ABSTRACT BOOK
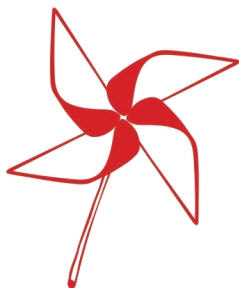
of the 27th ICCP World Play Conference

RESEARCHING PLAY - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2017, Vilnius

Abstract book of the 27th ICCP World Play Conference

Researching Play - Challenges and Opportunities

15-17th of June, 2017
Vilnius, Lithuania

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WELCOME ADDRESS by dr. Jan Van Gils,
President of ICCP

We are happy and proud that the 27th ICCP conference will be organised in Vilnius, Lithuania. The LEU University is a wonderful partner for this initiative because of his original pedagogical approach of children's play. The University has a very open mind in his approach of children and his hospitality is warm and playful.

The 27th ICCP-conference will focus on researching play by a wide variety of disciplines and ditto experts. Children's play can be approached from very different perspectives, but all of them try to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon of children's play. Children's play is very complex, it's kaleidoscopic and holistic, it belongs to the children's perspectives and to the ownership of children. Everyone knows playing: children and parents, pupils and teachers, play workers and artists, scientists and gardeners etc. but none of them can describe it exhaustible. This characteristic makes the conference fascinating. The conference is like a market place where everyone has something to offer and something to accept. The participants always are learning from each other and they go home enriched.

I hope that you will be one of the participants who wants to participate in this unique learning community. You can be sure, it will be a nice experience.

With playful greetings,

Dr. Jan VAN GILS
President ICCP

WELCOME ADDRESS by dr. Milda Bredikyte,
Chair of the Conference

We are happy to welcome all the participants of the 27th ICCP World Play Conference in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania. Lithuania is a country with rich history, courageous and friendly people. We are very honoured to have so many play researchers in our beautiful city and at our university. The Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences already has a history in play research – in 2012 we have established a Play Research Laboratory with a deep interest in cultural-historical approach of play. We hope that the atmosphere will be inspirational for you to make new contacts, to meet colleagues and to study play during the conference.

The aim of International Council for Children's Play (ICCP) is to promote research on play and toys in various countries and to exchange research findings, to promote the understanding of play and toys, to organize campaigns to ensure the child's right to play, to raise the standards of toys and to inform the public about good toys and their value in child development. Starting from the 1959, 26 conferences are held in various countries. 'Researching Play – Challenges and Opportunities' aims to share effective ways of researching play and to promote discussion about the methodological challenges confronting play researchers. This conference aims to stimulate a multidisciplinary exchange of knowledge and experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Conference organization

Organizing Committee
Milda Bredikyte (Lithuania) – Chair
Monika Skeryte-Kazlauskiene (Lithuania) – Secretary General
Agne Brandišauskiene (Lithuania)
Giedre Sujetaite-Volungevičiene (Lithuania)
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Maria Øksnes (Norway)

PROGRAM

Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences
Studentu str. 39, LT-08106 Vilnius (3rd and 4th floor of the main building)

2017.06.15

9.00-11.00 Registration for the Workshops and the conference
10.00-13.00 Workshops *Narrative Environments for Play* and *What is Playwork?*
16.00-20.00 Registration for the conference
18.00-19.30 Opening evening with welcome concert and Jan van Gils keynote lecture
Children's perspectives on play
19.30-21.00 Opening reception and ICCP meeting

2017.06.16

8.00-17.00 Registration for the conference
9.00-10.00 Keynote lecture
10.00-11.00 Conference sessions
11.00-11.30 Coffee, tea and posters
11.30-13.00 Conference sessions
13.00-14.00 Lunch
14.00-15.00 Keynote lecture
15.00-15.30 Coffee, tea and posters
15.30-17.00 Conference sessions
18.00-21.00 Conference Dinner

2017.06.17

8.30-14.00 Registration for the conference
9.00-10.00 Keynote lecture
10.00-11.00 Conference sessions
11.00-11.30 Coffee, tea
11.30-13.00 Conference sessions
13.00-14.00 Lunch
14.00-15.00 Keynote lecture
15.00-15.30 Coffee, tea
15.30-17.00 Conference sessions
17.00-17.30 Closing of the conference

SESSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

	1. The importance of play (Hall, 3rd floor)	2. Educational settings (332, 3rd floor)	3. Play environments and toys (403, 4th floor)	4. Promoting play (414, 4th floor)	5. Variety (318, 3rd floor)
	2017.06.16				
9.00-10.00	1K. Keynonte lecture: **David Whitebread**. Play & Development: Cause or Effect? (hall)				
10.00-11.00	**1.1.** Invited session: **P. Hakkarainen, M. Bredikyte.** Methodology of researching developmental potential of play	**2.1. E. Kane, A. Klerfelt.** Play and social integration of newly arrived children, in school-age educare	**3.1. J. Cartmel, K. Macfarlane, M. Nelson, G. Hodgson.** It's like a backyard: children's play at the Family Place	**4.1. D. Guzaitiene.** Play, Fun and Learning Programme: can attachment and play based parent training reduce parenting stress?	
		2.2. B. Ashley. The special knowledge needed for playwork with 'problem youth' - gangs and mobbing	**3.2. L. Tuuling, A. Ugaste, T. Õun.** The opinions of 5-6 year old children about the opportunities and necessity of outdoor learning.	**4.2. C. Kuegel.** Functional play for children with autism and severe learning difficulties	
11.00-11.30	Tea/coffee and posters				
11.30-13.00	**1.2. J. L. Linaza, J. J. Ramirez.** Children`s play in different cultures	**2.3. J.Wong-Powell.** Pushing the academic agenda forward: Actual practice challenging play discourse	**3.3. C. Barron.** The use of participatory research methodologies to identify the play and recreation needs of children aged 3-17 years	**4.3. D. E. Kalpogianni, F. Konstantinos, A. Evaggelia.** "The power of play": promoting play in preschool	**5.1. M. Van Rooijen.** Realistic Evaluation in exploring influencing factors on professional's attitude towards risk-taking play
	1.3. E. Waithaka. Children's involvement in play at school in Kenya	**2.4. K. Palsdottir, S. Kristjansdottir.** Play and literacy in formal and non-formal educational settings	**3.4. J. Van Gils.** Research methods regarding children's play outdoors and unaccompanied: opportunities and limitations	**4.4. B. Chancellor.** The Hall Program: A play based model of pedagogical delivery in an Australian primary school	**5.2. J. Meire.** On mapping and sensing play: Research strategies, understanding play and informing policy
	1.4. A. Ugaste. The experience of childhood play of various different generations	**2.5. A. M. Pessanha, A. Rebolo.** Literacy related with attractive play materials	**3.5. K. Tolland, C. Barron, F. Murphy.** Physical Activity Play and Playful Spaces among children and young	**4.5. A. Pursi.** Intersubjectivity in play interaction – constituting play connection in toddler group	**5.3. I. Safarov.** Children play as lawful interaction: modeling, analyses, skills
13.00-14.00	Lunch				
14.00-15.00	2K. Keynote lecture: **John Matthews**. Spontaneous play and the origin of representational and symbolic thought				
15.00-15.30	Tea/coffee and posters				
15.30-17.00	**1.5. R. Sorin.** Play and constructs of childhood	**2.6. K. Hermanfors.** Kindergarten teacher students on the way to learn guided role play	**3.6. T. Buchler.** Without instructions	Symposium **4.6. L. Specht Petersen.** MY PLAYGROUND - the potential of a temporary playground - findings from an ongoing qualitative study	

2017.06.16					
15.30-17.00	**1.6. M. Øksnes, E. Sundsdal.** In defense of the intrinsic value of children`s play	**2.7. A. Michaelides, E. Loizou, M.Photiadou.** Children's, parents' and Early Childhood teachers', descriptive and illustrative, beliefs on play and learning	**3.7. N. Prešlenkova.** Claiming the dark Forest as Urban Children's Play Space	**4.7. R. E. Casper, M. Brandstrup.** The Playship - developing the Danish play culture and revitalizing harbour cities **4.8. L. Specht Petersen.** The potential of the Playship - findings from an ethnographic study - with focus on the vision sailings.	
	1.7. L. Burriss, K. G. Burriss, M. Hill, D. Snead. Discussion and distribution of play research: A content analysis of existing play literature	**2.8. S. Sevimli-Celik, A. Ata Aktürk** Nurturing Creativity and Playfulness in Early Childhood Pre-service Teacher Education	**3.8. S. Ahmed.** Traditional Indian Board Games		
18.00-19.00	Conference dinner				

Posters:

P.01. **S. Janovskis, E. Stankevič.** Application of didactic games to develop linguistic competence of the 4th form students during French lessons.

P.02. **I. Kerulienė.** Children's right to play in Lithuanian kindergartens.

P.03. **C. Matsudaira.** Play for children with complex medical needs, uniting play with medicine.

P.04. **K. Riiser, A. Lund Haugen, S. Lund, K. Løndal.** ACTIVE PLAY in After School Programs.

P.05. **M. Skeryte-Kazlauskiene, L. Rakickiene, R. Driukiene, M. Bredikyte**. Free and structured play possibilities in Vilnius kindergartens.

P.06. **G. Sujetaite-Volungevičiene, A. Brandišauskiene, M. Bredikyte**. Affective experience in play: phenomenological approach.

P.07. **K. D. Wolf**. ECEC-teachers' participation in children's spontaneous play.

P.08. **D. Grogan, S. De Lorenzo, R. Soper, F. O'Donnell**. Playing With Gratitude.

2017.06.17					
	1. The importance of play (Hall, 3rd floor)	**2. Educational settings** (332, 3rd floor)	**3. Play environments and toys** (403, 4th floor)	**4. Promoting play** (414, 4th floor)	**5. Variety** (318, 3rd floor)
9.00-10.00	3K. Keynote lecture: **Elly Singer.** Playfulness and social life of young children in group settings				
10.00-11.00	**1.8. J. Cartmel, S. Newstead, K. Smith.** Realistic Evaluation across continents of the PARS model – a learning tool for developing playwork practice	**2.9. M. Hill, K. G. Burriss, L. L. Burriss, D. Snead.** Describing activity breaks during the school day: A preliminary analysis	**3.9. A. Melnikov.** An example of 'Games-Based-Learning' approach using in teaching adolescences within STEM area	Symposium **4.9. R. Soper, F. O'Donnell, D. Grogan, S. De Lorenzo.** The Foundation Early Learning. The Playing With Gratitude project	
	1.9. B. Ashley. Using theory and research to train play workers.	**2.10. J. H. Oh** What are the Beliefs of Teachers with Regard to Young Children's Outdoor Play in a Preschool Setting?	**3.10. A. Kempton.** Scripted objects and meaningful play: Theorizing play in video game modifications		
11.00-11.30	Tea/coffee				

2017.06.17					
11.30-13.00	**1.10. P. Blaževičius** Child`s life in the medieval town – between play and work	**2.11. L. Russo.** Anecdotes from the "Field": Using students' stories on play, curriculum and teacher perception as a learning tool within an early childhood teacher education program in the USA	**3.11. S. Zoels.** Toys can do so much more! Unlocking the many potential uses of toys	Symposium **4.10. E. Filipiak.** Narrative play as a strategy supporting a child in development and learning; approach by Lev S. Vygotsky (inspiration)	**5.4. K. Majors, E. Baines.** Children's play with their imaginary companions: parent experiences and perceptions of the characteristics of imaginary compan-ions and purposes served
	1.11. K. D. Wolf, A. Greve, K. O. Kristensen The importance of play - "…But don't think that we are only playing…"	**2.12. M. Gulhan, S. Sevimli-Celik, B. Tugrul.** An investigation of preschool teachers' role during playtime	**3.12. V. Mehringer.** W. Waburg Toys and diversity	**4.11. J. Szymczak.** Educational situation as "cultural space" for reflective-ness and reflection **4.12. E. Lemańska-Lewandowska.** The role of pedagog-ical documentation in designing teach-er's and students' activities (in a play situation)	**5.5. S. March, M. Fleer.** Developing play complexity from within children's imaginary play: A cultural-historical methodological approach to play
		2.13. E. Fox, P. K. Smith. Playful ways of teaching music, and the example of Kurtag's Játékok	**3.13. D. Bondi.** Martial arts: from spontaneity to sportivization		**5.6. B. Edmiston.** Changing our world: Dialogic dramatic playing with young children
13.00-14.00	Lunch				
14.00-15.00	4K. Keynote lecture: **Peter K. Smith**. Attitudes to play, methods of study, and the influence of the play ethos				
15.00-15.30	Tea/coffee				
15.30-17.00	**1.12. J. Wong-Powell.** Challenges with play: The inclusion of young children's voices	**2.14. A. Georgiou.** Early Childhood student reflections on their expe-rience and Play Skill enhancement during a Creative Drama course	**3.14. A. Rebolo, D. Alves, F. Mesquita, J. Matos, M.Santos, M. Marques, R. Varanda, S. Flamino, T.Ro-cha, V. Tavares.** Spy kids: The use of Glasses with cameras as method to collect data about play	Symposium: Narrative Environ-ments for play and learning **4.13. M. Bredikyte, P. Hakkarainen, A.Brandišauskiene, M. Skeryte-Ka-zlauskiene, G. Sujetaite-Volun-gevičiene.** Experience from Lithuania	**5.7. E. Sheina, E. Smirnova.** Psychological eval-uation of toys and games
	1.13. O.Monkevičienė, B.Autukevičienė. Development of child's multi-per-spective attitude in play	**2.15. C. Harrison.** Bridging the pedagogical divide for a positive tran-sition to school	**3.15. F. Lopes, R. Cordovil, C. Neto, A.Rebolo.** The real-ideal city: a child-friendly in-teractive playful tool to map children's transactional place experiences and mobility	**4.14. J. Lounassalo, A. Pursi, M. Laitinen, M. Salonen.** Experience from Finland **4.15. E.Filipiak, E.Lemańska-Le-wandowska, J. Szymczak.** Experience from Poland	**5.8. E. Smirnova, I. Ryabkova.** Evaluation of preschooler's pretend play level
	1.14. V. Sobkin, K. Julia. Parents' opinion about their child's play	**2.16. V. Benera.** Usage of game training technol-ogies in the pro-fessional teachers' preparation	**3.16. K. Løndal, S. Lund, A. Lund Hauge, K. Riiser.** A mixed method to explore physical activity play among children		**5.9. A.Chernaya.** Games with rules in early ontogeny
17.00-17.30	Closing of the conference				

KEYNOTES

KEYNOTE
Children's Perspectives on Play

Jan Van Gils

ICCP president, President European Network Childfriendly Cities,
Belgium

It's very difficult and maybe even impossible to define 'play'. However many people tried to circumscribe the behaviour called play. They did it from very different approaches and viewpoints, but play belongs to the same category as love, humour, happiness etc.: they all tell a lot about human beings and we know more or less about what they mean but it is not finished yet into a universal definition. But, we still go on to try to understand it.

