

Spring 2019

ITLS 6730
Games and Learning

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Office: EDUC 281
Class Time: Wed - Friday
Location: Online

Abstract

Video games can be fun and engaging. They also have the potential to promote learning and skills like problem solving and collaboration. In this course, we will investigate how, why, and when video games can foster learning on multiple levels: we will observe our own learning as we play and explore a game, we will observe how others learn as they play, and as a class we will read and critique research on games and learning. This course will deepen your understanding of the kinds of learning and social interactions video games encourage as well as help you develop critical thinking skills around the research on games and learning. The final assignment can be catered to your interest: design a prototype of a game for learning or design a curriculum around a game(s). Please note, in addition to the required text, students are also required to fund their playing of a contemporary video game.

Course Overview

If someone were to write the intellectual history of childhood—the ideas, the practices, and the activities that engage the minds of children—it is evident that the chapter on the 21st century would need to give a prominent place to video games and virtual worlds. The number of hours spent in front of these screens surely reaches the hundreds of billions. And what is remarkable about this time spent is much more than just quantity. Psychologists, media researchers, designers, educators, and parents are struck by a quality of engagement that stands in stark contrast to the half-bored watching of many television programs and the bored performance exhibited with school homework. Like it or not, video games and virtual worlds are clearly a highly significant component of contemporary children's culture. A generation of kids has grown up playing digital games and continues to do so into their adulthood. The game industry now rivals the movie industry in revenue - it has joined mainstream media. We also have witnessed a dramatic shift in the public and academic discussions. Researchers from various disciplines are investigating and designing games for learning and teaching. What's behind all of this sudden interest in games?

This course presents current discussions in newspaper articles, policy reports, and research reviews that are debating the educational promise of digital games. Drawing on work from education, psychology, communication, and the growing field of game studies,

we will examine the history of video games, research on game play and players, review how researchers from different disciplines have conceptualized and investigated learning in playing and designing games, and what we know about possible outcomes. We will also address issues of gender, race and violence that have been prominent in discussions about the impact of games.

No **prior** knowledge or experience in video games or virtual worlds is a prerequisite for taking this course. As part of this seminar, students are expected to participate in class discussions, reflect on their own history of playing traditional (card, board) and/or digital games, learn to play three in-class games, and design a game or lesson plan for a game.

Course Objectives

The course is designed to explore the following core questions:

- *What are video games and virtual worlds? How have researchers studied gaming and game players?*
- *What are different ways to describe and analyze learning practices and cultures in digital games?*
- *What kinds of practices and communities are formed outside of games themselves, and how are these productive for learning & identification?*
- *What do we know about engagement and learning of K-12 academic topics such as mathematics, science, and social studies with games inside and outside of schools?*
- *Who plays games, and who does not? How do players and designers deal with issues of gender, race, violence, and ethics in games?*

IDEA Learning Objectives:

- *Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories about video games and virtual worlds*
- *Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of gaming and gaming communities*
- *Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view*

Course Format

Delivery of this course is online, through the Canvas learning management system. Each week of the course begins and ends on a **Wednesday**, although some assignments will have deadlines on **Fridays** (those assignments usually involve leaving feedback on others' work – peer review, discussions, and commenting on others' posts).

You can expect the following from the instructor:

- Quick responses to requests to meet with the instructor or TA by phone, in person, or in a virtual conference room (within 48 hours, but more quickly on weekdays). Should there be multiple student requests (at least 1/3 of the class), a formal conference day and time will be scheduled and an announcement encouraging others to participate will be made on the course site.

As a graduate course, you will be doing a fair amount of independent reading and gaming; you need to be a self-motivated and independent learner. Please be aware that the lectures and the course readings are complementary. You will not be able to succeed in this class if you only watch lectures or overviews and skip the readings.

Asking Questions about the Material

Questions are best asked on the *Help Discussion Boards*. Many students will benefit from hearing your questions and others' responses. If you have a question, it is very likely that others do too. And if you have an answer you could receive a few extra credit points. Questions regarding personal concerns may also be sent to the instructor via email, but most questions should be posted online.

