

FACTSHEET

Can video games 'cure' dyslexia?

What are SLDs?

Specific learning disorders (SLDs), are also known as “dys” disorders, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, etc. They are disorders which means that their effects can be mitigated with treatment but they cannot be ‘cured’ since they are not illnesses. As they can make reading, writing, speaking, and calculating more difficult, they make school activities more challenging to students with SLDs (MOOCDys).

Could video games help develop the academic skills of learners with SLDs?

In the early 2010s, a few papers have suggested that the effects of dyslexia on students’ reading abilities could be undone by making learners play either action or rapid spelling video games. The study using action video games found that playing raised youngsters’ attention skills and allowed them to read faster thanks to the need to develop motor skills and perception to play the game (Franceschini et al., 2013). Other programs target rapid reading more specifically (APA, 2014).

Yet, a more recent study (Luniewska et al., 2018) has failed to replicate the results of the previous studies. According to them, neither action nor phonological video games help children with dyslexia read better.

Finally, most experiments seem to focus on dyslexia but ignore the other learning disorders, while it is not rare for people with one learning disorder to have another disorder.

Stay open to students’ thoughts

Video games should not be considered magical tools that could make disorders disappear nor treat dyslexia or other learning disorders completely. That being said, it is possible that some of your students might feel more confident in performing some tasks at school, even just focusing, after playing video games. It could be thanks to the stimulation of playing or thanks to being in an environment in which they felt safe to try and fail. Others might not feel the same. Stay open to the feedback you receive from your students and to their individual experiences!



Source: Blue vector created by vectorjuice - www.freepik.com

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