While trying to define 'play', it's important to involve children in this process, they are eminently the experts thanks to their daily experiences. However their verbalisation, their expressivity differs, so it's not easy for adults to understand what children mean by play. Thanks to interviews and observations I tried to collect some of their perspectives. These aspects are discussed: 'Mum, can I play', play and sports, boredom, giving meaning.

KEYNOTE
Methodology of Researching Developmental Potential of Play

Pentti Hakkarainen and Milda Bredikyte

Department of Developmental and Educational psychology in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences,
Lithuania

There seems to exist two main paradigms in play research and quite few researchers are developing methodological approaches. Traditional understanding of methodology as experimental design was clearly emphasized in Lillard et al. (2013) on play research claiming causal relation between play and child development. The special thematic issue (Lillard et al.) based on the review raised questions: "(1) the need for clearer operational definitions of play; (2) the importance of improving methodological rigor in studies of play; (3) the difficulty of eliciting authentic play in experimental settings; and (4) the need to look separately at play quantity and play quality in examining the role of play in development". The review was a deathblow to "play ethos" and linear causality between the phenomena. A different paradigm of play research is offered in cultural-historical psychology. Play is analyzed as one type of activity (deyatel'nost) mediating between children and the actual process of living. Activity is understood as the system in the system of social relations. The key process is the development of the object content of activity. In play object content has to be understood at the same time as the subject using psychological tools directed towards self.

KEYNOTE

Spontaneous Play and the Origin of Representational and Symbolic Thought

John Matthews

Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth,
England

Using naturalistic observations, including highly detailed, longitudinal studies of human infants, plus a study of a family of captive chimpanzees, I consider the formation of representational and symbolic thought in spontaneous play. I describe the beginning of the pivotal phenomena identified by Vygotsky, in which the child uses a 'toy' as a lever with which to separate words from objects and actions from meaning. This talk is based partly on someone not yet speaking his mother tongue, Noah, between ages 7 months 28 days to 1 year 9 days. Like other infants, he invents language-like utterances to accompany his actions.

By uncoupling herself from the task demands of handling and object or in managing the movement, the infant discovers and makes use of dynamic assemblies of action which can be disassembled and reassembled in an infinite number of ways. By discovering and then, intentionally, generating such dynamic structures, play lets us see and use, in quite a new way, the ordinary events happening in the ordinary moment. Play often helps us solve problems but, just as important, play allows the tranportation of its style and spirit to the real world, allowing us to enjoy a dialectical relationship with reality.

The talk is illustrated with short, iPhone movies of a chimpanzee, Rara (3 years 9 months 20 days), Noah (from 7 months 28 days to 1 year 9 days) and the free play and drawing of Chinese children 2 to 4 years of age in a Singaporean nursery and kindergarten. Drawing is not exactly play but it shows clearly the encoding of representational meaning onto a flat surface and some of the ways in which the children bridge the gap between representation and reality.

KEYNOTE
Playfulness and Social Life of Young Children in Group Settings

Elly Singer
Department of Developmental Psychology, University Utrecht and Department of Education, University of Amsterdam,
Netherlands

The quality of the play in young children is closely related to the emotional security in the teacher–child relationship. In group settings educators need to be attuned to each individual child, and at the same time they have to divide their attention between the whole group of children. In group settings 'group-focused sensitivity' of teachers seem to be stronger related to young children's emotional security then dyadic sensitivity. Teachers need to foster togetherness and friendship among children and to support children's ability to regulate stress, to solve peer conflicts and to play with each other. Daily successful experiences of peer play and being social engaged and, thus, in a state of both learning and creativity, build up mental health and eagerness to explore the world and to grow up. This lecture is based on studies of young children's lives in Dutch day care groups. The focus will be on the teachers' strategies to foster playfulness, togetherness and learning in group settings.

KEYNOTE
Attitudes to Play, Methods of Study, and the Influence of the Play Ethos

Peter K. Smith
Goldsmiths, University of London,
United Kingdom

Play in humans, especially in human children, has been written about extensively by psychologists and anthropologists. Play forms are primarily exercise play, rough-and-tumble play, object play, pretend and sociodramatic play. Play behavior can take up an appreciable part of the time budget.

There is a spectrum of views on the importance of play in human development, amongst theorists and amongst human societies generally. Different views can be found both historically and cross-culturally, from Spencer's (1898) description of play as "superfluous and useless exercise", through to Gaskins, Haight and Lancy (2007), who describe three types of societies with differing prevailing attitudes to play, which they call 'culturally cultivated play', 'culturally accepted play', and 'culturally curtailed play'. The 'play ethos' (Smith, 1988), or "the realisation that play is essential for normal development has slowly but surely permeated our cultural heritage" (Department of Environment Report, UK, 1973), has greatly influenced the value put on play in much of modern western society, and on the way research has been carried out and reported.

I review the history of views on play, and the evidence for developmental functions, as regards various types of children's play. The evidence comes mainly from anthropological studies, correlational studies, and experimental studies. Three models will be tested against the evidence: that play is epiphenomenal, shows equifinality, or is essential for development.

KEYNOTE
Play & Development: Cause or Effect?

David Whitebread
Center for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDAL)
University of Cambridge Faculty of Education,
United Kingdom

There is a considerable body of research which is indicative, providing circumstantial or correlational evidence, of a general relationship between children's play and aspects of their development. This evidence includes work in evolutionary and developmental psychology, anthropology, neuroscience and educational studies. While researchers in these fields have hypothesized about how play might enhance children's learning and development, much of this evidence merely establishes associations rather than causal relationships and there is little or no conclusive evidence regarding possible explanatory mechanisms. I argue in this talk that in order to move the study of children's play and development forward, research must begin to focus on specific psychological characteristics of play and the qualitatively different types of play in which children engage.

PRESENTATIONS:

SYMPOSIUMS,
INDIVIDUAL ORAL and
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

The Special Knowledge Needed for Playwork with 'Problem Youth' - Gangs and Mobbing

Brian Ashley

Freelance consultant,
Sweden & United Kingdom

Social change is increasing the risk of psycho-social maladjustment in the pre- and early adolescent stages when young people are seeking independence from adult direction and testing out and experimenting with social relationships and behaviour and preparing for entry to adult society. Research shows that these young people have the highest amount of free time without adult supervision and use it largely to explore Internet and forms of mass media that exposes them to all forms of mal-practice of the adult society. There is wide recorded evidence that the first signs of maladjustment or misbehaviour occur during this developmental stage. Yet the author's comparative studies in Europe, USA Australasia & Japan of support services for young people in their free-time, show that in every country these services are reduced or non-existent at this developmental stage. It would appear that adult society does not understand that normal institutional provision is not sufficient to meet the needs of this developmental stage. In any case it is doubtful if the assumptions of normal adult-directed services are capable of meeting the challenge of the independent and testing-out behaviour, named by the author, in other papers, as 'the Forgotten Group". Special understanding is needed to provide special non-institutional support for those passing through this stage and special training is required to cope with the challenge they present for those working with them. The paper will describe such training based on theories of experiential learning and studies of group behaviour.

Using Theory and Research to Train Playworkers

Brian Ashley

Freelance consultant,
Sweden & United Kingdom

Towards the aim of a comprehensive play-work provision and profession the author will describe a model based on theoretical principles that can be applied to different stages of child development and different types of play-work provision and methods.

Much academic attention has been focussed on play of children but much less analysis and research has been given to play-work with children outside institutions. This is mainly due to the lack of comprehensive public provision for this kind of play work with children, that can happen from the earliest childhood to late adolescence. Such play-work often is provided in projects that are experimental and short term. Each new initiative begins afresh and, in building up new practice, the same experience needs to be acquired and the same lessons to be repeated.

One real advantage is, that this opens possibilities for creative thinking and new initiatives. A disadvantage is that it wastes the benefits which can be gained from previous experience, whether successful or unsuccessful, and it denies the value of passing the experience gained on to later experiments.

Practical solutions to such fieldwork problems have rarely been carefully analysed and aims clearly articulated, before being put into effect. Methods of working in the field have rarely been fully described and understood before applying them, nor have actions been systematically recorded and results evaluated and reported. Only in a few cases are such evaluation reports available. There are still fewer examples of work practice which has been consistently recorded and used as a basis for professional supervision, continually analysing and improving the practice.

Such play-work which is innovative, experimental or generally exploratory, requires the worker to be aware continually of the effect that the environment, professional methods and the actions and behaviour can have upon the process and the players. It is important to have careful records of practice to build the worker's own professional understanding and that can be analysed and discussed objectively with colleagues or professional supervisors.

The Use of Participatory Research Methodologies to Identify the Play and Recreation Needs of Children Aged 3 – 17 Years: Challenges and Opportunities from an Irish Perspective

Carol Barron

Dublin City University,
Ireland

Adopting a children's rights perspective, with particular emphasis on Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the author conducted 24 consultation workshops with over 360 children and young people between October 2016 and January 2017 to identify their play and recreation needs growing up in Kildare, Ireland. The research project was conducted to inform the development of a county wide play and recreation policy. This paper reports on the methodological challenges and opportunities encountered when conducting research with children and young people (3 – 17yrs) about play and recreation. To answer one of the research questions 'where do children and young people like to play and hangout?, differing techniques were used to accurately map children and young people's mobility, play spaces and places, included 'draw and tell', 'card games, 'draw and write' and the use of national ordinance survey maps of towns and villages in Kildare. To ensure inclusivity and enable all children's voices to be heard, two subgroups were included; Traveler children and children with disabilities which brought their own unique methodological challenges. The opportunities and challenges of utilizing differing data collection tools to receive answers to the same research question across differing age bands is examined. Finally, conducting 1 to 1 ½ hour consultation sessions allows for a short window of time to collect play data which did influence some of the mediums in which the data is collected; for example the use of digital imagery to record the results of card games, and analysis of ordinance survey maps where young people tracked their play spaces and places is examined.

Usage of Game Training Technologies in the Profesional Teachers' Preparation

Valentyna Benera

Taras Shevchenko Regional Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy Of Kremenets, Ukraine

High efficiency of training both for professional activity and life value is determined in the theory and practice of home high education. Training is a plastic technology of professionalism increase in the sphere of interpersonal communication.

In the process of the intellectual training "Game methods of education" teacher's cognitive skills form organic and dynamic complex: cognition of self individual and psychological peculiarities, psychological and pedagogical state self-assessment and also realization of many-sided perception and adequate cognition of child personality in the would-be professional and pedagogical activity.

To teach a student to work on his own is quite complicated and polyhedral process. it demands a creative search, various forms of pedagogical influence, materials development, modern information learning tools, activated algorisms of individual work development.

We use game training technology as the activity system of algorisms of educational and cognitive acts working and ways of task solving in the process of teaching.

Intellectual training includes: relaxation games, "Adaptive games", "Games-formulas", "Games-release", " Communication games", "Game methods of conflict resolution", "Empathy games", "Games for intuition development" and others.

We consider intellectual training as one of the means of competence increase in the sphere of cognitive (gnostic) skills in the integrated three ways cooperation: communicative, perceptive and interactive. The named above intellectual training games can be used separately and be the constituent part of complex program of professional preparation of the would-be expert.

Child`s Life in the Medieval Town – Between Play and Work

Povilas Blaževičius

Toy Museum,
Lithuania

Exploring the history of the childhood in the prehistoric, medieval or even modern times, the archaeology in many cases gives the unique and irreplaceable information. Burial grounds and the osteological remains of children are the most numerous and more often investigated data resources spreading the light on the health, diet, social status etc. However, when the questions are raised about the children's everyday activities such as games or duty's – the answers are most often could be found in the archaeological material from urbanistic sur-rounding. The examination of the archaeological finds (toys, footwear, children fingerprints on clay production etc.) reveals importance of the play in the education, but also early inclusion of children in the tedious economic tasks, social inequality and other important aspects. So this presentation reveals the child life in urban society of Lithuania based on the 13th-18th cent. archaeological material.

Martial Arts: from Spontaneity to Sportivization

Danilo Bondi

University of Rome "La Sapienza",
Italy

The ludic element related to martial practice, consequent to innate needs and then developed according to the requisites of self-growth, got lost time by time in the "sportivization" process.

Through several epochs and cultures, between oriental and occidental traditions, from the performances in sacral games to the show business of modern society, the ludic part often got inhibited because of the restriction and/or exhibition of violence and, in recent times, also because of the various interests the media have developed on this topic.

Many scientific disciplines have shown interest in this field; nowadays we therefore have a better understanding of this phenomenon from different perspectives: the historical, the social, the sportive, the psychological and the pedagogical one.

The topic will be analysed confronting the two mirroring timelines of history and human biological growth, by means of a reconstruction of the cultural contaminations, the religious traits, the developmental qualities, the educational interpretations, the various examples of institutionalization and the affairs of the military world.

Finally, we can offer perspectives to enhance further advancement, and give recommendations concerning the negative components which can impair this worth exploring field.

Narrative Environments for Play and Learning

Milda Bredikyte, Pentti Hakkarainen, Agne Brandišauskiene,
Monika Skeryte-Kazlauskiene, Giedre Sujetaite-Volungevičiene
Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences,
Lithuania

Symposium together with Jarmo Lounassalo, Annukka Pursi, Minna Laitinen, Milla Salonen, Finland; Ewa Filipiak, Ewa Lemańska-Lewandowska, Joanna Szymczak, Poland.

