

# Play-based learning and intentional teaching: forever different?

Professor Susan Edwards

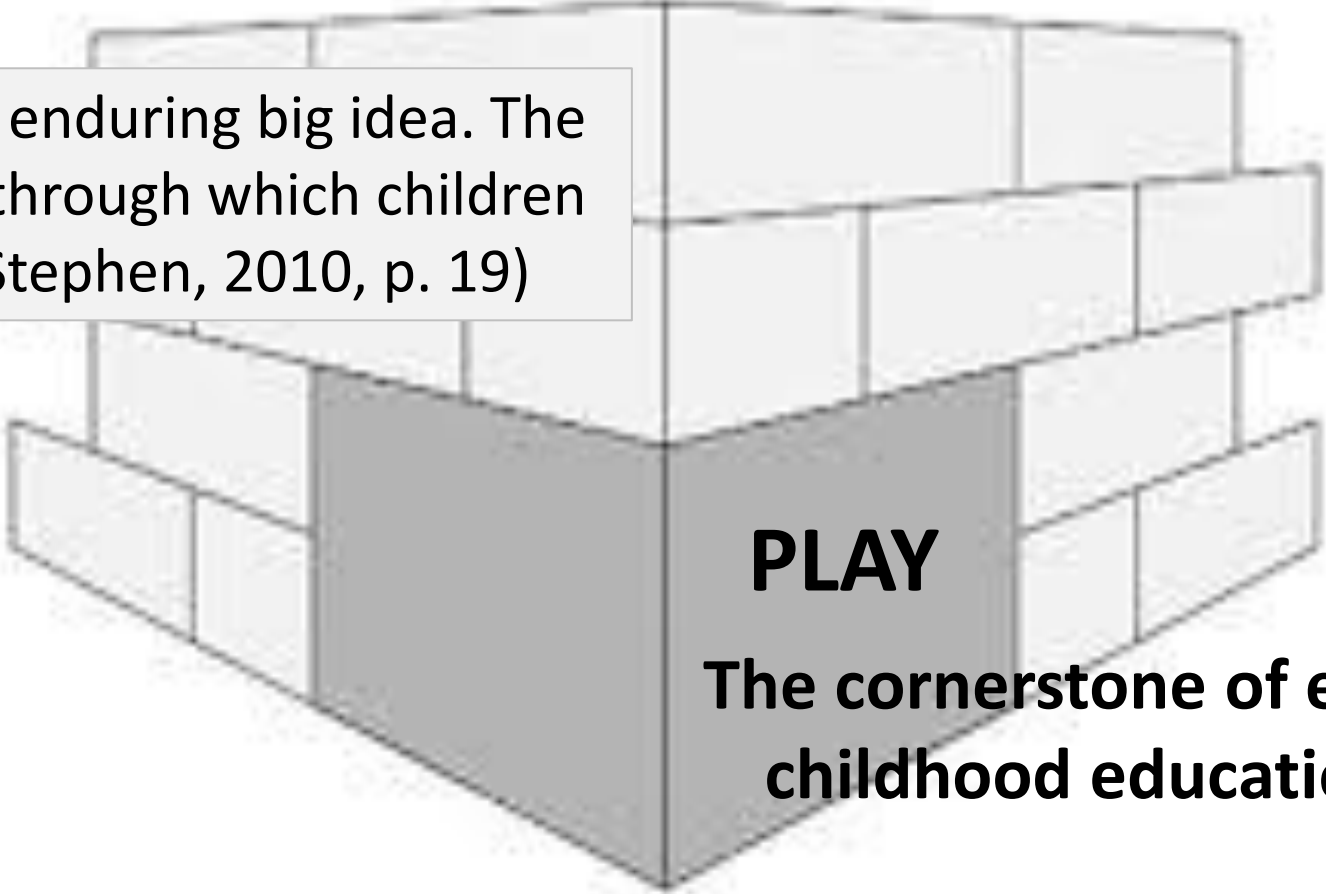


**Learning Sciences Institute Australia**



This presentation is dedicated to the Children Services staff and teachers of the City of Casey for their willingness to always play with new ideas.

