

PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF GAME BASED TECHNOLOGIES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

This article examines the organization of instruction aimed at developing independent thinking and cognitive growth in primary school students on the basis of enhancing their oral communication skills. This approach is grounded in the initiative and autonomy of the students, tailored to their cognitive capacity, and oriented toward the development of independent reasoning and consciousness. Its outcomes are formed as a product of personal activity and are directed toward cultivating a well-rounded individual, ultimately contributing to improved efficiency in primary education.

Keywords: Psychological games, methodology, educational technology, didactic game, encyclopedia, role-playing games, improvisation, psychological potential, sustained attention, perception, consciousness and memory.

Introduction

The first day of school is an enormously significant event in a child's life. School life opens up an entirely new world for children, and during this period their primary activities undergo a fundamental transformation. From school age onward, the central activities and principal responsibilities of children become study and the thorough mastery of the foundations of academic knowledge. Academic learning activity requires children to acquire new qualities and characteristics. For effective participation in learning, students must possess sustained attention, sharp intellect, strong willpower, a degree of abstract reasoning, well-developed speech, determination, and, alongside these, the qualities of independence, diligence, and discipline.

Games occupy a special place in motivating students to assimilate instructional material and fostering consciously creative engagement with learning. In order for games and game-based instructional activities to achieve the desired level of effectiveness, the pedagogical objectives they are intended to address must be clearly and correctly defined prior to implementation. The organization of such games should begin, where possible, at the primary school level. As educators and psychologists emphasize, if a student lacks genuine personal interest, the acquired knowledge will not exert a positive influence on the student's emotions and will not serve to promote intellectual development.¹ Furthermore, students will be unable to establish productive collaborative relationships with their peers in the course of acquiring such knowledge.

The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language defines a “game” as a free action or activity undertaken for the purpose of entertainment and recreation, as well as an activity conducted according to established rules for the purpose of competing with others.

The Encyclopedic Dictionary further notes that games carry significant importance as a means of psychologically preparing children for future life in the context of their upbringing, education, and development.²

These are general definitions of games. Regarding the essence of didactic games specifically, the Dictionary of Didactic Terminology provides the following definition: “A didactic game is a type of educational activity that stimulates students' interest in learning and their level of engagement on the basis of modeling the objects, phenomena, and processes under study.”³

Figure 1.1. Definitions of the concept of ‘game’ as presented in various dictionaries

The Dictionary of Pedagogical Terminology further specifies that “didactic games are specially designed educational games aimed at developing students’

¹Sadullayev B. System for developing socially cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students through games. Abstract of the PhD dissertation in Pedagogical Sciences. – Samarkand: SamSU. 2019. – P. 11.

²Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. – Tashkent: Fan. 1976. – P. 232.

³Muhiddinova Kh. Improvement of the scientific-methodological foundations for ensuring continuity in Uzbek language instruction across educational levels. Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences. TSPU. – Tashkent, 2011. – P. 21.

knowledge, skills, and abilities.”⁴ In light of the above, a game may be understood as a means of fostering students’ cognitive development, creativity, and moral-intellectual enrichment. Through games, students are exposed to an entirely new world of possibilities. It is impossible to ensure the holistic development of students without recourse to play. In the course of gameplay, students gradually internalize a system of interpersonal relations, engage in collaborative activity, develop as individuals, and form their personal identities. As a complex socio-cultural and didactic phenomenon, the game holds a distinctive value and has served as the object of numerous philosophical-cultural, pedagogical, and psychological studies. Games play a central role in establishing communication among students. Their complexity is determined by the distinctive character of play activity within the pedagogical process. The intrinsic features of games include their particular pedagogical value, their freedom of participation, and their voluntary nature. Games are practically oriented and hold a special pedagogical value insofar as they serve to produce guaranteed outcomes.

In addition to their multifunctional character, games are also distinguished by the diversity of their content and forms. Various approaches exist to the classification of games. The majority of such approaches have been developed on the basis of existing categories of games. Many specialists have attempted to describe games by dividing them into three broad groups: games with fixed and predetermined rules; free games, the rules of which are formulated in the course of play itself; and games based on rules that are partly fixed and partly shaped during the process of play.⁵ However, the above criteria are of a conditional nature, and there remains the possibility of approaching each game process creatively. In this process, participants are required to follow certain established rules.

The following groups may be distinguished as independent forms of play activity: all types of children’s games; festive games; folk games; dramatized game activities; game-based trainings and exercises; questionnaires and tests in game format; improvisation-based games; competitions, debates, contests, rivalries, relays; wedding traditions and game-based customs; deceptive games, prize-

⁴Saidov M. Educational assignments for developing critical thinking during Uzbek language instruction in 5th-grade classes of Uzbek schools and the methodology of their use. Abstract of the dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences. TSPU. – Tashkent, 2000. – P. 52.

⁵Sadullayev B. System for developing socially cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students through games. Abstract of the PhD dissertation in Pedagogical Sciences. – Samarkand: SamSU. 2019. – P. 12.

winning games, and games with prizes; carnivals, game-format auctions, and the like.

In the course of games, students have the opportunity to choose friends, partners, and close-minded peers. The social-pedagogical significance of games is manifested precisely in this dimension. The teacher must ensure that there is no contradiction between the instructional process and game activity in pursuit of their educational objectives. The learning process must not, in terms of its content and forms, become a tedious or alienating experience for students. As a didactic process, the game encompasses the following components: roles assumed by the participants; game actions serving to execute those roles; objects that facilitate the performance of actions during gameplay; specific actions among the subjects of the game process; and the content of the game — that is, its plot — within which real-life situations are depicted in a conventionally symbolic manner. In the course of games, students gradually internalize ethical norms and develop a sense of responsibility in the performance of their actions.

