

## **Call for contributions: The Power of Play in Higher Education**

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We are exploring options with publishers for a book we are co-editing tentatively titled, *The Power of Play in Higher Education*; this would be a groundbreaking text uniting playful pedagogies in university teaching across the world in a single publication.

There is currently no academic text for teachers, academic support staff and researchers in higher education which focuses on how, why and when to adopt playful pedagogic strategies to good effect. Hitherto, play has been conflated with creativity and little explored in Higher Education; it is often misunderstood as something trivial, associated with childhood and therefore inappropriate for a university education and research.

Play literature and theory contradicts this by arguing that play contributes at a fundamental level to social and human development and relations. The general benefits of play are picked out by Parr in his overview article on play (THE 2014), citing play luminaries such as Brown, Sutton-Smith, Huizinga. However, next to nothing is written about the importance of including play within higher education – the overwhelming majority relates to child development. Change is in the air however: creativity in tertiary learning is already popular as a subject for discussion and publication and now numerous conferences on play in HE in the UK are starting to be held. The recent appointment of a LEGO ‘professor’ at Cambridge University – albeit for early years learning - has made headlines and an impact on the university radar also.

In 2015 Chrissi and I scoped out the extent to which play is being used in higher education, by inviting examples of practice. We received 37 stories of how play is currently in use in HE in the UK and America. These reflective accounts suggest to us there is substantial evidence that play is an important and untapped element of higher order thinking and enquiry. We would now like the opportunity to show how in depth, rigorous and theorized examples of playful pedagogies can enhance the ~~the~~ higher education student experience.

With this in mind we are inviting colleagues around the world to send us an expression of interest for either

- a) a chapter detailing a scholarly case study of innovations with play in a higher education settings with discipline and context clearly specified
- b) a short pen portrait of an innovation using play
- c) a visual or digital resource for play in higher education that they have created and which is fully copyright cleared

At this stage, we simply require a 500 word outline of your proposal, to reach us no later than April 12<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The outline content is currently framed as:

- an introductory section by Chrissi and Alison on the history and theory of play, setting the context for and current situation of play and playfulness in HE
- the main body of the book which will offer chapters discussing evaluated experiences of play initiatives of all kinds - free, rule or game-based, team and solo, collaborative, competitive and open ended - and how they are situated within the higher education experience. We anticipate that these will cover a range of disciplines and situations.
- A future-facing concluding section which makes recommendations for ways in which play can be incorporated into the higher education offer, how and why.

### **Draft timeline**

Invite proposals for content by April 12<sup>th</sup> 2016

Confirmation of publication arrangements July 2016

Decision on content and invitation to produce full chapters May 2016

First draft chapters submitted September 1, 2016

Internal peer review of chapters between authors Sept – November 2016

Return of peer reviewed materials end November 2016

Amended chapters in line with peer review January 2017

Copy editing, permissions clearance by April 2017

Manuscript out for first draft peer review with publisher peer reviewers May 2017

Final edits July-August 2017

Final proof submitted to publisher September 2017

Publication Date tbc

We look forward to hearing from you

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