

Psychological tools and the development of play

Milda Bredikyte

Ed. D., Associate Professor, Department of Education, Oulu University (University Consortia of Kajaani)

Such theoretical concepts of cultural-historical theory as psychological tools, creative developmental acts and cultural development is introduced. The concepts are used in the analysis of empirical study of specifically designed play-promoting environment — playworld [15]. The environment has been constructed having in mind Vygotsky's idea of genetic experiment, but instead of one higher mental function the whole activity system (joint play activity) is promoted. Individual creative acts take place in collective activity. A case study is presented, which reveals developmental trajectory of the child and specific conditions of individual creative acts.

Keywords: psychological tools, creative act, play development, genetic experiment, playworld, "ideal" forms of behavior, dialogical drama with puppets, initiative behavior.

Introduction

In societies supporting children's play and regarding childhood as a fundamental period of human life there appears the problem how to support play. Often the support means a positive attitude towards play and acceptance of children's involvement in play activities. In western societies virtual materials, toys and props are offered to children in abundance. Children's spaces are often overfilled with materials produced for «play support». Materials and props do not accomplish their purpose. A general positive attitude towards play does not help to discern what plays are better than others and how to develop children's play.

Behind positive attitudes there is an assumption that play has a specific function in human development. But it is necessary to specify this function and find out appropriate methods of strengthening it. In traditional play theories developmental impact of play is not explicated in concrete terms. Play is supposed to have developmental value in any form and thus actively promoted. Attempts to demonstrate what concrete results play may bring with are often based on the evaluation of cognitive learning results attained in play. In this case the real developmental potential of play is lost. We claim that play has more potential as the tool of changing the self of participants in play (as a psychological tool).

Vygotsky did not write extensively about play, but indicated some essential aspects of play and its impact on child development. Developmental potential of play is connected first of all to the development of imagination and symbolic competence. These characteristics are results of the whole playtime during several years. We can even talk about similarities between play and artistic creativity in adult life. Vygotsky [25] argued that in play children create a symbolic reality like real artists do. He concluded that play is imagination in action and prototype of any artistic creativity. This connection is based on

the syncretistic (holistic) character of play, which is also a necessary precondition for all artistic creativity.

We think that creative aspects of play are more important than learning concrete knowledge and skills. We suppose that creative acts carried in play using cultural tools are important factors promoting children's development. The main focus in our study is on creative moments and interpretations in children's play and not what concrete phenomena from their environment they reproduce in the play process. Adults cannot directly program children's creativity. We can rather talk about adults' provocations for creativity and change of self. Provocations should have a close kinship with play, which means that they should have an aesthetic form (drama, story, narrative, music etc.).

Cultural and psychological tools in playworlds

We may describe children's play as creative interpretation of their cultural environments. In other words children are not directly copying and reproducing phenomena of the environment in their play. Cultural-historical psychology has interpreted creativity of play by emphasizing the sense making dominance of play [26]. This makes possible the disentangling of characteristics of objects and phenomena and their creative recombination (pretending) in an original way [7]. In any case play is carried out using different cultural tools, which may be directed to the personal self of the players. In other words cultural tools are transformed to psychological tools, which regulate children's psychological processes. Creativity exposed in play activity is a serious challenge in scientific research because concrete products seldom can be analyzed.

Play has an important function in the development of self-regulation. Play ideas, imaginary situations and roles as psychological tools replace external stimuli and control is shifted internally. The imaginary situation

frees the child from the impulses of the present situation. Vygotsky explained the transition of control using the concept of intention: «Intention is a type of process of controlling one's own behavior by creating appropriate situations and connections» [24, p. 211]. In child-initiated pretend play all participants jointly construct appropriate situations and there is a level of joint negotiated intentions. Control of behavior is established by creating play rules. Vygotsky argues that there is no play in situations where no rules are present. «Only actions that fit the rules are acceptable in the play situation» [26, p. 82]. Play rules are different from ordinary social rules, which normatively regulate cultural practices. The children negotiate about the rules and regulate their play behavior. These rules have an affective character and obeying rules brings satisfaction.

