012. University of California, Davis, PhD dissertation. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/why-vocabulary-still-matters-l2-lexical/docview/1433265510/se-2.

Baralt, Melissa, Laura Gurzynski-Weiss, and YouJin Kim. "Engagement with the Language." In *Peer Interatction and Second Language Learning: Pedagogical Potential and Researach Agenda*, edited by Masatoshi Sato and Susan Ballinger, pp. 209–39. Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2016.

Beck, Aaron T., Gary Emery, and Ruth L. Greenberg. *Anxiety Disorders and Phobias: A Cognitive Perspective*. Basic Books, 2005.

Biocca, Frank. "The Cyborg's Dilemma: Progressive Embodiment in Virtual Environments." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1997. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/cyborgs-dilemma-progressive-embodiment-virtual/docview/619593312/se-2.

Blake, Robert J. *Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language Learning*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013.

Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007.

Bolton, Gavin. "Changes in Thinking about Drama in Education." *Theory into Practice* 24.3 (1985): pp. 151–57.

Bowey, Jason T., Maximilian A. Friehs, and Regan L. Mandryk. "Red or Blue Pill: Fostering Identification and Transportation through Dialogue Choices in RPGS." *Proceedings of*

the 14th International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games. New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2019.

Brown, John Seely, Allan Collins, and Paul Duguid. "Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning." *Educational Researcher* 18.1 (1989): pp. 32–42.

Bygate, Martin, and Virginia Samuda. "Creating Pressure in Task Pedagogy: The Joint Roles of Field, Purpose, and Engagement within the Interaction Approach." In *Multiple Perspectives on Interaction: Second Language Research in Honor of Susan M. Gass*, edited by Alison Mackey and Charlene Polio, pp. 96–122. New York: Routlege, 2009.

Byram, Michael. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence: Revisited*. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 1997.

Casañ-Pitarch, Ricardo. "An Approach to Digital Game-Based Learning: Video-Games Principles and Applications in Foreign Language Learning." *Journal of Language Teaching and Research (Online)* 9.6 (2018): pp. 1147–59.

———. "Smartphone Serious Games as a Motivating Resource in the LSP Classroom." *Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology* 3.2 (2018): pp. 52-72.

Cavanagh, A. J., Aragón, O. R., Chen, X., Couch, B. A., Durham, M. F., Bobrownicki, A., ... & Graham, M. J.. "Student Buy-In to Active Learning in a College Science Course." *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 15.4 (2016): pp. 1–9.

Cavanagh, A. J., Chen, X., Bathgate, M., Frederick, J., Hanauer, D. I., & Graham, M. J. "Trust, Growth Mindset, and Student Commitment to Active Learning in a College Science Course." *CBE Life Sciences Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1-8. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/trust-growth-mindset-student-commitment-active/docview/1993015270/se-2, doi :https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.17-06-0107.

Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., & Nakata, M. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review* 66.1 (1996): pp. 60–92.

Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis, eds. *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures.* London: Psychology Press, 2000.

de Marivaux, Pierre. *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*. Paris: Flammarion, 2012.

Diderot, Denis. "Diderot : fragment du Salon de 1767, Vernet." *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 2.1 (1987): pp. 77–122.

———. *Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel, De la poésie dramatique, Paradoxe sur le comédien*. Paris: Flammarion, 2019.

———. « Le Salon de 1765. Essai sur la peinture ». *Œuvres de Denis Diderot*. Desrey & Deterville, 1798.

Diderot, Denis, and Jean Pol Caput. *Discours de la poésie dramatique: Avec une notice biographique, une notice historique et littéraire, des notes explicatives, une documentation thématique, des jugements, un questionnaire et des sujets de devoirs*. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1975.

Diderot, Denis. *Le Fils naturel ; Le père de famille ; Est-il bon ? est-il méchant ?* Flammarion, 2018.

