

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO GAMES REVISITED: PERSPECTIVES FROM PARENTS, GAMERS, AND SPECIALISTS

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Abstract

The scientific community apparently fails to offer a definitive answer to the questions on the effects of video game playing on children, and many studies are biased by the personal experiences of their authors. So, we shouldn't wonder that parents are also confused about the possible effects of video games. Our research aims to investigate the differences between parents', specialists', gamers' and non-gamers' perceptions on video game playing, with an emphasis on the educational video games. Four samples of participants were used: parents, psychologists, gamers and non-gamers. Starting from the pilot study conducted by Drugaș (2014), we evaluated again the popularity of video games, the content and tasks of educational video games, the risks and benefits associated with playing, their level of violence and the level of parent involvement in the virtual experiences of their children. The research highlights a rather negative attitude towards educational video games by non-gamers, individuals with little to no experience in the virtual world. As expected, gamers are largely in favor of the phenomenon, insisting on the fun of playing and on the gains on the cognitive and IT skills. Psychologists show a differentiated perspective, agreeing that educational video games could foster cognitive skills, but that players are often left without supervision in the virtual world. Parents showed an accepting attitude of the phenomenon. The non-random sampling and the small number of participants are among the limits of the research.

Keywords: educational video games; risks and benefits; parents; gamers; psychologists

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