



Play
School

Story Time

PlayWorld

Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Kate Miller-Heidke and Ernie share 'Under the Love Umbrella' by Davina Bell & Allison Colpoys.



Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the *Conceptual PlayWorld*

Story: Under the Love Umbrella

Written by Davina Bell and illustrated by Allison Colpoys

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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 is a story about the unconditional love given to children when in contexts that are emotionally challenging such as - moving house, forgetting something or breaking a toy. This is represented by the umbrellas shown in different contexts - up in the sky, on the beach, at school etc...
- The story can inspire investigation into how people keep dry when in a storm, or how different materials repel or absorb substances, like water.
- **Problem situation:** One of the children from the story says they have a hole in their umbrella and needs your help to keep dry.
- **Concepts:**
 1. Materials and their properties;
 2. Designing and making with textiles.
- **Possible plot extension:** Design and make costumes for keeping dry.

A partnership between



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

- Turn the dramatic play area into a designer's studio. Investigate the different umbrellas in the book and imagine how they are made and designed.
- To support the shared imaginary situation you could search and explore professional design studios. What do designers need? For example, sketch pads, pencils, rulers, tracing paper, samples of fabrics, metal frames.
- Visit an art gallery to explore patterns and design. Or extend the pretend play design studio into a catwalk to showcase children's costumes and other design creations.

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 design studio, you could have a shop front (set of shelves) and make a door by cutting it out of a large cardboard box.
- Children and adults choose to be characters e.g. a model, designer or client.
- Adults can place orders for items, such as a new coat or umbrella.
- Pretend to be an environmental scientist and prepare fabrics made from natural and sustainable materials. Or you could be a material scientist who knows about waterproofing.
- You could pretend to contact an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist and seek advice about patterns used in their artworks or fashion prints.

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 one of the children in the book: "Dear children, I need your help. My umbrella has a hole in it. To keep me dry and to help me feel safe, could you make me a new umbrella? From the Children in the book." While in the imaginary situation invite the children to work together to find out - How are umbrellas made? How are umbrellas waterproof? What are the different kinds of umbrellas and are they made from different materials? How do you stop umbrellas from breaking when it is windy? Are there different umbrella designs in the book?



Pedagogical characteristics

Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario
(continued)

Pedagogical practices

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

Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- Become a scientist: How would you test the materials to see if they repelled or absorbed water? Under what conditions? Are there different thicknesses of thread?
- Be a designer: Research different patterns that could be used to decorate the umbrellas so that they don't get mixed up. Do you need templates?
- What other things keep you dry, protect you from the sun, etc...? Can you design a new type of protection? Could it be a hat? How would you stop it flying off your head when it is windy?
- How does a design studio work? What people do you need? What tools would be helpful? Can you visit a design studio (virtually or in person), taking notes to help you fit out your own? Could you create a catwalk to show the different types of umbrellas? Do you need to send out invitations?

Planning educator interactions to build conceptual learning in role

- Educators are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted.
- Plan 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.

- Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following:
 1. **Be equally present with older children** - e.g. "Let's all draw pictures in our notebook to collect information about designs/waterproofing and take it back to our design studio".
 2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. Point out the pattern repetition in the designs and use words to describe waterproof materials (repels water).
 3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. "I don't know how to make an umbrella. What do I need?".
 4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. "Let's walk hand in hand on the catwalk to show our different umbrella designs".

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