

Lynn University

SPIRAL

Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and
Projects

Theses and Dissertations Collections

5-1999

Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?

Lynn Marlene Tomaro
Lynn University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://spiral.lynn.edu/etds>



Part of the [Child Psychology Commons](#), [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#), and the [Developmental Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tomaro, Lynn Marlene, "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" (1999). *Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects*. 202.
<https://spiral.lynn.edu/etds/202>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations Collections at SPIRAL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects by an authorized administrator of SPIRAL. For more information, please contact liadarola@lynn.edu.

Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?

"...Repent, the end should be here for the indifference of a nation that has turned its back on the effects of violent video games, movies, and television shows."

*~ Religious Leaders
(following tragedy at Columbine High School,
April 1999)*

**Lynn Library,
Lynn University
Boca Raton, FL 33431**

by

Lynn Marlene Tomaro

An analysis of video game contents and the possible impact
violence may have on teens, male and female.

A cumulative study
presented to
The Graduate Faculty of Lynn University

In fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
Master of Science
Criminal Justice Administration

Lynn Marlene Tomaro
May, 1999

~ ACKNOWLEDGMENT ~

It is with love and heartfelt appreciation I take a moment to thank my parents, Joseph and Marlene, for allowing me the opportunity to pursue my education throughout my life with all their love, support, and encouragement through the most difficult of times.

I would also like to recognize my director and mentor, Annette Gadus, who has always encouraged me to pursue higher education. In addition, the following individuals have been supportive in offering their guidance, assistance, and direction in providing me the tools and opportunity to succeed:

Eleanor Adler, PTA President, Walter C. Young Middle School

Judge J. Leonard Fleet, Broward County Court System
Chantal Leconte, Administrator, Cleveland Clinic Hospital

Charlene Lakhdar, PTA President, Silver Trail Middle School

Priscilla Marsala, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation, City of Lauderdale

Edward Miller, Principal, Smart School

Everald Nelson, PTA President, McNicol Middle School

This project would not have been successful without their involvement.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

A research study was conducted involving parents feedback on whether they felt video games were related to teen violence. Despite technologies efforts to promote computer and video games in a positive mode by focusing on forms such as "developing important skills as concentration and problem-solving in children", the violent acts contained in these games are downplayed and basically defended by the makers of the games.

Teen violence has escalated in the past several years with the school shootings being in the forefront. The mention of video games and lack of parental supervision has become the focus of this violent behavior, especially among male teenagers.

The parents of four public middle schools were surveyed through the assistance of principals and PTA presidents completing a questionnaire pertaining to their thoughts on whether video games were considered violent and if there is an effect on teenagers, both male and female. Data collected supported the thought-process of video games containing violent behavior and this behavior being learned and acted out by those participating in these games. Lack of parental supervision was acknowledged despite parents recognizing the violent content of games.

With the government now addressing the possibility of a connection between video games and teen violence, a much needed wake up-call for parents attention has emerged. Through more active parental involvement with children and the supervision of their activities, future problems of violence can possibly be recognized and addressed before the focus of attention is on the negative consequences of the youth of tomorrow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	Introduction	. . . . .	1
	Problem Statement	. . . . .	7
	Background	. . . . .	8
	Purpose	. . . . .	12
	Significance	. . . . .	14
	Nature of Study	. . . . .	15
	Hypothesis	. . . . .	17
	Scope and Limitations	. . . . .	18
II.	Research / Literature Review	. . . . .	21
III.	Methodology	. . . . .	48
IV.	Presentation / Analysis of Data	. . . . .	58
V.	Conclusions / Recommendation	. . . . .	63
	Tables	. . . . .	67
	Graphs	. . . . .	72
	References	. . . . .	82
	Appendices	. . . . .	87

*"It would be far better for parents and kids
if the industry simply kept the gory violence and sex out
of their games."*

~ Senator Joseph Lieberman
(D, Connecticut)

CHAPTER I

~ Introduction ~

Corpses litter the ground. Blood is splattered everywhere. The victims moan and beg for help. Other victims scream in agony. Is this a scene from a school shooting or a video game called *Postal*. You are correct if you chose either. The similarities are uncanny.

According to FBI statistics, juvenile violent crime has increased more than 25% in the past ten years. The vast majority of it is gun-related and stems from anger, or issues relating to gangs and drugs. Three out of four youth murderers use a firearm and an estimated 270,000 students take a gun to school each day. Studies show the reasons for the surge of violence is due to family influence. A 1988 survey of 14 juveniles condemned to death for murder found 12 had been brutally abused at home, and a male in the family had sodomized five. A study of 72 youths charged with murder in Michigan concluded only five were psychotic when they committed the crime, but came from broken homes, and a third had drug or alcohol problems (Wilce, 1993).

Teachers know there is a frightening number of students having to deal with multiple home problems, divorced parents, domestic violence, neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, Aids and dangers on the street, that deplete children's trust in the

world and turn them mean and violent. Add to this television violence, rap lyrics, and gory video games and the results can be devastating. Are America's children growing up undisciplined, alienated and amoral? Does the juvenile crime problem have more to do with parents who just throw in the towel when it comes to disciplining their children? It appears both schools and parents call the police for problems that used to be resolved at home. Dr. Paramjit T. Joshi, a child psychiatrist and founding director of the John Hopkins Children's Center's Office for the Prevention of Violence, believes parents need to take more control over their children's viewing habits.

"Children who are raised surrounded by violence develop an emotional immunity to it and often grow up themselves to be the perpetrators of the same violence" he said (Jensen, 1998).

'Action/Adventure' titles in video games expose kids to hundreds of images of death, dismemberment and murder - or the implied rape of women (Chmielewski & Gornstein, 1998). The mere thought of this major gaming industry of which the majority appeals to adolescent boys and young men must scare some parents to death. Does video games and lack of parental supervision lead to pre-teen or teenage violence? Much attention is focused after the fact, after the tragedies are over, as in the multiple school shootings occurring throughout the country. Prior to the most recent incident in Littleton, Colorado, when two teen

gunmen opened fire at Columbine High School, a series of other such incidents had occurred throughout the nation:

- May 21, 1998 - Springfield, Ore. - A 15 year old student shot and killed two students and wounded 22 when he opened fire at the Thurston High School.
- May 19, 1998 - Fayetteville, Tenn. - A senior at Lincoln County High School, age 18, shot and killed 18 year old senior Robert Creson.
- April 25, 1998 - Edinboro, PA. - A 14 year old student at Parker Middle School shot and killed teacher John Gillette. Two 14 year old boys were wounded.
- March 24, 1998 - Jonesboro, Ark. - Two boys, age 11 and 13, shot and killed a teacher and four girls at Westside Middle School. Nine girls and one other teacher were wounded.
- December 1, 1997 - Paducah, KY. - A 14 year old boy shot and killed three girls at Heath High School. Five others were wounded.
- October 1, 1997 - Pearl, Miss. - A 16 year old student shot and killed his ex-girlfriend and another girl at Pearl High School after slitting his mother's throat. Seven other students were wounded.

With the most recent tragedy of Littleton, Colorado so fresh in our minds, is it at all surprising that news reports have indicated both the teenage gunmen played violent video games for hours at a time?

Are parents wondering how to more effectively monitor the games their kids love? This issue is becoming more prominent as video games continue to become more popular and school-shooting incidents more common. Are today's teens dealing with their pain by blowing it away, whether literally with weapons or through video game violence? The families of three students killed in a high school shooting spree in 1997 are suing entertainment firms charging violent computer games, internet pornography, and a movie contributed to the attack a 14 year old made when he opened fire at school. The lawsuit says the teenager was influenced by the movie and popular, ultraviolent computer games which sharpened his shooting skills (Prichard, 1999).

The computer game industry has jumped to defend their violent games in the wake of a rash of school shootings. Doug Lowenstein, President of the Interactive digital Software Association stated, "video games are not the source of violence in our society." His comment was based on the results of a recent study showing more than 40 percent of consumers thought

computer games were the most exciting way to pass time at home (Lemons, 1998).

How comforting is that when the industry continues to make games more exciting, addicting, and violent, leading children to act out game scenarios in the real world.

Following the school shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Governor Mike Huckabee blasted violent video games and wished these games were monitored. With each and every school incident, the intensity to search for answers and blame is escalated. Bishop J. Delano Ellis of the Cleveland, Ohio based United Pentecostal Churches of Christ said the nation should "call to task" the makers of sadistic video games, the producers of violent movies and television shows and the manufacturers of ever-more-realistic toy guns (Briggs, 1999). President Clinton blamed "a changing culture" of violent games and movies that teach kids to lash out with guns. A special weekly report from The Wall Street Journal's Capital Bureau in the April 30, 1999 issue, stated congressional aides anticipate Clinton will endorse a bipartisan proposal for a White House summit. A goal would be to "shake up the CEOs" of companies that market violent movies and video games, says Democratic Senator Lieberman, a strong supporter of setting standards and limit violence. Conservative William Bennett sees "growing pressure on the entertainment industry to take responsibility" for its products.

These types of incidents were unheard of 30-40 years ago when technology was not in the forefront. Has technology spurred violence at all ages as opposed to benefiting the country with new programs, systems and inventions? It seems the success of video products is due to the increase and intensity of the violence. The more violence and aggression in a game, the more popular. With children being the primary targets of these products, the question is raised about the correlation between consumption of violent representations and learned violent behavior: do video games construct and maintain codes of masculine power and aggression?

Video games are associated with a number of behavioral and physical problems. They are blamed for being addictive, for causing failing grades, anti-social behavior, for taking time away for other constructive activities and even for health conditions such as "photosensitive epilepsy" and "space invaders wrist", a form of tendonitis. Educators are concerned video games teach the wrong values. In the video game world, violence and breaking the rules are not only acceptable, but necessary to win (Provenzo, 1992). This game culture has replaced a child's determination to read and become involved in other activities (Schroeder, 1996). In video games, children can enter into the character and take action as that character. This no doubt leads to increased aggressive behavior, but does this lead to

violence? The message of most games says violence and breaking the rules are not only acceptable, but are necessary in order to win. With this theory being projected to children, there is no understanding of why things are the way they are. There is no accounting for their actions. It is not surprising violence is prevalent as main the theme of games. There is little educational content and the video world depends on force rather than reason. Violence becomes the most common and popular option in order for a child to meet the objective - winning (Provenzo, 1992). Research and analysis of studies behind the thought-making process of children's video games and a look at the family's structure from decades past to present home styles may reflect the reasoning for the recent crimes prevalent today in any age category.

~ The Problem Statement ~

Despite technology's efforts to create computer and video games to develop important skills such as concentration and problem-solving skills in children, the violence presented in these games are threatening the mental health of the younger generation and impacting their identity. Children, through playing, learn their roles in society and develop their identity by playing these particular roles. Through the development of personality traits, masculine and feminine, and the themes of

the traditional gender roles and violence utilized in video games, it may lay the groundwork for future actions.

This study will identify particular roles individuals play according to society's expectations, however individuals will develop identities that define what their particular role means to them. Children learn their roles through childhood, which becomes an important part of the socialization process between boys and girls developing certain personality traits as masculine and feminine. However, the popularity and easy accessibility to video games continues to increase and the effect gender has in these games, portraying females as victims and developing a negative overall picture of females leans toward boys believing their responsibility is to protect, defend or possess them through the use of violence. A look at what today's parents feel the effect of video games has on their children and the children of America will be reviewed.

~ Background ~

Video games were first introduced in the 1970s. By the end of the decade, they had become a child's preferred activity and adults became concerned about the effects these games may have on their children. Early research was minimal and inconclusive. Now, with video games coming to the forefront again in the late 1980s, after the introduction of Nintendo, the effects of video games is being re-examined (Cesarone, 1994). With technology

everyday, trying to outdo itself on the latest inventions, and attempting to attract a younger audience, the thought process of appealing to this audience is not researched thoroughly as to what effect these programs will have on children who beg their parents for the latest releases. The bottom dollar is what becomes important, not the long or short term effect on children. As tragedies mount, involving young children who are responsible for the most shocking incidents of crime, each incident heightens the concern across the world and raises repeated questions, of "how could this happen?" The answer may lie in the fact no time is ever spent on the consequences of new ideas and new technologies as it relates to a human being's thought process but rather on just how to make a bigger, better, louder, and more explosive action-packed video to supercede the latest release. Video game violence is a result of a violent society. The media, unemployment, neglect of children, and the availability of guns are reasons for increasing violence in today's society.

All of research in production is misguided in the making and release of the latest item to beat out competition and the long-term effects this will have on the user is not important. Does a marketing firm consider the long-term effects? They just want immediate gratification through sales and know full well additional new items proposed and implemented will grab the

attention of the immediate audience. It is the old cliché, "keeping up with the Jones'" that fuels the market. However, most game developers say they are sick of watching their products being linked by parents or politicians to violent acts. They contend there are no studies that conclusively link computer games to violence. Whatever the newest or most popular medium is - western shoot-outs or head banging rock - it always draws criticism with those unfamiliar with the latest trends, they say (Chmielewski & Gornstein, 1998).

One of the few child psychologists to study the effects of game violence on children's behavior, Jeanne B. Funk, found children who spent the most time playing violent games have lower self-esteem. They see themselves as less popular, less skilled academically and less athletic (Chmielewski & Gornstein, 1998).

How do parents deal with the wave of video games and the blood, guts and gore associated with these popular titles, such as 'Resident Evil 2' and 'Dactyl Nightmare'? Because more attention is being focused on the effects these games can have on children, most games now carry ratings, just like movies and now television shows. Reviewers from the Entertainment Software Rating Board view early copies of each game and assign one of seven ratings, ranging from "early childhood" to "adults only" (Appendix A).

Parent-Teacher organization advocates suggest parents read the reviews in specialty gaming magazines and online sites. This should give the parent an understanding of the game and view the video before allowing a child to see it. Parents may even wish to go on-line with the game developer's own site. If blood and gore is the high point of the game, one can bet it will be mentioned and highlighted on line.

As parents talk with parents, it is felt there is a need for further clarification and concern regarding the effects on society's children, society's future. The National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV) has developed their own system to rate the violent content of video games. The ratings range from XUnfit and XV (highly violent) to PG and G ratings. The NCTV claims there has been a steady increase in the number of video games with violent themes. Games rated as extremely violent increased from 53% in 1985 to 82% in 1988. A 1988 survey indicated manufacturers were titling their games with increasingly violent titles (NCTV, 1990).

An early study on the effect of video games on children found that playing video games had more positive effects on children than watching television. A conference sponsored by Atari in 1983 presented only preliminary data and failed to identify any ill effects. More recent research, however, has begun to find a connection between children playing violent

video games and the development of aggressive behavior (NCTV, 1990).

The social content of video games may influence children's attitudes toward gender roles. Females are usually depicted as persons who are acted upon rather than the initiators of action. In some cases, females are the victims.

Mothers, fathers, religious groups, doctors, mayors, teachers, school principles, child protection groups and even the President of the United States of America want to protect children from violence in video games. But the controversy still lies in the question - is there really a problem with video games? Are the people who are fighting against the violence in video games, correct? Is there a link between the violence in video games and the rising levels of violence in today's youth?

~ Purpose ~

As technology proceeds to the forefront worldwide with focus on the new millennium, the baby-boomers coming of age and today's children earmarked to lead this country, can we as adults turn away from the signs of increasing violence and the impact and popularity of video games?

