



Call for Papers

Learning and Instruction

Special Issue on Playful Stances to Learning

January 2023

Learning and Instruction is soliciting submissions for a special issue entitled ‘Playful Stances to Learning’. The potential of play for sociocognitive development and learning has received scholarly attention for decades. Playful pedagogies have a long-standing tradition in learning studies and instructional design. Nonetheless, most educational systems have not yet succeeded in integrating the affordances of playfulness in different educational levels, modalities or areas of knowledge. Furthermore, the role of play in education and the nurturing of playful approaches tends to be restricted to studies of the early years, extra curricular learning spaces, and introductory or accessory phases in learning cycles and educational practices. We thus face the paradoxical situation whereby play in learning and education can neither be understood as a mature area, nor as an emerging area in current research and innovation. This call for papers seeks to advance the international agenda around playfulness and show that through re-envisioning the concept, new insights can be garnered in contemporary times. The scope of the papers we are interested in includes:

Research-based interventions, experiments, quasi-experiments, single-subject design studies and case-studies that enrich our understanding of how learning through play occurs across practice contexts and cultural settings, or the kinds of playful qualities that contribute to learning at all ages.

Carefully designed qualitative studies, as well as quantitatively-oriented larger population studies of a variety of stakeholders’ perspectives on the relation between play and learning.

Methodological analyses of the affordances of playful stances to further understanding of exploratory thinking, creativity, multimodal teaching and learning.

Exceptionally, comprehensive and theoretically-driven meta-analyses are welcome.

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Special issue information:

Learning and Instruction is soliciting submissions for a special issue entitled ‘Playful Stances to Learning’. The potential of play for sociocognitive development and learning has received scholarly attention for decades (Harris, 2000; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978; Whitebread, Basilio & Kuvalja, 2012). In addition, playful pedagogies have a long-standing tradition in learning studies and instructional design (Lillard, 2013; Lino & Parente, 2018; Pramling Samuelsson & Carlsson, 2008). Nonetheless, most educational systems have not yet succeeded in integrating the affordances of playfulness in different educational levels, modalities or areas of knowledge. Even if we limit the analysis to primary education, “there is a dearth of evidence and practical guidance on how learning through play can be employed effectively in the formal school context, and the conditions that support success” (Parker, Thomsen & Berry, 2022, p. 1). Furthermore, the role of play in education and the nurturing of playful approaches tends to be restricted to studies of the early years, extra curricular learning spaces, and introductory or accessory phases in learning cycles and educational practices.

We thus face the paradoxical situation whereby play in learning and education can neither be understood as a mature area, nor as an emerging area in current research and innovation. Rather it appears as a neglected or encapsulated area, divorced from the contemporary global agenda of learning and instruction. This demarcation seems to become more acute as achievement-centred demands and globalised standards of competitive societies increasingly permeate educational systems and practices. In this scenario, most educational systems experience difficulties in offering and sustaining meaningful, imaginative and agentic learning for increasingly diverse groups (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009; Cremin and Chappell, 2019; Kress, 2010; Pozo, 2020; Sahlberg, 2014). We argue however, that the significance of play in education may appear in a new light when we seek to promote ways of learning and teaching that acknowledge social complexity and tensions through the lenses of superdiversity -as diversification of diversity (Creese & Backledge, 2018; Vertovec, 2009), developmental compression and intergenerational cross-overs (Ackermann, 2015), multimodality and multimodality in cultural transmission and transformation (Kress, 2010), coexistence of realities - possible, virtual, digital and physical (Ackermann, 2015; Bruner, 1986)-, and ecologies of knowledge (De Sousa Santos, 2017).

Far from advocating a return to the roots (play as a foundational learning activity) or simply endorsing the need to make more space for play in school schedules (directed to wellbeing and creativity as separate from learning), this call for papers seeks to advance the international agenda around playfulness and show that through re-envisioning the concept, new insights can be garnered in contemporary times.

