

DESIGN FOR CURIOUS MINDS: SERIOUS PLAY

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Short description of the workshop: aims and underlying ideas

Children between the age of three and six are not only curious but also know more than we often think. What is remarkable and somewhat disturbing is that many of these interests seem to disappear as soon as children enter school. Learning language skills and arithmetic 'replace' interesting skills like problem solving, reasoning, argumentation, creative thinking and much more.

Can we keep the curiosity in the child? Can we further facilitate the development of these very valuable process skills?

We have identified many play-activities with a solid scientific content that led to new insights how young children reason and think.

Planned structure:

Planned timeline	Topic	Material / Working format / presenter
00:00- 00:40	Theoretical and illustrated background	Presentation/video
00:40 -01:00	Talent eliciting activities	Materials/Work
01:00- 01:30	Activities	Work /Reflect

Argumentation:

DESIGN

We have designed many interesting play-activities with a solid scientific content that has led to new insights how young children reason and think.

ACTIVITIES

The experiments have resulted in the development of more than a hundred activities and are recorded on more than 2000 interviews with 'playing' children. During the workshop we will at least work on three of these activities:

the car photo is about making a picture of similar objects of different size: can you make a picture where they seem to have the same size (scale, perspective, vision lines).

A second activity will be: looking at a collection of toy animals and make decisions about which animals 'belong in the same group'. Classification, seriation, counting, scale).

Finally we will look at the activity where children are invited to copy a building made with Duplo, using Lego (Scale, similarity, spatial Insight).

INFORMAL vs FORMAL LEARNING

As informal learning is of essential importance parents were involved from day one onwards. There are training facilities for parents (Young Parent Academy). For formal training professionalization has been developed as well (formal learning). Manipulatives are at the core and are selected on their talent eliciting qualities.

Connections between formal and informal learning, and between play, reasoning and core scientific concepts are at the core.