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REPRESENTATION OF DIDACTIC GAMES IN SOCIAL STUDIES AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

REPRESENTACIÓN DE JUEGOS DIDÁCTICOS EN EL ÁREA DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES EN EDUCACION PRIMARIA

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RESUMEN

El presente estudio empírico pretende identificar el grado de representación que tienen los juegos didácticos en el área de ciencias sociales en los cursos cuarto y quinto de Educación Primaria. Para ello, se han analizado la frecuencia con que se utilizan los juegos didácticos en el área de ciencias sociales, la frecuencia con que se utilizan los juegos didácticos en relación a las diferentes fases que se identifican en una sesión de clase, el motivo más importante por el que los docentes utilizan juegos didácticos en el área de ciencias sociales y las opiniones que tienen los alumnos acerca de si es posible adquirir nuevos conocimientos a través de los juegos didácticos. La muestra se compone de 290 alumnos de los cursos cuarto y quinto de Educación Primaria, 177 maestros de dichos niveles educativos, y un total de 56 sesiones de ciencias sociales observadas. Los resultados obtenidos muestran que los maestros raramente utilizan juegos didácticos en el área de ciencias sociales. Es bastante habitual que los docentes utilicen juegos didácticos al comienzo de las clases—para introducir la sesión. Los juegos didácticos son utilizados muy a menudo para lograr una mayor motivación y concentración por parte de los alumnos y para hacer que las clases sean más variadas y tengan un ambiente más relajado. Además, los alumnos consideran que el uso de juegos didácticos en el área de ciencias sociales les ayuda a adquirir más conocimientos.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Educación primaria; juegos; enseñanza; ciencias sociales.

ABSTRACT

This empirical research sought to establish the representation of didactic games in social studies in the fourth and fifth grades in primary school. The authors examined the frequency with which didactic games are used in social studies, the frequency with which didactic games are used with regard to the different phases of a class session, the most important reason teachers use didactic games in social studies; and students' opinions on whether it is possible to gain new knowledge via didactic games. The research sample consisted of 290 fourth and fifth grade students, 177 teachers teaching the fourth and fifth grades, and 56 observed social studies lessons. The results show that teachers rarely use didactic games in social studies. Teachers most commonly use didactic games at the beginning of lessons—in the introduction. Most often, teachers use didactic games to achieve greater motivation and concentration of students and for more diversified and relaxed classes. Also, students believe that by using didactic games in social studies they gain knowledge.

KEYWORDS

Primary school; games; teaching; social studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

In their early years, children best gain experiences through playing. In recent years, interest in games as a teaching support and learning method has increased. Bognar (1987); Roskos and Christie (2000); Ginsburg (2007); Cenčič, Cotič, and Medved Udovič (2008); Miller and Almon (2009); and Juriševič (2012) are only some of the authors who have researched the effects of didactic games on teaching and learning. Specifically, they have studied and researched the effects of games in the educational process among different age groups of children; and have studied such games' positive effects on different educational stages. In the present research, the current authors were particularly interested in certain aspects relative to the representation of didactic games in social studies in primary school at the fourth and fifth grade levels.

In Slovenia, students encounter social studies in the fourth and fifth grade levels of primary school. A total of 175 school hours are dedicated to it – specifically, 70 hours in the fourth grade and 105 hours in the fifth grade. Learning objectives include goals from the fields of geography, sociology, history, ethnology, psychology, economy, politics, ethics, aesthetics, and ecology. The primary emphasis of social studies classes is on relationships between the individual, society, and the natural environment (Budnar, Kerin, Umek, Raztresen, & Mirt, 2011). Basic practices for teachers on how to teach social studies in primary school in Slovenia are written in the *National Curriculum for the Teaching of Social Studies*, which is based on the constructivist theory of learning and teaching (Budnar et al., 2011). The constructivist approach emphasises students' active roles in the education process, as well as emphasizing their capability of developing their own knowledge by themselves – based on their experience and prior knowledge. A teacher must create favourable conditions for the learning process, including an encouraging environment and social atmosphere, so that the processes of active and independent knowledge acquisition can begin (Maxim, 2010; Woolfolk, 2002). One of the recommended teaching strategies (one which is also based on constructivist theory) is experiential learning, which attempts to integrate the emotional and sensory experience of the students and their thinking i (Marentič-Požarnik, 2003). A key element of experiential learning is the student's being personally involved in the pedagogical approach (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). One of the support methods of experiential learning is didactic gaming—a method which always involves an educational goal set by a teacher (Tomić, 1999). As mentioned in the introduction, a few prior research studies have already strongly indicating that children learn best while playing. Their findings, among others, have been that play positively supports children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language skills; and that it is essential to a child's overall healthy development (Boocock, 1971; Bognar, 1987; Ginsburg, 2007). Sawyer (2001) explains that students who engage in social and dramatic play are, to able to take others' perspectives, and are to a greater extent viewed as more intellectually and socially competent by their teachers. Bodrova & Leong (2007) interpreted that play contributes to the development of self-regulation and social skills such as collaboration, rule following, empathy, and motivation.

