



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

EC IGNITE Presentation





UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

UNO PLAY Consortium





Not Just for the Children: Teachers' Development in Using Play as a Learning Medium

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Professional Development, Teachers, and Play

- *Crisis in Kindergarten*, Miller and Almon (2009)
- Vu, Han, and Buell (2015): "Early childhood educators are often aware of the general importance of play in children's development; however, they are often less aware of how play can support both academic and social learning and what their own roles can be in children's play" (p. 444).
- "If teaching and play are to be seen as mutually inclusive terms then there must be a reconceptualization of play to include teaching, teachers, and the politics of play work"
- (Ryan & Northey-Berg, 2014, p. 212).



Study Overview

Questions

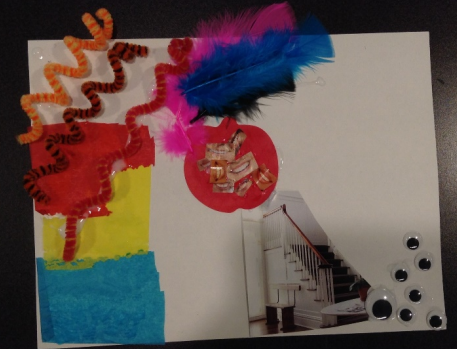
- What do early childhood teachers know and believe about play as a learning medium?
- How do early childhood teachers implement playful learning activities in their classrooms?
- How do the teachers make meaning of their students play individually and collectively?
- What professional supports and barriers have early childhood teachers encountered in their efforts to use play as a learning medium?

Methodology

- Participants: 4 ECE teachers in public school district
 - Prek-1st grade
 - Completed TED 8220 Play As a Learning Medium at UNO
- Data Collection
 - Written Interviews
 - Play-based Focus Group



Play-based Methodology





Findings

Identity

Play is personal.

“It (play) is so part of who you are.”

Play is open for interpretation.



Process

- Play in the classroom requires teachers to have intention, careful observation, and documentation.
- Play observations are used as insight into children’s learning.
- Struggles: Time, School Policies, Parents, Lack of Resources, Environments

Leadership

Models

PLCs

Reggio-Inspired Project

Parent Education





Take Aways

- 1. ECE Teachers incorporate play as a learning medium when they have access to personal play/play memories and intentional dialogue and reflection with other teachers about planning, documentation, and interpretation of play.
- 2. When given support for teaching through play, ECE teachers can articulate and support children's learning and can become curriculum leaders for their colleagues.
- 3. School policies such as controlled packaged curriculum, limited teacher planning time, and timed learning periods are common barriers to teachers using play as a learning medium.