

Игровая деятельность с ориентировкой как метод развития дошкольников

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Для цитаты:

Соловьева Ю., Кинтанар Л. Игровая деятельность с ориентировкой как метод развития дошкольников [Электронный ресурс] // Психолого-педагогические исследования. 2019. Том 11. № 4. С. 49–66 doi: 10.17759/psyedu.2019110404

For citation:

Solovieva Yu., Quintanar L. Playing Activity with Orientation as a Method for Preschool Development [Elektronnyi resurs]. *Psikhologo-pedagogicheskie issledovaniya [Psychological-Educational Studies]*, 2019. Vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 49–66 doi: 10.17759/psyedu.2019110404. (In Russ., abstr. in Engl.)

Согласно концепции Л.С. Выготского, психологическое развитие детей происходит в процессе культурной деятельности. Каждая форма деятельности может быть выражена как своего рода повествование или личная эмоциональная вовлеченность, испытываемая ребенком в разные периоды детства. Одним из важнейших видов такого опыта является игровая деятельность, вовлекающая участников коллектива в глобальную социальную ситуацию: детей и взрослых. Игровая деятельность с разнообразием типов и видов игр, которые также отличаются в зависимости от социально-исторических условий, может дать возможность изучить содержание, структуру и этапы одной и той же деятельности. Игры могут отличаться по самым разным параметрам. В данном исследовании представлено два вида проявления игровой деятельности: организованные игры с внешней направленностью, предлагаемые взрослыми. Такие виды игр предполагают общение и сотрудничество внутри групп дошкольников в дошкольных учреждениях. В статье представлены этапы введения игровой деятельности, виды средств внешней ориентации, предложенной взрослыми, и примеры конкретных игр с процедурой их реализации. Также обсуждаются качественные достижения в психологическом развитии дошкольников в результате участия в игровой деятельности. Авторы приходят к выводу, что культурно-историческая концепция развития должна использоваться наряду с концепцией активности

психологических структур. Такой подход может быть использован для качественного понимания содержательного развития в дошкольном возрасте.

Ключевые слова: игровая деятельность, ориентация, развитие дошкольников, культурное развитие, теория деятельности, методы развития.

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Playing Activity with Orientation as a Method for Preschool Development

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According to Vigotskian conception, psychological development of children occurs within the frames of cultural activities. Each form of activity may be expressed as a kind of narration or personal emotional involvement experienced by a child in different periods of childhood. One of essential kinds such experience is playing activity, engaging collective participants in a global social situation: children and adults. Playing activity with variety of modes and types of games, different in diverse social and historical conditions, may provide interesting psychological opportunity to study content, structure and stages of same activity. Games may differ by a variety of parameters. In this study the authors are interested in presenting two kinds of expression of playing activity: organized games with external orientation introduced by adults. Such types of games imply communication and collaboration within groups of preschool children in preschool institutions. The article presents phases of introduction of playing activity, kinds of means of external orientation proposed by adults and examples of concrete games with procedure of implementation. The authors discuss qualitative achievements in psychological development of preschool children as a result of participation in playing activity. The authors conclude that essential methodological approach of historical and cultural conception of development should be used together with conception of psychological structures development. Such an approach might be useful for qualitative understanding of meaningful development at preschool age.

Keywords: playing activity, orientation, preschool development, cultural development, activity theory, methods for development.

According to Vigotskian conception, psychological development of children occurs within the frames of cultural experiences. Not all cultural experiences might conform psychological activities as process directed to objective goal. Both unstructured spontaneous experiences and structured activities usually imply emotional involvement of participants within in different periods of childhood. Emotional involvement or emotional experience was introduced by Vigotsky [1] as a unit for analysis and description of periods of infancy and its significance for future development of activity and personality.

One of essential kinds of such emotional involvement in organized cultural situations is child's participation in playing activity. Playing activity might be understood as a particular kind of cultural, which involves collective communication and emotional exchange between children and adults. The relevance of the term of activity is based on the idea that human activity is at the same time the source and manifestation of human's psychological development [2; 3].

According to activity theory, playing cannot be understood as a "natural expression of child's inner world" or as a necessary biological stage of development [4]. Playing activity appears only on specific stage of social and historical development of human society, when it was possible to offer a period of infancy for practicing of social communication with the help of different symbolic actions of representation with possibility of achievement the level of narration in games [5; 6]. There is no biological need for playing activity, but there is a precise cultural need: an opportunity for experience of emotional contacts with other children and broad inclusion of symbolic means into mutual activity.

