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GAMIFICATION

Revitalising of History through Historical Games in the Digital Era

An opening provocation into teaching history through multimodality

This chapter advances multimodality in expanding historical game education research and application of historical video games for the teaching of history within secondary schools and tertiary institutions. A multimodal focus on historical representations encased in historical gameplay sequences and game developer integrations of digital and non-digital historical research methods and sources informing game design in development of a game's historical world comprise some of the innovative areas within this contribution in exploring the possibilities of history teachers using historical games as critical sources for their students learning of both history and historical gaming.

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Introduction

Public engagement with integrations of printed, visual, and digital media texts represents a major transition toward the assemblage of meanings or ideas, knowledge, and learning via multimodal forms of communication and interaction. Historical video games, as a recent multimodal form of representing the past, constitute a distinct genre of digital games that are 'set in and provide experiences of history and/or engage in discourses and meanings about the past' (Redder 2023: 5) and are gaining acceptance within the wider discipline of history. The establishment of 'Historical Game Studies' as an emergent interdisciplinary field dedicated to how historical games 'represent the past or relate to discourses about it, the potential applications of such games to different domains of activity and knowledge' (Chapman, Foka & Westin 2016: 1) has contributed a wide range of works. These areas of study include women and gender history within historical gaming, the ludic aesthetics of the historical game form (via affordances from a game's procedural rule-based system), and historical accuracy versus authenticity within video game representation. Increasing proliferation and reception of historical games in popular culture, global entertainment markets, and academic studies does not infer a displacement or erasure of older forms of communication (such as the literary or printed mode), but instead recognises that 'communication in all forms (including video games) is rarely limited to a single communicative mode' (Redder 2023: 106-107). Thus, in preparing young future historians for versatile proficiency in a wide array of digital and non-digital sources, experiential immersion and exploration achieved by contemporary historical video games possess significant worth for scholarly learning of the past.

Despite growing interest and contributions to research and discourse on historical games, the lack of a widespread extension of education systems and pedagogical practices that implement historical video games for history teaching curricula across schools and universities remains an ongoing problem. Undoubtedly, multiple individual cases of teachers and historians (e.g. Wainwright 2014; Lawler & Smith 2021; Seed 2017; McCall 2011; Clulow 2021) have shown the long-term benefits of incorporating historical video games effectively into history lessons and teaching curricula. However, within mainstream history education, many historians and history teachers, primarily trained to study and discuss history through the written form, continue to be 'slow to embrace technology as a means of bridging the gap between traditional history methods with the digital humanities' (Lawler & Smith 2021: 2). Consequently, many lack practical experience and conceptual expertise to engage with the multimodal interactions between contemporary historical texts (Donnelly: 2018).[1] Concurrently, investigative research into historical games' capacity to exhibit or produce and teach the kinds

of scholarship present in conventional academic history, alongside literary modes of history teaching and scholarship, in a classroom setting has been inhibited by the longstanding consensus within the wider history discipline. Video game historian Esther Wright outlines this belief eloquently 'despite … those keen to take games seriously, many [historians and scholars] have still never relinquished the assumption that written academic history is the standard by which all [histories] should be judged in perpetuity' (Wright 2022: 169). Donnelly's research (2018) also aligns to this statement from her interviews with practising history teachers (both in government and non-government sectors) within Australia. She not only found that most of the interviewees used 'the narrative and/or information provided by the historical representation, rather than analyse the text as a primary or secondary source', but also documented their responses in the form of bewildered surprise to 'applying source analysis techniques to contemporary historical representations. Clearly in their minds historical sources were written texts, not multi-modal experiences' (Donnelly 2018: 119).

