Media Education Research Journal 11.1 Spring 2022
doi: 10.5281/zenodo.6773054

MERJ

The Experimenting Community and Trans-Glocal Play Culture

Klaus Thestrup
The Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark

Abstract

The experimenting community is a pedagogically based strategy, where experimenting and playing is at the center of the activities in a pre-school, a primary school or an after school club. This article describes this pedagogical approach. The experimenting community is a way for pre-school teachers and teachers to support children's creative and meaning-making based use of digital media and digital technologies when getting online and using narratives as a source of material when playing and communicating locally, regionally and even globally. The paper is based upon several research projects, where children communicated across time and space, and outlines some possible ways to establish, what one might call a *trans-glocal play culture*, where children's own agency plays an important part in transforming narratives and media use both in a local and global context. The experimenting community both embraces this aspect of children's play culture and unfolds it as part of the community itself.

Keywords: experimenting community, flexible meeting place, participation, trans-glocal play culture

The development of a pedagogical approach

How can children and teachers in a pre-school or a school start to communicate, experiment and play with other schools or pre-schools across time and space? This is the question I will try to uncover some answers to based upon several research projects. This text is not about what children do on their own outside school and pre-school, but what they might do *inside* school and pre-school and where grown-ups in different professional roles might be part of it. in Denmark the educational system differs slightly from other countries. Here a pre-school is called a kindergarten for children of 3-6-years-old. These kindergar-

tens are not formally a part of the educational system, even though they feature activities that are intended to prepare children for school – the first year in primary school is called a 'pre-school class'. The projects I will be examining cover these different sectors and involved children who were 3-8-years-old. Play is a key aspect of the pedagogical framework of the pre-school class and has recently been strengthened in the curriculum for the Danish kindergartens (https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/8077%20SPL%20Hovedpublikation_UK_WEB%20FINAL-a.pdf). The kindergarten in Denmark has roots in the European tradition of child-centered pedagogy and has traditionally been organized in such a way that there is time and space for creative activities and children's free and self organized play. There are also connections between this pedagogy and approaches to the use of digital media or digital technologies (March et al, 2017; Resnick, 2017).

The findings in this article are based on a pedagogical approach, that has been developed over time, that supports playing and experimenting and where digital communication technologies have been an important part of this. The elements have been developed on the basis of experimentation in the different projects, but I also include suggestions for a future pedagogy to be discussed and tried out in other contexts. Since 2004 I have conducted practical research in the field of online communication, experimenting and playing, that has involved children, preschool teachers and teachers in primary school (Thestrup, 2019; Bølgan, 2018). The research has been inspired by practice-led research (Smith & Dean, 2009), action research (Duus et al, 2014) using participatory observations (Kristiansen & Krogstrup, 2013), informal conversations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), visual methods (Pink, 2013) and my own active participation in the pedagogical processes as the main methods. I have often been in the role of researcher as well as teacher in order to be able to find out how one can experiment and play together with children in both the physical and digital worlds. I have done this independently or together with other researchers or practitioners, sharing methods and results (Christensen et al, 2016). This has afforded me the opportunity to try out different pedagogical methods and teacher roles.

The article consists of several parts, that develop an understanding of the experimenting community. Firstly a short introduction to the research projects and the first framing of the communication between institutions. This is followed by the positioning of children's culture in relation to experimenting communities. I continue with a specific examination of the teacher's role in the experimenting community. Finally the experimenting community is related to trans-glocal play culture as a future possibility.

The research projects

My research started in 2004 in one kindergarten, where children, aged 3-6-years-old, experimented with and played with small digital cameras inside and outside (Thestrup, Henningsen & Jerg, 2009). The

children had access to cameras, stationary computers with an internet connection and later tablets. They took hundreds of images during one day of walking and running. The questions they posed were exploratory: What does it look like if we do this and this? If we use gaffer tape to mount this camera to one of our bicycles, what does the video look like? If we use *Star Wars* lightsabers and pose in front of the camera, what does that then look like and what is it with Anakin Skywalker, is he evil?

