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Ludic reading is 20 minutes a day?
– Adding a socio-material perspective to ludic reading

Abstract

This article presents unexpected findings about children's experiences with ludic reading, discovered through a collaborative project involving schools, libraries, and Pedagogical Learning Centres (PLC). The findings reveal that while children's ludic reading experiences often reflect a goal-oriented, functional approach typical of educational contexts, they also seek social, playful, and immersive reading environments. This article explores how a socio-material approach can illuminate these findings, which existing literature does not fully address. The research question guiding this study is: How can a socio-material perspective on ludic reading inform professionals in rethinking initiatives to enhance children's ludic reading? The methodology involves analysing these unexpected findings, termed 'stumble data,' derived from empirical material based on child-centred methods. The results suggest that a socio-material perspective can bridge the contexts in which ludic reading occurs. The article concludes that this perspective provides new explanatory frameworks and practice opportunities by integrating social and material elements that have not been sufficiently explored in the literature.

Keywords
ludic reading; socio-materiality; child-centred methods

Image 1: 'Hug Me', a prototype from the project Læselyst og Læserum, designed by Nina Gjødsbøl Ruder. Photo by Katrine Worsøe, Design School Kolding.

Introduction

This article examines the role of socio-materiality in supporting children's ludic reading – a concept that extends beyond mere individual engagement to include the significance of the physical and social environments in which ludic reading occurs. The overall framework and findings in this article are based on a project called *Læselyst og læserum* (Ludic reading and reading spaces) involving librarians, artists, designers, reading advisors, and children. This collaboration, funded by the Danish Agency of Culture and Palaces, aimed to address the decline in children's ludic reading (Hansen, Hansen & Pettersson, 2021). through a project involving Kolding Library, four Pedagogical Learning Centres (PLC), Design School Kolding's Play Lab, and the University of Southern Denmark. The overall project resulted in several innovative prototypes, such as a large book where children explore and activate their senses while engaging with a story, an octopus-like collection of huggable cushions for group reading (see Image 1), adventurous bunk beds with individual light settings, and secret codes and missions in the library, exemplify collaborative efforts to enhance children's ludic reading.

The initial aim of the project focused on enhancing the accessibility of library and PLC systems for children and improving the match between the individual child and book to promote ludic reading. However, child-centred design methods revealed that children expressed a desire for spaces where they could engage in ludic reading with their peers in soft, cave-like surroundings. Additionally, the language used by the children to describe ludic reading primarily reflected the demands of a school context. These findings surprised us and highlighted a gap in existing theoretical frameworks, which failed to account for why ludic reading, according to the children, is predominantly a shared experience among peers. Moreover, it became evident that ludic reading extends across various environments or

aspects of children's lives, connecting different contexts, and necessitating an interdisciplinary approach (Lyndgaard, Feder, Tirsgaard, Brink & Johansen, 2024). This article argues that integrating a socio-material understanding into the concept of ludic reading is crucial. This addition would ensure a sensitivity to children's environments, contexts, and relationships, thereby enabling professionals around children to better support and enhance their engagement in ludic reading. Through this approach, it also becomes possible to avoid the imposition of a scholastic and goal-oriented understanding of ludic reading that might otherwise dominate the children's experience.

The term *ludic reading*, as used in this article, is derived from Victor Nell's (1988) definition:

»It is free activity standing outside ordinary life; it absorbs the player completely, is unproductive, and takes place within circumscribed limits of place and time (Caillois, 1961; Huizinga, 1938/ 1950). Ludic reading (from the Latin ludo, I play: Stephenson, 1964) is therefore a useful descriptor of pleasure reading, reminding one that it is at root a play activity, and usually paratelic, that is, pursued for its own sake« (Apter, 1979 in. Nell, 1988, p. 7).

While ludic reading is significant in its own right, as per Nell's (1988) definition, it also plays a vital role in fostering children's imagination, empathy, and ability to immerse themselves in narratives (Lund & Skyggebjerg, 2021). To get an overview of the concept of ludic reading, we rely on Henriette Romme Lund and Anna Karlskov Skyggebjerg's (2021) comprehensive review of the concept of reading for joy. Our findings in this article indicate that children's understanding of ludic reading is deeply intertwined with the functional aspects of school contexts and encompasses atmospheres and materiality as integral element. Ludic reading, therefore, cannot be fully understood as an individual activity alone; the material environment plays a crucial role in stimulating and providing new and more inclusive, child-centred practice opportunities for professionals working with children's ludic reading. A central argument in literature is that the social and the material are 'mutually enacting' (Jones, 2013; Tanggaard, 2013, 2016), a perspective we find essential for enabling children's ludic reading.

In working with children's ludic reading, it is crucial to involve the children themselves to ensure a genuine understanding of their reading experiences, rather than merely reflecting the agendas and assumptions of the involved professional adults (Fails, Guha & Druin, 2013). The engagement of children can vary greatly, and this article's findings are based on data collected through a child-centred design approach as formulated by Feder (2020).

