

# TASP

The Association for the Study of Play

## 2011 TASP Annual Conference

**The Strong, Rochester, New York**

### **Conference Program**

**April 27-30, 2011**

Wednesday, April 27

7:00 PM-10:00 PM

Reception, Strathallan Hotel

Informal social event

Thursday, April 28

8:30 AM-9:45 AM (Theatre)

Welcome

Michael Patte, G. Rollie Adams

Keynote Address: Why Normal Isn't Healthy

Bowen White, M.D.

9:45 AM-10:00 AM

Break: coffee and refreshments

10:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room A)

Strengthening Communities through Play: Local Actions, Wider Networks

Amy Dickinson and Danielle Marshall, KaBOOM!

Play is Under Threat

Özge Metin and Belma Tu?rul, Hacettepe University Turkey

10:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room B)

Play as a Pathway of Experience

Thomas Henricks, Elon University

Play: Good for Social Health in the Classroom

Mary Bendixen-Noe, The Ohio State University-Newark

Play Memories in Saudi Cultural Context

Monirah Al-Mansour, The Pennsylvania State University

The Role of Play in Crafting a Sense of Place

Bea Bailey, Clemson University

Dorothy Sluss, James Madison University

10:00 AM-12:00 PM (Room C)

Children's Developmental Rights: The Necessity for Child Centered Play Experiences

Bruce Gilberg, Generation Two

Urban Elementary School Children at Play During Recess

Robyn Holmes, Monmouth University

Examining the Role of Recess on Student Behaviors in the Elementary School Classroom

Sarah Baltrusaitis and Michael Patte, Bloomsburg University

Behavior Mapping: Assessing Play and Science Learning at Toledo Zoo's Nature's Neighborhood

Rick Worch and Jodi Haney, Bowling Green State University

11:30- 12:00 PM (Activity Rooms Hallway)

Poster: Improving the Play Skills of Children with Learning Disabilities through Proactive and Reactive Social Skills Interventions

Kay Hanson, University of South Carolina Aiken

12:00 PM-1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM-2:30 PM (Room A)

(play) + (playfulness x work) – (work x drudgery) = (curriculum) ÷ (child + teacher)

David Kushner, University of Cincinnati

Play Friendly Learning Environment

Belma Tu?rul and Özge Metin, Hacettepe University Turkey

Emotional and Intellectual Well-being through Cooperative Engagement in a Playful Classroom

Pat Broadhead, Leeds Metropolitan University

1:00 PM-2:30 PM (Room B)

Enhancement of Parent-Child Play and Quality Time in the Framework of a Play-Center for Children with Special Needs

Jeannie Gadish, Beit Helena Play Center at Yad Sarah Organisation Israel

Does Finding the Needle Keep You from Playing in the Haystack? Visospatial Processing Style and Play Maturity in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Down Syndrome

Emily Kushner, Loisa Bennetto, and Susan Hyman, Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Children's National Medical Center and University of Rochester

A Study of Children's Play When Adding Loose Parts on a Playground at a Kindergarten in Taiwan

Sheng-Hsi Lin, National University of Tainan

1:00 PM-2:30 PM (Room C)

Workshop: Creative Expression through Movement

Monirah Al-Mansour and Serap Sevimli-Celik, The Pennsylvania State University

Play and Games of Today's Primary Schools Playgrounds: Pedagogic Intervention in Quest of Play "Vocabulary"

Vania Pereira, University of Minho Braga-Portugal

1:30 PM- 4:30 PM (Board Room)

IPA/USA Board Meeting

2:30 PM-2:45 PM

Break: coffee and refreshments

2:45 PM-4:45 PM (Room A)

Teachers Predict: What DO Children Learn About Science from Outdoor Play?

Victoria Carr and Eleanor Luken, Arlitt Child and Family Research and Education Center, University of Cincinnati

Critical Play Theory: A Review of Critical Literature on Play and Play Research

Lynn Cohen, C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University

James Johnson, The Pennsylvania State University

Neighborhood Play, Everyday

Mike Lanza, Playborhood

2:45 PM-4:45 PM (RoomD)

Panel : Ethnotheories about Play and Learning

Parental Beliefs About Play and Early Development

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine and Ambika Krishnakumar, Syracuse University

Teacher Beliefs about Play and Working with Parents in Taiwan

Mei-Fang Cheng and James Johnson, The Pennsylvania State University

Parents' Beliefs, Family Play and Activities, and Early Learning

Eunjoo Jung, Syracuse University

4:15 PM-4:45 PM (International Center for the History of Electronic Games, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play, Collections Storage)

Strong Tours

4:45 PM-6:45 PM (Board Room)

TASP Board Meeting

Friday, April 29

9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Room A)

What Can Early Childhood Educators Do to Preserve Play in Early Childhood Classrooms? From Research to Policy Suggestions

Myae Han, Jennifer Vu, and Martha Buell, University of Delaware

“Recess Access”: A Play and Health Initiative

Anna Beresin, University of the Arts

9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Room B)

Play Intends Freedom

Audrey Skrupskelis, University of South Carolina Aiken

Parent Play Education: “ Let My Children Play”

Marcia Nell, Millersville University and The Institute for Self Active Education

Walter Drew, Institute for Self Active Education

9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Room C)

Spatiality and Play: Computer Games and New Experiences Afforded

Bruno Galiza, UFG-Goiás Brasil

Girls in Virtual Reality

John A. Sutterby, University of Texas at Brownsville

10:00 AM-10:15 AM

Break: coffee and refreshments

10:15 AM-12:00 PM (Room A)

Children’s Arts Play in Care Institutions

Akosua Addo, University of Minnesota

A Case Study of Music Play at a Developmentally Appropriate Practice Classroom

Pyng-Na Lee and Sheng-Hsi Lin, National University of Tainan

Taiwanese Children’s Play in Public Places: The Role of Parents

Pang-Jiou Huang, National Taiwan Normal University

Sheng-Hsi Lin, National University of Tainan

10:15 AM-12:00 PM (Room B)

Panel: Trans-Cultural Analysis of Play Accounts

James E. Johnson, Mei-Fang Cheng, Monirah Al-Mansour, Serap Sevimli-Celik, Yoojung Ko and Fatemeh Rafie,

The Pennsylvania State University

12:00 PM–1:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM-2:30 PM (Room A)

Videotaping in Support of Teen Parent-Child Interaction

Dana Gross and Molly Ladwig, St. Olaf College

Service Learning in a Play-Based Summer Camp for Teen Mothers and Young Children

Eva Nwokah, Our Lady of the Lake University

P.R.I.S.M.- A New Perspective for Recess?

