

Chapter 5

The Lava-Shark: Teachers Attempting to Enter Children's Play



- Child *Now my cakes are ready, tatam!*
Teacher *Oh, how good! Is it okay to taste them now?* I think Alfon's dad
 is really lucky being allowed to taste!
Child This cake is a child cake!

This short dialogue illustrates the complexity of entering and becoming a participant in children's ongoing play. The teacher's initiative to take a part in the ongoing play by asking (in a playful voice) if it is okay to taste the cakes is rejected by a child, who clarifies that the cake is a "child cake", thus not a cake for adults. There is a tension visible in the dialogue, a tension between what the play is about (baking and eating cakes) and perhaps about who may participate (only children or also teachers). This tension can be seen as an example of what Wertsch (1998, 2000) refers to as the ongoing dialectic between *intersubjectivity* and *alterity*. In this chapter, this dialectic will be used as an analytical tool to illustrate and understand the premises for teachers' attempts to enter and participate in children's ongoing play. Another important analytical distinction is between *as if* and *as is* (Vaihinger 1924/2001). *As if*, as we clarified in Chap. 4, denotes utterances and other actions of a make-believe/imaginary kind appearing within or constituting a narrative play-frame. *As is*, in contrast, denotes utterances and other actions building on or constituting established knowledge as well as meta-communication about the play in order to coordinate what is going to be played and how.

In this chapter, we present examples of different strategies used by teachers trying to enter children's ongoing play. In the following chapter (Chap. 6) we conduct thematic discussions focused on *how* and *why* teachers seem to succeed (or not) in their attempts to enter ongoing play. The variety of play activities is substantial; for example, there are play focused on construction as well as play based on narratives and role-play. What is common to the examples analyzed is that they are all cases of play that is ongoing when teachers attempt to enter.

How Teachers Attempt to Enter Children's Ongoing Play

The teachers use a *variety of strategies* in their attempts to enter and thereby getting access to children's ongoing play. We have found four different ways used by the teachers when trying to enter children's ongoing play: (1) *Asking for permission to join the play*, (2) *Asking questions about the play*, (3) *Taking a role in the play* and (4) *Responding to a suggestion to join children's play*. Below, each of these strategies are illustrated with excerpts followed by analysis.

1. *Asking for permission to join the play*

We present two examples of how teachers try to enter children's ongoing play by asking permission. In the first example, the teacher mainly acts *as if* when she asks for permission and then talks about the animal house and the animals living in it according to the narrative play-frame. In the second example, the same teacher mainly acts *as is* by asking if she can join in and meta-communicating about what the hut looks like.

In the beginning of the first example, two children are sitting on the floor together with a teacher. Beside them is a hut with a roof. The two children are one boy (Sam, 3 years old) and one girl (Siri, 5 years old).

Excerpt 5.1

1	GUNN:	Shall we play something?
2	Siri:	We're already playing
3	GUNN:	What are you playing?
4	Siri:	We pl... we play animal house
5	GUNN:	Ahh yes animal house. Can I join for a while?
6	Siri:	Sure!
7	GUNN:	Animal house... who lives in the animal house?
8	Siri:	It's... elephant, dog, they they... the elephant is in the house
9	GUNN:	The house... is this the big house? (pointing at a hut)
10	Sam:	(makes barking noises and creeps on all four towards GUNN)
11	Siri:	We added an extra room
12	GUNN:	And you have so many animals in the house?
13	Siri:	Mm
14	GUNN:	What is the dog doing? (points at Sam)
15	Siri:	It's just a child of the giraffe and the elephant
16	GUNN:	I thought he was a little guard dog 'cause he barked at me when I came in here
17	Siri:	He's not. He just... he gets a little excited, always when he gets excited he barks
18	GUNN:	Okay, but what did you say now, Siri, was it in the tale that... or in this play, that the house was too small so you had to make it larger? You were too many animals in the house?
19	Siri:	Yes
20	GUNN:	Yes...
21	Siri:	We've got lots of animals