The research question guiding this article is: *How can a socio-material perspective on ludic reading inform professionals in rethinking initiatives to increase children's ludic reading?*

To address this question, we first define the concepts of ludic reading and the socio-material perspective. We present the context of the study and describe how we use the notion of *stumble data* to explain the unexpected findings that emerged from the overall project. We analyse these findings from three perspectives: those of the children, the professionals, and the contextual. This analysis leads to a discussion of the functional approach in schools and its impact on children's ludic reading, as well as the potential for a socio-material perspective to open up new practice opportunities for professionals working with children and ludic reading.

Ludic reading is a multifaceted concept

Lund and Skyggebjerg (2021) have reviewed the research on ludic reading from 2005 and onwards and conclude that the concept of ludic reading must be considered multifaceted. The concept encompasses the *joy* of reading for pleasure and *understanding* a text. Additionally, it involves the immediate *desire to read*, a *habit*, or a *general appreciation* for reading. Furthermore, *reading competence*, the ability to read, decode, and comprehend text, also influences ludic reading. Similarly, being able to assess whether one's own reading abilities match the text's level, defined by Nell (1988) as c*orrect book selection*, is crucial. Another central factor is having *access* to literature. Lastly, one's *goals* for reading influence ludic reading. Ludic reading can furthermore be understood from both an individual and a collective perspective and encompasses a developmental perspective, as described by Nell (1988) (see Lund and Skyggebjerg for further references). According to Lund and Skyggebjerg (2021), this makes ludic reading a quite comprehensive, even multifaceted concept, which can be complex to address.

Ludic reading with playful roots

Victor Nell (1988) describes pleasure reading as a form of play. He defines it, as initially stated, as a free activity standing outside ordinary life. It absorbs the reader completely, is unproductive (Nell, 1988). The notion of *ludic reading* is therefore a useful descriptor reminding one that it is at root a play activity and pursued for its own sake, as defined in the introduction.

   Nell's (1988) studies involved a total of 162 readers, which included 33 ludic readers. Nell (1988) focused on individual reading, immersion within the book, and engagement with fiction. Nell's (1988) research was grounded in perceiving ludic reading as a cyclical progression defined by several factors, also termed as three antecedents for ludic reading: reading ability, positive expectations, and correct book selection. Nell's cyclical understanding expands the concept of ludic reading to encompass pre-, during, and post-stages, showcasing that ludic reading is in continual development and subject to ongoing renegotiation by the individual. Ludic reading is regarded as an individual experience but is dependent on the immediate environment since reading competence often develops through education and inspiration provided by teachers, educators, parents, or others. The same applies to fostering a positive attitude towards reading and correct book selection, where encounters with compelling stories are often initiated and influenced externally. This suggests that the genesis and cultivation of ludic reading also occur collaboratively with others (Nell, 1988).

A socio-material perspective on ludic reading

Lund and Skyggebjerg (2021) present various perspectives on ludic reading, such as gender differences, the emphasis on fiction and non-fiction literature, and the role of the physical book as a reading medium, as well as the correlation between reading pleasure and reading competence, considering it as a measurable concept. They explore silent reading and read-aloud practices. However, the review does not explore the relationship between surroundings and different settings *where* children read, except for a mention that »*students will be particularly engaged in silent reading when involved in the design of reading environments and in the selection of reading material*« (Brok & Geer, 2018 ac. Lund & Skyggebjerg, 2021). Building upon Nell (1988) and Lund and Skyggebjerg's (2021) review, ludic reading can be

described as cyclical, in perpetual development, and dependent on specific antecedents, multifaceted in both individual and collective aspects. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, they may fall short of fully capturing the role of the environments in which ludic reading occurs.

We argue that ludic reading happens within particular environments and that the way it is supported in one context, such as schools, influences children's ludic reading in other settings. Therefore, we propose expanding the concept to include a socio-material perspective, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of social and material factors in enabling ludic reading.

This socio-material lens helps elucidate how the playful and paratelic nature of ludic reading is nurtured by the dynamic interplay between social contexts and material conditions. By integrating these factors, we can better understand how environments both shape and are shaped by the playful engagement in reading.

According to Anezka Kuzmicova (2016), one reason why the environment has been neglected in the ludic reading experience is that narrative reading is primarily regarded as a means of decoupling one's consciousness from the environment. However, Kuzmicova (2016) stresses the importance of connecting the reading room and sensory input to the content of the book to enhance mental imagery:

»In class, early readers could be exposed to sensory (auditory, tactile, olfactory, etc.) stimuli corresponding to the settings of a narrative they read. This may yield special benefits for the comprehension of narratives set in distant regions and cultures that would otherwise not, or not adequately, inform their mental imagery« (Kuzmicova, 2016, p. 25).

In addition, she states that teachers and librarians could capitalize on the insight that struggling readers could benefit from a better alignment between the book and the environment, primarily by trying to change the environment rather than the book (Kuzmicova, 2016). Schilab and Walker (2020) describe this view as *embodied reading*, which is attuned to the complexities of reading situations, including their cultural meanings as expressed in various historical contexts. This approach replaces traditional subject-object relations with multifaceted, multi-level interactions. Both Kuzmicova (2016) and Theresa Schilab and Sue Walker argue that connecting the content with the environment can enhance the understanding of written words (Schilab & Walker, 2020). These perspectives emphasize sensitivity to the environment and embodied reading; however, they do not focus on *ludic reading*.

