The Presence and Significance of Imaginative Play in the Lives of Mexican-American Adults

BY

ANTHONY T. PERONE III
A.B., Cornell University, 1994
M.Ed., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2005

THESIS

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2013

Chicago, Illinois

Committee:

Artin Göncü, Chair and Advisor

Pamela Quiroz, Educational Policy Studies
Stacey Horn
William Schubert, Curriculum and Instruction
Suzanne Gaskins, Northeastern University

This dissertation is dedicated to communities who create and share playful, meaningful experiences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

SUMMARY

The present study was conducted to examine the self-reported meanings, presence, and developmental and educational benefits of life-span imaginative play of second-generation young adults of the community of Mexican origin. Three expectations guided this study. First, it was expected that participants would report life-span engagement in imaginative play activity and that their play would reflect developmental differences. Second, it was expected that the participants' imaginative play episodes would reflect themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender. Third, it was anticipated that the participants would claim that their imaginative play activity has yielded developmental and educational benefits across multiple domains and contexts.

To conduct this inquiry, a derived etic methodology involving one-time interviews with the 16 participating adults was employed. The participants were asked their age, place of birth, parents' place of birth, and school and work commitments. In particular, participants were interviewed extensively on their previous and current imaginative play. First, their meanings of the words "imagination" and "play" were sought. Next, their self-reported engagement in imaginative play across 4 developmental periods (i.e., early childhood, elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood) was addressed. Participants also shared the factors that have supported and prevented their imaginative play as well as instances of private imaginative play. From there, the relationships between cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender and their imaginative play were explored. Finally, their stance on the developmental and educational benefits of imaginative play, their experiences with imaginative play in their formal learning environments, and their suggestions for the inclusion of imaginative play in formal schooling were discussed. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the

SUMMARY (continued)

participants and were audiotaped. In-depth summaries obtained from the audiotaped interviews

constitute the database for the study. All analyses were based on these summaries.

The results indicate that participants offered meanings of play and imagination that both

align with current definitions of imaginative play existing in the literature and reveal their local

meanings. Participants also reported spontaneous episodes and developmental benefits of

imaginative play activity across their lifespans. Themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic

identity, and gender and their presence in their imaginative play were offered to varying degrees.

Developmental patterns with respect to the number of imaginative play episodes and their

themes, structure, and motivations were also evidenced. Based on these findings, it is suggested

that imaginative play emerges as a cultural, community-informed activity that occurs in all

periods of development of these 16 adults and that it offers them developmental and educational

benefits. The significance and limitations of the study as well as suggestions for future research

are offered.

I.   INTRODUCTION

This dissertation describes the imaginative play of Mexican-American adults to address three areas of related interest: a life-span perspective on imaginative play activity, a focus on the imaginative play of adults of non-European American origin with the purpose of seeking cross-cultural evidence for the commonality of imaginative play, and the use of a derived etic methodology to seek such evidence.

While a single definition of imaginative play eludes scholars, it is commonly conceptualized as a representational activity whereby people, objects, and situations are transformed in ways that belie their roles and functions in non-play activity (e.g., Fein, 1981; Leslie, 1987; Lillard, 1993). For example, when human beings use a banana to substitute as a pretend telephone receiver, they are engaging in a representational activity whereby the common function of the banana is replaced by one which defies this common function.

Prominent theorists and the subsequent research addressed the presence and importance of imaginative play in the service of young children's development. For example, for both Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1976, 1978) imaginative play is important during infancy and early childhood but disappears afterwards. Specifically, for Piaget, imaginative play serves the needs of the egocentric self as representational assimilation during the preoperational stage, that is, children re-create non-play experiences in their imaginative play with the purpose of mastering them. During the elementary school years, however, play disappears with the advent of concrete operations giving way to logical thinking. In a similar manner, Vygotsky (1978) claimed that play is the leading activity during early childhood, serving as the Zone of Proximal Development whereby young children engage in explorations that they are not able to do outside of play, i.e., practice roles such as motherhood with the purpose of developing fuller understandings of them

1

(Göncü & Gaskins, 2011). However, Vygotsky claimed that play is replaced by schoolwork during the elementary school years where children delve into the mastery of scientific concepts. For both Piaget and Vygotsky, then, imaginative play serves as an activity of meaning-making emanating from affectively significant idiosyncratic and personal experiences only during early childhood. During the elementary school years and beyond, the goal in development is to master the already existing and socially coded logical knowledge outside of play that is essential for survival in society (Göncü & Perone, 2005; Perone & Göncü, under review).

Based on the groundwork laid out by Piaget and Vygotsky, research on the imaginative play of young children has burgeoned over the past 30 or so years, addressing a range of issues in the service of better understanding its presence and development during this period. In fact, as discussed by Göncü, Perone, and Ryan (2013), six areas of research have been established, namely, the developmental course of symbolic representations, (e.g., Fein, 1981; McLoyd, 1980), how children collaborate with one another in establishing intersubjectivity in their representations (e.g., Göncü, 1993; Howe, Petrakos, & Rinaldi, 1998), mental processes involved in symbolic representations, (Leslie, 1987; Lillard, 1993), the themes of imaginative play or the kinds symbolic representations in which children engage (e.g., Fein, 1989), the outcomes of imaginative play across multiple developmental domains (e.g., Erickson, 1985; Kavanaugh, 2006; Paley, 1981, 1990), and finally, cultural influences on young children's imaginative play, both to avoid a Western-and middle- class- only lens on this activity and note its features across multiple factors and communities (e.g., Farver, 1999; Gaskins, 1999; Göncü, Jain & Tuermer, 2007).

While this scholarship has contributed much to our understanding of the presence and development of imaginative play in early childhood, this is only part of the story of the

imaginative play of human beings: anyone, for example, who dresses up for Halloween or who engages in fantasy football or online gaming is also engaging in imaginative play activity. These and other examples remind us that older children, adolescents, and adults also engage in imaginative play with others who share their interests and seek amusement. This observation seems simple and easy to agree upon and yet our investigation of the motivations, transformations, and consequences of imaginative play activity beyond the early childhood years is not sufficiently addressed in the research agendas of developmental psychologists. In part, this is a factor of the very same prominent theorists, Piaget and Vygtosky, who not only focused primarily on imaginative play in early childhood, but whose work also states that imaginative play activity gives way to other activities such as games with rules, athletic activity, and logical and scientific thinking. A quick glance at the developmental literature will provide studies that adopt and advance the perspective that imaginative play is limited to early childhood (e.g., Fein, 1981; Vasta, Haith, & Miller, 1999).

However, in work constituting the immediate background for the present dissertation, a handful of scholars contend that adults also engage in imaginative play and that it has developmental benefits for them. The majority of the work is conceptual but some empirical work has also been done. On conceptual grounds, Freysinger (1998) asserts that human development is a continuous process throughout the lifespan and that one activity in which human beings engage, i.e., play, also carries on and yet transforms across time. Consistent with Freysinger, work by Sutton-Smith (1993, 1997) and Kelly-Byrne and Sutton-Smith (1984) addressed adult play. These authors challenge a pervasive approach of seeing childhood and adulthood as discontinuous and distinct, claiming that physical activity such as leisure play, teasing, and sexual play all find their expression in both childhood and adulthood. In their work,

they conclude that play activity should be viewed as a connection across these developmental periods. The presence of play in other communities avoids such discontinuities and advances the notion of imaginative play throughout the human lifespan and across multiple activities. For example, Huizinga (1949) conceptualizes that the culture of civilizations arises and unfolds in and as play and does so across multiple contexts such as in law, the arts, language, and philosophy.

Holzman (2009) connects Vygotsky's notion of play as the leading activity of early childhood to the life-span activity of performance, that is, being at once and always who one is and who one is not and she uses the human ability to improvise as a central example of such performatory activity. In line with Holzman, Göncü and Perone (2005) advance a conceptualization of pretend play as a life-span activity that serves as a challenge to the dominant developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky that imaginative play is limited to early childhood. Young children's imaginative play and a form of play in adulthood known as improvisational theater (improv) are hypothesized to exist on a continuum based on similarities between the two activities' definitions, psychological origins, social and dialogic functions, and developmental consequences.

Scholars have also engaged in empirical work on the life-span presence and importance of imaginative play. For example, in work conducted in Africa, Turner (1969; 1982) noted a playful approach to African communities' rituals. Ludic activities in these rituals may include joking relationships, sacred games, riddles, mock ordeals, clowning, and Trickster tales. These ludic performances are intrinsically connected to the work of the collective society to accomplish community goals. In addition, Holzman (1997, 2009) supports her claims by detailing performatory practices in therapeutic, educational, out-of-school, and business contexts with

which she has been affiliated. Finally, Perone and Göncü (under review), have conducted two studies to determine if imaginative play has occurred throughout the lifespan of Western adults. In the first study, young adults who study and perform improv were asked to describe the meaning of imaginative play and its presence during early childhood, the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood as well as whether or not they benefited from engagement in imaginative play. In a similar manner, in the second study, graduate students offered meanings of imaginative play and its benefits during their lives. Based on these findings, the authors concluded that regardless of participants' community affiliations imaginative play emerged as a cultural activity that occurs in all periods of development of Western adults and that it offers developmental and educational benefits.

As a result of this emerging work, imaginative play has been conceptualized as a life-span, developmental activity. However, the majority of work in this area has been mainly with the European-American community. For example, Smith and Lillard (2012) looked at the play of primarily European-American college students retrospectively, but only of their early childhood and elementary school years. Empirical work by Perone and Göncü (under review) has investigated the life-span perspective from the retrospective self-reports of adults primarily of European-American heritage. There is a dearth of research on the life-span play of adults from non-Western or non-middle class communities, despite its suggested universal presence (Huizinga, 1949). That said, it is indeed possible that imaginative play is a life-span activity that exists in other communities in addition to the European-American community. Yet, as it stands now, we are left to assume that imaginative play beyond early childhood fails to exist in other communities or that if it does, current conceptualizations of the imaginative play of European-American origin suffice to describe it. In fact, doing so may very well lead to similar concerns

raised by scholars in our investigation of the imaginative play of non-European-American and non-middle class children in the United States. As argued by McLoyd (1982), Gaskins and Göncü (1988), and Göncü and Gaskins (2011) imposition of the descriptions of European-American children's play onto the play of children of color or of low-income children resulted in ethnocentric and incomplete descriptions of these children's play.

This dissertation addresses these concerns by using a retrospective interview protocol to learn about and describe the life-span presence of imaginative play, its representational features, and its developmental consequences in a community of adults of Mexican heritage. This particular community has been chosen for four reasons. First, the Hispanic community in general is a rapidly increasing community in formal learning environments in the United States and Hispanics of Mexican heritage by far comprise the largest subgroup (Crosnoe, 2006; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Garcia & Jensen, 2009); however, little formal or informal inquiry into the imaginative play activity of Hispanics is evidenced and is limited mainly to the imaginative play activity of young children and the role that their caregivers play in supporting it (e.g., Farver & Howes, 1993; Howes, Wishard Guerra, & Zucker, 2008; Lancy 2007). Inquiry on the imaginative play activity of Hispanic adults has not been sufficiently explored and thus begs for further exploration. Second, and related to this first point, it behooves us in the United States, a nation of pluralism, to learn from and about all members of society not only to advance our understandings of the complexity and diversity in this nation, but also to avoid deferring to stereotypes or adopting hegemonic practices. Therefore, the present study is an opportunity to understand this community and expand our understanding of imaginative play as a life-span activity. Third, the community of Mexican origin already suggests engagement in imaginative play such as its creation of and participation in oral storytelling and celebrations such as Los

Dias de los Muertos (The Days of the Dead) and is addressed in the literature (e.g., Sayer, 2009). These kinds of cultural traditions that are similar to those reported by Turner (1969; 1982) provide encouragement for the search for examples of imaginative play in a Mexican-American community. Fourth, my own experiences as a teacher and teacher educator of adults of Mexican heritage have illustrated the presence, power, and potential of imaginative play in their lives and the benefits it has had on their learning and development (e.g., Perone, 1994, 2011), and in this study, I advance and enhance these observations.

The study has three expectations: first, that imaginative play is a life-span activity and as such may present developmental differences; second, that imaginative play for the participants of this study will reflect themes such as cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender; and third, that participants will report developmental and educational benefits of engagement in imaginative play across multiple developmental domains and contexts.

In the effort to obtain evidence to support these expectations, a derived etic research strategy has been adopted. In related literature on this research strategy, scholars (e.g., Berry, 1989; Rogoff, 2003; Young, 2005) outline and discuss three approaches when engaging in research with a cultural perspective: imposed etic, emic, and derived etic. Researchers using an imposed etic approach apply theory from their own community to other communities in search of universals based on the assumption that the phenomenon of research interest exists only in the manner that is available to the researchers. The outcome of this process is only the extent to which researchers' conceptualization of the phenomenon exists in other communities, excluding the unique and different ways in which the phenomenon may be present in other communities, and thus providing incomplete or biased descriptions. On the other hand, in an emic approach, researchers accept the cultural variations in whether or how a phenomenon of interest may exist

7

in different communities. Therefore, they aim to represent the perspectives of a particular community and usually do so by methods such as extensive observation and participation in the community's activities (Berry, 1989; Rogoff, 2003; Young, 2005). Finally, in a derived etic approach, researchers adjust their ways of conceptualizing the phenomenon of interest by questioning, observing, and interpreting the participants' actions so that they are able to maintain both their and the participants' perspectives in identifying both the similarities and the differences in the researchers' and the participants' conceptualizations (Berry, 1989; Rogoff, 2003).

For this study, a derived etic approach was adopted for two reasons. First, the conceptualization of imaginative play as a life-span activity has been developed on conceptual and empirical grounds without significant contributions of the community of adults of Mexican heritage; therefore, the present study seeks to understand if and how such a conceptualization is fitting to this particular community and what new contributions to our understanding of life-span imaginative play emerge from the participants' reports. Second, and related to the first point, the study aims to learn of the participants' meanings, presence, and developmental outcomes of the phenomenon of "imaginative play" based on their meanings of imaginative play and their possible experiences with this activity.

Thus, a derived etic methodology involving conducting interviews with the 16 participating adults was employed. The participants were interviewed extensively on their previous and current imaginative play: their meanings of the words "imagination" and "play," their self-reported engagement in imaginative play in their early childhood, elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood, its relationship with community practices and beliefs, and their stance on how their imaginative play has helped them learn and develop. In addition, their

8

experiences with imaginative play in their formal learning environments were discussed as were their suggestions for the inclusion of imaginative play in formal schooling. Qualitative analyses using a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were conducted and reliability exercises on these interpretive categories were undertaken.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. I discuss in the next chapter the three expectations that guide this study and draw upon literature in psychology, education, sociology, and anthropology to do so. The third chapter addresses the methods and the derivation of the codes that informed data analysis. The subsequent chapter presents the study's results with respect to the three expectations. The final chapter offers discussion and significance of the findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE

A. <u>Overview</u>

Adult imaginative play is a significant activity, but it is often disparaged and ignored in the United States (Kelly-Byrne & Sutton-Smith, 1984; Göncü & Perone, 2005). Reflecting this cultural bias, the fields of developmental psychology and education do not devote much space to the study of adult imaginative play. Much unlike young children who are often expected and encouraged to play in order to learn and develop, adults who play to learn and develop, or simply to have fun, are often overlooked (Freysinger, 1998). This is largely due to the fact that adult play has been repressed by a Protestant work ethic and an Industrial Revolution that favored work for survival, ignoring the adaptive functions of play (Göncü & Perone, 2005; Perone & Göncü, under review). In addition, the extent to which play has been considered, it was limited to the conceptualizations by scholars of European origin (e.g. Erikson, 1963; Piaget, 1962, Vygotsky, 1976, 1978) who set the stage for the examination of play from the perspective of European-Americans in this country. As a result, what we have is a body of literature on children's imaginative play as conceived by European-American scholars with some exceptions that support a cultural and community perspective (e.g., Farver & Howes, 1993; Farver, 1999; Göncü, Tuermer, Jain, & Johnson, 1999; Göncü, Patt, & Kouba, 2000; Gaskins, 1999).

The present dissertation adopts a cultural-historical approach on imaginative play as a life-span activity. In adopting such an approach, it challenges the notion that imaginative play is an activity primarily of young children or a life-span activity of and defined by only Europeans and European-Americans. As well, taking a cultural-historical stance considers that previous research findings on particular groups, while affording us a wealth of important information on the presence and value of imaginative play, should not necessarily be generalized to other

communities who have not been considered in that work; rather, the meaning and presence of the phenomenon of imaginative play must also be understood from other communities' points of view and experiences. Keeping that in mind, in what follows, I build the three expectations for the current study: first, that imaginative play is a life-span activity of Mexican-American adults and as such may present developmental differences; second, that imaginative play for the Mexican-American participants of this study will reflect themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender; and third, that participants will report developmental benefits of engagement in imaginative play across multiple developmental domains and contexts. Data for these three expectations will emerge from the participants' responses to the questions posed in a retrospective interview protocol that considers their imaginative play across four developmental periods, namely, early childhood (ages 3-5), the elementary school years (ages 6-12), adolescence (ages 13-17), and adulthood (since age 18). In what follows, I will, in turn, re-present each expectation, the existing literature to support it, and offer plausible manifestations or evidence of each expectation in the data to emerge from the study.

B. Expectation 1: Imaginative play is a life-span activity.

The first expectation is structured in terms of the participants' definitions of "play" and "imagination," their self-reported imaginative play episodes across their four developmental periods, their self-reported episodes with respect to lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, the motivations to engage in imaginative play, and the factors that support and prevent imaginative play.

1. Definitions of "play" and "imagination"

As this study takes a derived etic approach, the perspectives of the participants of what constitutes "imaginative play" is necessary in order to understand this phenomenon from their

own point of view. This approach begins with their understandings of the words "play" in general and "imagination" in particular. As the study aims not to assume that Western conceptualizations of this activity are generalizable, learning what these words mean to the participants is essential so that a more diverse and refined understanding of this phenomenon is provided. Inquiring about their meanings of these words is also important since the field of play scholarship itself does not converge on a unified definition of play (e.g., Smith & Vollstedt, 1985; Sutton-Smith, 1999). Complicating the issue further is that the field has different labels to describe play activity where pretense or representation occurs, using a range of terms such as "pretend," "fantasy," "simulative," "symbolic," "sociodramatic," "imaginative," and "make-believe." These may be used interchangeably by some scholars (e.g., Perone & Göncü, under review) but some scholars contend that these labels may differ in focus or value (e.g., Fein, 1981). Based on previous research with European-American adults (e.g., Perone & Göncü, under review) that has asked adult participants to define these words and obtained responses, I expect that participants will provide definitions for both words and I expect that definitions of "play" will, at a minimum, be defined as "fun" and definitions of "imagination" will, at a minimum, address the creative and representational features of this kind of activity.

2. **Life-span engagement in imaginative play**

This study contends that imaginative play is not limited to early childhood. Rather, it occurs in all periods of development, namely, early childhood, the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood. Based on previous research that has shown that imaginative play exists in all periods of development of Western adults, the present study expects this to be the case for the Mexican-American participants as well.

Previous work has conceptualized imaginative play as a life-span activity by noting the similarities between the activities of children and adults. For example, Göncü and Perone (2005) discussed the similarities between the imaginative play activities of children and the improvisational theater (improv) activities of adults with respect to their cultural, definitional, and performance features, the psychological origins to engage in imaginative play/improv, social and dialogic functions of play communications, and developmental consequences. Also, Sawyer (1997) notes the similarities between children's conversations in imaginative play episodes and the dialogic tools improvisers use to create scenes or perform games spontaneously onstage. Along similar lines, Erikson (1976) connects the pretend play of young children with adult activity such as playwriting. He states that "[the child's] classroom and…home setting are an early equivalent of the sphere of adult actuality with its interplay of persons and institutions [and] is the infantile model of the playwright's work" (p. 692). He also connects young children's imaginative play with adult activity such as scientific exploration and community rituals since these activities require participants to "orient [themselves] within the possibilities and the boundaries first of what is imaginable and possible…." (698). In addition, Terr (1999) aligns children's imaginative games and activities with their possible adult manifestations. For example, she suggests that children's copying of adults' smiles and other facial expressions continues into adulthood when adults do comedic impressions of others' voices or mannerisms. Finally, Rognli (2008) draws upon the similarities between children's social imaginative play and an adult activity called live-action role-playing (LARP). He contends that adults use the same fundamental skills and basic cognitive capacities to engage in LARP as children do when they play imaginative games and that there is considerable similarity in what motivates human beings to engage in both activities.

Despite these conceptualizations, the similarities between imaginative play activity in only early childhood and adulthood are presented and a stage-wise view on imaginative play beyond early childhood is limited on empirical grounds (e.g., Smith & Lillard, 2012; Perone & Göncü, under review) but suggest that in fact imaginative play occurs in all developmental periods. Based on this literature, it is also expected that the participants will report imaginative play from their own vantage points and across the four developmental periods. In elaborating upon this thesis, in the following aspects of Expectation 1, I will articulate the sources, motivations, and contextual factors of life-span imaginative play.

3. **Sources of representations: Lived, anticipated, and fantastic**

In both the fields of psychology and anthropology, work that considers imaginative play as a representational activity is inarguably perceived as based on the players' experiences. Interestingly, both fields identify these experiences as ones emerging on a continuum of directly experienced to desired ones. However, what mediates these experiences differs in the two fields. In the case of psychology, representations derive from individual idiosyncratic experiences and one's own priorities while in the field of anthropology, representations are mediated by the broader cultural practices. Each will be discussed in turn.

According to prominent developmental theorists such as Piaget (1962), Freud (1961), Erikson (1963, 1976), and Vygotsky (1976, 1978) imaginative play is a forum to address lived and anticipated experiences in the early childhood years. According to Piaget (1962), young children play to make sense of lived experiences. Once children go through an experience of adaptation, they put the experience under their own voluntary control with the purpose of re-living it (Gaskins & Göncü, 1988; Göncü & Gaskins, 2011). These experiences likely have an affective significance and engaging in imaginative play serves as a means of transforming a lived

14

experience into one that is suitable, pleasant, and self-controlled. Consistent with Piaget, the psychoanalytic tradition advanced by Erikson (1963) and Freud (1961) suggests that young children's imaginative play is a means of illustrating mastery over their environment or over particularly troubling experiences that players have had in life.

For Vygotsky imaginative play is more future-oriented although it is motivated by past experience (Göncü & Gaskins, 2011). Vygotsky (1976) claimed that children are guided to the world of imaginative play by their tendencies that cannot be realized in the world of non-play, such as experiencing an adult role such as mother. For example, Vygotsky argues that a child who is pretending to be a mother is constructing something specific about her future in relation to this role and learning about her community's rules for and expectations of this role (Gaskins & Göncü, 1988; Göncü & Gaskins, 2011).

Finally, though not the primary focus of these scholars' work, imaginative play activity has also been noted to be motivated by experiences unlikely to be had in one's current or future worlds, such as living on other planets or in other cultural-historical periods. Similarly, desires to adopt roles that are not possible in one's life such as Martians or other non-human characters motivate imaginative play in the early childhood years (e.g., Paley, 1990). That said, a third type of experience, fantastic, is also included in this expectation.

An anthropological stance on the presence of lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences considers the source of representations as a function of broader cultural practices in the community. For example, according to Sutton-Smith and Brice Heath (1981), in cultures where literacy is not a dominant means of storytelling, and where oral traditions take precedence, imaginative play is expected to be based on mainly on lived and anticipated experiences and less so on fantastic ones. In reporting results of research of the stories of children in two

communities, namely, middle-class European-Americans and working-class Black children in the United States, these authors state that the children not socialized to represent experiences via pictures or written text tend to tell " 'true stories' about their own experience" and in first person voice (p. 43). In contrast, in communities where literacy practices at home and in school are strongly present, imaginative play often reflects fantastic phenomena frequently made available through mediated activities such as literacy and media, and, as such, they tend to tell fictional stories in third person voice. Based on this conceptualization, one might expect that people from Mexico may be seen to rely more on lived and anticipated experiences and less so on fantastic ones and people from the United States may focus on fantastic experiences as mediated by their involvement in literacy and media. However, Goldman (1998) debunks this conceptualization by proffering data that illustrate that in a rural community such as the Huli in Papa New Guinea, imaginative play takes the form of fantastic characters such as Ogres and Tricksters. For example, these mythical characters come from their own experience and allow people to perform playfully and imaginatively within community practices and rituals (cf., Turner, 1969; 1982).

Based on this literature, I expect that the life-span imaginative play of the community of Mexican-Americans will evidence all 3 forms of representation for two reasons. First, their cultural heritages are at once affiliated with communities who value oral storytelling as well as literacy and media. Second, these participants have personal and school-related experiences that reflect these 3 broader sources. In the following section, I lay out the reasons why these 3 sources of representations may exist in all periods of development.

4. Substantive issues represented in play: Motivations for engagement in life-span imaginative play

Since work on the motivations of imaginative play focuses exclusively on early childhood, there leaves a gap in the literature on what may motivate older children, adolescents, and adults to engage in imaginative play. In order to fill this void, I will examine specific reasons why older children, adolescents, and adults engage in imaginative play. In doing so, I offer two reasons why people may engage in imaginative play beyond early childhood (Perone, 2009). The first reason relates to the 3 sources of representation and the second reason relates to substantive psycho-social concerns confronted by individuals throughout specific periods of their development.

With regard to the first, I contend that the motivations to engage in imaginative play activity in early childhood are relevant throughout the lifespan, as conceptualized by Göncü and Perone (2005), and continue to reflect lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences. For example, in the elementary school years, imaginative play addressing lived experiences in one's family or with friends may occur and anticipated experiences exploring future employment roles may still be evidenced, as seen in the reports of the adults in the studies of Perone and Göncü (under review). Imaginative play in the elementary school years may also reflect fantastic experiences, as players may choose to become inanimate objects or people they witness in the media such as cartoon characters or superheroes (e.g., Harris & Beggan, 1993; Perone & Göncü, under review).

Adolescent imaginative play may also be a means of making meaning out of lived experiences with respect to peer and elder relations and school experiences. For example, Perone and Göncü (under review) state that adults in their studies recall engaging in imaginative play around peers' romantic interests and engaging in parody or teasing about teachers or other

adults of authority. Anticipated experiences such as future career choice or relationship status have also surfaced in imaginative play episodes during this time period (Perone & Göncü, under review; Vygotsky, 1987). Like in the elementary school years, fantastic experiences may be based on people in the media; for example, some of the participants in the work of Perone and Göncü (under review) engaged in imaginative play motivated by fantastic experiences, such as pretending to be famous athletes or singers.

Like in early childhood, adult imaginative play has also been conceptualized to address lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences. Some suggest that the sources of adult play in the form of improv emerge out of lived, personal experiences that serve to address, and often provide relief from, previous tensions with family members (Göncü & Perone, 2005; Perone & Göncü, under review; Sweet, 1978). For example, the founder of the Compass Theater, David Shepherd, provides a powerful example in support of the claim that adults explore issues of affective significance in imaginative play such as improv, "When Elaine May would play a Jewish mother or Mike Nichols would play a businessman or when Shelley Berman would play a delicatessen father — these were people who were living out their liberation from their families. They were in analysis and they were using the stage of The Compass to liberate themselves from a whole lot of shit they had fallen into" (Sweet, 1978, pp. 5-6).

Anticipated experiences may also be explored in imaginative play in adulthood. For instance, a graduate student reported playing house both as a child and as an adult (Perone & Göncü, under review). As an adult, this play takes places when she is at the home of her significant other. When she and her significant other are together, they pretend that they already cohabitate and in doing so, they explore what that situation may be like for them should they cohabitate in the future. Finally, fantastic experiences may continue to be explored in adulthood

as evidenced in statements from some of the participants in the studies of Perone and Göncü (under review) who reported participating in Halloween activities or hosting theme parties such as "come as your favorite dead person."

With respect to the second reason, I extrapolate from Erikson (1963) to consider motivations for imaginative play during the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood. With respect to Erikson, the psycho-social issues articulated in his life-span theory of human development may propel human beings to engage in imaginative play in order to address and reconcile these issues beyond early childhood. For example, the issue he proposed in the elementary school years is "industry versus inferiority." In adolescence, it is "identity versus identity confusion" and in young adulthood it is "intimacy versus isolation." It is plausible that the motivation to reconcile these stage-specific concerns, that is, to explore use of tools and feel agentive among peers, to secure an identity, and to locate and maintain one or more meaningful relationships may be accomplished within and because of imaginative play activity. In what follows, I address this possibility further.

Imaginative play in the elementary school years may reflect two developmental shifts. One shift occurs in an effort to master experiences from and in school (Bergen, 1988; Curry & Bergen, 1988; Singer & Singer, 1990) since school has been considered the leading activity of this time in lifespan (Leont'ev, 1981). In support of this, Perone and Göncü (under review) found that European-American adults recall engaging in imaginative play activity in school-sponsored activities such as theater and in instructional activities (e.g., "pretend you are an adult and need to make a budget"), pretended to be teachers, and played school during their elementary school years.

The second shift addresses developing relationships with peers and images of self. Drawing from Erikson, older children begin to perceive themselves in relation to others and may, as a result, lack confidence. Erikson (1963) states that "If he [the child] despairs of his tools and skills or of his status among his partners, he may be discouraged from identification with them…" (p. 260). Imaginative play activity, then, may also serve as a source of feeling safe and efficacious in contexts where harsher evaluations and feelings of inadequacy prevail. Support for this claim is offered by Perone and Göncü (under review) who report that some of the adults in their work recalled engaging in pretense activities during their elementary school years such as video game play, war and battle scenes, or solitary imaginary play in order to offset feelings of social awkwardness around and rejection from their peers.

The dominant motivation for imaginative play in adolescence may be to resolve conflicts of identity and of emerging changes in responsibility and status in society. Identity formation is an important developmental shift at this time (Kroger, 2003) and as Erikson (1963) contends, adolescence is a time of identity confusion. Adolescents expect and are soon expected to become independent adults and they develop self-perceptions of higher status than dependent children; however, their desires to remain immature, be reckless, take risks, and be independent of larger societal designations or expectations are also evidenced (Erikson, 1976; Erlich, 1993; Lightfoot, 1997; Winnicott, 1971). Support for this claim is offered by Perone and Göncü (under review) who report that some of the adults in their work recalled engaging in pretense activities during their adolescence such as drug and alcohol use in order to indulge in alternate realities, to escape the expectations of adults such as teachers and parents, and to enjoy a more carefree existence.

A dominant concern in early adulthood, according to Erikson (1963), is the search for intimacy with a significant other, or risk isolation. While Erikson limits the notion of intimacy to

one of a romantic nature, it is possible to broaden this search to include others such as friends and family members. In support of this, some of the improvisers in the work of Perone and Göncü (under review) point to the importance and enjoyment of relationship building that emerge from improvising with peers. Similarly, Perone and Göncü (under review) reveal that many of the graduate students in their work highlighted the presence and joy of their social, imaginative play activity in adulthood with partners such as their significant others and friends. Therefore, imaginative play in young adulthood likely addresses desires to build meaningful relationships with others.

However, these, and perhaps other, psycho-social motivations to engage in imaginative play activity may not be exclusive to one developmental period but in fact be present throughout the lifespan. This life-span lens on the motivations to engage in imaginative play is possible based on previous retrospective research with adults on their life-span imaginative play, will be discussed in the next few paragraphs, and be drawn from the work of Perone and Göncü (under review).

Perone and Göncü note four particular developmental patterns that reflect the motivations of life-span imaginative play. The first pattern is characterized by imaginative play that has a similar structure (i.e., similar partners, props, and locations) and similar motivation to the individual throughout the lifespan. For example, an improviser reported episodes of her life-long solitary imaginative play with her reflection in the mirror of her jewelry box. This reflection (of herself) was "another," an imaginary friend with whom she could play and have conversations during times in her life when she felt alone, despondent, or powerless, but whose frequency of interactions would diminish when she felt connected, content, and strong.

A second pattern of imaginative play activity is shaped by episodes that have a similar motivation to the individuals but whose structure has changed over the course of the lifespan. For instance, an improviser has been motivated to explore moral questions in his imaginative play. In early childhood, he created imaginative play episodes with his brothers adopting characters such as knights, cowboys, and Robin Hood where he would wonder "What should I do as Robin Hood? Should I steal from the rich? How else could I help?" In his elementary school years, he recalled adopting Star Wars characters with his brothers emphasizing the morality of the characters such as playing the evil Darth Vader as good, as redeemed. Also, playing with GI Joe figures, he explored issues such as what would happen if the mercenary were offered more money to switch sides; would he do it? During adolescence, he moved from action figures to role-playing games such as Masquerade, a vampire-based role playing game, where he explored the morality of dark or dubious characters. Finally, in adulthood, he engaged in his exploration of morality via online role-playing games that took place with others in his college dorm.

A third pattern of episodes reflect a similar structure yet whose motivation has changed throughout the lifespan. For example, an improviser referred to playing alone in her mother's closet as a child to dress up in her mother's clothing as a means of "trying on" characters at home and without much purpose but now enters her own closet as an adult without adopting a character. As an adult, she enjoys trying on her own clothes as a form of imaginative play but now the specific goal of such play is to prepare to socialize outside of her home.

