

Supporting Playful Learning in Elementary Mathematics Classrooms

Postdoctoral Research Position

Applicants are invited to apply for a two-year, full-time postdoctoral position at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of Education and Human Development in Nashville, TN under the mentorship of Dr. Melissa Gresalfi and Dr. Anita Wager. The Postdoctoral Researcher will support a research-practice partnership project focusing on supporting early elementary teachers' learning about integrating play into their mathematics lessons.

Project Overview and General Summary

This project, funded by the National Science Foundation through DRK-12, seeks to investigate play in early elementary math education by proposing a four-year longitudinal study that documents teacher learning and connects teacher practice with in-depth qualitative analyses of students over multiple years. In so doing, this project will develop three in-depth accounts of: 1) how kindergarten teachers learn to integrate play into their instruction over multiple years, and how their teaching changes over time; 2) how the task of integrating play changes with different demands of mathematics curricula over the grades (kindergarten through second grade); and 3) how the relationship that students develop with mathematics might be transformed by experiencing playful mathematics learning over their early elementary careers (kindergarten through second grade).

The ideal Postdoctoral Researcher will have a specialization in mathematics education, teacher education, early childhood/elementary education, learning sciences, or a closely related field. The successful candidate will engage in one or more areas of research related to the project's core questions and demonstrate capacity to initiate, design, and lead a research strand for the team. This project includes partnership with Dr. Amy Parks (Michigan State University).

Responsibilities:

This position requires in-person work in Nashville, TN. The Postdoctoral Researcher will collaborate on all aspects of the project, including summer professional development, planning and video analysis meetings with teachers during the school year, and student-level data collection from August through May. Specifically, the postdoctoral researcher will:

- Work collaboratively with research team and research partners
- Co-design professional development activities
- Co-facilitate teacher video clubs
- Manage data collection protocols
- Identify an area of personal scholarly interest for the project
- Actively participate in scholarly communities through publication of research articles and presentation at professional conferences

In addition, within this role, the Postdoctoral Researcher will receive mentoring around scholarship in play, math learning, identity, teacher learning, and professional development; experience developing and analyzing longitudinal data sets; and mentoring around grant writing and management, publications, presentations, and other professional skills.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Doctorate in mathematics education, learning sciences, teacher education, early childhood or elementary education, or a related field by start date of position;
- Experience working with teachers;
- Demonstrated ability to conduct and publish research;
- Completed PhD by start date

Desired Qualifications:

- Experience in elementary schools or with young children;
- Experience planning or facilitating teacher professional development;
- Experience with large projects with multiple data streams;
- Methodological training in qualitative methods

The position will begin Summer or Fall of 2022, depending on the availability of the applicant. Salary is \$60,000 and includes benefits.

To Apply

Please send your (a) cover letter describing your relevant background, as well as your interest in and potential contribution to the project, (b) curriculum vitae, (c) a sample research paper, and (d) a list of three professional references and their contact information (please do not solicit letters).

Materials should be sent to melissa.gresalfi@vanderbilt.edu. Application review will begin January 30, 2022 and will continue until the position is filled.