

Learning through play and its influence on basic literacy skills development in the Pre-primary grades in Zambezi region, Namibia

Kenneth Nzwala

University of Namibia, Katima Mulilo Campus

knzwala@unam.na

Abstract

Learning through play is key to developing various skills in a pre-primary grade. This is due to the fact that through play a child engages in activities that are beyond his or her average age. This paper therefore investigated how play promotes the development of basic literacy skills in pre-primary classrooms in Zambezi region of Namibia. The study was guided by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of how children learn. It is a multiple case study and took a qualitative approach. Six (6) pre-primary classes participated in the study. A sample of the schools and a sample of teachers were drawn purposively. Data were gathered by using interviews, observation, and document analysis like lesson plans. Data analysis was done qualitatively through themes. The study established that teachers did not practice learning through play during lessons, and that there was a high level of schoolification of the pre-primary (Grade -0) curriculum. This study thus recommended that teachers should be trained to understand the speciality of pre-primary; support should be given to current teachers to adopt a child-centred, play-based approach to pedagogy; teachers should adopt collaborative teaching and learning, and that they (teachers) should attach learning themes to contextual games.

Keywords: *pre-primary; literacy skills; schoolification, and play based approach.*

Introduction and literature review

Play engages learners in hands-on activities and is thus fundamental to basic literacy learning in pre-primary grades. Teachers should thus plan lessons that are play related and should implement them accordingly. According to Kennedy et al. (2012, p. 42), through play and hands-on experience, "children see and interact with print as they build an awareness of its functions and conventions". Research claims that children "investigate the world through play thus making play an important part of the child's pre-school activities" (Namibia Ministry of Education [Namibia MoE], 2015, p. 10). This, by implication, means that pre-primary children learn effectively when learning is play-based. For example, "when children are afforded the opportunity to physically demonstrate action words like jump, run, sit, and laugh, word comprehension is immediate and long lasting, and when children materially move over, under, beside, and near objects, the child better grasps the meaning of these prepositions" (Johnson et al., 2010, p. 4). Through such games and even songs, children develop vocabulary in context and also learn to work together as a group (Orenberg, 2016), thus developing their physical, social,

cognitive and emotional skills which is the purpose for the pre-primary education curriculum in the schools. Despite Namibia's pre-primary curriculum emphasis on learning through play (MoE, 2015), the same curriculum, as per the pre-primary 'Daily Program' denigrates play by holding children in class listening to the teacher for 1.5 hours without exposure to the outside classroom for involvement in play based activities. This also points at how Namibian pre-primary teachers promote 'schoolification' of the pre-primary curriculum. In this study schoolification is a "practice by teachers who, due to a lack of professional training teach pre-primary learners in a more formal and structured manner thus putting them at risk to miss out on the much needed exposure to early childhood education in terms of good health, psychosocial stimulation, and play environment" (Polanki, 2013, p. 1).

When children are exposed to the outside classroom, they learn by *doing* which "creates more neural networks in the brain, and throughout the body, making the entire body a tool for learning" (Johnson, Christie, & Wardle, 2010, p. 4). Neuroscience further reveals that the child's early years are crucial

and that “once these critical periods have passed, the brain’s potential is difficult to realize” (Namibia MoGECW, 2007, p. 10). Therefore, pre-primary teachers should plan lessons by aligning prescribed curriculum topics to contextual games, and use such games to help learners attain lesson targets. Teachers could introduce learners to such activities as “threading beads, buttons and reels, playing with puzzles, zipping clothes and tying shoe laces, because it is through these activities that learners’ small motor muscles responsible for drawing and writing are developed” (DBE, 2015, p. 26).