Narrative Environments for Play and Learning (NEPL) is a project, developed to encourage children's play in its highest forms. The project is implemented in four countries – Lithuania, Finland, Poland and United Kingdom. Narrative play and learning approach was developed by Pentti Hakkarainen and Milda Bredikyte and it is based on the ideas of Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Gunilla Lindqvist, Kieran Egan and others.

Narrative play could be defined as an imaginative social role-play, in which children jointly construct a story line. The starting point of narrative play world usually is a story, a traditional fairy tale or other inspirational narrative. When children become interested in a story, they start improvising the most exciting and attractive events together with the adults. Adults usually are active participants in the narrative play – they take different character roles from the story, help children deal with their emotions being play partners, they observe children's play. Adults also help children to develop the play: fulfil children's ideas, propose some magical alternatives, and document the play. The main difference of the narrative play is that it is in between children's free play and structured play, dramatization: the ideas for the play are taken from the children and implemented with the help of adults.

The main goal of the narrative play is to create the environment where children feel free and encouraged to create their own play according to their own interpretations and understandings of the story and of the stories of their own.

As the project was implemented in four very different educational environments in different countries, the experiences of all participating parts will be presented.

Without Instructions

Tali Buchler

Israel

My name is Tali Buchler and I am an architect. I design spaces that encourage creativity in play. In my work, I design spaces and areas of play with open-ends, allowing users to imagine and invent while they inhabit the space. There are no instructions needed in my designs. Kids, as well as adults, make up their own rules. I provide components, that can become many different things, and spaces, that are abstract enough to ignite adults and children's imagination.

Repetition, tangibility, system, and scale are important factors when designing spaces with open-ends. I will demonstrate ways to do that using the following four points

Scale can affect the way a child feels and inhabit a space. Small spaces and cave-like structures increase a sense of safety and comfort. Large spaces or objects give a thrilling sensation.

Repetition can help learn a skill. By repeating an action, one becomes an expert with a skill, which enhances abilities, and therefore increases confidence. Repetition can be meditative. It can help calm, relax, focus and create a sense of rhythm.

Touch is a primary sense. It is the first sense to be developed, and the last to be lost. Through touch we learn about the world around us and it has a great effect on our wellbeing. When designing spaces for children, it is important to allow for tangible play with conscious decisions of the materials used.

Elements of play can be a representation of a **system**. This system is designed with characteristics that can lead to many different ways of play. The system should be limited by the unit's shape, materials, and the context designed for it, allowing the user to make up their own rules, emerging from the given.

To conclude, when creating open-ended spaces for children, regardless of design approach, some or all four points must be considered, and the space needs to be abstract enough in order to ignite children's imagination.

Discussion and Distribution of Play Research: A Content Analysis of Existing Play Literature

Larry Burriss, Kathleen G. Burriss, Monica Hill and Donald Snead

Middle Tennessee State University,
USA

The title of this year's ICCP conference, "Researching Play - Challenges and Opportunities," almost writes itself as a stand-alone research topic combining the challenges and opportunities of play as reflected in extant play research. "What are the challenges facing those who would research play," and "What are the opportunities that present themselves at the conclusion of this research?"

By integrating the diverse disciplines of mass media and education, the authors discuss, through a meta-analysis, what they have discovered about the nature of play research, and the why and how of disseminating accurate information regarding children's play. Researchers examined 1,600 articles related to the subject of play, using, among other variables, gender, location, play focus, and methodological procedures. Findings describe what and how play is currently investigated.

But, understanding the nature of play research does little good if discussion of the results occurs only between fellow academics. Yet, a small-scale study done in preparation for this major study shows precious little distribution to the public (generally through the news media) of information related to the importance of play in the emotional, social, cognitive, physical and academic lives of children.

The authors propose to interpret their results along two fronts: a dialogue relating to the meta-analysis itself (what do the numbers show – this refers to the "challenges" identified in the conference title). Next, a conversation explicating why and how these results should be presented to the public, particularly through the mainstream news media (what do we do with the numbers – this refers to the "opportunities" in the conference title).

It's Like a Backyard: Children's Play at the Family Place

Jennifer Cartmel, Kym Macfarlane, Mindy Nelson and Glenn Hodgson

Griffith University,
Australia

The Family Place is a unique place-based program in Logan that is currently engaging with families through a soft-entry, universal approach to early intervention and prevention. The Family Place is a strengths-based practice where staff and collaborative partners work together to provide multi-level support to families and the community. It is a space providing wrap around services to families in a non-stigmatised way. A significant component of the space is providing opportunities for children to play.

This paper reports on using photovoice methodology to gain children's perspectives about their play experiences at the Family Place. Photovoice is a group analysis method that uses photography to help participants express their points of view. It is particularly useful with marginalized groups who may not be able to express their ideas using traditional research data collection tools. Using digital cameras the children collected images within their play environment. The children collaborated with parents and practitioners to analyse the themes portrayed. The findings highlight narratives of the children's play and in particular the significance of the outdoor environment.

The Playship - Developing the Danish Play Culture and Revitalizing Harbour Cities

Rasmus E. Casper and Mathilde Brandstrup

Gerlev Sports Academy,
Denmark

The Playship is a traditional Danish Schooner loaded with joy of movement visiting 25 harbour cities during each summer from 2015-2018. The vision is to develop the Danish play and movement culture, but also to initiate dialogue with stakeholders and encourage them to note and rediscover the potential for community and play in maritime urban spaces.

The Playship visits each city for one week and offers the hosting municipality different courses based on play. Each day six elementary school classes visit the Playship for a play-class with an instructor combined with free play at our container installation loaded with inspirational games and ideas on how to bring play to the harbour.

Furthermore the Playship offers "Play agent" courses where students are trained to initiate play for younger students in their schoolyards and "Play and Design" courses, where older children are encouraged to innovate and co-create places for play, a process which potentially promotes ownership of their city.

Creativity, community and wellbeing through play

Focus of our presentation is to discuss the Playship's potential to create deliberate awareness of the potential of play and the importance of public areas dedicated to play and movement.

The discussion is seen in the light of a new Danish school reform, which has introduced and implemented more time for organized play in favour of free play. The Playship works with play in both aspects, and we invite to discuss the two approaches and how they can stimulate physical and social wellbeing as well as creativity and community.

The Playship is on the move and constantly evolving, which means we are testing and trying different concepts, based on experience from previous sail seasons. Furthermore we engage open dialogue to explore future possibilities and international collaboration.

The Hall Program: A Play Based Model of Pedagogical Delivery in an Australian Primary School

Barbara Chancellor

Outdoor Playspace Consultancy,
Australia

This research is underway and aims to explore an innovative play based program in an Australian primary school to try to understand why and how this unique program has survived and flourished through years of education funding cuts and increasingly restrictive curriculum government directives.

The Hall program has been running in the school for 24 years and is unique to this school and highly valued by the staff and the wider school community. It uses a play based model of pedagogical delivery with groups of children from grades Prep – 2 (5-8 year olds) attending sessions three times per week in multi-age groupings. The children participate in a range of play based activities developed from Froebellian principles adapted to this age range and a school setting. As part of this program, the teacher facilitates discussions related to children's learning such as problem solving, negotiating, articulating outcomes and more and includes a range of documentation conducted by the children and the teacher.

The research involves emergent spaces; expansive pedagogical approaches; children's geographies; moral geographies; histories.

Games with Rules in Early Ontogeny

Anna Chernaya

Southern Federal University,
Russia

Psychological status games with rules in early ontogeny are discussed in the context of Vygotsky and Piaget theories. Explicit rules the main element of the game guide children's group precedential behavior. Games with the rules discussed as the result of historical creativity of many generations of players, recorded precedent and psychologically significant forms of consolidative and collective behavior. This thesis illustrated by one of the most popular games with rules – marble and their historical and cross-cultural context. The main aspect of games with rules is a social practice of interaction. They are simulated important situations of maximum stress physical, volitional, and moral qualities to achieve a collective victory. Analyzed three groups of competitive games with different courses of action opposing teams committed to defeating the enemy. We are involved ethnographic materials about Russian traditional games, some of them remaining in the children and adolescents experience during the XX century. First, it is the game in which all players of each group simultaneously solve the tasks set rules of the game to achieve a collective victory. Secondly, it is the game in which main task is performed by the type of relay. Thirdly, it is the game in which two opponents compete . Hiding an object games as an example of the canonical rules. They correspond some typical game problems posed rule of the game. In this case, it is the task of hiding and playing Retrieving subject. Psychologically important assignment mechanism inherent in the traditional games with the rules of the social experience is concluded as follows. Traditional game in which meaningful story (everyday social situation) are summarized in the rule, is valuable because it makes the subject's activity tends to known results related to the achievement of the objectives contained in the game . Games with rules provide practicing communication skills with peers, the ability to evaluate himself and his actions in the team.

Narrative Play as a Strategy Supporting a Child in Development and Learning; Approach by Lev S. Vygotsky (Inspiration)

Ewa Filipiak

Kazimiers Wielki University,
Poland

A play (a play activity) is a factor in child development – it triggers and maintains changes at different levels of organisation. The very play activity is subject to the process of development too.

As a child grows, the form, sense, function and the meaning of play in child development change. It has been reported that there are possibilities of further development of play for children at pre-school age. At school age play becomes one of the internal processes, an element of inner speech, logical memory and abstract thinking (Vygotsky, 2002, p. 155). I would like to tackle the problem of different development aspects of play used at school age in the context of the crisis at the age of 7. I would also like to analyse the meaning of play as a form of child development at pre-school age vs. school age. While interpreting Vygotsky's concepts it can be assumed that owing to play one helps a child to digest and achieve new/assumed forms of development: self-acceptance, self-evaluation, the understanding of one's own experiences. The questions we are trying to answer in our Laboratory and in our projects are as follows:

- What phenomena, which reside in child play activity occur on the plane of higher mental functions?
- How to organize play space for children at pre-school and school age so as to support the development of verbal thinking and higher mental functions
- What bridge to build – the developmental context to enact Vygotsky's thought "play at school age does not die out but its sense and meaning change"?
- How to prepare teachers for the role of mediators and interpreters of meaning (what is their readiness to play this role).

Playful Ways of Teaching Music, and the Example of Kurtag's Játékok

Erika Fox and Peter K. Smith

Formerly Royal College of Music,
United Kingdom

I will discuss how the idea of games can help the learning process as it relates to all aspects of music: listening, reading, playing and composing.

Some of the games that children play have always had music as a component, e.g. 'Musical Chairs' and 'Pass the Parcel', in both of which intense though unsophisticated listening is vital.

In my own teaching I have often introduced aspects of play when training the listening process, for instance theatrical elements, or 'drawing' sounds; or in composition, of joining fragments of music together by chance processes with elements of play. In German 'to play' (spielen) and a game (ein Spiel) are the same. In English we say to play a game and a play is a piece of theatre, but we can say to play an instrument, or play football or to play a character. In each case we enter into a world of pretend, with fun and choice at its heart.

Often, though, learning an instrument can be seen as a chore and a duty. The very fact of sitting in a specific way and having to reproduce exactly the difficult symbols on the page can seem daunting and anything but fun.

The Hungarian composer Georgy Kurtag has tried to combat this negative attitude with a series of piano pieces, to which he adds periodically, so it is really a work in progress, which he calls Játékok, meaning games, where he introduces a whole new type of notation to encompass the huge range of the keyboard. As well as the usual range of notes, he produces some more artistic looking symbols, which denote the palm of the hand, the side palm, the fist etc. as well as shapes which look as they are meant to sound. He even sometimes does away with the conventional seating attitude altogether and emphasises changes of register from a standing/walking position.

Early Childhood Student Reflections on their Experience and Play Skill Enhancement During a Creative Drama Course

Anna Georgiou

University of Cyprus,
Cyprus

This study investigated how do early childhood (EC) students reflect on their experience and play skill enhancement during a creative drama course. EC students during their studies attended an Educational Drama course, which is part of their degree lessons called EPA325: Creative Drama. Creative Drama course included theoretical lessons and practical workshops for the students. As a part of students grading, their professor asked them to write reflective journals after each practical workshop they attended. They were advised to include in their reflective journals: their feelings while playing, their general impression, if some activities affected them and how, their relations with others, what worked well, what didn't work and how it can be fixed next time etc. The main hypothesis of this study was that educational drama has a positive effect in EC student's play skills. Data were drawn from EC student's reflective journals. Specifically, thirty seven EC students reflected upon their participation in drama workshops for a semester. The analysis consisted of qualitative and quantitative methods. Results showed that students referred to a large number of different play skills and had a positive experience during the creative drama course. The data indicate that student play skills were fostered (ability to pretend, cooperation, social interaction, making up a scenario, creativity etc). The study contributes to the existing literature on educational drama; EC students experience and play skill enhancement.

An Investigation of Preschool Teachers' Role During Playtime

Meryem Gulhan, Serap Sevimli-Celik and Belma Tugrul

Kirikkale University,
Turkey

For young children, play is part of their lives and the benefits of it for children of all ages have been recognized by many studies. By simply spending time playing, children have the opportunity to take part in activities that help them to improve their imagination, problem solving, creativity, and memory. With the first-hand experience of the world around them, children explore and make sense of life as well as express their feelings freely. During play, children also experience and work through several feelings helping them to regulate their emotional states. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers not only give children a plenty of time to play during the day but also being involved in their play when necessary. In this research, the aim is to examine the preschool teacher's role via conducting semi-structured interviews with the teachers and the observations of their behaviours during playtime. The questions in the interviews aim to investigate the value given to playtime in a daily routine, the attitude the teachers have toward spontaneous play, and the types of play practices they provide for children. The results of the study provide important insights for both pre-service and in-service teacher education. For in-service teachers, more professional development opportunities are necessary to internalise the importance of play and their role during playtime. Similarly, teacher education programs needs to include more courses on play pedagogy along with the research agendas on the benefits of play in young children's development.

Play, Fun and Learning Programme: Can Attachment and Play Based Parent Training Reduce Parenting Stress?