Required Course Readings

Course readings are available through links or pdfs online through Canvas.

Students will need to occasionally register for free accounts to games (have a junk email address ready if that bothers you).

Course Requirements

You are expected to check in the syllabus and with the course website regularly and meet all posted deadlines. You are also expected to follow the order of the assignments listed in each learning module, unless otherwise posted. There are a total of 1000 possible points for this course, below is a breakdown of how those points are distributed.

Assignment 1: Game Autobiography (50 points)

As we begin to study games and virtual worlds as designs for learning, it is helpful to understand our own history with gaming and how it might frame our perception of games and learning. Provide a **written account**. Highlight some of your prior experiences with playing games, digital or not: which games were your favorites, what games were played in your family, which games did you play with your friends, which games do you continue to play now, and any other relevant experiences and observations.

Assignment 2: Gamer Profile (100 points)

In this assignment, you will observe and interview someone playing a videogame for the first time. You should choose a game from the course or one approved by the instructor. You must observe a child (age 6-18). The purpose is to understand how they play, their learning, problem solving, etc and write a report of the session. Spend about 30 minutes watching them play. Ask them to talk aloud as they play. Feel free to ask them questions, "Why did you do that?" "How did you figure that out?"

Write a profile of your participant that tells the reader:

- Who they are (use pseudonyms; age, gender)
- How often they play games.
- What kind of games do they play? (It is ok if they don't play any games.)

- How they went about their game play.
- What did you learn from watching them?

Link it to your experience playing games and the readings/theories from class. If you are one of those people who wants guidance on how much to write, consider writing ~300 words describing the gameplay, and 300 words reflecting on it. If you do not know a child contact the professor.

Detailed rubrics will be included in Canvas.

Assignment 3: Class Games (200 points)

Over ten weeks (weeks 3-12) we will play three different games as a class. Participation in these games will make up 20% of your grade. We will first play *Minecraft Edu*, then *ECO*, and lastly *Guild Wars II*. Each week you'll be expected to play the game at least 2 hours to receive 20 points for that week of gameplay. *Minecraft Edu* and *ECO* will provide the teacher (me) with a record of who plays and for how long, for *Guild Wars II* I will upload more details on how to show your play time in Canvas.

Assignment 4: Game Journal (200 points)

In addition to play the game, each student will be responsible for keeping a “gaming journal” regarding what you have learned and your gameplay that occurs in the aforementioned games. This should help you prepare for weekly discussions and use writing as an ongoing means of exploring course content. The journal will consist of three types of entries:

- *Big Ideas* — Prompts that address a key topic for the week. These should be anywhere between 500 and 1000 words apiece. They are found in each module in canvas. Over ten weeks, you only need 7 big ideas posts.
- *Gaming “Diary” Entries* — Posts about your own gameplay (how you learned how to play, how you played with classmates, struggles, accomplishments, etc). These should be anywhere between 250-500 words apiece. Over ten weeks, you only need 6 gaming posts.
 - What you did in the game (bullet points are ok)?
 - At what point did you struggle?
 - How did you overcome those struggles?
 - Did you receive help from the community or your classmates?
 - Do you see opportunities for learning in the classroom or another learning context?
- *“Reflections”* — At the end of each week you should reflect on your learning, reactions to class discussions, and your game play. These should be anywhere between 250-500 words apiece. Over ten weeks, you only need 7 reflections posts.

You will complete your journal over ten weeks (weeks 3-12). However, you will turn in your journals three (once after each game): after week 6, week 10, and week 13. Of the ten weeks, you only need 7 entries for big ideas and reflections and 6 for gaming. For example, in week 5 you may decide to only write a reflection and big idea entry but not a gaming entry.

*****What you turn in: a pdf of your Journal entries. All entries should be dated and labeled with headings indicating what kind of entry it is. *****

Gaming Journal entries can be informally written, should cite course readings if appropriate, and can serve as an ongoing means for students to work through the course topics through writing. As such, a more informal tone is fine.