# INTRODUCTION



Play is an enduring big idea. The medium through which children learn (Stephen, 2010, p. 19)

**PLAY**

**The cornerstone of early  
childhood education**

Ryan, S., & Goffin, S. (2008). Missing in action. Teaching in early care and education. *Early Education and Development*, 19(3), 385-395.

**DEFINING A 'PROBLEM'**



**“An intractable problem”**

**Intractable: Not easily managed, controlled or solved  
(Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2016)**

“Play is not to be identified with anything which the child externally does. It rather designates his mental attitude in its entirety and in its unity. It is the free play, the interplay, of all the child’s powers, thoughts and physical movements, in embodying in a satisfying form, his [her] own images and interests. Negatively, it is freedom from economic pressure – the necessities of getting a living and supporting others – and from the fixed responsibilities attaching to the special callings of the adult. Positively, it means that the supreme end of the child is fullness of growth – fullness of realisation of his [her] budding powers, a realisation which continually carries him [her] on from one plane to another” (Dewey, 1969, p. 118)

“Problems are never gratuitous or invented. They grow out of conflicting elements in a genuine problem – a problem which is genuine just because the elements, taken as they stand, are conflicting. A significant problem involves conditions that for the moment contradict each other”  
(Dewey, 1969, p. 3)



## USA

Johnson, J. (2014). Play provisions and pedagogy in curricular approaches. Chapter in L. Brooker, M. Blaise and S. Edwards (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Play and Learning in Early Childhood* (pp.180-192). SAGE: London.

## Europe

Stephen, C. (2010). Pedagogy: the silent partner in early years learning, *Early Years*, 30(1), 15-28.

## South Africa

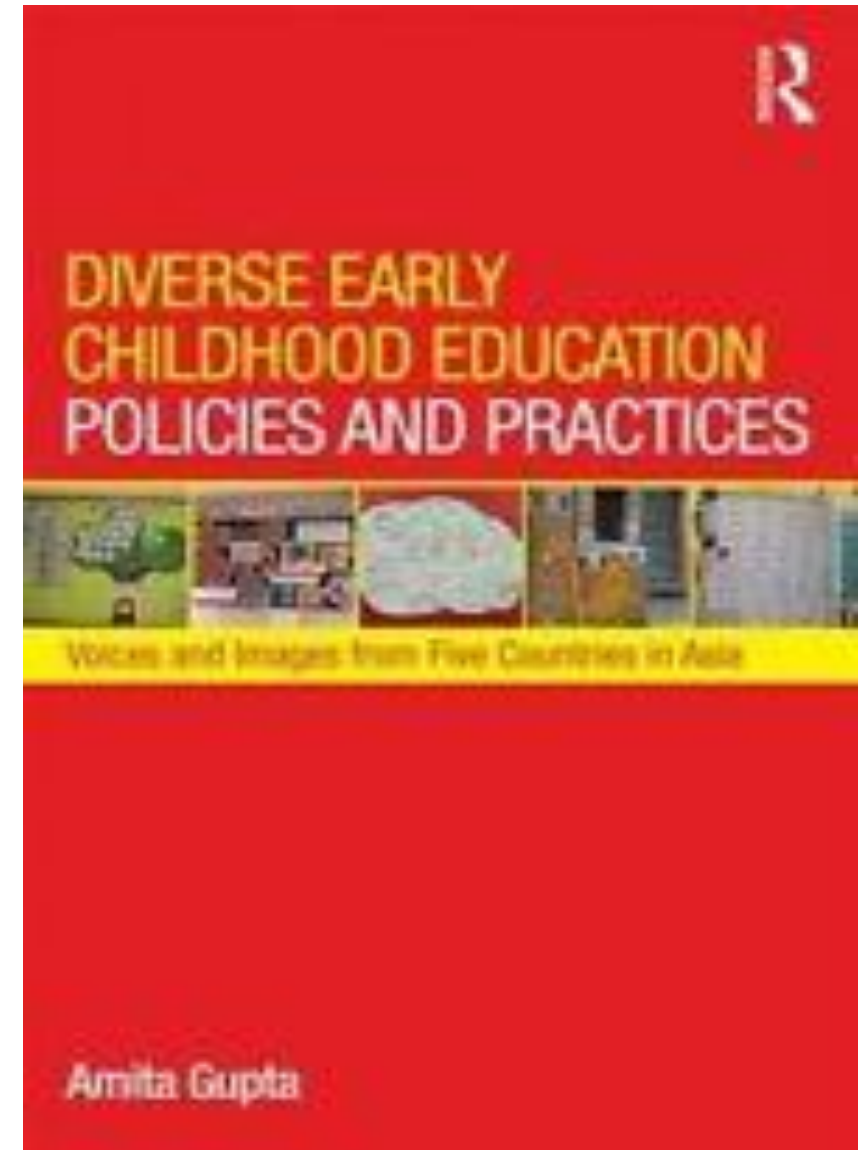
Ogunyemi, F.T. & Ragpot, L. (2015). Work and play in early childhood education: Views from Nigeria and South Africa. *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 5(3), 1-7.

