

Abstract

Title: The playworld of grown ups. A study of adults' play experiences.
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The main purpose of this thesis is to identify, analyse and describe adults' experiences of play. This thesis concentrates on how play is shaped when adults think back on their own childhood. Two issues are central in the thesis: What experiences of play do adults carry with them? How do adults apprehend play? The thesis is made up of four articles that highlight play in different ways and a theoretical frame. The purpose of the four empirical studies is to capture variations of experiences and ways to think about play. This thesis presents how the world of play shows itself for students majoring in education, preschool teachers and adults with disabilities.

The empirical studies clarify and contribute to the overall purpose from Vygotsky's theory and an environmental-psychological perspective.

The methods of data collection vary. Questionnaire with play categories, drawings and descriptive illustrations, playmem questionnaire with background information as well as interviews were used in the different parts of the study.

This study shows that there is a multiplicity of variations in adults' experiences of play. Three dimensions were discerned from the individual's experiences of play, i.e. the physical, the social and the innovative dimension. Most significant for the physical dimension is the experienced physically environment, i.e. places and motor activities such as risk- and chance, outdoor play, physical play and activities that contain a physical challenge. The social dimension includes participation in a social context, e.g. together with parents, siblings, friends, relatives and pets. The innovative dimension contains development play, creation, new feelings in play, some epoch-making and sensational play. The main significance for this dimension is experienced cultural environments, the media influence, time for play, complexity, fantasy, flow and eccentric play. This thesis concludes that play is present through the whole life.