TEACHER AND PARENT BELIEFS ABOUT PLAY IN

EARLY CHILDHOOD HOLISTIC SCHOOL SETTING:

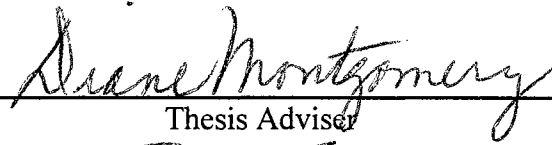A Q-METHODOLOGICAL STUDY

By

JOHN RAYMOND CATHEY

Bachelor of Arts
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1975

Juris Doctor
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma
1983

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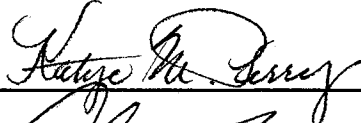DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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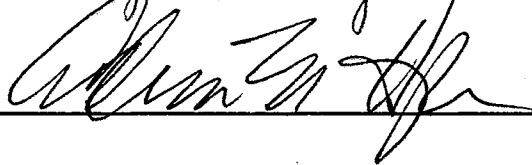# EARLY CHILDHOOD HOLISTIC SCHOOL SETTING:
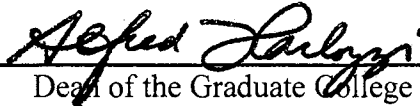
A Q-METHODOLOGICAL STUDY

Thesis Approved:

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Thesis Adviser

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Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Play is something every human has experienced on a personal level, but the concept defies a common theoretical definition. Experts in children's play seem to know play when they see it; yet, find little agreement and much ambiguity in making statements about what play is (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Play is described by classical scholar, Mihail Spariousu (1989) as unclear, going in two directions at once. Anthropologist Victor Turner (1969) describes play as occupying a threshold between reality and unreality. Biologist Geoffrey Bateson (1956) suggests that play is a paradox because it both is and is not what it appears to be.

The most irritating aspect of play, according to leading animal play theorist Robert Fagen (1981), is the difficulty of feeling that something is behind it all but just out of reach. The difficulty in defining play is reflected in all seven types of ambiguity enumerated by William Empson (1955) with play examples provided by Sutton-Smith (1997) in parentheses:

1. the ambiguity of reference (is that a pretend gun sound, or are you choking?);

2. the ambiguity of the referent (is that an object or a toy?);

3. the ambiguity of intent (do you mean it, or is it pretend?);

4.	the ambiguity of sense (is this serious, or is it nonsense?);

5.	the ambiguity of transition (you said you were only playing);

6.	the ambiguity of contradiction (a man playing at being a woman);

7.	the ambiguity of meaning (is play or playfighting?). (p.2)

Because there are myriad types and forms of play from daydreaming and playing piano to joking at a party or playing blackjack, various academic disciplines have developed different play interests. Biologists, psychologists, and educators focus on how play is adaptive or contributes to growth, development, and socialization. Sociologists define play as an imperial social system, while mathematicians focus on war games and games of chance. Art and literature enthusiasts are more interested in play as spurring creativity and those in psychiatry study how play is of therapeutic value in the treatment of the inner conflicts of patients (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

As children enter school at earlier ages and spend increasing amounts of time in school settings, the amount of time and variety of children's play experiences continues to diminish (Guddemi, Jambor, & Moore, 1998). The reasons for this trend may be explained by examining the underlying play rhetorics held by teachers who determine how play will be integrated into children's school day, and parents' values which often exert enormous pressure for school practice to mirror their concerns. According to Sutton-Smith (1997), it is the underlying subjective values rather than empirical evidence concerning play that shapes our public discourse. An examination of the attitudes and values teachers and parents express concerning play will explain the level of inclusion or

exclusion of play within the classroom setting and the degree of parental support for such play strategies.

For teachers, the association of play and the curriculum seems to lead to general increases in motivation at school (Hartmann & Rowlett, 1994). Although play seems helpful for those who associate it with academic goals, as Christie (1991) shows, it is more effective when there is a close association between the children's own play forms and the teachers' generalizations. Although play is often used directly in education as in simulation games, it is more frequently used as a reward to give children enjoyment and motivation, which increase their willingness to pursue the other things that adults require of them. Basically, it becomes a reinforcement technique (Block & King, 1987).

Research has found, however, that emphasis on extrinsic motivators decreases intrinsic motivation, which subsequently negatively affects feelings of competence and psychological well-being or happiness. Investigators confirm, for example, that entry into school brings a decrease in creativity among children (Graef, Csikeszentimihalyi, & Giannino, 1983). As children progress through the educational system, motivation becomes increasingly extrinsic (Harter, 1981; Maehr, 1983). Hence, the challenge becomes "how to integrate deeply rewarding enjoyable feelings which usually are experienced in leisure settings into the fabric of everyday life; so that life is not split into useless play and senseless work" (Maehr, 1983, p.187).

Studies indicate that when teachers or parents are more involved with children's pretend play, there are positive increases in the children's literacy, language, reading, and writing (Bloch & Pellegrini, 1989; Christie, 1991; Galda & Pellegrini, 1985; Goelman & Jacobs, 1994). There is considerable evidence that parents who interact with their

children impact their imaginative skills, which assists assimilation functions and schema formation. Parents identified as engaging in labeling, explaining, and storytelling with their children have children who are more capable of self-control, less aggressive, and better able to assimilate knowledge (Singer & Singer, 1998).

In spite of extensive research supporting the use of play in school, many educators and parents continue to support the steady drift toward pressurized, formal instruction for early childhood students. Many ambitious parents want early childhood programs to focus increasingly on academics in order to help their children succeed later in life. They often view play as something unrelated to this goal of accelerated learning. Teachers who state their support for play in school often fail to integrate it into the curriculum and limit free play to 20 or 30 minutes a day (Rothlein & Brett, 1987; Webster &Wood, 1986).

Holistic educators are concerned with what is called the whole child, which includes the intellectual, emotional or affective, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions (Miller, 2000). This broad perspective necessitates the inclusion of a variety of learning experiences, including play, that are frequently being minimized or eliminated in traditional school settings in favor of techniques that can efficiently achieve the more narrow goals measured by children's performance on standardized academic tests.

Parents and teachers in a holistic school environment also hold a variety of opinions and beliefs about play in school which influences the amount and types of play inclusion. Understanding their underlying beliefs about play will help teachers and parents establish dialogue leading to increased appreciation of play as an integral part of the daily lives of children in a holistic early childhood school setting.

Significance of the Study

This study utilizing Q-methodology enabled the researcher to better understand the subjective beliefs early childhood teachers and parents have about play. This is particularly important information for a private holistic school whose value system encourages the use of play in the development of the whole child. Teachers who work with children in a holistic school and the parents who enroll their children in a holistic school may hold a variety of beliefs and opinions, which may be contradictory to the philosophy of the school. Knowledge about the subjective opinions of teachers and parents will create a basis for dialogue between the teachers and parents and create support for play inclusion in early childhood programs.

There is little agreement among play theorists in defining what play is or its appropriate use in early childhood education. The different perspectives about play can be organized under the seven play rhetorics which define play and its appropriate uses from the perspective of its advocates. Most educational applications of child's play fall within the three modern rhetorics of progress, the imaginary, and the self. The field of education is dominated by the rhetoric of play as progress. The four ancient rhetorics of play: fate, power, identity, and frivolity are more group oriented than the modern rhetorics. Although not as directly applicable to the education of young children, they impact our cultural understandings of play and interact with the modern play rhetorics (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

How play is incorporated in early childhood education depends upon the attitudes and opinions of the teachers and parents of the young students. There are a variety of

opinions concerning the value of play among early childhood teachers from organizing the day around play to viewing play as a waste of time. For those who value play, how it is utilized also varies from a reinforcement technique to release of excess child energy. Whether educators value play, utilize it in their curriculum, and how they go about incorporating play depends upon their opinions and beliefs about play more than the empirical evidence surrounding play. The support or lack of parental support for the inclusion of play in school depends upon the parental perceptions and beliefs about play (Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

According to Sutton-Smith (1997), much of the chaos in the field of play theory is due to the lack of clarity about popular rhetorics underlying the various theories of play. The term *rhetoric* is used to describe a persuasive discourse or implicit narrative used by members of a particular affiliation to persuade others of the veracity and worthwhileness of their belief (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Applied to this study, the rhetorics of play express the ways play is placed in context within broader value systems, which are assumed by theorists of play rather than studied directly by them. The teacher who interrupts a student doodling in class because it's a waste of class time is expressing herself from a particular rhetoric without necessarily being consciously aware of the rhetoric or its implicit belief system. The seven distinct rhetorics-the ancient discourses of fate, power, communal identity, and frivolity and the modern discourse of progress, the imaginary, and the self-provide a conceptual framework for understanding the various theories of play presented as objective by their advocates.

The seven rhetorics presented by Sutton-Smith (1997) are:

1. *The rhetoric of play as progress*, usually applied to children's play, advances the ideas that children, but not adults, adapt and develop through play. "This belief in play as progress is something that most Westerners cherish, but its relevance to play has been more often assumed than demonstrated. Most educators over the past two hundred years seem to have so needed to represent playful imitation as a form of children's socialization and moral, social, and cognitive growth that they have seen play as being primarily about development rather than enjoyment. " (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 9) . The main tenet of the progress rhetoric is that adulthood and childhood are separate, childhood being innocent, nonsexual, and dependent (Benedict, 1938).

2. *The rhetoric of play as fate* is applied to gambling and games of chance. It is probably the oldest of the rhetorics and rests on the belief that human lives and play are controlled by destiny, by the gods, by atoms or neurons, or by luck, but very little by us.

3. *The rhetoric of play as power* usually applied to sports, athletics, and contests is an ancient rhetoric used to fortify the status of those who control play or its heroes.

4. *The rhetoric of play as identity* confirms, maintains, and advances the identity of the community of players through celebrations and festivals.

5. *The rhetoric of play as the imaginary* is usually applied to playful improvisation of all kinds idealizing the imagination, flexibility, and

creativity of the play world. This rhetoric is sustained by modern positive attitudes toward creativity and innovation.

6. *The rhetoric of the self* is usually applied to solitary activities like hobbies or high-risk activities such as bungee jumping. These are forms where play is idealized by attention to the desirable experiences of the players-their fun, relaxation, escape-and the intrinsic or aesthetic satisfactions of the play performances.

7. *The rhetoric of play as frivolous* is usually applied to activities of the idle or foolish. In modern times it inverts the classic work ethic view of play. It is also applied to trickster figures and fools who enact playful protest against the orders of the ordained world.

Sutton-Smith (1997) delineates the following eight criteria in order to validate the rhetorical categories of play:

1. There is a clear basis in well-known cultural attitudes of a contemporary or historical kind.

2. Each rhetoric has its own specific groups of advocates.

3. Each rhetoric applies primarily to a distinct kid of play or playfulness.

4. Each rhetoric applies primarily to distinct kinds of players.

5. There is an affinity between each rhetoric and particular scholarly or scientific disciplines, and between particular play theories and play theorists.

6. There is a "matching" interplay between the nature of the rhetorical assertions and the character of the forms of play to which they are applied.

7.   There is some kind of gain for those who are successful in their

persuasion.

8.   Definitions of play fall into three categories:

(a)   Play experiences and functions defined by the players,

(b)   Definitions by theorists of intrinsic play functions,

(c)   Definitions by theorists of extrinsic play functions. (p.17)

There is not much research concerning what players actually believe are the

reasons for their play participation. Often there is little similarity between players own

play definitions and those of play theorists. Most definitions cited fall under the

categories of intrinsic play function, which point to the players' game-related motives for

playing and extrinsic play functions, which focus on how play functions serve the larger

culture. Looking at the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic functions of play is

another way of talking about play and non-play.

The advocates of each of the seven play rhetorics agree that play is an exciting

activity that players do because they enjoy doing it. Although play does not seem to have

much to do with anything else, it is typically interpreted as having value beyond itself.

Not only are each of the seven rhetorics a representation of the way people value some

kind of play, they also represent the way these same people use play to maintain their

control by denigrating other kinds of play. For example, the desire for children to make

progress in development and schooling has led to two opposite positions. Educational

conservatives consider play a waste of time while educational progressives believe play is

a form of children's work. Both of these positions belong to the rhetoric of progress

whose aim is to constrain child play in the service of growth, education, and progress (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

It is not the proven effects of play on the learning and development of children that determines the inclusion or exclusion of play forms in school but how educators and parents *perceive* the effects of play on children. Researchers found that when parents believe the rhetoric that children learn through their play and value play for its cognitive and educational benefits, they are more likely to join their children in their play activity. Fathers who believe in play's educational value are more likely to join their children in reading books, doing puzzles, and building with blocks. Whether this play makes any difference in the children's subsequent school success was less obvious (Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995).

A rhetoric is used in its modern sense as being a persuasive discourse, or an implicit narrative adopted by members of a particular affiliation to persuade others of the veracity and worthwhileness of their beliefs (Burke, 1950). "As used here, the rhetorics of play express the way play is placed in context within broader value systems, which are assumed by the theorists of play rather than studied directly by them" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 8).

The progress rhetoric dominates the field of early childhood education. Most theorists believe play is a form of adaptation or development (Asher & Coie, 1990; Bruner, Jolly & Sylva, 1976; Garvey, 1977; Goodall, 1986; Gordon, 1993; Piaget, 1962; Smilansky, 1968). In recent years, criticism of the view that play is the cause of positive developmental outcomes has increased. One view is that increases in various academic test scores following play treatments is due as much to the new relationship between the

teacher and the children as it is to the play forms introduced (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

Although it seems play is seldom the only determinant of any of important forms of

learning that occur in children, it does influence development in combination with other

factors (Christie, 1991). The phenomenon of skill transfer may be due to what can be

called the tutorial transfer effect or the progress rhetoric transfer effect (Sutton-Smith,

1997).

The focus is on showing increases in the complexity of play skills, which parallels

some kind of human growth or adaptation. Subordination of intrinsic play functions to

extrinsic developmental functions reflects the primary concern for child socialization and

maturity, and children's civilized progress in general (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The issue of freedom is of central concern to holistic educators. Allowing

children to develop according to their own unique natures is a freedom denied by

conventional schooling. Alternative educators dissent from traditional schools tilt toward

bureaucracy, standardization, and the reduction of the individual to an anonymous

political and economic entity. The technocratic worldview poses a direct and serious

threat to human values rooted in any organic or spiritual sense of meaning, wholeness,

and connectedness to the natural world (Miller, 2000). Holistic educators believe that the

essential nature of children requires a sense of connection to the world that derives from

the "perennial philosophy" or "primordial tradition" underlying most religious

understanding of the world (Smith, 1989).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the typical values and beliefs toward play as held by parents and teachers of children in a holistic school environment. Play is considered to be any attitude or value organized according to the rhetorics of play (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Holistic educators contend that all aspects of human life are interconnected and that education must respect the dynamic relationships between intellectual, emotional, physical, social, creative, and spiritual qualities of every child (Miller, 1990). In contrast to traditional education's focus on discipline and acquisition of information, holistic educators recognize children learn through their feelings, concerns, imaginations, and bodies. Exploring the attitudes of teachers and parents toward play in school will provide a framework for developing parental and teacher dialogue that encourages parents and teachers to make connections between children's play and holistic development.

Research Questions

The specific research questions that guided this study were:

1.   What are the beliefs of teachers and parents about play within a holistic school setting?

2.   In what ways do parents and teachers of children in a holistic school setting share a common belief about play?

Whether teachers incorporate play in their curriculum and how they integrate play into the school program depends more on teachers' beliefs and attitudes about play than

upon empirical facts concerning play (Christie, 1991; Simon & Smith, 1985). Parental perceptions concerning the value of play results in support or lack of support for the inclusion of play in school. Results of this study will help clarify teacher and parent beliefs about play providing play advocates with insights on how to foster parental and teacher support for educational programs that include play.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The purpose of using Q-methodology in this study was to gain a better understanding of the subjective beliefs and values of the parents and teachers in the limited environment of a holistic private school. All participants, both parents and teachers, chose to be part of this small holistic school setting. The results of this study should not be generalized to the broader settings of more traditional public and private schools. The study was descriptive and does not intend to report causal relationships. Items were selected as representative of a broad spectrum of beliefs selected from the play literature. How well the study described the beliefs of the participants is limited by how well they identified with the items. The Seven Rhetorics of Play (Sutton-Smith, 1997) provided an inclusive framework to discuss a wide spectrum of opinions. These are adult rhetorics about play. A cohesive rhetoric from the child's perspective is needed to fully understand the phenomena of play. Perhaps the results of this research will add another voice on behalf of the children who are subject of our efforts in early childhood education.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the problem statement, theoretical framework for this study, and the significance of the problem in order to show the relationship between teachers' and parents' beliefs about play and the types and amounts of play inclusion in a holistic early childhood setting. Considerable research suggests it is individual perception about play rather than empirical evidence that determines whether play is integrated into early childhood school settings. In Chapter I, the theoretical framework for this study was introduced.