The authors can upgrade almost any children's play or game to a didactic game by adding an educational value; and a goal that students are expected to achieve. Based on game characteristics and Smilansky's (1968) classification of play, didactic games can be classified according to the following three groups:

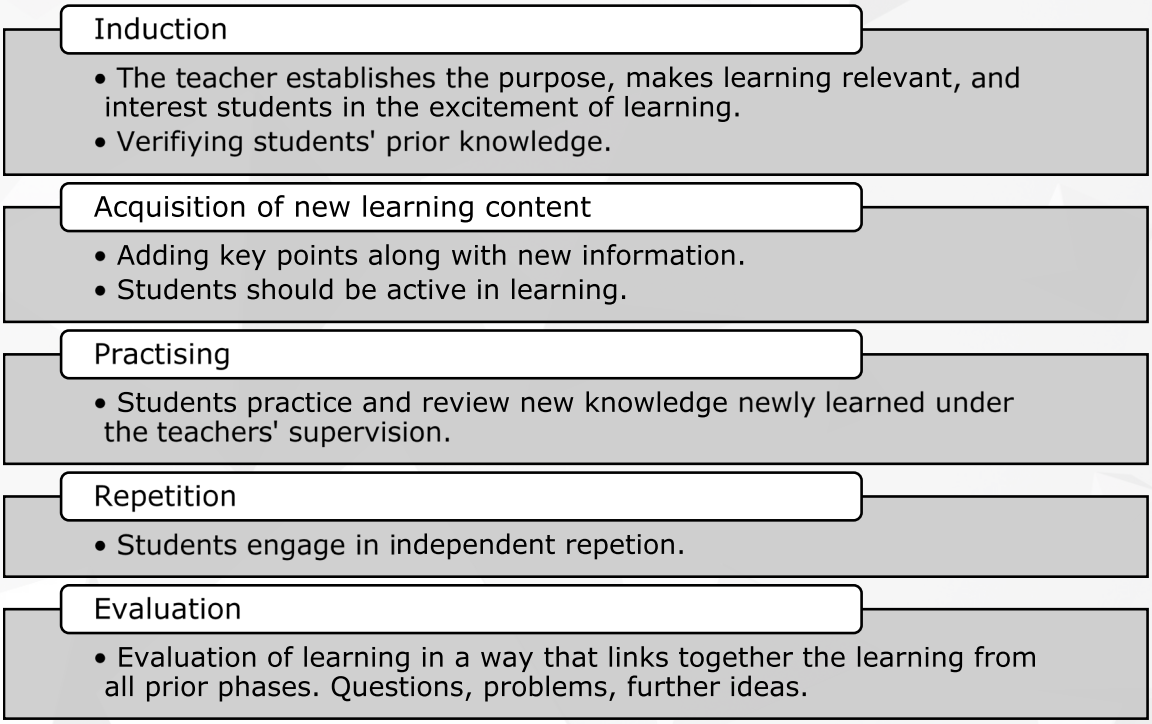
1. Constructive games – in which children gain experiences playing with materials and constructing things;
2. Role-playing games – ones presenting an event, activity, or situation from real life; and
3. Games with rules – which have rules that students must consider (versions of board games; dominoes, lottery; bingo; card games; physical games; and music games (Bognar, 1987; Marjanovič Umek & Zupančič, 2001).

