TASP

The Association for the Study of Play

2008 TASP Annual Conference

Tempe, Arizona

Abstracts

Akosua Addo (University of Minnesota)
Intercultural Interactions and Children's Play Culture

Playground culture in Ghana is creative, reflecting intercultural interactions within the culture. Creative play-ground experiences allow researchers and the researched to shift identities, embrace connected identities, and acquire new intercultural ones. Thus a meta-identity that is shared, compared and negotiated emerges during play. While singing games begin with a personal initiative to engage the creative act, they also demon-strate children's willingness to produce a variety of ideas (ideational flexibility- the bedrock of creativity) from intercultural interactions. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how shared, compared and negotiated inter-cultural playground identities birthed in intercultural interactions have informed creativity on the playground.

Sudha Babu (Pennsylvania State University)
Playful Mothering: A Culturally Defined Experience

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to some of the traditional mothering practices prevalent among many Hindu families in India and elsewhere. Embedded within these practices are beliefs and everyday rituals that are intrinsically tied to ancient Hindu scriptures. More importantly, stories about "play" and "playfulness" abound in these cultural texts. For example, stories about Lord Krishna's child-hood and his relationship with his mother Yashoda, are often shared and imbibed in everyday mothering practices across generations. How-ever, there are aspects of this approach that are questionable, making many researchers (including myself, an immigrant Asian-Indian mother) rethink the rationale behind such emic "insider" perspectives and these issues shall be discussed in detail. In addition, to support my claim I shall reflect on my mothering experiences and conclude by providing some suggestions, particularly about the value of exploring cross-cultural perspectives of adult-child play, as well as developing understanding about play and religion.

Carol Barron (Dublin City University, Ireland)
"Let Me Show You What I Like to Play": Children as Researchers Using Disposable Cameras

There has been renewed interest across academic disciplines in recent years in the use of visual techniques in researching children's lived experiences. This has run parallel to the recognition of children as competent social actors with the shift in perspective from research on or about children to research with children. Acknowledging that children are the experts in their own play and in an attempt to access this expertise, children from 2 single-sex schools aged from 8.5 to 12 years were given disposable cameras for a week and asked to record "What they play" and "Where they play". Cameras were distributed in the winter of 2006 and the summer of 2007 to allow for seasonal variation in activity and location of their play spaces. Children were then interviewed in focus groups about the images they produced using photo eliction. This paper presents the findings from the analyzed images produced by the children in combination with data from the children's interviews.

Joy Bechtold (Bloomsburg University)
The Relationship of Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of
Play and the Play Experiences of Young Children

Young children have an innate desire to learn, and this learning usually occurs through their play. For many young children in today's society these play experiences often occur within child care centers, preschools, public schools, as well as other early learning institutions. Research has identified that the teachers within these early care and educational institutions play a vital role in young children's successful acquisition of physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and linguistic developmental skills; which are normally acquired through meaningful play experiences. This presentation will examine and discuss how early childhood education pre-service teachers define and describe children's play and will discuss their perceptions and attitudes regarding the importance of young children's play experiences within the classroom.

Pat Broadhead (Leeds Met University, United Kingdom)
Conflict and Risk-Taking in Play: Bridging Home-School Cultures

Young children demonstrate sophistication in conflict management and children's conflicts do not naturally lead to violence. The study is a continuation of research into how children become sociable and cooperative through play, leading to The Social Play Continuum (SPC). The SPC charts the growth of sociability through four contiguous domains, Associative, Social, Highly Social and Cooperative, illustrating connections between Cooperative play and intellectual endeavour. It was used as a joint observation tool in two classes where staff were concerned about escalating levels of conflict and deteriorating behaviour. Observations revealed conflict resolution that progressed play into higher domains of sociability; children took physical risks and subverted the adult agenda by disregarding rules to progress their play themes. Reflections revealed links between conflict and children's peer relationships with experiences in and out of school, allowing staff consideration of children's culture and identity beyond perceptions of them as 'pupil'. This had implications for pedagogy.

Mac Brown (University of South Carolina, Columbia)

"Can I Play With You?": Children's Strategies for Entering Social Play

Vivian Paley says that being told you can't play is one of the most painful experiences of childhood. Entering the ongoing play of others is a challenge all children must face and some children have the social skills and strategies that help them be more successful. This presentation examines what those skills and strategies are and suggests ways to teach less skilled children the necessary means for entering social dramatic play.

Joanna Cemore (Missouri State University)
Preschool Children's Home Play Behaviors

In a study that examined the relationship between children's ability to delay gratification and time spent in make-believe play, children's play was assessed using a teacher questionnaire, a parent interview, a child interview, and videotaped naturalistic preschool classroom observations. In the sample of 39 3- to 5-year-old children there was a significant correlation between home make-believe play behavior and delay of gratification. Quantitative findings of this study were reported in Cemore and Herwig (2005). This presentation will focus on the previously un-examined qualitative data from the parent surveys and the child interviews related to the child's home play and make-believe play behavior.

