



Play
School

Story Time

PlayWorld

Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Luke McGregor shares 'Do Not Open This Book' by Andy Lee & Heath McKenzie.



Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the *Conceptual PlayWorld*

Story: Do Not Open This Book

Written by Andy Lee and illustrated by Heath McKenzie

Publisher: Lake Press, 2016

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 book full of humour and suspense about a guy who doesn't want the reader to open the box. The witch and the frog are characters that can be used to spark children's imagination and to invite them on extended play adventures.
- Children can make magic potions: What ingredients do we need? Will they turn monsters into frogs or frogs into monsters?
- Develop empathy for the main character because the witch has put a spell on him.
- **Problem situation:** How do we turn the frog back into a monster?
- **Concepts:** Transformation through physical and chemical science processes e.g. mixing, blending, heating.
- **Possible plot extension:** You, the reader, didn't follow the instructions to not open the book! And so the witch turned the monster into a frog! We need a witch's help to make a magic potion to turn him back into a monster.

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 an outdoor space into an imaginary situation from the story e.g. the witch's castle on a faraway mountain, where she has a chemistry lab.
- What does the castle look like? What does the chemistry lab look like? Does she have witch and/or wizard friends?
- Pretend to be a chemist or potion maker. Set up areas with test tubes, funnels, beakers, pipettes, spell books with recipes, different ingredients (e.g. things from the garden), safety equipment (e.g. goggles and gloves).
- Observe and record the imaginary potions. What ingredients do we need? What procedures do we follow (e.g. mixing, melting, blending, measuring)? What has changed?

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 the imaginary situation, travel to the witch's castle together. You could fly on a broom, or use a special travel spell/potion. You might need a witch's passport.
- Children and educators choose which character they'd like to be e.g. the witch from the story, other witches and/or wizards, the frog, the monster.
- Pretend to meet an expert chemist. For example, Professor Marie Curie who investigated radioactivity or Alfred Nobel (have you heard of the Nobel prize?).

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.

- Receive a letter from the monster such as: "*Dear Children, I need your help. Please visit the witch so that she can teach you the magic potion that will turn me back into a monster. I don't want to be a frog forever. From the Monster (now a Frog)*".



Pedagogical characteristics

Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario

(continued)

Planning educator interactions to build conceptual learning in role

Pedagogical practices

- The problem invites children to investigate solutions to help the play in the Conceptual PlayWorld.
- 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 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

- Investigate scientific processes (e.g. mixing, freezing, melting) in the witch's chemistry lab, in her castle. Explore the ingredients needed to make a chemical reaction and observe how they are transformed.
 - Pretend to be the witch or wizard trying to turn the frog back into a monster.
 - Explore mathematical concepts of numbers and measurement in the Witch's chemistry lab e.g. How many millilitres of food dye will we need to make the magic potion? How many lavender stems will we need?
- Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following:
 1. **Be equally present with children** - e.g. *"What ingredients do we need for this magic potion? Let's research together"*.
 2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. *"I'm pretending to be a witch mixing ingredients together. Let's record the results in our spell book"*.
 3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. *"Can you tell me how we can melt the magic ice cube? How can we freeze the magic water?"*.
 4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. *"Let's pretend to fly to the witch's magic castle together!"*.

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