Joint play requires flexibility and creative imagination, but it is at the same time the space for developing them further. Vygotsky [23, p. 123] offers a counter example about lacking imagination in his works on defectology: «We saw that the zero point of imagination...appears in the following way – the individual is in a state where he is unable to abstract himself from a concrete situation, unable to change it creatively, to regroup signs to free one's self from under its influence». An unwritten conclusion is that creative people are more adept at manipulating psychological tools and at adapting to their environments than less creative. Children's play age has sometimes been called «the time of unlimited creativity» [4].

An attempt to analyze the use of cultural and psychological tools is made by El'konin jr. [8] who proposed the concept of «creative act» as a unit of analysis in his study of developmental phenomena. A creative act has special potential and forms a turning point in developmental processes. A truly human act is an act of *cultural co-creation*, not a form of consumption of culture and cultural products. Only productive action can be called a developmental act. *The product of a developmental act irreversibly changes the environment and the subject or actor of the activity.*

We are interested in creative acts and the development of self in play and other activities where children assimilate sense and meaning of human activities. El'konin [7] argues that the didactic role of play is limited, because its specific functions are different. According to him «Role-playing is an activity within which the child becomes oriented towards the most universal, the most fundamental, meanings of human activity» (p. 24). In his diaries El'konin [6] writes that play is not a process of mastering the forms of human activity or social roles, but rather the *contents of moral norms*. Thus role-play can be understood as the overall process of mediation of meanings and purposes of human activity.

Some researchers claim that the most accessible cultural tools containing models of relations among people are folk tales and traditional fairy-tales. In educational practice today a story or fairy tale is often regarded merely as an example – a material to show the correct

way to relate to the realities of life. Experimental studies and practical everyday observations have proved that children while knowing how they should behave nonetheless are unable to demonstrate such behavior in real life situations. Mastery of helping behavior in an imaginary play situation did not lead directly to the mastery in normal daily setting [21].

Fairy tales do not directly reflect reality. On the basis of a lexical-semantic analysis Tsiv'ian concluded that, although a fairy tale may be considered one of the most accessible kinds of text, this does not mean that it is semantically simple. The semantics of a fairy tale is very complicated – it contains a «complete system modeling the world» [22, p. 212]. Semantic analysis of a story led Tsiv'ian [22] to reconstruct the archetypal features of the plots of fairy tales and to establish a mythological model of the world described in terms of a system of universal semiotic oppositions (one's own and that which is not one's own, external and internal, near and far, etc.). Propp [20] also showed that the role of everyday life in the fairy tale has been overestimated and that reality is not directly reflected in folklore. Folklore is an interpretation of reality conceived in totally different categories from our own. It is always a transformation of a particular aspect of reality.

What happens when a story is read or told to the child? According to El'koninova [10] «work» is the correct term for describing the complex internal activity of a child. A traditional story is centered on the main character and is focused on resolving the main character's personal fate. Identifying himself with the hero, the child grasps the text's hidden semantics that is conveyed through the actions of the main character. The sense of actions «is singled out by the child not through mental inferences and thought operations, but through a direct emotional relation to the main character, through participation in the events in the story» [9, p. 41].

Zaporozhets & Neverovich [29], Strelkova [21] have shown that while listening to the story a child follows the actions of the main character with his «inner eye» – «living through» (*soperezhivat'*) and assisting (*sodeistvovat'*): he literally experiences all the events physically and emotionally. Recordings of autonomic nervous reactions accompanying listening to a story have also confirmed this [29].

