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Jacob L. Molina

*The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*

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BATTLE ROYALE VIDEO GAMES AND THEIR IMPACT ON  
FIRST-YEAR WRITING STUDENTS: COMPARING  
THE WRITING PROCESS OF GAMERS  
TO NON-GAMERS

A Thesis

by

JACOB L. MOLINA

Submitted to the Graduate College of  
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2020

Major Subject: English



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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Colin Charlton  
Chair of Committee

Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman  
Committee Member

Dr. Mark Noe  
Committee Member

December 2020



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## ABSTRACT

Molina, Jacob M., Battle Royale Video Games and their Impact on First-Year Writing Students: Comparing the Writing Process of Gamers to Non-Gamers, Master of Arts, December 2020, 46 pp., 3 figures, 13 references, 1 appendix.

This study will examine the ways in which Battle Royale (BR) video games impact the writing process of first-year writing students at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley by comparing the students that play video games recreationally to the non-gaming group. The study will focus on how the recreational use of video games impacts writing by exploring the ways that gamers engage in these video games. By comparing BR gamers to non-gaming students, these differences will be highlighted through the evaluation of surveys and information gathered through research.

Some of the areas of the writing process that stand out are cooperative writing or teamwork, planning/ brainstorming, problem solving, and critical thinking. Since teamwork, strategizing, and analyzing situations in BR games is essential for success, these are the areas that will likely show within the student's writing process. This study uncovers the intersections between BR games and the writing process.





## DEDICATION

The completion of my master thesis studies would not have been possible without the support from my family and professors from the university. My mother and father, Kim and Mario Molina, along with my siblings played a major role in inspiring me as well as encouraging me to accomplish this goal. I want to express my gratitude for the love and support that my girlfriend, Maria Cepeda, had for me through this journey. She is the one that encouraged me to pursue this degree and believed that I would succeed. I also want to say that I am grateful for the relationships that I built with my professors throughout my career in grad school. Thank you all for the love and support that you had for me through this exciting journey.



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I want to say that I am forever grateful for Dr. Colin Charlton, chair of my thesis committee. He encouraged me to explore the topic that I find passion in and helped guide me through the process of writing my thesis. From providing me with guidance on research design to answering my various questions multiple times a day, I would not have been able to complete this project without him. Great thanks also goes out to my thesis committee members, Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman and Dr. Mark Noe. Their input to shape my project and guide my ideas helped ensure the success of my work.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Video games and literature have not always been seen as compatible partners in the learning and writing process of students until recently within the academic field. This has changed due to the recent resurgence in video game popularity. My fascination with video games started from when I was around seven years old. I had my *Gameboy Color* in my hand and was walking through Target with my parents to pick out a game. At that point, I had played video games with my brothers on the *Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)*, but I was not involved with them on an obsessive level just yet. My eyes caught a flash of the game *Pokémon Crystal Version* because of its reflective crystal-colored box and blue-colored pocket monster that stood out on the cover. From that day, my love and desire to play video games grew up into this point in my life where I play video games a couple hours each day and collect retro consoles and games.

Through the years, video games have evolved and expanded into many different genres similar to that of novels or movies. One of the most popular genres of video games at the moment is battle royale (BR). These video games are set up to encourage strategizing, teamwork, and problem solving. BR games are organized where there is only one winner at the end of the competition. All players fight until there is only one man or team left standing. Video game that fall into this genre are *Call of Duty: Warzone (COD: Warzone)*, *Fortnite*, and *PlayerUnknown*

*Battlegrounds (PUBG)*. The games are shooter-style games that require similar skills and tactics to become the last man standing. Since the resurgence of video games, people have taken to streaming services like Twitch and YouTube to watch others play these games. This has certainly contributed to the sudden rise in popularity and growth of this specific genre. This is where my theory comes in. Video games can without a doubt be used as a tool to help student within the classroom. The reason for this is that video games create their own space where the player is encouraged to learn and adapt to what the game is throwing at them. With my background in gaming, I have grown to enjoy and take part in the BR gaming community. The BR games that I play the most are *Fortnite* and *COD: Warzone*. I find that these games are great ways to test my skills by playing solo or with friends. That is what is great about these types of games, they encourage teamwork when playing in groups, so it helps to build skills that involve communication. With my writing process, I have found that communication is a great tool to brainstorm, connect ideas, and further explore the topic I am writing about. The term communication during the writing process can mean cooperative writing, receiving feedback, discussion the topic, or even talking to a friend/family member while taking a break from writing.

Additionally, for this project, I want to look into this genre of video game because it is one of the most popular genres, and I believe that the skills it builds may impact the writing process of people who may engage with them. In my experience, playing BR video games has helped me become more aware of what is happening within the virtual space. I am often analyzing, strategizing, and communicating with my teammates, if I am playing with friends, which are skills that may translate well when considering the writing process one takes when starting or working on an assignment. Since this genre is relatively new in the gaming scene, I

am looking to compare the writing process of BR gamers to non-gamers in first-year writing courses at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). The Rhetoric, Composition and Literary Studies department at UTRGV has a focus on educating first-year writing students in ways that are unique and useful to the students, and since video games are popular, this area needs to be analyzed. Video games have been used in classroom settings before, so I am looking at the recreational use of BR video games and the way they may impact the writing process of students who play these games during their own personal time. I am doing this by using a theory from James Paul Gee (2007). Although Gee does not address the use of video games outside of the classroom impacting the writing process of students, I am going to use his theory as a base to draw upon and create my own ideas and philosophy on these two subjects and their intersection.

The main resource that I aim to use and draw ideas from is James Paul Gee's book *What Video Games have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy* (2007). In this book, he discusses the different ways that video games may help students learn within the classroom or educational setting. He writes, "They [video games] situate meaning in a multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world" (Gee 40-41). This is the theory that Gee uses in this book, and the one that I am going to draw from when constructing a new theory on the impact that BR video games have on first-year writing students at UTRGV. The relationship that one creates with the video game and with another player may have an impact on their real-life tasks like their job or schoolwork. In this case, I am going to focus on the player and skills they practice and master in the virtual space and the way they employ them while working on a writing assignment. Gee does not address the ways it may impact the player's everyday life, so I am to explore that uncharted territory drawing

from his ideals. Also, this book is outdated with the genre of video games that are discussed since the BR genre is relatively new. Gee's theory is successful in expressing what he is trying to teach the reader, but I hope to explore new and alter ideas that assist in the creation of an expanded theory.

Additionally, I want to discuss one source that describes exactly what a video game is and the criteria that makes a game a game. Jane McGonigal's book, *Reality is Broken*, explains the four defining traits that all games have that make them into a game which directly translates over to BR video games. I believe that discussing what a game actually is before delving deeper into the other sources that support this project is important to create a background knowledge as to what BR video games are and how they encourage the player to use skills that can be used within their writing process as well. BR video games follow the exact traits that McGonigal describes in her chapter titled "What Exactly is a Game?" by detailing the four traits that each game should have. In the literature review chapter, I will fully explain the purpose of this source within this project's goals.

I will also address the idea of flow and fiero from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and bring the ideas back to the overall purpose of this project. I have gathered these ideas from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi described by Zac Hill in relation to *Magic The Gathering*, a card game. Hill writes an article about the state of flow and fiero that players often fall into when playing games, and this relates directly to BR video games. Flow is described as a state where the player or person is reacting rather than thinking. Their body is in complete control and reacting to each situation they are put into without hesitation. In video games, specifically BR games, the player needs to act as fast as possible when engaging in a fight with the enemy to create the most successful situation possible. In this paper, I will discuss the ways that flow and fiero

experienced in BR video games may transfer over into the students writing process. Often, writers fall into a state of flow when writing about something they enjoy, so I am going to theorize the possibility that flow and fiero are present in BR gamers writing and connecting them to Gee's ideas.

