



WELCOME TO
NERA 2021

3-5 NOVEMBER 2021, ODENSE, DENMARK



Inclusive Play Communities in Schools

Symposium

Designing for Inclusive Play communities in Schools

Helle Marie Skovbjerg

Aim: A number of recent studies show a close correlation between the lack of play competencies and social marginalization. Based on an ongoing research project – Can I join in? (2018-2022) this symposium will examine how play can be used as a pedagogical tool in the inclusion among marginalized children through different themes. **Method:** The empirical work stems from a number of design experiments, taking a design-based research approach, where we involved 2 schools, 600 children age 6-9 and 50 pedagogues. The empirical materials consist of field notes, pictures, videos and surveys. We combine theories from inclusive education with play theory and childhood studies. **Theoretical framework:** We define inclusion as a social practice that consists of both inclusion and exclusion processes, producing and reproducing norms, values, rules, and routines through social processes, interactions, relations and negotiations leading to a specific social order. A social order always presupposes the establishment of a collective social identity, and individuals need to adapt to this collective identity by learning and following rules and principles and internalizing shared understandings in order to be included. At the same time, a social order reflects individual difference up to a point in order to ensure all individuals' participation. The definition of play draws on the Scandinavian and international research in children's culture. Play is a shared cultural practice and children create play situations through collective competencies in knowing about different games, different rules and routines, altogether creating social play order. They are always driven by the participants taking part in the shared cultural practices and the children learn and develop their play competencies while doing so. **Results:** The symposium will present five different result pieces: About the design, the roles of the pedagogues, the relation between inclusion and play order, the communities of play and measuring the qualities of play through the children's voices. **Relevant to Nordic educational research:** The symposium will explore the relation between play and school, aiming at understanding how play can be a part of school, how pedagogues and teacher can work with play informed by research and how we in a Nordic context can continue working with play as an important value in the life of children.



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Play types potentials for participation in play

Jens-Ole Jensen

This presentation asks the following question: How do different play types influent potentials for participation in play? Five play types (creative play, role play, construction play, dramatic play and movement play) with specific design characteristics have been developed in the project. The designs have been developed through a co-creation process with the pedagogues and researchers. The different play designs have been tried out with the children and short term and focused ethnography has been carried out in order to obtain deeper knowledge about challenges and possibilities in play participation related to the specific design principles. The characteristics of each play type are analyzed in relation to time, space, mood and materials and it is scrutinized how this effect a variety of play positions, possibilities and strategies for the children.



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Participation sensemaking: a micro-analytical understanding of children and play in school

Anne-Lene Sand

Focusing on the work package about how play communities are established during this design-based research project I will present a perspective on participatory sense-making, which is a micro-analytical perspective to social interactions, that forces us to pay close attention to the way in which children engage and make sense in social practices during specific designed play interventions. Through empirical examples I analyse how play encounters can be short termed and superficial to deep and extensive, which provide an alternative understanding to concepts as social communities and friendship. Drawing upon phenomenology it is argued that children make sense in play through doing together, doing with materials and doing playful moods. Participatory sensemaking is furthermore related to the children's ability to take the surrounding space and pedagogical logics into account when playing.



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Different levels of play participation for pedagogues in schools

Hanne Hede Jørgensen

The presentation will point to several paths as important for pedagogical play practices. These paths point at the significance of pedagogical actions according to play. Such pedagogical actions are related to pedagogues' participation in play on different levels. One level points at the pedagogues' own ability to be playful. Another level, however, points at the necessity to make room in the everyday practices of school and leisure time pedagogues for working professionally with play: that means framing reflections on children's individual play abilities. It also means working collaboratively preparing, trying and adjusting different kinds of play; experimenting with materials, places and roles. Followingly, pedagogical play participation involves organisational questions and questions of the task of professional pedagogues in school settings.



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Identifying seven core qualities of play: a grounded theory and principal component analysis of children's own statements

Andreas Lieberoth

This presentation explores measuring play experiences. A wicked challenge to enabling children's voices in studies of large play interventions is the logistical infeasibility of interviewing every child multiple time, as experiences and positions change across play activities. We designed a survey instrument based bottom-up on 105 interviews about children's "good" or "bad" experiences. We then asked 651 students aged 6-10 who coded core statements from these stories applied to their recent play situations, in order to identify clusters that had universal resonance among our participants. Based on subsequent principal component analysis, 7 components emerged. We present the development process, results, subsequent validation, and how the resulting "7 play factors" instrument may be used to compare qualities of play experiences in future play-based intervention.



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Inclusion and exclusion processes in play

Janne Hedegaard Hansen

This presentation explores how pedagogues handle inclusion and exclusion processes. Children negotiate about the play order and to be included in play children need to act in a play in a way that is meaningful to the play order and to other children and their understanding of the play order. The negotiations in play make new ways of participating possible for the children and to participate through different and various roles. In general, the children are competent and open-minded in negotiations in play, and they show several strategies for doing that. The challenges for pedagogues are to handle the differences of the children and supporting children's negotiations and various ways to participate, and their positions as pedagogues changes according to the play practices, the play competences of the children and the challenge of the specific play designs.