

Knowledge Lab



Playing the Archive: Researching Children's Play Through Participatory Multimodal Ethnographies

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More information:
playingthearchive.net

 @playarchive



Playing the Archive: Memory, Community and Mixed-Reality Play

Exploring archives, technologies and spaces for play:

- Digitising and cataloguing archives of play
- Exploring contemporary play through ethnographic research
- Designing mixed reality play experiences based on the archive



Iona and Peter Opie in the playground.

725
219
218

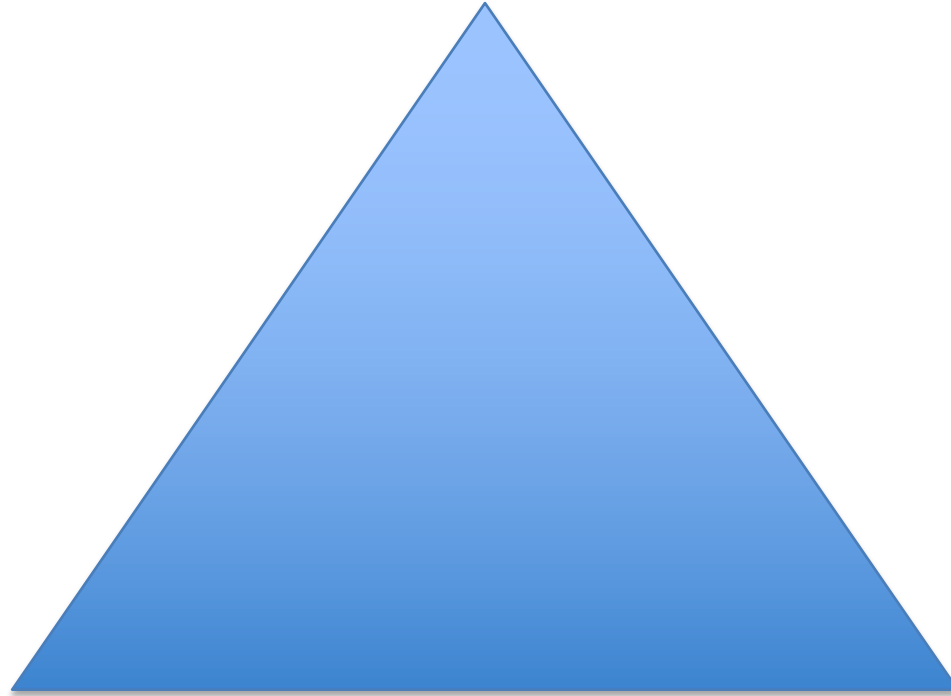
June 6th 1962
My favourite game is
chaseing and I play with the
boys in the playground. you
have to chase the boys
when you have caught
the boys. They have to
catch you and you have to
keep on swapping over
until the whistle goes

Playing the Archive Ethnography: Research Questions

1. *What is the nature of children's play in contemporary society?*
2. *What are the key elements of continuity and change in children's play since the 50s and 60s, with particular emphasis on the increasing part played by media cultures, especially social media and videogames?*
3. *What is the contribution of migrant cultures to the play repertoires of children in England?*
4. *How is contemporary play experienced bodily and spatially in playgrounds, and what elements of this experience can be transposed to VR/AR environments?*
5. *How might play be captured/represented multimodally?*

Research Design

Ethnographic



Participatory

Multimodal

Multimodal Research

- Multimodal Social Semiotics (Kress 2010)
- Focus on use of signs in society
- Language seen as partial
- Play as dynamic, embodied, ephemeral
- Therefore range of methods needed

See also NCRM Research Node 'MODE: Multimodal Methodologies for Researching Digital Data and Environments'

<https://mode.ioe.ac.uk>

Ethnographic Research

- Focused ethnography
- Multimodal ethnography

Special issue of Qualitative Research on 'Multimodal Ethnography' edited by Bella Dicks, Rosie Flewitt, Lesley Lancaster and Kate Pahl (Volume 11, Issue 3, June 2011).

