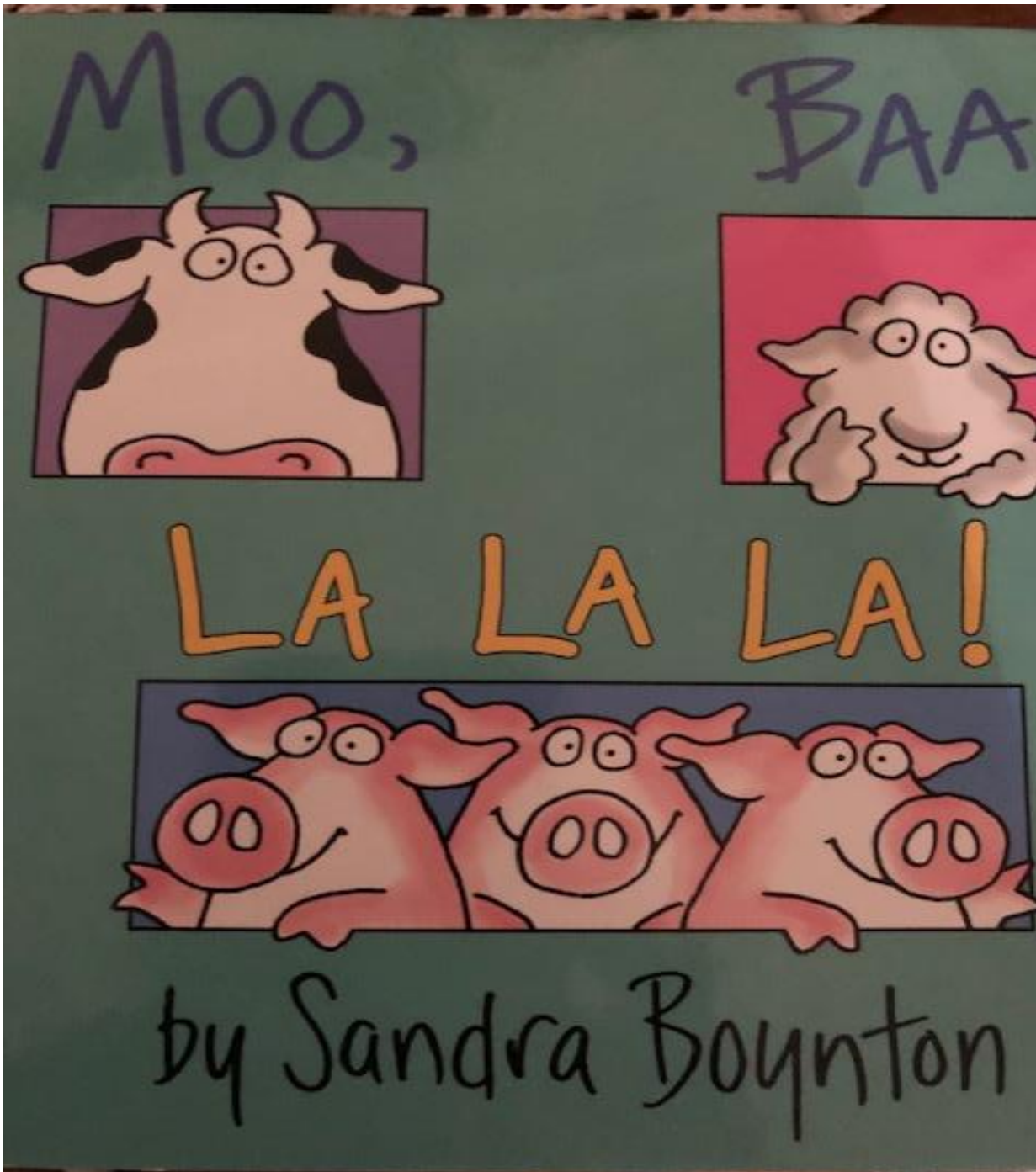


The Five Characteristics of a *Conceptual Playworld* (Fleer, 2018)



A cow says MOO

A sheep says BAA

Three singing pigs say, La La La!

“No, no!” you say, “that isn’t right. The pigs say OINK all day and night.”

Rhinoceroses SNORT and SNUFF and little dogs go RUFF RUFF RUFF!

Some other dogs go BOW WOW WOW! And cats and kittens say MEOW!

(It’s quiet now. What do you say?)



Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
<p>Selecting a story for the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with understandings of the context of children’s development and their interests (Farm life – experience of chickens, hens, chooks) ■ Selecting a story that is enjoyable to children and adults (Moo, Baa, La La La by Sandra Boynton) ■ Building empathy for the characters in the story (Children experiencing the drama of farmyard animals, and the sounds they make) ■ A plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation to the children (Wrong sound for the pigs? What about the other animals?) ■ Being clear about the concept and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed (Literacy – rhyming sounds; Categorising animals - what are farm yard animals? Rhinoceroses in the wrong spot)
<p>Designing a <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creating different spaces that give opportunities for exploring both concepts (Visiting farmyard –zoo animals – pets) and social and emotional development (empathy for the animals. Are the pigs confused? Is the Rhinoceroses lost) ■ Designing different opportunities for child initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore concepts and make them more personally meaningful (Building homes/spaces for all the animals mentioned in the story) ■ Planning different opportunities for representing children’s ideas and expressing their understandings (Mind map of different animals – stick puppets – and where they live – building imaginary homes for them – possibly the zoo, pets, farm yard etc)
<p>Entering and exiting the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole group enters the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> (Visiting farm yard – animals in the wrong home) ■ All the children are in the same imaginary situation (Being on the farm together, enacting the story together) ■ Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation (be different animals making the sounds that are in the book) ■ Teacher is always a character in the story or acting as a human prop (e.g., such as the farmer or being one of the animal family members, such as the pig family)



Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
<p>Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children have enough knowledge to be able to solve the problem – introduced inside or out of the imaginary situation (Which home would each of the animals live in – zoo, farm) ■ The problem scenario is dramatic and engaging (Rhino must be lost. Help the rhino to get back to the zoo) ■ Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned (message on the mobile phone from different animal sounds – who left them? Where do they belong? Can we help the rhino get home? How?) ■ Being clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation (Rhyming sounds, as a basis of literacy, categorisation of animals based on where they live) ■ Concepts are in service of the play (Need to be able to categorise the animals, in order to help rhino find her way home, or add new animal sounds to work out what the animals are)
<p>Planning teacher interactions to build conceptual learning in role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teachers working in interactional pairs: Teachers are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted Teacher A takes animal role, and invites other children to be with her as part of the family of pigs – confused, not making the right sound; Teacher B is with rhino planning get back to the zoo - lost) ■ There are different roles teachers can take: Teachers plan their role for the playworld to be equally present with the children, or to model practices in role, or to be needing help from the children. Their role can also be as together with the child leading (primordial we), where they literally cradle the child or hold their hand and together act out the role or solution ■ Conceptual intentions are planned: Planning of who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem ■

Fleer, M. (2018). *Conceptual Playworlds*: Foregrounding imagination and creativity as foundational for children’s learning, Monash University Working Paper: <https://www.monash.edu/conceptual-playworld>