The purpose of this study is to survey the parents of teenagers to obtain their point of view on a possible correlation between video games and teen violence. Some adults

believe video games offer benefits over television. Among mental health professionals, there are those who maintain that in playing video games, certain children can develop a sense of proficiency which they might not otherwise achieve. However, other authorities speculate performing violent actions in video games may be more conducive to children's aggression than passively watching violent acts on television. According to this view, the more children practice violent acts, the more likely they are to perform violent acts (Clark, 1993).

And what influence does video games have on gender roles? In the majority of games, women are usually cast as persons who are acted upon rather than the take charge, action figures. In extreme cases, women are the victims.

Studies have indicated males play video games more frequently than females. Television program producers and video game manufactures may produce violent shows and games. The demand for violence may be because males are looking for strong role models, which they seem to find in shows and games (Clark, 1993).

Given these varying opinions regarding whether violent acts in video games leads to violence in children, females victimized more and males are deemed heroes, today's baby-boomers have opinions of their own. This study will enlighten those to what

today's educated parents really feel technology is doing to the children whose hands in which we place our country.

~ Significance ~

Because the new millennium and Y2K is on the minds of almost every American, we all know technology will make every effort to far exceed its greatest achievements as time goes on. These achievements will continue to effect every person, parents and children alike. This era of video games has brought new ideas and new problems to light. Some have been researched, re-evaluated, and refocused on ways to further succeed in the market.

To study the area of violence in teens as it relates to video games, may at this point in time, help to place a better understanding of what is on the minds of parents: their involvement, worries and possible remedies. The baby-boomers, as we know them, (and you know who you are), have an opportunity, through this study, to reflect back on how childhood activities and games have changed over the years. How has this change in technology affected the American family and the quality time that was so important to those family values in years gone by? Do today's parents see today's youth as responsible, reliable and dependable? Or is their reason for concern?

As we close out the 20th century, isn't it important to reflect back on where we have been, what we are, and where we are headed? What better time, then the present, to ask the parents of this century their thoughts on our future.

~ Nature of Study ~

Throughout the course of time, we have seen a surge of popularity in video games. There is always at least one game that is considered a "must have" by any teenager when the holidays come around. Parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents find themselves wincing as they begin to shell out the dollars in order to make another wish come true. Whatever happened to linkin' logs, hot wheels, Chatty Cathy dolls, and erector sets of years gone by? A new bike and a hula-hoop were on the minds of children back in the 60s and Atari and Sega were not even in the picture, much less the minds of children.

The birth of this mega video phenomena has been raised from the minds of men looking to capture the nation. This has not only created a huge market but present and possible future ramifications.

The past history of video games and its rise in popularity may reflect on why and how children are becoming more addicted and engrossed in these games. The images are no longer in the form of a cartoon and are made very lifelike. Something that can make even the most G rated games seems so real. Almost as

if one was there living the fantasy, acting out a dream. Through the course of time and technology, it will be studied how the rise in video games has reached the level it is at now in 1999. Present issues will be reviewed and compared with past actions. Is there an underlying median between the two timeframes and has it just come to light now that popularity has brought video games to the forefront.

The facts of video game popularity and why they peaked the interest of so many children, almost an obsession, will be reviewed. Is there a correlation between the actions of teenagers from those who participate in video game activities and increasing juvenile crime? Maybe, with most parents having to work and some working two jobs in order to make ends meet, the lack of parental supervision, and constructive contact between adult and child, has led to a more violent outcome. Teens turn to games, something they can conquer and feel in control of. Do parents allow all this time for their teens to play these games because it keeps them from being underfoot and keeps them busy? Is it a parents way of making sure they are pre-occupied so they, as parents, can do their own thing and not have the interference of a teen? The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) says, "our intent is to inform parents about the games and then let them make the decision." But if parents decide not to restrict their children's purchase of

games, don't take enough of an interest in their children's activity, nor find the time for their children, how effective is the ratings system? Is this the way to remove blame from the video industry and place it directly on parents?

The methodology used in this study could be classified as a historical approach because the initial conception of video games will be reviewed, its progress followed, and its popularity studied. Once the background is established, present day problems, views and concerns will be examined with input received from today's average American family and their thoughts and feelings of how the structure and quality of life may or may not have shifted. This information will be compared and analyzed with previous recorded data to see if there has been any change in thought process regarding the effects of video games in society.

~ Hypothesis ~

The popularity of video games, being in the mainstream of technology for prestige among working families leads to unsupervised teens and violence. The use of video games, i.e. Nintendo and Sega, depicting multiple levels of violence, neglect due to lack of supervision and too much free time, as opposed to the more structured family life in the 50s and 60s, leads to activities and behavior threatening to others. Interactive violence may reduce a certain amount of aggression

in children by giving them an outlet to release their energy and video games provide these means which teach them how to become violent.

~ Scope and Limitations ~

The scope of the research involves parents of teenagers in public schools who are presented a survey asking for their thoughts and opinions on the effects of video games on teenagers. A sample of 500 parents was taken of those with children ranging in age from 13 to 19. The survey format depicts a parent's thought on whether there is a correlation between violence and video games, and if supervision, or the lack there of, is a contributing factor, which may lead to violence.

The sample population is derived from the Broward County public school system of those families with teenagers. Because the efforts of this study are focused on teen violence as it may or may not relate to video games and the influence of playing, the average American family is analyzed. This study also is focused on the parents, the baby-boomers, who were raised in an era different from present day standards. This researcher, also a baby-boomer, is anxious to see how many others feel values and priorities appear to have changed from the times and ways our parents raised us and if any of the 'old-fashioned' upbringing has been carried over to their children.

This researcher feels with the demands of a career, financial concerns, and much more stress put on families to exist, parents find themselves having to work full-time jobs in order to make ends meet. The pressure of this leaves the children of working parents, through no fault of their own, left to others for supervision at critical times of their upbringing. Through day care, babysitters, and nannies, children are kept busy with activities, such as video games, until such time parents are able to make available some quality time and actually see what their child is becoming involved in. On an ABC News documentary entitled "Teens: What makes them tick", airing March 8, 1999, narrator John Stossel interviewed family therapists to obtain their input on a teen's behavior. It was learned 85% of the time children are alone or with their friends. They run away from attempts by parents to control them. Teens feel the need to pursue their independence and find it through being the controller, as opposed to being controlled. What better way to do that than to control a video game and obtain satisfaction through conquering.

The days of the working father and stay at home mother have passed. Women are in search of their career goals, yet struggle to be moms too. Only so much time in any given day or week can be stretched so far, and either one's career or family life will eventually suffer. Life is a continual juggling process if

parents attempt to find a balance with family and career. Who suffers - the children?

"There's no clear, substantial evidence violent games cause a problem. Regardless, I don't know that they create a benefit."

~ Patrick McGriffin, Ph.D.
Chief Psychologist
Department of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry
Hahnemann University Hospital, PA

CHAPTER II

~ Research / Literature Review ~

Computer game playing appears to be the adolescent leisure phenomenon of the 1990s. To date, there have been few studies on whether computer game playing is addictive or dependence-forming probably because it is such a recent phenomenon. Reviews of different studies have indicated video game playing is primarily an adolescent pastime and boys play more regularly than girls.

The games of today may be psychologically different from the games of a decade ago in that these require more complex skills, improved dexterity, and feature socially relevant themes and better graphics. It could be the new games are more addicting. It may also be that the children of today are playing games at a significantly earlier stage of their development (Griffiths & Hunt, 1998).

Some people believe violence depicted in video games is the cause of the violent acts committed by today's youth. They argue the scenes of graphic violence cause children to want to portray the character they were just using in the video game. Other people say violence in video games has no influence on the children playing the game. Some studies believe video games have a positive influence on those playing, especially the younger children. The video games give children a sense of

having the ability to overcome obstacles and triumph. Some people also claim the video games improve hand-eye coordination in children.

It appears social status depends on owning the right video game. They have become the most popular "toys" ever. They represent 25 of the 30 top-selling toys in the United States since 1990. Studies conducted in 1992 looked at what messages were conveyed through video games. It showed the female gender usually being depicted as victims, which may lead girls to interpret themselves as the weaker sex and condition boys to assume dominance. Sex bias and gender stereotyping are evident in video games but seem to be tolerated by consumers because parents are not knowledgeable about the games and often ignore their content.

At the end of 1993, Communication Research Group, of Aston University, Birmingham, Alabama, performed a study which involved 150 children, two-thirds of girls and boys were over 12 years old. The subjects were in an audience at a popular video game TV program. Almost all participants were boys. This was not a random sampling of children nor did it encompass any substantial female points of view. The age ranges and genders were misrepresented because under two-thirds were over 12 years old and almost four-fifths were boys (Arthur, 1993). From this limited sampling, The Research Group drew conclusions based

solely on what these children indicated and found video games can make children lose their temper and act violently, but they are not a root cause of bad behavior. They concluded children play video games to fill time, relieve boredom and make friends. Psychologists felt parents were overreacting to statements regarding violence because they cannot understand technology. From this basis, The Research Group advised parents not to worry about children playing video games but, instead, to encourage them in order to promote social interaction. The Research Group's view was so narrowly focused they neither saw beyond the surface nor appreciated the greater long-term effects repeated exposure to violence might cause. Game industry representative Doug Lowenstein, President of the Interactive Digital Software Association, said "parents need to exercise control over what their kids are doing on the internet, just as they need to exercise control over the games their children play, and how much time they spend playing those games" (Curley, 1997).

Over time, video games have become extremely real. Early video games consisted of two-dimensional figures that were clearly not real. As technology became more advanced so did video games. Three-dimensional characters and graphics have become lifelike. The line between fantasy and reality tends to become a blur, especially for children who may interpret killing, pain and anguish as being gratifying and acceptable and

no punishment will be given for conquering and mastering the game. With advancements in technologies, the graphics in these games may look as real as life itself. If parents involve themselves more in what their children do and watch, violence should not be a problem. Parents should not expose smaller children to the very graphic games until they are mature enough to handle them and understand it is just a game. As long as those playing the game have an understanding of what is real, they will use these games as what they were meant to be, a form of entertainment. It has been established there are many different types of computer games as listed in Table 1 (Appendix B) and different types of games may have different effects with gender differences in the type of game played (Griffiths, 1997).

Harper's Magazine Foundation 1994 distributed a "disclosure questionnaire" to makers of computer-game software. The "disclosure questionnaire" was developed by the Recreational Software Advisory Council (RSAC) as part of a new rating system for video games. Under this system, makers of new software games answer a series of questions to determine if their products contain any 'objectionable content'. This RSAC panel, made up of parents, teachers and other concerned individuals, assigned each game a rating. The following definitions were used to help determine a game's level of violence:

- Benign Mobilization - an act which stops or restrains the actions of a being in a way which does not demonstrate any death, discomfort, harm or pain.
- Gratuitous Violence - depictions of continuous aggressive violence which causes harm or death to a being.
- Blood and gore - depictions of a being's blood or any association of vital body fluid. It cannot be just a simple dismemberment, but must be accompanied with tendons, veins, etc. (Harper Magazine, December 1994).

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) supports a ratings system which would pertain to all video game manufacturers. National PTA President Lois Jean-White has stated the organization supports the implementation of a parental advisory system providing parents with content information about the video games children are playing. The organization also believes the next step is to reduce the number of video games with violent themes. Studies show violent video games can raise children's levels of aggression and suppress their desire to engage in pro-social behaviors. The National PTA continues to work on educating and increasing the awareness of the impact video game violence has on children. Nintendo has developed its own guidelines. It has included brochures in their packaging informing parents about video games and suggestions on how to limit children's time. Sega also introduced its own

rating system which is similar to movie ratings: GA (General Audience), MA-13 (Mature Audience with Parental Discretion), MA-17 (game not appropriate for minors). The Video Game Rating Council, an independent committee of child experts, developed the ratings.

Game makers have created not one rating system, but two. In addition to the RSAC, which handles the computer games, the Entertainment Software Ratings Board ranks video games. This leads to dual rating systems, which needs interpretation by parents who already are ignorant of most video game content. In order to get the word out, the Video Software Dealers Association committed themselves to incorporate the ratings into the "Pledge to Parents" program where parents provide their input as to whether or not children can rent R-rated videos without their consent.

But what about the design of video games in attracting males and females alike? In the video industry, it is said developing games for girls is too much of a risk because, while girls are willing to play games that are intended to appeal to boys, boys would never play games intended for girls. In 1994, a research study was conducted involving the attitude of Sega players by having counselors handle the company's consumer hotline and ask parents and children, especially mothers and daughters, their opinions about the games. The study was

conducted for three months. The research revealed boys focused upon rules and winning while girls will use rules creatively or will change them. A majority of the present day video games are full of violence and action, which do not attract girls. Girls find non-violent games involving the environment more interesting.

Additional studies have been conducted regarding the content of video games played by children. The portrayal of females and the use of violence. One study was conducted in the spring of 1995 when Nintendo and Sega games were most popular. The sample of video games chosen for this analysis was nonrandom. This study picked the most popular games in light of the number of games available. Attempts to narrow the choices were based upon what would most likely influence children. Four stores were chosen with the most popular games listed. From the combined list the most popular Nintendo titles and Sega Genesis titles were selected for analysis.

Content analysis was used to collect information about the portrayal of women and the use of violence in video games. Coding sheets were developed which allowed the researcher to indicate whether or not female characters were in the video and whether or not violence was part of the theme or strategy of the game. In addition, different categories were created with

criteria to depict females, i.e. sex objects, victims, feminine roles, and heroes.

The findings indicated 15% portrayed women as heroes or as action characters. However, these heroes were dressed in stereotypical female colors and/or clothing. The second most common portrayal of women as the victim or 'damsel in distress'. Females were also depicted as being in non-significant roles, a choice which demonstrates the image of males and females in society.

This study's overall findings concluded video games minimized the roles of females, and many incorporated violence as a major component. The portrayal of female characters in popular video games was stereotypical and was shown as being subordinate to male characters thus representing negative role models of women. This image can be detrimental to girls and boys because they each may accept and expect this as role appropriate. Also, the majority of the games sampled utilized some form of violent theme. This could create, in the minds of children, the belief violence and victimization are normal in society. This type of behavior could also come to be associated with amusement and fun. Repetitive violence could also be interpreted as the accepted norm of conduct to be utilized to "succeed" or "win". Children might conclude violence is an effective means of problem-solving and should be utilized as a

tool to advance through life and come out a winner. Is that the image and message we wish to project to children?

A survey conducted by Jeanne Funk, Ph.D. was conducted observing children's time commitment and game preference of violent games introduced in the 1990s. Participants were volunteers from a school system in a midwestern city. Surveys were distributed by grade with children being surveyed in descending grade order, beginning with seventh and eighth graders. 900 male and female participants represented grades four through eight.

Pre-specified time categories were arranged with each child indicating the amount of time spent playing video games at home or in an arcade during a week. The results are listed in Table 2 (Appendix C). Boys reported more playing time than girls in each grade in both the home and arcade. On the average, there was a decreasing time commitment for both boys and girls in each setting.

To study game preferences, a system was established using children's perceptions of game content. The goal was to design a flexible system by which any current or future electronic game could be described. As part of the survey, children were asked to list the titles of up to three favorite video or computer games. These categories were then defined by investigators and listed by categories indicated in Table 3 (Appendix D).

For each grade, the percentage of total favorite game choices was calculated by category, separately for girls and boys. Overall results indicated girls were more likely to list educational games as favorites than boys. There was a trend for an increasing preference for general entertainment across all grades. The popularity of violent games remained consistent across all grades. Girls preferred fantasy (cartoon) violence, while boys chose games with human violence.