Psychological study of playing activity may provide interesting opportunity to study content, structure and stages of this kind of activity. Within historic and cultural

conception of child’s development, thematic games with social roles are considered as rector activity of preschool age [4; 7; 8].

Games may differ from one another by a variety of parameters. Such parameters might be established by consideration of elements of content of playing activity. But before considering games as specific kind of activity, typical for infancy, it is necessary to argue that playing activity may be understood as a kind of activity and how it would be possible to distinguish between games and other kinds of activities. Let us start with the first part of our argumentation.

Playing activity can be considered as a kind of activity, because it shares same structure as the structure of cultural activity in general. According to the structure of activity, it is possible to identify motive (concretization of necessity of activity), goal (direction of activity), means (verbal and non-verbal means of expression) and external or internal orientation [7]. It’s also possible to propose concrete analysis of psychological structure of playing activity [6].

In playing activity, the motive or object of necessity of the game is social communication with children and adults. The goal, which is not exactly conscious at the very begging, can be expressed as an aspiration for represent specific social role. The means are all kinds of actions with objects, symbolic representation, actions with symbols, verbal expressions, movements and so on, according to each concrete game. The orientation is the form of presentation (external or internal for the child) of the whole situation with roles and actions to the children. We find it useful the way of precise establishment of such content of activity, because it might be helpful for methodological and practical purposes. The table 1 shows the elements of the structure of games with social roles as elements of activity.

Table 1

Structure of playing activity

Structural components of playing activity	Description
Necessity	Broad social communication with adults and other children
Motive	Representation of imaginary communicative situations
Objective	Representation of concrete social roles
Means (operations)	Verbal expressions, gestures, movements, emotional expressions, reactions, objects, symbols, etc.
Orientation	Constant dialogical conversation, presentation of examples, group questions and answers, etc.
Result	Procedure of emotional involvement

According to activity theory [2], each kind of human activity involves always motive or object of activity, goals, means and orientation. Such inclusion always implies inclusion of a kind of emotional involvement according to Vigotsky’s proposal [9], but this

involvement wouldn't be a casual or spontaneous as it might happen in common day-to-day experiences. According to Leontiev [10] there is no activity without a motive, and this is a basic and essential feature of activity. At the same time, pure emotional experiences might be spontaneous and have no relation to specific child's activity. This position is very useful for study and implementation of playing activity in groups of pre-scholars. Our understanding of playing activity is clammg that it should be studied and applied as a kind of rector activity of preschool and not as casual or optional emotional experience.

The necessity of preschool children to take part in organized activity, which guarantees communication with adults and other children, allows might be accomplished with there inclusion in collective games. We should say that such kind of practice isn't typical in the majority of public or private educational institutions in Mexico and in other countries of Latin America the authors has opportunity to visit. The common options of for preschool education are so called "free" situations with no structure and no goals. Another option is related to the forced introduction of school tasks based on repetition and memorization of letters and numbers or usage of some symbolic means. According to us, both types of work have nothing to do with historical and cultural conception of psychological development, neither with activity theory. The concept of orientation is absent both in "free" situations and also in tasks of repetition and memorization. Certainly, both situations might include some kind of positive or negative emotional experiences, which are not necessary significant for the goals of psychological development and for preparation of the children for school learning.

We believe that motive of playing activity might be expressed as a desire or aspiration of representation of imaginary situations with social roles. Both imaginary situations and social roles should be attractive and understandable for children. In many occasions, children might require orientation for introduction of imaginary situations and roles, which take part in these situations. The role of adult in such introduction is essential for initial stage of introduction of playing activity in preschool institutions.

The goal of the present article is to describe the content of orientation as essential part of playing activity and to show examples of our methodology used in preschool institution in Mexico. Our contribution as of methodological nature and describes possibilities of qualitative way for introduction and analysis of the components of playing activity in groups of preschool children.

Orientation as essential component of playing activity

According to Galperin's conception of orientation as essential part of each human activity, orientation part of action must include some essential elements (Galperin, 1998):

- presentation of the global situation,
- consideration of meaningful elements of the situation,
- possibility of planning of the steps for fulfillment of the action,
- possibility for realization of reflexive control of the action in case of difficulties.

