

DOMINGUEZ, C. R. C. **Science circles in kindergarten:** a ludic and pleasurable way to learn. 2001. 174p. Master's dissertation. Faculty of Education, University of São Paulo – USP, São Paulo, 2001.

#### Abstract

The investigation described herein purported to identify the characteristics of ludicity in conversation circles about scientific subjects – which we call *science circles* –, held with a group of 4-year-old children in a kindergarten center. The *science circles* – in which the children talked about butterflies – were recorded on audio and video over a period of approximately six months. We found that the *circles* displayed ludic characteristics only when the children were allowed to speak freely about the subject in question. Using as reference the works of Huizinga and Piaget, we found the following aspects of ludicity on these occasions: delimitation of time, delimitation of space, distancing from quotidian reality, competition, challenge, the presence of rules and willingness to participate. We also found that the circles sometimes resembled dramatic games, sometimes were like language games, sometimes were games of rules, and at other times were exercise games. It should be noted that the subject of “butterflies” itself has a strong “ludic potential”, since children usually enjoy talking about these animals. During the period this group was monitored, we also observed that the children assimilated a variety of information about butterflies, such as: differences between life and death, coating of the body, metamorphoses/phases of the life cycle, and behavioral strategies. It should also be noted that lessons were learned concerning attitudes of care of live animals and about observation and data recording procedures.

Keywords: child education, ludic, conversation circles, science teaching, language