Play School

Story Time

PlayWorld

Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Michael Teo shares 'Big Love' by Megan Jacobson & Beck Feiner.

Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the Conceptual PlayWorld

Story: Big Love

Written by Megan Jacobson and illustrated by Beck Feiner

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Pedagogical practices

- Select a story that is enjoyable for children and adults.
- Build drama for the characters in the story.
- Build empathy for the characters in the story.
- Choose a plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation.
- Be clear about the concept(s) and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed.
- Choose adventures or journeys that spring from the plot.

Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- **Story summary:** This story brings forward how big things seem to a child (e.g. house, community, universe) within the context of the enormous love that a family has for their child.
- Plan adventures by exploring the illustrations about how big something feels for a child e.g. Big Ben, a whale, an elephant or hot air balloon.
- Develop empathy with the children in the story, who seem to feel very small in a very big world.
- Build empathy with the robot characters who are lost in the story.
- **Problem situation:** The robot character gets lost and needs help from the children to find his way back home through the use of coding.
- **Concepts:** Mapping/coding (foundational coding - forward, back, right, left, sequencing and repetition of steps).
- **Possible plot extension:** Create a *Robot World* and meet different robots. What happens if they get lost? Children can code the robots to have adventures.

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices	Conceptual PlayWorld in action
Designing a *Conceptual PlayWorld* space	• Find a space in the classroom or outdoor area suitable for an imaginary *Conceptual PlayWorld* of the story. • Design opportunities for child-initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore concepts and make them more meaningful. • Plan ways for children to represent their ideas and express their understandings.	• Create a portal into another world in the indoor play space using a frame (e.g. small table, trestle or chair) and sheet. Children (and educators) can crawl through the portal to begin their adventure, and later return back to the classroom through the portal. • Meet other characters from the story. For example, extended family members, grandma or cousins. Are they expert coders? You might need an imaginary computer lab to write code for the robots. • Draw a 2D plan or build a 3D model of an imaginary *Robot World* and use these resources to code the robots.
Entering and exiting the *Conceptual PlayWorld* space	• Plan a routine for the whole group to enter and exit the *Conceptual PlayWorld* of the story where all the children are in the same imaginary situation. • Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation. • Educator is always a character in the story.	• To signify entering and exiting the imaginary *Robot World* together, perform a robot dance by moving forward, back, right, left or singing as you move. • Children and adults choose to be characters. e.g. a robot, robot family, a coder. Pretend to meet a software engineer, an expert coder. For example, you could program the robot to visit the cat in the story. • When pretending to be a robot, follow secret coded messages. e.g. your fellow coders could instruct 3 steps backwards.
Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario	• Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned. • Problem scenario is dramatic and engaging. • The problem invites children to investigate solutions to help the play in the *Conceptual PlayWorld*.	• Receive an email from a robot such as: *"Dear Children, There's a glitch in my code and now I don't know my way around Robot World. The world feels so big without code. I know I can depend on you to get me back home. Please recode me. From the Robot"*

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices	Conceptual PlayWorld in action
Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario *(continued)*	• Be clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation, through children's play.	• Children can pretend to be software engineers and code their new robot friends to have adventures and find their way back home. Can you code your robot to go left? • Children can create a set of instructions or commands to guide imaginary characters through the adventures. For example, you could make coding cards using arrow symbols to program your character (e.g. a robot) around a map. Use repetition and instruction in coding e.g. 4 steps to the right, 10 steps forward. • Use digital coding resources e.g. Bee-Bots, Sphero or Lego Boost.
Planning educator interactions to build conceptual learning in role	• Educators are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted. • Educators can take on different roles for the *Conceptual PlayWorld*. Plan your role to be either **equally present** with the children, or to **model practices** in a role, or to be **needing help** from the children. Your role can also **be together with** the child leading, where educators support children to act out the role or solution together.	• Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following: 1. **Be equally present with older children** - e.g. *"Let's look at some coded messages together"*. 2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. *"I'm pretending to be a software engineer. This is how we instruct the robot to go forward"*. 3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. *"Can you show the symbol you choose for moving backwards?"*. 4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. *"Let's pretend to be robots dancing together"*.

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