



GAMES IN LEARNING: FROM ENTERTAINMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL SKILLS

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Annatasiya: This article discusses the importance of children's games in the development of their mental abilities. Although games are often viewed as a form of entertainment, they also provide numerous benefits for cognitive development. While playing, children develop important skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and decision making. The article argues that parents and educators should encourage children to participate in a variety of games that contribute to holistic mental development. Ultimately, this article suggests that games should be seen not only as a form of entertainment, but also as a valuable tool for mental growth and development.

Kalit so'zlar: mental skills, leading activity, relationships of adults, observational studies, experimental studies, longitudinal studies, correlation studies, intellectual development.

INTRODUCTION

Children's games have been a part of children's lives for centuries. In the past, children played games such as hopscotch, hide and seek, as entertainment. However, over time, studies have shown that these games play a crucial role in the development of the mental abilities of children. Children's games play a significant role in the lives of children. They provide numerous developmental benefits for children, including physical, social and cognitive benefits. Physical games help children develop motor skills, balance and coordination. Board games help children develop strategic thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Video games can improve hand-eye coordination, reaction time, and problem-solving skills. It is important for parents to encourage their children to play a variety of games and monitor their play to make sure they are playing age appropriate games. In play, the child is always above his average age, above his usual daily behavior; he is in the game, as it were, head and shoulders above himself. The motive of the game lies not in its result, but in the content of the action itself. The child's mastery of a wider circle of reality, inaccessible to him, can only take place in play. Thanks to this, play acquires a peculiar form, which now becomes, at this higher stage of the child's mental development, the leading activity [1; 52].

The essence of the game as a leading activity is that children reflect in the game various aspects of life, the features of the activities and relationships of adults, acquire and refine their knowledge of the surrounding reality, master the position of the subject of activity on which it depends [8]. The most prominent Russian teacher of the 19th century, K.D. Ushinsky, considered the child's play as his reality with actions and experiences. He emphasized that this reality is more interesting to the child than the life around him, because it is more understandable to him. Play is partly a child's own creation. The child cannot yet enter into real life because of its complexity. In the game, he gets to know everything around him, tries his hand and independently disposes of objects. K.D. Ushinsky noted the influence of the surrounding life on the content of children's games. In his opinion, games do not pass without a trace for the future life of the child and to a certain extent contribute to the formation of his personality, children's imagination. The child seeks to influence reality, to transform it within its accessible limits [3; 84].



The relevance of the theme of games in learning through entertainment can be of great importance for the development of mental abilities. Games often require players to use problem-solving, critical thinking, and strategic planning skills to succeed. These mental abilities can be transferred to other areas of life such as studies, work and personal relationships. The purpose of this article is to explore how play can be more than just a form of entertainment, but also a means of learning and developing brain skills.

METHODS

“There is no, and cannot be, full-fledged mental development without a game. Play is a huge bright window through which a child enters the spiritual world. A life-giving stream of ideas, concepts about the surrounding the world. Play is a spark that ignites the flame of inquisitiveness and curiosity” (V.A. Sukhomlinsky, 2014).

In modern society, much attention is paid to the development of cognitive abilities of children. It is believed that children's games have a significant impact on the development of mental abilities in children. The purpose of this article is to examine the research methods that have been carried out to prove that children's games have a positive effect on the mental abilities of children.

The following research methods were used to study this topic:

1. Observational studies:

Observational studies are carried out in natural settings where the behavior of children playing games is observed and recorded. In this type of research, researchers observe children's behavior and analyze the effects of play on their mental performance. Observational studies have shown that children who play games that require problem-solving and critical thinking skills have better cognitive abilities.

2. Experimental studies:

Experimental studies are conducted under controlled conditions where researchers manipulate the independent variable and observe the effect on the dependent variable. In this type of study, children are randomly assigned to two groups: one group plays games that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and the other group plays games that do not require critical thinking or problem-solving skills. Experimental studies have shown that children who play games that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills have better cognitive abilities.

3. Longitudinal studies:

Longitudinal studies are conducted over a long period of time. In this type of research, children are observed over a period of time and their development is measured at different time intervals. Longitudinal studies have shown that children who played games that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their early years have better cognitive abilities later in life.

4. Correlation studies:

Correlation studies are conducted to examine the relationship between two variables. In this type of research, researchers measure the relationship between games that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills and the development of children's intelligence. Correlation studies have shown a positive correlation between games that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills and the development of mental abilities in children [6; 302].

RESULTS

Children's games have been a part of children's lives for centuries. In the past, children played games such as hopscotch, hide and seek, as entertainment. However, over time, research has shown that these games play a critical role in children's mental development. The benefits of integrating games



into learning environments, transitioning from pure entertainment to the development of mental skills, are multifaceted and impactful. Games help children develop their cognitive, emotional and social skills. Here are some benefits of children's games:

1. *Cognitive development.* Games such as puzzles, board games, and building blocks help children develop problem-solving skills. These games also help children improve their memory, concentration and critical thinking skills.
2. *Emotional development.* Games such as role playing and team sports help children develop their emotional skills. These games teach kids how to deal with frustration, work as a team, and communicate effectively.
3. *Social development.* Games such as team sports, board games and card games help children develop their social skills. These games teach children how to interact with others, how to take turns and how to negotiate.
4. *Physical development:* games such as outdoor sports and active games help children develop their physical skills. These games help children develop strength, coordination and endurance.
5. *Creativity and imagination.* Games such as dress-up and role play help children develop their creativity and imagination. These games allow children to express themselves creatively and develop their imagination.
6. *Enhanced Engagement:* Games offer a high level of engagement, capturing and maintaining learners' attention through interactive and immersive experiences, thus creating a conducive environment for learning.
7. *Motivation and Fun:* By incorporating elements of challenge and reward, games motivate learners to actively participate in the learning process, resulting in higher motivation and enjoyment of the learning material.
8. *Personalized Learning:* Digital games have the potential to offer personalized learning experiences, adapting to individual progress and providing tailored challenges and feedback, thus optimizing the learning trajectory for each student.
9. *Transferability of Skills:* Skills acquired through game-based learning can often seamlessly transfer to real-world scenarios, allowing for practical applications of problem-solving strategies, decision-making practices, and adaptability honed in virtual environments.
10. *Technological Advancements:* Advancements in technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality are opening up new possibilities for immersive and interactive educational experiences, further enhancing the effectiveness of game-based learning.

