




# Playful Participatory Research: (40 pts)

For this assignment, you will engage in Playful Participatory Research (PPR - an approach to teacher research we will discuss in class) to explore a critical topic related to learning through play. This is an ongoing project throughout the semester. Each student will meet individually with the course instructor early in the semester to discuss their particular needs and interests for this project and develop a plan that fits their situation.

**Identify your learning context and learners.** This may be your practicum or fieldwork site (in-person or remote), a place of employment (school, babysitting job, or other experience in which you interact with children), or a home/family situation (if you regularly interact with children in your family or community). If you do not have access to any of these, you may form a group of 2 or more learners of any age in an in-person or remote-learning context. **Note:** If you are working with the same group of learners as another student(s) in the course, you might want to collaborate together for this assignment.

**Choose a research question.** Select a question related to play or playful learning and anti-bias/social justice to guide your inquiry. For example: *When and how do children talk about race during play?* or *How do read aloud about gender identity influence children's play?* or *What does engagement look like in remote learning play experiences? Is engagement equitable, or are some children more engaged than others? If so, why? Or In what ways do issues of equity come up in children's storytelling and story acting?*






**Learn more about your topic.** An important part of teacher research is knowing what others have learned about your area of inquiry. Explore other sources of knowledge about your inquiry topic. Here are some ideas for finding out more about your topic:

Read some research studies that you find through your university library system (e.g. in online journals about play or education)


Search online for blog posts, news articles, etc. about your topic

Talk to other educators, children, families, or members of your community to hear what they think about your question, and make notes about what you learn.

Once you have gathered some more information, share what you learned about your question/topic with your inquiry group or the whole class in a playful way. E.g., if you read about a research study where the researchers observed children in a play activity, you could have the class try out that activity and then share about the research findings.



**Document.** Engage in playful teaching and document the experience with video, audio, written notes, work samples, etc.



**Learn from and with your inquiry group.** Small inquiry groups of 3-4 members will be formed early in the semester based on common interests or Playful Participatory Research contexts. Each member of the inquiry group will develop a question to guide an investigation into play/playful learning in a current or future site of practice with young children. Group members will regularly bring documentation from their site of practice to the inquiry group. During class time, groups will use protocols to explore the documentation and consider next steps for practice. During inquiry groups in class (October and November), you will share two pieces of documentation related to your question (one piece during one class session, and a second piece during a different class session – specific dates to be agreed upon with your group).



**Share what you learn.** For the last day of class, create a “mini-poster” or short interactive presentation that shares an example of your documentation and includes an emerging hypothesis about your question.



**Write about your research.** Write a 5-7 page paper connecting your question and hypothesis with literature from the course as well as the 2-3 additional empirical studies about play you identified in step 3.