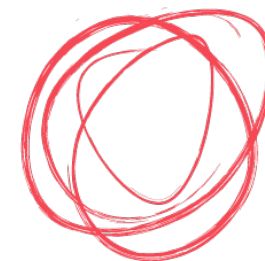


# Understanding Learning Through Play Across Cultural Contexts: The Indicators of Playful Learning

From the Pedagogy of Play Team  
Project Zero



pedagogy of play



# Play is both universal and culturally determined


- Who children play with
- How they play
- Where and when they play
- When/if they should stop playing



...all of these ideas are culturally constructed







**What does playful learning in schools look and feel like in different cultural contexts?**



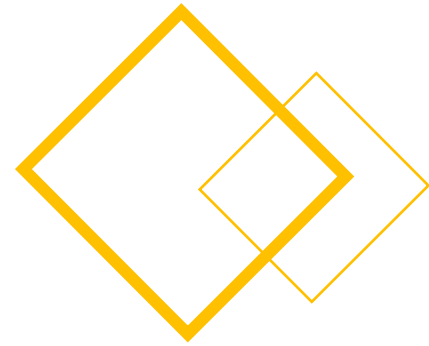
# International School of Billund



Denmark

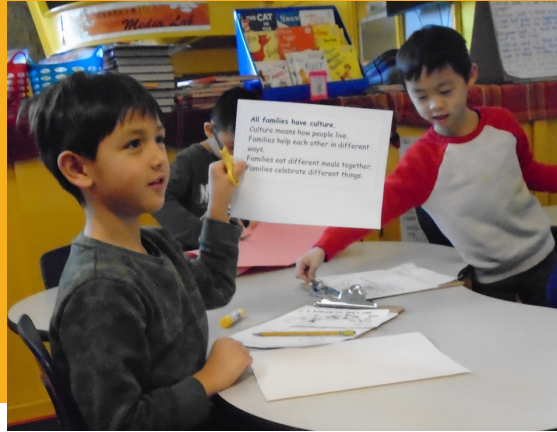






**3** South African Schools





# 6 Schools in the Boston Area





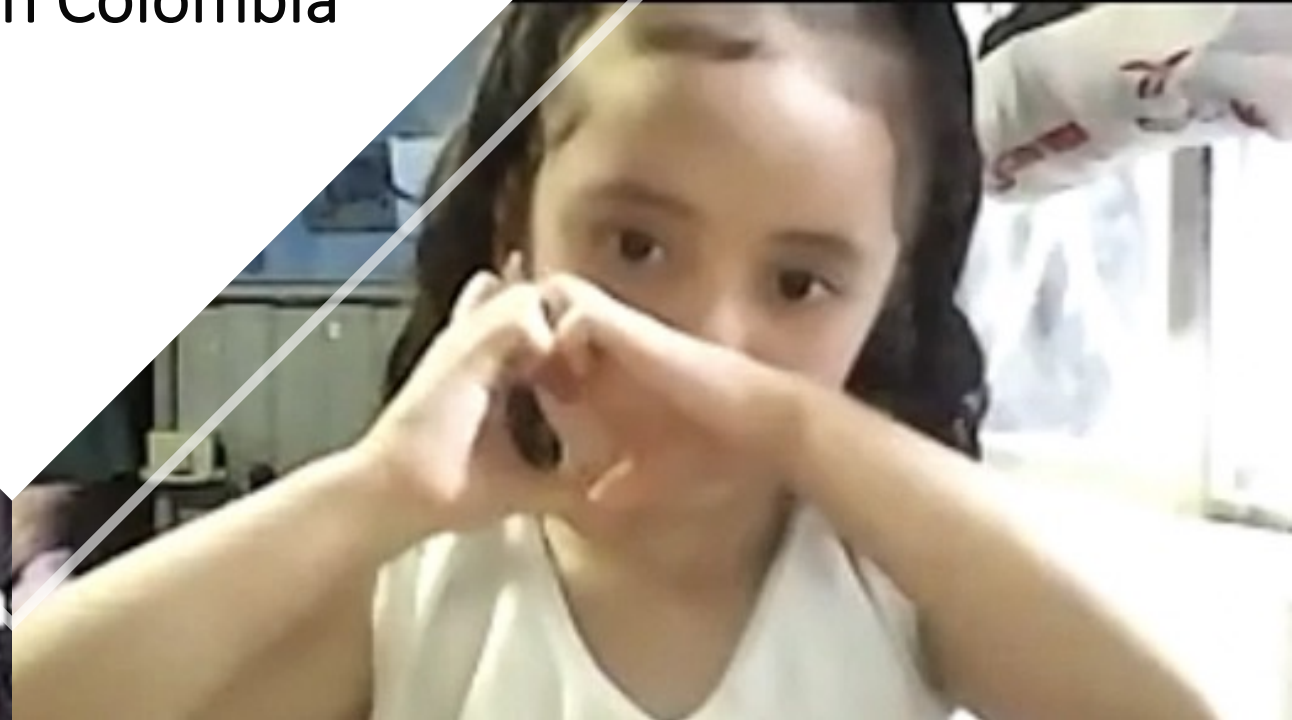
5 Schools in Colombia



a Gonzalez ...