Mei-Fang Cheng and James Johnson (Pennsylvania State University)
Analysis of Education and Development Research Articles on Children's
Play Over the Past Three Years

This paper analyzed research articles on children's play published the last three years in eight journals: four educational journals— Early Childhood Education Journal (ECEJ), Journal of Research in Childhood Education (JRCE), Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ), and Early Child Development and Care (ECDC), and four developmental journals— Child Development (CD), Developmental Psychology (DP), Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (JADP), and Merril Palmer Quarterly Journal of Developmental Psychology (JDP). Criteria were developed to select studies on children's play. Preliminary findings showed that the percentage of play studies published in these eight journals varied (ECEJ:
8.3%, JRCE: 16.7%, ECRQ: 8.3%, ECDC: 41.7%, CD: 8.3%, DP: none, JADP: none, and JDP: 16.7%).
More play studies on play appeared on the education journals (75%). Development studies were more likely to use play not as the object of study but as a tool to study something else. Analysis revealed how these journals defined children's play and its functions. This presentation will discuss the emergent themes over the three years of these studies.

Jim Christie (Arizona State University), Walter Drew (Institute for Self Active Education and Reusable Resources Association), James Johnson (Pennsylvania State University), and Alice Meckley (Millersville University)
Intellectualizing the Play Experience

This session explores play from the perspective of the player and the researcher. Sets of open-ended play ma-

terials will allow for sustained individual or group play. Participant teams will plan, do and reflect on play episodes over two rounds of activity with each participant taking on the role of researcher, player, or both roles. After each round teams will summarize the results of their research and there will be large group sharing at the end of the workshop. This session will focus on the value of experiencing play for intellectualizing play and the value of intellectualizing play for experiencing play.

Lynn Cohen (Long Island University) and Sandi Waite-Stupiansky (Edinboro University of Pennsylvania)
A Vygotskian Framework for Observing and Teaching Reluctant Learners

This proposal describes the application of Vygotskian theories to stages of make believe play with preschool and kindergarten children. Elkonian (1977) used the term mature to describe the play that provides maximum benefits for development. Bodrova and Leong (2004, 2006) observed children in preschool and kindergarten and developed characteristics of mature, the kind of play Elkonian (1977) described as the leading activity that should emerge at the end of kindergarten, and immature as the kind of play common in younger children. Using case study methodology, findings indicated that children with special needs and English Language Learners need teacher intervention to acquire a mature level of play. The following questions are addressed in this workshop: How can teachers use Vygotskian theories to observe mature play in classrooms? What specific strategies can teachers use to support the reluctant players in an early childhood setting?

Denise Cunningham (Missouri State University)
Graduate Students Investigate Play Through Action Research

Action research is intended to uncover or produce information and knowledge that will be directly useful to a group of people – the stakeholders. It is meant to enlighten and empower the person in the group, motivating them to use the information gathered in the research. Ten graduate students enrolled in a course titled "The Educational Role of Play" conducted action research projects to investigate questions involving play in their various roles in the early childhood field. Topics included the impact of play on the social play of children with autism, structured vs. free play on vocabulary, environmental influences on block play, and parent-child interactions during play. The project's findings will be highlighted as well as the student's final products to disseminate the play information to parents and the community.

Angela Eckhoff (Clemson University)
Playful Science: The Power of Play in Developing Young Children's Understandings of the Natural World

Albert Einstein is credited with saying "Play is the highest form of research." Young children are scientists at play; actively experimenting, exploring, and researching their surroundings. In their early encounters with the natural world, children develop ideas and understandings based on their experiences with real objects. Developmentally appropriate science experiences have a powerful role in developing the scientific thinking of both young children and their teachers. As such, science experiences need to be carefully crafted to build upon children's playful interactions with their world. This presentation reports findings from a research study aimed at developing pre-service teachers' understandings of young children's scientific play documented through the

children's drawings, teacher reflections, and teacher-child interactions. This study documented the ways in which pre-service teachers brought their understandings of play and inquiry-based science together to craft developmentally appropriate science experiences for kindergarten students.

Brian Edmiston (The Ohio State University)
Forming Ethical Identities in Early Childhood Play

Between the ages of about 18 months and 7 years I played with our son and entered into whatever imagined worlds he wanted to explore. These began in dinosaur lands, moved into folk tale territories, and then into horror landscapes. In this presentation I will use core examples as I report on several aspects of this longitudinal case study of child initiated play in which I actively participated. I will draw on the ideas of Vygotsky as extended by Bakhtin and supplemented with other poststructural and postmodern thinkers to theorize that through child-adult play we were co-authoring ethical, as well as socio-cultural, identities. I will use Vygotsky's theories of play and the ZPD to argue that our playing created a 'workshop for life'. I will use Bakhtin's theories to argue that child-adult play can create aesthetic, dialogic, co-authoring spaces where meaning, selves, and identities are created and productively contested.

Rebecca Eignor and Michael Patte (Bloomsburg University)
Can Play and Accountability Co-Exist in Early Childhood and Elementary Settings?

