

Journal of Music Teacher Education

<http://jmt.sagepub.com/>

Learning Through Play: Extending an Early Childhood Music Education Approach to Undergraduate and Graduate Music Education

Lisa Huisman Koops and Cynthia Crump Taggart

Journal of Music Teacher Education 2011 20: 55 originally published online 15 June
2010

DOI: 10.1177/1057083710373578

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jmt.sagepub.com/content/20/2/55>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



National Association for Music Education

Additional services and information for *Journal of Music Teacher Education* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jmt.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jmt.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://jmt.sagepub.com/content/20/2/55.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Mar 16, 2011

[OnlineFirst Version of Record](#) - Jun 15, 2010

Downloaded from jmt.sagepub.com at Levinsky College of Education on March 25, 2012

[What is This?](#)

Learning Through Play: Extending an Early Childhood Music Education Approach to Undergraduate and Graduate Music Education

Lisa Huisman Koops¹
and Cynthia Crump Taggart²

Abstract

Early childhood researchers have found that play is an ideal way for young children to learn. Yet few music teacher educators have applied this finding with adult learners, and in many music education programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, playful activities are generally few. This article presents a rationale for developing “playful” music education undergraduate and graduate programs and offer examples of engaging in play as part of coursework, socialization, and research. Observations, suggestions, and findings drawn from the fields of cognitive science, philosophy, psychology, music education, as well as early childhood research and practice are described as the authors open a discussion of how “lightening up” our curricula may actually have a weighty positive impact.

Keywords

teaching strategies, music teacher educators, early childhood

Play is currently a topic at the forefront of research and practice in early childhood education and beyond. Both child and adult play are featured in popular books such as Singer’s (2009) *Taking Play Seriously: Children and Play in Early Childhood*

¹Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

²Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Corresponding Author:

Lisa Huisman Koops, Department of Music, Case Western Reserve University,
Cleveland, OH 44106-7105, USA

Email: lisa.koops@case.edu

Education—An Exciting Challenge; Elkind's (2007) *The Power of Play: Learning What Comes Naturally*; Ackerman's (1999) *Deep Play*; Singer, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek's (2006) *Play = Learning*; and Brown's (2009) *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. Play is a topic of interest in research as well, as evidenced by books such as Sutton-Smith's (1997) *The Ambiguity of Play* and Sluss and Jarrett's (2007) edited collection *Investigating Play in the 21st Century*, the seventh volume of the University Press of America's *Play & Culture Series*.

But what is play, how does it influence learning, and how could a fresh understanding of play affect the work of music teacher educators, both on the undergraduate and graduate levels? In this article, we explore ideas associated with those questions with the intention of calling attention to play as an underconsidered and underused aspect of music teaching and learning, recognizing that play may be, in fact, an underconsidered mode of being in adult life in general.

Defining and Exploring Play

Play was identified by Pink (2006) as one of the six essential "senses" or approaches that is necessary to success in this day and age; the others are design, story, symphony, empathy, and meaning. But Pink did not define play; instead he pointed to computer games, laughter clubs, and jokes as examples of play. Sutton-Smith (1997), a leading scholar in play studies over the past several decades, argued that almost any activity can be play and that play is not easily defined. He began his book *The Ambiguity of Play* by saying, "We all play occasionally, and we all know what playing feels like. But when it comes to making theoretical statements about what play is, we fall into silliness. There is little agreement among us, and much ambiguity" (p. 1). Rather than defining play, Sutton-Smith went on to describe how play is viewed and used within narratives, including play as progress, as fate, as power, as identity, as the imaginary, in relation to self, and as frivolous.

Brown (2009), founder of the National Institute for Play, also was hesitant to define play, and stated "Defining play has always seemed to me like explaining a joke—analyzing it takes the joy out of it" (p. 16). Yet, there are some commonly accepted forms, qualities, and characteristics of play across both research and popular literature. According to Brown, the characteristics of play are that it lacks a clear purpose, is freely chosen and attractive, exists within a more loose conception of time, promotes loss of self-consciousness, invites improvisation, and is something players want to continue. Also, play often includes an element of physical activity. He went on to state that the problem with these descriptors is that they do not communicate the emotional aspect of play, which he also viewed as important. In describing forms of play, Brown included attunement, body and movement play, object play, imaginative play, social play, story-telling and narrative play, and transformative-integrative and creative play.