Finally, the fourth pattern can be characterized by pretend activity whose structure and motivation have changed over the lifespan. For example, an improviser considered much of his imaginative play activity in early childhood and elementary school as a way to feel powerful when feeling powerless, controlled, isolated, or unattractive. At those times, he achieved his aims

by engaging in imaginative play activities with action figures and martial arts, compensating for the emotional injuries he suffered from in non-play situations. He stated that "[In elementary school years] you don't have much power with your parents and then you go to school and you're not very listened to or liked, and so what you do is…create new realities. 'Well, this one's not doing it for me, but there's this other one in my mind that's really great. So that's there where I wanna go; that's where I wanna play.'" However, his feelings of isolation or powerlessness have dissipated in his adulthood and do not factor into his main forms of imaginative play in adulthood, namely improv and video games.

These four patterns articulated by Perone and Göncü indicate continuities and discontinuities with respect to the content of imaginative play episodes and motivations to engage in imaginative play across the lifespan. Particular themes, structural elements, or motivations appear to be not exclusive to one developmental period but in fact are also present and often transformed across the lifespan. Based on these continuities, it is plausible to expect that this community of Mexican-American adults will reveal themes and motivations in their lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences that may and may not have been addressed in previous literature. Therefore, it is the goal of the present study to examine whether or how conceptualization of imaginative play motivations emerging from lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and Eriksonian crises are relevant to this community.

5. **Contextual supports and constraints of imaginative play across the lifespan**

In adopting a cultural perspective of imaginative play with young children, it has been determined that the value the community places on play and imagination impacts who supports or prevents this activity and in which contexts it is sanctioned or repressed (e.g., Farver & Howes, 1993; Farver, 1999; Göncü, et al., 1999; Göncü, et al., 2000; Gaskins, 1999). For

example, Gaskins (1999) found that imaginative play for young children in Mexico may be sanctioned when important domestic tasks have been completed or serve as a means for young children to learn community practices. However, imaginative play may be seen as a distraction once children are expected to contribute to the activities of daily life at home or for work. That said, it is necessary to see if and how factors of support and constraint impact participants' imaginative play across their four periods of development.

This community approach to the factors of support and prevention also are relevant in the United States where social expectations and roles change over the course of the lifespan. For example, Harris and Beggan (1993) found that middle-school aged children reported fantasy play but said they did so less often than when they were younger since other activities such as school took precedence. That said, while episodes of imaginative play are expected to be reported across the lifespan, the number of episodes is not likely to remain equal throughout the four developmental periods. With respect to frequency of imaginative play episodes across their life spans, like their European-American counterparts (e.g., Perone & Göncü, under review) participants in this study are expected to report their imaginative play as declining since early childhood. This expectation is also informed by shifting support for imaginative play with respect to imaginative play locations and partners within the communities of Mexican origin, contextual factors discussed next.

Regarding location, institutions such as home, school, work, and community celebrations may or may not support engagement in imaginative play beyond the early childhood years and will be discussed in turn. With respect to home and school, like their European-American counterparts, Mexican-American adults will state that imaginative play activity is unlikely to take place in these locations after early childhood. With respect to home, possible family tension

(between parents and their older children) and parents' rules and expectations challenge older children and adolescents' sense of freedom and support to engage in imaginative play activities at home. Instead, parents or other caregivers of Mexican heritage may be concerned with their older children and teenagers heading on "the good path" (el buen camino) (Azmitia & Brown, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995) and will perceive imaginative play as a frivolity or distraction from parents' hopes for their children to finish or continue formal schooling and honor employment and family responsibilities.

However, home is likely to return as an important play location in young adulthood (assuming not living directly with parents) where significant others, friends, and other similar-aged relatives create and support imaginative play activity. This expectation is motivated by the finding that participants from previous work (Perone & Göncü, under review) claim that imaginative play occurs in institutions that supported it. Therefore, it is also plausible that young Mexican-American adults will engage in imaginative play in their own homes should they deem them free from external pressures.

Schools are also places where imaginative play does not take place in formal instruction beyond the early childhood years (Bodrova & Leong, 2003; Holzman, 2009; Sawyer, 2011) due to pressures in the current educational climate to focus on learning the socially-coded information of the community (cf., Perone & Göncü, under review) and where opportunities for free play are being eliminated from even traditionally sanctioned times such as recess (Pellegrini, 2005). Therefore, I expect few instances of imaginative play activity reported at school, particularly with teachers or in classroom contexts, after the early childhood years. Finally, work contexts in the United States are also generally not considered locations for imaginative play (Freysinger, 1998; Göncü & Perone, 2005; Holzman, 2009) since the focus is on income-

producing and "serious" activity. Therefore, it is expected that participants will report imaginative play in work less than in other locations, if they report it at all.

However, the people and institutions noted above do not prevent imaginative play writ large from continuing, particularly beyond the early childhood years. For example, the improvisers in the study by Perone and Göncü, (under review) engaged in imaginative play with peers in school, such as teasing, clandestine activity in the hallways, or even at work when not concerned about intervention from supervisors. Such activity suggests "secret play," that is, imaginative play activity that occurs in contexts whose members and structures tend to frown upon imaginative activity. Based on these reports from European-American adults of European-American origin, I expect that clandestine (or "secret") imaginative play is likely to be reported throughout the study participants' lifespans and occur either alone or with friends, siblings, and other similar-aged relatives and not likely to include parents, teachers, or other adults of authority.

In adopting a cultural stance, it is also possible that imaginative play occurs in community celebrations. In fact, there is a body of literature that addresses the presence of imagination and pretense in community rituals (e.g., Drewal, 1992; Huizinga, 1949, Turner, 1969, 1982). For example, the celebration in the community of Mexican origin, Los Días de los Muertos, with its painted pottery in the form of skeletons representing humans in scenes such as musicians giving a performance, children riding a bicycle, or a couple getting married, is an empowering activity via these objects that affords people opportunities to contend with issues of affective experience such as death, loss, life, faith, and reunion (Carmichael & Sayer, 1991; Sayer, 2009). For example, Saul Moreno (in Sayer, 2009, p. 125) an artist in Mexico, relates the play of death and life via the objects and activities of Los Días de los Muertos, "When I was a

child, I played with skulls and skeletons. Perhaps we are preparing ourselves psychologically for the final step…." That said, it is also expected that participants will report throughout their lifespans that imaginative play is present in locations where celebrations endemic to the community of Mexican origin occur such as, but not limited to, Christmas festivities, Carnival, Saints' Days, Holy Week, Quinceañeras (Sweet Sixteen, though celebrated at age 15), and Los Días de los Muertos.

In summary, the first expectation has 5 aspects. First, imaginative play is expected to be defined by the participants. Second, it will be reported throughout the participants' lifespans. Third, engagement in imaginative play will reflect the participants' lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences. Fourth, the motivations to engage in life-span imaginative play will reflect a life-long desire to explore lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and to address the psycho-social concerns of the elementary school years, adolescence, and young adulthood as articulated by Erikson (1963). Finally, issues of community and contextual factors that support and prevent imaginative play will be reported as will episodes of secret play.

Yet here lies a tension inherent in this work: the dominant conceptualizations and the majority of research in this area of imaginative play are driven by European and European-American scholars whose theories and research are advanced primarily by engagement with Europeans or European Americans. For example, while the study will inquire if experiences motivated by lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences exist across the lifespans of the participants in the study, and assume these motivations are relevant to other communities, we must not hasten to assume generalizability, that is, that lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences are indistinguishable across communities, across individuals within communities, or across the life spans of individuals. Instead, it is imperative that we also consider the possibility

of imaginative play, its motivations, and its factors of support and prevention from different communities' points of view. Therefore, in the next expectation, I build on this premise by discussing three broader areas of themes that reflect the participants' imaginative play activity.

C. Expectation 2: Self-reported imaginative play episodes for the adults of Mexican heritage will address themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender.

Expectation 2 is an extension of Expectation 1 as it focuses on specific dimensions of experiences. In particular, this expectation considers whether or how the themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender are expressed or represented in the participants' imaginative play. Despite the dearth of work on the life-span imaginative play of Mexican-American adults, work in the fields of psychology (e.g., Dahl, 1993; Erikson, 1963), anthropology (e.g., Cardozo-Freeman, 1975), and sociology (e.g., Brandes, 1998; Padilla, 2006) support the expectation that these themes will be represented in their imaginative play. That said, these three themes are expected to be explicitly stated within the participants' imaginative play episodes. In what follows, each theme and its impetus for imaginative play will be discussed in turn. Examples of cultural phenomena will also be provided and serve as possible sources of these themes in the participants' responses.

With regard to the theme of cultural/community affiliation, second-generation members of the community of Mexican origin live in "two worlds," that is, of the home world that often embraces values and practices of their family's country of origin, Mexico, and the outside-of-home world (e.g., school or work) that frequently adopts values and practices of the European-American world (Padilla, 2006). For second-generation members of the community of Mexican origin, cultural/community affiliation has been conceptualized to reflect the presence and/or

absence of the participants' psychological and sociological connection(s) with the European-American and Mexican community (Johnson, 1997; Tovar & Feliciano, 2009).

Psychological connections include, but are not limited to, to which communities of origin individuals believe they belong and are made based on the kind and number of *intercultural spaces* co-created by members of the communities of which the individual is a part (Berry, 2001; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). These *intercultural spaces* depend on the person and context and have been illustrated to take one of five approaches: honoring only the home culture (e.g., celebrations of Mexican origin at home), only the national culture (e.g., activities in formal schooling in the United States), honoring both (e.g., expressing interest in music sung in both Spanish and English), honoring neither (e.g., participating in practices of communities neither of Mexican-American nor European-American origin), or a "diffuse" approach (e.g., inconsistent and unclear affiliations with communities) .

Sociologically, connections to one (or both) of these communities are informed by factors such as surname, phenotype, or parents' heritage. For instance, a Latino-sounding name, skin color, language familiarity and use, and parents' country of origin impact how one is perceived in the United States and whether or not one is deemed, for instance, American or Mexican (Fergus, 2004; Johnson, 1997).

This theme is relevant since imaginative play is an activity of exploring and interpreting the experiences of the players. In this case, the study participants' two worlds, i.e., being both Mexican and American[1], are expected to be experimented and contended with via their imaginative play across the lifespan. For instance, a participant may engage in imaginative play

_____

[1] When referencing "American" as a nationality, I refer to individuals of United States origin.

with a cultural celebration endemic to Mexico or may have engaged in imaginative play to explore the similarities and differences of practices in their home and national culture.

With respect to ethnic identity, while the previous theme of cultural/community affiliation reflects participation in or alienation from communities, the theme of ethnic identity reflects more so the labels put upon or created by the self or others with respect to one's Mexican origin, that is, how the individual defines oneself as definitively of Mexican origin and what it means to be a member of the community. Ethnic identity will also be considered a distinct theme from the motivation to secure identity formation as based on the conceptualization by Erikson (1963). With respect to Erikson's work, the search for identity formation reflects the individual's search for the general interests one has and what one would like to engage in for, say, employment or recreation, but lacks a community or cultural focus.

With respect to ethnic identity, the self-labels of one's own ethnic group membership and the perceptions others have of their ethnic group have been conceptualized as most germane (e.g., Bernal & Knight, 1993; Phinney, 1996, 2008). Empirical support of this claim comes from the work of Fergus (2004) who contends that the youth of Mexican heritage whom he interviewed consider their ethnic identity (or identities) defined and redefined by self-identification, relationships with family members, and the assumptions and attributions of others such as peers and teachers that are often based on factors such as, but not limited to, their physical appearance, use of English and Spanish, and choice of friends. That said, empirical work has suggested that ethnic identity formation be perceived as statuses that are nonlinear, contextual, and relational and is shaped by people's beliefs, experiences, and practices (e.g., Chávez-Reyes, 2010; Quiroz, 2001; Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, & Guimond, 2009).

As imaginative play has been considered an activity of investigation and of adopting both familiar and novel roles of the self, ethnic identity will be a theme that is explored in one's imaginative play episodes and is expected to surface in the adult participants' retrospective self-reports of imaginative play and particularly of their adolescence and young adulthood. For example, participants may share that they played with the characters or personas they adopted in their imaginative play and that these characters reflected the labels or names that are assigned by the self and by others. Examples of episodes may also reflect exploring practices of their ancestry in order to connect with and understand better their associations with their culture of origin (cf., Brandes, 1998; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). For example, imaginative play episodes motivated by the theme of ethnic identity may serve as a means to learn about the self as a member of the broader Mexican community via the individual's use of community tools such as language, music, or games.

With respect to gender, for the community of Mexican heritage, gender stereotypes and expectations are important. The traditional view of the male as breadwinner and female as caregiver or cultural broker is present (e.g., Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Vigil, 1988). It is also a theme of interest when researching the imaginative play of young children in the United States. For instance, Dahl (1993) contends that young children express and make meaning of traditional notions of gender in their imaginative play and her work revealed expected differences in the thematic content between the sexes, such as boys engaging in themes related to aggression and girls engaging in domestic themes when looking at isolated, discrete play episodes. However, her work also challenges the exclusive focus on stereotypical roles and themes adopted, particularly when research focuses on individual children's psychological growth and imaginative play over time. When considering young children's play over time with individual children in

psychoanalysis, she illustrated that young children construct a more complex, densely layered, non-dualistic, and multileveled understanding and questioning of traditional gender roles, all the more reason to examine whether or not gender is represented in life-span imaginative play with this community.

In drawing from Dahl's work, it appears that studying individuals' imaginative play over time may illustrate that the community's gender stereotypes may be both recreated and challenged. An example of one factor that may impact whether gender roles are recreated or challenged is whether the participants' family has immigrated to the United States in stages (e.g., father first, mother and children some time later) or together as a family or couple (Dion & Dion, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). In the former, the father may leave Mexico to live alone for a period of time in the United States and, in order to survive, does traditional female activities himself such as cook or clean. All the while in Mexico, the female caregiver still maintains childcare responsibilities while also adding traditional male or fatherly tasks such as fixing objects and disciplining children (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Such blurring of gender roles and practices may continue or be expected to continue by the couple even after the family is reunited in the United States. Yet even if traditional roles remain in the United States as they were in Mexico, variations in their expression may also occur, based on socioeconomic or educational factors in the United States such as options and locations for working or learning outside the home (Dion & Dion, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Witnessing such experiences may impact Mexican-American children's understanding and acceptance of gender roles. For example, witnessing one' s mother assume both homecare tasks and work responsibilities outside of the home impacts one's views of traditional gender roles.

These and other issues of gender could serve as sources for imaginative play episodes as young men and women explore issues of manhood and womanhood that they witness, have experienced, or anticipate experiencing (e.g., Cardozo-Freeman, 1975). Episodes are expected to be reported by both male and female participants across their lifespans. It is therefore expected that recreating gender stereotypes as well as challenging gender norms will also be sources of life-span imaginative play episodes for the participants.

In summary, the second expectation for this study asserts that the imaginative play of adults of Mexican heritage is expected to reflect themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender. These themes, though not present in the literature on imaginative play as a life-span activity, are extrapolated from the literature in fields such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology.

D. Expectation 3: Participants will report benefits of the engagement in their imaginative play across multiple developmental domains and contexts.

The third expectation is structured around the benefits of imaginative play activity across the lifespan, across developmental domains, and across contexts and has 2 aspects: the benefits of imaginative play across the lifespan and the presence of and possibilities for imaginative play in formal learning environments.

1. Benefits of imaginative play across the lifespan

Imaginative play in the Western world has been considered a means of enhancing human functioning across the lifespan and across multiple developmental domains, particularly in the areas of cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional growth. With respect to young children of ages 3-5, imaginative play has been illustrated to assist young children with developing theory of mind (e.g., Garvey, 1990; Leslie, 1987; Lillard, 2001a, b), word meanings and representation of

33

words to objects (e.g., Vygotsky, 1976, 1978), intersubjectivity (Göncü, 1993), peer storytelling (Paley, 1981, 1990), and psychological comfort (e.g., Piaget, 1962). With respect to elementary school children of ages 6-12, imaginative play has also been shown to positively affect cognitive growth (e.g., Athey, 1988) and storytelling and peer relationships (e.g., Baker-Sennett & Matusov, 1997; Baker-Sennett, Matusov, & Rogoff, 1992; Baumer, Ferholt, & Lecusay, 2005; Bergen & Oden, 1988; Eckler & Weininger, 1989; Manning, 2006; Sierra, 2000). Despite the wealth of sources that extol the developmental outcomes of imaginative play in childhood, Lillard, Lerner, Hopkins, Dore, Smith, and Palmquist (2012) have challenged the prevalent notion that imaginative play always results in gains in different aspects of cognitive, social-emotional, and linguistic development. In reviewing a large number of relevant studies with different methods and foci, Lillard and her colleagues found that research findings are inconsistent and that attributions made to imaginative play as a source of development need to be reconsidered.

Though limited in number, studies on imaginative play in adolescence (ages 13-17) have also been shown to afford cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional development. Cognitively, it has been suggested that imaginative play for adolescents helps them to develop new perspectives, consider options, and symbolically try these options on as they explore their identity (Furnari, 2007; Holzman, 2009; Singer, 1995; Singer & Singer, 1990). For example, Holzman (2009) provides quotations from teenagers and young adults participating in an out-of-school, youth development-focused, performance-based program. One participant in this program claimed, "Playing [characters in the play] really helped me explore me as a person, my values. They helped me think different…." (p. 74). Linguistic development and storytelling skills may also be enhanced and increased metaphorical or lyrical language, longer narratives, and

34

more extensive dialogue may be evidenced (Vygotsky, 2004). Finally, feelings of self-worth have been shown to continue to be an emotional consequence of imaginative play activity at this time in the lifespan, affording teens the opportunity to effect personal, satisfying change (Furnari, 2007; Singer & Singer, 1990; Terr, 1999).

Based on this literature, cognitive, linguistic/narrative, and social-emotional benefits of imaginative play activity reflect the majority of research in this area. Researchers often attribute the positive impact of imaginative play activity on human beings' learning and development; at times, the players themselves also contribute their perspectives on the benefits of their imaginative play activity. Since the current study is informed by the reports of participants' imaginative play and its role in their learning and development, I draw upon both researchers' and participants' analyses of the benefits of imaginative play activity in adulthood.

Research with adults (i.e., ages 18 and older) suggests that they also benefit from their imaginative play activity. For example, Blatner and Blatner (1987) claim that their "Art of Play" workshops yield personal, social, educational, and cultural benefits for the adult participants. Goldmintz and Schaefer (2007), in a review of the literature, found ten benefits of play in adulthood: relationship enhancement, creative thinking, mood elevation, optimal arousal, improved learning, skill development, self-actualization, youthful spirit, mental acumen, and positive illusions.

Perone and Göncü (under review) also found that the communities in both of their studies (i.e., improvisers and graduate students) report that imaginative play activity in adulthood has been beneficial and developmental for them. In their work with improvisers, Perone and Göncü created categories to reflect the improvisers' self-reported benefits of improv: Personal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, and Performance. Personal benefits are defined as improved self-

perceptions and are evidenced, for example, by one improviser who claimed, "I'm more comfortable at work now. If I had made a mistake, I was worried and thought I was stupid. Now, if I make a mistake, it's OK. I am not so hard on myself." Interpersonal benefits are defined as improved communication and relationships with others and are articulated, for instance, by one improviser who stated "I was not a good listener before. I was not able to do my job well until I began this art form." Adaptability benefits are defined as improved cognitive and affective plasticity; for example, one improviser commented that "Doing improv helps me think of every option now, not just A, B, and C but from A to Z." Performance benefits are defined as factors that favorably impact improv activity, as related by one improviser who reported that as a result of doing improv, "I am more specific in my play: character choices, details, and motivations for the characters." In their work with graduate students, Perone and Göncü (under review) also found these categories of benefits to be relevant, save Performance. For instance, a graduate student commented, "Pretend play has helped me expand my imagination beyond what is available or go beyond current limitations in hand. It has made me more creative and imaginative."

Based on the literature in this area, it is reasonable that the self-reported imaginative play activities reported by adults of Mexican heritage will also yield benefits in their functioning across their lifespans, across multiple developmental domains such as cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional, and across contexts such as home and school.

2. <u>**The presence of and possibilities for imaginative play in formal learning environments**</u>

Imaginative play has been an area of inquiry in education because of its role in supporting young children's learning (e.g., Fein, 1981; Garvey, 1990; Göncü & Gaskins, 2007).

However, the role and importance of imaginative play in formal learning environments for young children is challenged by recent policy such as No Child Left Behind (cf, Holzman, 2009), resulting in even fewer instances where young children may engage in imaginative play in school. This shift away from imaginative play in school for young children is in fact receiving some advocacy to "bring back" imaginative play to formal learning environments. For example, Hirsh-Pasek, Michnick Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer. (2009) bemoan the loss of play opportunities for young children in the current educational and political climate and its negative impact on their overall development, particularly in academic contexts. In so doing, they stress the essential learning and meaning making young children do while they play. Though limited in number and scope, there is also evidence that learners beyond the early childhood years also learn from engaging in imaginative play in formal learning environments, such as when using drama and improv activties to teach adults a new language (e.g., Perone 1994, 2011; Wessels, 1987).

This literature supports inquiry in the present expectation in two aspects: one, reports on the presence and importance imaginative play activity in the participants' formal learning environments and, two, their suggestions, in line with the derived etic approach to this inquiry, for imaginative play activity in formal learning environments. Based on the previous literature that illustrates both the presence and absence of imaginative play in formal schooling I expect that both imaginative play will be reported in the participants' formal learning environments in early childhood but will not be present in formal instruction after this time in the lifespan, where the focus in classes in the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood will center on approaches such as top-down curriculum, direct instruction, and formal assessment practices. However, based on the expected reports that

imaginative play will be of consequence to them across their lives, I also expect that the participants will offer suggestions as to how to offer imaginative play activity in the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of learners across the lifespan and that their suggestions will be in line with their definitions and episodes of imaginative play reported.

In conclusion, three expectations and the existing literature to support them have been proffered for the current study: imaginative play is a life-span activity and as such may present developmental differences; imaginative play for the participants of this study will reflect themes such as cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender; and participants will report developmental benefits of engagement in imaginative play across multiple developmental domains and contexts. In making these expectations available, the present work aims to advance that the meanings, motivations, episodes, and outcomes of self-reported, life-span imaginative play activities of adults of Mexican heritage shape, and are shaped by, their cultural- historical beliefs and experiences.

III. METHODS

A. <u>Recruitment and participants</u>

1. <u>Recruitment</u>

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) approved

the study in late February of 2011. See Appendix A for the IRB approval and the ensuing

extensions. Recruitment began immediately afterwards and continued for more than one year;

all of the 16 adults had participated by early March 2012.

Upon beginning my recruitment process, I considered how my previous professional

experiences would serve me well when conducting this research. In particular, I drew upon my

10 years of experience in Chicago, particularly on the northwest and southwest sides of the city,

in two related capacities. First, I had been an adult educator of English as a Second Language

(ESL) to the family members of Head Start children, and nearly all of my students were of

Mexican origin. In addition, I had also spent 6 of those years working as a lead teacher and

supervisor of assistants who frequently were Mexican and Mexican-American. In working with

the community over the years, my experiences have illustrated that participants would likely

emerge if they were invested in me, the topic, and/or the method and if I was invested in them

and their community.

That said, upon beginning my recruitment, I adopted an approach that was based on building

trust with possible participants. I sought to create trust with members of the community since I

felt this would encourage people to make time, without personal benefit to them, to share

episodes of their imaginative play with me in comfortable and fluid ways. Trust, in my case, was

defined as building meaningful relationships with participants and the people and activities that

were of importance to them. This was particularly important from the outset of the recruitment

process, as often potential participants asked me questions such as "What do you mean by 'imaginative play'?" and "Why are you focusing on Mexicans?" In responding to such questions, I focused on my interest in respecting and learning more from them and how their activities and beliefs might be of interest when creating developmental and educational opportunities with and for their community. I also stressed that my research was not in place to criticize or find fault with their experiences or opinions; this comment was particularly important since I, as a male of European-American origin, sought to quell concerns that this research was not aiming to exploit or perpetuate stereotypes of the community whose members, historically, have often been portrayed less favorably (Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012).

In addition to my experiences with the community, writings on approaches to cross-community qualitative research with adults also supported my approach[1]. For example, Andersen (1993) shares her experiences as a researcher of European-American origin seeking to learn the perspectives of adults of African-American origin on race relations in their community. In order to avoid objectifying members of the community, distancing herself as "other," and struggling to obtain participation, she found it meaningful to participate in the "everyday activities" of the community and in doing so, found it greatly facilitated her research.

Consistent with Andersen, Sparks (2002) addresses her work as a researcher of European-American origin investigating the literacy practices of adults of Mexican-American origin. Among the many epistemological and methodological concerns she raises, she discusses the

---

[1] Sources in the chapter that support my approach to engaging in cross-cultural research are just two of many examples that reflect the rich literature on the importance of building trust and being involved in community activities. The interested reader may also consult sources such as Brice Heath (1983), Gaskins (1999), and Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, and Mosier (1993).

value of building "emotionality" with participants and an "ethic of caring" to conduct inquiry that is participant-centered and not distanced by the typical researcher-subject hierarchical divide. Therefore, I saw my role as researcher as one of "participant in community activities" to the extent permitted and eschewed an approach of the one-time announcement about the study and impersonal requests for participation.

Over the course of the recruitment year, I communicated in person, over the phone, and via e-mail with more than 300 adults via more than 40 adult education programs, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning. Such organizations were selected as forums to locate potential participants based on my previous professional affiliations. I also planned on referrals from the participants in the study. During this outreach, potential participants failed to emerge for three reasons. First, participants did not fit the elegibilty crtieria. For example, adults were not in the required age range or did not meet the requirements for place of birth or parents' place of birth. Second, potential participants appeared to be not interested in the topic and/or method of inquiry. Third, potential participants expressed that they were unable to commit the time needed to participate in the study**.** Nevertheless, the 16 participants in the study emerged; how and to what extent each of the aforementioned avenues resulted in participation will be discussed next.

With respect to adult education programs and community organizations, I received multiple invitations to attend staff meetings and trainings as well as adult education classes and recognition events. For example, I went to instructor meetings to get to know staff and introduce the study. At the request of supervisors, I also did improv workshops to promote teambuilding among the staff or introduce ways to use improvisational theater activities in the adult education classroom. I also participated in adult education classes as a volunteer tutor and attended end-of-

year recognition ceremonies or other program events. In addition, supervisors at many organizations shared e-mail messages with their staff to inform them of this study, to invite eligible people to participate, and to let others know of this possibility. The connections with adult education programs and community organizations were successful in securing participation in the research; of the 16 adults who participated, 7 of the 8 female participants and 1 of the 8 male participants emerged from this outreach.

With respect to institutions of higher learning, I contacted faculty members to inform them of my dissertation research and requested that information about my study be made available to their students. In some instances, faculty members forwarded information about the study to their students. In other instances, I was invited to speak during class sessions to introduce the study. These connections with institutions of higher learning were successful in securing participation in the research; of the 16 adults who participated, 3 of the 8 male participants emerged from this outreach. Finally, referrals were also an important avenue to secure participation in the study. One of the study's participants (female) referred another participant (female). A friend referred me to 2 male participants. A colleague referred a male participant who, after participating, referred his friend (male) to be in the study. Of the 16 adults who participated in this study, 1 of the 8 female participants and 4 of the 8 male participants emerged from referrals.

In sum, recruitment for this study took more than one year and involved outreach to many adults across many contexts. The participants emerged out of my participation in adult education and other community programs, my communication with individuals in institutions of higher learning, and referrals from friends, colleagues, and the research participants.

2. __Participants__

The participants in this study were 16 young adults (ages 25-35) who are second-generation immigrants of Mexican origin who live in Chicago and have at least one parent who was born in Mexico. The decision was to focus on only one immigrant generation. Second generation members of the community were chosen as I knew people of this immigration generation who might participate or make referrals. Eight females and 8 males participated in the study. The average age for both the male and female participants at the time of the interview was 28 (born in year 1982). The age range of the female participants was 25-35 and the age range of the male participants was 25-32. All of the female participants were born in Illinois and all but one of them was born in Chicago. Two of them had spent considerable time in Mexico: 1 during her elementary school years and 1 for a few years immediately after high school. All but 1 of the male participants was born in Chicago. Two of them had spent their early childhood and part of their elementary school years in Mexico. Both parents of all but 1 of the participants were born in Mexico.

Ten participants (5 of each gender) were enrolled in school at the time of interview. All the participants had formal educational experience beyond high school. For the females, 7 of the 8 participants had had some post-secondary school experiences as their highest formal learning achieved. One participant had a graduate degree. For the males, 4 of the 8 participants had had some post-secondary school experiences as their highest level of formal education. There were 2 participants who had completed their undergraduate degrees and were completing their Master's degrees at the time of the interview. One participant had a graduate degree and another was in the process of obtaining his doctorate.

Fourteen participants (8 males) were employed at least part-time at the time of interview. For the females, 6 reported working (with some form of compensation) and the average number of hours per week was 32. All 6 were involved in the fields of child care and education. Two of them worked full-time as family literacy facilitators. One was a full-time early childhood educator, 1 was a full-time administrator in higher education, and 2 worked part-time in a daycare center. Two participants did not work.

All of the males reported working (with some form of compensation) an average of 35 hours per week. Their employment contexts differed considerably. Two were teachers, 2 worked in customer or client services, 2 worked in technical fields, 1 worked in administration for a community-based organization, and 1 was self-employed in video production.

B. The interview protocol

Support for the use and content of the retrospective interview protocol comes from the existing literature and my own previous work. With respect to the existing literature, on conceptual grounds, Mezirow (1981) states that meaningful processes with adults include drawing upon their previous, lived experiences, encouraging reflection, and addressing if and how experiences are relevant to their personal and professional lives. Similarly, van Manen (1997) addresses the value of human beings' lived experiences and calls for reflection and dialogue on how these experiences have shaped one's viewpoints and understandings of the world. In support of this, Willis and Schubert (2000) have collected scholars' personal essays that relate the origins of their interests and inquiries and how these scholars' artistic and personal experiences have encouraged them to develop these interests. In a similar vein, in the present study, interviews were used to explore in depth the participants' meanings and recollections of their imaginative play experiences.

With respect to my previous work, a version of this interview protocol has been used in a study with adults who are improvisers (Perone & Göncü, under review) and the questions have been revised based on those interviews. In addition, I informally piloted the revised protocol with 4 adults (2 females and 2 males) of Mexican heritage in 2010 and 2011. These pilot interviews do not appear in the data for this study yet served 2 purposes. First, they afforded me an opportunity to practice interviewing adults from the community to determine if the questions were clear and relevant to them. Second, their feedback on the flow and content of the interview also served as an important source of revision of the protocol. For example, the participants from the pilot work suggested that the use of the term "imaginative play" rather than "pretend play" was more clear and fitting to them and others in the community. Based on feedback such as this, I revised the instrument.

Each participant engaged in one audio-taped interview that took place with me at a time and location that was convenient to the participant. The semi-structured interview had a three-part protocol that may be found in Appendix B. In the first section of the interview protocol, the participants' definitions of the words "play" and "imagination" were sought. Obtaining the participants' definitions of these words served the larger goals of the research. As this is a derived etic study, it was essential that participants situate episodes of imaginative play shared in the interview within their own meanings of these words, not of meaning assigned to them. In fact, the interview about imaginative play began with definitions that emerged from the participants themselves and set the stage that it was their perspectives that were sought and that there were no per se correct or expected answers (Seidman, 1998; Polanyi, 1962). Upon completing this first section, participants were asked to keep their definitions in mind and consider them as they answered the questions in the second and third sections.

In the second section, the interview questions inquired about the themes, contexts, and motivations of at least one imaginative play episode during the participants' early childhood, elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood. Inquiries in this section first focused on the episodes themselves and the partners and locations of imaginative play during each developmental period (e.g., doll play with a sibling at home during early childhood). For each episode a participant offered, questions also included the importance that this activity has had for the participant in order to tap into the motivation(s) for the episode (e.g., to have fun or to spend time with a sibling). As well, a probe question reflecting the motivation to engage in imaginative based on the psycho-social crises proffered by Erikson was asked when discussing their imaginative play in the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood.

Participants were not limited to the number of episodes they could relate; after a particular episode had been shared, I asked if another imaginative play episode from that developmental period had yet to be shared. Once episodes across the lifespan had been exhausted, I inquired about factors (e.g., people such as caregivers) that have supported and prevented their imaginative play and any instances of secret, private play. Next, probe questions were in place to address the themes of the second expectation and were asked upon completion of the questions on support, prevention, and secret play. All participants were asked these probe questions in order to confirm that these themes were addressed to their satisfaction.

However, these probe questions inquire about personal experiences with and opinions on sensitive topics such as ethnic identity and gender, and so it was possible that participants might still be hesitant or unsure how to address directly these themes as they relate to their imaginative play. Therefore, three brief vignettes, one each reflecting the themes of the second expectation, were presented with two or three follow up questions and were offered to all participants upon

completion of the probe questions. The hope was that participants would feel at ease addressing these themes as they pertain not only to the protagonists in the vignettes but also to their own lives.

