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Playful Pedagogies for Future History Educators

Edward Tan Yu Fan
Suhaimi Afandi

National Institute of Education (Singapore)
Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)

Abstract

How can play serve as a powerful pedagogical tool for fostering joy and engagement in Singapore's history classrooms, especially given the high-stakes and examination-driven context? Through insights from a study trip to Denmark and conversations with Singaporean student-teachers, this article examines the possibilities and tensions of adopting Playful Learning in the classroom as a means of enhancing student engagement, promoting historical thinking, and nurturing 21st-century skills and competencies. This article proposes several approaches to developing playful teachers who view the classroom learning process as one that is rich in possibilities for choice, delight, and wonder – the key ingredients of play.

Introduction

The education landscape and national curriculum in Singapore have undergone significant changes over the past few years. This was partly spurred by the acceleration of developments in virtual interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also rooted mainly in structural shifts that were already underway before 2020. One such change was an increased emphasis on the "joy of learning".

First mooted by the then Minister of Education in 2017, this change represents a more concerted effort of the Ministry towards developing "intrinsic motivation [that] will drive them [students] forward to explore and discover their interests and passions" (Ng, 2017). Since 2017, efforts have been made to reposition the purpose of teaching and learning in the classroom towards one that aims to nurture the joy of learning.

Translating that vision into reality took two main forms. First, at the structural level, the total curriculum was reorganised to reduce the number (and, hopefully, the role) of formal assessments during an academic year. As of 2023, all schooling levels no longer sit for mid-year examinations (MOE, 2023). Instead, formal assessments during most of the school year take the form of smaller bite-sized assessments. This reduction in examinations was geared towards engendering a mindset shift away from formal assessments, and by extension, help manage some of the academic stress that students face. Second, at the practice level, teachers were made aware of issues surrounding student motivation and metacognition, enabling them to develop lessons that are more meaningful and

enjoyable by taking into account students' motivational needs (Wang, 2018).

These are among the most visible changes that have occurred to help teachers find the curriculum space and resources to design and implement lessons that spark curiosity, account for student interests, and engage students as stakeholders in their own learning. Even though these structural and institutional changes are important, the question remains – what does it mean for teachers to bring joyful learning to their classrooms?

Perhaps the current gap in how we conceive of joy in the learning process can be summed up by the words of a student teacher whom we have spoken to for this article: "Joy is possible, but this is dependent on the teacher. It cannot be instituted. Furthermore, there are exams at the end of the day."

In this article, we aim to contribute to the discussion on nurturing the joy of learning by presenting a different perspective on the issue. Instead of focusing on the structural and institutional changes mentioned above, this article will examine play – what is the relationship between play, joy, and learning, and how can teachers incorporate play into their classrooms?

By utilising Denmark's experience of working with ideas of *playful learning*, as observed during a recent study trip, and conversations with several student teachers, this article will illustrate the concerns and challenge that student teachers hold with regards to nurturing the joy of learning in their students, their beliefs about their role as educators, and the limits of practicalities of lessons that are meant to spark joy in their students. Subsequently, this article examines how student teachers can be positioned to incorporate *playful learning* into their lesson designs and classrooms.

Play and Learning

We often make an (almost intuitive) distinction between "learning" and "playing". Whereas lesson time is for learning, recess time is conversely for playing. The distinction between 'play' and 'learning' is not one that adults and teachers exclusively hold. Often, students understand their world in terms of these dichotomies as well. To share a personal anecdote, after a role-play and simulation lesson as a beginning teacher, a student came up to me and expressed that he enjoyed the lesson and had fun, but he preferred that I had taught the lesson in "the normal way". When I probed what "the normal way" might entail to this student, he explained that he was expecting classes to involve writing and source-reading activities. As students and teachers, our conception of what each period and each space is meant for often perpetuates this false dichotomy between play and learning.

However, this distinction is often arbitrary and takes a very narrow definition of play, conflating it with activities that involve fun and games. Play is not an interruption of ordinary life in favour of a momentary distraction (Schechner, 1988). Some scholars go so far as to point to a fundamental human instinct to play, as evidenced by the notion that "where there are people, there is play" (Mardell et al., 2016). Therefore, play is arguably more ubiquitous than one might imagine.

