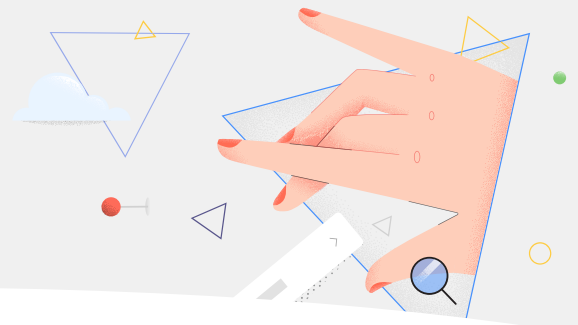


Learn through Play



Educational process is a set of defined activities, extracurricular and educational work carried out by the educational and pupil teams on one plan. In the training lessons, seminars, practical and laboratory work, which use different methods and tools, are mainly used. An increase of the mental workload on the lesson raises questions about supporting the students' interest in the studied material and their activity throughout the lesson. Teachers have to find effective methods of teaching and such instructional techniques that can intensify thoughts of pupils and encourage them to learn more by themselves. They have to make sure that students work actively and enthusiastically during the lessons. Teachers should use it as a starting point for the emergence and development of an intellectual curiosity and deep cognitive interest. Didactic games can be very important for this purpose. During the game, children develop the habit to concentrate and think. They also develop focus and the desire for knowledge. A variety of gaming activities, by which this or that mental task is solved, support and enhance the children's interest in the subject (Pellis, 2007).

A game, as a simple way of knowledge of the reality, should be the most natural and free way to master this or that knowledge, abilities and skills. A game is a unique phenomenon of human culture, its source and summit. Only during the game a child shows such selflessness and uncovers his/her psychophysiological and intellectual resources. A game, as a phenomenon of culture, teaches, educates, develops, socializes, entertains and rests. A

game reveals the child's character, his/her views on life and ideals. Children approach the complex life problems through the game without even noticing it. Given the fact that interest is the best stimulus to learning, it is necessary to try to use every opportunity to relieve a child through play activities (Pellis, 2007).

A game, as a learning method, was used since the ancient times. The widespread use of the game is in pre-school and after-school facilities. In today's school, which relies on the activation of the educational process, a game activity is used in the following cases:

1. As independent technologies for mastering notions, themes and even parts of the course;
2. As a part of a common technology;
3. As a lesson, or a part of it (the introduction, control);
4. As the technology of extracurricular activities.

The notion of “playing educational technologies” includes a large group of methods and techniques for organizing the educational process in the form of various educational games. In contrast to games in general, a pedagogical game has an essential feature. It clearly states the purpose of training and its corresponding educational outcome, which may be justified, explicitly identified and characterized by learning and cognitive orientation. A game form on the lessons is created by playing patterns and situations, acting as means of motivation and promotion for training activities (Hopkins, 2002).

Attempts to unravel the mystery of a game were made by scientists for hundreds of years. A start of the development of a general theory of the



game should be referred to the works of Schiller and Spencer. Significant contribution to the development of this theory was made by Freud, Stern and Dewey. The theory of the excess of nerve forces and the compensatory arose in XIX century; at the time, when a point of view that the game is a phenomenon of the substitute compensating activity prevailed. The ancestor of this theory is the English philosopher, Spencer. He saw the game as a result of an excessive activity, the possibility of which cannot be exhausted in the ordinary course of activities. According to Spencer, the game can free up the excess energy, inherent to animals with a high level of organization and a person. Spencer claims that game is an expression of the instincts committed for the sake of satisfaction. Gross stood in the same position of strengthening the development of hereditary forms of behavior in games. He was critical of the theories of leisure and abundance of nerve force. A game, according to supporters of this theory, helps to overcome the instincts of the past and to become civilized. These researchers perceive the game and game paraphernalia as reduced activity, the reproduction of life and religious ceremonies of ancestors. Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, developed the idea of compensatory game and tied it with unconscious mechanisms of the human psyche. According to Freud, the unconscious drives are represented in children's games symbolically. A game cleanses and heals the mind and relieves traumatic situations, which are the cause of many neurological diseases. Many scientists, including Piaget and Levin, believed that the game appears in the light of spirituality and is a source of spiritual development. The first attempt to organize the life of children in the form of the game belongs to F. Froebel. He developed a system of games, which are carried out on the basis of educational work (Eden, 2008).

