Positive and negative effects of gaming

Entertainment, Games

Video games are frowned upon by parents as time-wasters, and worse, someeducationexperts think that these games corrupt the brain. Violent video gamesare easily blamed by the media and some experts as the reason why some young people become violent or commit extreme anti-social behavior. But many scientists and psychologists find that video games can actually have many benefits – the main one is making kids smart. Video games may actually teach kids high-level thinking skills that they will need in the future.

Positive Effects of Video Games

When you play video games, it gives the brain a real workout. In many video games, the skills required to win involve abstract and high level thinking. These skills are not even taught at school. Some of the mental skills enhanced by video games include: o Following instructions

- Problem solving and logic

- Hand-eye coordination, fine motor, and spatial skills.

- Planning, resource management, and logistics.

- Multitasking

- Quick thinking, making fast analysis and decisions.

- Accuracy

- Pattern recognition

- Estimating skills

- Memory

- Concentration

- Improved ability to rapidly and accurately recognize visual information

- Teamwork and cooperation when played with others

- Management

- Video games increase your self-confidence and self-esteem as you master the games.

In many games, the levels of difficulty are adjustable.

As a beginner, you begin at the easy level and by constant practicing and slowly building skills, you become confident in handling more difficult challenges. Since the cost offailureis lower, you don't fear making mistakes. You take more risks and explore more. You can transfer this attitude to the real life.

Negative Effects of Video Games

Most of the bad effects of video games are blamed on theviolencethey contain. Children who play more violent video games are more likely to have increased aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and decreased prosocial helping, according to a scientific study (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). The effect of video game violence in kids is worsened by the games' interactive nature. In many games, kids are rewarded for being more violent. The act of violence is done repeatedly. The child is in control of the violence and experiences the violence in his own eyes (killings, kicking, stabbing and shooting).

This active participation, repetition, and reward are effective tools for learning behavior. Indeed, many studies seem to indicate that violent video games may be related to aggressive behavior (such as Anderson & Dill, 2000; Gentile, Lynch & Walsh, 2004). However, the evidence is not consistent and this issue is far from settled. Many experts including Henry

Jenkins of Massachusetts Institute ofTechnologyhave noted that there is a decreased rate of juvenile crime which coincides with the popularity of games such as Death Race, Mortal Kombat, Doom and Grand Theft auto.

He concludes that teenage players are able to leave the emotional effects of the game behind when the game is over. Indeed there are cases of teenagers who commit violent crimes who also spend great amount of time playing video games such as those involved in the Columbine and Newport cases. It appears that there will always be violent people, and it just so happen that many of them also enjoy playing violent video games.

- Too much video game playing makes your kid socially isolated. Also, he may spend less time in other activities such as doing homework, reading, sports, and interacting with thefamilyand friends.
- Some video games teach kids the wrong values. Violent behavior, vengeance and aggression are rewarded. Negotiating and other nonviolent solutions are often not options. Women are often portrayed as weaker characters that are helpless or sexually provocative.
- Games can confuse reality and fantasy.
- Academicachievement may be negatively related to over-all time spent playing video games. Studies have shown that the more time a kid spends playing video games, the poorer is his performance in school. (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Gentile, Lynch & Walsh, 2004). A study by Argosy University's Minnesota School on ProfessionalPsychologyfound that video game addicts argue a lot with their teachers, fight a lot with their friends, and score lower grades than others who play video games less often. Other studies show that many game players

routinely skip their homework to play games, and many students admitted that their video game habits are often responsible for poor school grades.

- Although some studies suggest that playing video games enhances a child's concentration, other studies, such as a 2012 paper published in Psychology of Popular MediaCulture, have found that games can hurt and help children's attention issues — improving the ability to concentrate in short bursts but damaging long-term concentration.

- Video games may also have bad effects on some children'shealth, includingobesity, video-induced seizures. and postural, muscular and skeletal disorders, such as tendonitis, nerve compression, carpal tunnel syndrome.

- When playing online, your kid can pick up bad language and behavior from other people, and may make your kid vulnerable to online dangers.

- A study by the Minneapolis-based National Institute for Media and the Family suggests that video games can be addictive for kids, and that the kids' addiction to video games increases theirdepressionandanxietylevels. Addicted kids also exhibit social phobias. Not surprisingly, kids addicted to video games see their school performance suffer.

- Kids spending too much time playing video games may exhibit impulsive behavior and have attention problems. This is according to a new study published in the February 2012 issue of the Journal of Psychology and Popular Media Culture. For the study, attention

problems were defined as difficulty engaging in or sustaining behavior to reach a goal.