Dodson, Sarah L. "FAQs: Learning Languages through Drama." *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education* 5.1 (2000): pp. 129–141.

Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Judit Kormos. "The Role of Individual and Social Variables in Oral Task Performance." *Language Teaching Research* 4.3 (2000): pp. 275–300.

Downs, Edward, Nicholas D. Bowman, and Jaime Banks. "A Polythetic Model of Player-Avatar Identification: Synthesizing Multiple Mechanisms." *Psychology of Popular Media Culture.*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2019, pp. 269-279. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/polythetic-model-player-avatar-identification/docview/1973992425/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000170.

Dundar, Sehriban. "Nine Drama Activities for Foreign Language Classrooms: Benefits and Challenges." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70 (2013): 1424–31.

Early, Margaret, and Sondra Marshall. "Adolescent ESL Students' Interpretation and Appreciation of Literary Texts: A Case Study of Multimodality." *Canadian Modern Language Review* 64.3 (2008): pp. 377–97.

Ellis, Rod. "Does Form-Focused Instruction Affect the Acquisition of Implicit Knowledge?: A Review of the Research." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 24.2 (2002): 223–36.

———. *SLA Research and Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Ferchaud, Arienne, et al. "Reducing Mental Health Stigma through Identification with Video Game Avatars with Mental Illness." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 11, pp. 2020-40. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/reducing-mental-health-stigma-through/docview/2448640749/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02240.

Finn, Jeremy D., and Kayla S. Zimmer. "Student Engagement: What Is It? Why Does It Matter?." In *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*, edited by Sandra L. Christenson, Amy L. Reschly, Cathy Wylie, pp. 97–131. Boston: Springer, 2012.

Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the age of Diderot*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Furstenberg, Gilberte. *Dans un quartier de Paris: An Interactive Documentary on CD-ROM*. New Haven: Yale University Pres, 1999.

Furstenberg, Gilberte, and Janet H. Murray. *A la rencontre de Philippe*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Global Languages, 1993.

Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, K., & Maillet, K. "Giving a Virtual Voice to the Silent Language of Culture: The Cultura Project." *Language Learning & Technology* 5.1 (2001): pp. 55–102.

Gass, Susan M. "Integrating Research Areas: A Framework for Second Language Studies." *Applied Linguistics* 9.2 (1988): pp. 198–217.

Gee, James Paul. *What Video Games have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy. Second Edition: Revised and Updated Edition.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Ghanbari, Nasim, Fatemeh Esmaili, and Mohammad Reza Shamsaddini. "The Effect of using Authentic Materials on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 5, no. 12, 2015, pp. 2459-68. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/effect-using-authentic-materials-on-iranian-efl/docview/1752636750/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0512.05.

Gilmore, Alex. "Authentic Materials and Authenticity in Foreign Language Learning." *Language Teaching* 40.2 (2007): 97–118.

Godwin-Jones, Robert. "Contributing, Creating, Curating: Digital Literacies for Language Learners." *Language Learning & Technology* 19.3 (2015): pp. 8–20.

———. "The Evolving Roles of Language Teachers: Trained Coders, Local Researchers, Global Citizens." *Language Learning & Technology* 19.1 (2015): pp. 10–22.

Grimes, Tom. *Captain Underpants Epic Choice-o-Rama*. Netflix, 2020, www.netflix.com

Harris, Joseph. "Corneille and Audience Identification." *The Modern Language Review* 104.3 (2009): 659–75.

Helm, Francesca, and Sarah Guth. "Telecollaboration and Language Learning." In *The Routledge Handbook of Language Learning and Technology*, edited by Fiona Farr and Liam Murray, pp. 267–80. London: Routledge, 2016.

Helme, Sue, and David Clarke. "Identifying Cognitive Engagement in the Mathematics Classroom." *Mathematics Education Research Journal* 13.2 (2001): pp. 133–53.