I am also going to pull the ideas from Deborah Brandt's book *Literacy and Learning*. I am going to focus on her chapter titled "Sponsors of Literacy" which focuses on the different types of sponsors that help to "enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy" (25). Video games, specifically BR games, fall into the description that Brandt describes in this chapter. I am going to delve deeper into the way that BR video games can act as a sponsor of literacy by exposing the player to a multimodal space with different forms of literacy. In the literature review chapter, I will explain the ways that BR video games can act as a sponsor in detail and how this ties back to the overall purpose of this project. I believe that using a source that focuses on literacy will help this project provide more insight as to how BR video games may impact the writing process of gamers.

Finally, I will use articles from Ian Bogost and others that discuss the history of video games. Bogost is another scholar that emphasizes the use of video games to assist in the learning process. However, he most often discusses the rhetoric of video games. He delves deeper into the way video games mirror society and the ways they may be integrated into learning. He also encourages the use of video games as a media that is to be used similar to novels and movies. His ideas and concepts are unique and detailed which is why I am using his works alongside Gee to create my own theory and philosophy. His detailed analysis of the rhetoric of various games proves to be useful to this study in the way that it provides insight into how video games have already been used in schools to teach. Since I am looking at the writing process of first-year

writing students, the resources gathered from Bogost and other scholars will be used in a way that will further this study's success. The sources are valid and successful in their own respective area of expertise, but since the intersection that I aim to examine has not been explored, I will draw from their theories, ideals, and philosophies in an attempt to create my own.

I am using mixed methods with this research. This study will consist of an initial survey that is intended to cast a net to draw in students that will fit into what I aim to examine. Since I am looking at first-year writing students, I sent the survey via email to all students from one freshman group of students. I was to be given access to these students through the Writing and Language Studies department by contacting professors that were teaching freshman classes. The initial surveys are to gather general information about each student's writing process and their relationship to video games. The survey is to be used to encourage the students that play battle royale video games to participate, but I collected all data from gamers and non-gamers. The reason for this is to gain an understanding of the number of students that play video games in a recreational setting. The quantitative data was intended to be collected and used to help create the questions that are asked during the qualitative section of this study. This was not possible due to some restrictions and limitations among the Covid-19 pandemic, and I will discuss this later.

Additionally, I planned to select eight students from the group of surveys to further interview. I added a few write-in areas within the survey to help fill out the qualitative section. I planned to choose four students that are BR gamers and four that do not game at all. Among this group, I wanted to choose two males and two females in each respective group to keep the study fair and unbiased. Regarding the question and form of the interviews, the participants would have received forms of consent that inform them that they would be asked to provide a writing sample from a previous writing assignment in one of their first-year writing courses at UTRGV.

The participants would have been interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The interview questions were constructed from the data collected in the initial survey. The main goal of the interviews was to gain data that would instruct my qualitative analysis of this data. To collect as much information as possible, each interview would have been recorded. This would have been strictly audio, and the recordings were to be used for transcription only. Once transcribed, the audio recordings would have been deleted entirely.

Furthermore, I want to discuss the risks and biases of this study. Since this study is involving recreational hobbies and the student's writing process, so the risks are minimal. The students were informed that their participation is voluntary, and they reserve the right to skip any question they may not want to answer. Regarding biases, I am aware that my knowledge and enjoyment of video games may impact the way I perceive and interpret data. However, my foundation in video games will only serve as a tool to further comprehend the untouched crossroads of battle royale video games and the writing process of first-year writing students at UTRGV. The biases that I have on video games and my enthusiasm for the expansion of the knowledge relating to English studies helped keep this study on track to provide rich data.

The methodology that I have chosen to use in this study was chosen to provide the best results possible. The reason for this is that there is not a vast number of studies on video games and BR games are relatively new, so I relied on the data collected from the survey. Also, through working on this MA thesis, there is great benefit in being able to look at this specific group of students to provide great insight on UTRGV practices. The participants of this study were able to express their relationship with video games openly while providing great insight into their unique writing process through the surveys. With the use of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, this study will be able to provide the most successful and effective data.



Finally, I want to address the way this study will be organized and how the research and findings will be presented. This project will consist of five chapters and will follow in chronological order from the start of my data collection to the analysis of the data. The five chapters are as follows: Introduction, Literature review/ source analysis, data analysis, and conclusion/ application. Since this is the introduction, I will start by discussing the structure of the literature review/ source analysis. This will be organized in a manner that shows that Gee's book is where I will gather the theory that I am going to construct and change to create my own. From there I will discuss and analyze the additional sources that will be directly referenced in my paper, and how they will impact this study. This chapter's goal is to show the ways that the sources I gathered will benefit this study.

The final two chapters are the results and application of those results that are gathered. This section will also have a self-analysis that provide additional insight through my own personal experiences with BR games and writing. The data analysis will be structured similar to the other chapters, in chronological order. In this section, I will analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the survey. I will analyze them together since the survey has both sections grouped within it. The purpose of this section is to present the results by the analysis of the gathered data which includes the survey and a self-analysis. The final section is the conclusion/ application. In this final chapter, I will discuss the completed project and the data gathered. This section will focus on looking to future application for the results that are apparent. I will look to theorize about ways to apply this new knowledge into our field's studies including, classroom settings, writing instruction, additional research, etc. I will also address additional research that I look forward to conducting in the future.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Although I have a few different sources that I am using for this project, there is one main excerpt from James Paul Gee that I am focusing on. It is from his book titled *What Video Games have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy* (2007). He writes, “They (video games) situate meaning in a multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world” (Gee 40-41). There is a great deal of information and ideas to break down from this theory as it is the backbone on which I have formed my own theories on how BR video games impact first-year writing students at UTRGV. I will also be referencing articles about the history of BR games and some additional sources that help support this project. This chapter will be used to showcase these sources, starting with the history of BR games, that helped me further my research and ideas. I will explain their role within this project in great detail to express the individual importance in this chapter.

Before jumping into the sources that are used within this project, I want to discuss the that I read that did not provide any information on the recreational use of video games. Since most of the focus in research has been used to explore the use gaming within the classroom, I have chosen to look into the ways that playing video games as a hobby impact the writing process of BR gamers. There are many different sources that I read at the beginning of this

project to focus down my ideas that did not make it into the final topic, so I want to address them. These different articles and excerpts influenced my topic by showing me what I did not want to research. They exposed me to ideas like using gaming to encourage students within the classroom, using video games as a text, gamification, etc. Although these types of research have their place within the field, they did not make it into this project's cited sources. I am going to include them within the reference list since they did indirectly impact the direction of this project.

Before jumping into the history of BR video games, I want to discuss the traits that define what a video game really is. I believe that this will help present what a BR video game is and why it is considered a game. This is important to the project's goals because any considerable background information on this genre will be more understandable to one that has never encountered the term battle royale. In *Reality is Broken* by Jane McGonigal, she goes into detail about the defining traits that every game should have. She writes, "When you strip away the genre difference and the technological complexities, all games share four defining traits: a goal, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation" (21). These four traits are present in every BR video game that is being used in this project. It is important to compare these four defining traits to the most popular of the games in the BR genre at the moment, COD: Warzone. The goal of this game is obvious, to be the last team standing. The player will also need to follow the in-game rules that are set by the imagined world and the creators of the game. The rules keep the game moving forward and lead the players to communicate/ work together to push towards the win. The feedback system for this game would be eliminating a player and raising the player's score. The game keeps track of each kill, the score, and the amount of damage that the player has collected over the course of each game. Finally, all video games involve voluntary participation.