Russ (2004) noted that processing emotion is a key feature of children's pretend play, in addition to engaging in cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and problem solving processes. She described the causal relationship between play and coping ability

as well as the relationship between play and creativity, specifically in the ability to generate insights and the ability to engage in divergent thinking. She and her graduate students at Case Western Reserve University are currently conducting research on a play intervention that may be used to help teach children to play in ways that improve their ability to cope with stressful situations.

Play has been used as therapy for decades, both with children (Bettelheim, 1987; Freiberg, 1959; Hartley, Frank, & Goldenson, 1952) and adults (Goffman, 1959). Elkind (2007) believes that all children use play to alleviate stress, and that play can be used to help children redirect impulses that are socially unacceptable. In adults, Cohen (2006) believes that role-playing can be useful in helping one become more adept at playing his or her roles in daily life, as well as in understanding the viewpoints of others.

Brown (2009) described the adaptive nature of play as important to evolution, and Miller (1968) notes that play is more frequent and varied in species that are more evolved. In fact, as early as the late 1800s, both Darwin (1872) and Groos (1898, 1901) studied play in animals and identified it as adaptive. In observing animals, Brown found that they demonstrated neoteny, which is the carrying of youthful characteristics into adulthood. A playful nature is one of these characteristics. These youthful characteristics result in adult animals being less resistant to change, as well as more curious and able to learn, increasing their chances of survival.

There is a tension, though, over corraling play for other purposes. Much of the research on play with children, reviewed by Sutton-Smith (1997), viewed play as progress, a way of learning and developing. Yet he questioned this narrative of play and hinted at the idea of valuing play for play's sake, asking "whether play need have a function apart from the joy of playing, the associated joy of living, the increases in enjoying one's own play skills, and the play interests and associations that naturally follow" (pp. 44-45). He further supported this notion with research on children's own definitions of play, which are about fun, freedom, and fantasy. These ideas of joy and enjoying one's skills might link directly to the stress-reduction and coping functions of play found by Russ (2004).

While including the "apparently purposeless" descriptor of play in his list described above, Brown (2009) went on to note that humans see purposes at times in play, such as preparation for adult life, observed both in animal and human play. He viewed play as development, even through adulthood, noting that play is a safe venue in which to practice adult behaviors and thoughts. This idea of a certain amount of safety found within play is central to the identification of play as a venue for development. The focus of our article is on cooperative and imaginative play, playfulness as an attitude, and playful behaviors that spur the imagination. This contrasts with descriptions of the typical forms of play in which adults engage that tend to be structured and include sports, festivals, and contests, which are based on physical and intellectual acuity and focuses on power and winning (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

An important strand in this discussion is how to hold in tension the inherent enjoyment of play with the desire to use play to meet certain goals. Elements of play could

be lost when it is made a requirement or even hijacked for specific purposes. And yet, making space for play could lead to flow experiences, among other things. Flow, as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), is a state of self-actualization and optimization that results from balancing challenges with skills, moving in a “flow channel” with increasing challenges as skills increase. A flow experience is autotelic, or “an end in itself” (p. 67), not done first and foremost to fulfill another purpose. Being in a flow state is marked by being in the moment (not analyzing what is happening); narrowing of attention to task at hand; forgetting about oneself but holding awareness of one’s body and actions; being in control but not worried about it; and having clear guidelines and goals. In a study of instances of flow during work and during play, it was found that individuals experienced flow in both settings, but did not always want to keep working even though they were experiencing flow, and did not want to stop playing even if they were not experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This could be because of the connotations of work being “hard” and play being “fun.” However, sometimes it is easier to experience flow on the job because of the “built-in goals, feedback, rules, and challenges, all of which encourage one to become involved in one’s work, to concentrate and lose oneself in it” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 162).