See also 'Multimodal Ethnography' video by Rosie Flewitt for the DigiLitEY Methods Corner:

<https://digiliteymethodscorner.wordpress.com/2019/04/22/multimodal-ethnography/>

Sociological Ethnography, Alterity and a Focused approach

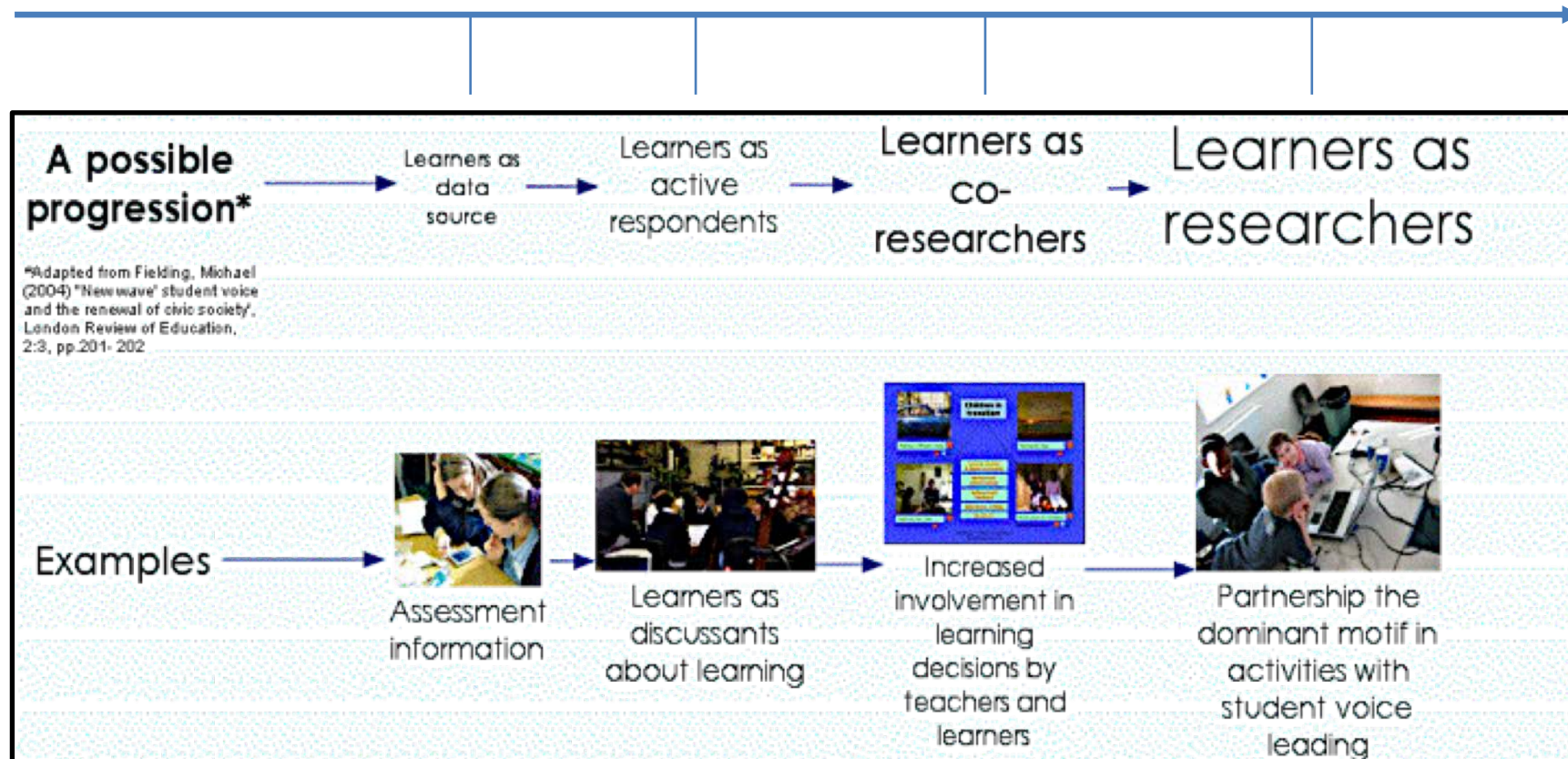


Focused ethnography is ‘...characterised by relatively short-term field visits (i.e. settings that are "part-time" rather than permanent). The short duration of field visits is typically compensated for by the intensive use of audio-visual technologies of data collection and data-analysis. Length (extension) of data-collection as it is common in conventional ethnographies is substituted for by the intensity of data collection.’

Knoblauch, 2005

Participatory Research

Children as co-researchers or as 'co-producers' of research?