Shelly Newstead, Institute of Education

1:00 PM-2:30 PM (Room B)

Panel: Playwork in the UK and America

Fraser Brown and Suzanna Law, Leeds Metropolitan University

Michael Patte, Bloomsburg University

Morgan Leichter-Saxby and Sharon Unis, Pop-Up Adventure Play

2:30 PM-2:45 PM

Break: coffee and refreshments

2:45 PM-4:15 PM (Room A)

Resilience through Play? Game-Elements and Testing in Ritual and Play among Girls in Zambia

Jan Ketil Simonsen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Sesilie Smørholm, Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB), Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Understanding of Play in Turkish Cultural Context

Serap Sevimli-Celik, The Pennsylvania State University

Piaget's "Little Scientists" Behavior: Exploratory Play in the One-Year-Old Room

Olga Jarrett, Stacey French- Lee, and Xiaoyan Xie, Georgia State University

2:45 PM-4:15 PM (Room B)

Panel: Achieving Well-being with Play and Humor

Play and Humor Strategies: Considerations for Health Care Professionals

Melanie MacNeil, Niagara University

Becoming More Playful: Promoting Healthy Classrooms and Educators

Tina Van Kuren, Grand Erie District School Board, Joseph Brant Learning Centre

Laughter Yoga as Funny Medicine: Therapeutic Interventions for Addressing Mental Health

Jackie West, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

2:45 PM-3:15 PM (International Center for the History of Electronic Games, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play, Collections Storage)

Strong Tours

3:45 PM-4:15 PM (International Center for the History of Electronic Games, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play, Collections Storage)

Strong Tours

4:15 PM-5:00 PM (Activity Room C and D)

Reception

5:00 PM-5:45 PM (Theatre)

Sutton-Smith Award, Presidential Address and TASP Business Meeting

5:45 PM-7:00 PM (Theatre)

BBC Documentary and Brian Sutton-Smith Commentary

Saturday, April 30

9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Room A)

Play and Performance from Beginning to End

Susan Massad, The EastSide Institute

Nepalese Nursery Rhymes: Play Brokers for the Young?

Vejoya Viren, The University of Texas at Brownsville

9:00 AM-10:00 AM (Room B)

Panel: Technology and Play

Digitizing the Bedroom: Children's Domestic Gaming as Consumption, Production, Subversion and Play

Sara Grimes, University of Toronto

Making Play Happen: Adaptive Design for Inclusive Learning in the Early Years

Jason Nolan, Ryerson University

Crafting Play: Exploring the Handmade in Digital Games

Emma Westecott, OCAD University

10:00-11:00 AM (Theatre)

TASP Past Presidents Panel

Brian Sutton-Smith, Phil Stevens Jr., Olga Jarrett, Jim Johnson, Alice Meckley, David Kushner, and John Sutterby

11:00-12:00 PM (Theatre)

TASP & IPA/USA Panel: Research 2011 – Implications for Play Advocacy

Olga Jarrett, Georgia State University

Tom Reed, University of South Carolina Upstate

Audrey Skrupskelis, University of South Carolina Aiken

Joyce A. Hemphill, University of Wisconsin – Madison

12:00- 1:00 PM (Activity Room C and D)

Lunch and Concluding Remarks

Abstracts

Akosua Addo (University of Minnesota)

### **Children's Arts Play in Care Institutions**

Children's play provides enjoyment, promotes self-confidence and positive interpersonal relations. In May 2011, I will collect data on how children's arts play is promoted in care institutions to support in children's well-being. Play offers opportunities for children to develop relationships, and strong relationships promote social wellbeing. The purpose of this paper is to present an in-depth meta-analysis of the literature to date on approaches to play, kinds of play and who engages in play in institutional care settings. Research on play in the context of care institutions has addressed the use of play for motivation, and play to develop specific skills, in-



terpersonal competences, kinesthetic skills and language ability. Specifically, I am interested in finding out how play varies according to age, gender, ethnicity and what the institutions' social and organizational demand and how this in turn, children's social wellbeing in Ghana.

Monirah Al-Mansour (The Pennsylvania State University)

### **Play Memories in Saudi Cultural Context**

"How has play been viewed and valued within the Saudi Arabian cultural context?" and "how has play been apprehended by Saudi Arabian's?" are two questions that are imperative to this study. The main purpose of this study is to identify, describe and analyze adult's play from the perspective of the Saudi culture. It aims to highlight play within Saudi cultural context based on a special physical environment that meets Saudi's social and cultural needs. The study is based on a demonstration of the participants' play experience and an illustration of their childhood to adulthood memories of play. A comparison with their own children's play in the present and a prediction of their children's play in the future will be highlighted as a theme of the study. The study will also focus on changes in society and their consequences on play and how play is being valued in different stages of life. This qualitative research inquiry is based on semi-structured interviews with 10 parents with children aged 5 to 10 years. A sketching technique of the memories of play is used in the interview. This study will increase the understanding of the significance of cultural influence on play by examining the play experience of a group of people (adults and their children) within this specific cultural context.

Monirah Al-Mansour and Serap Sevimli-Celik (The Pennsylvania State University)

### **Creative Expression through Movement**

This workshop will focus on the creative expression through movement in different play settings. Recent studies show that children benefit from this experience, since it helps them to practice their critical thinking skills and learn to cooperate and collaborate to solve their problems in many ways. It is an interactive approach that utilizes practical application of play. Participants will be experiencing hands-on activities using open-ended materials to prop up their play. We will further investigate some ways to encourage the use of environmental resources to enhance creative expression and creative movement for preschoolers. Participants will also explore the challenges that might defer some teachers of implementing play-based activities in various settings and find some practical solution.

Sarah Baltrusaitis and Michael Patte (Bloomsburg University)

### **Examining the Role of Recess on Student Behaviors in the Elementary School Classroom**

This presentation will give participants a look at my thesis studying play/recess and the behavior of students as a class. I will present my completed thesis. I am fascinated in how recess affects students' behavior and the students academically. I am also interested in how teachers view recess as well as recess duty. I interviewed administrators, teachers, parents and students to get a better understanding of how they believe recess affects

their well-being and their child's well-being. This topic was chosen due to the interest of my thesis chairperson, Dr. Michael Patte. It is through his interest in play and working with him that piqued my curiosity in this area. In hearing him discuss his research in class it interested me to investigate further. I want to learn more about how the elimination or the reduction of time devoted to recess affects children emotionally, socially, cognitively and creatively.

Bea Bailey (Clemson University)

Dorothy Sluss (James Madison University)

### **The Role of Play in Crafting a Sense of Place**

Crafting a sense of place is viewed as essential for establishing a healthy presence within a community. The role of play in this process will be explored. During this presentation, recommendations for schools systems interested in creating a more hospitable experience for transient children will be explored.