With the release of Mortal Kombat, the violent martial arts video game where the player can tear off the head of the opponent, raised some red flags and got the attention of the Center for Media Education. The Center was disturbed about the trends toward more graphic video violence being exposed to children and yet it was advertised as "fun". Publishers should note content of their products with clear phrases like "graphic violence" and "adult language" and be smart enough to advertise honestly. Presentation and packaging should be up-front and not masked in cartoon graphics in attempts to subdue the violent intent. Real information needs to be readily available to parents in an effort to assist them in determining what is or is not objectionable. The responsibility should not just lie with the publishers, nor with the parents, but with everyone. Force people to pay attention to what the market is promoting (Keizer, 1994).

As far back as 1956 was the first hint of the emergence of video games. A Korean War veteran, David Rosen, started a small photo booth company in Japan. 1961 spawned the first interactive computer game, which was a device the size of a small home, created by a MIT student. In 1964 Mr. Rosen teamed up with a Japanese Company and adopted the name Sega. Nolan Bushnell, an electrical engineer designed the first successful electronic video game in 1971 and released in 1974 under the company name Atari.

Historical research has shown when video games were first introduced in the 1970s they had become a preferred leisure activity for children and this began to concern adults. There was less time spent playing outside, homework, and reading books. As video games became more popular in the late 1980s, there was more interest in examining the effects of video games.

Ratings of video game violence have become an extension of ratings for television violence. Previous research has found connections between children playing violent video games and developing aggressive behavior. There was a short-term relationship between playing violent games and increased aggressive behavior in younger children. Historically, arcades introduced this new phenomenon to society. Then technology found its way to households with the creation of Atari.

At the same time personal computers were becoming of age. By 1984, it was thought the video game surge was over with companies who produced video cartridges going bankrupt. In 1987 the computer side of the industry, based on disks and not cartridges, continued to progress with new ideas and a new video game: Nintendo. By 1990 Nintendo had captured the market. Sega stepped back in contention with the release of Sonic the Hedgehog in 1991, and the Sega CD in 1992. 1993 showed Nintendo and Sega head-to-head on announcing their next generation systems.

At this time, after the release of Mortal Kombat and Night Trap, Senators Joseph Lieberman and Herbert Kohl launched a Senate investigation into video game violence, threatened to effect a ban on "violent games" and eventually softened their demands to an industry-wide rating system. Lieberman called the questionable games "digital poison" and encouraged parents to take an active role in monitoring what their children play. He asked game makers to set standards and limit the violence in the games they marketed. Lieberman and Senator Herb Kohl (D-Wisconsin) have been active in trying to protect children from gratuitously violent or sexually explicit content in video games (Curley, 1997). The game companies used this to attack each other, then developed a joint rating system and released even more violent games than before. The support of the PTA is with

Senators Lieberman and Kohl for keeping the issue of content of video games in the spotlight.

In comparison, two-thirds of Americans polled in 1996 said sex and violence on television was damaging society contributing to social problems like violence, divorce, teen pregnancy, and the decline of family values. There appears to be more sex-related programs as opposed to violence on television with the opposite being said for video games. The combined impact of television and video games may be one reason Americans are more focused on the increasing issues of crime. Staying away from violent video games is a parent's choice. "Before the games can have an impact, somebody has to buy them", said Patrick McGriffin, Ph.D., Chief Psychologist in the Department of child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Hahnemann University Hospital, Philadelphia. He states if parents want to buy those games, they need to be able to talk to their children about them. Make children understand they are just games and it is not o.k. to imitate them (Munson, 1995).

Recent studies of television watching by children have included measuring the time children spend playing video games. In 1967, the average sixth grader watched 2.8 hours of television per day. Data from 1983 indicated sixth-graders watched 4.7 hours of television per day with some additional time spent playing video games.

Video games represent a \$7 billion business in the United States (Dorman, 1997). With each new release players are promised endless amounts of blood and gore. There are spectacular sound effects, bells, and whistles to blur the distinction between reality and fantasy and promote criminality (Gahr, 1999). A recent study in 1993 examined video game playing among 357 seventh and eight grade students. They were asked to identify their preference among five categories of video games. The two most preferred categories were games which involved fantasy violence, preferred by 32% and sports games, some of which contained violent themes, which were preferred by more than 29%. Almost 20% of the students expressed an interest in games with a general entertainment theme, while another 17% preferred games with human violence. Fewer than 2% of those studied were interested in games with an educational content (Funk, 1993). An independent analysis of the 47 most popular video games found violence as the theme in 40 of the games. These facts indicate this popular pastime has a major influence in the lives of American children (Dorman, 1997). The overall results of the study found approximately 36% of male students played video games for 1 to 2 hours per week, 29% played 3 to 4 hours, 12% did not play at all. Of the female students, 42% played approximately 1 to 2 hours, and 15% played 3 to 6 hours per week. Almost 37% of females did not play any video games.

The average results indicate both males and females played more than 6 hours per week.

In 1993, a Ph.D. candidate at Princeton University, Heidi Dangelmaier, conducted research regarding profits in the video game industry. She concluded video game companies apparently were not interested in doubling their profits. It appeared females dominated the population at 52 percent; there are more than 15 million girls between the ages of 4 and 12 in the United States alone and young girls have written major video makers, i.e. Sega asking for more "girl games". Why aren't companies making more products for females? There has been no evidence any large video market has or had invested large sums of money to appeal to the female market and then been rejected and take a huge loss, therefore have a reason not to make more video games which appeal to females. There is no concrete answer for the market and why it tends to shift more to the male gender (Dangelmaier, 1993).

Ms. Dangelmaier posed the question to major game companies of why there are not more products for females. The common response was "our primary market (boys) might feel alienated if we make products for girls." Is this not a prejudiced response? Are big gaming industries afraid they might damage the male ego? There was no conclusive study that could be found concluding a boy's interest in video games would be negatively affected if

same or similar products were manufactured with girls interests' in mind (Dangelmaier, 1993).

Are video games sex-typed as male? Research has shown gender divisions can either evolve from cultural sex typing, or they can be born out of differing physical capabilities. Sex typing declares gender appropriateness of objects and activities: guns are for boys, dolls are for girls. Parents also reinforce this by purchasing and encouraging these traditional stereotypes (Dangelmaier, 1993).

Scientists have demonstrated different skills are improved with different types of toys. Toys for boys tend to emphasize more visual tasks which involve depth perception and the solving of puzzles. Many video games emphasize these areas and subsequently reflect a bias toward boys. There is no reason why areas in which girls excel, such as procedural thinking, cannot be incorporated into games as well (Danglemaier, 1993).

The National Institute on Media and the Family, an independent, non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-profit organization, mission is to maximize the benefits and minimize the harm mass media has on children, through research and education. They provide a 'report card' to assist parents in making appropriate and informed choices for their children.

The 1998 summary of the majority of games on the market was considered appropriate for children. The concern, though,

is about a core group of games featuring ultra-violence. Some also include sexual themes and crude language. Although these are called "games", a more accurate description would be "kill-for-fun murder simulations." The Institute's research shows most parents are unaware of these games and their content. Unfortunately, it is these types of games which are most popular with children and teenagers.

At the end of each year, the Institute issues its annual video and computer game report card in cooperation with Senators Joe Lieberman and Herb Kohl who have been working diligently with the game industry to develop policies and tools to ensure children are limited to the "mature" theme games (Walsh, 1998). The results gave the gaming industry an 'A' for putting ratings on games, but gave stores a 'D' for their lack of enforcement of the ratings. Senator Lieberman also connected video game violence with the previous year's schoolyard shootings. "I am not saying violent games are to blame for these terrible acts", he said, "but as I have said before, these games and their awful ads are part of the toxic culture of violence that is enveloping our children" (Lemos, 1998).

The video and computer game industry has seen tremendous growth in sales and popularity since its inception 26 years ago with the game Pong. New emerging technologies guarantee game players will experience these game environments with

increasingly greater "real world" interactions. These games are so popular with children and their access to these games featuring violence, sex and other adult themes, became an issue for many parents in the early 1990s. This was the time the Senators pressed the industry to establish the rating system, which it did in 1994.

The first video game report card was issued in 1995 to assess compliance with the rating system. The report card generated so much interest that its release has become an annual event at the start of the holiday season. The focus of this report is geared toward parents whose priorities change as issues evolve. Since games are so widely used by children and since parents are concerned about the effects, the annual report card is meant to provide helpful information to parents so they can make informed decisions. The latest report has documented the following:

- Video and computer games are among children's most asked for gifts during the holiday shopping season.
- Video and computer games are very popular with children. Research done by the National Institute on Media and Family shows that 69% of parents report their children own or rent games.
- In the same study, 46% of parents reported they think electronic games have a great influence on their

children. An additional 34% think the games have a moderate influence.

- Children who play games now do so an average of 7 hours per week. That is the equivalent of more than a full day of school per week.
- A 1996 study of fourth through eighth graders found that almost 50% of their favorite games featured violence.
- Emerging game technologies guarantee players will experience these games environments with increasingly greater "real world" interactions.

This information was obtained by a phone survey of 529 parents from all socio-economic groups with the cooperation of store arcades and the industry trade association (Walsh, 1998). Under the parental supervision category, the survey indicated parents have a primary responsibility in supervising their children's game playing. It was discovered most parents do not know the content of their children's games. Also, most do not utilize the rating system available with the games. One possible reason is most parents are not knowledgeable about the technology of the games and do not pay attention to it. 5% of the more than 500 parents surveyed never heard of the "mature" game *Duke Nuken* which combines violence and sex and attempts to expel Los Angeles from aliens who are kidnapping scantily clad women. *Duke Nuken* shoots anyone who gets in his way. However,

80% of junior high school students were familiar with the game. This finding illustrates the lack of knowledge parents have when it comes to video games (Walsh, 1998).

Although child-development experts disagree about whether playing violent games can actually lead to aggressive behavior, most acknowledge the fast, adrenaline-pumping pace evokes a definite physiological and psychological response in those who play them. Children who enjoy computer and video games are not just passive viewers of the violence. "They are actually the ones knocking people off," says Michael Brody, M.D., a child psychiatrist and member of the Media Committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Although most children are able to distinguish between reality and fantasy, Dr. Brody emphasizes some are not able to make the distinction.

Will violent games lead to violence in healthy, well-adjusted children? Probably not, says Dr. Brody, but that does not mean the games don't have any effect. So what should parents do about this? They need to start paying attention to what their children are playing. This includes reading the ratings on the boxes before buying the game. It also means supervising children when playing games and observing their actions (Furger, 1998). Were the two suspects of the Littleton, Colorado murders supervised and observed by their parents when

playing their favorite video game *Doom*? A game known by others to be their favorite? A game which players wander through a maze of rooms, corridors and halls killing everyone in sight. Sound familiar? The manufacturer of *Doom*, id Software, advises the player to "prepare for the most intense mutant-laden, blood-spattered action ever. You don't just play *Doom* - you live it." Is this normal? With the action so real and seen from the character's point-of-view, you *become* the character. How can one not see a connection between these games and violence. What we have here is an explanation for these acts staring us in the face.

Because of the rise in popularity of video games in homes, and due to the nature and content of these games, some potential negative consequences were examined, along with the affect on the health of education of children. American children are more overweight, slower and weaker than children in other nations. Video games and television may be big contributors to the cause of this and replacing the interest in sports and physical activity predominant in the era of the baby-boomers (Dinubile, 1993). Some have argued this point indicating the playing of video games increases the heart rate and associates it to mild intensity exercise. A study of this was conducted by Segal and Dietz in 1991 involving 32 males and females ages 16-25 to assess. The metabolic and cardiovascular responses during a 30-

minute play of a video game and then compared with 30-minutes standing inactive in a position. The results indicated the level of cardio-respiratory stress from playing the video game is not sufficient to improve cardio-respiratory fitness.

Another negative consequence involved the pathological preoccupation with video games. A case study was conducted with preadolescents. The child, who had stolen and forged checks, and skipped school to use video games, was experiencing distress in a family situation and appeared to be engrossed in games to suppress his family problems (Keepers, 1990).

The role of video games in promoting aggression has been the focus of much controversy. However, studies which examined the relationship have been inconclusive and inconsistent in their findings. The relationship of aggression and video game play has been explained using several theoretical frameworks (Silvern & Williamson, 1987). The general arousal theory implies children, when aroused, most likely will behave in a manner most recently observed. Therefore, the arousing nature of video games may increase aggressiveness. The social learning theory suggests children behave in a manner reinforced by a significant other. Thus, children playing video games allows them to practice aggression and be rewarded for it. Playing a video game seems to lead children to exhibit behaviors similar to those portrayed in the game, including aggressive behaviors.

A study conducted by N.S. Schutte involving 31 children, ages five to seven, reinforced these findings implying children tend to model what they experience in video games (Schutte, 1988). To counteract this study, additional studies were conducted in two separate countries, of which they had the direct opposite results and video game players developed superior social skills important to every child's adjustment (Dorman, 1997).

According to the Wall Street Journal ("PC games could capture Sega, Nintendo customers," April 27, 1994, page B1), in general parents support the use of video games that help children learn about school subjects while they play. There are several elements the teacher or parent should evaluate when choosing a computer game for educational purposes (Resnick & Sherer, 1994):

- Educational or therapeutic objective. The objective of the game should be clear. Have a known goal in mind for the players of the game. The outcomes should be clear to all involved.
- Type of game. Review the basic activities content. Some games require physical skill and strategy, others are a game of change.
- Required level and nature of involvement. Assess whether the player of the game is passive or active.

- Information and rules. Ascertain the range of knowledge and information about the game.
- Competition. The level of competition needs to be examined to determine if all who play can win or does one just win at an expense to all the others.

Although studies have been inconsistent in their findings regarding the impact of violent games on players, parents and teachers alike need to take the time to examine these games for violent and unhealthy effects children expose themselves to and avoid it. Educational video games which are developed should represent growth of educational and health behavior. More research is needed in this area to develop a better understanding of how video and computer games technology fits into the development and commanding influence it has on children and ways to make games more effective toward positive growth (Dorman, 1997).

With the increase in single parent families, children are often caught in the crossfire. Increasing divorce, cohabitation and births out of wedlock leave children living in single-parent households. Children come to be viewed as liabilities and inconveniences. Those born in 1980, 70 percent of white children and 94 percent of black children are projected to live with only one parent by the time they are 18 (Popenoe, 1996). Holtz (1995) refers to these modern children as "the warehouse

generation" - the generation in which day-care, babysitters, TV and peers serve as surrogate parents (Holtz, 1995). This leads to today's children being more independent, resourceful, anxious and peer-dependent than previous generations (Holtz, 1995; Whitehead, 1997). With this in mind, the media industry becomes an important force in the eyes of children. The industry gives children a chance to excel, be noticed, feel important, and in charge.

As children reach the adolescent stage, they are searching for their identities. Basic trademarks such as clothes, entertainment and music become priorities in their minds. The search for significance and security come in the form of friends and associated activities with these friends (Huggins, 1989). Teenagers spend the most money on clothing (36 percent) and on entertainment (23 percent). Adolescence is a period of self-identification, a time to achieve independence and be respected by adults. If teenagers have good relationships with their parents and with other adults, then their desires to express themselves and gain independence will be limited and not such a focus in their life. If their peer group is the only source of attention and feedback, then desires are magnified.

Many parents express concern over the violent action associated with video games. In fact, most games feature masculine fantasies of control, power, and destruction, as well

as sexism and racism. Preliminary research on video games indicates no significant relationships between increased social deviance or addictive behavior and video game playing (Gibb, 1983; Egli, 1984). However, initial studies have been criticized as having too narrow a focus.

