



Psycholudics

Key Terminology 6 – 2011

Many of these terms were first described in Gordon Sturrock and Perry Else (1998) The playground as therapeutic space: playwork as healing – known as *The Colorado Paper*.

Additions were made in 2004 with Towards Ludogogy: Parts I, II and III Gordon Sturrock, Wendy Russell and Perry Else.

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Adulteration	This occurs when the adult dominates or takes over a child's play for their own purposes, whether those purposes are conscious (working to say educational or safety standards) or unconscious (fear, embarrassment, domination).
Æffect	A combination of affect, emotion as used in psychology and the idea of effect, an outcome or aftermath. So, æffect is emotion or feelings and their outcome or expression seen as a whole; the impact of emotion on a situation. Gordon Sturrock (1996) <u>A Diet of Worms</u>
Affect	Affect is the emotional material, mood or mask that people display. The affect may be 'real' or 'false'; in playing, children may play with affect as part of their emotional development. This may then have an effect on those around them – see also <i>æffect</i> .
Annihilation	Play annihilation is the end of the play for the child at that time. This may be a simple end to the game or a dramatic destruction of the model or sandcastle they have spent the last hour carefully constructing. Annihilation will occur when the play frame has no more meaning for the child, when the child has got whatever they were looking for from the play experience. Adults working with children can often misunderstand this. Workers can be dismayed when a piece of art, instead of being mounted and displayed on the wall, is painted and thrown in the bin. Annihilation is about the child taking their choice in the play to a natural conclusion.
Association and Amplification	The associative playwork task may be to 'make ample' the imagery, ideas and symbols of the child's enacted play. By extending our own knowledge, playworkers are able to help children from all cultures with playful expression. 'Amplification involves the use of mythic, historical and cultural parallels in order to clarify and make ample the metaphorical content of [the play] symbolism.'

Based on Samuels et al (1987) A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis

Authenticity	<p>Being honest and open with children and other members of the staff team.</p> <p>Being honest about one's own feelings and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Children need to be offered honesty and truthfulness in the responses from the adults around them if they are to best make sense of their world.</p>
Being and becoming	<p>Playing is of the moment, it is Now – it has no concern for the past or future, it is fundamentally ontological, concerned with the nature of being.</p> <p>In that each individual 'knows' what it is to be themselves, they are experts in their own being and therefore their own playing – any results emerging from that playing may never be predicted or controlled; the child's becoming is therefore also bound up with that being-ness. This is a position that is at odds with the dominant Western paradigm of adult instruction, teaching or the 'ages and stages' that pigeon-hole children into categories of normality.</p>
Child's evaluation of the return	<p>The child's evaluation of the return may produce a response that extends the play, reduces or ends it, or is neutral. Again, the likely choice by the child and the intent of the play cannot be known by the adult. The child may choose to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Respond to the play return – and so continue or broaden the theme of the play; play flow is established▪ Annihilate or end the play cycle – the process has produced what was necessary▪ Repeat the original play cue – to see what happens
Containment	<p>Holding the play for the child till they are able to return to the playing form.</p> <p>The support that workers can give to children in play should include the ability to hold or 'contain' the play. It is about supporting a child through their initial tentative play cues, giving back a return to help the play on its way. It may also be about holding the frame while the child is away from the play (or when the play ends for the day)</p> <p>Containment should also be about helping children who may be at risk of harming themselves or others.</p> <p>Our professional containment is a crucial element of our working practice.</p>
Contamination	<p>Contamination in play occurs when the children's freely chosen play is affected adversely by the actions or comments of others (usually adults). Contamination may occur through concerns about safety, expected compliance with cultural norms or through an attempt to guide or teach the child how to play or behave.</p>
Daemon /Demon	<p>'Daemon' – the Greek word that in classical mythology refers to 'god within,' one's inner deity or guiding spirit, also known as a genii or jinn, the tutelary deity or genius of a person; one's daemon or genii is also said</p>



to be synonymous with one's fate or fortune.