In this example, the teacher first invites the children to play (turn 1) but immediately changes her plans when Siri says that they are already playing (turn 2). Instead, the teacher asks what they are playing and if she can join them, asking permission to enter the children’s ongoing play (turns 3 and 5). When the teacher gets permission to enter the play, a negotiation starts about how to understand what they are doing and what they are going to do. The teacher continues by asking *as-if* questions about the play, for example “who lives in the animal house” (turn 7). Turns 7–10 can be understood as meta-communication that coordinates *as is* (the physical hut) and *as if* (the hut as the house in the play). The teacher introducing a new idea (the dog being a guard dog, turn 16) can be seen as an example of alterity, which opens up for rethinking the premises of the play. However, the child has another idea regarding why the dog is barking (turn 17). Hence, even if rejected, suggestions may be generative for the development of play. Even if rejecting what theoretically could be referred to as alterity, the teacher’s suggestion still triggers the child to develop the narrative (the character description of one agent in the play; turn 17). When the teacher asks about the house being too small (turn 18) this reconnects to Siri’s previous explanation: “we added an extra room” (turn 11). We can see the teacher asking *as-if* questions about the play and trying to introduce *as-if* ideas into the play. This can be understood as an example of the continuous tension between temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity and alterity. In this episode, the teacher is sensitive to the children’s agency (Clarke, Howley, Resnick, & Rosé, 2016) and does not obtrude her ideas into the play. The teacher becomes a participant in the play and after her entrance the play is not *free from* (van Oers, 2014) the teacher. She participates as a play partner and both the teacher and the children are *free to* make suggestions on how to take the play in unforeseeable directions, even though all suggestions may not be realized. In their continuing play, the teacher suggests that even more animals be present, and the play continues for 15 minutes within the same narrative frame.

In the beginning of the second example, the same teacher tries to enter one child’s ongoing play by asking permission, but in a different way to in the previous example. The child (Siri, 5 years old) is playing in a hut when the teacher sits down next to her.

Excerpt 5.2

1	GUNN:	Can I play with you?
2	Siri:	Yees
3	GUNN:	Nice. What are you playing?
4	Siri:	Everyone who wants to can join
5	GUNN:	Everyone who wants to can join. Can I join for a while then? What are you doing?
6	Siri:	I’m only playing in the hut
7	GUNN:	You’re playing in the hut. May I pop in?
8	Siri:	Yes
9	GUNN:	I take a look here. Oh! what a NIICE hut you’ve made
10	Siri:	And I have lots of pets. Here!
11	GUNN:	Do you have so many pets?

12	Siri:	Yes, a whole box full!
13	GUNN:	A box full of animals. Oh! Okay. But Siri, I thought that now when I come to pay you a visit here in the hut I feel like playing with these for a while. Come and take a look. I thought we would take these (gets up and gets a can). Oh, it's such a BEAUTIFUL hut. THESE, what do you think of THESE. What do you say we play with these for a while?
14	Siri:	YES!
15	GUNN:	We can play that I come and pay you a visit and then I'm... the Triangle-Lady maybe?
16	Siri:	YES
17	GUNN:	Shall we do that? Is that okay? Can't you sit here next to me instead? Nice. The Triangle-Lady comes and pays a visit (holds a triangle in her hand and shows it to Siri). Do you know why they're called triangle?
18	Siri:	'Cause... they are a bit like that... (makes a drawing in the air with her finger), they're almost like this!
19	GUNN:	YES I agree

The child is playing inside and outside the hut when the teacher, in an *as-is* way, asks if she may join the play (turns 1 and 5). Siri says yes (turn 2) and then explains that everyone who wants to can join the play (turn 4). This is a common social norm in Swedish preschools that everyone shall be allowed to participate in play. It can be seen as an example of double dialogicality (Kullenberg, 2014), that is, the child orienting towards the teacher in the here-and-now and, at the same time, towards the institutional framework of preschool. Phrased differently, she contextualizes her response to the question from the teacher in institutionally-sanctioned terms. When the teacher asks what the child is playing (turn 5) Siri answers that she is “only playing in the hut” (turn 6). The dialogue continues with the teacher asking an *as-is* question: if she can look into the hut (turn 7). She is allowed to do so and says that the hut is very nice (turn 9). Then Siri explains that she has got many pets (turn 10). The teacher confirms the narrative play-frame by talking *as if* and using the word *pets* (turn 11). She also confirms that there is a box full of pets but then she, in the same utterance (turn 13), states that she feels like playing with something else. Thus, she switches between admiring the look of the hut and her own suggestion of what to play within the same utterance and she asks Siri if they shall play with “these” (the geometrical shapes in the can) for a while. Siri accepts the invitation (turn 14). From being allowed to become a participant in the child's ongoing play, the teacher now directs the play into a new direction, suggesting how to reframe the premises of the play. She meta-communicates about what to play and what play-role (Triangle-lady) she will have (turns 15 and 17). Siri does not get a named role in the play; instead, she is asked questions by the Triangle-lady, about a geometric shape, a triangle. The teacher's focus is no longer on becoming a participant in Siri's ongoing play, but on introducing the geometrical shapes she has in her can. She tries to do this within the frame of play, being a Triangle-lady in the hut. In this episode, there is not much room for the child's agency; however, the child is enthusiastic about the geometrical shapes and we do not know what would have happened if the child had said no to the suggestion from the teacher. The teacher directing the play