According to Namibia MoE (2015, p. 10), “play provides the basis for literacy learning and through play, children develop the ability to communicate an understanding of how things work”. Nieuwoudt (1998, cited by van Rensburg, 2015) observed that pre-primary content should not necessarily be academic, but anything that prepares the child to learn when s/he gets to Grade One the following year. A UNESCO study on the state of literacy in Pre- and Lower Primary classrooms in Namibia reported that “schools do not engage children in activity based learning and there are no play structures in the schools” (Weiss & Steukers, 2015, p. 22). Waite (2011, p. 24) believes that “movement underpins all other areas of early development, whether physical, intellectual or social, and is essential for young children”. Children develop literacy skills in an emergent way through retelling parts of stories in their own words, doing role plays and by asking questions. Grove and Hauptfleisch (1986, p. 6) observed that “until a child can enunciate clearly, has something to say, and can express his or her ideas or ask questions intelligibly, it is a waste of time to prepare him or her to read”. This means that a child should be able to hold some dialogue with the teacher and friends as a sign of readiness to read in Grade One. During oral deliberations, children’s level of vocabulary improves, and they learn to understand and interpret conversations in context. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) stress that:

Preschool instruction should be designed to stimulate verbal interaction, to enrich children’s vocabularies, to encourage talk about books, to provide practice with the sound structure of words, to develop knowledge about print,

including the production and recognition of letters, and to generate familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading (p. 9).

These are basic skills that inform and strengthen children’s basic literacy knowledge which translate into ways that demonstrate the acquired behaviour. This transition from the basics to implementation of basic literacy knowledge should be mediated by the teacher in order to be achieved by children.

Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (SCT) of how children learn. SCT theory has its roots in the child’s social, historical, and cultural experiences. Therefore, play as one of the ways children learn in the early years explores the child’s social, historical and cultural backgrounds to effectively learn basic literacy skills. In other words, children’s cultural experiences are demonstrated, to a larger extent, through play-based activities as children use cultural knowledge to meaningfully do an activity, thus facilitating learning in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This is due to the fact that play embraces imaginative and collaborative modes used by children to construct new knowledge through shared learning, thus promoting the development of higher mental processes (HMPs) (Nicolopoulou, 1993). The development of HMPs is critical for the reason that reliance on lower mental functions (LMFs) has serious implications for learning as children will be inhibited from developing abstract thinking due to dependence on their environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Bodrova, 1997). Research found that:

As long as humans possess the LMFs only, they remain ‘slaves to the environment’ completely dependent on the stimulation that comes from the outside and that lower mental functions are culture-free and have not changed significantly over the course of human history (Bodrova, 1997, p. 17).

LMFs are thus the basis for higher mental functions (HMFs) which can be promoted when children do activities through play. According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 93), play is

the “imaginary illusory world in which the unrealizable desires can be realized”. This implies that play immerses children in an imaginary world; a world in which they (children) engage in a variety of play activities with rules of behaviour to be obeyed to satisfy the objectives of a particular play activity (Vygotsky, 1978). Instead of waiting to be introduced to rules later when they are responsible enough, this is done through play. According to Bodrova (2008),

Whenever there is an imaginary situation in play, there are rules – not rules that are formulated in advance and change during the course of the game, but rules stemming from the imaginary situation. Therefore, to imagine that a child can behave in an imaginary situation without rules, i.e. as he behaves in a real situation, is impossible. If the child is playing the role of a mother, then she has rules of maternal behaviour. The role the child plays, and her relationship to the object if the object has changed its meaning, will always stem from the rules. In play, the child is free but this is an illusory freedom (p. 359).

Vygotsky (1978, p. 98) further claimed that the theories of play are significant to concept formation, though he still believed that “real concept formation and abstract reasoning appear only in adolescents”. Such concepts emerge when children interact during play activities. Vygotsky (1978, p. 103) saw play as the ‘leading activity’ of childhood learning in which the ‘leading activity’ is the action that “provides optimal conditions for the mental functions that develop at the current stage as well as preparing the foundation for the mental functions that will develop during the stage that will follow”.

Play and the Zone of Proximal Development: Pre-primary is traditionally the first formal year of schooling, but owing to its uniqueness it can still accommodate play which is a necessary form of learning in this age group and stage of schooling. For this reason it is necessary to examine play in relation to the ZPD. It is thus worth stating that “play is the work of children and through a variety of activities and routines, children are being prepared for more than just the next grade; they are being prepared for life-long

success” (DoE, 2008, p. 23). Through play, the child’s basic literacy competencies which are unique to preschool are promoted, affirming play as the beginning of a child’s learning (Bodrova, 2008). According to research, play is a “source of development and creates the zone of proximal development” (Bodrova & Leong, 2015, p. 376; Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). This is affirmed by the fact that during play, children think fast; which signals that ‘play’ is a successful and fulfilling mode of learning in early childhood. Play is collaborative and as children engage in collaborative activities; their ZPDs are enhanced and accelerated as they develop new levels of thinking. It has been established that, for play to be of benefit to a pre-primary child, it should be well planned by the pre-primary teacher with the objective of developing the entire child (Excell & Linington, 2011).