## Asia

Adams, M., & Fler, M. (2016). The relations between a 'push-down' and 'push-up' curriculum: A cultural-historical study of home-play pedagogy in the context of structured learning in international schools in Malaysia. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 17(3) 328-342.

Cheng, D (2001). Difficulties of Hong Kong teachers' understanding and implementation of 'play' in the curriculum. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 857-869.

Nyland, B., & Ng, J. (2015). International perspectives on early childhood curriculum changes in Singapore and Australia, *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, DOI: 0.1080/1350293X.2015.1102416



# **PLAY AND TEACHING IN PRACTICE**



BELONGING,  
BEING &  
BECOMING



The Early Years Learning  
Framework for Australia

## **Play-based learning**

A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people objects and representations (DEEWR, 2009, p. 6).

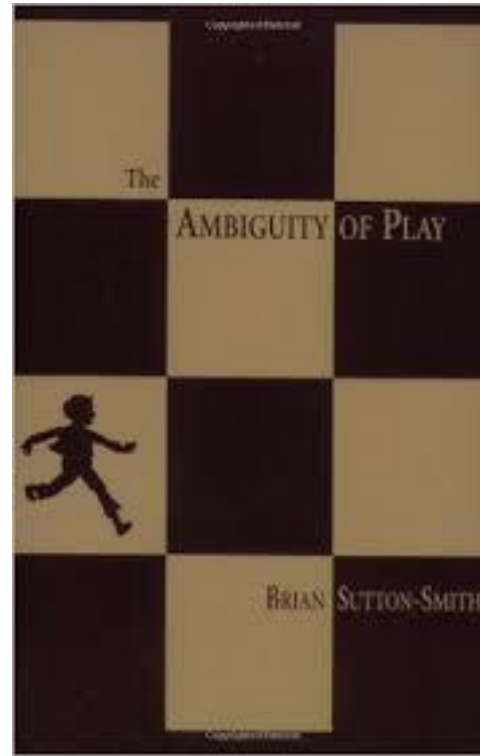
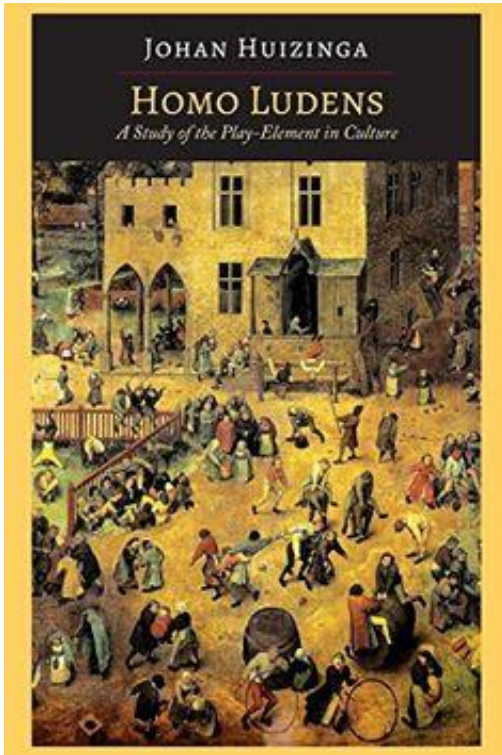
## **Intentional teaching**

Involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and action. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way (DEEWR, 2009, p. 5)