Didactic games can be used in any phase of social studies lessons. Social studies lessons can consist of five basic phases –

1. induction,
2. acquisition of new learning content,
3. practising,
4. repetition, and
5. evaluation

– any of which can be left out or added by teachers as they choose (Blažič et al.,2003). In Figure 1, lesson phases are presented, along with a short explanation of each.

Figure 1: Lesson phases



Source: own elaboration

2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to examine the representation of didactic games in social studies in primary school. The authors' quantitative research was upgraded by observing social studies teaching in practice in order to get a realistic picture of the use of games and not just the teachers' and students' self-assessments and opinions.

The authors examined the following:

- the frequency with which didactic games are used in social studies;
- the frequency with which didactic games are used with regard to each lesson phase;
- the most important reasons teachers use didactic games in social studies; and
- students' opinions on whether it is possible to gain new knowledge by means of didactic games.

During the analysis, the authors were interested as to whether there were any statistically relevant differences between teachers' years of experience, their professional title, the grade/s they are teaching, and their teaching environment (i.e., whether they are teaching in an urban or a rural primary school). In Slovenia, teachers progressing in field receive a series of professional titles according to the rules governing the promotion and titles of educational employees (*Rules on the promotion of employees in education in titles, Official Gazette of RS*, No. 54/02, 123/08, 44/09 and 18/10). Teachers progressing in field are successively accorded the titles of mentor, adviser, and counsellor; and these titles, once obtained, are permanent. The authors also checked for any statistically significant differences between participating students, with regard to their gender and the grade they were in.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was based on a descriptive and non-experimental method of empirical research. The authors included a random sample of 177 Slovenian primary school teachers teaching social studies in the fourth or fifth grades during the academic year 2016/2017, together with a random sample of 290 students enrolled in the fourth or fifth grade during the same academic year. In the research sample, the authors included teachers and students from all Slovenian regions. The number of convenience-sample teachers, who were observed in Social Studies lessons, is 56. In a sample of 177 teachers who participated in the survey, 52.5% taught in the fourth grade and 47.5% taught in the fifth grade. The survey was completed mostly by teachers who had more than 20 years of service (i.e., 61.0%), while 25.4% had taught from 11 to 20 years and 13.6% had taught up to 10 years. Nine per cent of the teachers were beginners with no title, 30.5% were mentors, and 55.4% were consultants. The least percentage in the sample, 5.1%, were counsellors. As for location, 53.1% of the participating teachers taught in urban primary schools, and 46.9% taught in rural primary schools. The research sample of 290 students consisted of 164 students in the fourth grade and 126 students from the fifth grade. The sample was comprised of 154 male students and 136 female students. The authors observed 27 social studies lessons in the fourth grade and 29 social studies lessons in the fifth grade.

3.1. INSTRUMENT

Data for all variables were collected using two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was prepared for the social studies teachers (of the fourth and fifth grade) and consisted of different types of questions – from dichotomous questions to the ranking of statements. The second questionnaire was filled in by the students. The second questionnaire was easy to understand since it consisted of simple questions of choice. Questionnaires for collecting all data had verified metric characteristics (i.e., validity, reliability, and objectivity). The authors ensured validity by reviewing and pre-testing the authors' questionnaire on a sample. Reliability was controlled from the start of the process of creating questions, since the authors were careful to provide detailed instructions and unambiguously specific questions. Objectivity was controlled with the selection of closed questions, which could not be changed in response to subjective assessments of information. The objectivity of the instrument was based on individual interviewing without the presence of an assessor.

