



Play - It's serious

The importance of play is frequently cited in the literature as essential for learning. Typically this is in relation to children not adults. Australia's two learning frameworks, The Early Years Learning Framework (2009) and My Time Our Place (2011), for example, both include play as one of the critical pedagogical practices supporting children's learning.

While play is indeed vital for children's learning, Dr Stuart Brown, a play researcher, argues that play is also essential for adults. He challenges the idea of play as a rehearsal or preparation for life. Rather, he argues that play promotes ongoing learning and development for all people, regardless of age. His past research has examined the dire consequences of the absence or deprivation of play. His current research explores the value of play for human development, fulfilment and potential.

Brown suggests we rethink the notion of a work-play differential, where play and work are seen as separate things, and play in particular, as something we make time to do. Instead, he encourages us to consider the potential for infusing all kinds of play into all aspects of our life, in order to have "a better and more empowered life". To hear Brown's TED talk on this topic, go to:

http://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital.html

Some questions for further reflection and discussion with colleagues:

- What is your play history and how has it shaped you and your view of play?
- What place does play have in your life today?
- How might you incorporate play into your life in a more holistic and integrated way?
- What might a more playful workplace look like?