Dalia Guzaitienė

Lithuania

"Play, Fun and Learning for Parents and Children Helping Them Grow and Shine Programme" (PFL) parent training was designed around developmental play and attachment structures targeting disadvantaged parents with young children (1-4 years old). To research its initial efficacy a pilot study was employed. The main objectives of the mixed method study was to explore the impact of attachment and play based parent training intervention in relation to parenting stress levels and parent-child interactions and how parents experienced it. In addition, this study as a pilot study aimed to check the suitability of research instruments. PFL was delivered in a community setting in Co. Longford. The research participants were 7 parents of children aged 1 to 4 years (M=2.6). Assessment took place before and immediately following the 10-week intervention. The results showed decreased parenting stress as measured by the Parenting Stress Index in three out of four scales. Some increase was found in positive parentchild interactions measured with the created survey, the Positive Toddler Parenting Questionnaire (PTPQ). The study also included results of a qualitative evaluation of parents' experience after attending the programme. Overall PFL was experienced as a highly useful programme, with various positive outcomes for both parents and children. In addition, it was concluded that parent-child interactions measurements received from the parents' self-report questionnaire (PTPQ) needed more testing and to be supported with observational data. The results were discussed and recommendations were made for the future research and programme adjustments.

Bridging the Pedagogical Divide for a Positive Transition to School

Cathie Harrison

Australian Catholic University,
Australia

Teachers in prior to school and school settings teach children of similar ages and yet their expectations of children and their approaches to pedagogy can be vastly different. This pedagogical discontinuity seems to be even more apparent in Australia when increased teacher accountability and greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy performance dominate the educational agenda. If it is children that matter most how can we do things differently? In this presentation Cathie will outline a research project implemented in the inner suburbs of Sydney and in the remote Australian city of Broken Hill. The project brought teachers from prior to school and school settings together for professional learning in play-based learning, paired visits to each other's classrooms, and practitioner inquiry research. The results of the project indicate significant transformation of teacher practice in both prior to school and school settings. Teachers reconceptualization of the role of play in learning had positive effects on the learning and well-being of both children and teachers. Examples of children, family and teacher voices will be used to illustrate the implementation and the results of the project

Kindergarten Teacher Students on the Way to Learn Guided Role Play

Kaisu Hermanfors

University of Tampere,
Finland

Play is seen fundamentally important developmental task for all children particularly in the early years. Therefore, the kindergarten teachers have an important challenge deal with this developmental opportunity. Because of appreciate childrens` free play In Finland, teachers in kindergarten do not take part to childrens` play very actively, mostly they are onlookers. The kindergarten teachers have not skills to guided role play, and so the challenge enhancing learning and development is lost. Change the situation kindergarten teacher students education we have in the university a course of "play as a cultural, developmental and pedagogical phenomenon" (5ects). During this course the students are practicing guided play through two kinds of learning tasks: personal task is to have one role play teaching session in the kindergarten, and the students group have a joint task to organized the play day for kindergarten children in our unit in the university. In my presentation I will describe and discuss the experiences of these role play learning tasks.

Describing Activity Breaks During the School Day: A Preliminary Analysis

Monica Hill, Kathleen G. Burriss, Larry L. Burriss and Donald Snead

Middle Tennessee State University,
USA

Research clearly describes the positive relationship between children's play/physical activity and mental wellness, physical health and intellectual success. This mixed- method study identifies ways in which classroom teachers implement play and physical activity during the typical school day. Classroom teachers (pre-k through sixth grade) completed surveys identifying the types of play and physical activities (recess, movement breaks) implemented during the day, time allowed for each type of experience, use of software to support movement, and training associated with developmentally appropriate practices. Narrative data explores teachers' understanding of play and physical activity as a support for children's health, wellness and academic learning.

"The Power of Play": Promoting Play in Preschool

Dimitra Elida Kalpogianni, Konstantinos Fissas and Evaggelia Avdelidou

PLAYING,
Greece

"The power of play" is a programme which aims at the promotion of play of preschool aged children, through targeting the parents and educators within day care nurseries. The scope of the programme is to raise awareness around the importance of play and educate the parents, teachers and community officials responsible for preschool care, on ways to promote children's play.

The programme started in the summer of 2014 and will run until the spring of 2017, through funding by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. It will cover 13 municipalities in the city of Athens and 10 cities across Greece, a total of 320 day care nurseries, catering for around 15.000 children and employing around 1.500 educators.

The programme includes research, as knowledge on play attitudes and practice in Greece is limited. Data on parent and teacher attitudes and practice regarding play, is gathered in all municipalities through questionnaires.

The programme includes presentations for parents and educators, as well as play promotion material produced for this programme. The methodology for producing the education materials and make them relevant to the conditions in Greece, included a thorough review of the literature and current research, but also in depth interviews with experts on play and child development in Greece, as well as data from 185 preschool educators working in day care nurseries in the municipality of Athens around their perceptions and practice regarding play.

"The power of play" is an innovative play promotion programme which combines face-to-face presentations, printed, digital and video educational materials, as well as research and utilises current cost-effective methods of dissemination. This project is running nationwide in Greece and has been received very warmly by the parents, educators and the communities.

Play and Social Integration of Newly Arrived Children, in School-Age Educare

Eva Kane and Anna Klerfelt

Jönköping University,
Sweden

Nässjö council, in Sweden, has since a couple of years a so called "integrated school-age educare" project. It started in Runnerydsskolan after they experienced difficulties when large numbers of newly arrived children started at the school at the same time. These children do not normally have access to school-age childcare since their parents do not yet engage in full-time study or work but the school-age educare teachers got council funding to allow these children part-time access to school-age childcare. Their aim was not only to ensure structural integration but rather to focus on children's social integration (Stigendal & Östergren, 2013), their feeling of participation.

Øksnes et al. (2014, p. 120) point to the governing documents' emphasis on democracy and participation as a way for staff to question the academic pressure and instead offer children rich play experiences and allow them to play just for fun. In early childhood research, a more common approach to participation is the discussion about inclusion and exclusion during play. Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) question all the habitual, taken-for-granted assumptions about play, arguing that play is not always "nice" and accessible, at least not for those children who feel bullied or excluded. Lester's focus on "play as event" suggests possibilities for adults to be sensitive to "the 'voiceless politics' that are present in the micro-events of playing" (2013b, p. 39), and opens for reimagining different ways of being together and apart for children and adults. Playing can, Lester suggests, be conceived of as participation and "playing, as a practice of resistance and resilience, creates moments of hope by imaginatively reworking constraints on children's daily lives" (2013b, p. 33).

This presentation will explore how school-age childcare teachers support newly arrived children in their play.

Realistic Evaluation Accross Continents of the PARS Model – a Learning Tool for Developing Playwork Practice

Jennifer Cartmel[1], Shelly Newstead[2] and Kerry Smith[1]

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This paper reports on the challenges and opportunities of using Realistic Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) to evaluate a model of playwork practice. The PARS (Playwork Action Research System) model has been developed from an in-depth study of both the contemporary and historical playwork literature (Newstead, 2016) and is a learning tool which aims to enable practitioners to articulate, develop and evaluate their playwork practice within their wider job roles.

This paper reports on the evaluation of the pilot of the tool with two cohorts of participants, one in Hong Kong and the other in the UK, using Realistic Evaluation principles and methodology (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). The PARS model was delivered during training sessions to adults who work with children in a variety of different settings, including hospitals, libraries and youth services. The implementation of the PARS model was examined by gathering data during the training sessions and from reflective accounts completed at the end of the training. Findings indicate that using the PARS model resulted in an increased confidence in playwork practitioners being able to explain and justify their practice, and changes in this practice which made significant differences to the way that children are able to play in supervised settings.

Changing our World: Dialogic Dramatic Playing with Young Children

Brian Edmiston

The Ohio State University,
USA

In this presentation I argue for the value of adults initiating, structuring, and participating in collaborative dramatic playing with children when the adults engage with children in dialogic meaning-making. I draw on Bakhtin's theory that understanding is authored dialogically through experiencing competing viewpoints on events to extend Vygotsky's theory of adult mediation. I take issue with the assumption that adult participation in play is likely to be manipulative or not dialogic as I analyze several examples from a preschool classroom to illustrate how adult-child dialogue when playing may support dialogic meaning-making unlikely for children whose play tended to be monologic and exclusionary.

Application of Didactic Games to Develop Linguistic Competence of the 4th Form Students during French Lessons

Siluans Janovskis and Ernesta Stankevič

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Lithuania

There are plenty of studies which show that games are effective in the foreign language classrooms; however, there is a lack of the actual practical investigations into the application of games for the development of students' linguistic competence while teaching French as a foreign language. The main problem question of the present research was defined as: are there any effective games that could help to develop the linguistic competence of the students who study the French as a foreign language in the fourth form of a primary school. The participants of the research were 18 students from the fourth grade (who were 9 and 10 years old) at Vilnius French school (EFV). For the action research there were vocabulary related games chosen and developed by the researcher. The action research project included such methods as the interview with the teacher, observation of the lessons, videorecording of the lessons during which games were used and analysis, post and pre-tests and reflections. The main conclusions of this practical investigation are that the use of didactic games can be effective to develop students' linguistic competence, i.e. the breath of their vocabulary knowledge, help to better understand and establish the meanings of words, to encourage to speak correctly. Also the application of games in the clasroom allowed to reflect on the points which are important to consider before and during the use of games in the classroom. In order for the game to be effective, the teacher should pay attention to a number of factors: there should be taken into account the knowledge level and the personal qualities of the students, otherwise, the games will not perform their function.

Scripted Objects and Meaningful Play: Theorizing Play in Video Game Modifications

Allen Kempton

University of Toronto,
Canada

This paper theoretically examines the place of video game modification (modding) within the contexts of play, agency, and algorithms. Video games are products of scripts and code, but require human interaction to execute and have meaning. Despite their algorithms, players derive their own dynamic meanings and understandings of the game, whether this means game community or individually derived meaning. Mods and modding practices provide an inlet for play research to examine how we can work towards a phenomenological understanding of dynamic and meaningful play of video games specifically as an algorithmic object.

The paper seeks to explore how Schutzian phenomenology can be blended with play theories to research and understand meaningful and dynamic forms of play against a context of video games as algorithmic objects. With user-generated-content games aimed at youth such as Minecraft, and increasing mainstream modding and outlets available for youth to modify their games, it is worth examining modding within play research. Situating modding as a deliberate form of playing with algorithms, I aim to explore how players exercise agency over algorithms to construct worlds of meaning, changing intended meaning, including what constitutes "real" play, ultimately changing the meaning of the game more broadly.

Taking a synthesis approach, this paper blends Schutz's phenomenology of the social world (1932) with theories of play, particularly Bakhtin (1984), Caillois (1955), and Grimes' and Feenberg's critique of Caillois (2009) to examine how agency is exercised in making meaningful play out of video games contextualized as pre-determined, algorithmic objects. Drawing on modding studies, such as Postigo (2007) and Somataa (2010), and algorithmic gaming (Galloway, 2006) to add context, I aim to discuss the challenges and benefits of Schutz's phenomenology (theory and methodology) as a broader theoretical framework to fit play theory within to study video games and meaning-making practices such as modding.

Children's Right to Play in Lithuanian Kindergartens

Ieva Kerulienė

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During the past two decades, kindergartens in Lithuania have undergone extensive educational reforms. One of the principles which the reform advocated was that kindergartens and early years practitioners should respect young children's rights to play, emphasizing and providing play over group lessons as the basic activity in kindergarten settings. The right to play for all children and young people up to 18 years of age, is enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The protection of child's rights in Lithuania is ensured by the state and its institutions, local self-government bodies, non-governmental organizations. Therefore, government has a duty to protect and promote play opportunities for children and young people of all ages, interests and abilities. All those who work with children need to provide a diverse range of play activities, which support children's development.

The purpose of the research: to reveal teachers' attitude towards children's right to play and analyse the real situation of its guarantees. The objectives of the research: to reveal teachers' attitude towards children's right to play; to identify if such factors as age, educational background, place of residence (town/rural area) influence teachers' respect and protection of children's right to play; to identify children's opinion about their right to play in a kindergarten.

The subject of the research: 332 kindergarten teachers and 553 children. The methods of the research: observation, interview, questionnaires and statistical analysis.

The research showed a few positive changes in the situation of play in the kindergartens. However, teachers seldom paid attention to young children's play, and not always devote enough time and space to a play. The research of children's opinions showed that the children's right to play is violated most often, children stated that they are not allowed to play as much as they want.

Functional Play for Children with Autism and Severe Learning Difficulties

Christina Kuegel

University of Bedfordshire,
United Kingdom

The importance of play for all children is highlighted across the literature regarding child development. However, research surrounding autism and play often focuses on play under the umbrella term of pretend play or higher levels of play such as symbolic play. Minimal focus is placed on lower stages of play such as functional or object play. In order to support the broad range of needs for pupils with autism and ensure continual progression it is vital that there is greater understanding of the 'play space' that develops in between exploratory and symbolic play.

Therefore, this presentation discusses a study which created a practical resource for practitioners to support functional play for children with autism. This presentation also addresses the complexities of conducting research in specialist schools for children with autism and severe learning difficulties (SLD).

The study used a mixed methods approach to analyse the natural play actions of thirty children aged 3-11 diagnosed with a combination of autism and severe learning difficulties. Observations were analysed alongside teacher interviews to develop detailed functional play categories based on the observed play actions. Classroom teachers then reviewed the functional play categories to clarify the usability of the resource and identified the tool as a resource to support planning, individual education plans and their own general functional play knowledge.

The overall findings present a functional play framework with specific descriptions of functional play behaviours presented by children with autism and SLD. This clarifies and expands previous functional play categories for children with autism and provides further description of the play that occurs in between exploratory and symbolic play.

The Role of pedagogical documentation in designing teacher's and students' activities (in a play situation)

Ewa Lemańska-Levandovska

Kazimierz Wielki University,
Poland

A teacher involved in intense observation of children typically keeps a record of their activities. A pedagogical documentation becomes a tool a teacher has to give personal meanings, a tool used for self-reflection, learning and building the culture of dialogue. It becomes a material for future discussion and development. Detailed documentation is the basis for developmental pedagogy, targeted at a child, the pedagogy of active listening and as well as child participation. On the one hand, it is research material for teachers, a reconstruction of learning processes, a material for further project planning in educational activity. On the other hand, it helps children to think over their ways of thinking, to marshal them and design new learning strategies.