in a new direction rather constitutes a new kind of play than taking ongoing play in a novel direction (alterity). It can thus here be questioned if the child is *free to* (van Oers, 2014) play in a way of her choosing. As the activity evolves, she aligns with the play initiated by the teacher in place of her own play.

2. Asking questions about the play

The second strategy teachers use is illustrated with an example where four and sometimes five children (2–3 years old) are playing in a room. Since this strategy – asking questions about the play – is more or less continuous throughout the play, we will illustrate how the questioning continues by showing several examples from the same play.

Excerpt 5.3

1	Liv:	<i>Go to the playground!</i>
2	Sara:	<i>Now we're at the playground</i>
3	EVA:	(is filming and is therefore herself not in the picture) What... what are you playing?
4	Lisen:	Playground
5	Child:	Mum dad child
6.	EVA:	Ahh
7	Liv:	We we play... (inaudible)
8		(they all go to another room)

The teacher starts filming and asks the children what they are playing (turn 3). One child answers that they are playing “playground” (turn 4) and another that they play “mother, father, child” (turn 5). Hence, it appears that the children are not in agreement about what they are playing; apparently, this has not been necessary for them in their play before the teacher enters (or they have been playing mother, father, child at the playground), which indicates that intersubjectivity is partial, sufficient for going on with a (more or less) mutual activity (play) without sharing concepts in a more strict sense. The example shows that their intersubjectivity is temporarily sufficient for going on without necessarily sharing conceptual understanding – to a certain point; when a new play partner tries to enter the play (or develop it), some coordination (meta-communication) work becomes critical. Then the children all start to walk away and the teacher follows them into another room. The teacher positions the video camera in the room, why we can follow the children's play also when she is not there.

Another narrative play-frame emerges when one child asks her friends in turn 18 (below) if they shall “look at the *padda*?” (Swedish vernacular for a computer tablet). The other children are doing different things while Liv starts to give out imaginary tablets to some of them, including the teacher who has now rejoined them (turn 21):

Excerpt 5.4

18.	Liv	<i>Look at the padda?</i> [the Swedish word <i>padda</i> literally means toad; however, it is used here as a common contemporary colloquial term for a computer tablet]
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19.	Lisen	Yes!
20.	Sara	(has her hands before her, appear to be driving something, makes noises)
	Svea	(singing and dancing)
21.	Liv	There (hands Lisen an imaginary computer tablet, and continues to give also to other children)
22.	Lisen	I'm a baby
23.	Sara	I too wanna look at the <i>paddan</i>
24.	EVA	(sits down next to the children)
25.	Lisen	(makes noises)
26.	Liv	Here you have a <i>padda</i> (hands EVA an imaginary tablet)
27.	EVA	Is it a <i>padda</i> , an ipad? Oh (takes the imaginary tablet)
28.	Liv	Mmm (nods and sits down)
29.	Sara	I too want an ipad
30.	EVA	Let's see

This teacher's attempt to enter the play is verbal at first, as she asks the children what they are playing (turn 3). Her attempt then gets physical when she returns and sits down beside them (turn 24). When she is offered a pretend tablet from Liv (turn 26) and asks, "Is this a *padda*, an Ipad?" (turn 27), she gets a humming and nodding answer from Liv (turn 28). Through this clarifying talk on how to understand what she is given, and the response she receives, she has become a member of the play. The local and *as-is* language ("Is this...") is coordinated with a more expansive and also *as-if* language of the play ("*padda*, an Ipad").

