Reading 2

Skills:

- Main idea
- Details
- Author's purpose
- Text function
- Understand references
- Scanning

Getting started: Our world is full of male-dominated occupations. Do you think the video game industry is another example of this fact?

WHY SO FEW WOMEN DESIGN VIDEO GAMES?

There's a stereotype that women don't play video games, but that's just not true. The numbers don't lie: 52% of gamers were female in the UK's last major study in 2018. But if we look at the proportion of female workers in the games industry, it's just 28% in the UK, and approximately 20% worldwide. If so many women are playing games, why are so few making them? It seems the problem is that women don't see themselves represented in games. That means they're less likely to start a degree or career in gaming, because they don't feel like they belong. What's more, gaming – like the technology industry – has a culture problem. For many women working in games, sexual harassment

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online and offline has become something common, pay differences persist, and toxic work culture is usual.

This problem begins at university, where more men have, historically, studied video games design. In 2016-17, 88% of students on video games courses were male. "My course was very male-dominated. I think there were four or five women and maybe 25 men in my year," recalls Kate Killick, a senior designer at Mojiworks who studied video games design at the University of South Wales. "At the time I don't think I understood how it affected my experience, but looking back, I think I felt I was a stranger in a world of men."

The picture is improving – the percentage of women studying video games design grew from 7% in 2014-15 to 31.5% in 2018-19. Larra Anderson, the dean of screen at London College of Communication (LCC), says that in the Image and Digital Arts programme – which includes games design, virtual reality and animation – more than 50% of students are now women. Andy Bossom, programme director of games at University for the Creative Arts (UCA), also says that his institution's games degrees have sustained a 60/40 male/female difference for several years.

A more evenly balanced mix of students is a good first step. But the nature of the programmes and games that are studied can have a big impact on a student's enjoyment of the course. "Being surrounded by people who were passionate about hardcore and **AAA** [blockbuster] games definitely made me question whether I counted as a 'gamer'," Killick says. To deal with this, some universities adjust video game design courses in ways to encourage diversity. Mariza Dima, a lecturer at Brunel University, says her university _____ on games design "as a creative discipline, not just a technical one".

To improve students' transition into the workplace, universities are increasingly connecting them with different types of role models. "They need windows into their future, through an education that gets them the skills and practices," says Anderson. "But they also need mirrors which show images where they can see themselves reflected in their field as well. Without that, they will not be inspired or see it as even possible for them to succeed." The games design courses at Brunel University, University of Southampton, LCC and UCA all invite female guest lecturers working in games. They also add games from a diverse range of creators to the course and organize events with

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industry experts who can share their own experiences and help students understand how they can be part of the industry.

Games themselves can also play a role in helping women consider the industry as a valid career choice, starting with portraying **them** in a way that doesn't play into offensive stereotypes. "I was always told I was unusual as a young girl enjoying video games, but that's just not true," says a games designer from the UK who wishes to remain anonymous. "If I had seen women in the games industry on TV, magazines or online, I think I would have had the aspirations I have now much younger."

Numerous studies have shown that diverse teams create better work and are more innovative. Without this, things won't change, and men will continue creating games for other men who then go on to pursue a career in games. "Everybody is a gamer now, so it makes sense for the industry to reflect the diversity of the audience," Killick says. "We make better games when people from different backgrounds bring their unique perspective and creativity to the table. I want to play those games, and I want to work with those people."

**Adapted from https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/feb/17/i-was-always-told-i-was-unusual-why-so-few-women-design-video-games*

Glossary

- **AAA**: It's an informal classification used for video games produced and distributed by a mid-sized or major publisher, typically having higher development and marketing budgets.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the text?
    a. To inform about the game industry in the UK.
    b. To analyze the best technology schools in England.
    c. To describe the steps to become a video game designer.
    d. To explain why the video game world is a male-dominated industry.

2. What's the author's attitude towards the video game industry?
    a. He/she thinks it is necessary that more women take part in video game companies.
    b. He/she believes men are not doing a good job designing video games.
    c. He/she laments people don't buy games designed by women.
    d. He/she criticizes the way tech schools are teaching students.

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3. According to paragraph 1, what is an assumption people make about women?
    a. They are bad gamers.
    b. They aren't interested in video games.
    c. They are not likely to be admitted into a tech school.
    d. They could receive a high salary if they found a good job.

4. According to paragraph 2, how did Kate Killick used to feel when she was studying video games design?
    a. She felt bad because she was the only woman in her course.
    b. She didn't like the program the University of South Wales offered.
    c. She felt she didn't belong to that environment.
    d. She didn't understand why they only admitted women over 25.

5. Why is the author using statistics in paragraph 3?
    a. To show how the number of students admitted into digital programmes has decreased in the last four years.
    b. To explain there's a more equitable balance between male and female students in game programs now.
    c. To describe why young people quit their studies in the United Kingdom.
    d. To give examples of the best creative programs in the UK.

6. What word can be inserted in the gap in paragraph 4?
    a. deals
    b. teaches
    c. focuses
    d. specializes

7. The word **them** in paragraph 6 refers to
    a. women
    b. games
    c. stereotypes
    d. themselves

8. According to paragraph 7, why is diversity important?
    a. It will encourage more people to play video games.
    b. Different perspectives can create more industries.
    c. If there's diversity, men will stop designing violent games.
    d. Workers can have a better performance and be more creative.

What do you think?

What is necessary to bring gender equity to the workplace?

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