In Chapter II, the seven rhetorics of play are the focus. The many types of children's play are explained according to the organization of the three modern play rhetorics of progress, self, and the imaginary, which dominate the field of education. The four ancient rhetorics of fate, power, identity, and frivolity are summarized. The rhetoric of holistic education is discussed as an alternative perspective.

Chapter III focuses on the research questions, instrumentation, and procedures. Chapter IV discusses factor interpretations and parent and teacher perceptions about play. Chapter V examines the results and discusses the implications of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs of teachers and parents about play within a holistic school setting. In this chapter, the variety of positions articulated by play theorists are examined according to the seven play rhetorics and a final section on the rhetoric of holistic education. They are discussed in the order of relevance to the field of early childhood education and development beginning with the three modern rhetorics of progress, self, and the imaginary. The four ancient rhetorics of power, fate, identity, and frivolity are summarized. A concise description of the seven rhetorics including its historical setting, functions, forms, players, disciplines, theorists, and concepts is found in Appendix A. Ambiguities within and among the play rhetorics are examined in order to illustrate the influence cultural and historical issues have on theoretical positions regarding the study of play. The ambiguous and rhetorical nature of holistic education is discussed in relationship to the play rhetorics. Appreciation of the numerous theoretical play perspectives will help educators and parents understand and make decisions regarding the use of play that is consistent with holistic understandings and inclusive of the child's perspective that is yet to be seriously studied or articulated.

The Rhetoric of Play as Progress

The rhetoric of progress originated from the eighteenth century view that progress in human society was possible. Evolutionary theory led to the expectation that child development could be seen as a form of progress and adaptation.

> The desire for children to make progress in development in schooling has led to play's being considered either a waste of time (the view of educational "conservatives") or a form of children's work (the belief of educational "progressives"). The one view is that play is not usefully adaptive, the other is that it is. (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 19)

Most educators over the past two hundred years have viewed play as primarily about development rather than enjoyment. As children's play skills becomes more complex physically, mentally, imaginatively, or socially, they are believed to result in increases in some parallel human growth or adaptation (Sutton-Smith, 1997). According to adherents of play as progress, the intrinsic play functions of the child are subordinated to extrinsic developmental functions because of their primary concern with child socialization, maturity, and civilized progress in general.

Mellon (1994) described two types of play theories: classical and modern. Classical theories originated in the nineteenth century while modern theories emerged after 1920. Dynamic theories are included among modern theories by Spodek and Sarcho (1994). Classical theories have attempted to explain why play exists and its function. Gilmore (1971) summarized the surplus energy, relaxation, pre-exercise, and recapitulation classical theories as follows:

1.   The surplus energy theory views humans as expending a given amount of energy toward goal directed activity (work) or goalless activity (play). A

person's excess energy beyond what is needed for work can be eliminated through play.

2.   The relaxation theory proposes that individuals restore their energy exhausted during work through play. After working for a period of time individuals must replenish expended energy so they can continue working again.

3.   The recapitulation theory postulates that children proceed through a series of complex developmental stages that parallel the evolution of the species. Play allows humans to rid themselves of primitive skills and drives inherited from the epochs preparing them for the sophisticated endeavors of modern life.

4.   The pre-exercise theory proposes that play is an instinctive way of preparing children for adult life. Their play activities mirror the content of mature adult behavior.

Each of these classical theories has some appeal, yet none of them adequately explain the causes of all play or the content of children's play. These four theories can be seen as two oppositional pairs. Surplus energy and relaxation theories offer opposing explanations concerning energy regulation. The recapitulation and pre-exercise theories relate play to instincts in a mutually exclusive manner (Mellon, 1994). These four classical theories are "armchair" theories rooted in philosophy rather than empirical research (Ellis, 1973).

Although the beliefs regarding energy, instincts, and evolution reflected in the classic theories has been discredited in recent times, they provided a foundation for

modern theories of play (Rubin, 1982). The recapitulation theory left an enduring mark on play psychology "in the idea that how children develop through the stages of play should be central to our knowledge of play" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 35).

More recently, dynamic theories focus on the processes of play, attempting to describe rather than explain them. Dynamic theories of children's play include the psychodynamic theory of Sigmund Freud and the constructivist theory of Jean Piaget (Spodek & Sarachok, 1994). Psychoanalytic theories consider play a cathartic activity allowing children to express fears and anxieties. It falls under the rhetoric of the self and will be dealt with under that topic.

Jean Piaget reflects the influence of the recapitulation play theory's focus on the stages of children's play as central to understanding play itself. Piaget hitches his play wagon to cognitive development as a set of stages through which all children must proceed both in cognition and play. In their quest for reliability and predictability, developmental psychology has focused on mapping the complexity of the human organism often converting those maps of development toward maturity into "recommendations for how to accelerate children's progress across those maps" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 36). The progress rhetoric of play has also become a rhetoric of developmental stages, with the relationship between play and development largely taken for granted.

According to Piaget (1962), play provides children a means of abstracting outside elements of their world through manipulating them to fit into their existing organizational scheme. Two related processes, assimilation and accommodation explain intellectual development. Assimilation lets children adapt information they acquire through

experience into schemes of what they already know. Accommodation allows children to modify their organizational schemes when new information cannot be adapted into existing frameworks of understanding.

Three distinct stages of play development are identified by Piaget. The sensory-motor stage of infancy is based upon reflexive patterns of physical behaviors. Accommodation dominates this stage as infants constantly change their scheme to meet the challenges of experiences with objects. (Saracho, 1983). Piaget (1962) described how play symbols such as a child using a stuffed animal to represent a pillow in a play scenario evolve out of the child's repetition of the act and not a sign of learned social interaction .

Dramatic or pretend play takes place in the second level of symbolic play characteristic of preschool and kindergarten children. Piaget (1962) describes pretend play as an act of "pure assimilation" (p. 89). Both sensory-motor play and symbolic play result from the child's own independent actions on the physical world and are not the result of social interactions with caregivers or peers.

The third stage of play involves games with rules; this is typical play of older children. Children become more oriented towards games as they enter the elementary school years.

Western researchers began to adopt Piaget's theory on the solitary origins of pretend play, mistakenly believing that his conclusions were based on empirical observations. In fact, Piaget based his conclusions on psychoanalytic concepts and very limited observations while ignoring the possibility of play behaviors being learned during social interactions previous to his observations. Although Piaget's wife was present

during observational play sessions, he completely disregarded her activities, neglecting the role of her signals to the baby; that is, "he leaves out the social context without which it is difficult to be sure when play occurs (Sutton-Smith, 1986, p. 142).

In contrast to Piaget who regarded early pretend play as a solitary activity for organizing schema already possessed by the child, Vygotsky (1978) regarded early pretend play as a formative activity directly associated with the development of the child's higher mental functions. In recent years, the developmental theories of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky have become increasingly influential in the United States. Although both Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories agree that children develop in a series of qualitative changes beyond mere expansion of repertoire of skills and ideas, they differ in how those changes occur. Piaget stated these changes occur in distinct stages (Ginsberg & Opper, 1998), while Vygotsky proposed a set of less well defined period of transitions from one stage to another with less emphasis on the characteristics of each stage (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). In Vygotskian theory, play and consequently higher mental functions, originate from social interactions between the child and his/her caregivers" (Smolucha & Smolucha, 1998, p. 34). While Piaget focused on the role of the child's solitary interactions with physical objects in order to develop mature forms of thinking, Vygotsky focuses on the child's interactions with people. For Piaget, people are of secondary importance, for Vygotsky, interacting with objects benefits the child's development only when included in a social context mediated by communication with others.

Unlike Piaget who believed a child's current developmental stage determines the ability to learn, Vygotsky viewed the relationship between learning and development as

more complex. He saw a child operating in an area between lower level of independent

performance and a higher level attained through assisted performance. He called this area

the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotskians argue that play has three

influences on child development:

1. Play creates the child's zone of proximal development.

2. Play facilitates the separation of thought from actions and objects.

3. Play facilitates the development of self-regulation. (Smolucha &

   Smolucha, 1998, p. 6)

It is play that establishes the child's zone of proximal development:

Play also creates the zone of proximal development of the child. In play
the child is always behaving beyond his age, above his usual everyday
behavior; in play he is, as it were, a head above himself. Play contains,
in a concentrated form, as in the focus of a magnifying glass, all
developmental tendencies; it is as if the child tries to jump above his
usual level. The relationship of play to development should be compared
to the relationship between instruction and development . . . Play is the
source of development and creates the zone of proximal development.
(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 74)

It is the process of engagement as well as the play content that defines the ZPD.

The child is able to perform at a higher level through the use of roles, rules, and support

provided by the imaginary situation. The child has lower levels of ZPD during nonplay

settings. A child who sees candy in a store may nag the parent and even throw a tantrum

to get what she wants. The same child can control her impulsivity during imaginary play

and choose not to cry or control the crying depending upon the rules and roles of the play

setting.

According to Vygotskian theory, one would expect a child who has little play

experience to suffer both emotionally as well as developmentally. This line of thought

has been refined by Vygotsky's students who believe play is the most important activity for development of children ages 3 to 6 (Elkonin, 1977). For this age group, play has a unique role not filled by any other activity. Vygotksy viewed play as bringing the magnified focus to the recognition of developmental accomplishments. The observation of attention, symbolizing, and problem solving through play would be seen as far better predictors of later learning than performance on academic activities such as letter recognition.

Vygotskians recommend teachers assist children's play without being intrusive. The ability to observe children's behavior during play may be hampered by too much adult direction. Sensitive teachers who provide appropriate scaffolding have a positive impact of play within their classrooms (Berk, 1994). Teachers may do the following to assist play:

1. Make sure children have sufficient time for play.

2. Help children plan their play.

3. Monitor the progress of play.

4. Choose appropriate props and toys.

5. Provide themes that can be extended from one day to the next.

6. Coach individuals who need help.

7. Suggest or model how themes can be woven together.

8. Model appropriate ways to solve disputes. (Bodrova & Leong, 1996)

Although many preschool educators currently recognize the importance of guided pretend play (Gowen, 1995; Smolucha & Smolucha, 1998), extension of this research is indicated with younger infants as enrichment programs become more common. Where

Piagetians would limit the role of adults to providing appropriate sensory-motor toys for solitary exploration, Vygotskians would focus on the need for caregiver-infant interactions. Whether the economic incentive to sell more educational toys will continue to overwhelm the research favoring the human interaction remains to be seen.

Some theorists assert that more attention be placed on the affective development of play over the cognitive (Fein & Kinney, 1994). Although cognitive, social, and emotional development all move along paths of increasing complexity as does the increasing complexity of play, the causal relationships are unclear (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Because children are so highly motivated to play, many adults use play as a motivating technique to reinforce and control children. Teachers often find the use of play in curriculum associated with increased motivation at school (Hartmann & Rollett, 1994). The use of play is more effective in achieving adult academic goals for children when there is a close association between the children's own play forms and the generalizations being made by the teacher (Christie, 1991). Although the inclusion of play is sometimes integrated into the curriculum it is more often used as a reward, giving children an enjoyable experience in return for their willingness to pursue adult agendas. Play becomes a reinforcement technique (Block & King, 1987).

Another confusion between the relationship of play and development is the observation that children develop play skills through play, which enable them to continue playing with other children (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Play skills become the basis of friendships between children and a means of social interaction with other children. Play is of direct social value for the players. Good social players develop general social skills and increase their happiness playing. The rhetoric of progress requires a function beyond

the experience of joy. It is interesting to note that researchers have found that parents

who believe the progress rhetoric and value play for its cognitive and educational benefits

are more likely to join their children in play. Fathers who believe in play's educational

value are more likely to join in reading books doing puzzles, and building with blocks.

The actual improvement of their children's school performance is less evident (Farver,

Kim & Lee, 1995).

The definitions children give themselves center on having fun, being outdoors,

being with friends, free choice, not working, pretending, fantasy, drama, and playing

games (King, 1979). Children focus on the individual experience and do not reflect the

progress rhetoric agenda. This is due to the very purpose of the progress rhetoric which is

to constrain child play in the service of growth, education, and progress (Sutton-Smith,

1997). Most adults are anxious about children's play fearing if it is not rationalized into

these ways it will escape their control.

> Play as progress is an ideology for the conquest of children's behavior
> through organizing their play. What is put to one side, forgotten,
> neglected, denied, trivialized, or suppressed are all the other ways in which
> children play by themselves or together with other children. (p. 205)

Although the various theories within the progress rhetoric disagree about the

specific kinds and ways development occurs through play, they all assume that play

transfers to some other kinds of progress.

The Rhetoric of the Self

The definitions given by children who focus on the intrinsic value of play are

similar to the adult play rhetoric of the self, which focuses on play as a valued personal

experience. Definitions that describe child play as a form of intrinsic motivation, focusing on means rather than ends, organism dominated, noninstrumental, and free from externally imposed rules are associated with the rhetoric of the self (Rubin, 1982).

The origin of the play rhetoric of the self, which centers on the quality of the player's experience, centers on the psychological mechanisms associated with Freud. Psychoanalysts have written extensively explaining play in terms of abreaction, repetition, compulsion, compensation, tension release, stage-related conflict resolution, master through role reversal and reality testing (Solnit, Cohen, & Neubauer, 1993). More recently, theories of play as individual stimulus seeking neurological arousal, and epistemic behavior have been added (Ellis, 1973).

These theories interpret play in terms of the player's subjective experience. Descriptive terms such like merry, joyful, carefree, aimless, joking, whimsical, and jesting focus on the feeling of the child during play. It is play as a state of mind, a way of being. In a comprehensive overview of psychological play theories, one theorist suggests, "there are advantages in regarding play as an attitude" (Millar, 1968, p. 20).

The rhetoric of the self came out of the Romantic Movement with its emphasis on the individual's personal freedom. Play and freedom became tied together in a search for what makes life meaning. The rhetoric of the self is concerned more with the individual than groups (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The most important and influential theorist to the rhetoric of the self is Mihaly Csikszentimihalyi who was influenced by the writings of Maslow on self-actualization as well as Berlyne and White on intrinsic motivation. He defines his approach as "phenomenological structuralism" (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentimihalyi, 1988, p. 366).

He attempts to discover why people are so motivated by their experiences of personal enjoyment in play, art, ritual, meditation, work, or elsewhere. He believed individuals experienced what he described as "peak experiences" which are basically similar inner experiences with the following characteristics:

1. First there is a merging of action and awareness . . . A tennis player pays undivided attention to the ball.

2. This merging results from the centering of attention on a limited stimulus field, a process of narrowing the consciousness . . . In games the rules define what is relevant and exclude everything else as well as provide the motives and risks, which keeps attention within the game. These motives are intrinsic to the game or "paratelic," as it has been called.

3. A consequence of the first two is a loss of self-consciousness during the play, a forgetfulness of other realities.

4. Another characteristic of a person in flow is that he is in control of his actions and of the environment.

5. Another quality of the flow experience is that it usually contains coherent, noncontradictory demands for actions and provides clear, unambiguous feedback to the person's actions.

6. A final characteristic is its "autoelic" nature...It needs no goals or rewards external to itself. (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1977, pp. 38-46)

The flow experience is described as universal across cultures occurring in work or play although their research indicates individual differences, suggesting flow may be learned rather than universal (Csikskentimilhalyi & Csikskentimilhalyi, 1988).