Hitosugi, Claire Ikumi, Matthew Schmidt, and Kentaro Hayashi. "Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) in the L2 Classroom: The Impact of the UN's Off-the-Shelf Videogame, Food Force, on Learner Affect and Vocabulary Retention." *Calico Journal* 31.1 (2014): pp. 19–39.

Holden, Christopher L., and Julie M. Sykes. "Leveraging Mobile Games for Place-Based Language Learning." *International Journal of Game-Based Learning* (IJGBL) 1.2 (2011): pp. 1–18.

Hubbard, Philip, and Claire Bradin Siskin. "Another Look at Tutorial CALL." *ReCALL* 16.2 (2004): pp. 448–61.

Jones, Linda C. "Supporting Listening Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition with Multimedia Annotations: The Students' Voice." *CALICO Journal* 21.1 (2003): pp. 41–65.

Kandalaft, M. R., Didehbani, N., Krawczyk, D. C., Allen, T. T., & Chapman, S. B. "Virtual Reality Social Cognition Training for Young Adults with High-Functioning Autism." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 43.1 (2013): pp. 34–44.

Kern, Richard, and Christine Develotte. *Screens and Scenes*. London: Routledge, 2018.

Klimmt, Christoph, Tilo Hartmann, and Andreas Frey. "Effectance and Control as Determinants of Video Game Enjoyment." *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* 10.6 (2007): pp. 845–48.

Konijn, Elly A., Marije Nije Bijvank, and Brad J. Bushman. "I Wish I were a Warrior: The Role of Wishful Identification in the Effects of Violent Video Games on Aggression in Adolescent Boys." *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 43, no. 4, 2007, pp. 1038-44. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/i-wish-were-warrior-role-wishful-identification/docview/614472566/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.4.1038.

Krashen, Stephen D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language*. First edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.

Kress, Gunther. *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Lambert, Craig, Jenefer Philp, and Sachiko Nakamura. "Learner-Generated Content and Engagement in Second Language Task Performance." *Language Teaching Research* 21.6 (2017): pp. 665–80.

Laurillard, Diana. *Rethinking University Teaching: A Conversational Framework for the Effective Use of Learning Technologies*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Leaguefeed.net. 2022. *LeagueFeed - League of Legends News, Updates and Tutorials*. www.leaguefeed.net/. Accessed 26 August 2022.

Levy, Michael. Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Lionel, Abel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. New York: Hill Wang, 1963.

Mahatmya, D., Lohman, B. J., Matjasko, J. L., & Farb, A. F. "Engagement Across Developmental Periods." In *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*, edited by Sandra L. Christenson, Amy L. Reschly, Cathy Wylie, pp. 45–63. Boston: Springer, 2012.

Miller, Megan, and Volker Hegelheimer. "The SIMs Meet ESL Incorporating Authentic Computer Simulation Games into the Language Classroom." *Interactive Technology and Smart Education* 3.4 (2006): pp. 311–28.

Mitchell, Rosamond, Florence Myles, and Emma Marsden. *Second Language Learning Theories*. London: Routledge, 2019.

Molière. *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*. Paris: Hatier, 2011.

Moranski, Kara, and P. Toth. "Small-Group Meta-Analytic Talk and Spanish L2 Development." In *Peer Interaction and Second Language Learning: Pedagogical Potential and Research Agenda*, edited by Masatoshi Sato and Susan Ballinger, pp. 291–316. Netherland: John Benjamins, 2016.

Munday, Pilar. "Duolingo. Gamified Learning through Translation." *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching* 4.2 (2017): pp. 194–98.

Nakamura, Sachiko, Linh Phung, and Hayo Reinders. "The Effect of Learner Choice on L2 Task Engagement." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 43.2 (2021): pp. 428–41.

Nation, Paul. *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001.

Neri, Ambra, Catia Cucchiarini, and Helmer Strik. "Automatic Speech Recognition for Second Language Learning: How and Why It Actually Works." *Speech Communication* (2003): pp. 1157–60.