Games possess two significant characteristics: (a) the development of students' oral speech; and (b) the habituation of students to comprehending the substance of given situations. In order to form and systematically develop such skills in students, a number of game types may be employed during lessons. As is well established, games are characterized according to their types.⁶ These include classification by purpose, by number of participants, and by the character of reality representation. In pedagogy, the following types of games are recognized: imitation-based, symbolic, and research-oriented games. The main character of games is defined by the modeling of students' intellectual work activity in combination with play activity, the formation of a process based on specific symbols and rules, and the design of activity associated with new knowledge and methods of action.

In this connection, the following have been identified: (1) interactive games that directly influence the textbook material — this category includes puzzles, crosswords, word searches, and chain words; (2) games that influence students directly — this category includes business games, narrative-role games, and

⁶Sadullayev B. System for developing socially cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students through games. Abstract of the PhD dissertation in Pedagogical Sciences. — Samarkand: SamSU. 2019. — P. 14.

simulation games; and (3) non-interactive games — individual assignments of a game character fall within this category.

Specialists have attempted to classify games according to their level of execution during performance: (1) role-playing and narrative games; (2) games based on specific rules with a meaningful plot; (3) plotless games — such as crosswords, word searches, and chain words. In general terms, specialists classify games into narrative, role-playing, business, simulation, and dramatized games.⁷

An examination of the classifications presented above reveals that each one contains a distinct underlying rationale. Educators have clearly distinguished between games and the external rules that determine their content and essence. At the same time, there exist games based on the internal logic of the modeled process. These games differ from one another not only in their purpose and content, but also in their distinctive significance in terms of the influence they exert on the intellectual and emotional spheres of students. Projective games also differ from one another in their didactic potential. They are divided into the following types: (1) games of a reconstructive formal character, which assist in demonstrating reality, perceiving existing conditions, and expressing the demands of a given society; (2) games of a formal-projective character, in the course of which students provide a personal evaluation of social reality, drawing on their cognitive experience; (3) non-formal projective games, which create a broad foundation for expanding students' imagination and activity, wherein they proceed on the basis of concrete reality.⁸ Moreover, there is a need for a broader didactic characterization of retrospective games. Games may further be divided into role-playing games and non-role games.

In distinguishing between games, the following three criteria should be applied: (a) the distinctive features of the roles performed by students; (b) the conditions under which the situations perceived during the activity arise; and (c) the degree of improvisation by students during gameplay in relation to the existing scenario. One important form of games consists of activity-algorithm-based games. Most educators also refer to these as training-format games. This category includes: (1) tabletop games — such as chess, checkers, dominoes, lotto, and the “Field of

⁷Sadullayev B. System for developing socially cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students through games. Abstract of the PhD dissertation in Pedagogical Sciences. — Samarkand: SamSU. 2019. — P. 16.

⁸Sadullayev B. System for developing socially cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students through games. Abstract of the PhD dissertation in Pedagogical Sciences. — Samarkand: SamSU. 2019. — P. 18.

Wonders” (“Mo‘jizalar maydoni”); (2) algorithm-based games, including puzzles, crosswords, riddles, and chain words; and (3) narrative games oriented toward perceiving reality through training.

These games have been analyzed to a certain extent by specialists in didactics, and in the course of this research, attention was directed toward uncovering their pedagogical potential in developing cooperative skills based on friendly relationships among students. Games also offer the possibility of selecting students for classes with an enhanced depth of instruction.

Games possess a distinctive scope and scale. Games are composed of several parts, each of which constitutes an independent component of the game, in which each participant performs a specific role and acts in accordance with the game’s objectives. Each part of the game differs from the others in terms of content and plot. In one particular segment of the game, the managers of two competing teams engage in debate, while in other segments, leaders persuade their team members of the necessity of undertaking projected actions. After each segment, each student gains insight into how to resolve specific real-life situations. The teacher evaluates each participant according to a defined system and determines the winner. It is equally important to clearly specify what skills students are expected to acquire in the course of games: effective competition and cooperation; conducting negotiations; successfully executing and completing tasks; managing conflict situations; regulating one’s emotions in situations of pressure; and establishing an effective collaborative environment within the team.

The reforms being implemented in the educational system of our country are not initiatives aimed at achieving results within one or two years, or within a short period — they may rightfully be said to represent changes of enduring significance, spanning several generations. This reflects the far-sighted policy underlying our President’s deep concern for our future and for future generations — the conviction that all the children of our country are our own children, and that they must be stronger, more knowledgeable, and certainly happier than us. It is well established that the introduction of advanced pedagogical and new information technologies in education not only enhances the effectiveness of instructional activities, but also plays a crucial role in cultivating independent and

logical thinkers — comprehensively developed, highly moral individuals — by applying the achievements of science and scholarship to practice.⁹

Figure 1.2. Classification of training-format game technologies

As a rule, the introduction of innovations is accompanied by the emergence of a psychological barrier toward novelty. This psychological barrier manifests itself in the indifferent or negative attitude of the pedagogical community toward its own innovation. Such a psychological barrier may present itself openly or in a latent form. Research findings indicate that this barrier is associated with individuals' preference for habitual modes of activity, fear of uncertainty, apprehension about increased workloads, and a failure to understand the necessity or importance of the innovation.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of integrating modern pedagogical technologies into the educational process is strongly influenced by the attitude of pedagogical leadership toward innovation, the management style adopted, and the nature of the relationships between administrators and staff. It is essential that members of the pedagogical community be provided with the full range of necessary information about the innovation, and that measures be taken aimed at improving their relationship with and understanding of it.

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