Thus, perhaps part of the educational enterprise is to recognize flow within work. Brown (2009) called for a respect of the mutually beneficial relationship between leisure play and work, recognizing the need for both. He also argued that play at work is useful and essential; that joking, pretending, and playing little games with one’s self can be a boon in the workplace. Kratus (1997) articulated the overlap between work and play, stating, “We can think of work and play as being at opposite ends of a continuum of conscious, intentional, purposeful human activity” (p. 3). He described his work/play continuum in this way:

At one end of the continuum, work can be defined as an activity in which the actor emphasizes the production of a particular outcome and in which there is some element of real world consequence. At the other end of the continuum, play can be defined as an activity in which the actor emphasizes the engagement in the process and in which there is some aspect of imagination or a suspension of reality. A conscious, intentional, purposeful activity can combine elements of work and play. (p. 3; emphasis his)

Kratus (1997) went on to call for music educators to design learning experiences that lie between the two ends of the work–play continuum, increasing “the imaginative work and the goal-oriented play” (p. 8) in music education, specifically within the areas of performance, listening, and composing.

Play can also be examined in terms of characteristics of playful adults. Play researchers Tegano and Moran (2007) identified three characteristics of playful adults, including an “open interactive style, resistance to evaluation, and tolerance for ambiguity” (p. 179). The interactive style is marked by active participation but not controlling behaviors. In resistance to evaluation, the authors describe putting aside externally

enforced rules. Tolerating ambiguity refers to being “open, flexible, and adaptable” (p. 182). These characteristics are also markers for creativity. Motivation is a key in distinguishing between work and play.

Play, then, is a multifaceted, slippery idea. For the purpose of this article, we are viewing play as activities and dispositions that allow for trying out ideas without immediate judgment or evaluation, increasing enjoyment or flow, and fostering creativity in a safe environment. Play is contrasted with work, in that work is aimed at accomplishing behaviors, whereas the purpose of play includes deepening personal physical, emotional, or cognitive well-being (Lehmann, Sloboda, & Woody, 2007). With this in mind, the remainder of this article will explore how play intersects with learning and how aspects of play can be incorporated into undergraduate and graduate music education courses and curricula.

The Role of Play in Learning

Music teacher educators are engaged in the enterprise of education, and play can be an important part of this enterprise. From early in life, play is central to learning. Bredekamp and Copple (2002) pointed out that children’s learning and development occur through opportunities to play. Music education methodologies and teaching approaches such as Orff-Schulwerk (Frazee & Kreuter, 1987) and Music Learning Theory (Valerio, Reynolds, Bolton, Taggart, & Gordon, 1998) have incorporated playful elements as central elements of pedagogy and curriculum for children. Children tend naturally to play, and their play generally is accepted and understood by adults as being an essential part of childhood overall and of learning in childhood in particular. Montagu, in his foreword to Blatner and Blatner (1988), insisted that play is an absolute necessity to social and physical development, yet this necessity has gone largely unrecognized. Play must continue throughout the lifespan. However, adult play is sometimes stigmatized as frivolous or something even more pernicious. Language reinforces this negative view subtly, for instance by saying that someone “plays games” as a way of saying that the person is not to be trusted.

However, acceptance of play being for adults as well as children is central to human development. Corbeil (1999) argued that play continues throughout the lifespan and should not be limited to children. Cohen (2006) insisted that, although they are inhibited about doing so, adults ought to play more and argued vehemently that the traditional view of play, as being something that children do, cramps persons’ growth as human beings. Blatner and Blatner (1988) confirmed this:

In play, children and adults experience a holistic integration of many components of learning: spontaneous originality, emotional reactions, unconscious motivations, personal temperament and style, social and cultural context, as well as the more researched intellectual processes. Play, therefore is a primal form of learning by doing, and this complex, co-creative process is becoming recognized as one of the most effective forms of education. (p. 34)

Brown (2009) stressed the importance of including play in the learning environment and worried that some malign play as mere entertainment. In response he stated that, with play and in a playful environment, “the lessons are learned as well or better than they would be with other methods. Play isn’t the enemy of learning, (sic) it’s learning’s partner. Play is like fertilizer for brain growth” (p. 101). Play researchers have identified physiological changes in the brain that are associated with play. Play has been found to stimulate nerve growth in the parts of the brain where emotions are processed and also in the portion of the brain where executive decisions are made (Brown, 2009). Play is also correlated with development in the frontal cortex, which is the portion of the brain responsible for much of what is identified as cognition (Brown, 2009). In other words, there is physiological evidence that play enhances thinking and learning for persons of all ages. Play develops the ability to learn. Play results in learning in and of itself and contextualizes that learning in a way that makes it more meaningful to the learner. It teaches the “rules of the game” in a safe environment. It also encourages flexible, improvisatory thinking that can be situated in a negotiated, social context.