With our modern value system seeking to find human meaning in individual secular pleasures, flow provides a modern psychological explanation as well as justification for what we choose to do. Accepting flow as the explanation for play would obliterate any distinction between work at its best and play at its best, something that lacks credibility (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

<div align="center">The Rhetoric of Play as the Imaginary</div>

Some kind of transformation is the essence of play to those who espouse the rhetoric of play as the imaginary. Imagination, creativity, deconstruction, pretense, metaphor, and mythology are all encompassed within this rhetoric. Like the rhetoric of the self, this rhetoric also emerges from the Romantic Movement. It is characterized by an attitude that "glorifies freedom, originality, genius, the arts, and the innocent and uncorrupted character of the childhood vision" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 129).

Art and play were both believed to involve the freedom, autonomy, and originality of the individual. Connecting children's art and play together with ideas about the imagination, resulted in viewing the child as primitive, innocent, and original. This romantic notion obscures the true relationship between play and art and instead singles out freedom, originality, and autonomy as central to both. This emphasis continues with many educators describing all forms of free expression as play. Play becomes an umbrella covering a host of activities including exploration, practice, manipulation, mastery, experimentation, reading and listening, making music, painting, dancing, and roughhousing (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Although identification of freedom, originality, and

innocence provides a powerful support for this rhetoric, it also destroys the distinction between them.

Various theorists have distinguished play and art. Some emphasize the biological roots of play versus the cultural foundations of art (Groos, 1976). Others have insisted that only art develops sensuous forms (Cassirer, 1944). Howard Gardner is the leading modern theorist. He sees play in terms of mastery of anxiety, self, and the world while art is seen in terms of mastery of symbolic systems (Gardner, 1982). He points out that the continued identification with this rhetoric has more to do with romantic tradition than empirical evidence.

The Rhetoric of Play as Fate

The ancient rhetorics of play tend to be about groups instead of individuals. They tend to have more extrinsic motivation than the modern rhetorics which associate play with freedom of the individual. There is also a reluctance to identify children with any of the ancient rhetoric, which are considered more akin to addiction, violence, and orgy. (Sutton-Smith, 1997). It is ironic that the first of these ancient rhetorics, fate, is the most pervasive of all play rhetorics, but the least publicly acknowledged. More than $400 billion is spent annually on gambling in the United States, more than the combined total of all other forms of play and national defense budget. More people go to casinos each year than attend baseball games (Hirshey, 1994). Yet, other than casino operators, there are few actual advocates of fate. As the antithesis of the rhetoric of progress, fate emphasizes luck over talent. It "negates work, patience, experience, qualifications...[it] grants the lucky player infinitely more than he could procure by a lifetime of labor,

discipline, and fatigue. It seems an insolent and sovereign insult to merit." (Caillois, 1961, p. 17). Fate may be a balance to a culture obsessed with competition.

The learning of young children may actually benefit from this rhetoric. Preschool children are innately unrealistically optimistic, not being put off by failure. They overestimate their own skills before the age of four (Bjorklund & Green, 1992). The very egocentricity viewed in negative terms in the progressive development of Piaget, means preschool age children learn better and remember more adequately things, associated with their self-centeredness.

It is possible that the adult obsession with the desire for our children to progress and to guarantee a successful future may be more of a mythological hope than a product of reason. Children may be seen as a way for us to guarantee a future beyond our own mortality. Like "Alice in Wonderland, [children] are to conduct their divinely sexless, affectless, rational pursuit of development through play" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 72). Mass irrationality provides the underpinnings for games of chance. Rhetorics of fate relate to our immortal apprehensions just as the progress rhetoric speaks to our narrow mortal aspirations. The rhetorics of progress and fate are rivals for our human souls (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The Rhetoric of Play as Power

Power is defined as "play's expression of conflict including competitions for superior positions in some hierarchy-either of those who organize the play or those who are the players-or for personal control in solitary play, as in mastery and empowerment" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 24). Unlike progress and fate, the advocates of the power rhetoric

argue that the major form of play is contest, which has a cultural function to mediate social conflict (Turner, 1969). The two most important forms of societal contest are physical skill and intellectual strategy (Geertz, 1973). There is also a large body of literature describing power as individual expression. The surplus energy theory of play (Schiller, 1965) comes from this school of thought which says play is an expression of inborn primitive forces (McDougall, 1923).

This adult rhetoric views play as rational power. There has been a constant association made between games, sports, and moral development in Western culture. These games are given more grandeur and public prestige reflecting the contest of the politically powerful over the less powerful. Intrinsically, the players are motivated by the uncertainty of the outcome, which provokes suspense and excitement. Extrinsically these sports and contests are preparation for war training, patriotic duty, and a test of manliness (Loy & Kenyon, 1969).

Some theorists believe that playfighting or rough-and-tumble play is probably the most basic of all play and is the beginning point for play in evolution (Aldis, 1975). Whether adults see playfighting as pretense or as violence depends mainly on their own values. Men see it more as pretense while women see it as aggression. Preschool teachers see most all of it as aggression (Sutton-Smith1997).

There is generally no accepted power rhetoric or theory of play for children. One of the emerging discussions is "illicit play" in elementary classrooms where children "whisper, make faces, giggle, mock, and satirize adults" with brighter students being more covert (King, 1997). The old surplus energy theory is a weak form child-power

growing out of the need to keep children in their seats in the early nineteenth century and still advocated by many in the twenty-first.

Organized competitive sports are a vehicle for adults to repress some of the irrationality of child play. The controversies surrounding the power of coaches, parental interference at games, the exclusion of certain players, the overemphasis on winning, the issue of girls' access to boys' sports, the harmful effects of early sports' pressure points to the underlying conflict in this domain of children's play. It is the power crisis in modern parent-child relationships (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The continued adult organization of children's play continually communicates to children that they are not capable of organizing themselves at all. The focus is on how children are turned into social beings by the actions of their parents. The study of how children turn themselves into their own social beings is a recent and minority concern in the study of play.

The Rhetoric of Play as Identity

The rhetorics of identity are ancient forms of play used to validate membership and traditions of a community. Most often expressed in parades, celebrations, carnivals, and plays as sanction for community (Sutton-Smith, 1997). The distinction between the rhetorics of power and identity are difficult since the purpose of most conflicts, contest and expressions of power is to prove the superiority of your group. Sports and contest are generally seen as expressions of competitive power while parades and other mass spectacles express traditional identity and community. Sometimes the forms are more orthodox (parades) while others mock orthodoxy (festivals).

The historical basis for this rhetoric is in community traditions. The players are usually adults in some sort of festival. Where Piaget sees the job of play as individual assimilation, the rhetoric of identity is a public assimilation of community values.

There is a generational struggle between adults who publicly make children progress while privately denying their sexual and aggressive impulses. The child is supposed to be successful in the family and school while privately having their own play life, expressed in their unique identity and resentment at being the captive of adult power. The rhetorics of power and identity explain much of the pranks, teasing, and antagonisms hidden in playground play. Children always seek autonomy in their play culture. "Resistance to adult power and conventions is a hidden transcript of childhood, not that it is a verbal rhetoric but often only by implication…" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 125).

The Rhetoric of Play as Frivolous

The final rhetoric belongs with the other ancient ones of fate, power, and identity. It differs from the others in its essence being nonsense and inversion. This play rhetoric developed out of the "Protestant Ethic" and the "Spirit of Capitalism" (Weber, 1930) which denigrates play as a frivolous waste of time. This Puritan ethic of play has lasted over four hundred years, longer than any other play rhetoric and is the antithesis of all the other rhetorics. Play has some utilitarian worth in the other rhetorics, but here it has no use. This devaluation of play reflects the dichotomist view of work as sober, serious and not fun as opposed to play, which is the opposite. This dualist position developed from the growth of urban life and was not always the Western view. Previously festival cycles

played an important role in the life of western culture and was taken very seriously by its players (Lancy & Tendall, 1980).

In modern times the puritanical position of play was challenged with the argument that play is basic to human functioning and exists in all cultures. Play was viewed as a parallel poetic world alongside the natural world (Huizinga, 1955). Eventually play was seen as outside the ordinary life of people. Games and art were practiced for their own sake and supported by the wealthy. Removing it from the fabric of ordinary life resulted in play being viewed as immaterial to real life, a voluntary activity occurring apart from the rest of life. Although this process of idealizing play appears to be elevating, it removes play from daily life and trivializes its inherent worth.

"The important issue is whether play's frivolity is necessary for the existence of all of these rhetorics" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 203). The spontaneous play of children is still deemed fairly useless by educators. Maria Montessori (1956) believed spontaneous play was "perhaps something of little importance which he undertakes for the lack of something better to do" (p. 122). Educators and parents who support play do so in pursuit of the progress rhetoric. Each of the play rhetorics describes its own view of play as good and using the term frivolous in association with other rhetorics which are bad. The entire study of play is considered frivolous by most of academia. The term *play* does not even appear in the index of most texts on human behavior (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Those whose play has been most marginalized are children, minority groups, women, and ordinary folk-groups with the least power in our political system. It is not surprising that although these groups take their own play seriously, the political establishment would diminish their position in an effort to retain control over them.

Although the type of play that occurs on playgrounds is varied and may be classified under any of the seven play rhetorics, it is discussed here because it is so important to children whose opinions are so frequently marginalized by the other rhetorics. In one study, first graders reported that play is something you only do at recess. When asked what they liked best at school only lunch and recess were mentioned. Recess was found to be the only sanctioned school activity that all school-age children agree was play (King, 1983).

Based on observations and interviews (King, 1982, 1983, 1986) three distinct types of play in the elementary school classroom: instrumental play, real play, and illicit play. Instrumental play includes the activities children are required, controlled, and evaluated by the teacher, such as watching a movie or doing a science experiment. Although some students may find these activities enjoyable, they are not voluntary and serve academic goals outside the child.

Recess falls within the second category, real play, which include voluntary and self-directed activities. All children say they like recess and many think it is the best part of school (King, 1983). It is the major recreational activity at school and provides children the chance to indulge in exuberant play, freely organize their time, choose their own playmates, and plan and carry out their own activities without adult intervention (King, 1983). Even in preschool, children value outdoor play as a favorite activity (Cullen, 1993). Physical play accounted for the largest amount of outdoor time followed by creative play. Most children perceived outdoor play as something they did by themselves without the assistance of adults. Most children (82.5 percent) perceived outdoor play as a social activity (Cullen, 1993).

Because playgrounds are almost always much larger than classrooms, there are increased opportunities for free exploration of the outdoor environment (Wohlwill & Heft, 1987). Although indoor environments encourage significantly more dramatic play for girls and younger children and constructive play for boys, outdoor environments are important stimulus for the dramatic play of boys and older children (Henniger, 1985). But a qualitative study of well-equipped playgrounds concluded children spent more time engaging in dramatic play in outdoor settings regardless of their gender, and dramatic themes are more diverse outdoors than indoors (Shin & Frost, 1995).

The spaciousness of outdoors provided the setting and freedom for children, especially boys, to participate in chase games which were transformed into dramatic play themes of chasing or shooting the bad guy. Outdoor environments provided children an abundance of natural and loose materials that were used to create and organize their fantasy world to meet their imaginative needs and interests (Shin, 1994).

Working-class children were more than twice as likely as middle-class children to play outside, particularly on wheeled vehicles, while middle-class children are more likely to choose indoor activities such as paints and pattern-making (Tizard, Philips, & Plewis, 1976). Working-class children also engaged in more dramatic play and in longer play episodes in outdoor settings than in classrooms, and their play were more mature outside. Illicit play, defined as unauthorized, surreptitious interactions during classroom events was the third identified type of play (King, 1982, 1983).

The Rhetoric of Holistic Education

The conflict between the various play rhetorics is described as a fight that has

continued since ancient Greek society, between the Apollonian view of play as rational

and the Dionysian view of play as irrational (Spariosu, 1989). Sutton-Smith (1997)

follows this binary view of play classifying the seven rhetorics as a relationship between

strong and weak play. Weak forms of play are seen as irrational, frivolous, and feeble

opposites of progress, fate, power, identity, the imaginary, and the self.

> Each of the seven rhetorics can be examined as a representation of the way
> people value some kind of play, and also as a representation of the way
> these same people use play to maintain their control by denigrating other
> kinds of play. (p. 204)

From a holistic perspective, the problem is not in choosing the correct play

position, but in our adherence to dualistic thinking which places each rhetoric in

opposition to the others. This mental forcing of all categories into polar opposites

emerges from our monotheistic view of adhering to a single position and demonizing all

others. It is particularly interesting that the authors cited above frame the conflict as

between only two Greek gods, since Apollo and Dionysus are part of a pantheon of

deities representing very diverse perspectives.

Apollo is a myth of logic, rationality, detached observation, scientific inquiry,

obviousness, and exactness. We have been its grip since the seventeenth century. In the

nineteenth century the myth of Dionysus (impulse, ecstasy, irrationality) took hold of the

romantic imagination. But there are additional players on our stage competing for our

attention. Prometheus (the technocrat, engineer, instrumentalist) inspired the industrial

age (Neville, 1989). Apollo dominates the philosophy of psychology, education, and

learning. It brings a scientific strength coupled with its dogmatic one-sidedness, which belittles the soul by insisting on taking metaphors literally.

It is Eros that brings experience, relationship, and creativity. He is also a powerful god with great cultural influence with advocates who enjoy the warmth and richness experience. This romantic position often has little taste for negative notions of reality, organization, or structure. Many alternative schools and teaching methods are Eros followers who often confuse chaos with creativity and impulsiveness with spontaneity. The educational establishment does not take poor Eros seriously.

Prometheus is challenging Apollo who still maintains his rule at the universities. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is being pushed out by the needs of industry and economic development. His mean-minded, amoral, obsessive materialism drives him carelessly into a future which views children as a product of a dazzling new high-tech educational system.

Introducing these additional divine positions to the battle between Apollo and Dionysus only compounds our problem if we get stuck in our monotheistic thinking, which insists on a single winner among the combatants. The answer may be in introducing a feminine deity to this masculine struggle for dominance. The Psyche myth is a myth of transformation. It is a story of how the soul is drawn by love through a slow, painful, shadowy initiation into a new way of being. T. S. Eliot (1971) describes this as the experience of arriving back where we started and knowing the place for the first time.

It is Carl Jung who is the leading apologist for Psyche. Unlike his earlier mentor, Freud, who was caught in the Apollonian fantasy of uncovering the facts of the mind,

Jung explored the Psyche myth without reducing her to a "nothing but" (Neville, 1989,

p. 7). Although Jung wrote little about education, his theory of the wholeness of human

mental activities, which he called the psyche, explains the complexity of personality

without resorting to reductionism. This psyche is an energy field perceivable through the

patterns of observable events under its influence. Jung called the patterns of image,

emotion, and drive archetypes. They have often been called gods. This perspective sees

realities as essentially symbolic and metaphorical. The myth tells us that truth is very

elusive, while the clear light of intellectual abstraction can give us a momentary brilliant

insight; this is only one element of the process. The rest of the process is presented in

images of lovemaking in the darkness, going down into the shadowy places, negotiating

with the gods.

Whether psyche is thought of in terms of whole-mind or Psyche in process-terms,

as the soul perspective, she gets little attention in schools. Intellect dominates the school

system, which is obsessed with utility. The Psyche perspective does not try to pin down

truth in a single form but accepts each of them as an "as if, Psyche is after all a butterfly"

(Neville, 1989, p. 22). This perspective does not help us as we wrestle with which

rhetoric is right. Wrestling is for the masculine consciousness of Ares or Hercules.

Psyche is feminine consciousness characterized by receptivity, intuition, inwardness,

centrality of relationship, sensitivity to beauty, and groundedness.

It is this Psyche perspective that describes the goals of holistic education which

views conventional education, which comes out of masculine consciousness as producing

incomplete people. It begins with abandoning the fantasy that the intellect with which our

ego identifies is our whole mind, our psyche. The purpose of holistic education is to seek

meaning through the making of connections. This movement toward wholeness is the stuff of Psyche. It is symbolized in the sacred marriage of Psyche to Eros, which results in the birth of Voluptas (pleasure).

Following the path of Psyche, we find ourselves back at the place we started. Seven play rhetorics compete against each other in order to establish dominance over all others. Which is the correct path for educators of young children? According to Psyche, it is not an either/or proposition. By understanding and accepting the multiplicity of play perspectives, we might find a place within the classroom where ambiguity of play is accepted and the truth in each rhetoric is allowed to come into view.