A first step is to delve into the notion of playfulness in relation to the qualities of the learners’ engagement in their experience of a given activity or situation, by distilling not only the part played by a joyful state of mind, but also those of a sense of agency, confidence and safety, that enable engagement without the pressure to attain a given standard or solution (Mujerkee et al., in press; Parker, Thomsen & Berry, 2022; Pramling-Samuelsson & Carlsson, 2008; Zosh et al., 2018).

In this call we seek to contribute to a finer understanding of why and how playfulness can enhance meaningful, imaginative and agentic learning in a world where flexibility, fluidity and perspectivism of life-long learning urgently need to be enhanced. We are looking for empirical studies that elaborate on the nature and scope of a playful stance to learning across educational levels, modalities, areas of knowledge, materials and realities. Another line of interest is the analysis of how a playful approach to investigating learning processes may enable us to capture emergent cognitive novelties in learners’



own approaches to a given topic (Mertala, 2021; Scheuer, Santamaria & Echenique, 2016). The scope of the papers may include (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- Research-based interventions, experiments, quasi-experiments, single-subject design studies and case-studies that enrich our understanding of how learning through play occurs across practice contexts and cultural settings, or the kinds of playful qualities that contribute to learning at all ages.
- Carefully designed qualitative studies as well as quantitatively-oriented larger population studies of learners', teachers', parents', caregivers' (of the young and the elderly) and other practitioners' conceptions, perceptions, beliefs or understandings of the relationships between play on the one hand and learning, teaching, sociocognitive development, on the other. Counting on an updated panorama of a variety of stakeholders' perspectives on the relation between play and learning may widen our understanding not only of the affordances of a playful stance to learning but also of the tensions and obstacles for devising and implementing playful pedagogies.
- Methodological analyses of the affordances of playful stances in ways of collecting data about learners' and teachers' thinking and practice to gain understanding of exploratory thinking, creativity, and multimodal teaching and learning.

Exceptionally, comprehensive and theoretically-driven meta-analyses are welcome.

Manuscript submission information:

As an international, multi-disciplinary, peer-refereed journal, Learning and Instruction provides a platform for the publication of the most advanced scientific research in the areas of learning, development, instruction and teaching. This 2023 Open Call for a Special Issue of Learning and Instruction solicits high-quality proposals that will be evaluated in a highly competitive procedure.

We invite colleagues to submit the manuscript any time before the deadline. For any inquiries about the appropriateness of contribution topics, please contact Dr. Nora Scheuer nora.scheuer@comahue-conicet.gob.ar or Prof Teresa Cremin, teresa.cremin@open.ac.uk

The journal's submission platform (Editorial Manager®) is now available for receiving submissions to this Special Issue. Please refer to the Guide for Authors to prepare the manuscript and select the article type 'VSI: Playful Stances to Learning' when submitting your manuscript online. Both the Guide for Authors and the submission portal can be found on the journal Homepage here: <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/learning-and-instruction/0959-4752/guide-for-authors>.

Interested authors are asked to submit:

- a) the manuscript title and an abstract of up to 1000 words (excluding references, figures and tables), and



b) a short bio of authors (150 words maximum per author) to the guest editors.

Abstracts will be reviewed, and selected authors will be invited to submit a full manuscript for consideration for inclusion in the special issue.

Submission timeline:

- Call for abstracts: 1st January 2023
- Abstracts due to Editors: March 31, 2023
- Invitations to submit full manuscripts: April 30, 2023
- Completed manuscripts submitted: September 30th, 2023

All submissions deemed suitable to be sent for peer review will be reviewed by at least two independent reviewers. Once your manuscript is accepted, it will go into production, and will be simultaneously published in the current regular issue and pulled into the online Special Issue. Articles from this Special Issue will appear in different regular issues of the journal, though they will be clearly marked and branded as Special Issue articles.

Here is an example: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/science-of-the-total-environment/special-issue/10SWS2W7VVV>

What is a VSI (Virtual Special Issue):

Upon its editorial acceptance, articles submitted to a VSI will go into production immediately. It will be published in the latest regular issue while simultaneously being presented on the Special Issue webpage. The regular issues will mark and brand the Special Issue articles.

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Keywords: playfulness, learning agency, playful pedagogies, imagination, cognitive diversity, pleasure, perspectivism.