Violence is being integrated into the child's conception of and expectations about reality (Provenzo, 1991). This is of great concern in the development of character of younger children who are unable to make the distinctions between fantasy and reality.

Today's technology is forcing America, and the world, to take a good long look at the condition of one's moral character of our children and the moral condition of their world. Some areas which need consideration now and in the near future include:

- Ongoing critical assessment of the role of technology in our lives. Are we controlling the tools or is technology controlling us? Parents and teachers alike must decide its own priorities and discuss them together.
- Schools, parents and other sources of social authority need to find the courage to formulate moral vision and clear standards and expectations. Within families, there is nothing more important than family meals where real discussions and conversations are encouraged. Many of

today's families are on different schedules and have little or no conversation, much less quality time to share the days events. Of those families who do manage to sit down to a meal together, two-thirds of them eat with the TV on.

- Parents and teachers need to set the example for good character. Children imitate those they are around on a daily basis. They must be involved in every aspect of their childhood to observe how parents and teachers behave under stress. Children need to be made a priority in an adult's life.
- Daily activities, those that put limits on doing what one wants, when one wants, can form the character of children. We, as adults, must make demands on our children's time and energy. Our examples and expectations must create an environment in which the simplest, but most profound lessons of life can be learned.

Character must begin with parents, teachers and leaders before it will have any value on the young. No advanced technology will fix what lies in our immediate future - the lessons taught and learned between parents and child, teacher and student (Seel, 1997).

"Everyone is concerned about violence in society, guns and crime, and we wonder what's causing it to escalate. There's a perception video games may play a role in increasing violence in society."

~ George Harrison, Director
Corporate Communications,
Nintendo of America

CHAPTER III

~ Methodology ~

Should violent video games and parental responsibility be combined in the same statement? Would there be less violence among teens if parents chose to take a more active role in their children's lives? Video game technology has and will continue to have a profound impact on a child's education. A common complaint which may be foreseen, is games take time away from the fundamentals, reading, writing and other educational activities necessary for a well-rounded child. Because video games have become the focus and highlight of a child's time, parents may be becoming more concerned with the consequences of owning a home video game and its effect on the study habits of a child. This fear has not been established by any research to date.

It appears the majority of research has surveyed and reviewed adolescents (both male and female) interests, reasons, frequency of play, and different reasons for popularity. However, through the course of the emergence of video games, little research has been conducted on a parents point-of-view. Parents, who themselves, were raised in an era when technology was not in the forefront. Where family values took priority, chores around the house were necessary for an allowance, and physical activity and sports was how friends were made.

This particular study was about parents and focused on what they felt effected their children. What better focus then to enlist the support of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA). An organization made up of over 7 million volunteer members with a goal of developing a partnership of parents and teachers dedicated to children and their growth and education. With the support and cooperation of PTA Presidents and Principals of four Broward County Public Middle Schools, a questionnaire was distributed to a total of 500 parents, 125 parents per school, who have teenage children, between the ages of 13 and 19, in the school district. McNicol Middle School, Silver Trail Middle School, Smart School, and Walter C. Young Middle School were those sampled. A content analysis methodology was utilized allowing for parents to answer truthfully, yet anonymously, their feelings in six particular areas on whether they felt the effects of video games may or may not effect children.

After an initial call to the Administrative Offices of the School Board of Broward County, and with the direction from those offices, correspondence was forwarded to the Broward County School Board's Partnership Department on January 22, 1999 (Appendix E). A follow-up phone call was placed by this researcher. At the time of the call, it was learned this particular department would not be able to assist in the survey process and referred this researcher to the PTA County Council

President, Debbie Bainton. A letter, dated February 4, 1999 was sent to Ms. Bainton explaining this researcher's intentions (Appendix F). On February 8, 1999, Ms. Bainton advised, although she would not be able to assist in the survey process, did provide the names of four middle schools, two on the east side (Lauderhill Middle and McNicol Middle), and two on the west side (Silver Trail Middle and Walter C. Young Middle). She suggested the PTA Presidents of each of the schools be contacted for assistance in the project.

With the advice provided by Ms. Bainton, on February 10, 1999 correspondence was directed to Ms. LaVleeta Baskerville, Lauderhill Middle School, Mr. Everaldo Nelson, McNicol Middle School, Ms. Charlene Lakhdar, Silver Trail Middle School, and Ms. Eleanor Adler, Walter C. Young Middle School (Appendix G-J). In addition, Interim Superintendent of Broward County Schools, Dorothy Orr was copied on all correspondence and provided an overview of this researcher's intentions (Appendix K). Contact was established with all four school representatives, and only Lauderhill Middle School informed there was no actual PTA program at that location. With the advice provided by a professor, the Smart School, a charter school in Lauderhill, was contacted and Principal Edward Miller expressed interest in participating (Appendix L).

A questionnaire was created with an overview explaining the purpose of the study (Appendix M). It was made clear this was strictly a random sample of parents and parents were to remain anonymous. Nominal data was collected by utilizing closed questions. This format was purposely chosen in order to make it less threatening and more likely responses will be generated. The opportunity for comments was listed on one open-ended question in order to give those parents, who really wished to become more involved, the opportunity to do so and show interest and support of the cause for research.

Six areas were highlighted to obtain parents' thoughts on the issues. These six issues were obtained after the research was conducted in the literature review to find the areas most frequently discussed and documented through surveys with children. Involving the thoughts of parents, little research had been conducted on these issues:

- Violent content in video games
- Supervision of children playing video games
- Video games lead to violence in teens
- Video games tend to interest boys more than girls
- Video games may reflect negatively on females
- Does previous childhood experience compare to present day or was it different

Upon input of data and results, conclusions were drawn on the various areas tested. From a parent's point of view, conclusions were reached regarding the areas of study: Is there a perception video games are violent and create a tendency for teen violence? Is there a perception females are shown in a negative image, and due to that, are boys more likely to be interested in these games? These results may be the beginning of the direction the generations to come are heading.

Upon completion of the questionnaires, this researcher was contacted by the three PTA Presidents of each of the schools and the principal of the Smart School. Each school handled the distribution of the surveys in a somewhat different manner. Ms. Lakhdar, Silver Trail, distributed surveys to the peer counselors who in turn distributed to the students to take home for the parents to complete and return. Mrs. Adler, Walter C. Young, distributed some surveys at the PTA board meeting and with the permission of Gail Petro, Principal, gave the remaining to her who subsequently had them distributed through a teacher for students to take home and have completed by their parents. Mr. Miller, Smart School, handled it differently and enlisted the support of Jennifer Shapiro and Robin Lipman, his assistants. They were going to distribute the majority of the questionnaires to parents attending parent/teacher conference. Any remaining questionnaires would be handed to parents when

they came to the school's front desk on other matters. When responses were not being met, questionnaires were distributed to the teachers for dispersement. The return was not favorable. An interesting perspective was gained by speaking with Mr. Miller. His initial comments regarding the design of the questionnaire indicated he felt it was too long and should have been condensed to just one side of one page. He indicated parents do not need to know the preliminary explanation of the project. He also has found, through past experience, the majority of people do not turn a page over to see if there is anything written on the back. Due to the fact these questionnaires had already been distributed in this format to the three other schools, it was this researcher's intention to keep it consistent. Mr. Miller understood this concept and only requested each page be placed on a separate sheet and stapled together in order to avoid the possibility page two may not be completed. This request was complied with and distributed in this manner. Mr. Nelson, McNicol Middle, advised he needed to draft a letter, per the school board's request, to advise parents this questionnaire was being sent home with 7th and 8th grade students. After receiving the permission of the principal, Mr. Nelson proceeded with the distribution (Appendix N) and collection of the results.

This researcher had offered to speak at the PTA meetings, of which one was attended. The majority felt it was not necessary for attendance at these meetings and distribution would be best handled directly through the initial contact person made by the researcher.

Once the questionnaires were completed and returned, the data received was analyzed in the six major areas. Because there was one open-ended question, some parents took the opportunity to express their feelings on the subject matter. Due to the writing style and language used in the answers to the question, it can be safely assumed parents did, in fact, complete the survey as opposed to their children. This researcher is comfortable with the validity of the answers presented in the surveys at each school. Although parents response rates to questionnaires placed by their own School Board continues to decline each year, the overall participation of parents in this project is considered remarkable.

The process of obtaining data from two of the four schools was a tedious, and often-times, painstaking wait for results. In addition, multiple contacts were made to obtain the cooperation of a fourth and final school. The initial three schools McNicol, Silver Trail, and Walter C. Young, responded in a timely manner to the original request for research participation. Problems arose with the fourth school,

Lauderhill Middle, when it was found there was no formal 'PTA' system in place. This researcher was misinformed with the initial call to the school requesting the name of the PTA president in order to address an appropriate letter of request. Although Ms. Baskerville advised of the miscommunication, she invited this researcher to attend the first of six 'megaskills' workshops for parents. Attendance consisted of approximately a dozen persons, of which only two offered to complete surveys. Due to the efforts of this megaskills program, it was not in this researcher's best interests to continue in this manner at this location due to the workshop encouraging the same participants to return on a weekly basis.

Not only was there a problem with obtaining a fourth middle school to sample, but a letter was received by interim superintendent, Dorothy Orr (Appendix O) advising the procedure for research assistance needed to go through the proper channels of the school board. Ms. Orr referred this researcher to contact Dr. Katherine Blasnik to obtain the proper protocol to proceed. With this project very much underway, any set back would be most unwelcomed. A phone call was placed to Dr. Blasnik's office. A return call was received from her secretary advising an application was required for any type of research conducted through the Broward County School System. Once submitted, along with five copies of the prospectus, the

application would be reviewed by the Research and Evaluation Committee for either approval or disapproval. This researcher completed the application, however enclosed a letter to Dr. Blasnik's attention of the progress already made and the intentions this researcher made for following the proper procedure (Appendix P). The first contact prior to beginning this project was to the Administrative Offices of the Broward County School System to obtain the procedure for research. There was never any mention of a 'Research and Evaluation' department. From that initial call and direction to the Partnership Department, this researcher proceeded on the course originally provided by the school board offices.

Upon receipt of the application and prospectus, Dr. Blasnik advised she was turning this over to Dr. Carrie Sutton who generally handles these requests. Because Dr. Sutton was not available for several days, a follow-up phone call was not placed to his office immediately. When Dr. Sutton was contacted, he indicated he would not put a stop to the project, due to the fact schools had already been contacted, but would have to halt the project if any complaints were received from principals, teachers or parents.

Due to the amount of time and effort already placed in this study, this researcher elected to continue on this course of

action and went ahead to obtain the assistance of the fourth school, the Smart School.

Although obstacles were placed in the path of this research, and many correspondence and calls were exchanged, all efforts were not defeated by those who wished not to participate. After months of diligently pursuing the goal, measurable results were achieved.

"The world of video games has no conscientious objectors and no sense of community. There are no team players. One must shoot or be shot, consume or be consumed, fight or lose."

~ Eugene Provenzo, Jr.
Professor
University of Miami
Coral Gables

CHAPTER IV

~ Presentation and Analysis of Data ~

Following the return of the questionnaires from the four participating schools, the data obtained was analyzed and compared for similarities and differences. Each school was examined separately by focusing on the completed questionnaires. Of those, percentages were obtained in direct relation to the question.

McNicol Middle School had 5% participation in this project. Of those participating, 33% of the families had male teens only, 67% had female teens only. There were no families who had both male and female teens. 67% of these families have purchased at least one video game within the last calendar year. Overall, a high percentage of parents (83%) felt video games contain violent content, yet 50% of those parents do not supervise their children playing these games. 83% of parents participating felt video games lead to violence in teens and parents were split (50%) on whether games interested boys more than girls, but 67% of parents indicated they did not really know whether games reflect negatively on females (Table 1).

Silver Trail Middle School had 30% participation in this project. Of those participating, 30% of the families had male teens only, 32% had female teens only, and 24% had both male and

female teens in their family. 70% of these families have purchased at least one video game within the last calendar year. Overall, a high percentage of parents (73%) felt video games contain violent content, yet 62% of those parents do not supervise their children playing these games. Parents were basically split in their opinion that video games lead to violence in teens, and the majority of parents (57%) felt the games interested boys more than girls and 59% of parents felt there is no negativity toward females in videos (Table 2).

Smart School had 10% participation in this project. Of those participating, 67% of the families had male teens only, 58% had female teens only, and 25% had both male and female teens in their family. 42% of those families have purchased at least one video within the last calendar year. Overall, a high percentage of parents (75%) felt video games contain violent content, and yet, like the other schools, Silver Trail and Walter C. Young, 50% of those parents do not supervise their children playing these games. Parents were split across all categories regarding whether these violent video games lead to violence in teens and whether boys were interested in playing these games more than girls. No parent participating in the questionnaire felt video games reflected negatively on females in general and a strong 83% said they did not (Table 3).

Walter C. Young Middle School had 26% participation in this project. Of those participating, 34% of the families had male teens only, 38% had female teens only, and 28% had both male and female teens in their family. 56% of these families have purchased at least one video game within the last calendar year. Overall, an extremely high percentage of parents (84%) felt video games contain violent content, and yet, like Silver Trail and Smart School, the majority of the parents (50%) do not supervise their children playing these games. 41% of parents felt video games lead to violence in teens, and the majority of parents (56%) felt the games interested boys more than girls with 47% of parents not knowing if games reflected negatively on females in general (Table 4).

The overall results of all four middle schools and those parents participating (17%) support the original hypothesis that the use of video games depicts violence. More concerning, however, is this same majority feel video games may lead to violence in teens but yet the higher percentage do not supervise their children when playing these games.

The statistical comparisons of all four schools can be summarized as follows:

- Percent participation ranged from 5% to 30% (Graph 1)
- More than half of the parents surveyed had purchased videos within the last year.

- Parents at all four schools felt strongly video games contain violent content (Graph 2).
- The majority of parents at each school indicated they do not supervise their children when playing games (Graph 3).
- Parents at schools were split in their opinions as to whether games lead to violence in teens (Graph 4).
- Parents at schools were basically split in their opinions as to whether video games interested boys more than girls with just a slight increase favoring that possibility (Graph 5).
- The majority of parents at all four schools did not think video games reflected negatively on females in general (Graph 6).
- The overwhelming majority at all schools indicated parents felt their upbringing in the 1950s was substantially different than present day child rearing (Graph 7).

Summarizing the findings, it was apparent videos are purchased by families in this age of technology. Not only are they marketable, but parents feel there is violent content in these games which may lead to teen violence. Knowing this, parents still are allowing their children to play them unsupervised (Graph 8).

The majority of parents surveyed had female teens only and the percentages indicate parents did not think video games

interest boys more than girls. Ironically, the majority of parents with female teens felt videos reflected negatively on females in general yet allowed their children to partake in these games (Graph 9).

The results of this project were based solely on the results from the number of questionnaires returned out of a total of 500 (125 distributed to each middle school). The data collected was calculated into percentages and analyzed based on the actual results. Each question was measured separately per individual school results, with an overall comparison made to support the hypothesis.

*"I'm afraid some kids won't realize that when you
shoot someone in real life, slipping another quarter in the
machine won't bring them back."*

~ Governor Lawton Chiles
April, 1998

CHAPTER V

~ Conclusions and Recommendations ~

Over the past month, America has been exposed to tragedy, shock, helplessness and despair. And these emotions were just due the latest incident of teen violence. Video games have been brought to the forefront and questioned as to whether the violence they project contributed to this particular high school shooting.

