

Research Article

Techvelopment Related Mind Disorders: Mitigating Students' Video-addiction by Mean of Bridge Mindsport as Socio-cognitive Skill Training Tool

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Abstract

An indefinite amount of neuro- and psychopathogenic factors including Artificial Intelligence embedded applications, full-sensory Virtual Reality experiences, proliferation of social media platforms, widespread new content such as online short videos (*"reels"*), instant feedback reactions, and other mechanisms making *online life* more persuasive than factual offline reality, are associated with a quasi-vertical, unchallenged algorithmic acceleration (*"techvelopment"*).

While sustainability/environmental neurosciences try to process the full health, sociological, and anthropological implications of the digitization process, further accelerated by photonic terahertz 6G-AI native mobile standard set for 2030, it's necessary to intervene urgently in order to mitigate, somehow mind and social adverse effects related to mass video addiction, a disturbing phenomenon particularly affecting children and adolescents.

Apart from being believed to be valuable strategies to support patients suffering from schizophrenia, autism, and dementia, social and cognitive skills training (SCST) group activities can be applied in educational settings in order to promote socialization, teamwork, and collective intelligence, improving school and academic performance.

As a powerful socio-cognitive resource, I propose to implement in educational settings the Bridge mindsport as a complementary SCST activity potentially able to cope with *digital risks*, particularly videoaddiction, within a broader perspective to decrease digital consumerism and foster critical autonomous citizens who actively participate in democratic life.

Background

As the unchecked and rampant process of digitization colonizes every nook and cranny of reality, even introducing *synthetic entities* and *social robots* into a new *"hybrid"* society increasingly populated by *"bionic"* and *"augmented"* humans, *Homo sapiens* is incessantly overexposed via screens to a complex mix of rapidly shifting visual and cognitive banal, vulgar, puerile, violent, sexual stimuli, messages, contents, that exacerbate the inattention due to rings, alerts, notifications, flashing lights.

In parallel the constant transition from actual life to the virtual dimension of *onlife* summed to dependency on *Google* and *GPS navigators*, subvert the traditional spatio-temporal

reference points that have contributed to shape human mind, while devices become appendages of the human body and sleep and dream activity are destroyed by all-night connexion to the web.

As regards the *"dromological"* acceleration described by Hartmut Rosa in the book *Acceleration and Alienation* (2015), widespread alienation and psychological distress stem from the fact that the supreme value placed on competition ends up trapping people in a hamster wheel that prevents them from stopping to reflect in-deep, read, study, relax.

Acceleration means to save time, to get more done in less time, often simultaneously (*multitasking*), to follow trends and novelties without understanding significance and potential.

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For his part *McDonaldization* invites workers to behave “functionally” as ignorant and stupid. Additional alienation is generated by neoliberal policies producing disoccupation and making work market more and more deregulated, precarious, flexible, underpaid, while *cyber-capitalism* driven by Big Tech freely extracts *big data* and *digital footprints* incessantly generated by human bodies, *i-Health* practices, surveillance policy and military systems to accumulate enormous profits.

In this increasingly artificial system where everything is datified, humankind is subjected to unprecedented adaptive stress, human brain can be interfaced with the digital world by VR headset visors and neural chips (see *NeuroLink's* projects), a part form being functionally and structurally transformed by visual culture and photonic ultra-high frequency pulses, generative and agentic AI applications threatens to replace human skills (which risk being irreversibly lost).

In the light of this complex mix of converging synergistic potentially dystopic trends I believe it's necessary to intervene urgently to protect human brain and society as a whole by mean of educational strategies aimed to mitigate mass videoaddiction and counteract digital consumerism.

Introduction

The primary aim of this work is to spark reflection on the unsustainability of an anti-social digitization process, with particular reference to collective mental health, which appears increasingly precarious partly due to a complex mix of converging alienating dynamics linked to the “*digital capitalism*” (named also “*techno-capitalism*”, “*cyber-capitalism*”, “*liquid capitalism*”), as I have highlighted in previous critical opinion papers [1-4].

Therefore commit to preventig human brain from functional simplification and cortical atrophy - adverse effects of mass videoaddiction suggesting the paradoxical regression of *Homo sapiens* in the stupid cave-dwelling hominids who 250.000 years ago communicated each other via pictograms and onomatopoeic sounds, as Giovanni Sartori hypothesizes in the book *Homo videns* (2000) - and “*liquid society*” to “evaporate” towards a chaotic increasingly artificial forms where social atoms wander in disarray - as Zygmunt Bauman writes in *Retrotopia* (2017) if humanity were to stop building bridges and dreaming of collectivist utopias – is a moral duty for doctors and sociologists.

Motivated by these reasons, thanks a bibliographic selective search combined with an (in-progress) on-field participant observation-like project aimed to explore the eventual benefits for the players and myself of Bridge mindsport, I propose to implement in educational settings the game of Bridge as a socio-cognitive skills training (SCST) tool potentially able to mitigate videoaddiction, and more in general, to protect our brain from digital risks causing an alienating condition of social isolation related to “*phigitality*” [5-7].

