Re-Architecting Adolescence: The Case for Play

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THE PROBLEM

Why Play?
PLAY!
An activity that is intrinsically motivated, entails active engagement, and results in joyful discovery.

(Yougman, Garner, Hutchinson, et al., 2018)
REMEMBER

A time when you played so hard that you lost track of time.
REMEMBER

When did it become unacceptable to play?
PLAY

ANXIETY
DEPRESSION
SUICIDE
FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS
NARCISSISM

(Gray, 2011)
PLAY IS NOT FRIVOLOUS!
Today

Everyone

Play more!
Play is to the 21st century what work was to industrialization. It demonstrates a way of knowing, doing, and creating value.
THE TEAM

Why Matter Design?
THE SITE

Why Grayson?
Our Mission
To provide gifted children with a challenging, research-based education worthy of their intellect and their intrinsic desire to learn and think deeply.

To serve as a valued resource for the gifted education community in Philadelphia and worldwide.
Our shared values

Respect
- for ourselves and others
- truthfulness
- kindness
- fairness
- humility

Authenticity
- integrity
- engagement
- meaning
- craftsmanship

Courage
- tenacity
- dauntlessness
- audacity
- resilience

Curiosity
- ingenuity
- intensity
- inquisitiveness
- insight

Purpose
- through serving something greater than ourselves
- humanity
- connectedness
- leadership
- vision
ACTION EXPRESSES PRIORITIES
FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT
FREEDOM TO FAIL
FREEDOM OF IDENTITY
FREEDOM OF EFFORT

Scot Osterweil | MIT
The four freedoms are *NOT* just for kids.
The four freedoms are *NOT* just for kids.

The four freedoms are for you.
So...
FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT
FIERCE ENGAGEMENT
AMOEBA S AND BLANKETS
Fussy, shivering amoeba who lives on a dot grid

Happy, warm amoeba with its fancy blanket
Find the 3 distinct orderings of four pancakes that require a minimum of 4 flips to obtain the perfect pyramid.
ONWARD TO WAFFLES
“Buy back” time for play and experimentation

Create a culture of collaboration
FREEDOM TO FAIL
WHAT IS YOUR EPIC FAILURE?
FOUNDERS’ DAY
NOs ARE FREE
- MELISSA BILASH
Normalize and practice failure

Celebrate meaningful risk

Model courage and audacity
FREEDOM OF IDENTITY
CREATING CHARACTERS

Language is the domain of people: we say it, we listen, we share stories, and we write stories. As an individual, how you use language is a part of your identity. Dialogue, in this context, is the creation of a character. Let's explore some aspects of character creation:

1. Pick an Archetype. An archetype is a basic pattern that describes your character. Each archetype has a distinct role in society, and it can give your character a specific purpose or motivation.
2. Give an Introduction. Based on your archetype and the story you want to tell, you will explicitly define who your character is and how they fit into the story.

In any story, the setting is as important as the characters. It sets the stage for how the characters interact with the environment and each other. As we explore these aspects, we'll gain a deeper understanding of the world we create together.
Power is the pivot on which everything hinges. He who has the power is always right; the weaker is always wrong.

Niccolò Machiavelli
They are many ages in one child: a delight-driven, joy-seeking, creatively mucky young child one moment, and a years-ahead thinker-philosopher-scientist-conceptualizer the next.

All in one child.

— P. Susan Jackson | The Daimon Institute
Include opportunities for identity play in your curriculum

Support students' ever-changing identities
FREEDOM OF EFFORT
AND THEN THERE’S LARP
LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAYING

“This is nonsense and I love it!” — Dexter
"The rule wins because it is the strongest impulse. Such a rule is an internal rule, a rule of self-restraint and self-determination."

Lev Vygotsky
EMBRACING PLAYWORK
Encourage the modulation of effort
Provide choice
Step back
THE PROJECT

Why THIS?
Grayson Playlab
THE TAKEAWAY

SO WHAT?
Play is the force that pulls us together.
Play is what we do when we are human.
HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU DEVOTE TO PLAY?
WHAT DOES PLAY LOOK LIKE IN YOUR SCHOOL?
IT’S NOT ABOUT MAKING YOUR OWN MEGALITH.

IT’S ABOUT MAKING YOUR OWN PLACE.
IT’S NOT ABOUT MAKING YOUR OWN MEGALITH.

IT’S ABOUT CREATING YOUR OWN FREEDOMS.
FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT.

FREEDOM TO FAIL.

FREEDOM OF IDENTITY.

FREEDOM OF EFFORT.

IT’S ABOUT CREATING YOUR OWN FREEDOMS.
FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT.
FREEDOM TO FAIL.
FREEDOM OF IDENTITY.
FREEDOM OF EFFORT.

HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL PROVIDE THESE FREEDOMS?
The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct.

Carl Jung
CREATIVE THINKING - Fluency - Flexibility - Originality - Elaboration
CREATIVE FEELING

- Curiosity
- Imagination
- Complexity
- Risk-Taking
Thank You!
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