We will share the preliminary results of an Honors Independent Study Research Project which examined if attitudes and actions concerning play and time devoted to daily recess changed recently amidst increasing demands for greater teacher and school accountability. Administrator and teacher perceptions provide keen insights about the "current school culture" concerning play and recess in a variety of early childhood and elementary school settings. Rebecca's research study seeks to unearth school attitudes and actions concerning play and recess in an ever increasing climate of academic pressure and student competence and considers the possible implications on student emotional and social well-being. Rebecca conducted this action research as part of her Honors' Program requirements under the supervision of Dr.
Michael Patte.

Lillian Englund (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) and Michelle Tannock (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
Educators' Beliefs and the Value of Play

This paper presentation will discuss historical and theoretical positions that influence contemporary attitudes about children's play. The presentation will explore the relationship between play and learning as it affects instructional practice in early childhood classrooms. Consideration is given to social expectations of parents, community, and administrators. Governmental mandates, as they influence curricular content and practice will be examined. How these influences relate to teachers' image of the child and the role of play in instruction, will be discussed. Finally strategies for evaluating educator's personal beliefs about the value of play and reconciling these beliefs with changing classroom practice are presented.

Carolee Fucigna (The Nueva School, Hillsborough, California) and Mark Mabry (Ring Mountain Day School, Mill Valley, California)
The Language of Dramatic Play: Looking Into Children's Play Culture

While most early childhood classrooms feature environments that support dramatic play, what transpires there is often not examined by educators with the same critical lens used to view other classroom events such as writing or numeracy activities. Educators from Reggio Emilia have inspired us to think of children's various representations of their experiences as "languages" worthy of deep consideration. We consider dramatic play as such a language. When carefully documented and studied by teachers and children, play provides powerful opportunities for reflection and critical discussion that enhance children's and teachers' thinking. Such opportunities also emphasize the important role of play to the entire school community. This presentation will: 1) Provide session participants with a perspective on dramatic play as a "language" inspired by the work in Reggio schools; 2) Provide examples of documentation of dramatic play and its uses; and 3) Explore and critique the methods, content and uses of documentation of dramatic play.

Dana Gross (St. Olaf College)
An Update on the Play Project: Planning for the Future and Learning From the Past

This presentation provides an update about a Play Project, developed in 1995-96, that is part of an introductory psychology lab course, Investigative Explorations in Psychology. As described in Volume 5 of*Play & Culture Studies* (Gross, 2003), the semester-long Play Project involves small-group observations of play in naturalistic settings and culminates in a poster session in which students share the results of their studies. The Play Project has evolved since it was first developed and further changes are planned as part of a departmental curricular revision. Specifically, in 2009-10, the introductory lab course will be modified and taught as a new course, History and Methods of Psychology, in which students will learn about the historical context for each of the labs they carry out. This TASP session invites audience participation and suggestions for material that will most effectively communicate the historical context for the study of play.

Pentti Hakkarainen (University of Oulu, Finland) and Milda Bredikyte (University of Oulu, Finland)
Play-World as a Tool of Cultural Development

Adult intervention in children's play is a challenge of play guidance. The Scandinavian model emphasize "free play" with minimal intervention in children's play activities in peer groups and Russian approach is "didactic play" in which adults teach what is "correct" play. Play-world approach is based on joint play activity of adults and children. Plot crafting and construction of play environments is a joint enterprise.
In this workshop two cases of play-world applications are presented. The first one demonstrates how play-world environment stimulates play participation and steps of cultural development. The second play-world version is constructed in a multi-age group where problem-solving tasks are combined with narrative play frame.

Myae Han (University of Delaware)
Investigating the Relationship Between Play and Literacy

Since the advent of No Child Left Behind, play is recently being shunted aside in early childhood programs in favor of more direct forms of instruction that address the new "pre-K basics" of language, early literacy, and numeracy skills. This has concerned many early childhood educators and has led to a demand to show the direct link between play and academic learning. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between children' level of play and level of literacy. The data were collected in one of the Early Reading First sites which uses a play-based-literacy program. The subjects were 70 children in the program. Children's cognitive and social levels of play were examined using the child snapshot observation method and children's literacy level was measured using literacy assessments in the area of vocabulary, letter, and phonological awareness. Correlation between the level of play and literacy performance were analyzed.

Thomas Henricks (Elon University)
Orderly and Disorderly Play: A Comparison

At invited presentations during the 2007 TASP meeting, participants heard two strikingly different versions of what play can be. At one session, Jerome and Dorothy Singer advocated an essentially orderly, "civilized" portrait of children's play. At another session, Brian Sutton-Smith emphasized play's rebellious, even antinomian spirit. Other presentations at the meeting displayed this opposition as well. The current paper returns to this issue by exploring the differences between orderly and disorderly play, including the sources and functions of each type.