Data was also obtained from class observation; and for this purpose, the authors assembled an observation protocol by which the authors sought to ascertain the number of social studies lessons in which teachers carried out game-based learning and used gaming features.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data for research was acquired in March and April 2017. The questionnaire for students was printed out and taken to randomly selected primary schools, where the authors asked school management for permission to conduct the survey. The authors acquired 290 fully completed questionnaires. On this occasion, the authors also distributed a second, printed-version questionnaire to the teachers. This second questionnaire for teachers was also designed as an online version and sent to e-mail addresses of teachers throughout Slovenia and, as well, was spread throughout social media. In return, the authors received 177 fully completed questionnaires. In addition, 56 social studies lessons were observed and analysed. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS statistics program. For data processing, the authors used basic descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, and a non-parametrical Chi-Square test for independence. During the analysis, the authors also checked for statistically relevant differences between participating teachers, regarding the teachers' years of experience, their professional title, the grade/s they were teaching, and their teaching environment (whether an urban or a rural primary school). Therefore, the authors used a Mann-Whitney U test to determine the differences between the two groups of teachers – teachers in fourth grade and teachers in fifth grade, as well as teachers working in the urban school district and teachers working in the rural school district. The authors also used a Kruskal-Wallis test to determine the differences between groups of teachers with regard to their professional titles and their years of experience. The difference between the groups was considered as being statistically significant if the degree of risk for the validity of the null hypothesis was less than 5% (i.e., p □ 0.05). The level at which the null hypothesis is rejected is usually set at five or fewer times out of 100. The 0.05 probability level is acceptable as a reasonable choice in most social studies research studies (Cramer & Howitt, 2004; Field, 2013).

4. Results

4.1. Frequency of Use of Didactic Games in Social Studies Lessons

Teachers were asked to assess how often they use didactic games in their social studies lessons, and which type of games they use. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Number (f), Structural Percentage (f%), and Average ($\bar{x}$) of use of didactic games in social studies

	Frequency of use of different types of games				
Types of games	Never *f (f %)*	Rarely *f (f %)*	Frequently *f (f %)*	Total *f (f %)*	Average $\bar{x}$
Role-play	8 (5%)	85 (48%)	84 (47%)	177 (100%)	2.4
Games with rules	8 (5%)	108 (61%)	61 (34%)	177 (100%)	2.3
Constructive games	62 (35%)	107 (60%)	8 (5%)	177 (100%)	1.7

Source: own elaboration

Table 1 shows that teachers in social studies classes rarely use didactic games. Most commonly, they use role-play ($\bar{x}$ = 2.4), which is followed by games with rules ($\bar{x}$ = 2.3); and most rarely, they use constructive didactic games ($\bar{x}$ = 1.7). No statistically significant differences exist between the responses of teachers with regard to their teaching environment, years of experience, and professional title. Statistically, the only difference can be detected in the frequency of use of role-playing games, depending on the grade being taught (χ^2 = 8.026, P = 0.014). Teachers who teach in the fourth grade use statistically more role-playing games in social studies than fifth grade teachers do.

When observing 56 social studies lessons where the authors monitored the use of didactic games, the authors perceived use of didactic games only in six lessons, which represents 10.7% of all observed lessons. In 50 observed lessons (i.e., 89.3% of all observed lessons), teachers of the fourth and fifth grade did not perform a didactic game. In fifth grade, the authors observed the use of a didactic game in the authors' social studies lessons. In fourth grade, the authors only observed two social studies lessons. Even though the authors' sample of observed social studies is not representative, the authors tested the authors' results for any statistical differences. As expected, results showed that there are no statistically significant differences regarding grade level.

4.2. FREQUENCY OF USE OF DIDACTIC GAMES REGARDING THE LESSON PHASE

Teachers most commonly use didactic games at the beginning of lessons – during the induction and repetition phases of lessons. Games are least frequently used in the acquisition phase of learning new material and in the last phase of the lesson – namely, in the evaluation of students' knowledge. A statistically significant difference was detected with regard to teachers' professional title and their school district. The results are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 2: Number (f), Structural Percentage (f%), and Average (x) use of didactic games in social studies regarding Lesson Phase

	Frequency of use of didactic game				
Lesson phase	Never *f (f %)*	Rarely *f (f %)*	Frequently *f (f %)*	Total *f (f %)*	Average $\bar{x}$
Induction	14 (7.9%)	84 (47.5%)	79 (44.6%)	177 (100.0%)	2.37
Acquisition of new learning content	34 (19.2%)	118 (66.7%)	25 (14.1%)	177 (100.0%)	1.95
Practising	19 (10.7%)	90 (50.8%)	68 (38.4%)	177 (100.0%)	2.28
Repetition	16 (9.0%)	74 (41.8%)	87 (49.2%)	177 (100.0%)	2.40
Evaluation	52 (29.2%)	99 (55.9%)	26 (14.7%)	177 (100.0%)	1.85