Summary

The review of literature provided background information about the variety of play theories articulated according to the seven rhetorics and the holistic perspective. The modern play rhetorics of progress, self, and the imaginary were discussed in detail because of their historical dominance for the last two hundred years in education. The ancient rhetorics of power, fate, identity, and frivolity were summarized as less influential positions in the educational debate over the use of play in school. The holistic perspective was included as an alternative rhetoric of inclusion.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore teacher and parent beliefs about play with early childhood students in a holistic school. This chapter describes the methods and procedures that were used in this study, a rationale for using Q-methodology, and a discussion of the subjects, instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

In accordance with federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy, a required review of studies that which elicits human subjects must be approved to ensure human rights and welfare are protected. This study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approved in the Spring of 2000 (Appendix B).

Q-Methodology

Developed by William Stephenson (1953), Q-methodology provides a systematic means to examine and reach understandings about self-referent subjectivity. According to Sutton-Smith (1997), it is the underlying subjective values rather than empirical evidence concerning play that shapes our public discourse. Examining the subjective beliefs of teachers and parents is critical in order to frame discussions about the use of play in ways that are persuasive. Q-methodology provides the respondents a unique manner of

demonstrating their viewpoints through the systematic rank ordering of items through a Q-sort.

A sample of statements (Q-items) is drawn from the flow of communication about a topic (the concourse) representing the language and concepts of the population (P-set) responding to the statements by rank ordering in a Q- sort reflecting the respondent's viewpoint according to a specific condition of instruction (Brown, 1993). The Q-sort is an arrangement of the items from those most like to most unlike those characteristics of the respondent's viewpoint. The Q-sorts are then analyzed with the intercorrelations of the number of Q-sorts as variables and factor analysis of the N X N correlation matrix. It is the persons, not the Q-sample items that are correlated. The resulting factors represent viewpoints and the association of each respondent with each viewpoint is reflected by the magnitude of his or her loading on that factor (Brown, 1993).

Q-methodology is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Qualitative research results in discoveries not arrived at through means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Q-methodology subjects this qualitative data to quantitative analysis bringing the possibility of further clarity and understanding by teasing out connections between perceptions that might otherwise be overlooked (Brown, 1993).

Participants P-Set

The P-set (participants) were a total of 15 teachers and 15 parents of students ages 3-7 years who completed one Q-sort each according to their individual beliefs about the use of play in school. The P-set is small because the purpose of establishing a

representative group of diverse viewpoints is not dependent on the number of participants or the randomness of their selection (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The P-set in this study was composed of teachers from a holistic school who teach students ages 3-7 years and parents of 3- to 7-year-old students in the holistic school.

The holistic education approach seeks to expand the way we view children and their relationship to the world by supporting their innate intuitive, emotional, physical, imaginative, creative, and spiritual potentials. The inclusion of play is a natural and essential part of holistic schooling, which actively supports children's innate desire for autonomy and social interaction through play. Although parents and educators recognize children's desire to play, they often reject its inclusion as being counter productive in rationally managed schools that seek the controlled management of children. This mainstream mechanistic view of education influences parents and teachers in holistic schools. The use of Q-methodology provides a systematic means to examine and reach understandings about these beliefs.

Description of Participants

Participants were 15 teachers of students ages 3-7 in a holistic private school and 15 parents of students ages 3-7 who attend the same school. Description of teacher participants summarized on Table I included gender, age, educational level, sources of early childhood training, total number of years teaching, and whether they taught full-time in the early childhood program or they assisted the early childhood program.

The 15 teachers who participated in this study included 10 females and five males. Nine teachers had family income less than forty thousand dollars while six earned

TABLE I

DEMOGRAPHICS OF TEACHERS

Gender		Age		Education		EC Training	Years Teaching		School Program
Male	3	(20-29)	1	VT	1	School & VT	3	(0-5)	2 ECC
N=5	1	(30-39)	3	BA	4	University	2	(6-10)	3 ECC assist
	1	(40-49)	1	MA					
Female	4	20-29)	2	VT	2	School	5	(0-5)	6 ECC
N=10	1	(30-39)	5	BA	2	School & VT	1	(6-10)	4 ECC assist
	5	(40-49)	3	MA	6	University	2	(11-15)	
							2	(>15)	

Note: EC=Early Childhood; VT=Vocational Technical Training; BA=Bachelor's degree;
    MA=Master's degree; ECC=full time teacher in early childhood center; ECC
    assist=part-time assisting in early childhood center.

between forty and seventy-nine thousand dollars annually. Degree of education varied

with four having obtained a master's degree, eight a bachelor's degree, while the

remaining three attended vocational-technical school. The sources of early childhood

training varied among the teachers. Ten teachers received university training in early

childhood education while four of those received additional training through workshops

or the holistic school where they taught. One received early childhood training from the

vocational technical school and the holistic school while four received all of their early

childhood training through workshops at the holistic school.

The early childhood staff was required to attend all day workshops for one month

prior to the beginning of the school year. Outside consultants provided training in

Vygotskian theories, Montessori methods, play-based assessment of children, and

literature-based approaches to literacy development. Local university early childhood

professors conducted a workshop on constructivism during the school year for the benefit of the entire school faculty.

Teachers who assist in the early childhood program include drama, dance, music, and art teachers. These teachers provide instruction for early childhood students in the areas of their expertise under the direction of early childhood teachers. Teachers with vocational training in early childhood are currently working on college degrees in early childhood and act as assistants under the direction of certified early childhood teachers.

Description of the parent participants summarized in Table II included gender, income level, number of children, and school programs their children attend. Twelve female and three male parents participated in the study. Six parents had only one child, seven had two children, one had three and one had five children. Twelve of the parents had children attending the early childhood program (3-7 year olds). Three parents had children in both early childhood and elementary programs in the holistic school setting.

TABLE II

PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	Children Attend	Annual Income Level			Number of Children
		<$40,000	$40,000 to $80,000	>$80,000	
Male	Early Childhood only	2	1	0	2-3
	Early Childhood & other	0	0	0	0
Female	Early Childhood only	9	0	0	1-2
	Early Childhood & other	0	1	2	3

One parent had an annual income below twenty thousand dollars while four had annual incomes between twenty and thirty-nine thousand dollars. Four parents had annual incomes between forty thousand and fifty-nine thousand dollars; one had annual income between sixty thousand and eighty- thousand dollars. Five parents had annual incomes in excess of seventy-nine thousand dollars.

Description of Holistic School Setting

The research was conducted at a small private holistic school located at the edge of a large urban community. Separate buildings house children ages 3-5 years and 6-8 years. Facilities include an art studio, dance studio, and dramatic play area with two-story playhouse and numerous play lofts. A greenhouse provides space for plants and an indoor glass beehive. Outdoor areas include a large covered pavilion play area, playground with gross motor equipment, water and sand areas, gardens, playhouse, stage, and playing fields. Nature trails wind through the outdoor wilderness area that includes a pond, wetlands, forested area, and tree house, and bird wall observation area. An outdoor farmstead includes children's vegetable garden, pumpkin patch, chickens, goats, rabbits, and beehives.

The school was in its third year of operation at the time the research was conducted. Approximately 60 children attend the early childhood program at the school. Multi-aged classes of 10-12 students participate in a play-based curriculum. Students attend half-day or full-day programs Monday through Friday or Tuesday through Thursday. Students spend more than half of their day in free-choice activities that allow

them to move to different areas and interact with children outside their home circle classes.

The school population is diverse with most students coming from middle-class families. Approximately half of the families receive some sort of financial assistance based on economic need.

Research Instruments

The Q-sort and demographic survey were developed in order to better understand teachers' and parents' attitudes toward the use of play in school. Packets of materials were prepared for the 30 participants. These materials included:

1. Informed consent from the teachers and parents (Appendix C),

2. Demographic questionnaire-teacher and parent versions (Appendix D),

3. Q-sort instrument, conditions of instruction, record sheet, and item list (Appendix E).

Instrument Development

A concourse may be developed in a variety of ways including from naturalistic, quasi-naturalistic, ready-made responses or a combination of these approaches (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In this study, two hundred six statements representing opinions from each of the seven rhetoric of play (Sutton-Smith, 1997) were selected from diverse sources in the literature of play theory. To reduce the items to a manageable number yet ensure that those selected were representative (Brunswick, 1956) statements were categorized according to the seven rhetorics. Items, which were determined to be

redundant or reflect, forced choice between opposites rather than reflecting diverse opinions were eliminated (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). A Q-sample of 50 statements was piloted with a group of doctoral students and further refined to a Q-sample of 40 (Appendix E) including statements representative of all seven rhetorics. A majority of the statements reflect the three modern rhetorics (progress, imaginary, and the self), which dominate educational practice according to the theoretical framework of the study.

The 40 items met the criteria for Q-sample size (N) of 40-60 (Brown, 1993). Q-items were typed on separate cards with an identifying number in the bottom right-hand corner. The Q-items were sorted in a range of nine columns with numeric values of 1 to 9 onto a form board in a range which resembles a quasi-normal flattened bell curve with extreme values at each end (Appendix E). Q-items that were most like the participants' opinions about play were placed in column 1; those most unlike their opinions about play were placed in column 9. Table III describes the number of statements per column, sorting number on each Q-item, and the number assigned for analysis.

TABLE III

ARRAY DESCRIPTION

Category	Array Description								
Statements per column	2	4	5	6	6	6	5	4	2
Sorting number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Analysis number	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4

Instrument Procedure

The data collection occurred in April 2000. Fifteen teachers and 15 parents were invited to participate in the research. The 15 teachers who volunteered completed a Q-sort in a single session after school. The parents who agreed to participate were given the opportunity to sort at home in the evening, or at school at times convenient to the participants. All parents chose to sort in one of three sessions scheduled during the school day or after school.

Each participant was given an envelope containing a set of cards with the 40 items. Administration of the Q-sorts was conducted with oral instructions given by the researcher (Appendix E). They were first instructed to read through all 40 statements to get an impression of the range of opinions and sort the 40 items into three piles: those statements that are most like their beliefs about play in school in one pile, those least like their beliefs about play in school in a second pile, and the remainder in a third pile. Participants were then instructed to select the item which is most like their belief about play in school and place it on the form board in column 1. Next, they were instructed to place the statement, which is least like their belief about play in school on the form in column 9. Finally, they were instructed to sort the remainder of the items alternately until all 40 items were placed on the form board. The distribution of items is symmetrical about the middle, but usually flatter than a normal distribution.

Respondents were then instructed to write the number corresponding to each Q-item on the data sheet (Appendix E). The data from the Q-sort was entered into a computer program for later data analysis.

Demographic Survey

After the Q-sort was completed participants were given the opportunity to complete post sort survey questions describing their thoughts about the sort. These written responses give the researcher additional insight into the participants' perceptions and aid in the interpretation of the data (Brown, 1993).

Characteristics of the participants were collected using a demographic survey and are included in Appendix D. Parents were asked to indicate the number and ages of their children and what school programs their children attend. In addition, parents were asked questions concerning their educational and income levels, ethnicity, and gender. Teachers were asked questions concerning their age, income status, educational degree attainment, and gender. In addition, teachers were asked to indicate the subject they teach, the number of years they have taught, the ages of children they have taught and are currently teaching, and their educational background in early childhood.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using PQMethod 2.06, a program that was adapted by Peter Schmolck (1997) from the Q-method mainframe Fortran program (Atkinson, 1992) for statistical analysis of Q-sort data. The results of the Q-sorts were analyzed using a sequential application of three sets of statistical procedures: correlation, Q-factor analysis, and computation of factor scores. The initial factor extraction was by principal components, which computed the correlation matrix and then computed the untreated factor matrix file (Schmolck, 1997). The correlation matrix represented a transitional

stage which the data must pass on the way to revealing their factor structure (Brown, 1980).

The Q-sort data were analyzed with the intercorrelations of the 30 Q-sorts as variables. It is the sort of each person, not the Q-items that are correlated. The resulting factors represent points of view and the association of each person's response with each point of view as indicated by the individual's loading on that factor. Q-sorts, which are highly correlated with one another, may be considered to have a family resemblance, i.e., those belonging to one family being highly correlated with one another but uncorrelated with members of other families (Brown, 1993).

An orthogonal rotation (VARIMAX) was used. This method takes the unrotated matrix files and rotates the numbers of factors requested (Schmolck, 1997). For this study, two, three, and four factor final statistical reports were generated for interpretation. Factor loading were flagged by an X by the default in the statistical computer program that calculated significant loads if more than half the common variance was explained by that factor and a loading was significant for that factor at $p< .05$.

The last step in the data analysis involves the calculation of factor scores where each Q-statement in the Q-sample is scored for each factor. This aids in the understanding and interpretation and meanings of the factors through the construction of a factor array (the composite Q-sort, one for each factor), and through the determination of statements whose ranks in the arrays are statistically different for any pair of given factors.

Distinguishing statements for each factor, consensus statements, and post-sort survey questions were used to interpret the factors. Interpretation of the factors is given

to the relevance of patterns to existing or emerging theories (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

This chapter explained the methods used to explore parent and teacher beliefs about play in an early childhood holistic school setting. Q-methodology was discussed as the selected method of discovering the subjective beliefs of the participants. The parent and teacher participants were described as well as the holistic school setting. The research instruments, administration of the Q-sorts, and data analysis were explained. Chapter IV will discuss the analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this study was to describe the typical values and beliefs toward play held by parents and teachers of children in the setting of a holistic school. The specific research questions that guided this study were:

1.   What are the beliefs of teachers and parents about play within a holistic school setting?

2.   In what ways do parents and teachers of students in a holistic school setting share a common belief about play?

Forty statements selected from diverse sources of literature in play theory represent the seven rhetorics of play, the theoretical basis that guided this study. These Q-statements were sorted by the participants in this study according to their subjective beliefs about play. This chapter describes the findings of the study and discusses the characteristics of the teacher and parent participants, describes the factors as revealed by computer generated factor analysis, and interprets the factors in response to the research questions.

Participants completed one Q-sort each according to their personal beliefs about play in school, which yielded 30 sorts. These were analyzed and interpreted according to the research questions for this study.

A varimax rotation was performed following principal component factor analysis using the PQMethod computer software program. The purpose is to maximize the purity of saturation of as many variates (Q-sorts) as possible on one or the other of the factors initially extracted. A varimax rotation was performed on 2, 3, and 4 factor solutions in an attempt to maximize the explained variance of the factors and to judge the best statistical and theoretical solution upon which to calculate z-scores for items on each factor. To analyze the data the Q-sorts were correlated and a principal components factor analysis (QPCA) was performed. QPCA is a method of extracting unrotated factors to produce a factor matrix of loadings for each Q-sort. The PQMethod computer program uses two formulas to compute statistical significance for a sort to be considered as a significant loading on a factor. Factor loadings are in effect correlation coefficients indicating the extent to which each Q-sort is similar or dissimilar to the composite factor array.

The three-factor solution accounted for 66% of all variance with five of the 30 variables failing to significantly load on only one factor. Although this is not reason alone to reject this solution since the purpose of Q-methodology is to examine operant subjectivity, an examination of the three-factor solution failed to add any useful theoretical information to the research. A four-factor solution was clearly rejected since nine of the thirty Q-sorts failed to load on a single factor and there were several factors with low numbers of Q-sorts with significant loadings, making this solution unstable.

The more conservative two-factor solution was selected as all Q-sorts achieved a significant loading. Table IV demonstrates 16 of the 30 sorts significantly loaded on Factor 1 (35% of the variance) and 14 sorts were significantly loaded on Factor 2 (27% of the variance). The two-factor solution was able to explain 62% of the variance. An

examination of the correlation between the factors provided by the statistical computer program (.8197) further demonstrates the importance of selecting the two-factor solution. The high correlation indicates a great deal of similarity between the two factors.