Despite the supposed ubiquity of play in the human experience, play is also an ambiguous activity whose boundaries are often unclear (Sutton-Smith, 1997). A large variety of disparate activities could all qualify as "playing" – from a football match between friends to tinkering with a scale model. However, play possesses a few key features: (i) it is pleasurable or enjoyable, (ii) directed by the player, (iii) involves

one's imagination, allowing one to envision new possibilities, (iv) engaging, and (v) often social in nature (Mardell et al., 2023). Finally, a last ingredient to play requires the players to perceive the activity *as* play, and to frame a situation that includes possibilities for enjoyment and exploration (Barnett, 1990; Liberman, 1977).

If play and learning are not distinct processes, how are they related? Studies in the science of learning have demonstrated a link between learning and playing. For instance, it has been observed that when a play activity (such as a game) is too easy and no longer challenging, or far too challenging, children lose interest in the activity and stop (Andersen, 2022). To many teachers, this behaviour is immediately reminiscent of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, strongly suggesting that our faculties for play and learning are shared. In that vein, playful lessons have been noted to help children understand abstract concepts and promote creativity (Qasem, 2017).

Play has also been observed to improve student engagement and motivation. While test results is not a perfect measure of engagement with lessons and schooling, a British study found that students who enjoy going to school performed better academically (Morris et al., 2021). Beyond test scores, students also expressed the idea that enjoyable lessons are beneficial to learning. In a survey of 1,500 students from 18 boys' schools around the Anglophone world, Riechert and Hawley (2010) found that effective lessons included a "transitive factor" – a lesson element that is engaging, energetic, and ultimately, playful.

These recent findings and the ideas underlying the use of play as a means of learning drew heavily from earlier traditions in educational thought, chiefly Piaget's constructivism, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and Dewey's progressivism. First, play is rooted in constructivism, which argues that students learn through actively engaging in activities – through manipulation, exploration, and problem-solving. Second, play is also social-constructivist in nature, where learning is mediated through interactions with others. Third, play is also progressive as it is a way of learning through experiences, by doing and reflecting (Skovbjerg et al., 2024).

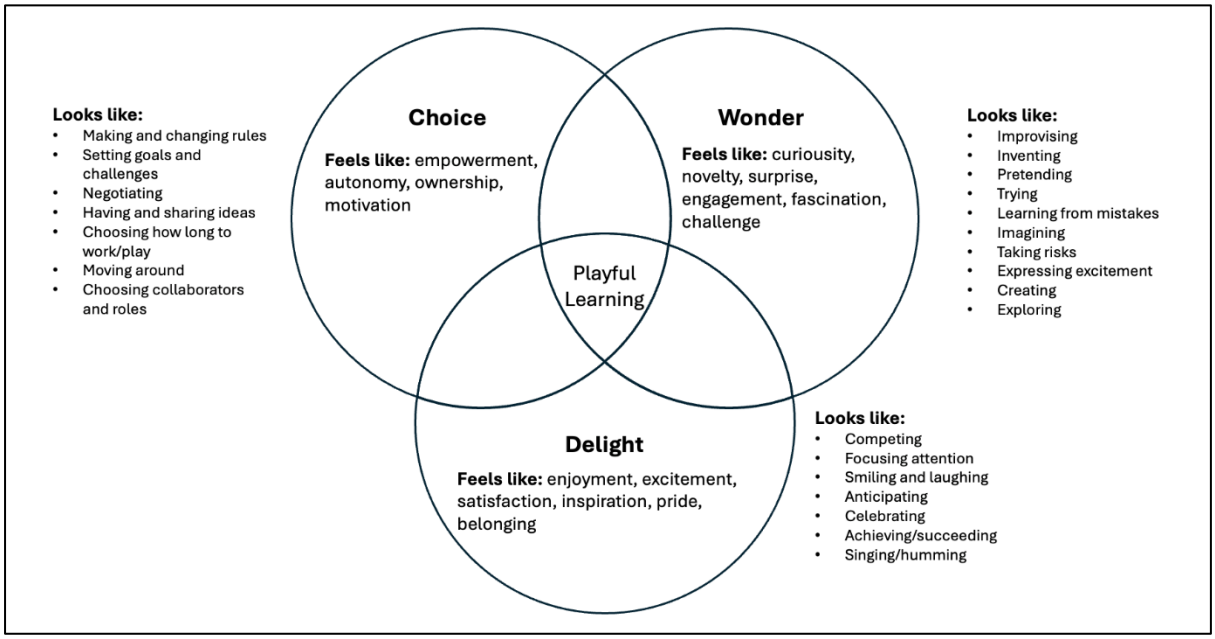
Therefore, what is explored here is that play is not antithetical to learning. Rather, the experiences that come with play are often congruent with, and indeed an essential part of, learning. Playing is also a disposition and mindset, and for learning to be joyful, it does not only rely on good lesson design and activities, but also on teachers and students engaging with teaching and learning with a playful mindset. Hence, bringing us to the idea of *playful learning*.