Children`s Play in Different Cultures

Jose Linaza and Juan Jose Ramirez

Universidad Autonoma de Madrid,
Spain

We explore the universal character of children's play and its relationship with local cultural practices. We include a description of different forms of children's play in different cultures in 3 continents (Spain, Madagascar, Libya, Peru and Chile). We show the relevance of play in children´s development and the relationship between culture and play, both in games with rules as in pretend play, shows the relevance of culture to understand and interpret children's play activities.

Secondly we provide a brief description of the playgroups network in Piura (Peru) where several thousands of children between 4 and 12 years of age, have the opportunity to exercise their right to play.

Finally we conclude with Bruner (2012) comment on the relationship between education, epistemology and play. He advises us not to reduce education to the transmission of knowledge as content, but to stimulate children to explore the process of knowing and understanding, to initiate them as epistemologists. Something deeply related to their attitudes while playing.

A Mixed Method to Explore Physical Activity Play among Children

Knut Løndal, Siv Lund, Anders Lund Haugen and Kirsti Riiser

*Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences,
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In this presentation, we introduce a method designed to explore quantitative and qualitative aspects of children's physical activity play, and we present some preliminary results from a study of 18 six years old children in Norwegian after-school programmes (ASP). We consider "physical activity play" as voluntary, non-functional, and autotelic-oriented activity with a minimum of physical vigour expressed through locomotory movements, stabilizing postures, and/or manipulative movements. Utilizing a combination of direct observation and objective measures, we distinguish between physical activity play and other forms of activity. On the one hand, we collect information about duration, frequency and intensity of observed activity types, and the contexts in which they occur. On the other hand, we describe qualitative aspects that characterize and influence the activities, and whether we consider them to be physical activity play. During the observation, one researcher follows one child through a full ASP-day. Using a pre-prepared scheme, the researcher checks the child's location and activity type at every point in time. She/he also checks whether the child is alone or together with others, and whether the activity is self-managed or adult-managed. The scheme's other side has space for qualitative descriptions about the child's activities in each activity period. During the observation session, the child carries an ActiGraph accelerometer that measures the intensity of her/his movements. We observed much physical activity play among the 18 ASP-children, but there are large differences between the individual children. The children's physical activity play is characterized by frequent exchanges between activity types and activity places, and by varying intensity. Physical activity play most often occurs during outdoor time, and together with friends. Play with various loose equipment and moveable installations dominates. The amount of physical activity play is influenced by the structure of the ASP-time, and by the children's access to places and equipment.

The Real-Ideal City: a Child-Friendly Interactive Playful Tool to map children's transactional place experiences and mobility

Frederico Lopes, Rita Cordovil, Carlos Neto and Amália Rebolo

University of Lisbon,
Portugal

We present SoftGIS Children methodology used in a PhD research as a tool to study children's mobility and transactions in the physical environment of Lisbon metropolitan area. By using a web-map based questionnaire, children and young people marked meaningful places according play, leisure, social and emotional affordances; reported daily and ideal mode of travel and type of accompaniment to significant places; and categorize how structured play and leisure affordances were in their daily and ideal lives. This methodology is child-friendly because content and digital usability of this survey is adapted to participant's perceptions, skills, cultures and languages.

Our main findings showed that car transportation and non-independent travel was adopted by more participants in school-home journey; active and independent travel were the most frequently used travel modes to meaningful places, namely within neighborhood area; children would like to be more active and more autonomous when going to meaningful places; 1632 multidimensional affordances were marked, with a prevalence on social affordances followed by leisure, functional and emotional ones; and, generally, "green space", "housing space", "commercial space" and "school" were more often used to actualize affordances. This methodological approach proved to be very effective in providing a more comprehensive reading of young people's geographies in the urban realm; and by allowing participants to collect meaningful data using a digital playful and participatory device.

Children's Play with their Imaginary Companions: Parent Experiences and Perceptions of the Characteristics of Imaginary Companions and Purposes Served

Karen Majors

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United Kingdom

Many children have imaginary friends. However, the reasons why children have them are not always known and parents can be concerned when they appear. Parents often see their young children play with their imaginary friends and children also tell parents what the imaginary friends have been doing. Parents have knowledge of their children and events in their lives and may be able to see when play with the imaginary friends serves different purposes.

The aim of the research was to find out parent experiences of their child's play with imaginary friends and to find out parent views on why the children had them. 264 parents of children who had current or previous imaginary friends completed questionnaires. 60% of children had more than one imaginary friend. Imaginary friends mostly took human form (67%) with 19% taking animal form. Animal imaginary friends were seen to be more important to the child. Play with the imaginary friends was seen to serve five distinct purposes: a companion for fantasy play, to allow children to explore behaviour and roles, problem-solving and managing feelings, exploring ideals and wishes, and a companion to overcome times of loneliness. Parents saw the main purposes of the imaginary friends were to support fantasy play and a companion to play and have fun with. They also frequently gave examples of how play with the imaginary friends enabled children to process and deal with life events. Most parents (88%) did not think there were disadvantages in their child having an imaginary friend.

Developing Play Complexity from within Children's Imaginary Play: A Cultural-Historical Methodological Approach to Play

Sue March and Marilyn Fleer

Monash University,
Australia

The role of adults in developing children's play complexity is central to a cultural-historical conception of play. Smirnova and Ryabkova (2010) consider the position of the child in play to be one of the most important considerations in understanding play. In role play the child adopts a role and acts on behalf of that role, becoming immersed in 'the other.' But simultaneously the child 'views her/himself as a spectator of the play that takes place' (2010: 55). This latter idea has been expressed by Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) as a double subjectivity in play. Kravtsova (2008) suggested that in order to communicate with a child inside the imaginary situation (in-situational position) adults must learn to use materials as children do. This presentation reports on an Australian case study that followed the play of one child (age 4.2 years) with her special toy at home and as she entered her childcare setting (25 children, mean age 3.4 years). The methodology for the study was based on Russia's Golden Key Schools (projective method - see Kravtsov & Kravtsova, 2014) and on the playworlds methodology of Lindqvist (1995; 2003) and took the form of a fairy tale festival over six weeks. Forty hours of video data were collected in the centre. In addition three focus families took part in the study. Twenty hours of video data of focus family participants were collected, including five hours by the family reported in this presentation. In contrast to the findings in her childcare centre, it was found that in the family home the child's special toy afforded a form of collaborative play where adults and children collectively projected themselves into the imaginary situation.

Play for children with complex medical needs, uniting play with medicine

Chika Matsudaira

University of Shizuoka Junior College,
Japan

During to the improvement of medical treatment, more and more children with complex medical needs are going home to be taken care within the family. But till now, the need of PLAY for these children have been unseen in Japan and also hardly any research has been done about how these children can access to play.

Hospital play Specialists are professionals who provide play for sick children and use play as a media to connect the child and medicine. By uniting Medicine which will keep children's lives longer and PLAY which shows the spirit of the child itself, children with complex medical needs will become seen as child who has dreams and a life as a child not just a patient. Hospital Play Specialists are the key person to protect the sick children's wellbeing through play. Hospital play Specialists have mainly worked in hospitals, but since last year, Hospital Play Specialists in Japan, Shizuoka, have started home visits as a research project funded by Takeda Pharmacy Company. All ten children who have been chosen are from 3 to ten years old, and has complex needs like long term ventilation, but taken care at home mainly by their family with the support of community nurses and rehab professionals. We play specialist have been visiting these children's homes twice a month since June, 2016. Through this poster presentation I would like to show the PLAY we provide and the results of our research because play needs of children with many medical devices can be easily forgotten.

Toys and Diversity

Volker Mehringer and Wiebke Waburg

University of Augsburg,
Germany

Children are different: there are boys and girls, children of different cultures and ethnicities, children from poor and children from wealthy families, children with or without disabilities and so on. Despite these obvious differences among children, actual toys do not seem to reflect the diversity in the society. Most toys, especially toy figures, dolls and puppets, are white, without disabilities, slim, young and well trained, they wear stylish clothes and they have attractive and well-paid jobs. In short, toys mostly reproduce society's preferred image of a regular person.

In contrast, political and scientific discussions concerning diversity and the question, how a society has to deal with its own diversity, have increased during the past years. In educational science, questions dominate which goals a diversity education should pursue and how to reach them.

As a contribution to this essential and broad discussion, we conducted a small research project on diversity education through diversity toys in early childhood education. Firstly, we took a closer look at actual toy catalogues. We analyzed the toys shown in the catalogues along different diversity categories. Then we chose a set of toys considering not only the diversity categories but also the targeted children's age and the different types of children's play. We introduced the toys to children in an inclusive kindergarten with children with and without disabilities and observed them the following weeks during free play. Furthermore, we interviewed groups of educators on how they see diversity education and which role toys can play in this process.

In our presentation we want to present and discuss first results of our project and the question, how they contribute to research on play and the research on diversity.

On Mapping and Sensing Play: Research Strategies, Understanding Play and Informing Policy

Johan Meire

Childhood and Research Centre,
Belgium

This paper explores a tension in policy oriented play research. It has grown in the context of working for over 10 years in an ngo doing research with children. Much of our research is integrated into children's participation sessions and is geared towards policy advice for local governments or youth organisations. Although a qualitative methodology has been a consistent landmark of our research, (forced) pragmatism has led us to adapt to a research practice which essentially aims to 'map' or give an overview of children's play in a neighbourhood, a playground, a youth club… A mix of active methods with children (taking photographs, walking tours, evaluating places and provisions, making design suggestions…) informs our advice to policy makers.

While economical and valuable, this approach and methodology largely fall short of taking play for what it really is. Play entails children making and unmaking worlds, affecting and being affected by the world around them. Understanding play then is about understanding experiences, events, occurrences – including the disruptive and the ephemeral. It has to do more with sensing the 'how' than with mapping out the 'what'. To a researcher, fine grained observations and thick descriptions of play are intensely rewarding. However, translating such research towards policy is usually cumbersome. Does insight in children's playing processes really matter in informing policy?

This paper suggests to deal with this tension by considering play as agency, shaping relations between children and the world which enables or impedes their possibilities. The conditions for playing, rather than just play space and provisions, then emerge as a theme subject to policies. How is children's play a form of minor politics (Lester, 2011; Ward, 1966) and how can local policies open up possibilities for play?

An Example of 'Games-Based-Learning' Approach Using in Teaching Adolescences within STEM Area

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Russia

The quality of school education in the STEM area is a challenging subject-matter almost all over the word. Moreover we have to raise the awareness of high technology among young people and to motivate them to acquire knowledge of natural sciences (and, more importantly, to empower them with appropriate cognitive learning tools). It will help to prepare them to live in a complex and technology saturated word. That is why we endeavour to create new ways, e.g. an educational computer game, of delivering knowledge and learning activities in the STEM area for adolescences. It is quite profitable, in terms of effectiveness of learning process, to test whether it is possible to design such a videogame based environment that can foster and facilitate the process of theoretical concepts in the STEM area acquisition. As is thought to be in 'developmental learning' the acquiring of theoretical concepts is a core element of theoretical thinking (cognitive) development of a child. At the same time we are aiming to analyse the transition from play to learning activity and learning process as a process of sense-genesis. For the purpose of the investigation a special videogame is currently in the work. The main storyline of the gameplay includes cross-disciplinary content of natural sciences with nanotechnological phenomena which is closely connected with secondary school subject areas (physics, chemistry, biology). The genre of the game has a combination of different genres, e.g. adventure and quest with action elements. The study is based on cultural-historical methodology. In the presentation there will be highlighted some of the results of the study.

Children's, Parents' and Early Childhood Teachers' Descriptive and Illustrative Beliefs on Play and Learning

Anthia Michaelides, Eleni Loizou and Maria Photiadou

University of Cyprus,
Cyprus

Play is a multifaceted phenomenon which makes it difficult for one definition to cover all its complexity. Nevertheless, researchers agree on a set of characteristics which can be employed in order to define an event as play. These include freedom of choice, innate motivation, active involvement and fun (Elkind, 2003). In addition a lot of studies examine play in reference to learning and highlight their relationship. Play is often seen as a tool to enhance literacy, mathematical skills, as well as cognitive and social skills (Boyle & Charles, 2010; Edo, Planas & Badillo, 2009; Bodrova, 2008; Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006). However, while research highlight's the connection between play and learning early childhood (EC) teachers, parents, and children's beliefs and understanding of this relationship can be vague. The aim of this study was to investigate the views of parents, children and early childhood (EC) teachers regarding play; their definition of play and its relation to learning. The participants were 41 children, of ages 4-6 years old, 23 parents and 19 EC teachers. Data collection included semi-structured interviews and artifacts; specifically illustrations of learning and play events. Findings reveal a consistency between the participants' definitions, descriptions and illustrations of play and learning correspondingly. However in EC teachers' play episodes, in many cases, there was no reference to the characteristics of play. Interestingly, only in few occasions did the participants relate play and learning. The majority of EC teachers, children and parents when asked to describe a learning episode, they commented on activities which take place during circle time or literacy/math activities. The significance of these findings are discussed in reference to teacher education programs and parent-school relationships. There is a need to support EC participants to construct a more elaborate understanding of children's play and make the necessary connections with children's learning.

Development of Child's Multi-Perspective Attitude in Play

Ona Monkevičienė and Birutė Autukevičienė

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The presentation will focus on the study revealing the child's ability to comprehend and accept another participant's perspective in the course of play. The theoretical basis of the study rests on the works of D. Pollack (2015), J. Piaget (2007), and R. L. Selman (1971). The following four levels of child's ability to accept another child's perspective were established: 1. Undifferentiated perspective-taking (Level O); 2. Social-informational perspective-taking (Level 1); 3. Self-reflective perspective-taking (Level 2); 4. Third-party perspective-taking (Level 3); 5. Societal perspective-taking (Level 4). The study was carried out on the basis of interpretive paradigm, with the help of underlying theory strategy. The data have been obtained while observing children at play and interviewing the children's pedagogues for their in-depth insights.

The presentation will comment on the signs that 5 and 6-year children use to indicate that they have understood another child's idea, which means that the child is able to step into another child's situation and can accept the situation from another perspective; it also means that that the child is able to signal own point of view towards the situation; and, finally, that the child understands that others also have different points of view and they treat his own understanding differently. The presentation will also discuss the methods of developing child's multi-perspective attitude.

What are the Beliefs of Teachers with Regard to Young Children's Outdoor Play in a Preschool Setting?

