

TASP

The Association for the Study of Play

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Abstracts

Bea Bailey (Clemson University)

Crafting a Sense of Place—Playfully

This paper highlights the cognitive and physical forms of play that are demanded as one begins to develop a meaningful sense of place. Multidisciplinary foci of thinking and doing that are essential to an understanding of place will be noted as we explore high quality texts about places by authors such as Thoreau, Dillard, Bryson and Robertson. An approach for crafting a sense of place will then be shared that enables students to playfully “take on” the mental habits and practices of historians, anthropologists, naturalists, astronomers and nonfiction writers. Current initiatives on writing about place (such as Foxfire) will be compared and contrasted with this approach. A premise of this newer method is that high school and college students can forge much richer understandings of and respect for their connections to our planet as they begin to play upon it in more insightful ways.

Sarah M. Bexell and Olga S. Jarrett (Georgia State University); Rebecca J. Snyder, Estelle Sandhaus, and Terry L. Maple (Zoo Atlanta); Luo Lan and Hu Yan (Chengdu Garden Bureau, Peoples Republic of China)

Interpreting and Understanding Animal Play: Implications for Conservation

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects observing giant panda play has on human concern for endangered species. Humans have long been intrigued by animal play. Scientists study animal play to attempt to determine its significance in physical, cognitive, and social development. Research has revealed that play may be important for species-typical development, with implications for conservation and animal well being. Visitors to zoos often remark that they enjoy seeing animals such as monkeys or otters because they are often playing. Why is it that people are so drawn to the antics of other species? Is it because we see something in them that we know is pleasurable for us? Are people interested in animal play because they learn from it?

What can humans learn from a casual observation of a play bout? Does such an observation change their feelings or attitudes about the animal? Visitors to three institutions, the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, and the Chengdu Zoo, China, and Zoo Atlanta, USA, that house giant pandas were interviewed. An interview survey was developed to assess people's knowledge and attitudes toward this endangered species. As part of the interview people were asked whether they observed a play bout or not. The goal was to assess visitors' general knowledge and attitudes toward giant pandas in the US and China, as well as whether the observation of panda play impacted their knowledge and attitudes. An information page on findings from giant panda play research was given to each survey participant after the interview. Our hypothesis was that observing play behavior affects a person's interest in and feelings toward giant pandas, which could hold promise for motivating people toward conservation action for endangered species, in this case giant pandas.

Kendall Blanchard (Fort Lewis College)

Sport and the Market State: An Ethic for a Global Community

The ongoing evolution of the global economy is outlined, a case is made for the market state as the logical successor to the nation state, and the current dilemma of business ethics and education is explored. The argument is that ethics must be presented as a fundamental component of all societies and that the focus must be on creating and sustaining ethical organizations as opposed to molding ethical persons. It is also suggested that the ethics of the great religions may be of limited value as models for a global business ethic in that they are too thoroughly tied to and imbued with the values and ambitions of the nation-state. In conclusion, a 21st century sport ethic is described and it is proposed that such an ethic provides a valuable framework for the development of a workable global ethic.

Marianne N. Bloch (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Play, Literacy, and Educational Debates about Standards/Assessments

Recent educational reforms at the preschool and primary level have focused on "leaving no child behind" by introducing a greater emphasis on early literacy (particularly phonics) experiences at the preschool and primary school levels, more rigorous expectations and standards, and assessments and testing, even of young children. This presentation will focus on the discourses of "No Child Left Behind" and other recent national reform texts on preschool and primary education, requirements for early literacy instruction, and early assessments/testing as these illustrate cultural conceptions of the "child" and childhood of those who are being left behind, and those children's families, and teachers. A critical, post-structural, and feminist theoretical framing of the system of cultural reasoning embedded in recent reform texts, policies, and pedagogical practices will facilitate a reexamination of the assumptions hidden within current discursively organized texts and practices, and an opening of new ways of reasoning about the child, family, and teaching that can include different imaginaries about childhood and the "educated" child/citizen. Within this framework, playful literacy and a literacy that can include the notion of being playful can be debated (once again) as part an imaginary—that may or may not be "appropriate" for all children.