As an opening provocation in response to these sentiments, this chapter explores new possibilities for historical game use in secondary school and tertiary education, on the premise that historical games 'can engage in and contribute a wide range of academic scholarship on its own merits and standards' (Redder 2023: 79) due to their multimodal compositions of representation. These multimodal compositions include how historical games assemble different typologies of historical knowledge that engage users/learners in new ways and provide students (in the role of players) 'agency and freedom to explore historical spaces, places, inhabitants, artefacts, experience rituals and practices, and hear sounds and languages' (Redder & Schott 2022: 4). This discussion then addresses the possibilities of using historical games as critical sources for teaching history within secondary school and university classrooms through a multimodal lens, illustrated by an overview of some of the multimodal compositions or engagements within certain recent historical game endeavours, as an ideal starting base for student interactivity with multimodal histories. Before we address the value of multimodal approaches to developing history curriculum usages of historical video games, an introduction to historical game education and some of its major developments is covered.

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1   Donnelly uses the term 'Contemporary historical representations' in her paper to account for the various types of representations created in recent times, such as historical fiction novels and graphic novels, museums, films, and video games.

Historical Game Education

Within historical game studies, and more broadly within digital game studies, a growing body of work studies the use and limitations of history games in both secondary (e.g. McCall 2011, 2020; Schrier 2014; Kee 2014) and higher education (e.g. Metzger & Paxton 2016; Kee 2014; Wainwright 2014; Houghton 2018; Holter, Schäfer & Schwesinger 2020). Foci for this study include the tension between the creative liberties applied during the game design process and standards for maintaining historical accuracy or sensitivity to evidence when configuring lessons and learning goals via historical games (Kee & Bachynski 2009; Metzger & Paxton 2016). Another prominent area of research addresses what students are expected to learn about history when interacting with and examining historical gaming experiences. A notable example is teachers emphasising historical games' capacity to develop student inquiry skills, bias identification, and perspective-taking, or as a vehicle for memorising historical facts (e.g. events and dates, historical figures, and military clothing and equipment) (Schrier 2014).

Video game historian and schoolteacher Jeremiah McCall's *Gaming the Past: Using Video Games to Teach Secondary History* is distinct not only for its extensive discussion on the types of learning that historical games can facilitate, but also includes sample units, lesson plans, templates and instructional strategies for teachers, alongside suggestions on how to identify and avoid common pitfalls (e.g. game blog journal, diagramming game systems, and writing narratives of simulation play sessions) (McCall 2011: 60–133). McCall (2011) recognises how historical games are capable of facilitating multiple, open, or alternative interpretations of the past. That is, choices presented to players (and re-playability) provide the freedom to navigate different pathways through a game world or make decisions which hold different consequences and outcomes. Games potentially offer multiple perspectives on the same scenario as opposed to a single narrative that can only be followed in a linear mode. As McCall recognises, games are interpretations subject to their own strengths and weaknesses, creating a form of history rather than relaying a fixed historical record (McCall 2011).

The aforementioned works comprise a body of influential research that foreground and develop effective strategies and applications for incorporating video games within feasible history curricula and student learning outcomes. However, this current body of research into historical game teaching and learning usually treats or approaches the use of historical games as tools for acquiring and producing conventional historical scholarship, rather than encouraging extensive analysis of a text's historical representation(s) and insights through an interactive engagement. In accordance with this approach, certain types of historical games (e.g. historical turn-based and/or real-time strategy games) as simulations in a procedural rule-based system are favoured: that is, explanatory

simulation models of 'history as a process', which are usually representative of global-based histories of the past (such as global politics, empire-building, and overseas maritime trade). Chiefly 'experimentation with simulating historical concepts and theories such as lessons on historical contingency, causality, teleology, and epistemology practices' (Redder 2023: 41).[2]

This predisposition toward a formalist approach to historical game pedagogy (i.e. gamic simulations of conceptual historical processes and epistemology) overlooks potential opportunities, including the Role-playing video games (RPG) genre and those in fantasy or imaginative contexts, that can assist pedagogical teaching and learning in two ways. One is addressing and using other kinds of historical game texts to teach and develop immersive student learning in knowledge acquisition, research, and critique of specialised historical periods, subjects, and/or imaginative and fantasized history contexts. The other is to concurrently offer students immersion in and accumulation of new or expanded historical knowledge about a period of history that has received limited research coverage (e.g. *Kingdom Come: Deliverance* (2018), and *Total War: Three Kingdoms—Eight Princes* (2019)). In addressing these underdeveloped areas in historical game education, this chapter contends that multimodal practices in the pedagogical teaching of history centre historical games not as merely tools or rule-based systems, but as *fully-fledged and critical works of history*.