We looked at images, drew on them, cut them to pieces and placed them on walls to talk about them. We called this *media play* based on a term invented by Margareta Rönnberg (Rönnberg 1983). It has to do with children's ability in their play culture to use a media text as a formula and then improvise upon it and in that process use and change characters, sentences and actions by making them sources of material in play (Mouritsen, 1996). Rönnberg's original definition included only the text itself, but as the examples show, the definition soon expanded to include videography (Henningsen, 1999) and later playing with any type of media available (Thestrup, 2011). Media play in general covers communication, narratives and expressive production. Today it must also include digital technologies and children's presence in a global and visual culture (Thorhauge & Jessen, 2021).

The research also took place through European projects such as mediaPLAYINGcommunities, 2007-2009 (Støvelbæk, 2009; MediaPLAYINGcommunities, 2009), where kindergartens and pre-schools started to go beyond an understanding of their pedagogical practice which was limited to each institution. Here one of the main challenges was, that the understanding of the actual pedagogical space was about the individual kindergarten itself. Therefore many activities and experiments took place and started out in the local sandbox, playground or activity room. This way of thinking has often been the starting point in other and later projects. It simply takes time to involve and include people and places elsewhere when it hasn't been done locally before. A way to start is to use the internet as information and a source of material for one's own stories and playing. Another way is to follow someone on a digital channel on social media and to use them for inspiration, discussion and local actions. But the moment the local group of children and the staff start using their own channels things begin to change for real, because others might follow the children and the kindergarten, for example, parents, friends and researchers. The children and the staff are then no longer only consumers, they are also producers of what was told and how it was told. The children might already be both consumers and producers in their family, but now they can also interact with the world outside their kindergarten, pre-school or school. It simply means that the pre-school teacher and the children try to find uses for any given media or technology, involving the use of any other material available during the pedagogical process. For example, a plastic toy knight living in a LEGO castle, might be photographed close-up and

the image sent to somebody via email who then might develop a story. Media play is a laboratory open to a variety of materials and ideas.

Projects have also taken place in a Danish national project like Cultural Formation in a Digital and Global World in 2015 (Thestrup et al., 2015), where 17 Danish kindergartens communicated using the software Google+, today reframed as Currents and part of the Google Suite. This piece of software made it possible to upload and comment through images, video, sound and text with an easy interface for the user. Here a variety of communication forms turned out to be possible. One example was that all involved parties used an app at the time called Chatterpix. This app made it possible to place a mouth on an image of any kind and record what it says. This produced a kind of asynchronous play, where everybody could improvise upon the same technical possibility in the form of a meme. In another example two kindergartens exchanged elements of a narrative by alternately uploading images from a foreign country with two fictitious characters placed upon them. These characters were travelling together and formed the basis of a story. In a further example two kindergartens chose a song and danced to it simultaneously on Skype. They also recorded elements of the dance and uploaded them on a closed drive and used these elements to edit a common video. The chosen software could be used to develop ideas, creativity and cooperation in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. The communication between the institutions was, in itself, a platform to inspire and to be inspired by others. The local play took place in physical spaces with concrete objects and were transformed into processes of mutual exchange that took place online.

In another example ASSIST, 2017-2018 (Thestrup, Gislev & Elving, 2018; Gislev, Thestrup & Elving, 2020), teachers in larger schools in Denmark worked together with teachers in remote schools on subjects, the remote schools could not offer. The children in this project were a little older than in the kindergarten projects (6-9-years-old). Here it soon became clear that the participants developed a network, where everybody collaborated the best they could, no matter who was assisting, and who was teaching the subject. It also soon became clear that the local situation was important because the local staff knew about the local children, conditions and resources. The physical space was of course of great importance in the communication among participants.

The network in this case did not exist in advance, but had to be originated, maintained and defined according to the actual needs of participants. When someone needed to talk to someone or show something it had to be tried out and the experiences shared. Participants in the network, which had to be flexible to be able to function and develop, collaborated with each other to share and foster expertise.

Finally, I have been part of the international project The MakEY Project

in 2017-2019 (https://makeyproject.eu/), where among many other things three schools in Denmark, Great Britain and Australia respectively tested how to communicate and experiment together online in global makerspaces (Thestrup & Pedersen, 2020). Again, 'Currents' was used as the primary tool to communicate and again the physical space was important locally. The difference was that the children at one school did not have to copy what the others at the other schools were drawing, building and painting, but were allowed to transform this into something more or less different – they could suggest ideas and add to drawings. One example was a small black and white drawing of a robot, that turned out to be a teddy bear in moonlight painted on bigger and thicker piece of paper. The original idea was transformed in terms of content, materials and tools. When somebody presented a spaceship, someone else was free to transform it into another spaceship. When somebody uploaded a drawning of a planet, someone else was free to suggest a name or come up with an idea.