Robyn Holmes (Monmouth University)
Young Children's Conversations During Lunchtime at School

The present study explores children's language use during lunchtime in a preschool and kindergarten classroom. The method was participant observation. The children were visited twice a week during lunchtime. A time sampling period of 5 minutes was employed for each table and all behavioral and linguistic activity was recorded. Findings revealed that children engage in a variety of activities that are framed in part by the fact that they take place during mealtime and away from an omnipresent adult authority figure. Conversational topics ranged from food, everyday life experiences such as going to the dentist, humorous anecdotes, requests for playmates, party invitations, current movies and games, jokes, and playing with food. Developmental differences and how children use language to control both the conversation, convey their status, and comment upon their own and the adult social world will also be discussed.

Abby Hughes (St. Olaf College)
Point-of-View Video Modeling: Effects of Play Behavior in Preschoolers with Autism

Point-of-view video modeling was used to investigate both positive and negative play behaviors in children with autism. In point-of-view video modeling, videotapes of a specific task are developed from the participant's viewing perspective; the environment is shown as a child would see it when performing the targeted task. A point-of-view video was made for two four-year-old boys with autism who had a similar task they were working on: appropriate transitions. Both children participated in three phases of the study: a baseline phase, a treat-

ment phase, and a post-treatment maintenance phase. Both the children's cooperative and disruptive play behaviors were recorded during all phases. Intermingled with the maintenance phase were generalization probes, to determine whether the child was completing transitions successfully in other scenarios. Preliminary results suggest that this intervention has decreased disruptive behaviors, such as screaming, and increased cooperative behaviors, such as appropriate play, in both children.

Olga Jarrett, Christi Moore, Stacey French-Lee, Gerald Parks II, Gail Townsend, and Abigail Washington (Georgia State University)
Play Among the One-Year Olds: The Effect of Georgia Early Learning Standards on Approaches to Learning, and Social and Emotional Development

The Georgia Early Learning Standards are newly enacted, and thus far no research has been conducted on how to use the standard indicators to enhance the learning and development of very young children.
This presentation is on the beginnings of such research, a collaboration between Georgia State University's Department of Early Childhood Education and a departmentally sponsored Child Development Center. The center director and classroom teachers are involved in the study, which includes classroom observations with video recording and digital interval recording, interviews with the director, parents, and teachers, and examination of the children's portfolios. Guided by the Standards indicators, the focus is on children's relationships with adults and peers as they engage in indoor and outdoor play. The paper will report on what has been learned thus far on the usefulness of various methodologies and reflect on insights gained as a university faculty member, doctoral student, center director, as well as classroom teachers collaborate on research.

Olga Jarrett (Georgia State University), LaDonna Atkins (University of Central Oklahoma), Helle Burlingame (Kompan Play Institute, Tacoma WA), Angela Eckhoff (Clemson University), Barbie Norvell (Coastal Carolina University), Anne-Marie Millbank (Playworker, United Kingdom), Halcyon Reese-Learned (Playground designer, Houston, TX), Audrey Skrupskelis (University of South Carolina, Aiken), and JC Boushh (Play consultant, Design for Play, Banning, CA)
From Research to Advocacy: Research to Inform Advocates for the Child's Right to Play

The American Association for the Child's Right to Play advocates for appropriate play opportunities for children and supports the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31 guaranteeing the right of the child to play and leisure. Currently, test driven school policies, safety issues and concerns about litigation, and the popularity of TV and video games have devalued recess, play-oriented community activities and after-school programs, block play and dramatic play in kindergarten, creative playgrounds, and time spent in exploring the outdoors. Children of poverty are among those most affected.
Many current school policies and social trends are not research driven but to counter them, research is necessary. The panel members will discuss research that has been useful in trying to influence policy makers, teachers, and parents about the importance of play. Then, in a group discussion, panelists and attendees will identify areas where further research is needed.

James Johnson (Pennsylvania State University), Jim Christie (Arizona State University), Dorothy Singer

(Yale University), and Jerome Singer (Yale University)
Using Make-Believe Play to Promote Literacy in Young Children

Play intervention in early childhood education can be traced back to the 60s. This panel session reflections this tradition and presents latest findings of a new generation of play intervention programs targeting language development, emergent literacy and school readiness more generally conceived. The panel will discuss the relevance of this work for parents, teachers, researchers, administrators, and policy-makers.

Leif Jonsson (Arizona State University)
Turning Culture Into Contest: Reworking Minority Identity at Ethnic Festivals

Thailand's mountain people have for decades been under considerable pressure regarding integration into national society. Some previously common cultural practices are reemerging as performances for tourists and items of competition at festivals. This paper examines these dynamics in Mien (Yao) communities, that now assemble annually for sports and culture festivals. A notable feature of recent festivals is the emergence of "cultural sports." These are enacted alongside "international sports" and "local sports." The paper examines the emergence of culture as sport, how that connects to other dimensions of the current fashioning of minority identity in national context, and explores the ways in which Mien ethnic festivals assume a national gaze regarding culture, fun, and membership in society.

