

Erasmus + Loose parts play

Module 6: How are we doing – ongoing evaluation and reflection

Session summary

In this module we delve deeper into evaluation of and reflection on loose parts play. Beginning with a recap, then an introduction to Professional Enquiry, and we then move through suggestions for documenting children's play.

Critical cartography is a method rich in potential for understanding the *how* rather than the *what* and *why* of children's play. As well as integral to the research process of this loose parts play project, critical cartography can become part of the ongoing development and documentation of the space after the project.



Target group

Participants with prior knowledge and experience of loose parts play. Participants may have completed all five prior modules and by participating in module 6 will complete the whole course.

Previous training/experience required to attend

- Advanced knowledge of loose parts play
 - principles of loose parts play
 - able to recognise 'play cues' and 'play responses'
 - able to identify play types in the context of observing of children's play
- Personal loose parts play experience.

Length: 3 hours

Module 6: learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will:

1. have shared their own experience and ideas about professional enquiry/professional learning
2. have experimented with methods of documenting children's play and discussed ethical and practical considerations
3. have been introduced to critical cartography as a method
4. feel confident to introduce critical cartography as a method to implement in our school, setting or community.

Learning indicators

Ability to document children's play using appropriate methodology and explain it to others; ability to introduce critical cartography to others; ability to explain clearly play types, clues and responses; ability to explain the importance of evaluation and reflection to playwork approach; professional curiosity; appreciation of the value of observing and documenting children's play; appreciation of evaluation and reflection as an integral part of playwork.

Resources required

Flipchart paper and stand or equivalent, module 6 PowerPoint if desired, large paper to draw on, luggage labels or postcards, post-it notes, pens and other drawing materials, string or washing line and pegs, participants own camera phones, or paper and pens.

Resources to prepare

List of learning outcomes, print play types poster and cut into cards – see note on session plan, prompter questions, blank planning template, learning outcomes presented in evaluation format.

Reference material

Examples of ways of documenting children's play – ideally physical examples from projects
Examples of critical cartography maps or photographs of maps.
Copies of Rules for re-enchanting our relationship with play (Russell, W. 2020)



Manual: 2.3, 4.3, 4.4, 5.3, 6.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3



Tools: 3, 16, 18, 23



Manual: 6.4

Trainer notes

As this is the end of the LPP course, look for opportunities to recap and consolidate learning. Link back to previous content, perhaps using photographs taken during the course, or providing examples the group will relate to.

Reread the relevant sections of the manual and ensure you are familiar with the toolbox elements.

Introduction

Time 10 minutes

Resources needed: list of learning outcomes, reminder of new knowledge, competencies and attitudes associated with module 6, PowerPoint if using it.

Trainer notes

Welcome participants, introduce the project and module and set out the learning outcomes.

Explain the sequence of topics and activities and whether there will be breaks.

Introductory activity - What do you bring?

Time 10 minutes

Resources needed: Luggage labels or postcard size pieces of think paper, pens. Tie the string or washing line somewhere convenient across the room.

Trainer notes

This activity is designed to encourage self-reflection on the knowledge, competencies and attitudes already held by participants. Encourage them to recognise what they bring personally and as a group.

- Ask participants to draw write, doodle what they bring on a label – this can be knowledge, competencies and attitudes.
- Provide stickers or stencils etc. to decorate labels if you wish.
- Ask them to hang their labels on the string.
- Encourage participants to browse through the labels to see what other people have shared.

Points to sum up: we all bring a range of skills, experience, ideas and creativity. When we are introducing loose parts play to a school or setting, recognising what everyone brings to the project and making good use of it, is vital to success. We should also recognise what the children bring and how that can make our project more successful and sustainable too.

Activity 1 Play types recap

Time 10 - 15 minutes

Resources needed: Play types drawn, written, or printed as individual items. See Play Scotland play types poster.



Manual: 4.3, 4.4



Tools: 8, 23

Trainer notes

The purpose is to remind participants of prior content on play types. It's expected that play types will be a useful concept for knowing how well your project is going.

Select a game or activity to remind participants of what they have learned about play types.

Here are some possibilities:

- Lead a group brainstorm to remember as many play types as possible and list them.
- Turn this into a competition by splitting into groups and seeing who can think of the most in a set period of time.
- Create play types cards - two of each play type. Mix them up and lay them out face down. One after another, each player has to turn two over and try to match pairs by memory. If they don't match, turn the cards back over. The next player then tries to find a pair, and so on until they are all matched.
- Use play types cards in a game similar to collecting football cards – swap and trade cards until you have a full set.

Points to sum up: remember play types when we are planning for evaluation and professional learning.

Play types are rarely seen in isolation. Playing children move between play types and combine them with great speed and complexity.

What might be happening if children don't seem to be engaging in a wide range of play types?

We can experiment with the environment, loose parts, atmosphere, time for play, attitude of adults, to widen the play types available.

Activity 2 Playwork approach recap

Time 10 minutes

Resources needed: flipchart and pens or smartboard, with the question written on it.



Manual: 2.3



Tool: 3

Trainer notes

The purpose of this activity is to remind participants of prior content as a primer for thinking about evaluation and professional learning.

Lead a group brainstorm to quickly capture response to the question:

“What do you feel are the important or distinctive things about a playwork approach?”

Remind participants to refer to the manual.

Points to sum up:

Origins of Playwork

The Playwork Principles

Link these back to monitoring, evaluation and professional learning.