Source: own elaboration

Table 3: Number (f), Structural Percentage (f%), and χ^2-test results of use of didactic games in the induction lesson phase regarding teachers' professional title

		Induction				
		Never *f (f %)*	Rarely *f (f %)*	Frequently *f (f %)*	Total *f (f %)*	*χ^2-test*
PROFESSIONAL TITLE	No title	0 (0.0%)	10 (62.5%)	6 (37.5%)	16 (100.0%)	χ^2=15.409 *P*=0.015
	Mentor	9 (16.7%)	21 (38.9%)	24 (44.4%)	54 (100.0%)	
	Consultant	3 (3.1%)	51 (52.0%)	44 (44.9%)	98 (100.0%)	
	Councillor	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	9 (100.0%)	
	Total	14 (7.9%)	84 (47.5%)	79 (44.6%)	177 (100.0%)	

Source: own elaboration

From Table 3, the authors can conclude that regarding the professional title a statistically significant difference in the use of didactic games can be found in the learning stage of induction. Teachers with a higher professional title are statistically more likely to use the game as a way of learning in the learning stage of induction than are teachers with a lower professional title or none at all.

Table 4: Number (f), Structural Percentage (f%), and χ^2-test results regarding the use of didactic games in specific phases of lessons; and regarding teachers' professional title in which statistical differences appear.

		Lesson phases				
		Never *f (f %)*	Rarely *f (f %)*	Frequently *f (f %)*	Total *f (f %)*	χ^2-*test*
		Acquisition of new learning content				
SCHOOL DISTRICT	Urban	25 (26.6%)	55 (58.5%)	14 (14.9%)	94 (100.0%)	χ^2=8.055 *P*=0.018
	Rural	9 (10.8%)	63 (75.9%)	11 (13.3%)	83 (100.0%)	
	Total	34 (19.2%)	118 (66.7%)	25 (14.1%)	177 (100.0%)	
		Practising				
SCHOOL DISTRICT	Urban	17 (18.1%)	42 (44.7%)	35 (37.2%)	94 (100.0%)	χ^2=13.328 *P*=0.001
	Rural	2 (2.4%)	48 (57.8%)	33 (39.8%)	83 (100.0%)	
	Total	19 (10.7%)	90 (50.8%)	68 (38.4%)	177 (100.0%)	
		Evaluation				
SCHOOL DISTRICT	Urban	36 (38.3%)	43 (45.7%)	15 (16.0%)	94 (100.0%)	χ^2=9.540 *P* = 0.008
	Rural	16 (19.3%)	56 (67.5%)	11 (13.3%)	83 (100.0%)	
	Total	52 (29.4%)	99 (55.9%)	26 (14.7%)	177 (100.0%)	

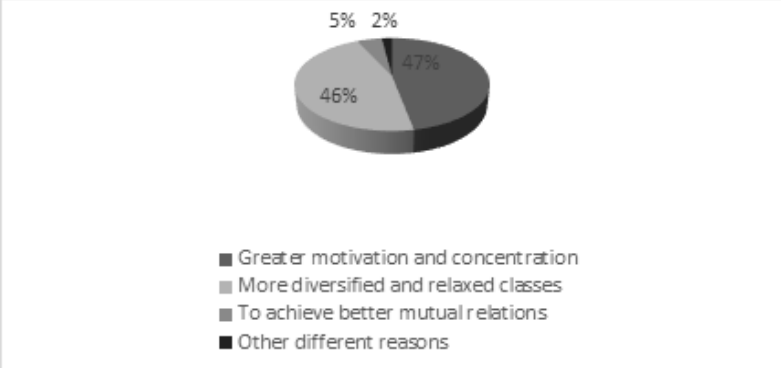
Source: own elaboration

The results from Table 4 indicate that teachers working in urban school districts frequently use didactic gaming in the acquisition of new learning content and in evaluation phases more often than their peers from rural school districts do. At the same time, teachers from urban school districts rarely incorporate didactic games in the practising phase than their peers from rural school districts do.