M. Elizabeth Kelley (Western Washington University)
Go Play Outside: The Physical Discipline of Parkour as an Agent of Play For Young Adults

Parkour is a physical discipline that can most easily be described as obstacle coursing. The discipline is quickly becoming popular internationally among teens and young adults, particularly males. It incorporates strength, skill, and creativity; all essential elements of play. When asked to describe it, most participants describe it in a similar way as one would a martial art, and like any other physical activity or sport, Parkour requires hard work and dedication to improve and excel. However, almost inevitably participants also mention that they do Parkour because it is fun and because they enjoy "playing." This young discipline encourages and invites its participants, called traceurs, to enter a play mind-set and to redefine their world as an environment in which it is easy for anyone, even grown-ups, to almost instantaneously break out into play; an environment in which play is just as normal as work or leisure. In this presentation, I look at Parkour as a play activity and explore who participates and why.

David Kuschner (University of Cincinnati)
Math, Morality, and Money on the One-Yard-Line: An Analysis of One Moment in a Professional Football Game

With less than three minutes to go in the game and his team winning by a score of 10 to 6, running back Brian Westbrook of the Philadelphia Eagles broke free for what looked to be an easy touchdown. But instead of crossing the goal line without being touched by an opposing player, he deliberately fell to the ground at the

one-yard line. Even though he deprived his team of the six points that comes with the scoring of a touchdown, Westbrook's decision at the one-yard line was applauded by most (but not all) followers of the game. The purpose of this presentation is to examine Westbrook's decision and to discuss how this one moment in a sixty minute game embodied considerations of math, morality, and money.

Lisa Mische Lawson (University of Kansas Medical Center)
Preschool Children's Sensory Processing Patterns and Toy Preferences

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between sensory processing and play preferences of preschool-aged children. Parents completed the Sensory Profile and a demographic form. Researchers observed 53 children's play activity level and toy preference during free play. Analysis revealed a significant relationship between the avoiding quadrant and the standard deviation of children's body position during play (p=.23), suggesting sensation avoiding children are less likely to vary their position during play. ANOVA revealed a significant difference between toy categories and children's sensation seeking scores (F=2.814, p=.038), with post hoc showing children preferring miniature toys had a higher mean sensation seeking score than children preferring creative art (p=.039), building materials (p=.013), or no toy preference (p=.043). Children preferring vehicles had a higher mean sensation seeking score than children preferring building materials (p=.017). Descriptive statistics showed children preferred play dough (11.9%), blocks (5.3%), bright builders (4.5%) and crayons (3.6%).

Sheng-Hsi Lin (National University of Tainan, Taiwan) and Shih-Yi Tsai (Kindergarten teacher, Taipei, Taiwan)
Leader's Behaviors of Children at Indoor and Outdoor Play

This study investigated the leader's behavior of young children at indoor and outdoor free play in a kindergarten. Two girls and two boys were observed in their play interaction with peers for four months. Their teacher and the four leader children were also interviewed. The data from observations and interviews were transcribed for analysis. The findings were as follows: First, the four leaders tended to initiate play interactions with other children and identify play rules with them. When the leaders successfully initiated play, the leaders usually exhibited their leadership during their play interaction. The leaderships served to maintain their interaction with peers, to sustain their play time, and to extend the content of their play. Furthermore, the interactions between the leaders and the followers during play involved arguing with the peers, struggling in power structures and role assignment, attracting followers with play ideas, and presenting play themes to encourage peers to actively cooperate and follow. Finally, social contexts and physical contexts supported the changes of leaders or leading behavior during children's play.

Shih-Yi Lin and Sheng-Hsi Lin (National University of Tainan, Taiwan)
A Study of Children's Sharing Behavior in Pretend Play

This study investigates children's behavior in pretend play. Based on the qualitative research of children's pretend play in a natural situation (27 mixed-age preschoolers in Tainan, Taiwan), it is found that sharing behavior

is a situation of mutual possession in children's pretend play, and it is not necessarily self-sacrifice. Furthermore, we focus on the sharing things, the sharing strategies and the relationship between sharing behavior and pretend play. When children are in their pretend play, they tend to share roles, spaces, objects, and action-plans. The speaking strategies of the sharers spread from compassion to oppression, and the resultant attitudes of the recipients may be flexible or bossy. Sharing behavior can initiate the pretend play and can also maintain the process of pretend play. On the other hand, the episodes of pretend play can promote the occurrence of sharing behavior.

Carrie Lobman (Rutgers University) and Tony Perone (University of Illinois at Chicago)
Playing Together: The Importance of Improvisation for Human Development Across the Lifespan

Improvisation is a valuable form of adult play in many communities. Improvisation can encourage camaraderie, inclusiveness, creativity and play. This workshop consists of three parts. First, the presenters will briefly discuss research on the relationship between improvisation and development. Next, participants will form breakout groups to engage in improvisation games. Finally, the participants will reconvene for a short reflection of their improv experience and to discuss the relevance of improvisation to their professional activities.