TABLE IV

FACTOR MATRIX INDICATING A DEFINING SORT

QSORT	Factor 1	Factor 2
1 T1	0.7157X	0.2751
2 T2	0.7076X	0.4284
3 T3	0.4329	0.5217X
4 T4	0.0839	0.7212X
5 T5	0.7037X	0.2829
6 T6	0.7356X	0.4715
7 T7	0.7780X	0.1599
8 T8	0.2823	0.7129X
9 T9	0.1682	0.7463X
10 T10	0.7341X	0.2852
11 T11	0.8173X	0.2201
12 T12	0.6924X	0.3969
13 T13	0.4687	0.6341X
14 T14	0.4748	0.6794X
15 T15	0.7233X	0.4328
16 P1	0.3004	0.6059X
17 P2	0.3613	0.6289X
18 P3	0.6522X	0.3011
19 P4	0.6974X	0.5515
20 P5	0.4545	0.5838X

TABLE IV-Continued

QSORT	Factor 1	Factor 2
21 P6	0.4762	0.6075X
22 P7	0.6048X	0.4315
23 P8	0.6709X	0.4723
24 P9	0.6315X	0.5508
25 P10	0.4037	0.6736X
26 P11	0.7224X	0.4227
27 P12	0.4520	0.6377X
28 P13	0.4759	0.5659X
29 P14	0.8079X	0.3937
30 P15	0.4809	0.4959X
Number of Significant	16	14
% Explained Variance	35	27

Note: T=Teacher (Q-sorts 1-150; P=Parent (Q-sorts 16-30); X=indicates significant at .05.

Factor Interpretation

<u>Research Question One</u>

What Are the Beliefs of Teachers and Parents about Play Within a Holistic School Setting?

In Q-method, the response to this research question requires a detailed and in-depth interpretation of each of the two factors. Information used to interpret the factors includes the theoretical factor arrays produced by ordering the items according to the z-

scores for each factor in descending order. Additionally, it was discovered that placing

the statements in the array position as the participants sorted them assisted in the

interpretation.

Other information used for the interpretation of the two factors included a post-

sort survey question and demographic information about the participants whose sort

significantly defined the factor (Appendix D). The factors were interpreted and named

Child Connected to Learning with Play for Factor One and Child Connected to Nature to

Play for Factor Two.

Although both factors share a large number of beliefs about play, there are

significant differences concerning what types of play are most important and the purposes

play should serve within the context of each distinct belief system. Appendix F provides

a list of the most distinguishing items between the two factors. Two distinct beliefs were

revealed. Factor One places more emphasis on items that reflect the progress rhetoric of

play focusing on extrinsic play functions- those functions that serve the larger culture.

Although Factor One shares the importance of learning and development with the

traditional progress rhetoric, it differed in a significant manner. Where the progress

rhetoric views play as a motivator or behavioral reinforcement for getting children to

master an adult agenda, Factor One adherents reject play as a technique and instead see it

as a means of connecting the child to the depth of his or her own learning process.

The values expressed by Factor Two are found in items from a wide range of

rhetorics including the progress rhetoric, but placing greater emphasis on items from

the rhetorics of imagination, the self, frivolity, and power. Many of these items can be

grouped as favoring intrinsic play functions- those that emphasize the experiences,

functions, and motives of the playing child. Unlike traditional use of recess as a means of allowing children to release pent up energy, the picture that emerges from Factor Two is a broader valuing of the outdoors as necessary in order for the child to connect to nature with play.

Factor One: Child Connected to Learning with Play

Factor One Demographics – Twenty females performed Q-sorts with 13 loading on Factor One. The sorts of seven female parents and no male parents loaded on Factor One. The sorts of two male teachers and three female teachers also reflected Factor One beliefs (Table V). The sorts of the three teachers whose early childhood training was from vocational technical school were located in Factor One.

TABLE V

FACTOR DEMOGRAPHICS BY GENDER

Category	Factor One: Learning		Factor Two: Nature	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Teachers	2	7	3	3
Parents	0	7	3	5

The income level of parents loading on Factor One was the highest of any group with four parents earning above $79,000 (Table VI). Only two parents out of seven with

incomes between $20,000 and $39,000 reflected beliefs of Factor One. The reverse was true concerning the income of teachers loading on Factor One. Seven teachers with annual incomes under $40,000 loaded on Factor One. Only two teachers with income above $39,000 reflected Factor One values.

TABLE VI

FACTOR DEMOGRAPHICS – ANNUAL INCOME

Category	Factor One: Learning		Factor Two: Nature	
Teachers	2	<$20,000	2	$20,000-$39,000
	5	$20,000-$39,000	2	$40,000-$59,000
	1	$40,000-$59,000	2	$60,000-$79,000
	1	$60,000-$79,000		
Parents	1	<$20,000	2	$20,000-$39,000
	2	$20,000-$39,000	4	$40,000-$59,000
	4	>$79,000	1	$60,000-$79,000
			1	>$79,000

Parents whose beliefs were reflected in Factor One held the higher educational level with a minimum of an associate's degree. Four held a bachelor's degree, one a master's degree, and one a doctorate. Four had only one child while the other four had two children. The income level was moderately lower with only one parent in the highest income range.

A description of the common beliefs follows with the supporting Q-statements, their factor array placement and z scores. The factor array (model Q-sort)-one for each factor-with scores from –4 (least like) to +4(most like) reflects each end of the continuum of beliefs about play in school. Since some Q-sorts are more closely associated with the view of one factor than the others, the different magnitudes are taken into account and computed as weighted z-scores. (Appendix F).

Factor One Description – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – The central belief of Factor One is the importance of connecting the child to learning with play. But this sense of connectedness combined with the items which value the learning aspect of play creates a belief not of heavy-handed adults acting upon passive children through manipulative play techniques, but adults who want children to experience a deeper sense of personal engagement in the learning process through playful means. Play is not seen as imposing learning upon children but as a natural reflection of the learning process.

Those whose opinions adhere to Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – begin by describing *what* play is and is not. First, children's play is not a useless activity that should be discouraged or eliminated from the school day. Statements most strongly rejected by those beliefs are reflected by Factor One are items advocating the elimination of play in favor of formal academic instruction. Items are referenced by Q-statement numbers.

- 21. The practice of play in school should be discouraged or eliminated in favor of formal academic instruction. (array, -4, z-score, -2.088)
- 16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless. (-4, -1.951)

Those loading on Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – place the strongest positive opinions on items which define what play is. Play is seen as the best vehicle for children's learning. Learning is defined beyond narrow academic goals of measurable success to include to helping children gain a sense of connectedness with others in the development of a unified self.

- 37. Children learn best through play. (+4, 1.585)

- 38. Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with others fostering development of the child as an indivisible, self-consistent, self-determined, unified person. (+2,1.067)

Although play is seen as transcending academic goals, it is not viewed as antithetical to the purposes of education. Strong disagreement was expressed for items that reflecting the view that play is incompatible with academic achievement.

- 24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic achievement. (-3, -1.567)

Teacher 2, a male, who assists in the early childhood program stated that "the longer play is kept in school the more successful we will be as teachers, because we will see growth beyond measure" (Transcript, T-2).

Those who advocate schooling as a means to create logical, rational thinkers frequently oppose child fantasy as threatening to the educational process. This view is clear rejected by those whose beliefs are reflected by Factor One. Three statements rejecting this belief were given equally strong weight.

- 33. Fantasy undermines the real purpose of education to create logical, rational thinkers.(-3,-1.455)

- 9. It is dangerous for children to be allowed to play in ways that are irrational, wild, dark, or deep. (-3,-1.546)

- Playing video games promotes internal and unpredictable solitary fantasy.(-3,-1.237)

Far from seeing play as frivolous and unimportant for children, Factor One sorts view play as children's work.

- 35. Play is children's work.(+3, 1.124)

Helping children develop connections between themselves and others is highly valued. The development of these social skills emerges in the context of group play activities, games, and collaborative artistic ventures.

- 19. Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games, and collaborative artwork assist children in developing age-appropriate interpersonal skills. (+3,1.068)

Another important aspect for those loading on Factor One is the importance of children participating in artistic ventures in order to support the accessing of the their deep resources of creativity. The emphasis is on engaging the entire personality through play. Children area encouraged to seek internally for the source of their strength instead of relying on outside reinforcements.

- 36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resources of creativity. (+3,1.191)

Play is seen as more than a positive activity for children's learning. Play is viewed as a child's right that should be protected by adults. Adults not only should value

play, they "must" do so and assure that environments are created to include every child's right to play.

- 22. Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of each individual child to play. (+3,1.140)

The type of play advocacy advanced by those advocating Factor One values is respectful of the child's integrity. Adult use of power to manage children's play toward goals acceptable to larger culture is strongly rejected. Factor One beliefs reject the use of play as a behavioral reinforcement technique to coerce children toward adult learning goals.

- 1. Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities. (-2,-0.875)

Highly controlled rotating systems of classroom management are seen as inadequate for children's need to play. Factor One supporters view traditionally popular classroom learning centers as not providing enough playtime for children.

- 26. Assigning children to particular learning centers with a rotating system of management provides children with adequate playtime within the classroom setting. (-2,-0.942)

Two statements reflecting the need for adults to closely monitor children's play in order to prevent activities considered aggressive or antisocial are rejected by Factor One proponents.

- 7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying. (-2,-0.812)

- 32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging in war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior. (-2,-1.010)

Teacher 8, a female who teaches full-time in the early childhood program stated, "A teacher should be available for questions or safety, but for the most part step back and give the children the opportunity to play with each other."

Those loading on Factor One reject sports as a means to socialize children or teach them personal discipline.

- 5. Sports socialize children into the values of the larger society. (-2,-.0983)

- 15. Sports teach children personal discipline. (-1,-0.692)

It is the adult doing things to the child for community goals that is rejected in sports. Providing children opportunities for outdoor play, which enhance the child's developing personal strength, coordination, and skills is considered a positive and natural result of child play, which adults should support.

- 39. Children should be allowed to return to the playground of nature nurturing gardens, climbing tress, caring for animals and playing games in open fields. (+4, 1.622)

- 38. Play helps the children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills. (+2, 1.067)

Concern for children retaining a sense of control over their lives is an important function for those whose beliefs are reflected by Factor One. Concern for children's freedom from adult regulation is seen in this item:

- 27. Play is the one arena where children have a modicum of control over their lives, powerful and free of adult regulation. (+2,1.046)

Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – establishes the importance of children being allowed to play free of excessive adult control in order to enhance development and learning. Using play to support adult learning objectives and classroom management are viewed as inappropriate. In order to understand what role play should have in learning; one must look at the underlying beliefs about learning revealed by the person whose sorts define this factor. The experience of learning advocated is not reflective of traditional schooling. Items supportive of the conventional model of education the transmitting of knowledge to passive children were strongly rejected in favor of learning experienced as a dynamic process children's active engagement with the world.

The teachers and parents whose values are reflected in Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – support play as the best vehicle for children to participate in this active process. Play is seen as providing the opportunity for children to fully participate in making deep intellectual and aesthetic connection.

- 34. Social pretend play evokes magic or the exploration of the borders of human experience that characterizes the probing of the mysteries of life found in intellectual and aesthetic disciplines. (+2,1.035)

This statement about play evoking "magic" and "mysteries" reflects the belief of Factor One that learning is about probing the deeper levels of life beyond rational thought.

Rather than using play as an external educational technique, Factor One describes play as reflecting rather than driving cognitive development.

- 3. Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive stages. (+2,0.869)

The mastery of literacy grows out of the opportunity provided by play to provide children opportunities to explore and manipulate symbols rather than being told to memorize them.

- 30. Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice and opportunities to master the making and manipulation of symbols and representations. (+2,0.857)

Factor Two: Child Connected to Nature With Play

Of the nine male subjects that completed Q-sorts, seven loaded on Factor Two including the sorts of most of the male teacher and all the male parents (Table V). Only two early childhood teachers shared the belief of the Child Connected to Nature with Play. The remaining five teachers who loaded on Factor Two assist in the early childhood program, although their primary teaching duties are with older students. The income pattern for Factor Two was the opposite of Factor One. The annual income of Factor Two teachers was higher than the income of Factor One teachers. Four of the six Factor Two teachers had annual incomes of $40,000 or more with two teachers having annual incomes between $20,000 and $30,000. The income pattern of Factor Two parents was the opposite. Only one of the five parents with the highest annual incomes loaded on Factor Two. Two out of three of the parents with the lowest annual incomes (Table VI) loaded on Factor Two.

Factor Two Description – *Child Connected to Nature With Play* – Subjects whose beliefs are described by Factor Two share a consensus belief with Factor One as to the importance of play as connecting children to a sense of wholeness.

- 18. Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with others fostering development of the child as an indivisible, self-consistent, self-determined, unified person.(+3,1.186)

But they do not share a common belief about the principal focus of play's connecting power. Adherents to the Child Connected to Learning With Play focus on *what* play is; its children's work. Those parents and teachers whose values are reflected by Factor Two focused on *where* play takes place; its in nature.

- 39. Children should be allowed to return to the playground of nature nurturing gardens, climbing trees, caring for animals and playing games in open fields. Strongest loadings reflect a belief that adults "must" value play and protect the "right" of every child to play.

- 22. Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of each individual child to play. (+4,1.676)

Parent 7, a mother of one daughter stated that all children should be allowed to play and she disagreed with any reason to limit a child's free use of their creativity during play.

This movement back to a place where children can connect to nature and develop their true selves places greater value on the romantic notion of children's freedom. Factor Two proponents expressed support for spontaneous play and respecting children's autonomous play by rejecting excessive adult intrusion.

- 16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless. (-4,-2.146)

- 32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging in war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior. (-3, -1.051)

- 7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying.(-2,0.804)

Teachers and parents whose views are expressed by Factor One valued play as a vehicle for children to establish profound connections with learning. Those whose views are reflected by Factor Two placed weaker value on the learning, placing all learning items in array positions of very weak agreement or slight disagreement (Appendix F).

Items that focused specifically on cognitive or academic pursuits were viewed less positively by those in Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature With Play* – reflected by the low rankings on items:

- 37. Children learn best through play. (+1, .695)

- 30. Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice and opportunities to master the making and manipulation of symbols and representations. (0, 0.221)

- 1. Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities. (-3, -1.186)

Although parents and teachers whose beliefs are reflected in Factor Two expressed weaker support for play as a vehicle for academic learning, they strongly disagreed that play is inconsistent with learning or should be excluded from schooling.

- 24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic achievement. (-3, -1.917)

Instead, Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature With Play* – encourages the use of play for the social, emotional, and physical well being of children including a positive regard for sports and games that enhance children's physical, social, and personal development.

- 38. Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic skills. (+3,1.238)

- 31. Game playing is an activity of socialization through which children learn the complex role-playing skills relevant to later life. (+2, 1.087)

- 15. Sports teach children personal discipline. (+1, 0.221)

Playground time is seen, not for the narrow purpose of energy release or a reward for learning, but as an integral part of the school day.

- 23. Recess and playground time are outside extensions of sound, child-sensitive, activity-based educational programs. (+1,0.695)

The purpose of play is not to motivate children along an external adult agenda but to assist children's own self-actualizing potential.

- 14. Play helps children actualize their potential. (+3,1.230)

This powerful effect of play is reflected in its ability to draw from within children's abilities rather than imposing them from outside.

- 36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resources of creativity. (+3,1.407)

Teacher 14, a female who assists in the early childhood program stated that, "Play is an integral part of a child's life. Without play, creativity is stifled and conformity is encouraged."

Teachers and parents whose beliefs are reflected by Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature With Play* – value children's happiness. Pleasure is seen not only as something children desire, but also something they need. Play is a vehicle fulfillment of this need.

- 17. Play helps children fulfill their need for pleasure. (+2,1.045)

Factor Two proponents reflected a more positive emphasis on community inclusion and successful social functioning by children through play.

- 31. Game playing is an activity of socialization through which children learn the complex role-playing skills relevant to later life. (+2, 1.087)

- 18. Play helps children gain a sense of connectedness to others . . . (+3,1.19) (Appendix F).

- Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and social relationships and offer a way of becoming involved with other children when moving to a new community. (+2,0.88)

Teacher 15, a female who teaches full time in the early childhood program stated that "Play plays an important role in the development of children socially and academically. There are so many key factors involving play that many people are unaware of how it affects a child."

The second question that guided this study was: In what ways do parents and teachers share a common belief about play? Although the analysis of the data revealed two clear distinguishing factors, one emphasizing the child's connection to learning with play and the other the connection to nature with play, there was strong agreement about the value of play. Parents and teachers agree that play facilitates the process of helping children become whole persons through making connections with their world.

