

PIECCE Birth to Four Programme Framework

Play Chapter 11 Summary

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"It is the child's playfulness that renders (makes) an activity play." (Christian, 2012)

1. *Children's right to play (UNCRC, South Africa, 1995)*

- a. playful learning = successful growth
- b. birth to 9 and beyond
- c. SA Constitution (1996)
- d. NCF (DBE, 2015)
- e. CAPS (DBE, 2012)

2. *Common understanding?*

- a. Huizinga: fundamental human function, different cultures of civilisation
- b. Lucich (2011): children's total humanisation, self discovery, explore their world
- c. Berk (2007): independent children, make own decisions, self-reliant
- d. Mayesky (2006): positive self-image
- e. Ridgway (2012): encourages language, personal development
- f. Some opposition in West and other 'cultures'
 - i. misconceptions
 - difficult to assess
 - frivolous, no end-product, not teacher directed
 - ii. lead to formal academic learning
 - 'schoolification' (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013)
 - academisation of ECD (Nocolopoulou, 2010)
 - didactic teaching and test-based school assessment
 - iii. 'work' and 'play' divide
- g. post-structuralist (MacNaughton, 2003; Cannella and Viruru, 2004)
 - i. not all children learn through play
 - childhood not always joyful / pleasurable
 - vulnerable, needy children don't always access play
 - largely limited to privileged children
 - children without voice / agency
 - shy children can be excluded
 - 'other' language, illness or affliction
- h. 'illicit' play (King, 1987)
- i. don't trivialise or idealise play (Wood, 2009)

3. *Conventional 'Western' understanding:*

- a. Play is voluntary for pleasure, free of external rules, is about process not outcome, children are intrinsically motivated
- b. early educationists
 - i. Pestalozzi 'through play ... achieve harmony ... skills for life.' (1746-1827)
 - ii. Froebel (1678-1782): play until age seven (kindergarten)
 - iii. British nursery school movement
 - iv. Piaget (1896-1980): cognitive theorist

- construct own knowledge through exploration and discovery
- sensory motor, active, hands-on, experiential
- v. Vygotsky (1896-1934): social constructivist
 - collaborative, interactive
 - learning is social process
 - language key for mediating knowledge
 - social contexts where children engage playfully are ideal learning environments
- vi. children make sense of their world
- vii. DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice) Copple and Bredekamp (2009)
 - Play is chief vehicle in early learning
- viii. develop socially, emotionally, personality
- ix. Montessori, Steiner, Malaguzzi (Reggio Emilia) had different philosophical underpinnings and epistemological understanding, but still acknowledge importance of meaningful play
- c. Medical and other science:
 - i. Play important for neural plasticity
 - ii. play = increased neural pathways (Conbayir, 2017)

4. African perspectives

- a. Ng'asike (2014) and Wadende et al (2016)
 - i. play and learning deeply rooted in local, indigenous cultural knowledge
 - ii. social, cultural and historical contexts influence children's play
- b. work prioritised over play (Boyette, 2016)
- c. learn and play through work (Wadende, Oburu and Morara, 2016)

5. What do we mean by play?

- a. 21st C skills: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, exec functioning
- b. Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek (2016): 6C's
 - i. communicate
 - ii. collaborate
 - iii. creative solutions
 - iv. critical thinking
 - v. confidence
 - vi. content knowledge
- c. Optimal learning through play (Liu et al., 2017):
 - i. joyful
 - ii. meaningful
 - iii. active (minds-on) and engaged (not distracted)
 - iv. iterative (repetition)
 - v. thinking (experiment)
 - vi. socially interactive
 - vii. develop deep, conceptual understanding
- d. universal regardless of race or culture
 - i. nonetheless culturally bound (Maynard, 2002)
 - ii. and culturally variable (Roopnarine et al., 2015)
- e. balance of 'work' and 'play'
 - i. explore, build personality, construct unique knowledge (Bodrova & Leong, 2010)

- f. characteristics of play:
 - i. universal
 - ii. culturally determined
 - iii. voluntary in conducive conditions
 - iv. spontaneous
 - v. self-satisfying
 - vi. therapeutic
 - vii. process oriented
 - viii. adventurous and risky
 - ix. social and solitary activity
- g. What children learn from play
 - i. linked to self-regulation, executive functioning and metacognition
 - ii. perseverance, curiosity, responsibility, positive self-concept
 - iii. resilience, playfulness, reciprocity
 - iv. positive dispositions for lifelong learning
 - v. concrete learning experiences - emergence of symbolic thought - forerunner to
 - vi. abstract thinking
 - vii. imagine and pretend - try out ideas, feelings, roles - re-enact past and rehearse future
– support emergent literacy and numeracy
- h. classification of play
 - i. not rigid, but varied for age / stage
 - ii. solitary play
 - iii. spectator play
 - iv. parallel play
 - v. associative play
 - vi. co-operative play
 - vii. Sensory-motor / practice play (Piaget)
 - viii. Symbolic play (Piaget)
 - ix. Games with rules
- i. Continuum of play (Zosh et al, 2017)
 - i. From free play to more adult-directed play with guided / collaborative play options all the way in between, including a wide range of play scenarios & varied learning possibilities
 - ii. Indicators are not absolute, and include:
 - location
 - resources
 - developmental skills
 - contexts
 - subject disciplines eg science, language
 - iii. Types of play:
 - Functional
 - Construction
 - manipulative
 - socio-dramatic
 - games with rules
 - organising framework (Excell and Linington) what, why, when, where

