

## Chapter 21

# Reasons to Instruct Teachers on the Use of Motor Games for Learning Purposes: Teachers and Teaching Students' Opinion

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter addresses the use of play-based learning as a means to boost meaningful learning. This work aims to provide reasons to back up the suitability of motor games as a pedagogical resource in early childhood education. By this means, the authors aspire to help teaching students and actual teachers to become aware of the importance of getting familiar with the pedagogical basis of motor games in order to apply them effectively from the early education stages. A systematic review has been performed to tackle this objective, and it has revealed cognitive, linguistic, physical, and socio-affective benefits of implementing games for instructive purposes. Apart from that, both teachers and university teaching students have completed a survey to measure their opinion on this issue, and the results show that they regard motor games as powerful pedagogical tools.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers need to become aware of the impact of motor games in children's cognitive and affective development in order to perceive the importance of mastering their pedagogical foundations. This reflection is based on the view of the game as an essential element in the comprehensive development of the child, and, therefore, an indispensable pedagogical ingredient in the teaching-learning process. Among other benefits, the use of this tool enhances children's creativity and fosters the understanding of linguistic concepts. Games, and particularly motor games, reinforce children's personality and character, their social abilities and autonomy, as well as their motor control and physical abilities (Baena & Ruiz, 2016).

It is in the early childhood when children build up their personality by adjusting in a holistic manner the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective spheres; and it is precisely in the game where all these spheres meet. Furthermore, games are useful mechanisms of socialization because they allow children to get to know themselves, and, from that, to communicate with their peers in order to become acquainted with them and establish affective relationships with them. Thus, while children play, they are unconsciously internalizing a set of social behavior norms.

By incorporating the term 'motor' to the concept of game, the researchers aim to underline the role of this kind of game in the development of the physical functions (coordination, balance, locomotive and manipulative skills, breath, and postural skills, and so forth) but without underestimating its psychic benefits for the maturity of memory, language, creativity, perception, and so on. Actually, this combination is crucial to ensure that children are able to develop their ability to learn.

Children can effectively achieve this capacity when teachers devise the proper teaching-learning context of games by guiding them under the principles of constructivism. Hence the importance of a rigorous and practical teacher training in pedagogical strategies.

In this vein, Rinaudo et al. (2006) stress that this training will be enriching inasmuch as learners – teachers and future teachers–perceive it as meaningful. To put it in other words, it is essential that these agents regard these concepts, abilities, and aptitudes they are trained in as worthy to ensure that they are engaged in their assimilation and transmission. It is necessary to delve into the justification of the motor game as a pedagogical tool for the classroom to guarantee that teachers acknowledge their benefits and become aware of their responsibility to keep their training in this field updated.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The etymological origin of the concept of game point to dynamics of jokes and amusement. Thus, games refer to easy-going activities that are commonly regarded as ludic activities (Rodríguez & Montúfar, 2017). Children have the ability to socialize and are naturally interested in it. They tend to make the most of the environment that is laid out before them. Moreover, they intrinsically need to move and engage in activities and relationships with the elements and individuals around them. Games allow children, on the one hand, to know themselves and to express their ideas, and, on the other hand, to explore their context with the aid of their senses and their movement (Garaigordobil, 2008).

From what has been stated, it follows that the upbringing of the child must be focused on what he/she is and what is around him/her (family, friends, school, society, personal characteristics, basic needs, and so on.). The best tool to attain this goal is the game. Minerva (2002) advocates for this kind of activity

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