According to Galperin [11], such general understanding of orientation is very important, but not enough for concrete usage of this methodological concept. In case of each specific activity or intellectual action should be created concretely according to detailed previous analysis. These general elements of any kind of orientation might be directly applied during introduction of playing activity in groups of preschool children. The table 2 shows possible content of each element of orientation within playing activity.

Table 2

Orientation in playing activity

Elements of content of general orientation	Elements of content of orientation in playing activity
Presentation of the global situation	Presentation of example imaginary social situation
Consideration of meaningful elements of the situation	Presentation of possible social roles with possible actions, possible usage of objects and of symbolic means.
Possibility of planning of the steps for fulfillment of the action	Agreement of participation of each child in the process of game.
Possibility for realization of reflexive control of the action in case of difficulties	Inclusion of reflection during and after the process of the game with different possibilities

According to the content of table 2, it is possible to notice that the elements of orientation in playing activity give open possibility of different solutions of imaginary situations. We may remember Vigotsky's words about similarity of children's playing and artistic forms of activity and even the comparison of the concept of child playing with the concept of drama [12; 13].

According to our understanding of Galperin's conception, there is no contradiction between the concept of drama and the concept of orientation, because any acceptable drama, as a product of artistic creation, also requires orientation. Even participation in the artistic process as spectator requires orientation, as element of orientation is always reflexive element of each cultural action. There might be different kind of orientation for various kinds of actions and the concept of orientation might be applied in a variety of concrete situations [14].

In the case of playing activity, orientation should be always an open and flexible element, but this element must be present, if an adult pretends to implement methodology of playing activity in preschool institution. We propose some specific features of the component of open and flexible orientation for playing activity (table 3).

Table 3

Features of open and flexible orientation

Elements of content of orientation in playing activity	Options and possibilities of content of elements of orientation
Examples imaginary social situation	Suggestions, offers and propositions of adult, differentiation between real and imaginary situation

Possible social roles with actions, objects and symbolic means	Suggestions, offers and propositions of adult related to characters, what they usually do and don't do, and how and by what means they might do it.
Agreement of participation	Collective and reflexive consideration of various possibilities and options for the game process
Inclusion of reflection during and after the process of the game	Collective and reflexive verification of all possible changes and choices at all stages of the game at present and in future (planning of future game)

According to Elkonin's position, the child always knows that he or she is playing, which is one of essential parameter of primary assessment of ludic activity at preschool age [4; 15]. In our proposal of orientation for playing activity, the child may have reflection not only of the fact that he or she is playing, but also how and with what means he or she is playing. According to our experience of introduction of playing activity with little children starting by three years old, orientation permits children to start and to develop gradually their playing activity together with sufficient level of reflection from the very beginning.

According to our methodological proposal and results in practice, orientation should be external at the very beginning, when little children of the age of three years old or so start to take part in social games. It is an adult who presents social imaginary situation and all communication means to the children and helps with questions and answers about the contents of the game. The adult offers also different concrete and symbolic means, which are useful for the process of the game. Later on, according to their experience, children acquire more and more initiative for communication, representation of roles, rules, objects, symbolic means and verbal expression in the games. The most complex level might be achieved, when children can choose topics, roles and the whole context for the game independently or almost independently, with minimum external orientation coming from the adult. In this case, we might say that children have interiorized the content of orientation for playing activity. We are sure that it is possible to achieve this level with all regular children at the age of five or six years approximately.

The means of playing activity are broad possibilities of verbal communication and expression. Little preschool children will not just see each other and start to communicate or to interact by no means and no proposals. The topic of the game and the whole social situation opens broad possibility for development of expressive verbal and non-verbal means. Discovery of varied verbal and non-verbal actions within imaginary situations stresses emotional character of preschooler's activity.

Usefulness of playing activity for development

Positive affective background of behavior during playing sessions helps to develop important psychological formation of personality such as reflection and communication abilities. Objective, as a conscious part of each cultural activity, is presented firstly as a shared between all participants of the game. Gradually, real possibility to represent concrete social roles becomes more conscious for a child and is directed to other participants within the topic of a game.

The conscious objective starts to take part of voluntary playing activity as the possibility to follow established goal or proposal of activity [16]. Such proposal may be complete the drawing, play the game with other children, represent the role, listen to the

story, etc. But what is the essential difference between games and other kinds of activity, which might be useful in preschool age?

