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LEARNING IN MODERN SOCIETY: THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA AND COMPUTERS ON CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines children's learning in a variety of settings. Children ages 6 to 13 were interviewed and asked to describe their perceptions of learning, playing, school, leisure, and computers. The paper's discussion is founded on constructivism's theoretical perspective, and it employs some key constructivism ideas, such as developmental tasks and constructive learning settings.

KEYWORDS: School, Leisure, Learning, Developmental Tasks, Learning Settings

Children today are growing up surrounded by a variety of digital tools, and they begin to form opinions about how these technologies work and their basic capabilities at a young age. As a result, when teaching youngsters about digital technologies, it is important to consider both the initial mental models of the technologies and the role that the technologies play in their daily lives. This paper looks at how children think about computers, programming, and the Internet. The justification for focusing on these themes stems from the evolving nature of children's digital life, as well as recent curriculum modifications.

Computers have evolved from stand-alone equipment to ubiquitous technology like mobile devices (such as tablets and smartphones) and computer-integrated household gadgets (i.e., washing machines, refrigerators, and toys). As a result, it's crucial to investigate whether and how this growth is mirrored in children's computer notions. Furthermore, whereas games and movies were originally purchased or leased from specialty businesses, they are now downloaded, played, and watched online. To put it another way, because the Internet is one of the main life worlds for children in the twenty-first century, it's critical to learn more about how they think about it. This separation is artificial because children's notions of computers, programming, and the Internet appear to be tightly linked.

Children's computer use has progressively increased over time, as have concerns about its harmful impacts on social development. Concerns include the replacement of actual interpersonal relationships with classmates and parents with virtual ones, the loss of time spent on “developmentally meritorious” activities (e.g., sports and social activities) due to computer use, and cyber bullying exposure.

Increased computer use, for example, could obliterate ostensibly more meaningful face-to-face social contact, weakening social relationships with family and close friends.

Furthermore, time spent on the internet, on social networking sites, or playing computer games is time that cannot be committed to sports, clubs, or other extracurricular activities by definition. Extracurricular activities are viewed as an important venue for maintaining and deepening existing friendships. At its most extreme, social isolation can lead to youngsters skipping school or being chronically late. Children's "alone time" on computers, on the other hand, may prolong social bonds by interacting with people through virtual exchanges and even enhance following in-person contacts.

In summary, the evidence reviewed suggests that moderate use of digital technology tends to be beneficial for children’s mental well-being, while no use or too much use can have a small negative impact. This is in line with findings from a meta-analysis of 40 studies of both adults and children, where a negligible negative effect of internet use on well-being was reported. In this context, several authors suggest that to improve children’s mental well-being, it is more important to focus on other factors such as family functioning, social dynamics at school and socio-economic conditions, while also ensuring that children use digital technology in moderate amounts. Instead of focusing only on the impacts of time spent on digital technology, researchers should pay more attention to the influences of the content children encounter and the activities they participate in online, in addition to their social and family environments (Kardefelt-Winther, 2017).

Although research on the effects of children’s use of home computers is still sketchy and ambiguous, some initial indications of positive and negative effects are beginning to emerge. With the increased role of home computers in children’s lives has come increased concern about how children may be affected. Time spent on home computers may displace other activities that have more developmental value, and the merit of the computer-based activities has also been questioned. (Kaveri Subrahmanyam, 2000).

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THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CHILDREN

Contexts for learning and play at school and in leisure

I acquired information regarding the children's conceptions of leisure and school and activities going place in these contexts through discussions with children aged 6 to 13, at day and afternoon care centers, and at schools. Unsurprisingly, there was a clear distinction between the two. "I peered into the classroom via the window and saw...yes, there they sat, learning," for example. "I simply wanted to play, and one is not permitted to play at school," a pre-school boy says, peering into a new world filled with children who are listening to a teacher speak to them (12-year old boy about his delayed school start). I was completely unprepared for school. I had to wait for a whiff of something. Children and adults alike believe that learning involves passively listening to adults and that play does not belong in school but rather in leisure. In my interviews, older children said that school includes so many mandatory activities for students, whereas leisure time provides more freedom. It's possible that you read the same book at school and at home, but you have to account for it at school.