The process in these and other projects changed over the years from localised digital media play, to collaboration between institutions. The understanding of the kindergarten, pre-school or school has slowly changed as well from a closed pedagogical entity to a more open and porous entity reaching out in the world and being both local and *glocal*. Throughout all of these projects the physical spaces have been connected to other physical spaces through digital communication. The next part of the article discusses ways of understanding and doing this.

Platforms for creativity

I will continue by presenting a way to conceive the connections with the world outside the school, which is called the flexible meeting place (Gislev, Thestrup & Elving, 2018). The idea is quite simply that the co-operating partners begin with the digital and analogue meeting places, that they need and, on the way, develop or change the use of them including leaving them behind when they no longer serve their needs (https://open-tdm.au.dk/blogs/assist/). By digital and analogue ways of meeting, I refer to the distance between the participating schools to determine whether an actual physical meeting place is possible, but it is also possible for meeting places to be hybrid. For example, children might experiment in a local workshop and upload images from what they are doing to their cooperating schools elsewhere. It might also be, that they in their workshop use common digital tools, share the same drive or meet regularly on video conferencing tool like Zoom to demonstrate processes or even work together. This illustrates that the flexible meeting places can consist of several actual meeting places at the same time in a combination of uses, for instance, a drive for storage, a video conferencing tool for talking, a platform for sharing images, text and sound and all the physical spaces around these communication tools.

The children experimenting and playing together might not be alone

in their respective homes, as so many experienced during the Covid pandemic. The spaces in question can be everything from a classroom, a school yard or a playground. So, a crucial part of the digital meeting place is a physical space with play traditions, pedagogical methods and principles, as well as digital technologies. The flexibility has to do with how one communicates, experiments and produces and reflects upon the tools used and that also includes the form of communication in itself. The flexibility also has to do with children's use of body and space – involving digital media and technologies does not exclude this. It all depends on how the meeting place is constructed and facilitated.

Regarding the different meeting places, the participants come together to do more than simply reflect on how they communicate. The flexible meeting place could also be understood as a platform for creativity, because that emphasizes what the participants are doing together (Gauntlett, 2015). Ideas and examples are highlighted and supported on this conceptual platform, which does not need to be online or physical (Culpepper & Gauntlett, 2020). The exchange between them can be seen as meaning-making process inside a single social or cultural group of people or between groups (Gauntlett & Thomsen, 2013). This all means that the meeting place does not need to be a place only to represent what is already known or applied, but can also be a place for questions, experimentation and sketching out ideas.

I have previously used and developed the term 'open laboratory' to explain the different activities in an educational setting connected to online teaching (Thestrup & Robinson, 2016). It derives from a discussion on drama and theatre some years ago about what qualified as drama and theatre and what did not. The idea of the open theatre was an assertion, in response, that no theatre or drama tradition should be excluded, but all invited into the 'laboratory' (Lehmann & Szatkowki, 2001). Those who advocated this had already begun to use digital media and technologies in the open lab as well. The potential consequence of this is that when all materials, traditions and tools are invited inside, then new expressions, processes and space might be formulated and used. So, an open laboratory is open to the encounter of analogue and digital materials and tools. It is not only a question of being creative or reflective, but being open to new challenges and possibilities presented by others somewhere in the flexible meeting place. From this, it follows that the open laboratory is also open to the outside world. It is not only a laboratory fixed in a physical space, where the pedagogy is defined to be acted out within a set of walls. It is in dialogue with the world around it – including other laboratories or not.

Finally, the open lab is open in the sense, that the participants in a lab are in a network or on the way to become part of one or more networks. One might describe about a process that goes from a moment, where there is no contact and no exchange through a moment

where the first meeting place is established, to a later phase, where the group becomes part of more networks (Gislev, Thestrup & Elving, 2020). What is essential here is that the participants in one community realize that they are no longer the only ones to decide, what to do, when, how and why as more communities have to agree. The pedagogical methods and principles locally might therefore be challenged. Others also have something to offer, including opinions or experiences, that lead them to how they understand the world or the area of interest in question. The process necessitates, at least, the acknowledgement that there must be room for negotiation and decision.

