



# Playfulness as a teachers' and educator's competence

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Pirkko Siklander

[pirkko.siklander@oulu.fi](mailto:pirkko.siklander@oulu.fi)



”Childhood play is the origin of adult problem-solving and creative thoughts”  
(Banaji & Burn, 2007; 2010)

Playful teaching is discovering, openness to new experiences, and reorganizing thoughts and actions.

### PLAYFUL TEACHING (Hyvönen, 2011)

1. Roles (leader, follower, afforder) assumed by teachers and students in different play situations,
2. the design of playful learning processes by integrating play and curriculum
3. the emphasis on developing and using students’ creativity, and
4. importance of fun and creativity.



# I LIKE TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH: ADULT PLAYFULNESS AMONG EDUCATORS

**INTRODUCTION** All educators need to be playful when designing teaching and learning activities. Despite the importance of playfulness, play is continually decreasing in formal education (Wood 2014; Wyver et al. 2010). Playfulness as a personality trait and as a quality of activities is studied widely in children but less often in adults.

**AIM** of this research is to investigate how educators and students in educational field (N=123) see their playfulness. **RQ's:** 1) How do adult educators evaluate their playfulness? 2) What are the most general qualities of playfulness among educators? 3) Are there differences in experienced playfulness among educators of different ages and genders?

**PLAYFULNESS** describes characteristics of individuals (e.g., Barnett 2007, 1991; Dunn 2004; Liebermann 1977), the tendency to approach activities, a quality of activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; Glynn & Webster 1992; Hyvönen 2008) and the tendency to feel certain emotions, such as joyfulness (Starbuck & Webster 1991).

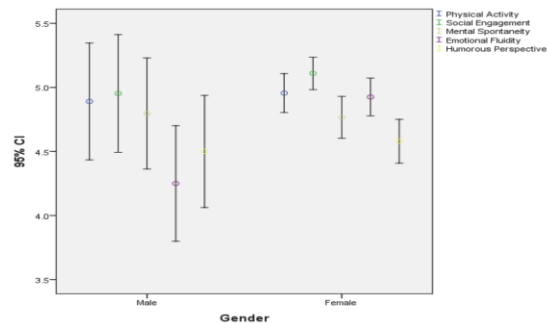
**MEASUREMENT METHOD** Reliability and principal components analysis was conducted. It showed that the Finnish version of the Staempfi (2005) scale had reliabilities greater than .75 and that the factorial structure was equivalent to the original scale.

## RESULTS

1) The participating evaluate their playfulness as high—they enjoy being with other people, want to know and learn more, and are flexible. (See Lieberman 1965; Dunn 2004).

2) Six statements were the most likely to depict adult playfulness, and the most agreed-upon statements in the APS was: “I like to make people laugh”. The most descriptive characteristics of playfulness are inquisitiveness, curiosity, flexibility and creativity.

3) A multivariate analysis showed that there were statistically significant multivariate differences in adult playfulness between genders,  $V = 0.11$ ,  $F(5, 114) = 2.93$ ,  $p = .016$ , but not for age,  $V = 0.04$ ,  $F(5, 114) = 0.93$ ,  $p = .462$ .



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## Background

### PROBLEMS / GAPS

Play / playfulness can enhance creativity, collaboration, problem-solving and regulation skills; it a power for learning and well-being (Bateson & Martin, 2013)

New curricula stress importance of play in learning, but intergrating play with curriculum is challenging (Hyvönen 2008; 2011).

Play is continually decreasing in childrens' lives (Bergen, 2002; Jarvis et al., 2014; Wood, 2014; Wyver, 2010)

Teachers' engagement in playful learning processes has a crucial impact for how children experience learning (Kangas, Siklander, Randolph, & Ruokamo, 2017)



## Background

- All educators need to be playful, when designing teaching and learning activities.
  - Playfulness and playful teaching are competencies that can be learned (pedagogies)
  - There is no differences in adult playfulness between women and men (Barnett, 2007; Glynn & Webster, 1992).
  - Highly playful educators can design playful learning; they are innovative in their work and their focus is on the students (Dunn, 2004). Indeed, the more playful the educator, the more playful the classroom or learning environment (Staempfli, 2005; 2007).
- “Playful people are uniquely able to transform virtually any environment to make it more stimulating, enjoyable and entertaining” (Barnett, 2007)
  - Playfulness has been studied in children, but less in adults (eg. In organizations: West et al., 2016), even lesser in adult educators.