Neville, David O. "Structuring Narrative in 3D Digital Game-Based Learning Environments to Support Second Language Acquisition." *Foreign Language Annals* 43.3 (2010): pp. 446–69.

Neville, David O., Brett E. Shelton, and Brian McInnis. "Cybertext Redux: Using Digital Game-Based Learning to Teach L2 Vocabulary, Reading, and Culture." *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 22.5 (2009): pp. 409–24.

Passig, David. "Revisiting the Flynn Effect through 3D Immersive Virtual Reality (IVR)." *Computers & Education* 88 (2015): pp. 327–42.

Peterson, Mark. *Computer Games and Language Learning*. Boston: Springer, 2016.

Philp, Jenefer, and Susan Duchesne. "Exploring Engagement in Tasks in the Language Classroom." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 36 (2016): pp. 50–72.

Philp, Jenefer, Rhonda Oliver, and Alison Mackey, eds. Second language acquisition and the younger learner: Child's play?. Vol. 23. John Benjamins Publishing, (2008).

Plass, Jan L., Bruce D. Homer, and Charles K. Kinzer. "Foundations of Game-Based Learning." *Educational Psychologist* 50.4 (2015): pp. 258–83.

Playstation.com. 2022. *PlayStation® Official Site: Consoles, Games, Accessories & More*. www.playstation.com/en-us/. Accessed 26 August 2022.

Plonsky, Luke, ed. *Advancing Quantitative Methods in Second Language Research*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Ranalli, Jim. "Learning English with The Sims: Exploiting Authentic Computer Simulation Games for L2 Learning." *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 21.5 (2008): pp. 441–55.

Reinhardt, Jonathon, and Julie M. Sykes. "Conceptualizing Digital Game-Mediated L2 Learning and Pedagogy: Game-Enhanced and Game-Based Research and Practice." In *Digital Games in Language Learning and Teaching*, edited by Hayo Reinders, pp. 32–49. Boston: Springer, 2012.

Reinhardt, Jonathon, and Steven Thorne. "Metaphors for Digital Games and Language Learning." In In *The Routledge Handbook of Language Learning and Technology*, edited by Fiona Farr and Liam Murray, pp. 441-56. London: Routledge, 2016.

Richards, Jack C. "The Role of Vocabulary Teaching." *TESOL Quarterly* (1976): pp. 77–89.

Richards, Jack C., and Theodore S. Rodgers. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Roth, Wolff-Michael, and Alfredo Jornet. "Situated Cognition." *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science* 4.5 (2013): pp. 463–78.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Lettre à d'Alembert*. Théâtre. Vol. 8. Paris: Deterville et Lefévre, 1817.

Salen, Katie, and Eric Zimmerman. "Game Design and Meaningful Play." *Handbook of Computer Game Studies* 59 (2005): pp. 59-79.

Sato, Masatoshi, and Susan Ballinger. "Raising Language Awareness in Peer Interaction: a Cross-Context, Cross-Methodology Examination." *Language Awareness* 21.1-2 (2012): pp. 157–79.

Scanlon, Claire. *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. the Reverend*. Universal Television, 2020, Netflix, www.netflix.com.

Schmidt, Richard W. "The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning." *Applied Linguistics* 11.2 (1990): pp. 129-158.

———. "Deconstructing Consciousness in Search of Useful Definitions for Applied Linguistics." *Consciousness in Second Language Learning* 11 (1994): pp. 237–326.

———. "Implicit Learning and the Cognitive Unconscious: Of Artificial Grammars and SLA." *Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages* 22 (1994): pp. 165–209.

Schmitt, Norbert. "Key issues in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary." In *Insights into Non-Native Vocabulary Teaching and Learning*, edited by Christian Abello-Contesse, Dr. Rubén Chacón-Beltrán, María del Mar Torreblanca-López, Rubén Chacón-Beltrán, 28–40. Towanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2010.