The teacher uses the same voice as usual (i.e., without taking on the voice of a character or speaking in a manner that signals play) and asks many *as-is* questions; the children answer and continue the play. After this question-answer dialogue there is a cut in the film (we do not know for how long) but when it continues, they still sit together talking about their imaginary tablets and that one of the tablets is broken:

Excerpt 5.5

61.	EVA	<i>But what are we gonna do when it's broken?</i>
62.	Sara	(points towards the tablet) <i>it's not working</i>
63.	EVA	No but can you fix an ipad?
64.	Sara	Noo
65.	EVA	You don't think you can fix an ipad?
66.	Sara	Noo (shakes her head)
67.	Sven	<i>Yes, I get a syringe</i>
68.	EVA	You get a syringe
69.	Sven	(nods, reaches out and grabs a pretend syringe)
70.	EVA	Okay! and...?
71.	Sven	<i>To fix it</i>
72.	EVA	To fix the ipad?

73.	Sven	<i>Here’s where you put it in</i> (does something with the imaginary ipad)
74.	EVA	You mean you insert the syringe... in the ipad, in the ipad?
75.	Sven	Yes
76.	EVA	Yes, okay. What happens to the ipad when you put a syringe into it?
77.	Sven	Then, then then it’s fixed
78.	EVA	You mean it’s fixed then?
79.	Sven	Yes

The teacher’s concern for the broken tablet has an *as if* approach when she in turn 61 asks “what are we gonna do when it’s broken?” but shifts to an *as-is* approach when asking, “can you fix an ipad?” (turn 63). Sara confirms that the tablet does not work (turn 62) and answers “no” (turn 65). The teacher asks, “you don’t think you can fix an ipad?” and gets another “no” from Sara (turns 65–66). Sven takes a different approach, replying, “yes I get a syringe”. Sven puts his hand forward with a pretend syringe (turn 69). Here the teacher looks surprised and says “okay! And...?” Sven responds to this prompt by explaining, “to fix it”, and gets a confirmatory question “to fix the ipad?” (turn 72). Turns 61–72 can be understood as a negotiation where the tension between the teacher’s *as is* and the children’s *as if* turns out to be a possible way to establish temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity and to keep the play going. This negotiation continues throughout the play and seems to work as fuel for the continuation of the play. Sven shows how to put in the imaginary syringe in the imaginary computer tablet (turn 73). Again, the teacher looks surprised and says, “you mean you insert the syringe...in the ipad, in the ipad?” (turn 74). After Sven answers “yes” (turn 75), she acknowledges his suggestion and asks what will happen then (turn 76). Sven sticks to his former suggestion, that it will get fixed, and the teacher turns his statement into another confirmatory question “you mean that it’s fixed then?”, which he once again confirms.

Despite different standpoints, concerning *as if* and *as is*, the child is *free to* take the play into a new, unforeseeable direction. The teacher communicates in an almost over-participating way, asking many questions in an evaluative-instructive style (Walsh, McGuinness, & Sproule, 2017). However, she does this with an interest in how to solve the problem actualized in the play, and by her questions, she becomes a participant in the play. Noteworthy is that through her *as-is* question (i.e., whether a broken computer tablet can be fixed, turn 63), she triggers the children to engage in a sustained, collaborative *as-if* exploration (from turn 67 onwards). Hence, there is no simple linearity between a question and how it in a wider sense is responded to and given consequence by participants in play. An actual problem (*as is*) is contextualized by participants in play *as if* (a problem in the imaginary realm).

3. Taking a role in the play

Below follow three examples where different teachers try to take a role in children’s ongoing play without asking or saying anything before their entrance. In the

first example, two girls (Ruth and Klara) and two boys are in a room that is decorated as belonging to a hairdresser. The two boys are lying on a sofa and do not pay any attention to the two girls. The two girls are standing beside a chair where the customers sit when they get their haircut. One girl praises the other girl's braids by saying "you actually became really nice". Then the teacher enters the room and sits down on the sofa:

Excerpt 5.6

1.	ANNA:	<i>I can take a book while I wait</i> (whistling)
2.	Ruth:	Oh!
3.	Klara:	<i>Next can come!</i>
4.	ANNA:	<i>Is it my turn?</i>
5.	Klara:	<i>Yees</i> (ANNA sits down on the chair and Klara starts fixing her hair). <i>I take down the pony tail</i> (and does so)
6.	Ruth:	Now I get a chair
7.	ANNA:	<i>I'd really like some colour</i>
8.	Klara:	<i>Okay, what colour?</i>
9.	ANNA:	<i>Eeeh, some red in</i>
10.	Klara:	I get a comb
11.	ANNA:	Mmm (some children move about the room and one of the children tries to sit in ANNA's lap) But I'm at the hairdresser's
12.	ANNA:	<i>Eh then I think I want to cut my hair a bit</i> (Klara silently combs ANNA's hair) <i>Have you had many costumers today at the saloon, Klara?</i>