Scope of the project “Bridge for digital sustainability”

Collateral scope of this work is to scientifically support an educational project that possibly integrates the sport of Bridge among SCST, *digital detox* and *digital literacy* strategies in order to fight student's videoaddiction and to promote socialization, teamwork, collective intelligence.

If we want such an intervention it aims to steer schools back to their fundamental mission: fostering critical thinking, pacific integration, conviviality, helping to shape responsible and autonomous citizens who approach consumption consciously and actively participate in democratic life. In this way, the sport of Bridge would become part of a broader project aimed to counter-mainstream project pushing institutions, including schools and Healthcare, to conform to Industry 5.0 AI-driven models.

This educational critical need becomes even more urgent in light of the imminent launch of 6G powered by native *machines deep-self learning algorithms* - usually called AI - which vastly increases communication efficiency of terahertz (THz) radiofrequency photonic pulse and makes AI increasingly pervasive, despite the extremely high risks regarding information overload, unsecurity, management difficulties [8,9].

The potential dystopian outcomes of these trends have long been hypothesized by post-marxian critical theorists like Adorno, Marcuse, Rosa.

As early as 2002, in the 3G era, Bauman described a *liquid modernity* characterized by spawning swarms of video-addicted “*zombies*” wandering aimlessly through the “*non-places*” of consumerism. Twenty years later 5G mobile standard cements the succes of “*agentic*” AI and AI algorithms embedded into hardware, software, contents just designed to create and reinforce video-addiction [10].

Now the sixth generation of mobile telephony (6G), slated for 2030, will integrate artificial intelligence in order to autonomously manage data traffic, eliminate latency, make interactions virtually instantaneous, and facilitate the widespread use of drones and unmanned vehicles.

Inevitably AI powered 6G will also generate new synthetic entities (even called “*subjectivities*” or “*identities*” because of their own super-human intelligence and “personality”) such as 3D *holograms* and *extended reality* (XR) where is practically impossible to detect physical and digital world by embedding in the newer headsets and smart glasses VR and Augmented Reality (AR), so making increasingly immersive gaming and entertainment experiences [11].

Actually a “*reverse Flynn effect*” signals a large-scale regression in collective IQ. Consequently, remeasuring the “*Engelbart Index*” in a few years, when desirable AI powered 6G standard will bring the number of mobile subscriptions to



9.7 billion, might provide further prognostic insights about mind digital related disorders.

By mean of Bridge, an intellectual partnership/team sport requiring high cognitive, emotional and social skills, I suspect is just possible to somehow break the vicious cycle linking acceleration, alienation, technostress and screen addiction by reinforcing globally human brain and potentially promoting communication, collaboration, socialization and, consequently, collective critical intelligence.

In particular, in the light of Imaging studies on videoaddicted subjects performed by the neuroscientist Mark Spitzer (*Digital dementia*, 2014) and a vast literature highlighting an amount of adverse effects concerning neuroplasticity and neural functions related to video-addiction [12-15], in my opinion as a SCST strategy Bridge mindsport is an educational activity potentially able to improve school performance by stimulating intelligence and critic spirit, working as a "protective factor" against the digital induced stupidity and dementia-like cognitive decline symptoms.

Bridge's psychotherapeutic potential in managing digital risks

Bridge is an intellectual sport played in pairs and teams that requires logical-mathematical-predictive skills, collaboration, empathetic communication just like in the strategic interactions of everyday life.

In fact the acronym "CORE" perfectly captures the prosocial essence of the game: communication (dialogue), openmindedness (altruistic inclination), responsibility (respect for the partner's choices), empathy (sharing of viewpoints) permeate mindset and personality of the ideal bridgeplayer type.

The player tries to stay focused for hours during the tournament, undistracted by environmental and/or inner "noises", while correctly transmitting information to the partner through the sport tools (*bidding cards* and playing cards). This particular modality of composed and unexpressive symbolic dialogue, since the players cannot speak each other or exchange paralinguistic messages, stresses the role of empathy generating interpersonal closeness, just as happens in work groups communicating by mean of text messages via online chat.

Apart from involving both emotional intelligence (emotional control, empathy) and critical thinking (hand analysis, assessment of the forces at play, planning of moves and countermoves, time-pressure decision-making), Bridge involves social (appropriateness of behavior in relation to the circumstances) and collective intelligence (ability to solve complex problems through collaborative reasoning).

In summary, we can say that Bridge involves a global stimulation of the brain strengthening cognitive, emotional

and social competences. It is therefore possible to assimilate this mindsport to other types of socio-cognitive skill training (SCST) group strategies bringing significant competitive advantages to companies and organizations that promote teamwork and the production of collective intelligence to solve complex problems.