The use of vignettes receives support from the previous literature. For example, according to Barter and Renold (1999, 2000), there are three benefits to using vignettes in qualitative research: they present actions in context, they serve to clarify people's judgments about themes and offer a less personal and therefore less threatening way of discussing sensitive topics, and they enable participants to define situations in their own terms.

In the third section, questions addressed whether or not they benefited from the play reported in the second section. If applicable, and whenever possible, participants were asked to provide one or more examples from their lives to illustrate the benefits of engaging in imaginative play in their adulthood and in their childhood and adolescence. Participants were also asked to consider the similarities and differences with respect to the benefits of their current and previous imaginative play. Participants were not limited to only one benefit or one example to support a claim. In addition, I also inquired about the presence and importance of imaginative play activities in their previous and, if applicable, current formal learning environments and their suggestions for inclusion of imaginative play activity in learning environments.

C. The interviews

The 16 interviews took place in a host of contexts and they included the UIC campus (6), home of the participant and of the researcher (4), restaurants (3), Chicago Public Libraries (2), cafes (1), offices of adult education programs (1), and outdoors (1). All but one took place in only one context and all but one took place in one administration and will be discussed below. In one instance, I spent the day with a participant and her children with the interview locale

47

changing from her home to a diner and then to a park as a function of her children's needs. In the other instance, a participant could only commit to about an hour for the interview. We started with the intention of finishing in one sitting, but the dialogue continued for that first hour before the interview protocol was completed. We ended up doing three successive Wednesday meetings to complete the interview.

Overall, both the participants and I were engaged in the dialogue that we created. While the recruitment documents and consent forms suggested the interview would take about an hour, the participants spent considerably more time than that with me in these interviews. The range of time for these interviews was from 1 hour 7 minutes to 3 hours and 1 minute; the average interview time was 2 hours and 2 minutes, revealing their enthusiastic participation in the study.

Of the three sections of the interview (Definitions, Episodes, and Benefits) the majority of time was spent in the Episodes section, and in particular, the subsection on spontaneous episodes of imaginative play across the 4 developmental periods. The range of time for this subsection was 33 minutes to 2 hours and 8 minutes and the average amount of time spent on this subsection was 1 hour 13 minutes. The shortest section was the Definitions section, with each person taking between approximately 1 and 3 minutes. Time spent on the Benefits section ranged from 9 minutes to 32 minutes; the average amount of time spent on this section was 16 minutes.

D. Interview summaries

Appendix C presents a sample summary. This summary is different from the example provided within this chapter in two ways. First, they are from two different participants to avoid redundancy and to offer responses from both a female participant (within this chapter) and a male participant (Appendix C). Second, the summary in the Appendix is a complete summary in

that all self-reported episodes are included; within this section, only one example of an episode is presented to serve as an illustration.

After each participant's interview, I listened to it a minimum of three times to create its summary. For the first round, I only listened to the interview to make sure that it was recorded in its entirety and to get a general sense of the ease with which the interview was conducted. For the second round, I summarized the interview into three sections based on the corresponding sections of the interview protocol: Definitions, Episodes, and Benefits. The amount of time in hour:minute (i.e., HH:MM) format appears below each main section (or, in some cases, subsection). The amount of time spent on the entire first and third section appears below the main heading, i.e., Definitions and Benefits, respectively.

Since the second section on Episodes was the most lengthy and had many sections, smaller passages of time reflecting these different parts were noted. In this case, the section on spontaneous imaginative play episodes across each of the four developmental periods was totaled and appears under the main heading for the second section. In addition, this total amount of time was broken down to also show the amount of time spent on each of the four developmental periods in the lifespan.

Individual amounts of time spent on later parts of this section were also noted. For example, the total amount of time spent on the probe questions was determined and included under the header "Probe questions (across the lifespan)." Likewise, the total amount of time spent on the questions on support, prevention, and secret play was determined and included under the header "Support/Prevention of play and 'secret play'." Finally, the total amount of time spent on the vignettes was determined and included under the header "Vignettes."

When creating the summary for the first category, Definitions, I wrote verbatim responses, including pauses and conversational fillers to reflect wonderings about and articulation of the participant's own definitions. Since the definitions anchored the participants' responses to all subsequent questions, it seemed necessary to transcribe them to support their selections of imaginative play episodes in which they believed they have participated. When transcribing verbatim, italics were used. For example, a participant's responses to the items on definitions appeared like this:

I. **Definitions**
   Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:02
   A. **Play:**
   (Umm…)Play is something fun and refreshing (ummm) both spiritually and emotionally that all people do. And it can take on various forms umm and functions depending on (ummm) the age of an individual and what their interests are.

   B. **Imagination:**
   Oh! (Umm)…OK (pause). Imagination is (pause) this really beautiful thing that (ummm) is direct from people's previous experiences and (ummm) an individual's (ahhh) sense or depth of creativity and it (ummm) often drives (umm) individual's play. (Ummm) and it's…(ummm) it sort of serves as like this catalyst (right) and then (ummm) some really beautiful things come out of it. And And And I think that happens for both children and adults.

For the second section, Episodes, each self-reported episode offered was summarized (in short phrases or sentences). The episode summary, for the purposes of this study, was based on 4 factors: its theme, its motivation(s), its structure (i.e, partners and locations), and any affective or other descriptive information provided by the participant, such as how the participant felt when doing this activity. When summarizing responses, regular (i.e., not italicized) print was used. Spontaneous responses were presented in the following manner:

Theme:

Themes were noted in each participant's summary and were based on the initial statements to introduce and describe a particular episode. For example, if asked about whether or not the participant had engaged in imaginative play in a particular time in the lifespan, an initial response might have been, "Yes, I played with dolls." This episode's theme, then, was named "Doll play," using the key word(s) of the episode and adding the word "play" afterwards. This approach was taken for each self-reported episode and as the data set was complete, attempts were then made to re-name episodes to have consistent, similar themes. For example, episodes originally named "Barbie play" were often collapsed with "Doll play." Underneath the theme, a brief synopsis of the episode (in first person) is provided that reflects the essential review of the episode and any affective features mentioned by the participant.

Motivation:

Here, the participant's response to the questions, "What significance does this activity have for you? or "Why is this activity important to you?" was summarized using the infinitive form of the verb(s) reported.

Context:

Here, a list of the partner(s) and location(s), in order, were listed and based on the brief synopsis of the episode.

In the event the participant did not offer a response to part of the question (e.g., motivation), "N/A" (not applicable) was written. If an episode continued into more than one developmental period and a motivation or context example was similar, the words "as before" were written in the appropriate part of the summary.

51

For example, a spontaneous self-reported episode from a participant's early childhood years looked like this:

Theme: Doll Play
I engaged in solitary imaginative play of this kind at home for hours. There was a lot of romance and babies in these play episodes. I used objects of my mother's (e.g., jewelry) when playing.

Motivation: To explore and to make sense of relationships between people.

Context : alone and home

Within the review of imaginative play during the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood, probe questions reflecting imaginative play to address Eriksonian psycho-social concerns were asked. To ensure that the participants' responses emerged from their own point of view as much as possible, all participants were asked these probes and all participant responses were summarized regardless of instances of imaginative play. For the section on imaginative play in the elementary school years, this response was summarized in first person voice and included under the heading "School and Self/Body exploration in imaginative play." For the section on imaginative play in adolescence, this response was summarized in first person voice and included under the heading "Identity play." For the section on imaginative play in adulthood, this response was summarized in first person voice and included under the heading "Relationship play." With respect to these probes, a participant's summary looked like this:

Theme: **School and Self/Body exploration in imaginative play**
No, not that I can think of.

Theme: **Identity play**
As I was in a performance-based high school, I was doing a lot of theater, music, theater, and modeling. I was told that I could explore these options as a career but that I needed to decide now if that was a commitment I needed to make. As I was exploring my relationship with my boyfriend and playing with roles as a singer/model, I decided that this was not a path I wanted to pursue.

Theme: **Relationship play**

 My relationships have always been explored in my play throughout my life. In adulthood, my boyfriend (now husband) and I are always figuring out what interests us, what would make our relationship stronger, and what we might do in the future when we become parents. My relationship with him is very playful.

Next, responses to probe questions on the themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender were summarized and written in first person voice. The theme of each probe question honored its title in the summary. The themes were named, in order of presentation: Play connected to experiences with Mexico, Gender roles, Play of people in Mexico and in the U.S., and Aspects of Mexican culture/celebrations. The last title, Aspects of Mexican culture/celebration, combined responses to the final two probe questions: on the relationships between imaginative play and culture and on the presence of imaginative play in community celebrations. They were combined because they frequently were asked together and overlapped in content. All participant responses were summarized whether or not they reported imaginative play activity. If appropriate and reported by the participant, motivations and contexts of new imaginative play episodes resulting from these probe questions were also included in a manner consistent with the spontaneous, life-span episodes. With respect to this subsection, a participant's summary looked like this:

Probe questions (across the lifespan)
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:10

1. Theme: **Play connected to experiences with Mexico**
   Having attended a fine arts school in a diverse neighborhood, I never felt "different" from others. We were all different in some way. There was no curiosity per se about being Mexican. As an adult, there has been some playfulness surrounding the cultural differences with my husband, who is not Mexican. It's been interesting to see the changes we have experienced with his getting familiar with different cultural experiences in my family, such as food.

   Motivation: N/A

Context: N/A

2. Theme: **Gender roles**
   I explored issues of gender in my singing play, choosing Latina artists such as Selena. I also loved my Barbie dolls and other baby dolls that looked more like me and my family.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: N/A

3. **Play of people in Mexico and in the U.S.**
   Play exists in Mexico. It's different in that they don't have the off-the-shelf toys that I used here, like Barbie dolls or kitchen sets. It's amazing from the stories from my Dad and my visits there of the innovation kids had to make imaginative play. For example, children used insects to make kites.

4. **Aspects of Mexican culture/celebrations**
   The only one that is playful to me is Cinco de Mayo. From my time as a young child, we did something equivalent to an Easter Egg Hunt during Cinco de Mayo that was playful and exciting. Catholicism is also important and celebrations of patron saints include eating together as a family, children receiving presents, and everyone dressing up. Making it an appealing experience for kids makes it more interesting for children since the religious significance is not as meaningful for children. Only during these patron saint days were we allowed to play Lotería, for example.

Responses on support, prevention, and secret play were summarized. Summaries were written in first person and they included not only who or what supports or prevents their imaginative play, but also, if applicable, why these factors are relevant to the participant. Similarly, episodes of secret play included not only a general summary of the episodes but also, if applicable, why such play is kept secret. All participant responses were summarized regardless of reports of support, prevention, or secret imaginative play. With respect to this subsection, a participant's summary looked like this:

Support/Prevention of play and secret play
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:14
1. **Support for play:**
   In childhood: my brother

   Now: husband and students
   My husband is a total clown and makes me smile. It was refreshing because my relatives are serious and in public, my family members are "prim and proper." Also, my students because I teach young children and there's a lot of imaginative play going on there. It's hard not to get drawn into that and facilitate it with them. I think it is important to participate in imaginative play with them. It makes it a much safer experience for them since before I was perceived as an observer; now I am collaborator. The experience is now more authentic for both of us when I am engaged in imaginative play with them.

2. **Prevention of play:**
   Now: Administrators and my job.
   Being in that position by default creates a situation where you have to put a focus on practical things and play is not considered practical. The philosophy "upstairs" in the main office does not match the philosophy "downstairs" in the classrooms. I am so invested in my job and I spend a lot of time working with children and families but it leaves little time for imaginative play in my life.

3. **Secret play:**
   The Simms computer game. My sister gave it to me as a gift but I was not excited about the gift; it was not for me. But then it became an addiction! You get to create these people and their lives. This started for me in college and I don't do it too much now but I did love it.
   The singing I did at home as a child and teen was also very private for me. Making my Barbie/Ken dolls kiss was something I did but I knew it might be bad to explore that.

For the final subsection, Vignettes, responses were summarized in the order presented in the protocol and written in first person voice. Summaries included not only their opinions of the activities of the protagonist of the vignette but also their responses to whether or not the protagonist's imaginative play activity was relevant to their own imaginative play. If applicable, justifications for their statements were also included. All participant responses were summarized

regardless of opinions or the presence of imaginative play reflecting the theme of the vignette.

With respect to this subsection, a participant's summary looked like this:

Vignettes
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:17

1. **Vignette 1 – Culture/Community affiliation**
   I think it's fabulous. I'd go to a party like this. The first thing I thought of was Frida Kahlo. But I might not want to look like her. So I'd go as Selena. I'd put on a purple outfit and have bangs, padded lips and bra. I'd pick her because she was very talented and died too early. She seemed very kind and down-to-earth.

2. **Vignette 2 – Ethnic identity**
   There's the honoring the curiosity she has about it and it may be a very relevant form of imagining for her. From my perspective, it is unfortunate that she does this. One of the children I teach is Mexican but doesn't want to speak Spanish at home; maybe it makes her feel "less than." I have never had an experience like this. I did question it once. White girls at school were always into Abercromie and Fitch. My mother and I walked into the store to check out the clothes and I realized "this is so not me." Later in college I did buy stuff there because the fashion direction of the store changed and seemed to fit me at that time.

3. **Vignette 3 – Gender**
   She gets freedom from this activity. I think it's great. In that piece of time, she is thinking of freeing from her current situation. I grew up in a very traditional family with respect to gender roles and responsibilities for wife and husband. When I lived with my boyfriend, I told him we would do things 50/50. In some respects I hold onto traditional female roles while in other respects I do not. I don't serve my husband his meal but I am the primary cook in the relationship. He also does the dishes. I do the laundry but he does landscaping.

   When I played Barbie and cooking, I imagined a husband and/or baby present in the play and explored these issues of gender in the play: emulating and making sense of the "female as servant to her husband" issue. I figured out in the course of playing with these issues that the approach of "female as servant to her husband" was not for me.

For the third section, Benefits, I transcribed responses verbatim on the benefits of their current play, the benefits of their play in childhood and adolescence, and the similarities of and

differences between the benefits of their current and previous imaginative play. At this point, the

interview culminated and so verbatim transcriptions were important to have at this point since

responses to these questions reflected the impact of their life-span imaginative play on their

development over time. I summarized their responses to the presence and possibilities of

imaginative play in formal schooling in a similar fashion as articulated before since comments at

this time tended to be brief and general. As seen in other sections, if applicable, justifications for

their suggestions for including imaginative play in formal learning environments were also

included. All responses in this section were transcribed or summarized, as appropriate. With

respect to this section, a participant's summary looked like this:

III.   **Benefits**
       Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:16
       A. **Current play**
          They helped me to be reflective on the things that I'm curious about or that I'm not sure about. For example, what [my husband] *and I do when we are taking care of the kids, we get to play for that short while and then at the end of it we get kind of to recap and talk about what we'd do differently or how we'd handle these situations if they were our children or what if one of us was alone. It provides this really short term, fun, and safe way to practice being parents. Which is exactly what you do when you're a child: all these things that you're curious about and that you want to practice being like. So I think that it certainly helps me make sense of the future and what that will be like and what we will be like as parents. It's encouraged a lot of reflection that I think will make us better parents in the future. And I think a lot of that imaginative play you do as a kid makes you a better person. It helps you make sense of all of the things that are going on around you.*

          At work, ummm…it's…gosh…it…it's…gosh…I don't even know how to put this into words…it lightens my step. Playing at work with young children and obviously now in my family playing with the young children when we have family parties and really engaging in that imaginative play I think that other adults in my family who see that with our generation, so the adults playing with the young children, I think they find that very interesting because they never really did it. I think they find it very interesting and also very charming especially because…and now we are getting into something different… [my husband] *really loves to engage*

57

in imaginative play with the children. So here's a male figure who is engaging in imaginative play with these really small children. It's interesting for them that adults are engaging in imaginative play but also that not only the female, but also the male counterpart, is doing it. They find it very interesting and they really love it. I think that is one of the things that helped win them over. Here's this guy....we never see men really on their hands and knees with small children riding him like a horse. It was new, novel, different, and exciting for them. Playing with young children when you're an adult is refreshing. I learn a lot from being with them in that way: both about their thinking and their perceptions. As well as them challenging my own thinking and my perceptions. And it challenges, really, the way that I teach. Sometimes I think I am saying or doing the right things but then they play something and makes me go 'Huh…that's really different. Maybe I should try a different angle.' And it's very informative. It really educates me on what their interests are which helps me be a better educator for them in terms of keeping them engaged. So obviously there's the teacher lens for me. And then there's also the personal lens that it brings such great joy.

It's so much fun. And to leave that, to say that that fun, that enjoyment, that magic, is reserved only for a certain age, it's so sad. It's so sad because it's so beautiful. And so fun. I cannot wait to have children of my own and to be able to share that with them.

B. **Play from childhood and adolescence**
   (It helped me) *make sense of my world and it* (dramatic theater) *was fun. It was a way to let go. It was a way to let loose. Elementary school is stressful for many reasons, both for personal reasons and academic reasons. And being able to have that much fun, to be somebody else for a little while and to really sort of expand your creativity because to be somebody else for a short time, that requires a lot of vulnerability. So it was a way to escape too.*

C. **Difference between benefits of current play and play from childhood and adolescence**
   No. it's the same benefit it just takes on new meaning at different stages of your life. In both ways, I was making sense of my world so it was functional in that way but at the same time, playing back then and playing now, it's a way for me to escape, to have fun, to relax, and really enjoy it. And I learn a lot from it, just as much now as I did then, whether I am doing it with adults or kids.

D. **Examples of imaginative play during formal schooling experiences and their importance**
   Not really in school experiences in elementary school or high school outside of drama/fine arts activities. Academics were very separate from the extra-curricular activities. And I did not consider it to be very playful. It was not very fun for me. It was very academically focused. It was not hands on in the curriculum and not innovative.

E. **Kinds of imaginative play to have/have had in formal schooling experiences**
   I would have loved school so much more if there was imaginative play. I would also be better at things like math and science. Classes like English and creative writing lent themselves to that self-directed activity - like pick a topic and write about it. If math and science had had a more play-based curriculum, I would have certainly enjoyed those subjects a lot more and been a lot more motivated and continued to challenge myself as opposed to being completely overwhelmed by them and just wanting to get the work done.

   Possible play-based activities: Go to museum exhibits. Learning through/in nature to explore science concepts or collect and categorize information. And if the activity failed, so what? Along with learning necessary information, you're doing it in engaging and meaningful ways, based on places and situations in your community.

On the third (and often fourth or more) round of creating the summary, I listened again to the entire interview and made sure that the summary was complete and accurate.

E. <u>**Data analysis - *a priori* and emergent codes**</u>

There are two kinds of codes employed in this study: *a priori* and emergent. *A priori* codes refer to codes that come from the existing theory and are used to determine whether or how they are applicable to the current community. In keeping with the central premise of the study, emergent codes are also used in order to reflect the participants' particular responses that extend beyond the *a priori* codes and were created using a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Emergent codes were developed based on a systematic way of transforming responses into successively refined systems of coding and categorizing data. For the purposes of this study, this process involved listening to the interviews and reviewing the

summaries in order to locate similar responses, name these responses with a coding category (and, if needed, subcategories), define the category, and assign and confirm frequencies to them. For example, I noted that there were responses converging on an aspect of the definition of "play" that included the concept of joy. Attention was then placed on naming the category (e.g., Enjoyable), defining Enjoyable with respect to the responses of this group, and determining how many participants should be included in this category. Code labels, definitions, and frequencies were refined throughout the data analysis and reliability exercises.

Therefore, an important contribution to this study rests not only if and how the participants align their meanings, examples, and outcomes of imaginative play to the *a priori* codes, but also that their responses yield emergent codes and illustrate new understandings of a cultural and community-based approach to inquiry on life-span imaginative play. In fact, the emergent codes in and of themselves are important findings as they illustrate the variety of meanings for the community with respect to particular aspects of their imaginative play. In presenting these codes, their variety, and the frequencies for each, I have avoided not only stereotypes of what, for instance, play means, what forms it takes, and how it is of service to human beings' learning and development but I also avoid stereotyping the communities of which these participants are a part by only addressing the most popular or expected codes. In what follows, each type of code will be discussed in turn and with respect to the order of presentation of the expectations of the study.

With respect to Expectation 1, *a priori* codes include play and imagination and the words are included in Section I of the interview, questions A and B, respectively. In addition, the presence of imaginative play across the lifespan was expected to reflect the participants' lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and the codes for lived and anticipated were informed by the theories of Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1978) on the motivations to engage in imaginative play in early

childhood. A third type of experience, fantastic, was also included in this expectation. Fantastic episodes were coded as those based on the creation and execution of narratives that are improbable to occur and roles that are unlikely to be adopted in the participant's current and future reality. How these three types of experiences were coded will be addressed next.

Assignment of all the spontaneously reported episodes to these mutually exclusive categories was based on at least 1 of 2 pieces of data from the participants. The first one was the participant's review of a particular episode at any and all of the four developmental periods. Should, for instance, the participant refer to the play activity as related to an experience in his or her life, that episode was coded as "Lived." For example, a participant spoke of playing with cars during his early childhood and recreating in his play instances of accidents that he recalled hearing about or witnessing in his community. The second piece of data kept in mind was the participant's self-reported importance of the episode, (i.e., response to the question, "Why is this episode important or meaningful to you?") Had a participant, for instance, stated that an episode playing teacher helped her think about what teachers do or explore if she wanted to become a teacher as a career, that item was coded as anticipated. If a participant spoke of exploring alternate realities, neither of one's past, present, nor future, such as becoming a cartoon character, that episode was categorized as fantastic.

Other probes as noted in the bullet points of the subsection on previous imaginative play and that are part of Section II, Part A and B are also included. These bulleted probe questions tap into motivations to engage in imaginative play across different developmental periods and are extensions of theory of psycho-social development as articulated by Erikson (1963). The probe in the section on imaginative play in the elementary school years reflects issues of school experiences. The probe in the section on imaginative play in adolescence reflects issues of

identity. The first probe in the section on imaginative play in adulthood reflects issues of relationships. These probes were asked of each participant.

A priori codes with respect to affordances and constraints reflect non-interpretive instances already present in the literature such as imaginative play partners (e.g., parents) and locations (e.g., home). Considering the partners and locations of spontaneous episodes was queried in all developmental periods; yet, for instance, include questions on current imaginative play in Section II, Part C, numbers 1-5. Frequencies for these codes emerged from the "context" summary of each self-reported episode. Finally, the probe questions on support, prevention, and secret imaginative play are located in Section II, Part C, numbers 6 – 8 and these responses were used to compose the summaries for the section on "Support/prevention of play and 'secret play'."

In sum, the use of the words "play" and "imagination," lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, the motivations to engage in life-span imaginative play based on the work of Erikson, and the contextual factors that support and prevent imaginative play and secret imaginative play in their lives will be *a priori* codes presented to address Expectation 1. From there, participants' specific definitions, their imaginative play themes based on lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, and their motivations to engage in imaginative play are represented as emergent codes.

With respect to Expectation 2, *a priori* codes include the themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender. As stated in the previous chapter, the theme of cultural/community affiliation refers to the participants' descriptions of the presence and/or absence of their psychological and sociological connection(s) with the European-American and Mexican community (e.g., celebrations of Mexican origin). The theme of ethnic identity reflects

the labels put upon or created by the self or others with respect to one's Mexican origin, that is, how the individual defines oneself as definitively of Mexican heritage (e.g., others' labels based on participants' speech). Finally, the theme of gender considers the recreation and challenging of gender stereotypes of the Mexican-American community (e.g., challenging stereotypes such as the "macho" role). These codes are present in the five probe questions (i.e., the second through fifth bulleted questions under Section II, Part C, Number 5) and in the three vignettes (Section II, Part D). Codes for this expectation are not mutually exclusive, as at times participants might have discussed both the importance of the connection to Mexican culture and of learning about oneself via, for instance, imaginative play with music from Mexico. In this instance, this episode was coded as both "cultural/community affiliation" and "ethnic identity." In addition, their responses to the vignettes include emergent codes. In sum, these themes will be explored within three data sources: self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, and responses to the vignettes.

Items in the interview protocol to address the third expectation include the entire third section. Questions A and B reflect current and previous imaginative play, respectively. Even though larger developmental domains such as cognitive or social-emotional point to possible categories of the benefits of life-span imaginative play, my previous work in this area has tended not to have *a priori* codes and for this study they were also not included; rather, emergent codes were employed to honor the participants' responses that extended our understanding of the developmental and educational outcomes of imaginative play beyond static, mutually exclusive categories such as cognitive or social-emotional or even the emergent codes created out of the responses in my previous work with European-American adults. Question C addresses the similarities and differences with respect to the benefits of previous and current

imaginative play. Questions D, E1, and E2 address the aspect of this expectation that reflects the presence and importance of imaginative play in the participants' current and former learning environments. Finally, Question F addresses the final aspect of this expectation: their suggestions for imaginative play activity in formal learning environments.

Presentation of results for the third expectation will include, then, the emergent codes for the following aspects: the benefits of their current and previous imaginative play, the similarities and differences between the benefits of their current and previous imaginative play, the presence and importance of imaginative play in their formal schooling, and their suggestions for inclusion of imaginative play in formal learning environments.

To sum up, Table 1 summarizes the two types of codes across the three expectations. This table serves as a guide for what will appear in the results chapter. All of the emergent codes will be introduced, exemplified, and discussed along with all the *a priori* codes in the results chapter.

F. **Units of analysis and reliability**

The units of analysis for the study were the person's response and the number of participants applicable to a particular code. Only categories that were mentioned by at least 2 participants at any time in the lifespan are included and no statistical analysis will be presented. These decisions are motivated by the larger goals of the study. First, the choice of a minimum of 2 participants suggests that at least the response was not idiosyncratic and implies connections among participants' responses. Discussion in the following chapter will address all categories that meet this minimum frequency requirement although the focus will be on those categories where the majority of participants converged. The decision to forgo quantitative analysis was primarily to present and focus on my interpretations of the meanings, presence, and benefits of

Table 1 Summary of *a priori* codes and emergent codes across the study's 3 expectations

	A priori codes	Emergent Codes
Expectation 1	• Play, imagination • Lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences • The motivations to engage in life-span imaginative play based on Erikson • Contextual factors (e.g., parents and locations) that support and prevent imaginative play	• Participants' definitions of "play" and "imagination" • Imaginative play themes • Motivations to engage in imaginative play
Expectation 2	• Cultural/community affiliation • Ethnic identity • Gender	• Responses to the vignettes
Expectation 3	N/A	• Benefits of imaginative play in adulthood and in childhood and adolescence • Similarities and differences of the benefits of current and previous imaginative play • The importance of imaginative play in their formal learning • Suggestions for inclusion of imaginative play in formal learning environments

imaginative play across these participants' life spans. Second, I sought to consider the unique

experiences of these members of the Mexican-American community, in line with the purpose

and approach of this study. Because of these two reasons, I elected to do a study with a small sample size and with in-depth analysis.

Reliability exercises took two forms. The first was a review of a subset of summaries to determine their completeness and accuracy. Completeness, in this case, was defined as ensuring that all responses to the interview questions were included. Accuracy was defined for the purposes of the study as fully transcribed and fully summarized statements where appropriate. For example, transcribed statements were checked to ensure that the content fully reflected the participants' statements, reflecting not only content but also conversational fillers and pauses. Summarized statements were checked to ensure that the content fully reflected the participants' answers. Once all summaries were completed, a colleague familiar with qualitative research analysis considered a sample of these summaries (two from female participants and two from male participants), was given a review of how the summaries were completed, listened to the interviews, and ensured the completion and accuracy of the summaries. In each of the four interviews reviewed, there was 100% agreement with respect to the completeness of imaginative play definitions, episodes, and benefits reported by the participants. Minor content changes and edits were offered to enhance the accuracy of the transcriptions and were incorporated into the summaries.

The second form of reliability exercises addressed *a priori* and emergent codes, including the vignettes. Exercises of both kinds were done with a colleague familiar with qualitative research analysis. There was a three-step process in which we engaged. First, we reviewed together the codes and definitions for a particular subsection of an expectation (e.g., definitions of "play" and "imagination") and together assigned responses to one of the study's summaries. Then, using worksheets I created, we independently coded the same four summaries (two of each gender)

that were used in the previously discussed reliability exercise to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the summaries. Finally, we reviewed our independent responses and discussed any differences.

Once this process was complete, I determined the interrater reliability for each exercise. There are many approaches to calculating interrater reliability such as percentage of agreement or kappa (Grayson & Rust, 2001; Stemler, 2004). For the purposes of this study, the decision was made to use the percentage of agreement and interrater reliability was calculated for each code as the number of independent agreements for all codes and of all participants of a given aspect of an expectation divided by the total number of possible agreements for that given aspect and then multiplied by 100. For example, when considering the definitions of "play" provided by the 4 participants in the sample set, the number of independent agreements for all emergent codes of this definition for all 4 participants was totaled, then divided by the total number of possible assignments for these definitional codes, and finally multiplied by 100.

This approach is supported by Marques and McCall (2005) who call for a new lens on interrater reliability. These authors contend that for qualitative studies where researchers are "the primary instrument" (i.e., the one conducting inquiry with the participants) and where analyses are based on the researchers' interpretations of participants' perspectives of the phenomenon of interest, collapsing responses and calculating percentage of agreement in a manner similar to the one conducted for this study is acceptable since the overall goal of the reliability exercises is solidify, and not verify, data analysis. In qualitative work such as this, interrater reliability serves more so as a means of strengthening the researchers' interpretations of the results when both raters come to agreement as well as improving the rigor of the study when raters have different interpretations. For the purposes of this study, the use of an additional coder served as a

67

solidification of the presence and frequency of the codes across the subset of participants and their general presence in the data. Disagreements, when they emerged, served as an opportunity for both raters to understand the participants' responses from a new vantage point.

The percentage of agreement will occur in parentheses at the heading of each section or subsection, as appropriate, within each expectation in the following chapter. The percentage of agreement in each case refers to all the categories in the relevant section or subsection. Results include the names, definitions, and examples of the emergent codes; unless otherwise specified, emergent codes are not mutually exclusive, as participants reported, for instance, more than 1 example of a motivation to engage in a particular play episode or multiple benefits of their current imaginative play. Results also are supported by examples from the summaries and will therefore be summarized or quoted as appropriate.

IV. RESULTS

For each expectation, a brief overview will begin the presentation. Then, codes will be introduced along with their examples and their frequencies will be reported. Frequencies are based on the number of people unless otherwise stated. Each section will be discussed in the form of a brief summary statement, paving the way for the general conclusions to be drawn in the final discussion chapter.

Reliability will be considered and reported as the percentage of agreement and will appear in parentheses in each section or subsection as appropriate. In addition, reliability for each category was obtained to see if low reliabilities were present. Categories with reliabilities that are lower than 80% will be noted in the footnotes. However, some of the categories included in the reliability exercises had smaller than 3 frequencies and agreement on these ranged from perfect agreement to no agreement, raising the possibility that any degree of agreement on these categories was arbitrary. Therefore, separate low reliabilities on these categories will not be reported; these were Dramatic, Knowledge of Community, Applicability, and Hands-On Projects. Any other issue of reliability will be discussed where relevant.

A. <u>Expectation 1</u>

The first expectation that all the participants will engage in life-span imaginative play was examined in terms of 5 analyses: definitions of the words "play" and "imagination," life-span engagement in imaginative play, sources of representations for self-reported episodes reflecting lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and interpretive themes based on these experiences, motivations for imaginative play, and contextual supports and constraints of imaginative play across the lifespan.

1. **Definitions of "play" and "imagination"**

    a. **"Play" (percentage of agreement = 83%)**

All 16 participants offered a definition of "play." The participants' definition of play yielded 4 categories as description of this activity: Enjoyable, Interactive, Dramatic, and Exploratory. Enjoyable emerged as a category based on the participants' definitions of play as a fun, pleasing, and stress-free activity (e.g., "It's when you're having a stress-free time. When you're having fun.") Enjoyable was the most common definition of play and was mentioned by 12 participants. Interactive considers that play activity usually (but not always) is comprised of 2 or more persons (real or imagined) and includes statements such as "The word 'play' means…..interacting with ahhh…with the world…." Interactive was included in the definitions of 5 participants. The category of Dramatic was included in the definitions of 4 participants and keeps in mind the structure of imaginative play episodes in that a storyline is enacted; one participant defined play as "…a collection of, umm, ideas that generally relay back to some sort of a storyline…" The final category of Exploratory was defined as an opportunity to experiment with roles, situations, and options. Two participants defined play as Exploratory. For example, a participant said "Play means to me… experimenting with everything around you and just exploring (pause) objects, exploring other people and just the world around you without a purpose."

    b. **"Imagination" (percentage of agreement = 83%)**

All 16 participants offered a definition of "imagination." Their definitions of "imagination" yielded 3 categories: Cognitive[1], Pretend, and Creative. Cognitive emerged as a

---

[1] The category of "Cognitive" had 67% reliability.

category based on the participants' definitions of imagination as a state of mind where thinking, visualizing (e.g., creating an image in one's mind), or dreaming (e.g., envisioning alternate states) about something occurs. These thoughts, visualizations, and other processes of the mind did not necessarily have to be manifested in the physical realm; in fact, this category focuses on, according to a participant, "[the] play one does in one's head." Cognitive was the most common definition of imagination: 11 participants described imagination as a cognitive or visualizing activity. For instance, a participant said the word imagination meant "…something you think…like a picture in your mind, Like you tell yourself a story and you just imagine it in your head."