Anne Bolin (Elon University)

Embodied Ethnography: Seeing, Feeling and Knowledge among Bodybuilders

This paper offers an example of ethnographic inquiry in the study of a sporting subculture, that of competitive bodybuilding. The focus is on a critical and self-aware anthropology that explores the shifting relations between objectivity and subjectivity in long-term ethnographic research among competitive bodybuilders. In pushing the boundaries of reflexive ethnography, consideration is given to the potential of an embodied knowledge acquired through somatic participation. This approach emphasizes the senses of ethnographer and collaborator in the creation and recreation of a bodybuilding and gym subculture. The physical and kinesthetic experience within bodybuilding subculture is a processual one that embeds a dynamic and complex habitus of meaning and knowledge. From this process, emerges an identity and aesthetic of bodybuilding. The implications of embodied knowledge for understanding bodybuilding as cultural phenomenon and the insights this has for anthropology are discussed.

Edda Bomtempo (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil), Maria Rita Zoéga Soares (Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Pr., Brazil)

The Importance of Children's Play for Medical Procedures and Hospitalization

In the past year there has been great concern in creating play therapy programs for children under stress situations like hospitalization. However, many health professionals are not conscious of the importance of such situations. The present work has the objective of researching and suggesting a psychological intervention program involving play as an important tool for the recovery of the hospitalized child. The research was carried out in a public hospital in the outskirts of Londrina, PR, Brazil, with the help of Psychology students from the State University of Londrina. The results showed a high level of acceptance of the treatment proposed by the program (they facilitate or respond more easily to the invading medical procedures) and a low level of treatment resistance (responses which can cause difficulties, delays or impediments to the invading medical procedures).

LeAnna Bryant and Olga S. Jarrett (Georgia State University)

The Effect of Technology on Students' Perceptions of Instruction: Work or Play

The purpose of this research is to determine whether instruction integrated with technology is perceived to be more playful than other methods of instruction. Subjects are approximately 50 fifth grade students in a southern metropolitan school district. The research consists of two parts: (1) a home/school computer use survey and (2) school activity ratings. In part one, students describe computer use and rate programs at home and school according to how much fun they are. In part two, at the sound of a tone approximately every half hour for five school days, each student notes what he/she is doing and rates it as work, play, both (play/work), or neither. When the tone sounds during computer time, students also identify the program they are using. Data analyses will determine (a) whether activities employing computer technology are more likely to be rated as fun or work/fun than other aspects of the school day and (b) which computer programs are considered fun or work/fun. Implications for teachers will be discussed.

Jim Christie (Arizona State University)

The Story Behind Play and Literacy

In the latest volume of the Handbook of Reading Research, Yaden, Rowe, and McGillivray (2000) state that the play-literacy connection was one of the most heavily researched areas of early literacy during the 1990s. In this talk, I will attempt to trace the history of this strand of inquiry, starting with its humble beginnings in several correlational studies in the early 1980s and following, as experimental and then qualitative studies came into favor.

Susan L. Churchill and Courtney Shultz (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Implementation of a Play Class from the Instructor's and Student's Point of View

This roundtable will discuss the design and implementation of an undergraduate class "Play and Child Development" from both the instructor's and student's point of view. This seminar class was presented to 10 undergraduates in the spring of 2002. A review of the goals, class structure, and assignments will be presented by the instructor and then the student will review the actual implementation of the class. A review of what was successful and what should be changed will be presented to facilitate the development of other classes focusing on play.

Helen M. Davis (University of California-Los Angeles)

"I'm the Boss": The Cultural Structuring of Social Play in Two Costa Rican Preschools

This study is an ethnographic comparison of social play and classroom structuring in two Costa Rican preschools: a rural, coffee-farming community preschool and an urban University Lab Preschool. These sites had significant quantitative differences in play group sizes and friendship networks. In the qualitative analysis for this paper, I explored the invention and introduction of play scripts, their transmission throughout the group, and the distribution of roles, such as bosses. These data showed distinctive patterns that were influenced by the cultural structuring of classroom activity settings, routines and teachers' socialization practices. At the rural site, children invented small numbers of play scripts with limits on what roles different children could play, particularly across genders. The setting supported large group, elaborated and complex play with a few, established "bosses." The Lab Preschool children invented large numbers of scripts with few limits on roles. This setting supported friendship-based, small group play with much innovation and many, changing leaders.