Zaporozhets [28] points out that one of the most important changes taking place at preschool age is the development of an **ability to act mentally in imaginary circumstances** (an imaginary situation according to Vygotsky). Vygotsky describes how this process develops from the creation of imaginary situations in pretend play, Zaporozhets analyses it further describing how listening to a fairy tale supports the child's movement from symbolic actions with symbolic objects in imaginary sense-fields to imaginary actions (but real feelings and emotions) in the imaginary fairy tale space. Clear composition, dramatic events and rhythmical movement of the events help the child to step into the circle of imaginary circumstances and assist mentally the heroes of the story. The young child doesn't want and is

not yet able to take the position of an outside observer, says Zaporozhets. Vygotsky [25], Flerina [11], Kudriavtsev [13, 14] and others state that a young child is always «inside» the events he is painting or telling.

In pretend play the child has to create imaginary situations, symbolic objects and actions (which are still real actions) in order to maintain pretending. The narrative of a fairy tale helps the child to create an imaginary reality, maintain and feel it, enabling the child to act. The result of this process «is making his own story — i. e., assimilating and comprehending its sense». This requires time, practice and sensitivity from the adult.

A decisive factor is that the child has an opportunity to live through and assist (soperezhivat) the hero in carrying out heroic deeds. Is it equally possible when listening to the story, observing the story dramatization or participating in the dramatization? Results from experiments with short stories presented to groups of six-year-old normal and intellectually retarded children show that dramatization and personalized presentations of the story clearly enhanced the understanding of retarded children. There were no differences between the different modes of presenting the story to normal children [1].

El'koninova and El'konin jr. made a psychological analysis of the fairy tales relying mainly on the works of Lotman, Propp, Tsiv'ian and others and came to the conclusion that *initiative relationship to the world* is presented in fairy tales. The subject in a fairy tale is the subject of a deed (in Bakhtin's sense), the initiator of an action — creative act (in El'konin's sense). The fairy tale is shaped to test *initiative* behavior.

El'koninova's [9, 10] experiment is an attempt to follow the development of creative acts in play activity. According to her a «*developmentally challenging play is not possible without giving a real shape for the ideal form of human relations presented in folk tales*». In her experiment she followed the way in which children between three and seven play out stories familiar to them, keeping to a canonical plot. At the beginning the story was read to the children and they were asked to dramatize the story together with an adult. Only those children who wanted to take part in the dramatization participated in the play sessions. In all 60 kindergarten children from 4 to 7 years took part in the experiment.

The main conclusion was that the preschool children are not able to construct the whole structure of a classical folk tale in their joint play. Children between the ages of 4 and 5.5 managed the task best.

«A vivid enactment of an integral story plot, *during which alone samples of initiative can be tested*, becomes possible when a child not only intuitively understands that what happens in make-believe is indeed make-believe but also, at the same time believes in the reality of the story. Younger children cannot play out the part of a story completely because for them it is too real; 6–7-year-olds are not able to do this because for them the story is too make-believe. An integral and vivid enactment of a story occurs at about the age of 5 because children of this age are best able to establish a balance between their experience of the reality of the story and

their experience of the make-believe quality of what takes place in the performance» [10, p. 86].

El'koninova concluded that in make-believe performances the child acquires the experience of being a subject, he senses initiative through overcoming behavioral stereotypes and through restraining impulsive actions. Initiative requires some self-definition from the child and it marks the beginning of changes of his consciousness.

Child as the subject of joint activity

Traditional folk tales represent culturally accepted — «ideal» forms of behavior. They do not directly reflect reality, but express particular attitudes towards the world and cultural values. Hughes [12] suggests that stories may be called units of imagination and understanding.

An adult personifies «cultural» or «ideal» forms of behavior for the young child. Even if the child already is able to perceive such cultural forms as music, rhythm, rhyme, sounds, colors, shapes, forms, etc. he has no access to them without an adult. The adult is a mediator of culture for the child. When the adult introduces to the child such cultural forms as folk songs, folk tales, folk art, the child gradually can find his «independent» path to the world of culture. This makes possible to «compare» ideal cultural forms with everyday life situations and start creating subcultures.

According to Lotman [17] young children approach all artifacts actively not just observing and contemplating. They start touching, moving, exploring. When dealing with objects and actions the child has an example — an adult who is modeling the «ideal» forms of behavior. But with cultural human values the situation is more complicated. Adults do not necessarily represent the models of «ideal» or «right» behavior.

