

Special Report: 10 Top Picks for Free Online Interactive Programs to Stimulate your Brain

Many people believe that playing games is a waste of time. This could not be further from the truth. Traditional and computer-based games are often treatment material goldmines! Games can be used effectively during treatment sessions and incorporated into independent practice programs.

There are many online sites as well as CDs which provide enjoyable interactive activities and games for practicing skills to reach treatment goals. Board games, card games, strategy games, word games and even games of luck, when used appropriately, offer enormous benefits. Children may be more easily engaged in therapy and practice new skills without realizing that there is an educational process taking place. Adults can reduce stress, enjoy acquiring new skills, and find new ways to interact with others.

Many goal areas of communication and cognitive treatment can be addressed during treatment with games and online interactive activities such as: attention, concentration, memory, problem solving, visual scanning, initiation, sequencing, talking, writing and reading.

New brain research shows that brain pathways improve with practice. Games need to be changed and adapted to fit the needs of the user. This can be accomplished by exploring and selecting options that are provided with the game, changing what the player is expected to do or by varying the amount of assistance provided during the game.

As with other treatment materials, it is necessary to keep in mind the goals of therapy, visual impairments, fine motor abilities, cognitive and communication strengths and weaknesses, and the interests of the user.

10 top picks for free online interactive programs

The following free online resources do not require membership or fees. They can be easily adapted to help individuals in order to help them improve communication and cognition. They do not require logins or passwords. They may require Macromedia Shockwave or a Java platform – both of which can be downloaded at no charge. Depending on the Internet connection speed, most downloads are fast. Some games are played alone, while others engage the play of others who are online.

1. www.1-language.com

There are a variety of flash games, grammar quizzes and hangman.

2. www.aarp.org/games

AARP Online Games and Puzzles feature online puzzles, jigsaws, and other interactive games. There are clear instructions with minimal advertising interruptions. I most often use:

- * ·Card Games- spider solitaire
- * Strategy- The decoder, Mahjongg Toy Chest
- * Word- Sea Chest, Word Search

3. <http://a4esl.org>

This site features quizzes, tests, exercises, and puzzles to help learn English. Specific lessons offer grammar and vocabulary quizzes, and crossword puzzles.

4. www.funbrain.com

This site has math, spelling, and creative writing games.

Each section allows users to start the game over, to switch levels, or to return to the home page to select another game.

5. www.jigzone.com

This is a great site for puzzles with a wide variety of levels.

You can determine the pictures, number of pieces, and shape.

(Please contact Joan@innovativespeech.com for the complete free special report)