Walter Drew (Institute for Self Active Education), Phillip Cox (Reusable Resources Association)

The "Play Experience": Research Implications

The purpose of this session is to identify research implications to promote play as we explore the use of dynamic hands-on self active adult play experiences with open-ended "reusable resources" to advance academic performance, reduce stress, build self-esteem and develop social competence. Participants will develop a deeper appreciation for the value of play as a way of promoting healthy social, emotional and intellectual development, especially pertaining to teacher training and parent education. We will investigate and relate our

direct experience of play to such developmental needs as social competence, creative problem solving and the emergence of self-esteem. Workshop leaders will help participants understand the importance of observing and listening to children as a way of unfolding and organizing knowledge for further inquiry.

Dana Gross (St. Olaf College); Kate Horst and Barbara Kyle (Minneapolis TAPPP)
Parent-Child Interaction in a Parent Education Program for Adolescent Parents

Children born to teen parents are at heightened risk of experiencing a range of health and developmental problems. Without intervention, teen mothers are less likely than older mothers to speak or respond to their infants, and they often have an immature or inaccurate understanding of their child's development and age-specific needs. Comprehensive school-based services have been shown to produce positive outcomes for adolescent parents and their children. The proposed presentation will focus on preliminary findings of an ongoing evaluation of the Minneapolis Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPPP), a school-based program enrolling more than 70 mother-child dyads. The TAPPP parenting curriculum teaches parenting skills and gives parents feedback and guidance to help them become more sensitive and responsive, enjoyable and affirming, and encouraging of new learning. Analyses of parent-child interactions during (1) free play, (2) shared book reading, and (3) structured play will be discussed.

Ann Marie Guilmette (Brock University, Canada)
21st Century Lifestyles: The Erosion of Play and Culture

Huizinga (1972) wrote long ago of a growing concern for play and culture at the turn of the 20th century. Some 100 years later play and culture are again under siege. The essence of play will be examined in this conceptual paper. The contemporary issues of consumerism, materialism, technology, and urbanization that have placed children, families and communities at risk will be considered. The negative consequences for play of living in a society with efficiency and expediency as primary cultural values will be explored. The importance of play to the development of physical, emotional, intellectual, and social capacities will be included so that the foundations for resiliency can be established. The emerging role of "extra-sensory" physical play, imaginative and creative socio-dramatic play, and gender-based rough and tumble play will also be discussed. Strategies for encouraging and implementing child-structured activities will be offered.

Michael Heine (University of Manitoba, Canada)
Next Time, We are Going to Clean up Transcultural Participation in Aboriginal Sports at the Arctic Winter Games

The Arctic Winter Games are a biennial sports meeting for athletes from the circumpolar regions of Siberia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Originally designed to provide an opportunity for northern athletes to participate in high-level sports competitions, the Games initially did not include traditional aboriginal sports. By now, competitions in traditional Inuit (Eskimo) and Athapaskan (Indian) games are one of the festival's highlights. The recent addition of teams from jurisdictions as far distant as Siberia and Greenland has created new expectations and creates additional pressures on the original form to express traditional aboriginal identity and val-

ues. At the Games held in Nuuk (Greenland) in March of 2002, Inuit athletes from Greenland requested registration in competitions in Dene Indian traditional games. Athapaskan girls have for several years demanded participation in games that traditionally, and for culturally significant reasons, were an exclusively male domain. Inuit elders, for their part, argue that the organizational format of the games fails to reflect the emphasis on co-operation historically associated with traditional Inuit games. The paper examines the pressures and conflicts that these developments bring to bear on the traditional games form as a means to produce and express a traditional cultural identity, within the context of the Arctic Winter Games.

