

Expert compares violent television to military tactics

The founder of 'killology' says TV and video violence have psychological influence on children

By Tricia Schwennesen
Oregon Daily Emerald

Violent television programs and video games are training children to kill in the same fashion the military trains soldiers to kill, retired Lt. Col. David Grossman said.

"The single most psychologically toxic thing to give people is violence," he said.

Grossman shared his views with about 16 students and faculty members Monday in the EMU Ben Linder Room. He is the founder of killology, the study of the psychological effects of killing. He was a West Point psychology instructor and wrote the book "On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society." The University's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior sponsored his lecture.

There are four stages of "training" that children get through tele-

vision and interactive point-and-shoot video games, Grossman said. These are the same conditioned reflex skills that a soldier or a police officer receives in training.

The first stage is traumatization and brutalization that comes with the shock of being exposed to violence, such as the humiliation a new recruit faces in boot camp.

Soldiers are programmed to embrace two values, discipline and violence, so in times of war the idea of killing is an automatic response, Grossman said.

The second stage is classical conditioning.

"It's like Pavlov's dog," Grossman said. "We're training our children to laugh and derive pleasure in response to death and violence."

The third stage, operant training, is where killing has become a conditioned response. The last stage is social learning through role models.

Children learn to observe and imitate violence through television and movie heroes such as Rambo, Freddy, Jason and Xena, he said.

"Ultimately, the reason why networks pump so much violence into our children is because the violence is physically addictive in children," he said.

Children experience hormonal and adrenal effects as a result of violence, Grossman said.

"If you knew tapioca pudding increased the level of violence 45 percent in young children, you wouldn't have it anywhere near your home," he said.

But children continue to watch hours upon hours of television, he said.

Grossman said the one constant variable in juvenile violent crime in this country and others including Canada, Japan, Scotland and China, is the impact of television violence and video games.

"It is an irrefutable fact that TV is at least 50 percent responsible for the violence in the world," Grossman said.

Ashleigh Harris, a senior at South Eugene High School, said she agrees with Grossman, but she said family background also plays a part in youth violence.

"At the same time where television can be harmful, it can be educational too," said Harris, who attended Grossman's speech.

To comprehend the magnitude of violent crime, people need to keep in mind the number of people saved because of advances in medical technology, Grossman said.

If society had 1940-level technology today, the murder rate would be 10 times higher, Grossman said.

Instead of looking at the murder rate as an indicator of violent crime, a better indicator is the rate of people attempting to kill one another, the aggravated assault rate, he said.

In 1957, the rate of aggravated assaults was 60 per 100,000 people. That rate has increased sevenfold to 440 per 100,000 people by the middle of this decade, he said.

With this increase, three things need to be done to stop and confront the problem of violence in children, he said.

"Children need protection.

They should be confronted when they laugh and cheer at violence, and we should prevent them from learning the motor skills to point and shoot," Grossman said.

The battle with television violence is similar to the more recent battle with tobacco companies, he said.

"The information we have linking TV violence to real world violence is better than what we have linking tobacco to cancer," Grossman said. "When we finally do hold the networks accountable for their actions and we will, it will destroy their market shares."

Education coupled with legislation is the place to begin fighting the increase in juvenile violence, he said.

"Families and communities need to offer alternatives to children," said Jeff Sprague, co-director of the University Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior.

Sprague said that television has become the primary socializing agent and that parents need to turn off the television.

FOR the EDUCATION and RESEARCH COMMUNITY

OVER ONE MILLION
OF THE BEST
MINDS IN AMERICA
HAVE ALREADY
CHOSEN THE BEST
RETIREMENT SYSTEM.

TIAA-CREF.

When it comes to planning a comfortable future, America's best and brightest turn to the expert: TIAA-CREF. With over \$230 billion in assets under management, we're the world's largest retirement system, the nation's leader in customer satisfaction,* and the overwhelming choice of people in education, research, and related fields.

Expertise You Can Count On

For 80 years, TIAA-CREF has introduced intelligent solutions to America's long-term planning needs. We pioneered the portable pension, invented the variable annuity, and popularized the very concept of stock investing for retirement. In fact, we manage the largest stock account in the

world (based on assets under management).

Today, TIAA-CREF can help you achieve even more of your financial goals. From tax-deferred annuities and IRAs to mutual funds, you'll find the flexibility and choice you need, backed by a proven history of performance, remarkably low expenses, and peerless commitment to personal service.

Find Out For Yourself

To learn more about the world's premier retirement organization, talk to one of our retirement planning experts at 1 800 842-2776. Or better still, speak to one of your colleagues. Find out why, when it comes to planning for tomorrow, great minds think alike.

Visit us on the Internet at www.tiaa-cref.org



Ensuring the future
for those who shape it.™

*DALBAR, Inc., 1997 Defined Contribution Excellence Ratings. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. CREF certificates and interests in the TIAA Real Estate Account are distributed by TIAA-CREF Individual and Institutional Services. For more complete information, including charges and expenses, call 1 800 842-2733, extension 5509, for the prospectuses. Read them carefully before you invest or send money.

8/98

Cash
for books
Everyday.

Always buying all kinds of
books, including texts,
paperbacks, Cliffs Notes,
current magazines...



768 East 13th • 345-1651
1 Block from Campus

ALL DAY
TUESDAY

SPAGHETTI



ALL
YOU
CAN
EAT
EVERY
TUES!

includes
Garlic Bread
11:30 am-10 pm

\$3.25
with
student ID

PIZZA
PETE'S

2673 Willamette • 484-0996
"this location only"

Be cool...

Make a better world.

RECYCLE!