Children's culture as part of the pedagogy

The open laboratory is not only based upon the developmental possibilities in drama and theatre. It is also based upon children's play culture. When entering the laboratory, the participants carry with them experiences and culturally-based ways of using digital media, technology and narratives, which might be adequate or interesting for them to use, as they are. So, entering a lab is not necessarily based upon a need to change or a lack of possibilities, but a desire to try out and play, to try out new possibilities and see what they can be used for. The lab itself does not need to be a physical entity; it can comprise combinations of the physical and the virtual as long as it is possible for the children in their play culture, and as part of the experimenting community, to detect formulas and improvise upon them.

In children's play culture there might be repetitive patterns of play but there is also the ability to adapt and improvise. So, when the children and staff enter the lab, two things enter with them: an already existing social and cultural practice and a culturally-based ability to both maintain a practice and change it. Children might not know everything, there is to know about a narrative, a media situation or a technology, but they bring with them the ability to both maintain and improvise. One might claim that the formula comes from a movie or a game and this is what the children improvise upon, but a certain way of playing can also be seen as a formula to improvise upon. A way of playing is not locked down in a certain and never changeable pattern. The point is that the ability to improvise upon a formula from a narrative or an existing way of playing might create a new way of playing, which can be regarded as a new formula. In the open lab, the result of the improvisation might be a new way of playing about something and the experiment into the way to do this. You could say that the balance between doing the same again and doing something new creates a disequilibrium, where a new kind or playing or a new cultural practice is established, followed by a new balance when everything falls into place again.

So far, I have described the part of children's culture that can be described as their own play culture, but arguably children's culture actually consists of three interconnected categories: culture *by* the chil-

dren themselves; culture *for* or directed at them; and finally together *with* them (Mouritsen, 2002.) Often we talk about children's play culture when we talk about culture by children. They are in principle the ones who decide what do to for how long and when. Culture for them is about toys, games, movies, etc., meant for them to consume or use, but also includes museums and libraries. One could say that this cultural form is where someone other than the children decide for them what to do. The final form is about adults interacting directly with children on an equal basis as culture with children. Here nobody in principle in advance decides what to do and the preschool teacher or teacher cannot claim to be the ones who have this kind of authority. It is an ongoing negotiation between all the participants involved. The three forms are closely interconnected and affect both the position of the children and the pre-school teacher. It is not only a question of offering children different kinds of cultural processes or products or, conversely, letting them unfold their own play culture, but it is also a question of what kind of playing unfolds in all three forms. In culture with children you can frame play as common play in contrast to children's self-regulated play or free play in their play culture and guided play or instructed play in culture for children. The difference is who decides what to do and how to do it and who doesn't.

Guided play is where the teacher decides what to play and the children decide how to do it. Instructed play is in principle where the teacher decides both. Children's self-regulated play is regulated to a large extent by the children. When the teacher takes part here, she or he follows the guidelines for the local play defined by the children and can, in principle, suggest something new but does not in advance posses any formal power to change anything. In free play the teacher is absent and everything is run by the children themselves. Content and rules depend solely on the children. The definitions of these five forms of play placed in three forms of culture are based on the question of what one should place at the center between the adults and the children (Zosh et al, 2017; LEGO Foundation, 2021) and my choice has been a consequent insistence of a space in the middle, where both parties have a say on content and rules, which I then frame as common play. This is possible if the adults on one hand listen to what is being suggested and played and on the other suggest and show a genuine interest in playing.

This has been visualized in the table below, which represents experiences from the different projects discussed. The cultural continuum as it is called, covers the different forms of play and suggests a continuum between free play on one hand and instructed play on the other, indicated by dotted lines.

