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| **Abstract:** | Abstract from NectarInspiring and encouraging creativity in the young, nurturing imagination and enthralling them in the global world of possibilities is our task as parents and educators. We use stories to encourage children to play and use toys to help them recreate imaginary worlds and to generate new ideas. We draw on our own cultural heritage and experience and rediscover for ourselves the worlds of fairy tales and superheroes. As lecturers at a British University we are using this child’s world of imagination - created through drawing and play, illustration and toy making - to teach not only design but also a wide range of skills that should enable students to find new opportunities in global markets. Live client projects with manufacturers and distributors of toys and games have benefited students, charities and the UK market. The firms and organisations involved have been drawn from the community surrounding the university, the UK and overseas. Instilling the notion of playful creativity gives students’ design work the ability to cross the boundaries that exist between generations and cultures. Using three case studies of our work with Sue Ryder (designing doll’s houses) John Crane Toys (wooden toys) and the Santander Bank (picture books and toys), we will exemplify relevant student learning by tackling key skills and issues such as ethics, quality, sustainability, cultural diversity, intellectual property, and visual literacy. The case studies demonstrate that design students get timely exposure to resource management and the global market, considering the particular manufacturing processes and distribution networks associated with the production of books, toys and games. We captured the learning through feedback and mapped the client interaction and situated learning with factory visits and attending trade fairs. We reviewed the collaboration with partners, drawing from expertise residing within the University. Toy design provides insights for communities of practice ranging from education and child development, knowledge and brand management, to regulators of conformity and safety standards. The joint paper will illustrate our playful approach to designing and how the process has affected not only what we teach but also our plans for further research and collaboration. The paper concludes with a discussion of our experience about the value of designing for play at degree and postgraduate level  |