In the Zambezi region for example, and in the whole of Africa, there are common traditional games in which children engage. Some of these games are ‘hide and seek’ (*maipato*), draughts (*mulabalaba*), and pretend play (*mandwani*). These traditional games can be played using any language as determined by the context/s of learners. They (the games) are played because children find them pleasurable to play. Furthermore, through play the child’s language, gross and fine motor skills, which are critical in development of a child’s basic literacy skills, are unconsciously developed. Children engage their critical reasoning skills during play thus reflecting reality in what they do, and migrating from LMFs to HMFs which are critical to literacy learning in Grade One.

In his acknowledgement of this thinking, Vygotsky (1978, p. 102) wrote that “in play the child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it was as though he were a head taller than himself”. This denotes that through play the child engages in activities that promote abstract reasoning. Learning which results in the promotion of abstract reasoning occurs in no other region but the ZPD. The fact that the child engages in activities that are beyond his or her average age, “as if the child tries to jump above his usual level” (Bodrova, 2008, p. 360), suggests the advancement and accomplishment of his or her developmental goals in the ZPD. Kennedy et al. (2012, p. 42), reason that, through play and hands-on experiences, “children see and

interact with print as they build an awareness of its functions and conventions”.

Symbolic play: Pellegrini and Galda (1993) report that early work on symbolic play was conducted by Jean Piaget who coined the term symbolic play. Piaget defined symbolic play as “egocentric thought in its pure state” (Cemore, 2005, p. 9). In his investigations on symbolic play, Piaget revealed that “children can use objects as part of the symbolization process, for example, a doll could be made to represent a baby” (Pellegrini & Galda, 1993, p. 163). As children represent events symbolically in their minds, their critical and abstract thinking develop. “Assigning new names to the play props as these are used in a new function helps children master the symbolic nature of words as the child first “unconsciously and spontaneously makes use of the fact that he can separate meaning from an object” (Bodrova, 2008, p. 362). Children also come to realize that there is a relationship between words and a variety of objects they signify (Bodrova, 2008).

However, children do not randomly substitute objects’ real names with new names, but do so under guidance of relevant procedure (Vialle, Lysaght, & Verenikina, 2005; Karpov, 2005). Karpov (2005, p. 135) points out that “the new name that the child is imposing on an object substitute has to be supported by the child’s knowledge of the relevant procedure. For example, the word ‘iron’ given to a ‘block’ will lead to the child’s use of the block as if it were an iron only if the child is familiar with the procedure of ironing”. This is not spontaneous; it is a gradual process which happens when a child observes an adult ironing. Therefore, modelling behaviour is key to assisting children to develop symbolic play, which also involves children in play games of counting and drawing. According to Vygotsky (1986), children’s early drawing is linked to marks made by young children as drawing remains “the earliest evolving type of symbolic representation, and continues to be a significant aspect of young children’s symbolic play” (Whitebread, 2012, p. 22). Whitebread (2012, p. 23) further states that “through drawing, children gradually increase their graphic vocabularies”. In the same vein, Karpov (2014) reasons that, when children apply different symbols in their play activities, their symbolic thought is promoted. As pre-primary children fantasize events during

symbolic play, they develop concepts and abstract thinking which support literacy learning (Mielonen, 2009). Therefore, teachers should have a fantasy corner in class where children can use scrap paper and other drawing materials to make shopping lists. Though the actual words may not be structurally correct, such activities support the emergence of learner basic literacies (Barnes, 2015).