Xion Naiomi Ospina



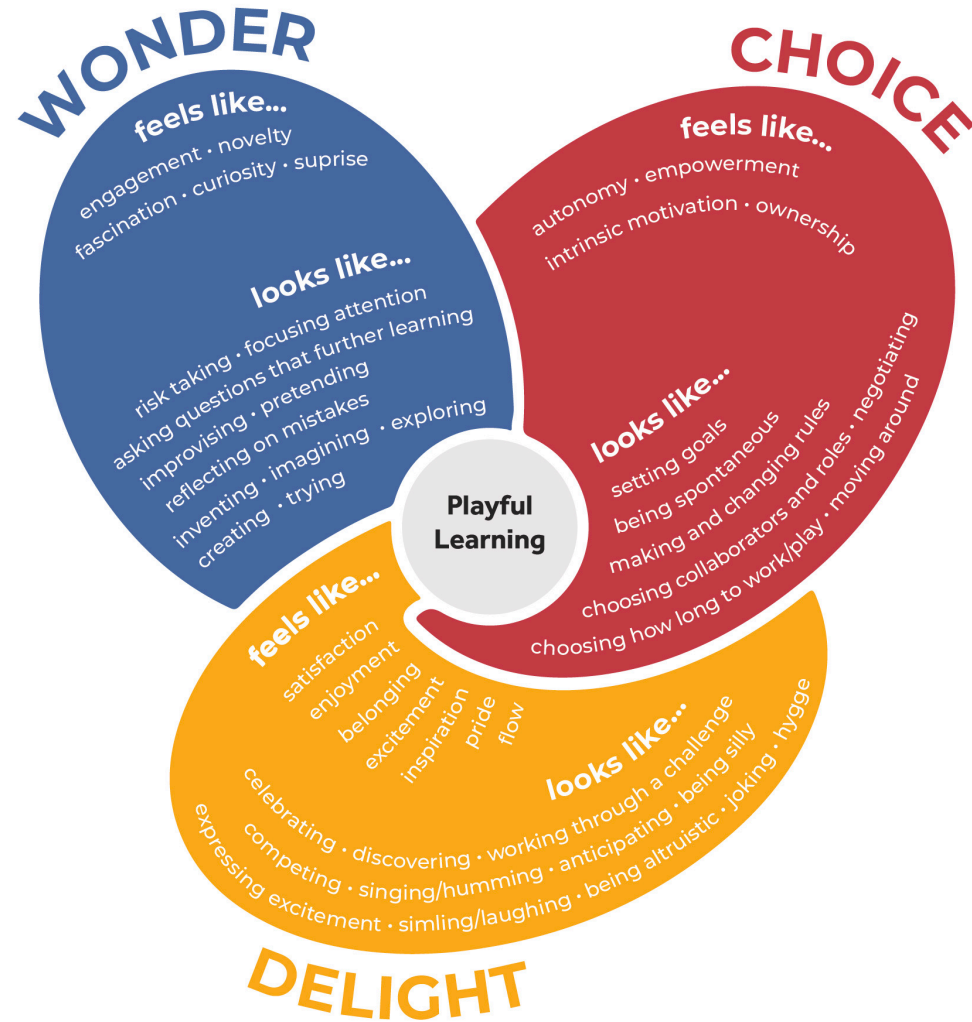
# Methodology: Developing the Indicators

- Site selection – purposive sampling:
  - Variety of SES, school type
  - Interested in incorporating playful learning
- Data sources:
  - Extensive classroom observations
  - In-depth semi-structured interviews with classroom teachers, administrators, and children
  - Focus groups with children
  - Playful activities to surface playful learning experiences
- Analysis:
  - Emic, open coding
  - Thematic analysis
  - Return to the conceptual literature to inform analytic approach
  - Co-construction through iterative analysis and feedback with local educators





