



Childhood in the Digital Age

Thinking

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Young children learn about the world in a number of different ways.

Sometimes they think through a problem and work it out, sometimes they try out different solutions until they find something that works and sometimes they learn best by watching and talking to the people around them.

How will technology affect these different but overlapping forms of learning?

When children memorise facts, reason, and solve problems they are involved in 'cognitive learning'. They are deliberately thinking about the task and learning from that reflection.

In the digital age children are often carrying out several tasks at once such as texting, listening to music and surfing the net. There is some concern that this routine multitasking so early in life will compromise children's ability to focus deeply on any one task in the future.

Does using digital technologies rewire children's brains for better or for worse?

Often children learn simply by trying things out and seeing what works and what doesn't.

Many computer games rely on this type of trial-and-error learning. Regular rewards and reinforcements are built in, which encourage the player to work out how to progress.

Some critics consider computer games a time-consuming distraction. But might they actually nurture skills that are useful in the real world, such as fine motor control and hand-eye coordination?

Children learn a huge amount from the people around them through observation, interacting, and exchanging ideas.

A new way of writing and speaking has evolved through digital communication technologies such as social networks and text messaging. Is this new text 'slang' damaging children's literacy skills or is it the sign of a creative new genesis of language?