...But there is a strange and horrible thing about one's daemon: When honoured and acted upon, it is indeed one's guiding spirit; those who bear a god within bring genius to their work. When, however, one's daemon is heard but unheeded, it is said that the daemon becomes a demon, or evil spirit—divine energy and talent degenerates into self-destructive activity.

Wilber K (1991) Grace and Grit

Dysplay

When the play cues are laden with anxiety.

The urgent, frantic play cues offered by children who are unable to complete the play cycle effectively.

Children denied choice will be inhibited in their play, the cycle will be incomplete. The play drive will try to compensate with cues that are more urgent or aberrant, perhaps causing conflict with the environment around the child (these anxious cues are called *dysplay*).

False self

There is a 'false self which develops on a compliance basis and is related in a passive way to the demands of external reality...

...the false self becomes organised to keep the world at bay, and there is another true self hidden away and therefore protected.

DW Winnicott (1988) Human Nature

Holistic play

See also Integral Play Framework

Like all humans, the playing child has an experience of the world that is both emotional and physical at the same time; we live at the boundary of the personal and shared worlds. And as has been commented by many writers, the integrated model recognizes that humans create their own world in relation to that of other people; we are social animals who see our identity and status in relation to others. We should note that these are mutual worlds, different sides of a similar coin – we shape and are shaped by our lived experience of mind, body and environment, as we integrate our different experiences of the world, they have an effect on who we are.

Integral Play Framework

The Integral Play Framework balances the experiences of the child in the tangible world of structures with the insubstantial world of feelings and beliefs. As children are playing they are using their bodies to move through and experience the world, either solitary or with others. Those sensations are processed internally and inform the child's self awareness, feelings and beliefs, which may be shared with others.

For example; a group of children are playing chase, a physical game involving running around on the ground and over obstacles to evade capture. Ethan is 'it'; he is trying hard to pass the role to another and races round energetically. Initially frustrated that he cannot catch the others, he becomes elated when he tags his friend Sohail and manages to escape onto a high platform. Later he and Sohail talk about the game and what it felt like to be 'on' and what it was like when they were running away.

Integrity of intervention

Where the worker is aware of the interventions they may need to make in a play session in order to make them as playful as possible.



	<p>The adult may be involved in disputed or conflicting frames – and may be called on to make judgements affecting the play frames of several children, or may need to remind a child of the risks taken when crossing boundaries. Where possible, the worker should aim to offer a response that is playful rather than controlling or prescriptive.</p>
<p>Levels of intervention – ludocentric</p>	<p>i) Play maintenance: The play is self-contained – no intervention is necessary, the worker observes the activity</p> <p>ii) Simple involvement: The adult acts as a resource for the play – this may be subtle, as in making a tool available for use, or more overt when responding to a request from children</p> <p>iii) Medial intervention: At the request of the child, the adult becomes involved in the play – such as by offering alternatives from which the child chooses, or by initiating a game then withdrawing</p> <p>iv) Complex intervention: There is a direct and extended overlap between playing children and the adult – the adult may need to take on a role in the play, or act as a partner to the playing child</p>
<p>Levels of intervention – safety</p>	<p>These four levels of intervention are <i>ludocentric</i> (play-centred) in their intent. There will, of course, be times when the duty of care requires workers to behave in a non-ludocentric manner, for example when a child is in imminent danger of seriously harming themselves or others. Professional judgements on when to make such a non-ludocentric intervention will be informed by the worker’s level of understanding of how their play plays through them as adults and on their knowledge of the child/ren and the contexts and their instant risk assessment.</p>
<p>Lifeworld</p>	<p>The psychic script by which we describe our own life and experience, the stories we tell ourselves and others about our selves (as we know them).</p>
<p>‘Lila’ लीला</p>	<p>Lila is the spirit of divine play; seen in the urge to invent, to create</p> <p>In Hinduism, all reality is seen as the outcome of creative play by the divine spirit</p>
<p>Ludic</p>	<p>Playful</p>
<p>Ludic consciousness</p>	<p>We might perceive the child’s play universe and the meeting with the external world as a flexible, holistic and ludic process.</p> <p>This totality we see as being a psychic, non-physical, ludic ecology. By ‘reading’ the inherent encounter and the subsequent balancing, the resulting adaption and adjustment processes, we as playworkers can contribute to the child’s development in a way that is child-centred, and encourage the self-healing potentials of play to take effect.</p>