Twice during the semester, you will turn in your journal. Feedback will be given based on three criteria: Reflection, Growth, and Effort. Please see the Rubric for the Game Journal.

Assignment 5: Final Project (200 points)

Choice 1: Create an instructional unit.

You will create an instructional unit that uses games for learning or applies principles from games to reshape learning in your instructional environment. This should be bigger than just a lesson. It should encompass a topic in some course or area of formal (or even informal) learning and cover it through a set of lessons and experiences. Perhaps you want to redesign a curricular unit in a course that you teach. Perhaps you want to develop a new unit for a museum or a science club or a writing workshop or a Sunday School unit. In addition to developing the curriculum you will write a 1-2 page explanation of the how and why behind the curriculum and your choices:

- How does the game help foster learning?
- Why did you choose this particular game or format?
- How does this game help learn this content in ways that face-to-face instruction can not?

Choice 2: Make a game for learning.

You will create your own game with purposes for learning. This is a technical and design challenge. If you make this choice, we encourage you to use an existing platform like Aris (for augmented reality) or Twine. Warning: Don't get so caught up on the technical side of things that you neglect the actual design of your game. In some cases, a detailed layout of a game intended to be designed for technical platform may be adequate (i.e., you want to design a full-blown role-playing game but are not a full 100-person technical team). Finally, if you are designing a game you will probably only need to design level one, or part one, or one section of the game.

*A detailed rubric will be uploaded on canvas for both of these assignments.

Assignment 6: Weekly Reading Discussions (300 points)

Throughout the term, you will be asked to participate in reading discussions and activities online. Each week you will receive a participation score for your participation in the discussions. Your initial post should be done on Wednesday and two responses to your classmates should be completed by Friday. Your initial post is worth 20 points, and both responses are worth 5 points each for a total of 30 points each week. ***Thus only 10 posts need to be completed to get full scores.** Discussions should demonstrate that you read and understood the reading for the week. More detailed scoring rubrics will be included on the canvas.

Class Schedule

Note: the course schedule is subject to change, that is, it is a plan rather than a contract. You will be notified in Canvas about any changes to the schedule or existing content.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/s	Game To Play	Assignment Due
1	January 7-13	Intro	<p>Squire, K. Chapter 1. Why study video games?</p> <p>Ecology of Games glossary Salen, Katie. Glossary. In the Ecology of Games p. 267-273.</p> <p>Video: Watch Squire Video</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Game Autobiography 2. Watch Squire video: https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/videogameslearning/recorded_videos%2FGames%20as%20Designed%20Experiences%20Part%20I%20-%20Squire.7aa39252a11a1a787e765aa3539c96c9.webm 3. Reading Discussions
2	January 14-20	History of Games	<p>Ito, M. (2008). Education vs. Entertainment: A Cultural History of Children's Software. In K. Salen (Ed.), <i>The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning</i> (pp. 89–116.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.</p> <p>Yee, N. (2014). <i>The Proteus Paradox: How Online Games and Virtual Worlds Change Us-And How They Don't</i>. Yale University Press. (Chapter 1)</p>	Zork, Pac-man, Math Blaster, Oregon Trail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Discussions 2. Play Classic Games
3	Jan 21-27	What is a game?	<p>McGonigal, Jane. "Why I Love Bees: A Case Study in Collective Intelligence Gaming." <i>The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning</i>.</p>	Minecraft educati	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start Journal