Ji Hyun Oh

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USA

The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of preschool teachers' beliefs about young children's outdoor play and to describe individual teachers' personal experiences with regard to outdoor play on a newly developed playground on their work site. For primary data collection, three in-depth individual interviews were administered and concept maps were collected as secondary data to portray individual participants' beliefs and knowledge to supplement the findings of this study. For data analysis, Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory was employed using two steps of coding, initial and focused. Major emerging themes generated from this study included: 1) Teachers value outdoor play for educational, developmental, and well-being purposes, 2) Teachers perceive that natural outdoor environments promote learning and development in their own unique ways, and 3) Teachers attempt to provide quality outdoor play by performing various roles during outdoor play. First, the preschool teachers' beliefs about the value of outdoor play included promoting freedom. The teachers also perceived that outdoor play is beneficial for facilitating young children's development in different domains, such as physical, social, emotional, and creative. Second, the preschool teachers' beliefs about young children's outdoor play in natural environments included benefits such as promoting hands-on learning, sensory development, and use of imagination and creativity. In addition, the teachers in this study perceived that interactive experiences in the natural environment enable young children to develop their sense of appreciation of nature. Third, the preschool teachers in this study served various roles for providing outdoor play. The teachers perceived being a safety supervisor as their most important role during outdoor play. Additionally, barriers for providing outdoor play were specified, and they appeared to be related to the teachers' preparations and planning for providing outdoor play. The implications for researchers and practitioners will be discussed at the end of the presentation.

In Defence of the Intrinsic Value of Children`s Play

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In this paper we question the view that play has no intrinsic value to children. According to a well-established view in both developmental psychology and educational policy, play is to be regarded mainly as a useful means for realising developmental aims deemed educationally valuable. Such an instrumental perspective on play may lead to adults organising and structuring children's play according to educational aims, which may curtail children's free and spontaneous play. The point of departure for our paper is a general comment to article 31 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child published in 2013. Here the UN Committee stated a concern for children`s right to a form of play that is of intrinsic value to them, meaning play that is fun, non-productive and "undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end" (UN, 2013, p. 5). This kind of play is under pressure because in early childhood education there is a strong focus on formal learning and academic success. This means that when children are allowed to play, play is often thought of as a means to an end. We argue that an instrumental view of play shows a lack of understanding of the complex phenomena that play is, and further, that the understanding of play promoted by the UN is supported by cutting-edge research. Our contention is that there are sound scientific reasons for promoting the intrinsic value of play in early childhood education. Our discussion on the intrinsic value of play will be informed by research on play from various scientific perspectives spanning from the classic play theorist Johan Huizinga to perspectives from cognitive ethology and neurobiology, the latter perspectives that are often assumed to counter the view that play has intrinsic value.

Play and Literacy in Formal and Nonformal Educational Settings

Kolbrun Palsdottir and Steingerdur Kristjansdottir

University of Iceland,
Iceland

The aim of this research is to explore play opportunities and the educational value of play in formal and informal learning environments for six-to nine year old children. Leisure-time centres provide edu-care services during out-of-school hours for young school-children in many European countries. In 2016 the Icelandic educational authorities published the first article on leisure-time centres and their role within the educational system. The article, which can be found within the Icelandic educational law, stipulates that within leisure-time centres there should be emphasis on free play and on children's choice of activities. According to the Icelandic curriculum for elementary school, play should be considered a fundamental method of learning and should be used to support literacy.

Previous research on leisure-time centres in the Nordic countries indicates the "schoolification" of leisure-time centres and that children's free and spontaneous play is increasingly marginalized. At the same time, the importance of play for children´s cognitive and socio-emotional development is well documented. Furthermore, recent play-research shows that play can positively influence children's literacy development. In this paper we analyze the role of play in the Icelandic educational system. The research is twofold; first, educational policy documents in Iceland are thematically analyzed and comparisons made between various representations of play. Secondly, the first results of a pilot study of opportunities of play in leisure-time centres and in schools will be presented. Data was gathered through focus groups with children and focus groups with leisure-time pedagogues and teachers. The findings can be used to develop spaces for play and to support creative ways to enhance literacy development.

MY PLAYGROUND - the Potential of a Temporary Playground - Findings from an Ongoing Qualitative Study

Lise Specht Petersen

University of Southern Denmark,
Denmark

This presentation is based on the preliminary findings of a qualitative study at the University of Southern Denmark researching the potential of a temporary playground in different urban contexts. MY PLAYGROUND is a moveable and temporary playground with the aim of rethinking the playground by designing an `innovative´ and `poetic´ architectonical design, that invites both children and adults for creative play, causal meetings and socializing.

The playground is designed by Gustin Architects in cooperation with Aarhus 2017 European Culture Capital and is `visiting´ four different Danish cities in 2017 - for a period of two month in each city.

The focus of the presentation is to discuss the potential of this temporary playground, reflecting on how it is being used, by whom (children, youngsters or adults and elderly people) and how the use of the playground is variating in the four different urban contexts, corresponding to the different geographical, architectural contexts in the four local city contexts. And finally the presentation reflects on if and to which extend MY PLAYGROUND is contributing to `more play´ in the visited cities for children, youngsters and adults in their everyday lives.

http://www.aarhus2017.dk/en/programme/design-and-architecture/my-playground/

Literacy Related with Atractive Play Materials

Ana Maria Pessanha and Amália Rebolo

ISEIT, Piaget Institute, Almada campus,
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The work that we present shows the best practices considering play materials and books in school and family context in Portugal.

Initially, we make a brief theoretical introduction including objective and we also present the rationale for these studie.

We take into consideration the relevace of the association of play materials and literacy.

The aim of the investigation was to assess if a pleasant literacy project, which promotes moments of family story reading, play and retelling stories, can improve child's comprehension of story, reaching the concept of the story structure, language development and family/school communication

We choose two groups of children an experimental and control a group. To the Experimental group, it was asked to the family, by the Scholl teacher, to be involved in this programme during 9 weeks, The family and the children must participate, daily at home, with a practical experiment of reading story books, telling and retelling stories : It was also used play materials and toys related with the selection of the story books to enhance the story reading moments

It was applied in the Pré-test and Pós-test a Reading and Writing Performance assessment from Martins and Story Retelling and Rewriting Evaluation Guide Sheet from Morrow .It was used the inventory of Literacy - toys from Pessanha produced in previous investigation related with literacy and play

We present final conclusions related with the Pré-test and Pós-test scores and we defend the benefits of implementing programs reinforcing literacy and play in school integration and family participation. As play is considered essential in the development of children, is urgently be created conditions that make it possible and this responsibilities should be shared among scholl and family. Futher investigation mast be done considering the recent new books of Children´s Literature.

The Potential of the Playship - Findings from an Ethnographic Study - with Focus on the Vision Sailings

Lise Specht Petersen

University of Southern Denmark,
Denmark

This presentation is based on an ethnographic study at the University of Southern Denmark investigating the Playship. The Playship is a traditional Danish Schooner `loaded with joy of movement´ visiting 25 harbour cities during each summer from 2015-2018. The vision is to develop the Danish play and movement culture, and to initiate a dialogue with local stakeholders encouraging them to rediscover the potential for community, play and movement in maritime urban spaces.

The primary focus of the research is to investigate the potential of the Playship for creating play and movement during the visits in the harbour cities, but also to investigate what kind of `traces' the Playship seems to leave in the cities in form of having inspired or encouraged central stakeholders to develop concrete projects or initiatives with focus on play or urban spaces for play in the visited harbour cities.

This presentation reflects on the potential of the vision sailings. The Playships idea with the vision sailings is to create a positive framework for future development processes, which also can be used strategically in the development of the harbour cities. The aim of the vision sailings is to bring a diverse group of local stakeholders together, (politicians, consultants from municipalities, sports clubs or other local associations, schools and other institutions, the maritime industry and tourism) who do not always speak together.

Firstly it will be discussed what characterizes the maritime play-building and the dialogue on these vision-sailings between the delegating people. Secondly the question of what this `being on the same boat´ means for the delegating people in order to co-operate about developmental projects in the future will be addressed. And finally the presentation reflects on the Playships potential not only to inspire and encourage the stakeholders during the harbour visit, but also helping the harbourcities to put their visions into practice by qualifying concrete developmental play or movement projects or initiatives, that can revitalize the harbourcities in the long run in the future.

Claiming the Dark Forest as Urban Children's Play Space

Nina Prešlenkova
ZOOPI Institute for Child and Eco-Friendly Play,
Slovenia

"Come home when the street lamps turn on" was a call for children playing at the end of the 20th century in Slovenia, meaning that their playtime was over when the dusk descended. Nowadays children play less outdoors and even less so engage in their unstructured play activities in the nature, it seems that free play in the woods after the night falls is quite an unsettling idea. With all the potential dangers it is perceived as an unacceptable risk children might be exposed to.

A small community based NGO in the capital of Slovenia invites pre-school children to free play in the nearby forest even after the dark sets. Instead of fearing the nature in the dark, perceiving it as creepy and scary, it is embraced with all the challenges it offers.

In our study, we have found that children notice many differences in free play in the forest during the night time as compared to the day time, mainly those related to the impaired visual sense. When playing in the dark, they enjoy in most of the physical and construction activities as well as storytelling.

Parents of the children involved tend to understand beneficial effects of playing in the dark for their children; most commonly mentioned were the experience of a significant adventure with friends and having the access to the nature that is usually limited.

Practitioners believe that the sense of mutual trust is crucial during the play in the dark: parents trust the practitioners to take care of their children and they also trust their children to make smart choices even in an unknown environment. Practitioners have confidence in each other and in the children. They recognise the enhanced children's feelings of freedom, excitement, independent movement, attention to the actions of others, and diminished fear of the unknown dark nature.

Intersubjectivity in Play Interaction – Constituting Play Connection in Toddler Group

Annukka Pursi

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Despite a large body of research on play and its numerous functions in early childhood education (ECE), studies to date have not succeeded in specifying what play means from the adult perspective. Altogether, there is a growing need within educational research to deepen the understanding and sharpen the conceptualization of play in the pedagogical adult-child relationship. This includes challenging prevailing conceptions and assumptions about the adult role in play. In this study, we examined play interaction as intersubjective in nature and placed the process of constituting and facilitating play connection as the central focus of adult's action. Building on theory of action, we asked how adults and toddlers together constitute play connection in their moment-to-moment, micro-level flow of interaction and how verbal and non-verbal communication are used as mediational means in indicating play signals and sharing subjective play experiences in a Finnish day-care centre. The objective of our in-depth case study was to clarify and further develop theoretical as well as methodological understandings of play interaction between adults and very young children under the age of two. The results of our embodied interaction analysis highlight the relevance of play connection as a convenient analytic unit as well as pedagogical tool in understanding play interaction in ECE context. More specifically, the analysis provides methodological insight for researchers and ECE professionals to contextualize joint play in the micro-level flow of interaction. In all, this study advances the present-day understanding regarding how basic features of early childhood education and care (ECEC) – education, care and play – as embodied and intersubjective contextual configurations might be understood from the adult perspective in the unity of interaction.

Spy Kids: The Use of Glasses with Cameras as Method to Collect Data about Play

Amália Rebolo and Débora Alves, Filipa Mesquita, Joana Matos, Maria Santos, Mónica Marques, Rita Varanda, Sara Flamino, Tomé Rocha and Vanessa Tavares

ISEIT, Piaget Institute, Almada campus,
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School playground world is separate and different from the classroom world. The behaviors that children will or will not show are almost impossible to predict. Taking into account the concept of affordance we know that each child perceives and use the space differently, under the influence of environmental variables (school and type of play space), but also by internal variables.

To understand how the same space is experienced by different children we observed individually and directly 32 children (20 boys and 12 girls, 5 and 6 years) that showed us their paths and favorite activities at recess. We noted displacements, fundamental movement patterns and spaces used.

To have some knowledge of the children perspective, they were carrying glasses with a video camera - "CAMSPORTS - cameras and recorders for extreme sports" that lead to record images of the route and areas visited. We also look for the occurrence of images of the hands and / or feet as well as the local support. We found that children with higher motor availability are more confident and risk more. The use of the glasses with the camera by the children is a very good way to study children's play without adult intervention.

ACTIVE PLAY in After School Programs

Kirsti Riiser, Anders Lund Haugen, Siv Lund and Knut Løndal

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Background: Interventions delivered in after-school programs (ASP) have the potential to become a means of ensuring physical activity among young schoolchildren. This requires a motivational climate, allowing for self-determination and the intrinsic values of the activity, on the activity's character of play. In the present context, the term "physical activity play" refers to such a character of play, incorporating subjective and experienced aspects of movements. ASP staff could be trained in reflecting about how their role and the ASP as an institution facilitates children's physical activity play in their everyday life. Physiotherapists in school health service possess knowledge of motor development and learning, and are important contributors to an ASP-based intervention emphasizing physical activity play.

Aim: To present the study protocol and describe the development and feasibility testing of "Active play in ASP", a complex intervention emphasizing physical activity play among first graders in ASP. The intervention aims to increase the knowledge and autonomy supportive skills among ASP-staff members, enabling them to support physical activity through play and thus promote health-related quality of life in a population of young children.

Methods/design: An iterative developmental process based on review of existing research and theory, meetings, workshops and interviews with ASP-staff and physiotherapists, as well as a feasibility test of the intervention, is described. This is the first step in an innovative complex intervention study, that applies a mixed methods approach. The next step, which is in progress, includes a cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. A protocol of the entire study will be presented.

Anecdotes from the "Field": Using Students' Stories on Play, Curriculum and Teacher Perception as a Learning Tool within an Early Childhood Teacher Education Program in the USA

Lindsey Russo

The State University of New York at New Paltz,
USA

Early Childhood Teacher Education programs introduce their students to research and practice that identifies play as the most valuable learning experience we can provide for young children (Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R.M., Berk, R.E. & Singer, D.G., 2008). However, students are then frequently placed at practicum sites where play is disconnected from the curriculum and, more often than not, used as an outlet for those extended periods of time when children are expected to sit and focus on direct instruction. (Russo, 2009). The students quickly become disillusioned and anxious because they have very few opportunities to observe how play can be integrated and validated within the curriculum. On graduation many feel as if they have few tools that support their practice in this area or enable them to become effective advocates for the inclusion of play within curricula and classrooms. The participants and field placement sites are diverse but the issues that arise share a number of commonalities. The students aspire to become advocates for play within their future classrooms and the change agents required to return play to the early childhood curricula. These shared concerns for the loss of play from curricula and the implications for practice are core components of class discussions, reflections and conversations in general.