Ludic ecology	The space for play (both physical and psychic), not a solid formation, it is rather a fluid and supple projection; it is a mobile, flexible extension, where options, ideas, themes, change and adapt in contact with the surrounding, and containing, environment
Ludic third	The ludic process reflects the interplay of three subjectivities: the subjectivity of the child, of the adult, and of the ludic third. The ludic third is a creation of the first player and the second player, and at the same time, the players are created by the ludic third (After Ogden). The worker is aware of the ludic third when they are <i>self-witnessing</i> .
Ludido <i>See also play drive</i>	<p>The ludido, the play drive, could be precisely seen as the active agency of an evolving consciousness – such a description is closer to the definitions out of eastern psychologies and traditions, the <i>lila</i> principle – in what we call a ‘field’ or psychic, ludic ecology.</p> <p>The ludido functions through an interplay with surrounding ‘fields’ to circulate through the metalude, contained reality, and constructed reality, seeking, desiring animation, authority and law, text and context, æffective outlet, expression as a means of homeostasis.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gordon Sturrock (1996) <u>A Diet of Worms</u></p>
Ludocentric	The ludocentric (play-centred) model represents a process-based approach and rests on the premise that potential benefit, both immediate and long term, derives from the ludic process itself. From this premise, therefore, the professional task of the adult is to support that play process. Any attempt to direct or control the play process has the potential to adulterate it and in so doing invalidate any benefit that might accrue.
Ludogogic	Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a <i>ludogogue</i> or <i>ludogogy</i> Having the office or character of a ludogogue; that is, a person who arrives at insight in play and playing by virtue of self-witnessing and reflection
Ludogogue	<p>An adult attendant to the child at play; a person who arrives at insight in play and playing by virtue of self-witnessing and reflection</p> <p>A playing participant</p> <p>A play leader, usually adult – in the sense that the commencing interpretation or analysis of any play expressions from the child/children is played through the adults first. The ‘leading’ is not of the play of the child, except when invited to do so, or where a ‘role’ requires the adult to do so, for example, in the ludic third (discussed later in this paper). The leading is of the adult’s own material as the basis for analysis. The ‘This-is-how-it-plays-through-me’ self-witnessing paradigm.</p> <p>[Sturrock G (2003) from Latin, ludo (‘I play’) + Greek, ag gos (‘leader’, from agein, ‘to lead’)]</p>
Ludogogy	<p>The function, profession or practice of a <i>ludogogue</i>;</p> <p>The study of the science and art of the <i>ludogogue</i> through <i>self-witnessing</i></p>



and *reflection*; education and training in the practice of a ludogogue;

Metalude The metalude is the source point and beginning of the function of internalised gestalt formation within the play process. It describes the moment of daydreaming or reverie that sets out the intent of the play. The metalude is the ‘unconsciously conscious’ thought that precedes any playful act. It is formed in the internal world of the child from which *play cues* go into the external, physical world.

The term metalude also suggests the ‘playfulness of play,’ in that it crosses boundaries and motifs in microseconds.

Mindfulness ‘Moment to moment awareness’ – being present, in the moment, aware of what is happening Now, both within and outside of the self.

After Jon Kabat-Zinn

Modes of expression The four major modes of expression, which children explore through their play that are developmental, inclusive and overlapping, are: The Psychological (Spirituality) The Cultural (Culture) The Physical (Science) The Social (Politics)

Primary mode	Major modes	Modes of expression
Subjective/felt	Psychological	Instinctual, impulsive, emotional, symbolic, problem solving
	Cultural	Creativity, art, drama, music, belief, cultural understanding
Objective/fact	Physical	Exploration, working with materials and the natural elements, movement skills, tactile skills, mastery
	Social	Exerting personal choice, co-operative play, social, legal and political skills

Paraludic Playing alongside the child/ren and also playing alongside the internal ludic response to the children; an objective awareness of subjective playing.