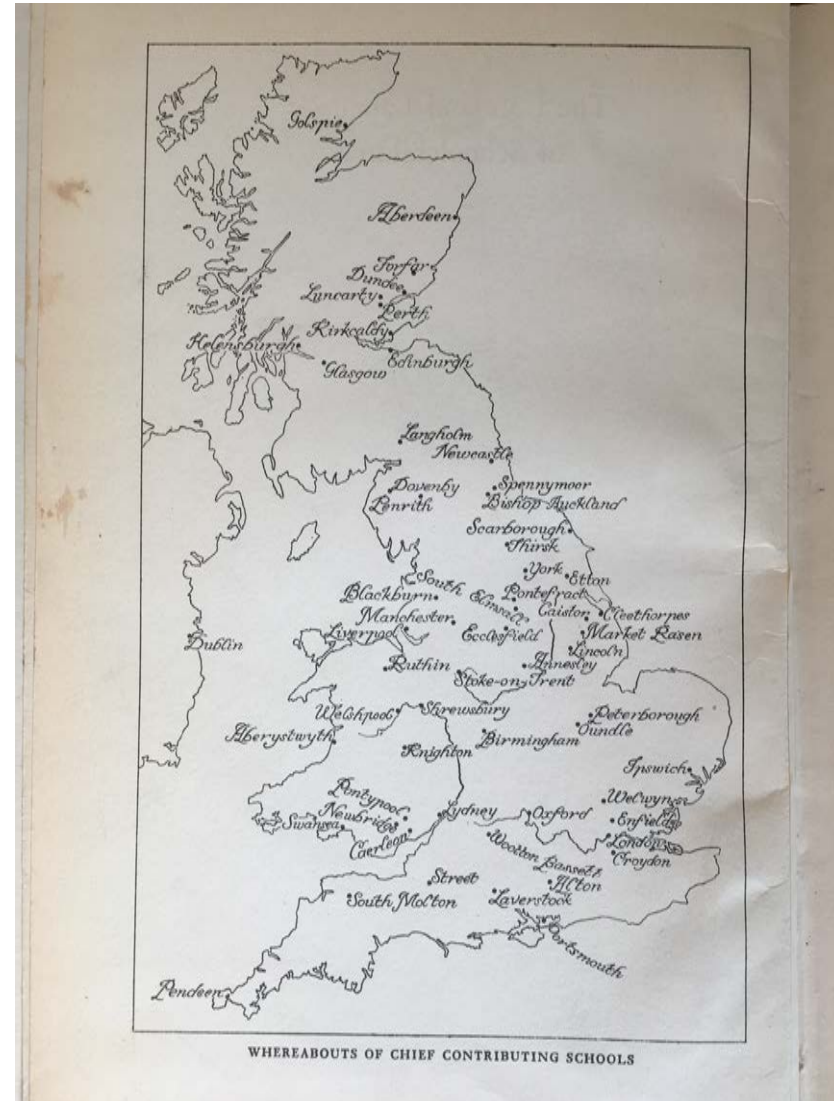
We took the view that participant *co-production* of data would be the most useful way to approach an issue which was so bound up in the 'life-world and meaningful actions' ...
(Bergold & Thomas, 2012)

I don't think it's a good idea



Researching Schools



- Sampling
- Sites
- Ethics
- Consent
- School Policies




Researching with Children

- Year 5-6 (age 9-11)
- Invitation to participate, opportunities for questions
- Child-friendly consent forms
- Collating adult and child consent = core group of child researchers
- A range of opt-in/opt-out methods

Negotiating Consent

Finding out about play	
[Tick one box ✓]	
I am happy to take part in this project	 <input type="checkbox"/>
I am not happy to take part in this project	 <input type="checkbox"/>
My name is.....	
To be completed by researcher:	
Date:	
Participant identification number for this project:	

Finding out about play

We are researchers at University College London and we want to find out about how children play, and about how play has changed over the years.
We want to ask you to help us in this study by being researchers. That means we want you to help us to find out about play. We will also be working with new technologies, like virtual reality, and asking for help with designing virtual play spaces and other play equipment.

Research with Children: Good Practices in Seeking Consent

<https://iread-project.eu/2018/10/01/research-with-children-good-practices-in-seeking-consent/>

Negotiating Consent

As one of our children's research team, we will ask you to do some of the following things:

- Talk to an adult researcher about your play
- Talk to another child researcher about your play
- Ask questions of children in school about their play
- Film other children in school playing (and sometimes for you to be filmed)
- Wear a Go Pro camera on your head or chest to record your play ✓
- Ask an adult about what they remember about play as a child
- Take photographs of your playground
- Draw pictures/ collages about your play
- Tell us what you think of websites and virtual games we might show you ✓
- Talk about your work to people who will be interested in the project
- Meet with the adult researchers now and again to talk about the project.



Your name will not appear in any writing about the project.

