



# **RPG Research & RPG.LLC**

Role-Playing Games  
for Educators & Librarians – 2 hours

# Schedule Overview

- **Part 1**
- **Break** (5 minutes, physically stretch & move)
- **Part 2**

# This is an Introduction

- Overview of RPGs for Education
- Librarian/Library considerations

# 4-hour versions provide more in depth

- **RPGs in Education**
- Similar topics, but deeper dive
- **Therapeutic RPGs**
- More therapy and special populations focused



# Full Professional Training

- If you would like to get full professional training workshops, with in-depth coverage, hands-on experience, certificates of completion, or diplomas, see:
- RPG Research Volunteer Training (free) – Training diploma
- RPG Therapeutics LLC professional workshops 1 through 5 day options (paid) – certificates, possible CEUs for some professions.



# Speakers / Trainers

- Hawke Robinson, Founder/President, TRS(R), GM 19. RPGs since 1977. CS, nursing, habilitation therapy, neurosciences, research psychology, music & recreation therapy.
- John Welker, Vice President, TRS(R), GM 5. RPGs since 1979. US Army veteran, nursing, home care.
- Danielle Whitworth, Student TRS(R), GM 3. RPGs since 2017. Sports training.



# Audience/Participants Assessment

- Using the text chat, answer the following questions please.





# Primary Reason

- What is the primary reason you are attending this session?
- What are you hoping to learn from attending?



# What is your profession

- Relevant to the topic of this session, what is your profession?



# RPG Experience?

- Have you played role-playing games before?
- If so, for how long?



# RPG Experience?

- Have you been a Game Master for RPGs?
- For how long?



# About RPG Research

- Founder RPG since 1977
- Research roots in 1983
- Education & school programs since 1985
- Incarcerated populations since 1989
- Therapeutic since 2004
- [www.rpgresearch.com](http://www.rpgresearch.com)
- Incorporated as 501(c)3 non-profit 2018



# About RPG.LLC

- **Accessibility**
- **Cooperative music & drum circles**
- **Educational**
- **Entertainment**
- **Mobile gaming & cooperative music events at your doorstep**
- **Parties, birthdays, special events, camps, retreats, & more**
- **Publishing**
- **Recreational**
- **Role-playing games (tabletop, live-action, electronic, & hybrids)**
- **Therapeutic programs for ages 2 through senior adults**
- **& much more!**

# Baseline Quiz

- Question (Formats): What are the 4 *major* (top of the tree) RPG formats? (According to the Hawkes-Robinson RPG Model)

# Baseline Quiz

- Question (Theories): What are 3+ key neuroscience principles for maximizing learning that RPGs excel at?



# Baseline Quiz

- Question (Theories): According to Game Theory, tabletop role-playing games are a \_\_\_\_\_ sum game.

# Baseline Quiz

- Question (Populations): For people with slow cognitive processing speeds, coordination, reflex, or other cognitive impairments (such as TBI recovery), what is one of the most critical considerations when evaluating which eRPG to use?

# Baseline Quiz

- Question (Populations): Variations on the RPG Formats mean that role-playing games can be effective for students ranging in age from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

# Baseline Quiz

- Question (resources): 3 very useful resources for more information about RPGs for educators and librarians are:
  - 1. (website): \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. (person): \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. (website): \_\_\_\_\_