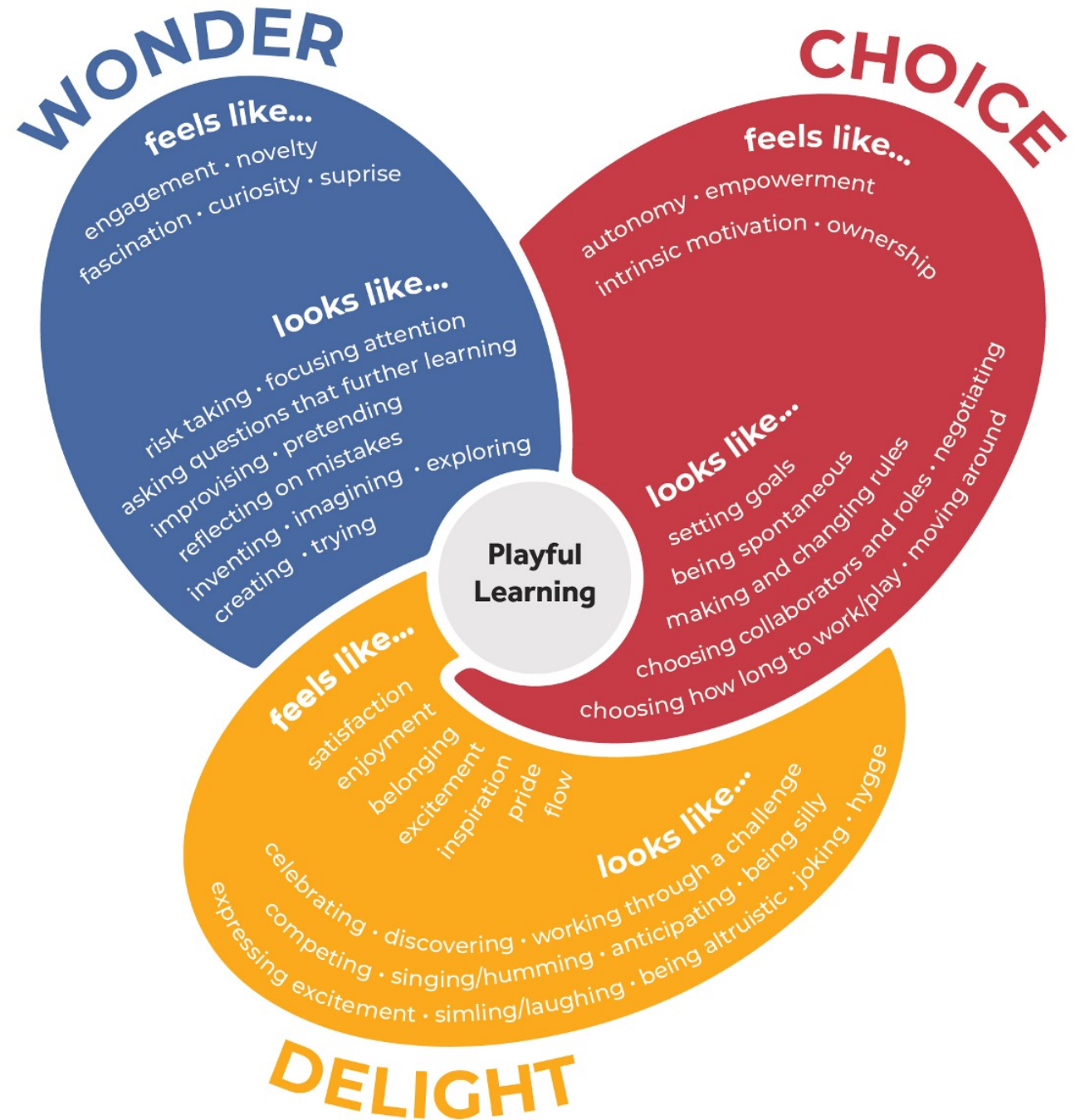
# Indicators of Playful Learning from the International School of Billund in Denmark



# Subjective and Objective

What does playful learning look like? (objective)

What does it feel like? (subjective)





# Choice

## feels like...

autonomy  
empowerment  
intrinsic motivation  
ownership

## looks like...

setting goals  
negotiating  
choosing how long to work/play  
choosing collaborators and roles  
influencing the direction of learning  
making and changing rules  
being spontaneous  
moving around

# Wonder

## feels like...

engagement  
novelty  
fascination  
curiosity  
surprise

## looks like...

risk taking  
trying  
reflecting on mistakes  
asking questions  
focusing attention  
improvising  
pretending  
inventing  
imagining  
exploring  
creating