According to our experience, we may say that the content of playing activity includes elements of communication and imaginative symbolic situation, which normally is not a part of a content of other types of activities (practical or cognitive activities). Result of playing activity is the process of playing itself and the manifestation of its positive realization is positive emotional stage of children who take part in this activity. In this sense, playing activity is similar to artistic activities, in which the coincidence between process and result might be noticed. The difference between playing activity and artistic process of creation or perception of art is that the children imagine the whole situation of the game, but they never create a new artistic product by playing. Imagination is a possibility to anticipate results of self-actions and of actions of the others [17; 18]. This possibility can be formed on the basis of acting within imaginary situations with roles and rules of the games.

According to Leontiev [7], the types of motives can differentiate activities, and in the case of playing the motive is always related to social communication. So, we can say that the playing activity with social roles is always communicative, collective activity aimed to representation of imaginary situations with roles accepted by each participant. It is no sense to call such activity as “free”, “spontaneous” or “individual”.

From psychological point of view, it is possible to say that playing activity is a kind of activity, which does not have practical aim. The aim of playing activity is an image or symbolic representation. Symbolic or representative actions cannot be observed in superior apes [19] but are very rich and diverse at the age from two to four years in children. At this age, symbolic actions can convert soon into symbolic complex play, if the child is able to show not only one isolated representative action, but a chain of combined and relate done to another actions. In our previous studies we have shown that the level of symbolic development in Mexican preschool children is extremely poor as the consequence of absence of activities, which may guarantee such development [20; 21]. We have concluded that it is necessary to propose some kind of specific symbolic operations in the contents of the games and other activities at preschool age in order to change this situation [22]. Symbolic function is the possibility to use and create signs in order to formalize the situation or to represent some rules of behavior [23; 24]. Playing activity is a powerful pedagogical and psychological situation, in which preschool children may have an opportunity to use external symbolic mean as elements of contents to formalize roles and rules in games [25; 26; 27].

Taking into account symbolic function and symbolic development, games might be also understood as a kind of symbolic activity of solution of conflict (model of conflict as an opposition to a real conflict) [28]. Participants of games try to solve some kind of symbolic problems by means of representations (actions of representation) according to some system of previously established rules. All participants have to agree to follow the agreed rules; there is no game without any rules as the rule is an essential element of the structure of the game.

Here is a really important question from psychological point of view: may we call playing activity of children as totally “free” activity or not? The answer, from the point of view of activity theory would be negative: there are no “free” activities in a human culture. All cultural practical and artistic activities require of some established means; the games require following some rules. But games, as other kinds of cultural activities are voluntary for participants. We may say that people who play chess or football really wish to do so (some exceptions might be obviously found when someone would be obliged to play chess

as a kind of duty, but this it not the point for our consideration at the moment). But if we use the word “free” as an opposition to the word “obligatory”, it would be possible to say that children normally desire to play games and to take part in other communicative collective activities. It is interesting to notice that normally psychologists who proposed to call games “free” activity claim to let “children play freely” with no kind of participation or orientation form adults. In this case, we mind that playing activity is “not free” activity that the adults should “be there” and play with children. Same answer we should provide if someone would ask: is it necessary to explain to children how to play chess or should they find all the rules freely by themselves? We should definitely answer: adults should introduce and explain the rules. If someone considers that playing activity occurs naturally by no orientation and no participation of adults or society, any specific ways or forms of organization of activities, no proposals for introduction of interactions between children, no usage of communication are considered or discussed. The terms of interaction and communication between children in groups might be only declared because of “social contact between children”. General development and playing activity is declared as spontaneous process and interaction is a postulation of the presence of social relations between people with no specificity according to age, stage of development of types of activities or concrete collaborations.

Content of playing activity and it's development

The content of playing activity should be understood as the process of the game as itself, in which the researcher may identify specific elements. According to Elkonin [4], games with social roles may be differentiated by topics (arguments) and concrete procedure (contents). The topic is a generalized social situation with social roles. Such situation should be understood by children and easily identified by them and whose actions children can represent. An example of a topic can be “Hospital”, “Railway or Bus Station”, “Designers”, “Airport”, “Super Market”, “Restaurant”, “Photo Studio”, “Clinic for Animals” and so on [25]. As Elkonin has argued, the topic, in which there is no social roles or participation of the roles isn't sufficiently clear for children are not suitable for introduction of playing activity [4]. We would add to this characterization that the topic, which somehow doesn't permit the exchange of the roles between all participants according to any reason, aren't suitable for topics of games. The children have to imagine that they are “roles” and to represent the whole situation according to the topic with the broad possibility of exchanging of each participant of each role. Such activity may have sense only if is considered as a collective form of activity and not individual one. From this point of view, a very common game of “family” topic isn't the best variant for preschool age.