We can conclude that the construction of self starts at the crossroads of at least three lines: (a) subjective — what I want to do; (b) everyday, «realistic» — how others (adults and peers) behave; and (c) cultural, «ideal» — how to behave correctly (morally). This contradictory situation can be the **starting point of a creative or developmental act**.

Bozhovich studied personality formation and claimed that the act is the unit of studying personality. The concept of an act is different from the concept of an action (which does not necessarily include internal motivation) and activity. «An act always presupposes a special type of activity in the subject. It is accompanied by a competition among motives and the making of a decision, although in many cases this competition is not consciously perceived by the individual» [3, p. 32].

In this connection we can talk about co-creation of a new culture. Creative acts are dually oriented: to the change of the world of objects and of the acting subject. In the construction of self the mechanism of role taking is important. Simultaneous presence of two positions («me as myself» and «me in a role») creates the challenge of comparing and reflecting one's own

self. By taking a role the child constructs a mirror for self-change using stories and narratives as a psychological tool.

Story as a psychological tool of self development

We think that E'lkoninova's experimental approach can be elaborated. The subject himself in a situation of free choice should carry out creative acts. Adults cannot directly teach or guide creative acts. We strongly support Mikhailov's [19] favorite expression «the human soul doesn't know mediators». Readiness for creative acts matures in different activities, partly guided by adults, and adults serve as models of creative acts.

We believe that dramatization of a story together with an adult cannot be called play in the true sense of the word; it looks more like «practicing» initiative behavior (in El'konin's sense). Also the claim that «samples of initiative» can be tested only during «a vivid enactment of an integral story plot» is not convincing. The purpose of play staging seems to be artificial for the children and we can't make any conclusions about their ability to carry out or get the sense of «heroic deeds». «Concerted actions» with adults hardly can be called creative acts. But we agree that this is one of the possible ways to help the children to «grasp» the sense and meaning in human relations depicted in tales.

In our experiment [2] the children were able to «play out» the whole structure of a well-known folk tale in joint activity, but only with the help of an adult. In our opinion they carried out such activity because it was «a puppet theatre presentation» for other children. Playing the role of an actor – giving a puppet theatre presentation of their favorite folk tale – was the children's main activity; the fairy tale was a secondary but necessary means to achieve the main goal.

It is crucial for the development of joint play that children have a possibility to follow drama or puppet performances of traditional folk tales. We observed how they later used some of the episodes during independent play. We believe that children are able to perceive the moral of heroic behavior on a general level, and grasp the model or a «net» (setka) [16], which they can use for encoding the behavior of other people and later of their own. The way in which they will behave depends on their life experiences, «moral feelings, convictions, worldviews» Bozhovich [3, p. 85].

The «experimental» setting for creative play

Our basic principle of constructing the play environment is the continuous enrichment of children's experience with cultural content. We offer the children new

narratives – stories and new cultural forms of activity. Egan [5] writes that story form makes information effectively meaningful and gives a feeling of safety. It is important that young children are constantly provided with new experiences. They are offered opportunities to take part in creative activities such as storytelling, dramatizations, puppet performances, building play-worlds including painting, music/singing, movement/dancing etc.

Organization of the environment and activities

The experimental development of play has taken place at Oulu University campus in Kajaani, Finland since 2002. Our site is a club of children's creative play. Approximately 62 children (0–6 years) from 30 families have attended the laboratory for creative play over the six years. The club's activities form a part of early childhood education. Once a week a group of 15–20 children (between the ages of 3 months and 5 years) attend the club for creative play and participate in specific activities with the university students. Children come with their parents and stay for 4 hours. During each session a music teacher and a university teacher/ researcher are also present.

