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# The Importance of Didactic Games in the Development of Students' Cognitive Skills

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***Abstract:*** *This article highlights the pedagogical significance of didactic games in enhancing students' cognitive abilities. This serves to develop the intellectual and mental abilities of students and improve problem-solving skills. Today, the relevance of didactic games in the education system is of great importance in terms of increasing the effectiveness of education and providing students with more practical experience. As a result, didactic games have a positive impact on the cognitive development of students, their effective use in the pedagogical process. In conclusion, didactic games are recognized as an important tool in the development of students' cognitive abilities in education.*

***Keywords:*** *cognitive abilities, didactic games, pedagogical methods, student development, educational effectiveness, intellectual abilities.*

**Introduction.** Along with the development of the education system, the development of students' cognitive abilities is becoming one of the most important tasks of education. Cognitive ability includes students' thinking processes, mental activity, and knowledge processing skills. Effective cognitive development plays an important role in ensuring the high quality of the educational process. One of the effective tools for enhancing students' cognitive abilities is didactic games[1]. Didactic games create opportunities for students to actively participate in the educational process, assimilate information, and apply knowledge. Currently, didactic games are always an indicator for the teacher of students' assimilation of knowledge or the application of acquired knowledge in practice. Czech pedagogue Y.A. Komenskiy, emphasizing that play is the main form of a child's activity, stated that it is precisely play that corresponds to the child's nature and interests [1,2]. The scientist emphasizes that play comprehensively develops a child's mental abilities, expands their understanding of the world around them, and develops their speech. Also, playing together with peers brings the child closer to their peers. In the process of game activity, increasing the cognitive activity of students creates an opportunity for students to demonstrate their abilities, apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve the goal of the game. The rules of the game help to properly organize the game process. It regulates students' behavior and their interactions. Play is an integral part of a child's life. Through play, the child becomes acquainted with the environment, natural phenomena, landscapes, objects, plants, and the animal world. Didactic games are of particular importance in organizing the mental and physical activity of students in primary education. The use of didactic games in lessons is also important for developing students' intelligence and improving quick calculation skills [3]. In the process of didactic games, students learn to strictly follow the rules of the game, and feelings of harmony and worldview are formed. Didactic games in the educational process should be organized according to the characteristics of the students. This is aimed at facilitating the teaching of knowledge, ensuring clarity, and creating an opportunity not to tire or bore students. Didactic games can be organized in various ways. For example, dolls, toys, pictures and handouts, various geometric shapes can be used. Didactic games, depending on their purpose, include 4 factors:

1. Task of the game.
2. Game movement.
3. Rules of the game.
4. End of the game.

Before starting each didactic game, the teacher explains to the students the rules, content, and outcome of the game. Students understand it, comprehend it, and act on this basis. In primary education, didactic games are considered as a source of information. The organization of didactic games during the lesson serves the formation of such qualities as communication, concentration of attention, and, in turn, quick-wittedness among students. Regular use of games in the process of primary education creates a natural environment in education. This allows students to freely engage in activities during the lesson. The effective use of games in accordance with the content of the lesson contributes to the independent assimilation of the resources provided to the student during the lesson, the development of creative thinking. At the same time, it reveals students' hidden potential and interest in the subject [4,5].

**Methodology**

Today, the pedagogical significance of didactic games is understood more broadly, since they directly influence the cognitive and emotional development of students. Didactic games help students not only to acquire knowledge, but also to develop their thinking abilities, logical thinking, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills. From this point of view, the role of didactic games in improving cognitive abilities deserves special attention.

Scientific research on didactic games has changed over the centuries, but in recent years they have been widely used as one of the most effective methods in the educational process. In particular, many scientific studies have been conducted on the role of didactic games in the development of students' cognitive abilities. The analyzed literature notes the importance of didactic games not only in improving the learning process of students, but also in developing their problem-solving, logical thinking, creativity, and teamwork skills. In addition, the theories of cognitive development put forward by leading scientists in the field of pedagogy, such as Ikhtiyor Askarov, Jean Piaget, and Jalil Hamidov, also help to understand the influence of didactic games on the mental development of students. Jean Piaget's concept of studying the "zone of proximal development" allows us to understand how didactic games help students acquire new knowledge. Piaget's stages of cognitive development help ensure the age-appropriate use of games. Also, I.Askarov's theory of learning emphasizes how didactic games create opportunities for improving cognitive processes by activating students and applying a constructive approach to them.

