

MISSION

Clearly establish the **causal** effects of all forms of role-playing gaming on participants, providing evidence-based research through the use of rigorous scientific methodologies from various disciplinary perspectives.

OVERVIEW

RPG Research is the umbrella title for the ongoing series of research projects using multi-stage, multi-variable, multi-blind, short & long-term, observational, controlled, & uncontrolled studies, following scientific principles, conducted over a span of years.

Since 1979, approximately 100 studies have been published related to participation in role-playing games (RPGs) & their effects on participants. Most of these studies were focused on responding to the media's negative claims about RPGs. The continual repetition of the media's claims created an increasing societal stigma towards role-playing gamers (RPGers), even though the research clearly disproves the claims by the pop-culture media about higher risks of suicide, homicide, or anti-social behavior. Additionally the research disproved the stereotypes about gamers being dysfunctional.

Previous research strongly indicated that people known to regularly participate in RPGs have significant advantages over those that do not, including: much lower suicide risks, much lower feelings of meaninglessness, stronger communication, math, reading & writing, problem solving, social skills, team building, research, leadership, empathy, creative skills, and many other areas.

While the existing research clearly disproves the negative pop-culture and media claims, the majority of the prior studies, relied mostly on comparison of existing data from multiple sources (meta-analysis), correlative data analysis, individual case studies, small sample sizes, and/or conducted over short time periods, so they do not clearly prove causality. Did the gamers scoring so much better than the general population already have these strengths, so were drawn to RPGs because it allowed them to exercise these abilities further?

Or were they were drawn to the game for other reasons, and RPGs helped them develop these skills?

Existing research clearly indicates strong causal benefits for educational purposes, leading to many schools throughout the world now using RPGs in various forms for education from K through 12+. Research also indicates there may be *therapeutic* benefits for participants as well, but this needs to be clarified by rigorous scientific observation, clear metrics, controlled experimental research groups, larger samples, & longitudinal tracking.

HISTORY

Hawke Robinson, founder of RPG Research, retired from a successful career in computer science, IT, and information security in 2003. He is now a student at Eastern Washington University (EWU) working on interdisciplinary degrees in recreation therapy, music, and research psychology.

RPGs were very popular in the 1980's with an estimated 12-20+ million participants in the U.S. Robinson first began informally researching the educational and social impact of role-playing games in 1985 in response to the barrage of negative press and public misinformation commonly disseminated regarding role-playing games & gamers, especially the unsubstantiated negative claims regarding the most popular tabletop form of RPG, Dungeons & Dragons (D&D).

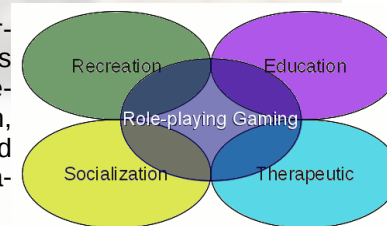
The formal development of RPG Research began in 2004, first considering the broader psychosocial impact of tabletop role-playing games, presented as essays written for the Recreation Therapy department at EWU, followed by a series of research documents and publications that continue to contribute increasingly detailed information, including all forms of RPG (tabletop, live-action, & computer-based).

VISION

Through the efforts of RPG Research, it should become possible to clearly define the **specific causal therapeutic and educational effects from participation in role-playing gaming**. This may lead to developing effective therapeutic intervention modalities using all forms of role-playing games.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY

RPGs have overlapping domains between recreation, education, socialization, and potential therapeutic benefits.



PROJECTS

Early stages of the project include purely observational (non-experimental) studies, questionnaires, standards-based testing, demographics gathering, detailed case studies, longer & shorter term research projects, building towards a larger body of data aggregation planned over years of research efforts. Disciplinary perspectives include cognitive, behavioral, neurological, recreational, humanistic, sociological, and other relevant approaches.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered, therapeutic interventions may become apparent. Recreation therapy techniques, combined with RPG, may be developed to promote the goals of self-actualization or facilitation of the fullest possible recovery, growth, and development of the client.

GOALS

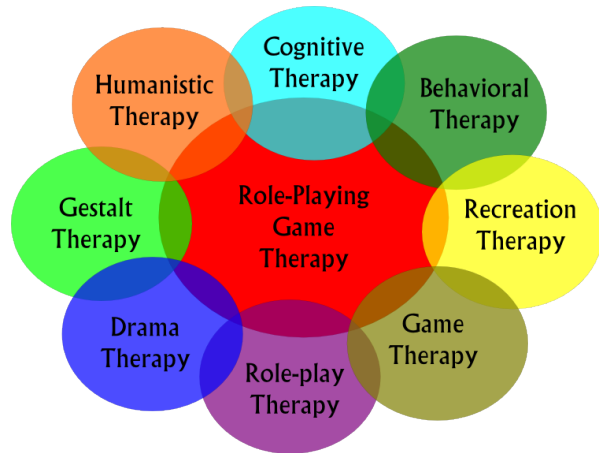
The intention of RPG Research is to:

- Determine any repeatable *causal* effects from those who participate in RPGs.
- If data indicates potential causality, clarify the *independent* variables and their impact on various *dependent* variables.
- Determine whether any response differentiation exists between participants of various role-playing gaming formats such as tabletop, live-action (LARP), or computer-based.
- Determine whether there are positive or negative correlative demographic idiosyncrasies in variables found between experienced role-playing gamers and the general population.
- Attempt to determine whether there are any differentiations 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 effects between shorter sessions of 1 or 2 hours, compared to longer sessions of 3, 6, or more hours per session.
- Determine the differences between differing demographic groups.
- Determine whether there are any repeatable, statistically significant, "positive" or "negative" characteristics found for potential use as a therapeutic treatment.
- Adjust various hypotheses and theories according to the data gathered, and update research goals accordingly.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Research is approached from an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, including recreation therapy, cognitive neuropsychology, bio-feedback, neuro-feedback, research psychology, behavioral, cognitive, humanist, sociological, and other disciplines.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

These projects involve contributions and participation from individuals and organizations spanning the globe. The RPG Research website is intended as a central repository where scientists, therap-

ists, researchers, and other professionals, as well as media and laypeople, will be able to find all the information they need regarding this expansive topic. The website provides a blog, news, web-based forum, email discussion lists, chat room, books, videos, links, downloads, and other other resources freely available to the public.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE THE RESEARCH

If you are interested in participating in upcoming RPG Research projects, simply register via the website by completing the online form listed on the front page of the website under the title:

SIGN UP TO PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE STUDIES

RPG Research is accepting application for as many participants as possible, both gamers and non-gamers alike. Even if you have never participated in a role-playing game, we are very interested in your participation to help more effectively establish causality.

RPG Research

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Research studies investigating the causal effects of role-playing gaming.

WWW.RPGRESEARCH.COM