The Many Benefits, for Kids, of Playing Video Games

Freedom to Learn

parents

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essay on rise of depression and anxiety

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fear
In these online games, players create a character (an avatar), which has unique physical and psychological traits and assets, and, with that, they can participate in a world where real-life people are not physically present but are instead represented by these avatars. This allows for a unique form of interaction that is not possible in the real world.

Over time, video games have become increasingly complex and multifaceted. Perhaps the most interesting games today are the so-called Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs), such as World of Warcraft. In these games, players can develop their own characters and interact with a vast number of other players, creating a complex and dynamic online environment.

Video games have been shown to have many positive effects on brainpower. Quite a few well-controlled research studies have documented positive effects of video games on mental development. Repeated experiments have shown that playing fast-paced action video games can quite markedly increase players' scores on tests of visuospatial thinking, and problem solving. Other studies suggest that, depending on the type of game, video games can also increase scores on measures of working memory (the ability to hold several items of information in mind at once), critical thinking, and problem solving.

Concerning violence, meta-analyses of the many studies designed to find effects of violent video games on real-world violence have concluded that, taken as a whole, there is precious little or no evidence at all of such effects. It's interesting, also, to note that over the decades in which violent video gaming has been steadily rising, there has been a steady and large decline in real-world violence by youth.

I have to admit that I personally hate graphic depictions of violence, in games or anywhere else, but I claim no moral virtue in that. I'm just similar students who didn't play such games.

Some evidence that playing such games helps people learn how to control their hostility. In one experiment, college students were presented with a frustrating mental task and then were assessed for their feelings both of depression and hostility. The significant finding was that regular players of violent video games felt less depressed and less hostile 45 minutes after the frustrating experience than did otherwise with a frustrating mental task and then were assessed for their feelings both of depression and hostility. The significant finding was that regular players of violent video games felt less depressed and less hostile 45 minutes after the frustrating experience than did otherwise regular players of violent video games felt less depressed and less hostile 45 minutes after the frustrating experience than did otherwise.

Video games can also have positive effects on health. For example, some evidence suggests that video games can increase physical fitness and reduce obesity. A large-scale study in four cities in Holland showed – contrary to what I assume was the initial hypothesis – that kids who had a computer and/or a television set in their own room were significantly more likely to be obese, more likely to also enjoy outdoor play, more socially engaged, more socially well-adjusted, and more civic minded than are their non-gaming peers.

The most common complaints about video games are that they (1) are socially isolating, (2) reduce opportunities for outdoor activities and exercise, (3) promote violence in kids, if the games have violent content. On the face of it, of course, the first two of these claims should be truer of book reading than of video gaming. Concerning the third claim, I don't see any obvious reason why pretend murder of animated characters in video games should be any more likely to provoke real murder than, say, reading Shakespeare's account of Hamlet's murder of his stepfather. Yet we...
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And when we’re talking about video games, there are actually some pretty great benefits that your kids can enjoy, if you let them play from time to time. From increased physical activity, to improved memory and broadened social activity, here are 17 reasons why playing video games may actually be good for your kids.

**Physical Benefits.**

#1. Better Motor Skills. Worried your child is lacking with their fine motor skill coordination? Studies suggest giving them video games! According to one study, kids who played sporadic video games for the duration of 10 weeks were able to tell the difference between different shades of grey, compared to kids who did not play at all!

#3. Full Body Movement. Many moms think that video games leave their kiddo stationary. Parent-approved video games that are played in moderation can help young kids develop in educational, social, and physical ways. As parents, we focus more attention on the potential dangers than on the potential benefits of electronic video games, but these games are a normal part of modern childhood.

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**Meet the Editor:**

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you know what to look for, video games can be a powerful tool to help children develop certain life skills. They can help parents choose appropriate leisure-time games, help educators seek ways to supplement classroom teaching, and help game developers create games that teach. Recently, I wrote a research paper called "Children's Motivations for Video Game Play in the Context of Normal Development" that w