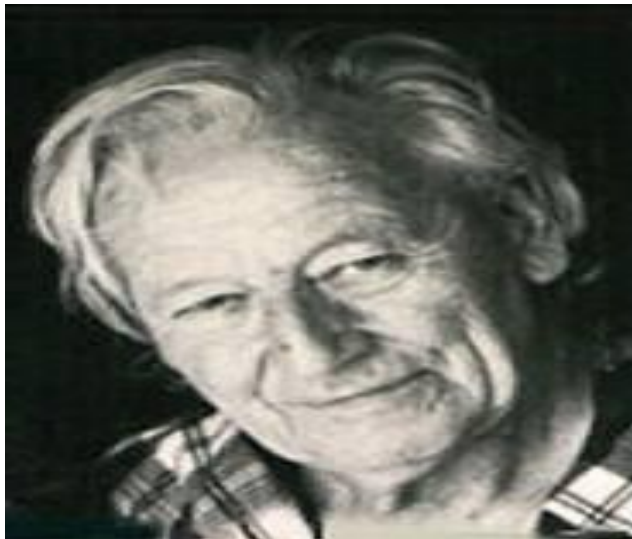
1. Fundamentally commit to improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
2. Political situation of the time (Rudd Government)
3. Various theoretical flavours about children's play and learning circulating the nation
4. Address and identify Learning Outcomes for over 1.5 million children across 8 million square kilometres of land-based and cultural diversity
5. Recognise the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
6. Be deployed across multiple early childhood education and care settings

Sumsion, J., Barnes, S., Cheeseman, S., Linda Harrison, L., Kennedy, A., & Stonehouse, A. (2009) Insider perspectives on developing Being, Becoming and Belonging: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 43(4), 4 -13

**ENGAGING THE PROBLEM**



Professor Elizabeth Wood



*"Interesting phenomena occur when two or more rhythmic patterns are combined, and these phenomena illustrate very aptly the enrichment of information that occurs when one description is combined with another."*

**Gregory Bateson**

A word cloud of academic terms, with the word "play" being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include "digital", "power", "technologies", "ethics", "gender", "policy", "crosscultural", "near", "out", "relations", "studies", "popular culture", "politics", and "ethics". The words are arranged in a circular pattern, tilted at various angles, and colored in shades of red, blue, green, and yellow.

**play**  
digital  
power  
technologies  
ethics  
gender  
policy  
crosscultural  
near  
out  
relations  
studies  
popular culture  
politics  
ethics



### **Intentional teaching**

Duncan, J. (2009). Intentional teaching. *Early Childhood Education Educate*. Ministry of Education: New Zealand.

Epstein, A. (2007). *The intentional teacher. Choosing the best strategies for young children's learning*. Washington: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

### **Conceptual play**

Fleer, M. (2011). 'Conceptual Play': foregrounding imagination and cognition during concept formation in early years education, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 12(3), 224-240

### **Pedagogical activity**

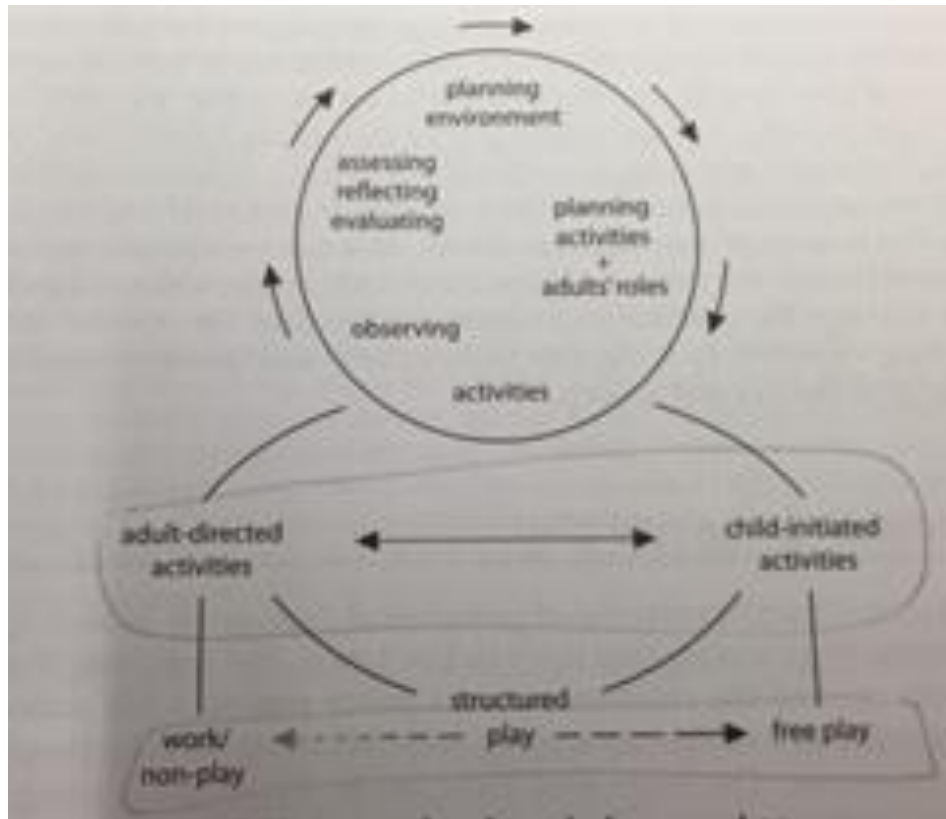
Dockett, S. (2010). The challenge of play for early childhood education. Chapter in S. Rogers (Ed.), *Rethinking play and pedagogy in early childhood education. Concepts, contexts and cultures*, pp. 32-48. Routledge: New York