This presentation will share my current research that focuses upon the multiple relationships between storytelling and play. One area of my work explores this growing phenomenon through the reflections of pre-service students upon their field experiences. These experiences are shared as anecdotes and stories during class discussions and within two reflective assignments, one written at the beginning of our course work together and the other at the conclusion. The data has been collected over a period of 3 years from an undergraduate and a graduate course I teach at SUNY New Paltz.

Children Play as Lawful Interaction: Modeling, Analyses, Skills

Ildar Safarov

Independent researcher,
Russia

Preschool and Junior School children follow lawful interactions in play. When they seek for play they are looking for common plot and joint sense of play (P.Hakkarainen, I.Safarov). The play should be familiar for all the participants and easy to follow. Adult also can explore play and participate using lawful dynamics of interaction in relationship. Relationship discloses effects of psychological forces, intention (K.Lewin) of play in particular. It is mostly well-known in process-oriented psychotherapy like Psychodrama, Gestalt therapy, Ericksonian hypnosis, oth. It is possible to transfer basic notions from psychotherapy (in particular, from Gestalt therapy) into play analyses preserving meaning of play relationships.

To analyze lawful interaction in play we use nonlinear model of relationships (I.Safarov). On the one hand, the model gives deep theoretical view of qualitative changes from the very beginning of play to completing it by child's independent learning at different topic of play. At the other hand, it makes sure of awareness and analyzing of full range of psychological phenomena like emotions, play situation, plot and role, decision making and playful actions. All these phenomena are organized by sense of play manifested trough intention to play.

Some play analyses are presented in common with the model (unit) for analyses. Also some assignments of bachelor students of Faculty of Education of Oulu University, Kajaani Campus are offered to understand how University students assimilate new skills of play exploration and analyses.

Nurturing Creativity and Playfulness in Early Childhood Pre-service Teacher Education

Serap Sevimli-Celik and Aysun Ata Aktürk

Kastamonu University,
Turkey

Towards the aim of a comprehensive play-work provision and profession the authYoung children have an innate ability to pose questions, bring out new ideas, and use variety of materials in unusual and divergent ways. During the early years, children have the potential to express themselves openly and creatively. They enjoy when they are allowed to think divergently which is considered hallmarks of being a creative and playful individual. Hereby, early childhood teachers play a critical role in encouraging children's creative instinct in the classroom while realizing the child's potential and arranging an environment that has dramatic impact on the child's creative experiences. To promote creativity and playfulness in early childhood classrooms, pre-service teacher education is one avenue worth exploring the beliefs and attitudes toward creative process and the pedagogical practices to enhance prospective teacher's content knowledge about creativity and playfulness in general. This study aimed to make an in-depth investigation on the beliefs of pre-service teachers about creativity and their perceived barriers toward creative process. The study also aimed to examine the extent to which the pre-service teachers reflected their creativity and playfulness on their pedagogical practices. The data was collected through the pre- and post-questionnaires, document analyses of the lesson plans and in-class activities and the focus group interviews held at the end of the semester. The study results shed light on understanding the barriers in creative process and fostering variety of pedagogical practices during pre-service teacher education. Moreover, the results revealed the need for more courses on creativity and play to familiarize the pre-service teachers with different approaches to incorporate creative activities across curriculum.

Psychological Evaluation of Toys and Games

Elena Sheina and Elena Smirnova

Moscow State University of Psychology & Education,
Russia

The paper is devoted to scientific ground of psychological and pedagogical evaluation of children toys. We introduce approach which is developed in The Centre for Psychological and Pedagogical Expertise of Games and Toys of the Moscow State University of Psychology and Education. A toy is the most traditional cultural tool created by adults to develop children. The cultural-historical and activity theory of mental development is the theoretical basis of our evaluation approach. The developmental potential of a toy depends on the character and variability of play action and its relation to the needs and potential of the age. The specific types of child's activities (cognitive-explorative activity, play, productive and physical activity), types of objects / toys for each activity and the criteria of their evaluation are described.

Free and Structured Play Possibilities in Vilnius Kindergartens

Monika Skeryte-Kazlauskiene[1], Lauryna Rakickiene[2], Rasa Driukiene[3] and Milda Bredikyte[1]
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[2]*Vilnius University, Lithuania*
[3]*Association of Waldorf Early Childhood Education Initiative in Lithuania*

Unstructured free play is considered critical for the successful development of preschool children and smooth transit from preschool to school years. Kindergarten groups have all possibilities to provide the opportunities for children to develop elaborated, imaginative play, as children of similar ages spend a lot of time together. However, there is a rising concern that various structured activities organized by adults, such as learning and structured play, are taking up most of the schedule and children are not left enough free time to develop and elaborate their own creative play.

We present the results of our Vilnius kindergartens study on the possibilities for free unstructured play compared to structured play, organized by adults. Early education teachers from different public and private kindergartens in Vilnius answered questions regarding the schedules of their preschool group and the priorities they give to various activities, including free and structured play. The most popular play forms in the groups of 3-6 year old children are constructing and manipulating with various non-educational toys, such as dolls, cars, though the pretend play and structured games organized by adults are equally preferred in these groups. There also are kindergartens where adult organized play is played more often than play created and initiated by children.

Evaluation of Preschooler's Pretend Play Level

Elena Smirnova and Irina Ryabkova

Moscow State University of Psychology & Education,
Russia

Pretend play takes a special place among all types of play. According to Vygotsky, such a play provides an opportunity of separation of thought from a thing, i.e. an action originates from a thought but not from a visible object. Pretend play is the leading activity for preschool children, which ensures effective child's psychological development. This type of play is a base for imagination development, image thinking self-control, voluntary behavior, self-awareness, etc. But only a high level of pretend play can be the course of the development for all these abilities. So the evaluation of pretend play level is an especially important task.

We have elaborated the method of pretend play level diagnostics. Since the creation of the imaginary situation and its substitution in real action is the main specific feature of pretend play, the substitution should be the main indicator of the level of the play. Substitution in the play is presented at different levels: 1) at the objects level (the substitution of one subject to another); 2) positional substitution (acceptance of roles, transition to the real or directorial position); 3) situational substitution — the creation of imaginary situations of different level of complexity (from simple separated action to branched structured plot).

The second important indicator of pretend play is the interaction between children, which takes place on two levels: 1) outside the play (i.e., the discussion and organization of the play) 2) inside the play (from playing positions).

The third indicator of play level is the theme — the area of reality that is simulated in the play - from everyday actions to adventure or fantasy images.

The respective index of these three indicators of play varies from 0 (complete absence) to 3 - bright intensity.

Parents' Opinion about their Child's Play

Vladimir Sobkin and Khalutina Julia

Institute of Education Management of the Russian Academy of Education, Russia

The report is based upon a sociological survey of 486 parents of the senior preschool aged children. Respondents answered a number of questions about the amount of time a child plays at home, games, toys and play themes preferred by a child and parents involvement in the joint play.

The materials obtained are analyzed with respect to children`s and parents` gender differences, and differences in parents` educational and financial status. Furthermore, we conduct a comparison with the survey materials, carried out by the authors in 2007, which allow us to fix the temporal dynamics in the parents` opinion.

Our study showed that only a small part of parents (2.6%) suppose their children nearly don`t play at home. Every seventh claims the child`s play time is rather limited and does not exceed 1 hour per day. At the same time more than a half of parents (59%) consider their children play at home more than two hours a day.

As for games, the most popular among senior preschool aged children are project engineering and construction activity (54.5%), outdoor and sport games (53%) table-top games (40.3%). Less popular but still much preferred are: computer and video games (24.7%), playing a "family" (21.2%), playing in characters from books, movies, cartoons (20.6 %), play different professions (18.6%). Only a small amount of preschoolers prefer playing "war" games (8.7%).

Our study shows that overwhelming majority of parents (84,5%) play with their children. Most of them use traditional play themes from cartoons, juvenile and fairy tales but only 17% of parents create their own play themes.

As for toy preferences modern preschool boys significantly more often prefer design engineering kits, cars while girls prefer puzzle, dolls, plush toys, mosaic and art sets. These results represent traditional preferences in toys for modern preschoolers despite serious socio-cultural changes.

Play and Constructs of Childhood

Reesa Sorin

James Cook University,
Australia

Children and childhood have been conceptualized in various ways over the years. One early conceptualization of childhood was that of the child as evil, based on the concept of original sin, as children were a product of their parents' intimacy. Within this construct, children are seen as destructive and driven by their own needs, pleasures and desires. Based on this construct, the adult is seen as the 'good' one; whose duty it is to keep the moral order, and instill obedience. Interactions between the child and the adult are unequal; the adult holds all the power and the child, who is considered a threat, is more or less powerless. The adult is always right and children should 'speak only when spoken to' with a strong need for discipline. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' is an example of adults conceptualizing children as evil.

Play, in this conceptualization, might be seen as problematic; an imposition on the adult world. Play is therefore restricted, adult-controlled and rule-bound, with little room for choice or initiative on the part of the child.

This presentation examines ten constructs of childhood (Sorin & Galloway, 2005), their relationship to adult constructs, and how play would be envisaged for each of these constructs. These constructs include: the child as innocent, the child as evil, the child as miniature adult, the child as adult-in-training, the noble/saviour child, the commodified child, the snowballing child, the out-of-control child, the child as victim and the agentic child.

Affective Experience in Play: Phenomenological Approach

Giedre Sujetaite-Volungevičiene, Agne Brandišauskiene and Milda Bredikyte
Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences,
Lithuania

Playful activity has different meaning for each person. In play every life experience and ability matter. If we agree that play is an affective state, or an embodied state of mind (Shields, 2015), we can analyse early playful experience as memories. The aim of this phenomenological study was to capture the meaning of playful activity that adults remember having in early childhood. Six participants were interviewed about their brightest experience of play. Every story was transformed into an anecdote and revealed authentic meaning of play experience. Usually play theorists acknowledge play as a happy state (Henricks, 2015), but results in this study show a variety of feelings that accompany play. Playful activities start with fun and happy feelings, but may end in absolute contrast. Participants talk about brotherhood and betrayal, emotional self-regulation and disorganization, being honest and feeling remorse. In sum, play activities in early childhood are already complex experience, not only a happy state of mind. This makes an argument that play has the power to build personal character by presenting contrasting affective experiences.

Educational Situation as "Cultural Space" for Reflectiveness and Reflection

Joanna Szymczak

Kazimierz Wielki University,
Poland

The presentation will show a narrative play as a cultural space for doing reflection concerning specific problems of educational reality, which might be done by the teacher and by the student. What will be discussed here is the understanding of reflectivity, reflection as well as their mutual relations. All the concepts have been grounded in the on-going research project devoted to the early education teachers' reflection on working with students. An educational situation (designed by the teacher and created by the teacher and students) will be presented as a cultural space for reflection performed by its participants. The following aspects will constitute the key issues: (1) a narrative play as an educational situation, (2) reflectivity as a cultural space for reflection, (3) a narrative play as a cultural space for reflection of the student and the teacher.

Physical Activity Play and Playful Spaces among Children and Young People (8-16 years) Growing up in the Republic of Ireland

Karinda Tolland, Carol Barron and Fiona Murphy

Dublin City University,
Ireland

This research explores the physical activity play and the play spaces in which children and young people (aged 8 – 16 years) growing up in the Republic of Ireland actively engage from an ethnographic perspective. This research employs auto-driven photo-elicitation (Harper 2002) which incorporates photographs that children have taken themselves. The pivotal aspect of this approach is that children are able to identify the items, places and spaces, people and activities which shape their ideas about their play and recreation experiences. It is my intention to present a paper on the interpretations and findings of the 2277 photographs produced by the 51 children involved in this method of the research. The analysis of visual data and the subsequent photo-elicitation interviews provide an in-depth insight regarding children's contemporary play behaviour while uncovering the motives and barriers to participation in play and recreation. I specifically examine the emerging themes of friendship and play peers and the concept of "hanging out", as well as the various gender differences in relation to play and recreation. I further consider the differences and similarities in the play spaces occupied by children in schools and neighbourhood's in urban and rural settings within the Republic of Ireland. Children's individual preferences, and differences in gender, must be taken into account when considering opportunities for physical activity play and play spaces. This can have a significant influence on children's participation and may, in turn, affect later involvement in physically active lifestyles.

The Opinions of 5-6 Year Old Children about the Opportunities and Necessity of Outdoor Learning in Estonian Preschools

Lehte Tuuling, Aino Ugaste and Tiia Õun

Tallinn University Rakvere College, Estonia

In Estonia the outside area for most preschools is traditionally spacious grassy field divided into a small playgrounds with sandbox and bigger open area with swings, slides, climbing frames. The research findings indicated that in Estonia, traditional and safe objects are preferred in the play area and there are few natural objects presenting challenges (Tuuling, Ugaste & Õun, 2015). The purpose of this study is to find out the children preferences in choosing play areas and devices and their attitude towards being and learning outside. The reason children have been included in the study is their unique view of their lives and their ability to open up their opinions, thoughts and feelings (Brooker, 2000; Hennessy, 1999; Tolfree & Woodhead, 1999). Clark & Moss (2001) found that to get valuable and reliable information from children you have to choose an appropriate way of communication. We chose the qualitative method for this study, using photography and photo based conversation and half-structured interviews with children. We based in choice of methodology on the studies done by Johanna Einarsdottir (2005) and Nurul Nadiah Sahim (2010). 180 5 – 6 year old preschool children participated in the study. From the results we can see that children often chose a natural object like a hill, large trees or bushes as their favourite play areas. Children also like attractions which challenge them like climbing walls, balance boards, ladders etc. The majority of children feel positively about being outside and would like to spend more time there because you can move freely, there is fresh air and they are allowed to be louder. Most of the participants of the study see being outdoors as an opportunity for physical activity but drawing, singing and learning to write were also mentioned.