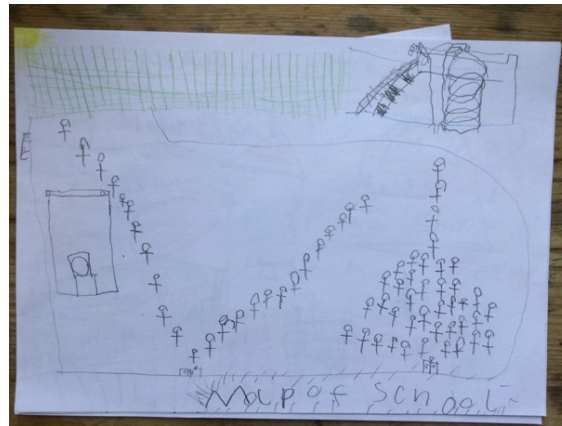
People may be able to see you in films and photographs, but they will not know your name.

Please let us know if you are happy to take part by putting a tick in the box next to the smiley face, or if you do not want to take part, put a tick in the box next to the sad face.

Data Collection

Regular research visits to two inner-city London primary schools, working with a core group of child researchers aged 9-11

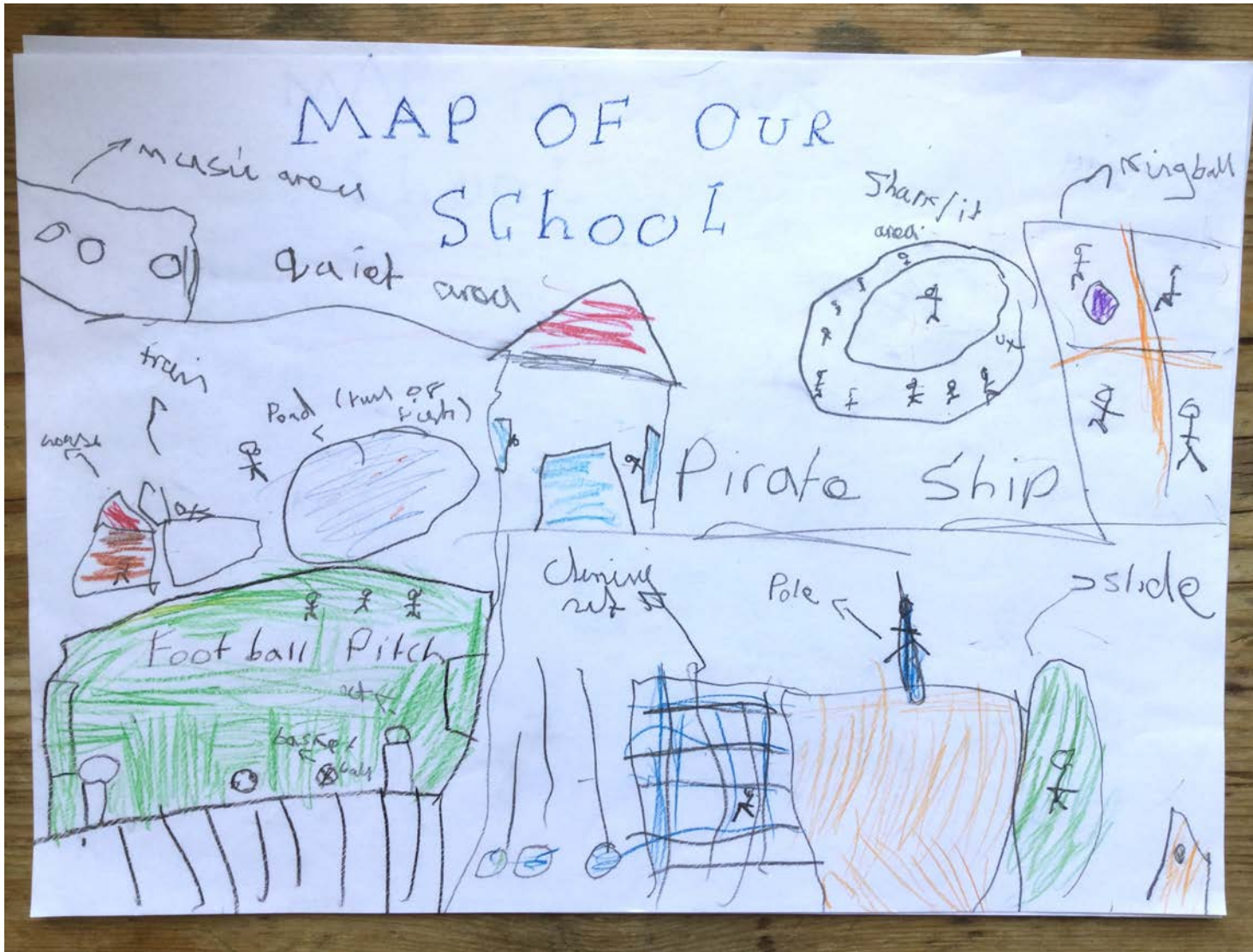
Data created by adult researchers	Data created by child researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fieldnotes• Photographs• Audio recordings• Video recordings (aerial and playground level)• Interviews with children• Drone recordings (Sheffield)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playground video tours• Drawings/maps of playground and games• Child-to-child interviews• GoPro recordings using chest harness



