



Play
School

Story Time

PlayWorld

Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Tsehay Hawkins Madden shares 'A Pair of Pears and an Orange' by Anna McGregor.



Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the Conceptual PlayWorld

Story: A Pair of Pears and an Orange

Written and illustrated by Anna McGregor

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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 book is about a pair of pears and other fruit characters exploring friendship. It includes concepts of counting and 'how many?', developing a sense of number.
- Develop the drama in the story. What happens when the number of group members changes? For example, there were 3, now there are 5.
- Develop empathy with Big Pear who feels left out when the group moves from 2 to 3. Explore why the character Cardinal Coconut finds it difficult to know how many.
- **Problem situation:** Cardinal Coconut needs the children's help to solve number problems. She has a *Number Party* to organise as a mathematician. How many seats? How many party hats? How many cupcakes?
- **Possible plot extension:** The fruit could meet other vegetables, such as corn cobs. Can Big Pear teach the children about "how many"? Can the children help to set up the party?
- **Concepts:** Cardinal counting (such as 1, 5, 15). Investigate one-to-one correspondence, number sequence, numeral recognition and subitising (i.e. when children look at a group of objects and realise how many there are without counting). Explore connections between number names, numerals and quantities up to 10.

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Pedagogical characteristics

Designing a *Conceptual PlayWorld* space

Pedagogical practices

- 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.

Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- Set up a mathematics or *Number Party*, where children can help character Cardinal Coconut know 'how many'.
- Pretend it's someone's birthday. How old are you turning? Have you made a cake? Invite children to design a cake with coloured icing and fruit/vegetable edible icing figures.
- Set up a pretend play office where children become 'party planners' and work to prepare for the *Number Party*.

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 situation (e.g. the *Number Party*), everyone can wear a number party hat or be given a party invitation. Sing number rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns' and change words to include fruit from the story e.g. 'Big Pears'.
- Pretend to be the characters Cardinal Coconut or Big Pear. What other fruit is coming to the party?
- Pretend to be a number expert or a mathematician. Go on a hunt to find numbers in the environment e.g. on letterboxes, doors, cars or signs.

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 a letter from Cardinal Coconut, such as: "*Dear Children, I want to plan a party for Big Pear because I hear he felt left out. Planning parties needs number experts and number problems can be tricky! I need your help. How many seats? How many party hats? How many cupcakes? I don't want anyone to be left out, especially Big Pear. From Cardinal Coconut*".



Pedagogical characteristics

Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario

(continued)

Planning adult interactions to build conceptual learning in role

Pedagogical practices

- Be clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation, through children's play.

- Educators are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted.
- Plan of who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem. 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.

Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- Pretend to plan a party and use everything you've learned from the number experts.
- Investigate questions together e.g. *"How many guests are there? Let's count them"*. Children can dress up as numbers and play number party games e.g. number 4 stands between numbers 3 and 5.
- Invite children to design party invitations and birthday cards, including the numerical age e.g. *"Happy 6th birthday"*.
- Ask children to draw a party plan, thinking about 'how many' - *How many guests? How many decorations? How many candles for the cake? How many more or less place settings do we need?*
- Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following:
 1. **Be equally present with older children** - e.g. *"Together let's work out how many party bags we'll need for Big Pear's party"* and brainstorm solutions.
 2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. *"This is a group of seven balloons - 1,2,3,4,5,6,7!"*.
 3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. *"How many invitations will we need?"*.
 4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. *"Let's pretend to be Little Pear together. We can help Cardinal Coconut"*.

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