Other research connects reading, and especially literacy, with a socio-material perspective. Kathy A. Mills & Barbara Comber (2013) argue in *Space, Place, and Power: The Spatial Turn in Literacy Research* that place matters to literacy because the meanings of our language and actions are always materially and socially situated in the world (Mills & Comber, 2013; Scollon and Scollon, 2003). They state that one cannot interpret signs—whether an icon, symbol, gesture, word, or action—without considering their associations with other meanings and objects in places. Mills and Comber (2013) map out an emergent strand of literacy research that foregrounds place and space as constitutive, rather than a backdrop for the real action, and in this case, literacy. However, the argumentation is relevant for ludic reading as well. Mills and Comber (2013) see space and place as relational and dynamic, not as fixed and unchanging but socially produced and subject to negotiation, reimagining, and remaking.

They document a shift in literacy studies towards the materiality of lived, embodied, and situated experience.

While literacy focuses on the fundamental skills of reading and writing, ludic reading is more related to a deeper and more enriching reading experience, as defined by Nell (1988). When adding a socio-material perspective to ludic reading, it engages with the idea that ludic reading is more than just a cognitive activity or mental exercise. Instead, it emphasizes that engaging in ludic reading is a comprehensive and holistic experience that involves the entire body situated in a specific space and place. The reader connects not only with the content of the book and the narrative but also with the physical environment and the people around creating a sensation or experience of reading that brings joy. Essentially, this perspective highlights the multisensory and immersive nature of ludic reading, suggesting that it encompasses more than just the intellectual aspect but involves a person's entire being in a particular setting. The socio-material perspective can reconnect the ludic reading experience with the environment that enables this experience. More precisely, it entails exploring the movements of ideas and the ongoing and productive re-associations that occur in relational spaces during the process of ludic reading. This stresses the need to include other and new perspectives when working with ludic reading (Tanggaard, 2015; Hvidtfeldt, 2019). The theoretical argument here is that ludic reading is consciously or unconsciously facilitated by the environment. The socio-material perspective becomes relevant when seeking to understand ludic reading in practice by analysing associations and connections between people, spaces, and materials as they appear in the actual process (Tanggaard, 2016; Hastrup, 2011; Hvidtfeldt, 2019).

Method and data collection

In the overall project *Ludic reading and reading spaces* the data collection centred on children's stories, fairytales, letters, drawings, as well as interviews and workshops with both children and the professionals (librarians, teachers and reading consultants). The methods were rooted in the principles of the Nordic Child Culture Perspective and child-centred design methods. These perspectives emphasize children's agency, creativity, and participation, ensuring that their voices and experiences are at the centre of the research process (Sommer, Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010; Dael, Juncker & Helmer-Petersen, 2021; Mouritsen 1996; Feder, 2020). By integrating these principles, the project aimed to foster an inclusive and democratic approach that respects and values children's perspectives. See appendix 1 for complete overview of the data collection, the methods, the number of involved from each target groups and documentation and image 2 portraying children writing a fairytale as one of the methods.

This data material was systematically themed and organized, leading to the formulation of design principles. These principles, reflecting both child-centred methodologies and the Nordic Child Culture Perspective, were subsequently presented to teachers, librarians, artists, and designers. This presentation formed the basis for the development of prototypes such as sensory books, huggable pillows (see image 1), adjustable bedside lamps, and interactive library features, all designed to support and enhance children's ludic reading experiences as mentioned in the introduction (see Designschool.dk for the design principles).

However, some findings in the original project could not be adequately explained by existing theoretical frameworks. Therefore, the methodology of this article is informed by the concept of 'stumbling data' (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2017; Tanggaard, 2016). Stumbling data

refers to unexpected findings that emerge during research, which may not align with initial hypotheses or theoretical expectations. This concept highlights the value of serendipitous discoveries in research, offering insights that might be overlooked. Stumbling data can lead to significant theoretical and practical advancements by challenging existing assumptions and opening new avenues for exploration (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2017; Tanggaard, 2016).

This concept of stumbling data is grounded in John Dewey's pragmatic epistemology. Dewey's philosophy emphasizes the role of experience and experimentation in the process of knowledge construction. According to Dewey (1938), knowledge is not a static set of truths but rather an evolving process shaped by interaction with the environment and the resolution of problematic situations. Stumbling data aligns with this view by recognizing that unanticipated findings can prompt new questions and insights, thereby contributing to the dynamic and iterative nature of research. Dewey's focus on the practical consequences of knowledge and the value of empirical experience underpins the importance of embracing unexpected data as a means of advancing theoretical and practical understanding (Dewey, 1938, Tanggaard, 2016, Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2017).