Somaya Malkawi (University of Kentucky)
Occupational Therapy Play Assessments for School-Aged Children

Play is the occupation of children that is understood to be important in their physical, social, and emotional development. Most occupational therapists use play in their practice as an intervention but rarely is play used as a target of assessment. If used, clinicians, therapists and researchers require reliable and valid measures to assist in their quantification and study of the play. In recent years, the number of assessment measures available for clinical and research purposes has grown significantly, making selection of the most appropriate assessment measure(s) challenging. The purpose of this paper is to critically review the literature related to play assessments available for school-aged children, 6 to 12 years, and to present the psychometric status. Each of the play assessments will be reviewed utilizing the four factors of play assessment; what players do, how players approach play, capacity of player, and support from the environment. Clinical and research implications are presented for each of the assessment tools reviewed.

Marcia Nell and Alice Meckley (Millersville University)
In-Depth Analysis of Data Collection Models Used in Studies on Parental Beliefs

This study will continue an investigation of parents' perceptions, beliefs, and practices in relation to their child's play and literacy development. To this point we have found that a mixed methodology research design provides the most reliability and establishes congruency between perceptions, beliefs, and practices. Congruency is the important issue if any change is going to be made in parents' practices with their children either in play or literacy. The data collection methods used to measure congruency, therefore, need to be accurate and valid. This paper will present the next step of this investigation which will be an in-depth analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods used in parental belief studies.

Don Nilsen and Allene Nilsen (Arizona State University)
Animal Play and Human Play: Some Analogues

In his "Innateness Hypothesis Theory" Noam Chomsky says that human language and animal language are both quantitatively and qualitatively different. For example, human language has much more of such qualities as creativity, displacement, duality, appropriateness, adaptability to new situations, range of expression, etc. Even though we accept Chomsky's innateness hypothesis theory, we are nevertheless amazed at how animal play echoes and sometimes surpasses human play. We will talk about the "play" of ants, bees, birds, bovines, canines, equines, felines, fish, and primates. Primates, for example, can do sign language, computers, and magnetic chips, and some mother primates have taught some sign language to their daughters. We will conclude by showing a video clip of a playful elephant, playful dogs, and playful cats.

Eva Nwokah (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)
Teens and Tots Summer Camp: Building relationships Through Play

Teens & Tots Summer Camp was a day camp for adolescent mothers (age 14-18) and their children held July 2007 as an Outreach Program in North East Greensboro, North Carolina. The study examined the impact of using a variety of play settings and experiences to teach communication strategies and support positive social-emotional interaction between adolescent mothers and their children. The camp was a local multi-agency collaboration between speech-language pathology programs in two universities, the Public Library, Department of Parks and Recreation and the YWCA. Twenty-four teen families were impacted by the program. The week before the camp all children had communication & hearing assessments. Teen mothers were screened for depression, self-concept and self-esteem and they were videotaped interacting with their children. Undergraduate and graduate students received pre-camp training and were matched one on one as mentors with each mother and child. Play activities during the camp included Family Playtime, Family Read, Family Outings to Artquest and similar locations, Mom and Baby Swim, and Mom and Baby Stroller Fitness. The mothers and their children were taught baby signs and communication strategies and assessed on this knowledge at the end of the camp. They also completed a satisfaction questionnaire. Overall, the scores indicated they retained the information and were positive about the impact of the activities on the social emotional and communicative relationship between themselves and their child.

Peggy O'Neill-Wagner (National Institutes of Health) and Rosemary Bolig (University of the District of Columbia & Walden University)
Do Companion Animals Elicit Expression of Novel and Enriching Playful Roles for Their Caregivers?

We live in a society where households with companion animals outnumber those with children. Annual pet product revenues sometimes exceed children's toy industry revenues. Often pet owners spend their time and energy adorning, rearing, training, controlling, transporting, pampering, and playing with companion animals. Some pets have wardrobes, accessories, toy boxes, furniture, and hairdressers. Typically product advertising appeals to the pet's need for novelty and enrichment. Yet, biomedical research reveals positive outcomes also exist for human brain development and a sense of well-being when exposed to novelty and environmental en-

richment throughout life. This paper descriptively illustrates how caregivers may reap the rewards of novelty and enrichment while engaging with pets in child-like play, creative expression, competitive excitement, celebration of excess, silliness, and excitement from the unexpected. Simple contact comfort, the sense of belonging, and a return to parental duties may also offer priceless rewards to individuals when exposed to animals for companionship.

Michael Patte (Bloomsburg University)
Student Teachers' Perceptions of Play Across a Variety of School Settings

I will share the preliminary results of an action research project examining the attitudes and actions of teachers concerning the use of play in both curricular and extra-curricular activities taking place during the school day in classrooms throughout central Pennsylvania. Student teachers conducted the research study during the spring 2007 semester and sought to document the role of play/playfulness in cooperating teachers' instructional and non-instructional practices and the impact of such practices on student attitudes toward school. Reflective journals, interviews, and participant observation were the primary sources of data collection used to unearth current practices.

Jane Perlmutter, Wen-Chun Wang, Marylou Matoush, and Eliza Dean (Western Carolina University)
Parental Views of Their Kindergarten Children's Play at Home and at School

The purpose of our study was to explore parental attitudes and beliefs about their children's play both in school and at home. Subjects included 20 parents and their kindergarten children in a small southern town located in a rural area. Interviews were conducted with parents, allowing them to describe, not only their children's play patterns, but their own involvement in play at home. Classroom observations of children's play during center time were conducted, coded and analyzed by the investigators. Patterns similar to those reported by the parents were observed in the classrooms observations. Parents readily identified learning outcomes related to play. They supported the use of play as a vital part of children's learning experiences. They indicated an appreciation of play and its value in the kindergarten classroom.