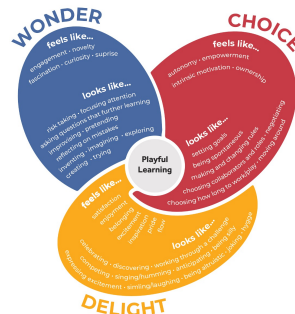
# Delight

## feels like...

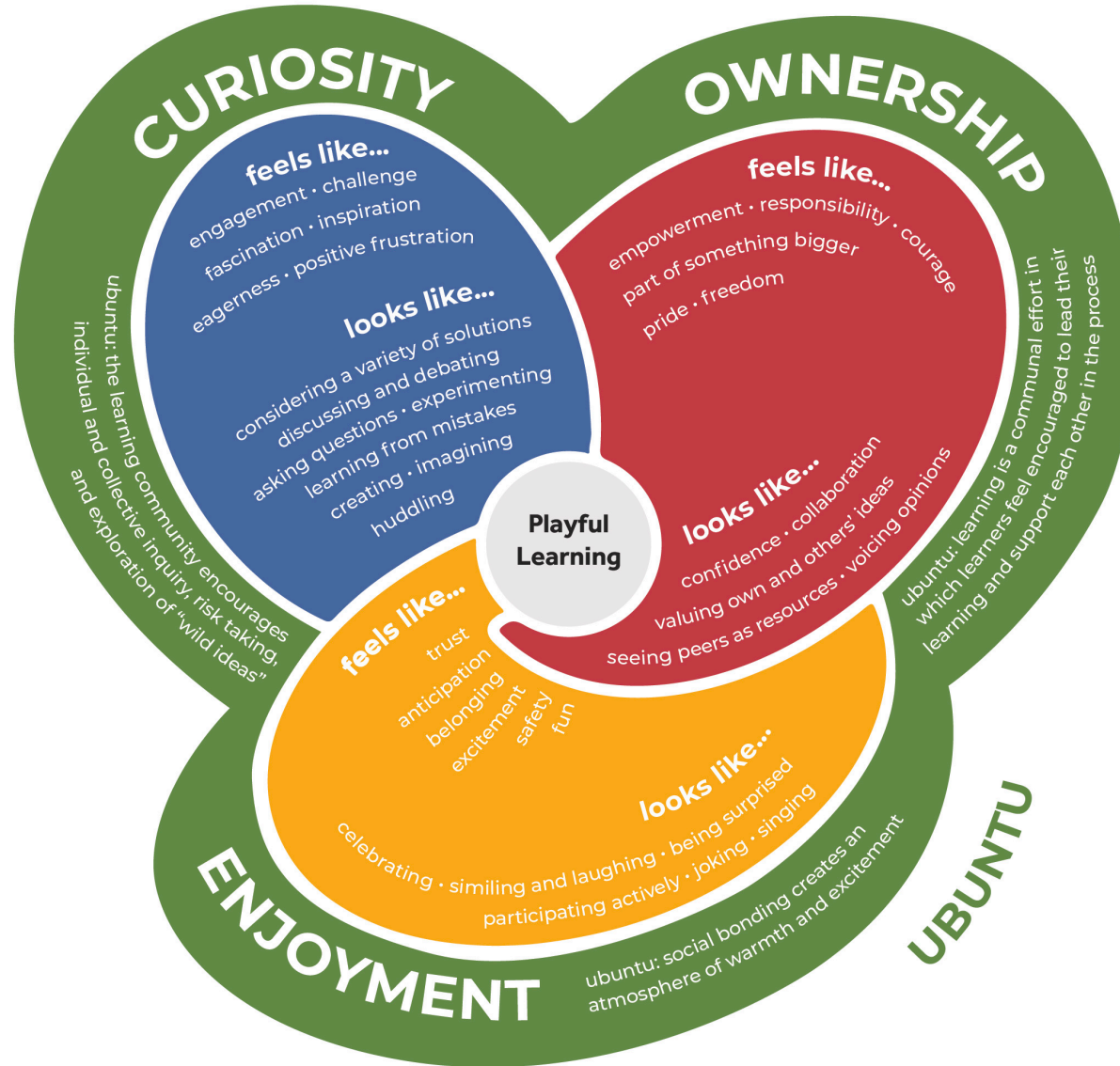
satisfaction  
enjoyment  
belonging  
pride  
excitement  
inspiration  
flow

## looks like...

celebrating  
discovering  
being silly  
competing  
singing/humming  
smiling/laughing  
anticipating  
joking  
hygge  
being altruistic  
expressing excitement  
working through a challenge



# Indicators of Playful Learning from 3 South African Schools





# Ownership

## feels like...

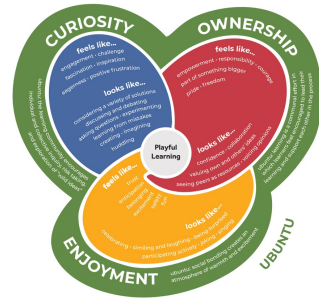
empowerment  
responsibility  
courage  
pride  
freedom  
part of something bigger

## looks like...

valuing own and others' ideas  
seeing peers as resources  
confidence  
collaboration  
voicing opinions

## ubuntu

*learning is a communal effort in which learners feel encouraged to lead their learning and support each other in the process*



# Curiosity

## feels like...

engagement  
challenge  
fascination  
inspiration  
eagerness  
positive frustration

## looks like...

considering a variety of solutions  
discussing and debating  
asking questions  
learning from mistakes  
experimenting  
creating  
imagining  
huddling

## ubuntu

*the learning community encourages individual and collective inquiry, risk taking, and exploration of "wild ideas"*