The table 4 illustrates one of the variants of the elements of the contents of games. According to our opinion, such illustration is useful to organize and to describe real situations of playing activity with social roles. It is important to stress that all these elements are flexible and creative. Actually, methodological recommendation is that adult should try to present different examples, choices of actions and usage of symbolic means and different possibilities of distributions of roles and rules for each play.

Table 4

Elements of content of playing activity

Elements of content of games with social roles	Description
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Topic	Imaginary social situation with roles
Roles	Social character, which may be easily comprehended and accepted by children; elementary rule of the game
Rules	Accepted necessity of acting during the game; norms or modes of actions
Objects	Concrete objects and parts of context, which may be used during the game
Symbolic means	External materialized or graphic means created or used during the game to determine absent objects, rules, norms, orders

The element of roles and the possibility of its representation considering direction to another participant of the game is the most essential element of this activity. Precisely, progressive development of playing activity at preschool age might be described as more personalized representation and it's moving towards aspects of narration. We may speak about narration when children possess enough initiative in order to convert a topic into personalized and individualized scenery of shared collective action of dynamic representation. Only more experienced and advanced preschoolers may achieve this level after having rich experience of participation in playing activity with broad inclusion of social roles and symbolic means [29]. At this narrative stage of playing activity, reflection in communication appear as one an essential new psychological formation related to personality of preschoolers.

At the end of preschool age, between the age of five and six years, if children achieve this stage, they become able not only to represent, but also to reflect their own feelings and feeling of the others, to show compassion to the others, to communicate wishes, positive and negative results of own actions and actions of the others. In our previous studies we noticed that children who don't have experience of participation in this kind of games didn't show this positive new psychological formation [30]. At this stage, the topic might be changed and might emerge from proper propositions of children during their collective discussion. Such topic, in our experience were: "Travelling into Space", "Our School", "New Excursions", "Exploration of Nature", "Magic Flowers". "Art Exposition" [31]. The table 5 shows how reflection and communication might be related to the components of the content of games with social roles.

Table 5

Relation between new psychological formations of reflection and elements of contents of games with social roles

New psychological formations of preschool age	Actions within games	Elements of contents of games
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Reflection communication	in	Constant usage of external oral expressions during the games related to possibility to take into account positive and negative behavior and results of joint actions; no rejection of any proposal of reflection or positive solutions of conflict situations during the game.	Dialogues and comments in groups about mutual behavior with possibility of critics and corrections.
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According to the table 5, it is possible to appreciate progress through the concrete contents of playing activity may provide an impact psychological development of activity and personality of children. The table 6 offers a scheme of the protocol for qualitative register of components of role acceptance and verbal expression as essential parameters of positive communicative social development of reflection.

Table 6

Parameters of communication in games

Parametres	Descripcion
Role acceptance	Representation of correspondent actions with actions and symbols: - Independently - With external help of adults or another children - No acceptance
Verbal expression according to the role	Verbal communication of the character: - Independent dialogue with another character - Dialogue with external help - Absence of expressions according to the role
Emotional expression and reflection of the role	Emotional manifestation according to the character: - Independent proposal of new expressive means according to character - Acting based on external orientation or proposals of others - Absence of emotional positive behavior in situation of the game

Implementation of playing activity by stages in preschool institution

Our experience of implementation of playing activity in age groups of preschool children from three to four, from four to three and from five to six years with preschool children in Mexico has pointed out constant gradual improvement of playing activity

according to mentioned communicative parameters. Our experience was obtained during implementation of the playing activity in the preschool college five times per week for approximately one hour time during three school years (Kepler College in the city of Puebla: www.colegiokepler.edu.mx. According to such an opportunity, it is possible to identify some qualitative stages of changing of development in playing activity at preschool age. The table 7 shows essential stages of development of playing activity at preschool age.