Our analysis focuses on the stumbling data and findings, which we categorize into three analytical perspectives: 1) the children's views on ludic reading, 2) the professionals' discoveries, and 3) ludic reading across different contexts. We use empirical examples from the overall dataset (see Appendix 1) and provide context for each finding included in the analysis. Rather than presenting the entire dataset from the overall project, we delve into the three specific 'stumbles'. By exploring these unexpected insights, we aim to uncover new dimensions of ludic reading and offer guidance to professionals for developing initiatives that better support children's engagement with ludic reading.

*Image 2: Children writing the fairy tale of Karla, who has lost the joy of reading.
Photo by Pia Viuff Schytz.*

Analysis
Ludic reading according to the children – play, friends and caves

The first 'stumbling' occurred when we analysed the children's drawings: One method we used to gain insight into the children's perspective on ludic reading involved asking them to create drawings of where they would read, titled »My place« and »Our place« (see images 3 and 4). The instruction was to draw a place where they would sit and read purely for the pleasure of reading, without being told or expected to do so. We discovered a recurring emphasis on the desire to be with friends, highlighting a sense of coziness, tranquillity, comfortable room temperature, and an overall pleasant, quiet atmosphere. There was a focus on creating an enveloping environment, often illustrated in cave-like settings (see image 4), incorporating elements such as bean bags, sofas, blankets, and cushions.
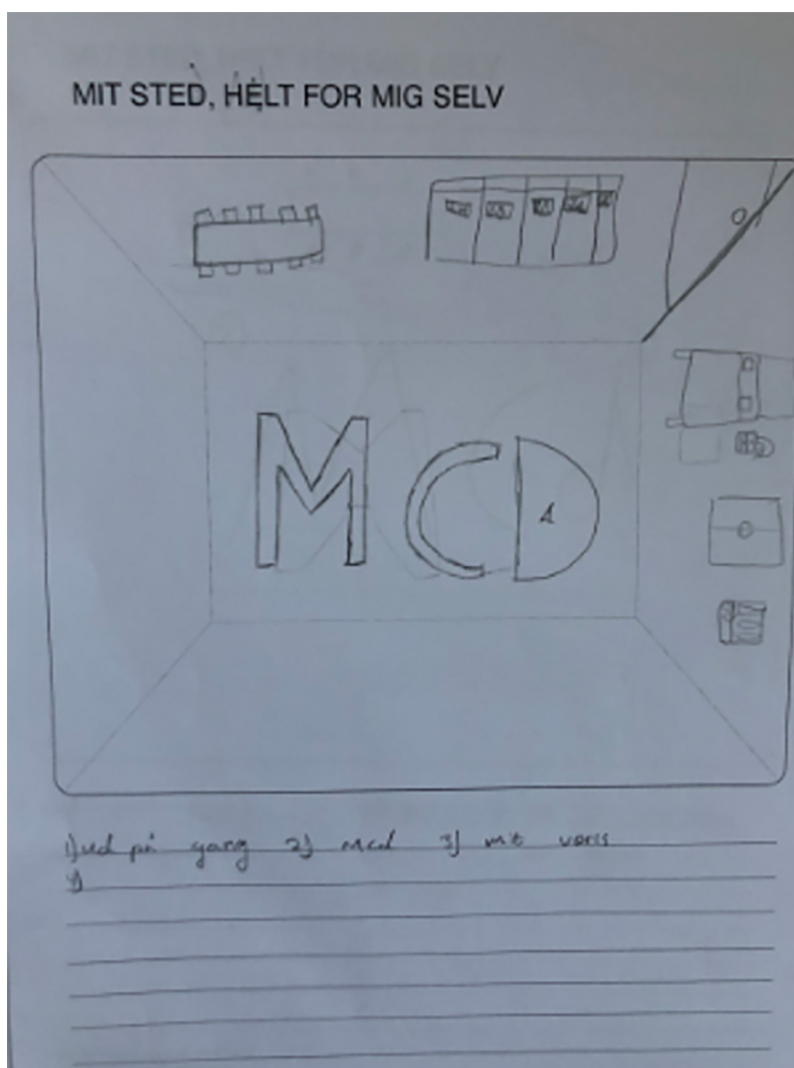