Logging Data

- File naming (e.g. HPKC2018-02-08p005)
- Date of recording
- Media type (e.g. video, drawings)
- Location (school initials)
- Venue (location within school e.g. football pitch)
- Recordist
- Duration
- Session
- Who (age, gender)
- Overview
- Contents
- Recording notes (e.g. quality, cross-referencing between files)
- Analytic notes

Multimodal Maps and Drawings



“In designing multimodal maps, meanings are distributed across image, writing, linkage and layout ... Decisions must be made about what to include, omit or adjust

...

Shifts in what the children drew and how they drew particular items provided insights into their particular interests: how they viewed the world and how they shaped their representations for (in this case) a researcher audience. Looking across images can also show shifts in interest.”

(Mavers 2007, p. 26)

See also Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

Reading children's drawings as data

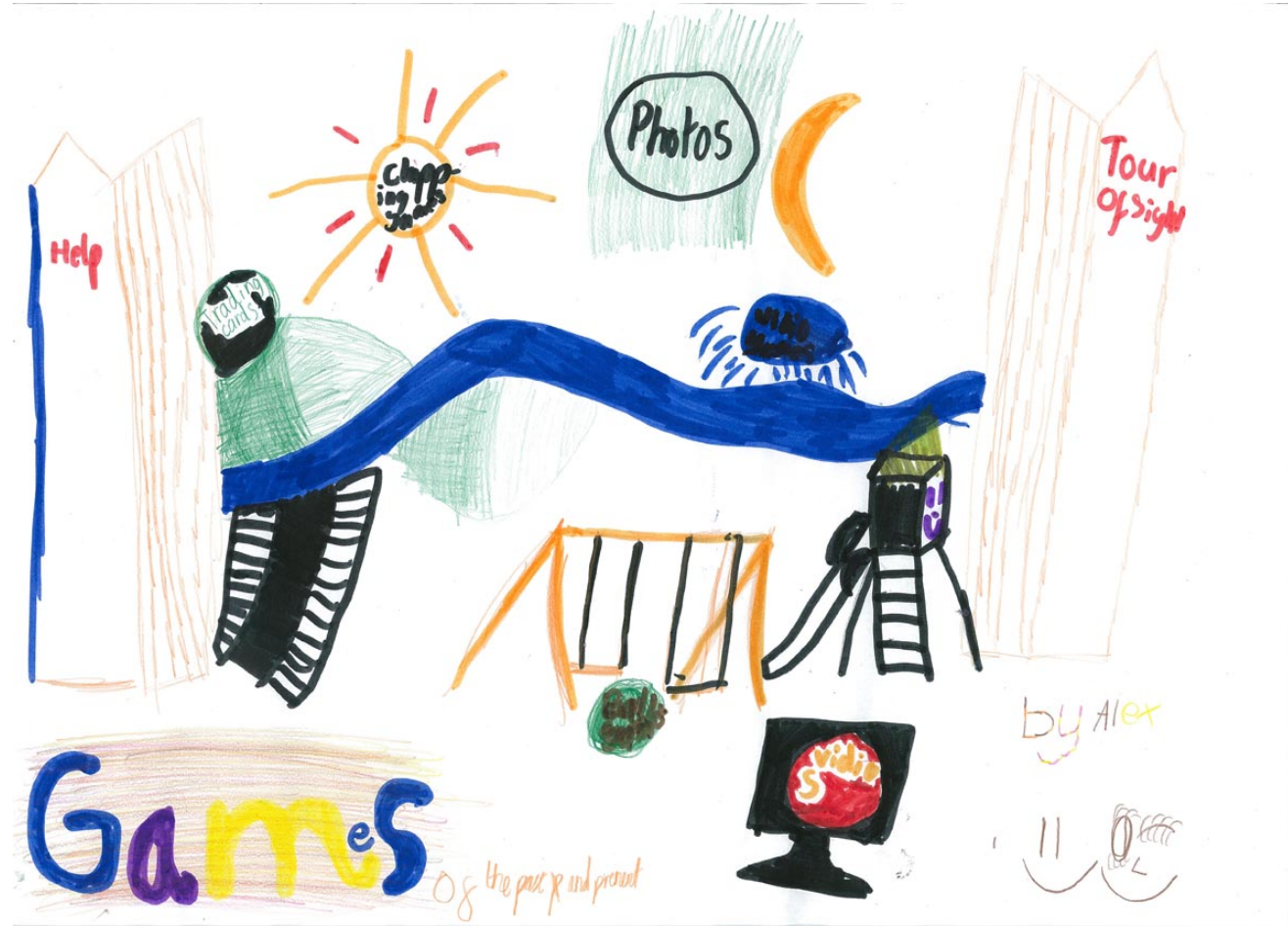
Modal-compositional criteria

A place to start?

Look for:

- Information value
- Salience
- Framing

*Group activity
with research data*



INFORMATION VALUE: The placement of elements with specific values attached to the zones in an image