Thomas S. Henricks (Elon University)

Play as Encounter: The Contributions of Erving Goffman

As a theorist who integrated sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches in his work, Erving Goffman is perhaps best-known for his dramaturgical explanations of social order, his accounts of "impression management," and his studies of ways in which human experience is "framed" by various pre-existing contexts and constraints. This paper will explore a less well-known theme that runs throughout Goffman's work, i.e., his attention to the playful and game-like qualities that characterize much of human interaction. The author will attempt to organize these scattered references and comment on their general implications for the study of play.

Olga S. Jarrett, Stacey French-Lee, and Sarah M. Bexell (Georgia State University); Rajani Konantambigi (TISS, Bombay, India); Nimet Korkmaz (Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey)

University Sponsored Child Care in Four Countries: Implications for Play Theory and Practice

This symposium studies child care centers/kindergartens connected with universities in India, Turkey, China, and the United States. Each researcher is following the same protocol: (a) interviewing a university faculty member with connections to the center on the history of the center and the university and center philosophy of learning in general and play in particular, (b) interviewing the director and some of the teachers on their views on curriculum, policies, and practice, (c) observations in the classroom at various times of the day to determine how the curriculum functions in practice, especially the types of play in which the children of various age levels are engaged. The primary focus of the presentations will be on play: the time spent in play, types of play encouraged, rules on appropriate play, and play equipment and facilities.

Marjatta Kalliala (University of Helsinki)

The Culture of Play and Societal Change

The foremost aim of this research is to discover how time and culture are reflected in children's play culture. The study's contextual framework has been based upon the changing roles of childhood and adulthood. Play culture is dealt as viewed from the perspective of 23 six-year-old children (of middle-class backgrounds), who have grown up in Helsinki. The primary material consists of interviews and observations carried out both in homes and in day-care centres. The results show that the dependency of play on time and on culture may be traced from the microlevel of children's play culture to the macrolevel of profound changes and, in particular,

the changing roles of children and adults. The change may be described with two metaphors. 'Out of the garden' stands for open competition and the adultomorphic tendencies of today; whereas 'a little piece of land' expresses children's unique persistence in creating their own play culture.

Tizuko M. Kishimoto (University of São Paulo, USP, Brazil)

Toys and Public Policy of Child Education in Brazil

The target of the presentation is the comparison between data of census 2000 of Ministry of Education and recherche of São Paulo to analyse the culture of educational toys. The identification of toys and pedagogical materials and its uses and meanings for the professionals of child education who works with 4-6 years old children, explain the survey kind of research, that was done during 1996-98. The research intended to make a diagnosis of the reasons of the choice and the use of toys and pedagogical materials based on interviews, observations and videos. Results indicate that the child education in the worked area shows conceptions of lack of incentive on the children autonomy and the acquisition of knowledge as the main objective of child education. The most significant and commonly used pedagogical materials in the classrooms are the pedagogical, graphics and communication materials. For physical education, the outside space is used. Toys that stimulated the symbolism and the socialization, as symbolic, construction and socialization games are used in an insignificant percentage, showing the low value of symbolic representation and playing. Besides the high percentage of toys presented by the census the uses demonstrated the lack of play in the child education.

Rajani M. Konantambigi (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, India)

Play and "Play Way Method" in the Elementary Grades: Is it Really There?

This paper presents the findings and implications of research on the "Joyful Learning" approach, a play-based approach which was introduced in Grades I to VI in the schools of Mumbai, India, in 1997. This is predominantly based on Vygotskian theory of how children learn and the "play way" method. This study is part of a larger study of nine schools, looking into the adjustment and performance of children and the classroom processes. Joyful Learning was implemented in all the nine schools in the study. In implementing the "play way" approach to the existing curriculum, the teachers were shown how to demonstrate more, provide hands-on experiences and situate the learning in the child's everyday environment. Results, based on teacher interviews and observation of classroom processes, revealed that the play way method was understood and implemented in the real sense of the concept by only one teacher. Play as a means of learning was not an integrated concept. There was also no slot for play in the time-table of the schools. Results are discussed in the light of issues for teacher training.