Image 3: An example of a drawing with the title 'My place' with 1) a sofa in a school hallway, 2) McDonald's, and 3) their personal space. Photo by Pia Viuff Schytz
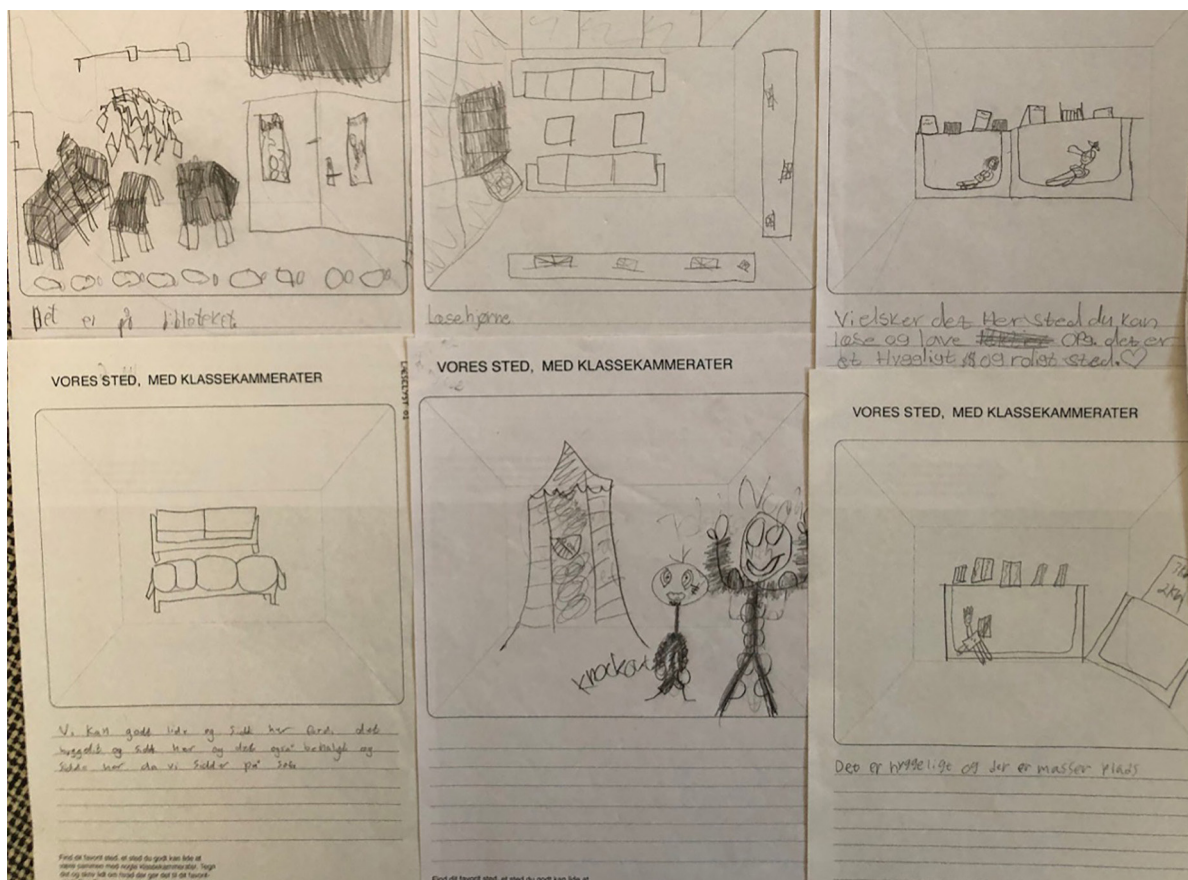
Image 4: Examples of the children's drawings, where the focus is particularly on community, soft and enveloping surroundings. Photo by Pia Viuff Schytz.

Interestingly the drawings centred around smaller groups of children actively participating in playful activities like soccer, table tennis, swings, basketball, or imaginative role-playing. The children expressed their desire to create enduring positive memories with friends and enjoy shared experiences. In line with Nell's (1988) definition of ludic reading, it appears that the children equate ludic reading with playful activities, not as an individual pursuit as one might expect, but as a shared playful activity.

The emphasis on creating a cozy environment suggests that well-being and a sense of togetherness can positively contribute to children's desire for ludic reading. By contextualizing the analysis of children's illustrations within the framework of socio-materiality, we can examine how both physical and social elements in children's environments impact ludic reading. Elements such as bean bags, sofas, and blankets become not only physical objects but also social symbols of camaraderie and shared reading experiences. Social interactions and the material environment work together to shape children's ludic reading. Socio-materiality provides us with an analytical tool to understand how the physical and social dimensions of children's surroundings interact to influence their ludic reading creating a sensitivity towards the surroundings and possibilities for opening for new ways to activate imagination, empathy, and ability to immerse themselves in narratives (Lund & Skyggebjerg, 2021). The drawings also reveal omissions, as not a single child depicted a desk and chair within a classroom setting.

The professionals – »Is there room for two?«

The second »stumbling« was the lack of participation and involvement of children in the professionals' practices aimed at enabling ludic reading, as well as insufficient interdisciplinary collaboration across areas of focus and contexts, specifically between schools, PLCs, and libraries. A significant aspect of the overall project involved professionals collaborating with the children and experimenting with solutions or prototypes to enable ludic reading. During one instance, a researcher visited a PLC, where a reading advisor was actively working on a cardboard cave. She told the researcher:

»It's interesting that you've come now because I just had a group of children test my prototype. You know what they said to me? They really liked it, but they asked, 'Is there room for two inside otherwise it's not something for us?' So, now I'm in the process of expanding it«. (see image 5)

Image 5: A prototype in cardboard to facilitate ludic reading. Photo by Pia Viuff Schytz

The prototype not only corresponds with various elements emphasized in the children's drawings but also embodies a key principle in Nordic Child Culture Perspective and child-centred design methods (Sommer, Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010; Dael, Juncker & Helmer-Petersen, 2021; Mouritsen 1996; Feder, 2020). Additionally, the reading advisor introduces an unexpected dimension compared to the initial vision in the overall project. While the project initially revolved around finding the perfect match between a child and a book, its progress revealed that matching is indeed important. However, more significantly, the focus shifted towards creating an environment conducive to shared reading experiences, fostering relational aspects to ludic reading in collaboration with the children.

