


Chapter 10


Exploring Game-Based Learning for the Inclusion of Students With Autism in Regular Classrooms: A Case Study

Ana Manzano León

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6966-0355>

University of Almería, Spain

Marina Alférez Pastor

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3323-124X>

University of Almería, Spain

José M. Rodríguez-Ferrer

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1811-0040>

University of Burgos, Spain

José Manuel Aguilar Parra

University of Almería, Spain

ABSTRACT

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant challenges in social interaction, communication and cognitive flexibility. This chapter explores how Game-Based Learning (GBL) methodology can enhance the communication and socialization skills of children with ASD within a regular classroom setting alongside their peers. Employing qualitative research methods, including the analysis of teacher interviews and academic reports, the study exam-

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ines the impact of structured board games on fostering inclusive interactions and developmental progress in three students with ASD at a public school in Spain. The findings highlight board games as an effective educational tool that facilitates the integration of these children by improving their ability to interact and collaborate in a group setting. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of selecting games with clear rules and consistent structures tailored to the unique needs of children with ASD to create a more inclusive and conducive learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter explored the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL) methodologies in educational settings, specifically aimed at incorporating students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) into regular classrooms. The focus was primarily on how structured board games can enhance communication and socialization skills among children with ASD, facilitating a more inclusive environment where these children can interact and learn alongside their neurotypical peers.

The perspective of the chapter was founded on recognising the unique challenges faced by individuals with ASD, particularly in terms of social interaction and communication. These challenges often include difficulties in understanding non-verbal cues, managing emotions, and engaging in reciprocal social exchanges. However, the chapter posited GBL as a potentially transformative approach. Incorporating board games into the curriculum suggests that students with ASD can benefit from structured yet flexible learning environments that naturally promote the development of critical social and communicative skills. In addition to fostering social skills, the chapter also addressed how GBL can support emotional regulation, a significant area of need for many students with ASD. Through gameplay, students can experience a controlled setting where they can practice managing frustrations and successes, which are common emotional responses during competitive and cooperative play. This potential for transformation should inspire hope and optimism for the future of inclusive education.

Moreover, the chapter discussed the role of educators in successfully implementing GBL. Teachers are essential for mediating game-based interactions and adapting the games to meet students' educational needs. Educators' professional insights and adjustments are crucial in ensuring that the games are both accessible and effective in achieving the desired educational outcomes.

The primary objective was to explore, through a case study methodology, the effectiveness of a specific game-based learning methodology to improve communication and emotional management skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) integrated into regular classrooms.

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