

Research on Life-and-Death Education in the Plants Vs Zombies

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ABSTRACT: The Plants Vs Zombies game enables players to think death in a relaxed atmosphere; the Plants Vs Zombies game is a vivid portrayal of life and death and it reflects the development of the philosophy of life and death as well as the life-and-death education in United States and their extensive influence.

KEYWORD: plants; zombies; life-and-death education

Papers innovation: it aims to explore the life-and-death education factors from the common computer game and utilize game, a recreational form, to carry out life-and-death education.

The *Plants Vs Zombies* is a puzzle strategic defensive game developed by PopCap Games of United States. In this game, players switch between different functions by arming various plants, and conduct battles with the invasive zombies. Different zombie enemies and multiple scenes constitute a variety of game modes. Night, fog, swimming pools and other obstacles make this game more challenging. Since 2009, it has swept the world and won the appreciation of the public all over the world, especially young people.

The Plants Vs Zombies contains a wealth of life-and-death education factors, so it is an effective form to promote and implement the life-and-death education.

1 DEATH ALERT FUNCTION OF PLANTS VS ZOMBIES

"If we don't know life, how can we know death?". Due to the influence of China's traditional culture, people tend to avoid the topic of death and their faces will turn pale at the mention of death. If you have not experienced the death threats of yourselves or the friends and family, death seems to be a distant thing for ordinary people. However, "Death is not something divorced from life, but the thing underlying life¹." Death will not stay away from you just because you shun and do not talk about it or do not think about it. Instead, it has come to hiding in the depths of every human heart. Just "people are naturally lazy, and they could not effectively get rid

of this tendency and embark on the journey of self-awareness through highly intense physical and mental activities until they are under the circumstances of facing death.¹" "He admits the limit of the cherry tree, a puppy, and human life unrelated to him, or even the limit of his friends and family, but refuses to acknowledge the limit of his life,²" People, especially young people with good health would not easily admit the short period of his life, but it does not mean they are not fearful of death. In daily life, people often show the fear of death in other slightly changed forms. For example, hypochondria psychology, and paranoid thoughts, etc. These all come down to the demonstration of the fear of death or death anxiety. The grave of death makes people unwilling to discuss issues and thinking of death seriously. Therefore, it is needed to adopt more flexible and richer ways to carry out death education.

Using games to carry out death education for people is one of the effective measures, and Plants Vs Zombies contains a wealth of life and death education factor. It converts the problem of death into the form of games, which is displayed in various forms of zombies, so that death is no longer serious, stereotyped and bored, but very fun. This game gives people an opportunity to gradually face death in fun, relaxed and happy way, making people become less sensitive to, less anxious about and fear of death. The whole game represents a portrayal of life and death and stimulates the player's awareness of death unintentionally by playing games and fighting against zombies, making some people gradually think about the problem of death in a relaxed and happy manner and reflect on the limitation and fragility of life, and thus helping them gradually develop an understanding about the individual life's

end point. If there is a teacher or parent using game to properly guide players, it will assist them to learn the correct attitude to life. No waste of time and life, and pursue the meaning of life in a joyful, optimistic, and cherishing the moment attitude, and then move on to thinking about life's meaning and value.

2 THE MUTUAL ATTACK AND DEFENSE OF PLANTS VS ZOMBIES IS A VIVID METAPHOR AND PORTRAYAL OF LIFE AND DEATH

Game is like life, *Plants Vs Zombies* is a battle between plants and zombies, which is a vivid portrayal of life and death. Plant is a symbol of birth, while zombies symbolize death. Life and death are transformed into a variety of funny items and are vividly presented in front of us. The battle between life and death has been gamified and visualized. Various plants and zombies attack and defense each other, just like life and death affect and interact each other.

Analysis of various factors in this game

The sunflower which continuously generates sunlight: life and growth all need sunlight. We need a positive attitude and keep the sunny state of mind, thus becoming more strong and powerful. When the zombies (disease) struck, the sunlight, which represents good attitude and spirit, is particularly important, for it can bring a weapon (immunity) to strengthen your resistance.

Plants (sunflower, pea shooter, etc.): the power of life. Zombie: death. The battle between plants and zombies is a battle between life and death.

Plants' constant shaking: Life is movement and movement generates power.

Nuts wall (hinder zombies march forward): the fortifications to delay the death, exercise a healthy body, cultivate a strong spirit to resist the invasion of disease and aging, that is, to erect the nuts wall of the life.

Grave: it symbolizes death. Zombies mean the sudden death, as long as we operate and cultivate plants (life) to enhance our spiritual life and social life, and achieve the life value. Therefore, these suddenly visiting zombies (death) are not terrible.

Back garden: like family, it is the driving force and source of our career. A well-managed garden will help us get success in the future life.

Night War: night will be over and we try to become strong and enduring to look forward to a bright future.

Burning the midnight oil: Lit a lamp to penetrate the fog and find the direction for the future, then we can overcome the darkness and usher the dawn.

Plant team: unity is strength. Every member performs its functions and cooperates with each

other to fight against common enemies, thus overcoming difficulties.

3 LIFE IS MOVEMENT

All the plants in this game are swing, which reflects a dynamic force. Life is movement, and movement and swinging make them have the power. It warns us that when in the face of death, we cannot just sit around but face it with sunny, positive and optimistic attitude. Besides, we should take action to enrich our life and live a happy, fulfilling and meaningful life. Help those who need help, help vulnerable groups with the universal love, which will finally achieve self-help and forget the disease, anxiety and fear. Yang Shunde, a railway policeman in Liuzhou of Guangxi, developed laryngeal carcinoma. After being diagnosed in hospital for several months, he went back to work, assisting and educating problem students in primary and secondary schools. This job enables him to find his life value. He devoted himself to the hotline consultation, lecture, mental health and education for more than ten hours every day. Eventually he beat cancer. Ten years later, Yang Shunde is still active in helping and educating schoolchildren, and won the "Second Prize of National Public Security System" for his excellent performance.

4 "BRAIN EATING" IN THE GAME IS A REFLECTION OF BRAIN DEATH

Zombies eat your brains, which means you have been defeated, and this is due to the pervasive influence of brain death culture. In recent years, with the development of medical science and updating of people's mind, more and more countries regard the brain death as criteria to determine death. Brain death usually refers to the irreversible function loss of the whole brain, including the brainstem. With the advancement in medical science, patients' heart rate, breathing, blood pressure and other vital signs can be reversed or maintained for such a long term through a series of advanced equipment or drugs. But if the structural damage occurs to the brain stem, the patient will eventually develop cardiac death no matter what kind of medical treatment is conducted. Therefore, compared with cardiac death, brain death is much more scientific and more reliable.

5 PLANTS VS ZOMBIES GAME REFLECTS THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEATH EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Death education stems from life-and-death education in America and it is an important way to implement

life education. People in the United States have the courage to face death, the theme of death and death education has penetrated into different social areas such as literature, film, television, painting, music and so on. For example: the dancing zombie in this game represents the image of Michael Jackson, and the PopCap Games company almost got into a lawsuit due to this image. However, the original intention of using this image is to carry forward the spirit of Jackson and encourage us to cherish life.

To sum up, it is an effective form to carry out life-and-death education by the *Plants Vs Zombies* game.

Cited Note: ①②③ [China] Duan Dezhi, *Western Death Philosophy* Peking University Press, 2006 edition

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