It is apparent, through this study, parents are concerned regarding the effects of video games on teens and the possibility these games can lead to violent acts. However, the response to participating in this important topic was disappointing. Through the school sampling, this researcher had high expectations parents would be taking an active role in such an important topic as we close out the 20th century. This was not the case. Either parents are just not interested or do not want to become involved with reality as it happens around them. Maybe now it has gotten their attention.

With the headlines ever-so prominent regarding teen violence in the wake of the latest school massacre at Littleton, Colorado, attention is being focused on parents. Are they aware of what their child is doing? Who their child is spending time with and who their friends are? Do parents want the answers to

these questions or is it just easier to bury their head in the sand and not take responsibility?

Top senators in Washington are warning the makers of violent video games to stop targeting children through advertising, or regulations would be imposed forcing the entertainment industry to do so. Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said he would propose having the Federal Trade Commission investigate whether entertainment companies are marketing violent films, music, and videos to children. Hatch said he was considering an "enforcement mechanism" for current ratings systems to ensure children could not watch or buy videos without parental consent. Although there is a ratings system in place, there is little evidence it is enforced (Helm, 1999).

At the opening of the video game industry's annual trade show, Electronic Entertainment Exposition, in Los Angeles on May 13, 1999, the conference centered around video game violence. The Interactive digital Software Association said they would make greater efforts to inform parents about the rating system of games and to make sure retailers enforce the ratings and not sell inappropriate games to minors. The Senate voted unanimously to authorize studies of the effects of violent video games. In addition, several states are considering legislation to ban or regulate violent games (Pollack, 1999).

With the beginning of the National Campaign to Reduce Youth Violence organization, spearheaded by President Clinton, parents may now take a more active role in what is occurring in this nation which had basically been untouched by the degree of hatred and violence other nations experience. Parents may now reflect back on this topic of research they were asked to participate in and whether they chose to or not, this current topic may allow them to begin to recognize the urgency of addressing an ever growing problem. These issues will not go away. Time has shown incidents continue to escalate and more and more media attention brings to the forefront a force to be reckoned with.

At the summit for youth violence, Steve Case, Chairman of America Online, showcased new tools for parents to monitor and communicate with their children about on-line viewing and access to video games (Feeney, 1999). This may sound like the cure to the problem, but if parents do not even supervise their children when playing these games or take an interest in doing so, as was found in this study, this new technology will be wasted.

Our nation is beginning to take steps to address the seriousness of the issue that has been swept under the rug for too long. As evidence in an additional amendment and urgent summit meetings, this topic has turned many heads and caught the ear of government. With the implementation of this study, long

before the recent school massacre, the concept of combining video games and teen violence was only a thought. Now it has become reality. This study has only been the tip of an iceberg which may or may not sink this nation. If parents continue to be oblivious to the life of a child, *their* child, yet recognize the possibilities for violence of which they allow their children to be exposed to, the future looks dismal. There is too much variety and choice for entertainment which pulls a family apart and away from the roots of a solid upbringing. Are we subliminally training our youths to be tomorrow's terrorists?

Respect, values, and family ties have carried this nation through the depression and world wars. Without those qualities, the youth of today will never know or appreciate the sacrifices made by parents unless those same parents become more involved and communicate in the life of a child.

TABLES

TABLE 1

TABLE 1

MCNICOL MIDDLE SCHOOL
SURVEY RESULTS

Number of Surveys distributed	Number of Surveys Completed	% Participation
125	6	5%

Of surveys completed:

% of families with male teens only	% of families with female teens only	% of families with both male and female teen
33%	67%	0%

PURCHASED VIDEOS (%)

Yes	No
67%	33%

QUESTION 1: As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
83%	17%	0%	0%

QUESTION 2: I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
50%	33%	0%	17%

QUESTION 3: I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
83%	17%	0%	0%

QUESTION 4: I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
50%	50%	0%	0%

QUESTION 5: I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
17%	17%	67%	0%

QUESTION 6: If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
50%	17%	0%	33%

TABLE 2

TABLE 2

SILVER TRAIL MIDDLE SCHOOL
SURVEY RESULTS

Number of Surveys Distributed	Number of Surveys Completed	% Participation
125	37	30 %

Of surveys completed:

% of families with male teens only	% of families with female teens only	% of families with both male and female teens
30%	32%	24%

PURCHASED VIDEOS (%)

Yes	No
70%	30%

QUESTION 1: As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
73%	16%	3%	8%

QUESTION 2: I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
24%	62%	0%	14%

QUESTION 3: I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
35%	38%	19%	8%

QUESTION 4: I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
57%	22%	16%	5%

QUESTION 5: I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
3%	59%	32%	5%

QUESTION 6: If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
70%	5%	3%	22%

TABLE 3

TABLE 3

**SMART SCHOOL
SURVEY RESULTS**

Number of Surveys Distributed	Number of Surveys Completed	% Participation
125	12	10%

Of surveys completed:

% of families with male teens only	% of families with female teens only	% of families with both male and female teens
67%	58%	25%

PURCHASED VIDEOS (%)

Yes	No
42%	58%

QUESTION 1: As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
75%	17%	8%	0%

QUESTION 2: I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
33%	50%	8%	8%

QUESTION 3: I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
33%	33%	33%	0%

QUESTION 4: I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
42%	42%	17%	0%

QUESTION 5: I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
0%	83%	17%	0%

QUESTION 6: If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
58%	8%	8%	25%

TABLE 4

TABLE 4

WALTER C. YOUNG MIDDLE SCHOOL
SURVEY RESULTS

Number of Surveys Distributed	Number of Surveys Completed	% Participation
125	32	26%

Of surveys completed:

% of families with male teens only	% of families with female teens only	% of families with both male and female teens
34%	38%	28%

PURCHASED VIDEOS (%)

Yes	No
56%	40%

QUESTION 1: As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
84%	9%	3%	3%

QUESTION 2: I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
38%	50%	0%	13%

QUESTION 3: I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
41%	25%	31%	0%

QUESTION 4: I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
56%	19%	25%	0%

QUESTION 5: I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general.

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
19%	31%	47%	0%

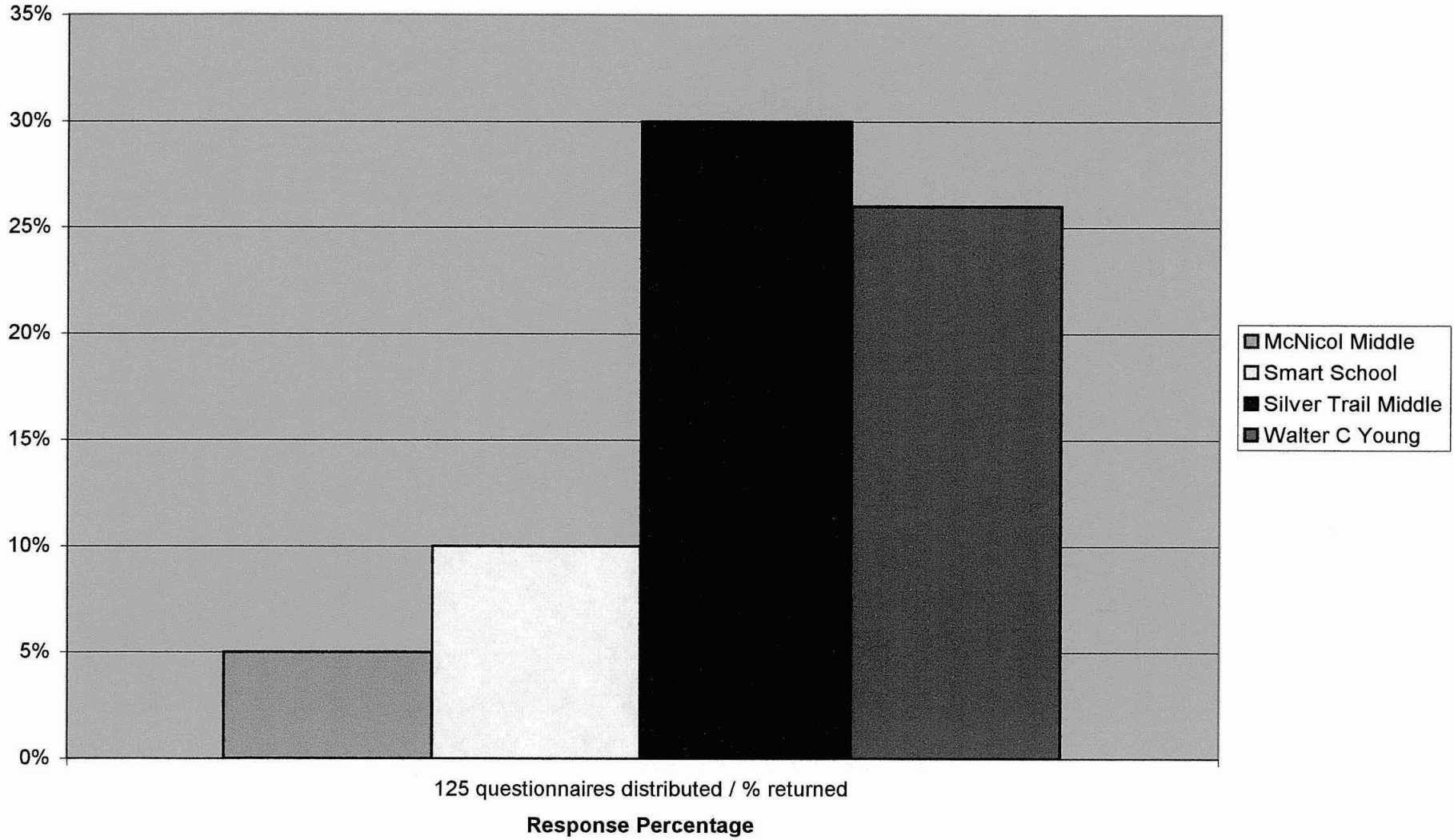
QUESTION 6: If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
69%	6%	0%	25%

GRAPHS

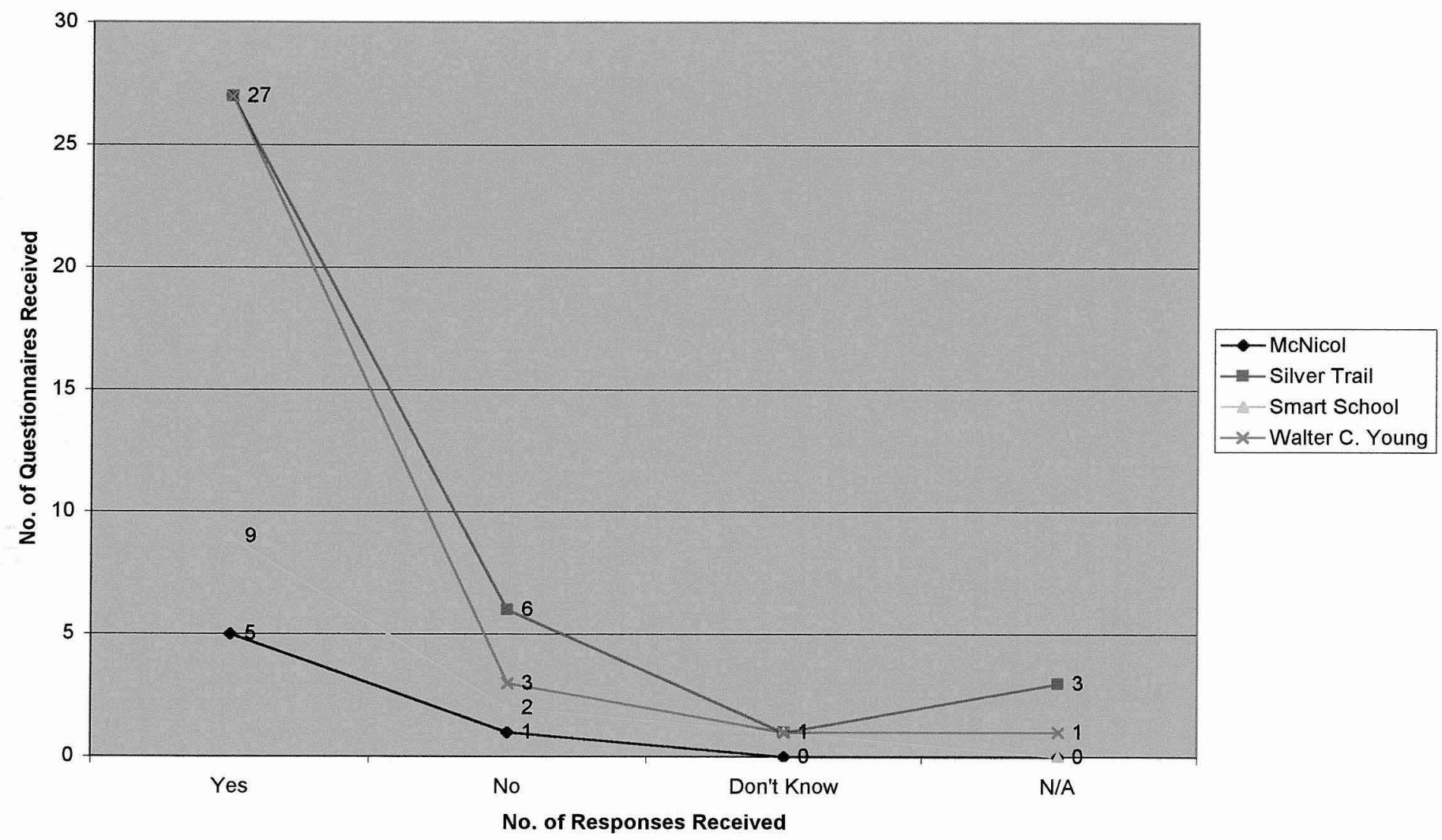
GRAPH 1

Middle School Comparisons



GRAPH 2

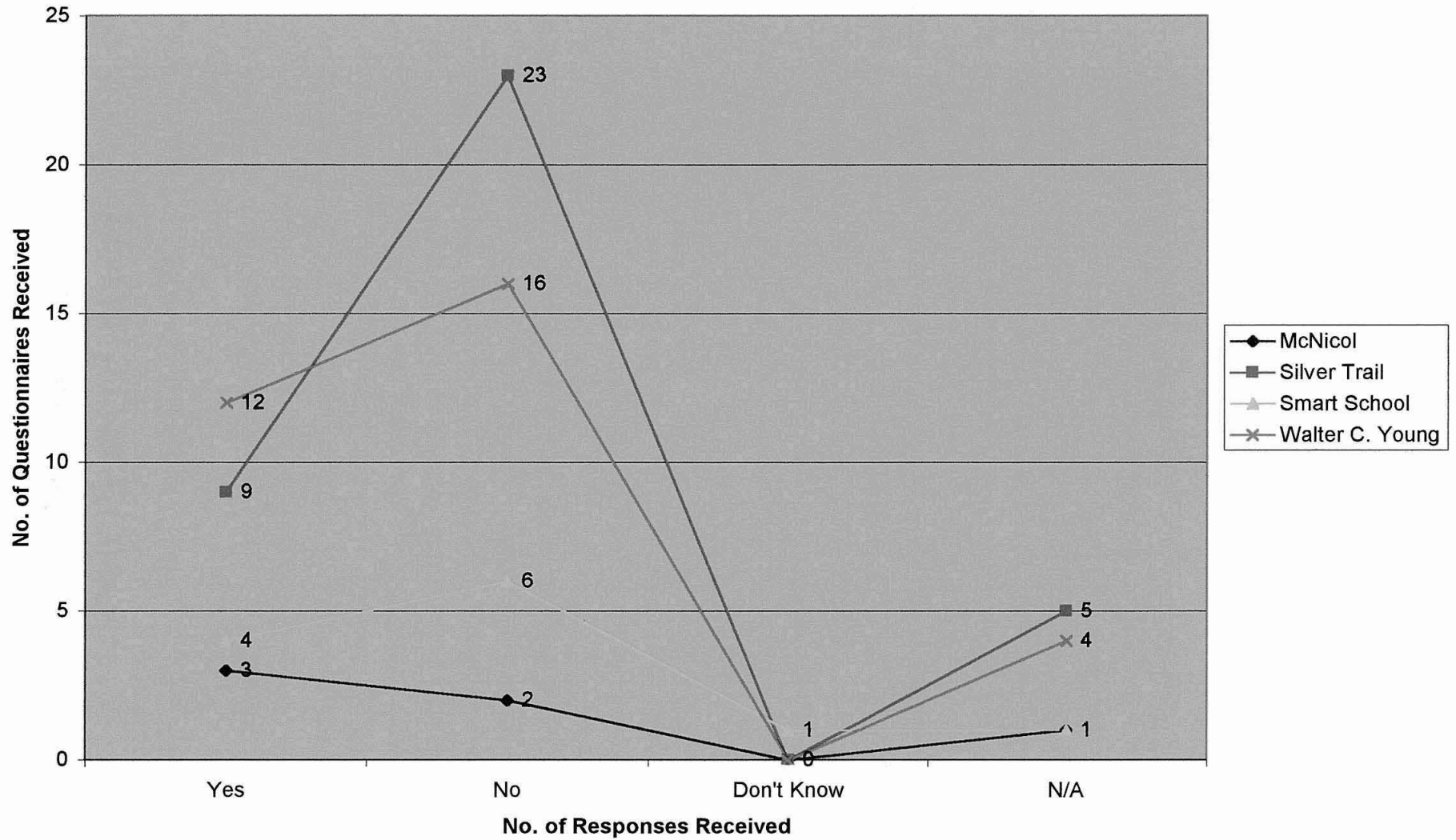
QUESTION 1: As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content



