

“Pretend Play as a Creative Activity”

Abstract

The main purpose of this work is to develop a new line of connections between pretend play and creativity, and to present children's pretense as a form of creative activity. Thus, this proposal significantly differs from the previous approaches to those connections, which focused on various mental abilities — mainly imaginative and divergent thinking abilities — supposedly fundamental for children's pretense. My own proposal is presented in three main steps. In the first chapter I show the most important theories and studies on pretend play. In the second chapter I describe the previous ways of combining children's pretense with creativity, starting with two popular assumptions about the nature of both phenomena — which are assumptions about the representational nature of pretend play and about the mentalist core of creativity. I also outline my own critique of these assumptions. In the third chapter I present my own approach to pretense-creativity connections. Namely, I describe children's pretense as a form of contextualized creative activity through which children explore the possibilities of given pretend situations and regulate their behaviors so that they are valuable and meaningful according to the specific goals of pretense. By means of these studies I want to emphasize the role of actions (with or without objects) and the role of the material and social context in pretend play and in all other creative actions.

Keywords:

pretend play, creativity, action, exploration, imagination