# Enjoyment

## feels like...

trust  
anticipation  
belonging  
excitement  
safety  
fun

## looks like...

celebrating  
smiling and laughing  
being surprised  
participating actively  
joking  
singing

## ubuntu

*social bonding creates an atmosphere of warmth and excitement*





# Ownership

## feels like...

empowerment  
responsibility  
courage  
pride  
freedom  
part of something bigger

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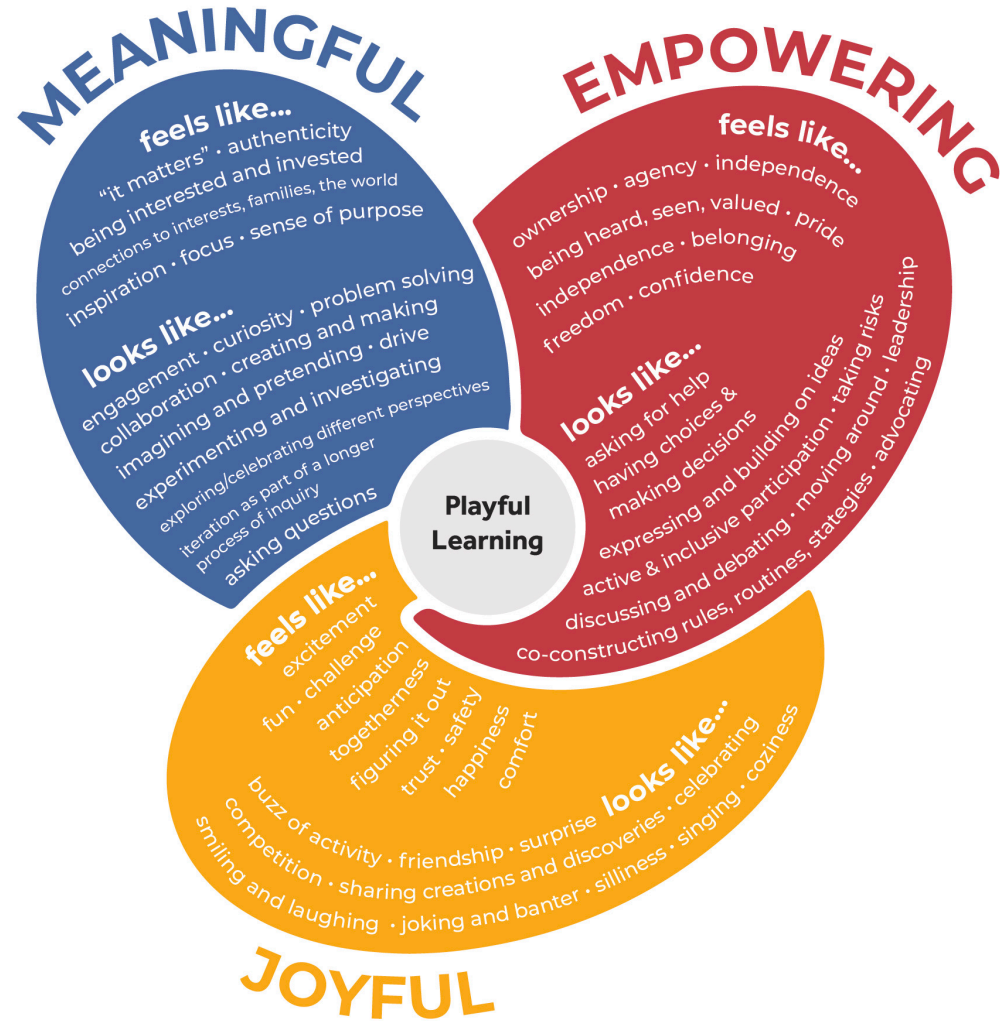
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celebrating  
smiling and laughing  
being surprised  
participating actively  
joking  
singing

### **ubuntu**

*social bonding creates an atmosphere of warmth and excitement*

# Indicators of Playful Learning from 6 U.S. Schools



# Empowering

## feels like...

Ownership  
Agency  
Being heard and seen  
Independence  
Belonging  
Pride  
Freedom  
Confidence

## looks like...

Having choices and making decisions  
Leadership  
Taking risks  
Co-constructing rules, routines, strategies  
Active and inclusive participation  
Expressing and building on ideas  
Discussing and debating  
Asking for help  
Moving around

# Meaningful

## feels like...

"It matters"  
Being interested and invested  
Connections to interests, families, the world  
Authenticity  
Inspiration  
Sense of purpose

## looks like...

Engagement  
Curiosity  
Collaboration  
Drive  
Creating and making  
Imagining and pretending  
Experimenting and investigating  
Problem solving  
Asking questions  
Exploring different perspectives  
Iteration as part of a longer process of inquiry



# Joyful

## feels like...

Excitement  
Challenge  
Anticipation  
Togetherness  
Figuring it out  
Trust  
Safety  
Comfort  
Happiness  
Fun

