

The Game through the Experience on Seminars of the Pedagogy Course for the Students of Teaching

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The game is often defined as: “*physical or mental activity, main aim of which is relaxation and entertainment of the individual. We meet the game activities not only in the childhood, but in every developmental stage, including adults. Naturally, the content, form and role of the game are changing along with age.*” (Slovak Pedagogical Encyclopedia, 1989, p. 310). There are a lot of theories in present-day literature which explain the gist of the game. The developmental, content and theoretical points of view are used here frequently

The meaning of the game study and thorough knowledge of the game by the students of teaching. The knowledge of the game, its features and developmental principles is considerably important for the teacher in the process of pedagogical evaluation. The game is a developmental need for healthy child. The observation of the spontaneous game of the child enables teacher to know the child move closely, to diagnose the mental level, i.e. the degree of development of mental and physical abilities of the child: “*The game of mentally and sense handicapped children is mainly monotonous, with mechanical and stereotypical repeating of the action and process. It is not verbally commented enough, it misses adequate gesticulation and motor handling of action.*” (Special Education for teacher, p. 54)

Despite of this fact, the game provides joy and inner satisfaction to every child (both healthy and handicapped). Cognitive, socio-affective and psychomotor domains of personality are simultaneously developed in the game activities – whole child personality matures developmentally and progresses due to accelerating effect of the game, it supports also the development of social relationships and communication abilities¹.

The game is an essential part of all activities which fill in the time of child; it is the dominant activity in childhood. As a means of education, it is used mainly in school institutions of preprimary, less in primary grade. It is used here in the form of educational game. Even though the game belongs among child’s basic needs as a natural activity in free time of preprimary and primary children, it is not like that in traditional school: “learn first and then you can play.”

I cannot get rid of the idea that we pay little attention to the children’s game also in preparation of teachers. It is interesting that the teachers in practice often neglect this means of education as a method of effective teaching. Also our present-day didactic literature devotes to the game just marginally, though the specialists certainly know the value of the game for child and its meaning for the following child mental development. We have already mentioned that the game fills in the essential part of free time of preprimary child. But what do we do if we want such an effective, for children close means of education to become a part of everyday teaching in elementary schools? One of the attempts how to point at the meaning of integrating the game in lessons is recognition of students through activities on the pedagogy seminars.

¹ According to Jean Piaget (1997), the child must necessarily come to confrontation with other children’s opinions and things like that, with someone who has a different attitude: “*intellectual development of child is mediated by placing child into social situations*”. In the game with others, the child is forced to take to consideration other child’s view which is in conflict with his own view.

The function of the seminars dealing with children's game in teachers' study.

It is as if adults and university students forgot what everything the game was providing for them. In fact, they do not realize what everything the game gave them, what everything they learnt through it. They can realize and reevaluate it by means of activities on seminars. Therefore the process of recalling and recognition is interesting, of course, on a different level and from a point of view that differs from the one in childhood.

At the Philosophical Faculty of Catholic University, the game is taught as an optional subject of credit study of the Pedagogy and psychology course in the sixth semester. It is implemented by two and four lesson blocks. The content of the Game Course:

1. **The features of the game.** The game represents in the life of the child, pupil, one of the most important symbolic activities. The content of the game is sociohistorically determined. Reality and fantasy are united in the game. The game activity is miscellaneous and has many forms. Its classification is not unified.
2. **The creative games.** The creative games enable group fantasies.
3. The games with rules. The teacher's principle – the restriction of intervention from the teacher's side, and if it is necessary – to prefer indirect intervention. This concerns not only spontaneous game but also educational game.
4. **The educational game.** *“Analogy of spontaneous children's activity which follows (for pupils not always in an obvious way) didactic goals. It can be realized in the classroom, gym, playground, town, nature. It is typical that it has its rules; it requires control, final evaluation. It is designed for both individuals and groups of pupils; the role of pedagogical leader has a wide range from the main organizer up to observer. Its advantage is stimulating charge, because it awakes an interest, it rises involvement of pupils on performing activities, it supports their creativity, spontaneity, cooperation and competitiveness, it forces them to use various knowledge and capabilities, to integrate lifetime experiences. Some of the educational games approach to model situation of the real life.”* (Průcha – Walterová – Mareš, 1988, p. 49)
5. **The use of children's folk game in teaching.** It has its particularities in every single region in Slovakia. It involves three complementary parts: dynamic part of behavior, music, rhyming and text. The dramatization of action can graduate together with dynamics of musical and dancing expression. The teacher can complete and enrich the game by various props. The folk game is of great importance for children because they know it from their family surroundings – they often know it when they start school attendance. The games motivate and concentrate attention of children by close, natural activity. The use of the game is suitable at the beginning of the lesson – it becomes an introductory motivating method. It prepares pupils for the main part of the lesson. It mobilizes and activates children; it supports concentration for the following activities connected with exposition and fixation. Children's folk game in the form of rhymed poem connected with the game on the body can be used as an energizer in every part of the lesson.
6. **Motivating effects of the game.** The game is of great importance for children, because it motivates and concentrates attention of the child.

The form of realization of the seminar

The phase of active game. It represents the demonstration (realization of a certain kind of game by students themselves) with consequential deduction. It is important to drag students in game activities. This approach comes out the thesis that the authentic learning is one of the most effective ways of pupil's self-development. The students work in groups. The group work finishes with the phase of collective evaluation and deduction based on own experience.

This phase is considered to be the most important – the students realize the features and try to make their own suggestions how to use the game in teaching.

Experiments, experimental search and observation as a base of individual work of students are means of self-development, especially for cognitive processes development.

The teacher as a facilitator creates situations leading to recognition of features and principles of game functioning. On the base of their own cognition, they get diametrically opposed point of view related to the game and its individual developmental forms.

The conclusion

The game represents one of the most important activities in the life of the child. Even though the game dominates as a main activity of preprimary and primary children in their free time, it is not like that in traditional school. Therefore it is necessary to look for other opportunities of using the game in the process of teaching.

Sources

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The main objective of my contribution is to present the creative and activating methods, that are realized at the University by the teachers from the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology. The teachers present learning through the experience, group activities and learning base on co-operation by the means of methodological games. In the spirit of solipsizm, the students realize the importance of their own interaction as a co-operation necessary for the work on natural purpose.

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