What does Playful Learning look like?

The desire to bring joy into the classroom and to learning is not a uniquely Singaporean concern. In different iterations and verbiage, it is also being pursued in other educational contexts. As alluded to in the introduction to this article, Denmark is one such case study. In Denmark, *playful learning* is an educational approach that integrates play-based strategies to foster deeper engagement, creativity, and collaboration in learning environments (both within and beyond the classroom). The *playful learning* approach rests upon the belief that play is essential to how students (and indeed, humans) learn, as discussed in the previous section. This approach has also gained currency in school systems beyond Denmark, including those in the United States, Colombia, and South Africa.

Playful learning is comprised of three components, and these components can be described as the indicators of play: (i) choice, (ii) wonder, and (iii) delight (Mardell et al., 2016). Each of these indicators describes the quality of students' experience of the given lesson, as summarised by Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. The Indicators of Play (Mardell et al., 2016, 2023)



To provide *choice* in a playful lesson means giving students a sense of empowerment, autonomy, ownership, and spontaneity. At this point, it is essential to note that having a choice and taking a playful approach does not mean that there are no boundaries to the learning activity – a playful activity is still bounded by the overarching learning goals and other considerations, such as the time allotted by the teacher. However, instead of viewing these boundaries as the tension between students' interests and teachers' learning objectives, they should be viewed as guardrails within which experimentation and exploration can be supported and take place (Mardell et al., 2016, 2023). Figure 1 provides examples of some of the range of playful choices that can be offered in the classroom, beyond the conventional method of giving choices through differentiated instruction.

To provide *wonder* in playful lessons means to provide students with the experience of curiosity, novelty, surprise, and challenge. It is a process that fascinates and engages the learner. As briefly explored in the earlier sections, students have been noted to enjoy new and interesting challenges, and playful lessons provide students with the opportunity to push the horizons of their imagination and possibilities. However, it is also important to note that wonderment is a subjective idea, and not all activities will include the same response from all learners – the takeaway is to continuously calibrate based on the interests of one's students, and not to be disheartened when only a portion of the class experiences wonder through a given activity.

To provide *delight* in playful lessons includes excitement, joy, satisfaction, inspiration, anticipation, pride, and a sense

of belonging. This emotional response extends beyond the relationship between the student and the activity at hand. It also encompasses the interpersonal realm, where students can share a good time with friends as part of the activity, and where teachers can experience delight in their teaching of students.

Collectively, by considering choice, wonder, and delight in a lesson design, playful lessons hope to bring the following qualities into the classroom:

Table 1. Summary of the Qualities of Play (Mardell et al., 2023: 30-37)

Quality	Description
Joyful	Playful learning experiences are enjoyable and engaging, fostering a positive attitude towards learning.
Actively Engaging	Children are actively involved in the learning process, rather than passively receiving information.
Meaningful	Activities are connected to real-life experiences and provide a sense of purpose.
Iterative	Children are encouraged to try different approaches, learn from mistakes, and refine their understanding through experimentation.
Socially Interactive	Playful learning often involves interaction with peers and adults, promoting collaboration, communication, and social skills.