To me, this is the most crucial trait that makes a game enjoyable. Being forced to play a BR video game would turn it into work rather than play. McGonigal writes, “Playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles” (22). Each player is voluntarily playing these BR video games and decides to struggle through the imagined world experiencing challenges that leads them to become the last team alive. McGonigal’s description of the four defining traits helps to further explain why people play video games and what makes video games considered a game. Next, I will dive into the history of the BR genre.

I want to jump into the history of BR games to give a solid background as to what this genre of video game is. They had an interesting start and slowly built their way up to be one of the most popular genre of video games across the world today. This information was gathered from Hornshaw’s “The history of Battle Royale: From mod to worldwide phenomenon” (2019) and Allan’s “Well-known battlegrounds: the rise of battle royale games” (2019). In simplified terms, BR games are usually shooter-style games where players compete to be the last man, or team, standing. The last man is rewarded with a victory screen that shows them that they have succeed at what all of the others could not. This genre of game is set up to where once you are eliminated from the round, you are out of the game and cannot return. This is called “permadeath.” It creates higher stakes where the player must be strategic and take advantage of each encounter they have with any opponent. This can be extremely interesting when you throw in the concept of duos or squads, or groups of three or four, because the player will be forced into planning out their attack and fill a specific role within the team. Will one player be aggressive while his team stays back and provides cover fire? Will one player take on the role as the medic and provide medical assistance to heal his teammates? Will the whole team take a passive approach and avoid encounters as much as possible? This is all dependent on each

individual player and/ or team. Each experience for the players is unique to the way they want to play the game, and each individual game is unique in the sense that there will be a lobby full of new players experiencing the game in their own way. That is why BR video games are so different from that of a multiplayer shooter or story-based game.

For example, *Call of Duty (COD)* is one of the most popular shooter multiplayer video games on the market right now, and the gameplay is a traditional multiplayer where the player runs around each map and eliminates enemies until they are eliminated themselves. However, they respawn on the map and continue to play as they did before they were eliminated. Each game is unique, but there are limitations to the way that each player can engage in the gameplay. The multiplayer is generally set up with two teams, and the team with the highest score at the end of a set amount of time wins. Comparing this to BR games, there is no set amount of time. Instead, there are zone that are constantly moving and getting smaller to encourage teams to engage with others until one team is left standing. The zones are set up to be located in different areas of the large map and move differently each game. *COD: Warzone* is the BR version of the *Call of Duty* game that is similar in the aesthetics and cosmetics, but the BR version has all the aspects of BR games that I just described. *COD: Warzone* encourages strategies and tactics that put the player, or team, in a position to win the game. Teamwork and communication are both essential tactics for a team to successfully achieve a victory in all BR games.

Before diving into the history of this genre, I feel that I should discuss the three games that I will be using for this project. The three specific BR games that I will be using are *COD: Warzone*, *Fortnite*, and *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG)*. These are some of the more relevant and popular BR titles during this time with *COD: Warzone* being the most popular at this point in time. *Fortnite* is the title that brought this genre into the spotlight, but it has fallen

into second place over the last few months. *PUBG* and *Fortnite* are the two games that popularized the genre and helped turn it into what it is today with the millions of worldwide followers and gamers. All three of these games play similarly with their own twists on how this genre of video game plays. You can play solo, duos, or squads, and the last man, or team, standing is the winner of that one game. If you die you are dead for the rest of the match unless you are playing on a team. If the player is playing duos or squads, they have the chance of being revived by their teammate if the opportunity arises. However, this is still considered to be permadeath since the team has to visit a buy station to revive a teammate. These games all have the moving zones to force players into different encounters with other players within each game. These three games are representative of the entire shooter-style battle royale genre since the other BR games that are not shooters have similar rules and goals.

Delving deeper into where this genre of video game originated, it is clear that BR games came from a unique start and grew into a genre that is one of the most popular worldwide. The initial genre of video game that started BR games was survival. Hornshaw explains, “The genre as we know it was born largely from multiplayer mods in open-world survival games... territory infested with enemies such as zombies and other players, forcing them to rely on their wits to find or make the items they needed to stay alive in those games.” From these early games, there were two new BR games that were created: *Fortnite* and *PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds*. These two games were the start of the genre creating a new form of gameplay that merged the competitiveness of multiplayer games and the intensity of survival games. Out of the two, *Fortnite* grew greatly in popularity largely due to the game being free-to-play. Allan writes, “By 2018, it had spread across all the big console and mobile platforms and had a player base of over 200 million as of November 2018.” Free-to-play is just what it says it is; it is a game that is free

of any charge to play the game, but there may be skins and tools for sale. These skins and tools do not offer any advantage to the player that purchased them. All players, non-paying and paying, are on equal playing fields. The strategy of free-to-play games is to encourage downloads since there is no fee and keep players interested with additional skins, events, and general content. All three of the titles I am using for this study are free-to-play.

Additionally, when discussing the history of BR games, the drastic jump in popularity was not just due to the games being fun and entertaining to play. The massive boost in popularity was due to perfect timing with a streaming service called Twitch rising in popularity and a resurgence in consumers playing video games. Twitch is a streaming service, that is partnered with Amazon, that provides a space where gamers can broadcast their gaming, as well as other hobbies, live to views. They are able to communicate with viewers live with a chatroom where they can engage with the streamer. The viewers also have the ability to donate to the streamer to help fund their career of playing video games. This streaming service has been around since 2011 but gained popularity with gaming becoming more acceptable around 2015-2016. BR games fell perfectly between these two important aspects and became the genre that they are today. Since BR games are strategic and slow-paced, popular streamers have a chance to talk with their viewers in the middle of their gameplay. They often have time, in between battle with enemies, to look at the chat and reply to the viewers creating a relatively responsive and engaging space for the viewers. Since there were millions of people watching their favorite streamers play these games, which were often free-to-play, the viewers would often download the game as well. It is important to discuss this streaming service because of the major impact it had on the uprising of BR video games. It is true that Twitch helped build the BR genre, but the genre itself had a sort of cult following of its own that grew as the games improved. Also, the

shift from open-world survival games that encouraged players to strategize and communicate to BR games with similar mechanics was a great start of the genre. Without the major factors that came into play throughout the history of BR games, there would not be the millions of players playing games like *COD: Warzone*, *Fortnite*, and *PUBG*. BR games have a massive history that starting from 2017 which shows why it is one of the most popular genres in video games history.

Before jumping into the main quote that I will build my theories and ideas on, I want to summarize James Paul Gee's book, *What Video Games have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacies*, to fully explain why this text is vital to this project's success. In general, this book focuses on the different ways that video games can be used to influence learning and increase literacies within the classroom. Video games have a unique way of teaching players the mechanics of the games while encouraging the player to push through difficulties and improve their skills. The idea is that since video games do this well, taking the tactics that video games use and implementing them in the classroom may prove to be beneficial to teachers and students. Gee argues that these principles within the games can be used in a classroom setting to encourage and teach students in a way that will be more engaging. Other than this point, he is expressing that whatever the player is doing within that video game is often good learning. He writes, "Real learning comes from the social and interactional systems within which a powerful technology like video games is placed, not from the game all by itself" (216). Gee makes sure to explain that not all video games are good examples of tools to use to learn. Good games that encourage learning follow a specific set of principles that leads the player through the game while teaching new mechanics to use in the upcoming challenges. The player will practice this skill while the game throws them into new situations with new skills to learn which further guides the learning of the player.