SALIENCE: Elements attract the attention of an audience member with their placement and variation

FRAMING: The presence or absence of connectives between elements that suggest they belong together

From Kress &
Van Leeuwen
(2006) *Reading
Images 2nd
Edition*, London:
Routledge

Multimodal Maps and Drawings

- What might these drawings reveal about the child's interest?
- What is this interpretation based on? (Information Value? Salience? Framing?)





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LDShadowLady [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Lemonade	iPhone
Lemonade	OMG
Ice tea	Chat chat chat
Coca cola	On my phone
Pepsi	Snapchat
Lemonade	OMG
Ice tea	Chat chat chat
Coca cola	On my phone
Pepsi	Snapchat
Turn around	Turn around
Touch the ground	Oh no - my battery's dead
Flick your hair	Freeze
I don't care	
Freeze	
Star star star star	
Icky icky aye ah	
Boom	

BBC Radio 4: 'A Sailor Went to Sea Sea Sea'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00017sj>

Video: Perspectives on Play



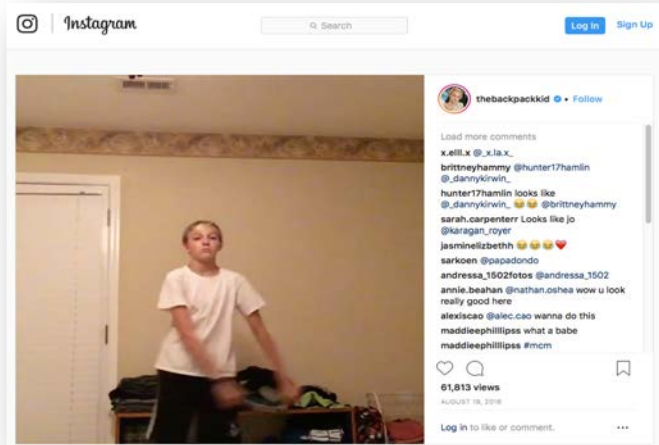
Researcher POV (iPad)

Rooftop POV (Go Pro 360 edit)

Player POV (GoPro)