David F. Lancy (Utah State University)

Anthropology and Children: A Critical Appraisal of Hirschfield's Claims

The American Anthropologist in April published a piece by Lawrence Hirschfield that purports to summarize and excoriate scholarship on children by anthropologists. I will offer a "reanalysis" of his arguments and a rebuttal. Specifically, I will address these claims: that anthropology has neglected and has marginalized the study

of children; that the extant research has not coalesced into a “sustained tradition;” that children mostly create their own culture; that scholars have been turned away from the study of children in reaction to earlier “tainted” comparative research and; there is no worthy theoretical foundation for the study of childhood. More analysis will identify holes in Hirschfield’s review of literature and expose a flawed understanding of the nature of anthropology and of the kinds of questions that guide inquiry.

Margie I. Mayfield (University of Victoria, Canada)

Children’s Museums: Learning through Play or Edutainment?

Children’s museums have been established rapidly since their beginnings in the 19th century, and especially so in the past thirty years. Children’s museums are participatory, interactive, and increasingly high tech. They are seen by some as places that promote intergenerational play and by others as entertainment centres. This presentation is based on observations of thirty children’s museums in Europe, North America, and South America and begins with a very brief history and overview of the development of children’s museums. This study examined models of children’s museums, types of exhibits and interactive play materials (indoor and outdoors), programming, roles of adults, and common obstacles to the establishment and continuation of children’s museums—such as funding, availability of suitable space, exhibit design and development, etc.. Slides of children’s museums from several countries will be used for illustration.

Peggy O’Neill-Wagner (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

Play, Exploration, and Program Attentiveness of Monkeys Introduced to Audio-Visual Entertainment

Ten rhesus monkeys (*macaca mulatta*) were introduced to videotaped programs. As each program was shown the behavior of monkeys with viewing access was video-recorded. Frequencies for twenty-one behaviors were scored from 116 hours of recorded data, utilizing one-minute timed intervals. Results of the analyzed recordings indicate that simian attentiveness toward the screen fluctuated as program content changed. Outcomes varied relative to age and gender. Overall, juveniles were more active. Immature animals engaged in higher rates of exploration and play behavior and lower rates of video watching. Female monkeys were more attentive than males toward all types of programs. For females, video attentiveness was highest (89%) when subject matter showed monkeys with humans. The male attention rate was highest when program content showed rhesus monkeys (66%), or other primates (58%). Behaviors displayed by the monkey subjects toward the monitor during video presentations varied from vocalizing and aggressive posturing, to playful solicitation.

Tom Reed (University of South Carolina-Spartanburg)

Rough and Tumble Play: It’s Not What it Looks Like

The primary purpose of this paper is to provide the participant with current research on the nature of Rough and Tumble play (R&T) and on how children use this type of play to express care and affection for one another. TASP members are in a unique position to benefit from this presentation by virtue of their commitment to early childhood education. To the untrained observer, children participating in R&T appear to be engaging in a chaotic and unruly form of play. However the children who participate in R&T see it quite another way. This

presentation will outline R&T in terms of developmentally appropriate practice and socio-emotional and cognitive benefits of R&T. Integral to this presentation will be the argument that R&T exceeds the parameters of play and becomes a vehicle for the development of friendship, the expression of affection, and ultimately becomes a form of communication among the players. R&T (often confused with aggression) will also be compared and contrasted to aggressive play.

Paola de Sanctis Ricciardone (University of Cosenza, UNICAL, Italy)

The Game of Lotto: A Pre- and Postmodern Italian Dream

The presentation starts from a very intriguing *dépistage* of Antonio Gramsci about this popular national game, written during the imprisonment in fascist jails. In his Notebooks he reflects on the roots of the mass-favor accorded to Lotto in Italy, a country then substantially pre-industrial. For capturing some social and cultural meanings of this game, he used a wide-ranging literature. Works of Balzac, Marx, Croce, Serao, Weber are passed under scrutiny in an amazing phantasmagoria of suggestions. Gramsci finds a sort of continuum between some pre-modern catholic conceptions of the grace – as identified by Weber – and the magic-religious practices that surround many strategies of betting on certain numbers. After more than seventy years, the old Lotto has been dethroned as the peculiar national cultural lottery, for using the Caillois expression. It cohabits with several other popular forms of gambling, not excluded the clandestine ones and those virtual on Internet. But the postmodern way of dreaming of many Italian players seems to have – still now – something to do with the narrative clues identified by Gramsci.