### **Sustained-shared thinking**

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2009). Conceptualising progression in the pedagogy of play and sustained shared thinking in early childhood education: a Vygotskian perspective. *Educational and Child Psychology* 26 (2), 77-89.

**Pedagogical play:** the use of play in early childhood education by teachers to foster and support children's learning (Wood and Attfield, 2005; Hatch, 2010; Wallerstedt and Pramling, 2012)

**A model of integrated pedagogical approaches  
(Wood, 2010)**



**Three approaches  
(Trawick-Smith, 2010)**

1. Trust in play approach
2. Facilitate play approach
3. Enhance learning outcomes through play approach

**The three play-types  
(Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie,  
2011)**

1. Open-ended play:  
Experience and exploration

2. Modelled play:  
Illustration, explanation and demonstration

3. Purposefully framed play:  
Discussion, open-ended questions, observations, resources, connection to existing knowledge

### **Sample sustainability topics**

1. Animal habitat: such as pond life and macro-invertebrates
2. Habitat destruction: such as water pollution and species extinction
3. Plants: such as growing food and composting food

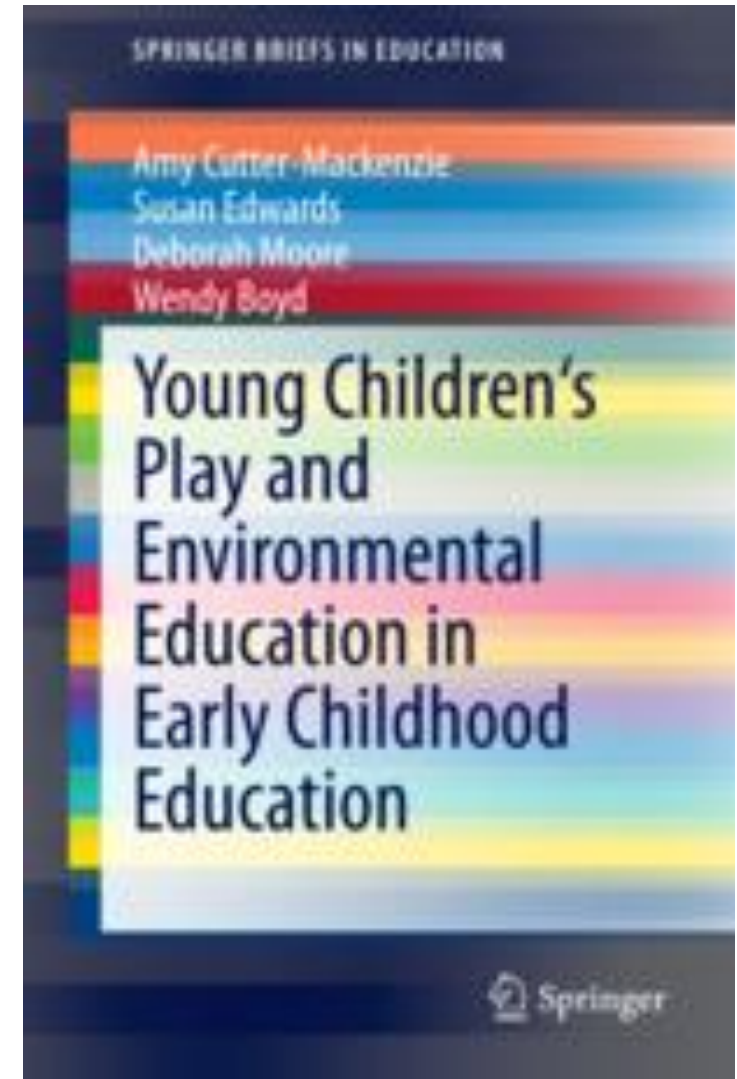
### **Combinations of play-types**

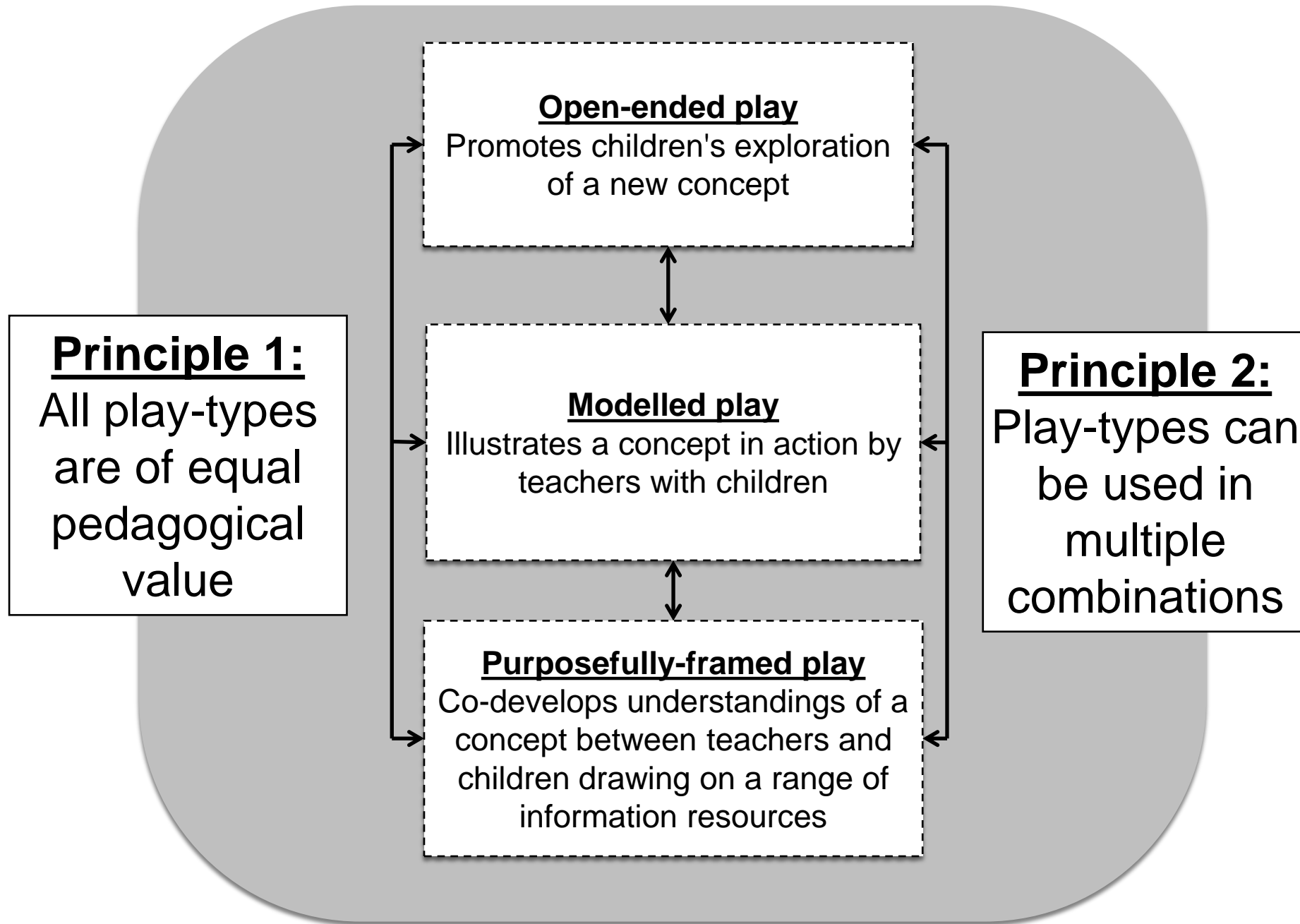
- a) open-ended, modelled, purposefully-framed
- b) open-ended, purposefully-framed, modelled
- c) Modelled, open-ended, purposefully-framed
- d) Purposefully-framed, open-ended modelled
- e) Purposefully-framed, modelled, open-ended



