

Reflexivity in Practice as Research: Making games with young people

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Digital Games: Where is this work starting from?

Acknowledging games' exclusionary "nature"

Socioculturally-constructed imaginary (cf. Fron et al, 2006; Shaw, 2013)

Interventionist game-making initiatives

Challenge conventions (cf. Anthropy, 2012; Harvey & Fisher, 2016; Jenson et al., 2017)

Critically-informed designers/makers/producers

Avoiding neoliberal and celebratory narratives of emancipation through technology
(e.g. forming workforce) (cf. Vossoughi, Hooper, Escudé, 2016; Parry, Howard, Penfold, 2020)

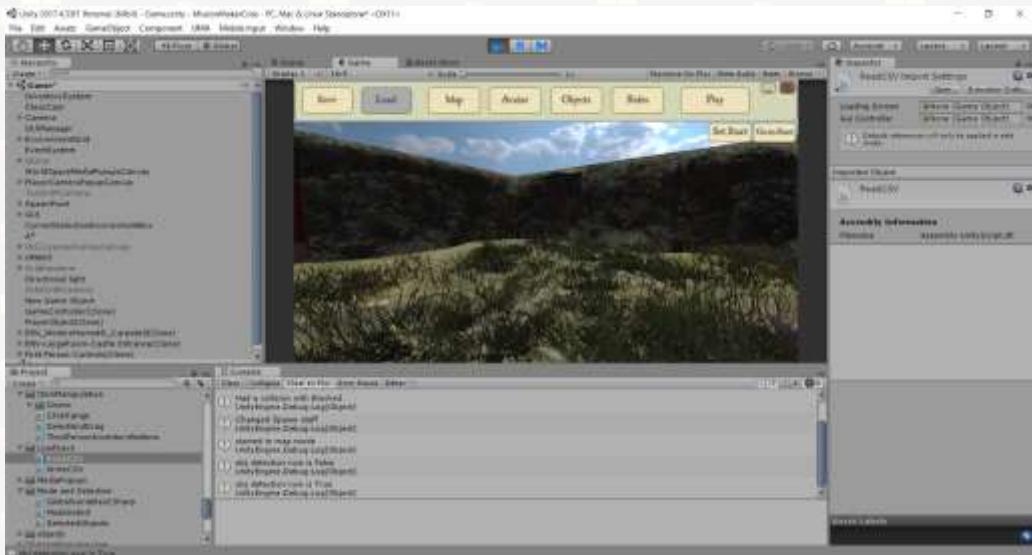
Reflexivity as...

'the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome' (Berger 2015, 220)

Not an individualised endeavour, but imbricated in the social dimensions where we (researchers, researched and the phenomenon being researched) are inserted in.

Reflexivity in relation to my work...

...as designer/developer



(Foxman, 2019; Nicoll & Keogh, 2019)

(important note: MissionMaker is not a game, but a tool that helps makers design their own games)

...as facilitator



Context

Focus on a particular game-making club with Latin American youngsters in London

de Paula, B. (2021). Korean Soap Operas, Telenovelas and Sci-fi Conspiracies: A Game-making Experience with Latin American Youth in London. *Digital Culture & Education*, 13(2), 111–128. <https://www.digitalcultureandeducation.com/volume-13-2>.

de Paula, B. (2021). Reflexivity, methodology and contexts in participatory digital media research: Making games with Latin American youth in London. *Learning, Media and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2021.1901114>

Reflexivity in two passages

Balancing pragmatism and research ideals

The perks and perils of assuming an insider position

Pragmatism and Research Ideals...

“Making things work”

For game-makers, for myself (as game developer; as facilitator; as researcher), for the institutions that were hosting the activities

“Inclusivity”

Recognise hegemonic forms of playing and making games and supporting game-makers' “work against the grain”

Pragmatism and Research Ideals...

How to work with MissionMaker in this project?



How to avoid reifying the same exclusionary conditions in gaming in this project?

Pragmatism and Research Ideals...

Competing interests...

We [...] might find ourselves juggling multiple roles in the same context, and this conflation of roles can culminate in curricular/methodological conundrums: a practitioner's on-the-fly productive solution might become a researcher's nightmare.

... and different timings for reflection

'Reflecting in action' (Schön [1991](#)) within a specific role can be easier [...]. Understanding the impact of choices 'across' roles [...] can be more difficult to be scrutinised 'in action', being easier reflected afterwards – or 'on action' (Schön [1991](#)).

Claiming an insider position...

Despite the generational gap, we were all migrants, from similar cultures, being able to speak the same languages...

Good rapport

Insights that might be missed by an outsider

...is not without its risks

Oversimplification?

'Although it is possible to label participants as Latin American migrants in London [...] this labelling can "flatten" the complex cultural positionings occupied by these participants. As it would become clear throughout the programme, as important as their preference to speak in Spanish and their shared taste for *reggaeton* were their allegiances to anime, football clubs or horror movies. Rather than necessarily articulating a stereotypical view about what it would mean to be a Latino/Latina [...] what we have is a much more complex patchwork of intertextual relationships[...].'

(de Paula, 2021)

Projection

C: How can we take care of him?

R: Oh, this is about... ah, yes, the end of your game... what did you want her to do?

M: We could tuck him into a bed and...

R: Hm... we cannot do that... remember what we can do here in the game...

C: Yes, but that...

R: What if she brings some stuff to him...

M: I don't know... we will think about it.

Whose voice is that?
(Dahya, 2017)

Why being reflexive?

Acknowledging limitations and “Rigour”

Working through these limitations

Not in a self-congratulating, egotistical way; but recognising the context and the positionings in question

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