Research Question Two

In What Ways Do Parents and Teachers of Students in a Holistic School

Setting Share a Common Belief about Play?

Factor One and Factor Two Consensus

Only 23 of the Q-statements in this study were found to be consensus statements-those that do not distinguish between any pair of factors. A description of the common beliefs follows with the supporting Q-statements, their factor array placement and z- scores. The factor array (model Q-sort)-one for each factor-with scores from –4 (least like) to +4 (most like) reflects each end of the continuum of beliefs about play in school. Since some Q-sorts are more closely associated with the view of one factor than the others, the different magnitudes are taken into account and computed as weighted z-scores (Appendix F).

A consensus was shown among participants through mutual disagreement with Q-statements. Both factors valued children's free and spontaneous play as evidenced by the identical strong negative array ranking (–4).

- 16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless. (-4,-1.95; -4,-2.15)

Teachers and parents were also agreed that play is important within the school setting.

- 21. The practice of play in school should be discouraged or eliminated. (-4, -2.09; -4, -2.22)

Participants expressed strong agreement with the most important function of play is its ability to help children become whole persons through developing connections with others.

- 18. Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with others fostering development of the child as an indivisible, self-consistent, self-determined, unified person. (+4,1.22; +3, 1.19)

The critical nature of play to both parents and teachers is reflected in their agreement that the opportunity for all children to participate in play is not only important but a "right."

- 22. Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of each individual child to play. (+3,1.124; +4, 1.622)

Another identical ranking (+3) gave high marks for the engagement of the whole child, drawing from the internal resources of the child.

- 36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resources of creativity.

This process of engagement leads to the self-actualization of the child.

- 14. Play helps children actualize their potential. (+1,0.80; +3, 1.23)

Participants agreed that whatever they believed was the central purpose of play- whether to connect children to learning or to nature, it is not inconsistent with academic pursuits. There was consensus on two strong negative statements, which characterize play as incompatible with school and the goal of creating rational thinkers. Both factors rank of −3 were identical:

- 24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic instruction. (-3,1.57; -3,1.92)

- 33. Fanstasy undermines the real purpose of education to create logical, rational thinkers. (-3,1.46; -3,1.15)

These consensus items reflect an agreement between teachers and parents of early childhood students in a holistic school that play is strongly supported as part of the schooling experience and is not inconsistent with academic pursuits. Although play was not considered inconsistent with schooling, there was a strong consensus opposing the use of play as simply a technique to reinforce children for doing their schoolwork.

- 1. Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities. (-2, -0.87; -3, -1.119)

This rejection of play as technique is consistent with the beliefs of parents and teachers who agree that play reflects children's learning process rather than imposing learning upon children.

- Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive stages. (+2, 0.87; +2, 0.74)

Play is viewed by parents and teachers as having positive social value in the development of interpersonal skills and nurturing of friendships.

- 19. Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games, and collaborative artwork assist children in developing age-appropriate interpersonal skills. (+3,1.07; +2, 0.81)

- Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and social relationships and offer a way of becoming involved with other children when moving to a new community. (+1, 0.84; +2, 0.74)

Participants agreed that children do not need excessive adult monitoring or control over their play.

- 32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging in war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior. (-2, 1.01: -3, 1.05)

- 7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying. (-2, -0.81; -2, 0.80)

In addition to valuing the social development of the child, participants agreed that play also has an important role in the physical development of the child.

- 38. Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills. (+2, 1.07; +3, 1.24)

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The findings of this study revealed two distinct beliefs about play in school held by teachers and parents in a holistic school. Q-methodology provided a method for discovering the subjective beliefs of the 15 teachers and 15 parents by allowing the

participants the opportunity to rank order forty play statements selected from the seven rhetorics of play, which provided the theoretical basis for the study.

The data obtained from the 30 participants in the current study were described and interpreted in Chapter IV. The two factors that emerged indicate that teachers and parents hold distinct views concerning play in school. Participants loading on a factor held similar views about play in school. Under a single condition of instruction two factors emerged. Factor One: Child Connected to Learning With Play reflects the valuing of play as a means of deeply connecting the child to learning. The focus is on cognitive and intellectual development that results through the child's engagement through play. Factor Two: Child Connected to Nature With Play contained the Romantic notion of freedom in nature and the child's right to be protected by adults in order to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of play that transcend learning goals.

An examination of the consensus items helped answer the second research question: In what ways do parents and teachers share a common belief about play? Both parents and teachers expressed strong opinions in favor of play. Although the adherents differed in emphasizing either learning or nature as the focus of play, both were strongly supportive of play beyond its common use as a behavioral motivator in traditional school settings. Both shared the holistic perspective of helping children develop deep connections to their learning, their environment, to community and to the self. In Chapter V, a summary of the current study is included. Implications for theory, practice, and further research are also addressed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to describe teacher and parent beliefs about play in a

holistic school. This chapter summarizes the study and discusses implications for theory,

practice, and further research.

Summary of the Study

This study examined the subjective beliefs of teachers and parents about play in

school. Fifteen teachers and 15 parents in a holistic school volunteered to participate in

this study. All participants were teachers or parents of children in a holistic school's early

childhood program (ages 3-7 years). The participants agreed to complete a single Q-sort,

a demographic questionnaire, and a post-sort interview.

Through the use of a phenomenological approach, Q methodology provided the

researcher with a means to examine the teacher and parent beliefs about play in school.

In this study 206 statements representing opinions from each of the seven rhetorics of

play (Sutton-Smith, 1997) were selected from diverse sources in the literature of play

theory. To reduce the items to a manageable number yet ensure that those selected were

representative (Brunswick, 1956) statements were categorized according to the seven

rhetorics. Items which were determined to be redundant or reflect forced choice between opposites rather than reflecting diverse opinions were eliminated and a Q-sample of fifty statements was piloted with a group of doctoral students and further refined to a Q-sample of 40 (Appendix C) including statements representative of all seven rhetorics. A majority of the statements reflect the three modern rhetorics (progress, imaginary, and the self), which dominate educational practice according to the theoretical framework of the study.

Two specific research questions guided this study:

1.   What are the beliefs of teachers and parents about play within a holistic

      school setting?

2.   In what ways do parents and teachers share a common belief about play?

The statistical procedures used to analyze the data included correlation of Q-sorts and factor analysis. A varimax rotation was performed on 2, 3, and 4 factor solutions in order to maximize the explained variance of the factors. The two-factor solution was judged the best statistical and theoretical solution upon which to calculate z-scores for items on each factor. Additional clarification for factor interpretation was gained through post-sort questionnaires. Two factors emerged from the analysis of data indicating unique patterns that did not mirror any of the seven rhetorics contained in the theoretical framework. The two factors that emerged were examined and named according to the pattern of belief held by the participants loading on that factor.

Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – described the belief that play connects children to a deep sense of personal engagement in the learning process. Those whose opinions were reflected by this factor focused on play as a natural reflection

of children's learning. Child Connected to Learning With Play included the beliefs of most of the females who completed sorts (13 of 20) but only two of the nine males who completed sorts. Parents with the highest incomes and teachers with the lowest incomes reflected beliefs of this factor.

The opposite pattern was reflected by those parents and teachers whose beliefs are reflected in Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature with Play*. Seven of the nine male subjects and the parents with the lowest incomes were among those whose beliefs were reflected in this factor. In contrast to the focus on defining what play is reflected by subjects whose beliefs are described by Child Connected to Learning With Play, those whose beliefs were reflected by Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature with Play* – focus on where play takes place, in nature. The movement is back to a place where children can connect to nature and develop their true selves.

Parents and teachers shared a common belief in the value of play as connecting children to a sense of wholeness. Play was seen as a right of every child, which must be protected by adults, not a reinforcement technique to be used by adults.

Implications

President Clinton declared in his 1994 State of the Union address that our nation's schools should be measured by "one high standard: Are our children learning what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy?" (Miller, 1990, p. 211). This statement reflects a singleness of perspective approach to education, which dominates our national goals to exclusion of all others. The result of our national obsession with achieving this economic vision is the neglect of children who are viewed as products of

the educational system. The time and manner children are allowed to play in school continues to diminish as educators seek increasingly efficient means of achieving measurable results towards standardized goals. Two distinct beliefs about play in school emerged from an analysis of the data from this study. A discussion of how these beliefs differs from the play literature offers an alternative perspective to the dualism that dominates current educational practice and may lead to ways we may better address the needs of our children.

Implications for Theory

Parents and teachers whose beliefs about play are described as Child Connected to Learning with Play value the use of play to enhance children's cognition and development. Concern about children's learning comes from the progress rhetoric, which views childhood as quite separate from adulthood. Progress rhetoric adherents subordinate intrinsic play functions to the extrinsic functions of child socialization, maturity, and civilized progress in general. The desire for children to make progress in development and schooling leads educational conservatives to view play as a waste of time while progressive educators view play as adaptive (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The early classical theories of social stages paralleling human evolution had a profound influence on Piaget and other psychologists who adapted the stage theory harnessing play to cognitive development. This promise of predictability and regularity lead to converting developmental maps into recommendations for accelerating children's progress along those paths (Sutton-Smith, 1997). The progress rhetoric is also a rhetoric of stage development.

Play studies indicate a high correlation with age and play complexity. Although play development and other kinds of age-related development move along paths of increasing complexity, the causal relationship between play and other types of development are less clear. Because children are so highly motivated to play, teachers often use play as a reinforcement technique to reward children for their willingness to comply with adult agendas (Block & King, 1987).

Many studies indicate children who become good social players improve in their general social competencies and successful play experiences lead to the potential for children to continue happy playing. Children's social development and happiness are not as highly valued by most parents. Researchers have found that parents are more likely to play with their children if they believe that children learn through play and value play for its cognitive and educational benefits (Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995).

In contrast to this adult play rhetoric, children do not mention growth, learning, or development when describing their own play. Children define play in terms of having fun, being outdoors, being with friends, choosing freely, not working, pretending, fantasy, drama, and game playing (King, 1997). Children value the kinds of personal experience reflected in the rhetoric of the self. There is an increasing popularity for play defined by these theorists as intrinsically motivated, focused on means rather than ends, organism dominated, noninstrumental, and free from externally imposed rules (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983). Similar definitions focusing on children's positive emotional states are also popular (Ellis, 1973). Fagen (1981) in his review of numerous play authors found their definitions divided between the rhetorics of progress and the self.

In contrast to the divisions articulated by play theorists, the beliefs expressed by the parents and teachers according to this study did not fall into a single rhetoric. The participants whose values are reflected in the Child Connected to Learning with Play shared the belief from the progress rhetoric that play helps children learn and develop but reject play as an external behavioral technique of reinforcement. Unlike many traditional educators who view learning as something imposed upon children by adults, the beliefs of the parents and teachers described by Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – described children's development mirrored in play. It is not the desire to have children achieve prescribed academic outcomes, but to make deep connections in the process of learning that is paramount. The goal is to assist children to probe the depth of human experience and play is seen as providing this process through active social interactions with other children.

The sense of connectedness with others gained by children playing and the development of a unified self are seen as values equal to traditional academic learning. In the Child Connected to Learning with Play the progress rhetoric is married to the rhetoric of the self-creating a union of external learning goals and intrinsic experiences of the self. Like the progress rhetoric, the rhetoric of the self is concerned with individualistic rather than communal values. But unlike the progress rhetoric, rooted in the Protestant work ethic, the rhetoric of the self is grounded in the personal freedom of the romantic period.

The rhetoric of the self in play theory is based on the psychology of the individual player. It is not surprising in our psychological age that the focus of play would be on intrapsychic mechanism such as compensation, wish fulfillment, compulsion, and reality testing, to name just a few. More recently there has been a shift to the quality of the

player's play reflected in the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, which he describes as phenomenological structuralism (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and more popularly referred to "flow."

The search for the meaning of play is found in the quality of the player's experience according to the rhetoric of the self. Academic theorists interpret play from the subjective experience as being "fun"; it is an optimal experience; it is voluntary; it is free choice; it brings arousal or excitement; it is an actualizing experience; it is an attitude (Millar, 1968). Children describe play in terms of what they are doing and how they feel when they are doing it. They use terms such as having fun, running, chasing, and pretending.

Although parents and teachers whose values are reflected in Child Connected to Learning with Play do not believe play is incompatible with the attainment of academic goals, they reject the notion of adult control over the children's play. Classroom learning activities, such as learning centers that are planned and run by adults, considered inadequate to meet the play needs of children. They strongly support the belief that child autonomy in play is essential. It is children's potential that is actualized through play, not the adult's educational goals.

In addition to the belief that play unites learning with children's joy, parents and teachers whose values are reflected in the Child Connected to Learning with Play participants also expressed a strong agreement with statements consistent with the transformational play rhetoric of the imaginary. This rhetoric, which also grew out of the romantic movement, glorifies freedom, originality, and the arts, and the idealization of the childhood vision as innocent, primitive, and original. This has lead many educators to

define all forms of children's free expression as play including: exploration, practice, manipulation, mastery, experimentation, making music, and dancing. Howard Gardner (1982) distinguishes the two seeing art in terms of mastery of symbolic systems and play in terms of the mastery of anxiety, self, and the world.

The playful forms of imagination depend of elements of reversal, inversion, exaggeration, paradox and the playing with the boundaries of space and time (Stewart, 1978). Parents and teachers whose opinions are expressed in Child Connected to Learning with Play placed strong value on play's ability to engage the entire personality of the child and draw from their deep resources of creativity.

The picture that emerges from the analysis of Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – is a non-dualistic view of play that is holistic. Parents and teachers who share a common belief that play connects children to learning do not fall into the oppositional trap of the distinct rhetorics. Instead, they see learning and the development of the children's physical, emotional, and social dimensions connected through the transformational vehicle of play.

On the other hand, the parents and teachers whose beliefs are captured by Child Connected to Nature with Play value the three modern play rhetorics but place importance in the opposite pattern of Child Connected to Learning with Play. In contrast to the strong emphasis on learning reflected by Factor One, the parents and teachers who shared the values of the Child Connected to Nature with Play emphasized the children's experience of individual freedom. The rhetoric of the imaginary with its romantic notions of the idealized child in nature, creativity, and personal truth captures part of Factor Two's core values. Creativity, fancy, and flexibility are encompassed under this rhetoric

which focuses on transformation as play's most defining feature. Where the progress rhetoric treasures regularity along predictable paths, the rhetoric of the imaginary values spontaneity along unchartered paths.

The Romantic Movement's glorification of freedom, originality, genius, the arts, nature, and the innocent and uncorrupted character of the childhood vision eventually led to play replacing the concept of the soul, giving assurance that life was meaningful. Fredrich Froebel (1782-1852) developed the view that play was the highest phase of a child's development, the function of the imagination being the peak of the child's self-active inner representation (Sutton-Smith, 1997). Although he influenced the kindergarten and preschool movement, his comments about play tended to be discounted with their association with children. Traditional dualism prevailed with top-down logic and bottom up play. This romantic view provides a powerful value system for this kind of play advocacy but obliterates the distinctions between children's play and other activities.

The traditional notion of the rhetoric of the imaginary does not capture the richness of the opinions of the parents and teachers whose beliefs are reflected in Factor Two. Advocates of the Child Connected to Nature with Play embrace concepts that go beyond the idealized notions of creativity and artistic expression. They connect the transformational nature of the imaginary with the joy and pleasure found in the rhetoric of the self. Children's potential emerges in the context of play. This potential is seen as engaging the entire personality, accessing internal creativity, and resulting in a whole person. The appropriate role for adults is not as the monitors and directors of children's play but as protectors and defenders of children's right to autonomy as they forge their

own personal truths through play. Adults are seen as guardians of children's original innocence.

Although parents and teachers whose beliefs are reflected in Child Connected to Nature with Play reject the opinion that play is somehow inconsistent with academic pursuits, their lower ranking of items concerned with learning is clearly of secondary importance to the intrinsic development of the child.

Several values reflected in the ancient collective play rhetorics of identity, power, fate, and frivolity are explicitly included in the beliefs of participants whose values are reflected in the Child Connected to Nature with Play.