GRAPH 3

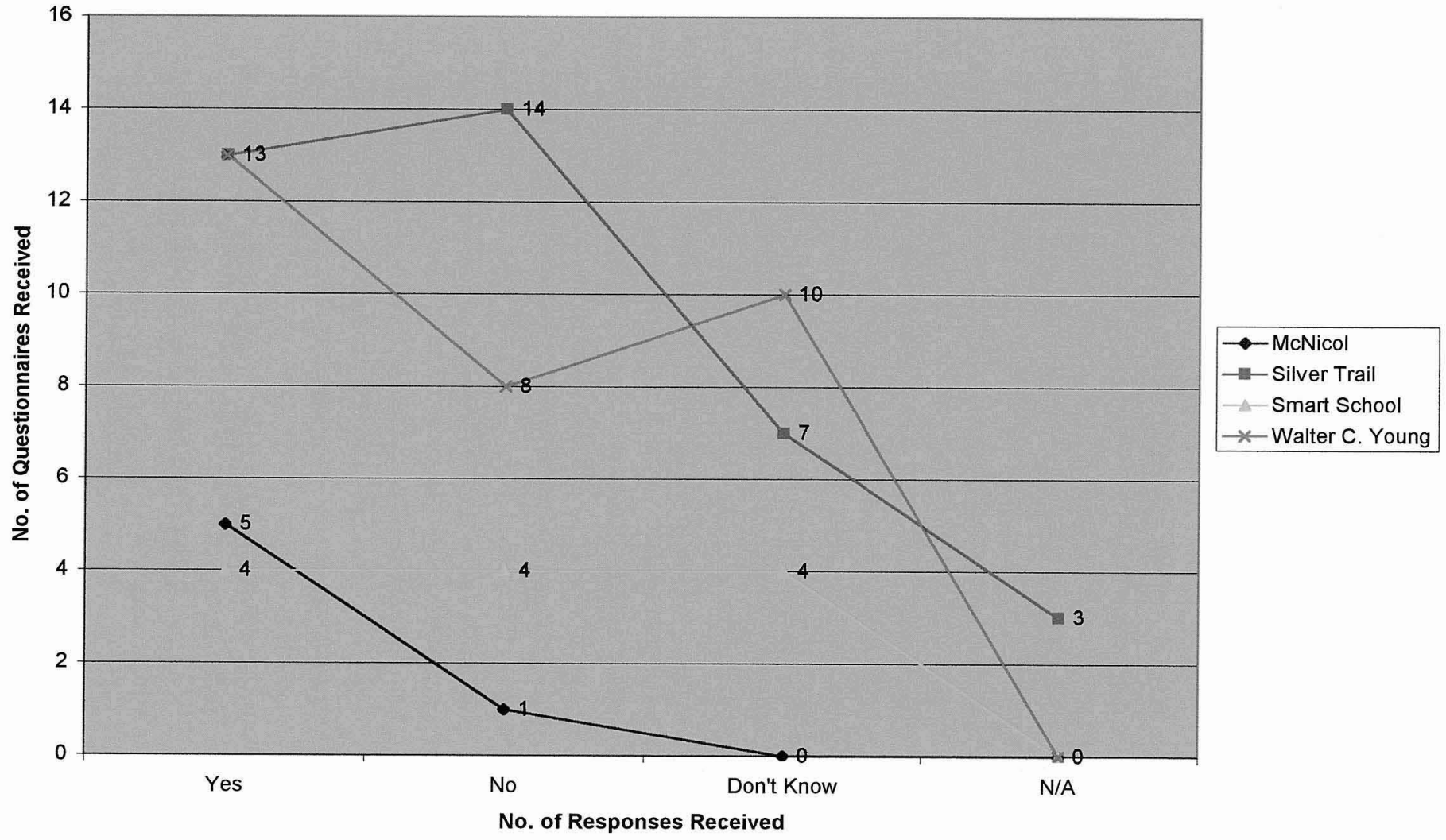
GRAPH 3

QUESTION 2: I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games



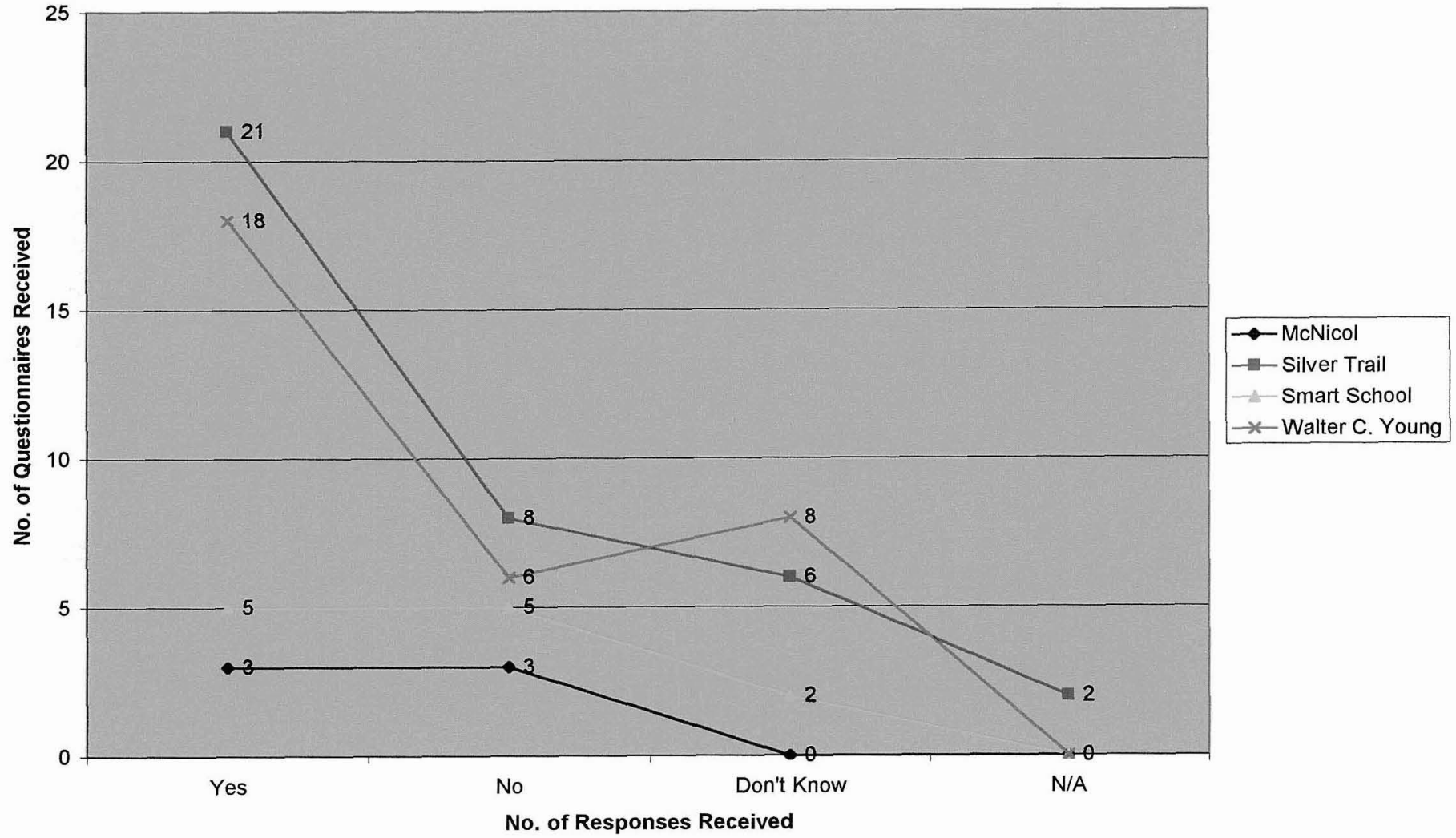
GRAPH 4

QUESTION 3: I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens



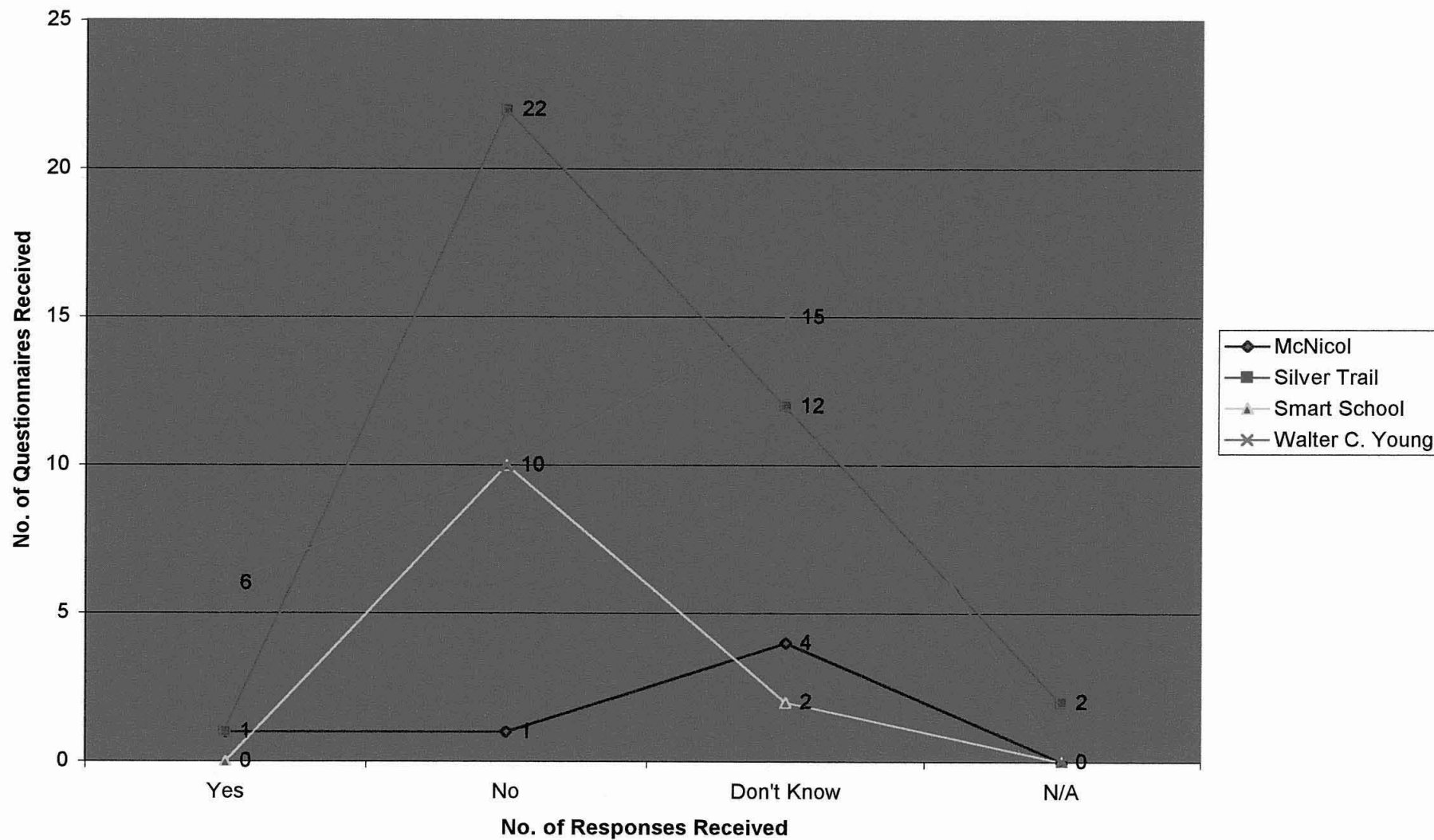
GRAPH 5

QUESTION 4: I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls



GRAPH 6

QUESTION 5: I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general

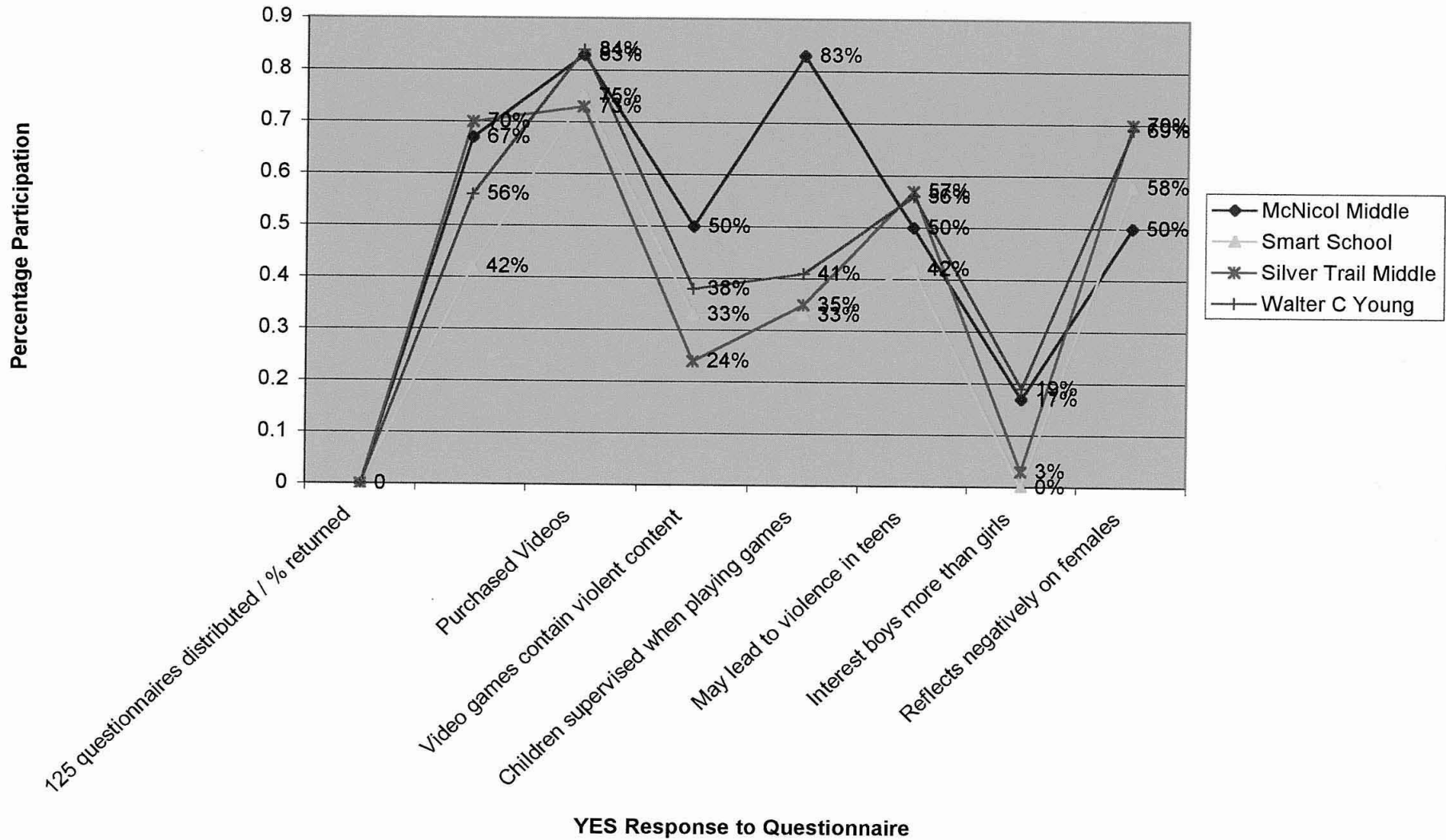


GRAPH 7

GRAPH 8

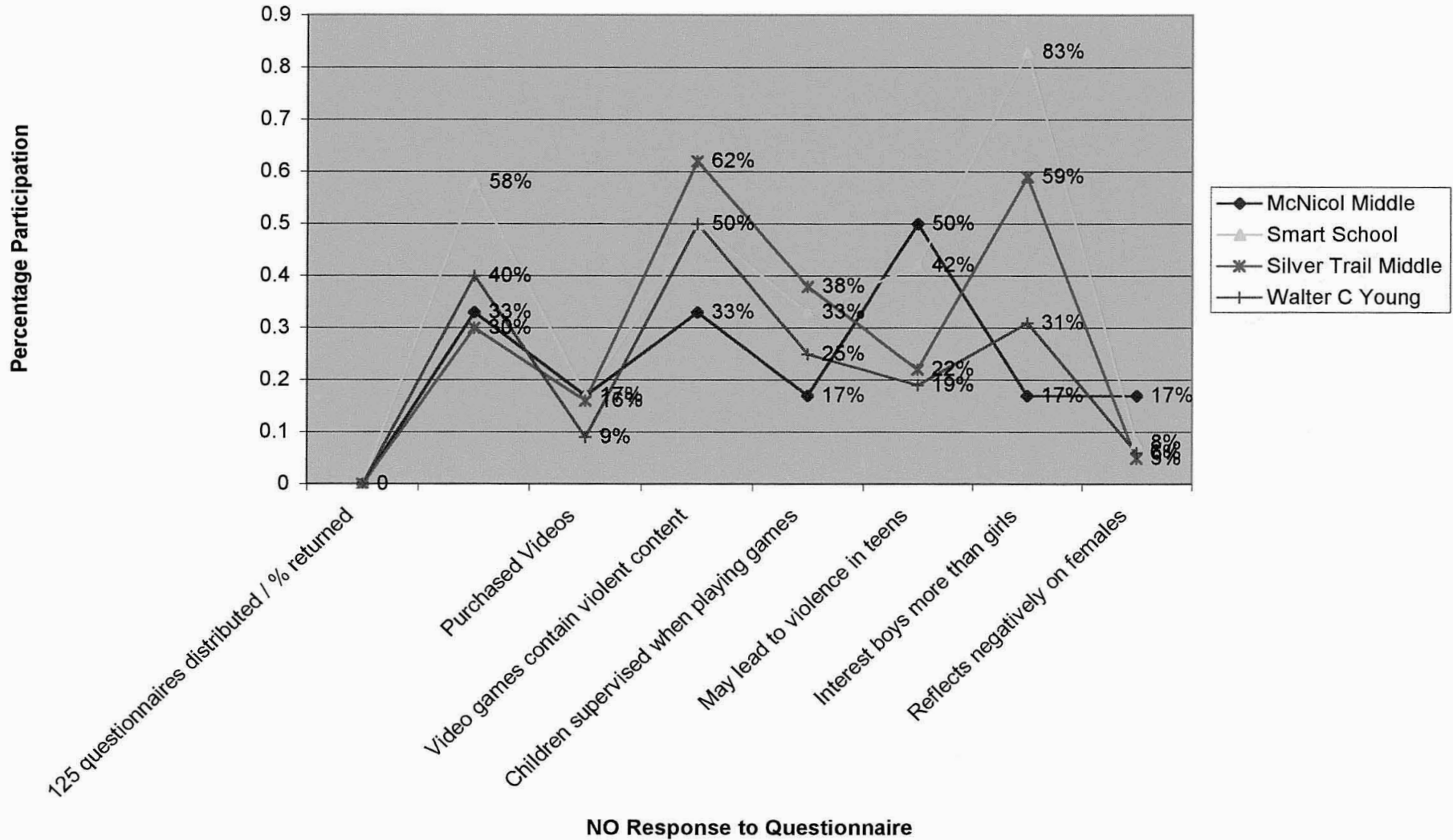
GRAPH 8

Middle School Comparisons



GRAPH 9

Middle School Comparisons



REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Arthur, C. (1993, December 4). How kids cope with video games. New Scientist, v140, p. 5.
- Briggs, D. (1999, April 24). Confront the violence, clergy urges. The Cleveland Plain Dealer/Religion, p 1F.
- Brownstein, R. & Fiore, F. (1999, May 8). Clinton to tackle youth violence. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 3A.
- Bruni, F, (1999, May 13). Senate rejects tougher gun law. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 3A.
- Buchman, D., & Funk, J. (1996, Summer-Fall). Video and computer games in the 90s: Children's time commitment and games preference. Children today, v24, p. 12.
- Cesarone, B. (1994, January). Video games and children. ERIC DIGEST.
- Chmielewski, D. & Gornstein, L. (1998, December 6). What's the name of the game? MAIM! Sun-Sentinel/Lifestyle, p. 1E.
- Clark, C.S. (1993, March 26). TV Violence. CQ Researcher, pp. 167-187.
- Collie, T. (1998, December 15). Predictions aside, crime by juveniles on decline. Sun-Sentinel, p. 19A.
- Dangelmaier, H. (1993, December 20). Video games for females? Hidden dollars in the interactive market. Digital Media, pp. 2-5.
- Dietz, T.L. (1998, March). An examination of violence and gender role portrayals in video games: implications for gender socialization and aggressive behavior. Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, v38, p. 425.
- Dinubile, N.A. (1993). Youth fitness-problems and solutions. Prevention Medicine. Pp. 589-594.
- Dorman, S. M. (1997, April). Video and computer games: Effect on children and implications for health education. Journal of School Health.

Feeney, S. (1999, May 11). Diverse group reviews violence. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 3A.

Ferrell, K. (1991, January). Electronic worlds without end: The past, present and future of electronic games. Omni, v13, p. 84.

Fitzgerald, K. (1994, February 14). Protecting kids from games and tender trap. Advertising Age. P. s-2, s-6.

Fleeman, M. (1999, May 10). Entertainment industries at center of youth summit. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 3A.

Foster, D. (1999, April 23). Report: Gunmen bright, intelligent. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 12A.

Funk, J.B. (1993, February 2). Reevaluating the impact of video games. Clinical Pediatrics, v32, pp. 86-90.

Gahr, E. (1999, April 30). Gore for sale: computer games at a store near you...Be afraid; Be very afraid. The Wall Street Journal, p. W13.

Griffiths, M. (1997, December). Computer game playing in early adolescence. Youth & Society, v29, pp. 223-38.

Griffiths, M. & Hunt, N. (1998, April). Dependence on computer games by adolescents. Psychological Reports, v 82, p. 475.

Guidelines for the gameboys. (1994, December). Harper Magazine, v289, p. 18.

Helm, M. (1999, May 5). Stop marketing violent films to children senators warn. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 11A.

Impoco, J. (1996, April 15). TV's frisky family values. U.S. News & World Report, v120, p. 58.

Jacobs, K. (1994, May-June). Robo babes. I.D., v41, pp. 40-42.

Jensen, P. (1998, August 23). Protect your child from TV violence. Sun-Sentinel/Lifestyle, p. 1E.

- Keepers, G. (1990). Pathological preoccupation with video games. Journal of American Academic Children's Adolescent Psychiatry, pp. 49-50.
- Keizer, G. (1994, May). Dangerous Games. Omni, p. 16.
- Klein, R. (1993, December 3). Window Zapping. Times Educational Supplement, p. 35.
- Lemos, R. (1998, May 27). USB security key coming for MACS. MacWeek, v12, pp. 1-3.
- Lemos, R. (1998, December 3). Violent video games under fire. ZD Net Australia.
- Lohr, S. (1998, March 5). It takes a child to raze a village: And it may take computer games, whether shoot 'em-up or dress 'em-up, to help prepare kids for the future. The New York Times, v147, p. D1, G1, col. 1.
- Munson, M. (1995, December). Kids and vids: Many children like the nice stuff better. Prevention, p. 36.
- National Coalition on Television Violence. (1990). Nintendo tainted by extreme violence. NCTV News 11, (1-2 February-March): 1, 3-4.
- Pollack, A. (1999, May 14). Video game industry defends blood-spattering entertainment. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 7A.
- Prichard, J. (1999, April 13). Grieving families sue three entertainment firms. Sun-Sentinel/Nation, p. 3A.