Hopefully, this section has provided some possible aspects that teachers can consider when trying to bring play (and by extension, joy) into the classroom. More broadly, it hopes to encourage teachers to consider teaching practices that extend beyond the transmission of knowledge and the development of discipline- and examination-centric skills. Instead, playful learning also factors in the interpersonal, relational, and affective dimensions of learning into the classroom.

The Case for Playful Learning in the History Classroom

Should history teachers in Singapore be concerned about being *playful* in their classrooms and engaging in playful learning with their students? Beyond viewing playful learning as an attempt to align with the Ministry's stance on the joy of learning, playful learning in the classroom can also serve to enhance history teaching and learning in Singapore. The relevance of playful learning lies in the opportunities it can provide for teachers to help their students engage with the discipline, promote historical thinking, and develop 21st-century skills and competencies. These benefits have also been previously explored in the context of sparking the joy of learning in Singapore's history classrooms (Baildon et al., 2019).

First, playful learning has the potential to enhance students' engagement with the discipline and their motivation levels. As discussed earlier, playful learning emphasizes the provision of choice, wonder, and delight in the learning process. By providing students with the autonomy to be self-directed learners – for example, to give students space to generate their own questions about the past as part of a broader historical inquiry, to guide them through the process of investigation, and encourage students to share their ideas through such a process – it can serve to boost student motivation through empowering them to

ask questions about the past.

Second, playful learning can serve to promote historical thinking. A playful classroom encourages students to imagine and envision new possibilities through tasks they are engaged in – a disposition that is central to authentic historical and intellectual work. For instance, simulation exercises of historical developments, such as the 1963 referendum to join Malaysia, encourage students to consider the historical "what-ifs" and "if-nots" when they wrestle with the dilemmas and trade-offs faced by the various communities and stakeholders in the process. Furthermore, well-structured and guided playful activities can also serve as safe spaces for the discussion of sensitive historical events (such as the legacies of colonialism or historical atrocities), while encouraging students to exercise their historical reasoning to make sense of historical sources and to come closer to the motivations and experiences of various historical actors.

Third, playful learning also provides opportunities for developing 21st-century skills and competencies in the classroom. Playful activities, such as collaborative and competitive games, historical role-play, and authentic historical tasks (like inquiry), are often multidimensional and challenge a range of competencies in students. For instance, as part of a historical role-play of the different historical actors involved in the outbreak of the Cold War, students are tasked to take on differing perspectives (of both historical characters they are role-playing, and of their peers they are collaborating with), and to communicate the perspectives of the characters they are role-playing. Such a form of play develops global and cross-cultural literacies, as well as communication and collaboration skills, organically and authentically, as students learn through directly engaging in dynamic and authentic historical tasks.

In the Singapore context, playful learning has the potential to enhance current teaching practices, making learning joyful, deeper, and more meaningful. Given that playing and learning are not fundamentally distinct, rather than viewing play as a pause on other 'serious' learning activities, well-designed and engaging learning activities should already possess the features of playful activities.

Is Play Possible? Student Teachers' Perspectives

Given the potential benefits of a play-based pedagogy in promoting learning and nurturing the joy of learning, as explored in the previous sections, is it feasible in the context of the Singaporean history classroom? This question was posed to a group of student teachers of history at the National Institute of Education (NIE). For context, this group of four student teachers has had practical classroom experience through the required pre-training contract teaching and has also participated in at least one teaching assistantship as part of their pre-service preparatory programme. These student teachers were also briefly introduced to notions of *play* and tools such as the Playwheel as part of their coursework sessions for QCH52B –Teaching for Historical Understanding.

Throughout the conversation, several key themes emerged. First, this group of student teachers reflected a dichotomy between play and learning, similar to what was discussed in the earlier sections. Second, this group of student teachers believes that joy and fun are possible in their classrooms, and a lot of it is derived from cultivating a love and appreciation for the discipline of history. Third, these student teachers believe that delivering on examination results (and preparing students

to do well in formal assessments) is a major part of their role and responsibility in the classroom.