			<p>Edited by Katie Salen. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 199–228.</p> <p>Squire, K. Chapter 2: What Makes a “Good” Educational Game?</p> <p>Skim: Bedwell, 2012. Look at taxonomy of a game attributes.</p>	on	<p>2. Watch:</p> <p>Jane McGonigal The Game that can give you 10 Extra years of life (Gamification) Talking about the game Superbetter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfBpsV1Hwqs</p> <p>3. Reading Discussions</p>
4	Jan 28-Feb 3	Play and Learning	<p>Bruner, J. (1983). Play, Thought, Language. Peabody Journal of Education. Vol. 60, No. 3.</p> <p>Squire, K. Chapter 3: Learning Through Play</p>	Minecraft	<p>1. Journal entry 2. Reading Discussions</p>
5	Feb 4-10	Minecraft, Mods, and Knowledge Building	<p>Pick one:</p> <p>Burnett, C. (2015). Being together in classrooms at the interface of the physical and virtual: implications for collaboration in on/off-screen sites. Learning, Media and Technology, 1-24.</p> <p>Dezuanni, M., O’Mara, J., & Beavis, C. (2015). ‘Redstone is like electricity’: Children’s performative representations in and around Minecraft. E-learning and Digital Media, 12(2), 147-163.</p> <p>Dijkers, S.: <i>Teachercraft: How Teachers Learn to Use Minecraft in their Classrooms</i>. ETC</p>	Minecraft	<p>1. Journal Entry 2. Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNfPdaKYOPi</p> <p>Quest to Learn: Web: http://www.q2l.org Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqMiNDyxmPk</p> <p>3. Reading Discussions</p>

			Press,Pittsburgh (2015)		
6	Feb 11-17	Game Design	<p>Gee, J. P. (2005). Learning by design: Good video games as learning machines. <i>E-Learning</i>, 2(1), 5–16.</p> <p>Also explore Gee’s 36 learning principles at http://edurate.wikidot.com/the-36-learning-principles (These are taken from Gee, J. P. (2003). What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.) http://edurate.wikidot.com/the-36-learning-principles</p> <p>Eric Zimmerman’s blog post on Iterative Design</p> <p>Recommended: Van Eck, R. N., Shute, V. J. & Rieber, L. P. (in press). <u>Leveling up: Game design research and practice for instructional designers</u>. In R. Reiser & J. Dempsey (Eds.), <i>Trends and issues in instructional design and technology (4th ed.)</i>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.</p>	Eco	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn in Journal for Minecraft Edu 2. Reading Discussion
7	Feb 18-24	Games & Motivation	<p>Malone, T. W., & Lepper, M. R. (1987). Making learning fun: A taxonomy of intrinsic motivations for learning. In R. E. Snow & M. J. Farr (Eds.), <i>Aptitude, learning, and instruction: Cognitive and affective process analysis (Vol. 3, pp. 223-253)</i>. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.</p>	Eco	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal Entry 2. Reading Discussion

			<p>Recommended: Ryan, R. M., Rigby, C. S., & Przybylski, A. (2006). The motivational pull of video games: A self-determination theory approach. <i>Motivation and emotion</i>, 30(4), 344-360.</p>		
8	Feb 25- Marc 3	Gamification	<p>Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R. & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: defining gamification. In Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference (pp. 9–15).</p> <p>Nicholson, S. (2012, October). Strategies for meaningful gamification: Concepts behind transformative play and participatory museums. Presented at Meaningful Play 2012.</p> <p>Website: gamification network http://gamification-research.org/about/ In popular culture: http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/09/14/high-score Sebastian Deterding talk at Google “Meaningful Play: Getting Gamification Right” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZGCPap7GkY</p> <p>Gamification to improve our world: Yu-kai Chou at TedX https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5QjuegtiyC</p> <p>The Future of Creativity & Innovation is Gamification: Gabe Zichermann TED talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZvRw71Slew</p>	Eco	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal entry 2. Watch videos on Canvas 3. Reading Discussions

			<p>Extra Credits video on gamifying school: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MuDlw1zIc94</p>		
9	March 4-10	Making Games for Learnin g	<p>Kafai, Y. B. (2006). Playing and making games for learning: Instructionist and constructionist perspectives for game studies. <i>Games and Culture</i>, 1(2), 36-40.</p> <p>And one of the following:</p> <p>Peppler, K. A. & Kafai, Y. B. (2007). What video game making can teach us about learning and literacy: Alternative pathways into participatory culture. In Akira Baba (Ed.), <i>Situated Play: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA)</i> (pp. 369-376). Tokyo, Japan: The University of Tokyo.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Burke, Q. & Kafai, Y.B. (2014). A decade of game making for learning: From tools to communities. In H. Agius & M.C. Angelides</p>	Eco	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal Entry 2. Reading Discussions