The teacher has been observing the children before she enters the room and based on her observation she does not need to ask the girls what they are playing; she already knows that they are playing hairdresser. Instead, on her own initiative, she takes the role of a customer, without meta-communicating this action. She does not tell the girls that she joins the play or that she is a customer, she just says that she will "take a book while I wait" and sits down on the sofa (turn 1). When she does this, it becomes obvious to the girls that she is a customer and the play continues without interruption and without any need for the participants to negotiate the mutual play project (turn 3). This action triggers the development of the play where the teacher is a participant.

The play continues with the two girls and the teacher acting as hairdressers and customer (turns 4–12), respectively. The teacher clearly shows that she is playing when she says "but I'm at the hairdressers" when another child tries to sit in her lap (turn 11). It is evident that the girls have some experience of what happens at the hairdresser's and the teacher asks them *as-if* questions about what to do with her hair (turns 7 and 12) and if there have been many customers this day (turn 12). Thus, there is temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity for engaging in mutual play in which the teacher is a play partner. However, ANNA is not consistently in the frame of *as if*; notice how she addresses her *as-if* question to the child, using her actual (in the transcript by the researchers replaced by a pseudonym) name, Klara (in turn 12).

Also in the next example, the teacher first observes the children through a windowed door and then knocks before entering the room. A boy (Sigge) and a girl (Lilly) are in the room. There are many different toys in the room, including two baby dolls. The teacher brings a similar doll in a carrycot when she makes her entrance into the ongoing play.

Excerpt 5.7

1.	GUNN	<i>Hi hi, may I come in, may I come in?</i>
2.	Sigge	<i>Mm</i>
3.	GUNN	<i>Hi, I thought I'd pay you a visit today. Here I am with my little baby (carries a baby doll)</i>
4.	Sigge	<i>Aaa</i>
5.	GUNN	Can I sit down?
6.	Sigge	Yes, you can sit here
7.	GUNN	Can I sit here?
8.	Sigge & Lilly	Yeess

Based on her observation of the children's play, the teacher enters the play by taking a role within their ongoing play (i.e., acting *as if*). This means that she does not have to interrupt the play by asking what the children are playing and/or if she may join. She simply asks if it is okay to come in with her "baby" and is swiftly accepted (turns 1–4). Her entrance potentially expands the play, by adding a new role character; a role that aligns with the play-frame. Coming prepared, through having observed the children's play, the teacher manages to make this addition seamless. As the role taken aligns with the narrative play-frame, intersubjectivity is temporarily established, allowing participants to continue with a mutual play.

Observations like these indicate that teachers need to be sensitive to possible roles within the play they try to take a role in. If not, the role taken may not be a possible role according to the children and then the play may collapse. Below is an example where the children are playing a, for them, well-known story, Billy Goats Gruff. There has been some negotiation before the play start, regarding the roles of the story. There are six children involved in the play and a decision is made that three of them will act as the goats and three of them as trolls. The teacher participates during this negotiation but she does not make any attempt to be given a role in the play. The three children acting as trolls are lying under a bench serving as the bridge. The teacher initiates the play by, with a dark voice, saying "once upon a time there were three goats" (i.e., framing the activity *as if*). Then the children take over and start to act in line with their roles. Soon there is a discussion about what the goats are to do before they walk over the bridge:

Excerpt 5.8

53	Peter	They do not graze before the tale begins
54	CIA	How do you know?

55	Peter	'Cause you don't see that they have done that
56	CIA	Aha. Wonder what the goats do? Perhaps they... what do the goats do before they cross the bridge?
57	Lisa	Eat, I have the book

Excerpt 5.8 indicates that the children have a view of how the story goes (turns 53 and 57) and that their intention is to play in line with the original storyline (*as it is*). This can be seen as an example of alterity (expanding the play in a new direction) being rejected. Then, after a little while, when the second goat is to walk over the bridge, the teacher tries to enter the play:

Excerpt 5.9

77	CIA	<i>Wrao ... Here's another troll, a troll who eats trolls</i> (walks with her hands reached out towards the troll)
78	Child under the bench	No, you were our mother troll
79	CIA	Okay. <i>But my children, you have to take the goat</i>

