



Play
School

Story Time

PlayWorld

Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Courtney Act shares 'The Spectacular Suit' written by Kat Patrick & Hayley Wells.



Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the Conceptual PlayWorld

Story: The Spectacular Suit

Written by Kat Patrick and illustrated by Hayley Wells

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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 is about a young girl named Frankie who wants to wear something special to her birthday. It brings forward the concept of patterns as Frankie uses her imagination to dream up a spectacular suit.
- It's Frankie's first party, she is full of excitement and anticipation, but she doesn't like what she's supposed to wear. Develop empathy for Frankie who is forming her identity and beginning to voice her ideas.
- **Problem situation:** Designing a suit with a spectacular pattern.
- **Concept:** Patterns - designing a spectacular suit with repeated characteristics, such as shape or colour.
- **Possible plot extension:** The children are invited to Frankie's birthday party! They'll need a suit with a spectacular pattern.

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 indoor space into an imaginary fashion studio and pretend to be textile designers and tailors.
- What does a textile designer need? For example, coloured pens, paper, computers. Think about colour, shape, texture.
- What does a tailor need? For example, a measuring tape, a sewing machine, thread & needle, fabrics, pen and paper.
- What inspiration do you have for your pattern? Frankie's spectacular suit was inspired by space, for you it might be nature or geometry? How will you represent your pattern?
- Patterns are all around us. Can you go on a pattern hunt (e.g. finding spirals, spots, stripes)?

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 together (the fashion studio) you could be a team of textile designers. How do you get there? A magic carpet with a spectacular design?
- Children and adults choose to be characters. e.g. Frankie, her family members, party guests and fashion designers.
- Visit a fabric and craft shop, or use what you have at home e.g. bedcover, furnishings, rugs, curtains, socks.
- Invite an expert artist or designer to visit in character to help learn about patterns and print. They'll have to arrive on the magic carpet with the spectacular pattern!

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 an invitation from the family, such as: "*Dear Children, Please come to Frankie's surprise birthday party. We need your help to make the party even more spectacular. It would be spectacular if you could design and make your own spectacular outfit to surprise Frankie for her birthday? Love Frankie's family*".



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

- Children can use their imagination to create patterns for their suit design. Frankie will be excited to see their spectacular suit.
- Investigate patterns. Frankie's spectacular suit looks like a stormy sky with stars, lightning bolts and other shapes. What does your pattern look like? Does it have spirals, tessellations, animal prints or other shapes?
- Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following:
 1. **Be equally present with older children** - e.g. "Let's explore patterns together. What patterns can we find in nature?"
 2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. "I'm pretending to be a textile design expert. The sequence of these three shapes are repeated".
 3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. "Show me your pattern design for the Spectacular Suit".
 4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. "Let's pretend to surprise Frankie together".

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