# Two principles for using the three play-types

1. All play-types are of equal pedagogical value
2. Play-types can be used in multiple combinations to support learning (Edwards & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011)





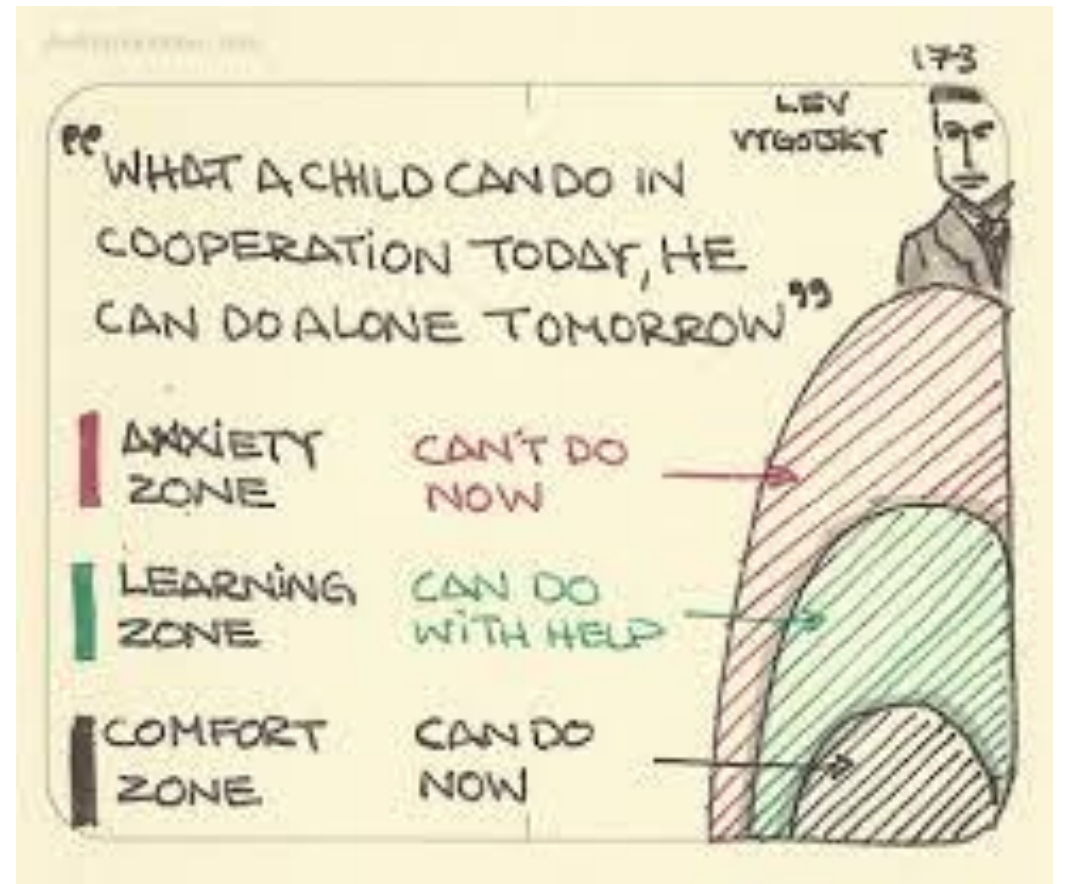
**THEORY**

“The creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person’s previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person’s experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to. This is why a child has a less rich imagination than an adult because his experience has not been as rich” (Vygotsky, 2004, pp. 14–15).



