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LESSON
MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO WRITE, BY USING THEIR INTEREST IN GAMING

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WRITING A REVIEW

Subject and level
Danish (language Studies) High school Level

Connection to curriculum
Games/videos as texts, Games/videos as media, Investigative learning, Narrative structures

Didactic and pedagogic considerations
It is this study's thesis that the use of computer games and/or pop-cultural media will trigger

1. Identification
2. Recognition
3. Acceptance of the students interests as valid and therefore Motivation and efficacy (the belief in own capability)
4. Analytical thinking
5. Rhetoric and argumentation
6. Creative writing and language skills are honed
7. If the Peer to Peer exercise is included, the students also develop their cooperation, critical thinking and also the core knowledge, competence and education goals in the subject's curriculum

The context of the subject is journalism and news

Time estimate
2-3 weeks (5-6 lessons)

Group size
Normal class size at around 25-30 students

Overall introduction to exercise

This exercise is placed at the end of a course on Journalism. If possible this exercise is followed by an exercise where the class creates an online newspaper.

Thesis: The use of computer games or pop-cultural media like music videos, movies, graphic novels or TV-series strengthens the student motivation towards analytical writing and writing in general.

The exercise is structured in a 4 part process.

In the first part, the students choose their media (computergame, movie, tv-series or graphic novel) and start their analysis as described in the worksheet. This part takes around 2 lessons

In the second part, the students are given a new worksheet, and now start writing their review based on the instructions of the new worksheet. This part is divided into two parts: - At first they write. They are given 1 lesson to write their first abstract of their review.

Thirdly they are divided into small peer-review groups of 3-4 persons. In this group the students read each other's review and give feedback. Afterwards they rewrite their reviews based on the feedback. This part takes around one lesson

Overall introduction to exercise

In the fourth and last part of the exercise, the students engage in a roll-play-scenario, where they play the role of a newly started internet based newsmedia.
The narrative is as follows: They are working on a newly started news-website. They have a bunch of raw-reviews that is to function as the newssites content.They are using google sites (but any website designer can be used). They are told that they are working on a timetable, and that there is a deadline in which the website goes online. The class is then divided into 4 groups with different parts to play.

The groups are:
2 students are appointed as Editor-in-Chiefs: Who ensures that the editors work is up to standard and oversees the entire workflow and ensures that the deadline is kept.
4-6 students are appointed as Graphic Designers: Who creates the layout and design of the newspaper, and uploads the articles to the website
10-12 students are appointed as Editors: Who edits articles for clarity, grammar, style, and accuracy; cuts copy to fit page space
5-10 students are appointed as Journalists: Who creates new content

The students are then given around 2-3 hours to work, and on the deadline, the website is launched. With a congratulation that they succeeded, and that they should be proud of themselves.

After the exercise, the student will have created a couple of academic products: A deep analysis of their chosen media, a written review (or pod/vod-review) and a web-based news site.
Most of them will have a feeling of heightened self-efficacy and believe in their own abilities and capabilities. Hopefully their motivation to write is also heightened as well.

Part 1: Analysis of chosen media

Assignment Description:

Today we begin the preparatory work leading up to writing a review of a self-chosen medium. The medium can be, for example, a video game, an episode from a series you watch, a film, or a graphic novel.

You are not to start writing the actual review yet. Today, your task is to engage with the medium you have chosen—by watching, playing, or reading it—and make some analytical observations about it.

You should not rely on memory alone; you must actually watch, read, or play the medium. Therefore, parts of the assignment may be completed at home if that's where you have access to your chosen medium.

You will have 5 lessons dedicated to this exploratory phase. The next phase begins next week, when you will start writing your reviews.

Preparatory Phase

Write the name of the game, series, film, or graphic novel you have chosen.

Investigate the background of your medium.

Write a bit about who created it, who published it, and the year of release. If your medium is part of a franchise, include some information about that.

Finally, investigate the plot of your medium and write a short text explaining what you can find out about the plot through online research.

Exploratory Phase

Now you will work with your chosen medium (video game, series, film, graphic novel, etc.).

You must:

- Watch, play, or read your medium
- Take screenshots for your review
- Write notes about the medium based on the following points, which you will use in your review:
  - Plot and Story
  - Characters
  - Setting
  - Genre
  - Screenshots
  - Special Features

Plot and Story

Plot (What is the main character supposed to do?)

Story background (Why is the main character supposed to do something?)