Constructive play: “Constructive play starts in infancy and becomes more complex as the child grows” (Anderson-McNamee & Bailey, 2010, p. 2). Children enjoy playing in sand, and while playing in smaller groups (which is social) outside, they prefer manipulating (physical) various objects like tins, bottles, sticks, wires and many other play related objects. They use some objects to construct houses or any structure related to the object of their play activity. Constructive play is essential as it encourages creativity, critical thinking and imagination. In pre-primary, constructive play can be encouraged by ensuring that there are materials such as wooden blocks and others which children can manipulate and use during play time (South African Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2015).

Make-believe play: Vygotsky’s approach suggests that young children imitate adult activities through make-believe play: a step toward understanding the adult world and optimizing their potential (Bodrova, 2008). During make-believe play, children master use of symbols and, later, communication with their peers with words, which is, of course, a breakthrough for learners in terms of literacy learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky observed that through make-believe play, “one can actually watch the child of tomorrow” (Bodrova, 2008, p. 360), as children engage in fantasizing the adult world through taking up adult roles, allowing children to understand and internalize concepts through concerted practice, which is key to strengthening the foundations of literacy.

Research questions

The key research questions explored by this research were:

1. How does learning through play influence learners’ acquisition of basic literacy skills in pre-primary classrooms in Zambezi region, Namibia?

2. What type of play activities did teachers use during their literacy development lessons?

Methodology

Research design

This was a qualitative case study. The aim of approaching this study from a qualitative perspective was to understand the influence of play on the acquisition of basic literacy skills in pre-primary classrooms, and for the researcher to express his experiences in a narrative way. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), data collected by qualitative research is qualitative data, and does not deal with numbers. In the same vein, Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) posit that:

Qualitative research is concerned with the understanding of how a particular individual or group of individuals think and the meanings they attach to their actions and in the quest to understand these meanings, qualitative researchers are encouraged to adopt ways that enable them to represent the voices or actual words of the participants in their research reports thus making the qualitative approach thick and descriptive (p. 209).

Therefore, for this study, qualitative data enabled the researcher to get a thick description of how learning through play influenced pre-primary learners' acquisition of basic literacy skills. In other words, qualitative analysis of both interview and observation data provided the researcher with a rich description and understanding of how teachers used play to develop learners' basic literacy skills in pre-primary classrooms, as well as the types of play activities teachers used during literacy development lessons.

Sampling

Six (6) pre-primary schools and 6 pre-primary teachers participated in this research. The 6 schools and 6 teachers were sampled using a purposive sampling technique. "Purposive

sampling is a non-random sampling technique in which the researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to participate in the study" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 215). Though purposive sampling "helps in achieving representativeness of individuals, the ability to generalize from a sample to a population on the basis of a single study is severely limited" (Nzwala, 2007, p. 38). The 6 schools were drawn from three different contexts, for example, 2 from urban, 2 from peri-urban, and 2 from rural contexts. The purpose for drawing participants from these contexts was to establish the influence of context on learner acquisition of basic literacy skills.

Data Collection

Data were collected by interviewing all 6 pre-primary teachers at the 6 schools, observing their literacy lessons, and document analysis of teachers' lesson plans.

Data Analysis

Data generated by different data sets of teacher interview, teacher lesson observation, and teacher lesson plans were analysed (by way of cross cutting themes) thematically and in a narrative way.

Findings and discussions

The findings of this research are based on interviews, lesson observation, and teacher lesson plans data.

Teacher interview data

Data from interviews revealed that some teachers knew that play was critical in developing learners' basic literacy skills in the pre-primary phase. This was demonstrated during interviews as shown in Dialogue Box 1 below: Note that teachers' names are expressed as pseudonyms. For example, Urban School Teacher 1 [UST¹]; Urban School Teacher 2 [UST²], Peri-urban School Teacher 1 (PuST¹), Peri-urban School Teacher 2 (PuST²), Rural School Teacher 1 (RST¹), and Rural School Teacher 2 (RST²) respectively.

Dialogue Box 1: What is the role of play in developing pre-primary learners' literacy skills?

UST¹: Yes, learners they must play with toys.

UST²: The pre-primary curriculum must make provision for play related activities.

PuST¹: The curriculum is teaching me a lot of things which I have to do with my learners like outdoor play and indoor play.

