

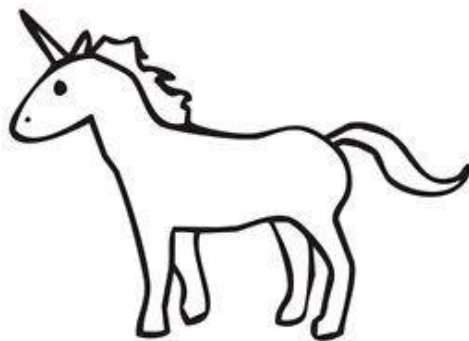
A vibrant, multi-colored nebula in space, featuring shades of purple, pink, blue, and green. A large, green, spherical planet is visible on the left side of the frame. The background is filled with stars and cosmic dust.

Realms of Fantasy

Using Play to Increase Engagement and Learning

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Always be yourself.



Unless you can
be a unicorn.

Then always be
a unicorn.

social joy physical perform
recreation dramatic
manipulate enjoyment
athletic self-directed participate
motivation fun problem-solving rules
improvement fantasy self-chosen skill
expression choice performance amusement silly
reward imagination communication act freedom
playful purposeless nonliteral
role nonserious confidence
activity cooperative empathy
game experience behavior
pleasure maneuver sport
explore engaging drama

Characteristics of Play



- **Play is self-chosen and self-directed**
 - An expression of freedom. It is what one wants to do as opposed to what one is obliged to do
- **Play is activity in which means are more valued than ends**
 - Players do not necessarily look for the easiest routes to achieving the ends/ goals
- **Play is guided by mental rules**
 - To play is to behave in accordance with self-chosen rules
- **Play is non-literal, imaginative, marked off in some way from reality**
 - In play one enters a realm that is physically located in the real world, makes use of props in the real world, is often about the real world, is said by the players to be real, and yet in some way is mentally removed from the real world
- **Play involves an active, alert, but non-stressed frame of mind**
 - Attention is attuned to the activity itself, and there is reduced consciousness of self and time. The mind is wrapped up in the ideas, rules, and actions of the game

Play is vital for human development

Physical, social, emotional & cognitive development:

- Develop imagination and creativity (brain plasticity and neural connections)
- Problem solving
- Enhanced confidence and resilience
- Communication: work in groups, share, negotiate, resolve conflicts, build self-advocacy skills
- Develop leadership and decision making skills
- Build active, strong, healthy bodies
- Engage fully in an activity
- Freedom of choice (autonomy)
- Expression of positive and negative feelings, empathy
- Adaptability
- Any others?



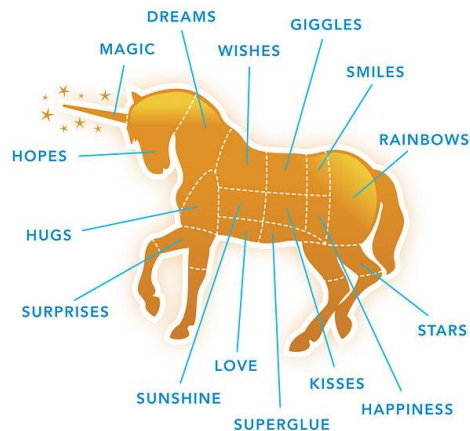
Types of Play



- **Dramatic** - take on roles within pretend games about familiar experiences
 - Ex. riding in a Grand Prix
- **Fantasy** - creating props and using them to engage in fantasy adventures
 - Ex. knights on a quest
- **Exploratory/ Manipulative** – explore/ manipulate properties and functions of materials, equipment and objects
 - Ex. Searching the forest for grooming tools, parts of the horse puzzle
- **Physical** - explore movements and ways to combine movements
 - Ex. posting the trot, two point gives sword extra superpowers
- **Games with rules** - follow or create rules to reach a shared objective in a game
 - Ex. relay races (pass the treasure), red light/ green light (sneak up on the dragon), basketball (unlock the hidden cave)