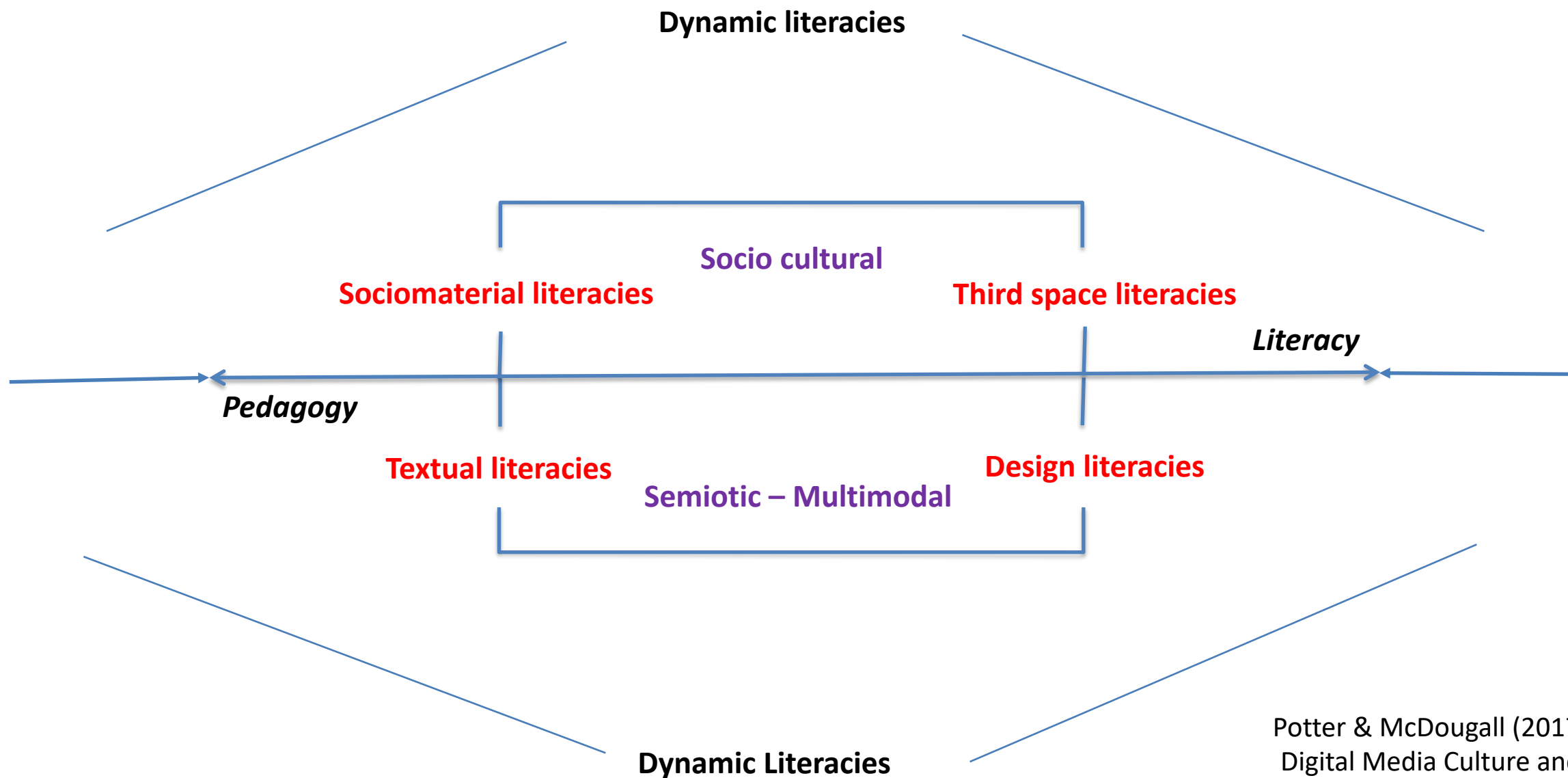


Multimodal methods enabling attention to the detail of embodied remediation into play: an example of dynamic literacies in action – The Floss

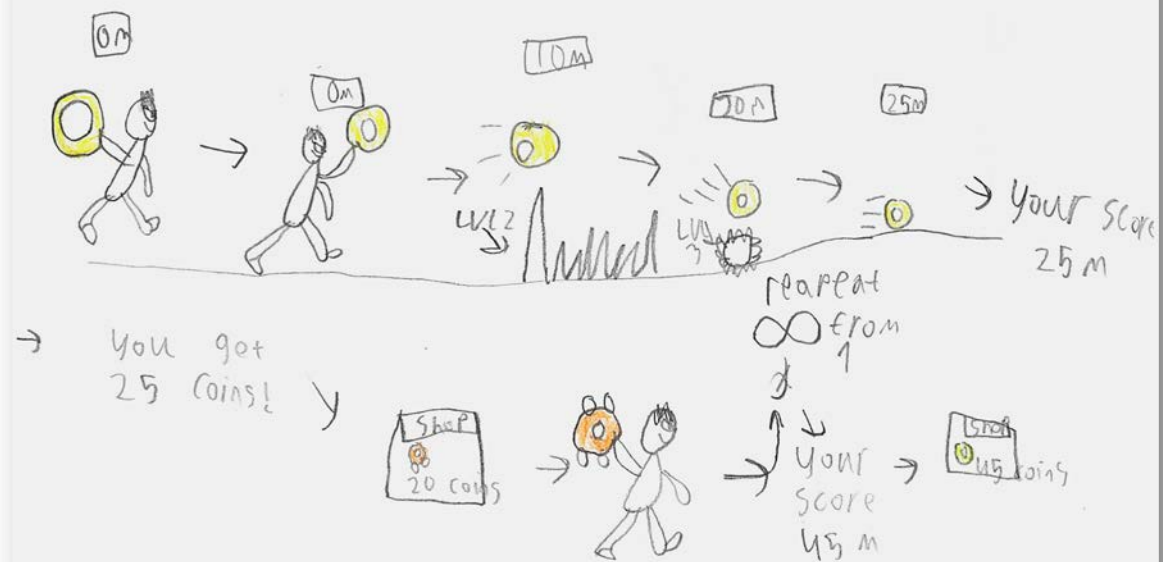


Emergent
media
ecosystem





Hoo P
bowling



CatWalk

1. Level
- | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
- Click
2. avatar
- hair eye
- clothes
3. Theme
- Disco baby
- Disco glory
- Shopping
- Other
4. Press.
- GO
- 5.
- Press
- back fl. p. →
- 6.