## looks like...

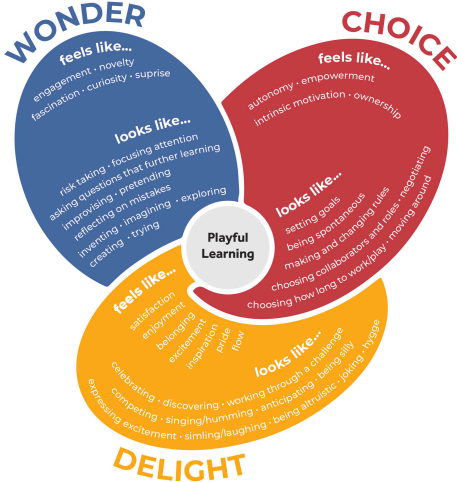
Smiling and laughing  
Surprise  
Joking and banter  
Friendship  
Sharing creations and discoveries  
Buzz of activity  
Silliness  
Competition  
Singing  
Celebrating  
Coziness



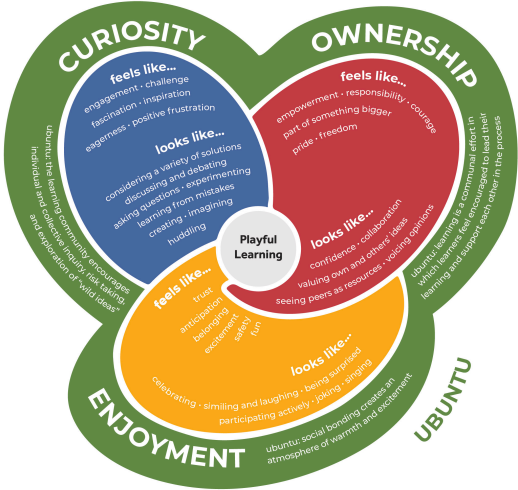
Insert a U.S.-based video here from the video library to try out using the indicators from the U.S. schools

# Indicators of Playful Learning

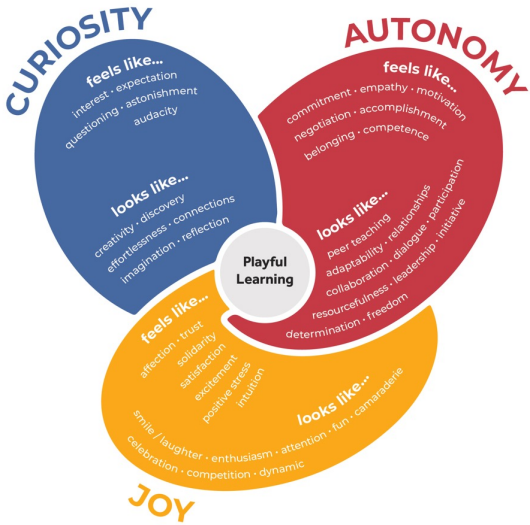
Indicators of Playful Learning from the International School of Billund in Denmark



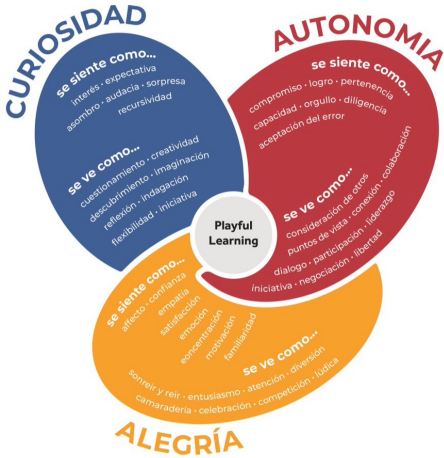
Indicators of Playful Learning from 3 South African Schools



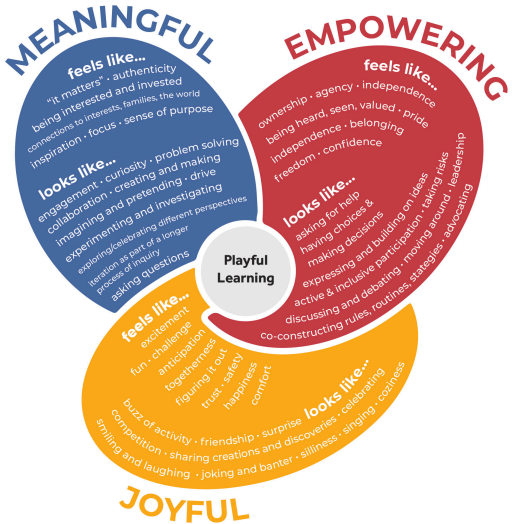
Indicators of Playful Learning from 5 Colombian Schools