We call our curriculum *the play generating narrative curriculum*. Planning is based on field notes and video observations of previous days. Researchers and students discuss and plan the curriculum and schedule of all activities and later the students are responsible for the practical implementation of the planned activities with the children. Children's participation in any activity is voluntary. Children's creative interactions with different materials and activities, with other children and adults create contexts for their development and meaningful learning. Adults take an active part in children's play using different methods and strategies.

All activities are recorded on video with several cameras. Besides video records we obtain four types of reports from each play session. Student's field notes are used as an important resource for analyzing and interpreting play sessions. Their experiences of direct participation in play enable us to capture the inner state of an adult player in addition to the changes in children's participation.

We have used the Dialogical Drama with Puppets (DDP)* method [2] as our main tool in working with the children. Basic components of the DDP method are:

- Narratives: traditional folk tales, fairy-tales, fiction, self created stories
- Puppet performance (can be dramatization) of a story
- Dialogical form of the activities: main purpose of the DDP method is to involve the child in a dialogue initiated by the teacher and, by letting him watch the adult, encourage him gradually to join in or otherwise take part in the activity.

* Dialogical drama with puppets (DDP) is one of the methods for fostering creative activities in preschool age. The DDP method is based on creative or developmental drama, which is defined as «an improvisational, non-exhibitional process-centered form of drama... The primary purpose of creative drama is to foster personality growth and to facilitate learning of the participants...» (McCaslin, 1982, 6).

Analysis of creative acts in the play environment

Our experimental environment provokes children to creative acts, but we cannot plan the exact time of their appearance. The same can be said about the content and context of these acts. Everything depends on the children's interpretation of created situations and possibilities. As in spontaneous play situations the time span between some impressive event and its reflective use in play can be quite long as was shown in the analysis of children's use of stories told to them [27]. A typical feature for thinking in complexes is that events and impressions are combined without adult logic, which makes it even more difficult to see certain elements or causal chains in play activity.

In some cases we can identify a clear connection between our «provocation» (a story, game, puppet performance) and children's joint play, drawing or other form of narrative expression. One example is the story of a three-year-old girl presented in drawing. The girl participated in the students' story performance of *Little Red Riding Hood* and the small children's circle game *Watchdog*. After these activities she asked for paper and started to draw her own story. In her drawing she made a huge watchdog, which could protect people from the attacks of the mean bad wolf.

Our «provocations» are based on careful observation of children's earlier activities. We have formulated hypotheses on children's «zone of creative development». Themes and forms of narratives are selected bearing in mind the interests children have and how we could enrich and enlarge them. The second feature of «provocations» is that they are presented using creative methods. Students should demonstrate creativity to the children in different forms. The students' emotional involvement is a critical feature in their presentations. The presentation should invite the children to join the activities or go further in their own joint activity.

A clear connection between play provoking activities and children's joint play is not sufficient evidence on creative acts. Every child has his own life world and experiences outside our play environment. Creative acts have their roots in children's life outside our control. We can offer with the provocative environment a channel for finding appropriate forms of expression for creative acts. In a way we as researchers have to reconstruct children's creative acts and our role as provokers. For this purpose we have tentatively elaborated a set of criteria for the identification of creative acts and their relation to the construction of self in a multiage group of children. We have to keep in mind that co-construction of creative acts differs greatly depending on the age of the child and children's joint construction of these acts takes always place in small subgroups, although the whole group usually participates in «provocations».

The concept of a creative act should be revised and redefined in the contexts of children's pretend play. We think that play and pretending creates a specific environment for experimentation, which always is new to

children. This may seem a paradoxical claim, because children are using elements from their environment. But the essence of play is not external similarity with real life. It is more important to know how the experience of being someone else is constructed using real life phenomena as tools. An important aspect in children's creativity is self-change.

We would like to define creative acts in concrete play situations as moments of the appearance of qualitatively new phenomena in play. Often adult provocations or disturbances in children's play cooperation are behind these moments. Thus in most cases a creative act is not an individual phenomenon, but a collective unanticipated creation. Methodologically catching these moments requires a construction of favorable environments and follow-up study of play. Children are not consciously changing themselves in play or acquiring new traits, but participating in play activity, which challenges them to confront their momentary real self. Adults may have a role of a helper who can reveal what the children's play behavior looks like and reinforce new features.

