**Synthesising Sources: Synthesis Grids**

**Task 1: Brainstorm**

Imagine that you are researching a project on **the effects of playing video games on people’s wellbeing**. Brainstorm the potential benefits and dangers of playing video games and list them below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefits** | **Dangers** |
| Sense of achievement  Problem solving skills  Communication with other players  Reflexes improve  Entertainment | Eyesight  Addictive (mental/physical)  Imitating negative actions  Posture  Damage hearing  Immune system suffer from lack of exercise/fresh air  Lose touch with reality |

**Task 2: Themes**

Below is a list of themes that have found in sources about the impact of video games.

* Choose **three** which look most relevant to your research project.
* Highlight your three chosen themes in the Annotated Bibliography provided underneath.

|  |
| --- |
| Physical dangers of playing computer games |
| Widespread popularity of computer games |
| The societal benefits of computer games |
| Motivations for playing computer games |
| The cultural impact of computer games |
| The psychological dangers of playing computer games |

**Source 1:**

**Brown, M.J. (2000). The impact of computer games on children’s physical health. *Journal of Physical Health*, *23*(1), 129-142.**

This study revealed that children who play computer games on a regular basis experience a number of medical problems. The evidence suggests that the most serious problem is crooked posture, which is caused by their being hunched over their computers for considerable periods of time. Another common problem associated with playing computer games over long periods (when the same moves are constantly repeated) is that of pain in the hands.

**Source 2:**

**Kardefelt-Winther, D., (2014), Problematizing Excessive Online Gaming and its Psychological Predictors, *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 31, pp. 118-22.**

This study challenges ideas of “excessive” online gaming when viewed in isolation, exploring players’ motivations of escapism, achievement and social interaction alongside wider psychological characteristics such as social anxiety, loneliness, and stress. Through a case study of around 900 players of World of Warcraft, it was concluded that stress was the most significant “negative” predictor of excessive gaming. However, the research also indicated that by investigating players’ motivations and mood in relation to each other, a larger and more complex picture emerged, where questions of “social motivation” and gamer’s agency became much more relevant.

**Source 3:**

**Dorman, S. (1997) Video and computer games: Effect on children and implications for health education, *Journal of School Health,* Vol. 67 Issue 4 pp. 133-38.**

Video games can be used in a positive way to promote health and provide information to children and adolescents, which captures and keeps their attention and allows them to interact with the information in a meaningful way. Games and simulations have potential to help adolescents personalize information, forcing them to assess risks and consequences and make decisions in a hypothetical yet realistic situation. SMACK is a video game developed as an attempt to illustrate for teens the negative consequences associated with drug use. SMACK uses simulations which require teens to make decisions regarding drug use and respond to the consequences of such decisions.

**Source 4:**

**Crawford, G., Gosling, V.K., and Light, B. (2011), ‘The Social and Cultural Significance of Online Gaming,’ Crawford, G., Gosling, V.K., and Light, B. (eds), *Online gaming in context: the social and cultural significance of online games*, Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 10-30.**

The authors focus on the huge cultural significance of online games in recent years, noting the large-scale global popularity of Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games (MMORPG). However, the authors stress that online gaming “is not just about MMORPs” (p. 1), and in their introductory chapter present a brief history of the development of the Internet alongside a parallel discussion of the origins of online gaming, beginning with table-top, or pen-and-paper role-playing games (PnP RPGs) in the 1960s and 70s, such as *Dungeons & Dragons*. The article stresses the sophistication of online games, highlighting how embedded they have become in peoples’ lives. The author’s attempt to move the debate beyond simple questions of the positive or negative dimensions of gaming, and to focus on more relevant issues such as the sociability of gaming and the ways in which individual identity is being expressed through online gaming communities.

**Task 3: Planning a Synthesis Grid**

* An effective way of connecting sources is to create a Synthesis Grid.
* This allows you to separate out your main themes and show how your sources relate to each one and to each other.
* Complete the Grid using the sources from the Annotated Bibliography. Three themes have been chosen for you. ‘X’ denotes that the theme is not present in the source.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme 1**:  Social Aspects | **Theme 2**:  Physical Health | **Theme 3**:  Mental Health |
| **Source 1:**  (Brown, 2000) | X | medical problems;  posture & pain in hands | X |
| **Source 2:**  (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014) |  |  |  |
| **Source 3:**  (Dorman, 1997) |  |  | Educational tools:  SMACK - anti-drug games in schools |
| **Source 4:**  (Crawford, Gosling and Light, 2011) |  |  |  |

[continued on the following page]

**Task 4: Create a Synthesis Grid for your own Literature Review**

Project Title:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme 1**: | **Theme 2**: | **Theme 3**: | **Theme 4:** |
| **Source 1:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Source 2:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Source 3:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Source 4:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Source 5:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Source 6:** |  |  |  |  |