Children are exposed to a plethora of different media throughout their lives. They see and use a lot of different media in the most crucial moments in their lives, when their brain and body is developing. We have all lived with television, radio, magazines, newspapers and many more portals of media communication, but what about the newer age of technology, mostly video games. This can focus solely on this brief definition that I like to call video game literacy. Video game literacy can be described as the understanding and comprehension about video games. Using this definition, you can ask yourself these three questions so you can understand and comprehend them a little bit easier. One, how do video games affect the brain and its development? Two, what are some of the benefits and consequences of using and playing video games? Third, what can I do to educate myself of the content of the game?

Once you understand which question you want to ask, the next step is learning how this can help you and your child. It is best to understand what brain development stage your child is in because it helps you decide what type of learning he/she could be using. The child's brain develops continuously from birth to and past young adult, but birth to young adult is very crucial brain development moments in the individuals' life. Once you understand what stage your child, or you, is at in life, you are going to be able to understand how using video games will affect you or your child. Of course there are positive and negative outcomes in everything that we do in life, using and playing video games is no exception. If you understand yourself, you will be able to clarify how they may or may not affect you. Now that you are getting a good understanding about yourself and your brain, or your child and his/her brain, it is now time to educate yourself to comprehend what is being played. Comprehending the content of the video game and learning about it and the rating system will help you realize if this is the best item for you or your child to be viewing.

I have explained the different topics and their relationship with each other, now I will tell you why I have organized them in this way. I feel that you need to understand you or the individual that is being using the video game media. If you understand how their or your personality is, the easier you will be able to see if it is the right moment for them to be playing that type of specific content. Learning about what you or your child is taking in could affect them later in life for better or for worse. The three topics; brain development, effects of the video games, and the education; are very important, not only in the video game media, but also in all the media that we are taking in today. In the paragraphs below, I will have multiple sources that I will explain

The following authors will discuss the process of the brain development through young adult hood. They will discuss what these individuals are learning at this point of their lives and how it is a fragile and crucial moment.

Dill, K. E. (2009). *How fantasy becomes reality: Seeing through media influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This researcher explains the best time for children to you media, such as video games, to learn. She describes that the best way to teach children is through story telling. Story telling is a fundamental element of social systems. The best ways to understand and teach young children through stories are to use parable and fables so that you can teach them important lessons. A lot of video games use these types of storytelling. Some other things she discusses throughout the text is that playing video games are great for social lessons, their attention spans, and explaining, depending on the stage of their life, how they are frightened.

Singer, D.G, (2006). Handbook of Children, Culture, and Violence. Dowd, N. E., Singer, D. G., & Wilson, R.F. (EDs), *Prologue: Developmental variations Among Children and Adolescents- An Overview of the Research and Policy Implications.* **(pp. xxvii-xliv). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.**

This book has many different authors, but this author describes in the prologue the developmental stages of birth to young adults. She goes into great detail about the different periods in a person's life, specified by age, and describes what they should be learning. You can tell that this researcher is focusing purely on the age and really wants to address what children should be learning and the best way for them to learn the lesson.

The following authors will go into further detail on the different ways that video games affect certain individuals.

Small, G. W., & Vorgan, G. (2008). *IBrain: Surviving the technological alteration of the modern mind***. New York: Collins Living.**

These authors give very detailed information about how media can affect the brain. Small and Vorgan talk about different stages in the individual's life and how video games and television affect the individual. They go into more information that focus's on mental disorders such as Autism, Indigo children, and ADHD. They also talk about how the playing video games will affect the brain in certain areas at certain ages. Unlike the authors below, they talk more about the mental disorders.

Carnagey, N.L., Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B.J. The effect of video game violence on physiological desensitization to real-life violence. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 43 (2007) 489-496. Doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2006.05.003.

These two researchers go into great detail about the study that they conducted to see if violent video games desensitize individuals. They talk about how the individuals behaviors were before, during, and after they play a violent video game. They had a control group and a variable group that played and did not play a game that contained violent content. Before playing the game, they made sure that each individual did not have aggression issues, and made sure they were all emotionally and physically stable. During the playing of the violent video game, they measured heart rate and the other ways that the body reacted to the violent content. Finally, they had some scenarios that contained bullying, or someone being hurt. They explained that the individuals that played the violent video game didn't really share empathy for that individual; therefore focusing on the desensitizing effect.

The following authors will be discussing the different types of ways that you can gain more information about video games to help educate yourself.

***Violent Video games and young people.* Miller, M.C., MacDonals, A., Grinspoon, L., & Borus, J.F., (Eds). Harvard Mental Health Letter. Retrieved from Vol. 24 number 4 Oct. 2010.**

Unlike author Taylor, the writer of this Harvard article, focus' less on educating individuals about the rating system, but on how the parents should monitor there child with 'screen time'. This author lists several steps on how to do so, for instance, they focus on

spending time and playing with the individual to learn about the game and the content of games that they're child is playing. Another thing they talk about is placing video game consoles in family-oriented rooms. Once again, they focus more on the family spending time together to learn, rather than just reading about the rating system and games.

Alloway, N., & Gilbert, P., (1998). Wired Up. Howard, S., (EDs). *Video Game Culture: Playing with masculinity, Violence and Pleasure. (pp. 93-113).* **University College of London.**

Alloway explains how the Internet could help educate you on the content of the video games. She says using forums, Facebook, and other social media portals. Using these types of communication to talk to other concerned individuals and video game company's help you understand what the video game actually is and the content that is within the game. Concerned parents say that this is one of the best ways to gain information, especially unbiased information.

Taylor, L.A., (2006). Handbook of Children, Culture, and Violence. Dowd, N. E., Singer, D. G., & Wilson, R.F. (EDs), *Positive Features of Videogames. (pp. 247-266).* **Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.**

This researcher explains how important it is to understand the rating system of video games. In today's world, we have rating systems for television, movies and video games. This researcher feels that this is a big problem because they are inconsistency. She feels that parents do not know what they're child is playing because he/she does not know the rating system, or is confusing it with the other systems. She also stresses that