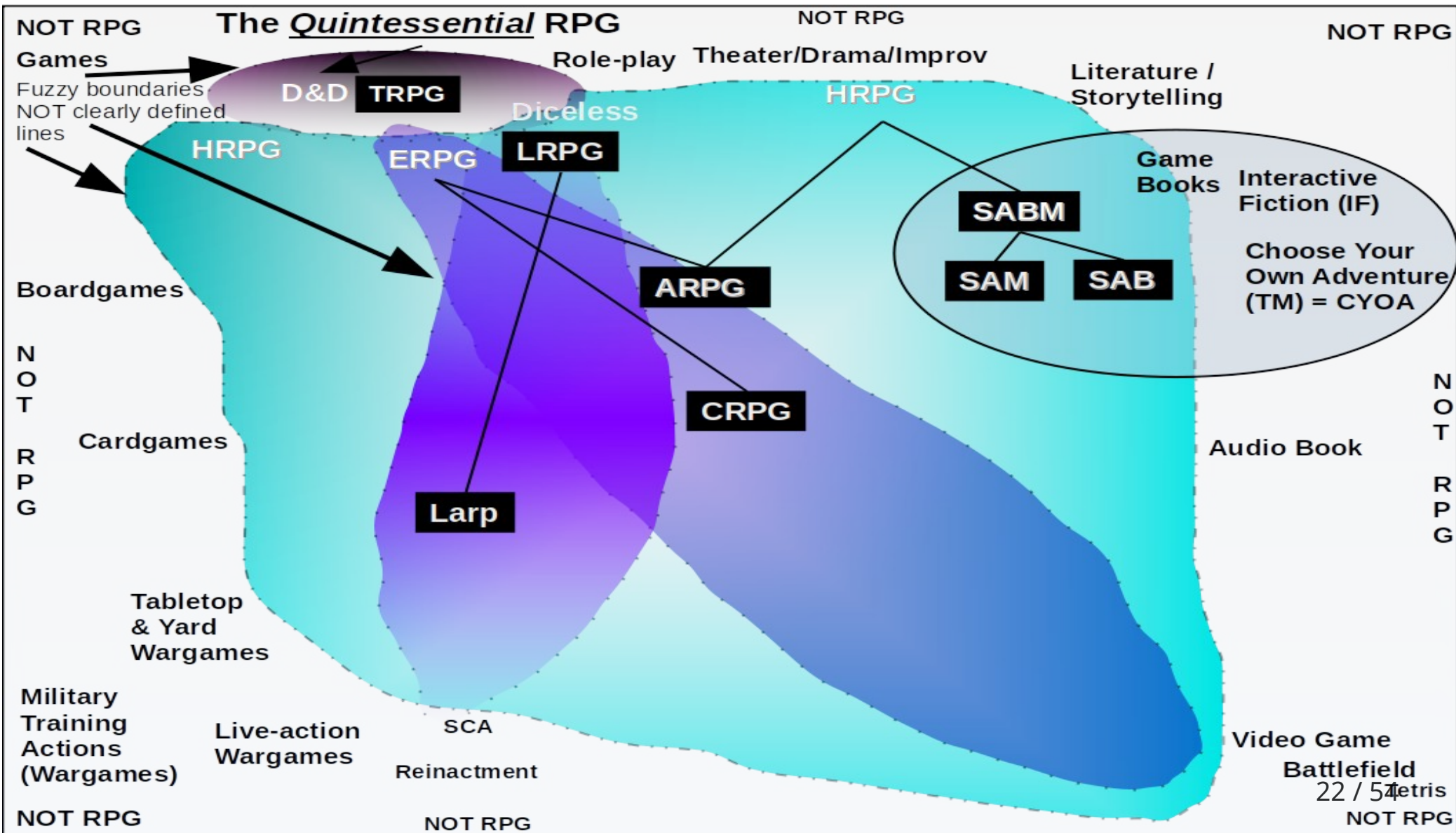
# Proto-RPG Evolution



# RPG Model 4 Formats

## Hawkes-Robinson RPG Model

Fuzzy Boundaries, Quintessential RPG to non-RPG





# IF – Romeo & Juliet

- Very brief examples from this book, don't spend too much time on it, but enough for them to get the idea and the humor.
- Legal issues to use IF and not use CYOA unless specifically referencing the trademarked material (see Chooseco vs. Netflix court filings).



# TRPG

- Tabletop Role-Playing Game
- Evolved from multiple directions, but especially wargames: (1600s, 1800s, 1913 (H.G. Wells), 1954 (Tactics, Avalon Hill), 1971 Chainmail
- Blackmoor by Arneson (documentary)
- World's first *published* RPG: OD&D 1974





# LRPG

- Live-action Role-Playing Game
- LRPG versus full Larp (NTYE example)
- Combat & Salon Larps
- Adaptive LRPG of TRPG very useful to make learning benefits of TRPG more accessible and effective for young children, as young as 2.5 years old!



