

Editorial

Playing the Game

Dominick M. Maino, OD, MEd
Editor

Computer games don't affect kids, I mean if Pac Man affected us as kids, we'd all be running around in darkened rooms, munching pills and listening to repetitive music.

Marcus Brigstocke
British Satirist

Mr. Brigstocke is just wrong! Computer games do affect us in what may be surprisingly excellent ways. *Science News*¹ carried a story noting that playing video games helps surgeons with skills they need to be better surgeons. (This study was published in the February 2007 issue of *Archives of Surgery*.)

At the website PlayAttention.com a story titled, *Video Games Improve Reading*² showed that the same video game that distracts kids from schoolwork improves concentration and memory. It was noted that by playing an arcade game from Japan called Dance Dance Revolution, reading comprehension was improved.

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Maino D. *Playing the game* *Optom Vis Dev* 2007;38(1):5-6.

In the study 62 sixth graders with ADHD were given a series of reading tests. Then half the children were instructed to play Dance Dance Revolution for about an hour a week. The other children continued with their normal routine. After three months, the children took the same reading tests again. The scores showed that those who played Dance Dance Revolution did better with receptive coding skills indicating greater focus and attention.

And finally the Creative Teaching Site³ notes that playing computer games can improve reading, logical thinking, observational skills and more. Creative Teaching also notes that mapping skills can be improved, vocabulary enhanced, general knowledge expanded, and spelling improved. Other areas that tend to show enhancement are note taking, problem solving and strategic planning.

This issue of *Optometry and Vision Development* is presenting leading edge research concerning the use of computer games that improve reading and other skills needed within the academic environment. These research articles include ones by Goss et al. (*The Effect of HTS Vision Therapy Conducted in a School Setting on Reading Skills in Third and Fourth Grade Students*⁴) in which they note that if you complete the recommended HTS training protocols you achieve significant improvements in reading. Another article by Helms and Sawtelle, (*A study of the effectiveness of cognitive*

*skill therapy delivered in a video game format*⁵) found that students in the study group showed an average of 4 years and 3 months improvement on tests of cognitive skills, compared to a 4-month improvement for the control group and showed an average of 1 year and 11 months improvement on tests of achievement compared to 1 month for the control group. And finally, Lawton (*Training Direction-Discrimination Sensitivity Remediates a Wide Spectrum of Reading Skills*⁶) noted that upon completion of her computer program interventions significant improvements in reading performance were found following rapid training on direction discrimination.

Please read these articles carefully. Apply this ground breaking research to your daily practice and continue to improve the quality of life for each and every one of your patients. Remember:

What we play (at) is life.

Louis Armstrong

US jazz musician (1900 - 1971)

As always, I want your feedback and comments not only on this editorial, but on all we offer in every issue of the *OVD*. Please email your comments, praise (and yes, even criticism) to dmaino@ico.edu. After all, this is *your* journal.

References

- 1 <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?chanID=sa003&articleID=128482B5773C09ED87E7630FD24D9E6F> accessed 02-20-07

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5. Helms D, Sawtelle SM. A study of the effectiveness of cognitive therapy delivered in a video game format. *Optom Vis Dev* 2007;38(1):25-32.
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525,600 Minutes

**Dominick M. Maino, OD, MEd
Editor**

In the musical Rent, there is a song (Seasons of Love) about how you measure a year. I have used many of those 525,600 minutes serving you as editor of *Optometry and Vision Development*. The time I've spent on my OVD related tasks pales compared to the time that many others have given in making your journal an outstanding publication of which we can be very proud. I can't think of a better time to recognize these individuals than at the start of a new publication year.

I've just finished reading Caesar's commentaries on *The Gallic War*. His style of writing tends to mimic Hemmingway: short, to the point, with great clarity of thought. One of the most striking aspects of his work is how often he praised his soldiers and officers. Caesar frequently named names. It's time for me to name some names and to offer praise for all who work so hard.

OVD Journal Review Board

The individuals who have volunteered for "duty" on the JRB are composed of truly remarkable men and women. They are content experts who peer review all scientific articles, write articles and provide a great deal of input on how we can make your journal better and better. The OVD JRB is comprised of the most respected members of our eye and vision care community including those who are researchers on clinical trials (i.e. Mitch Scheiman, Kelly Frantz, Michael Gallaway, Eric Borsting, Marjean Kulp, Harold Solan, etc) and those who are academicians/clinicians/researchers at our finest institutions (Michael Cron, Rachel Coulter, David Damari, Michael Earley, Graham Erickson, David Goss, Bill Rainey, Christine Allison, Sidney Groffman). We have other members on the JRB with superior credentials in practice management (Mark Wright), traumatic brain injury (Kenneth Cuiffreda), reading and vision (Harold

Solan), and special populations (Dominick Maino). Other members are from our international community (Ken Koslowe, Israel; Stephen Leslie, Australia and Yi Pang, China), as well as many clinicians of note (Leonard Press, Carl Grunning, Curt Baxstrom, Garth Christenson, Theodore Kadet, Arnold Sherman, John Tassinari, Dan Fortenbacker). Finally we should also acknowledge our students/residents who serve: Megan Allen.

Praise For Those Who Put It All Together

Those individuals who literally paste together every issued include Sally Corngold (managing editor), Erin Larson (advertising manager) and Annie Hellerstein (graphic artist). They should to be recognized for their consistent and untiring contributions. The Optometric Extension Program should also be acknowledged as well. OEP has always gone that extra mile for us.

COVID Board

The COVID Board of Directors and our administrative staff want your journal to be the very best. They support what we do so that OVD can bring you the latest ground breaking and clinically relevant articles (just look at this issue). My most sincere thank you goes out to all of these incredible COVID leaders.

Authors

There would be no journal if there were no authors. For all of you who contributed articles this year...thank you. For all of you who have worked through the peer review process....thank you. For all of you who will be sending articles to me....thank you. I deeply appreciate your efforts one and all.

To anyone that I've failed to recognize: *Thank You!*