

MISSION

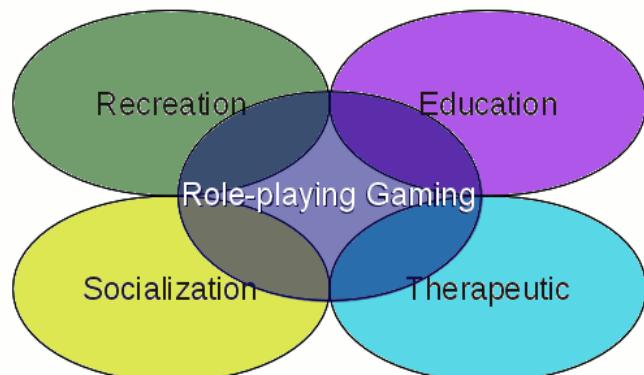
Clearly establish, through rigorous scientific testing, the ***causal*** therapeutic and educational impact of role-playing gaming on participants.

OVERVIEW

The RPG Research Project consists of a series of multi-stage, multi-variable, multi-blind, controlled studies following scientific principles.

To date approximately 80 studies have been published related to participation in role-playing games and their effects on participants. Most of these studies have relied solely on meta-research (comparison of existing data from multiple sources), correlative data analysis, individual case studies, or very small sample groups, and do not clearly prove causality.

Most of the existing meta-data and correlative-data currently accumulated appears to strongly indicate many ***possible*** therapeutic and educational benefits for participants, but this has not yet been clearly delineated through rigorous scientific experimental research, observation, clear metrics, controlled groups, large samples, and longitudinal tracking.



VISION

It is hoped that, through the efforts of RPG Research, it will be possible to clearly define the ***specific causal therapeutic and educational aspects of participation in role-playing gaming*** with the eventual possibility of developing effective educational and therapeutic modalities using role-playing games.



PROJECT

There are many sub-projects contained in the overall RPG Project, from demographics gathering and case studies, to small shorter term research projects, building towards a larger body of data planned over the years of research efforts

The overall project is dedicated to ascertaining, by means of the application of various scientific methods, the therapeutic and educational aspects of role-playing gaming. Approaches include cognitive, behavioral, neurological, humanistic, sociological, and other relevant perspectives.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered, therapeutic and educational modalities may become apparent. Therapeutic recreation techniques, in conjunction with role-playing gaming activities, may be applicable in meeting client needs - either as a standalone tool, or in conjunction with other treatment modalities for various population groups.

HISTORY

The first stages of this project began in 1985, with an active revival in 2004 through interaction with various universities and organizations. The project has been advancing each

year since.

The project founder, Hawke Robinson, first began formally researching the educational and social impacts of role-playing games in 1985 in response to the barrage of negative press and public misinformation about role-playing games popular in the 1980's, especially with regard to Dungeons & Dragons.

Further development in consideration of broader psychosocial impacts from role-playing games resumed in 2004 with a series of essays written for the Therapeutic Recreation department at Eastern Washington University, followed by a number of successive documents and publications continuing to develop more detailed hypotheses and theses.

GOALS

The intention of RPG Research is to implement a series of studies using many different population groups meeting the following goals:

- Determine if there are positive or negative correlative demographic idiosyncrasies in variables found between experienced role-playing gamers and the general population.
- Determine whether any response differentiation exists between participants of different role-playing gaming formats such as classic paper and dice tabletop RPGs, live-action role-playing games (LARP), computer-based solo and online multi-player role-playing games.
- Determine if there are any repeatable *causal* influences on those who participate regularly in role-playing gaming recreational activities.
- If data indicates potential causality, clarify the variables and look for any differentiations in results between the different RPG formats.
- Attempt to determine whether there are any differentiations in impact on test subjects between "heroic" and "evil" gaming.
- Establish any differences from participation in a single session compared to a longer series of

sessions.

- Determine the differences between shorter sessions of 1 or 2 hours, compared to longer sessions of 3, 6, or more hours per session.
- Determine the differences between various populations and cultures in response to participating in RPGs. For example the significant gender differential in participation with tabletop RPGs, clarify differences in the Deaf community, differences from other countries, etc.
- Determine optimal duration of game sessions for maximal benefit, how many hours per session, how frequently to schedule sessions, and how many sessions deliver optimal benefits.
- Determine whether there are any repeatable, statistically significant, "positive" or "negative" characteristics that can clearly be defined for use as a therapeutic treatment or educational tool, either separately or in conjunction with other modalities.
- Experiment with creating modules designed to address specific population needs (such as depression, PTSD, Asperger's, Autism, schizophrenia, social or educational needs) for which role-playing gaming provides measurable benefits over a typical 6-8 week course, compared to other modalities.
- Define the requirements for a Game Master Therapist (GMT) or Game Master Instructor (GMI) in applying a role-playing game therapeutic or educational module.



- Adjust various hypotheses and theories according to the data gathered, and update research goals accordingly.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This project involves participation from individuals and organizations from around the world. The RPG Research website is intended to be a central repository where scientists, therapists, researchers and other professionals, as well as media and laymen, will be able to find all the information they need on this expansive topic. The website provides a blog, web-based forum, email discussion lists, chat room, downloads, and other resources.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

If you are interested in participating in the RPG Research Project, you may fill out the online registration form at:

<http://www.rngr.org/registration>

Or you may fill out the enclosed application form, add a postage stamp, and mail it to:

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