The Cultural Continuum

The five different ways of interacting between children and teachers exist in a ongoing continuum. Instructed play seems clearly to

The cultural forms	**Culture BY Children**		**Culture WITH Children**		**Culture FOR Children**
The forms of play	Free play	Self-organized play	Common play	Guided play	Instructed play
Who is deciding the content?	Children	Children (Teacher)	Teacher + Children	Teacher	Teacher
Who are deciding the rules?	Children	Children (Teacher)	Teacher + Children	Children	Teacher

Table 1 The Cultural Continuum

be a part of culture for children, but guided play allows children some space to regulate themselves. Free play is again clearly a part of children's own culture but children's self-regulated play allow for some influence from the teacher. Common play is the moment when all involved have the opportunity to change content and rules. In a Danish kindergarten, based upon a child-centered pedagogy, it is possible to activate and change the form of playing when needed or wanted. Children's culture in a pedagogical environment is a complex matter, where the teacher must be able to switch positions and the children to understand and take the different position, they are offered. It requires, in a sense, a very delicate navigation for the children and the teacher, as they are in a changing relation to each other; it is not just a question of whether to visit an art museum or let children play in a sandbox at a given time during school hours.

The Experimenting Community

The experimenting community is a pedagogical entity that is influenced in its methods by children's culture and especially the use of media and technologies in children's play culture. One of the first times this term was used was when children in several pre-school classes were using robots, video cameras and greenscreen (Caprani & Thestrup, 2010). It is a group of people who are together to experiment and not just to copy any given existing practice. It is related to Wenger's community of practice, as it has a common practice done by practitioners at its center, which is to experiment and ask questions, where there might not be an answer (or, at least not yet, for the group of people involved). The group of people are interested in learning from each other on a

regular basis. At the same time, it is not quite a community of practice, if one understands this as a community which tends to repeat the same practice inside the group itself. It is closer to social learning, as this sort of learning can be understood as a learning space, where the group together pushes towards what they don't yet know, trying to make a difference in the world (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

The experimenting community relates to children's own play culture through exchange. The children might come up with good ideas from their own play culture to be used by the experimenting community. The children demonstrate how something is done in their culture or they talk about it. The experimenting community might then try it out and eventually alter it for its own purposes. The other way around is also possible. The experimenting community is doing something that might inspire the children when they play on their own, but as they are deciding for themselves what to do, it might or might not be the case. The experimenting community also relates to culture meant for children as sources of material. Any visit to a museum, any movie, any game or merchandise in popular culture can be changed into new experiments and new narratives which can be used and developed by the experimenting community.

Supported by digital media and digital technologies, the experimenting community can become a link between culture *by* children and culture *for* children. The experimenting community is capable of both consuming and producing culture, for example, if a museum wants content from children uploaded on their platform, then the experimenting communiy can do this. Even without a formalized possibility or invitation, the community can decide to produce and communicate with others. In this process the community might even become a source of material for others to improvise upon. Finally the experimenting community can become part of several looser or more closely connected networks, where all can become sources of material for each other.

The staff in a kindergarten or primary school might, in an experimenting community based upon children's culture, get opportunities to act out variations on the teacher's role. I suggest conceiving the pre-school teacher or schoolteacher as more than an instructor or a facilitator. An instructor tells children what to do and how and when and a facilitator more indirectly ensures that the children are in a learning process of their own. Both the instructor and the facilitator can of course be needed in an educational setting, but these functions can be gathered under another conceptual role; this I call the 'participator', which I know, is not a word in English, but I humbly suggest it anyway and include four categories to explain it. The participator is a much part of the enquiry as is the participant. The teacher might not have all the answers to all the questions when the process starts. The teacher also searches for new questions, actions

and answers. There might even children in the community, who have interesting suggestions or pieces of important information and knowledge, that teacher does not yet possess. But the teacher may of course also know some answers or ways to investigate and in that way step into the role of the 'expert' on the subject or technologies used. She or he is in a learning process, but the teacher also has something to offer to the community. The teacher also ensures that as many as possible, for as long as possible, are involved in the investigations and is, as such, also the guide. Here she or he is looking for what challenges some children might have in trying to play and experiment. Finally, the participator might have a personal interest as a social agent in keeping the experimenting community running and developing, engaging with the shifts in cultural and social codes which exist inside the community. The experimenting community is not only meant for children to be part of, but also for the adult participants – the teacher is there as a human being among other human beings, so that all have, or can develop, agency.

The participator is an attempt to answer to define a teacher role, that fits the development of a culture together with children, where everybody has a say and can take an active part in what the experimenting community is doing. Here experiments and decisions are made together – not by one single party, and here the playing is something both teachers and children can influence. Everybody can become a play expert, everybody can suggest and everybody can follow and change the rules of play. To be an active part of an experimenting community based primarily upon culture together with children, the teacher gains an advantage in being a participator. The role has its strength when encountering new cultures, new technologies and establishing new experimenting communities. The participator might be better at showing increased sensibility towards unknown situations, as she or he, in principle, has a knowledge about how to handle situations yet to be negotiated and shaped.