The distinction between "play" and "learning" is one that has been developed over a long period and has become deeply ingrained in our educational and societal culture. When these student teachers were asked, "What do you think about bringing play or playful activities into your classroom?", concerns about whether play (or fun, as it has often been understood) contributes to student learning, and whether it is a good use of the curriculum time, as seen below:

> Student Teacher C: Joyful and playful learning experiences can go a long way to create meaningful lessons for students.
>
> Student Teacher A: It depends on the student profile on your school.
>
> Student Teacher B: Time in the classroom is limited, and a lot of curriculum time is consumed due to HBL and SBB.

Furthermore, *play* is not only seen as competing with other major curriculum initiatives, such as home-based learning and subject-based banding for time, it is also seen as competing with aspects of the history curriculum as well:

> Student Teacher B: [Even now] historical concepts are not really fronted in the classroom. We are already struggling to teach inference; there is hardly time left to talk about evidence.

From these brief glimpses, it could be seen that *play* and *learning* activities are conceived as separate and competing for time. An illustrative example of this competing use of time in the classroom could be seen in how interesting and fun activities were often used as a means of sparking curiosity or building rapport before diving deeper into a more conventional lesson:

> Student Teacher D: Student profile [of the school I taught in] is challenging. Just engage them through memes, often at the start of lessons, to get them interested.

What was gathered from this conversation is that these student teachers were generally keen and interested in making their lessons enjoyable for their students but also recognised the limitations that they face in a school environment, in which they attempted to balance between time constraints and various curriculum initiatives and goals that they are expected to deliver on. However, the fact that these limitations are conceived of as a trade-off strongly implies that *play* and *learning* are being viewed as separate activities.

Second, these student teachers believe that delivering on examination results and ensuring their students perform as well as possible remains a major component of their role and responsibilities as teachers. This may, in part, contribute to explaining how these student teachers perceive the limitations of the classroom, as explored above.

The conversation below illustrates the attitudes and concerns that these student teachers hold about formal assessments in schools:

> Student Teacher C: Removal of mid-year exams does not help at all. The fundamental game does not change. Compared to

> Denmark, it also depends on the culture of the place. It is a question of decision-making and risk-taking. Play constitutes a career risk.
>
> Student Teacher B: How are Danish teachers being assessed? How are Singaporean teachers being assessed?
>
> Student Teacher A: Concepts, fun, inquiry, are side-quests. The main question is, how does it translate to exam results? [For concepts and inquiry] You often don't see rewards till after you graduate. I am happy as long as they have a broad understanding of the structure [of history].

There is a tendency to view the ability to ensure student attainment in examinations as directly linked to their effectiveness as teachers and, hence, their career success. The reluctance to incorporate play, and arguably other pedagogies, stems from a pragmatic decision to prioritise activities that appear to have a more immediate link to improving the skills and dispositions being examined.

Interestingly, the sentiments of these three student teachers are not new and echo sentiments of more senior teachers from the past. As observed from the following excerpt from an unpublished teacher interview carried out as part of a PhD study that incorporated teachers' views on the teaching and learning of history in Singapore schools (Afandi, 2012):

> Teacher A: Yes. Isn't it [examinations] how teachers are ranked anyway? It boils down to the basic bread-and-butter issues. Of course, the ideal would be the second approach (i.e., promoting historical understanding), but this is not Xanadu. This is Singapore. Everything is result-oriented.

Examinations, the need to be accountable to one's students and other stakeholders, and ultimately concerns about one's career performance are perennial issues in Singapore's educational landscape. Set in such a milieu, it is not surprising that these student teachers may find it challenging to bring a *playful* disposition to their lesson designs and their classrooms.