The category of Pretend addressed the actual enactment of imaginative play and was defined as an activity where making believe and becoming something or someone else occurs. Pretend was included in the definitions of 4 participants, and includes, for example, a participant who said that imagination means "…becoming something, someone, being something special." Finally, the category of Creative describes the overall quality of inventiveness one engages in when imagining. This category was included in the definitions of 4 participants and is evidenced in statements such as "[imagination is] this really beautiful thing that is direct from people's experiences and an individual's sense or depth of creativity and it often drives individual's play…"

In summary, these findings indicate that all participants had definitions for play and imagination. In order of most common to least common responses, the participants' definitions of the word "play" reflect its pleasant, interactive, dramatic, and investigational nature while their definitions of the word "imagination" illustrate, in order of most common to least common responses, its cognitive, illusory, and inventive properties. Their responses provide evidence to

support the aspect of Expectation 1 that all participants would offer definitions of "play" that reflect at a minimum its ludic nature and of "imagination" that reflect at a minimum its representational features.

2. __Life-span engagement in imaginative play (percentage of agreement = 100%)__

All 16 participants reported that they engaged in imaginative play. Furthermore, imaginative play has been a life-span activity for the significant majority of the participants. Of the 16 participants, 14 of them reported at least 1 episode of imaginative play across each of the 4 developmental periods. There were 2 participants who did not report imaginative play during their early childhood and each had a different reason for not doing so. One participant believed that he was probably too young and that his parents were not always up to date with respect to what was possible for the early childhood years. In the case of the other participant, this time in his life was difficult to remember due to a family tragedy. According to him, this tragedy may have blocked many of the other activities in which he participated as a young child.

Taken a step further, the majority of participants reported more than 1 episode of imaginative play in each of their periods of development, suggesting this was not an idiosyncratic activity for them. In early childhood, 12 of the 14 participants recalled more than 1 episode. In the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood, 14 of the 16 participants recalled more than 1 episode. Across each of the 4 developmental periods, at least half of the participants recalled between 2-5 episodes.

As a group, there were a total of 248 episodes: 54 episodes recalled in early childhood, 79 in the elementary school years, 47 in adolescence, and 68 in adulthood. The range of episodes recalled in each developmental period was 0-7 in early childhood, 1-15 in elementary school, 1-4 in adolescence, and 1-8 in adulthood. These totals suggest that the elementary school years had

72

the most number of episodes across the lifespan, followed by adulthood, then early childhood, and finally, adolescence. Four participants cited the most episodes of imaginative play during early childhood (between 4-6 episodes), 6 during their elementary school years (between 4-15 episodes), 2 in adolescence (2 or 3 episodes), and 7 in adulthood (between 3-8 episodes).

On the one hand, these findings indicate that imaginative play occurred in the lives of all the participants, offering strong support the first expectation that imaginative play is a life-span activity for all 16 members of this Mexican-American community. On the other hand, the data do not support the aspect of this expectation that stated that participants' imaginative play would decline over the lifespan.

3. <u>Sources of representations</u>

a. <u>Lived, anticipated, and fantastic (percentage of agreement = 87%)</u>

When reviewing the reliabilities for these 3 categories, the category of Anticipated Experiences was determined to be 76%. This somewhat low percentage of agreement is due in part to the two raters not in agreement at times on whether or not a particular play episode reflected exclusively present or future concerns. For example, a participant pretending in her elementary school years that she was a teacher evidenced both recreating experiences she had had in school and an opportunity to explore teaching as a possible career. In this instance, disagreement as to the dominant source of this experience emerged but was resolved by discussion. Such disagreement is likely with respect to lived and anticipated experiences when considering their relationship as conceptualized in the literature. According to Göncü and Gaskins (2011), Vygotsky considered young children's imaginative play to be future-oriented (i.e., anticipated) although it is motivated by past experience (i.e., lived).

All participants (16) explored issues of lived and anticipated experiences in at least 1 of the 4 developmental periods. All but 1 participant engaged in fantastic experiences in at least 1 of the 4 developmental periods. The number of participants recalling each type of experience within each developmental period appears in Table 2. Discussion will address in turn each type of experience within each developmental period.

Table 2 *Imaginative play episodes reflecting lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences across the lifespan.*

Source of representations	Early Childhood	Elementary School Years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Lived experiences	9	12	13	15
Anticipated experiences	7	9	5	4
Fantastic experiences	9	14	8	5

In early childhood, an example of a lived experience is car play, where the participant related that play episodes he created with his toy cars reflected the stories he heard of people in Mexico getting into accidents on the roads. As these stories scared him at the time, he recalled recreating these stories to soothe him. An example of an anticipated experience includes a participant who explored marital status. The participant, her younger sister, and other children in the neighborhood used objects in nature to make her sister a wreath of flowers when they pretended she was getting married. Finally, one example of fantastic experiences at this time includes "Gaze thinking." This participant, while traveling with his migrant family, spent time thinking alone about alternate realities, a process he called, "kind of like tripping out on drugs."

With respect to the elementary school years, imaginative play reflecting lived experiences includes engagement in baseball to offset feelings of being picked on in school. For this

participant, playing pitcher gave him the ability to "control the 'play' of the game," and to imagine the possibilities of how he could make the game go. Anticipated experiences include, for example, a participant who played teacher with her siblings, cousins, and friends, each taking turns being the teacher and students. Fantastic experiences recalled at this time include 2 participants, brothers, who recalled the Halloween when their parents created Power Rangers costumes for them and their sister.

In adolescence, lived experiences include a participant who moved out her parents' home to move in with her boyfriend and his family to raise their child. Now, as a young mother, she engaged in imaginative play not only with her newborn son, but also felt that she was "playing grownup," that is, engaging in adult responsibilities as a lived experience, gaining comfort and familiarity with new tasks put upon her such as grocery shopping. Anticipated experiences at this time include, for instance, a participant who recalled cleaning her family's house as a form of imaginative play. In this episode, she asked her mother and younger siblings to go out while she and her older sister pretended they were adults who were cleaning their home "just like [their] mother did." When her mother and siblings returned home, her mother was surprised that they had cleaned the house so well, except for the floors, since they had left soap on them. A fantastic experience at this time in the lifespan is a participant who pretended he was a well-known wrestler. His cousins, friends, and he donned the costumes of their chosen wrestler, adopted their wrestler's signature moves, and wrestled each other.

In adulthood, lived experiences as a source of imaginative play come from 2 participants who work at a day care asserted that the play activities in which they engage with the children are based on play they had done in their own lives and was a way to make their time together meaningful for all. With respect to anticipated experiences, 1 participant, along with her

husband, explored their possible future roles as parents when they would babysit their relatives' children. These babysitting instances were opportunities to explore questions such as "What would we do if our baby got sick?" or "What kinds of disciplinary approaches would we use?" Finally, an example of a fantastic experience at this time comes from a participant who shared that she has become "Spongebob Squarepants" when playing with her nieces and nephews.

In summary, the participants have engaged in imaginative play throughout their life spans reflecting their lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, with development patterns evidenced. In particular, lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences are consistent, being nearly equal in frequency, in the early childhood and elementary school years. However, there is a prevalence of episodes motivated by lived experiences in adolescence and adulthood, reflecting the possibility that their lived experiences are rich and gain greater representational significance in their lives.

b. __Emergent themes reflecting lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences (percentage of agreement = 94%)__

While lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences motivate the participants' life-span imaginative play, they do not offer what they reveal about the experiences represented in imaginative play. Therefore, the themes of these play episodes are not evident and necessitated further analysis. To examine what aspects of their experiences the participants interpreted in imaginative play, the content of lived, anticipated, and fantastic play episodes was categorized according to the themes expressed in play. This examination addressed yielded 5 mutually exclusive categories: Home and Family, Physical, Community, Arts and Media, and Envisioning Possibilities. Table 3 presents each of these categories along with their frequencies within each developmental period.

Table 3 *Interpretive imaginative play themes based on lifespan, self-reported episodes.*

Interpretive imaginative play theme	Early Childhood	Elementary School Years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Home and Family	8	4	4	4
Physical	7	11	8	6
Community	6	10	11	10
Arts and Media	6	11	8	9
Envisioning Possibilities	5	6	4	3

Home and Family was defined as play whose theme addressed family life as it was expressed in household practices such as cooking or laundry. Eight participants had at least 1 episode with the theme. In early childhood, a participant shared that she and her sister put couches together and pretended that they were the washer and dryer. In the elementary school years, a participant shared how she and her younger brother played dress up together. They would both wear their mother's high heels, pretend to be their mother, and do the household activities in which she engaged. In adolescence, a participant played house with her friends at school where they explored alternate family dynamics personally unfamiliar to them such as single-parent households. In adulthood, a participant played with household responsibilities with her boyfriend such as doing the dishes or cooking. She moved out of her parents' home before getting married to live with her boyfriend (who later became her husband). She shared that living together "was a different dynamic for us now than when we were still dating and I was living with my parents," and that they needed to explore what they would do in their "shared, private space." For them it meant exploring more intensely what they needed from the other in the relationship. One way

they explored each others' needs was reading together the book *The Five Languages of Love* and playfully using the book's vocabulary in their everyday interactions.

Physical was defined as play whose theme addressed athletic or other corporeal activity. A majority of the participants, 14, had at least 1 episode with this theme. In early childhood, for example, 1 participant and his cousins created games such as "Jump the Frog" and "Move the Car." In the former, two at a time pretended to be frogs and the others had to jump over the frogs and see who could jump the farthest. In the latter, some of the children would pretend to be cars and others would have to move them. In the elementary school years, 3 participants often pretended to be Michael Jordan when they played basketball such as sticking out the tongue and drinking Gatorade, counting down and going for the "final shot," and making noises to represent the buzzer and the crowd. During adolescence, a participant started running on the track team at his school and began "wondering about the factors that would allow or deter [him] from achieving [his] goals." Finally, in adulthood, a participant shared that she and her adult sister play fight, trying to run away from or chase each other and making each other laugh when doing so.

Community was defined as play whose theme addressed practices and roles occurring outside of the home. Again, a majority of the participants, 14, had at least 1 episode with this theme. In early childhood, a participant recreated and played with community experiences and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. She and her siblings stole church books, her brother was the priest, and they recreated Roman Catholic mass. In the elementary school years, 2 participants, sisters, turned family dinner into a restaurant experience, where they pretended to be the servers, their father the customer, and their mother the cook. During adolescence, this theme was expressed by 1 participant who helped organize a holiday drama production performed by

younger children with disabilities. With respect to adulthood, a participant considered her years living in Mexico at this time an opportunity to play and step into new roles since she consistently had to consider the similarities and differences in community practices between her 2 countries. For example, she recalled that it was playful for her to learn how to travel around in Mexico (e.g., how people drive with so many beetles around or navigate the train system) and the differences in gestures (e.g., how a pedestrian acknowledges being given the right of way differs between the 2 countries).

The fourth category was Arts and Media, and this theme included play episodes that addressed interests in pursuits such as music, writing, theater, and drawing and frequently, but not always, involved media such as television or sound equipment. Once again, a majority of the participants, 14, had at least 1 episode with this theme. For instance, in early childhood, 2 participants began their life-long interests in artistic, imaginative pursuits such as drawing or music. In the case of drawing, a participant shared how he started drawing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles with his friend. In the case of music, a participant spoke of his cousins naming a song or artist and he would sing as if he were the artist. In the elementary school years, 2 participants shared that they began their affiliation with imaginative play within the Hip Hop community and would do creative activities such as graffiti art and other murals around Chicago. During adolescence, a participant began taking part in inventive, playful activities surrounding architectural design. In adulthood, a participant began his own video production company and considers the creation of these videos imaginative and playful for him.

The final category, Envisioning Possibilities, was defined as play whose theme was imagining, but not necessarily acting upon, alternate realities, both possible and unlikely. These frequently, but not always, occurred alone, as they were "imaginative thoughts" of scenarios they

79

hoped to effect at some point in their futures. There were 9 participants who recalled at least 1 episode with this theme. In early childhood, 2 participants engaged in imaginative play with their imaginary friends, often having conversations with them. During the elementary school years, a participant shared that he often wondered about what he would like to be when he grew up and what he would have to do to become someone of that profession. At this time, he wondered about, but did not necessarily act upon, becoming a doctor, architect, and pilot. In adolescence, a participant imagined herself more self-efficacious as a single mother. In this case, she considered the dreams and desires she had for her future, such as going back to school in order to be more a self-sufficient role model for her young daughter. In adulthood, a participant has fantasized about community change he would like to take part in. In this envisioning activity, he has imagined "being someone great and improving [his] community" with social and economic resources.

In summary, these 5 categories reflect the themes that illustrate the lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences in the participants' lives. These themes reflect areas of importance to them, such as family and home, physical activity, community, the arts and media, and envisioning possibilities. There are also developmental patterns evident in these data. In particular, the theme of Home and Family is the most prevalent theme in early childhood, reflecting the participants' focus at the time on their lived and anticipated experiences in their primary context. However, the themes of Physical, Community, and Arts and Media appear with greater frequency after the early childhood years, reflecting possible new experiences in contexts such as at school or work or within the wider community. Finally, the fifth theme of Envisioning Possibilities was not as prevalent as the other themes across the lifespan but when reported evidenced the participants'

efforts to engage in wondering about possibilities that were not real at the time but could be, if only for the moment in one's mind or in another imaginary fashion.

4. <u>Substantive issues represented in play: Motivations for engagement in life-span imaginative play (percentage of agreement = 90%)</u>

Findings for this aspect of Expectation 1 will first address the participant responses to the probe questions that address the expectation based on the developmental theory of Erikson. Then, emergent codes reflecting motivations will be presented.

With respect to imaginative play reflecting experiences in school, only 1 participant responded affirmatively to this probe question. In this instance, the participant shared that when she was an elementary school student, she did not like school, but played school in the way she wished it could be. The participants who did not respond affirmatively tended to converge on the idea that imaginative play may have occurred at school (e.g., athletic activity or drama) but that the particular experiences they were having in school did not surface in their imaginative play episodes during this time. Also, with respect to imaginative play reflecting issues of the self and peers, no participants stated that their imaginative play reflected this motivation in response to the probe question.

Imaginative play reflecting identity was addressed by 6 participants based on this probe question and in all instances they referenced how previously reported episodes were avenues through which they have shaped their identity, that is, of understanding their interests. For example, a participant stated that his involvement in sports and creative activities during his childhood and adolescence was often a way for him to express himself and provided opportunities to learn what he liked to do. Finally, imaginative play reflecting relationships was reported by only 2 participants in response to the probe question; in this instance, a participant

shared that his dating experiences in his young adulthood are a form of imaginative play for him

since he is exploring what qualities he would like in a partner and learning how to express his

feelings for partners in creative avenues such as poetry writing.

In addition to motivations reflecting the theory of Erikson, in chapter 2, I also expected that

psycho-social issues would be life-span, going beyond these specific concerns at particular

developmental periods. With that in mind, I looked at all the motivations expressed in the life-

span self-reported episodes and the data revealed these 4 categories: Mastery and

Resourcefulness, Ludic, Constructing Relationships, and Self-Awareness and Autonomy. Table

4 presents each of these categories along with their frequencies.

Table 4 *Interpretive imaginative play motivations based on lifespan, self-reported episodes.*

Interpretive imaginative play motivation	Early Childhood	Elementary School Years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Mastery and Resourcefulness	10	14	9	8
Ludic	7	12	9	11
Constructing Relationships	6	5	4	10
Self-Awareness and Autonomy	1	2	5	6

Mastery and Resourcefulness became a category since participants' self-reports indicated that

their imaginative play was motivated by desires to exercise or illustrate competence or

inventiveness. All 16 participants stated this was a motivation to engage in their imaginative

play. In the early childhood years, a participant stated that imaginative play he did as a young

child such as "Jump the Frog" and "Move the Car" was motivated by "creating our own games.

We owned these games more because these were our own creations." Another participant stated that engagement in baseball in his elementary school years was motivated by a desire to "dedicate myself to something and get really good at it." In adolescence, a participant reported that playing basketball and pretending he was Michael Jordan was motivated by the desire to develop his physical abilities and gain respect from peers. Finally, in adulthood, a participant stated that creating his own art gallery with other artists was an opportunity for him to illustrate not only his work, but also show himself and others one way in which they could independently promote art in the city of Chicago.

The category of Ludic surfaced as a category due to participants' reports that one of the motivations for their imaginative play has been to improve the mood of a situation by having fun, escaping or calming tensions, or feeling confident around others. Almost all participants, 15, reported this motivation. For example, a participant stated that her imaginative play during her early childhood years with her brother was a means of having a good time. In the elementary school years, a participant explored maps and wondered about different parts of the world and enjoyed wondering what these places were like. In adolescence, a participant said that her imaginative play in the form of joking with classmates when faced with a challenging project or exam was motivated by her desire to "reassure people, including myself, that everything is OK." Finally, a participant said that her imaginative play during her adulthood and while living in Mexico caring for an ill family member was motivated by "hav[ing] fun...despite new responsibilities."

Constructing Relationships emerged as a category based on the participants' self-reports that their imaginative play was motivated by a desire to build, work through, improve, and sustain relationships with others ("[Creating Halloween costumes] was a way "to bond with my family

over a creative activity that we all enjoyed.") Motivations to engage in imaginative play based on Constructing Relationships were reported by a majority of the participants, 13. In the early childhood years, a participant stated that playing dolls with her brother was motivated by the need "to connect with [him]." In the elementary school years and adolescence, 2 participants stated that engaging in imaginative play with music of Mexican origin was motivated by building relationships and sharing interests with their fathers. Finally, in adulthood, a participant shared that imaginative play in the form of dancing with her children has been motivated by the desire to create better relationships with them.

Self-Awareness and Autonomy emerged as a category based on participants' self-reports that their imaginative play was motivated by a desire to learn about and express themselves or to seek independence ("[Doing Hip Hop has been a chance to "learn about myself" or "[Doing laundry for the first time without the assistance of my parents] was a way to "figure myself out and feel independent from them."). A majority of the participants, 11, had at least 1 episode in their lives whose motivation was Self-Awareness and Autonomy. In the early childhood years, a participant stated that dressing up in her parents' clothes and jewelry was done to express herself. In the elementary school years, a participant reported that imaginative play in the form of singing and dancing was a way to express herself and her desire "to be a star." During adolescence, a participant engaged in imaginative play in the form of drinking alcohol to express herself more freely. Finally, in adulthood, a participant considered her cooking experiences imaginative and playful and a way to express her independence since she did not have to rely exclusively on her mother to prepare her food.

The motivations in these emergent codes reflect 2 important findings. First, there are developmental patterns that illustrate Erkisonian psycho-social concerns. Second, and related to

84

the first point, these motivations are present throughout life-span but may be prevalent in a

particular developmental period. With respect to the concern of "industry versus inferiority"

there appear to be a strong motivation to manifest resourcefulness or ingenuity in the elementary

school years, as 14 participants reported this motivation, but this motivation was also present in

other periods of the lifespan. In addition, there was a presence, though less pronounced, for

learning about and expressing the self, that is, the concern of "identity" in adolescence. Five

participants reflected this motivation in adolescence and 6 in their adulthood. Finally, the

motivation to build and sustain relationships was also an important life-span reason to engage in

imaginative play, though more participants (10) did so in their adulthood when compared to the

other developmental periods and this motivation reflects Erikson's concern of "intimacy versus

isolation" in early adulthood. Finally, the category of Ludic was nearly consistent across the

lifespan.

    In conclusion, there is support for the aspect of the first expectation of life-span motivations

to engage in imaginative play with respect to lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences. The

aspect of this expectation that the motivations for imaginative play activity may serve to address,

across the lifespan, the concerns articulated in the life-span theory of psycho-social development

proffered by Erikson has not been met when considering the participants' responses to the probe

questions. However, there is support for this aspect of this expectation when the interviews are

considered more broadly. In particular, when the participants' responses to the question of the

importance of their specific self-reported imaginative play episodes were analyzed and emergent

codes created, there was evidence to support that the concerns raised in Erikson's theory of

psycho-social development are relevant motivations to engage in imaginative play beyond the

early childhood years. What's more, this finding reflects not only a prevalence of particular

motivations at particular developmental periods, but their presence throughout the lifespan is also evidenced. Thus, there are data to support this aspect of Expectation 1.

5. **Contextual supports and constraints of imaginative play across the lifespan**

a. **Imaginative play partners**

Data for this section emerge from the context of each episode of each summary and reflect my interpretation of their responses. The data illustrated 2 categories of play: solitary and social. Solitary was defined as imaginative play episodes where no living play partner other than the participant is included. The category of Social reflects the presence of one or more living play partners in addition to the participant. There were 4 subcategories for Social: Family, Friends, School, and Community. The Family subcategory included the following 5 groups: Siblings, Cousins, Parents, Sons/Daughters, and Significant Others. The School subcategory included the following 2 groups: Classmates and Teachers. The Community subcategory included the following 2 groups: Work (e.g., students and co-workers) and Program Peers (e.g., teammates or sorority sisters). Table 5 presents the presents the number of participants who reported solitary and social imaginative play across each of the 4 developmental periods.

A majority of the participants, 10, reported solitary imaginative play at least once throughout their lives. All 16 participants reported social imaginative play at least once throughout their lives. Social imaginative play with family was important to the participants. Siblings were the most popular and consistent family member as play partner. Twelve participants reported imaginative play with siblings, 9 participants reported cousins, 8 reported significant others, 5 reported sons and daughters, and 4 reported parents as imaginative play partners in at least one period of development.

Table 5 *Solitary and social participation in imaginative play across the lifespan*

Categories of imaginative play participation	Early Childhood	Elementary School Years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Solitary	7	8	6	7
Social	14	16	16	16
Social: Family: (Siblings)	8	9	5	8
Social: Family (Cousins)	6	5	3	2
Social: Family: (Significant Others)	0	0	3	8
Social: Family (Sons and Daughters)	0	0	2	5
Social: Family (Parents)	1	4	2	1
Social: Friends	6	12	6	7
Social: School: (Classmates)	5	8	4	4
Social: School: (Teachers)	2	1	2	2
Social: Community: (Work)	0	0	0	7
Social: Community: (Program Peers)	0	3	3	5

Friends were the most popular non-family play partner for this group. In at least one period

of development, a majority of the participants, 12, mentioned imaginative play with friends, 14

participants mentioned imaginative play with classmates, and 6 participants cited teachers as imaginative play partners. With respect to community and in at least one period of development, 7 participants report engagement with co-workers such as students (both children and adults) and adult colleagues and 8 participants engaged in imaginative play with program peers such as a teammate, a fellow artist, or a sorority sister.

In summary, when considering the total number of participants who engaged in imaginative play in their lives, a majority of the participants engaged in solitary play. Social imaginative play was also a life-span activity for all the participants and play partners were found across multiple contexts: family, friends, classmates, teachers, co-workers, and program peers, reflecting the people of importance in their lives and the relationships that were of most value. In addition, the lack of imaginative play with parents and teachers, as was expected, appears to be the case in these data. What's more, the expected importance across the lifespan of peers as imaginative play partners is evident. More specifically, family members such as siblings and cousins were important life-span play partners for this group; classmates or friends were as well, but appear to be more so in the elementary school years. Finally, participants not considered in the original expectation, namely, children and significant others, appear to be imaginative play partners in adolescence and adulthood.

b. <u>Imaginative play locations</u>

There were 6 mutually exclusive categories of locations: Home, School, Work, Outdoors, Other, and International locations. The category of International locations reflects imaginative play that took place in Mexico. These categories are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 *Imaginative play locations across the lifespan*

Categories of imaginative play locations	Early Childhood	Elementary School Years	Adolescence	Adulthood
Home	10	12	9	11
School	6	13	8	5
Other	1	3	3	5
Work	0	0	0	6
Outdoors	4	7	6	5
International locations	2	3	2	1

All 16 participants reported use of at least 1 category of locations in at least 1 episode. Almost all participants, 15, reported imaginative play at home at least once throughout their lives. Fifteen participants mentioned imaginative play at school while work was only specifically cited as an imaginative play location in adulthood by 6 participants. Other locations, such as libraries and theaters, were imaginative play locations for 8 participants in at least 1 episode. A majority of the participants, 10, reported imaginative play at least once outdoors. Finally, across all periods of development, International locations were cited as an imaginative play location by 6 participants.

Also present within this aspect of this expectation was the possibility of imaginative play to occur in the locations where celebrations of Mexican origin are held, such as Los Días de los Muertos. The fourth (and fifth) probe question of Section II Part C that queried about the presence of imaginative play in cultural celebrations and festivals such as Los Días de los Muertos also evidenced the presence of imaginative play in the locations where these celebrations occur. Almost all participants, 15, reported that these celebrations, wherever they occur, include imaginative play activity. Examples included Los Días de los Muertos, Christmas

celebrations, patron saint days such as El Día de Guadalupe, Cinco de Mayo/Mexican Independence Day, Holy Week, dances, and cooking. The participants shared the playful aspects of these celebrations, such as the use of costumes in Los Días de los Muertos (painting faces or dressing as skeletons or dead people) or the use of representational objects in Christmas celebrations (e.g., rocking a doll to represent baby Jesus). Still others shared the playful interactions they have with family and community members at these times, such as splashing each other with water on Holy Saturday.

In summary, participants have created imaginative play in a range of locations throughout their lives. While the majority of the categories reflect those present in previous literature with adults of European-American origin, a new category not present in the previous literature, International spaces, emerged as an imaginative play location. The category of International spaces emerged as a function of participants' time in Mexico throughout their lives and appears to reflect community values of affiliation with both the home and national culture. It was expected that home as a location for imaginative play would not be consistently supported, particularly in adolescence, where possible tensions between adult caregivers and adolescents may make imaginative play less supported there; as the data illustrate, this does not appear to be the case for these participants. Similarly, school and work were expected to be institutions where imaginative play is present to lesser extents. The data seem to not support this, particularly when considering imaginative play in school during the elementary school years. On the other hand, with respect to frequencies, the presence of imaginative play in work contexts was reported less so than other contexts, thus meeting this aspect of the expectation. Finally, and in support of this aspect of this expectation, participants stated that locations where celebrations of Mexican origin take place include imaginative play.

c. <u>Support and prevention of imaginative play across the lifespan</u>

These results emerge from the specific probe questions about support and prevention in Section II, Part C, questions 6 and 7. When specifically asked questions about support and prevention of their imaginative play, the participants had 5 sources: family, school/work, self, friends, and non-people. Each of these sources will be discussed in turn, along with their frequencies for both support and prevention. With respect to family, parents were the most popular example of support, with 12 participants stating that their parents have supported their imaginative play throughout their lives. There were a couple of participants who referenced specific instances of engagement in imaginative play with them (e.g., father playing video games or parents creating Halloween costumes). In general, however, participants spoke more so of the broad support (e.g., time, space, and resources) parents have had for their imaginative play but that their direct engagement in their imaginative play episodes did not occur. Only 1 participant claimed her mother prevented imaginative play in her early childhood because her mother perceived her having an imaginary friend as a sign of psychological disease.

Siblings were another important source of family support: 6 participants named them and no one named siblings as a source of prevention of imaginative play activity. For example, a participant said that her older brother supports her imaginative play by playfully teasing her or calling her "loca" or "weird." Two participants named significant others as sources of support. For instance, a participant shared that her husband is a "total clown," makes her smile, and that his playfulness is refreshing for her. Children were mentioned by 2 participants, both of whom consider them as sources of support. In fact, both these participants enjoy the fact their children consider them "cool" mothers who are funny and fun to be around. Finally, a participant shared how his cousins have been a source of support for his goals, even if they are different from his own, by giving him feedback on what he is doing in his life during their playful conversations.

On the other hand, another participant has found her cousins to be at times unsupportive of her imaginative play, since her cousins thought her pretending as a child was "weird."

The second source, school/work, was a context that could both support and prevent imaginative play. There were 4 participants who have found support in these contexts. With respect to support, a participant finds her current attendance at a school of metaphysics a context for support of who she is, since her classmates find her "charismatic and fun." Another participant finds her teaching young children through play a means to create authentic experiences for both her and the children.

However, school contexts also can be places where imaginative play is prevented and 7 participants said so. In fact, the early childhood educator finds her school a place where imaginative play is prevented, since often "the philosophy 'upstairs' [administration] does not match the philosophy 'downstairs' [in her classroom]" Many others in this group also spoke to how schools can stifle play; one participant feels that larger institutions like school or work do not serve local interests and explorations (i.e., play) and focus instead on trying to maintain the status quo.

The third source, self, was perceived as a source of support by 3 participants and a source of prevention by 1 participant. In the case of support, a participant says he is the main supporter of his current imaginative play since he cannot stand being bored and likes to be active. However, another participant says he gets in the way of his imaginative play sometimes because he is too tired or not in the mood to play.

Friends were seen as a source of support by 3 participants and a source of prevention by 3 participants. With respect to support, a participant shared how much interest she and her friends had in their elementary school years creating imaginative play scenes off of the telenovela

"Muchachitas." When considering friends as sources of prevention, 2 participants spoke of former friends whose lifestyles (e.g., gang involvement) or negative energy thwarted the kind of growth and exploration these participants have sought in their lives and they found it necessary to no longer be friends with these individuals.

While the majority of the responses reflected people (within institutions) who support or prevent imaginative play, there were a few instances of non-living sources as well. There was 1 participant who said "the future and possibilities" makes imaginative play possible for him. There were 4 participants who mentioned non-living examples that have prevented their imaginative play such as materials (e.g., not having enough chairs to make an imaginary house), rules (i.e., what is or is not expected in society), gender roles of the community of Mexican origin (i.e., expectations of what activities are and are not appropriate for males and females), and reality.

In summary, the importance of family as imaginative play partners highlights the value of family in the community. For example, the majority of participants stated that that the participants' parents have supported their imaginative play activity throughout their lives, yet not in the form of direct participation, but rather often in the form of affordances such as time, resources, and general psychological support, while similarly aged family members such as siblings were named as sources of support who directly engaged in imaginative play with the participants. Likewise, the support of friends is evident. While family and friends have been consistently a source of support for the participants, there were a few instances where family members or friends have prevented imaginative play for the participants, serving as a reminder that it is the particular relationship at particular times that speaks to the presence and support of imaginative play. Likewise, school and work, often not considered contexts for imaginative play,

93

was found to be the case for some participants, but not for all, as it is possible that participants have created imaginative play with others in locations wherever the activity is welcome.

d. <u>Secret play</u>

Most of the participants, 10, reported at least 1 example of secret imaginative play. Responses were distinguished as solitary and social secret play. There were 3 examples of solitary secret play: imaginary conversations, simulation game, and imitating famous singers, each of which had only 1 participant. In the first example, the participant shared that the private, imaginary conversations she has with herself would not be something she would like others to know she does. Another participant offered the remaining 2 examples. In simulation game, she shared how she might not like others to know that as a young adult she got "addicted" to playing the Simms computer game. Also, she would like to keep secret her imaginative play as an elementary school and high school student when she practiced singing like her favorite artists.

There were 4 examples of social secret play: sexual play, illegal/gang play, recording conversations, and Mother's Day gift. Sexual play was reported by 4 participants. For example, a participant shared that when she was young she and her play partners would make their Barbie and Ken dolls kiss. Another participant shared that he often engages in "homo-erotic" teasing with some of his male friends, such as attempting to touch each other in private areas of each other's body or trying to get each other to punch oneself in the crotch. Finally, 2 participants shared that their sexual expression with their partners included imaginative play. Illegal/Gang play was reported by 3 participants. One participant shared that she would not like people with whom she currently goes to school that she imitates gangbangers or other people from her "hood." Another participant shared that some of the graffiti activity he had done as a youth and young adult was illegal.

The last 2 examples, recording conversations and Mother's Day gift, were idiosyncratic episodes recalled by 1 participant in each case. In the former, the participant records playful conversations he has with family about their goals and ideas for their future and does so without their knowledge. In the latter, the participant shared an example from her elementary school years when she imagined herself a florist and created a Mother's Day bouquet of marigolds she picked from public gardens while walking home. To this day, her mother cherishes this gift and tells people about it every Mother's Day. As a child and teenager, this participant did not like her mother sharing this memory with others. In addition to episodes, the participants gave 4 reasons why these episodes of imaginative play, be they solitary or social, are secret: privacy, embarrassment or shame, judgment of others, and lack of trust.