Multimodality

Multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001, 2006) is the 'composition and simultaneously the application of multiple interconnected literacies and modes of communication and experience to make meaning' (Redder 2023: 103). Different modes of semiotic communication (e.g. written, visual, aural, and verbal forms) as ensembles within a text produce assemblages of both meanings and meaning-making processes or functions in experiencing and understanding a text's representation as a whole. Multimodal discourse then is highly useful to 'analyze how complex meanings are created in the articulation of both modal resources—or modes—and

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2   *Historical simulation games are defined as occupying the middle between 'simulation' and 'game' and are viewed by scholars like McCall as ideal for game-based historical learning opportunities, as opposed to other historical games which are historical but not simulation (McCall 2016). As McCall unpacks this term, clearly 'historical simulation games … deal with the ambiguous boundaries between rule-based playable systems that model the past accurately— simulations—and those that do not—games. Historical simulation games, then, occupy that middle ground as games—dynamic, rule- based and quantifiable conflicts—that provide playable models of an historical event, system, or process' (McCall 2016: 523).*

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media' (Canale 2019: 42).[3] Utilised in a wide range of fields, multimodal theory and discourse is notably gaining traction in digital game studies (e.g. Tavinor 2008, 2009; Hawreliak 2019; Burn 2017; Burn & Parker 2003; Burn & Schott 2004; Quijano 2019) by developing research that affords a more holistic approach to the 'exploration and analysis of video games as a multimodal form of communicative representation' (Redder & Schott 2022: 5). These frameworks consider video games as a medium not only in all its procedural and representational facets, but also in the intersections of meaning-making that emerge between these facets in both the game itself and its pre-release game production stage.

Despite video games being well suited to multimodal analysis as they 'rely upon the communicative resources of a wide array of modes … [and allow] a useful way … [of understanding] how players actually experience and negotiate meaning within a game' (Hawreliak 2019: 6), multimodal research and conceptual frameworks are limited in historical game studies. Nonetheless, research into the efficacy of multimodality in enriching pedagogical teaching and/or learning curricula through video games (combined with or supported by other digital and non-digital sources and methodologies) has been extensively developed in the last two decades. In works like Timms (2017) and Moore and Shute (2017), references to or applications of video games and/or game software for improving learning outcomes and interactive assessment activity have been developed with varying measures of success. Works like Jewitt (2006) have explored case examples of students designing games through accessible software to proactively encourage problem-solving and decision-making in a visceral format. Concurrently, von Gillern and Stufft (2022) developed lesson activities for adolescent students entailing analysis of gameplay experiences from popular commercial games to enhance student development of both digital literacy and digital remediations of other literacies (written, verbal, visual, etc.) commonly employed within games as multimodal symbols. Additionally, researchers have developed their own multimodal learning guides, programmes, and curricula with case examples for teachers to develop student learning with multimodal texts and strategies. Lee and Khadka (2018), Canale (2019), and Lim's (2021) works are integral examples of this endeavour in compositional classroom learning.

In line with this extensive range of research, multimodal conceptual frameworks and activities can open new pathways into how we conduct research into historical game study, including the nature of representation through historical gaming. In historical game education, a multimodal approach invites a plethora of different pedagogical capabilities

(including those opportunities mentioned earlier) grounded on engagement with historical games as multi-communicative histories eliciting scholarship in a gameplay form.[4] These pedagogical capabilities include student learning, knowledge acquisition, and analytical critique of histories or historical periods re-constructed as and via 'research-infused game experience[s]' (Redder & Schott 2022: 3) within a typology of historical games that 'translate research scholarship … found in both academic history and fantastical or folkloric accounts of history' (Redder & Schott 2022: 3). Multimodal learning can also foster students' competency and expertise in researching and interpreting history by teaching them to integrate and cross-examine an array of literary, visual, and digital historical sources and research methods. Finally, it provides students with viable spaces to develop a more in-depth analysis of the particularities of historical research, game design processes, and sources of the evidence used by game developers in constructing their games' respective history.

