



Assessing Learning in Kindergarten Play-Based Learning Environments

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Outline of Presentation

1. Perspectives on Play.
2. The context of Play Based Learning and Assessment.
3. Assessment in Play Based Learning Environments.
4. Supporting Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Competency.



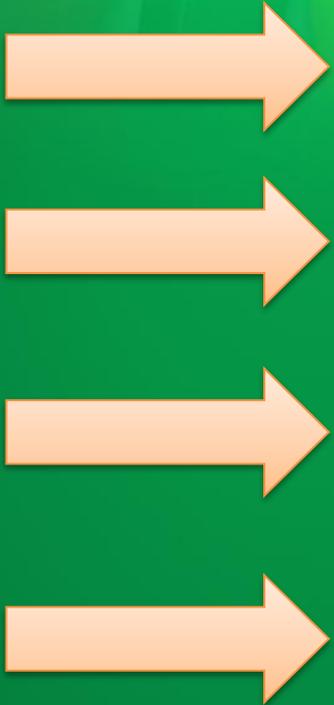
Defining 'play'

Play can be described as:

- pleasurable-play is an enjoyable and pleasurable activity. Play sometimes includes frustrations, challenges and fears; however enjoyment is a key feature
- symbolic-play is often pretend, it has a 'what if?' quality. The play has meaning to the player that is often not evident to the educator
- active-play requires action, either physical, verbal or mental engagement with materials, people, ideas or the environment
- voluntary-play is freely chosen. However, players can also be invited or prompted to play
- process oriented-play is a means unto itself and players may not have an end or goal in sight



PLAY



- Cognitive Development
- Emotional Development
- Social Development
- Physical Development



Perspectives of the Purpose of Play.

- Primary purpose of play was to support the development of personal and social skills.





Perspectives of the Purpose of Play.

- Play was also beneficial to the development of academic skills



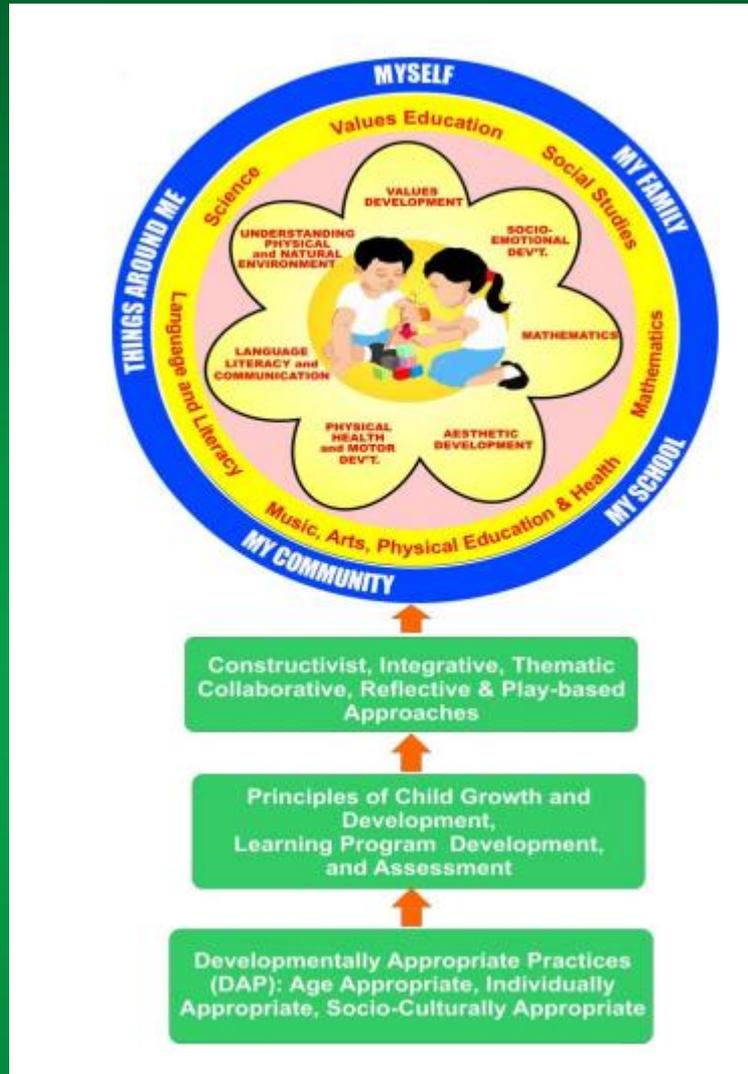


Perspectives of the Purpose of Play.