Characters

(Inner and outer traits; are they stereotypes?) If there are several characters, choose a few to focus on.

Character Description

- Main Character
- Main/Supporting Character
- Supporting Character

Setting

(Physical and psychological; realistic or fantasy universe). If there are different layouts, describe some general principles of the setting or choose one level/scene to describe in detail.

Genre

What genre does the medium belong to? (Fantasy, horror, comedy, etc.) If the medium draws on multiple genre traits (e.g., horror + fantasy), describe how each genre trait is incorporated.

Description of Genre Traits

Screenshots/Images

Take screenshots/images while you play, watch, or read, and describe why the image is relevant.

Insert screenshots/images here. Descriptive text for your image. What is happening, and why is it relevant to your medium? (Remember to include a timestamp if it's a film or series)

Screenshot

Timestamp + Description

Special Features of Your Medium

(Anything that stands out—graphically, in terms of plot, twists, etc.)

Part 2: Writing a review

Based on your work with "Analysis of a video game, series, film or graphic novel" from last time, you will now write a review of the medium you have chosen.

Your review can be created as either an **article**, **podcast**, or **video review**.

If you choose to write an article, you must follow the standard article layout: **Headline, subheading, byline, subheadings, body text, images with captions, and possibly a fact box.**

You should also consider which of the **five news criteria** you want to emphasize.

Your review must include the following:

- **An introduction** presenting your medium, its franchise, and the genre it belongs to (e.g., horror, fantasy, action, thriller, etc.)
- **A brief summary** of the story and plot of your medium
- **Analysis of selected elements** (Plot, Characters, Sound, and other aspects such as graphics or gameplay)
- **A conclusion** that summarizes your observations and possibly compares your medium to another within the same genre
- **A rating** (e.g., 7 out of 10)

Remember to include your screenshots with captions throughout the review.

The review should be approximately **2 pages**, where **1 page equals 2,400 characters**.

(Examples: See a written film review here; a written video game review here; a video review of a video game here; a video review of a film here.)

Part 3: Peer-review feedback and correction

Today you will finish writing your review.

We will work **peer-to-peer**, which means you will share your review with a group of your own choosing—people you feel comfortable sharing your written work with. The group will read your text and give you **constructive feedback**, which you will use to finalize your review.

By the end of the lesson, the goal is for you to be ready to **submit** your review so we can prepare for publishing the **online newspaper** on Tuesday.

Review Criteria:

Your review must include the following:

- **An introduction** presenting your medium, its franchise, and the genre it belongs to (e.g., horror, fantasy, action, thriller, etc.)
- **A brief summary** of the story and plot
- **Analysis of selected elements** (Plot, Characters, Sound, and other aspects such as graphics or gameplay)
- **A conclusion** that brings together your observations and possibly compares your medium to another within the same genre
- **A rating** (e.g., 7 out of 10)

Peer-review:

Form groups of **3–4 students**, with whom you feel comfortable sharing your written work with

In these groups, you will work **peer-to-peer**, meaning you will share your reviews with each other, read them, and give feedback.

Feedback Criteria:

You can ask your readers for feedback on **specific parts** you find challenging.

Otherwise, focus on whether the review:

- Meets the criteria (see box above)
- Is linguistically coherent
- Has a clear and consistent argument for the rating
- Contains sections that are too short or too long

Remember: Your feedback must be **constructive**.

That means you shouldn't just say something is good or bad.

If something is **not working**, explain **what's missing** and how it could be improved.

If something is **working well**, explain **why** it works.

Part 4: Roleplaying game of creating a web based news media

Today we will begin creating our Online Newspaper, which must be ready for launch later today at xx.xx, when the deadline hits.
The entire class is the editorial team.
The class will be further divided into the following roles:
2 students are appointed as Editor-in-Chiefs: Who ensures that the editors work is up to standard and oversees the entire workflow and ensures that the deadline is kept.
4-6 students are appointed as Graphic Designers: Who creates the layout and design of the newspaper, and uploads the articles to the website

10-12 students are appointed as Editors: Who edits articles for clarity, grammar, style, and accuracy; cuts copy to fit page space.

5-10 students are appointed as Journalists: Who creates new content

Everyone shares a collective responsibility to ensure the newspaper is completed and looks great by the deadline.
If you don't have a task at the moment, ask a classmate, one of the editors, or me, and you'll be assigned something to do.

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