———. *Researching Vocabulary: A Vocabulary Research Manual*. Boston: Springer, 2010.

Schwienhorst, Klaus. "CALL and Autonomy: Settings and Contexts Variables in Technology-Enhanced Language Environments." *Independence* 43 (2008): pp. 13–15.

Seegert, Alf. "Doing There vs. Being There: Performing Presence in Interactive Fiction." *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 1.1 (2009): pp. 23–37.

Servotte, J. C., Goosse, M., Campbell, S. H., Dardenne, N., Pilote, B., Simoneau, I. L., & Ghuysen, A. "Virtual Reality Experience: Immersion, Sense of Presence, and Cybersickness." *Clinical Simulation in Nursing* 38 (2020): pp. 35–43.

Shirai, Akira. "Authentic or Artificial Materials: The Effects of Material-Types on L2 Motivation." *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* 36.4 (2013): pp. 422–41.

Silalahi, R. M. P., Nan, G., Santoso, W., & Puspitasari, V. A. "The Effect of Motivation and Attitudes toward Retention of Gamification-Based Autonomous Mandarin Learning Applications." *Journal of Optoelectronics Laser* 41.7 (2022): pp. 717–45.

Skinner, Ellen A., Thomas A. Kindermann, and Carrie J. Furrer. "A Motivational Perspective on Engagement and Disaffection: Conceptualization and Assessment of Children's Behavioral and Emotional Participation in Academic Activities in the Classroom." *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 69.3 (2009): pp. 493–525.

Slade, David. *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*. House of Tomorrow, 2018, Netflix, www.netflix.com.

Slater, Mel, and Sylvia Wilbur. "A Framework for Immersive Virtual Environments (FIVE): Speculations on the Role of Presence in Virtual Environments." *Presence: Teleoperators & Virtual Environments* 6.6 (1997): pp. 603–16.

Squire, Kurt D. "Video Game–Based Learning: An Emerging Paradigm for Instruction." *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 21.2 (2008): pp. 7–36.

States, Bert O. "The Dog on the Stage: Theater as Phenomenon." *New Literary History* 14.2 (1983): pp. 373–88.

Steinkuehler, Constance, and Sean Duncan. "Scientific Habits of Mind in Virtual Worlds." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 17.6 (2008): pp. 530–43.

Stets, Jan E., and Peter J. Burke. "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2000, pp. 224-237. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/identity-theory-social/docview/619651305/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870.

Storch, Neomy. "Metatalk in a Pair Work Activity: Level of Engagement and Implications for Language Development." *Language Awareness* 17.2 (2008): pp. 95–114.

Swink, Steve. *Game Feel: A Game Designer's Guide to Virtual Sensation*. Burlington, MAL Morgan Kaufmann, 2008.

Sylvén, Liss Kerstin, and Pia Sundqvist. "Gaming as Extramural English L2 Learning and L2 Proficiency among Young Learners." *ReCALL* 24.3 (2012): pp. 302–21.

———. "Similarities between Playing World of Warcraft and CLIL." *Apples-Journal of Applied Language Studies* 6.2 (2012): pp. 113–30.

Taylor, John L., and Rex Walford. *Simulation in the Classroom*. New York: Penguin, 1972.

Teixeira, Annalisa Brielle Corioso. "The Role of Keyboarding in the Development and Retention of L2 Spanish Vocabulary." 2017. University of California, Davis, PhD dissertation. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/role-keyboarding-development-retention-l2-spanish/docview/1874473331/se-2.

Tekinbas, Katie Salen, and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

"The Statistics Portal." *Statista*. www.statista.com/.

The Trail to Oregon. StarKid Productions. YouTube 2014. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxKCX-UvPrI

Thorne, Steven L. "The'Intercultural Turn'and Language Learning in the Crucible of New Media." In *Telecollaboration 2.0 for Language and Intercultural Learning*, edited by F. Helm & S. Guth, pp. 139–64. Bern: Peter Lang, 2010.