This short summary is not to discredit any of Gee's insightful ideas and theories throughout his book. It is to provide background detail explaining the significance of this major source's role in this project. I feel that it is vital to have a basic understanding of what this book has to offer before focusing on the one excerpt I am forming my ideas and theories around. Gee's ideas are what influenced my desire to uncover the intersections between video games and writing. Most of the games that Gee discusses in this book are not played as frequently and have fallen out of popularity. Since there are games being produced and released in great quantities, many games fall out of popularity fairly quickly. However, the new wave of BR genre games are relevant since there are millions of people playing these games. I do not see this genre losing steam over the next few years.

The source that I want to focus on next is by Gee, and I talked about this earlier in this chapter. I want to break this excerpt down in a way that provides the most for this project's goals. I believe that this excerpt from Gee provides enough insight into the world of video games that I can draw from to form my own ideas related to BR games in particular. Although Gee does not discuss BR games since this book is from 2007, it provides insight into the multimodal space that is the virtual world created by video games. He writes, "They (video games) situate meaning in a multimodal space" (40). I have interpreted this quote and found that it provides a vital take on how BR games may be viewed and the intersections that this project attempts to bring to the foreground. Multimodality, in this case explained by Gee, is the different forms of literacy that occur within the virtual space that is within each respective video game. The different literacies within video games can be dialogue within the game, character interactions with others, player verbal communication with other players, written communication within the game, etc. What Gee is expressing in this quote is that video games create and place meaning to

these literacies within the space that each video game is situated in. The way that this quote will influence this projects goals of finding ways that BR video games impact the writing process of first-year writing students at UTRGV is by explaining the different modes of literacy that are situated in this specific genre of video game.

Within the multimodal space that is within these BR games, there are a couple different forms of literacy. The first, and most important to this project, is the communication that occurs between teammate when playing. The players communication to work out strategies while moving through difficult and intense situations show the unique literacy that the players use when playing this specific genre of game. Other forms of literacy within the game are dialogue, menus, and in-game character interactions with enemy players. Although the latter forms of literacy may have their place in the writing process of students, I want to focus in on the first form of communication between players. With each team, whether it be two or four players, there is vital verbal and character movement that each member uses when strategizing and making in-game decisions. BR games are built to encourage this type of communication between teammate to create the best possible chance to win the game. Being able to relay information quickly and efficiently to a teammate is key in BR games. Most often, players are team up with friends which creates an environment where they are able to communicate comfortable. This leads to better teamwork which creates a more successful squad leading to more wins.

The next quote from the excerpt I have taken from Gee's book reads, "...through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds" (40-41). BR video games started off as survival games that have evolved into a unique blend of intensity and skill that encourages players to learn the mechanics and use BR-specific skills to be successful. This "imagined world," explained by Gee, is detailed in a specific way

that is unique to each BR game, and the player is experiencing these worlds with the real interactions they are having with teammates and enemies all together. These experiences, although inside the video game, are happening in real-time with the player reacting and thinking critically about each real situation they are encountering. Each player experiences problems that they are actively solving throughout each round of whichever BR game they choose to play. Communication takes place in these experiences to assist in the problem-solving process for each team. Whether the players are planning out their form of attack by discussing each player's role in an ambush or calling out enemies in the heat of an intense battle, the players are met with issues and working through them with communication and teamwork. Actively communicating with the team leads to a more successful mission which will lead the team to victory. That being said, BR games are the imagined worlds that these players are experiencing problems to be solved and intricacies to be explored.

The final part of the quote focuses on one last point that guides the ideas in this project. Gee writes, "...and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world" (41). The relationships and identities that are crafted within the imagined world of a video game are not trapped within that multimodal space. The social relationships between teammate and the player's relationship with the BR game are as real as any built within modern society as well as identities. Talking, sharing personal information, laughing, and teamwork are all aspect to how relationships are built, and this type of relationship building happens within each of the three BR games I am using for this project. Identities reflect what a person does and who they are, so if video games are a major part of a person's life, that person's identity will reflect that. The identities and relationships that are unique to each player within each BR game are formed through these different experiences and problem solving and transfer over directly to

these player's real-life identities and relationships. Each player is impacted by BR games in different ways, but the aspects that are created within the multimodal space of these games reflect into their real life.

The next source I want to discuss is from Deborah Brandt's book *Literacy and Learning*. I am going to focus on one specific chapter from her book called "Sponsors of Literacy." The ideas that she describes in this chapter are beneficial to the purpose of this project. She discusses the different forms of sponsors and the way they may impact the literacy of the sponsored. She writes, "Sponsors, as I have come to think of them, are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy" (25). Sponsors are any agents that impact the literacy of the one that is sponsored, and I believe that BR video games fall into this category that Brandt is describing. She goes on to describe the different forms of commercial sponsors like "the magazines, peddled encyclopedias, essay contests, radio and television programs, toys, fan clubs, writing tools, and so on, from which so much experience with literacy was derived" (27). These are older sponsors, and BR video games, being a relatively new genre, have been left off of this list only because they did not exist. However, due to the popularity of video games and BR video games, they will fall perfectly into this description from Brandt.

The sponsorship from BR video games works similarly to that of television and radio. This sponsor encourages the sponsored gamers to learn the different forms of literacy within that multimodal space. Since there are many forms of literacy including player to player, player to environment, the language of the gamer's community, and more, the player is often motivated to learn the new literacy to be able to fully enjoy their gaming experience. The exploration of a new literacy will lead the player to communicate with other gamers, read articles/ statistics, and

watching videos to learn the new literacy. This is the same across the BR video games that I have used within this project. Each game has its own new literacies that the sponsored desires to explore. This is important to note since actively seeking out new forms of literacy can prove to be useful to a first-year writing student and their writing process. This desire to improve new literacy can directly transfer over into the student's writing process in a couple of ways that are similar to the ways it happens within BR video games. With a new writing assignment that may involve a new topic, the student may actively seek out others to collaborate on ideas regarding this new literacy. This bring me back that I discussed earlier in this chapter within Gee's book. Students that play BR games may be comfortable with communication/ cooperation which will lead them to actively learn this new form of literacy. Another way this may impact their writing process is improving their research skills. Since the sponsored in learning a new literacy, they will need to research the topic. Often, in BR video games, the player will research strategies and tactics that will improve their skills within the imagined world, and this takes time and research to find reliable sources. These skills in researching new literacies will provide the student with a background knowledge on how to find sources that are reliable to them. Next, I want to bring in the ideas of flow and fiero to provide additional information on how BR video games can impact a student's writing process.

Additionally, I want to discuss the state of flow and fiero described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and discussed by Zac Hill in his article "Sculpting Flow and Fiero." The state of flow is explained to be an experience where the person is functioning at peak performance accomplishing their goal with utmost success. Hill writes, "Csikszentmihalyi found that central to the flow experience were three factors: clear goals, rigidly defined rules of engagement, and the potential for measured improvement in the context of those goals and rules." Within BR

video games, the player may focus into the imagined world to solve the problems that are set by the game while reacting rather than think about what they are doing. They will be successfully accomplishing their goals while communicating to their team to lead them towards a win.

Another term that is often attached to Csikszentmihalyi is *fiero*. *Fiero* is described as the additional experience that comes after this flow state. Hill writes, “If flow represents the height of the human capacity to learn? and therefore to triumph? *fiero* is the payoff that happens once we do that.” *Fiero* occurs when the final screen pops up saying that the team is the last team alive in that match. The player is overcome with a feeling of joy and adrenaline-rushing experience that only occurs after the state of flow. I believe that this state of flow and experience of *fiero* that occurs during BR video games may transfer over into the writing process of first-year writing students.