Mary Bendixen-Noe (The Ohio State University – Newark)

### **Play: Good for Social Health in the Classroom**

We know that children learn best through play. However, in the current assessment and standards based US society, most children are taught using worksheets and through adult based academic strategies. Research has shown that children, who are taught by these strategies, have a higher “burn out” rate regarding school and school work. Teachers need to be able to incorporate developmentally appropriate teaching/learning strategies that still teach the required academic standard(s). Children’s academic learning through play has been well documented. Many other “non-academic” benefits of play have been determined through re-search. Through play, children have an increase in social skills, including cooperation, learning to take turns, sharing, listening, negotiating with others, learning to manage emotions, etc. (Landreth, 2002; Elias & Berk, 2002). They learn to follow rules, either through games that have set rules, or rules that self-imposed by the play group. Creativity is another feature that is fostered through play. Playing allows children to practice skills in a “safe” environment and also gives them a chance to understand others’ perspectives. It has also been reported that play helps children develop strategies to handle stressful life events (Saltz & Brodie, 1982; Feitelson, 1972; Simalansky, 1968). This paper will address how play in the classroom helps develop good social health.

Anna Beresin (University of the Arts)

### **“Recess Access:” A Play and Health Initiative**

Recess is an inexpensive, movement filled health alternative for elementary schools, yet an increasing number of public schools have eliminated this playtime. “Recess Access” is a new advocacy and research initiative in Philadelphia that provides play materials for inner city schools. This presentation will share the latest studies of Recess Access that compares the health benefits of recess as compared to gym. Started in 2010, Recess Access has worked directly with 4000 children, and has consulted to many schools in the Philadelphia region. Although there is much concern about children’s physical health, there is greater fear over the wildness of play,

the perceived chaos of peer culture, and the adult need to control children's bodies. The presentation will share written materials developed by Recess Access and calls for a national movement for recess advocacy.

Pat Broadhead (Leeds Metropolitan University)

### **Emotional and Intellectual Well-Being through Cooperative Engagement in a Playful Classroom**

This presentation draws from a longitudinal study of children's playful learning, over one year in an English early years unit, within a school, for children aged from three to five years. The presenter has researched the setting in conjunction with the class teacher, basing their joint analysis and reflections on extensive filmed material of the children's play. Significant pedagogical developments have taken place as staff have created a more open-ended play environment resonant of Nicholson's Loose Parts Theory (1971; Brown, 2003), but with younger children in an educational setting. The methodology and research ethics are briefly explained. Four themes arising from data analysis underpin the remainder of the presentation. These themes are; exploring and watching; identity and design; culture and friendship and conflict and chaos. Each theme is illustrated and considered as essential to children's well-being as playful learners. In addition some of the pedagogical challenges are also considered.

Fraser Brown (Leeds Metropolitan University)

Michael Patte (Bloomsburg University), Suzanna Law (Leeds Metropolitan University), Morgan Leichter-Saxby and Sharon Unis (Pop-Up Adventure Play)

### **Playwork in the UK and America**

Starting just after World War II, and continuing until today, the UK's adventure playgrounds have offered children the chance to construct, dismantle and reconstruct their own play environments, via the creative use of scrap materials. That basic philosophy of fun, freedom and flexibility still underpins the UK's approach to playwork today. In 2005 a new form of playwork, called play rangers, sprang into life around the UK, re-igniting the passion for play, but still holding firm to the original child-centred playwork philosophy. In recent years we have seen the beginnings of a playwork approach stirring in the USA. But who are the playworkers and play rangers and what do they do? Find out what it takes to be a playworker or play ranger; explore the philosophy that underpins this work and the benefits it brings to children and families across the UK; discover the potential for playwork in America.

Victoria Carr and Eleanor Luken (Arlitt Child and Family Research and Education Center, University of Cincinnati)

### **Teachers Predict: What Do Children Learn about Science from Outdoor Play?**

Early childhood education and informal science education have common key characteristics. Both disciplines emphasize meaningful, child-initiated play and learning strategies that emphasize first-hand experiences and active participation, cognitive and affective process development, and an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to problem-solving and concept development. Where better to learn about science through play than natural outdoor environments? Play within nature engages children as young naturalists and is the venue for

drama, work, exploration, and the creation of rich play scenarios. Through play, observation of nature can lead to the development of science inquiry skills: wondering, questioning, exploring, investigating, discussing, reflecting, and formulating ideas and theories. We asked a group of well-educated and experienced preschool teachers specifically what they thought children would learn in outdoor play environments that were designed specifically for preschool children. This presentation will share the results from the group with commentary framed by social-constructivist theory.

Mei-Fang Cheng (The Pennsylvania State University)

James E. Johnson

### **Teacher Beliefs about Play and Working with Parents in Taiwan**

Due to cultural tradition, academic achievement is especially valued in Taiwan. Pressure is on older students and young children alike. Parents view school readiness as more important than developmental readiness for young children to be prepared for learning in the classroom. This viewpoint intensifies concerns about the role of play in early childhood education (ECE) in Taiwan. This study examines ECE teacher beliefs about play and relations with parents focusing on the importance of play for learning. Three experienced teachers in private child care programs and three from public kindergartens were interviewed concerning their educational philosophy and play and curriculum, as well as their beliefs about parental ideas and attitudes about play and learning; teachers' thoughts about the influence of demographic factors on parents, and how to effectively communicate with parents about play and ECE were additional topics investigated during the interviews. Results showed that teachers in the private programs were concerned about parents' views more than public school teachers were. Teachers in general reported themselves to have deeper and broader understandings about play and learning than they perceived parents to possess. Teachers spent much time working with parents and employed different communication strategies. These findings are discussed with respect to cultural factors and communication demands and challenges inherent within the parent and teacher relationship. Suggestions are made for professional development, with special reference to Sigel's proximity index and distancing as useful constructs to be employed for fostering greater understanding about play and education within Taiwanese families with young children

Lynn Cohen (C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University)

James Johnson (The Pennsylvania State University)

### **Critical Play Theory: A Review of Critical Literature on Play and Play Research**

Despite major inroads toward using critical theory to explore early childhood education, play research has remained largely reliant on the viewpoints of Piaget and Vygotsky. There is a need to expand and deepen play theory to challenge and harness the potential of multiple perspectives of contemporary thinking about play. This paper provides a review of critical literature on play, while also examining how scholarship on play can be used as historical and cultural artifacts that reflect assumptions, preferences, and constructions of play. It also argues for a critical play theory that moves to re-conceptualize and reconsider the potential benefits that critical theories can offer to bring to the forefront the multiple perspectives of what play is and can be.

Amy Dickinson and Danielle Marshall (KaBOOM!)