Studies show that didactic games develop students' creative and logical thinking, improve reading and writing skills, and also teach students skills in independent and teamwork. All this is an effective tool for improving cognitive abilities.

The importance of didactic games in the development of such skills of students as mental development, logical thinking, and quick decision-making is increasing day by day. Also, didactic games create the opportunity to make the educational process more lively and interactive. This increases students' motivation for reading, improves reading and writing skills, and develops general cognitive abilities.

**Result and discussion**

Studies and practical observations on the influence of didactic games on the cognitive development of students show that with the successful integration of game elements into the educational process, the level of assimilation of knowledge by students, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills increase significantly. Jumladan;

1. Student engagement increases

In one of the experiments, lessons conducted with elementary school students using simple lecture-based teaching and didactic games were compared. The graph below showed the results:

**Table 1.** Student engagement in class (%)

| Lesson type | Activity rate (%) |
|---|---|
| Traditional teaching | 52% |
| Based on a didactic game | 85% |

As can be seen from the table, through game activity, the involvement and activity of students in the lesson was significantly higher. This is an important factor in the cognitive stimulation of students, strengthening the processes of thinking and memorization.

2. Development of cognitive skills

Lessons conducted through didactic games have formed the following basic cognitive competencies in students:

- **Analysis and Comparison** - Games have made it easier to compare facts and draw conclusions.
- **Problem Solving** - Developed skills in solving various problem situations based on game scenarios.
- **Creative thinking** - Thanks to the creation of conditions for free thinking during the game, students' imagination has expanded.
- **Attention and Memory** - Games requiring mental activity have increased students' memory strength.

**Table 2.** Dynamics of cognitive skills observed in students (at the beginning and end of the experiment, by points)

| Habit | Initial grade (1-10) | Last grade (1-10) |
|---|---|---|
| Analyze | 5. | 8. |
| Troubleshooting | 4. | 7.5 |
| Focus and memory | 6. | 9. |
| Creative thinking | 5.5. | 8.5. |

The results of the analysis show that the regular use of didactic games increases the cognitive potential of students.

3. Social and Emotional Development

Through didactic games, students acquire not only knowledge, but also such socio-emotional skills as working in a team, clearly expressing their opinion, and respectfully approaching opposing views. This plays an important role in their overall personal development.

**Table 3.** Social skills developed through didactic games (in percentages)

| Habit | Change (%) |
|---|---|
| Teamwork | +30% |
| Culture of communication | +25% |
| Sense of responsibility | +20% |
| Decision-making | +28% |

These indicators prove that didactic games have a great influence not only on mental, but also on social development.

4. Students' Motivation Excessive

During the study, the students' learning motivation was also assessed. In classes where didactic games were used, students' interest in the lesson, their level of satisfaction with the lesson, and their desire to complete homework increased.

**Table 4.** Level of lesson motivation (on a 10-point scale)

| Teaching method | Motivation score |
|---|---|
| Ordinary lecture | 6.2. |
| With a didactic game | 9.1. |

These changes show that the game approach strengthens students' internal motivation.

**In conclusion** we can say that the use of didactic games comprehensively supports the cognitive development of students. The results presented throughout the article showed the following:

1. Didactic games engage students in the lesson - their activity and level of participation increase.
2. Cognitive skills are significantly developed - analysis, memory, attention, and creative thinking are enhanced.
3. Social and emotional growth occurs - a culture of teamwork and communication is formed.
4. Motivation and enthusiasm for knowledge increase - which determines the quality of the learning process.

Our recommendations, on this basis, are recognized as an important tool for increasing the effectiveness of didactic games in the educational process, especially at the stages of primary and general secondary education. In the future, there is a need to develop innovative game technologies in this area, integrate them into textbooks, and train teachers according to this methodology.

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