I am aware that this definition of the teacher role and experimenting community can challenge pedagogic orthodoxy in a pre-school, a school or even in a kindergarten, if it is based upon a model whereby the the teacher is the sole possessor and provider of knowledge and answers. Orthodox methods are like an echo chamber, where the children reflect input provided by teachers (Tække & Paulsen, 2022). Conversely, establishing an experimenting community is a process, where elements over time can be tried out and activated when needed. If the subject in a class or kindergarten is about an enquiry with open ended processes, then the experimenting community is an actual possibility as well. There might in a kindergarten or a school be actual workplaces, drama studios, playgrounds or makerspaces, where a relative autonomy is required or asked for in the actual pedagogical methods and principles. A so called third space (Potter & McDougall, 2017) like a makerspace outside school might be yet another possibility to establish an experimenting community, as such a space is defined by the ones using them and

given the freedom to define actions, questions, projects and communities. Anyone can in principle become a member of an experimenting community, but in a kindergarten, a pre-school or school the community will typically consist of a class or a group of children, that normally spend time together during the day. It exsists within the framework of education and every step of the way towards becoming an experimenting community will probably have to be explained to the participants as it might be an unfamiliar pedagogical approach for all involved.

To sum up my question at the beginning regarding how children and teachers in a pre-school or a school can start to communicate, experiment and play with other schools or pre-schools across time and space, the starting point might be very humble: the class might follow someone online and talk about how to understand this person and then later communicate directly with others in the wider world. There might even be a step before that, when the class and the teacher get used to experimenting and playing with digital media and technologies without communicating with anybody outside the classroom. The open laboratory has to be tested through different exercises and the flexible meeting place might also need to be tested locally by the class separated in two rooms at the local school or kindergarten. It might also be necessary to play out the different roles of the teacher and the children to see the differences and understand the possibilities. No matter what, the processes will extend into unknown territory when entering the digital space outside school or kindergarten.

Processes of exchange

Until now the flexible meeting place has mainly been described as taking place through different digital channels, that to a large extent are defined by the staff. The next step is to more closely investigate other channels of interaction and a more extended view of the play culture which children reveal and which an experimenting community could relate to and itself advocate. One could point towards children playing online and suggest that children's play culture could be framed as a trans-glocal play culture (Pedersen, 2020). Play culture is seen as a phenomenon, that can take place both globally and locally. What happens in the local playground is influenced by the digital world but also *remixed* by the children there (Potter & Cowan, 2020). But play culture also has another dimension; for instance, children might upload a video on YouTube about how to play something they like, or exchange ideas with someone somewhere else on how to do it. It might also simply take the form of playing games with others online. Children can be seen as those who play both locally and globally almost simultaneously, when they both play with others online and use elements of that play in the playground. When playing in a playground or demonstrating how to play something, one might say that they start to transform and not only copy, what they see and hear. It might also be that the game or social media opens up possibiliies for play in several ways (Livingstone

& Pothong, 2021). Minecraft can be considered and used as a digital sandbox with potentially endless possibilities to build anything, and TikTok as a place to see different kind of performances as formulas to be improvised upon by its users. This all takes place in the play culture and can be brought into the experimenting community by the child, thus expanding the possibilities of experimenting and playing together inside the community and between communities. The experimenting community can then inspire and influence what children do on their own.

One next step in the future could be to follow the children in digital worlds where they already are, or at least give them possibility to talk about what they see and do, and of course support them in making choices about what apps or games to be part of or not. Aspects of what they do could take place inside the experimenting communities themselves and other aspects of it will be outside in their own time as free play, where they have agency and where adult involvement is minimal. But the interchange is still an option and children's confidence in the adults around them, who will care and listen to them, is vital.

As mentioned earlier it can be a long process to establish a school or a kindergarten as an experimenting community, but during that process the experimenting community can be seen as a group of researchers establishing processes of exchange. The community can be seen as active in the search for information, inspiration and common play. Basic questions like: "what do we want to say?", "what do we want to know?", "what do we want to do?" and "what kind of exchange using what kind of software will we try to establish?" will be important to talk about, try out and find answers to.