The state of flow and *fiero* are both important terms to discuss in this study because it does not only pertain to video games. When discussing BR video games and writing, flow and *fiero* may be one part of playing BR video games that transfers over into the student’s writing. Flow and *fiero* is something that will be present in the BR players gaming experience, and it is quite possible that they will experience this within their writing as well. Both BR video games and writing have the three factors that contribute to the experience of flow. Students that are experienced in falling into this flow state may be able to do so when the “clear goals, rigidly defined rules of engagement, and the potential for measured improvement in the context of those goals and rules” are all met by the writing assignment that they are working on. The students will be able to fall back on this experience to work successfully on their writing assignment to show the best results. The overlapping of the two topics, BR video games and writing, show will provide the player/ writer with the tools to improve their writing process.

The final article I am going to draw information about a different look into classroom application to help support the ideas I have used from Gee is from Ian Bogost. In Bogost's article, "The Rhetoric of Video Games," he discusses the rhetoric of video games and the relationship that they have with the real world. Often, video games like simulation or role-playing games mirror society and events that happen in the modern world. Bogost believes that video games that mirror society can be beneficial to the learning process in school and can be implemented in a classroom setting. He also breaks down and analyzes the procedural rhetoric that occurs within the video game space. He believes that video games have a place in learning and makes arguments that challenge the players mental capabilities, but he also feels that games do not teach reading and writing. He expresses that this is where you will find the best intersections between the classroom and implementing the procedurality of video games. Procedural rhetoric is defined by Bogost as "the practice of using processes persuasively, just as verbal rhetoric is the practice of using oratory persuasively and visual rhetoric is the practice of using images persuasively" (125). He explains that video games use processes in a way that is persuasive to the player which makes the want to learn and move further in the game. Although Bogost's view about video games and their impact on writing are unique, his work brings light to the mirroring of video games and the real world which is beneficial to this project. The mirroring of in-game relationships and problem solving intersects with ideas I am using from Gee's book. In this project, the ideas that Bogost brings to the limelight are being used to assist in proving that the ideas and theories are relevant within this field.

All of these sources, from the history of BR games to the rhetoric of games, are being used to defend the goals of this research project. As a little reminder, the goal of this project is to prove that, in some way, BR games have an impact on first-year writing students at UTRGV.

Gee projects great insight on the ways that video games are imagined worlds that create experiences for players where they are able to solve problems and form relationships as well as build their own identities. The depth of the short history of BR games has made it grow into one of the most popular genres of video games in the modern world, and this is the reason why this project is possible. The relevance of the BR games is due to the millions of people playing in recent years, since 2017, which may result in a recent impact to the first-year writing students. The next chapter will provide a self-analysis which will show my own experience with BR games, and how I feel my writing has been impacted by them. Then, I will dive into the results from the surveys I sent out to students. I will provide insight and connect the data to the sources I have used in this chapter.



## CHAPTER III

### DATA ANALYSIS AND SELF-ANALYSIS

In this section, I am going to discuss my personal experience with BR video games and the data that was collected through the survey. My experience with video games has been a positive one since I started playing them on a nightly basis while continuing to work on this research project. In this short section of this chapter, I will do an in-depth self-analysis of how my writing process is and has been affected by the genre of BR video games. The main reason I am doing this is to express my own exigence within these two subjects respectively. I feel it is important to show that I am active within both fields to show that I may have biases coming into this research project, and I believe that my own experience with BR games and writing will be useful in the success of this project. Since video games are what jumpstarted my literacy and majorly impacted my writing, I feel that I need to address this before moving into the data analysis section of this research project.

I have many hobbies and activities that I enjoy doing out of work and school and playing video games is one that I do every single day. I usually play video games two to four hours a day rotating through the specific game I play relatively often. There is one genre of game that I play every single night with my friends. That is *Call of Duty: Warzone*, and this title is my favorite of the genre at the moment. The BR genre is one of the more exciting genres due to the amount of

skill and competition that it demands from the player. Before going deeper into the BR genre and how it has impacted my writing, I want to discuss my history with video games.

I have played video games since around the age of five, and I consider myself an avid gamer that keeps up with the newest games ranging from new *Pokémon* titles to BR games like *Call of Duty: Warzone* and *Fortnite*. One of my fondest memories from when I was kid was playing Super Smash Bros on the *Nintendo 64* with my two brothers. We stayed up all night trying to unlock new characters and playing against each other. I still have all of my older systems alongside my new ones. In the current time, I play more of the modern games as well as some older titles, but I would say that the games I spend the most time playing in my older age of twenty-five are these new BR games. Usually, I will casually play video games like *Pokémon* and *Super Mario* on the side while I more actively and competitively play *Call of Duty: Warzone* or *Fortnite* on a daily basis. From my point of view as a researcher and gamer, I can say that BR games have had a unique impact on my writing process.

BR video games can be played alone, but they are mostly played in groups that range from two to four players depending on the game mode. I only play these games with one or more of my friends. I find them to be more enjoyable with friends. When I play alone, I am the person that is creating the strategies and working towards being the last man standing, and this makes the gaming experience much more stressful. Working with others to create a strategy and plan of attack through communication and organization is what I find to be most entertaining about this unique genre of video games. It is the unmatched blend of competition and strategizing that draws gamers in. There are also non-shooter BR games like *Fall Guys* and *Tetris 99* that require similar mechanics, but are usually only played solo, so I am leaving them out of this conversation.

Focusing on my time playing hundreds of hours of *Fortnite*, *Warzone*, and *PUBG*, I can quite honestly say that the way I approach writing has changed significantly since I started playing *Fortnite* in 2017. These three games stand out of the crowd because they encourage communication and teamwork to be successful in being the last team standing. The way this impacts my writing is different from many may think, but it has been incredibly important in the improvement of my writing by changing my writing process. The way it has changed my writing is my desire to communicate with other during my process of writing a paper. Typically, my process goes as follows: I receive the prompt, I do a quick brainstorming and outlining session, I take a few days break to ponder the topic, I start writing by trying to completely write the paper in one day depending on how long it needs to be, I take some days off, I do a first round of editing, I will often send it to a colleague to review, and finally, I edit the paper one last time before the submission date. The area where communication takes place is during those breaks and times in between actually writing. I find that these little breaks of communication with other help me to form ideas, connect thoughts, and subconsciously address issues I have with my own writing. Before playing BR games, before 2017, I found that I lacked this skill or tactic of communication, and in some cases, collaboration of ideas. Today, communication and collaborating on ideas and theories is what the foundation that my writing is built on. Through playing video games where I am encouraged to communicate with one or more other players, I have found a great strategy that has significantly improved my writing. I have played the newest *Pokémon* and *Super Mario Bros* throughout my college career that started in 2013, and I do believe that playing through dialogue-based games have helped me develop a stronger vocabulary and can improve reading and writing in students. However, the improvements to my writing