# ERPG

- Electronic Role-Playing Game
- Project Ilmatar Phase 1 NWN:EE - “The Tempest”
- Phase 2 text-based



# HRPG

- Hybrid Role-Playing Game
- IF, SABM
- Boardgame variants
- Cardgame variants
- VR/AR variants

# SABM

- SABM = SAB / SAM
- Solo Adventure Book
- Solo Adventure Module
- Format matters (Book vs. Module)
- Legal issues to not use, see Tolkien Estate & Iron Crown Enterprises -  
<https://gamebooks.org/Series/270/Show>

# RPGs and Game Theory

- Game Theory refers to competition as generally a “zero-sum game” at the cost of others, where one’s success is dependent on taking away from others to be successful.
- However, TRPGs are considered by this theory as a “non-zero-sum game” because participants are able to experience overcoming challenges and achieving success without it being at the cost of fellow players.
- Intrinsically motivating without competition



# Exploration & Learning

- Pennsylvania State Professor John Dattilo on exploration as foundation of and enhancing effectiveness of learning
- Dattilo's theories further reinforced how RPGs fit so very well with the concept of literal exploration as the foundation of learning (from before we are even born), and how RPGs are so strongly associated with: self-determination, autonomy, competence, and social connections to increase the learning effects.



# Research on RPGs & Edu

- Far more research available on using role-playing games in educational settings and for educational goals, than for therapeutic.
- See our research archives, 185+ items
- <https://www2.rpgresearch.com/@@search?SearchableText=education>



# “Regular” Education

- Preschool
- K-12
- College
- Professionals / retreats





# “Alternative” Education

- Gifted & Talented
- Online – classcraft (and many others)
- NWN: EE custom-built for edu goals
- International students & language skills
- Cultural learning through immersion
-



# Cognitive Neuropsychology of RPG Learning Benefits

- Immersion & Flow
- Intrinsically motivating
- Deep level processing through “Why questions”, elaboration, & distinctiveness
- Relation to prior knowledge, interconnections of previously known concepts to new learning
- Differential learning rather than mass learning
-



# Cognitive Neuropsychology of RPG Learning Benefits

- Variety of sensory descriptions and adjectives
- Distinctive cues
- Learning in layers
- Goal-oriented, incremental rewards and delayed gratification
- Use of a PC that player can relate to, and through, applies self-referencing effect
- Simulation of challenges, mild stress “wakes up”.



# Cognitive Neuropsychology of RPG Learning Benefits

- Story-driven narrative approach (example of the memory competitions using power of narrative) to tie together, have deeper understanding, and longer recall of complex information
- “Otherness” empathy through PC
- Mindfulness and introspection due to PC
-



# Cognitive Neuropsychology of RPG Learning Benefits

- may help with the inconsistent environmental effects of the encoding-specificity-principle, by providing, in the learner's imagination at least, a more consistent environment for them to encode and recall the information, regardless of the actual physical environmental differences between studying at home and taking the test in the classroom.





# Accessibility considerations

- Aphantasia vs. theater of the mind
- dyslexia
-



# Common uses with results

Examples where RPGs often used with consistently significant results:

- Foreign languages
- Leisure education
- History
- Math
- Science



# Common uses with results

- Creative writing prompts
- Geography
- Politics
- Humanities
- Ethics & Morality (Terrance MacMullan EWU 2019. Holinsworth 1995)
- Literature





# Osterkov Afterskole

- Danish Larp High School, 2 years
- Math, Science, History, 3 languages, all through Larp
- VICE: “At This Danish School, LARPing Is the Future of Education”

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/yvx4zb/at-this-danish-school-larping-is-the-future-of-education-482](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/yvx4zb/at-this-danish-school-larping-is-the-future-of-education-482)



# Life skills learning

- Operation Z Day
- Case of the Missing Surgeon



# Cason Snow

- Tolkien Moot 2007 video – Cason Snow
- Dragons in the Stacks – Torres-Roman & Snow “A Teen Librarian's Guide to Tabletop Role-Playing”
- Cason Snow metadata librarian/cataloger at the University of Maine was recently awarded a Judges' Spotlight Award for the 2015 ENnie Awards
- Also Playing with History: A Look at Video Games, World History, and Libraries;” “Tabletop Fantasy RPGs: Tips for Introducing Role-Playing Games in Your Library;”



# Terra Libris

- The Library RPG Project
- <http://theescapist.com/library/>
- “...promote and raise awareness of library projects that incorporate role-playing games.”
- Out of date, nothing really new since 2010, but a starting place for potential resources



# "Afternoon Adventures with Dungeons & Dragons"

- Back in 2008
- Now defunct
- Was offering Afternoon Adventure kit for your library
- See if email [libraries@wizards.com](mailto:libraries@wizards.com) still some resources available. One kit per library.
- If defunct, let them know your interest so they start it back up again.



