D&D in the Library: YA Programming Concept
by Francis Toole

Abstract: *This article discusses the benefits of Dungeons and Dragons programs in libraries, and what library staff will need to create their own D&D program.*

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) has the potential to be an amazing, engaging, and creative YA program. D&D is a high fantasy role-playing game that takes place primarily in the imagination. During the game, one player acts as the Dungeon Master. They will create the world and guide the players through the game. The other participants are responsible for developing, creating, and role-playing their characters. The party works together to complete quests, slay monsters and develop their character's stories. A D&D campaign can take anywhere from a few hours to several months or even years! Ultimately, players can adapt the game to be their own unique experience. (Jensen, 2019)

Benefits

There are many benefits of playing D&D in the library and developing a program specifically for young adults. Library staff Jake Hutton says the program brings together teen participants (Hutton, 2017). Hutton noticed that young adult participants of the program made friends through D&D (Hutton, 2017). This is no surprise considering that D&D is a highly social game that encourages players to work together collaboratively. Specifically, the game relies on players' interactions and their ability to work together. Gaining these skills will be beneficial for teens as they gain skills to work with others in a team environment. Likewise, D&D will introduce them to the high fantasy Literature genre and encourage teens to explore the genre further (Hutton, 2017). It can be the first step to encouraging young adults to explore new books and

genres. D&D may not draw large crowds of participants, but those who attend will be highly engaged and will likely benefit from learning about the world of high fantasy and role-playing games (Vos, 2012).

How to Create a D&D Program & Supplies

You may be asking, what would a role-playing game such as D&D look like in my library? How can I implement such a program for my young adult patrons? Firstly, it is helpful to have a library staff member (or two) who is familiar with D&D and can play the role of Dungeon Master (Hutton, 2017). Library staff can guide the journey of the game and adjust the storyline depending on participants, who may not attend every session, and their interests (Hutton, 2017). Ultimately, the game will have to be flexible and may need to break off into multiple groups depending on the number of participants that attend the program (Vos, 2012). Ideally, there are between 4-6 players in one game to ensure that all participants can engage and take turns playing their characters (Vos, 2012).

Supplies

D&D does not require a lot of materials but, there are a few essential items that you will need.

Dice: To play the game, each player needs a set of die. The dice roles determine character's abilities and the success of their attacks. (Vos, 2012)

Character Sheets: This is where players keep track of their character's abilities as they level up, their health fluctuates, and they gain items for their inventory. These sheets can be found online and printed off for participants. (Vos, 2012)

D&D Guide Book: It may be helpful to have the official D&D guide book on hand to clear up any questions or concerns that the dungeon master or players may have. The books are also a helpful guide to library staff who may be new to D&D. (Hutton, 2017)

Campaign: It may be helpful to find a pre-made campaign to follow for the sessions. D&D campaigns can be purchased online through the official D&D website or your local game store. If the library staff facilitating the program is confident and has the time, they may also choose to create their own campaign. (Hutton, 2017)

Map: This will help visualize the gameplay and will be used during battle sequences. A map can be as simple as printable graph paper or a specific gridded map for role-playing games. (Vos, 2012)

References

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