We suppose that the first step of self-change is taken in play activity and the child has to become a different person in play situations before his real self can change. This means that the child feels himself a different person. In the following section we will analyze changes in the participatory trajectory of one child in our experimental play environment.

Lucas

He has attended our club for three years. In autumn when the observation period started he was five years and two months and at the end eight months older. Lucas is very independent, possesses a strong character with clearly expressed traits of individualism and perfectionism. He is very curious, eager to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. He loves to work in the handicraft center with paper, scissors and glue, drawing and cutting figures, painting large pictures. He decides what he wants to do, all his activities are purposeful and usually productive: he likes to create something that he can show to his parents and students, and then take home. During the last two years he did not make close contacts with the other children and has preferred to play with students, with his younger sister or by himself. Three questions have bothered Lucas' mother: (1) Lucas always wants things to be done his way and gets very angry if someone doesn't agree, (2) he doesn't play with other children, (3) he doesn't start a new activity until he is sure that he will manage it well. According to the mother the boy needs a push and support at the same time. Last spring when a new brother was born Lucas became more stubborn, angry and impatient.

The following table describes his participatory trajectory in five first puppet story performances given by the students. The story was the folk tale «Turnips», which students customized by introducing new chara

ters and events. Lucas' favorite character of the puppet story was «Pööpöti» – the millipede.

Immediately after the fifth puppet performance all the children ran to the art area to paint a rural landscape of the story. Lucas kept on painting and conversing with children and a student for about 20 minutes. First time he was able to carry out a personal conversation with Nora during the story performance and painting together. He was not nervous and angry when a younger girl came to paint close to him and added some details on the house he was painting! Later he enjoyed painting with a boy. Conversations with the students were most important to him, but he could also get into contact with the other children. We draw the conclusion that Lucas' behavior had *irreversibly changed*; he looked like a totally different person. He was really an active participant and fond of the activities.

The puppet story performance organized by Lucas

During the last club meeting Lucas started alone to collect all decorations, puppets and props from the previous students' puppet performances and invited Nora to play with him. He suggested they should make a plan and then invite all the mothers and other children with a bell. «The performance is starting!» he announced. When people arrived he explained to them in detail where they should sit and how to behave.

The main features in the puppet show were:

- The whole performance took 14 minutes. Lucas was peacefully playing with Nora for the first time; he did not lose his temper, was not shouting or fighting, and was really flexible.
- He organized the whole show by himself because he wanted to make it to everybody. He realized that he couldn't do this alone and invited Nora to play with him. They were doing well, and understood each other without words (especially at the beginning).
- They managed to create a relatively «good» story with a beginning, dramatic events and an end. They improvised on the spot without rehearsing or adult help.
- They demonstrated different skills, such as playing different roles, changing voices, playing several roles at a time, listening to each other, interacting and constructing the story plot through the dialogues. At the same time they observed the audience and made comments on their behavior («You have to follow the show and not talk to each other»).

- The improvisational character of the show revealed the fact that the name of the show was clear at the end. Lucas announced: «The name of the show is Pööpöti's nightmare».

We can conclude that Lucas' participatory trajectory changed from resistance and indifference to self-initiative as is illustrated in the following chain: *resistance* → *raising interest* → *careful observation* → *active participation* → *leadership and organization of the activity*

Discussion

We argue that the development of psychological tools in play requires creative (developmental) acts accomplished by individual children and at the same time «inside» this activity other children are able to carry out developmental acts. The adults act as mediators between culture and children's creative acts when they present stories to the children and later participate in joint play-worlds. The adults first present creative acts through stories, then model them in play-worlds and later create or support the «developmental» situation in play. Narratives (stories presented to the children) are the main source of play.