- Provenzo, E. F. Jr. (1992, March). The video generation. The American School Board Journal, p. 30.
- Provenzo, E. F. Jr. (1992, December). What do video games teach. The Education Digest, pp. 57-58.
- Schroeder, R. (1996, Winter). Playspace invaders: Huizinga, Baudrillard and video game violence. Journal of Popular Culture, v30, pp. 143-154.
- Schuster, K. (1998, April 3). Video game violence is under attack. Orlando Sentinel.

Schutte N. & Malouff, J. (1988). Effects of playing video games on children's aggressive and other behaviors. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, pp. 329-337.

Segal, K. & Dietz, W. (1991). Physiologic responses to playing a video game. American Journal of Disciplinary Children, pp. 1034-1036.

Senate pressures biz to adopt video game ratings. (1994, October 8). Billboard, p. 82.

Silvern, S. & Williamson, P. (1987). The effects of video game play on young children's aggressions, fantasy, and pro-social behavior. Journal of Applied Development Psychology, pp. 453-462.

Steel, J. (1997, Fall). Plugged in, spaced out, and turned on: Electronic entertainment and moral minefields. Journal of Education, v179, pp. 17-33.

Talalay, S. & Walker, C. (1999, March 27). Survey: Broward Schools status quo. Sun-Sentinel/Local, p. 4B.

The rating game. (1994, November 21). U.S. News & World Report, p. 91.

Video games: The school of hard knocks, knives, and numchaks. (1993, Fall). Business and Society Review, pp. 41-43.

Walsh, D. (1998, December 1). 1998 video and computer game report card. National Institute on Media and the Family.

Wilce, H. (1993, December 3). Families choke on immortal cocktail. Times Educational Supplement, p. 12.

APPENDICES

" We create Nintendo games that make shooting everybody in the room fashionable, so why not do it for real and see what it feels like...it's OK on video, so in their minds they can't separate that it's not OK to do this for real."

*Bishop J. Delano Ellis
United Pentecostal Churches of Christ*

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

EARLY CHILDHOOD (EC)

Early childhood for ages 3 and up. Contains no material parents would find inappropriate. These games are often inspired by nursery rhymes, books or children's TV shows.

KIDS TO ADULTS (K-A)

Kids to adults suitable for ages 6 and up. May contain minimal violence, some slapstick comic mischief or some crude language.

EVERYONE (E)

Everyone rating replaces Kids to Adults designation.

TEEN (T)

Teen suitable for ages 13 and up. May contain violence, profanity, and mild sexual themes.

MATURE (M)

Mature suitable for ages 17 and up. May include more intense violence, profanity, and mature sexual themes than "Teen" rated products.

ADULTS ONLY (A)

Adults only and not intended for persons under 18. May include graphic depictions of sex and violence.

RATING PENDING (RP)

Products have been submitted for review but are awaiting a rating.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Table 1

TYPES OF COMPUTER GAMES / DESCRIPTION

Sport Simulations -

Games simulate sports such as golf, ice hockey, athletics.

Racers -

Could be considered a type of sport simulation in that it simulates motor sports like Formula 1 racing.

Adventures -

Uses fantasy settings in which the player can escape to other worlds and take on new identities.

Puzzlers -

Games are brainteasers that often require active thinking.

Weird games -

These games are not weird, per se, and should be termed Miscellaneous.

Platformers -

Games involve running and jumping along and onto platforms.

Platform blasters -

Games involve platformers but also involve blasting everything that comes into sight.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Table 2
 Average Hours Reported Playing Electronic Games in a
 Typical Week by Gender, Location and Grade

	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
Girls					
Home	4.50	3.14	2.60	1.92	2.07
Arcade	1.18	.82	.58	.33	.45
Total	5.67	3.96	3.18	2.25	2.52
Boys					
Home	7.14	6.12	5.40	4.87	3.89
Arcade	2.30	2.10	1.49	1.41	1.12
Total	9.44	8.23	6.89	6.15	4.97

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Table 3
Revised Video Game Categories with Description

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
General Entertainment	The main action is a story or game with no destruction.
Educational	The main action involves learning new information or inventing new ways to use information.
Fantasy Violence	The main action is a story where a cartoon character must fight or destroy things and avoid being killed or destroyed while trying to reach a goal, rescue someone, or escape from something.
Human Violence	The main action is a story where a human character must fight or destroy things and avoid being killed or destroyed while trying to reach a goal, rescue someone, or escape from something.
Nonviolent Sports	The main action is sport without fighting or destruction.
Sports Violence	The main action is sports with fighting or destruction.