In summary, a majority of the participants, 10, stated that at least 1 episode of their imaginative play is best kept secret and fell into categories previously created such as solitary and social. While these instances may appear idiosyncratic, they in fact point to activities commonly not addressed publicly with others: sexual activity, illegal activity, and talking to oneself. What's more, the participants' statements remind us that, apart from merely preferring to keep such examples private, feeling safe to express such imaginative play activity with others requires essential responses from the community such as trust and lack of judgment, allowing the participants to feel free not only to engage in imaginative play activity, but to also share it directly or indirectly with others. Based on the expectation that community values and practices may encourage clandestine or secret play, support for this aspect of the first expectation has also been provided.

Expectation 1 received support on many levels, such as the provision of definitions, the presence of life-span imaginative play that reflected lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences,

the motivations to engage in imaginative play to reflect the psycho-social concerns made available in the work of Erikson, and the presence of contextual supports and constraints of imaginative play across the lifespan.

B. Expectation 2

The second expectation that the participants' life-span imaginative play reflects themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender was examined in terms of 2 analyses: first, self-reported episodes and responses to probe questions and, second, responses to vignettes. After conducting the first few interviews for this study, I noted that self-reported episodes across each developmental period in the lifespan reflected a majority of the time spent. In the interest of time, probe questions in this expectation were asked more globally, that is, they were not asked and explored distinctly across each of the 4 developmental periods. Each theme will be explored in turn.

1. Self-reported and probed responses to the themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender (percentage of agreement = 83%)

a. Cultural/community affiliation

All of the 16 participants stated that their imaginative play reflected the theme of cultural/community affiliation in either in their self-reported episodes, or responses to probe questions, or in some instances, both. Nine participants self-reported without probes at least 1 episode reflecting this theme.

Examples of self-reported episodes reflecting this theme in early childhood include 1 participant who watched American situation comedies (such as "Three's Company") to distance herself from the tensions from her parents to be Mexican. Another participant, during his early childhood, enjoyed singing songs of Mexican origin with his family, pretending he was the

artists. In the elementary school years, examples included a participant who shared how she visited Mexico in the summer and used basic objects in the community, such as a tire, to play physical games like tag. Rather than play with store-bought toys, they often used objects in the community or at home and were encouraged to "figure out what to do with them." When in the United States, this same participant and her mother (and sometimes her brother) would engage in imaginative play in a similar manner, creating clay, noodle people, piñatas, and dioramas. She says, "since my mother grew up poor, she knew how to make stuff out of what she did have. We never went to the arts supply store…" In adolescence, a few participants continued to explore their community affiliations with Mexico and the United States by singing like the artists they liked from one or both countries. Finally, in adulthood, arts-based imaginative play continued for some, particularly the 2 participants who are now in a Spanish-language music group whose musical influences are of Mexican origin.

All 16 participants claimed that themes of cultural/community affiliation were relevant when probed, particularly in their answers to the probe question on the instances where imaginative play reflected connections to Mexico and/or the United States and the probe question which asked about the similarities and differences between imaginative play in both countries.

With respect to the probe question on connections to Mexico and/or the United States, 11 participants provided examples that reflect the importance of tools and relationships in their imaginative play as specific indicators of their affiliation with Mexico and/or the United States. Tools refer to community artifacts and practices present in their imaginative play such as music, humor, games, art, faith, and language and were mentioned by 8 participants. For example, a participant mentioned that his sense of humor is inspired by common practices of people from Mexico such as engaging in teasing and parody. In the latter category of relationships,

cultural/community affiliation was evidenced with respect to the importance of family as imaginative play partners and was mentioned by 3 participants. For example, a participant stated that "a big part of Mexican culture is….family. So, I'm proud of not only being Mexican, but also of the activities I do [with]…my family…[we] are really close and they are often the people I play with."

The probe question on the similarities and differences between imaginative play in both countries reflected their familiarity and affiliation with imaginative play practices in Mexico and the United States. Participants focused on differences with respect to the structure of imaginative play episodes, types of imaginative play activities, or the presence of imaginative play. With respect to structure, there were 4 participants who addressed imaginative play partners. For example, participants shared that the children in Mexico play with relatives more than with friends, as opposed to children in the United States. There were 9 participants who referenced imaginative play objects; participants shared that the children in Mexico use objects in the community since toys and technology are not as pervasive as they are in the United States. There were 8 participants who spoke about imaginative play locations. In this case, participants shared that children in Mexico play outdoors and on the roofs more than children do in the United States. With respect to activities, 6 participants referred to the kinds of play in which people take part. For example, participants stated that children in Mexico play soccer more than children do in the United States. Finally, 6 participants related differences with respect to the presence of play in the 2 countries; for instance, participants asserted that play is more supervised in the United States than in Mexico.

In summary, the participants stated that their imaginative play reflected affiliation with one or both of their communities of origin, Mexico and The United States. Episodes emerged out of

both spontaneous self-reports and responses to probe questions and evidenced that their communities' tools, relationships, and practices were of importance in shaping their life-span imaginative play around the theme of cultural/community affiliation, thus lending support to Expectation 2. What's more, the participants revealed their connections to both their Mexican and American origin, as evidenced in their awareness of both community's practices and beliefs with respect to imaginative play.

b. **Ethnic Identity**

Eight participants stated that their imaginative play reflected the theme of ethnic identity in either their self-reported episodes, or responses to probe questions, or in some instances, both. Five participants self-reported without probes at least 1 episode reflecting this theme. There was 1 example of self-reported episodes reflecting this theme in early childhood; a participant who enjoyed singing songs from artists of Mexican origin stated that doing so at this point and during his later developmental periods helped shape his identity as a performer of music from Mexico. In the elementary school years, a participant's engagement in imaginative play around telenovelas afforded her opportunities to explore the labels and practices of Mexican women of different socioeconomic statuses. In adolescence, delving into Spanish-language poetry and literature served as a means for a participant to explore and shape his ethnic identity as was his "Gaze Thinking." He says that at this time, he felt "in between 2 countries and languages," was "moving around a lot" as part of a migrant family, and stated that "I was looked down on from being from the south or from Mexico…I questioned my roots. I was born 10 minutes from the border, so I wasn't too sure what 'side' I belonged to…" In adulthood, a participant shared how his engagement in a Spanish-language music group shapes his identity as a male of Mexican origin.

99

A specific probe on ethnic identity was not asked since it was assumed that questions on cultural/community affiliation would likely also reflect understandings of the self within their community affiliations. There were 4 participants who made reference to the relationship between this theme and imaginative play across the probe questions. For example, a participant stated that she learns about herself as someone who has both lived in Mexico and the United States now that she teaches adults of Mexican origin and works with many colleagues of European-American origin. For example, she says that she is fortunate that she knows and has played games from both countries and that as a Latina, she can share these games with learners and colleagues alike, benefiting everyone's development and learning.

In summary, half of the participants stated that their imaginative play throughout their lives reflected the theme of ethnic identity. Episodes emerged out of both spontaneous self-reports and responses to probe questions asked in the context of cultural/community affiliation. The participants' responses evidenced that the labels they or others assign themselves are impacted by their interactions with the tools and practices of one or both communities of which they are a part, lending limited support to Expectation 2.

c. <u>Gender</u>

Twelve participants stated that their imaginative play reflected the theme of gender either in their self-reported episodes, or responses to probe questions, or in some instances, both. Two participants self-reported without probes at least 1 episode reflecting this theme, 1 in her elementary school years and 1 in adolescence. In the former, the participant who engaged in imaginative play around the Mexican telenovela "Muchachitas" stated that one of the motivations was to do a "girl" activity and explore what women of Mexican heritage and of different backgrounds were like. In the latter, the participant who engaged in imaginative play

with her friends around family dynamics (i.e., pretending that she and her friends were a family but, say did not have a father since he left them) gave her an opportunity to explore what females might do in the event a situation like this arises. In the first example, the participant's imaginative play explored recreating gender stereotypes, while in the latter, there appears to be evidence of challenging them (i.e., being resourceful and empowered in light of being a single parent). These 2 types of gender play were also included in the participants' responses to the probe question that specifically addressed the impact of being a Latino/a on their imaginative play episodes.

There were 11 participants who addressed the role of gender in their imaginative play based on their responses to the third probe question in Section II, Part C of the interview protocol. Participants' episodes reflected both recreating gender stereotypes and rejecting gender stereotypes. In the former, the participants recognized that Mexican culture has certain expectations for gender-appropriate behavior and imaginative play was an activity where these expectations were explicitly or implicitly present. There were 8 participants who referenced this behavior in their play. For example, a participant mentioned how she explored traditional gender roles in her Barbie and doll play in her early childhood years; in addition, a participant stated that his "alpha male" personality is expected by the community of Mexican origin and is evident in his athletic, competitive play. Finally, another recalled "playing sexy," in high school and doing so because "Latinas are supposed to be sexy."

In the latter category of challenging gender stereotypes, participants recognize that there are certain expectations for gender-appropriate behavior and imaginative play was an activity where these expectations were abandoned. There were 7 participants who referenced this behavior in their play. For example, a participant mentioned that his art activities and associations with

others have been sources to explore alternate gender expression and question established beliefs about gender identity or sexual orientation. A female participant stated that her teasing others and "saying what's on her mind" is non-traditional for females of Mexican origin. She says "…as a Latina, I like being forward, calling someone 'Gorda' [fat]….that's very non-traditional and I'm told to hold back."

In summary, in support of Expectation 2, 12 participants stated that their imaginative play throughout their lives reflected the theme of gender. Episodes emerged out of both spontaneous self-reports and responses to probe questions and evidenced that this theme reflected both recreating gender stereotypes of the community of Mexican heritage as well as challenging such stereotypes. What's more, as expected, both male and female participants provided examples of this theme.

2. **Themes of cultural/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender in vignettes**

   a. **Vignette reflecting theme of cultural/community affiliation (percentage of agreement = 94%)**

The participants overall enjoyed this vignette and endorsed the playfulness both present in it and inspired by it. All participants embraced the playfulness of the protagonist's response to the Mexican-themed costume party, such as stating that the protagonist was "going all out" to become the character or stating that what the protagonist was doing was "awesome."

Fifteen participants stated that they would attend a similar costume party with a theme of dressing up as a person of Mexican heritage, living or dead, and expressed interest not only in the possibility of the event, but also in honoring Mexican culture and history with their choice of costume. The only person who rejected the idea did so because this type of party for her would

be weird to attend, whether in Mexico or in the United States. Costume choices of Mexican heritage were situated with 4 categories: Popular Artists (e.g., Gloria Trevi or Selena), Political Figures (e.g., Benito Juarez or Subcomandante Marcos), Fantastic Characters (e.g., La India Maria or Chappulín Colorado), or Other (e.g., "myself"). One participant offered 2 possibilities to this question. Therefore, there were 5 participants who chose a Popular Artist, 5 participants who chose a Political Figure, 5 participants who chose a Fantastic Character, and 1 participant who chose Other. In order to prepare for this party, 12 participants would do research on, create, buy, and/or use a prop such as a costume; the other 3 stated that they would practice acting like the person to be convincing at the party.

b. <u>Vignette reflecting theme of ethnic identity (percentage of agreement = 100%)</u>

The participants had mixed reactions to this vignette with respect to the activities of the protagonist (i.e., changing a Spanish-language first name to an English-language equivalent) and their identification with him or her. There was a nearly-even split between favorable and unfavorable responses to the protagonist's activity. There were 6 participants who saw the protagonist's imaginative activity as favorable (e.g., as way to explore other identities or possibilities) and 7 participants who viewed the protagonist's activity as unfavorable (e.g., as an indication that the protagonist was unhappy with himself or herself or against Mexican culture). Mixed reactions were found in 3 participants who responded both favorably and unfavorably to the protagonist's activity. For example, a participant stated that she honored the curiosity the protagonist had and thought it may be a relevant form of imagining for her, but considered it unfortunate that she does this.

When asked if they had imagined themselves as someone other than who they are, the participants were once again mixed in their responses. There were 9 participants who replied affirmatively while 7 participants did not reply affirmatively. In the case of affirmative responses, the participants did not only address the type of transformation in which the protagonist engaged. That said, there were 3 types of affirmative responses. The first was an alignment with the protagonist's possible ethnic identity change, i.e., imagining oneself as being White or European-American. There were 4 participants who mentioned this type of imaginative activity. One participant recalled that as a child she desired to live with people who were wealthier than her family and who spoke English (not Spanish) as their first language and claimed that this was likely due to the presence of White culture in her life and as portrayed in the movies. The second type of response addressed exploring other life dynamics or situations, but examples here were not necessarily addressed as "White." In this case, there were 3 participants. For example, a participant stated that she has sometimes wondered what it would be like if she had fewer siblings or if her family had nicer cars. The final type of identity change was the use of Aliases; there were 2 participants who have used aliases when representing their art.

Of the 7 participants who did not reply affirmatively, there were 2 types of reasons given. One was pride, that is, pride for being who they are and, often, for being Mexican. There were 4 participants in this group. The other group, with 2 participants, had no reason, i.e., the need or desire to engage in such a transformation of identity had not ever crossed their minds. Finally, there was 1 participant who had no response.

c. <u>Vignette 3 reflecting theme of gender (percentage of agreement = 100%)</u>

Fifteen participants saw what the protagonist was doing (i.e., engaging in imaginative play in a gender non-conforming profession) as favorable; one of the participants did not answer the questions of this vignette. There were 12 participants who stated that the participant got "freedom" or the chance to explore possibilities for careers within this instance of imaginative play while 3 participants focused on the prospects of changing jobs outside of the imaginative play sphere. However, none of the participants perceived this activity as odd or unfamiliar.

In fact, 10 of the participants also stated that their own imaginative play has explored going against traditional gender expectations while 5 claimed that going against gender roles had not been evident in their imaginative play. For the 10 respondents who answered affirmatively responses took 4 forms. The first one was in the form of adult responsibilities, such as employment or parenting. There were 7 participants who had an example in this category; one participant claimed that she has imagined herself in traditionally male-dominated professions such as an electrician. The second category was athletic activities, mentioned by 4 participants, and can be illustrated in a female participant's episode of using the PDX 90 videos to build muscle and acting masculine, flexing, and using a deeper voice when engaged in the activity. The third category referred to childhood imaginative play, mentioned by 2 participants; for instance, a participant claimed that playing restaurant or teacher with his sister during his elementary school years is not common for young boys of Mexican heritage. The fourth category was prop use, such as the use of clothing, jewelry, or other accessories commonly used of the opposite gender. There were 2 males in this category who have used jewelry or apparel commonly worn by women in their imaginative play, such as a participant who wears an earring to reflect his association with the Hip Hop community.

Five participants claimed that they did not play against gender roles. Three participants mentioned that they had no "issues" with gender with respect to their imaginative play. For example, one of these participants mentioned athletic activities he has done that are typically associated with females (e.g., volleyball or ballet). He asserts that he is comfortable with gender issues since he was raised exclusively by his mother and grandmother when he lived in Mexico while his father stayed in the United States, not reuniting with his father till he returned to the United States during his elementary school years. The other 2 participants had no reason.

In summary, almost all the participants' responses to the first vignette show that the theme of cultural/community affiliation may be evidenced in their own play much like that of the protagonist of the vignette. The activity of the protagonist in the second vignette on the theme of ethnic identity was less favorable to the participants but about half of the participants were able to find a related episode of identity transformation that was fitting to their lives, though not necessarily on the theme of ethnic identity. Finally, the activity of the protagonist in the third vignette on the theme of gender was seen favorably by nearly all the participants and inspired many of them to relate that at some point in their lives that they have engaged in imaginative play that challenged gender stereotypes. Therefore, the responses to vignettes also provide support for the second expectation that themes of cultural/community affiliation and gender would be meaningfully expressed in the participants' life-span imaginative play. However, the issue of ethnic identity as presented in the vignette was controversial for this group, suggesting that this theme may be one that is less comfortable for some of the participants to share and find relevant to their imaginative play at least in the manner as presented in the narrative of the vignette.

Expectation 2 received support for the presence of themes of cultural/community affiliation and gender across the self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, and responses to vignettes.

C. Expectation 3

The final expectation that participants' life-span imaginative play would be beneficial across multiple developmental domains and contexts was examined in terms of 2 analyses: first, benefits of imaginative play across the lifespan and the similarities of and differences between the benefits of imaginative play in childhood and adulthood and, second, the presence of and possibilities for imaginative play in formal learning environments.

1. Benefits of imaginative play across the lifespan

a. Benefits of imaginative play in adulthood, and in childhood and adolescence (percentage of agreement = 87%)

It is important to state at the outset that all 16 participants claimed that their imaginative play in their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood has been beneficial to them. To reflect the first three questions in the third section of interview protocol, discussion at this time first focused on the benefits of current imaginative play and then previous imaginative play, and, as such, discussion in this section reflects the emergent codes that reflect the benefits of their imaginative play in adulthood and in their childhood and adolescence. First, I will discuss the categories in common to both time periods (i.e., Relationship Building, Self-Awareness[2], Joy, Flexibility[3], and Stress Reduction). After that, the ones that are germane to only adulthood will be presented (i.e.,

_____

[2] The category of "Self-Awareness" had 67% reliability in childhood and adolescence.

[3] The category of "Flexibility" had 67% reliability in adulthood.

Focus). Finally, the codes germane only to childhood (i.e., Knowledge of Community and Social Skills) will be discussed.

With respect to benefits of imaginative play in adulthood, 6 categories were created: Relationship Building, Self-Awareness, Joy, Flexibility, Stress Reduction, and Focus. Relationship building emerged as a category based on the participants' reports that their imaginative play supports the creating and sustaining of connections with people in their lives. Relationship building was the most common benefit mentioned in adulthood: 12 participants reported it. These relationships included family, co-workers, and students. Based on frequencies, family was the most important source of relationship building in imaginative play in adulthood. Nine participants stated that building relationships with family was a benefit of their current imaginative play. For instance, a participant stated how imaginative play with her family helps them spend time together and learn with and from each other:

> "[f]or the movie night [imaginative play episode], I think it benefits us in that we don't really get to spend time with my sister and her husband and the kids and everything. But when it comes to the movie night, I think we like take advantage of [it]…we sit around and play with them and watch a movie and everything. And we take advantage and it benefits us by spending more time with them…."

Particular family members were also mentioned. For example, relationships with significant others were enhanced because of imaginative play. One participant shared how important a playful spouse and play with his spouse are to him and their relationship, "…I mean, I didn't marry a girl with no sense of humor. I married a woman with a great sense of humor because I love that and… it's something that keeps us grounded in our love for each other." Similarly, the participants' relationships with their children also grow as a result of engaging in imaginative play with them. One participant speaks to this subcategory when she says:

> "It [imaginative play] makes me connect more with my kids. And that's a big thing for me because I want my kids to come to me whenever they have a problem. I wanna be

able to help them so that my kids don't go through the problems I went through as a child and adolescent. I wanna make sure my kids don't get involved with gangs and…even engage in sexual, risky sexual activity, get someone pregnant. I mean, being an easy mom, in the good sense, a funny mom, a charismatic mom…I think it'll have a positive influence in my kids' lives. It'll enable them to open up with me because, I'm not…too serious."

Finally, siblings were also mentioned as specific family members whose relationships develop when they engage in imaginative play together. For example, a participant shared "I have a good relationship with them [my siblings]….instead of sitting there really talking bad about each other, we're just having fun. And then like instead of saying something the wrong way…you kinda throw it in there and they won't get it as bad."

Relationships at work also benefit from imaginative play activity and were reported by 3 participants. For example, the following participant shared how imaginative play not only builds relationships with the children who attend her daycare, but also with their families:

"..It [imaginative play] helps me try to see who people are. And some of the things that we can also see is that if we do a mistake how do others react. And if they do a mistake, how do I react? It's kind of funny because for example one of the kids [in her daycare] knows I am not going to get mad but he also thinks that I'm going to say something. So he tries to hide it and not say anything but I know something happened and he did something. But after a certain point he tells me, "Oh yes, this happened" or he just tells me…I also gain trust from others: family, children and their parents in the daycare can come up and know I will listen and I can go up to the parents and tell them what their children are thinking."

As seen in adulthood, Relationship Building was one of the most popular benefits reported for imaginative play in childhood and adolescence: 6 participants discussed it. Relationships with their friends and family were specified. With respect to friends, a participant shared how her imaginative play when she was younger helped her to learn who her "real friends" were and whom she could trust. With respect to family, the benefits of their imaginative play on their relationships with their own children were mentioned by 2 participants. These participants focused on how the play they did as children currently benefits them since such play is or will be

shared with their own sons and daughters. For example, a participant shared how the Halloween costume creating he did with his family as a child sets the stage for creating play with his daughter now:

> I think costumes and like all that stuff, like creating stuff with my family, that set, all those good things, all those good things that I know that have been good influences on me, those are things that I know I am going to do with my daughter now. So, I just think that building that as a child or making kids comfortable expressing themselves at a young age, it just shows them...how to facilitate that for other people. And for me, the way that my dad facilitated our creativity, my mom did, like that showed me how to do that for my daughter, how to put her in a place where she can express herself. And give her room to…develop.

Finally, 1 participant shared that her childhood and adolescent play helps in her current work life. She says, "being a leader and being a team player in my play in childhood with other children helps me in my current work."

Self Awareness emerged based on the participants' claims that their imaginative play gives them a sense of who they are and what interests them. Self Awareness was discussed by 7 participants in adulthood. For example, a participant shared how imaginative play with her younger relatives helps her learn about what possible career interests she might have: "being around people or now with kids, you know, like for example, it might help me in the future if I may wanna have a day care or stuff. I would know how that would that go…how that is, you know, [by] playing…you know, when it comes up to playing with kids in a day care and stuff. Or maybe that would tell me, 'Ok, no, this is not what I wanna do.' " As well, another participant shared how his imaginative play in adulthood helps him learn about himself, when he stated that "[Imaginative play] gives me a sense of who I am."

Self Awareness was mentioned as a benefit in childhood and adolescence by 6 participants. One shared how important his imaginative play was in helping him discover the activities he enjoys: "It [imaginative play] allowed me to find out the things I enjoy. The things that made me

110

happy. And I pursue that nowadays and a lot of the things that made me happy as a young child make me happy today. So it gave me a chance to explore, to figure that out…" Another participant echoed such sentiments when he said, "those [imaginative play activities] are like the foundations of where you start building your creativity. You know, like when you look at those situations you're like, 'Oh man, the stuff I was doing as a kid, you know, well I kinda had this time that molded me into who I have become.'"

Joy emerged as a category based on the participants' claims that their imaginative play brings about happiness. Joy was mentioned by 6 participants based on their imaginative play in adulthood. For example, a participant said, "Playing around helps your soul. You keep being motivated and happy and not, you know, always the same…" Another participant stated that his imaginative play in adulthood "…is fun. I enjoy it. You know it's fun to dream and imagine that I'm growing…that I'm becoming something, something greater….a better person…."

Joy was a benefit of imaginative play during childhood and adolescence for 3 participants. For instance, a participant stated that "happiness…was a major thing which is now there but then was the major reason why I was doing it [playing]. The main reason why I'm doing it now altogether make me happy but before it was just being happy, having a good time, not worrying about anything else, just playing. I think that's all it used to be: just playing, and having a good time."

The fourth category, Flexibility, was created based on participants' statements that imaginative play activities bring about plasticity of thoughts and actions; the emphasis here is on cognitive benefits and included 4 participants in adulthood and 3 participants for childhood and adolescent imaginative play. For instance, a participant claimed that his current imaginative play yields benefits such as "adapting…problem solving...multi-tasking and trying different things."

111

Another participant stated that as a result of his current imaginative play, "I'm thinking, I'm constantly thinking and I think that has changed the way I look at many things in life because now I try, ahh, analyze everything." Finally, a participant stated that the imaginative play she did when she was younger helped her develop capacities to comprehend situations or problems with limited information and another said that her imaginative play when she was a child helped "expand [her] mind."

Stress Reduction was defined as helping one relax and cope with taxing life situations. Stress Reduction was included in the comments of 2 participants in adulthood; one of them shared how her life as a single mother is less stressful because she engages in imaginative play as an adult:

> I am very high-stressed all the time. It's me doing everything: it's me buying the groceries, doing the laundry carrying two sacks with two kids on the side. I'm the one who has to worry about how to pay the bills. So if I didn't have that playful side to me, dude, I would go crazy. I mean, this is the way I cope. Some people may say it's wrong, to always cope with a joke or with laughter, but to me it's the only way I can get around it.

Stress Reduction was reported by 3 participants based on childhood and adolescent imaginative play. For instance, a participant claimed that her imaginative play "was a way to let go. It was a way to let loose. Elementary school is stressful for many reasons, both for personal reasons and academic reasons….So it [imaginative play] was a way to escape too." In support of this statement, another participant claimed that the stresses of her family and school life were alleviated to some extent by engaging in imaginative play. She says, "[imaginative play] released… the tension, perhaps the anxiety that I'm sure when I was a kid, when I was exposed to all these problems in my household then it made me feel good at that time. Absolutely…it helped me cope and not take…what other kids were saying about me seriously… [or] so personal."

The category for adulthood only, Focus, was defined as a benefit of imaginative play that provides one motivation for or orientation to the activities in which one engages. Two participants were included in the final category of Focus; each shared how their imaginative play in adulthood helps "keep them on track." For example, a participant stated that her imaginative play helps keep her motivated and the other participant shared how his current imaginative play "…helps me stay focused on what I want to do. It…sets me on a path you know that I need to …invest in..."

The first of 2 categories particular only to childhood and adolescence was Knowledge of Community. It was defined as increased understanding of the rules and practices of one or more communities of which the participants have been a part. It was also one of the more commonly occurring categories at this time in the lifespan: 6 participants were included in this one. For example, a participant shared "we learned, like when we played store, we would do things like our parents did when they were at the store. And now that we go to the store, we actually like now go by ourselves and we know how to do it and stuff." In addition, a participant stated that imaginative play helped him learn about community roles. He says:

> "…in our young days we learn how to socialize. We go to kindergarten because we don't know how to socialize. And play is the vehicle about which to create a nonthreatening environment. I think more in our teen years we sorta build social norms, right? So this idea that, 'this is OK in this context, but that's not OK in that context.' Sort of like doing hypothetical contexts. Right? 'I'm a doctor. You're a nurse.' …it's sorta like, 'Whoa! The nurse doesn't do that. Whoa! The doctor doesn't do that! Whoa! The patient definitely doesn't do that. Let's fix that up.' "

The second category for the benefits of imaginative play only in childhood and adolescence, Social Skills, was created based on participants' claims that their imaginative play at these times developed interpersonal abilities, but focused more so on how to interact well with others overall, and not necessarily to enhance specific relationships. Social Skills was mentioned by 5

participants. One participant shared how her imaginative play developed her leadership skills when she organized a school production with her classmates for Teacher's Day in Mexico. Another stated that her childhood imaginative play assisted in her "…not being afraid of being with other people…."

In summary, all participants stated that their imaginative play throughout their lives has been of benefit to them in different ways including, in order of most common to least common responses, opportunities to build relationships, learn about themselves and others, create joy, be open to new ideas, and reduce stress. With the exception of a few emergent codes, self-reported benefits were present in both their current and previous imaginative play. As well, these benefits were present in contexts such as at home, at school, and at work. Based on their reports, the study reveals support for the aspect of Expectation 3 that stated that participants would report benefits of their imaginative play across multiple developmental domains and contexts.

b. **Similarities and differences with respect to the benefits of imaginative play in childhood and adulthood (percentage of agreement = 100%)**

After discussing the benefits of their current and previous imaginative play, the next question asked if there were similarities and differences with respect to these benefits. When considering the participants' responses to the similarities and differences between the benefits of previous and current imaginative play, 3 categories were created: Awareness, Ongoing, and Impacting. The category of Awareness was defined as the change in the participants' consciousness that their imaginative play has been beneficial to their learning and development; in other words, the participants in this category asserted that they were more attentive now to the presence and kinds of benefits of their imaginative play than when they were younger. There were 8 participants in

this category. One participant shared her insights on this category of awareness and how she uses

it to her advantage in her life:

> Well, the benefits now that I'm consciously aware of what makes me feel good and I do it
> as opposed to doing it as a child and adolescent because I was just…[I] simply did not
> know. I just thought it was funny. You know, but now, ok, I know that…I'm more aware
> of what makes me feel good. And I work towards developing that ability to do it more
> often to bring happiness into my life. To bring love into my life. To bring acceptance
> about myself.

The second category, Ongoing, is based off of the participants' claims that there is no

difference in the benefits of imaginative play across the lifespan; the focus here is on the

continuity of benefits across the lifespan. This category included 4 participants. While they saw

the benefits of their imaginative play as no different between the 2 developmental periods, they

did note that what may differ may be based on the structure of play episodes such as partners,

locations, or motivations. For example, a participant shared how her life-long imaginative play

has been similarly beneficial throughout her life but her play partners may differ:

> [I]t's the same benefit it just takes on new meaning at different stages of your life. In both
> ways, I was making sense of my world so it was functional in that way but at the same
> time, playing back then and playing now, it's a way for me to escape, to have fun, to
> relax, and really enjoy it. And I learn a lot from it, just as much now as I did then,
> whether I am doing it with adults or kids.

Likewise, a different participant shared how his play has always brought him joy, but what

determines that joy may be specific to particular times in his life and life experiences,

"Happiness…is always gonna be the same….And now, I'm getting a lot more out of it….but all

of that makes me happy. So, back in the day, just having fun made me happy and now other

things make me happy, so just the determinants of what makes me happy are different."

Impacting reflects the comments made by the participants that their imaginative play in

childhood and adolescence provided opportunities to learn about the expectations of activities

that are now performed with ease in adulthood; while it is still a benefit, the focus in this

category is on the relationship between the imaginative play activity of childhood and adolescence and its impact on adult functioning in non-play contexts. There are 4 participants who are included in the category of Impacting, as seen in the following comment:

> "Everything I learned back then came into my life now. And everything that I'm learning now is gonna come to play in the future, whether it's maybe teaching one day or with my grandchildren, or with whatever, it's a learning process. What I learned back then is working for me now. And what I'm learning now is probably gonna work for me later."

In summary, some of the participants contended that the benefits of their imaginative play have been similar between the 2 times in the lifespan, stating that previous benefits have impacted current functioning and have had similar effects throughout their lives. Some participants stated that the difference in benefits between the two times in their lives was the awareness of such benefits. Based on their responses, there is additional support for the third expectation that imaginative play is a beneficial life-span activity whose benefits span multiple developmental domains and contexts.

2. **The presence of and possibilities for imaginative play in formal learning environments**

   a. **Examples of imaginative play in the participants' formal learning environments (percentage of agreement = 90%)**

Eight participants shared at least one example of imaginative play that they had in their formal learning environments. Five participants believed that imaginative play had not been part of their formal learning environments at any time in the lifespan. There were 3 participants who shared both examples of school-based imaginative play as well as instances where imaginative play was absent in school. No participants shared examples of imaginative play that took place in the early childhood years; therefore the aspect of the third expectation that claimed that examples of imaginative play in the participants' formal schooling would emerge from this time in the

116

lifespan has not been met. The examples that were given reflected all times in the lifespan with the exception of early childhood.

The participants offered examples of imaginative play in their elementary school years, high school, and post-high school formal learning environments and the significance of these episodes in these developmental periods were reported. From their responses, 4 categories of importance were created: Applicability, Engagement, Interaction, and No Importance. Applicability was defined as creating imaginative contexts in which course content was more real-world and pertinent to the participants' current and future activities. Imaginative play activities for 7 participants were included in the category of Applicability. For example, a participant stated that an activity she did in her business courses where learners needed to create a fictional business plan and imagine they were seeking supporters for it (i.e., other classmates) helped her act out what it might really be like to make and promote a real business plan as a professional in the future.

Engagement reflects that imaginative play in formal learning environments makes activities fun and based on their interests. There were 5 participants who attributed the importance of Engagement to their imaginative play in formal schooling. There were 2 participants who found it engaging that their high school English teachers encouraged their students to write about their own interests and explore their imagination within the structure of a formal essay. The third category, Interaction, was created based on the statements of participants who found that imaginative play activities in their formal learning environments have helped them socialize with teachers and classmates. This category includes 2 participants. For example, a participant enjoyed the interactions with classmates she would have when they did math contests in elementary school where the person who got the most correct answers quickest was the winner

(sometimes she) and was rewarded by being able to "play teacher" and help other students. The final category was No Importance, reflecting that one or more examples of imaginative play in their formal learning environments have not been substantive. The final category, No Importance, had 2 participants and both their examples reflect that their experiences with acting and drama activities in elementary school were not significant.

All participants who stated that imaginative play has not been a part of their formal schooling at least at some point in their academic careers claimed a negative consequence for the lack of imaginative play, converging on 2 ideas: being disadvantaged from academic and employment possibilities and being disengaged from previous and current formal learning experiences. For example, a participant stated that if there had been imaginative play in her early school experiences, it might have helped her learn better. Furthermore, there were 3 participants who stated that particular post-secondary academic and employment choices were less likely or extensive due to the absence of imaginative play. Finally, with respect to disengagement from school, a participant stated that he found his elementary school fearful: learners were not allowed to socialize and teachers got upset when learners tried to talk with each other, causing him to "shut down" at school.