These three learning outcomes inform two particular engagements within emergent areas of historical game study that have potential value for supporting future secondary school and tertiary history curriculum programmes and classroom teaching. The multimodal historical engagements discussed in this chapter are (1) recording, interpretive analysis, and dissemination of historical scholarship of historical gameplay experiences as multimodal sources of history; and (2) historical research informing game design. The following sections explore these engagements and highlight the focus of scholars using a wider repertoire of both commercial and university-led historical game releases for teaching their respective histories through their multimodal scholarship and research processes.

Possible Avenues for Teaching History through Multimodal Learning

Gameplay history for historical research and analysis
Gameplay constitutes the multimodality of an historical game text. It does so by encompassing the 'entirety of the game experience itself, including in simultaneity the impact of its ludic and procedural elements … as well as the visual, performative, narrative, verbal, aural, and many other communicative modes and styles' (Redder & Schott 2022: 6). Historical gameplay, then, is the medium of historical games consisting of different modes of historical representation, with each one containing its own communicative style, content, and meaning-making processes, and historical literacies or knowledge expressions. Subsequently, experiencing a game's respective history through a particular mode of gameplay representation constitutes a range of multimodal experiential

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3   *The word 'mode' is a particular material and/or semiotic resource used to organise and signal or communicate meaning(s) (be it simple or complex) within a medium, entailing either a range of generalisations (e.g. imagery, writing, speech, performance) or in signs, units, and acts (e.g. word, gesture, sound, image).*

4   *By multi-communicative, I mean the different communicative languages or acts in all their multiple modalities of semiotic expression, content, and meaning-making processes.*

histories or more formally 'gameplay histories'. Moreover, recording, editing, and documenting video game footage of one's gameplay activity via a game capture device (e.g. Elgato) is the main source of data for obtaining, analysing, and disseminating scholarship from gameplay experiences.

While it is usually an outlet that content creators use to share their favourite pastime to online audiences, recording and using gameplay footage as data evidence, content presentation or storytelling, and/or critical text study is already gaining traction in both research (e.g. Marczak et al. 2012; Wallner & Kriglstein 2015; Redder 2023) and education applications (e.g. Gillern & Stufft 2022; Redder & Schott 2022). In particular, the developing multimodal conceptual framework 'Historical Modality' developed in Redder (2023) provides a potential opening platform for both secondary schools and tertiary institutions to incorporate multimodal gameplay into history teaching. In gameplay study, the historical modality system identifies and articulates an assemblage of different modalities of history represented or experienced through gameplay. To elaborate, it examines different types of multimodal systems or ensembles of historical gameplay representation that engage in and construct or contain different styles of communication and experience, content and its meaning-making process, and literacies of history. Hence, 'historical modality' or 'modality' signal these particular modes of gameplay representation, with three major historical modalities currently identified as 'lore history', 'imaginative history', and 'alternate history' (Redder 2023).

In my doctoral research, I applied historical modality to examine the recorded gameplay sequences of two Medieval historical game case studies and their dissemination of Medieval scholarship via its principal historical modality. Namely, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance* (KCD) by Warhorse Studios (Prague, Czech Republic) engaging in lore history, and *A Plague Tale: Innocence* (APTI) by Asobo Studio (Bordeaux, France) engaging in imaginative history via the historical fantasy style. However, the key engagements and highlights within this research application of the historical modality system contain potential avenues that, if applied in a history classroom or university lecture, can fulfil the learning opportunities outlined earlier in this chapter.