### **Strengthening Communities through Play: Local Actions, Wider Networks**

Local advocates often initiate the most effective play advocacy by addressing community-specific factors that influence an area's state of play. To that end, Asset-Based Community Development serves as an effective tool to promote play. This panel will both highlight communities who have effectively employed ABCD principles in promoting play and explore the wider tools and resources that aid in play advocacy efforts. Access to hubs of information and networks of people provides the critical information, social or public support, and creative exchange of ideas that strengthen the play movement and lend weight to community campaigns. Online tools and strategies, in particular, have proven adept at connecting local advocates, giving voice to local struggles, and disseminating resources in a way that can be melded to meet specific communities' needs. This panel ultimately seeks to elucidate the intersections of such tools and strategies with local actions on behalf of play.

Jeannie Gadish (Beit Helena Play Center at Yad Sarah Organisation Israel)

### **Enhancement of Parent-Child Play and Quality Time in the Framework of a Play-Center for Children with Special Needs**

Family focused intervention is considered best practice in work with children (Hanna & Rogers, 2002). Parent involvement, and family contribution to therapeutic goals, are considered critical components in a child's progress (Humphrey & Case-Smith, 2005). This unique center, for special needs children and their families, is an evidence of what neurologists refer to as 'brain flexibility'. It is family-oriented, and based on family-focused intervention. Unlike therapy sessions which are usually limited, and "doing" oriented, in the play center there is time for "being". There are two programs in the center: Morning program from birth to 3, and afternoon program from 3 to 11 years old. The staff is multi-disciplinary. The children are referred by doctors, nurses, therapists, educators, etc. The play center offers the parents an opportunity for spontaneous play, and quality time with their children in a semi-structured environment, which serves as a source of modeling, and equips parents with "take-away" tools for home-play. It offers five large richly equipped rooms catering to the varied domains of development, and a unique lending library. The center was established in 1997, and weekly serves over 100 families. Ongoing Parent Satisfaction Surveys indicate high level effectiveness and parent satisfaction.

Bruno Galiza (UFG – Goiás, Brasil)

### **Spatiality and Play: Computer Games and New Experiences Afforded**

In his seminal 1997 book, *Interface Culture*, Steve Johnson points out the spatialization of the information as an important aspect related to how computers and digital technologies became an intrinsic part of life in the 21st century. Since computer games have been connected to features inaugurated at most of the new steps taken in modern computing – from representational aspects to human-computer interaction advances -, they explicitly show how new ways of mapping information into and by the interface allowed incrementally innovative ways of dealing with computational systems. This paper investigates how representational strategies, summed up to human-computer interaction concepts and elements, are used pragmatically within computer

games, observing how different generations first represented the action on a plane, then adopted a tridimensional representation model and, finally, how the physical and conceptual output of elements to the real world afford new experiences.

Bruce Gilberg (Generation Two)

### **Children's Developmental Rights: The Necessity for Child Centered Play Experiences**

Generation Two embraces the methods of child centered play to prepare children for the emotional and social challenges they face during their early school careers. Through civic engagement, school programs and advocacy, G2 children, college students and senior citizens create vibrant intergenerational friendships that promote the social and emotional strength necessary for children to learn in their classrooms and in their community. Research conducted through the University of Rochester describes the G2 play experience that essentially supports active and engaged learning.

Sara Grimes (University of Toronto)

### **Digitizing the Bedroom: Children's Domestic Gaming as Consumption, Production, Subversion and Play**

This paper will discuss findings from an ongoing study of children's web-enabled commercial virtual worlds and "UGC" (user-generated content) games. It proposes that while these games are often heavily commercialized and highly restrictive, child players nonetheless use them for a variety of creative and unexpected play activities—working around the rules and design barriers to produce meaningful communities of interest. This exchange operates in fascinating continuity with "girls' bedroom culture"—a notion first articulated by Angela McRobbie and more recently expanded to explore children's domestic leisure practices as sites of cultural production. I engage with the idea that by opening up the traditionally private and highly contained space of the "bedroom" to new forms of public and community engagement, the digitization of the children's bedroom culture enables a paradoxical reframing of children's leisure, as new subjectivities of consumption are intertwined (and occasionally undermined) by children's increasing ability to appropriate technological tools and content. I argue that rather than focus solely on the overtly "productive" aspects of these appropriations, a more deliberate consideration of the role of play in these processes would lead to a better understanding of their subversive and transformative potential.

Dana Gross and Molly Ladwig (St. Olaf College)

### **Videotaping in Support of Teen Parent-Child Interaction**

This paper is an update on collaborative field work with TAPPP, a high school-based parent education program for adolescent parents and their children from birth to age 3 years. Two different videotaping approaches were explored to enable parent educators at TAPPP to use a modified Seeing Is Believing technique to reinforce program goals. Play and reading interactions of 10 mother-child dyads (video feedback) and teacher-child dyads (video modeling) were videotaped, replayed, and discussed with the mothers. Results of this pilot project support the value of using video at TAPPP to enhance playful parent-child interactions, communication, and learning.

Myae Han, Jennifer Vu and Martha Buell (University of Delaware)

### **What Can Early Childhood Educators Do to Preserve Play in Early Childhood Classrooms?: From Research to Policy Suggestions.**

This session will include a report comparing teacher play beliefs, actual classroom practices, and policy recommendations aimed at reconciling the differences. Using surveys, we collected data on early childhood teachers' beliefs about play. We then conducted observations to determine the quality and quantity of play taking place in the classrooms and the teachers' role in children's play. The data indicated a gap between teachers' beliefs and practice surrounding play. Drawing upon our findings as well as a review of the extant literature, we provide policy suggestions – such as requiring a course on play theory and practice in early childhood teacher education programs, revising state early learning standards to include play as both an outcome skill as well as a medium for learning aimed at strengthening the presence of play in the early childhood classroom by addressing policy issues that affect early childhood teacher education.

Kay Hanson (University of South Carolina Aiken)

### **Improving the Play Skills of Children with Learning Disabilities through Proactive and Reactive Social Skills Interventions**

The common perception of learning disabilities (LD) is that it is an academic problem. While this is true, it is the attendant social problems experienced by many children with LD that can be far more devastating. Approximately seventy-five percent of students with LD have inadequate social skills. These act as barriers to successful play experiences. Children with LD need the benefits of play. Research has shown that children with LD are often devalued, underestimated, ignored, and/or ridiculed by their peers and even by their teachers. They need play experiences to learn and build social skills as well as to showcase their non-academic skills, achieve peer acceptance, enjoy a respite from the continual challenges of the classroom, and improve their own self-esteem. This presentation will focus on current proactive and reactive interventions that can help children with LD achieve social success in play situations.