When the teacher tries to enter the play as a troll who eats other trolls (turn 77) she does no longer follow the original storyline and the children interrupt the play by meta-communicating about the narrative, telling her that she is not a troll who eats other trolls but a mother-troll (turn 78). Even though the teacher has been observing the play and even though she acts *as if*, temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity is not established. The children clearly want to keep the play as close as possible to what they perceive to be the original storyline, why the addition from the teacher is not accepted. However, CIA is offered another role. The teacher is responsive and immediately adapts and acts as the mother-troll (turn 79) instead. However, her role as a mother-troll is reduced to her being the storyteller, helping the children to continue the play in line with the original storyline. Thus, the narrative frame of the story becomes an *as-is* frame of the play (i.e., how the play *really is*) where participants, in this case the teacher, are not *free to* take the play in an unforeseeable direction (what we theoretically refer to as alterity). This finding implies the need to question the common-sense idea of imaginative children and a-creative, governing teachers (we will return to this issue in Chap. 12).

4. Responding to a suggestion to join children's play

The fourth strategy that teachers use to gain access to children's play we have found is when the *teacher accepts an invitation* to participate in children's ongoing play. Thus, the initiative is not the teachers' but still they have to make an appropriate entrance into ongoing play. Excerpt 5.10 contains an example with two girls (Ivy and Kim) in a room with a small slide. The girls have started a chase-and-catch play called "The Lava-Shark". Before the teacher is invited to participate in the play, the girls have been negotiating (arguing) about how to play but now they have agreed

on the rules and have played for about half a minute. Thus, temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity seems to be established, first they “agreed on not agreeing” (cf. Matusov, 1996) on the rules and then they reach an agreement. Now they are playing by the jointly agreed upon rules. Suddenly, one child turns to the teacher and says, “you’re the Lava-Shark”. Thus, it is one of the children who invites the teacher into the play, and she does this by assigning the teacher a role. Based on the previous negotiation between the two girls (about how to play and the rules) the role assigned to the teacher is a role that none of the children seems to want to have.

Excerpt 5.10

7.	Ivy:	You’re the Lava-Shark!
8.	SARAH:	I can be the Lava-Shark (goes to the slide and sits down on her knees. The two girls are at the top of the slide)
9.	Ivy:	This is for free
10.	Kim:	And here is free, you cannot take us here
11.	SARAH:	Can I take you here (puts her hand on the slide)?
12.	Ivy:	You must, when you are there then you can take someone
13.	SARAH:	There (points at the floor)?
14.	Kim:	Mm
15.	SARAH:	Perfect (the girls start laughing and one of them slides down the slide)
16.	SARAH:	<i>Taken!</i> (touches Kim with her hand)
17.	Kim:	Then I’ll have to sit here (sits down on a small chair by the slide)
18.	SARAH:	Okay

The teacher accepts the role she is given (turn 8) and a dialogue focused on the rules of the play follows (turns 9–15). These rules are the ones negotiated by the two children before they invited the teacher to become a participant in the play. Telling the teacher the rules of the play is a dialogue carried out in terms of *as is* – on the rules previous decided on how the play *is* (to be) played – is important to establishing temporarily sufficient intersubjectivity between the children and the teacher. The children have agency to determine how the play is to be framed (played), as the teacher without objection agrees on the rules of the play and immediately starts acting as the ascribed character (the Lava-Shark).

Discussion

In this chapter, we have presented four examples of different strategies used by teachers when trying to enter children’s ongoing play. The teachers’ actions differ between, but also within, these four strategies. One difference is whether the teacher tries to enter the ongoing play *as if* or *as is*. In the strategy we have referred to as *asking for permission to join play*, the teachers sometimes act *as if* and sometimes *as is* when they make attempts to enter children’s ongoing play. In the strategies we

call *accepting a suggestion to join the play* and *taking a role in the play*, respectively, the teachers act *as if* while they in the strategy we call *asking questions about the play* in our analyzed data act *as is*. As previously mentioned, the conceptual pair of *as if* and *as is* is not to be considered poles in a conceptual dichotomy, and none is considered to be superior the other, but as seen above, different strategies seem to be possible to connect with *as is* and/or *as if*. In the next chapter, we will deepen our understanding of these strategies by conducting a thematic discussion intersecting the strategies, focusing on when and why teachers seem to succeed (or not) in their attempts to enter children's ongoing play.

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