Laurell Phillips (East Tennessee State University) and Dorothy Sluss (James Madison University)
Investigating Digital Photography in Kindergarten

This proposal addresses one kindergarten classroom's journey using digital cameras as a play and discovery approach to teaching and learning, with defined stages of skills.

Stuart Reifel (University of Texas, Austin)
Block Play Research: Multiple Meanings Revisited

This presentation provides a critical review of research on block play, from the speculative arguments of Froebel to current work on literacy discourse in the block corner. While block play is often framed as a con-

structive symbolic activity for childhood education, much research has studied other aspects of education or development (e.g., social relations, science concept acquisition) as they take place (not so incidentally) in the context of block play. The presentation will summarize the research on play in the block corner, with an emphasis on cognitive and social attributes of block play. Case material will be presented to suggest future directions for research on construction play.

Stuart Reifel (University of Texas, Austin)
Classroom Play Text Analysis: Analytic Technique

The purpose of this presentation is to elaborate hermeneutic methodological techniques pertinent to studying classroom play. Building on earlier work that explored analysis of play as text, this approach argues that "any narrative case be considered critically within larger theoretical contexts, including the conditions that contribute to creating the text." Building on Gadamer, Henricks, VanderVen and others, techniques of data collection and analysis have been identified and expanded, building on observation/ recording of classroom events and using multiple frames for interpreting play; discourse analysis, informants, and member-checking are common procedural techniques. This paper focuses on analytic problems related to the complexities (and limitations) of language used for description and analysis (disengaging theoretical language from the meanings of a play text as enacted), balancing perspectives of participants (researcher, insider interpreters, players), and bridging meaning of play in cultures other than the researcher's. Implications for conducting classroom research will be explored.

Nancy Remy (Pennsylvania State University)
Maria Montessori and Play in 2008

Maria Montessori was a woman ahead of her time in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first woman to graduate from medical school in Italy, she was innovative in her development of educational materials and a keen observer of all around her from children to world politics. This pioneering spirit would most certainly have led her to the research that prevails today in the arena of play. So much of what Montessori embraced in her work with children one hundred years ago aligns itself with what we know about the importance of play in the life of a child in the 21st century. This presentation will include discussions and demonstrations over a range of ages beginning in the early years and moving into elementary.

Paola de Sanctis Ricciardone (University of Calabria, Italy)
Exhibiting Play: Museums, Collections, Domestic Memories

Showing toys, game implements, and play evidences, is a widespread public and private practice. Many museums in the world, even the most representative like the Louvre or the British Museum, contain collections related to ludic activities belonging to different cultures and ages. In Europe, thematic museums completely devoted to play are more recent than others, and they seem to have developed various missions and strategies of representation. Some contemporary Italian exemplifications testify to a particular research aimed to give the world of play new meanings and functions, also in connection with a kind of local branding.

Dorothy Singer (Yale University), Jerome Singer (Yale University), Heidi D'Agnostino (StrategyOne Research Organization), and Raeka Mallikarjun (StrategyOne Research Organization)
A Twelve-Nation Study of Children's Play and Pastime Activities

This study examined the role of play and other activities beyond formal schooling in twelve countries. Mothers of 1800 children in the U.S.A, the United Kingdom, France, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, South Africa, Thailand, India, China, Vietnam and Morocco were interviewed, described, and rated their children's daily activities. Patterns of play at home and outdoors, media usage, and comparisons within and across nations were conducted. Mothers' beliefs and attitudes about experiential learning, the general values for children, safety, and health-promotion were obtained. Children of comparable socioeconomic status up to age twelve from each nation, included equal numbers of boys and girls. Findings indicated a surprising similarity across nations. Mothers agreed that childhood was being eroded through lack of free-play opportunities. The major outside of school activity of children was watching television. Detailed cross-national comparisons will be reviewed and implications for research and social actions such as playground development will be presented.

John Sutterby (University of Texas, Brownsville) and John Andreu Sutterby (Vela Middle School, Brownsville, Texas)
Txt Mssg: Cell Phone Play in the 21st Century

Text messaging is developing into a new form of communication mostly used by young people. Currently about 1 trillion text messages are sent a year by over 1.5 billion cell phone users (Bontis, 2007). This presentation will examine the ways adolescents use text messaging for playful purposes based on the experiences and reports of adolescent text messagers. Adolescents are using this technology for a variety of playful purposes in a form of social communication play. They send chain emails and jokes, and they communicate in class as a more modern form of note passing. The language used for text messaging will be discussed as well as technique.