Third, these student teachers still believe that joy and fun are possibilities in their classroom and see the cultivation of a love and appreciation for the discipline of history as closely tied to the joy of learning history. When asked how they might nurture the joy of learning in the classroom, they responded:

> Student Teacher A: It should be done through conceptual teaching. As a teacher, enjoyment and fulfilment in the classroom come from helping students appreciate and understand the broad structures of the discipline.
>
> Student Teacher B: Fun activities are a way of activating their schema; if done properly, they are very rewarding.
>
> Student Teacher C: There is a gap between what MOE defines as the 'joy of learning' and what joyful learning experiences are. The whole point is to create meaning for students. If only there is more space and time for teachers to work on their unit plans and consider how procedural concepts fit into lessons for the long term.

The prevailing sentiment was a recognition that, why conceptual teaching and the use of second-order concepts in the classroom can be time-consuming and challenging, it is still viewed as an avenue in which students can be presented an engaging intellectual puzzle, one that, through solving, can both produce enduring understandings and an appreciation for history and the past.

To summarise this section, based on conversations with a handful of current student teachers, it appears that ensuring examination readiness remains a primary concern for young educators. There is also the awareness that joyful and meaningful learning requires teachers to invest time and effort in infusing concepts meaningfully within a tight curriculum space. These concerns influence their understanding of the role of play in their classrooms. However, beneath all that, there is a continued interest and belief that there is a role for play in the teaching of the discipline. As one of the student teachers in this conversation said, "the joy of learning is tied to the joy of teaching"; therefore, the question is how teachers can be empowered to adopt a playful disposition.

Developing Playful Teachers

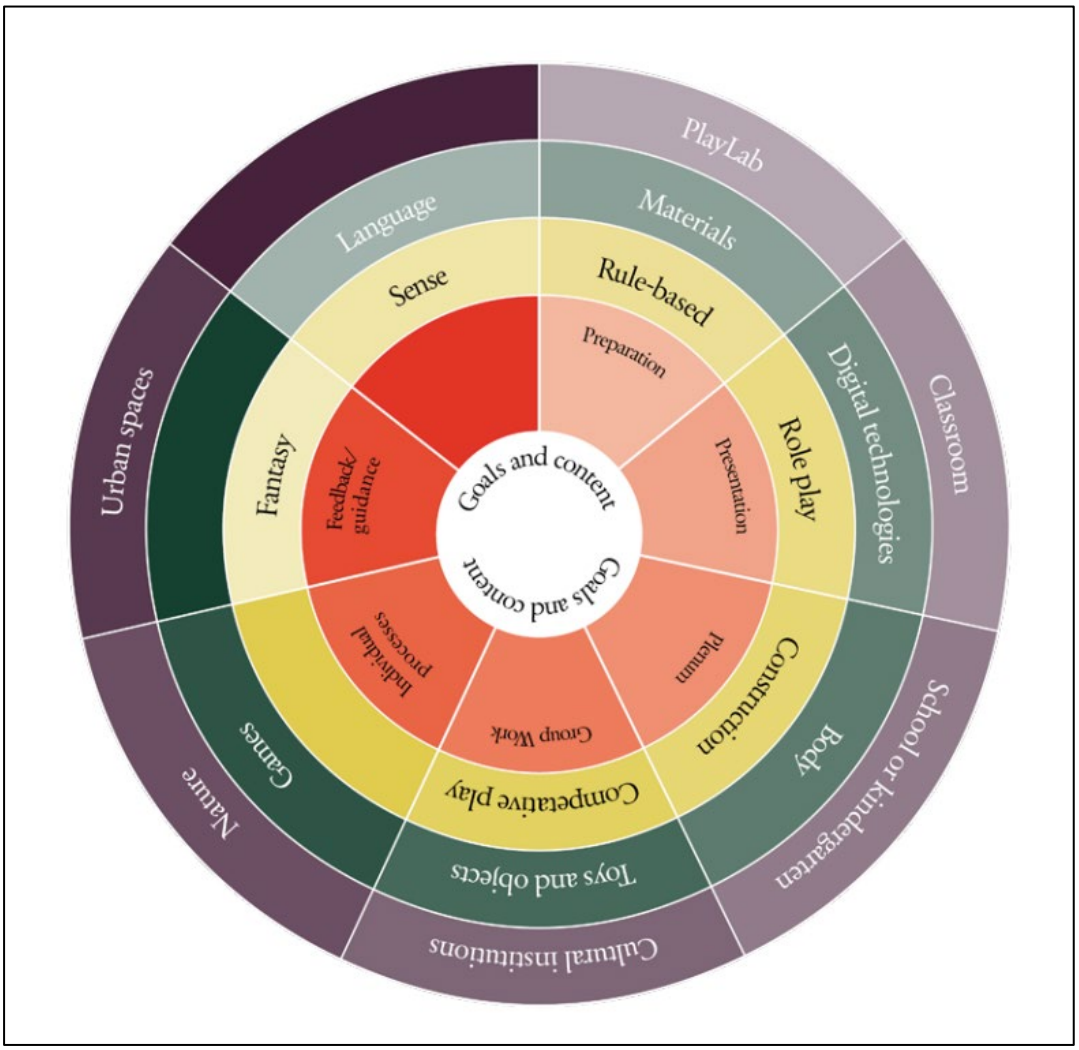
While the concept of Playful Learning may appear attractive – for its potential benefits in student motivation, learning, and also for nurturing the joy of learning – a playful approach to learning does not just require students enjoy the lesson, but also for educators to engage with play and themselves embrace the unpredictable and the chaos of playful learning (Ørsted and Laybourn, 2016).