To provide some examples of these highlights from a gameplay research context, the KCD case study set in early fifteenth century Bohemia (modern-day Czech Republic) is used as a referential illustration. KCD adopts lore history as its primary modality, which involves 'discovery, dissemination, and experience of historical knowledge, research, and insights in relation to the game's chosen history' (Redder 2023: 249). Subsequently, KCD's provision of experiential lore histories as multimodal historical sources exhibiting gameplay variations of academic scholarship can configure or support lessons and student activities centred on content presentation, source

analysis, and assessments. KCD can support these kinds of lessons because its gameplay representations combine an extensive array of relevant historical sources (e.g. chronicles, fieldwork at surviving Medieval sites, Medieval combat fencing treatises and books) to represent a detailed yet minimally-documented regional history of the Rattay-Sasau (Czech: Rataje nad Sázavou) region impacted by an internal civil war (1402–1403) between two brothers and rulers, King Sigismund of Hungary and King Wenceslas of Bohemia. This re-construction, informing KCD's design of its historical game world, created a provision of new and extended interpretations of existing historical knowledge on this civil war's impact on the Rattay-Sasau region and more broadly the various phenomena and minutiae existing in Medieval Bohemia before and after the civil war. This provision of scholarly gameplay knowledge in the form of lore histories includes: the re-construction of the Siege of Silver Skalitz (1403) and its immediate socio-political aftermath (such as the refugee crisis); religious histories; conflicts against local robber baron knights; and several histories regarding the agencies and struggles of certain local Czech women during this ongoing war. These sorts of gameplay histories, when recorded by teachers, can be used alongside traditional historical sources to contribute and teach, for instance, on the content of the historical period and topics represented in the game, as well as provide a space to discuss and critique these multimodal gameplay sources. Concurrently, they can be framed as a form of student learning or assessment in building students' skills in conducting research and source analysis, by documenting their own or using the teacher's gameplay recordings when investigating and gathering evidence on a certain topic, theme, or subject.

Another key highlight for potential pedagogical material is that KCD's configuration of its gameplay representations in the lore history modality provided opportunities to interact with and critique the integration of primary and/or secondary historical sources. These various sources were acquired from Warhorse Studios' research and embedded into the game world (e.g. written literature and documents, combat manuscripts, historical sites, artworks). This particular engagement would extend history students' practice in source analysis by affording them different experiences. Specifically, students would interact with these sources not as replications of their original non-digital form but as renewed multimodal constructions. Additionally, during analysis of historical insights and knowledge within games like KCD, student-assessed research projects may entail encounters that encourage the search for and examination of additional primary and secondary historical sources to corroborate or expand findings from the historicity of the gameplay experience, and in other instances re-examining source evidence originally overlooked.

Designing lesson and assessment activities entailing recorded gameplay histories would be structured by three other key elements. Firstly, both history teachers and students would operate as a player-analyst in the role of player-historian. A

player-analyst is not only a participant in a video game from a ludic lens, but also has a specific focus to analyse and interpret their various gameplay experiences, stylistic conventions, and semantics of the game's content in the analytical lens of their respective field (e.g. film, anthropology, history, and cultural studies) (Redder 2023). In a history context, a player-historian is fundamentally a type of player-analyst for holistically examining historical games and their particular gameplay's historical modalities through ludic (procedural), history (representational), and orientational lenses (Redder 2023).[5]

Secondly and concurrently, maintaining the principles of multimodal video game learning requires students to study and master the procedural (ludic) and representational components of a video game and its gameplay medium, as historical games are 'representational texts and simultaneously a digital form of structured play' (Redder 2023: 7). Thirdly, applying the historical modality framework for history game teaching and students developing multimodal research and source analysis skills is enhanced by training history students to combine and cross-examine utilisations of history between non-digital sources and research methods with digital gameplay counterparts. This process was another viable multimodal approach utilised within my doctoral research and its empirical-based historical methodology to supplement and expand the historical insights gathered from recorded gameplay footage of KCD and APTI. These non-digital historical sources that corroborated my recorded game footage and its findings were: primary and secondary written sources pertaining to these games' histories and their subject matter; fieldwork at historical sites used by the game developers; and interviews with some of the game developers working for Warhorse Studios and Asobo Studio (Redder 2023).