Thomas Henricks (Elon University)

### **Play as a Pathway of Experience**

In this paper, the author extends his view that play should be distinguished from other fundamental patterns of human relating. Play is analyzed here as a distinctive strategy or “pathway” by which people seek a certain “standing” with regard to the world. That pathway is a publicly recognizable framework that prepares people for events, lets them operate inside those events, and then helps them evaluate what they have done. The author also argues that play encourages a distinctive range of emotions, what he calls an “emotion sequence.” The pathways of play, ritual, communitas, and work are compared

Robyn Holmes (Monmouth University)

### **Urban Elementary School Children at Play during Recess**

This study investigated urban school children's play activities during outdoor recess. There were 149 children (80 boys, 69 girls), the majority of whom were African American and Hispanic. Children were observed for the

entire year. Recess was divided into 20 minute periods for K-2nd; 3rd -5th graders; and 6th-8th graders. Multiple observers recorded children's behavior in five minute intervals. Observations included: sex of child, number of children, and type of activity. Findings revealed the following: group size increased with age; younger children engaged in more chase and unorganized running; older children played more organized sports; boys of all age groups engaged in more vigorous physical play, and girls engaged more in group talking. Cross sex play took place at all grade levels and differed in frequency and form by age. Future research might explore comparisons between playgrounds with different types of outdoor equipment and larger, more diverse samples of children.

Pang-Jiou Huang (National Taiwan Normal University)

Sheng-Hsi Lin (National University of Tainan)

### **Taiwanese Children's Play in Public Places: The Role of Parents**

This study focused on the parents' role as children played with strange peers in the Tainan Play Center. Although "play" is not the product of Asian culture, parents bring children to the public places for different reasons, for example, decreased fertility recently in Taiwan, there are opportunities to play with strange peers, as siblings, or parents just want to take breath. Through naturalistic observation of six target children, data included the events of children's play as well as interview with target children and their parents. The findings indicated that parents wanted children play in the public places, since that children could learn to get along with peers, have preadaptation of school life, or have a playmate, etc. However, Parents played active or negative role in children's play with strange peers together. Some parents dominated children's play, or kept an eye on them but disrupted their play frame for safety. Moreover, parents also supported their children with peer play interaction, like serving as "social pivot" (Reifel & Yeatman, 1993). The parents guided children (even strange peers) to enter play frame before initiating children's play with strange peers, offered play scenes, actors or materials in their play frame during their play, and left their play interaction when their children played independently with strange peers, etc. Finally, parents' attitudes and actions affected that children used mature social play skills to initiate and maintain play with strange peers.

Olga Jarrett, Stacey French-Lee and Xiaoyan Xie (Georgia State University)

### **Piaget's "Little Scientists" Behavior: Exploratory Play in the One-Year-Old Room**

Piaget described the behavior of one-year-olds as engaged in discovery and invention similar to scientific discovery. The purpose of this paper is to assess the amount of "little scientist" behavior during free play among one-year-olds at a campus children's center. On 33 days during two different school years, a total of 13 focal children were photographed at one-minute intervals with notes taken between photos. Defining "little scientist" behavior rather broadly (exploring, experimenting, trying to do something, or observing closely), focal children behaved like "little scientists" a range of 1.1% to 9.8% of the time. The rest of the time, the children played with materials but did not vary or investigate their use. Typical institutional play materials may not provoke as much desire to investigate as materials found in a home or natural environment. We explore the relationships among exploration, play, and exploratory play and recommend ways for child development centers to encourage more "little scientist" behavior.



Olga Jarrett (Georgia State University)

Tom Reed (University of South Carolina Upstate), Audrey Skrupskelis (University of South Carolina Aiken), and Joyce A. Hemphill (University of Wisconsin – Madison)

### **TASP & IPA/USA Panel: Research 2011 – Implications for Play Advocacy**

TASP members engage in many kinds of research, some of which has implications for child's right to play advocates. Panel members, leaders in the American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA), will attend all the presentations at the conference with a view toward identifying research studies play advocates should know about and research studies that suggest further research of interest to play advocates. Panel members will share their insights on how the identified research can be used by advocates and engage the audience in a discussion of the relationship between research and advocacy.

James Johnson, Mei-Fang Cheng, Monirah Al-Mansour, Serap Sevimli-Celik, Yoojung Ko, and Fatemeh Rafie (The Pennsylvania State University) **Trans-Cultural Analysis of Play Accounts**

Although play has universal characteristics in its biological components, the way people play differs across contexts. From a historic-cultural perspective, the study of play should be situated in a person's contexts to consider unique dimensions of economic, social, and cultural factors. Here a person's play accounts, recollections, and forecasts are interpreted differently in light of cultural considerations and personal chronology, with the influence of globalization; modern play materials and programs are widely spread into every culture. The impact brings concerns about the role of play in the transmittance of cultural value. Play accounts are examined in relation to diverse cultural contexts in order to explore how play is influenced by globalization, reflects cultural traditions and customs, and suggests the transmittance of cultural heritage in play. The role of play in enhancing culture is also explored. Interviews are being conducted representing five different nationalities, Taiwan, Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Three parents with child aged 5 to 10 years are being interviewed in each cultural group. A drawing technique is used in the interview. Two focus groups with the five interviewers from Taiwan, Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are planned to explore the role of play memory within their cultural contexts. A final focus group brings all seven together to generate data for trans-cultural analyses. This work in progress brings attention to the influence of globalization on play, adaptation of cultural values in play, and the role of child play in enhancing cultural heritage.

Eunjoo Jung (Syracuse University)

### **Parents' Beliefs, Family Play and Activities, and Early Learning**

The transactional model posits that development occurs through bi-directional interactions between an individual and the environment. This model assumes there are reciprocal influences between a child and his or her

caregiver. In the present study, the environment consisted primarily of parents; therefore, critical transactions were those between the parents and children of diverse family and contextual backgrounds. Parents significantly influence a child's development and, in turn, the child also influences parents through his or her needs for care, responsiveness, attitudes, and learning. Drawing from the contributions of transactional theory, this study examined children's attitude toward school as a mediator of early learning through the effects of family play and activities and parental beliefs concerning school readiness. Structural equation modeling analyses from a longitudinal study of a diverse group of kindergarten children revealed that the effects of parental beliefs of school readiness on children's attitude toward school are mediated by family play and activities. Specifically, this effect of family play and activities on children's reading achievement was mediated by children's attitude toward school. Parental beliefs about school readiness and family play and activities also revealed a direct effect on children's reading achievement. These results highlight the role of parental beliefs about school readiness, which facilitate children's reading achievement by directly impacting family play and activities as well as indirectly influencing children's attitudes toward school.