In this regard, it may be useful to draw a parallel between Bridge and the dyadic collaborative and strategic relationship radiologist-clinician. Both in a match and clinical setting a "bid" is at stake: players bet on landing a "contract", doctors on getting a diagnosis right. The iconographic diagnosis needs clinical information, the clinical reasoning take critically into account instrumental data.

In strategic interactions, where interlocutors/social actors/players communicate and cooperate to achieve a common goal - in our case the best treatment for the patient - they have to make decisions by assessing imperfect, incomplete, asymmetric information, including the evaluation of opposing "hands" of differing value.

In essence, to paraphrase Einstein: "*clinical practice without Imaging is blind; Imaging without clinical practice is empty*".

However an important difference between Medicine and Bridge must be noted: in Bridge the coded communication between partners is sincere, honest, transparent, in order to be evaluated also by the opponents. Among doctors often communication is indirect, mediated by reports or via telephone, hampered by mutually incomprehensible terminology.

In addition personal motives and interests risk making the "bid" unfeasible, hazardous, leading to unnecessary and/or inappropriate interventions that result in unsafe, ineffective, and costly care.

This example merely aims to highlight how the sport of Bridge as SCST tool eventually implemented in educational settings could, ultimately, contribute to improve clinical appropriateness by making doctors more critical, attentive, focused, collaborative.

Final critical remarks

It is well established in Psychiatry that card games, "*serious games*", SCST strategies represent socio-cognitive resources able to promote socialization and stimulate cognitive and executive functions.

Performed in educational settings these integrative activities can help students to improve learning and school or academic performance, encouraging them to teamwork, but we do not have solid information regarding the magnitude and duration of the benefits [16-18].

Regarding Bridge, the literature documents experiences



involving elderly patients suffering from early-stage dementia, but I am not aware of any scientific studies that have used Bridge to enhance students' skills, let alone to combat screen-addiction as a sort of *digital detox* strategy [19].

However, in the light of the available evidence and my own on-field observations, I believe that the proposal to incorporate Bridge into educational activities should not be underestimated as strategy potentially able to mitigate video-addiction, prevent digital risks, curb digital consumerism, promote critical digital literacy [20,21].

Aligning perfectly with the recent views expressed both by Pope Leo XIV in the encyclic *Magnifica Humanitas* calling for an educational alliance to protect humanity from the dystopian scenarios related to techvelopment, and by Maurizio Ferrari (*Comunismo digitale. Una proposta politica*, 2025), who on the other hand proposes a popular alliance to wrest the immense wealth generated by "*documedia capital*" from Big Tech giants and redistribute it to the very people who unwittingly produce this precious commodity, I intend to support a propose aimed at significantly impacting the generation of personal data and digital consumerism by combating mass screen-addiction.

Discussion and limitations

Bridge may offer an educational setting in which students can engage in collaborative reasoning, strategic decision-making, sustained attention, and interpersonal communication. These features provide a plausible basis for examining its potential contribution to broader educational initiatives that promote social interaction and responsible digital-media use.

Nevertheless, the proposed relationship between Bridge participation and reduced problematic video use remains to be established empirically. The cognitive and social demands of a game do not, on their own, demonstrate that participation will change students' media-consumption patterns or protect against mental-health difficulties. Furthermore, evidence concerning general cognitive stimulation or social-cognitive skills training cannot be treated as direct evidence of the effectiveness of Bridge for this specific purpose.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the article is primarily conceptual and does not present a completed empirical evaluation of a Bridge-based intervention. Second, the literature-search approach is not described in sufficient detail to establish its reproducibility or completeness. Third, the cited evidence encompasses different populations, outcomes, and study designs, limiting direct comparisons and the transferability of findings to students in educational settings. Fourth, the manuscript does not establish a causal relationship between problematic video use and the specific neurological changes described in the Introduction.

Future studies should evaluate the feasibility and

acceptability of school-based Bridge activities and use clearly defined outcome measures to investigate changes in digital-media use, attention, social interaction, and student well-being. Where feasible, prospective controlled studies with appropriate comparison groups and follow-up assessments would help determine whether any observed changes can reasonably be attributed to the intervention.

Until such evidence is available, Bridge should be presented as a potential complementary educational activity rather than an established treatment or a proven method of preventing digital-media-related neurological harm.

Conclusion

Bridge represents a potentially valuable educational activity for exploring the relationship between structured social interaction, collaborative reasoning, and responsible digital-media use. Its demands for attention, strategic planning, and cooperation provide a plausible rationale for investigating its integration into broader digital-literacy and student well-being initiatives.

However, the effectiveness of Bridge in reducing problematic video use or preventing cognitive and neurological harm has not been established by the evidence presented in this article. The proposal should therefore be regarded as a hypothesis for further investigation rather than a demonstrated intervention.

Future research should use transparent methods, clearly defined outcomes, and appropriate study designs to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of Bridge-based educational programs. Such evidence would help determine whether this activity can make a meaningful contribution to student development and responsible engagement with digital technology.

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