This field observation illustrates how the material environment, represented here by the cardboard reading cave, functions as both a physical and symbolic space for reading. This space is not merely an object in itself, it also creates a social dimension where children express the desire of *social* lucid reading. Socio-materiality is evident here through the connection between the physical material (a cardboard cave) and its social significance (the potential for shared reading experience). A socio-materiality perspective comes into play and enables a shift in the focus from matching the individual with the perfect book to creating an environment that facilitates shared reading and possible ludic reading. The material environment can invite and form possibilities for ludic reading. Material and the physical environment are not just background elements but active agents in shaping children's ludic reading.

Several professionals expressed that they have learned '*they can ask the children'* when they develop solutions for enabling ludic reading. While professional fields may be divided by locations and areas of focus, children's lives do not have the same divisions. They move across different arenas and should be co-creators and informants in finding solutions for themselves, especially when it comes to fostering a greater interest in ludic reading, which is a practice that transcends the boundaries between leisure, school, and libraries. Ludic reading goes beyond professional divisions and physical locations, as it is an experience of activating the imagination and immersing oneself in narratives (Lund & Skyggebjerg, 2021), know no boundaries. The professionals might benefit from a more holistic and socio-material understanding, when working to increase children's ludic reading.

A contextual perspective on ludic reading: »Ludic reading is twenty minutes a day«

The third unexpected finding (or stumbling) in the data was that most of the children in the project expressed that ludic reading was '*20 Minutes a day´*. It turns out that this phrase originates from a school context, where students are tasked with reading twenty minutes a day. As we write this article, one of the researchers receives a message (see image 6) from a teacher in her son's 1st grade class that confirms this phrasing:

Forældrebrev 1.A Januar

Dansk:

I dansk fortsætter vi med at læse og arbejde med læse- og arbejdsbog hver mandag, onsdag og torsdag. Vi er i gang med kapitlet, som hedder "Nanna". Om tirsdagen er vi på biblioteket den første time, og derefter arbejder vi med en af arbejdsbøgerne i den sidste time. Jeg skal så vidt muligt nok skrive ud, hvilke sider de skal læse, ellers er det altid den næste overskrift, de har for. Fredag spiller vi fortsat danskspil i den første time. Jeg anbefaler, at I læser 20 min derhjemme hver dag.

Image 6: Information letter from school, January 2024.
Photo by Maria Lyndgaard (translated to English:

Translated to English it says:

»In Danish, we continue to read and work with the reading and workbook every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We are currently working on the chapter titled 'Nanna'«. On Tuesdays, we spend the first hour at the library, and then work on one of the workbooks during the last hour. I will try to specify which pages they need to read; otherwise, it will always be to the next heading they have. On Fridays, we continue to play language games during the first hour. I recommend that you read for 20 minutes at home every day« (Letter from teacher see image 6).

While learning to read undoubtedly involves elements of duty, discipline, and goal-based motivation (see Lund and Skyggebjerg, 2021), equating these with ludic reading is misleading, as they are fundamentally different. The children cannot easily distinguish between learning to read and ludic reading, as their experience is more practical than theoretical. The aim is not to impose precise terminology for these distinctions, but rather to understand how their conflation might reveal what dominates the children's reading experiences.

   A socio-material perspective can connect the children's arenas, enabling professionals to do the same becoming a valuable tool in bridging these different arenas and involving professionals in a collaborative effort to support children's ludic reading. Imagine if the homework was: »...*share a story with a friend, notice where the reading is joyful or make a reading cave with blankets during the weekend, or read with a friend, or go to the library*«. The children's equation between ludic reading and »...it's 20 minutes a day« is reminder that their voices are important, and that maybe the playful in ludic reading have been neglected:

»Dear ludic reading. I'm sorry to say this to you, but it has started to become boring; there's no fun anymore«. (Excerpt from a break-up letter by a group of 8th graders. Translated from Danish see original in image 7).