Thorne, Steven L., and Jonathon Reinhardt. "'Bridging Nctivities,' New Media Literacies, and Advanced Foreign Language Proficiency." *CALICO Journal* 25.3 (2008): pp. 558–72.

Thorne, Steven L., Ingrid Fischer, and Xiaofei Lu. "The Semiotic Ecology and Linguistic Complexity of an Online Game World." *ReCALL* 24.3 (2012): pp. 279–301.

Thorne, Steven L., Rebecca W. Black, and Julie M. Sykes. "Second Language Use, Socialization, and Learning in Internet Interest Communities and Online Gaming." *The Modern Language Journal* 93 (2009): pp. 802–21.

Trepte, Sabine, and Leonard Reinecke. "Avatar Creation and Video Game Enjoyment: Effects of Life-Satisfaction, Game Competitiveness, and Identification with the Avatar." *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2010, pp. 171-84. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/avatar-creation-video-game-enjoyment-effects-life/docview/821594518/se-2, doi:https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000022.

Trepte, Sabine, Leonard Reinecke, and Katharina-Maria Behr. "Creating Virtual Alter Egos or Superheroines? Gamers' Strategies of Avatar Creation in Terms of Gender and Sex." *International Journal of Gaming and Computer-Mediated Simulations (IJGCMS)* 1.2 (2009): pp. 52–76.

Turkle, Sherry. *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*. New York: Penguin, 2016.

Van Doremalen, J., Boves, L., Colpaert, J., Cucchiarini, C., & Strik, H. "Evaluating Automatic Speech Recognition-Based Language Learning Systems: A Case Study." *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 29.4 (2016): pp. 833–51.

Van Lier, Leo. *Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy, and Authenticity*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Van Looy, J., Courtois, C., & De Vocht, M. "Player Identification in Online Games: Validation of a Scale for Measuring Identification in MMOGs." *Media Psychology* 15.2 (2012): pp. 197–221.

VHL Central. https://www.vhlcentral.com/. 2022.

Wang, C., Cavanagh, A. J., Bauer, M., Reeves, P. M., Gill, J. C., Chen, X., & Graham, M. J. "A Framework of College Student Buy-in to Evidence-Based Teaching Practices in STEM: The Roles of Trust and Growth Mindset." *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 20.4 (2021).

Weil, S. A., Hussain, T., Brunyé, T., Sidman, J., & Spahr, L. "The Use of Massive Multi-Player Gaming Technology for Military Training: A Preliminary Evaluation." *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* 49.12. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2005.

Wilkins, D. A. "Vocabulary." *Linguistics in language teaching*. Milton Park, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire: Taylor and Francis, 1972.

Yamazaki, Kasumi. "Computer-Assisted Learning of Communication (CALC): A Case Study of Japanese Learning in a 3D Virtual World." *ReCALL* 30.2 (2018): pp. 214–31.

———. "The Effective Use of a 3D Virtual World in a JFL Classroom: Evidence from Discourse Analysis." In *Technology-Supported Learning In and Out of the Japanese Language Classroom: Advances in Pedagogy, Teaching and Research*, edited by rica Zimmerman and Abigail McMeekin, pp. 227–51. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2019. www.multilingual-matters.com/display.asp?isb=9781788923491

Yancey, Kevin P., and Burr Settles. "A Sleeping, Recovering Bandit Algorithm for Optimizing Recurring Notifications." *Proceedings of the 26th ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining*. 2020: pp. 3008–16. https://doi.org/10.1145/3394486.3403351.

Yazzie-Mintz, Ethan, and Kim McCormick. "Finding the Humanity in the Data: Understanding, Measuring, and Strengthening Student Engagement." In *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*, edited by Sandra L. Christenson, Amy L. Reschly, Cathy Wylie, pp. 743–61. Boston: Springer, 2012.