David Kushner (University of Cincinnati)

**(play) + (playfulness x work) – (work x drudgery) = (curriculum) ÷ (child + teacher)**

This presentation explores four concepts that are important to any attempt at integrating play into the early childhood curriculum: play, playfulness, work, and drudgery. An examination of these concepts shows that while there may be some intersections between and among them, it is important to consider the essential characteristics that may differentiate them from each other. Particular attention will be paid to how play and playfulness are related yet may be separate concepts; how play and work are not necessarily mutually exclusive; and how work can have its place in the curriculum as long as it is not turned into drudgery. The analysis of these concepts will be applied to such educational approaches as "educational play," "play interventions," "play-based curriculum," and curricular models based on the Project Approach and the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Emily Kushner, Loisa Bennetto and Susan Hyman (Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders Children's National Medical Center and University of Rochester)

**Does Finding the Needle Keep You from Playing in the Haystack? Visospatial Processing Style and Play Maturity in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Down Syndrome.**

Play is crucial for development in all children, but delayed or even deviant developmental trajectories of play threaten the positive impact for children with developmental disabilities. Extreme visuospatial processing styles may be one of the underlying causes of these atypicalities in play, particularly for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). The present study examined visuospatial processing style and play maturity in 18 children with ASDs, 18 children with Down syndrome (DS), and 18 children with typical development. Results showed that the children with ASDs showed a detail-focused processing style in concert with less mature play while the children with DS showed a globally-focused processing style with more mature, pretend play. The data suggest that future research should examine a potential relationship between these domains if interventions aimed at shifting visuospatial processing styles may be useful in supporting play development in children

with ASDs.

Mike Lanza (playborhood.com)

### **Neighborhood Play, Everyday**

Learn how parents can create “Playborhoods” – i.e. neighborhoods with abundant free play – for their children. This session defines the problem, describes innovative Playborhoods throughout the US, and provides solutions for parents who would like to give their children a life of neighborhood play.

Pyng-Na Lee and Sheng-Hsi Lin (National University of Tainan, Taiwan)

### **A Case Study of Music Play at a Developmentally Appropriate Practice Classroom**

This study attempted to understand the music teaching for young children at a DAP classroom. The subject was assessed by the instrument of Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI) and pilot study to ensure their music teaching proceeding regularly. The method of qualitative case study was employed to investigate the phenomenon and context in the classroom. The result found that the music teaching includes instructional teaching and free music play which are reciprocally affected to connect with children’s experiences. In the instructional teaching, the teaching activities are frequently adjusted to children’s initiated play, and the free play at music center where children practiced instruments, made music, and created ensemble as well as extended the instructional teaching is a crucial place for children to make music learning meaningful and leads to musical creativity.

Sheng-Hsi Lin (National University of Tainan)

### **A Study of Children’s Play When Adding Loose Parts on a Playground at a Kindergarten In Taiwan**

This study attempted to explore how differences of children’s play behavior are when adding loose parts on their playground at a kindergarten in Taiwan. The researcher evaluated the playground and observed the children for 2 times on the playground at the subsidiary kindergarten of the elementary school for the first 2 visits. Then the research suggested adding loose parts, storages, and construction area on the playground. 30 children were observed and interviewed during 10 visits after adding the loose parts. Children are found that they spend time exploring and experimenting with those loose parts in the beginning. Meanwhile, they make use of the loose parts and make creative activities. In addition, rough-and-tumble play and chase game decreased. Cooperative play, constructive play, and socio-dramatic play were most exhibited by those children. Moreover, children defined and rearranged their play space when playing with loose parts. It happens often that the children play across different areas and make connection to each play area with loose parts. By using loose parts, children’s learning experiences are extended their experiences. Most importantly, the roles of the teachers become more active, which was inspired by the children’s creative play.

Melanie MacNeil (Niagara University)

### **Play and Humour Strategies: Considerations for Health Care Professionals**

According to McGhee (1999), many nurses and hospital administrators are concerned that patients will perceive them as unprofessional, and as unconcerned about their health issues, if they use humour while interacting with their patients. Yet as Caudron (1992) suggests, humour is becoming more widely accepted in business as an effective management strategy in the training of employees. This paper will focus on the benefits of play and humour in the training and education of health care professionals. Coping strategies for dealing with the stressful and difficult circumstances that occur in contemporary health care workplaces will be featured in this session. Suggestions for using play and humour to reduce stress and burn-out, and achieve wellness will be offered. The positive functions of play and humour in enhancing our professional competencies so that we can better manage the demands of health care delivery in the 21st century will be reviewed.

Susan Massad (The EastSide Institute)

### **Play and Performance from Beginning to End**

Dancing, making funny faces, uttering strange sounds. Led by a 72 yr old physician, a group of senior citizens are experiencing the magic of play and performance. Here no one is too old, too ill or too impaired to play and perform, or, to develop and learn new way of being. The presenter, a physician/teacher and adjunct staff member of the EastSideInstitute, (ESI), will show how the ESI's innovative discovery—in order for human beings of all ages and abilities to grow, they must be supported to play and perform—has emerged as the centerpiece of a practice of health that focuses on helping everyone involved in the process,(providers and patients), to develop, grow and create health. The presentation will tell the story of how the discovery of performance for creating health was made in a community of social activism and is being used in medical practice, in community health projects, workshops for older people and in a senior theatre group.

Özge Metin and Belma Tu?rul (Hacettepe University, Turkey)

### **Play is under Threat**

The importance of play and their indispensability by children are known. The probable benefit of a play is affected by the environment's opportunities and the social environment's resources that are presented. The perception of play by the community, reflects the value that is given to the game and hence the value and the meaning of the child. Being aware of the great benefits of play, and allowing children to play will improve the quality of their chances of playing. It is observed that in the 21st century, the opportunities and chances that are provided to the child are changing. Children mostly attend limited "game-like" activities in large shopping malls, and are limited to playing in the time remaining from bale, yoga and tennis classes, and spend more time on virtual games on computers at home. The fact that mothers and fathers perceives these activities as play and prefer academic skills instead of the skills that are gained by playing, show us that play is under threat. Children who are forced to live their childhoods among rising buildings try to play in limited parks, and the rights of a child to play, are prevented by environmental and social factors. In this presentation, to analyze the factors that threaten playing with a child's point of view, and put forth possible solutions.

Marcia Nell and Walter Drew (Millersville University and Institute for Self Active Education, Inc.)

### **Parent Play Education: "Let My Children Play"**

When early childhood teachers were surveyed during three state affiliate Play Symposiums, “parents” were cited as the number one barrier to using play as a learning tool in classrooms. Data also indicated that teachers recognized the need to provide parents with experiences to enhance the parents’ belief systems to understand the value of play to the development of children and to recognize the value of play in their own lives. In response to the data collected from the research questions, a national initiative has begun targeting parent play education, titled “Let My Children Play”. The research results along with the national initiative will be shared during the presentation.