According to scientists, a teacher must be in the center of a child's life,



understand what is happening, delve into the interests of the children at play, and skillfully guide them. There are following positions in the conception of a game, as a form of the organization of life and children's activities:

1. A game is designed to solve common educational problems, including the problem of forming moral qualities of a child. A teacher should be specific to each type of games;
2. A game, especially in the high-school age, must be an amateur in nature and develop in this direction with the proper pedagogical guidance;
3. An important feature of the game as a form of children's lives is its penetration into different activities: work and operating processes (Eden, 2008).

A teacher should have a good idea which problems can be solved during the game. It is advisable to plan the tasks related to the whole group (to teach children to join in the familiar mobile game), and the tasks that relate to individual children (for example, a shy child should be involved into the mobile game). Thus, a new didactic game, a teacher explains playing with the children, first as a lead, and then as an ordinary partner. However, directing the game into the mainstream of educational solutions and educational problems, a teacher should always remember that the game is a kind of independent activity. Through the game, children have the opportunity to show independence to a greater extent than in any other activities. A child can choose subjects of games, toys, items and partners (Hereford & Schall, 1993).

Moreover, during the game the social life of children activates the most. A game allows children to use some forms of communication in an



independent manner. Two types of relationships are formed between children during the game:

1. The relationship that is defined by the content of the game and rules of the game'
2. A real relationship, which appears during the game. Real relationship, being private, is formed not only during the game, but also during the entire life of a child.

Thus, on the basis of the real relations, qualities of the public are formed in the childhood: the ability to enter into a group of playing children, to act in it in a certain way, to establish relations with partners and to submit to the public opinion. In other words, qualities of the public allow the child to interact with others in a successful manner. On the basis of social relationships feelings and habits are formed. An ability to act jointly and consistently develops. An understanding of common interests comes. The high value of the game is that it has the greatest potential for the development of children's society (Eden, 2008).

There are also some disadvantages of a game process during learning. First of all, if a teacher does not know how to explain the rules to the pupils properly, the lesson may turn into mere anarchy. Excessive enthusiasm to the game can take away from the main purpose of the lesson: learning a particular subject. For some pupils a group work becomes a way to do nothing. However, there are much more advantages of a game learning strategy. A game is the most active form of human occupation. This model of training, compared to the traditional one, is more promising (Hereford & Schall, 1993). Lessons on playing technique significantly increase pupils' interest in the subject, allow them to remember various wordings and



definitions better, and liberate pupils' thinking. A game is the most affordable type of activity. It is a method for processing the received impressions from the outside world. A game clearly manifests features of thinking and imagination of a pupil, his/her emotionality and activity; thus, developing the need for communication. An interesting game enhances the mental activity of a child, and he/she can solve more difficult task than in a normal class (Graham & Burghardt, 2010). However, this does not mean that the teaching process should be only in the form of a game. A game is only one of the methods, and it works well in conjunction with others: observations, interviews and independent work. While playing, children learn to apply their knowledge and skills in practice, to use them in different conditions. A game is an independent activity, in which children come into contact with other children. They are united by a common goal, a collaborative effort to achieve it, and the overall experience. Gaming experience can have a deep impression on the minds of children and contribute to the formation of good feelings, noble aspirations and skills of collective life. The game is important. It is closely connected with learning, with observations of everyday life. It teaches to solve game problems, use knowledge, and express it in words. A game often provides an opportunity for communication of the new knowledge and widening of the horizon. Thus, the play activity is the actual problem of the learning process (Hereford & Schall, 1993).

