

Play & Learning (Angela Bachieca, Angela Bulzinetti, Floriana Serafini)

Amusement carries out the basic function of developing and structuring one's personality.

It is a pleasure that cannot be given up as it removes the player from reality and leads him in a fantasy world from where he is able to escape simply by stopping to play.

It is enriching: to play "let's pretend" allows the child to simulate every day deeds and, therefore, to take over the more common attitudes that characterize the world of the grown up.

This is a basic right of any child because it is a vital need for kids, motivated by requirements of physical, affective, psychological and social order, based on the acknowledgment of human being in any stage of life.

To have fun is also a learning process because, quoting J. Piaget, "it is the most spontaneous inclination of the child's thought".

Finally, to play is a universal value that goes beyond any cultural and linguistic difference. It makes integration and communication easy since it uses a multiplicity of languages that exceed the limits of the linguistic code; it allows identifying general targets, acknowledging the respect of habit and traditions of any single country.

International documents, school institutions and the educational agencies consider to have fun a primary right and one essential instrument for human growth.

We feel, therefore, that is important to introduce some proposals of "Didactics of amusement" to be included in the supranational projects.

Through play, inherent characteristics in the human nature of each individual and democrat (with the cards in hand, everyone is an equal, maintained Gogol) and play laboratory activities, intend to pursue the following aims:

- to encourage the social integration of children
- to know, understand and respect different cultures
- to stimulate and develop fantasy and creativity
- to create an enjoyable and interesting learning atmosphere in which learning through making prevails on learning through the systematic transmission of knowledge and consolidated values
- to communicate, confront, collaborate and cooperate for the achievement of mutual aims

The work presents some examples of activities which can be achieved with primary school children (6/11) depending on methods and time.

1. **Dramatisation laboratory: "The City of Colours and the perfidious Knight Grey** – from the painting experience, to the drawing up of a story and to the consequent dramatisation.
2. **The Secrets of Bluelawn** – from the collective invention of a story, to the planning and achievement of a game through a "journey".
3. **Friends in the Woods** – from the telling of a story, to the planning and achievement of a Giant Game through a "journey".
4. **Little Giant, Little Hero** – from the collective invention of a story, to the planning and achievement of a giant interactivity book.
5. **The Creative Metamorphosis** – from the splashes of colour to the production of a fantasy text.
6. **Play in time and space** – intergenerational study and examples of intercultural learning.

For all the proposed activities, a play – laboratory methodology was chosen in which the child is the main and active protagonist. Such a choice was determined from the fact that play is an element of crucial importance in the development of the child's personality and is the activity most congenial and suitable for a incisive, learning action, as was also maintained by Erasmo da Rotterdam, "a constant note of enjoyment has to be interspersed with our studies, thus it becomes possible to conceive education as a game rather than a toil" and clarified "no activity can be conducted at length if there is no pleasure for who participates".

Each example is then characterised by specific models which can be reformulated, reviewed, modified and enrich the aims of adapting to the different scholastic realities and in accordance with new stimulus, new needs and proposals.