# Awareness of Player Preferences

- To improve intrinsic motivation (more likely to work harder and learn even more):
- Identify preferences for:
  - Genre
  - Setting
  - System
  - Play style



# Play Style

- Focused on ERPGs, but applicable to other formats
- Bartle (most commonly cited through flawed, useful as high-level concept)
- Andrzej Marczewski user types
- BrainHex: A neurobiological gamer typology survey (Nacke, Bateman, Mandryk) 2013

# Play Style & Learner Engagement

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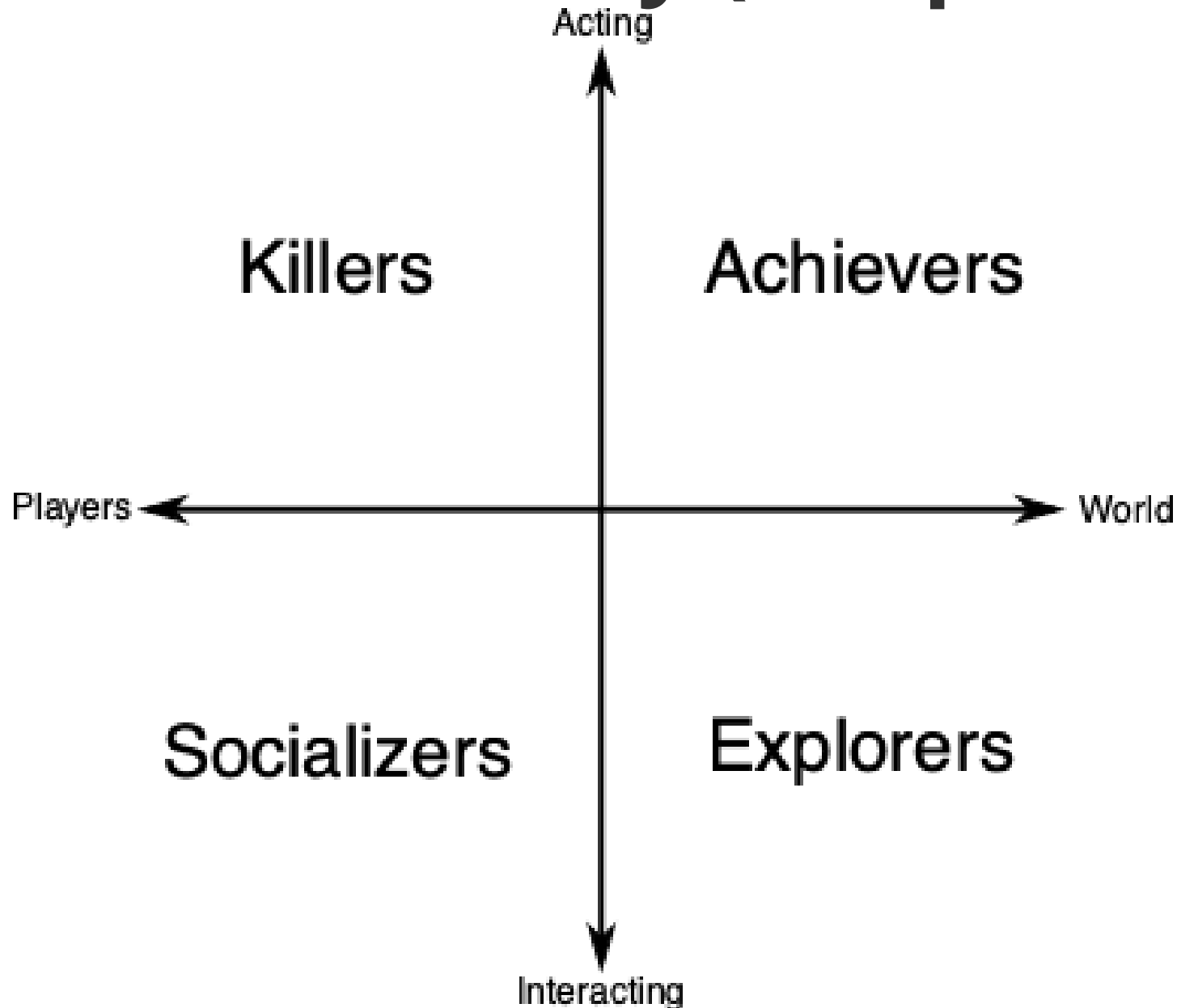




