MINDLY EDUCATION

THE ROLE OF PLAY IN LEARNING

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TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. START SMALL AND SIMPLE
2. ALIGN GAMES WITH LEARNING OBJECTIVES
3. FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
4. DEBRIEF AND REFLECT
5. MONITOR AND ADAPT

Here are five recommendations for education professionals who want to integrate play into their teaching practice, along with the potential risks involved:

MONITOR AND ADAPT

Recommendation : Be attentive during the game. If some games do not engage students or cause disruptions, be ready to adjust or try new activities.

Risk : Rigidly sticking to a game that does not work can lead to frustration for the professional and the young people. Flexibility is essential to ensure successful integration of the game into learning.

DEBRIEF AND REFLECT

Recommendation : After the game, take the time to discuss what the students learned and how they can apply it. This helps reinforce the educational value of the activity.

Risk : Omitting the debriefing can leave students unclear about the purpose of the game, thus reducing its effectiveness as a learning tool.

Start Small and Simple

Recommendation : First incorporate short, structured games or activities that align with your program. This can serve as an icebreaker or transition between lessons.

Risk : Introducing too complex games too quickly can lead to confusion or disengagement. Start with easy-to-explain and manage activities.

Align games with learning objectives

Recommendation : Choose games that reinforce specific educational goals. For example, use math games to practice arithmetic or role-playing games for language skills.

Risk : If the games are not related to the learning objectives, students may perceive them as distractions rather than meaningful learning opportunities.

PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Recommendation : Select games that encourage teamwork and collaboration, ensuring that all students can participate regardless of their abilities. Adapt the rules to accommodate different skills.

Risk : Exclusive or overly competitive games can alienate some students, leading to feelings of inadequacy or exclusion.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- “Stanislas Dehaene's research on learning and the brain” - Wise Channel
- “The importance of play in children's learning and development” - Starting Blocks
- "The Role of Play in Learning" - (NAEYC)
- "Embracing Learning Through Play" - Harvard Graduate School of Education
- "Learning Through Play: A Review of the Evidence" - The LEGO Foundation

"THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT" - STARTINGBLOCKS.GOV.AU

Play is essential for children's overall development. Through play, children enhance their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills. It allows them to explore, imagine, solve problems, and naturally learn basic language and math concepts in a fun way. Encouraging play every day supports effective learning and children's well-being.

"Embracing Learning Through Play" - Harvard Graduate School of Education

This resource written by Elizabeth M. Ross outlines the critical role of play in children's learning processes, backed by research findings. It offers practical strategies for educators to foster a playful learning environment in their classrooms.

"The Role of Play in Learning" - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

This article discusses the importance of play in early childhood education, emphasizing how play facilitates learning and development across various domains. It provides insights into best practices for integrating play into the classroom.

"Learning Through Play: A Review of the Evidence" - The LEGO Foundation

This comprehensive report presents research on the benefits of learning through play, highlighting various educational approaches and the positive impacts on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

"Stanislas Dehaene's research on learning and the brain" - Wise Channel

Cognitive psychology and neuroscience have started to unravel the neural mechanisms behind literacy through brain imaging methods. When children learn to read, their brains repurpose existing visual and auditory regions, adapting them to recognize letters and sounds. This process, known as “neuronal recycling,” sheds light on why many children face challenges during reading acquisition. As our knowledge of the developing brain expands, it has significant implications for how educational practices should be designed to better support learning.