When observing social studies lessons, the authors observed that in six lessons in which teachers used didactic games, none of those games were used in the practising and evaluation phases of lessons. The results of the observations of the lessons are similar to the results of the authors' quantitative research. In both instances, didactic games were either used rarely or never in the evaluation lesson phase. Depending on the lesson phase, most participating teachers (i.e., 50%) used a didactic game in the repetition lesson phase; 33.3% used a didactic game in the induction lesson phase; and 16.7% of teachers used a didactic game in the acquisition of new learning content lesson phase.

4.3. THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON TEACHERS USE DIDACTIC GAMES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Figure 2: Structural percentage (f%) of most important reasons for teachers to use didactic games in social studies lessons (N = 177)



Source: own elaboration

As seen in Figure 1, 177 participating teachers most often use didactic games to achieve greater motivation and concentration of students (i.e., 47%) and to achieve more diversified and relaxed classes (i.e., 46%). Five percent of teachers use didactic games to achieve better mutual relations, and 2% of teachers identified that they use games for different reasons.

To better understand reasons for the use of didactic games in social studies, teachers were subsequently asked to rank the following two statements on a Likert scale from 1 (don't agree) to 5 (completely agree):

- First statement: Didactic game is a good motivational tool.
- Second statement: When students have fun and relax through playing, they also learn a lot and strengthen their knowledge.

Teachers completely agree that a didactic game is a motivational tool ($\bar{x}$ = 4.44) and that when students have fun and relax while playing they also learn a lot and strengthen their knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21). With the last statement (i.e., *When students have fun and relax through playing, they also learn a lot and strengthen their knowledge*), according to the Mann-Whitney U test performed, it can be concluded that there are statistically significant differences regarding grade level, among the interviewed teachers (IzI =-3288, P = 0.001). Namely, a statement is agreed with at a higher level by teachers of fifth grade than by teachers of fourth grade. Regarding teachers' years of experience, their professional title, and the school environment, there were no statistically significant differences.

In the next question, the authors were interested is whether teachers check whether students have achieved pre-set educational goals while students use didactic games. Precisely 94.9% of the participating 177 teachers check, after the didactic game, whether students have achieved pre-set educational goals. Precisely 92.9% of those teachers who check whether students have achieved pre-set educational goals do this check in oral form. Precisely 2.4% of teachers do so in written form, and 4.8% of teachers do so with a combination of oral and written communication.

All six teachers whose classes the authors observed, and who used a didactic game in their lessons after the game, verbally verified whether the students achieved the learning pre-set goals of the didactic games. While the sample of observed teachers is not representative, it is still helpful in the interpretation of the authors' quantitative research and provides added value to the authors' study of the representation of didactic games in teaching social studies.

4.4. STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON DIDACTIC GAMES

According to the results of the authors' quantitative empirical research of 290 participating students (as presented in Table 5), students believe that by using games in social studies class, they gain new knowledge. This can be deduced from the answer to the question of whether they also learn anything by playing games, to which most of them replied in the affirmative. Precisely 45.2% of students responded that they always learn something, 36.6% said they often learn something, while 11.0% of believed that they rarely learn something in such an activity. Precisely 7.2% are those who consider that by playing games, they learn nothing.

Table 5: Number (f), Structural Percentage (f%), and χ^2-test results of students' answers on whether they learn anything with didactic games with regard to school grade

		Students' answers					
		Never *f (f %)*	Rarely *f (f %)*	Frequently *f (f %)*	Always *f (f%)*	Total *f (f %)*	χ^2-test
GRADE	4th grade	5 (3.0%)	17 (10.4%)	65 (39.6%)	77 (47.0%)	164 (100.0%)	χ^2=10.731 *P*=0,013
	5th grade	16 (12.7%)	15 (11.9%)	41 (32.5%)	54 (42.9%)	126 (100.0%)	
	Total	21 (7.2%)	32 (11.0%)	106 (36.6%)	131 (45.2%)	290 (100.0%)	

Source: own elaboration

From Table 5, the authors can conclude that statistically significant differences occur between the students of the fourth and fifth grade. The fourth grade students believe that working with games often gives them new knowledge, whereas the fifth grade students are more inclined to either reply that they never or rarely get any new knowledge. There are no statistically significant differences with regard to students' gender.