			(Eds.) The Handbook of Digital Games: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). New York: Wiley-IEEE Press.		
	March 11-17		SPRING BREAK		
10	March 18-24	Games and Schools OR Games and Training	<p>Schools: Read the Introduction to Teachers as Pioneers (2016) and read 1 chapter that interest you.</p> <p>Training: Read the introduction and skim chapter 1 of Serious Games: Games that Educate, Train, and Inform . Then read an additional chapter that interests you (Chapters 2-9).</p> <p>Watch James Gee: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq6h5_NUPB0&feature=youtu.be</p>	Guild Wars 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn in Journal for Eco 2. Watch Videos on Canvas 3. Journal Entry for Guild Wars 2 4. Reading Discussions 5. Gamer Profile Due
11	March 25 – 31	Gender, Race, Culture, & Gaming	<p>Jenkins, H., & Cassell, J. (2008). From Quake Grrls to Desperate Housewives: A decade of gender and computer games. In Y. B. Kafai, C. Heeter, J. Denner & J. Y. Sun (Eds.), Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat: New perspectives on gender and gaming (pp. 5-20). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.</p> <p>Richard, G. T. (2013, April). Designing Games That Foster Equity and Inclusion: Encouraging Equitable Social Experiences Across Gender and Ethnicity in Online Games. In</p>	Guild Wars 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal Entry 2. Reading Discussions 3. Watch Videos on Canvas

			<p>Proceedings of the CHI'2013 Workshop: Designing and Evaluating Sociability in Online Video Games, Paris, France (pp. 83-88).</p> <p>In the Media: Rolling Stone Article: https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/anita-sarkeesian-gamergate-interview-20141017</p> <p>New Yorker: http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/gamergate-scandal-erupts-video-game-community</p> <p>Anita Sarkeesian's organization: https://feministfrequency.com</p> <p>Anita Sarkeesian's Talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah8mhDW6Shs</p>		
12	April 1-7	Affinity spaces	<p>Gee, J. P., & Hayes, E. (2012). Nurturing affinity spaces and game-based learning. <i>Games, learning, and society: Learning and meaning in the digital age</i>, 1-33.</p> <p>Recommended: Stevens, R., Satwicz, T., & McCarthy, L. (2008). In-Game, In-Room, In-World: Reconnecting Video Game Play to the Rest of Kids' Lives. In K. Salen (Ed.), <i>The Ecology of Games: Connecting Youth, Games, and Learning</i> (pp. 41–66). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.</p>	Guild Wars 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journal Entry 2. Reading Discussion 3. Submit a proposal for your final project.

13	April 8-14	Games as Assessments	<p>Shute, V. J., & Ke, F. (2012). Games, Learning, and Assessment. In D. Ifenthaler, D. Eseryel, & X. Ge (Eds.), <i>Assessment in Game-Based Learning</i> (pp. 43–58). Springer New York.</p> <p>Fishman, B., Riconscente, M., Snider, R., Tsai, T., & Plass, J. (2015).</p> <p>Clarke-Midura, J., Dede, C., & Norton, J. (2011). Next generation assessments for measuring complex learning in science. <i>The road ahead for state assessments</i>, 27-40.</p> <p>Supplemental:</p> <p>Empowering Educators: Supporting Student Progress in the Classroom with Digital Games (Part 2: Case Studies of Game Features Used to Support Formative Assessment Practices). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. http://gamesandlearning.umich.edu/agames</p> <p>Mislevy, R. J., Oranje, A., Bauer, M. I., von Davier, A., Hoa, J., Corrigan, S., ... John, M. (2014). Psychometric considerations in game-based assessment. New York: GlassLab. (Read pages 18-38; read more if you are curious and/or ambitious.)</p>	Guild Wars 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn in Journal for Guild Wars 2. 2. Reading Discussion

14	April 15-21	Esports	Richard, G. T., McKinley, Z. A., & Ashley, R. W. (2018). Collegiate esports as Learning Ecologies: Investigating Collaborative Learning and Cognition During Competitions. <i>Proceedings of DiGRA</i> , 1-15.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Discussion 2. Turn in First Draft of Final Project
15	April 22-28		No Readings—Work on Your Final Project		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn in Final Project

Grading scale

There is no curve for the class. Grades will be assigned based on the scale below, with your final grade rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point.