In our research site adult participation in joint activities creates the space and environment supportive for developmental acts. The concept of creative act should be revised and redefined in the contexts of children's pretend play and early learning. We define creative acts in concrete situations as *moments of the appearance of qualitatively new phenomena in children's activity*:

1. Catching these moments requires the construction of appropriate environments and follow-up study of play and learning.
2. In most cases a creative act is not an individual phenomenon, but a *collective unanticipated creation*.
3. Children are not consciously changing themselves or acquiring new traits, but participating in joint activity, which challenges them to confront their momentary real self.
4. Often adult and peer *provocations or confrontations* are behind these moments. Adults may have a role of a helper who can reveal what the children's behavior looks like and reinforce new features.

The main *prerequisites* for creative acts are: (1) rich and long experience of participation in «cultural activities» together with adults and other children. Appropriate activities are e.g. storytelling, puppet pre-

Table 1

Lucas' participation trajectory in puppet performances

	Session number				
	1	2	3	4	5
Time of performance (min.)	11	10	8	6	7
Participation	Resistance (L stands)	Focused attention, (L sits)	Concentrates, Keenly observes (no talk)	Comments, Responds to students' questions	Suggests next steps, gives advice
Emotional involvement	Angry expressions	Smiles now and then	Smiling to other kids	Happy mood	Personal relation

sentations, dramatizations, creative drama, painting, drawing, modeling, making puppets and other play props from different materials; (2) rich environment of challenging materials and self-made play things, but not ready made toys and games.

Creative acts are provoked by *crisis situation*. In most observed cases a particular kind of irritation, feeling of uncertainty and dissatisfaction precedes creative acts. We may call this «agonies of creation». Creative acts should be carried out by the subject himself in a situation of free choice without obvious adult guidance or pressure.

Prerequisites for creative act are:

- Self organized and self performed activity (if an adult is participating, he has a role of a helper)
- Time (most of observed cases lasted from forty minutes to two hours)
- Self-chosen and arranged «special» spaces (for example a house «built» behind the couch or under the table; a castle in creative drama center, etc.).

Creative act is a challenge to the adult because it always is a surprise. As a rule, truly developmental «movement» starts when cognitive learning task (from adult point of view) has been accomplished and the teacher is ready to leave. Creative acts cannot be

planned in advance; the adults have to be in a state of «constant openness». Some indicators of creative act are:

- Child becomes active and carries out «his own» activity
- Child starts to lead the activity
- Child becomes spontaneous and flexible, flow experiences can be observed.
- Child acts on a higher level compared to his usual play behavior.

A necessary prerequisite for creative act is a sensitive and flexible adult participation. In this case the adult may support and sometimes «bring» the child to the accomplishment of a creative act. Often this doesn't happen because adults design «realistic learning goals». Creative acts are more often observed during children's «free play». We argue that adults may even resist creative acts. They are «afraid» of spontaneous and «free flow» mood of child's creative activities because they are not able to «control» them. Such activities often are not valued in educational institutions. Only very skillful and creative teacher understands and supports independent creative activities of children. Creative act in the classroom is one of the indicators of creative educational environment and pedagogical guidance.

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Психологические средства и развитие игры

Милда Бредиките

Ed. D., доцент факультета образования Университета Оулу (университетский консорциум г. Каяни)

Вводятся такие теоретические понятия культурно-исторической теории, как психологические средства, творческие акты развития и культурное развитие. Данные понятия используются при анализе эмпирического исследования, в котором специально была разработана среда, содействующая игре, — игровой мир [15]. Окружающая среда была сконструирована учитывая идеи Выготского о генетических экспериментах, но в данном случае рассматривалась вся деятельностная система (совместная деятельность игры) вместо одной высшей психической функции. Индивидуальные творческие действия совершаются в коллективной деятельности. Представлен анализ индивидуального случая, в котором показана траектория развития ребенка и определенные условия отдельных творческих действий.

Ключевые слова: психологические инструменты, творческое действие, развитие игры, генетический эксперимент, игровой мир, «идеальные» формы поведения, диалогическая пьеса с куклами, инициативное поведение.