Activity 3: Professional enquiry and curiosity

Time 15 minutes

Resources needed: PPT slide or pages from 7.1 as a handout

Copies of prompter questions:

- What is my focus and why?
- What research will help inform my thinking?
- What questions will guide my enquiry?
- What is my plan of action?
- How will I measure changes or impact?
- What is my data telling me?
- What is my informed action going to be?



Manual: 7.1

Training notes

Use section 7.1 of the manual to provide a short input. This activity is an introduction to stimulate reflection on practice and questions to explore further.

“What are the kinds of question you would like to explore about loose parts play?”

Think back over the LPP course – play types, play cues, the role of adults, types of loose parts - what sparks your interest? What makes you curious?

What questions do you have? Why do they do that? How does that happen? How could we ..? What would happen if...? I wonder why? Is it true that...?”

- Individually or in small groups, ask everyone to really think about a question that interests them. Keep it quite focussed.
- Alternatively, you use large ‘inside outside circle’ to generate ideas.

Provide the prompter questions sheet to help participants think through how their professional enquiry could be approached.

Activity 4: Documenting children's play

Time 15 minutes

Resources needed: Participants own phones with cameras or notebooks or paper and pencils.

Examples of play documentation. See samples in manual or project website.



Manual: 5.4, 7.2



Tool: 23

Trainer notes

The purpose is to tune into noticing play and to encourage reflective practice, leading to considering ways to document play. These are important aspects of assessing how well we are doing.

Describe some examples of things you might see after children have finished playing e.g. sandcastles, chalk drawings on a pavement, a row of pebbles.

- Ask participants to go to look for 'traces' of play.
- They can use their phones or notebooks and record what they find.
- In a school or children's setting this will be easier, but you can also look for traces of play left by your group.
- Photos can be shared and projected onto a screen if you have technology available.

Key points: when we document children's play we don't always have to take photos of children or to ask them direct questions – we might not even be there at the time.

Documenting children's play requires a sensitive approach which doesn't intrude or interrupt play but is alert to signs and signals of what's happening in play. We'll come back to this in looking at critical cartography.

- Share examples you have brought of play documentation.
- Use manual sections to discuss tips and suggestions as appropriate to the group.

Activity 5: Ethical and practical dimensions of documenting children's play

Time: 20 minutes

Resources needed: Prompter questions, flipchart or smartboard



Manual: 6.4, 7.2

Training notes

The purpose of this activity is to reflect together and create a list of ethical and practical dimensions together as a group.

- Ask participants to discuss the prompter questions in small groups.
- Ask groups to write their responses on post-it notes or small pieces of paper.

Let's think about ethical and practical implications of documenting children's play

- What are the key things you need to consider?
- Are there pros and cons to consider?

And...

- Children can be actively involved, if they choose, in documenting your loose parts play provision.
- What do you think the possible impacts will be on children's play if they are also involved in this?

After about 10 minutes, facilitate bringing the responses together into one sheet. Responses might be categorised into headings such as:

- Legal/school guidance or procedures
- GDPR
- Children's rights
- Impact on play
- Reflective practice



Manual: 7.2

Activity 6: Critical cartography

Time 10 minutes

Resources needed: Content from manual

Examples of critical cartography maps or photographs of maps.

Copies of *Rules for re-enchanting our relationship with play* (Russell, W. 2020) or

[ERASMUS+ Loose parts play | East Lothian Play Association \(elpa.org.uk\)](https://elpa.org.uk/ERASMUS+Loosepartsplay/)



Manual: 7.3



Tool: 16



Manual: 7

Trainer notes

Use the manual to provide an input on critical cartography. Mention it was used as a method for the Erasmus+ loose parts play project on which this course is based. Share any examples of critical cartography available.

See also Toolbox - see Tool 16 for a template.

Activity 7: Critical cartography - methods

Time: 20 minutes

Resources needed: Large drawing paper, drawing materials, sticky post-it notes.



Manual: 7.3

Training notes

The purpose is to explore approaches and methods for critical cartography.

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to choose a space they've worked and played in together during this course or a school playground or play space they use with children.

Ask participants to make a map from memory of that space.

Reflect on the maps and introduce the critical cartography methods of interconnecting documentation

- Maps
- Significant spaces
- Stories
- Lines.

Emphasise that this is a short introduction and learning and insights will develop over time when using this methodology. The trainer's own familiarity with the methods and examples will be very valuable.

Activity 8: Critical cartography - planning

Time: 20 minutes

Resources needed: Blank planning template



Manual: 7.3

Tutor notes

The purpose is to consider how critical cartography will be applied in participants' own setting and to create a personal action plan for introduction of critical cartography.

Activity – create personal or school/setting action plans to introduce critical cartography to our school or setting.

- What questions do you have about how to help it work well?
- What do you need to learn more about or prepare before introducing critical cartography? How will you do this?
- Who do you need to work with (colleagues, children etc.)
- What resources are required? How will you organise them?
- When will you begin?
- How often will you engage as a group to reflect on critical cartography?
- Where will the map be displayed?

Closing

- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Return to the learning outcomes you introduced at the beginning of the module to check with participants if they have been achieved.
- Ensure participants know arrangements for any other modules they can participate in.
- Create an opportunity for participants to set their own personal goal or task to carry out as a result of the session.
- Plan a short evaluation exercise to check satisfaction with the training content, the training style, the venue and arrangements.
- Provide contact details as appropriate.
- Hand out certificates for achievement of the course, if applicable.



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