5. CONCLUSION

In this research paper, the authors were interested in the representation of didactic games in social studies in primary school at the fourth and fifth grade levels. The authors researched the frequency of use of didactic games in social studies; the frequency of use of didactic games with regard to each lesson phase; the most important reasons teachers use didactic games in social studies; and students' opinions as to whether it is possible to gain new knowledge by means of didactic games. The authors' research was planned and carried in two parts. The first part was gaining teachers' and students' opinions about the use of didactic games in social studies and the second part was about the observation of social studies lessons.

Results showed that teachers rarely use didactic games in social studies. Most commonly they use role-playing games – a practice which could be predicted, since role-playing is suggested in the curriculum as being an appropriate method for teaching social studies. As stated in the theoretical introduction, the emphasis of social studies classes is on learning about the relationship between the individual, society, and the natural environment. According to Bognar (1987) and Marjanovič Umek and Zupančič (2001), role-playing games present an event, activity, or situation from real life. Children are active in role-playing games. The importance of the active involvement of children in the process is emphasised by several studies. As cited in Tankersley et al. (2013), the following authors found students' active involvement to be positive: Pianta, Laparo, and Hamre in 2006; and Leavers in 2005.

It is not only important to know if a teacher will use a didactic game, but also when and in which lesson phase a didactic game will be used. The methods, in the authors' case didactic games, that are to be used in lessons must be suitably combined with regard to the students' age, characteristics, goals of the lessons, and circumstances. In the authors' research, teachers most commonly use didactic games at the beginning of lessons – in the induction lesson phase. Games are least frequently used in the lesson phase involving the acquisition of new learning material, and in the last lesson phase – namely, in the evaluation of students' knowledge. When observing social studies lessons, in six lessons, the authors observed that none of the didactic games were used during either the practising lesson phase or in the evaluation lesson phase. The results of the lesson observation are similar to the results of the authors' quantitative research. In both cases, didactic games were either rarely or never used in the evaluation lesson phase. Even though the National Curriculum for Social Studies (Budnar et al., 2011) advises the use of authentic evaluation and assessment, didactic games were not broadly represented. The evaluation should be derived from the specific objectives and subject standards. Given that aspects of useful and lifelong knowledge as well as developmental and individual characteristics of students must be considered, teachers carefully choose forms and methods of evaluation.

Teachers most often use didactic games to achieve greater motivation and concentration of students and for more diversified and relaxed classes. Teachers completely agree that a didactic game is a motivational tool. Teachers also agree that when students have fun and relax through playing, they also learn a lot and strengthen their knowledge. Based on those agreements, the authors can also explain why teachers use didactic games most commonly at the beginning of lessons in the induction lesson phase. In the opinion of the participating teacher, didactic games are a great motivational tool; therefore, it can be expected that they would mostly use it in the induction lesson phase. Didactic games encourage students to take an interest in the subject being taught; and such games make the subject more interesting. If a didactic game is interesting, students will easily learn. In addition, they will also develop their social skills (Petsche, 2011). According to the results of the authors' quantitative empirical research of 290 participating students, students believe that by using games in social studies classes, they gain knowledge. To confirm whether students have gained new knowledge by using a didactic game, almost all participating teachers check whether students have achieved pre-set educational goals, after the didactic game has ended. When students relax and have fun at the same time, they tend to either learn or strengthen their knowledge (Petsche, 2011).

Considering that there had not been any research made regarding the representation of didactic games in social studies at the fourth and fifth grade levels, the authors' research enables them to contribute the first overview of the representation of the use of didactic games at those educational levels. The results of this research can contribute to a higher quality of social studies lessons in the fourth and fifth grades in primary schools, since the results can be used to plan further or additional education for teachers. Professional education and the training of teachers should reflect their needs and should be adjusted to the circumstances in practice. The authors' results showed the lack of use of didactic games in social studies. One possible reason could be that teachers have insufficient knowledge and no guidebooks to use for planning their lessons. This is another aspect that could be interesting for further analyses and would give a more complete overview of the status of the implementation of this best practice. The next step for obtaining a deeper understanding of the impact of the didactic games in social studies would be to design more complementary research to be based on a pedagogical experiment or an action research study.

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