In sum, it was expected that these episodes of imaginative play in formal learning environments would emerge from the early childhood years and that was not the case for these participants since early childhood was the only developmental period from which they did not draw examples. This may be due to a host of factors including the possibility that they may not have attended early childhood education centers and may not have considered early childhood education as formal schooling. However, a majority of the participants stated that imaginative play has taken place in their formal learning environments after early childhood and the majority

118

of them found it to be of benefit to their learning and development. Also, as expected, participants reported the absence of imaginative play in formal schooling across multiple developmental periods. The participants who spoke of the lack of imaginative play at some point in their formal schooling referenced the deleterious effects it had on their learning and development both during and after their formal school attendance. Based on these responses, there is additional evidence to support this expectation that imaginative play affords developmental benefits but raises questions about the presence of imaginative play in formal learning environments in primarily the early childhood years.

b. <u>Participant suggestions for imaginative play in formal learning environments (percentage of agreement = 87%)</u>

Fourteen participants shared at least 1 suggestion of how imaginative play should take place in formal learning environments. One participant had no suggestions, stating schools probably already have everything they need. Another participant had some suggestions for how imaginative play could take place in formal schooling, but he had reservations about the presence of imaginative play in formal learning environments. For those who shared suggestions of imaginative play, 5 categories were created: Role Playing/Pretend Play[4], Group Projects, Hands-on Activities, Learner-Centered Curriculum, and Increased Presence of the Arts.

The first category, Role Playing/Pretend Play, was defined as instructional and assessment activities that involve imaginative play where learners may adopt a role of other than who they are or engage in creating a fun, imaginary context – with or without props. This was the most popular category as 8 participants' suggestions were included. Most of the suggestions of this

---

[4] The category of "Role Playing/Pretend Play" had 75% reliability.

category reflected curricular or instructional approaches, but there was an instance of the possibility for imaginative play to be used in assessment. With respect to curriculum and instruction, one participant suggested that it would be interesting to play different, possible roles (e.g., professions) for one's future. As well, a different participant thought that classroom activities like mock trials would be a good way to address historical, political, and social issues. Finally, a participant suggested an intersection between imaginative play and assessment: learners could present to others what they have learned in the form of a game or a play.

The definition of Group Projects is imaginative instructional and assessment activities collaboratively and playfully engaged in by learners, teachers, or other adults. It was also a popular category since it included responses from 8 participants. While most participants spoke generally about the importance of group projects, a couple of participants offered details to their suggestion. For example, a participant suggested that schools use imaginative play as a form of building the classroom community, that is, using games and play to build teams who learn to work well together. Another participant suggested that schools can provide spaces for clubs, sports, and volunteering for learners and such organized activities can be quasi-supervised: learners do not have to sit in their seats, multiple conversations can occur at once, and adults do not direct or lead all the activities, stepping in as needed when the learners need help "learning the ropes" of a particular situation or activity.

The third category, Hands-on Activities, was defined as instructional and assessment activities that ignore direct instruction, textbooks, standardized tests, or other traditional methods of teaching and assessing learners. Rather, activities in this category exercise the learners' imagination, may take place outside the classroom, and address contextualized, meaningful experiences for them. This category included 6 participants. Like in the previous category,

participants tended to offer broad statements about the importance of hands-on activities; however, there were a couple of specific examples for instruction given. For example, a participant suggested learners attend more museum exhibits where they can learn through and in nature to explore science concepts or collect and categorize information in playful ways.

Learner-Centered Curriculum was defined as curriculum that is more "bottom up," that is, curriculum that follows learners' interests and building off of these interests to inform what is taught; while learners' interests may in fact be included the other categories, this category explicitly builds on learner input whereas the other ones appear to be teacher-initiated. This category had 6 participants. One participant warned against compelling learners to do something, saying "Don't make kids draw if they don't want to draw; if they like playing in the sand just let them." Another participant agrees with this statement, adding, "Give kids free time to just beat a drum or do whatever interests them."

The last category, Increased Use of the Arts, includes instructional and assessment activities that involve use of media such as music or video. Five participants were included in this category. For example, a participant suggested using Hip-Hop to teach art and address issues in the political and social sciences. Music was suggested by 2 participants who both stated that all children should learn a musical instrument. Finally, a participant suggested a way to teach learners about Mexican heritage: create a festival about a person of Mexican origin and in this festival include paintings, drawings, and other performances in addition to more traditional academic presentations.

In summary, nearly all of the participants, 15, suggested that formal learning environments include imaginative play activity to provide quality, effective opportunities for students to learn and develop and to explore their community and their personal interests in meaningful ways. In

light of their comments that the presence of imaginative play in formal learning environments is valuable, there is support for this aspect of Expectation 3 that participants would offer meaningful suggestions for the inclusion of imaginative play in in the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of learners across the lifespan and that these suggestions would emerge based on their own definitions and experiences.

Expectation 3 received support on many levels, such as the provision of benefits across the lifespan and across multiple developmental domains and contexts, the presence and absence of imaginative play in formal learning environments, and suggestions for inclusion of imaginative play in formal learning environments.

V. DISCUSSION

This chapter has 4 parts. First, the results of the study will be discussed. Second, the significance of the study's method will be addressed. Next, the study's limitations will be presented. Finally, suggestions for future research will be offered.

The present study advances our conceptualization of imaginative play as a life-span, cultural activity by interviewing and building understanding with a sample of adults of Mexican heritage. The data emerged based on a derived etic approach where the participants' meaning of the phenomenon of imaginative play situated if and how it has occurred in their lives and if and how such activity has been beneficial towards their learning and development. In doing so, the study addressed both how the participants' responses reflected current conceptualizations of imaginative play as a life-span activity in the fields of human development and education as well as contributed new understandings to these conceptualizations. In particular, these new understandings of imaginative play came from not being limited in how developmental theory addresses imaginative play (e.g., communities or age groups studied) but from "leveling the playing field" per se by inviting the meanings and possibilities of imaginative play from participants of a community whose perspectives on this phenomenon have been previously ignored.

The participants enthusiastically participated and reported the presence and significance of their life-span imaginative play. As revealed in their interviews that exceeded an hour, the participants had much to share about this topic. Once they were engaged in the interviews, they dedicated themselves and their time to them. In the course of what emerged as a playful dialogue, they reflected upon what matters to them and how just, engaging, and powerful a life-span, cultural lens on their imaginative play activities might be. Based on the participants'

123

eagerness and responses, we might, then, consider the data offered by them as representing the presence and benefits of imaginative play in this community of Mexican-American adults.

While this study has been anchored in the previous literature, it also broadens our understanding of how a community of Mexican-American adults is engaging in imaginative play, what examples the play takes, why this activity is meaningful, how this activity may benefit their community, and how it may be situated in formal learning contexts across the lifespan. That said, in what follows, I will discuss the study's findings and do so first with respect to the previous literature, illustrating continuities between it and the present findings. After that, I will articulate the unique features of imaginative play in the community of Mexican-American adults who participated in the present study.

Based on the participants' responses to questions about their definitions and self-reported episodes and benefits of imaginative play, the previous literature is supported in five areas. These five areas are: their definitions of the word "play," the life-span presence of imaginative play, the motivation to engage in imaginative play to reflect lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and to reflect the psycho-social concerns proffered by Erikson, the presence of themes such as cultural/community affiliation and gender, and benefits of life-span imaginative play.

In the first area, all participants, as expected, provided definitions of the word "play." Though not equal in frequency, their definitions of "play" as ludic, interactive, narrative, and exploratory were evidenced. As such they honor what may constitute "play" in general as conceptualized in the previous literature (e.g., Smith & Vollstedt, 1985; Sutton-Smith, 1999). As I will discuss later, however, their description of imagination differs from the previous literature and reflects their local meanings of the word.

In the second area, anchored in their definitions, as expected, all the participants reported life-span engagement in imaginative play with only 2 participants not recalling imaginative play occurring in early childhood. Their reports of imaginative play support the emerging conceptualization of imaginative play as a life-span activity (e.g., Göncü & Perone, 2005). Taken a step further, participants frequently recalled multiple episodes of imaginative play in each of the four times in their life spans. What's more, the presence of life-span, imaginative play in the community of Mexican-Americans supports its cross-cultural presence as proffered in the extant literature (e.g., Huizinga, 1949; Turner, 1969; 1982).

In fact, the presence of the participants' life-span imaginative play has not steadily declined, as was initially expected, leading us to question the developmental phenomenon of imaginative play as an activity that fails to exist after early childhood (e.g., Fein, 1981; Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky 1978) or as a life-span activity that declines over time (e.g., Harris & Beggan, 1993). There are 3 pieces of evidence to support this statement. First, as a group, the highest total number of episodes remembered by the participants across the 4 developmental periods were self-reported during the elementary school years, with adulthood the second highest, early childhood the third highest, and adolescence the lowest. Second, only 3 participants had the fewest number of episodes self-reported in adulthood. Third, 7 participants reported the highest number of imaginative play episodes in their adulthood.

With respect to the third area, with developmental differences to be addressed later, the participants' life-span engagement in imaginative play also provided evidence for the aspect of the first expectation that stated that their imaginative play would address lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences. All participants' imaginative play addressed lived and anticipated

experiences in at least one period of their development and all but 1 participant explored fantastic experiences in at least one period of their development.

It appears that the participants' realities, broadly construed, shape their imaginative play activity. In this case, previous literature on the motivation to engage in imaginative play as a means of addressing lived and anticipated experiences in early childhood, based on the work of Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1978) is supported, as is the presence of fantastical experiences as seen in work describing the imaginative play of young children of European-American origin (e.g., Paley, 1981; 1990). In addition, their imaginative play reveals their desires to continue to represent their realities across their lifespans with respect to lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences and provides support why participants would engage in imaginative play beyond the early childhood years. The emergent themes based on these broader sources of representations will be discussed later.

In addition, the reason offered in this dissertation to engage in imaginative play beyond early childhood that drew upon the work of Erikson (1963) was also supported. Support emerged out of their answers to questions on the importance of their self-reported episodes and less so on their responses to the probe questions. Based on my experiences conducting these interviews and interpreting their responses, I can speculate a couple of reasons why these motivations were not reported in the probe questions. First, it is possible that the participants did not recall these particular concerns or consider them for their imaginative play at particular developmental periods when probed. Second, the probe questions were not clear for some of the participants, who, for instance, were not sure how "school experiences" might come up in their imaginative play, despite my attempts to restate the probe. Therefore, probe questions on these motivations may need to be revised in future work on this topic. However, the participants did

126

state that their imaginative play may address Eriksonian concerns throughout their lives when the emergent codes in this area are considered; additional discussion of these emergent motivations will appear later in the chapter.

In consideration of the fourth area, the participants' realities were also represented in their play via the themes of cultural/community affiliation and gender, but not of the theme of ethnic identity. With respect to cultural/community affiliation, all the participants stated that at least one example of their imaginative play reflected this theme. Their alignment with this theme emerged in their self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, and vignettes. With respect to self-reported episodes, examples surfaced such as creating objects of Mexican heritage such as piñatas or engagement in play with music of both Mexican and European-American origin. Responses to probe questions also revealed this theme. For example, the presence of imaginative play in cultural celebrations of Mexican origin such as Los Dias de Los Muertos (e.g., Sayer, 2009) was reported, thus supporting the presence of imagination in such contexts and evidenced in the celebrations and rituals of other communities (e.g., Drewal, 1992; Huizinga, 1949; Turner. 1969; 1982). In addition, the participants' responses to the probe question on the similarities and differences with respect to imaginative play in Mexico and the United States illustrated their familiarity with the practices and values of imaginative play in both countries such as the contexts (e.g., partners, objects, and locations), themes, and support of this type of activity. Related to this previous point, though not the case for all participants, six of them stated that they engaged in imaginative play in both Mexico and the United States. Finally, the vignette on attending a costume party with the theme of dressing up as a person of Mexican heritage was ardently supported by nearly all the participants (15) who not only stated that they would attend a

similar event, but were also thoughtful about whom they would represent, selected someone of Mexican origin, and offered details as to how they would effect this characterization.

The 16 participants' responses on the theme of cultural/community affiliation across items reveals two important insights. First, it suggests that play represents and creates culture and community. That is, play is not simply an activity of a culture, a dependent variable per se that is impacted by culture and community affiliation. It is more pervasive than that; as Huizinga (1949) claims, play is an interpretive activity in which culture and community are recreated. For the participants, this pervasiveness may be the case as the theme of cultural/community affiliation was present across multiple community practices, such as the arts, celebrations, athletic activities, and religious practices. Second, these participants were willing to explicitly relate themes of cultural/community affiliation to their imaginative play indicating that the theme of cultural/community affiliation is worth addressing when considering individuals' imaginative play; therefore, this theme should be included in future psychological studies on this topic.

With respect to gender, all the participants stated that at least one example of their imaginative play reflected this theme. Their alignment with this theme emerged in their self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, and vignettes. With respect to self-reported episodes, examples surfaced such as recreating episodes of telenovelas as means of understanding stereotypical roles of Latinas as well as "playing house" where they explored empowered single mothers who raised their children despite the absence of support from fathers. Responses to the probe question on the impact of gender on their imaginative play presented numerous instances of recreating gender stereotypes, such as a male participant playing competitively with male friends or a female participant playing "sexy," as well as challenging such stereotypes, such as male participants engaging in their own forms of artistic expression

that flouts the expectation that men of Mexican origin are not sensitive. Finally, the vignette on gender, which featured an imaginative play episode where an individual adopts an occupation typically of the opposite gender, resonated with the majority of participants (10), who recalled their own activities in childhood or adulthood where they too have challenged society's gender expectations in their imaginative play, such as imagining themselves in gender non-conforming activities like employment or parenting.

The participants honored the point raised by Dahl (1993) that claims that addressing participants' imaginative play over time would reveal a more nuanced look at the theme of gender. When considering the presence of the theme of gender in imaginative play activity over the course of the participants' lifespans, it was revealed that for both male and female participants, traditional gender roles and stereotypical activities surfaced as did the choice to challenge such roles and stereotypes. The participants reflected that imaginative play was a forum to honor the pervasiveness of gendered expectations in their community (e.g., Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Vigil, 1988) and to "play" with them with the purpose of opening up new ways of understanding and performing their roles of men and women of Mexican origin.

The 16 participants' responses on the theme of gender reveal three important insights: First, the representation of gender roles and practices lend support to the expectation that this theme is of value to this community and, second, that it is considered worthy of exploration in imaginative play (e.g., Cardozo-Freeman, 1975). Third, the theme of gender, as evidenced by Dahl (1993) and corroborated in all the participants' reports, should not be limited to a discrete, episodic perspective but should be addressed across the lifespan of the players and should take into account the community's expectations of gender roles and expression.

With respect to ethnic identity, nine participants stated that at least one example of their imaginative play reflected this theme. Their alignment with this theme emerged in their self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, and vignettes. With respect to self-reported episodes, examples surfaced such as learning about oneself via engagement in music or literature of Mexican origin. Responses across the probe questions reflecting this theme included awareness of and engagement in activities such as games played in both the United States and Mexico. The vignette on this theme, reflecting the change of the protagonist's first name from a Spanish-language one to its English-language equivalent, only resonated for 4 participants, with others either relating other sources of identity transformation, their disapproval of this particular practice, or the absence of this theme in their own imaginative play.

Even though the theme of ethnic identity has been conceptualized as relevant to the reality of the community of Mexican origin (e.g., Tovar & Feliciano, 2009), it was not strongly supported in the participants' reports of imaginative play across their self-reported episodes, responses to probe questions, or vignettes. The participants' reports of lack of engagement around this theme in imaginative play raise questions of which topics may or may not be addressed in this forum. Based on my experiences conducting these interviews and interpreting their responses, I can speculate a few reasons why this theme was not likely to be reported. First, while the theme of ethnic identity may be a part of their lived experiences, it may not be an appropriate theme for their imaginative play. Second, this theme may have a meaning for the participants that does not lend itself to discussion in an interview or in responses to vignettes; it may be a deeper or more complex topic to address; as a corollary to this speculation, the theme may not be appropriate to talk about in an interview or research context with an individual whom they do not know well. Finally, the participants may not have found the vignette on ethnic

identity appropriate or relevant to them. If we compare this vignette to the vignettes on cultural/community affiliation and gender, the one on ethnic identity was less favorable with respect to the activities of the protagonist and may have been an example of ethnic identity exploration that reflects disapproval of affiliation with the community of Mexican origin. Based on the participants' resounding endorsement of affiliation with the community of Mexican origin as evidenced in the first theme, this vignette may have been less likely to be applicable to their lives and their imaginative play.

In the fifth area, imaginative play has been proffered in the literature to be an activity that affords life-span developmental benefits across multiple developmental domains such as cognitive (e.g., Garvey, 1990), linguistic/narrative (e.g., Göncü, 1993) and social/emotional (e.g., Singer & Singer, 1990) and in contexts such as school and work (e.g., Holzman, 1997; 2009); likewise, the participants' reports in the present study support that imaginative play has been a life-span developmental and educational activity across multiple contexts for them as well. The emergent categories illustrate that imaginative play is a beneficial activity across domains and contexts; additional points on these emergent categories will be made in later paragraphs.

While much of the participants' reports support the previous literature on imaginative play in early childhood or as a life-span activity, there are seven areas where their responses indicate their unique perspectives on their imaginative play and possibly reflect their Mexican heritage, calling for expansion of the existing views on imaginative play. These seven areas are: their definitions of the word "imagination," a developmental perspective on the sources of their representations, the themes of these representations, the motivations represented in their imaginative play, contextual support and constraints, the benefits of their imaginative play, and the role of imaginative play in formal learning environments.

With respect to the first area, inquiring about the participants' meanings of the words "play" and "imagination" finds support in the field of cultural psychology, where scholars (e.g., Shweder, 1990) address the importance of obtaining a unique, community-based view of the realities that shape, and are shaped by, their intentional worlds and, in doing so, compel us to appreciate the diversity of meanings of an activity that may exist across communities. While it appears that the participants' definitions of the word "play," as an enjoyable, interactive, narrative, and exploratory activity reflect mainstream views of what constitutes this activity, eleven participants offered definitions of the word "imagination" that addressed the cognitive, visualizing aspects of the word (and activity) and less so (reported by only 4 participants) on the actual engagement in pretense or of representation in the physical realm. It also appears that they focus less so on the specific issue of the use of signifiers that tends to anchor a view of imaginative play in childhood (e.g., Fein, 1981).

The participants of the present study tended to think of imagination in broader terms rather than a specific focus on a representational act. Their definitions of "imagination" are more like the enactment of an image rather than a concrete or an isolated act and are manifested in some of the episodes they self-reported. For example, participants considered their "Gaze Thinking" imaginative play and a theme of their imaginative play included envisioning possibilities that were imagined but necessarily acted upon, such as wondering about what careers they might have in the future or what steps they would take to improve their lives or their communities.

The participants' definitions of imagination are different from definitions of pretend in the literature, particularly when considering similar work done with adults of European-American origin. The European-American participants in the work of Perone and Göncü (under

review) did not address the cognitive, visualizing aspects of the term "pretend" when asked for their definitions but focused more so on escapism from current realities or creating alternate ones; what's more, this aspect of escapism or creating alternate realities was not addressed as "the play one does in one's head," but is indeed effected in pretense activities. These words, that is, "imaginative," adopted for this study, and "pretend" as used with and advanced by scholars researching the pretend play of members of the European-American community, appear indeed to reflect the differences in focus or value on how the words used to label this activity and defined across communities within different intentional worlds (Fein, 1981; Shweder, 1990). As such, the contributions of this community of Mexican-American adults with respect to this area remind and oblige researchers and practitioners alike to ensure that the meaning of the phenomenon of interest be not only understood from others' point of view, but also celebrated as a reflection of their intentional worlds. In doing so, a standardized view of an activity such as imaginative play is avoided and a plurality of perspectives and practices reflecting these meanings are revealed and welcomed.

With respect to the second area, the participants' life-span engagement in lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences also shed light on the community's sources of representations. While it is of interest that nearly all the participants (15) have engaged in at least 1 episode across their lifespan that reflects their lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, there are instances of developmental differences. For example, while the presence of all three sources of representation appears in the participants' early childhood and the elementary school years with similar frequency, the presence of lived experiences appears to dominate the sources of representation in adolescence and adulthood. This prevalence of lived experiences represented in their imaginative play later on in their lives may suggest that the participants deem their

current realities worthy and sufficient enough to reflect their imaginative play at this time and that their interests in exploring other realities, be they possible or unlikely, are less important as they mature. This may be the case that the participants perceive their lives as fun and imaginative and enjoy playing with their daily lives as they occur, for instance, at home, in school, or at work.

These sources of lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences also yielded emergent categories to illustrate the themes of lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences in their lives and reflect the third area of interest. These interpretive themes reflect examples of objects and tools (e.g., media and the arts), locations (e.g., home or community) and activities (e.g., physical and envisioning possibilities) that were of interest to them. These themes were of importance to the participants across all stages of development yet also illustrated developmental differences, such as the predominance of the theme of home and family in early childhood and the prevalence of the themes of community, physical activity, and arts and media from the elementary school years and onward. These themes also reflected cultural practices engaged in imaginative fashion. For example, participants shared engaging in imaginative play based on home and family activities such as pretending to clean like their mother did. Also, involvement in imaginative play around community practices such as recreating experiences in church or with spirituality in general were evidenced as were performing as if they were television characters from telenovelas or well known singers. Much like the broader sources of representation, namely lived, anticipated, and fantastic experiences, these themes were also evidenced across the participants' lifespans, although with varying frequencies, challenging the importance of assigning particular themes to only particular developmental periods.

With respect to the fourth area, their imaginative play episodes revealed emergent codes that described the motivations of such broader sources of representation throughout their lives and build upon and extend our understanding of the role of imaginative play in effecting psycho-social development, particularly with respect to the work of Erikson. For example, participant responses did suggest a motivation to feel confident around and accepted by others during the elementary school years, as intimated in Erikson's "inferiority versus industry" crisis. While this motivation was prevalent during this time in the lifespan it was not necessarily absent in other developmental periods. Also, the exploration of or learning about the self (in adolescence) and the creation and development of relationships (i.e., intimacy) in adulthood were also dominant, but not exclusive, motivations to engage in imaginative play at these particular times in the lifespan. As was hypothesized, the search for intimacy was also not limited to a significant other as seen in Erikson's conceptualization; rather, the participants expressed in this motivation the intimacy that comes from parenting, romantic partnership, family unity, and friendships. Therefore, findings from this study lend support to my claim that evidence of human development advanced by scholars such as Erikson may be found in and because of human beings' imaginative play but that these personal psycho-social concerns are not merely stage-specific since they appear across the participants' lifespans. Based on these findings, new understandings of developmental theory and its intersection with imaginative play have been suggested.

With respect to the fifth area, contextual affordances and constraints on their imaginative play reveal the values and practices of the community. Based on the study's findings, a range of contextual factors appear to encourage and limit imaginative play across the lifespans of these 16 members of the Mexican-American community. Personal locations such as home (and their

family members) were reported by a majority of the participants at least once in their lifespans and reflect the value of home for the members of this community. Indeed, the pervasiveness of home and family as supportive locations and partners for imaginative play was evident in their responses. In addition, a lens on what constitutes "support" in the form of partners illustrated community values and practices of Mexican-Americans, as 12 participants stated that their parents support their imaginative play more so with resources such as time and objects but do not engage directly with their children in imaginative activities. This finding is aligned with research previously done with young children and their caregivers of this community (e.g., Farver & Howes, 1993; Gaskins, 1999).

Another aspect of affordances and constraints appears to be community values and practices that tend to produce "secret play" throughout the participants' lives. These episodes were both solitary and social, with the majority in the latter. Participants often justified why such imaginative play stays out of the purview of one or more audiences, most often citing the need to maintain one's privacy, but they also stated that their communities do not sanction divulging activities that one might engage in that are sexual, illegal, or otherwise frowned upon such as having conversations with oneself. Overall, the findings on constraints and affordances of imaginative play with respect to locations and partners reveal two insights. First, any location may be a place for imaginative play activity provided that the members of the particular location support its presence and importance, and, second, what constitutes support may take different forms depending on the contexts, themes, or partners in question.

The sixth area of interest considers the benefits of their imaginative play across the lifespan. With respect to benefits of imaginative play in adulthood, the categories reflect participants' beliefs, to varying degrees, that their imaginative play in their adulthood has helped

them learn to think more effectively and divergently, relate to people better, and deal with taxing situations. These benefits also afford them opportunities to develop themselves and their relationships with others. These categories were shared across multiple contexts with varying degrees such as at home, school, or work.

Much like in adulthood, all participants claimed that their imaginative play in their childhood and adolescence has afforded them a multitude of benefits across multiple categories. These categories, to varying degrees, reflect the importance of their imaginative play to build relationships and learn about community practices, to develop thinking skills, and to contend with psychological challenges. These benefits, like those of adulthood, occur across a variety of contexts such as in school and at home. In fact, many of the categories remained consistent across the 2 time periods, once again challenging a particular stage-driven lens on the developmental benefits afforded by engagement in imaginative play For the participants, the benefits of their imaginative appear to emerge early on in life and remain continually of value to them; if anything, the main difference they noted, from a developmental point of view, is that they are more aware over the course of their lives of just how important imaginative play is across their multiple developmental domains and contexts.

In sum, the participants' emergent categories on benefits reveal two insights. First, obtaining the participants' perspectives on how their imaginative play has been of service to their development is a worthwhile and meaningful activity within scholarship on this topic. Second, the participants present a holistic lens on the benefits of their imaginative play. For example, their benefits across the lifespan reflect, to varying degrees, personal and interpersonal development, creating joy, and reducing stress. This holistic lens on their imaginative play becomes more salient especially when little or no mention in this section of the interview was

made of imaginative play's formal educational benefits such as its possible contributions to skill development, much unlike the previous literature (cf., Lillard et al, 2012). The participants in this study point more to how imaginative play has helped them be and become stronger people, to be able to construct and reconstruct themselves, and to create and sustain relationships.

With respect to seventh area on their suggestions for imaginative play in formal schooling, almost all of the participants contended that formal learning environments should include imaginative play activities. However, their suggestions were not limited to the familiar examples of imaginative play evidenced in the literature such as dressing up or only driven by the types of episodes that they self-reported such as athletic activities, video games, or dolls and action figure play. The participants contributed certain curricular, instructional, and assessment suggestions that may seem already in practice, such as group projects or hands-on activities, but converge on a theme of building partnerships in learning environments: be they collaborative work with other learners or community agencies or embracing the needs and interests of learners along with the agendas of the teacher, the school administration, or policymakers.

Based on their responses, a more nuanced and diverse understanding of the claim that imaginative play should be included in formal learning environments across the lifespan emerged (cf., Göncü & Perone, 2005). The participants' suggestions for imaginative play in formal schooling reveal an important charge, as they beg researchers and practitioners to consider imaginative play, broadly construed, as what interests and community experiences learners have and how they wish to explore them. The many kinds of activities that embodied imaginative play for these participants is testament to the idea that what counts as imaginative play is as diverse as the players and the communities of which they are a part but it is defined and situated best when the meaning, manifestations, and educational and developmental benefits of

imaginative play are co-constructed, be it between, for example, parent and child, teacher and learner, or researcher and participant.

In addition to these seven areas of interest, a broader contribution of the present study emerges when we consider the participants' responses across all interview protocols. This contribution is that these participants valued engaging in imaginative play to create and develop relationships in social institutions of home, school and community. The participants, across multiple parts of the interview protocol, stressed the importance of interactions with others in and because of imaginative play. For example, when considering emergent codes to address the themes of their imaginative play, the category of Home and Family in early childhood (8 participants) and Community in the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood (10, 11, and 10 participants, respectively) are evidenced as meaningful themes of their imaginative play. As well, one of the important interpretive categories of the motivations to engage in imaginative play, particularly in adulthood (10), was constructing relationships. With respect to their self-reported benefits, across their lifespan (i.e., 12 participants with respect to current imaginative play and 6 with respect to previous imaginative play), participants reported that one of the benefits of their imaginative play was its impact on their personal relationships, that is, imaginative play is a medium through which they have been able to maintain and advance their connections with the people whom they value.

The focus on relationships in institutions such as home and community finds its support in the broader literature on the importance for Mexican-Americans of family (e.g., Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Zapata & Jaramillo, 1981) and community (e.g., Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). According to these scholars, family and community are essential, life-long sources of strength, support, and education. As imaginative play has been perceived by the participants to

be of service in initiating and developing these relationships, the participants' responses reflect another instance of the intersection of community values and life-span engagement in imaginative play, offering additional support of the claim that play is culture and community creating (Huizinga, 1949).

In sum, the significance of this study not only includes the more immediate finding that imaginative play is a life span, developmental, beneficial, and cultural activity for these 16 adults, but also sheds light on the importance of a community-driven look at this phenomenon, and the importance of bridging understandings not only of what imaginative play is from the perspective of the current literature, but also what else imaginative play could be based on the perspectives and examples of members of other communities such as the one in this dissertation. By adopting a derived etic approach, I was able to accomplish this by honoring work already advanced by scholars, but not being limited to it. By adopting a derived etic approach, researchers must at once keep in mind and respect their previous understandings of the phenomenon of interest and be willing to consider connections with and variations of their own understandings and those of their research participants. Interviews, that is, an "inter" "view" (cf., Seidman, 1998) appear to be a effective method of doing so, assuming that researchers consider the method an opportunity to learn of and understand different vantage points that at once enhance and advance their own previous perspectives.

In this particular research study, the derived etic approach was well supported by the presence of triangulation within the questions and methods employed in the interview protocol. The interview protocol for this study provided 2 built-in instances of triangulation. One instance involves the retrospective nature of the study when reflecting on the participants' self-reported motivations and benefits of their imaginative play activity. The participants' responses to the

question on motivation were similar to their responses to questions on the benefits of their imaginative play across the lifespan. In this case, the participants' responses with respect to the motivations of previous and current imaginative play and previous and current benefits frequently overlapped. For example, participants often looked back on an episode of their childhood play and claimed that its importance was to "spend time with family." Later, when asked about the benefits of childhood imaginative play, participants also stated that it provided opportunities to "spend time with family."

This type of triangulation ended up serving the research(er) well, as there were "checks and balances" and opportunities for both the participant and me to see the connections and continuities in responses. Since this is a semi-structured interview protocol, there was still an expected and healthy amount of reflection and meaning-making occurring. And so, in the course of recalling imaginative play episodes and wondering about their significance, participants may have in fact been building a more conscious awareness of its presence and importance in their lives because we were talking about it from this life-span, retrospective vantage point. As well, it provided me opportunities to confirm my understanding of the participants' responses both during the interview and when analyzing the data.

In a second instance of triangulation, the inclusion of analyzing spontaneous episodes, probe questions, and vignettes provided a more robust perspective on and discussion of the second expectation and provided the participants and me multiple ways to consider these themes and the related episodes of their imaginative play. Related to this point, the participants' responses to items on contextual support and prevention as well as to the motivations of their imaginative play not only emerged from my interpretation of their self-reported episodes, but also in specific probe questions. With respect to contextual support and prevention, use of both methods

provided a fuller understanding of the affordances and constraints of their imaginative play. On the other hand, the use of probe questions did not illustrate the role of Eriksonian psycho-social concerns as a source of motivation to engage in imaginative play and yet these concerns were apparent in the emergent codes created out of the participants' responses to questions on the significance of their self-reported imaginative play activity. Nevertheless, both methods were made available to the participants to welcome their perspectives, provide multiple means of securing them, and confirm their consistency and, if needed, variations. Future research, then, may adopt additional methods of inquiry in support of triangulation that are in service of the research questions and conceptual frameworks adopted.

Despite the wealth of the participants' responses and the contributions of this study to research on imaginative play as a life-span activity, there are three limitations to the current work. First, the study is limited to the responses of only 16 second-generation young adults of Mexican origin and therefore the meaning, presence, and developmental benefits of imaginative play throughout the lives of additional participants could be learned. Second, the demographic features of the participants also converged on similar academic, professional, and artistic characteristics. All the participants had post-secondary formal learning experiences. Nearly all have been engaged in professional or artistic activities that highlight the presence and value of imagination, creativity, and play; more specifically, 14 of the 16 participants have been teachers or caregivers and/or have been involved in creative pursuits such as music, drama, art, Hip Hop, and writing for many years. These professional and personal interests may have shaped their support for and engagement in imaginative play throughout their lives and the lives of people in their families and other communities. Third, this study is also limited as it is based on a one-time interview with the participant that was dependent on their memory of their imaginative play at

the time the interview was conducted and where no follow-up interview or other means of learning of the participants' imaginative play occurred.

Based on the present study, I offer four suggestions for future research in this area. The first suggestion concerns the eligibility requirements for the present study and its relationship to the research findings. The present study had stringent eligibility requirements. On the one hand, these requirements meant that many people did not qualify and resulted in a long recruitment process. On the other hand, these stringent requirements may have contributed to fairly robust results. It appears that there is a tradeoff between eligibility requirements and research findings and raises questions for future research. That said, I suggest that eligibility criteria for future work in this area be qualified and be based on the goals and framework of the research study. In addition, I suggest that research in this area address the relationship between the characteristics of participants and the particular issues of imaginative play considered.