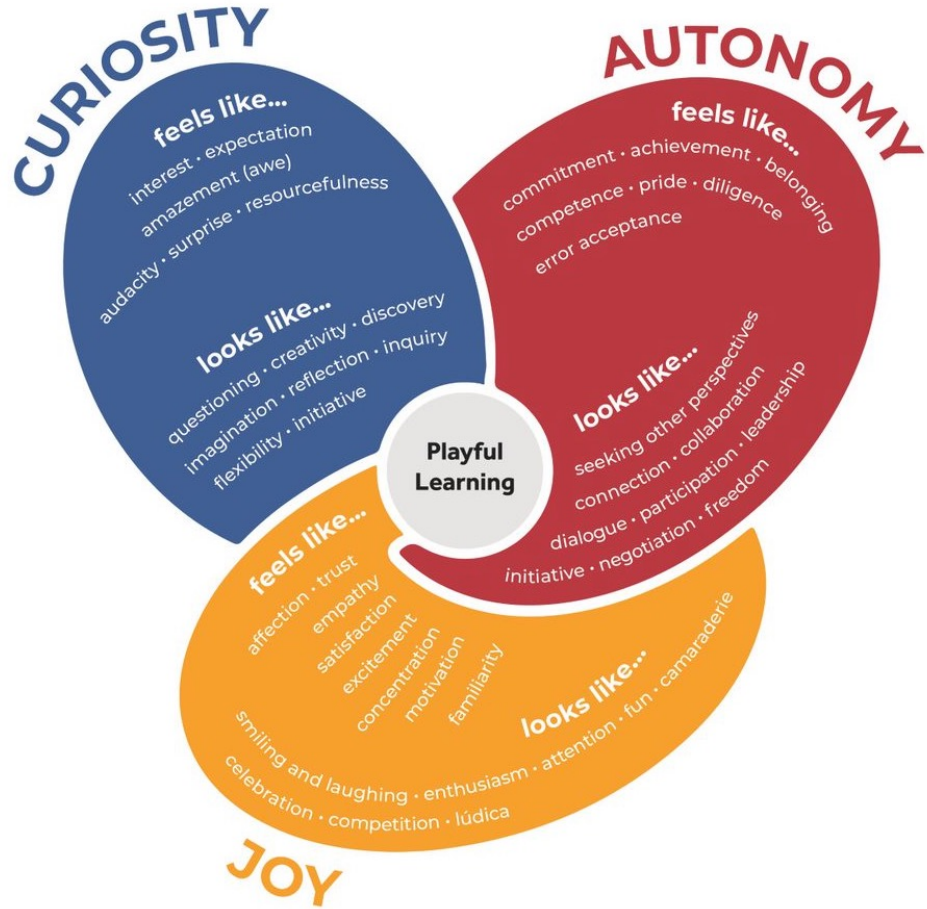
Indicators of Playful Learning from 5 Colombian Schools



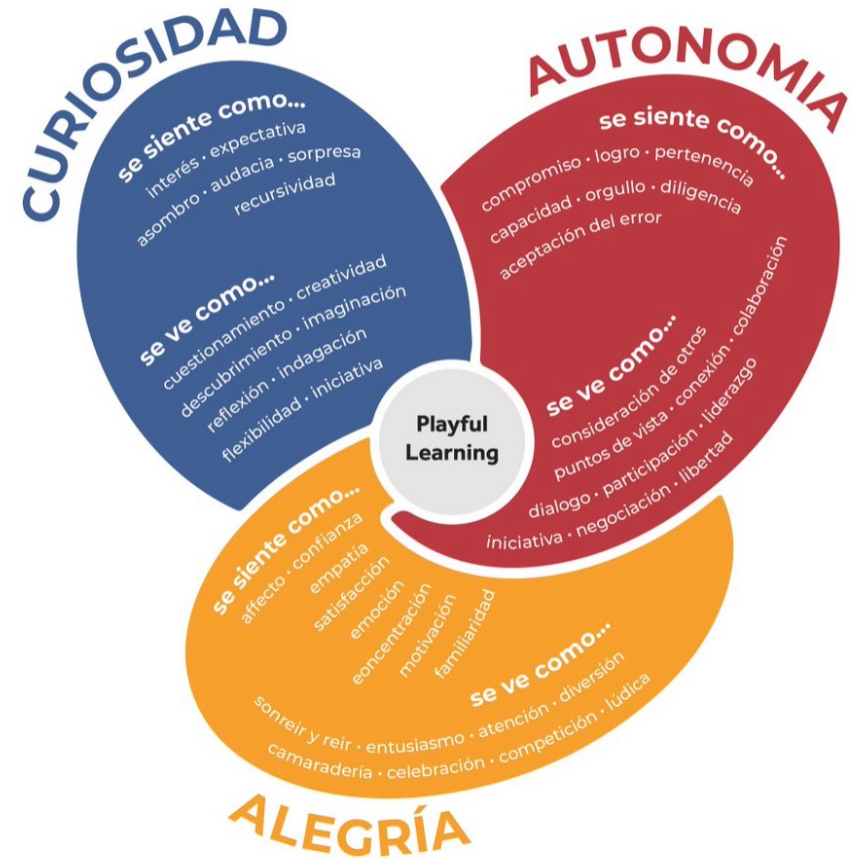
Indicators of Playful Learning from 6 U.S. Schools