Shelly Newstead (Institute of Education, London, UK )

### **P.R.I.S.M. – A New Perspective for Recess?**

This paper is based on the author’s current doctoral research and will describe the Playwork Research in Schools at Midday (P.R.I.S.M.) project which was undertaken in primary schools in England. A brief review of the research on the benefits of recess play will be presented to illustrate the thesis that the problem with play-time (recess) lies not with children, but in adults’ restriction of play (particularly locomotor play) on the playground. P.R.I.S.M. was set up to investigate the research question, “Does adopting a playwork approach change the way that children play?” by introducing a playwork approach to lunchtime supervisors with the aim of increasing ‘free play’ on school playgrounds. A quasi-experimental design was used to measure the effect of adult behaviour on children’s play. Initial findings will be discussed and recommendations given for increasing the play value of school playgrounds and the training of lunchtime supervisors.

Jason Nolan (Ryerson University)

### **Making Play Happen: Adaptive Design for Inclusive Learning in the Early Years**

Unstructured and informal play are fundamental components of a child’s development of autonomy and a sense of self. Children with disabilities, however, are often excluded from spontaneous or serendipitous interactions with their peers due to their challenges. Even in communities promoting inclusive practices, these children struggle to have meaningful interactions with their peers. And while unstructured and informal play is recognized as a crucial component of socialization and learning, the barriers children face are difficult to overcome with the scarce resources in schools and at home. The Experiential Design and Gaming Environment Lab researches the creation of low cost custom adaptations that support play and informal interactions for children with disabilities. Creating adaptations that are individualized for the child’s immediate social and learning needs is a crucial step to providing children with the opportunity to play. This paper explores the adaptations constructed so far and their use by children in an inclusive early learning environment.

Eva Nwokah (Our Lady of the Lake University)

### **Service Learning in a Play-based Summer Camp for Teen Mothers and Young Children**

During a summer camp for teen families, student participants reflected on their service learning experiences through daily journaling, regular audio-taped group debriefings, and the completion of pre and post camp questionnaires. The summer camp was designed to provide support for parenting skills and positive mother-

child interaction through play, music, and dance. The questions addressed in this study were 1. How would participation in a summer camp for teen families impact students' knowledge and beliefs? 2. What changes might occur in student experiences over the course of the program? and 3. What might be the main themes that would emerge from the project? A qualitative grounded theory method was used to analyze the data using keyword and words in context search and cut and sort methods. Students transitioned from an idealistic view to a realistic view in relation to their impact and the challenges of this population.

Vania Pereira (University of Minho, Braga-Portugal)

### **Play and Games of Today's Primary Schools Playgrounds: Pedagogic Intervention in Quest of Play "Vocabulary"**

The play, which is so natural on children, exercises their imagination and it's a great contribute for their social interaction (Gordon, 1981). Aiming to fulfill children's needs of development, the play provides them a large amount of opportunities to explore their environment. (Jambor, 1990). The goals of this study are to identify daily school playground activities of children, with or without disability; know the significance that those children give to the school recess; identify all school recess interaction between children and verify if pedagogic intervention (introduction of playground games and inclusive play in recess), lead to increase the practice of those activities in school playground and the interaction between all the children. The mixed method design will be applied in this study. The qualitative methods adopted to collect data are the video tape film and field notes. A questionnaire will be use as the quantitative method.

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine and Ambika Krishnakumar (Syracuse University)

### **Parental Beliefs about Play and Early Development**

Parental ethnotheories about play, early developmental processes, and early education can influence the structuring of cognitive and social experiences for young children. Ethnotheories are deeply rooted in cultural scripts that have been passed down from one generation to the next or can be constructed and revised as parents come into contact with new information and society-wide endorsements of preferred childrearing and training techniques. Because parental ethnotheories are linked to early developmental processes in young children, we examined ideas about play and early development in 70 English-speaking Caribbean mothers and fathers with preschool-aged children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds residing in the New York City area. During semi-structured interviews, mothers and fathers were asked separately about their beliefs about preschool/kindergarten, importance of play, what children should learn in preschool/kindergarten, homework, early intervention, and what contributes to raising healthy well-adjusted children. There was strong endorsement of homework for preschoolers and the beneficial impact of learning basic academic skills in preschool/kindergarten for later schooling by mothers and fathers. Play was seen by mothers and fathers as having diverse functions in early childhood: development of personality, social skills, emotional health, and for learning academic skills. Good teachers and good schools were judged to be factors that contribute to sound early education. The data will be discussed in the context of Caribbean immigrant parents' ethnotheories about early development and education

Serap Sevimli-Celik (The Pennsylvania State University)

### **Understanding of Play in Turkish Cultural Context**

Although living conditions and technological developments make it difficult for most people to devote much time to play, it still has an important place in children's lives. Play covers socio-cultural dimensions as well as physical and cognitive factors. It is a significant part of the culture. Through play, children learn societal roles, norms, and values that are different across cultures. Therefore, it is critical to understand the dynamics of cultural influence on children's play (Hyun, 1998). The primary concern of this study is to examine the role of Turkish cultural context in the expression of play. Through semi-structured interviews and play memory drawings, parents are being asked about both their play experiences in the past, present and future and their children's as well. The study results will help to understand the dynamics of cultural influence on children's play.

Jan Ketil Simonsen and Sesilie Smørholm (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

### **Resilience through Play? Game-Elements and Testing in Ritual and Play among Girls in Zambia**

We experience Zambian children as strong characters who overcome hardship and adversity in what to affluent Scandinavians would appear as rather harsh social and economic realities. This has led us to question and explore ways in which play may produce resilience in children; resilience understood as culturally specific social practices that individuals and collectives employ to sustain well-being in culturally meaningful ways. In the paper, we examine mocking games among pre-adolescent girls and play-like performances among adolescents in female initiation rituals (Chisungu) staged at menarche. Salient features of these cases are that the girls articulate relations of power and suppression, and challenge and – through games and ordeals – test each other's abilities to face adversity and endure hardship. It is argued that engagement in ritual and play potentiates the girls to overcome all sorts of inhibitions such as fear, cowardice, and suppression, and potentiates them to respond to their hardship with prudence. Moreover, in line with recent developments in the anthropology of play, we question whether play and game-like behavior are general responses to everyday challenges in a world inherently precarious, perilous, and contingent

Audrey Skrupskelis (University of South Carolina Aiken)

### **Play Intends Freedom**

The value of child play is misunderstood and underestimated, yet it is essential for healthy development. Programs such as "Baby Einstein" and "Babies Can Read", among others, make claims that are not supported by recent brain research, which shows that unstructured, imaginative play is how children learn to understand the adult world in their own time and space. The emphasis on forcing very young children into academic situations is not only counterproductive, but goes against the nature of children. There is too strong an association of play as mere recreation and fun. In observing play, several major themes emerge: play as freedom, imagination, harmony, friendship, and mystery. This paper will emphasize the theme of freedom, in the sense of self-initiating thought and action. I understand by freedom the ability to formulate one's own goals and experiment in the search for means of their realization. What I especially emphasize is the contrast between the world of the child and the world of the adult. The adult world, the child experiences as an alien power, which has no

meaning for him. The child must come to deal with the adult world on her own terms. In the play event, the child constructs a world, which he can understand, confront and master in cooperation and sometimes in confrontation with others. The description of play will show that play is not mere play, but an essential human function, intimately linked with what we most value in personality.