Second, I suggest that psychological research make greater provisions than it presently does to adopt a derived etic or emic point of view, depending on the conceptualizations or expectations adopted and methods employed, in order to learn the meanings, episodes, and outcomes of imaginative play from the participants' points of view. The current work intimates that a researcher-only focus on the imaginative play of young children or of European-Americans is insufficient and that we should address other players' meanings of and their stance on their imaginative activity to avoid generalizing its presence and significance (or absence) across communities. By integrating the perspectives of the players with that of researchers, newer perspectives on the complex, diverse, beneficial, cultural activity emerging in childhood as "imaginative play" may continue to surface and result in it being better understood across communities and better situated in the formal and informal learning environments of all learners.

In the case of this study, this point is evidenced in areas such as, but not limited to, the value of relationship building in and because of imaginative play or the presence of imaginative, playful activity within community celebrations.

Third, I recommend that for this community, interviews or other meaningful sources of data collection include participation of at least one participant's family or a friend. There are 2 reasons that this suggestion emerges. One reason is that the participants stressed the importance of (building relationships with) family and friends: as a motivation to engage in imaginative play, as prevalent play partners, and as a benefit of playing throughout their lives. The second reason serendipitously emerged in the current sample, as 2 sets of siblings and a participant and his friend took part in this study. These interviews provided instances that emphasize the multiple meanings of what play means, what it looks like, and what its outcomes are across the perspectives of more than 1 participant who may have had similar imaginative play episodes whose importance or benefits may have been similar or differed to some extent. As such, these instances provide "thicker" (cf., Geertz, 1983) descriptions of the community's imaginative play episodes.

Fourth, the presence and use of imaginative play in formal learning environments could be further investigated. Future research could investigate learning environments whose curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices include examples or manifestations of the suggestions offered by the participants. Data could include not only what aspects of these programs include, for instance, elements such as group projects or a learner-center curriculum, but also how these elements are expressed in the program and, from the community's perspective, whether or not these elements constitute imaginative play. For instance, Seidel (2011) chronicles the learning and development in The High School for Recording Arts, an urban secondary school rooted in

the tenets of Hip Hop and based on performance, music and video production, community-based learning, urban youth culture, and personal, artistic development.   Learning from the community as to whether or not their activities are imaginative play for them and how these activities support students' learning and development may substantiate and build upon the participants' examples of and suggestions for imaginative play in formal learning contexts.

In sum, this dissertation provides the fields of play research, developmental psychology, and education much to consider and much to continue investigating. The dissertation's findings, these findings' significance, and the resultant suggestions for additional work lead me to conclude that advancing our understanding of imaginative play as a life-span, cultural, community-based, and developmental activity is indeed worthy of inclusion in our research agendas and, in effect, this dissertation serves as a call for playing with and re-forming our previously held perspectives of the human activity of imaginative play and considering its presence, meanings, and importance across the lifespans of human beings and across different communities.

REFERENCES

Andersen, M.L. (1993). Studying across difference: Race, class, and gender in qualitative research. In J. H. Stanfield II and R.M. Dennis, (Eds.), *Race and ethnicity in research methods* (pp. 39-52). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Athey, I. (1988). The relationship of play to cognitive, language, and moral development. In D. Bergen (Ed.), *Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 81-101). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Azmitia, M., & Brown, J.R. (2000). Latino immigrant parents' beliefs about the "Path of Life" of their adolescent children. In J.M. Contreras, K.A. Kerns, & A.M. Neal-Barnett (Eds.), *Latino children and families in the United States: Current research and future directions* (pp. 77-105). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Baker-Sennett, J., & Matusov, E. (1997). School "performance": Improvisational processes in development and education. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *Creativity in performance* (pp. 197-212). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.

Baker-Sennett, J., Matusov, E., & Rogoff, B. (1992). Social processes of creativity and planning: Illustrated by children's playcrafting. In P. Light & G. Butterworth (Eds.), *Context and cognition: ways of learning and knowing* (pp. 93-114). Hertfordshire, U.K.: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.

Barter, C, & Renold, E. (1999, Summer). The use of vignettes in qualitative research. *Social Research Update 25, 1-7.*

Barter, C, & Renold, E. (2000). "I wanna tell you a story": Exploring the application of vignettes in qualitative research with children and young people. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *3*(4), 307-323.

Baumer, S., Ferholt, B., & Lecusay, R. (2005). Promoting narrative competence through adult-child joint pretense: Lessons from the Scandinavian educational practice of playworld. *Cognitive Development, 20*, 576-590.

Bergen, D. (1988). Stages of play development. In D. Bergen (Ed.), *Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 49-66). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bergen, D., & Oden, S. (1988). Designing play environments for elementary-age children. In D. Bergen (Ed.), *Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 245-269). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bernal, M.E., & Knight, G.P. (1993). Introduction. In M.E Bernal & G.P. Knight (Eds.), *Ethnic identity: Formation and transmission among Latinos and other minorities* (pp. 1-7). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Berry, J.W. (1989). Imposed etics-emics-derived etics: The operationalization of a compelling idea. *International Journal of Psychology*, 24, 721-735.

Berry, J. W. (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(3), 615–631.

Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D.L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 55(*3), 303–332.

Blatner, A., & Blatner, A. (1987). *The art of play: An adult's guide to reclaiming imagination and spontaneity.* New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D.L. (2003, April). The importance of being playful. *Educational Leadership, 60*(7), 50-53.

Brandes, S. (1998, Autumn). The Day of the Dead, Halloween, and the quest for Mexican national identity. *The Journal of American Folklore, 111,* 359-380.

Cardozo-Freeman, I. (1975, January-March). Games Mexican girls play. *The Journal of American Folklore, 88*(347), 12-24.

Carmichael, E., & Sayer, C. (1991). *The skeleton at the feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Chávez-Reyes, C. (2010). Racial and ethnic socialization in later generations of a Mexican American family. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 32,* 495-518.

Crosnoe, R. (2006). *Mexican roots, American schools: Helping Mexican immigrant children succeed.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (3rd Ed.) (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc

Curry, N., & Bergen, D. (1988). The relationship of play to emotional, social and gender/sex development. In D. Bergen (Ed.), *Play as a medium for learning and development: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 81-101). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dahl, E. K. (1993). Play and the construction of gender in the oedipal child. In A. J. Solnit, D. J. Cohen & P. B. Neubauer (Eds.), *The many meanings of play: A psychoanalytic perspective.* (pp. 117-134). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1992, Autumn). School matters in the Mexican-American home: Socializing children to education. *American Educational Research Journal*, *29*(3), 495-513.

Dion, K.K., & Dion, K.L. (2001). Gender and cultural adaptation in immigrant families. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(3), 511–521.

Drewal, M.T. (1992). *Yoruba ritual: Performers, play, agency.* Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

Eckler, J.A., & Weininger, O. (1989). Structural parallels between pretend play and narratives. *Developmental Psychology 25*(5), 736-743.

Erickson, R.J. (1985). Play contributes to the full emotional development of the child. *Education 105*(3), 261-263.

Erikson, E. (1976). Play and actuality. In J. Bruner, A. Jolly, & K. Sylva (Eds.), *Play - its role in development and evolution* (pp. 688-704). New York: Basic Books.

Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and society.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Erlich, H.S. (1993). Reality, fantasy, and adolescence. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, *48*, 209-223.

Farver, J. A. M. (1999). Activity setting analysis: A model for examining the role of culture in development. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Sociocultural perspectives* (pp. 99–127). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Farver, J.M., & Howes, C. (1993). Cultural differences in American and Mexican mother-child pretend play. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 39,* 344-58.

Fein, G.G. (1981, December). Pretend play in childhood: An integrative review. *Child Development*, 52(4), 1095-1118.

Fein, G. G. (1989). Mind, meaning, and affect: Proposals for a theory of pretense. *Developmental Review, 9,* 345-363.

Fergus, E. (2004). *Skin color and identity formation: Perceptions of opportunity and academic orientation among Mexican and Puerto Rican youth.* New York: Routledge.

French, S. E., Seidman, E., Allen, L., & Aber, J. L. (2006). The development of ethnic identity during adolescence. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(1), 1-10.

Freud, S. (1961). *Beyond the pleasure principle*. New York: Norton.

Freysinger, V.J. (1998). Play in the context of life-span human development. In D.P. Fromberg & D. Bergen (Eds.), *Play from birth to twelve and beyond* (pp. 14-22). New York: Routledge.

Furnari, J. (2007). What's the point? Adolescent adventures in the dramatic experience of the learning self in the making. Ed.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, United States -- New York. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I. (Publication No. AAT 3269065).

Gándara, P., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Garcia, E., & Jensen, B. (2009). Early educational opportunities for children of Latino origins. *Social Policy Report: Giving Child and Youth Development Knowledge Away, 23*(2), 3-19.

Garvey, C. (1990). *Play.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gaskins, S. (1999). Children's daily lives in a Mayan village: A case study of culturally constructed roles and activities. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Sociocultural perspectives.* (pp. 25-61). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gaskins, S., & Göncü, A. (1988, October). Children's play as representation and imagination: The case of Piaget and Vygotsky. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 10*(4), 104-107.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge.* New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Goldman, L. (1998). *Child's play: Myth, mimesis, and make-believe.* New York: Berg.

Goldmintz, Y., & Schaefer, C.E. (2007). Why play matters to adults. *Psychology and Education 44*(1), 12-25.

Göncü, A. (1993). Development of intersubjectivity in social pretend play of preschoolers. *Human Development, 36,* 185-198.

Göncü, A., & Gaskins, S. (2011). Comparing and extending Piaget's and Vygotsky's understandings of play: symbolic play as individual, sociocultural, and educational interpretation. In A.D. Pellegrini, (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of the Development of Play* (pp. 48-57). New York: Oxford University Press.

Göncü, A., & Gaskins, S. (2007). An integrative perspective on play and development. In A. Göncü & S. Gaskins (Eds.), *Play and development: Evolutionary, sociocultural, and functional perspectives* (pp. 3-17). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Göncü, A., Jain, J., and Tuermer, C. (2007). Children's play as cultural interpretation. In A. Göncü & S. Gaskins (Eds.), *Play and development: Evolutionary, sociocultural, and functional perspectives* (pp. 155-178). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Göncü, A., Patt, M.B., & Kouba, E. (2000). Understanding young children's play in context. In P. Smith & C. Hart (Eds.). *Handbook of social development* (pp. 418-436). London: Blackwell.

Göncü, A., & Perone, A. (2005, September). Pretend play as a life-span activity. *Topoi*, "Play, Games and Philosophy." [Special Issue] *24*(2), 137-147.

Göncü, A., Perone, A, & Ryan, S. (2013). "Play." In L Meyer (Ed), *Oxford Bibliographies in Education*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Göncü, A., Tuermer, U., Jain, J., & Johnson, D. (1999). Children's play as cultural activity. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Sociocultural perspectives* (pp. 148-170). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grayson, K., & Rust, R. (2001). Interrater reliability. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *10*(1&2), 71–73.

Harris, M.J., & Beggan, J.K. (1993). Making believe: A descriptive study of fantasies in middle childhood. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality 13* (2), 125-145.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Hirsh-Pasek, K., Michnick Golinkoff, R., Berk, L.E., & Singer, D.G. (2009). *A mandate for playful learning in preschool: Presenting the evidence.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Holzman, L. (1997). *Schools for growth: Radical alternatives to current educational models.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Holzman, L. (2009). *Vygotsky at work and play.* New York: Routledge.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, (1992, Sept.). Overcoming patriarchal constraints: The reconstruction of gender relations among Mexican immigrant women and men. *Gender and Society, 6*(3), 393-415.

Howe, N., Petrakos, H., & Rinaldi, C.M. (1998). "All the sheeps are dead. He murdered them.": Sibling pretense, negotiation, internal state language, and relationship quality. *Child Development, 69*(1), 182-191.

Howes, C*., Wishard Guerra, A.G., & Zucker, E. (2008, April). Migrating from Mexico and sharing pretend with peers in the United States. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *54*(2), 256–288.

Huizinga, J. (1949). *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.

Inzlicht, M., & Schmader, T. (2012). Introduction. In M. Inzlicht and T.Schmader, (Eds.), *Stereotype threat* (pp. 3-14). New York: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, K.R. (1997, October). "Melting Pot" or "Ring of Fire"?: Assimilation and the Mexican-American experience. *California Law Review, 85*(5), 1259-1313.

Kavanaugh, R.D. (2006). *Pretend play and theory of mind*. New York: Psychology Press.

Kelly-Byrne, D. (1984). Continuity and discontinuity in play conditioning: The adult-child connection. In B. Sutton-Smith & D. Kelly-Byrne (Eds.) *The masks of play.* New York: Scribner.

Kroger, J. (2003). Identity development during adolescence. In G.R. Adams & M.D. Berzonsky (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook on adolescence* (pp. 205-226). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Leont'ev, A.N. (1981). *Activity, consciousness, and personality.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Leslie, A.M. (1987). Pretense and representation: The origins of "theory of mind." *Psychological Review*, *4*, 412-426.

Lightfoot, C. (1997). *The culture of adolescent risk-taking.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Lillard, A. (1993). Young children's conceptualization of pretense: Action or mental representational state? *Child Development*, 64, 2, 372-386.

Lillard, A. (2001a). Explaining the connection: Pretend play and theory of mind. In S. Reifel (Vol. Ed.), *Play and culture studies: Vol. 3. Theory in Context and Out* (pp. 173-177). Westport, CT: Ablex.

Lillard, A. (2001b). Pretending, understanding pretense, and understanding minds. In S. Reifel (Vol. Ed.), *Play and culture studies: Vol. 3. Theory in Context and Out* (pp. 233-254). Westport, CT: Ablex.

Lillard, A. S., Lerner, M. D., Hopkins, E. J., Dore, R. A., Smith, E. D., & Palmquist, C. M. (2012). The impact of pretend play on children's development: A review of the evidence. *Psychological Bulletin,* doi:10.1037/a0029321

Manning, M. L. (2006). Play development from ages eight to twelve. In D.P. Fromberg & D. Bergen (Eds.), *Play from birth to twelve* (2nd ed., pp. 21-29). New York: Routledge.

Marques, J.F., & McCall, C. (2005). The application of interrater reliability as a solidification instrument in a phenomenological study. *The Qualitative Report, 10*(3), 439-462.

McLoyd, V.C. (1980). Verbally expressed modes of transformation in the fantasy play of black preschool children. *Child Development 51*(4), 1133-1139.

McLoyd, V. (1982). Social class differences in sociodramatic play: A critical review. *Developmental Review, 2*, 1-30.

Mezirow, J. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education, 1,* 3-24.

Padilla, A.M. (2006). Bicultural social development. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 28,* 467-497.

Paley, V. G. (1981). *Wally's stories: Conversations in the kindergarten.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Paley, V. G. (1990). *The boy who would be a helicopter: The uses of storytelling in the classroom.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pellegrini, A.D. (2005). *Recess: Its role in education and development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Perone, A. (1994). Autonomy, awareness, and action: Learning and teaching languages through drama. Unpublished undergraduate honors thesis.

Perone, A. (2009). *Pretend play as a life-span activity: Motivations, transformations, and consequences.* Unpublished manuscript, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Perone, A. (2011). Improvising with adult English language learners. In R.K. Sawyer (Ed.), *Structure and improvisation in creative teaching* (pp. 162-183). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Perone, A., & Göncü, A. (under review). *Life-span learning and development through imaginative play.*

Phinney, J. S. (1996). When we talk about American ethnic groups, what do we mean? *American Psychologist, 51*(9), 918-927.

Phinney, J. S. (2008). Bridging identities and disciplines: Advances and challenges in understanding multiple identities. In M. Azmitia, M. Syed, & K. Radmacher (Eds.), *The intersections of personal and social identities. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 120,* 97–109.

Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, dreams, and imitation in childhood.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Polanyi, M. (1962). *Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Quiroz, P.A. (2001). The silencing of Latino student "voice": Puerto Rican and Mexican narratives in eighth grade and high school. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 32*(3), 326-349.

Raffaelli, M., & Ontai, L. L. (2004). Gender socialization in Latino/a families: Results from two retrospective studies. *Sex Roles, 50*(5-6), 287-299.

Rognli, E. (2008). We are the great pretenders: Larp is adult pretend play. In M. Montola & J. Stenros (Eds.), *Playground worlds: Creating and evaluating experiences of role-playing games* Retrieved August 13, 2012, from http://www.solmukohta.org/pub/Playground_Worlds_2008.pdf#page=200.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B., Mistry, J., Göncü, A., Mosier, C., & Chavajay, P. (1993). Guided participation in cultural activity by toddlers and caregivers. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 58* (7, Serial no 236).

Sawyer, R. K. (1997). *Pretend play as improvisation: Conversation in the preschool classroom.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sawyer, R.K., (Ed.). (2011). *Structure and improvisation in creative teaching.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sayer, C. (2009). *Fiesta: Days of the Dead and other Mexican festivals.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Seidel, S. (2011). *Hip Hop genius: Remixing high school education.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd Ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Shweder, R. (1990). Cultural psychology: What is it? In J.W. Stigler, R.A. Shweder, & G. Herdt (Eds.). *Cultural psychology: Essays on comparative human development* (pp.1-43). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Sierra, Z. (2000). Play for real: Understanding middle school children's dramatic play. *Youth Theatre Journal, 14,* 1-12.

Singer, J.L. (1995). Imaginative play in childhood: Precursor of subjunctive thoughts, daydreaming, and adult pretending games. In A.D. Pelligrini (Ed.), *The future of play theory: A multidisciplinary inquiry into the contributions of Brian Sutton-Smith* (pp. 187-219)*.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Singer, D.G., & Singer, J.L. (1990). *The house of make-believe: Children's play and the developing imagination.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Smith, E.D., & Lillard, A.S. (2012): Play on: Retrospective reports of the persistence of pretend play into middle childhood. *Journal of Cognition and Development. 13*(4), 524-549.

Smith, P.K., & Vollstedt, R. (1985). On defining play: An empirical study of the relationship between play and various play criteria. *Child Development, 56,* 1042-1050.

Sparks, B. (2002, March-April). Epistemological and methodological considerations of doing cross cultural research in adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education. 21*(2), 115-129.

Stemler, Steven E. (2004). A comparison of consensus, consistency, and measurement approaches to estimating interrater reliability. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 9(4). Retrieved December 17, 2012 from http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=9&n=4.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory, procedures, and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (1995). *Transformations: Immigration, family life, and achievement motivation among Latino adolescents.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University

Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2001). *Children of immigrants.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1993). Suggested rhetorics in adult play theories. *Play Theory & Research, 1(2), 102-116.*

Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *Ambiguity of play.* Boston: Harvard University Press.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1999). Evolving a consilience of play definitions: Playfully. In S.Reifel (Ed.), *Play and culture studies (Vol. 2) Play Contexts Revisited* (pp. 239-256). Stamford, CT: Albex.

Sutton-Smith, B., & Brice Heath, S. (1981). Paradigms of pretense. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition*, *3*(3), 41-45.

Sweet, J. (1978). *Something wonderful right away: An oral history of The Second City and The Compass Players.* New York: Limelight Editions.

Terr, L. (1999). *Beyond love and work: Why adults need to play.* New York: Scribner.

Tovar, J., & Feliciano, C. (2009). 'Not Mexican-American, but Mexican': Shifting ethnic self-identifications among children of Mexican immigrants. *Latino Studies, 7*(2), 197-221.

Turner, V. (1982). *From ritual to theatre: The human seriousness of play.* New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

Turner, V.W. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure.* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Gonzales-Backen, M. A., & Guimond, A. B. (2009). Latino adolescents' ethnic identity: Is there a developmental progression and does growth in ethnic identity predict growth in self-esteem? *Child Development, 80*(2), 391-405.

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience.* London, Ontario: Althouse.

Vasta, R., Haith, M. M., & Miller, S. M. (1999). *Child psychology: The modern science*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Vigil, J.D. (1988). The nexus of class, culture and gender in the education of Mexican American females. In T. McKenna and F.I. Ortiz, (Eds.), *The broken web: The educational experience of Hispanic American women* (pp. 79-103). Berkeley, CA: Floricanto Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1976). Play and its role in the mental development of the child. In J.S. Bruner, A. Jolly, & K. Sylva (Eds.), *Play – its role in development and evolution* (pp. 537-554). New York: Basic Books.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987). *Imagination and creativity in the adolescent* (M.J. Hall, Trans.) In R.W. Rieber (Series Ed. & Vol. Ed.) *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky: Vol. 5. Child Psychology* (pp.151 -166). New York: Plenum Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (2004, Jan.-Feb.). Imagination and creativity in childhood. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology, 47*(1), 7-97.

Wessels, C. (1987). *Drama.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Willis, G., & Schubert, W.H. (Eds.) (2000). *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry.* Troy, NY: Educator's International Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. New York: Basic.

Young, J. (2005). On insiders (emic) and outsiders (etic): views of self, and othering. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 18, 151-162.

Zapata, J. T., & Jaramillo, P. T. (1981). Research on the Mexican-American family. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 37*(1), 72-85.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Approval Notice

Initial Review (Response to Modifications)

February 22, 2011

Anthony Perone, M.Ed.

Educational Psychology

L-244 EPASW

M/C 147

Chicago, IL 60612

Phone: (773) 636-7627 / Fax: (312) 996-1696

RE: Protocol # 2010-1109

"Mexican Adolescents' and Adults' Imaginative Play and its Role in their Learning

and Development"

Dear Mr. Perone:

Your Initial Review (Response to Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on February 14, 2011. You may now begin your research

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

155

Protocol Approval Period: February 14, 2011 - February 13, 2012

Approved Subject Enrollment #:   32

Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: The Board determined that this research satisfies 45CFR46.404, research not involving greater than minimal risk. Therefore, in accordance with 45CFR46.408, the IRB determined that only one parent's/legal guardian's permission/signature is needed. Wards of the State may not be enrolled unless the IRB grants specific approval and assures inclusion of additional protections in the research required under 45CFR46.409. If you wish to enroll Wards of the State contact OPRS and refer to the tip sheet.

Performance Sites: UIC

Sponsor: None

PAF#:   Not Applicable

Research Protocol(s):

    a) Research Protocol: Mexican adolescents' and adults' imaginative play and its role in their learning and development; Version 2; 01/19/2011

Recruitment Material(s):

    a) Recruitment script adults (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    b) Recruitment script adolescents (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    c) Face-to-face recruitment script, adults for adolescents; Version 2; 01/19/2011
    d) E-mail script - adult participants; Version 3; 02/03/2011

Informed Consent(s):

    a) Mexican adults' imaginative play adult consent; Version 2; 01/19/2011
    b) Waiver of Signed Consent Document granted under 45 CFR 46.117 for the eligibility screening
    c) Alteration of Informed Consent granted for the eligibility screening

Assent(s):

    a) Assent form adolescent participants; Version 2; 01/01/2011

Parental Permission(s):

    a) Mexican adolescents' imaginative play parental permission (English); Version 3; 02/03/2011
    b) El juego de los adolescentes mexicanos permiso de padres (Spanish); Version 3; 02/03/2011

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific categories:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes. (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

<u>Please note the Review History of this submission:</u>

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
12/15/2010	Initial Review	Expedited	12/20/2010	Modifications Required
01/19/2011	Response to Modifications	Expedited	01/24/2011	Modifications Required
02/03/2011	Response to Modifications	Expedited	02/14/2011	Approved

Please remember to:

→ Use your **<u>research protocol number</u>** (2010-1109) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure,
 "**UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 996-9299. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Marissa Benni-Weis, M.S.

IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):
1. UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects
2.   Informed Consent Document(s):
   a) Mexican adults' imaginative play adult consent; Version 2; 01/19/2011
3.   Assent Document(s):
   a) Assent form adolescent participants; Version 2; 01/01/2011
4.   Parental Permission(s):
   a) Mexican adolescents' imaginative play parental permission (English); Version 3; 02/03/2011
   b) El juego de los adolescentes mexicanos permiso de padres (Spanish); Version 3; 02/03/2011
5.   Recruiting Material(s):
   a) Recruitment script adults (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
   b) Recruitment script adolescents (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
   c) Face-to-face recruitment script, adults for adolescents; Version 2; 01/19/2011
   d) E-mail script - adult participants; Version 3; 02/03/2011

cc: Keith Thiede, PhD, Educational Psychology, M/C 147
       Artin Goncu, Educational Psychology, M/C 147

Approval Notice

Continuing Review (Response To Modifications)

February 6, 2012

Anthony Perone III, M.Ed.

Educational Psychology

L-244 EPASW

M/C 147

Chicago, IL 60612

Phone: (773) 636-7627 / Fax: (312) 996-1696

RE: **Protocol # 2010-1109**

"Mexican Adolescents' and Adults' Imaginative Play and its Role in their Learning and Development"

Dear Mr. Perone III:

Your Continuing Review (Response To Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on February 2, 2012. You may now continue your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: February 14, 2012 - February 12, 2013

Approved Subject Enrollment #:   32 (18 currently enrolled subjects)

Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: The Board determined that this research satisfies 45CFR46.404', research not involving greater than minimal risk. Therefore, in accordance with 45CFR46.408 ', the IRB determined that only one parent's/legal guardian's permission/signature is needed. Wards of the State may not be enrolled unless the IRB grants specific approval and assures inclusion of additional protections in the research required under 45CFR46.409 '. If you wish to enroll Wards of the State contact OPRS and refer to the tip sheet.

Performance Sites: UIC

Sponsor: None

PAF#:   Not Applicable

Research Protocol(s):

    b) Research Protocol: Mexican adolescents' and adults' imaginative play and its role in their learning and development; Version 3; 08/31/2011

Recruitment Material(s):

    e) Recruitment script adults (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    f) Recruitment script adolescents (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    g) Face-to-face recruitment script, adults for adolescents; Version 2; 01/19/2011
    h) E-mail script - adult participants; Version 3; 02/03/2011

Informed Consent(s):

    d) Mexican adults' imaginative play adult consent; Version 2; 01/19/2011
    e) Waiver of Signed Consent Document granted under 45 CFR 46.117 for the eligibility screening
    f) Alteration of Informed Consent granted for the eligibility screening

Assent(s):

    b) Assent form adolescent participants; Version 2; 01/19/2011

Parental Permission(s):

    c) Mexican adolescents' imaginative play parental permission (English); Version 3; 02/03/2011
    d) El juego de los adolescentes mexicanos permiso de padres (Spanish); Version 3; 02/03/2011

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific category(ies):

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes., (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
01/18/2012	Continuing Review	Expedited	01/23/2012	Modifications Required
01/26/2012	Response To Modifications	Expedited	02/02/2012	Approved

Please remember to:

→ Use your **research protocol number** (2010-1109) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure,
 "**UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-0816. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Alison Jones, MSW, MJ

IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):
6. **UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**
7. **Data Security Enclosure**
8. **Informed Consent Document(s):**
   b) Mexican adults' imaginative play adult consent; Version 2; 01/19/2011
9. **Assent Document(s):**
   b) Assent form adolescent participants; Version 2; 01/19/2011
10. **Parental Permission(s):**
    c) Mexican adolescents' imaginative play parental permission (English); Version 3; 02/03/2011
    d) El juego de los adolescentes mexicanos permiso de padres (Spanish); Version 3; 02/03/2011
11. **Recruiting Material(s):**
    e) Recruitment script adults (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    f) Recruitment script adolescents (demographic questions); Version 2; 01/19/2011
    g) Face-to-face recruitment script, adults for adolescents; Version 2; 01/19/2011
    h) E-mail script - adult participants; Version 3; 02/03/2011

cc: Keith Thiede, PhD, Educational Psychology, M/C 147
       Artin Goncu (Faculty Sponsor), Psychology, M/C 147

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

Approval Notice

Continuing Review

January 22, 2013

Anthony Perone III, M.Ed.

Educational Psychology

L-244 EPASW

M/C 147

Chicago, IL 60612

Phone: (773) 636-7627 / Fax: (312) 996-1696

RE: **Protocol # 2010-1109**

"Mexican Adolescents' and Adults' Imaginative Play and its Role in their Learning and Development"

Dear Mr.Perone III:

Your Continuing Review was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on January 17, 2013. You may now continue your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: February 12, 2013 - February 12, 2014

Approved Subject Enrollment #:   32 (limited to data analysis from 22 enrolled subjects)

Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: The Board determined that this research satisfies 45CFR46.404 ', research not involving greater than minimal risk.

Performance Sites: UIC

Sponsor: None

PAF#: Not Applicable

Research Protocol(s):

    c)   Research Protocol: Mexican adolescents' and adults' imaginative play and its role in their learning and development; Version 3; 08/31/2011

Recruitment Material(s):

    i)   N/A: Limited to data analysis only

Informed Consent(s):

    g)   N/A: Limited to data analysis only

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific category(ies):

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes., (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
01/14/2013	Continuing Review	Expedited	01/17/2013	Approved

Please remember to:

→ Use your **research protocol number** (2010-1109) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→Review and comply with all requirements on our website,

[**"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"**](*http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/policies/0924.pdf*)

[**"JBVAMC Investigator Responsibilities for Performing Research Involving Human Subjects"**](*http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/jbvamc/Investigator_Responsibilities_Poster.pdf*)

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-0816. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Alison Santiago, MSW, MJ

IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosure(s):
       12. Data Security Enclosure
cc: Keith Thiede, PhD, Educational Psychology, M/C 147
       Artin Goncu (Faculty Sponsor), Educational Psychology, M/C 147

Appendix B

<div align="center">**Semi-structured interview protocol with adults**</div>

I.   **Definitions**
   A. How do you define the word "play"?

   B. How do you define the word "imagination"?

II.   **Imaginative play episodes across the lifespan**

   A. Imaginative play during early childhood and elementary school years
      1. Did you participate in imaginative play when you were a young child?
      2. If so, what imaginative play did you participate in when you were a young child?
      3. Did you participate in imaginative play when you were an elementary school child?
      4. If so, what imaginative play did you participate in when you were an elementary school child?

      Over the course of the dialogue, I will be sensitive to self-reported episodes of imaginative play that reflect themes/issues about school and peers during elementary school years. Should no such issues/themes emerge, before B1 I will ask questions such as:

      • Do you think your school experiences and relationships with your friends came up in your imaginative play? Why or why not? How?

   B. Imaginative play during adolescence

      1. Did you participate in imaginative play when you were a teenager?
      2. If so, what imaginative play did you participate in when you were a teenager?

Can you tell me about imaginative play you did when you were a teenager?

If the theme/issue of identity does not emerge, it will be probed in a similar manner as stated above.

- Do you think issues/questions about yourself like "Who am I?" came up in your play? Why or why not? How?

C. Current imaginative play

1. Do you participate in imaginative play nowadays?

2. If so, who do you play with? Do you play with your parents, peers, siblings, friends, or teachers?

3. Where does it take place? Do you play at home, school, work, or any other place?

4. What significance does this activity have for you now? Why is this activity important to you?

5. Is there another imaginative play activity that you participate in now? Is there another imaginative play activity from your adulthood that you would like to share?

If the themes/issues of intimacy, culture/community affiliation, ethnic identity, and gender do not emerge, they will be probed in a similar manner as previously stated.

- Do you think your imaginative play has given you a chance to play with or represent your relationships? Why or why not? How?
- Do you think your connections to Mexico and to the United States have come up in your imaginative play? Why or why not? How?
- Do you think the fact that you are a (male) (female) has come up in your imaginative play? Why or why not? How?
- Do you think people who live in the hometown(s) of your family in Mexico do imaginative play? Why or why not?
  If yes, how is their play like and unlike yours?

- Do parts of Mexican culture come up in your imaginative play?
- Have your celebrations and holiday activities such as Los Días de los Muertos included play?

6. What (or who) makes imaginative play possible now? Do your friends and family support your imaginative play? Do your school and/or work support your imaginative play?

7. What (or who) makes it difficult to do imaginative play now? Do your friends and family not support your imaginative play? Do your school and/or work not support your imaginative play?

8. What kind of play do you do that you might not want other people to know?

D. Vignettes
   In this part of the interview, I will begin by saying:

   "I am now going to give you three examples of people playing. After each example, I'll ask you a few questions based on the story presented."

169

1. **Vignette 1 – Cultural/Community affiliation**

a. **Vignette 1a (males)**

Gustavo is invited to a costume party by his friends. Everybody has to dress as a famous person of Mexican heritage, living or dead. Gustavo decides he will go as Pancho Villa and he puts a lot of effort into creating an elaborate costume and even practices talking like Pancho Villa so he can be convincing at the party.

Questions:

- What do you think about Gustavo's response to the costume party invite?
- If you were invited, would you like to go to a costume party like this? If so, who would you be and why? What would you do to get ready for the party?

b. **Vignette 1b (females)**

Gloria is invited to a costume party by her friends. Everybody has to dress as a famous person of Mexican heritage, living or dead. Gloria decides she will go as Frida Kahlo and she puts a lot of effort into creating an elaborate costume and even practices talking like Frida Kahlo so she can be convincing at the party.

Questions:

- What do you think about Gloria's response to the costume party invite?
- If you were invited, would you like to go to a costume party like this? If so, who would you be and why? What would you do to get ready for the party?