In addition to these benefits, children's games also contribute to the development of speech. Games such as word games and storytelling games help children develop their language skills. These games also help kids develop their literacy skills and vocabulary. Moreover, children's games promote learning through play. Children are more likely to retain information when they learn through play [5; 66]. Games designed to teach children certain skills, such as math or science, can help children learn those skills in a fun and engaging way. The incorporation of games into learning environments has transcended the realm of entertainment to become a pivotal catalyst for the development of mental skills. As educators continue to explore innovative approaches to foster engagement, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence, games stand out as a versatile and potent tool for shaping the educational landscape and nurturing well-rounded, adaptable learners. The transition of games from pure entertainment to invaluable tools for the development of mental skills in learning environments offers a wide array of benefits, ultimately contributing to more engaging, effective, and holistic educational experiences for learners across various age groups and learning profiles.

DISCUSSION



The intellectual development of a preschooler is the most important component of his overall mental development, preparing him for school and for his future life. At preschool age, the foundation of ideas and concepts is laid, which ensures the successful mental development of the child. A number of psychological studies have found that the rate of mental development of preschool children is very high compared with later age periods [9].

Games-classes with didactic toys develop concentration, the ability to calmly, without being distracted, do some business for some time, develop the ability to imitate an adult. Actions with such objects always pose a mental task for the child - he tries to achieve a result. Tasks of a sensory nature are gradually included: to teach to distinguish between size, shape, color. Verbal didactic games are of great importance in the speech development of children. They form auditory attention, the ability to listen to the sounds of speech, repeat sound combinations and words. Game actions in verbal didactic games (imitation of movements, search for the one who called, actions on a verbal signal, onomatopoeia) encourage repeated repetition of the same sound combination, which exercises the correct pronunciation of sounds and words [2; 97]. Children's games have always been a popular source of entertainment for children all over the world. However, recent studies have shown that these games can also be used as a means of learning and developing mental abilities in children.

The integration of games into learning environments has evolved from being pure entertainment to a powerful tool for the development of mental skills. This transformation represents a dynamic shift in educational paradigms, offering a unique approach to engaging learners and cultivating essential cognitive abilities. Games have been employed as educational tools since ancient times. From board games to rudimentary simulations, the idea of using gameplay for learning purposes has been present across various cultures. However, the contemporary digital age has significantly amplified the impact of games on education, giving rise to a wide array of interactive and immersive experiences designed to enhance mental skills.

One of the primary advantages of games in learning is their inherent ability to captivate and motivate learners. By incorporating elements of challenge, reward, and interactivity, games can evoke a strong sense of engagement, sustaining the attention of learners and fostering a positive attitude towards the learning process. Games facilitate the development of a broad spectrum of mental skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, strategic planning, creativity, and adaptability. Whether through puzzle games that require logical reasoning or simulations that demand decision-making, learners can hone their cognitive abilities while navigating virtual environments. In addition to cognitive skills, games can also contribute to the cultivation of emotional intelligence. Through narrative-driven experiences, role-playing games, and collaborative multiplayer settings, learners can develop empathy, teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution skills, all of which are integral to social and emotional growth.

Digital games have the potential to offer personalized learning experiences by adapting to individual progress, providing targeted challenges suited to each learner's level and offering personalized feedback. This adaptive approach can optimize the learning trajectory for each student, enhancing their mastery and understanding of educational content. One crucial aspect of games in learning is the transferability of skills acquired in virtual environments to real-world scenarios. The problem-solving strategies, decision-making practices, and adaptability honed through gameplay can seamlessly transition into practical applications, enriching students' overall skill set. While games offer valuable educational benefits, it's important to consider ethical guidelines and moderation in usage. Balancing game-based learning with diverse educational experiences and ensuring that games align with learning objectives are essential considerations. Looking ahead, the future of games in learning appears promising, with advancements in technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and gamified learning platforms opening up new frontiers for immersive and interactive educational experiences.



In the past, children's games were considered only as a source of entertainment. They were simple and straightforward, giving them no educational value. However, as technology has advanced, the gaming industry has evolved and new games have been created that can be used in education [4; 69]. These games are designed for fun and also to help children learn new skills, solve problems and develop their mental abilities. One of the most significant advantages of children's games in learning is their ability to develop cognitive abilities. Many games require players to solve puzzles, answer questions, or make decisions based on information presented to them. These activities help develop the critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills that are essential for success in life [10]. In addition, children's games also help in the development of social skills. Many games require players to work together to achieve a goal or compete against each other. It helps children learn how to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and develop teamwork skills. These skills are essential for success in school, work and social situations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that children's games have evolved from just a source of entertainment to use in education and the development of cognitive, social and emotional abilities in children. These games are designed to be fun and engaging, and to help kids learn new skills and concepts. With the development of technology, the gaming industry is constantly creating new games that can be used in education. Therefore, parents and educators should consider incorporating games into their teaching methods to help children learn and develop the necessary skills and abilities to succeed in life. Games can be an effective means of teaching children. Whether used solely for entertainment or as part of the curriculum, games can help develop children's intelligence and should be seen as a valuable resource in education.

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