Creativity and self-actualization can be achieved through play (Brown, 2009). Play was recognized by Blatner and Blatner (1988) as being fundamental to fostering creativity. This has direct implications for music teacher educators, as creativity is highly valued in teaching and scholarship. Creativity allows teachers to think on their feet and adapt their teaching “in the moment,” improvising to meet the needs of their students. And, without creativity, scholarship stagnates; researchers need to be able to view conundrums creatively or they will never get the answers they seek. By integrating play in music education curricula at all levels, music teacher educators will be fostering the kind of creative thinking that will develop creative teachers and scholars.

Perls (1969) argued that persons seek self-actualization through play. Not coincidentally, many seek education for the same reason, which supports that blending play and education may make intrinsic sense. According to Perls, play helps adults bridge the unsettling gap between what they view as their potential and what they have actually achieved. He believed that, through play, adults experience what Csikszentmihalyi would call flow experiences, during which this gap is at its smallest and through which they experience liberation and joy. In fact, Csikszentmihalyi (2000) sometimes used the words play and playfulness as synonyms for flow. Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi suggested that humans learn the properties and characteristics of the structure of flow experiences and learn to generalize them to other situations. Perhaps music teacher educators can learn enough about the properties and characteristics of playfulness so that we can harness them for educational purposes.

Play has also been found to facilitate the creation of trust and community (Brown, 2009). Play enables humans to experience common emotions and puts them in meaningful communication with those around them. In this way, play can enhance a learning community and tear down boundaries that otherwise might inhibit learning.

Elkind (2007) believed that it is possible to bring creative, playful impulses to what would normally be viewed as work. Brown (2009) found evidence of this when he took the play histories of two Nobel laureate scientists, Roger Guillemin and Jonas Salk. In doing so, he realized that what they were doing in the laboratory on a daily

basis was playing. He described this in the following way: “When Roger took me through his laboratory he was like a kid as he described his experiments. Here was the biggest, most expensive sandbox he had ever played with, all set up to let him discover wonderful new things” (p. 63). Elkind (2007) expressed concern that the power of play “is threatened by the current emphasis on suppressing play in the service of work for both children and adults” (p. 218). Are music education curricula and classrooms guilty of this? Can music teacher educators create learning environments that are playful and pose challenges that are worth students’ full engagement?

Creating a Culture of Play in the Classroom

Some adults find it difficult to play in settings that are not typically viewed as playful, like the classroom. Unlike young children, adults can be extremely self-conscious and are reluctant to engage in anything that might make them appear “silly” in front of professional colleagues and friends (Brown, 2009). In fact, Brown (2009) believed that learning how to stay playful was one of the most difficult but important challenges that humans faced as they enter adulthood. With this in mind, how can music teacher educators create a culture of play in their music education classrooms?

First, music teacher educators may need to teach students to play, as many students will be inhibited to do so in the classroom (Blatner & Blatner, 1988). To do this, music teacher educators need to be playful themselves, as students have few models of playful adults (Blatner & Blatner, 1988). They should model the three characteristics of playful adults, as articulated by Tegano and Moran (2007). These are an open, interactive style, resistance to evaluation, and tolerance for ambiguity. The last two of these, resistance to evaluation and tolerance for ambiguity can be challenging and will require many to rethink what happens in their educational settings. Music teacher educators also need to create play opportunities for and with students. These types of playful activities can come in many forms, including role-playing, use of humor, writing and use of jokes, brainstorming, and use of games.