In the research of Pyle & Deluca, 2016:

- developmental perspective
- play supported personal and social skills development but also expressed that students learned academic expectations through play

Blended perspective on the purpose of play



Play as a pedagogy for academic learning.



Play Based Learning

- Play-based learning is primarily child centered. Play contexts allow children to guide their learning and thus learn at a pace that aligns with their individual development (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013).
- Play based learning draws from children's natural desire to engage in experiences based on their interests, strengths and developing skills. (Cole, 2009)
- A context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations. (Carter, 2008)



Benefits of Play Based Learning Environments

Play also provides a potential opportunity to unite academic and developmental orientations to kindergarten education as the benefits of play have been explored in relation to both personal and social development as well as academic learning. (e.g., Bodrova, Germeroth, & Leong, 2013; Saracho & Spodek, 2006; Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013).

Play provides the most natural and meaningful process by which children can construct knowledge and understandings, practice skills, immerse themselves naturally in a broad range of literacy and numeracy and engage in productive, intrinsically motivating learning environments. (Walker, 2007)



Assessment in Play Based Learning Environments

Current research on classroom embedded assessment practices in contemporary kindergarten contexts is exceedingly rare (Gullo & Hughes, 2011; Roach et al., 2010).



Assessment in Play Based Learning Environments

Kindergarten teachers are expected to assess students' learning of academic standards and their development. Teachers are further expected to integrate assessment data throughout instruction to monitor student achievement and guide student learning to meet mandated academic standards and developmental targets (Gullo & Hughes, 2011; Stiggins, 2005).



Assessment in Play Based Learning Environments

- At the kindergarten level, Gullo and Hughes (2011) identified three principles for assessment to serve as a practical guide for teachers endeavoring to balance developmental and academic assessment approaches:
 - (a) assessment of student learning should be a continuous process in classrooms
 - (b) assessment should engage multiple formats (e.g., observation, testing, conversations) appropriate for diverse learners, and
 - (c) assessment should reflect students learning toward academic standards and developmental targets.

Assessment Tools used during Play by Teachers

Personal & Social	Blended	Academic
<p>Observation Anecdotal notes Checklist Checklist iPad Videos Continuum Rubrics Work samples Portfolios</p>	<p>Photos Anecdotal notes Checklists (i.e., ELECT & Look Fors) iPad (apps identified: Evernote, Pic Collage, Videos Interviews/discussions Observation Audio recordings Documentation wall Formal testing (including running records) Portfolios Paper/pencil Success criteria Parent visits MART visits Work samples</p>	<p>Photos Anecdotal notes iPad (apps identified: Shadow Puppet & Teacher Kit) Videos Work samples Checklists Standardized assessments (e.g., DRA, PA screener) Observations Portfolios Recording sheets Teacher designed assessments Student interviews Documentation wall</p>



Assessment in Play Based Learning Environments

Brookhart (2003, 2004) asserted the importance of integrating assessment with developmentally appropriate, individualized instruction to move learners from their initial level of knowledge toward the achievement of academic standards; thus, there exists a theoretical foundation to connect developmental and academic functions of assessment.



Kindergarten teachers' view about assessment...



many areas can be covered, such as math, languages, science, social studies, arts through play, it is a very busy and chaotic environment

systematic tracking of student learning on site is near impossible

Assessment was a persistent challenge to play-based learning.

How do we support Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Competency?

1. Continuous improvement in their knowledge and skill at constructing, analyzing, and using assessment information—within the context of kindergarten play-based education.



How do we support Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Competency?

2. Create blended tools to measure children's various learnings.





How do we support Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Competency?

3. Assist teachers to design purposeful/changing play based learning environments.
(purposefully creating contexts of play)

Play is not entirely a neutral social space where children 'naturally' develop. Children are social agents in their own right and social interactions between children during play can recreate and replicate gendered stereotypes, existing dominance hierarchies, and can include or exclude children (Walsh, 2010)

How do we support Kindergarten Teachers' Assessment Competency?

4. More research to support teacher learning and teacher practice by linking existing policies, potential practices, and contemporary theory together into a comprehensive framework for teacher use.





When teachers are competent
in assessment and when assessment
works seamlessly
to complement their pedagogical
approach, they are able to
leverage information on student learning
to promote academic,
personal, and social growth in children.



Thank you!

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