RST¹: The financial position of the school is stable even though we pre-primary teachers we don't have other resources like playfield for training.
 RST²: They must learn how to match things.

Although UST¹, PuST¹, and RST¹ expressed the importance of play in pre-primary when interviewed, their lessons were not play based. According to research, play is critical as it is a “source of development and creates the zone of proximal development” (Bodrova & Leong, 2015, p. 37). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) claims that play is the basis of concepts for children.

Lesson observation data

Lesson observation data revealed that though the above teachers acknowledged the use of play to help with pre-primary learners' acquisition of basic literacy skills, none of them demonstrated the use of play in their language development lessons. Instead all the 6 teachers taught formally while their pre-primary learners passively listened to them. This confirmed teachers' failure to demonstrate what they expressed during interviews, which could be attributed to their lack of the concept of 'play' as they were not trained as pre-primary teachers. RST¹'s mention of resources like 'playfield' suggests that learning through play can only be realized if there is a sports field. Instead of engaging learners in play based activities, learners were subjects of a teacher centred approach with no materials for manipulation by learners.

According to South African Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2015), play can be encouraged in pre-primary by ensuring that there are materials such as wooden blocks and others, which children can manipulate and use during play time. The study established that though all the 6 pre-primary classes which were observed had objects such as tins and blocks with which learners could play and manipulate, learners were not afforded time to play as teachers strictly observed the timetable, keeping all learners indoors, and there was no reflection of play-based activities in lessons and lesson plans. It was observed that teachers discouraged learner talk during lessons even if learners made noise in the context of lessons taught. For example: During a lesson on picture reading PuST² said, “Muezalilata-zwelapili Ronaldo” (*You are making noise-continue Ronaldo*) - “Hanilati banana baba ezalilatakoo” (*I don't want learners making*

noise there. In her second lesson (Lesson 2) on phonics, UST² warned learners against making noise and said, “Ni utwalilatakumulaho” (*I hear some noise at the back*); “Kwalamulomo” (*Shut your mouth*); “Ukuze” (*Keep quiet*). RST¹ in her preparatory reading lesson (Lesson 1) demonstrated her dislike for noise in her class when she said: “Musikemwaezalilata” (*Please don't make noise*).

The fact that teachers discouraged noise making in their respective classes revealed the extent of their disregard for a play-based environment; as well as their unwillingness to engage learners in active learning due to the fact that learning in pre-primary should be fun and entertaining. Teachers' displeasure about learner talk (herein referred to as noise-making) also demonstrated their expectation of pre-primary learners to keep listening to them for the entire lesson duration despite their short concentration span. It also showed their lack of understanding that pre-primary learners develop literacy skills in a collaborative manner.

Research argues that collaborative teaching and learning in pre-primary classrooms accelerate learners' ZPDs thereby promoting abstract reasoning among learners (Vygotsky, 1978; Bodrova, 2008) thus preventing learners from staying at lower mental functions' stage. This implies that without critical thinking, learner ZPD will not grow to the next level, as learner cognition will be stagnant with no promotion of lower mental processes to higher mental processes. This situation dictates learners' reliance on LMFs. According to research, “as long as humans possess the LMFs only, they remain 'slaves to the environment' completely dependent on the stimulation that comes from the outside and that lower mental functions are culture-free and have not changed significantly over the course of human history” (Bodrova, 1997, p. 17). LMFs are thus the basis of HMFs.

Teachers' lesson plans

Teachers did not plan lessons that involved play; lessons that were collaborative and interactive, but rather planned lessons that were too formal, and teacher centred. These lesson plans ushered into situations where

teachers discouraged noise making during lessons, even if learners made noise in the context of lesson topics. Such lesson plans suggested that teachers lacked expertise in the pre-primary phase and that the curriculum had a formal structure as it was drawn on the basis of Grade One.

Conclusion

Pre-primary is traditionally the first formal year of schooling, but owing to its uniqueness it can still accommodate play which is a necessary form of learning in this age group and stage of schooling. For this reason this study explored play in relation to the ZPD. The study further explored the significance of play in a pre-primary class and how it facilitates the acquisition of basic literacy skills in pre-primary phase. The study also recommended options that pre-primary teachers can adopt in order to stimulate literacy learning in a pre-primary class. For example, teachers should be trained to understand the speciality of pre-primary, and support should be given to current teachers to adopt a child-centred, play-based approach to pedagogy. Teachers should also adopt collaborative teaching and learning with play at the centre of their pre-primary classroom activities.