Given the context outlined above, how can teacher preparation programmes, such as the NIE postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE), and in-service mentors (e.g., senior teachers) develop teachers who possess playful dispositions?

A playful disposition among teachers encourages teachers to see learning opportunities and activities as containing possibilities for leading, exploring, and enjoying (the key ingredients of play). This disposition places teachers in a position to transform their learning activities into ones that contain the key qualities of *play* as discussed earlier in this article.

Beyond equipping student teachers with knowledge about the principles and modalities of play, teacher preparation can also provide opportunities for exploration and enjoyment. One potential method could be the employment of the *Playwheel*. The *Playwheel* was developed by the LEGO Foundation and educators at the University College Copenhagen in 2019 to help build a playful disposition in their student teachers. It was based on research into play-based learning by Callois (2001) and Steenholt (2011, as cited in Ørsted and Laybourn, 2016).

Figure 2. Example of a Playwheel used at the University College Copenhagen as part of their teacher training programme (Playful Learning, 2024)



Each layer of the *Playwheel* represents an aspect of classroom and lesson design that student teachers must consider. From the innermost ring working outwards:

Table 2. Explanation for each layer of the Playwheel

Layer	Description
Goals and content	Lesson objectives that are determined by the teacher.
Typical teaching and organisation forms	Teaching and organisation forms represent the general didactic forms that the lesson/activity will take.
Play types	The play type represents some of the common or standard play forms that can be brought into the classroom.
Play media	The media through which the type of play that is selected can be enacted.
Location	Locations where lessons and activities can be carried out, locations shortlisted in the wheel are locations where playful, creative, and experimental teaching can take place.

The Playwheel is not just a thinking scaffold with meaningful categories for student teachers to consider when crafting their playful lessons and activities; it is also a useful training tool for developing playful dispositions in student teachers. For instance, by spinning the different layers of the Playwheel, student teachers can be presented with a novel, randomised lesson specification from which they can consider the types of goals and content areas that work with the given didactic form, play type, and play media. When used in a seminar or group setting, it can help elicit lively discussions among student teachers on how these different dimensions of playful lessons can be integrated and brought to life, promoting collaborative learning.

By engaging student teachers with activities such as the Playwheel, it can help to illustrate and model the principles of playful activities in the following ways:

(i) It encourages active engagement as it empowers learning. Engaging with student teachers and their lesson designs through the Playwheel encourages student teachers to take an active role in charting the direction of the class discussion.
(ii) It is socially interactive as it welcomes collaboration. It encourages student teachers to exchange ideas, build upon, or even disagree with each other while working towards a common goal of solving the 'puzzle' posed by the Playwheel. Through such activities, it also allows student teachers to build relationships, facilitate purposeful conversations that co-construct knowledge (or ideas), and foster a culture of feedback.
(iii) It is iterative as it promotes experimentation and risk-taking and encourages imaginative thinking. Through the Playwheel, potentially unlikely match-ups in lesson design may occur, and it encourages student teachers to engage with their imagination (the "what-if" space) and to explore new ideas and perspectives on how lessons can be designed. Furthermore, class discussions about these imaginative possibilities also encourage an iterative lesson design process that can encourage experimentation and risk-taking.