Historical research as and for game design—Mythik Tane (TBC) and Ako: A Tale of Loyalty (2020)

The second avenue for student engagement with multimodal studies of history and historical gaming is situated within a game development context. Namely, this involves furthering students' study of a game's respective history via their game studio's selection and employment of historical sources from methods in both historical research and game design. Additionally, it includes establishing and distributing student-led historical game projects on streaming services for history teachers from secondary schools and universities to access for use. Both these approaches offer another way to enrich and assess a student's proficiency in research skills, critical analysis of source material, and semiotic or communicative applications through both digital and non-digital primary and secondary historical sources. These activities around

research-infused historical games and game development practices closely resemble the possibilities of the 'Gamic Mode of History' outlined by historian Dawn Spring (2014). In this frame, historical games following a gamic mode of history present 'original historical scholarship and … original research' (Spring 2014: 207), not by replicating scholarly monographs but through combining and complementing the strengths and skills of the history discipline with game system conventions. Consequently, 'the primary sources of the given research topic combined with the thesis and historical argument set the parameters for developing the rules' (Spring 2014: 217) while assessing how the 'relevant primary source material … [can] be most enjoyable [for players]' (Spring 2014: 215).

The earlier mentioned KCD and its localized Medieval Czech history can be considered as fulfilling a distinct gamic mode of history via 'gathering and cross-examining a wider repertoire of primary and secondary historical sources from a range of contexts' (Redder 2023: 210). Examples of evidence-intensive research and game design methods by its developer, Warhorse Studios, include: an extensive repository of primary and secondary historical literature (including some primary documents pertaining to some of the actual events of the Bohemian Civil War); nineteenth century military maps to configure their 3D game world and in-game map; fieldwork of historical sites within the Rattay-Sasau region (e.g. Sázava monastery, Castle Pirkstein); as well as aerial and on-site photography of its countryside landscapes (Redder 2023). Moreover, employment of a full-time historian (Joanna Nowak) and collaboration with various institutions and historical experts, such as museum staff (e.g. Czech Museum of Silver in Kutná Hora and Hussite Museum at Tábor); local historical guides and historians; and Medieval HEMA (Historical European Martial Arts) practitioners were also utilised (Redder 2023). Throughout the entirety of this game development process, Warhorse Studios closely operated within the boundaries of empiricism, late Medieval Czech narrative agency, the exercise of historical scepticism with respect to narrative accounts within their various Medieval sources, and appropriate game design liberties (Redder 2023).

While KCD is the most prominent example to date of this activity as a potential case study for instructing students on multimodal research in historical game design, the forthcoming release of the virtual reality game *Mythik Tāne* (TBC) by Vincent Egan (Lead developer and CEO of Maui Studios) in Aotearoa New Zealand offers another interesting gamic mode of history. In the synopsis of *Mythik Tāne*, the story is set during the chaos of creation in a proto-world created by the demiurge Io. A cataclysmic war breaks out between the Gods, and the player as the chosen deity, or Atua, Tāne is shown the path toward the heavens of knowledge in the hope that he can bring about peace and order. His journey is plagued with demonic entities sent by his jealous sibling Whiro, the Atua of malice, suffering, and disease. Maui Studios' upcoming historical game is highly innovative for a kaupapa

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5   *See Redder (2023) for an in-depth coverage of this variation of the term 'player-historian', originally developed by video game historian Adam Chapman in his seminal text* Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice *(2016).*

Māori research approach (specifically mātauranga Māori or Māori knowledge) and employs a core primary historical source from oral history in configuring their game world, namely Egan's own pūrakāu (ancient story) passed down from his koro (family elders) through multiple generations brought to life via digital game technology.[6] This historical game containing a story and an immersive game world from a Te Ao Māori worldview aims to inspire young Māori for self-determination, reclaiming Māoridom through storytelling, visual art, and cultural history, and promotes indigeneity such as incorporating Te Reo Māori as the game's primary language.