## Playfulness

- 1) Characteristics of individual (Barnett, 2007, 1991; Dunn, 2004; Liebermann, 1977; Siklander et al., 2017)
- 2) The tendency to approach activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Glynn & Webster, 1992) and the tendency to feel certain emotions, such as joyfulness (Starbuck & Webster, 1991)
- 3) Quality of activities (Hyvönen & Ruokamo, 2005; Hyvönen, 2008a; Hyvönen & Kangas, 2007; Kangas, 2010).

The features of playfulness:

- *action, embodiment, creation, narration, collaboration and insight*
- *emotionality, concretization and authentication*
- media richness

**State theories “situationists”** consider playfulness to be situational and to show little stability over time

**Trait theories** refer to individual dispositions to behave in certain ways across situations, consistent behavior (Kenrich & Funder, 1998)

**Interactional theories** combine situational factors with the trait approach (Woszczyński, Roth, & Segars, 2002).



Studies dealing with adult computer playfulness (playfulness in computer interactions) indicate that playfulness is rather stable (stable versus dynamic) (Yager, Kappelman, Maples, & Prybutok, 1997).

## Aim

to investigate how educators see their own playfulness.

- 1) How do adult educators evaluate their own playfulness?
- 2) What are the most general qualities of playfulness among educators?
- 3) Are there differences in experienced playfulness among educators of different ages and gender?





## Methodologies: Participants

- Teachers and educators
  - student teachers
  - students educators
  - retired teachers
  - retired educators
- (N=123)

107 were female. The median birth year was 1978 with a minimum of 1951 and a maximum of 1995.





## Methodologies: Questionnaire

Finnish language version of Staempfli's (2005; 2007) Adult Playfulness Scale (APS) was used.

We examined the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) and factorial validity of the Finnish version of the scale to ensure that it was consistent with the English-language version of the scale, beginning with a two-step cluster analysis of the five sub-scales.

We followed that analysis with a multivariate analysis examining the influence of gender and age (as measured by date of birth) on the adult playfulness subscales.

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Results



Research Question	Results
How do adult educators evaluate their own playfulness?	<p>Participants evaluate themselves as <b>quite or extremely playful</b>: they are creative, enjoy being with other people, want to know and learn more, and are flexible.</p> <p>They see themselves as cognitively, emotionally and socially playful and spontaneous as well (See Lieberman, 1965; Dunn, 2004).</p> <p>Highly playful adults find it “stimulating to be original in her/his thinking and behaviour” and are “challenged by ambiguities and unsolved problems”.</p>
What are the most general qualities of playfulness among educators?	
How experienced playfulness among educators of different ages and gender differ?	