In this mode, the adult is fully conscious of how the children’s play expressions are playing through them; they acknowledge this but do not privilege their needs over the child’s. They engage paraludically in the play frame, for example, playing the great monster that the children want to chase them, but not using this role for their own ends.

Peak experiences Peak experiences are especially joyous and exciting moments in life, involving sudden feelings of intense happiness and well-being, wonder and awe, and possibly also involving an awareness of transcendental unity or knowledge of higher truth (as though perceiving the world from an altered, and often vastly profound and awe-inspiring perspective).

See also
translation and transformation

In play children may often have experiences that offer such feelings, however it may be many years before they are able to integrate the skills and knowledge necessary to replicate those moments at will.

After Maslow



PISCES



P – Play; Personal; Participation; Process; Physical; Psychic; Perspective

I –Identity; Intelligence; ours, the child, site

S – Symbolic; Spiritual; Self; *Socius*, ‘The community which holds our identity’

C –Creativity; Considerative Craft; Culture; child, the playworkers and the site; wider Culture; Contemplation; Celebration

E –Ecology; Environment; Events; Experiences

S –Security; Safety of the site and the people who work there; of our practice and its operative concerns

Gordon Sturrock (1997) ‘SPICE – a Redundant Metaphor: Towards a More Extensive Definition’ in Therapeutic Playwork Reader one

Play cycle

Or play process

The play cycle consists of the full exchange of play from the child’s first play cue, the establishment of the play frame, the perceived return from the outside world, the child’s response to the return, and the further development of play to the point where the play is complete and so ended or annihilated.

Play cues

The play cue is the signal the child gives that they want to play. This cue may be spoken, eye contact, a body signal or by the use of materials. The play cue comes from the thoughts of the child, their internal world, into the physical world in the expectation of getting a response. A child kicking a ball towards you is a play cue; you are expected to kick it back. Picking up a paintbrush, singing a song, and starting a conversation could all be play cues. Children invite participation by other children or adults in their play by communicating feelings, thoughts and intentions. And of course these cues may not always be positive in effect.

Play drive or impulse

See also ludido

The child’s play drive or instinct which functions through an interplay with surrounding ‘fields’ to circulate through the metalude, the impulse to play will be affected by the child’s sense of identity and power (or lack of power), values, beliefs, level of thought and understanding, physical skill and ability. This drive to play is internal to the child and is manifested in the *play cue*.

Play flow

Play flow occurs when the frame has been established and the child becomes ‘lost’ in their play. Children at play are ‘alive in the moment’, with no concern for the past or future. The play may cover a number of topics in a few moments, with roles changing, ideas developing and concepts shifting, or it could be the single focus on a particular aspect. The play becomes self-regulated and the playworker if not actually playing with the child is largely outside of the *play frame*. Once entered into, this play flow can absorb the child or children for minutes to days at a time.

Play frames

The frame is a boundary, material or non-material, that keeps the play intact.

The child may then change the frame by including others, moving objects or adapting it in some other way to create a varied response that