The goal is not simply for ludic reading to be 'fun,' but rather to consider whether children are pointing out something important. Paratelic practices, such as ludic reading, may be under pressure from an instructive and functionalistic discourse.
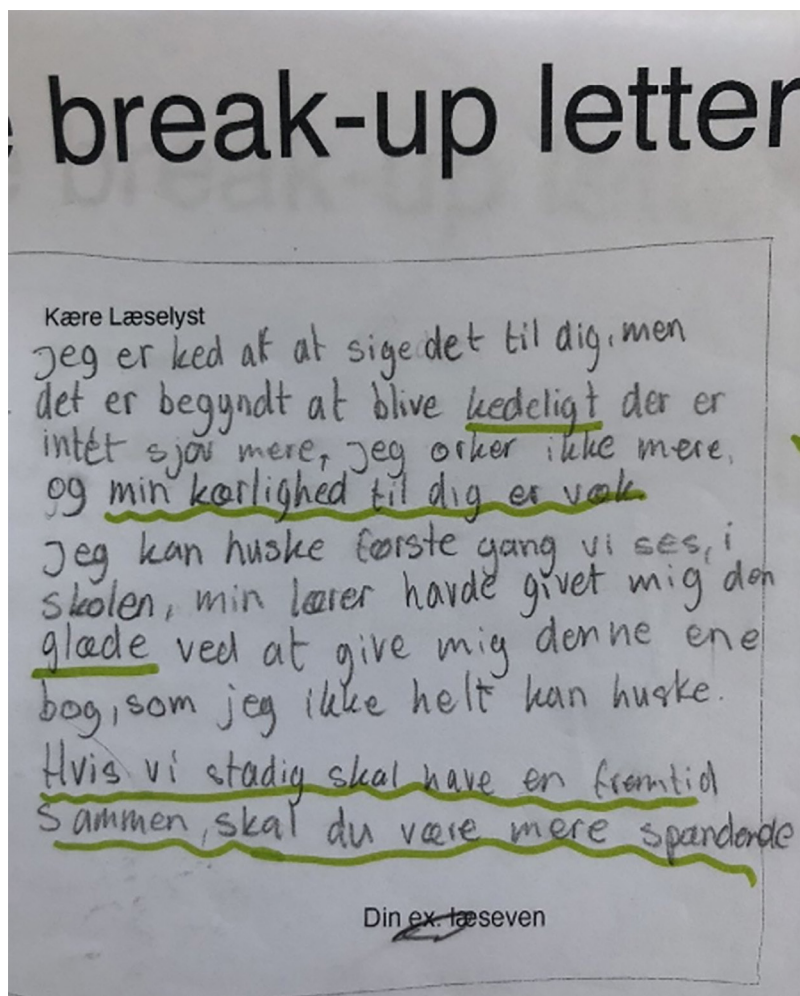

Image 7: An example of a break-up letter to Ludic reading (in Danish).
Photo by Pia Viuff Schytz

In English: »I'm sorry to say this to you, but it has started to become boring; there's no more fun. I can't stand it anymore and my love for you is gone. I remember the first time we met at school; my teacher had given me the joy of giving me this one book, which I can't quite remember. If we are still going to have a future together, you need to be more exciting. Your ex-reading friend«.)

Discussion

It is crucial to understand that the goal is not merely to make ludic reading »fun«, but to recognize that the paratelic element – although it may be more diffuse – is equally important. We should focus on how environments shape and promote learning in general, rather than viewing them as passive settings. This includes curiosity about what children's contexts can teach schools and vice versa. Interdisciplinarity becomes central, and combined with a child-centred approach, it can provide insights into what actually works. It is essential that contexts support each other rather than being unintentionally in conflict.

Ludic reading is a complex concept that requires a nuanced understanding. Instead of merely limiting the understanding to the individual child, there is significant value in employing a socio-materialist approach. This approach expands our perspective from individual competencies and preferences to also include the environment, children, and literary materials as active factors. The socio-materialist approach makes it possible to support playful elements in ludic reading initiatives and emphasizes relational and material aspects as integrated parts of the work to promote ludic reading (Nell, 1988; Tanggaard, 2014, Hastrup, 2011). However, adding to the theoretical and already multifaceted notion of ludic reading may be insufficient if professionals find themselves in frameworks that do not allow for changed practices or, for example, child involvement. It requires courage to involve children and to dare to invest in the paratelic over the measurable (Tanggaard, Feder, Lyndgaard & Grøn, 2022).

It can quickly become up to the individual professional to create a reflective space that encompasses both their own and children's thoughts on ludic reading and how it can be promoted. This is not about sidelining the professionals' knowledge and experience but about applying it in a learning environment that can accommodate unpredictability and unexplored opportunities, while also supporting and guiding children through their literary experiences with ludic reading. However, it can become a solitary and potentially unsuccessful endeavour if the effort relies solely on the individual teacher, librarian or reading advisor or if conflicting understandings of ludic reading are at stake.

To support children's ludic reading, a socio-materialist understanding can act as a bridge between different aspects of children's lives. This approach enables innovative solutions and promotes a collaborative approach across these domains. It indicates that professionals across contexts could benefit from working together and discussing their understanding of ludic reading, as well as ways to support each other across domains. Thereby avoiding competition and instead expand children's understanding and experiences with literature from *twenty minutes a day* to more inclusive, playful, and exploratory practices.

Efforts to promote ludic reading face challenges beyond conflicting agendas and differing interpretations of what ludic reading entails. However, this article does not address the impact of e.g. social media and technology. The »twenty minutes a day« initiative may arise not only from a telic understanding but also from necessity, as ludic reading is under pressure from several competing agendas within children's leisure time.