Play in Children vs. Adults

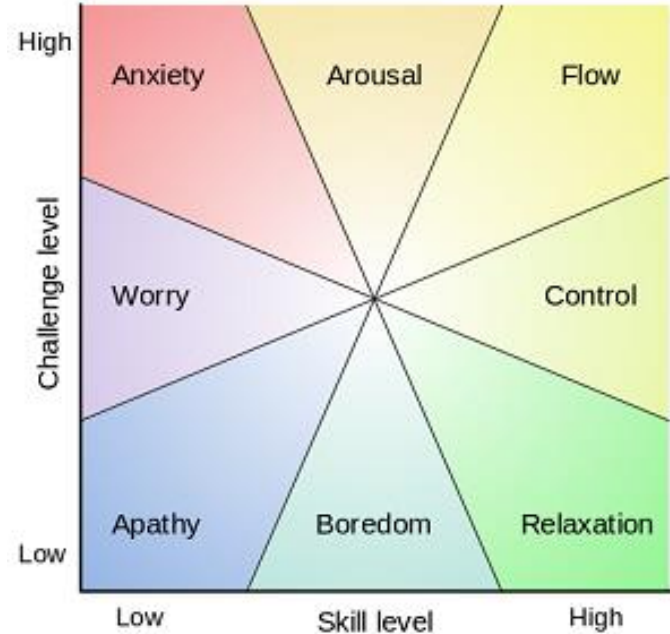
- Exploration
- Modeling
- Communication
- Physical activity
- Examples:
 - Fort building
 - Dressing up
 - Play fighting



- Competition
- Relationship building
- “Playful spirit”, “playfulness”
- Examples:
 - Role play - LARP
 - Card/ board games
 - “Adventuring”
 - Spirit animals

To learn we need:

- Motivation
- Flow
 - Where the level of challenge and skill meet, and the person is completely engaged in the activity
 - “In the zone”
- Play is the “engagement” that allows learning to happen



Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's
Flow Theory



Examples

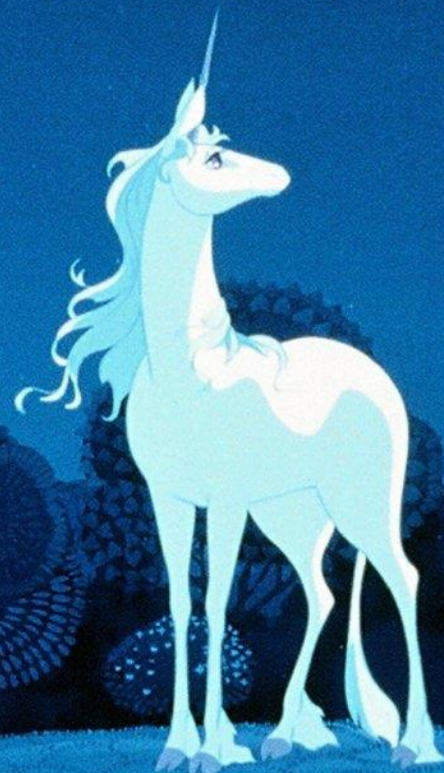


As instructors, therapists, EAAT professionals...

- Be aware of the interests/ imaginations of your students
- Be flexible
- Think outside the box (arena)
 - Find creative ways to connect play to your lesson content
- Say “YES”



Questions...?



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Resources

Play

<http://www.humankinetics.com/excerpts/excerpts/definitions-of-leisure-play-and-recreation>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200811/the-value-play-i-the-definition-play-gives-insights>

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beautiful-minds/201203/the-need-pretend-play-in-child-development>

Queensland Department of Education (Australia), <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/pdfs/tip-sheets/different-types-play.pdf>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/06/336360521/play-doesnt-end-with-childhood-why-adults-need-recess-too>

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/11/15/the-importance-of-play-for-adults/>

<http://www.childrensmuseums.org/images/MCMResearchSummary.pdf>

Intrinsic Motivation

<https://msu.edu/~dwong/StudentWorkArchive/CEP900F01-RIP/Webber-IntrinsicMotivation.htm>