	<p>maintains the play flow.</p> <p>The play frame is chosen and initiated by the child and is the enclosure for their imaginal expression. It will be supported or contained by the physical boundaries of the available play space, but the frame is not dependant upon and may or may not synchronise with those boundaries.</p>
<p>Play return (Play response)</p>	<p>The play return is the response the child experiences as a result of the <i>play cue</i>.</p> <p>The play return will be found by the playing child from the environment or as initiated by another child or adult. It is what goes back to the child after they issue the play cue. The child will choose what to ‘play’ with. The return will usually come back from another child or adult; they will be playing together, though the child can also find a return from the environment around them. They may be digging for treasure in the sandpit; they may be hunting for insects in the bushes. If the child gets a positive response they may choose to extend and enhance that experience by issuing another cue; they will be playing and learning. If the child gets a negative response they may stop playing or try another play cue. Understanding this process helps the worker offer choices to the child to help them play.</p> <p>When the return is initiated by an adult, it should be made with an awareness of the child’s emotional state, cultural understanding, physical abilities and sense of power (as far as they can be known) and primarily the adult’s own cultural understanding and sense of power.</p>
<p>Playing through us</p>	<p>The recognition that when in the child play space the adult is also engaging with the ludic material that emerges; it will trigger responses that the adult may be aware – or unconscious – of.</p> <p>It is in the overlap of the two ludic fields that the locus of well-being is situated, for both child and adult.</p> <p>In the first instance, the children’s play is not adulterated by an immediate rush to judgement. The deliberations arrived at have a prophylactic distance applied that protects the child’s rights to forms of playing, which are, for them, personally significant. The privileging of the child’s being and becoming is maintained. Secondly, the interpretations derived from internalised processing of the attendant adult’s own ludic material, can over time, be exercised into permitting personal self-understandings and awarenesses to be explored, creating not inconsiderable well-being.</p>
<p>Psycholudics</p>	<p>The study of the mind and psyche at play, describes the process of play as it happens.</p> <p>It proposes that play is essentially spiritually, ecologically and ontologically developmental.</p>
<p>Reflection – before and after play</p>	<p>A regular review of the work practice, both before and after the session.</p> <p>This reflection also includes playworkers’ own behaviours and attitudes. It examines the themes and material that could not be predicted. Playworkers will form quick judgements about what to do in the play</p>



	space. After the session, reflection will help with understanding the worker’s judgement at that time.
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Reflective continuum	An awareness of both self and self reflection that goes beyond the merely mechanistic recording of data. It is reflection in the moment, ‘reflection in action’ and reflection after the event, ‘reflection on action’ in order to become a better practitioner and a better person (after Schon).
<i>See also association and amplification</i>	

Self-witnessing	The analysis of the self in relation to a relationship with a playing child. Self-witnessing is where the worker reflects on their practice from the <i>witness position</i> . This witnessing issues from a position where the reactions of the playworker are the object of scrutiny.
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Transformation	Generally read as ‘going beyond’, meaning to go beyond a prior form or state of oneself. In play children may go beyond previous levels of experience, in each of the four realms of self, physical body, cultural and social relationships. In transformation, new skill/knowledge is acquired that could not have occurred before-hand, yet with the retention of the previous knowledge or state of experience. For example when children learn to walk they are still able to crawl, when they learn to relate to strangers, they can still relate to family members and friends.
<i>Transcendence</i>	

Translation	A term defined by Wilber to indicate those states of experience where the self is simply given a new way to think or feel about reality, but which ultimately does not lead to transformation or change. For example, no matter how much individuals play with ‘world making’ games such as <i>Sim City</i> , it cannot fully equip them for life in the real world. The more successful an individual becomes at a given sport, it does not indicate that they will become more tolerant of others or self reflective.
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Unplayed out material	The dormant yet laden play impulses of adults that may manifest in play interchanges with children. Unplayed out material if not recognised and dealt with may result in adulteration of the children’s play, as it takes on greater meaning for the adult than the child. ‘Being aware of our own unplayed out material, recognising it and acknowledging it, but not privileging it over the children’s material, is what we mean by the intrasubjective application, it is to operate in the witness position. It is both ludocentric and paraludic and it has the potential to benefit both the children and ourselves.’
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Towards Ludology

Witness position	Where the worker is objectively (impartially) aware of their subjective relationship with another, the playing child. Subjectivity often relies on thoughts and feelings of a personal nature; children will naturally act subjectively in their play. Workers need to act objectively (but not authoritatively) in relation to this emotional content; workers therefore need to be aware of their own affect (their emotional
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mood or mask) and the impact of this material on their interactions and relationships. Therefore they need to 'witness' their own behaviour in the play space.