With questions like this the experimenting community itself will be its own center for investigation and play, even if part of several networks at the same time. In addition the ideal experimenting community will be self-regulating, demonstrating through its actions the codes of conduct online. The experimenting community as an educational strategy gives the children the opportunity to more safely navigate online, but also to experiment, to play and to communicate in ways that make sense to them. These children will become citizens, better prepared to confront new and unknown situations.

The experimenting community can both relate to children becoming part of a trans-glocal playculture and in itself become part of several trans-glocal playcultures. Together children and staff can decide and choose what content to engage with and then actually engage in conversation, demonstration, transformation, experiments and play. This requires digital systems and a media ecology designed for exchange. Trans-glocal play culture is not only something, we can look for in children's own play culture in a globalized and digitalized world, it is also something we as teachers or researchers can support and develop

in an educational setting. The experimenting community relating to culture *for* children and culture *by* children is such an example.

References

Bølgan, N. B. (2018). *Digital praksis i barnehagen* [*Digital practice in kindergarten*]. Fagbokforlaget.

Caprani, O. & Thestrup, K. (2010). Det eksperimenterende fællesskab: Børn og voksnes leg med medier og teknologi [The experimenting community: Children and adults' play with media and technology]. *Læring og Medier*, *3*(5), pp. 1–39. https://doaj.org/article/aba105d1075948f895b345a91f1f92d3

Christensen, D. R., Hansen, E. L., Krøgholt, I. & Stage, C. (2016). The participatory researcher: developing the concept of 'accompanying research'. *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift*, *9*(1), 116-136

Duus, G., Husted, M., Kildedal, K., Laursen, E. & Tofteng, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Aktionsforskning – en grundbog*. Samfundslitteratur

Culpepper, M. K. & Gauntlett, D. (2020). Making and Learning together. Where the makerspace mindset meets platforms of creativity. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *10*(3), 264–274

Gauntlett, D. (2015). *Making Media Studies*. Peter Lang Publishing

Gauntlett, D. and Thomsen, B. S. (2013) *Cultures of Creativity. The LEGO Foundation*. https://www.legofoundation.com/media/1073/cultures-of-creativity-lego-fonden-2013.pdf

Gislev, T. Thestrup, K. & Elving, P. R. (2018). *Mellem assistent og lærer*. [*Between assistant and teachers*]. CUDiM. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_DavvdJQwoGnfV9lc7d2fse6rN8C0KZN/view

Gislev, T., Thestrup, K., & Elving, P. R. (2020). The flexible meeting place: Connecting schools through networked learning. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *10*(3), 275-288.

Henningsen, L. (1999). *Børnekultur – medielege* [*Children´s culture – media play*]. Zip Zap Video

Kristiansen, S. & Krogstrup, H. K. (2012). *Deltagende observation* [*Participatory observation*]. Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interview: det kvalitative forskningsinterview som håndværk*. Hans Reitzels Forlag.

LEGO Foundation (2021). *Distance Learning. A guide to playful learning distance learning*. LEGO Foundation

Lehmann, N. & Szatkowki J. (2001). *Creative Pragmatics – a Manifesto for The Open Theatre*. IDEA Publications.

Livingstone, S. & Pothong, K. (2021). *Playful by Design: A Vision of Free Play in a Digital World*. Digital Futures Commission. https://digitalfuturescommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/A-Vision-of-Free-Play-in-a-Digital-World.pdf

Marsh, J., Kumpulainen, K., Nisha, B., Velicu, A., Blum-Ross, A., Hyatt, D., Jónsdóttir, S. R., Levy, R., Little, S., Marusteru, G., Ólafsdóttir, M. E., Sandvik, K., Scott, F., Thestrup, K., Arnseth, H. C., Dýrfjörð, K., Jornet, A., Kjartansdóttir, S. H., Pahl, K., Pétursdóttir, S. & Thorsteinsson, G. (2017). *Makerspaces*