Blatner and Blatner (1988) advocated the use of role-playing as a type of play that helps adults recapture the imagination and spontaneity that is lost to many adults. They believed that role-playing allows adults to distance themselves from the self-consciousness that comes with growing older. Cohen (2006) described the use of role-playing in an educational setting, noting that role players were at first embarrassed, but after 20 minutes players had relaxed, were laughing, and were able to interpret performances. Imaginative role-playing allows students to view a problem from another perspective or through an alternate lens (Brown, 2009). Role-playing could be employed in an introduction to music education class. Students could assume roles as a vehicle for presenting arguments on advocacy with principals (one student assuming the role of music teacher and another of the principal), justifying grades to parents (one student assuming the role of music teacher and others of the parents), and discussing behavior with individual students (one student assuming the role of music teacher and another of student). During peer-teaching lessons in an undergraduate methods course, role-playing could take the form of asking students other than the one teaching to be child-like, providing

a slightly more realistic group of learners for the peer teacher and perhaps reducing the peer-teacher's anxiety. The experience might also help the role-players look at children in a new light. On a graduate level, a philosophy class could hold a panel discussion or debate, with each class member acting as the various philosophers studied in class. This would require the player to understand deeply the philosopher's stance on issues and possibly apply his or her ideas to new situations.

Using humor, telling jokes, and appreciating jokes requires deep understanding of a subject as well as the vocabulary and language patterns used within a subject; jokes are among the most difficult things to translate and to understand in a second language. Researchers have found that "humor cuts through the clutter in the 'higher' centers of the brain, straight to the cortical, emotional centers" (Brown, 2009, p. 164). As a result, the use of humor can help students internalize concepts and commit them to long-term memory.

Appropriate use of humor also can diffuse tension in a classroom and allow teachers to handle awkward situations. Elkind (2007) suggested that persons in positions of authority, such as teachers, often fall into an "egocentric trap" (p. 172) that inhibits their abilities to see things from another point of view, but that humor is an escape from the trap. When teachers can laugh at themselves openly and with a sense of humor in the classroom, they will create a safe, trust-filled environment in which students also can laugh at themselves when they feel uncomfortable, diffusing tension and allowing them to move forward. This gives students permission to experiment and helps them learn that mistakes are not fatal.

Elkind (2007) also advocated the active use of humor through the creation of jokes. Giving students an opportunity to write jokes requires them to grapple with a subject in a new way and forces creative, deep thinking. A research class could be assigned to write a research joke, possibly using a common joke formula. For instance, "What do you get when you cross a qualitative music education researcher with a llama?" or "An ANOVA, a t-test, and a linear regression walked into a bar." At times, joking and role-playing can intersect. For example, graduate students could prepare silly, mock research posters to share with one another during class in a mock poster session. This requires a certain level of understanding, but frees student thinking, allowing students to work with statistical tests and research terms without the burden of accuracy or usefulness. It also allows them to "play" with their emerging identity as researchers and presenters.

Games have a place in the classroom, as well. Csikszentmihalyi (2000) believed that games provide enjoyment in a real-life setting and can result in flow. For this reason, he stated that games should be used to structure "more and more of our normal experiences into forms that will provide enjoyment" (p. 73). However, the focus of games in the classroom should be learning, fun, and cooperation rather than competition. Elkind (2007) suggested that competition is an inherent part of life, but that too often the focus of games is competition rather than cooperation. He believed that cooperative games help to provide a balance to what often is an overriding focus on competition and winning above all else. Blatner and Blatner (1988) also expressed concern that too many adult games place excessive emphasis on competition rather than on cooperation, and

stated that competition should not be imposed on students in the classroom. Furthermore, Blatner and Blatner suggested that playing cooperative games together with a shared goal should serve as a model for educational practice. Games can take many forms in the music education classroom. For instance, one might have students work in small group to unscramble a word jumble of terms related to what had been discussed in the previous class and in the assigned reading. This could lead to a review of terminology by asking the students in their groups to be certain that all group members knew the meanings and importance of the terms that they unscrambled. This playful activity, which would only take a couple of minutes, would get the students working collaboratively with the course content. A game in research class could be to generate collaboratively in groups of three or four students multiple purpose and problem statements for a specified research design, or brainstorm five different interpretations of a surprising research finding: "why did these numbers come out so differently than we had expected?" Brainstorming, when done rightly, is a constructive form of play, and a playful frame of mind helps one to be open to new ideas. Generating many ideas, including some that are silly and creative, might lead to a new insight.