170

2. Vignette 2 – Ethnic identity

a. Vignette 2a (males)

One day while Jorge is driving home from work, he begins to imagine what it would be like if he were "George" rather than Jorge. He makes up a new voice for George, imagines what his parents and siblings are like, creates a new history for him, and thinks about how George's life would be different from his own.

Questions:

- What do you think about what Jorge was doing? What might happen as a result of this activity?
- Have you ever imagined that you're someone different than who you are? If so, why?

b. Vignette 2b (females)

One day while Maria is driving home from work, she begins to imagine what it would be like if she were "Mary" rather than Maria. She makes up a new voice for Mary, imagines what her parents and siblings are like, creates a new history for her, and thinks about how Mary's life would be different from her own.

Questions:

- What do you think about what Maria was doing? What might happen as a result of this activity?

- Have you ever imagined that you're someone different than who you are? If so, why?

3. **Vignette 3 – Gender**

a. **Vignette 3a (males)**

Miguel works in construction 6 days a week, 8-10 hours a day. He's getting tired of the job and the schedule and wonders what else he could do for work. One day while on break at work, he imagines what it would be like to be a kindergarten teacher, even though he knows that most kindergarten teachers are women. He imagines what his classroom would look like, who his students would be, and how much more enjoyable this job would be.

Questions:

- What does Miguel get out of imagining that he's a kindergarten teacher?
- Have you ever played with roles that go against what typically are considered male roles? If so, why?

b. **Vignette 3b (females)**

Beca runs a day care from her home from 8am-6pm 6 days a week. She's getting tired of the job and the schedule and wonders what else she could do for work. One day while her daycare children are napping, she imagines what it would like to be a construction worker, even though she knows that most construction workers are men. She imagines what buildings she would work on, how much she would enjoy being outdoors, who her co-workers would be, and how much more enjoyable this job would be.

Questions:

- What does Beca get out of imagining that she's a construction worker?

172

- Have you ever played with roles that go against what typically are considered female roles? If so, why?

III. Reflection on the role of imaginative play in human development and learning

A. Do you think you benefit from playing now? If so, in what way?

B. Do you think you benefited from your imaginative play when you were younger, as a young child, in elementary school, and as a teenager? If so, in what way?

C. Do you think the benefits of playing are different now than they were when you were younger?

D. Do you attend school now?
   1. **If "yes," focus on current formal learning experiences**
   2. **If "no," focus on previous formal learning experiences**

E. Do/Did your formal school experiences include imaginative play activities?
   1. **If "yes,"**
      a. When do/did you do imaginative play in school?
      b. How important have imaginative play activities been to you in your experiences in school?

   2. **If "no,"**
      a. Why do/did you not do imaginative play in school?
      b. How would your school experiences be different if imaginative play were (had been) included?

F. What imaginative play activities would you like to have (have had) in school?

IV. Demographics

A. What year were you born?

B. Where were you born?

C. Where were your parents born?

D. Do you attend school now? If so, what school do you attend? If not, what school(s) did you attend?

E. What is the last grade/level of school that you completed?

F. Do you work? If so, how many hours/week do you work?

Appendix C

Length of interview (HH:MM): 02:28

(*italics = verbatim participant response*)

I. **Definitions**
   Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:02
   A. **Play:**
   Play means to to actively have fun. Umm, pretty much, yeah. I guess, umm, any kind of, of activity that ummm that would involve ummmm, I guess ummm, (long pause), *it's a harder definition, it's a really a harder definition than you think. Play...I think a lot of things can be considered play. So, I think it's like enjoyment and* (long pause) *any activity you can do that that you do that brings enjoyment can be considered play.*

   B. **Imagination:**
   Ummm, imagination I guess, just to me, ahhh....is more with ummm, I guess, ummm, it fits along with play because it's like the type of play that you do, ahhh, in your mind.

II. **Episodes**
   Length of this section (HH:MM): 01:14
A. **Early Childhood**
   Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:14

   1. Theme: Drawing play
      I did this most often at this time in my life. I did this in many places. I drew Ninja Turtles with my friend in pre-school. At first, I just drew them from behind walking into the sunset since I couldn't draw their faces; in kindergarten I'd begin drawing them from the front. I also was asked to draw something on command for family members since my family thought I was a good drawer.

      Motivation: To begin my life-long identity and activity as an artist. It was something that always was with me.

      Context: friends and family and school and home

2. Theme: Video game play
   My family had Nintendo and I played with my father and brother at home. Playing video games is like being transported to another world and acting in it.

   Motivation: To bond with my brother and father. I was also amazed to see the art of motion in the game and be able to participate in it.

   Context: father and brother and home.

3. Theme: Objects in nature play
   I remember not being incredibly grounded in reality. For example, I'd go on walks with my grandmother and I'd stop a lot to pick up rocks or look at sticks. This magical, adventure-like approach to taking a walk was my reality. Since I was so young, these objects were often so new to me and so it was exciting to experience them.

   Motivation: To tie into my artist identity. To realize that I've always been artistic and visual and that it started from my earliest days and memories.

   Context: alone and outdoors

4. Theme: Wrestling play
   My brother and I watched wrestling on TV and often acted out the scenes as if we were famous wrestlers of the time.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: brother and home

5. Theme: Cartoon play
   My brother and I watched Superheroes and Ninja Turtles on TV and often acted out the scenes as if we were the characters from the episodes. Sometimes I would also do this play with friends during recess at school.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: brother, friends and home and school.

B. Elementary School Years
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:13

1. Theme: Drawing play from early childhood continued into elementary school years. During this time, I still drew things but it was not with the intent of pushing an idea of what I wanted to express and why. It was based on interests; for example, if I liked Power Rangers, I just drew them. I was not trying to make a "big idea" about Power Rangers.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: as before

2. Theme: Video game play from early childhood continued into elementary school years.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: as before

3. Theme: Cartoon play from early childhood continued into elementary school years. Now, the focus was on Power Rangers rather than Ninja Turtles. I still acted scenes out with my brother. I also added comic book reading and comic book card collecting and trading activities during this time in my life. Reading comic books and collecting and trading cards was incredibly imaginative. Since I was not a huge reader, it was great to engage in graphic novels like comic books. The visuals were great for me and I enjoyed seeing the artists' perspectives and comparing them to my own. It added to my bank of perspectives of the stories, how others saw things, and what else I could try and create in my own drawings.

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: alone and friends and home and school

4. Theme: Objects in nature play from early childhood continued into elementary school years.
   I was interested in science and nature in elementary school and I enjoyed outdoor walks to wonder about objects in nature and how and why these objects came about or what their functions were.
   Motivation: N/A

   Context: as before

5. Theme: Costume play
   I really got into Halloween and my parents made costumes for my siblings and me. My father is really crafty and he was really good at measuring and making things exact and detailed. My mother was a really good knitter and sewer. Before Halloween each year, my siblings and I picked out patterns and fabrics and my mother would make costumes and my father would help as needed. The first one that comes to mind was the year I was Cyclops. My mother sewed it and my father made the belt. I felt so cool and it was great to have a costume that my family made. It made me proud. One year my sister, brother, and I were all Power Rangers. My mother made the costumes and my father made our belts.

   Motivation: To bond with family over a creative activity that we all enjoyed. We all got a chance to share our interests and talents.

   Context: family and home and school

6. Theme: Wrestling play from early childhood continued into elementary school years

   Motivation: N/A

   Context: as before

7. Theme: School and Self/Body exploration in imaginative play
I don't think so. We had art class in school but school was not a big influence on my art or video game play, for example.

C. **Adolescence**
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:20
1. Theme: Wrestling play from elementary school years continued into adolescence.
I did this until about age 13 or so.

Motivation: N/A

Context: as before

2. Theme: Video game play from elementary school years continued into adolescence.
I played a lot of video games at this time. During these years, it was more of a reclusive activity since my neighborhood was really dangerous and many of my friends were gangbangers. There was also a lot of shootings and drug activity in my neighborhood. At times, friends and I who weren't in gangs would go to each others' houses and play multiple-player games like Halo.

Motivation: N/A

Context: as before

3. Theme: Drawing play from elementary school years continued into adolescence.
My graffiti art was the main focus. I also sketched people's names in graffiti upon request.

Motivation: N/A

Context: as before

4. Theme: Hip-hop play
   I got into Hip-Hop because my brother was in the community. We were not getting along at the time but one day my brother came home with a friend and started break dancing in our kitchen and I was curious. I also saw them doing graffiti art and got really interested. I ended up joining them and doing graffiti art, break dancing, and poetry slams. I did permission walls in Chicago and traveled to competitions in Illinois and around the U.S. There was a refreshing focus on originality and being authentic in the Hip-Hop community; that was a positive message for me at this time in light of what I was experiencing at school.

   Motivation: To bond with my brother. To explore the art experiences I couldn't/didn't have at school. To escape the reality of my school situation and be a more "authentic" me. To get validation for my art from my peers and from a community. At the time, my parents, my school, and law enforcement were against the Hip-Hop community (they thought it was a gang-banging activity).

   Context: friends, brother and home, community

5. Theme: Identity play
   I've always considered myself an artist and explored that identity from my earliest memories drawing to my current activities in Hip or Hop or playing music.

D. Adulthood
   Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:27
   1. Theme: Drawing play from my adolescence continues into my adulthood.
      I do this less often and it's more tied to my work.

      Motivation: N/A

      Context: as before

2. Theme: Family play
   I play with my daughter. Sometimes I pretend I am a monster who tries to chase her or I do a little dance as I come over to pick her up. My sister also joins in when she comes visit.

   Motivation: To bond with my daughter

   Context: daughter, sister, and home

3. Theme: Hip-Hop play from my adolescence continues into my adulthood.
   I continued to hang out with other members of the community and attend competitions in Illinois and throughout other parts of the U.S.

   Motivation: To spend time with like-minded people.

   Context: as before

4. Theme: Music play
   I picked up the guitar at this time and enjoy playing alone. It's the most expressive play I do these days since it's not tied to work or other responsibilities. It's all about self-expression and the process of creating.

   Motivation: To express myself and allow my creativity to flow

   Context: alone and home

5. Theme: Costume play from my elementary school years continues into my adulthood.
   My wife and I always do matching costumes every Halloween and I'm looking forward to helping make my daughter's costumes as she gets older.

   Motivation: To spend time with family

   Context: wife and daughter

6. Theme: Video game play from my adolescence continues into my adulthood.
    I really enjoy multi-player games and ones where people can make fools of
    themselves and have fun together. It's not so much a solitary activity.

    Motivation: N/A

    Context: as before

7. Theme: Spirituality play
    When I was young, I was raised Catholic and the emphasis was on "this is the way;
    there's no questioning or interpreting it otherwise." Now, I see spirituality as an
    opportunity to explore ideas and beliefs and get to know people. Now I am working
    as a youth minister and I love getting to know young people, what they think about,
    and have opportunities to share experiences with them. I also use my graffiti art
    background to create media for my faith community.
    I also find reading the Bible imaginative now; it's a way of connecting with the words
    in a new way each time; my faith is not dead to me like it was when I was younger.   I
    now feel free to be spiritual.

    Motivation: N/A

    Context: alone and other members of my spiritual community, in the community and
    church.

8. Theme: Humor/joking play
    I enjoy having fun with my wife; we get each other's sense of humor. She's a really
    fun and funny woman. We like imitating each other, making each other laugh. We
    try to find fun ways to do every day activities, like skipping out the door to go pick up
    our daughter.

    Motivation: To build my relationship with my wife. To have fun and not make our
    relationship stale.

    Context: wife

9. Theme: Relationship play
    I don't use play to understand my relationships, but play is a huge factor in my relationships with my family. For example, I love joking around with my wife and doing Hip Hop events with my brother.

E. Probe questions (across the lifespan)
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:16
1. Theme: Play connected to experiences with Mexico
    It happens a lot with music. My earliest influences in music are from my father and his influences come from Mexico. Also, with respect to humor, there's a particular style of humor. Mexican humor is silly but sharp. Making fun of people is common as is parody. There's so much that Mexicans take seriously, but when humor is concerned, anything goes. For example, my aunt is really religious and strict, but she has no problem telling a filthy joke.

    Motivation: N/A

    Context: as before

2. Theme: Gender roles
    When I was younger, a lot of the play I did just with my brother at the exclusion of our sister. When I was younger, I sometimes told her that boys do X; and girls can't do X. The masculine identity in Mexico is ingrained in us, from everything to not expressing emotions to having a deep voice and mustache. But my father, brother, and I break down these barriers whenever we do things like express ourselves in our singing, art, or dancing.

    Motivation: N/A

    Context: as before

3. **Play of people in Mexico and in the U.S.**
    When I was younger, there fewer examples of imaginative play using technology like video games. When I went back a couple of years ago, there were more examples of children playing with video games or other technology. There's also more "adventure-based" play in Mexico: kids would go out and do stuff. One time I remember going out with my cousin in Mexico with our backpacks and some Gatorade to have an adventure.

Also, families live more close to each other in Mexico; families are more spread out here in the United States.

4. **Aspects of Mexican culture/celebrations**
Day of the Dead is an example: the sugar skulls and art are ingrained into the celebration. Cooking is also very creative and is often done as a group. In Mexico, when people cook, they cook for everybody and many people are helping out. The ingredients are often fresh and available right outside people's homes. Also, when I went back a couple of years ago, people have a celebration where they make characters out of paper maché, have them available for show, and then they are blown up with fireworks at the end of week.

F. **Support/Prevention of play and "secret play"**
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:13

1. **Support for play:**
Depends on which activity. My parents always support my reading and drawing.
The common denominator: people who care about you and would like to get to know you. Even if my father does not see the world as I do, he is always interested in what matters to me. The Hip-Hop community is filled with people who are genuinely interested in what you've got to offer.

2. **Prevention of play:**
Institutions and others who do not pay attention to or care about my interests. When institutions (e.g., school or faith) get too large, they can no longer serve local and individual interests; they become too stifling and the people in charge get too afraid of things changing based on people's needs.

3. **Secret play:**
Sexual play with my wife. It's important for me to express who I am in this way, but it's not something that others need to know. It's also not something I am ashamed of but it is something I prefer to keep between my wife and me.

G. **Vignettes**
Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:11

1. **Vignette 1 – Culture/Community affiliation**
I think it's awesome. I love it. I love going to costume parties and I love to go with my wife. I'd go with her as a Day of the Dead couple. We'd wear old clothes, paint our faces, and look like walking sugar skulls. I'd do a lot of research to get every possible angle of how to look, walk, and act dead and creepy.

2. **Vignette 2 – Ethnic identity**

   I don't think there's anything wrong about it. It's positive, as long as it's coming from a place of exploration, not because he hates himself. If he is interested in wondering about something and someone else, that's great. If not, then it might not be a good thing. I haven't done that before exactly like he did, but I do daydream about my future and what's possible. I also have done it through costumes. But I like who I am and so I have never created a whole different life in my mind.

3. **Vignette 3 – Gender**

   He gets hope out of this activity. When you're younger, you really getting into what you're imagining and what you're imagining may draw you into actually going for it. He might see the career change as possible. I usually don't play against male roles, but I have imagined what it would be like to be a mother rather than a father. When my daughter was born, I saw the bond my wife had with her that seemed almost instant. I also appreciated my mother more once I saw my wife give birth and I realized, "Wow, my mother did that." I understood the activity of carrying a baby, giving birth, and taking care of a child is different for mothers than for fathers. And I've wondered what that's like. It's also challenged the dominant idea in Mexican culture that men are superior to women; I've never been a chauvinist but once you see a woman give birth, there's no longer a question of who's the stronger sex.

III. **Benefits**

   Length of this section (HH:MM): 00:32

A. Current play

Oh definitely. Ummm, just quality of, quality of life. Umm, I guess like the more, the more you can tie, ummm, play or imaginative activity to everything that you do, I think that it just goes hand in hand with your level of happiness. Cuz I think ummm, the way I defined it at the beginning that play is something that like brings you joy, and life should bring you joy. That that should be kinda the point. There's this work you do and there's this bunch of stuff that makes you completely unhappy and so you can have 'I'm going to really have fun this weekend."Life should be fun. It should be an ongoing, an ongoing thing. I feel like all the, all the little ways I like experience play and this like imagination throughout my life has just really ingrained in my mind that it's not something I want to do like on the weekends. It's something I want to do all the time. Like whether it be with my wife, like I mean, I didn't marry a girl with no sense of humor. I married a woman with a great sense of humor because I love that and and it's something that like keeps us grounded in our love for each other. And the same way that I, I mean I work at a job where like I, I, not necessarily being like imaginative all the time but I get to talk to people. I get a, it allows me, it gives me, it gives me like a window of opportunity to still like do stuff that makes me happy and that I can still express myself and still make a living even though it's not, I think I think it's a unique situation cuz most people can't do

something else while they're working. Those people have to do like what they're doing. And I'm thankful that that that I can cuz I can go to school or like make extra money by doing design work. Just you know have an opportunity, a window of opportunity to, ahhh, where I can do what it is that I would like to do. Where I have a choice, rather than 'this is what you're going to be doing.' Umm…yeah you know…that's it.

B. Play from childhood and adolescence

Definitely. Because I think costumes and like all that stuff, like creating stuff with my family, umm, that set, like all those good things, all those good things that I know that have been good influences on me, those are things that I know I am going to do with my daughter now. So, ahhh, I just think that building that as a child or or making kids comfortable expressing themselves at a young age, it just shows them ummmm, it just, I mean, it it shows them how to do it, how to, how to facilitate that for other, for other people. And for me, like, the way that my dad facilitated our our creativity, my mom did, like that showed me how to do that for my daughter like, how to put her in a place where she can express herself. And give her room to kinda like, you know, develop.

C. Difference between benefits of current play and play from childhood and adolescence

I think now I think the benefits are more, I think it's the same benefits but ummm, the benefits are more ummm, ahhh, they're just clearer now. Like like like when you play as a kid it's it's a lot more transparent. You're playing and like you're not trying to get anything out of it. It's what's natural to you. I mean you want to play. It's the first thing kids want to do when they wake up. They they ahhhh…I put my daughter down and she just goes over, picks up a toy, picks up some blocks. The first she wants to do is play. It's what she wants to do. And like now we're like when we get older our lives, because of the nature of the responsibilities of being older they're they have to be structured. So like now when we play, it's a way to escape that structure. Like before, play was the structure. And like, we still got the same thing out of it, except now like we're conscious of what we're getting out of it because we kinda need it.

D. Examples of imaginative play during formal schooling experiences and their importance

In grammar school, teachers just lectured to you and you answered a series of questions. There was limited group work. In high school, it depended on the teacher. The different teaching styles of the teacher may have encouraged more dialogue or more interactive, creative activities. I did have some amazing teachers who treated us like people and not as morons; they respected us and cared about what we had to say. My English teachers may have given us the structure of a five-paragraph essay, but welcomed our creativity and our voice within that structure.

187

I wanted to enroll in an arts-based track in my high school but my counselor did not enroll in me that track and so I got stuck in another track and couldn't change after the first year. I was angry that I couldn't do the art track since I wanted to go to art school. I ended up not caring as much about school as I had in the first year and my grades went down and I got kicked out of honors classes in my sophomore year. I also felt that the quality of my instruction worsened once I entered the general track. Even though I wanted the arts-based track, my friends who did do the arts track in high school got disenchanted with art since our school structured the activities so much that it stifled their creativity.

If there had been more imaginative play in school, I would have gone to college sooner. The main reason I didn't go to college right after high school was because I didn't see that my high school prepared me to develop my art portfolio and creative thinking. So I decided I was going to work on my portfolio on my own and apply a year later; it didn't happen. I know people who did go to art school and they now have tons of debt and their work is not necessarily deeper or richer than what I'm doing. But it would have been a more organic movement as an artist. I might have gotten to the point I am at now sooner if school had helped me along.

E. **Kinds of imaginative to have/have had in formal schooling experiences**
   I am not sure. I am thinking of home schooling my daughter. I do think it would be most helpful to have one-on-one attention and much more time to learn about each child's interests and needs are. Teachers might be able to make history class like a game show to draw kids in, but it's important to ask kids themselves what they would like to do and what interests them. Then you're honoring the different ways people learn and the different interests they have. The evaluation also has to change: we need to get away from quantitative measures; pigeonholing people with percentiles does not work. Focus more on the interests and experiences of students and teach to that.

   I also think incorporating music into instruction is important and underused. Even if there's not a structured time for music, give kids free time to just beat a drum or paint a picture. Or do whatever interests them. And realize that that's not just what little kids want to do; it's what people want to do.

VITA

Anthony T. Perone III

The Presence and Significance of Imaginative Play in the Lives of Mexican-American Adults

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago – College of Education

2013 (expected) Ph.D. Educational Psychology (Human Development and Learning)

Advisor: Dr. Artin Göncü

University of Illinois at Chicago – College of Education

2005 M.Ed. Instructional Leadership/Self-Designed program

Cornell University - College of Arts and Sciences/College Scholar Program

1994 B.A. Magna Cum Laude - Applied Language Studies

Honors thesis: Autonomy, awareness, action: Learning and teaching languages through drama

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2004 – 2006 Annoyance Training Center Improvisation Program

2002 – 2003 & 2008 IO Training Center Improvisation Program

2001-2002 Second City Training Center Beginning Improvisation and Acting Program

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluent in English and Proficient in Spanish (all skills)

AWARDS AND HONORS

2012 President's Research in Diversity Travel Award – The University of Illinois

2011 Graduate Student Award Cultural Historical Special Interest Group – American

      Educational Research Association

2010 Volunteer Spirit Award - All Starts Project of Chicago

2009 Graduate Student Fellow Division E Counseling and Human Development - American

      Educational Research Association

2008 Graduate Student Young Scholar Travel Award recipient – International Society for the
Study of Behavioural Development. National Science Foundation Grant Number BCS-
0827429 $1,577.

2007 Five-year service recognition award – University of Illinois

2006 Recognized in *Who's Who of Emerging Leaders –1st Edition*

2006 Recognized in *Who's Who in American Education – 8th Edition*

2006 Recognized in *Who's Who in America – 61st Edition*

2005 Recognized in *Who's Who in America – 60th Edition*

2005 Recognized in *Who's Who in American Education – 7th Edition*

2004 Teacher Recognition Award, Humboldt Park YMCA Head Start

1999 Burton Greene Scholarship Award Winner, Purchase College, SUNY

1994 Magna Cum Laude, Cornell University.

1994 Distinction in All Subjects, Cornell University

1991 – 1994 Dean's List, Cornell University

1991 Golden Key National Honor Society

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Perone, A. (in preparation). The presence and significance of imaginative play in the lives
      of Mexican-American adults. (Dissertation)

Perone, A., & Göncü, A. (under review). Life-span learning and development through imaginative play.

Göncü, A., Perone, A, & Ryan, S. (2013). "Play." In Oxford Bibliographies in Education, (L. Meyer. Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.

Göncü, A., Main, C., Perone, A., & Tozer, S. (2012, November). Crossing the boundaries: The need to integrate school leadership and early childhood education. In B. Superfine (Ed.), *The University of Illinois at Chicago Research on Urban Education Policy Initiative* (Fall 2012 ed.).

Perone, A. (2011). Improvising with adult language learners. In R. Keith Sawyer (Ed.), *Structure and improvisation in creative teaching,* (pp. 162-183). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Göncü, A., & Perone, A. (2009). Inquiries into the role of adults in children's play. *Play and Culture Studies: Vol. 9. Transactions at Play* (pp. 125-128).

Göncü, A., & Perone, A. (2005, September). Pretend play as a life-span activity. *Topoi.* "Play, Games and Philosophy." [Special Issue] 24(2), 137-147.

Göncü, A., & Perone, A. (2005, January). Exploring the role of narrative and play in young children's development and education. Review of Bert van Oers (Ed.), (2003). Narratives of childhood: Theoretical and practical explorations for the innovation of early childhood education. *Early Education and Development 16(1),* 43-47.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2013 Teaching Assistant, Writing in Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2011 Instructor, Advanced Educational Psychology, College of Education, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2009 – 2010 Teaching Assistant, Advanced Human Development and Educational Processes, College of Education, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2002 - 2008   Adult and Family Literacy Educator Team Leader, Center for Literacy, College of Education, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2001 – 2002 Adjunct Lecturer, Tutorium in Intensive English, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2001 Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Higher Education Basic Skills, East-West University

2001 English as a Second Language Instructor, American English Academy

2000 <u>Adjunct Lecturer,</u> School of Continuing Education, Purchase College, SUNY

1999 <u>Teaching Assistant,</u> Department of Natural Sciences, Purchase College, SUNY

1995 - 1997 <u>English as a Second Language Instructor,</u> EF International

1991 - 1995 <u>English as a Second Language Teacher,</u> Berlitz International

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2011-current <u>Member-at-Large:</u> The Association for the Study of Play

2009 <u>Reviewer:</u> Play and Culture Studies, Vol. 11 (Play and Performance)

2008 <u>Reviewer:</u> American Educational Research Association/Cultural Historical Research Special Interest Group

2008 <u>Reviewer:</u> American Educational Research Association/Adult Language and Literacy Special Interest Group

2008-2009, <u>Representative:</u> Graduate School of Education Student Council Department of Educational Psychology, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2006 – 2008, <u>Alternate Representative:</u> Graduate School of Education Student Council Department of Educational Psychology, The University of Illinois at Chicago

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Perone, A. (2012, April). Imaginative play as a life-span, cultural activity. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Holzman, L., Lobman, C., & Perone, A. (2011, April). Performatory research and inquiry. Professional Development session presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Holzman, L., Lobman, C., & Perone, A. (2010, May). Implementing and researching performatory learning environments: Meeting the challenge of integrating cognitive-social-emotional learning**.** Professional Development session presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.

Perone, A., & Göncü, A. (2010, April). Illustrating pretend play as a life-span activity: A multi-method, retrospective, life-span approach. Paper accepted for presentation in the symposium "Cultural historical approach to imagination, play, and art as meaning-making practices," A. Marjanovic-Shane, Chair, at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.

Perone, A. (2010, March). The benefits of adult imaginative play activity: A cultural-historical perspective. Paper accepted for presentation in the symposium "Cultural-historical understanding of play," A. Marjanovic-Shane, Chair, at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Atlanta, GA.

Perone, A. & Göncü, A. (2008-March). Adults speak out: The benefits of pretend play. Paper presented in the symposium "The developmental and educational contributions of pretend play across the life span," A. Göncü, Chair, at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, NY, NY.

Perone, A. & Göncü, A. (2007-April). Lives in Play: A life-span approach to pretend play. Paper presented in the symposium "The role of pretend and improvisation in the development of children and adults" at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, A. Göncü, Chair, Chicago, IL.

Rosenfeld, S. & Perone, A. (2007, March). The multi-level tree of ESL assessment. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Seattle, WA.

Perone, A. & Göncü, A. (2005, September). Pretend play as a life-span activity. Paper presented in the symposium, "The improvisational and performance aspects of play," L. Holzman, Chair, at the meeting of International Society of Cultural and Activity Research, Seville, Spain.

Perone, A. & Shelton, C. (2005, March). Teaching and learning languages through improvisation games. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), San Antonio, TX.

PEER-REVIEWED POSTER SESSIONS

Perone, A. (2008, July). Pretend play as a life-span activity: Developmental continuities, discontinuities, and transformations. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Würzburg, Germany.

Perone, A., & Göncü, A. (2008, July). Adults speak out: The benefits of pretend play across the lifespan: two retrospective studies with European-American adults. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Würzburg, Germany.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

Division G – Social Context of Education

Special Interest Groups:

Cultural Historical Research

Adult Language and Literacy

The Association for the Study of Play (TASP)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012 – 2013 Research Assistant, Center for Literacy, College of Education, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2008 – 2012 Coordinator, Educational Policy Studies, College of Education, The University of Illinois at Chicago

2001-2002 Program Manager, Youth Outreach Services

2000-2001 Teen Information Specialist, FIRST, Inc.

PUBLIC SERVICE

2010 – present Volunteer: All Stars Project of Chicago

2004 – 2007 Outreach Counselor and Consultant, Split Pillow NFP

2002 Volunteer, Chicago Improvisation Festival

2001 – 2002 Education and Training Committee Volunteer, Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network.

1998-1999 Community Volunteer/Adolescent Unit, New York Presbyterian Hospital.

WORKSHOPS

Perone, A. (2012, November). Teaching and learning with multi-level ESL classes. Workshop presented at Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Salit, C. & Perone, A. (2012, October). Using performance, play, and pretending in afterschool. Workshop presented at Afterschool: Growth! a grassroots conversation about afterschool with frontliners and innovators, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2012, October). Using improvisational theater (improv) games in the adult ESL class. Workshop presented at Universidad Popular, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2012, October). Performing communication in and with the languages of PTW '12! Workshop presented at the biannual meeting of Performing the World, New York, NY.

Perone, A. (2012, June). Imaginative play across the life-span. Invited speaker at the Healthy Lungs Initiative of the Cook County Health & Hospitals System, Chicago, IL.

Christenson-Caballero, T., Kenkel, W., & Perone, A. (2012, May). Improv-e your way to a better research presentation. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2012, April). Co-creating adult learning & development using improvisational theater (improv) games. Workshop presented at the annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A., & Lobman, C. (2012, February). Co-create, not negotiate: An improvisational approach to offering and developing play. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Albuquerque, NM.

Perone, A. (2011, November). Improv as youth development. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago Youth Development Summit, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, November). Teaching and learning with multi-level ESL classes. Workshop presented at Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, October). Improv as youth development. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A., Lenner, J., & Jones, T. (2011, September). The performance of volunteering. Workshop presented at the All Stars Project of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, September). Teaching and learning languages with improvisation games. Workshop presented at Universidad Popular, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, August). Parents learning through play: Community building using improv games. Workshop presented at Cowlishaw Elementary School, Naperville, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, July). Community building using improv games. Workshop presented at Morton College, Cicero, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, June). Teaching and learning languages with improvisation games. Workshop presented at Poder Learning Center, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, March). Teaching and learning with multi-level ESL classes. Workshop presented at Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, March). Playing with and performing community. Workshop presented at The Northwestern University Settlement House, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2011, February). Performing outreach. Workshop presented at the All Stars Project of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2010, December). In the know: The promise of play. Workshop presented at the All Stars Project of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

Wallace, V, Buscemi, P., Grant, M., & Perone, A. (2010, October). Performing language: Using play to create an ensemble performance with new language learners. Workshop presented at the biannual meeting of Performing the World, New York, NY.

Perone, A. & Rich, M. (2010, October). Improv break-out session. Workshop presented at the biannual meeting of Performing the World, New York, NY.

Perone, A. (2010, March). Not just child's play: Improvisational theater activities for adult learning and development. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Atlanta, GA.

Lobman, C., O'Neil, B., & Perone, A. (2010, March). Play and performance. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Atlanta, GA.

Lobman, C., O'Neil, B., & Perone, A. (2009, February). Improvisation and performance. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Brownsville, TX.

Perone, A., Tetrick, R., Atler, T., Aufmuth, E., Medina, Jr., T., & Harris, A. (2008, October). Team-building using improv games. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago/Family Start Learning Center (FAST), Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2008, October). Improv break-out session. Workshop presented at the biannual meeting of Performing the World, New York, NY.

Lobman, C., & Perone, A. (2008, March). Playing together: The importance of improvisation for human development across the lifespan. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of The Association for the Study of Play, Tempe, AZ.

Rosenfeld, S. & Perone, A. (2008, March). Forming a new look on adult ESL assessment. Workshop presented at the annual Illinois TESOL-BE State Convention, Naperville, IL.

Perone, A. & Rodriguez, A. (2007, April). Learning styles and the adult learner. Workshop presented at the annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. & Razo, J. (2006, February). Playing improv games for adult language development. Workshop presented at the annual Conference of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2005, October). Playing improv games with adult ESL learners. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of Performing the World, New York, NY.

Perone, A. (2005, October). Performance and development. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago/Family Start Learning Center (FAST), Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2005, July). Performance and development. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago/Family Start Learning Center (FAST), Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. & Martinez, J. (2005, February). Teaching and learning languages through improvisation games. Workshop presented at the annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. & Shelton, C. (2004, November). Teaching and learning ESL through improvisation games. Workshop presented at the Adult Learning Resource Center Adult Education Fall Conference, Bloomingdale, IL.

Perone, A. (2004, June). Improvisation games for better public speaking. Workshop presented at Columbia College, Chicago, IL.

Van Ormer, K., Perone, A., Villarreal, E., & Rodriguez, R. (2004, April). Chicago as a Classroom: A family literacy experience. Workshop presented at the annual Tutor and Adult Learner Conference of Literacy Volunteers of Illinois, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. & Shelton, C. (2004, February). Using improvisation games and activities in the language classroom. Workshop presented at the annual Illinois TESOL-BE State Convention, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2003, July). Using drama and improvisation with pre-school, kindergarten, and elementary school children. Workshop presented at the University of Illinois at Chicago/Family Start Learning Center (FAST), Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2003, May). Improve your social skills with improv. Workshop presented at the annual Youth Conference of Youth Outreach Services, Chicago, IL.

Perone, A. (2002, May). Improve your social skills with improv. Workshop presented at the annual Youth Conference of Youth Outreach Services, Chicago, IL.