The importance of outdoor play is significant for at least three reasons. It connects to the romantic notion of the innocent child returning to the Garden of Eden before the fall and corruption of humanity. Perhaps parents and teachers feel a bit nostalgic about their own lost innocence and want to experience it once again through their children.

The outdoor play also provides an expansive space for children to develop their physical skills and bodily development valued by those whose beliefs are expressed in Factor Two. Children's need to move, climb, run, and release energy is reflected in statements highly ranked in Factor Two.

A third reason the outdoor play is important is it provides children a place to create autonomous play cultures. Researchers have recently demonstrated children's ability to behave as a large autonomous community within a situation loosely framed by adults (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p.119). Although parents and teachers represented by Children Connected to Nature with Play reflect the traditional concept of children

learning appropriate social behavior through adult controlled activities, they also value playground play, which provides the resources for children to forge their own independent and complex play cultures.

This belief supports the possibility of a rhetoric of children's power suggesting that in play children can be autonomous in was they cannot be anywhere else. It is about children's need to arrange themselves hierarchically into leaders and followers so they can get on with their business of playing. They do this by constructing a society where play can take place free of adult cultural forms (Sawyer, 1996).

In contrast to a modern notion of a child rhetoric of power, parents and teachers whose opinions were reflected in Factor Two also indicated agreement with statements indicative of the surplus energy theory as explaining the epidemic of children judged to be too active in schools.

The surplus energy theory came about when compulsory schooling first required children to sit at their desks quietly. The way they leapt out of their seats to join playground activity suggested that energy was the key form of power involved in play. This largely discredited eighteenth century notion is still mentioned in the play literature (Pellegrini, 1995).

The last of the ancient play rhetorics, frivolity, has a unique place as opposed to the seriousness of all the other rhetorics. The essence of play from the position of this rhetoric is nonsense and inversion. The Protestant work ethic began and the urban industrial age has sustained the denigration of play for the past four hundred years. Work is obligatory, somber, serious, and not fun and play is the opposite. Although often taken for granted, the notion of work versus play is simply not valid (Lancy & Tindall, 1980).

But play has been shown to be a most fundamental human function permeating all cultures from the beginning. In play, we create a poetic world alongside the original world of nature (Huizinga, 1955).

Most parents and teachers who pursue the rhetoric of progress believe children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless (Montessori, 1956). The very point of the progress rhetoric has been to constrain child play in the service of progress. Adults are often anxious and fearful that children's play will escape their control and become frivolous or an irrational representation of child power, child community. "Play as progress is an ideology for the conquest of children's behavior through organizing their play" (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 205). What is trivialized or suppressed are all the other ways children organize their own play with other children. By treating all these other play modes as frivolous; adults add to the idea that all children's play should be organized to insure their proper development (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

The participants rejected any notion of children's play being frivolous. Their beliefs were drawn from a variety of play rhetorics and tended to make connections between them rather than disparage the differences. This attitude of inclusion is critical if significant understanding between different theories of play is to come about.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the seven rhetorics of play articulated in The Ambiguity of Play (Sutton-Smith, 1997). The premise of the book is based on the notion that the concept of play in inherently ambiguous and hard to define. Theorist from each of the rhetorical positions attempts to define play in the image of their own belief system. Each of these theoretical positions has advocates that espouse

certainty about what play is, partially by a dualistic argument excluding other positions as not play.

The result of this research revealed two distinct play rhetorics replacing the dualistic notion of either-or with a holistic one of yes-and. The answer to understanding children's play may be in abandoning the quest for certainty which excludes all other positions, and instead look for the connections between various theories building bridges of understanding.

Implications for Practice

This research indicates two unique holistic views of play, one focusing on learning, the other on nature. Both are child connecting which is at the heart of holistic education. It is tricky to follow the multiple perspectives approach in a world of dualism. We are naturally prone to draw strict categories, which are mutually exclusive. The researcher fell into this dualistic mode when beginning to analyze this data attempting to force it into neat either-or categories. The faculty advisor discouraged this line of analysis and suggested, instead, to allow the data to speak. It is the richness of Q-methodology that allows new categories to emerge out of this unique honoring of subjectivity.

Breaking out of the habit of dualism and allowing the multiple perspectives to be seen is only the first step. The practice we follow and methods we employ with children must be inclusive of these various perspectives. Core beliefs about children are at the root of the methods we use in schools. We must be conscious of the underlying assumptions regarding the nature of children and play if our educational practices are to

reflect methods that are consistent with these core values. Adult control of children's play may be considered good practice according to the classic progress rhetoric. There is certainly a place for adult direction in early childhood education. But the discovery of the right balance of direction without interfering with the freedom and autonomy of the child is an ongoing struggle. This is the ambiguity of holistic education, which challenges educators to dance between the poles of control and freedom, retaining in the adult a level of acceptance that the tension will always be present.

An illustration of this tension is early childhood practice of setting a specific timetable for all children of a certain age to achieve mastery of letter recognition. This may appear to be sound practice in school settings, which follow group instructional practices based upon what all children should know at specific times. Holistic practice may acknowledge the importance of letter recognition while placing greater emphasis on children developing important underlying structures of literacy through play and delay the introduction of letter recognition based on individual needs.

It is difficult to advocate play for children in school settings when the wave of political and cultural opinion is often going against this position. It is essential that teachers and parents be supportive of play in order to allow schools to follow a path less traveled and often criticized by many traditional educators and politicians. Education of parents concerning the importance of play is critical if teachers are going to be given the freedom to include play within the classroom setting as well as providing ample outdoor playtime. On-going communication with parents will allow educators to hear the concerns and pressures parents experience from vocal advocates of contrasting positions

regarding play which are often the only voices published in our culture's educational discussions.

<u>Areas for Future Research</u>

The present study was restricted to a small number of parents and teachers in a holistic school who work with or have children in the school's early childhood program. All the participants in this study chose to attend the private holistic school that utilizes a play-based approach to early childhood education. Significant instructional time is dedicated to play-both indoor and outdoor. The campus setting in a wilderness area also provides unique opportunities for outdoor play experiences and connections to nature. The unique nature of the holistic school philosophy concerning play and nature is reflected in the two factors that emerged.

Replicating this study in a more traditional school setting in a inner-city environment may result in very different beliefs about play. The more diverse population of teachers and families in a public school combined with the many mandated learning objectives and standardized tests would impact beliefs in ways that need to be examined.

There was congruity between parent and teacher beliefs about play and the educational practices of play inclusion by the subject school in this study. It remains to be discovered if there is a discrepancy between the beliefs of public school teachers and parents and the school policies concerning play inclusion. It would be of interest to investigate this issue with two conditions of instruction. One would seek to discover the beliefs about play in an ideal school environment and a second to reveal the ways play is actually utilized in the school environment being investigated.

Future research is also needed to discover the beliefs about play with children beyond the early childhood years. Do parents and teachers of children in a holistic school environment continue to be supportive of play as children move into the higher grades or does their support diminish and why? Gathering data concerning the opinions of other salient groups such as school administrators, professors of early childhood education, politicians and policy makers would also be valuable in understanding the use of play in early childhood education.

Concluding Comments

This study began as a quest to understand parent and teacher beliefs about play in an early childhood holistic school setting. The goal was theoretically based upon the seven rhetorics of play and applied Q method as a scientific means of discovering the truth. This singleness of vision placed the researcher in the myth of Apollo, which is the myth of logic, rationality, detached observation, scientific inquiry, obviousness, understanding exactly what is what. The title of the book explaining the theoretical framework, The Ambiguity of Play (Sutton-Smith, 1997) hints at the difficulty of this approach. Discovering the correct perspective would be different when even a simple definition of play eluded the experts.

Abandoning the search for a single truth and allowing the data to speak gained insight into the research questions. Q-methodology belongs in the myth of Psyche who tells us that understanding is not so simple, that reality is not manifested so clearly and directly, but through images and subtle understandings. Psyche embraces complexity

rather than singleness, preferring both-and to either-or. One element of the perspective of soul is the acknowledgment that it is only a perspective, one image among many.

Two unique belief systems emerged through the analysis of data. Factor One – *Child Connected to Learning with Play* – reflected an emphasis on children connected to their deeper selves and their own understandings that occur through the social interactions of play. Factor Two – *Child Connected to Nature with Play* – placed more emphasis on children's personal freedom that flourishes in an outdoor play setting where they can discover the joy of becoming fully human through relationships with other children.

These two unique belief systems shared a core value honoring both the integrity of children and their capabilities to direct and control their play experiences. This uniquely engaging activity of play touches children's deepest selves and must be protected rather than controlled by adults. It provides opportunities for important learning of physical and mental skills, and social skills that will serve children into the future.

Each of these beliefs adds a unique perspective about children's play to the many in the current literature. The use of Q-methodology allows Psyche's perspective, embracing complexity rather than singleness, to inform our understanding of children's play. The key to a greater dialogue and understanding between play theorists and between teachers and parents lies in abandoning the search for a single truth and instead to create a space for the emergence and understanding of our multiple perspectives about something so cherished by our children-play.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SEVEN PLAY RHETORICS

APPENDIX A
SEVEN RHETORICS OF PLAY

Play Rhetoric	Historical Ancient/ Modern	Function Intrinsic/ Extrinsic	Form	Players	Discipline	Theorists	Concepts
Progress	Modern Enlightenmen Evolution	Extrinsic Adaptation Growth and Development	Play Games	Children	Biology Psychology	Groos Hall McDougall Thorndike SuttonSmith Piaget Vygotsky Winnicott Erikson Lieberman MacDonald SuttonSmith	Preparation Recapitulation Instinct Learning Holistic Virtuality Pure Assimilation Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) Transition Mastery Divergent Thinking Afect Regulation Enactive Subjuctivity
Self	Modern Individualism	Intrinsic Peak Experience Microperfomance	Leisure Extreme Games Solitary Play	Children Adults Solitary Playe	Psychiatry	Csikszentimihalyi Veblen Patrick Ellis Lewis Ruben Vandenberg McDonald Bauman/ Garvey/ Gerstmeyer	Flow Consumer Self Relaxation Arousal Positive emotional state Intrinsic motivaiton Optimism Affect Regulation Performance
Imaginary	Modern Romanticism	Intrinsic Creativity Flexibility	Exploration Practice Mastery Experimentation Acting Reading Listening Making Music Painting Dancing Rough housing	Children/ Adults Actors/Artists	Art/Literature	H. Schwartzman Stephenson Fein J. Singer Brethertond Schechner Bateson	Transformation Vicarious Play Pretense Imagination Symbolic Play Dark and Light Play Metacommunication
Fate	Ancient Animism Divination	Magic Luck	Chance	Children/ Adult Gamblers	Math Anthropology Psychiatry	Chance Chaos Indeterminism The play of being Dark Play Existential Optimism Unrealisite Optimism, egcentricity	Pascal Gleick Monod Heidegger Schechner SuttonSmith Bjorkhund
Power	Ancient Politics, war	Status Victory	Skill Strategy Deep play	Athletes	Sociology History Psychiatry	Surplus energy Pleasure of being a cause Compensation Catharsis Illicit Play Cruel Play	Schiller Groos Freud Menninger King SuttonSmith
Identity	Ancient Tradition	Communitas Cooperation	Festivals Parades Parties New Games	Folk	Anthroplogy Folklore	Symbolic interactionism Bonding Gaming Orderly and disorderly genders	Mead Harlow Hughes Nicolopoulou
Frivolity	Ancient Work ethnic	Inversion Playfulness	Nonsense	Tricksters Comedians Jesters	Pop culture	Trickster Fool Nonsense Groteseque realism Feast of fools	Radin Welsford Stewart Rabelais Cox

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires:

Date: Wednesday, April 26, 2000   IRB Application No: ED00259

Proposal Title: TEACHER AND PAPRENT BELIEFS A BOUT PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL

Principal
Investigator(s) :
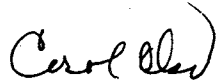
John R. Cathey   Diane Montgomery
833 NW 15th   424 Willard
OKC, OK 731064055   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt
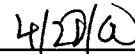
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Signature :   *Carol Olson*   *4/20/00*

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance   Date

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Oklahoma State University
Graduate Study
School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology

This study is done as part of an investigation entitled Teacher and Parent Beliefs About Play in Early Childhood School.   I will complete a sorting task and a survey that requires no more than 30 minutes.

I understand that the results of this research will be published. Codes using numbers will be used in place of names. My name will not be given or used so that any identifying information about me will remain confidential.

I am a voluntary participant in this study. There is no penalty for refusing to participate. I may withdraw my consent for participation at any time. I freely accept any risks that might be involved in this project.

I, _____ , verify that I have read the above consent form and agree to participate in the above study by completing the information.

If I have any questions or concerns, I understand that I can contact the researcher, John R. Cathey, in writing at: 833 N.W. 15th Street, OKC, OK 73106 or by phone: home 405/524.1874 or work 405/478.8848. I may also contact Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. 405/744.5700

Date _____/_____/2000 Signed_____

I choose NOT to participate at this time. _____   (Participant)

Date_____/_____ 2000 Researcher Signature:_____

John R. Cathey, J.D

APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

QUESTIONNAIRES

D – 1
Teacher Demographic Questionnaire

Directions: Please circle the responses or fill in the blank with the responses that best fit your answer to each item.

1. What is your gender? Male   Female

2. What is you age range? 20-29 years   30-39 years 40-49 years   50years or older

3. What is your ethnic background?   Caucasian   African-American

Native American Indian   Other:_____

4. What is your household income range? Less than $20,000 $20,000- $40,000

             $40,000-$59,000 $60,000-$79,000   More than $79,000

5. What is the highest level of educational completion? High School Diploma

Vocational Technical Certificate   Bachelor's Degree

      Master's Degree   Doctoral Degree   Other:

6. What subject do you teach? _____

7. You teach children in which school programs?   Early Childhood (Ages 3-5years)

      Transition (Ages 5-8years)   Other _____

8. Circle all the ways you have received training in early childhood:

Through this school   Outside workshops   Vo-techCollege or University

9. How many years have you taught children ages 3-8years? _____

10. How many total years have you taught?   _____

11. What ages of children have you taught?   Ages 0-3 years   Ages 3-5 years

Ages 5-8 years   Ages 9- 12   Older than 12 years of age

12. What thoughts about play in school do you have after completing this Q-sort?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. If you are willing to discuss this study further please provide your first name and phone number. First Name_____ Phone Number _____

Thank you for participating in this study. This information will be destroyed in six months.

D– 2

Parent Demographic Questionnaire

Directions: Please circle the responses that best fit your answer to each item.

1. I am the Mother   Father Step-Mother   Stepfather   Other Caregiver: _____

2. I have _____Son/s age/s: _____ and _____Daughter/s age/s: _____

3. My child/ren live/s with: Mother &Father Mother   Father   Other:_____

4. My child/ren attend/s the following program/s: ECC 3-day half-day

 ECC 3-day full-day ECC 5-day half-day ECC 5-day full-day   Transition   Barn

5. My ethnic background is: Caucasian   African-American   Hispanic

            Native American Indian   Other: _____

6. My age range is: 20-29 years 30-39 years 40-49 years 50 years or older

7. Highest education level completed: High School Diploma   Vocational Technical
Certificate

        Bachelor's Degree   Master's Degree   Doctoral Degree   Other: _____

8. Our household income range is   Less than $20,000 $20,000-$39,000

            $40,000-$59,000 $60,000-$80,000   Above $80,000

9. What thoughts about play in school do you have after completing this Q-sort?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. If you are willing to discuss this study further please provide your first name and
phone number.

First Name: _____ Phone Number:_____

Thank you for participating in this study.   This information will be destroyed in six
months.