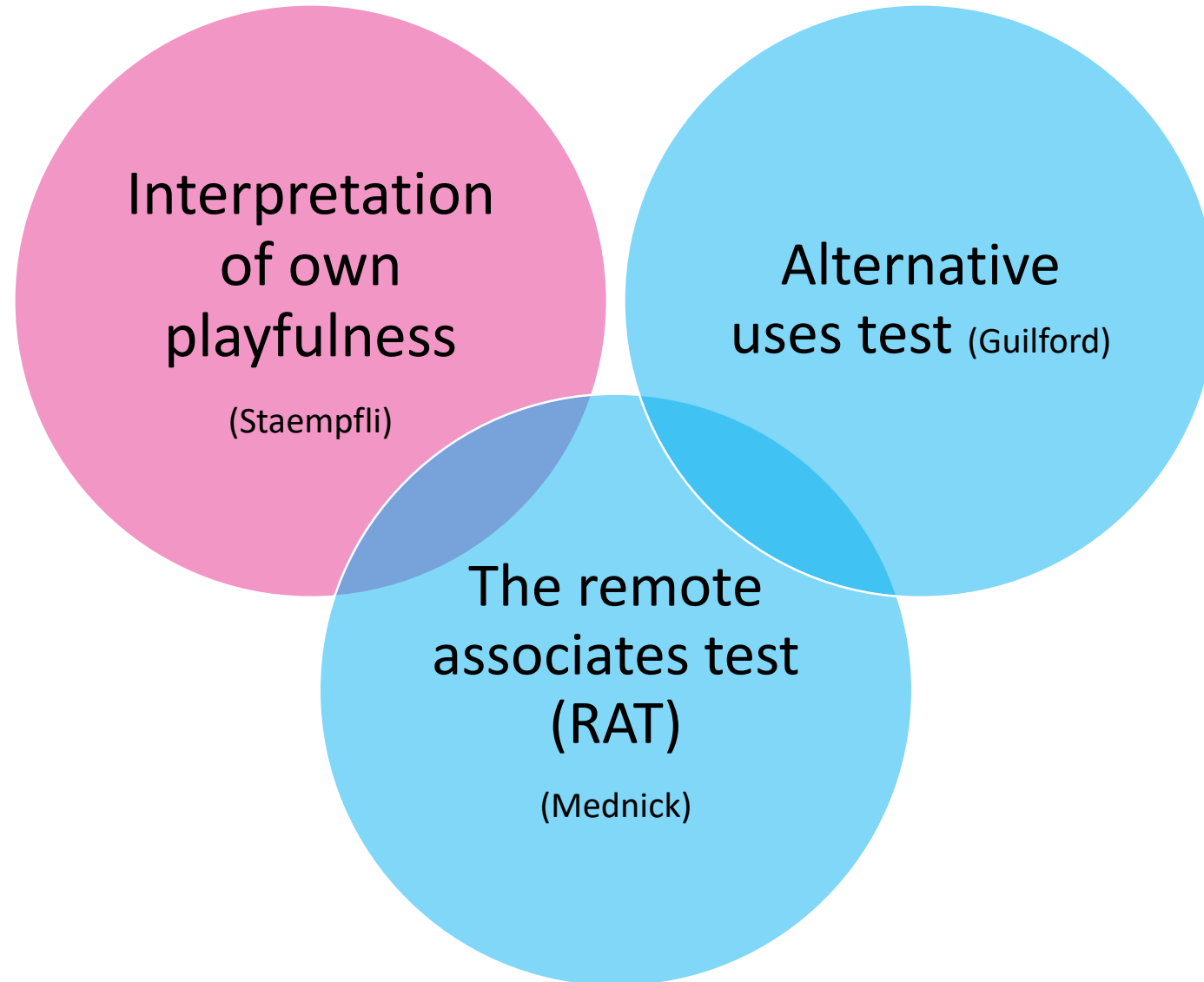
Research Question	Results
How do adult educators evaluate their own playfulness?	
What are the most general qualities of playfulness among educators?	<p>The most agreed-upon statements in the APS (Staemphli, 2007) were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>“I like to make people laugh”</b> [social]</li><li><b>“My friends can tell when I am having a good time”</b> [humour]</li><li><b>“I like to play with ideas”</b> [cognitive]</li><li><b>“I have an active imagination”</b> [creativity and imagination; cognitive]</li><li><b>“Being physically active keeps me stimulated and motivated”</b> [embodiment]</li><li><b>“By being playful it is easier to get along with people”</b> [social]</li></ul>
How experienced playfulness among educators of different ages and gender differ?	

Research Question	Results
How do adult educators evaluate their own playfulness?	
What are the most general qualities of playfulness among educators?	
How experienced playfulness among educators of different ages and gender differ?	We find no differences in perceptions of playfulness among educators between 20 to 64; however, male educators seem to be slightly less playful than female educators, which has not been recognised in earlier studies.



# Is there a linkage between self-evaluated playfulness and creativity?

(Bateson & Martin, 2013) "Acting playfully and coming up with new ideas"



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Please, in each statement, click the circle that best describes you in general

Your name is not asked, but add it (or nick name) into the document after your possible comments.