Michelle Tannock (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
Young Children's Rough and Tumble Play: Classification and Typology

This research investigated the rough and tumble (R&T) play of 17 five-year-old children in two early childhood settings. The study resulted in an increased understanding of the forms of R&T displayed by young children. Twenty-seven distinct R&T play behaviors were exhibited by young children during over 30 hours of observation. These distinct elements were categorized in the development of typology of variations in the forms of R&T which includes independent play, play with others, and play with objects. The results of this study and categorization process have implications for educators, parents, and researchers seeking understanding of the forms of young children's rough and tumble play. With increased assistance on the elucidation of R&T, educators and parents can more effectively manage the play and researchers can more efficiently investigate the manifestation of this form of play.

Kathryn Welteroth, Ginger Fisher, and Deb Austin (Wilson College)

Preference Between Destructible and Indestructible Toys in Panthera Tigris

There are approximately 5,000-7,000 captive tigers (Panthera tigris) living in the United States. Maintenance of these captive predators includes enrichment to provide stimuli and elicit natural behaviors. Toys have been used to maintain the mental and physical health of the various captive species. In this study, five individuals were observed interacting with destructible and indestructible toys. When the individual trials were completed the tigers were then exposed to both toy types simultaneously and behaviors were recorded. The focal sampling method was used to count the number of play behaviors each tiger performed. Preliminary results indicate that preference occurs on an individual basis. For this reason it is recommended that tiger caretakers should consider using both toy types until a preference is established.

Susan Welteroth (Watsontown Elementary School and Susquehanna University)
Reconstructing Recess

In many school across the country, recess is being eliminated in favor of increased academic time. At our elementary school, we still believe that recess is an important part of the school day. Sometimes, however, recess can become a free-for-all. At any given time, there may be aimless running, tackle soccer, or very large group kickball. Children may be teasing, fighting, or bullying, while others are being teased, pushed around or bullied. This presentation will address our elementary school's attempts to turn the playground into a productive learning environment. In this setting, school staff teach small group games that provide opportunities for breaks throughout the day, child-choice of activities, outdoor play experiences, and the development of appropriate social interactions.

Alice Whiren (Michigan State University, retired)
A Place to Play: The Natural Environment

Reflections on the impact of place in the play of young children. Context as a determiner of play content. Public places, family management of private places, and the need for research on the interaction of nature and the development of children.

Debora B. Wisneski (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee)
Play and Story Is Our Universal Language!: Exploring One Teacher's Interpretation of Classroom Play

Bennet et al. (1997) demonstrated that teachers reflect upon play as a meaningful experience drawing upon rich beliefs and theories; however, teachers are also unaware of what children actually do or how they understand the play experience. Whenever classroom play has been analyzed as "text" for interpretation, some studies have shown that there can be multiple understandings of the play experience by children and teachers which are different and even contradictory. In order to address these issues of classroom play, scholars suggest the need to explore how teachers think about play and consider context when developing theory. This presentation examines a teacher's thinking by sharing a collaborative inquiry between a first year teacher and researcher that follows the teacher's reflections on his use of Vivian Paley's model of story acting in a preschool

classroom. A process of shared learning between teacher and children through play will be outlined.

Rich Worch (Bowling Green State University)
Sex Differences in the Function of Play in Red Colobus monkeys of Kibale Forest, Uganda

This paper presents the results of tests for three hypotheses for the function of play in red colobus monkeys (Colobus badius). Analyses support the fighting skills hypothesis and long-term social bonding hypothesis but not the social perception hypothesis. The results suggest that play serves multiple functions for red colobus monkeys, some of which are predictable based on sex-specific socioecological traits. The theoretical foundation and empirical predictions for each hypothesis, the procedures for data collection and analyses, and the implications for the study's conclusions will be discussed.

Careen Yarnal and Ondrej Mitas (Pennsylvania State University)
Playfulness, Psychological Resilience and Neuroplasticity: A Hypothesized Model

Psychologists have uncovered exciting connections between playfulness and a variety of positive outcomes. Studies of the benefits of playfulness in the aging population, however, are scant. Studies about older women's playfulness, positive psychological outcomes (e.g., psychological resilience) and positive neurological outcomes (e.g., neurological plasticity) are absent. The lack of research on older women's playfulness, psychological resilience, and neurological plasticity is inopportune especially when (a) "… factors that can help people maintain or enhance their cognitive and emotional health as they grow older [should be] a major public health goal" (Hendrie et al., 2006) and (b) novel developments in both the social sciences and the neurosciences suggest that playfulness may contribute to neurological plasticity
(Pereira et al, 2007; van Praag, Kempermann & Gage, 2000). This proposal presents a hypothesized model outlining potential connections between playfulness, psychological resilience, and neuroplasticity.

Careen Yarnal (Pennsylvania State University), Lynn Barnett (University of Illinois),
Marianne Staempfli (University of Waterloo), and James Johnson (Pennsylvania State University)
Playfulness, Development and Healthy Aging

Contributors to this panel session are experts on play and playfulness in early childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and later life. Taking either a developmental and/or a health approach, participants will address where their interest in playfulness came, conceptual and/or theoretical links between their work on play and playfulness and healthy aging, and future directions.