APPENDIX E

Q-SORT PACKET FOR PLAY IN SCHOOL

E – 1

Q-Sample Play Statement Items

1. Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities. (Block & King, 1987)

2. Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and social relationships and offer a way of becoming involved with other children when moving to a new community. (Sutton-Smith,1997)

3. Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive stages. (Piaget, 1952)

4. Games of chance help people tolerate competition that is unfair or too rugged. (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

5. Sports socializes children into the values of the larger society. (McPherson, Curtis,& Loy, 1989)

6. Play is an important release of energy for children who must control their impulsiveness in class. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

8. All forms of children's free expression are forms of play. (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

9. It is dangerous for children to be allowed to play in ways that are irrational, wild, dark, or deep. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

10. Playing video games promotes internal and unpredictable solitary fantasy. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

11. Children's play is important because it imitates the adult world. (Sutton-Smith,1997)

12. Children forge their own quest for emotional truth through the creation of fantastic worlds with heroes and heroines. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

13. The longer children are allowed to play together the more autonomous they become in social construction. (Rubin, Fein & Vandenberg,1983)

14. Play helps children actualize their potential. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

15. Sports teaches children personal discipline. (Sutton Smith, 1997)

16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless. (Montessori,1956)

17. Play helps children fulfill their need for pleasure. (Freud, 1965)

18. Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with others fostering development of the child as an indivisible, self-consistent, self-determined, unified person. (Kottman,1993)

19. Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games, and collaborative artwork assist children in developing age-appropriate interpersonal skills. (Fromberg &Bergen, 1998)

20. Games of construction are the highest form of playing because they require children to build representations of the world according to their understanding of it. (Piaget, 1962)

21. The practice of play in school should be discouraged or eliminated in favor of formal academic instruction. (Seefeldt, 1992)

22. Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of each individual child to play. (Guddemi, Jambor & Moore,1998)

23. Recess and playground time are outside extensions of sound, child-sensitive, activity based educational programs.(Johnson, 1998)

24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic achievement. (Manning,1998)

25. The epidemic of children judged as too active is partly due to restricting the amount of time they are allowed to play outside. (Angier, 1994)

26. Assigning children to particular learning centers with a rotating system of management provides children with adequate playtime within the classroom setting. (Trawick-Smith, 1992)

27. Play is the one arena where children have a modicum of control over their lives, powerful and free of adult regulation. (Smilansky, 1968)

28. Some children need support in play intervention teachers can lead to positive developmental outcomes. (Smilansky, 1968)

29. Modern play is non-pragmatic in that it does not prepare the child for specific skills or activities but prepares the child's mind for the learning tasks of today as well as future tasks that humans cannot yet imagine. (Bodrova & Leong, 1998)

30. Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice and opportunities to master the making and manipulation of symbols and representations. (Vygotsky, 1966/1977)

31. Game playing is an activity of socialization through which children learn the complex role-playing skills relevant to later life. (Lever,1976)

32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging in war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior. (Levin,1998)

33. Fantasy undermines the real purpose of education to create logical, rational thinkers. (Manning, 1998)

34. Social pretend play evokes magic or the exploration of the borders of human experience that characterizes the probing of the mysteries of life found in intellectual and aesthetic disciplines. (Kaku, 1994)

35. Play is children's work. (Myers, 1998)

36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resources of creativity. (Winnicott, 1971)

37. Children learn best through play. (Elkind, 1987)

38. Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills. (Guddemi, Jambor&Moore, 1998)

39. Children should be allowed to return to the playground of nature nurturing gardens, climbing trees, caring for animals and playing games in open fields. (Guddemi, Jambor & Moore,1998)

40. Resistance against adult power and conventions is a hidden transcript of childhood and is acted out in play. (Sutton-Smith, 1997)

E– 2

<u>Q-Sort Script</u>

The purpose of this Q-sort is to record your thoughts about the following question:

What are your beliefs about play in school?

1. Read each of the forty statements in the envelope, place those statements that are most like your beliefs about play in school in one pile, those least like your beliefs about play in school in a second pile and the remainder in a third pile.

2. Choose the item that is most like your belief about play in school and place it in a box in column 9 on the form board.

3. Choose the item that is least like your belief about play in school and play it in a box in column 1 on the form board.

4. Now continue choosing items alternating between most like and least like your beliefs about play in school placing them on the form board until all items are placed in boxes in columns in rank order with 9 being the items that are most like your beliefs and 1 being least like your beliefs about play in school.

5. After placing all items on the form board, write the corresponding number of each item on the data sheet in the same order you sorted them on the form board.

E – 3

<u>Q-Sort Form Board</u>

WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT PLAY IN SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Most Like   Least Like

APPENDIX F

FACTOR ARRAYS AND NORMALIZED

FACTOR SCORES

F-1

Array Positions and Normalized Factor Scores

Factor One :Child Connected to Learning with Play

Statement Number	Array Position	Z-Score
21. The practice of play in school should be discouraged or eliminated in favor of formal academic instruction.	-4	-2.088
16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless.	-4	-1.951
24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic achievement.	-3	-1.567
9. It is dangerous for children to be allowed to play in ways that are irrational, wild, dark, or deep.	-3	-1.546
33. Fantasy undermines the real purpose of education to create logical, rational thinkers	-3	-1.455
10. Playing video games promotes internal and unpredictable solitary fantasy.	-3	-1.237
32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior.	-2	-1.010
5. Sports socializes children into the values of the larger society	-2	-0.983
26. Assigning children to particular learning centers with a rotating system of management provides children with adequate playtime within the classroom setting.	-2	-0.942
1. Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities.	-2	-0.875
7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying.	-2	-0.812
40. Resistance against adult power and conventions is a hidden transcript of childhood and is acted out in play.	-1	-0.709
15. Sports teaches children personal discipline.	-1	-0.692
4.Games of chance help people tolerate competition that is unfair or too rugged.	-1	-0.655
11. Children's play is important because it imitates the adult world.	-1	-0.251
23. Recess and playground time are outside extensions of sound, child-sensitive activity-based educational programs.	-1	-0.180
29. Modern play is non-pragmatic in that it does not prepare the child for specific skills or activities but prepares the child's mind for the learning tasks of today as well as future tasks that humans cannot yet imagine.	-1	-0.041
28. Some children need support in play intervention by teachers that can lead to positive developmental outcomes.	0	0.047

6. Play is an important release of energy for children who must control their impulsiveness in class. — 0 — 0.140

8. All forms of children's free expression are forms of play. — 0 — 0.165

13. The longer children are allowed to play together the more autonomous they become in social construction. — 0 — 0.203

12. Children forge their own quest for emotional truth through the creation of fantastic worlds with heroes and heroines. — 0 — 0.296

17.Play helps children fulfill their need for pleasure. — 0 — 0.297

20. Games of construction are the highest forms of playing because they require children to build representations of the world according to their understanding of it. — +1 — 0.444

39. Children should be allowed to return to the playground of nature nurturing gardens, climbing trees, caring for animals and playing games in open fields. — +1 — 0.459

31. Game playing is an activity of socialization through which children learn the complex role-playing skills relevant to later life. — +1 — 0.536

25. The epidemic of children judged as too active is partly due to restricting the amount of time they are allowed to play outside. — +1 — 0.568

14. Play helps children actualize their potential. — +1 — 0.800

2. Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and social relationships and offer a way of becoming involved with other children when moving to a new community. — +1 — 0.841

30. Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice and opportunities to master the making and manipulation of symbols and representations. — +2 — 0.857

3. Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive stages. — +2 — 0.869

34. Social pretend play evokes magic or the exploration of the borders of human experience that characterizes the probing of the mysteries of life found in intellectual and aesthetic disciplines. — +2 — 1.035

27. Play is the one arena where children have a modicum of control over their lives, powerful and free of adult regulation — +2 — 1.046

38. Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills. — +2 — 1.067

19. Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games, and collaborative artwork assist children in developing age-appropriate interpersonal skills. — +3 — 1.068

35. Play is children's work. — +3 — 1.124

22. Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of each individual child to play. — +3 — 1.140

36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep — +3 — 1.191

resources of creativity.

Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with   +4   1.215
others fostering development of the child as an indivisible,
self-consistent, self-determined, unified person.

37. Children learn best through play.   +4   1.585

F-2

Array Positions and Normalized Factor Scores

Factor Two :Child Connected to Nature with Play

Statement Number	Array Position	Z-Score
21. The practice of play in school should be discouraged or eliminated in favor of formal academic instruction.	-4	-2.218
16. Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless.	-4	-2.2146
24. There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and academic achievement.	-3	-11.917
1.Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward children for pursuing appropriate learning activities.	-3	-1.186
33. Fantasy undermines the real purpose of education to create logical, rational thinkers.	-3	-1.153
32. Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engaging in war play and adults, by allowing it, are tacitly condoning such behavior.	-3	-1.051
9.It is dangerous for children to be allowed to play in ways that are irrational, wild, dark, or deep.	-2	-0.947
7. Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to prevent cruelty and bullying.	-2	-0.804
29. Modern play is non-pragmatic in that it does not prepare the child for specific skills or activities but prepares the child's mind for the learning tasks of today as well as future tasks that humans cannot yet imagine.	-2	-0763
10. Playing video games promotes internal and unpredictable solitary fantasy.	-2	-0697
4. Games of chance help people tolerate competition that is unfair or too rugged.	-2	-0.667
40. Resistance against adult power and conventions is a hidden transcript of childhood and is acted out in play.	-1	-0.639
20. Games of construction are the highest forms of playing because they require children to build representations of the world according to their understanding of it.	-1	-0625
26. Assigning children to particular learning centers with a rotating system of management provides children with adequate playtime within the classroom setting.	-1	-0471
35. Play is children's work.	-1	-0445
5. Sports socializes children into the values of the larger society.	-1	-0.225
13. The longer children are allowed to play together the more autonomous they become in social construction.	-1	- 0.134

6. Play is an important release of energy for children who must control their impulsiveness.   0   0.016

27. Play is the one arena where children have a modicum of control over their lives, powerful and free of adult regulation.   0   0.028

34. Social pretend play evokes magic or the exploration of the borders of human experience that characterizes the probing of the mysteries of life found in intellectual and aesthetic disciplines.   0   0.034

11. Children's play is important because it imitates the adult world.   0   0.060

25. The epidemic of children judged as too active is partly due to restricting the amount of time they are allowed to lay outside.   0   0.173

30. Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice and opportunities to master the making and manipulation of symbols and representations.   0   0.221

15. Sports teaches children personal discipline.   +1   0.230

8. All forms of children's free expression are forms of play.   +1   0.240

28. Some children need support in play intervention by teachers which can lead to positive developmental outcomes.   +1   0.337

12. Children forge their own quest for emotional truth through the creation of fantastic worlds with heroes and heroines.   +1   0.396

23. Recess and playground time are outside extensions of sound child-sensitive, activity-based educational programs.   +1   0.695

37. Children learn best through play.   +1   0.733

3. Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive stages.   +2   0.745

19. Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games, and collaborative artwork assist children in developing age-appropriate interpersonal skills.   +2   0.807

2. Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and social relationships and offer a way of becoming involved with other children when moving to a new community.   +2   0.883

17. Play helps children fulfill their need for pleasure.   +2   1.045

31. Game playing is an activity of socialization through which children learn the complex role-playing skills relevant to later life.   +2   1.087

18. Play helps children gain a sense of "connectedness" with others fostering development of the child as an indivisible, self-consistent, self-determined, unified person   +3   1.186

14. Play helps children actualized their potential.   +3   1.230

38. Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordination, strength, agility, and other basic physical skills.   +3   1.238

36. Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resources of creativity.   +3   1.407

39. Children should be allowed to return to the playground of nature gardens, climbing trees, caring for animals and playing games in open fields.   +4   1.622

22. Adults must value lay and seek to create favorable socially   +4   1.676
   inclusive environments for all children that honor the right of
each individual child to play.

F-3

Array Positions and Normalized Factor Scores

Consensus Statements

Factors

		1		2	
No. Statement	No.	RNK	SCORE	RNK	SCORE
1* Play is a successful reinforcement technique to reward child	1	2	0.87	3	1.19
2* Play skills become the basis of enduring friendships and soc	2	-1	-0.84	-2	-0.88
3* Play mirrors and consolidates the development of cognitive s	3	-2	-0.87	-2	-0.74
4* Games of chance help people tolerate competition that is unf	4	1	0.65	2	0.67
6* Play is an important release of energy for children who must	6	0	-0.14	0	-0.02
7* Children's play must be closely monitored by adults to preve	7	2	0.81	2	0.80
8* All forms of children's free expression are forms of play.	8	0	-0.16	-1	-0.24
11* Children's play is important because it imitates the adult w	11	1	0.25	0	-0.06
12* Children forge their own quest for emotional truth through t	12	0	-0.30	-1	-0.40
13* The longer children are allowed to play together the more au	13	0	-0.20	1	0.13
14 Play helps children actualize their potential.	14	-1	-0.80	-3	-1.23
16* Children's own spontaneous play is fairly useless.	16	4	1.95	4	2.15
18* Play helps children gain to sense of "connectedness" with ot	18	-4	-1.22	-3	-1.19
19* Group play activities such as role-playing, structured games	19	-3	-1.07	-2	-0.81
21* The practice of play in school schould be discouraged or eli	21	4	2.09	4	2.22
24* There is an incompatibility between play, schoolwork, and ac	24	3	1.57	3	1.92
25 The epidemic of children judged as too active is partly due	25	-1	-0.57	0	-0.17
28* Some children need support in play intervention teachers can	28	0	-0.05	-1	-0.34
32* Children learn antisocial messages and behaviors from engagi	32	2	1.01	3	1.05
33* Fantasy undermines the real purpose of education to create l	33	3	1.46	3	1.15
36* Play engages the entire personality and draws on deep resour	36	-3	-1.19	-3	-1.41
38* Play helps children grow physically as they gain coordinatio	38	-2	-1.07	-3	-1.24
40* Resistance against adult power and conventions is a hidden t	40	1	0.71	1	0.64

Consensus Statements -- Those That Do Not Distinguish Between ANY Pair of Factors.

All Listed Statements are Non-Significant at P>.01, and Those Flagged With an * are also Non-Significant at P>.05.

F-4

Distinguishing Statements

		Factor One		Factor Two	
No.	Statement	RNK	SCORE	RNK	SCORE
9	It is dangerous for children to be allowed to play in ways	-3	-1.55*	-2	-0.95
10	Playing video games promotes internal and unpredictable	-3	-1.24*	-2	0.70
5	Sports socializes children into the values of the larger soc	-2	-0.98*	-1	0.22
26	Assigning children to particular learning centers with a rot	-2	-0.94*	-1	0.47
15	Sports teaches children personal discipline.	-1	-0.69*	1	-0.23
23	Recess and playground time are outside extensions of sound,	-1	-0.18*	1	0.69
29	Modern play is non-pragmatic in that it does not prepare the	-1	-0.04*	-2	-0.76
17	Play helps children fulfill their need for pleasure.	0	0.30*	2	1.05
20	Games of construction are the highest forms of playing because	1	0.44*	-1	-0.62
39	Children should be allowed to return to the playground of	1	0.46*	4	1.62
31	Game playing is an activity of socialization through which	1	0.54*	2	1.09
25	The epidemic of children judged as too active is partly due	1	0.57	0	0.17
14	Play helps children actualize their potential.	1	0.80	3	1.23
30	Play prepares the child for literacy by providing practice a	2	0.86*	0	0.22
34	Social pretend play evokes magic or the exploration of the	2	1.04*	0	0.03
27	Play is the one arena where children have a modicum of control	2	1.05*	0	0.03
35	Play is children's work.	3	1.12*	-1	-0.45
22	Adults must value play and seek to create favorable socially	3	1.14*	4	1.68
37	Children learn best through play.	4	1.59*	1	0.73

(P < .05 ; Asterisk (*) Indicates Significance at P < .01)

Both the Factor Q-Sort Value and the Normalized Score are Shown.

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VITA

John Raymond Cathey

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: TEACHER AND PARENT BELIEFS ABOUT PLAY IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD HOLISTIC SCHOOL SETTING: A Q-METHODOLOGICAL
STUDY

Major Field: Applied Behavioral Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Classen High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in
May, 1971; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities-Religion from
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 1975. Received
Juris Doctor degree from The College of Law, University of Oklahoma,
Norman, Oklahoma in May 1983. Completed the requirements for Doctor
of Philosophy degree with major in Educational Psychology at Oklahoma
State University in December 2000.

Experience: Middle school and high school social studies teacher at Norman,
Oklahoma from 1976-80; Oklahoma Supreme Court Intern 1981-82;
Legal Practice in litigation 1983-93; Supervisor of Gifted and Talented
Programs for Oklahoma City Public Schools 1990-91; Education
Consultant 1991-94; Founder and Head of School of the Plains, a private
holistic school from 1997 to present.