Playing the ARchive

All in together

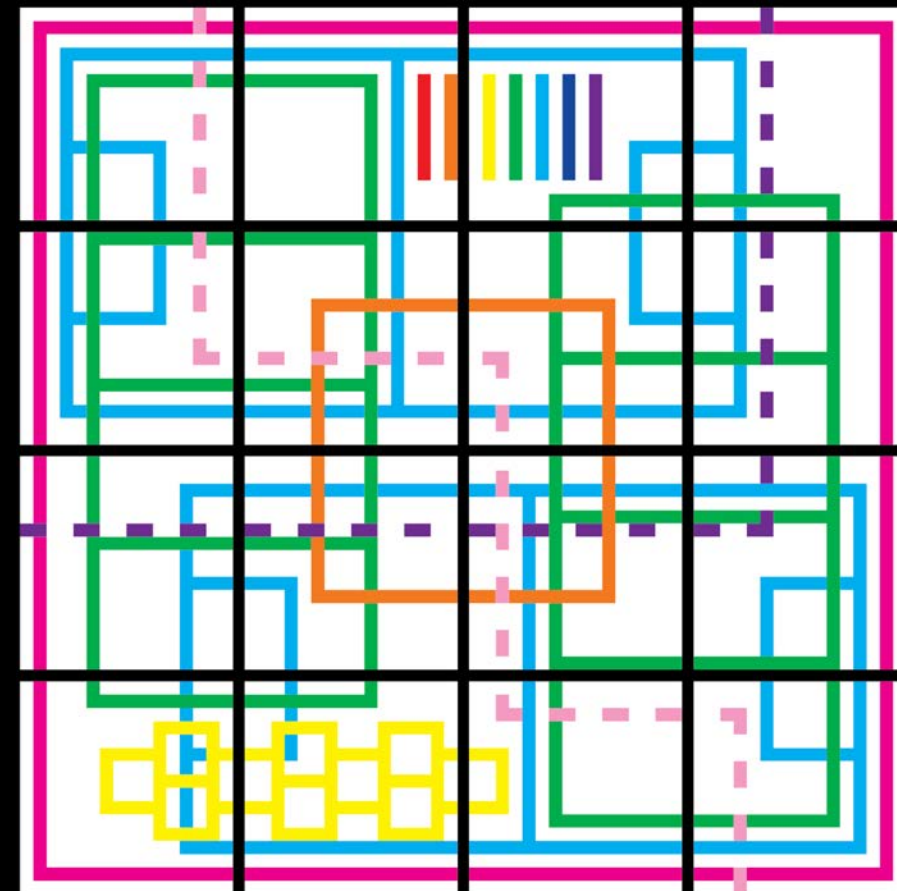
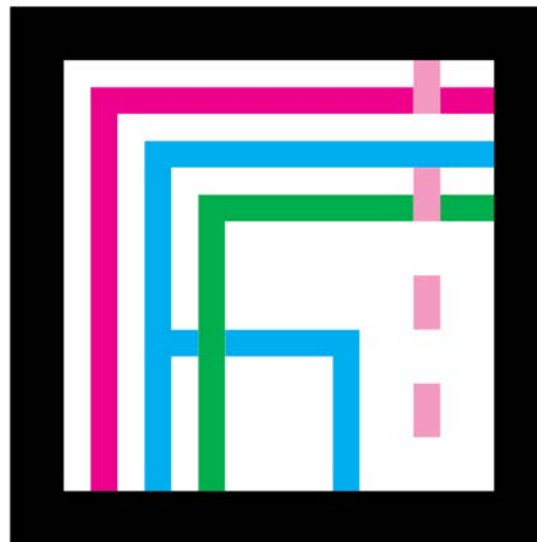
1. Two players **turn the rope** slowly and all the other remaining players **skip the rope** to the rhyme:

All in together girls
Never mind the weather girls
When it's your birthday
Please leave the rope

2. Then everyone **chants** the months.
3. Player must leave the rope when the chant says their **birthday month**.



All in together



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