Albert Rouzie (Ohio University)

A Serio-Ludic Rhetoric of Electronic Discourse

From Huizinga to Sutton-Smith, many play scholars have defined play in contradistinction to work. Very little work has been done on play in work. When I first approached studying play in electronic discourse (specifically synchronous conferencing and hypertext compositions), I wanted to investigate the power of playful discourse to transcend the limitations imposed by the entrenched, debilitating dichotomy of adult work and play I found both inside and outside of academia. As I began to analyze the rhetoric of playful discourse in the context of student discussions and project work in a university English composition course, I found myself most interested in how students took advantage of the relative freedom of electronic venues to liberally mix serious and playful messages, styles, motives, and effects. This combination of work and play in discourse I call “serio-ludic” rhetoric. I believe that serio-ludic rhetoric may be a useful category for all forms of discourse, electronic discourse is a particularly fecund field for this type of mixing. In my paper I will explain my concept of serio-ludic rhetoric and discuss some examples from the above-mentioned course.

Jean Schappet (The National Center for Boundless Playgrounds)

Play Behavior Framework for Play Environment Design

Boundless Playgrounds is a non-profit organization that facilitates the design and development of play environments so that all children can play together. Children with disabilities have been commonly excluded from

public play places due to physical and social barriers. In working with communities to build “fully integrated” playgrounds where all children can play together it became apparent that the existing protocol for separating play areas based on the age of children was only benefiting adults. As a result we observed that all children that are capable of independent play would pass through predictable play phases. We have developed the Play Behavior Framework as an adult guide to preparing children’s play environments and the on going need to facilitate play in non-intrusive ways. The Play Behavior Framework is the first comprehensive model to provide direction for the design and facilitation of children play spaces.

Sandi Simon and Olga S. Jarrett (Georgia State University)
Ethnic Play Patterns During Recess in a Multicultural School

Since recess provides an opportunity for children to choose their play partners, the way children interact during recess may provide a window on how children of different ethnicities get along with one another in school. The purpose of this study is to determine the ethnic composition of play dyads or groups in different sections of an elementary school playground. The ethnic makeup of this school is fifty percent Hispanic, thirty percent African American, ten percent Asian, and ten percent Caucasian. Data collection involves observations during the twenty minute recess period, two days a week for six-weeks. Every thirty seconds, an observer watched one of the four sections of the playground, recording the ethnicity of children playing together as well as the type of play in which they were engaged. The paper discusses observed percentages of cross-ethnic interactions and whether certain types of play and sections of the playground support more cross-ethnic interactions.

Patricia Scully (University of Maryland-Baltimore); Peg Costello (Worthington Elementary School)
Preserving Play in Kindergarten: A Veteran Teacher Shares Her Story

Despite the abundance of research that supports play as vital for children’s healthy development, early childhood teachers must continually explain and defend the value of play in the kindergarten curriculum. This paper, drawing on the experiences of one of the authors as a kindergarten teacher in a public school, explores how she managed to preserve play in her classroom despite the pressures to increase academic activities. As a veteran teacher with over thirty years of successful teaching experience, she has an important story to share. This case study, developed through extensive interviews and classroom observations, reveals that her philosophical commitment to the importance of children’s play has been a significant factor in her remaining and thriving in teaching.