John A. Sutterby (The University of Texas at Brownsville)

### **Girls in Virtual Reality**

Historically games have been targeted to boys and men. Most game designers are also men. However over the last decade there has been a dramatic increase in the number of girls and women who play computer games, especially online games (Jenkins, no date). Playing virtual reality games for girls allows them to play powerful figures (Jones, 2002). Other online games based on the Facebook framework like Farmville and Mafia Wars include relational or sharing elements that are appealing to many female players. This presentation will focus on female players of an online virtual reality game World of Warcraft. World of Warcraft allows players to challenge an online environment as well as join forces with other online players. Initial data collected from female players indicates that they are attracted to the open nature of the game which allows them freedom to explore. Female players also are attracted to the idea of building up a character over time. Given that females are increasingly interested in these online worlds it is important to understand why they pursue these games and how these games are influencing them.

Belma Tu?rul and Özge Metin (Hacettepe University, Turkey)

### **Play Friendly Learning Environment**

Play is one of the indispensable self-created tasks of a child. Children play everywhere. What important is that when this task first appears, the child begins to learn. For learning to be qualified and permanent, it is important for the child's environment to be play friendly. Play friendly learning environments, take children and being a child seriously and realize the necessities of a playing environment as a right, and ensure that the children utilize and enjoy the play at the highest level. These learning environments are build on the theoretical basis that every child can learn, but each child has a different learning attention, capacity and learning style. These environments, all over the kindergarden, stand ready to attract the child's attention, and invite children to learn. This invitation to learn is not only for children but also for teachers. Play friendly learning environments allow teachers to gain clues regarding how children learn better. In the presentation, applications that took place in play friendly learning environments in a qualified kindergarden will be presented and our experiences will be shared.

Tina Van Kuren (Joseph Brant Learning Centre)

### **Becoming More Playful: Promoting Health Classrooms and Educators**

Although there have been many reported benefits of play and humour in creating more humane, and successful in-school experiences (McGhee, 1996; Nunez-Ramoz and Lorenzo, 1997), the legitimacy of play and humour in the classroom continues to be in question. The dilemma occurs as play is seen to provide opportunities for



students to problem-solve and collaborate but at the expense of the decorum expected in an academic setting. While humour is reportedly beneficial in creating more interesting and cohesive educational venues, (Nilsen, 1993, Van Giffen, 1990; Zillman and Bryant, 1983; Berk, 1999), the challenges can be formidable for most instructors. Often, educators struggle with low comfort levels or lack confidence in the use of frivolity, and even face active student resistance to those who risk adding jocularity to their classes. Strategies for promoting more play in classrooms and using humour to the benefit of educators will be provided in this interactive session.

Vejoya Viren (The University of Texas at Brownsville)

### **Nepalese Nursery Rhymes: Play Brokers For The Young?**

In a recent visit to a school in the hills in India I was intrigued by how a kindergarten teacher focused on how nursery rhymes inherently educated and stimulated interactive play among socially reticent children; a need to involve, touch, or interact, physically or dialogically with a partner (peer or adult). The value of nursery rhymes and children's songs on literacy acquisition and the importance of phonological sensitivities thus created, on reading has been endlessly researched and supported. This exploratory paper looks at the role of nursery rhymes in helping children acquire knowledge of social strategies to negotiate social interaction (play) within a safe and controlled script. Most of the nursery rhymes mentioned here are of Nepalese origin, however, the play inherent in these extend to rhymes in other languages too.

Jackie West (St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton)

### **Laughter Yoga as Funny Medicine: Therapeutic Interventions for Addressing Mental Health**

Laughter Yoga has been created as a new and innovative program that features extremely beneficial activities in an unconventional combination of laughter exercises, light breathing and stretching techniques found in yoga. Research indicates that whether you laugh for a reason or no reason at all, your brain releases happy hormones, called endorphins, which naturally elevate mood (Kataria, 1999). For persons experiencing mental illness, laughter yoga can provide a great opportunity to learn new coping strategies and increase overall well-being. According to Lyubomirsky (2007), when 40% of our happiness is within our control, then individuals can use this type of activity to empower their desire to increase wellness. This presentation will focus on the history, development, and benefits of laughter yoga, as well as the strategies used to facilitate a program with mental health clients. An opportunity for participants to interactively engage in an actual laughter yoga session will be provided.

Emma Westecott (OCAD University)

### **Crafting Play: Exploring the Handmade in Digital Games**

Technology has facilitated a rise of DIY practice in many areas of human expression. From the Internet to gaming and beyond, we all increasingly engage in expressive practice. Indeed, it might seem that our digital tools exert pressure on us to document and share every excruciating detail of day-to-day life filling the networks with endless and repetitive snapshots of life's key moments. In the move online digital game form has been

quick to try to accommodate game culture into a broad spectrum of gaming practice. The mainstreaming of digital games has moved beyond the province of the core gamer forcing the industry to consider how to engage newer gamers in acts of making as well as playing. The essentially active nature of digital gaming grants this “lively art” (Jenkins: 312) a privileged position in fostering playful behavior that holds potential for productive shared play experience. My interest here is in the feedback loop increasingly on display between digital game form and a more mainstream cultural setting through the growth of both analogue and digital craft practice.

Rick Worch and Jodi Haney (Bowling Green State University)

### **Behavior Mapping: Assessing Play and Science Learning at Toledo Zoo’s Nature’s Neighborhood**

Nature’s Neighborhood, a play-based children’s area at the Toledo Zoo, opened in June 2009. In July and August 2010, an assessment team collected data using multiple methods to determine whether the zoo met its design goals and to provide data to improve visitors’ experiences. This presentation focuses on the use of behavior mapping, a technique pioneered by Robin Moore, to spatially locate areas in which specific types of play behavior and science learning are observed. The results show that most of the programmed spaces did promote the types of play for which they were primarily designed. High levels of play were also observed in certain portions of the space that were not programmed for specific play-based activities. Implications of the findings will be discussed. To provide a broader understanding of the assessment project, results from exit surveys, distribution scans, and play value assessment will be also highlighted.