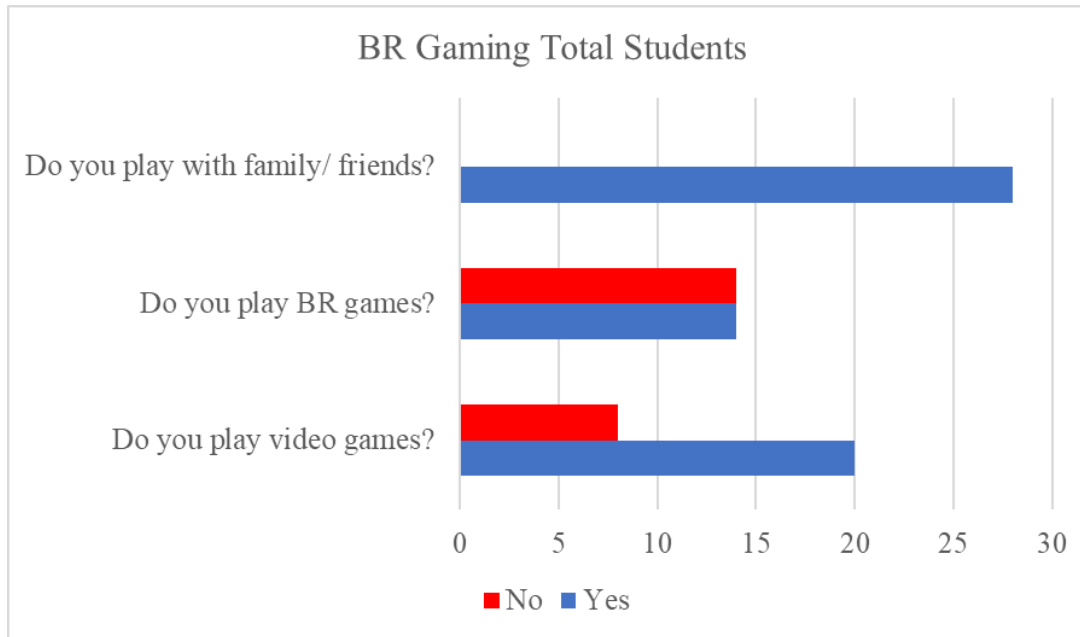
process that started after playing BR games are directly connected to the skills that are needed to play games like *COD: Warzone*, *Fortnite*, and *PUBG*.

Moreover, when I am playing COD: Warzone, often towards the end of the game during intense situations, I will fall into a state of focus. In this state, my mind and hands are working perfectly to where I do not realize that it is happening. I am not thinking, but I am playing and acting as efficiently and effectively as possible. I am calling out enemies and gunning them down as they show up. I am clearly and concisely communicating with my teammates. This is the experience of flow that I discussed in the earlier chapter, and I experience it in my writing process as well. When I am writing about a topic that I enjoy, I tend to experience flow similar to when I am playing video games. The flow and fiero experience greatly improves my writing because I am clearly focused on writing about my topic. I find success when I produce writing that comes from this experience. This is important to reference since I have found that BR video games cause me to experience flow and fiero more often than others. I will discuss, in-depth, the unique skills used while player BR and their possible impact on writing processes of first-year writing students in the next section of this chapter.

Diving into the data analysis section, I sent out surveys to a class of first-year writing students, and then I moved onto trying to interview some of the students, but this failed. The survey consisted of questions that were intended to gather information on whether or not the students play video games and their writing strengths. Some of the questions within the survey were as follows: What are the BR video games you play? If you do not play BR games, what games/ hobbies do you play/ have? Do you play video games with others? How often do you play video games? How often do you work on writing assignments? When writing, do you work with others? These questions were set to gather quantitative data on the number of students that

play BR video games, how may do not, and how often they work and play. I really wanted to collect basic information to help launch me into a deeper look at information through interviews, but due to the pandemic caused by Covid-19, I was not able to meet with the students face-to-face. This led to the surveys finding success while the interviewing process failed to attract the attention of the students. I was only able to find one student that was interested in participating in the interviewing process. The information that I gathered from this student is interesting and does have a place in this project, but I will not be referencing it due to the lack of information. The major focus will be on the data that was collected from the surveys. There was a total of twenty-eight first-year writing students at UTRGV that completed the survey, so this is the data that will be analyzed in great detail. In this chapter, I will discuss patterns and idea that have become apparent from further analyzing this data in relation to the ideas that I have formed from the sources I am using in this project.

Through further examination of the data that was collected from the survey, I found a couple different patterns that stood out. While about seventy percent of the class confirmed that they play video games, fifty percent of that group play BR games. All though I was looking for data on BR games, the additional information on those that do not is just as insightful. The first pattern that stands out from the survey is that every student that plays video games enjoys playing with friends. Additionally, nearly eighty percent say that they enjoy playing with friends rather than alone. This can mean a couple of different things. See the figure below:



Since fifty percent of the students play BR games, that shows that one hundred percent of the class that plays BR games plays with either their friends or family, not alone. Bringing this back to what Gee discusses in the excerpt I shared in chapter two, the students experience real-world relationships within the multimodal space of whichever BR game they choose to play. The desire to play with friends is due to the desire to build relationships and communicate with the people they play with, and the experiences they have within the imagined world directly transfer to the real modern world. In game, the student will be encouraged to talk and create plans with their friends or family while playing these games. In a situation that may be intense and needing of clear communication, the players will focus in, clearly call out enemies, and move forward with their plans. They will strategize as they move forward through each zone and use teamwork to overcome any difficult engagements with enemies. After they win or lose the game, they will have built relationships and have experienced problems that required critical thinking to solve. The experiences that happened in that imagined world will be within the multimodal space or

space that is filled with different forms of literacy. They will have encountered the literacy that comes from player-to-player communication and player-to-game interactions.

The teamwork or collaborating skills that are being built in the BR video games can transfer over into real-world writing situations by changing the writing process of these students. One of the ways it can do this, relating it to their desire to play video games only with friends, is by doing just that, encouraging collaboration on planning and executing their writing. This will impact their writing in a way that encourages working with others whenever possible. For me, I tend to talk to others to help connect my thoughts and ideas, but it can be a little different for others. The student may directly seek collaboration with another person or group of people. This can be as drastic as working as a team with every participant's name on the project or talking to a colleague and/or professor to draw out ideas. The point is that since there is a desire to play video games with others, the desire to build relationships and solve problems as a group will transfer over into the students writing process. Collaborative or team writing creates more opportunities for success since there are more minds to create a successfully prepared paper. This is also directly mirrored in BR games. Working as a team, rather than solo, will create a plan that is strategized and more likely to be successful since there are more minds at work. Of course, it would be irresponsible to not address the issue of improper teamwork and people that are not compatible. This is one issue with collaborative writing. If the students are not compatible, their writing will suffer drastically. Players that play video games in groups enjoy the collaboration aspect of BR games, so their writing may reflect that by working with compatible writers. Also, like Brandt discussed, the sponsored will be more likely to seek out communication with others due to their desire to improve on a new literacy.

The next pattern I want to discuss comes from a write-in section that I added the survey. I added a write-in section within the survey to ask the student to describe details about the way they play video games regarding their strategizing and tactics. See the responses in the figure below.

BR Tactics & Strategies	
<b>Student 1</b>	"I tend to play smart. I'm not the kind of person to go chasing a kill. I would rather secure an objective and/or put myself in an advantageous position to take engagements."
<b>Student 2</b>	"Communication and teamwork"
<b>Student 3</b>	"I always try to be one step ahead of my opponent and try to guess what they are going to do before they even know what they are doing"
<b>Student 4</b>	"I have to think ahead of the possible moves that will be more efficient and checking the surrounding for any clues to what would be the best outcome."
<b>Student 5</b>	"No strategies really, i have played with my friends for a while and we all know our roles"

The students seemed to focus in on a few specific aspects being playing smart, practice, teamwork/communication, and knowing your role. This relates to sponsorship as well. Since the game that the student is playing as acting as a sponsor, the student seeks out ways to learn this new form of literacy by communication and researching strategies/ tactics. On their own, these results do not show much other than the fact that these students put time and effort into BR games to win as many games as possible. However, I also asked them to write about their detailed writing process in a separate write-in section. The two figures show the different ways that these students play video games and the way that they write. The intersections between the two are shown by the answer that the students wrote into these two sections. See the figure below for some of their response.