Concurrently, endeavours to assess students' ability in conducting historical research and/or dissemination of scholarship by a more proactive involvement with primary and secondary historical sources (particularly written material) have also been present in student-collaborative historical game design projects. Lawler and Smith's (2021) classroom experimentation (in a style similar to the *Choose your Adventure* book series), *Sankofa* (2017) developed at the University of California Irvine, and game studio Triseum's creation and release of the edutainment historical game series *ARTé* for game-based historical learning are some of these endeavours.[7] Another prominent example is the programme 'Epoch: History Games Initiative' at the University of Texas in Austin (UT), founded and managed by historian and Associate Professor Adam Clulow.

This programme is currently tasked with designing historical games catering to potential secondary schools and their history classrooms or teaching programmes (both in the USA and abroad) by instructing and utilising history students as game developers, combining their skills in historical research and game design. Their first game release, *Ako: A Tale of Loyalty* (2020), is a digital graphic-novel-style adaptation of an Early Modern Japanese history called the '47-Ronin', otherwise known as the 'Akō Incident' (1702–1703). This game was developed by a group of history major students (Ashley Gelato, Michael Rader, Izellah Wang and Alex Aragon) under the direction and guidance of Clulow himself with an educational framework in mind, alongside a series of historical goals and restrictions under which the students had to work.[8] The main challenge for the student games team was to locate and incorporate contemporary in-depth scholarship to address four overlapping tasks, specifically 'creating a believable central

character, developing a branching storyline with consequential choices, writing compelling dialogue and producing realistic and historically grounded artwork' (Clulow 2020: para. 7). Clulow stated (2021) that the student games team used a number of research methodologies for their game process, such as writing over 30,000 words of dialogue derived from and alongside extensive research in topics like agriculture, diet, currency, dress style, architecture, and funeral ceremonies. As a key outcome, aside from creating a fully functional game, Clulow found that the students learnt 'more about samurai life and early modern Japan than any group of students I had worked with across a single semester. They read a dizzying array of books and articles while working and reworking the overall design, dialogue and artwork' (Clulow 2021: para. 18). This major finding strongly encapsulates the main learning outcome and incentive described by Lawler and Smith, regarding how conducting historical research through a game design assessment allows students that 'research, write and create games … an opportunity to engage in the work of the historian, test their historical interpretations … [and reinforce] the importance of asking good historical research questions (Lawler & Smith 2021: 2).'[9]

Conclusion

These multimodal research areas within historical game studies (historical gameplay representations as multimodal texts and interaction with historical research informing game design) encourage new extensions to existing curricula for teaching history by synthesising conventional or non-digital (e.g. written) and digital methods of historical knowledge and content presentation, source/text analysis, and critical interpretation skills. Additionally, these emergent areas of study afford historians, history teachers, and lecturers new opportunities for experimentation with and refinement of their styles or methods of multimodal literacy, resource selection, and assessment structure. Understandably, until further developments or applications of these multimodal engagements as practical syllabus courses brings them out of their current state of 'theoretical potential of [historical] games as learning tools' (McCall 2011: 4), arguing for historical games to be understood as critical scholarly histories within secondary schools and universities will remain an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless, the growing number of historians, game designers, and teachers implementing closer integrations of conventional and digital forms of

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6   Mythik Tāne *won the gold award at the New Zealand Best Design Awards in 2022 where it was showcased, and commercial distribution is planned.*

7   Sankofa *was developed in a collaboration between history professor Patricia Seed, computer science professor Magda El Zarki, and computer game designer and staff member Jessica Kernan.*

8   *This project was also undertaken in supportive collaboration with UT graduate and experienced games designer Ian Diaz.*

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9   *The success of their game's release was followed by further releases in subsequent years under new student-led teams, namely* The Pazzi Conspiracy *(2021) and* Play Ghosts over the Water: Changing the Tides of Japan's Future *(2023). The latter game is the first in an extended collaboration between the Department of History and the Department of Asian Studies at UT within the funded project JapanLab from 2022–2025 (run by the directors Kirsten Cather, Adam Clulow and Mark Ravina).*

history increasingly problematise current education policies, presuppositions, and history teaching practices that continue to impart to history students an engagement with studying the past primarily in the monomodal printed form.

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