Grading scale	
A	93 – 100%
A-	90 – 92.9%
B+	87 – 89.9%
B	83 – 86.9%
B-	80 – 82.9%
C+	77 – 79.9%
C	73 – 76.9%
C-	70 – 72.9%
D+	67 – 69.9%
D	63 – 66.9%
D-	60 – 62.9%

Late Assignments

Assignments will be accepted late. However, there will be a 10% score reduction for each day late. After a week late assignments will not be accepted.

USU Criteria for Make-Up of Missed Assignments or Projects

Students will be allowed to make up assignments or projects at full credit only if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Incapacitating illness prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks,
- A death in the family,
- Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a schedule to secure needed employment,
- Change in work schedule as required by employer (with verification) or,
- Other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

If there are extenuating circumstances, a student may petition the instructor for time beyond the deadline. Documentation of the circumstances cited to justify the make-up is required.

Plagiarism

As stated in the USU Student Code, plagiarism is “the act of representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.” Plagiarism is harmful both for the author of the original work and for the

plagiarizer. Any individuals involved in plagiarizing work will receive an automatic fail for the assignment or project and will be immediately reported to the university administration.

Persons with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities who are in need of academic accommodations should immediately notify the instructor and/or contact the Disability Resource Center at (435) 797-2444 and fill out an application for services. Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

Incompletes

In accordance with University policy, incompletes are not to be given for poor performance. There will be no incompletes given except for conditions beyond the student's control, including:

- Incapacitating illnesses that prevent a student from attending classes for a period of at least two weeks
- A death in the immediate family
- Financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter course schedule to secure employment
- Change in work schedule as required by an employer

Other, *unexpected* emergencies may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of the cause for the incomplete, appropriate documentation of the circumstances is required for an extension to be considered.

Written Assignments

Unless otherwise advised in advance, all written assignments are to be completed in the following format:

1. MS Word file with **your name** and assignment type in the file name.
2. 8.5 x 11, single-spaced.
3. Times or Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, **your name** on first page.
4. Submitted by electronic copy through email.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE ORIGINAL WORK

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade. The preferred style for bibliographic referencing is APA (*American Psychological Association*). You can find details about APA documentation on the following helpful website: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>. For educational research, the most popular database is ERIC (*Education Resources Information Center*). This can be found online at: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>.

10 Pointers for Good Academic Essay Writing

1. A good general rule to follow in the structure of your papers is “tell them what you’re going to say, tell them, then tell them what you said”. In the introduction, provide a roadmap of what you are going to say in the paper. It will help your own organization and organizes the paper for the reader to follow your arguments along.
2. Be explicit about your questions, thesis, perspective and put it up front in your introduction. It’s best not to leave your reader(s) guessing what the paper is about.
3. Provide signposts or points to your roadmap, e.g., “in this section, the following point...” or “to summarize” or “having covered the...we will now turn to...”
4. Section titles are also good as signposts but be sure that the content of the section reflects the title of the section.
5. Use transition sentences that build from pervious information and connects to the next.

6. Explain terms. Don't put them in quotes and assume the reader will know what you mean. Try very hard not to make assumptions about what the reader knows even though you know who the reader is and he/she might be an expert in your topic. The point is for you to demonstrate that you know the material.
7. Be consistent with your bibliographic referencing style.
8. Be careful not to over-generalize, e.g., "many theorists..." when you are only referencing one study.
9. Don't assume everyone sees or agrees with your perspective, you need to convince the reader of your perspective.
10. Summarize in the conclusion, what you wrote about in the body of the paper. Tie your conclusions back to your original question...how have you proven, answered, shown, presented information that addresses it. Don't introduce new information in the conclusion. It detracts from the cohesiveness.