**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Dr. John Kornfeld (Committee Chair)
Dr. Karen Grady
Dr. Paula Lane

**PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**

I am proposing that for my cognate project I create an informational training program booklet for those who wish to use tabletop role-playing games and live-action role-playing games in education in the methodology adopted by The Game Academy, my educational nonprofit.

This program booklet will be used to train anyone looking to volunteer time with us as a game master, and it will be given to any new employees in the same role. We will also distribute this as a general informational asset to anyone coming to our website or seeking to take our methodology and apply it in their own educational environment.

The program booklet will be between 30-40 pages, and would include the following:

* A discussion of the philosophy and research reinforcing the methodology of using tabletop role-playing games in education.
* A reference as to how playing tabletop role-playing games meets certain common core standards.
* A primer on how to be an effective game master in an educational setting. This will include information on:
	+ Effective storytelling,
	+ Effective preparation and story creation,
	+ How to recognize and take advantage of teachable moments,
	+ How to integrate educational goals into the curriculum, and
	+ A collection of tools and methods for assessment.
* A discussion of how to most effectively handle players of different ages, and players with specific educational needs.
* A discussion on how to effectively integrate tabletop gaming into a larger curriculum.
* An example adventure and game play example walk-through.
* A collection of tips and tricks for the game master educator.
* A frequently asked questions section.
* A collection of resources to facilitate the activities of the game master educator.
* A literature review of supporting materials that reinforce the methodology.

The program booklet will be directly downloadable to the public on The Game Academy website and would be supported with a collection of links to useful resources. If time allows, I would also like to take the content of the program booklet and lay it out in hypertext with images and supporting links and materials, for ease of understanding and for a more complete experience. Down the road, I will also create a collection of video snippets to help educate and explain our methodology in greater detail.

**RATIONALE**

Many educators that I encounter are interested in getting started with using role-playing games in their classrooms, but do not know how to effectively get started, or how to proficiently plan a lesson around a series of game sessions. Creating this booklet and accompanying materials will create a more consistent way for us to help share our knowledge and spread the techniques we use in our programs.

In creating this, I will also spend the time necessary to codify what I know into a coherent method, which will help The Game Academy expand and grow in a consistent fashion and ensure that the children in our program are receiving a consistent level of experience. We are planning on hiring and growing, and we need a way to encapsulate our methodology so that anyone can join our team and learn to be a game master educator in our particular methodology.

The three courses that are contributing to the cognate project are:

EDUC 417 – School and Society
EDSS 418 – Development in Adolescent and Emerging Adulthood
EDSP 430 – Introduction to Special Education

The information I have learned in EDUC 417 is general educational philosophy, but it helped me formulate my own educational philosophy, and a considerable amount of the information in my literature review and philosophy section will come from this course. I will pull from John Dewey, Joel Spring, as well as various articles read in the class, focusing on constructivist, learner-centric educational philosophy.

I will pull from EDSS 418 information on childhood/adolescent development and how it may pertain to readiness for certain types of learning in relation to role-playing games. I will pull from Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, as well as other information found in the textbook from this course, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach*, by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (and related referenced authors and materials).

From EDSP 430, I will integrate information on Universal Design, and use the textbook (*Teaching in Today’s Inclusive Classrooms: A Universal Design for Learning Approach* by Richard M. Gargiulo and Debbie Metcalf) as a guide for creating as inclusive an environment as I can. I will explore possible accommodations and modifications for learning, emotional, and physical disabilities, as well as other special needs situations.

As for other literature to be used, I will compile a selection of supporting materials from previous works (included in my portfolio), as well as doing a more recent search for articles related to the use of role-playing games in education. A short list would include works by James Paul Gee, Henry Jenkins, Jane McGonigal, Katie Salen, Howard Gardner, Benjamin Bloom, Pablo Freire, Henry Giroux, William Pinar, Kathy Short, Carolyn Burke, Sarah Lynne Bowman, Brent D. Ruben, and Lev Vygotsky. There are many other articles I would pull from as well.

*Social Justice in Education*

One of the great potentials for the pedagogy of role-playing games is its ability to help the participants transcend self-conception and build new identity markers related to success. In role-playing games, socioeconomic barriers melt away, and everyone can play the hero of the story. Through visualization and imagination, role-playing games can build self-esteem, and open cognitive doors towards subject matter that would otherwise be closed off from those who may not have access in their everyday environments. It can also teach empathy, and create environments where learning about cultural differences, inequities, oppression, etc. can be explored in detail. Real problems in our society can be explored and solutions can be role-played that could activate the creative as well as political imaginations of the participants.

**EDUCATIONAL SIGNFICANCE**

The educational significance of this project to me is multifold. First, it helps me solidify my philosophical and research-based support of the pedagogy, and in doing so, allows me to better articulate the benefits to others. Second, it creates a reproducible methodology, and a means to explain and teach the pedagogy to others. Thirdly, I know that as I go through the process of formulating this project, I will research and learn the very latest information pertaining to the use of role-playing games in education, which will only serve to improve my practice.

The educational significance of this project to the profession of education is that I will be creating a pedagogical approach that can be adopted by other educators, and can be a seed for conversation, adaptation and augmentation by and with others in the education profession. Hopefully, a community of practice can either form around a work such as this, or an existent community can make use of it as part of their greater exploration and conversation.

**ACTION PLAN / TIMELINE TO COMPLETION:**

My goal is to be completed with this project by the end of the Spring term (May 2019). This gives approximately 12 weeks between now and my proposed date of completion. My plan is to spend the next 2 weeks doing a final literature search and review, and to begin my writing in earnest at the end of February. I will outline the project in the first week of March, and March and April will be the primary work months, with edits and revisions happening at the end of April, submitting my project by May 3rd.

I have carved every Thursday out of my schedule for this work between now and the end of the term, and I will have other times on weekends and in the evenings as well. If I can write 5 pages a week, I should have more than enough time to finish.