in the early years: a literature review. The University of Sheffield. https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/makey/publications?authuser=0
MediaPLAYINGcommunities (2009). *mediahandbook*. IBAF gGmbH
Mouritsen, F. (1996). *Legekultur*. [*Play culture*]. Universitetsforlag.
Mouritsen, F. (2002). Child culture – play culture. In F. Mouritsen & J. Qvortrup (Eds.), *Childhood and Children's Culture*. University Press of Southern Denmark.
Pedersen, L. H. (2020). Play culture across makerspaces: Connecting into a global makerspace online. *Global Studies of Childhood: Special Issue on Global Makerspaces*. *10*(3). https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/gsca/10/3
Pink. S. (2013). *Doing Visual Ethnography* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
Potter, J. & Cowan, K, (2020). Playground as meaning-making space: Multimodal making and re-making of meaning in the (virtual) playground. *Global Studies of Childhood: Special Issue on Global Makerspaces*, (10)3. https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/gsca/10/3
Potter J. & McDougall, J. (2017). *Digital Media, Culture & Education: Theorising Third Space Literacies*. Palgrave Macmillan
Resnick, M. (2017). *Lifelong Kindergarten*. The MIT Press
Rönnberg, M. (1983). *Skådeleg og medialekar* [*Audience play and media play*]. In C. Bøgh (ed.). Småbørnsforskning i Danmark IX. Rapport fra seminaret børns leg i det moderne industrisamfund [Researching small children in Denmark IX. Report from the seminar childrens play in the modern industrial society]: Udvalget vedrørende småbørnsforskning [The committee on researching small children].
Smith, H. & Dean, R. T. (eds.). (2009). *Practice-led Research, Research-led Pratice in the Creative Arts*. Edinburgh University Press.
Støvelbæk, F. & MediaPLAYINGcommunities (2009). *mPc – is what you see*. MediaPLAYINGcommunities. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtGHo5oXuUY&t=1s
The MaKEY Project. https://makeyproject.wordpress.com/2019/05/16/the-story-of-two-new-planets/
The SEEDS project. https://seedsproject.sites.dansk.nu/
Thestrup, K. (2011). *Det eksperimenterende fællesskab – medieleg i en pædagogisk kontekst* [*The experimenting community – media play in a pedagogical context*]. [Doctoral Dissertation, Aarhus University].
Thestrup, K. (2019). Digital citizens: how preschool teachers and children communicate in a digital and global world. In C. Grey & I. Palaiologou (eds.). *Early learning in the digital age*. (pp. 136–147). SAGE Publications.
Thestrup, K. & Robinson, S. (2016). Towards an entrepreneurial mindset: Empowering learners in an open laboratory. In. P. M. Papadopoulos, R. Burger & A. Faria, A. (eds.). *Advances in Digital Education and Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2* (pp. 147-166). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Thestrup, K. & Haugaard Pedersen, L. (2019). Makeative maker-spaces: when the pedagogy is makeative. In A. Blum-Ross, K. Kumpulainen & J. Marsh (Eds.). *Enhancing digital literacy and creativity: makerspaces in the early years* (pp.24-37). Routledge.

Thestrup, K., Henningsen, L. & Jerg. K. (Eds.). (2009). *Billedbevægelser – medieleg i en daginstitution, Tidskrift for Børne- & Ungdomskultur* [*Image Movements – mediaplay in a pre-school*]. Syddansk Universitetsforlag

Thestrup, K., Andersen, M. P. Jessen, C., Knudsen, J. & Sandvik, K. (2015). *Delaftale 3: Dannelse i en digital og global verden* [*Cultural formation in a digital and global world*]. https://tdm.au.dk/fileadmin/tdm/Publikationer/DANNELSE_I_EN_DIGITAL_OG_GLOBAL_VERDEN-DELRAPPORT-FINAL_26.11.2015.pdf

Thorhauge, A.M. & Jessen, C. (2020). Mobilæer, sociale medier og computerspil (mobiles, social media and computer games). In M. Dael, J. Helmer-Petersen & B. Juncker (Eds.), *Børnekultur I Danmarkl 1954-2020* (pp. 344-269). Gads Forlag.

Tække, J., & Paulsen, M. (2022). *A New Perspective on Education in the Digital Age: Teaching, Media and Bildung*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Wenger-Trayner. E. & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2020). *Learning to make a difference*. Cambridge University Press.

Zosh, J. M., Hopkins, E. J., Jensen, H., Liu, C., Neale, D., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Solis, S. L., & Whitebread, D. (2017). *Learning through play: a review of the evidence*. The LEGO Foundation.