Conclusion

This article reveals that integrating a socio-material perspective into the study of ludic reading – beyond the individual engagement to include the physical and social environments – can significantly enrich our understanding and practice. The research highlights that children's experiences with ludic reading are influenced by their desire for social, playful, and immersive environments, rather than solely being goal oriented as often seen in educational contexts. Unexpected findings from the collaborative project underscore the importance of creating environments that support shared reading experiences. The analysis of 'stumbling data' shows that children prefer spaces that foster coziness and social interaction, such as soft, cave-like settings, and that their concept of ludic reading is closely tied to these physical and social dimensions. Additionally, the realization that ludic reading is often equated with a set duration from school contexts reveals a disconnect between institutional practices and the more playful, immersive nature children desire. By applying a socio-material perspective, professionals can

bridge different contexts – schools, libraries, and other learning environments – and develop more holistic approaches to support ludic reading. This perspective encourages the creation of environments that integrate both social and material elements, offering new opportunities to enhance children's engagement with reading. The findings suggest that instead of viewing ludic reading through a purely functional or scholastic lens, it is essential to consider how the interplay of physical spaces and social interactions shape children's reading experiences. This approach can guide professionals in crafting environments that truly support and enrich children's enjoyment and immersion in reading.

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Appendix

Method for data collection	Description/purpose	Target Group	Documented by
10 Probe-kits for professionals working with ludic reading	Through a set of different assignments e.g. filming their context, answering questions, and describing their role etc., we tried to get a sense of the everyday and understanding of ludic reading as well as the already established initiatives to enable ludic reading	Professionals both teachers, reading specialist, librarians and PLC advisors	A data set from each professional including video material
'The troll Lix' A fairy tale about the troll Lix who has lost its joy of reading	A fairy tale where the third graders are helpers and experts on how to enable ludic reading. They help writing the adventure being asked e.g. 'which obstacles are preventing ludic reading', or 'which three things can help LIX', or 'who is the hero/heroine' in the tale	25 third grade students	An A3 poster with their answers
Karla's adventure An adventure about Karla who has lost the joy of reading	A fairy tale where the third graders are helpers and experts on how to enable ludic reading. They help writing the adventure being asked e.g. 'which obstacles are preventing ludic reading', or 'which three things can help Karla, or 'who is the hero/heroine'	Two fifth and sixth grades from two different schools	20 fairy tales since the students worked together to fill in the fairy tale
The love-letter (Laughey, Brown, Ariel, Duenas, Gabrielle, 2021).	A love-letter to ludic reading with questions like 'When did you first meet?' 'How do you imagine your future together', 'what kind of experiences and where' 'yours forever…'	Three 8th grades in two different schools	25 letters since the students worked together in small groups to write the letters
The break-up letter. (Laughey, Brown, Ariel, Duenas, Gabrielle, 2021).	A break-up letter to ludic Reading with questions like 'Mention the reasons why you are not in love/happy about ludic Reading anymore, 'What would you rather do than spend time with ludic Reading' 'what should ludic Reading do for you to have a future together? '	Three 8th grades in two different schools	23 letters since the students worked together in small groups to write the letters
My place	A drawing exercise where the students draw their favourite places with ludic reading in mind. The paper has lines where they can write a few words	Third grade fourth grade fifth grade sixth grade eighth grade	55 drawings distributed in the different class levels

Our place	A drawing exercise where the students draw their favourite places together with their friends with ludic reading in mind. The paper has lines where they can write a few word	Third grade fourth grade fifth grade sixth grade eighth grade	55 drawings distributed in the different class levels
Participant observation	Visiting the PLC's and the libraries involved in the project as well as visits to DOKK1 a public library in Aarhus and LÆR a children's department at the main library in Copenhagen	Getting a sense of the systems and use of the PLC's and public library	Pictures and field-notes
Informal interviews	Interviewing the Danish teachers, librarians and other professionals when conducting the data collection	the professionals in the arenas being investigated	Audio and field-notes.

Table 1: Overview of data collection, target groups and documentation

Biographies

Maria Lyndgaard is a psychologist with a cand.psych. degree and currently works as a research assistant at Design School Kolding in the Lab for Play & Design. She is working on a Ph.D. project that investigates the relationship between learning and performance metrics. Maria's research interests particularly focus on learning and educational psychology for both children and adults. In collaboration with Lene Tanggaard, she is responsible for data collection and co-authoring publications in a research project that explores children, school, and art programs.

Lene Tanggaard is the Rector of Design School Kolding and a Professor of Educational Psychology at the Department of Communication and Psychology at Aalborg University, where she specializes in creativity and learning research. She has published several books and scientific articles on these topics, including her recent works, A Little Book on Why Most Parents Should Do Much Less Than They Think and Creativity Behind the Scenes. Lene is an active member of various commissions and councils, such as the Welfare Commission and the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (DFIR). She is also leading the KUMULT! research project, which explores a cultural initiative within schools. Lene frequently speaks at conferences and engages in discussions about the experiences of children and young people.

Karen Feder is Associate professor at Design School Kolding in the LAB for Play & Design, where she also leads the Master's program in 'Design for Play'. With a background in pedagogy and interaction design, Karen holds a PhD in child-centered play design, with her thesis titled Exploring a Child-Centered Design Approach – From Tools and Methods to Approach and Mindset. Her research focuses on the intersection of design, play, and children, emphasizing how adults can become more attuned to children's needs and perspectives through playful approaches.