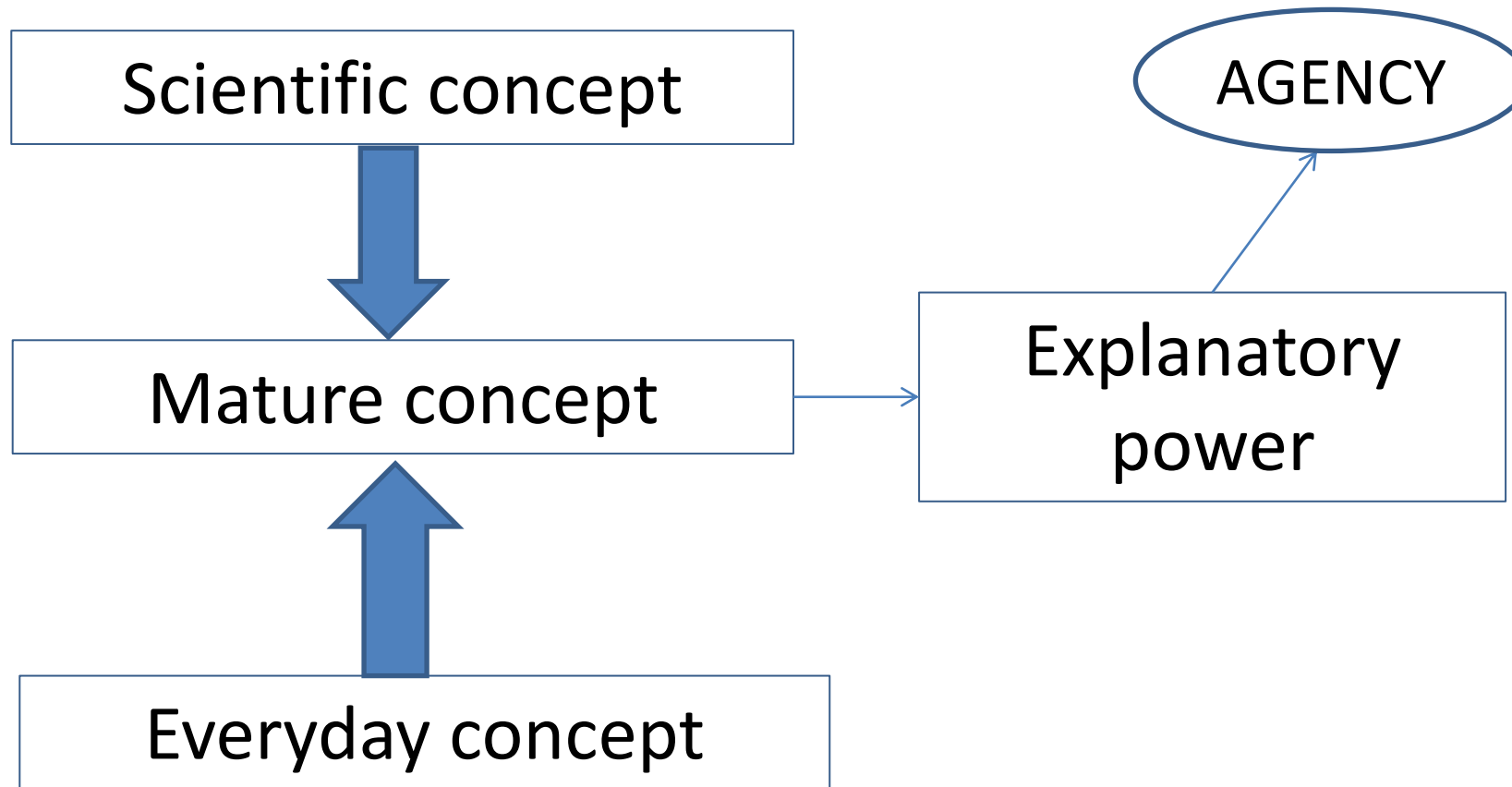
Capacity within and outside of play

# ZPD



Achievement with adult support





(Vygotsky, 1987; Gelman & Kalish, 2006)

**CONCLUSION**