6. *How do we support meaningful learning and teaching through playful interactions?*

- a. provide quality playful L&T opportunities
- b. use meaningful material
- c. **Pedagogy of Play**
 - i. co-construction of knowledge
 - ii. reciprocal and responsive relationships
 - iii. social constructed and mediated activities
 - iv. children's interests
 - v. culturally driven
 - vi. emergent / responsive curriculum (Wood, 2016)
 - respond to children's choices
 - participatory ways of knowing and participation
 - contextually relevant
 - opposite to directive / transmission / 'over prescribed'
 - Still space for cultural transmission / directive model to counter negative cultural attitudes?
 - vii. agency, power and control
 - viii. children make choices
 - ix. social interaction / individual development
 - x. collaborative learning
 - xi. alternative to formalisation
- d. intellectually challenging and stimulating
- e. framed by effective pedagogies
- f. 'How can we teach playfully?'
- g. 'How can we encourage parents to play in the home?'
- h. Change how teachers think about play
- i. deep reflection about attitudes and beliefs
- j. draw on entire play-teaching continuum
- k. who is controlling what, for what reason?
- l. Extend playful learning
 - i. develop ECD site / school culture
 - ii. playfulness celebrated as a visible pathway of learning (Project Zero, 2017)
 - iii. including primary
- m. plan, assess and reflect on playful teaching & learning
- n. Indicators in three categories:
 - i. delight
 - ii. wonder
 - iii. choice
- o. 'Read' indicators accurately in children
- p. critical and reflective approach
- q. **Transformative Pedagogies**
 - i. dynamic and continually changing
 - ii. specific role for teacher > teacher educator
 - iii. participatory pedagogy
 - student voice
 - children's voices
 - agency

- diversity
- enrich lives and learning of others (Hocking, 2010)
- inclusive of all
- iv. inclusive pedagogy
 - mindset and awareness
 - of educator (teacher/practitioner) in relation to student (child) (Dewsbury, 2015)
 - acknowledges all diversity
 - co-construction of knowledge
 - support achievement of all children (students)
 - rich learning experiences
- v. Student teachers should be immersed in transformative pedagogies

7. *Assessment through play*

- a. inseparable from teaching and learning
- b. systematic, planned
- c. authentic, reliable evidence
 - i. over time
 - ii. from multiple sources
 - iii. with clear criteria
- d. assessment for learning (formative)
- e. assessment of learning
- f. assessment as learning
- g. informal, observation
 - i. records
 - ii. share with parents

8. *Parents and play*

- a. culturally determined
- b. role of siblings
- c. rural / urban
- d. dynamic, collaborative teacher-parent partnerships
- e. share play-based learning culture
- f. resources accessible and affordable

Summary of key issues / questions raised / what practice means

Key issue	Questions raised	What does this mean in practice in my institution?
Children's right to play (UNCRC, South Africa, 1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we really believe that children have the right to play? What about adults' right to play? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do we already do? 2. What is non-negotiable? 3. What do we want to do / change? 4. What does this mean in practice? 5. What is possible now? 6. What is possible short to medium term? 7. What is nice to have but not feasible yet? 8. How is this affected by the mode of provision in my institution (face to face, blended, fully online)
Common understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are we getting close to a common understanding? 	
Conventional 'Western' understanding:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we draw on from 'Western' and African perspectives to achieve a common understanding? 	
African perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we have sufficient grasp of the content and concepts around play? 	
What do we mean by play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What needs to be adopted, added, adapted? 	
How do we support meaningful learning and teaching through playful interactions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If we need playful learning environments for children, what sort of learning environments do we need for student teachers? How does this relate to transformative pedagogies for teaching and learning? What kind of support do student teachers need to make a change? What kind of support do teacher educators need to make a change? What do we do as programme designers to embed play-based pedagogies as part of a transformative approach? Who needs to be on board? How will we do that? 	
Assessment through play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of assessment do we currently conduct with student teachers? What needs to change for us to be able to implement assessment for learning, of learning and as learning? What kind of support do teacher educators need? Who needs to be on board? How will we do that? 	
Parents and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with parents is some of the most difficult work that teachers do. How do we support students teachers to do that? 	