

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Day Two of “Face-to-Face/Screen-to-Screen: Interactive Media.”

Continuing on with Part C of yesterday’s intro: How can games best educate young people on HIV/AIDS?

Analysis of video games should be classified by their intended objective. In relation to HIV/AIDS there are several fields to consider. Portions of the following have been abridged from an excerpt from *Serious Games: Games That Educate, Train, and Inform* (ISBN 1592006221) published by Thomson Course Technology.

*** This is just an initial overview of some of the educational benefits of video game in relation to HIV/AIDS. Please provide your input on best practices and methods through which video games can both prevent and improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.**

Educational

Educational based games have the objective of teaching the user about the issues around HIV/AIDS. Especially in countries where understanding of HIV/AIDS is low, the first step in prevention is basic understanding of the methods of communication. Games such as [Freedom HIV/AIDS](http://www.freedomhivaids.in/) (http://www.freedomhivaids.in/) serve this specific purpose.

Behavior Changing

Many games address the long term solution of HIV/AIDS by providing methods to change social behavior. Some games such as *Dance Dance Revolution* have altered the fundamental way young people look at physical fitness:

Konami's *Dance Dance Revolution (DDR)*, originally released in Japan in 1991 as an arcade game, is an example of a video game that mixes physical activity with game play mechanics. *DDR* uses the special input controller (see Figure 1): a dance pad, with four panels, up, down, left, and right, arranged around where the player stands. The player presses the panels with his or her feet in response to arrows that flash on the game's screen. The arrows are synchronized to the rhythm or beat of a song played by the game, and success depends on the player's ability to time his or her steps accordingly. Since its days in the arcade, *DDR* has been released as specialized cabinets that players can buy to play at home and for game consoles like the Sony PlayStation.

Games used during and after health therapy:

Distracting patients during painful medical procedures

How much pain a person experiences often depends on how much conscious attention the person gives to the pain signals. Video games and virtual reality (VR), with their ability to immerse the individual in a computer-generated environment, have been shown to be effective in focusing a patient's attention away from their medical treatment and the pain they are experiencing. Immersed in the world of the game, they are not as consciously aware of what is going on around them, and they miss a proportion of the pain signals.

Treatment and Recovery Process

Hospitals and larger clinics, often partnering with non-profit organizations and research facilities, have begun to experiment with alternatives to traditional treatments and therapies. Among their experiments have been a growing number that attempt to integrate video games into the treatment and recovery process. Video games have been used to distract patients during painful medical procedures as well as to improve motor skills in physical therapy and to speed recovery for certain operations and conditions.

Other questions to consider

- Given the current distribution systems available, can HIV/AIDS games be used in conjunction with other forms of prevention to more effectively educate young people?
- Are there any known metrics to test the effectiveness of video game on HIV/AIDS?
- Are there any benefits of north/south linkages with video games? If so how best could they be best used?