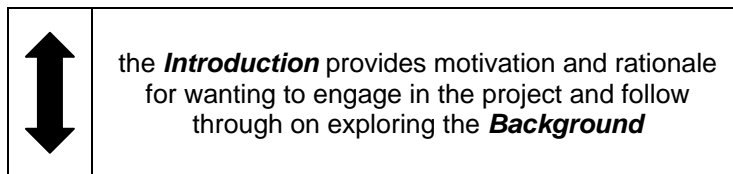**Narrative Outline**

From Personal Action to Collaborative Play: Creating a Personal Engagement Plan for Adults that Creates a Rewarding Group Learning Experience

I. Introduction: My Perspective on Adult Learning and the Value of Play
(ties into: Evaluation of my own past scenarios, Inquiry to Illuminate the Background, Reflection)

In my own experiences in adult learning, I have become particularly interested in the idea that play may be used as a tool that might enhance the learning process by opening up the possibilities of _experimentation_ in learning. I consider this to be an important part of the learning process such that it may, when used at appropriate times, remove the boundaries of "right" and "wrong". When this happens, an opportunity for learning occurs that provides space for novel or "strange" ideas to be considered; this may not happen if learning activity is purely goal-driven, since that may require that such novel ideas are ignored if they do not directly or obviously relate to the goal. Further, if play happens in a collaborative way, this means that learners may be performing the same experiments together, finding ways to enjoy the experience, and increased *sharing* between them. I will reflect upon learning experiences of my own in which collaborative play did happen and work effectively as well as some that lacked such play but that might have shown a benefit from having it. Also, I will describe some initial assumptions that I made at the start of the action research.
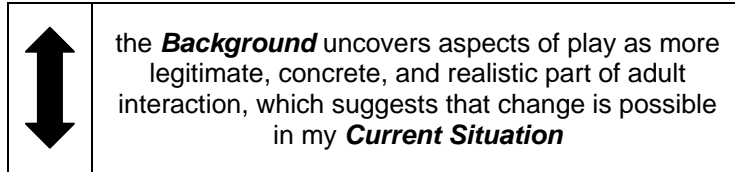
> the **Introduction** provides motivation and rationale for wanting to engage in the project and follow through on exploring the **Background**

II. Background Wisdom from the Minds and Experience of Others
(ties into: Inquiry to Illuminate the Background, Dialogue)

I will summarize my review of the literature concerning the ideas of others regarding the meaning of "play" and "collaborative play" and consider how they have been defined and related to the childhood and adult worlds of interaction. Because no single idea of play claims to be the

most useful or only correct one, I will present some themes that emerge from comparing a variety of perspectives on play, and note some key contrasts. Further, I will provide some example cases of the use of play in learning situations that primarily involve adults.

> the **Background** uncovers aspects of play as more legitimate, concrete, and realistic part of adult interaction, which suggests that change is possible in my **Current Situation**

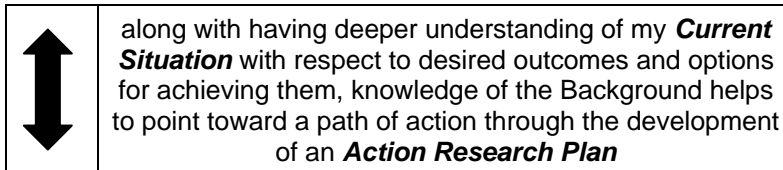### III. My Current Situation and the Need for Change
(ties into: Evaluation of my current situation, Dialogue, and Constituency-Building)

I will describe the target setting of my role as a curriculum developer and teacher in a preschool program, where I need to work with a group of core preschool teachers to develop lesson plans and activities that both integrate multimedia and help meet learning standards for the students (such as literacy and science awareness). The area for change focuses on this teacher planning process itself and how collaborative play might be included in the process and used more effectively as a tool to enrich our planning, with an inner-most constituency group being these teachers.

Two central issues surround the planning process. One is that I have specialized knowledge (multimedia, technology, and information resources) and the teachers have specialized knowledge (educational standards for preschoolers and more personal knowledge of the students themselves). In order for planning to become more effective, we must learn from each other's knowledge and experience so that our plans account for all of it as much as possible. Another central issue is that planning has traditionally occurred in the form of a "decisional discussion" - a general discussion that aims to simply find agreement on a decision about what activities to use in the student classes. This means that there currently is no play between the members of the teacher planning group, even though we are attempting to create learning experiences for the students that involve high levels of play. In typical teacher planning so far, we have not really tried activities ourselves or even imagined "out loud" how they might work. My action research plan will focus on what actions I may take that can introduce the possibility of collaborative play into the teacher planning. This will be a primary area of interest in my current project.

Future cycles of action research cycle might then seek to refine how the change takes place:
- Phase 2: how to do this in such a way that the collaborative play that happens actually increases the mutual cross-learning between teachers
- Phase 3: how to do this in such a way that the collaborative play, that leads to mutual learning, also leads to more playful and well-defined student lesson plans and activities
- Phase 4: ....leads to increased engagement/enjoyment of the preschool students themselves

> along with having deeper understanding of my **Current Situation** with respect to desired outcomes and options for achieving them, knowledge of the Background helps to point toward a path of action through the development of an **Action Research Plan**
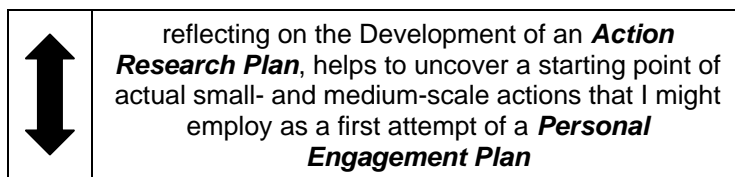
IV. Developing an Action Research Plan for Change: The "Personal Engagement Plan" in Defining How Personal Action Relates to Increased Collaborative Play
(ties into: Proposing and Planning {what actions}, Implementation {strategies, logistics for action})