APPENDIX E

January 22, 1999

Ms. Merrie Meyers-Kershaw
Broward County School Board
Partnership Department

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Ms. Meyers-Kershaw,

I have been referred to your department in an attempt to seek assistance in conducting a survey to obtain parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for Criminal Justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought-process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by 500 parents. I am not sure if you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however I would be willing to address a group or groups of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave 500 survey forms for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your department, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

APPENDIX F

February 4, 1999

Ms. Debbie Bainton, President
PTA County Council

[REDACTED]

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Ms. Bainton,

I have been referred to you in an attempt to seek assistance in conducting a survey to obtain parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for Criminal Justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought-process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by 500 parents of teenagers. I am not sure if you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however I would be willing to address a group or groups of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave 500 survey forms for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your department, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

APPENDIX G

February 10, 1999

Ms. Lolita, Baskerville, PTA President
Lauderhill Middle School

[REDACTED]

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Ms. Baskerville,

I am requesting your cooperation in my efforts to conduct a survey obtaining parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for criminal justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by parents of teenagers. I am soliciting the assistance of four middle schools, including yours, in an effort to obtain a random sample of 500. This means each school need only have 125 parents complete the survey. I am not sure you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however, I would be willing to address a group of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave surveys for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your area, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

Cc: Dorothy Orr, Superintendent

APPENDIX H

February 10, 1999

Mr. Everald Nelson, PTA President
McNicol Middle School

[REDACTED]

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Mr. Nelson,

I am requesting your cooperation in my efforts to conduct a survey obtaining parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for criminal justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by parents of teenagers. I am soliciting the assistance of four middle schools, including yours, in an effort to obtain a random sample of 500. This means each school need only have 125 parents complete the survey. I am not sure you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however, I would be willing to address a group of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave surveys for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your area, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

Cc: Dorothy Orr, Superintendent

APPENDIX I

February 10, 1999

Mrs. Charlene Lakhdar, PTA President
Silver Trail Middle School

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Mrs. Lakhdar,

I am requesting your cooperation in my efforts to conduct a survey obtaining parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for criminal justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?". My thought process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by parents of teenagers. I am soliciting the assistance of four middle schools, including yours, in an effort to obtain a random sample of 500. This means each school need only have 125 parents complete the survey. I am not sure you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however, I would be willing to address a group of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave surveys for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your area, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

Cc: Dorothy Orr, Superintendent

APPENDIX J

February 10, 1999

Ms. Eleanor Adler, PTA President
Walter C. Young Middle School

[REDACTED]

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Ms. Adler,

I am requesting your cooperation in my efforts to conduct a survey obtaining parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for criminal justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I have enclosed the survey form I would like to have completed by parents of teenagers. I am soliciting the assistance of four middle schools, including yours, in an effort to obtain a random sample of 500. This means each school need only have 125 parents complete the survey. I am not sure you are able to assist me in my endeavor, however, I would be willing to address a group of parents and advise them of my intentions and goal. If that were not feasible, I would be willing to leave surveys for distribution however you deem appropriate and return to pickup the results.

Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. If this is something that is out of the scope of your area, please contact me so I can pursue another course of action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosure

Cc: Dorothy Orr, Superintendent

APPENDIX K

February 10, 1999

Ms. Dorothy Orr, Superintendent
Broward County School District

RE: Graduate Research Paper

Dear Ms. Orr,

I am soliciting the following four middle schools, McNicol Middle School, Lauderhill Middle School, Silver Trail Middle School, and Walter C. Young Middle School, through the cooperation of the PTA Presidents, to assist in my research efforts. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought-process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viewpoint of the parents of teenage children. I am enclosing a sample of the survey form I have forwarded to the PTA Presidents at each of the schools listed above. My intention is to have 125 parents of teenagers at each school to complete the forms totaling 500 surveys for analysis. I request your support in my endeavor and would appreciate any assistance you could provide to encourage these four schools participation.

If you would like further information on my objective or have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at work [REDACTED], or in the evening at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Enclosures

APPENDIX L

March 17, 1999

Mr. Edward Miller, Principal
Smart School

[REDACTED]th [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

RE: Graduate Program Research Paper

Dear Mr. Miller,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for returning my initial call. I am requesting your cooperation in my efforts to conduct a survey obtaining parents feedback on a subject of which I am researching. I am presently completing my final course in the graduate program for criminal justice at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida.

My topic of research and study is "Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?" My thought process is to see if there is a correlation between video games and violence and obtain the viepoint of the parents of teenagers (13-19 years of age). I am requesting the assistance of four middle schools, one possibly being yours, in an effort to obtain a random sample of 500. This means each school need only have 125 parents complete the survey. My research to date has shown the teenagers point of view being analyzed with very little attention spent on parents thoughts.

I have enclosed a sample of the survey for your review. Any direction you could provide me would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached at work [REDACTED] or in the evening at [REDACTED]. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

enclosure

APPENDIX M

Please do not throw this survey away. It is important to me and may be to you and your child's safety.

“ Video Games and Teen Violence”: Is It Related?

This question is the topic of my research and I request your participation in finding out if there is a possible correlation. Please take a moment to complete this survey and assist me in my efforts to study this popular past-time.

Thank you.

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Overview

A research study is being conducted to determine if Americans feel video games may or may not generate teen violence in both males and females. Your participation is appreciated in completing this questionnaire. If you are uncomfortable for any reason with answering any of the following questions, please feel free to leave them blank. I would much rather have your survey returned to me without these facts, than not receive your survey at all.

Please DO NOT include your name or address. This is strictly a random sample survey of parents.

General Information

How many people, including yourself, are there in your household?

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 /more

Of those in your household,
how many are:

Male _____
Female _____

Of those, how many are
between ages 13 and 19?

Male _____
Female _____

Instructions

This quick survey is easy and will only take a few minutes:

- Place a check in the box that applies or is most appropriate.
- Please consider all people living in your home.
- If a category does not apply to your household, check the ‘does not apply’ box and skip it.

Popular Video Games

	Yes	No	Number Purchased
Our household has purchased one or more video games since January 1998			

Video Game Content / Video Game Effects

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DOES NOT APPLY
As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content				
I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games				
I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens				
I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls				
I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general				
If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?				

Additional Comments

If you would like to include any additional comments on the subject matter of video games, as it may or may not relate to teen violence, it would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

APPENDIX N

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

The Nation's Largest Fully Accredited School System



McNICOL MIDDLE SCHOOL
Debra Patterson, Principal



Chairperson Lois Wexler
Vice Chairperson Darla L. Carter
Carole L. Andrews
Judie S. Budnick
Paul D. Eichner, Esq.
Stephanie Arma Kraft, Esq.
Miriam M. Oliphant
Dr. Robert D. Parks
Diana Wasserman

Dorothy J. Orr, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

April 27, 1999

Dear Parent and/or Guardian:

The PTSA has requested that a sampling of our parents complete the attached survey and return it to McNicol Middle School by Friday, April 30, 1999.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Everard Nelson
PTSA President

APPENDIX O



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

600 SOUTHEAST THIRD AVENUE • FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301-3125 • TEL 954-765-6271 • FAX 954-760-7483

DOROTHY J. ORR, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL BOARD

Chairperson LOIS WEXLER
Vice Chairperson DARLA L. CARTER
CAROLE L. ANDREWS
JUDIE S. BUDNICK
PAUL D. EICHNER, ESQ.
STEPHANIE ARMA KRAFT, ESQ.
MIRIAM M. OLIPHANT
DR. ROBERT D. PARKS
DIANA WASSERMAN

February 22, 1999

Ms. Lynn Tomaro
C/O Cleveland Clinic Florida
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Tomaro:

This is in response to your letter regarding a research project at the following schools: McNicol Middle School, Lauderhill Middle School, Silver Trail Middle School, and Walter C. Young Middle School.

In your letter, you did not mention that you had contacted the principal of each school. Further, Dr. Katherine Blasik, Director, Research and Evaluation, approves these kinds of projects for the school system. I would suggest that you contact her at [REDACTED] 715-8205

In the meantime, I am apprising the Deputy Superintendent, School Operations and Area Superintendents of your request.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Dorothy J. Orr, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

DJO:jpd

cc: Dr. Gail Daly, Interim Deputy Superintendent, School Operations
Area Superintendents
Mrs. Carmen Varela-Russo
Dr. Katherine Blasik

APPENDIX P

March 1, 1999

Dr. Katherine Blasik, Director
Research and Education
The School Board of Broward County, Florida



RE: Graduate Research Project

Dear Dr. Blasik,

I am presently completing my final project for obtaining my Masters Degree from Lynn University. My topic 'Video Games and Teen Violence' is the area of which I am attempting to research. Over the past month, I have been diligently contacting PTA Presidents of four middle schools to ask their assistance. My goal is to obtain 125 completed surveys from the following four schools: Lauderhill Middle, McNicol Middle, Silver Trail Middle, and Walter C. Young Middle. I have enclosed a copy the survey for your review.

To provide you a background of my progress, I had intially contacted the Administrative Offices of the School Board on January 22, 1999 seeking the appropriate direction and procedure to pursue my research project. I was informed that Ms. Merrie Meyers-Kershaw, of the Partnership Department handled these types of requests. I mailed her a letter indicating my intentions. I had not received a response back from her, therefore I recontacted her office and was advised her office did not handle these types of requests, but rather Ms. Debbie Bainton, PTA President of the County could assist me. I contacted Ms. Bainton and followed up with a letter on February 4, 1999. She contacted me and advised she could not directly assist me but was able to provide me with four area middle schools which she felt may be able to be of assistance. I subsequently addressed letters on February 10, to each of the PTA Presidents at those four schools.

As of result of these letters, I have heard from Ms. Charlene Lakhdar of Silver Trail Middle, Ms. Eleanor Adler of Walter C. Young Middle, and Mr. Everald Nelson of McNicol Middle. They all have advised they will be contacting the Principals of their respective schools to obtain the authorization to proceed. I have volunteered to speak at PTA meetings, of which I have done already at Silver Trail Middle. I have very much appreciated their cooperation and they all have been most helpful.

Since I have just spoken with your office this morning, I have completed the Research Review Form and I was advised I could fax it back to your office with this cover letter indicating where I stand at this point in my project. I hope you will be able to support my

efforts as I am sure you are aware of the obstacles graduate students run into when trying to obtain cooperation from the community in obtaining research. Since I have not yet heard from Lauderhill Middle, your advice on how I should proceed at this point in re-contacting them would be appreciated. I apologize for not being aware that your office handles these types of projects, however I was never informed of this when I made my first call to the Administrative Offices of the school board. Please contact me at [REDACTED] if you have any additional concerns or suggestions on proceeding. Once again, the PTA Presidents I have spoken with have been most helpful and I hope they have your support in assisting me in reaching my goal.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University

Cc: Judge J. Leonard Fleet

Request Number: _____

(BCPS use only)

**Broward County Public Schools, FL
APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION FORM
Research and Evaluation**

Instructions: Submit one copy.

Title of research project: Video Games and Teen Violence: Is It Related?

Name of applicant: Lynn M. Tomaro

Business address: Cleveland Clinic Florida

[REDACTED]

Home address: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Business phone: [REDACTED]

Fax number: [REDACTED]

Home phone: [REDACTED]

Broward County Public Schools, FL
RESEARCH REVIEW FORM
Research and Evaluation

Instructions: Submit five copies of this form and five copies of the Research Proposal.

1. Title of research project:

Video Games and Teen Violence:
Is It Related?

Request number:

(BCPS use only)

2. Reason the project is being conducted (e.g., dissertation, comply with grant):

Requirement: cumulative project for completion of Masters Degree

3. Name of university/agency with which applicant is affiliated (if applicable):

Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

4. Name, title and signature of the student advisor certifying that the Research Proposal is acceptable (if applicable):

Judge J. Leonard Fleet

Name

Professor, Lynn University

Title

Signature

5. Anticipated starting date: Already been in process as of January 4, 1999.

6. Anticipated completion date: March 18, 1999

7. State the general purpose of the research:
To obtain feedback from parents of teenagers on their feelings
regarding the popularity of video games and the effects, if any,
on teens.

8. List the primary questions to be addressed by the research:
See attached survey. (This will be one sheet of paper, front and back.)

9. Describe research activities that will require direct contact with students either on campus or at school events:
Not applicable (none)

10. List the sources of data that are not dependent on school/district records. Note that copies of all instruments not reviewed in Mental Measurements Yearbook must accompany the Research Proposal:

Not Applicable (None)

11. List the sources of data that are dependent on school/district records. Be specific (e.g., academic grades, attendance):

Not Applicable (None)

12. Indicate the number of participants and/or subjects in the research. Use the total column if the grade designation is not applicable:

Participants	Grade												Other (Specify)	Total	
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			12
Students															
Teachers															
Principals															
Parents															125*
Others															

*of teens ranging in age 13-19, per school (Total Parents: 500)

13. Office/school levels targeted by the research:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district office | <input type="checkbox"/> alternative center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> area office | <input type="checkbox"/> vocational-technical center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> elementary school | <input type="checkbox"/> adult center |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> middle school | <input type="checkbox"/> exceptional student center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> high school | |

14. Estimate the amount of time the research project will require of each type of participant. List the time units in total and/or decimal parts of an hour. (e.g., 1.5 hours, not 1 1/2 hours or 90 minutes):

Participants	Activity				TOTAL
	Testing/Assessment Surveying	Training Inservice	Teaching Instruction	Other (Specify):	
Students					
Teachers					
Principals					
Parents				questionnaire (2-5 minutes)	
Others					

15. Describe the expected value of the research to education:

Previous research has focused on what teens thought of videos.

Minimal research has been conducted obtaining a parents point-of-view.

This may be the initial start to having parents become more involved with the effects technology has on a child's education and actions.

16. Describe the expected value of the research to the Broward County Public Schools:

May assist in providing the necessary statistics for either support or restructuring of computer usage in schools.

Can also be forwarded to the local law enforcement D.A.R.E. programs.

17. Beginning with the Research Proposal, list in order the title of all the enclosed documents (e.g., instruments, parent permission form):

Questionnaire / Survey

18. Indicate the anticipated date for submitting an abstract of the research findings to Research and Evaluation: Upon approval by Lynn University, May 1999.

Please do not throw this survey away. It is important to me and may be to you and your child's safety.

“ Video Games and Teen Violence”: Is It Related?

This question is the topic of my research and I request your participation in finding out if there is a possible correlation. Please take a moment to complete this survey and assist me in my efforts to study this popular past-time.

Thank you.

Lynn Tomaro
Graduate Student
Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Overview

A research study is being conducted to determine if Americans feel video games may or may not generate teen violence in both males and females. Your participation is appreciated in completing this questionnaire. If you are uncomfortable for any reason with answering any of the following questions, please feel free to leave them blank. I would much rather have your survey returned to me without these facts, than not receive your survey at all.

Please DO NOT include your name or address. This is strictly a random sample survey of parents.

General Information

How many people, including yourself, are there in your household?

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 /more

Of those in your household,
how many are:

Male _____
Female _____

Of those, how many are
between ages 13 and 19?

Male _____
Female _____

Instructions

This quick survey is easy and will only take a few minutes:

- Place a check in the box that applies or is most appropriate.
- Please consider all people living in your home.
- If a category does not apply to your household, check the ‘does not apply’ box and skip it.

Popular Video Games

	Yes	No	Number Purchased
Our household has purchased one or more video games since January 1998			

Video Game Content / Video Game Effects

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DOES NOT APPLY
As a parent, I/We feel video games contain violent content				
I/We supervise my/our children when playing video games				
I/We feel video games may lead to violence in teens				
I/We feel video games tend to interest boys instead of girls				
I/We feel video games may reflect negatively on females in general				
If you were born in the 1950s, do you feel your childhood rearing was different than present day?				

Additional Comments

If you would like to include any additional comments on the subject matter of video games, as it may or may not relate to teen violence, it would be appreciated.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

"We will not ask who takes the blame, but how we can all take responsibility...and I will challenge everyone there and everyone in America to do their part."

~ President Clinton