References

Anderson-McNamee, J. K., & Bailey, S. J. (2010). *The importance of play in early childhood development*. Montana: Montana State University.

Barnes, R. (2015). *Teaching art to young children (3rd Ed.)*. NY: Routledge.

Bodrova, E. (1997). Key concepts of Vygotsky's theory of learning and development. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 18(2), 16-22. doi: 10.1080/1090102970180205

Bodrova, E. (2008). Make-believe play versus academic skills: A Vygotskian approach to today's dilemma of early childhood education. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 16(3), 357-369. doi:10.1080/13502930802291777

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2015). Vygotskian and post-Vygotskian views on children's play. *American Journal of Play*, 7(3), 371-388.

Cemore, J. J. (2005). *What is make-believe play? Preschool teachers' perspectives. Retrospective theses and dissertations*.

Retrieved June 15, 2017, from <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu>.

Department of Basic Education. (2015). *Grade R big book of little stories book 2*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

Department of Education. (2008). *Grade R practical ideas*. Pretoria: DoE.

Excell, L., & Linington, V. (2011). Move to literacy: Fanning emergent literacy in early childhood education in a pedagogy of play. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 1(2), 27-45.

Grove, M. C., & Hauptfleisch, H. M. (1986). *Remedial education in the primary school*. Pretoria: HAUM.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and other approaches*. UK: SAGE.

Johnson, J., Christie, J., & Wardle, F. (2010). *The importance of outdoor play for children*. Retrieved October 17, 2017, from <http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2010/outdoor-play>.

Karpov, Y. V. (2005). *The neo-Vygotskian approach to child development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karpov, Y. V. (2014). *Vygotsky for educators*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Kennedy, E., Dunphy, E., Dwyer, B., Hayes, G., McPhillips, T., Marsh, J., . . . Shiel, G. (2012). *Literacy in early childhood and primary education (3-8 years): Commissioned research report*. Retrieved February 17, 2016, from <http://ncca.ie/en/Publication>

Mielonen, A. M. (2009). Developing literacy through play. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 3(1), 15-22.

Namibia Ministry of Education. (2015). *Pre-primary syllabus: Junior primary phase*. Okahandja: National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).

Namibia Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. (2007). *National integrated early childhood development policy*. Windhoek: Namibian Government.

Nicolopoulou, A. (1993). Play, cognitive development, and the social world: Piaget, Vygotsky, and beyond. *Human Development*, 36, 1-23.

- Nzwala, K. (2007). A study of the teaching of reading in grade 1 in the Caprivi region, Namibia. *In partial fulfilment for the degree of master of education*. Grahamstown, Rhodes University
- Okeke, C., & van Wyk, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Educational research: An African perspective*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Orenberg, R. T. (2016). *The impact of promoting literacy through educational songs*. Retrieved May 23, 2018, from <http://digitalcommons.brockpot.edu>.
- Pellegrini, A. D., & Galda, L. (1993). Ten years after: A re-examination of symbolic play and literacy research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 28(2), 162-175.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children (Free Executive Summary)*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Van Rensburg, O. J. (2015). The school readiness performance of a group of Grade R learners in primary schools in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 5(1), 1-23.
- Vialle, W., Lysaght, P., & Vereinikina, I. (2005). *Psychology for educators*. Australia: Cengage.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. In M. Cole, J.V. Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), *The development of higher psychological processes (pp.1-159)*. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge: MA: MIT Press.
- Waite, S. (2011). *Children learning outside the classroom: From birth to eleven*. London: SAGE.
- Weiss, J., & Steukers, G. (2015). *Capacity development in pre and lower primary teacher education in Namibia*. Windhoek: UNESCO.
- Whitebread, D. (2012). *The importance of play: A report on the value of children's play with a series of policy recommendations*. Retrieved May 10, 2017, from <http://www.importanceofplay.eu/IMG/pdf-dr-david-whitebread>.