Many educators have criticized the entire educational system for its inability to foster learning. Control systems, texts, learning environments, credits, and grades all operate as roadblocks. Information technology, depending on the manner in which it is used, can be positively or negatively affect the child's development. Andjelkovic points out that the potential positive impacts related to the process of cognitive development, the development of symbolic representation, development of attention, opportunities and understanding of the essence, clearly and faster classification, decision making, analysis, understanding of cause-effect relationships, the development of memory, encouraging creativity, encouraging curiosity, develop imagination, problem solving process, increase motivation. Negative impacts are related to the reduction of creativity and creative thinking, reducing the ability for daydreaming, poor concentration, problems with attention and reducing the patience to work and learn (Dr. Lazar Stosic, 2014).

However, there are some negative signals, such as children's perceptions of computers becoming uninteresting with time, it is critical to create software that is at the forefront of technology, humorous and instructive at the same time as well as instructing. Computers have the ability to be more open-ended and encourage children to solve problems. When children use home computers instead of watching television, it is generally viewed as positive; but when children use computers instead of participating in sports and social activities, it raises concerns about the possible effects on their physical and psychological well-being. In addition, research focusing on the physical risks of playing computer games is important, given that games remain the most frequent home computer activity for children across most age groups, despite the proliferation of other software and applications. These studies suggest that children's extended computer use may be linked to an increased risk of obesity, seizures, and hand injuries (Kaveri Subrahmanyam, 2000).

Developmental Tasks and Knowledge Construction

The interviews with children that I mentioned at the start of this piece were performed as part of my field work training during college when I worked with children. Two theoretical concepts that were utilized to characterize a portion of my findings will be discussed here. A developmental task can be thought of as a life project task for persons of all ages and from all walks of life. School children's developmental challenges include (a) relating to peers while maintaining some distance from adults, (b) dealing with many types of media influences, and (c) learning how to express oneself in various means of communication. Biological motivations and environmental demands, maturational goals and cultural contexts, inner competence motivations and outer competence claims are all intertwined in a developmental activity. Building knowledge that satisfies the expectations of children and young people has become a very significant developmental challenge in our culture.

Another theoretical vehicle for my investigation of children's responses to various environmental "affordances" is construction of knowledge. Children build knowledge by investigating and acting on the world around them. Play is an important aspect of this discovery and acting. Children, in my opinion and theoretical foundation, learn by playing. Some key findings in constructivism theory should be noted, as they have implications for children's learning at school and in their free time - communication, memory, and the question of learning hierarchies.

Communication Development

Communication development for young children includes gaining the skills to understand and to express thoughts, feelings, and information. Understanding communication begins before birth (during pregnancy) and continues through life, as a child hears, sees, and interprets information from other people. The expression of communication or a child's language begins with head, eye, and body movements, as well as through simple vocalizations and hand motions. Language expression progresses to words, sentences, and conversations through many methods including gestures, spoken words, sign language, pictorial language systems, and communication boards. It is essential that a child have one of these functional means of expressive language before going to

kindergarten (Caroline Gooden, 2013). Communication is viewed as a collaborative process based on reciprocal interpretations. As a result, communication (and cooperation) is a prerequisite for successfully completing developmental activities.

A memory that is useful

Learning is a construction process, and memory is a construction process as well. Learning necessitates the use of memory. One concerning element, especially in schools where learning is intended to take place, is that memory is frequently regarded as a separate construct. Research has also shown that young children are much more strategic in their efforts to remember than had previously been thought. A consensus view two decades ago was that children were rather astrategic before the elementary school years, but it turns out that preschoolers just did not seem to make use of the rehearsal and organizational types of strategies that are evident after age 8; rather, they employ somewhat less sophisticated techniques (Peter A. Ornstein, 2001). Children must have the ability to construct, not just receive and recall knowledge, in order to handle developmental activities and solve difficulties linked to these tasks.

Is it possible to learn in hierarchies?