Creating a safe environment is fundamental to teaching students to play (Brown, 2009). Students need to know that they will not be judged or ridiculed by others as they engage in play. They need to feel that they are part of a learning community in which the members support one another, and that the teacher is a part of that community. One way in which to approach this is to take steps toward flattening the teacher/student hierarchy by interacting with and listening to our students and by giving them a voice in our classrooms. This is difficult, as faculty members are in a position of authority; they give grades and write letters of recommendation. This student/teacher hierarchy will, can, and should never be completely flat. Yet students need to trust their teachers and one another not to be hurtful or demeaning as they take risks and play. As a means of flattening the classroom structure, at the beginning of the semester, teachers might consider talking with their students about the environments that they, as a community, want to create in their classrooms. The students could help to establish rules and parameters that would help them to feel safe as they play and learn.

Giving students choice is another means of creating a flatter hierarchical structure in the classroom. Brown (2009) found that giving students choices results in longer term satisfaction with their learning experiences, especially if the options are playful in nature. Perhaps music teacher educators could construct several playful, creative options to the more traditional class assignments. For example, instead of writing an end-of-term scholarly paper, students could be given the option of producing a skit or a short film that demonstrates knowledge of course content. Students also could be given an option of writing a story that embodies the desired principles or course content. This skit, film, or story could be accompanied by a bibliography and a short explanatory statement, making the intellectual connections in the creative product more explicit. Then students could have the opportunity to choose which activities seem to be the most fun, best suit their learning needs, and resonate most with their playful natures. Some might choose to write traditional papers, but others may choose more creative options.

Music teacher educators might also need to consider how and when they use grades. Grades can create high stakes and a sense of competition, fear, tension, and stress that undermine community (Elkind, 2007). As a result, they can get in the way of the creativity and the risk-taking needed to learn through play. Are there times when rich, nongraded feedback is equally as or more appropriate than giving a grade? Perhaps at the undergraduate level, some assignments do not need to be graded and detailed narrative feedback will suffice. Alternately, providing students an opportunity to revise work for an improved grade might relieve some of the pressure of figuring out what the teacher wants so that they receive a good grade; it also might make being creative less risky. At the doctoral level, grades may not be necessary. The coin of the realm at that level is publications, presentations, and letters of recommendation. Perhaps music teacher educators at the doctoral level should give extensive feedback and mentoring and dispense with grades entirely.

Most students view school as work, and providing informal opportunities for them to play with other members of their work community, that is, peers and faculty members, will support their learning in the classroom. For example, an MENC chapter could have a beginning of the year or year-end picnic. During the event, the music education students and faculty could gather outside, eat, play games, talk with one another, and relax. Additionally, faculty members could host social gatherings for the different parts of the music education community at their homes. These types of social events, in which faculty and students play together outside of the classroom, can create a type of subculture that encourages collegiality, which is essential to the creation of a safe, playful learning environment.

The faculty hiring and student recruitment processes also can serve an important role in creating a playful culture. Both of these processes allow music education faculty to choose individuals who can contribute to a creative culture. Brown (2009) warned readers to avoid persons who shut down play and recommended seeking out the company of others who value play and have a playful nature. By hiring colleagues with whom they can play as well as think, plan and dream, music teacher educators can experience the power of play themselves and model playful behavior in the workplace for their students. During the admissions process, faculty also can seek students with playful natures that can be nurtured and developed. Involving graduate students in choosing their own graduate colleagues can also help to create a playful graduate community. When a graduate candidate visits, all available graduate students could take that candidate to lunch in an informal setting. Following the candidate's visit, the faculty could talk with the doctoral students to determine if they thought that the potential student would fit well in the learning community. This feedback could figure in an informal way into admission decisions.

