Brain Game Product Reviews blog
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The purpose of this blog is to review a variety of readily available games, books, and other products that can help aging adults keep their brains active in lighthearted ways. Most have adaptations that can be used by people living with dementia, and most can also be used intergenerationally. My goal is always to help others make new connections in their brains and new social connections through sharing. If you have suggestions for a new product or other ways to use a product I've reviewed, please contact me at Kathy@WiserNow.com.

Gobblet Game

Gobblet is usually described as a combination Connect Four and Tic-Tac-Toe in which players "gobble up" their opponent's pieces. While its name sounds like the perfect choice for National Games Week held each year around the American Thanksgiving (gobble, gobble) to promote socially interactive games, it's just as great for lounging on a porch on a hot summer day: Give your brain a strategic workout without working up a sweat.

Gobblet is like Connect Four in that the goal is to get four of your pieces in a row, and like Tic-Tac-Toe because it's played on a flat surface, but the gobble factor requires much more strategy. Each player gets 3 sets of 4 nesting pieces, which when placed on the board are essentially upside down cups. (The smallest piece in the nest is a simple cylinder.) As players place pieces on the board, they can choose to set a piece down on an empty square or gobble up an opponent's piece by covering it with one of their larger pieces. Only the largest pieces can't be gobbled, but since each player has only three of those, no one can win four in a row by playing only their largest pieces. Plus, unlike Tic-Tac-Toe, there is no center square to give players that strategic advantage.

To play according to the rules requires strategic thinking, but the game can also be simplified by, for example, playing with fewer pieces or allowing players to move a placed piece on their next turn. The smooth, cylindrical wooden pieces are also satisfying to simply hold. For people living with dementia, I have found that just as they often like to put the pieces in the slots for Connect Four (oblivious to the rules), they enjoy slotting the wooden pieces into each other without trying to play the game.

The quality-made, all-wood game is a box with its playing board on top and a space to store the 24 pieces inside that's nice enough to leave out on a coffee table. Even when stored in a cupboard, set-up can be done in an instant.