## Interpretation of own playfulness

(Staempfli)



## Alternative uses test (Guilford)

Add your name or  
nick name – same  
as used in the  
questionnaire – on  
the paper.

### **GUILFORD'S TEST OF DIVERGENT THINKING – ALTERNATIVE USES TASK** (Guilford & Hoepfner, 1971)

How respondents are able to come up  
with alternative uses for a certain  
product (a chair, paperclip, brick, cup  
etc.)

It aims to **derive multiple answers** to the  
question and categorize the answers  
into:

- Originality – the novelty of the  
alternative use
- Fluency – the number of uses the  
respondent was able to come up with
- Flexibility – the categories with which  
the alternative uses fall into
- Elaboration – the amount of detail the  
respondent provided with regards to the  
alternative use of the item

After seeing each  
picture of the  
object  
you have two  
minutes time to list  
as many uses as  
possible.

Item 1.



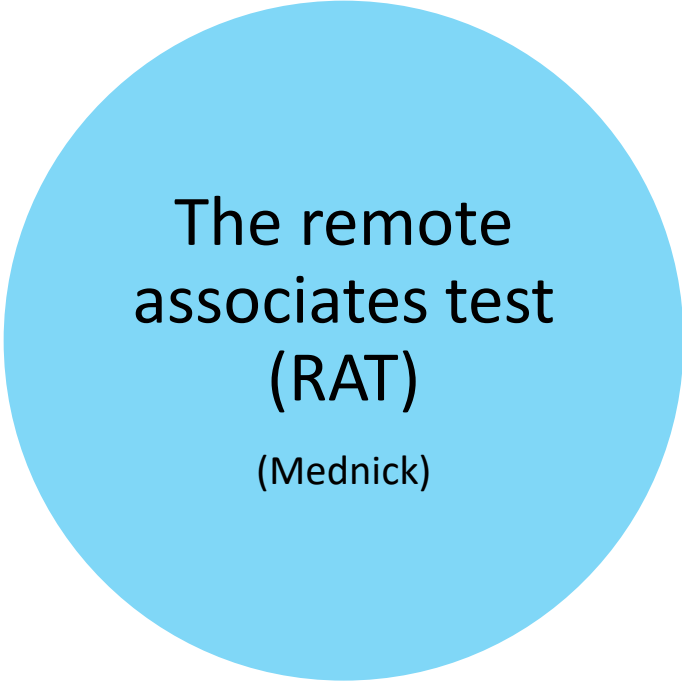




Item 2.



Item 3.



## The remote associates test (RAT)

(Mednick)

Add your name or nick name – same as used in the questionnaire – on the paper.

Sarnoff Mednick in the 1960s to measure *creative convergent thinking* - **Ability to associate seemingly unconnected, perceive new relations between thoughts**

Each question on the RAT test lists a group of words, and requires that we provide a single extra word that will link all the others together.

The respondents' task is to find what links or associates these words together.

What links:  
elephant–lapse–vivid  
lick–mine–shaker

Playing / Learning / Working  
Square / Cardboard / Open  
Broken / Clear / Eye  
Coin / Quick / Spoon  
Time / Hair / Stretch

Aid / Rubber / Wagon  
Sense / Courtesy / Place  
Flower / Friend / School  
Opera / Hand / Dish  
Wheel / Hand / Shopping

Fox / Man / Peep  
Home / Sea / Bed  
Fence / Card / Master  
Illness / Bus / Computer  
Wise / Work / Tower



Bass–Complex–Sleep  
Chamber–Staff–Box  
Desert–Ice–Spell  
Base–Show–Dance  
Inch–Deal–Peg  
Soap–Shoe–Tissue  
Blood–Music–Cheese  
Skunk–Kings–Boiled  
Jump–Kill–Bliss  
Shopping–Washer–Picture

Athletes–Web–Rabbit  
Shelf–Read–End  
Sea–Home–Stomach  
Car–Swimming–Cue  
Board–Magic–Death  
Walker–Main–Sweeper  
Cookies–Sixteen–Heart  
Chocolate–Fortune–Tin  
Lounge–Hour–Drink  
Keel–Show–Row