Another issue to consider in this type of analysis is prevalent perceptions of how individuals learn, particularly the concept of learning hierarchies. Learning is frequently considered as occurring in phases or hierarchies that are laid out according to some kind of law, both in common sense and in scientific work. Hierarchies have been differently defined by different investigators, in accord with their theoretical and applied interests. Learning psychologists and instructional designers tend to define hierarchies in terms of asymmetrical transfer relationships between two or more tasks. Thus, two tasks are considered to be hierarchically related, if (a) one task is easier to learn than the other; and (b) learning the simpler task first produces positive transfer in learning the more complex task. For example, learning to count is demonstrably easier than learning to add. A child will also learn addition more quickly if he is competent in counting than if he does not yet know how to count; counting, in other words, provides positive transfer to learning addition. Counting and adding, therefore, are hierarchically related, with counting prerequisite to adding. Now if we assume that addition is prerequisite to a still more complex task — for example, some forms of multiplication — and that the multiplication task is pre requisite to a still more complex task, we have a hierarchically organized sequence of tasks (Resnick, 2014). It is natural to understand learning as a process in a set hierarchy, serving as a norm for credits and measures, from a so-called compensatory view of learning, grounded in a philosophy of children's incapacities rather than a philosophy of children's competence. On the other hand, if you regard learning to be an active process, you must also consider play to be a component of that process. They begin with their own competency and create their own learning chains.

Children's Computer Concepts - to Address a Developmental Task

Children's growth is aided by the Information Society, which includes electronic media and computers. From a constructivist standpoint, it's fascinating to investigate this activity from the perspective of the children, i.e. using the children's own remarks and debates as data. The children's competency, both motivationally and cognitively, must be the foundation for their learning, and so the concepts of the children must be the beginning point for any educational initiatives. To form a scientific concept (accurate or not), children must identify cause-and-effect relationships, formulate hypotheses, make generalizations, and draw interpretations from their observations and experiences. All of these processes can be defined as higher-order thinking skills (Dori, 2009). Here I summarize some trends.

In the afternoons, at daycares and schools during a semester, I spoke with youngsters aged 6 to 8 on a regular basis. We talked about education and recreational activities, and within these categories, we occasionally talked about computers. These young children usually discussed computers as a fact to consider, rather than with joy or anxiety. They could explain - often in great detail - how to use the computer to extract various types of data. Friends or parents had told them about computers. Many parents used to work with computers and would bring them home with them. A young youngster of eight arrived to the conclusion that "a computer does not have the ability to invent itself," and this statement may well characterize many children's casual attitude about technology. This little boy was enthralled by the possibilities offered by computers, but he quickly pointed out that a computer cannot think for itself and can only do what it is told. "We can teach them our knowledge, but they must also be taught how to do things. Of course, you know what a computer is, but explaining it is difficult," he answered when I asked another child what a computer was. Well, wait, it's just a big box with buttons, and it won't forget it unless you take the disc out, of course." At school, none of them had ever seen a computer. Some girls, when confronted with this option, disagreed that a computer could be used to learn. "Paper and pencil are required for learning," one girl observed, while another assumed that computers in school meant a new topic, computer learning. In terms of children's impressions of computers in their world, there is a shift from younger to

older youngsters. The younger children have a more casual attitude about computers, while the older ones have a more fearful attitude. It's difficult to say if this pattern reflects the children's varying familiarity with computers or if it's a developmental one (based on age). Most of the youngsters polled, on the other hand, could see the educational benefits of computers at school, to the point where they believed that teachers may lose their jobs and that verbal connection with teachers and peers would become obsolete. The idea of employing computers as learning tools was met with some scepticism among the younger girls. At school, paper and pencils seemed to be the natural vehicles for learning, but perhaps computers could be taught as part of a separate topic.

CONCLUSION

Is New Media a Threat to Children or an Opportunity for Education?

The tasks are governed by "inner" and "outside" limitations, and it is impossible to generalize how different children with diverse backgrounds handle these problems. This is a crucial thing to note, because it corresponds to my earlier critique of general learning hierarchies' assumptions. The Information Society places many new expectations on children and youth, which are translated into developmental tasks, and one issue is how school and home may assist in completing these duties. Games on the computer at home, on the other hand, are not always a threat to school and education. The issue appears to be how to introduce computers to schools in such a way that children will use them to construct knowledge, bringing computers under their control rather than being dominated by them. In today's technological culture, we notice a variety of dangers for children, as well as their parents and teachers. Some parents are comfortable using computers as job tools, while others aren't. Educating children to learn using computers while maintaining human touch with adults, such as teachers and parents, will most likely be a future problem in order to solve critical developmental tasks other than those raised by the Information Society.

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