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## Leave Them Kids Alone: Canadian Game Tackles the Bully Impulse

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**Many media effects researchers claim that videogames increase aggressive behavior in children.** A new role-playing game by Canadian researchers, however, has been shown to change children's attitudes about bullying. **The Quest for the Golden Rule**, developed by Steven Brown at **Practiqest** was the subject of several PRENet research studies conducted across Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and the U.S.

**Quest for the Golden Rule** taps into kids' desire to experiment. The game leads students through several fantasy-based school scenarios, letting them practice social strategies in a safe environment. Contrary to popular impressions, Brown says videogames are "disarming, personalized and surprisingly great for teaching relationship-building skills and empathy. Isn't it ironic that antisocial computer games can teach social skills?"

PRENet's scientific research seems to bear that out. According to Brown, students showed significant shifts in attitudes, skills and knowledge after each 30-minute session with *Quest for the Golden Rule*.

Brown says one of the advantages of using games in social skills curricula is that students become so immersed in play that they don't even realize their being taught. That has some chilling implications in other domains, but worked wonders in teaching bullying prevention. "Children love being able to direct virtual characters and are empowered by the impacts of their actions."

[via [Northern News](#)]