The Experience of Childhood Play of Various Different Generations

Aino Ugaste

Tallinn University,
Estonia

In Estonian education a transfer to a new learning approach is going on. That view considers the individuality and social development, study skills, creativity and entrepreneurship of each student. Children's play and learning are closely connected and play and play environment have an essential role in the development of learning readiness and motivation.

The aim of this study is to examine childhood play experiences of different generations. The intention is to focus on how people of different ages perceive and describe play opportunities, play environment and playmates and how they assess their childhood experiences. An interview was used in the study and 96 people of different ages took part in it. Study findings were presented with the help of the thematic analysis. The received results were compared with the cultural-historical and educational-political changes in the society. The study deepens the understanding about the child and the society and the importance of the play world in the childhood.

Research Methods Regarding Children's Play Outdoors and Unaccompanied: Opportunities and Limitation

Jan Van Gils

ICCP,
Belgium

I'm very interested in the evolution of children's spontaneous play in public space. I want to know if in our rapidly changing world, also children's play is changing and how can we assess that evolution. In this presentation I want to focus on the methods to collect data as there are: the age of the children, the gender, the environment, the types of play and others. It is not easy to determine the important data, to connect them with each other and to compare them over a longer period. In 1983 and 2008 we organised such projects focusing on children in the age of 3 to 14 playing in public space, and we tried to compare data of 2008 to the data of 1983.

We collected demographic and some socio-economic data on the districts, we described the different types of public space and we observed the children at play.

Besides some general conclusions, I will ask special attention on a play-index, the evolution of the types of play and the relation of the types of public spaces with the play frequency.

Realistic Evaluation in Exploring Influencing Factors on Professional's Attitude towards Risk-Taking Play

Martin Van Rooijen

University of Humanistic Studies,
Netherlands

The possibilities of engaging outdoors risk in play in structured environments like childcare or schools are limited, due to a narrow focus on children's safety instead of developmental benefits of challenging activities (Brussoni et al., 2015). Professionals willing to involve children in more risk-taking play are confronted with five barriers: cultural expectations, regulatory frameworks, parental beliefs and, on an individual level, personalized characteristics and their constructs of children (Van Rooijen & Newstead, 2016).

To investigate how these five barriers influence professional practices, we will conduct a study using the approach of Realistic Evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Realistic evaluation (RE) aims at finding an answer to the question 'What works, how, in which circumstances and for whom?'. This method is therefore specifically suitable for studying social worlds, attitudes and effects in particular contexts. RE starts with formulating a middle-range theory based on existing theories, past evaluations and previous experience which provides an appropriate program for the specific setting. In analyzing the change 'mechanism' in the program more can be learned about participant's reasoning and the working of appointed resources.

In five different childcare settings the researcher will conduct a trajectory in collaboration with the professional teams. This study has three goals: a better understanding of the mechanisms behind the influencing factors in daily childcare situations, to grow professional awareness for potential barriers and in doing so to change attitudes and enhance possibilities for outdoor risky experiences of children in structured environments.

In this session I want to discuss the study-design giving due notice to methodological issues as well as ethical considerations on intervening in children's play environment. By examining barriers and how they influence individual practitioners in their specific context, more can be learnt about how to facilitate professional practice in enabling children taking appropriate risks in their play.

Children's Involvement in Play at School in Kenya

Esther Waithaka

Kenyatta University,
Kenya

This paper focuses on challenges faced in studies on children's involvement in play and games in Kenya. Since studies had established that children's play had been on decline, and the preschool policy guidelines underline that learning in early childhood should be through play, my study sought to establish the extent to which preschool teachers allowed the young children to engage in play activities. Initial data were collected through teachers' self-reports. The results showed that all the teachers stated that they were using play as the medium of instruction. Observations were carried out in the same preschool classes during the first lesson that is supposed to be purely free-play. Results showed that majority of those teachers directed children in specific activities according to assigned groups. Children were coerced to complete the activities even when they showed little or no interest. Through the observations, it was clear that children were not given an opportunity to learn through play. This led to the conclusion that the elusive definition of play had probably made it difficult for preschool teachers to distinguish between play and other activities that involved manipulation. This further suggested that collection of data on children's play, using teachers' reports could be misleading. Another study, sought to establish the existence of children's traditional games in one region using mixed methods design. Collection of data involved observation, interviews with individual children and focus group discussions, among 7 to 8-year olds. The names of the same games varied, children were therefore asked to describe the procedures involved in each of the games they mentioned. These data did not provide a clear picture of the time spent in any of the games that featured. However, frequencies were used to assess each game's popularity and to predict the values transmitted.

The Importance of Play- "…But don't think that we are only playing…"

Kristin Danielsen Wolf, Anne Greve and Knut Olav Kristensen

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences,
Norway

In Norway, there has been an increasing focus on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a learning area. UN (2013) warned that more focus on learning, in academic formalized ways, could supplant the time for children's free spontaneous play. If children's possibilities to free play would be limited, so would their rights to express themselves and participate as a child-sized citizen (Jans 2004).

Opinions about the meaning of play may differ, and even be contradictory, from different angles and positions. We want to explore professional, parental and political perspectives when it comes to free play in children's daily life in ECEC. Our aim is to enlighten children's right to spontaneous play, and rethink taken-for-granted perceptions about play and pay attention to how different and multiple perspectives can prevent or promote children's free playful interactions.

There are multiple concepts of play, and ways of understanding the phenomenon (Sutton-Smith 1997). In our research and analyzes we see play as an aesthetic and cultural way of being and expressing ourselves (Guss 2001, 2015, Gadamer 2010). Children in particular, are playful beings (Jans 2004), although human beings in every age may be seen as Homo Ludens – playful humans (Huizinga 1956), and the lively viability of play makes life worth living (Sutton-Smith 2008)

This presentation is based upon two research projects with different and mixed designs. We will use quantitative material from questionnaires with parents, and qualitative material from focus group interviews with parents. We will use empirical data from interviews with teachers and staff in four ECEC institutions. Our qualitative approach is inspired from ethnography, micro-ethnography, and designed as fieldwork in varied periods with a focus on play. In this presentation we will analyse both quantitative and qualitative material og discuss our findings related to political papers, white papers and theories/concepts of play.

ECEC-Teachers Participation in Children's Spontaneous Play

Kristin Danielsen Wolf

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences,
Norway

In Norway, there has been an increasing focus on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a learning area. UN (2013) warned that more focus on learning, in academic formalized ways, could supplant the time for children's free spontaneous play. If children's possibilities to free play would be limited, so would their rights to express themselves and participate as a child-sized citizen (Jans 2004).

Opinions about the meaning of play may differ, and even be contradictory, from different angles and positions. I have explored how professionals in two ECEC-institutions base their work upon children's play, without approaching children's play as a method for learning. My aim is to enlighten children's right to free play, and how teachers and staff in ECEC may participate and contribute to children's playful interactions.

There are multiple concepts of play, and ways of understanding the phenomenon (Sutton-Smith 1997). In my research and analyses I see play as an aesthetic and cultural way of being and expressing ourselves (Guss 2001, 2015, Gadamer 2010). Children in particular, are playful beings (Jans 2004), although human beings in every age may be seen as Homo Ludens – playful humans (Huizinga 1956), and the lively viability of play makes life worth living (Sutton-Smith 2008)

This poster/presentation is based upon the second part of my research project, were I had fieldwork with observations and focus group interviews in two ECEC-institutions. I will use empirical data from observations and interviews with teachers in the ECEC institutions, and focus particular on play-ethical issues and playful atmosphere in this presentation. My qualitative approach is inspired from ethnography, micro-ethnography, and designed as fieldwork in varied periods with a focus on play.

Challenges with Play: The inclusion of Young Children's Voices

Jennifer Wong-Powell

Vilnius International School,
Lithuania

Children are viewed as active participants in the co-construction of their learning. It is through play where different subjectivities shape and form meaning together. At the heart of learning through play are the children. Children possess extraordinary potentials. As they engage with their environment and interact with the people around them, the opportunities afforded through play enable children to make meaning about their world. Children are therefore the active constructors of knowledge. The image of children as meaning makers gives place for their voices in the learning process to be heard. It provides an opportunity for children to express their opinions and gives them a chance to make decisions regarding the design, implementation and evaluation of their learning experiences. Research suggests that such meaningful participation increases the self-esteem and confidence of children, it develops autonomy and independence, it promotes social competencies and it enhances overall development as children engage in higher order thinking skills when they are provided with opportunities to explain their ideas and opinions. However, an interplay of factors make children's involvement challenging. This presentation will use one school's collaborative learning journey into children's play as an example of the different types of challenges faced in the inclusion of young children's voices. The experiences of early childhood educators working at Vilnius International School highlight the complexities of including the voices of young children. The challenges faced include being uncomfortable with uncertainties, verbal capabilities versus functional competencies and the pedagogy of listening. While children's voices need to be heard, the process of including their voices comes with challenges that early childhood practitioners need to overcome.

Pushing the Academic Agenda Forward: Actual Practice Challenging Play Discourse

Jennifer Wong-Powell

Vilnius International School,
Lithuania

Research suggests a paradox between what teachers theoretically understand about the benefits and the role of play in learning and what is reflected in practice. Though play in the learning and development of young children is well researched and documented, the reality of research into classrooms indicates a misalignment between play at the rhetoric level and play in practice. This presentation will highlight the challenges to play in research, emphasising the misalignment between play in theory and play in practice. Though much research illuminates the benefits of play the pressures from parents and administration to meet standards and expectations still puts the place and value of play in educational institutions as the way children learn at a secondary level. In unpacking the complexity of play, we recognize that "while the idea of play-based curriculum might evoke a romantic vision, the play activity that occurs in settings and classrooms must be reconciled" (Howard & McInnes, 2010, p. 31). By illuminating the misalignment between play in theory and play in practice, the question which this presentation will address is: Where do we go from here?

Toys Can Do so Much More! Unlocking the Many Potential Uses of Toys

Siegfried Zoels

Fördern durch Spielmittel e.V.,
Germany

When the themes 'Play' and 'Toys' are discussed, usually pedagogic issues and child development issues are at the centre for debate. For years we have been trying to reveal other potential elements of Play and Toys:

• Beginning with Creativity Workshops, which concentrate on the user stands who has the highest demands to place on any play materials: The Children with their handicaps. The results are impressive.

• We use the instructions for making these toys, which are published following these workshops, as a basis for exploring the capacity of the young people and to develop this further in terms of preparation for a job.

• Simultaneous we put long-term unemployed in contact with the young people. The results are increased self-confidence and self-assertion for the unemployed persons.

• We operate a Toy Library with over 800 toys. The results of such a Toy Library are impressive; they reach families of different social status levels and strengthen the social togetherness and solidarity.

• Toys are ideal for attaining social effects. Colleagues go into Women's Prisons and build toys together with the female prisoners. The women experience that they have skills and abilities and can produce something to give as a present. Simultaneous they are prepared better for the period following their release.

• Toys from other cultures speak to everyone. We copy toys and make them with the children. The children learn that with simple materials they are able to make wonderful toys. We discuss with them the life and culture in other parts of the world, too, and encourage children to be alert when it comes to making purchases. The toy thus opens the door to a better understanding of globalization and sustainability in practice.

• We form links to the existing interest in technical matters that children and young people with learning difficulties have. We encourage manual skills. But we also motivate the young people with handicaps to develop themes for

films and to produce them.

The Toy is, in our opinion, the item with which everyone in the whole world is an Expert! Everyone has played - we only have to convince them, that this is not necessarily something which is 'childish'.

Children and adults with handicaps place the highest demands on objects, especially on toys and play materials. Either it functions, or it does not function. Why should I hand to other children a toy which does not work? This applies in the same way for the development of methods. Here there are great potentials which just cry out to be applied to other areas of activity.

The Foundation Early Learning The Playing With Gratitude Project

Rod Soper, Fiona O'Donnell, Deborah Grogan and Sam De Lorenzo

Foundation Early Learning,
Australia

Play with purpose invigorates creative and critical thinking and transformative relationships between children in their early years and their collaborating educators. However, findings from our current research suggest that children can all too often struggle with a lost sense of self and consequent disconnection with peers and staff when they are growing through the early years when this purpose is lost. In response, a consortium of seven Australian early years settings, crossing three states, representing diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds have engaged in a journey of change using the science of gratitude as the innovative ingredient to forge and facilitate new play and thinking patterns in children and educators in order to strengthen their sense of self and connectedness.

Our research, The Playing With Gratitude Project, is a practitioner inquiry research program investigating how gratefulness influences wellbeing of educators and children birth to five through co-playing. Our research offers findings around what occurs when educators use current research around the science of gratitude, its psychological, physical and social elements, to co-play with children. The implications of this innovative co-playing has infiltrated and reimaged mindsets, dispositions, language and relationships within the play environment. The program measures change against the indicators of the Wellbeing Observational Scale; Reflect, Respect, Relate Scales, achieved educator gratitude goals and recorded observational change through pedagogical documentation. The current project results, to be shared by a panel of presenters at the 2017 ICCP conference, will focus on two remarkable findings. Firstly, the shifts in educators personhood as they report deep and personal perspective modifications towards their self, others and the play space. Secondly, the innovation in the co-play with children, as a result of the influence of gratitude, highlighting shifts in language, dispositions and expectations of self and peers in their play environments, relationships and consequent over-all well-being.
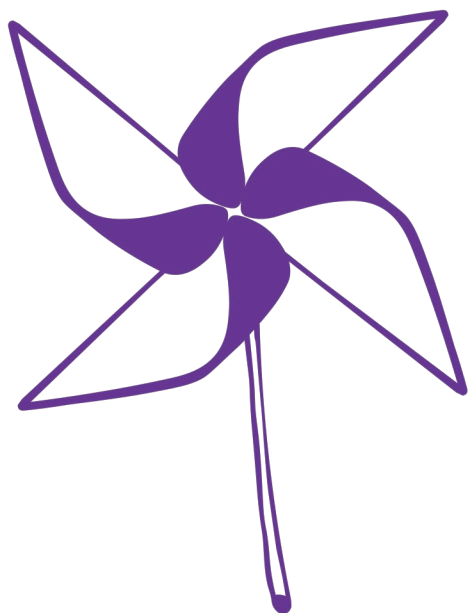
FOR YOUR NOTES