Table 7

Stages of development of playing activity

Parametres	Description
First stage	High dependence of external guidance: - Acting by usage of concrete objects - Materialized representation of attributes of roles - Absence of initiative for expressions and actions - Emotional positive participation
Second stage	Needs for orientation persists: - Acting by usage of concrete objects - Generalization of means of representation without attributes - Possibility of usage of symbolic means - Appearance of initiative for actions according to roles
Third stage	Major independence in acting: - Acting by usage of symbolic means for roles and rules - Initiative for symbolic means and representation
Fourth stage	Narrative aspects and positive emotional reflection, absence of external orientation (minimum orientation): - Predominant initiative for topics and roles - Proposal of rules - Initiative for all symbolic means - More individualized and personalized acting and all expressions

At the first stage, children show high dependence of the guidance of the teacher. The children do not act according to the selected role and can lose easily the started actions during the game. The verbal expressions don't have any communicative objective, the children use toys and objects without any relation to the topic and to the roles. No initiative for elements of contents of the game can be observed. External helping of the adult is essential at this stage. Figure 1 shows such initial situation of playing activity.



Fig. 1. Game: "Animal Clinic" (photo of the authors file)

On the second stage, it is possible to notice important qualitative changes in the process of playing. Children start to use appropriate verbal expressions and to answer to the questions of the characters. The dialogues acquire sense according to social situations and the duration of games become considerably longer. Children become able to follow the aim of the game collectively and to choose objects and symbols more independently. Figure 2 illustrates such kind of playing activity.



Fig. 2. Game: "Hospital" (photo of the authors file)

At the third stage, it is possible to note a great advantage of children related to major Independence. At this stage they can chose practically all elements for the contents and even the topic by themselves. The external help from the adult becomes to be unnecessary. The example 7 shows realization of the game “cars competition” in the group of children of the third grade of preschool education. Children represent the drivers, judges and rules. Figure 3 shows such initial situation of playing activity.



Fig. 3. Game: “Cars competition” (photo of the authors file)

The fourth stage might be characterized as predominantly independent fulfillment of the social collective situation according to chosen topic. Children show high level of initiative for all elements of playing activity. Narrative elements of creation of imaginary situation with participation of characters and broad variety of expressive means can be observed on this stage. Example 4 shows an example of such complex game with the topic of “Art Exposition”. This narrative game was possible only at the fourth stage in the third grade of official pre-school educational level after participation of children during three years in this College.

Discussion and conclusions

We insist that described stages are not the result of “spontaneous” or “natural” development, neither “free” manifestation of inner world of the children. In all experimental situations, when playing activity was not provided as day-to day experience of children, it was never possible to observe the high stages at the age of five or six years. Children of this age with no playing experience always showed first stage when included into playing activity as children of the age of three years in our practice did. After constant emotional involvement and joint guided representation, it was possible to observe qualitative changes presented in the table 5. Similar positive effects were observed in different groups of preschool children, where same method was used in public institutions in Mexico [32] and Colombia [31].

We are sure that the inclusion of symbolic function into the contents of the games permits to elevate the level of development of playing activity from psychological point of

view. According to Davidov [33], symbolic function permits to identify features of the objects and to substitute one object by another according to this feature. The objects can be generalized by a child and start to take part in his/her activity as a rule or norm of action and behavior. In our little participants it was possible to appreciate such kind of qualitative changes. The children started not only to fulfill the rules in the games, but also to use symbolic means in order to organize their own behavior. For example, children stated to plan the order of patients who will be attended by a “doctor in the hospital” or clients at the mal.

External symbols, used in the contents of the games, gave an opportunity to reflect the essence of general features of communicative situations. For example, symbolic means were used to repair the watch or the telephone, to construct buildings according to prepared plan in the game of “constructors” and “engineers”. At preschool age, symbolic function permits not only to see the world as a multitude of diverse features, but also to find out selectively features required for concrete social communicative situation. According to Ilienkov [34], symbolic plan starts from imagination at preschool age, while at school age it would be possible to elevate the level of symbolization in order to achieve operations with abstract concept of usage of models.

Our results of pedagogical qualitative research during seven years in Mexico show great possibilities of using the game with social roles as a methodology for psychological development at preschool age with Mexican preschool children. We insist that games should be used as day-to-day common activity in groups and not as a kind of useless recreation or free time between “serious sessions of learning”.

Our results confirm the practical importance of the Vigotsky’s words about creation and usage of symbolic means represent particularity and principal way for cultural development of human child [1, 9]. As it is well known for this author the basis of the structure of cultural forms of behavior is mediatized activity [35; 36]. Leontiev [10] claims that playing activity offers positive changes for preschool child and represents the valuable basis for psychological preparation for school. Our results permit to arrive to same conclusion.

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