Dolores Stegelin (Clemson University)
Making the Case for Play Policy: Four Research-Based Reasons for Play Environments

Play policy is an area of play research that is in need of greater emphasis and support. This paper provides a framework for early childhood professionals who would like to become more involved in play policy development and implementation. Included are definitions of play policy, anecdotal examples of current situations that are challenging play practices in the United States, and a review of four areas of research that support the expansion of play policy in the U.S. Based on interdisciplinary research, the four areas focus on the value and

necessity of play for healthy development of young children and students. These four areas of research include (1) obesity and health-related research; (2) brain research and cognitive development; (3) social and language development; and (4) emotional and mental health indicators related to play. The author's goal in this presentation is to provide a workable framework for novices in the area of policy to develop strategies that strengthen play practices in child care, preschool, Head Start, Kindergarten, and primary settings. Included are international resources as well as examples of international play policy initiatives.

Marisa Takatori (University of São Camilo, UNISC); Edda Bomtempo (University of São Paulo, USP)
Disable Children's Everyday Playing: An Occupational Therapy Assistance Proposal

The purpose of this research was to observe disabled children in a routine of playing, and to observe them in order to understand the way they fulfill their needs. This study, based on Winnicott ideas, shows that playing is understood as an activity that makes evident the personal aspects of the ones who play. Not only with a focus on traditional playing or on the use of toys and games, it is understood that playing is a dimension that allows children to have a contact with external reality in a creative way. These experiences bring out some aspects of the subject's inner and outer realities which make possible the social participation of the subject. Three disabled children were studied during this piece of work; they could handle the toys and did not have any mental disabilities. These children were observed in their home in a period no less than a month and no longer than three months. The information obtained during this observation was used to elaborate the occupational therapy assistance proposal of these children. Occupational therapy has tools and activities. The main concern is that the individual could organize herself or himself on daily activities in spite of motor or any other disability. The motor and functional conditions can have a limit for recovering, but the possibility of "doing something" is not only linked with movement or action. It does not depend simply on motor or functional skills. It requires choices and meanings that turn the movement into a spontaneous gesture that happens and that is recognized by the social and cultural environment, having as a result the participation of the individual. In the relationship among the occupational therapist, the patient and the activities, the experiences involving doing something, allow the therapist to know the patient very well and this is useful in building on assistance proposal that will help the patients build their routines in spite of their disabilities.

Arne Trageton (Stord/Haugesund College, Norway)
Creative Writing on Computers: Playful Learning in Grades 1-3

There is a lot of research about computers in schools, but few about playful writing for 6-9 year olds. This paper covers grade 3 and the end of the research evaluation (Grade 1 & 2 was presented at TASP 2002). 14 classes in Norway, Denmark, Finland and Estonia started playful writing on computers and learned to write and read already in grade 1. The traditional letter program and primers in grade 2 became unnecessary. They produced their own primers by playing "Publishing house" and "Newspapers office". In grade 3 the children produced newspapers and books (20-60 pages) on a more advanced level in different genres. The writing inspired the children to intensive reading of library books. Three-year development is documented by 7100 texts in a database and 60 edited videos. In the end evaluation the PC classes showed a higher quality level in composing fairy tale and factual prose than produced in traditional handwriting classes, significant at the $p>0.001$ level.

Also, the handwriting tests showed significantly higher quality at the PC classes on $p > 0.001$ level in spite of delaying this activity to grade 3. This playful learning may lead to radical changes in literacy teaching in grade 1-4.

Arne Trageton (Stord/Haugesund College, Norway)

Sensomotoric and Role-Play Development in 1-7 Year Olds: Cultural Differences in Five European Countries and in Arizona

This research project video recorded 400 play episodes in 5 preschools among 1-7 year olds in Norway. In a part of the project, preschool teacher students made play observations in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Arizona and East-Germany (strongly influenced of the former soviet culture and pedagogic). East-German persons taking an East-German teacher education observed East German children in naturalistic setting in East-German preschools, and a similar strategy was used for all 6 countries. We hoped that this method would enlarge our understanding of cultural differences. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the written running protocols showed that the American and German observations reflected very different general cultures and specific play cultures (Bronfenbrenner). The Nordic countries lay in-between, with the Danish play culture closer to the American one, and with Finland closer to the East German.