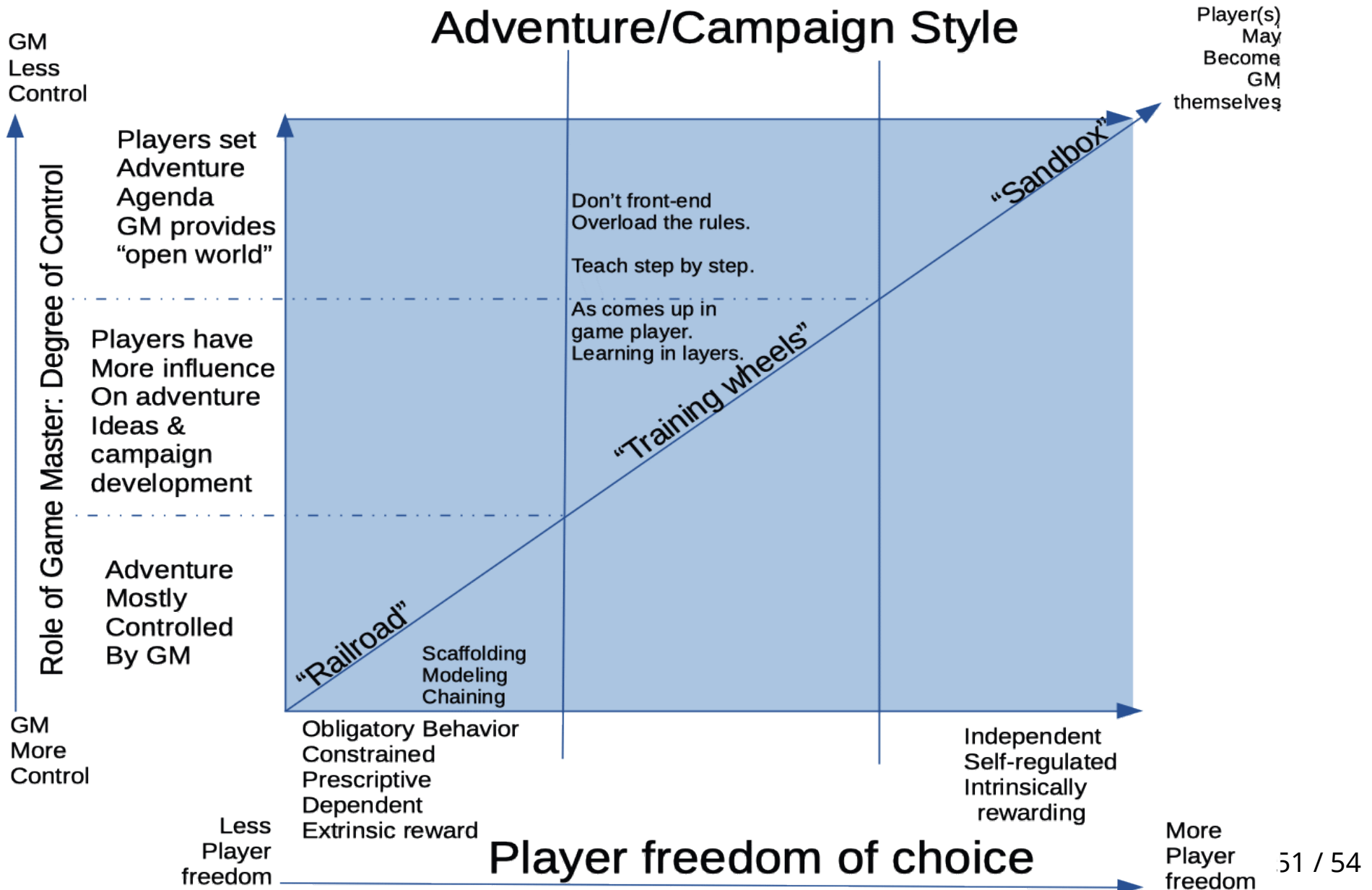
# Play Style

- Jonathan Spike Traits-based Player types
- Quantic Foundry & Nik Yee's Gamer Motivation (Daedelus Project) - nearly half a million submissions and counting
- Stewart, Personality And Play Styles: A Unified Model