Through activities such as the Playwheel, student teachers can be placed in a position to consider the possibilities for play in their own teaching practice.

Of course, the culture of play in Singapore's context is different from that of Denmark, and the corresponding challenges, constraints, and pressures of the classroom are different as well, as astutely pointed out by the student teachers we have spoken to. To accommodate the priorities of a Singaporean classroom, a more conventional Playwheel can be used instead, see below:

Figure 3. A Playwheel for the Singapore Context?

While some of the activities listed above may not appear immediately as "playful" – such as support and feedback or inquiry-based learning – the use of such a wheel to foster discussion and consideration among student teachers can also encourage them to consider the imaginative possibilities in their lesson design. This further opens the possibility of increasingly playful categories in future iterations, once an initial inclination to play has taken root among student teachers.

Such a device can help student teachers to be sensitive to the various layers of teaching decisions – for instance, in Figure 3, from the innermost layer to the outermost, the layers represents the possible lesson objectives, classroom organisation forms, experiential elements, lesson medium, and physical location of the lesson – that have to be made when designing a lesson. Each of these considerations provides opportunities for student teachers to consider ways to give the students choice, wonder, and delight, and more broadly, to explore both possibilities and opportunities for playful learning in the classroom. By breaking down lesson planning into its various sub-components that require teachers to make decisions on, it also serves to make the process of imagining play in the classroom less expansive and more manageable – not all aspects of the classroom need to be made playful at the same time. For example, whereas the physical space for a classroom

may present limited play opportunities compared to that of a field trip site or a humanities resource room in the school, teachers can still look to the lesson medium or the classroom organisation form as avenues where playful learning can be implemented.

One way to utilise the Playwheel to foster the playful disposition of student teachers is to challenge them to consider the opportunities for play at each level and, as a group, weigh the pros and cons. As a learning activity, student teachers can work in groups of five and agree upon a set of lesson goals. Having done so, each student teacher can be assigned to a different layer of the Playwheel and give their specific layer a spin to obtain a randomised teaching decision for their assigned layer. They are then to individually consider the opportunities for play in their given category vis-à-vis the lesson's goals – for instance, should one draw "feedback and support" as the experiential element for the lesson, possible avenues for play may involve celebrating successes to introduce delight into the process, or to provide wonderment through turning feedback and support into a series of collaborative improvision by students.

Members of the group can then reconvene and assemble a cohesive lesson plan based on each randomised teaching decision they have drawn. This process may present odd combinations – such as attempting to introduce feedback and support elements while the lesson is set in a field trip site. Some of these abnormal combinations further encourage student teachers to consider what their lessons can look like beyond conventional lesson forms that are currently tried and proven in schools. Taken in totality, the Playwheel and activities such as drawing random lots to collaboratively design a lesson hope to raise teachers' disposition for play, by making the lesson planning process a playful one – and as a result provide room and space to consider the possibilities for choice, wonderment, and delight in their own classrooms.

Conclusion

While the removal of mid-year examinations and the release of curriculum time for teachers present an opportunity for teachers to nurture the joy of learning in their classrooms, it is evident that the examinations continue to occupy a significant part of the mindshare of many student teachers. By helping history teachers develop lessons guided by ideas around playful learning, it is hoped that some of the recent developments can be fully leveraged, and play and joy can be more effectively integrated into the classroom. To that end, this article provides an introductory overview of the principles of Playful Learning, a brief (but arguably indicative) snapshot of the concerns and aspirations of young educators in Singapore, and some suggestions on how Playful Learning can be tapped and made meaningful for teacher education in the Singaporean context.

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