Student Writing Tactics & Strategies	
<b>Student 1</b>	“My writing process is really related to what teachers and professors want. Brainstorming for me is really important however I have to say that I am still trying to improve. Drafting takes place secondly; I try to write and as I write delete some mistakes I did. Revising is my last step and what I do in this step is to read my paper and examine it really carefully and see my mistakes. It’s very similar to drafting.”
<b>Student 2</b>	“In my writing process, I tend to follow the usual brainstorm, draft, revise, and publish. However, I am a bit of a perfectionist, so I do revise as I draft until my first draft is either my final paper or close to finishing.”
<b>Student 3</b>	“My writing process starts with the information and brainstorm. I put a general layout of the information in a brainstorm map then I see there things connect or contrast to each other. After, I generally wing the essay and the only thought I put into my writing is in my thesis.”
<b>Student 4</b>	“Write what’s on my head, then check it over for any grammar mistakes. Then i read it again to see what sentences would better belong in to make the paragraph/essay better. I will read it again to see if i need to add any detail to something i said. I will then ask one of my siblings to read it if i feel i could do better.”
<b>Student 5</b>	“I have many outlines in the beginning for example I think of my topic then find the best researches about that topic then get the quotes I would like to use and set them aside. Then I get my paragraph outline after that I just wait for inspiration to hit to start my writing complete.”

Some of the students describe detailed responses of their process of writing a paper for one of their classes. The responses tend to follow a pattern of brainstorming, structuring/ outlining, writing, editing/ revising before submitting. Intersecting the two write-in sections, I have found that the students tend to follow a well-planned out writing process that is intended to create the most successful finished product. In BR games, the player or in this case, the students will work to strategized and plan out their form of attack before moving in and striking the opposing enemy. This will provide them will the more successful outcomes each time, and I believe that the students know this when starting out their writing process. Also, the new literacy that the student is writing about is acting as a sponsor similarly to that of BR video games. Depending on the student, they will employ all of their knowledge on how to properly start

writing and continuing through the process leading into the submission of the paper. The intersections between the students that wrote in both sections is clearly showing that strategizing and planning go into both their BR gaming and writing.

Next, I want to discuss one last pattern that I found particularly interesting, and I believe it has to do with the lack of interviews with the students. Within the survey, I added one question that asked the students if they work with others when writing their assignments. The results showed that not one of the students surveyed answered yes for this question. This is an interesting statistic since every student said that play video games with family and friends. This could mean two different things. Either the students did not fully understand how communication and collaboration can take part in their writing in subtle ways, or there is no correlation between the teamwork/ collaborating skills within BR games that I was able to find with this population surveyed. Since this survey was limited by the formatting and population size, this is part of this project that would need further surveying and research in future studies. I feel that this is important to bring up in this section because although I have found some fruitful data through the survey I sent out, I will need to look further into this research in a future project to find more detailed results.

Finally, I want to make a comparison between the writing process of gamers to non-gamers with the data that I have gathered through this survey. Although there is was not much data on non-gamers and their writing processes that was shown in this data, there are a few points I want to bring up about the possible similarities and differences between them and gamers. Since I have stated the intersections that I have observed between BR games and the writing process of gamers, I want to further discuss the way the writing process of a non-gamer may relate to that of one that plays BR games regularly. Before speculating, I want to address the

lack of information on non-gamer first-year writing students. To fully explore this comparison, I will need detailed interviews with both of the groups of students, but this was not possible due to the restraints that were in place after the start COVID-19 pandemic.

I have talked about some of the skills that can be built through playing BR games earlier in the paper, but I will restate them here: communication, collaboration/ teamwork, strategizing/ planning, problem solving, and critical thinking. From this data, the places where I can see a possible difference in is the collaboration/ teamwork and communication. When comparing the writing process of gamers to non-gamers, I believe that this is where the major difference will stand out. Since BR players are accustomed to playing with others, communicating, and using teamwork to form a successful plan, the non-gamers may struggle with this. However, this may also depend on the type of hobbies that the non-gamers enjoy outside of the classroom since some hobbies require these skills as well. From the data I have gathered, it is fair to speculate that non-gamers have the ability to build the same skills as gamers due to outside hobbies and activities. I am looking forward to future research on this topic as I believe there is much more to uncover. I feel that this data is lacking in some areas, and this is due to the smaller population of those surveyed. In the future, I plan to survey multiple groups and interview as detailed as possible.

In the following chapter, I will conclude this research by exploring possible application and future research that has come from this project. I will theorize possible application within the classroom and outside of the classroom. My goal will be to provide concluding thoughts and look to future research that will provide additional data and ideas that may prove to be beneficial to this field of study.

## CHAPTER IV

### APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

In this conclusion, I want to do two things: First, I am going to discuss possible application and theorize other ways this research can provide insight for the field, and second, I am going to provide my final thoughts on this project's goals. The way I am going to do this is focus on application and the insight it provides for the field of Rhetoric, Composition, and Literary Studies. This is the chapter that will bring all of the ideas and theories used within the project together and look forward into the future of this type of research. I will reflect of the way that this project was conducted and the weaknesses and strengths of how it all played out. My goal by the end of this conclusion is to have filled in some gaps that I did not discuss in the previous chapters and look to my future research with this specific topic.

First, I want to talk about the difficulties and issues that occurred with this project. This project was started before the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way the people are able to interact safely. This project was originally going to focus on much of the data gathered through detailed interviews with students that are gamers and non-gamers, but due to the changed that took place in the middle of the pandemic, I was not able to reach out to as many students as I would have liked. I was able to contact students through email to participate in the survey, but when I reached out to follow up on interviews, only one student replied and participated. Since there was a lack of information from not being about to conduct more interviews, I was forced to

focus solely on the data gathered from the survey. This did restrict the analysis section of this project. I feel that there were sections of the ideas I was discussing that needed additional information to further analyze and strengthen my argument that BR video games impact the writing process of first-year writing students at UTRGV. This is something that will be able to be further explored through a future research project on this topic.

In a future research, I will be able to do a few things to make the next project more successful in finding additional data on gamers and non-gamers. I will do this by sending out multiple surveys while trying to reach out to as many first-year students as possible. To reach both groups, gamers and non-gamers, individually, I will need to create a survey that is specific to each group. This will provide me with data that is separated into two categories instead of a random assortment from the limited population of one class. I will also send out multiple emails inviting each student that participated in the surveys to join in the interviewing process as well. The interview will be used to gather in-depth information from each group and each student's writing process. This will hopefully reveal the differences and similarities in a spotlight rather than speculation. The future research project will show a more in-depth and detailed comparison between BR games and non-gamers with less restrictions and restraints due to an unforeseen pandemic. The project will be focusing on the topic explored here since there needs to be additional research to help make a stronger argument.

Moving onto the ways that this research can be applied into the learning process of the students and the ways that educators can use it within the classroom or outside of it. Before this project, I looked into scholarly articles and journals to find research on the impact that recreational video game use, outside of the classroom, has on the way that students write. Although there is always the chance that I may have missed an article or journal that references

it, most research focuses on the use of video games as a text, implementing games into lesson planning, or taking the way games function and using that to encourage learning. I have added the sources I read but did not use into the reference list because they impacted the direction of my ideas. I find the recreational use to be exceptionally interesting due to the huge amount of people that play video games all over the world. I do not believe that most students connect video games with their writing, so delving deeper into the way that the skills learned in-game transfer into their writing without consciously knowing is intriguing to uncover.