Conclusions

If music teacher educators can create a culture of play in the classroom, their students' learning may be stimulated, contextualized, and made more meaningful. In addition,

preservice music educators might develop better strategies to cope with stress through play. Stress can lead to burnout of music education students (Bernhard, 2005) as well as in-service teacher job dissatisfaction (Scheib, 2003), and is one of the identified causes of attrition of in-service music educators (Baker, 2007). Music teacher educators' making conscious efforts to help their students learn to play during their undergraduate and graduate music education work could have a far-reaching effect on students' eventual career success and satisfaction.

Exploring the ideas of play, and delving deeper into the definitions and forms of play, as well as their place in learning, can be a challenging and rewarding pursuit for music teacher educators. We should continue to explore creating a culture of play in our discipline by incorporating playful ideas into undergraduate and graduate programs. This could lead to research on specific benefits of play-based activities, identification of best practices for playful activities, and possibly a compilation of ideas and strategies for including play in the undergraduate and graduate music education programs. In addition, by learning to work playfully, music teacher educators' enjoyment of their own teaching and research might blossom, as they experience some of the same joy in the workplace as Guillimen and Salk experienced in their laboratories.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

References

- Ackerman, D. (1999). *Deep play*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Baker, V. D. (2007). Relationship between job satisfaction and the perceptions of administrative support among early career secondary choral music educators. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 17*(1), 77-90.
- Bernhard, H. C. (2005). Burnout and the college music education major. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 15*(1), 43-51.
- Bettelheim, B. (1987). *A good enough parent*. New York, NY: Knopf.
- Blatner, A. & Blatner, A. (1988). *The art of play: An adult's guide to reclaiming imagination and spontaneity*. New York, NY: Human Sciences Press.
- Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (2002). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Brown, S. (2009). *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Cohen, D. (2006). *The development of play* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Corbeil, P. (1999). Learning from children: Practical and theoretical reflections on playing and learning. *Simulation & Gaming, 30*, 163-180.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). *Beyond boredom and anxiety: Experiencing flow in work and play* (25th anniversary ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darwin, C. (1872). *The expression of the emotions in animals and men*. London, England: John Murray.
- Elkind, D. (2007). *The power of play: How spontaneous, imaginative activities lead to happier, healthier children*. Cambridge, MA: DaCapo.
- Fraze, J., & Kreuter, K. (1987). *Discovering Orff: A curriculum for music teachers*. New York, NY: Schott.
- Freiburg, S. (1959). *The magic years*. New York, NY: Scribner's.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Groos, K. (1898). *The play of animals*. New York, NY: Appleton.
- Groos, K. (1901). *The play of man*. London, England: Heinemann.
- Hartley, R., Frank, L., & Goldenson, R. M. (1952). *Understanding children's play*. London, England: Routledge.
- Kratus, J. (1997). *The roles of work and play in music education*. Paper presented at the Philosophy of Music Education International Symposium III, Los Angeles, CA.
- Lehmann, A., Sloboda, J., & Woody, H. (2007). *Psychology for musicians*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, S. (1968). *The psychology of play*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin.
- Perls, F. (1969). *Gestalt therapy*. London, England: Souvenir Press.
- Pink, D. H. (2006). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. New York: Penguin.
- Russ, S. (2004). *Play in child development and psychotherapy: Toward empirically supported practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Scheib, J. W. (2003). Role stress in the professional life of the school music teacher: A collective case study. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51, 124-136.
- Singer, D. (2009). *Taking play seriously: Children and play in early childhood education—an exciting challenge*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Singer, D., Golinkoff, R. M., & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Play = learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sluss, D. J., & Jarrett, O. (Eds.). (2007). *Play & culture studies: Vol. 7. Investigating play in the 21st century*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *The ambiguity of play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Tegano, D. W., & Moran, J. D., III. (2007). Play and creativity: The role of the intersubjective adult. In D. J. Sluss & O. S. Jarrett (Eds.), *Play & culture studies: Vol. 7. Investigating play in the 21st century* (pp. 175-187). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Valerio, W. H., Reynolds, A. M., Bolton, B. M., Taggart, C. C., & Gordon, E. E. (1998). *Music play: The early childhood music curriculum guide for parents, teachers, and caregivers*. Chicago, IL: GIA.