I will describe an idea for how to plan my actions and suggest how others might do the same across an imagined larger system of teacher planning throughout a school. My main idea is that I would create a "Personal Engagement Plan" for myself. This would be a list of actions that I would plan to take before, during, and after a teacher planning session that I propose might help to introduce collaborative play into the planning process. "Before" actions might include those that might help me to individually develop a playful attitude ahead of time and prepare materials that might be used in playful planning. "During" actions might include those that directly communicate suggestions for play to other teachers during planning and those that lead to planning activities that are themselves playful in a way that matches appropriate with the current interactions of the planning session. "After" actions might be those that allow me and others to reflect on our play and collect feedback from the observers of teacher planning.

Part of the Personal Engagement Plan will certainly require me to make attempts to define actions in the first place that I think are likely to lead to collaborative play, so I will also discuss how I might think about this. The actions might draw upon my own direct teaching and learning experiences as well as perspectives related to life experiences, such as some of my recent training in theater and kind of play that happens in sports and games.
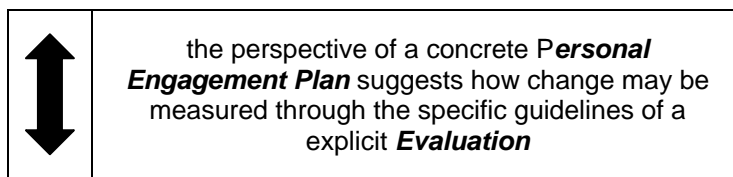
Further, because the Personal Engagement Plan starts with myself but includes many others, I will describe how my I imagine the growth of my constituents to work over time, with respect to direct participants (myself and the other teachers), indirect participants (preschool administrators and preschool students), and allies (teachers in other schools, playful people, idea-providers, Action Research class colleagues). This description will include how I might ideally frame the constituency in a holistic way, such that I am able to offer support to constituents as they do so with me, and such that communication/relationship-building might occur not only between me and individual constituents and constituent groups, but between constituents themselves. Because collaboration and play lie at the foundation of the change that I envision, constituency-building will also involve specifically seeking out skeptical people who can help me to consider objections to the use of collaborative play or areas in which play in general might be met with resistance.

> reflecting on the Development of an **Action Research Plan**, helps to uncover a starting point of actual small- and medium-scale actions that I might employ as a first attempt of a **Personal Engagement Plan**

V. Example Personal Engagement Plan
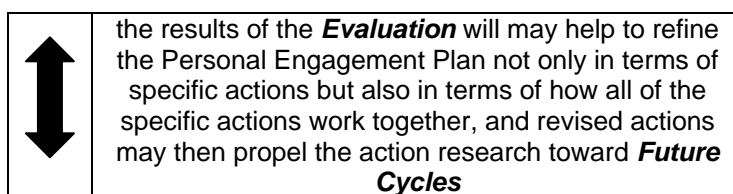*(ties into: Implementation, Reflection, Constituency-Building))*

Because the Personal Engagement Plan is the primary vehicle for supporting the actions taken to create change, I will provide a suggestion for an initial plan while considering how this might work in my own situation, as well as proposing how it might also apply to an imagined situation in a larger environment where multiple teacher planning sessions might be happening, where collaborative play is sought not only as a tool for in-group teacher planning but also as a new element of school/institution culture. I am now considering that My own Personal Engagement Plan might involve the integration of several elements: 1) lists of "before", "during", and "after" actions that I take, 2) conditional statements/priorities that regulate when certain actions need not or may not be taken relative to a particular teacher planning session, and 3) time-based and systems-thinking considerations that influence overall implementation of the actions, i.e., does implementing a given action disrupt some other part of the system of the preschool that otherwise appears to exist outside of teacher planning sessions?

⬍	the perspective of a concrete P**ersonal Engagement Plan** suggests how change may be measured through the specific guidelines of a explicit **Evaluation**

VI. Evaluation of the Personal Engagement Plan
(ties into: Evaluation, Dialogue, Constituency-Building)

Consideration of the Personal Engagement Plan will also include description of how this can be evaluated. Because collaborative play might not be equally meaningful or perfectly well-defined across all teachers, evaluation will depend not only upon my own reflection but also on feedback/commentary given directly by other teachers, notes on observations made by third-party observers, and other quantitative and qualitative measurements of my own and others' behavior both during and outside of the teacher planning sessions.

⬍	the results of the **Evaluation** will may help to refine the Personal Engagement Plan not only in terms of specific actions but also in terms of how all of the specific actions work together, and revised actions may then propel the action research toward **Future Cycles**

VII. Imagining Further Iterations of the Action Research Cycles
(ties into: Evaluation, Inquiry {unanswered questions related to Personal Engagement Plan})

The primary focus of the action research during the first phase will be to introduce collaborative play into the teacher planning process in some form, as a way of discovering which actions that I take might catalyze the collaborative play interactions that take place. This not only means injecting "instances" of collaborative play into the formal teacher planning sessions, but also hopefully taking the actions that help to establish that the overall environment allows for collaborative play where it might even become more spontaneous outside of the formal planning. Future directions of the action research might then address the types of implied changes that are suggested under Phase 2, 3, 4, and beyond, as mentioned previously under the "Current Situation" section.