When examining my own writing, it was not until I stepped back and looked at my writing process in detail that I realized that BR video games had changed the way that I write. This is where I want to focus the application on. Since I found details on how a student works through their writing process, we can look to in-class work catered to the different groups of students. What I found from the data was that students that play BR video games tend to play with friends communicating and working as a team to strategize their plan off attack, so when working with first-year writing students that play BR games recreationally, the instructor can speculate that the student has built skills with communication, collaboration, teamwork, and strategizing. The instructor can assign an initial assignment to get to know whether or not the students play BR games and take note on which ones do. The first writing assignment can be used to play to the strength of each group of students. For the gamers, the students may work better with other, so assigning group work and collaboration opportunities may prove to be beneficial to them. This can be done in pairs or groups of four depending on the class size. Encouraging this group to brainstorm, strategize, and plan out their writing will place them in a situation that they are familiar with when playing BR video games. This does not mean that the non-gamers group cannot benefit from collaboration as well. Since this study was not able to find

data on many non-gamers due to the smaller population size, I cannot say whether or not this group will be in a familiar setting when collaborating with their peers. I hope to look further into this in a later research project. However, the instructor can encourage the class to hone these skills through collaborative writing or simply collaborating on ideas and planning. I believe that this will lead the students to build stronger writing processes and more successful final products.

Additionally, through this collaboration of ideas, the students will be able to build social relationships and be able to fall back on their peers when they are going through their own writing process. I believe that there needs to be times in the classroom that the students are encouraged to work together through their own writing process to help build and shape skills that they may not use very often. Gee states that the video game space is a multimodal space, and this is mirrored in the classroom or social setting. I feel that this is important to mention because this space is where different literacies are presented and experienced by the student. It would be interesting to see if the students that are gamers react differently than those that are non-gamers. There may be a difference in the two groups, but it also depends on the types of recreational hobbies and activities that each of the non-gamers engage with outside of the classroom. Some students may feel comfortable building relationships and collaborating with their writing. Applying this knowledge into the classroom will provide the teacher with interesting knowledge about the students that show some of the skills and attributes learned within the BR game's multimodal space.

Additionally, Brandt's ideas of sponsors can improve the writing of students by encouraging them to explore new literacies. Since writing assignments are often new topics to the students, they will need to explore the new literacy by communication with other, researching tactics/ strategies, and seeking improvement. Since BR gamers have been exposed to new

literacies within the sponsorship of the imagined worlds of the game they are playing, they will be comfortable doing this. The students may have developed skills that will help them conduct research and collaborate with others on ideas. Students that do not play video games may also show skills in doing this due to their own hobbies. There are new forms of literacy everywhere, and students may explore them outside of the classroom in many different ways.

Next, I want to talk about the possible ways that others will be able to use this project for research purposes to add-on, reflect, or argue against. Since I already talked about the ways I will delve deeper into this topic and uncover more information regarding the intersections between the writing process of first-year writing students and BR video games, I want to look at the possibility that this project will be used in future research projects other than my own. Although I was not able to collect the amount of quality data that I would have liked, my ideas and theories that I have formed with the help of my sources are relative to the new generation of students. There is a major increase in the amount of people that play video games, and BR games are one of the most popular genres at the moment. Most of the other studies that focus on video games use games that are out-of-date or not popular. Those studies have their place in this field, and this is apparent due to Gee's work playing a major part in this research project.

Others will be able to use my input as a reference when researching recreational use of video games and writing or when discussing the different skills and tactics that are picked up through the multimodal space of BR games. I believe that BR games are one the genres of video games that offer experiences that may result in a positive change to student's writing. Skills like problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and strategizing are all important when used in the writing process. This will result in a well-planned and organized final product. Peers in this field will be able to look at my project and see where I succeed and learn



from the areas I failed at. Overall, I believe that this project will be a great tool for my colleagues to dwell on when they are conducting their own research on video games and writing. This research does not only apply to video games. Other hobbies and activities like recreational sports, fishing, hiking, music, and more can benefit from the ideas I have discussed in this research project. I can see this type of research being used when exploring all of these other hobbies and their intersections with video games as well.

Before closing out this project, I want to provide my final thoughts, and look to the future for further research. Overall, I feel that this project was successful in exploring the different ways that BR video games may impact the writing process of first-year writing students at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. I was able to look at the skills that are needed to play BR games and analyze the data that was gathered from the survey to uncover intersections between the two. I found that the skills that were uncovered were communication, collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, and strategizing. I would need to have larger population to survey in a future project to be able to fully test these skills and examine if the students that play BR games use them within their writing process. I will also need to survey students that do not play video games and examine the skills that they use in their own writing process to be able to compare both groups properly. This project was lacking in overall data collected due to the changes that were in place when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. I was forced to change the ways I was going to reach out to students. I believe that only being able to send out emails rather than showing up in front of a class and properly explaining this project's goals was the reason that there was a lack of student participation.

In the end, I am happy with the way this project played out and find success in the effort and time it took me to complete this study. I am hopeful for the future of this topic, and I look

forward to completing further research in the near future. My ultimate goal is to delve deeper into this topic and find unique ways that the recreational use of video games, specifically BR games, can be used to improve the writing process of students. I believe that this research project did this, and I will continue my journey to find additional intersections between my two passions of playing video games and writing.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY QUESTION SCRIPT

I am gathering information for my master thesis project. These survey questions are being asked to gather data on the ways that playing video games recreationally can impact a first-year writing student. My hope is to find a link between the writing process and video games that can be used to further improve student writing and teacher. All student's names and information will be protected. All questions are used to gather this data, and if you would like to skip or leave any question unanswered feel free to do so. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

1. Can you please provide your school email? (This is optional)
2. Is this your first course in writing at the college level? Y/N/Other
3. Do you play video games? Y/N
4. Do you play battle royale video games (Fortnite, Apex, COD Warzone)? If yes, which games?
5. How many hours a week do you play video games? 0-5hrs/ 5-10hrs/ 10-15hrs/ 15+
6. Do you play video games with friends/family? Y/N
7. Do you enjoy playing video games with other more than alone? Y/N
8. How often do you work on writing assignments? 1-3times a week/ 3-6 times a week/ 6+ times a week
9. Do you work with others when writing? Y/N
10. What is your strongest part in writing? Writing process/ Thesis Statement/ brainstorming/ cooperative writing/ Other\_\_\_\_\_
11. If there is anything you would like to say about your video game playing/ hobbies regarding strategy/ tactics feel free to write in the blank space \_\_\_\_\_
12. If there is anything you would like to say about your writing process feel free to write in the blank space \_\_\_\_\_

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jacob L. Molina has finished his final semester of his master's program in English to complete his Master of Arts degree. This will conclude his graduate-level education for a brief moment, and he will be planning to further his studies into doctoral levels. He started his college education at the University of Texas Brownsville in 2013 and continued education through the merge into the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He was able to graduate with his bachelor's degree in English in Fall 2018, and he was able to graduate with a Master of Arts in English from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in December 2020. He is looking forward to furthering his studies in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literary Studies through his doctorates program where he can continue his research on the intersections between video games and writing. He is excited to see what the future holds for this field and his own self. You can reach him at [jacobmolina5@gmail.com](mailto:jacobmolina5@gmail.com).