## Indicators of Playful Learning from 5 Colombian Schools



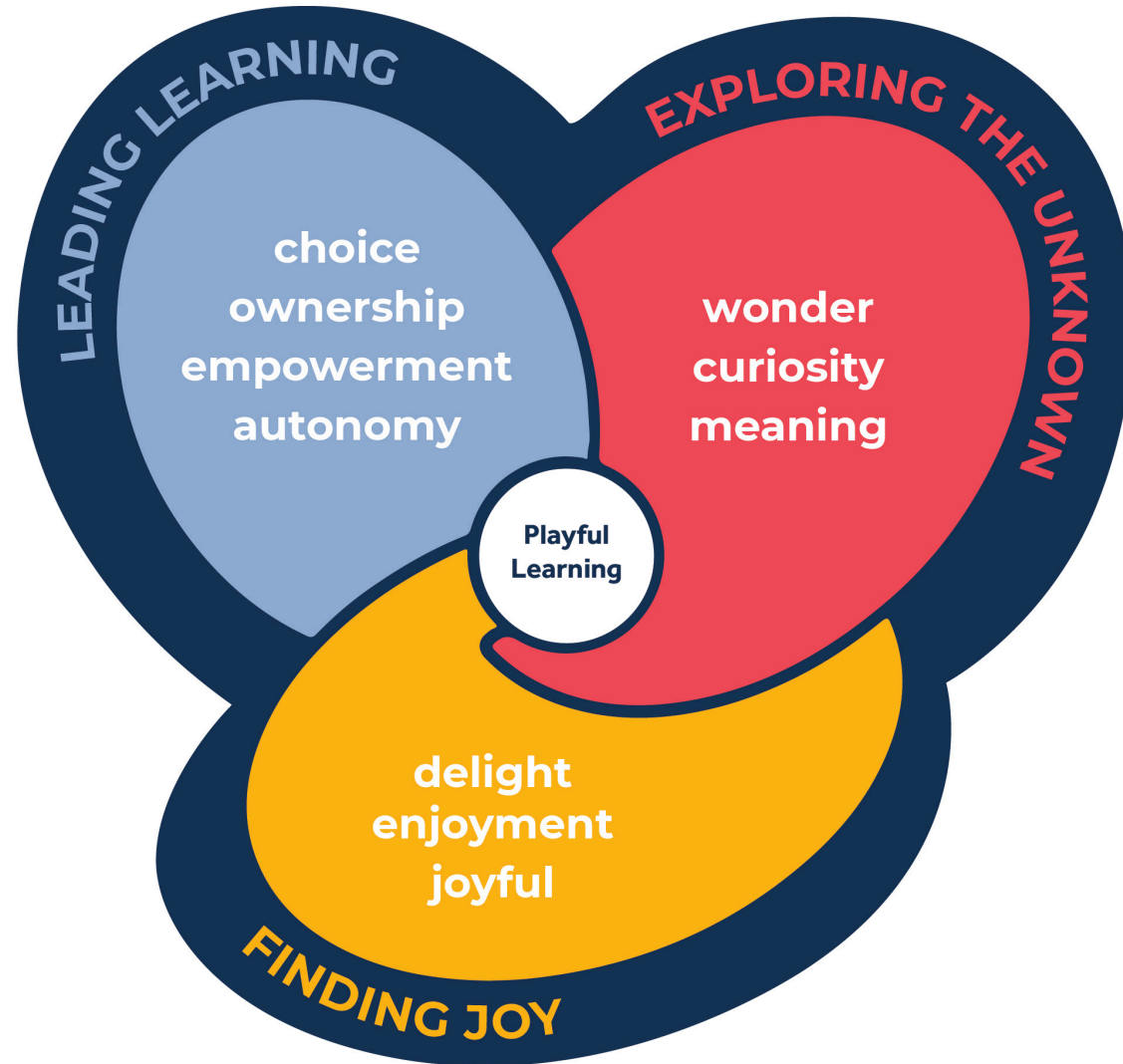
## Indicators of Playful Learning from 5 Colombian Schools





# Cross-cultural Indicators of Playful Learning

Patterns from schools in Denmark, South Africa, the U.S., and Colombia



# Breakout Discussions: PoP Pictures of Practice

- In the Picture of Practice you read:
  - What indicators of playful learning did you see evident in the examples shared?
  - What intrigued or puzzled you?



# Our Indicators of Playful Learning