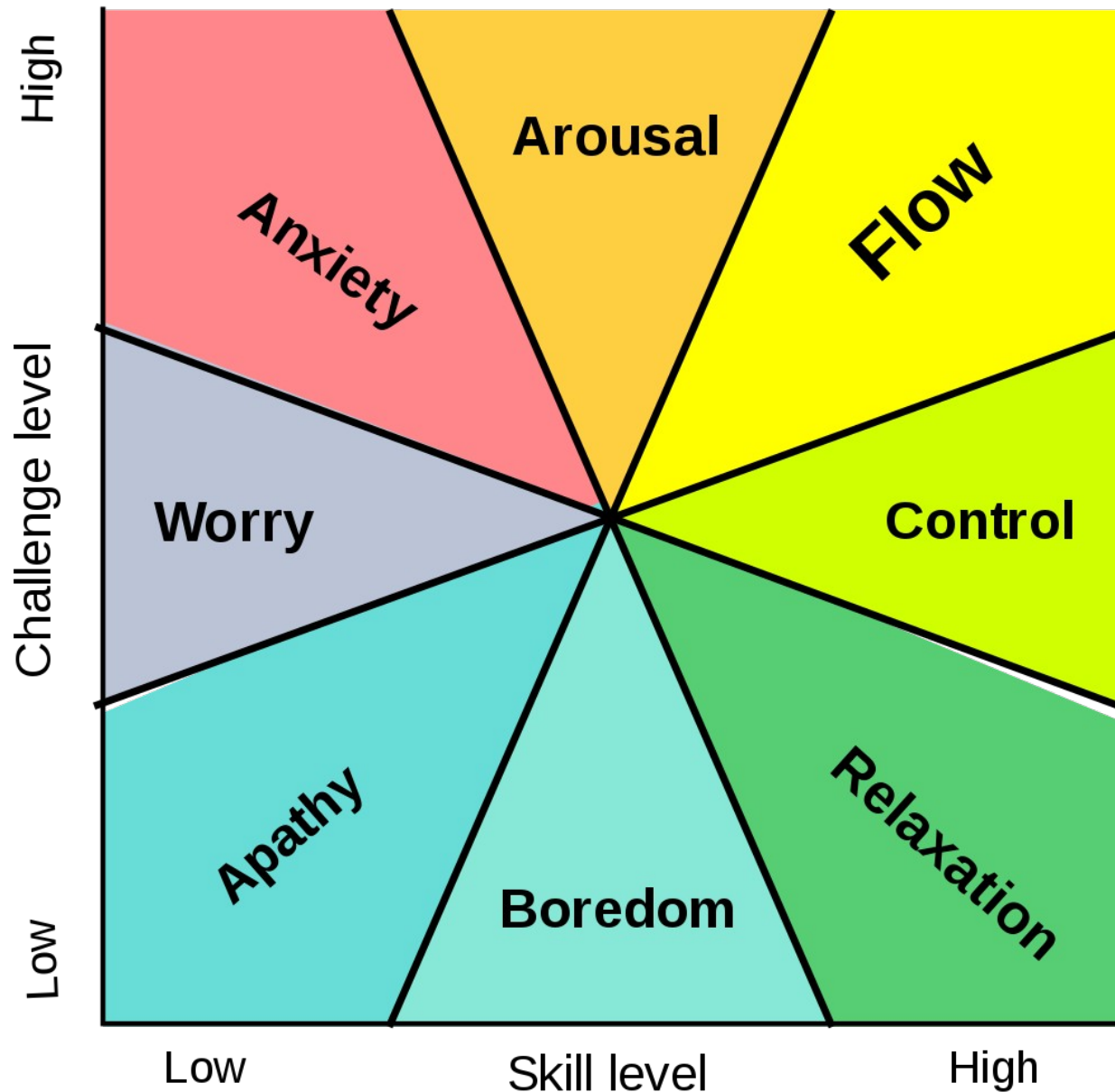
# Bartle Taxonomy (Simplified)



# RPG Learning Ability Model



# Immersion & Flow



# Experiential Learning

## Experiential Learning

- ◆ Teacher/student planned
- ◆ Students involved in simulated or real life experiences.
- ◆ Transactive & transformative
- ◆ Strategies/Methods include:
  - ◆ Historical drama
  - ◆ Role-playing
  - ◆ Experimentation
  - ◆ Generating & testing hypotheses
  - ◆ Simulations
  - ◆ Games
  - ◆ Model building
  - ◆ Surveys



# RPG Complexity & Efficacy

- More complex = potentially more benefits
- Less complex = fewer potential benefits

Examples:

- Rolemaster vs. D&D 5e
- BRP Call of Cthulhu vs. Trail of Cthulhu (gumshoe)