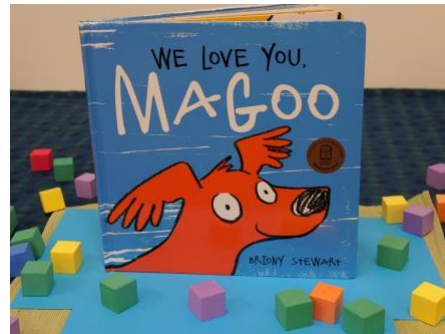


**We Love You, Magoo**  
Briony Stewart



## Planning a *Conceptual PlayWorld* in STEM (Fleer, 2022) Monash PlayLab

*Five Characteristics of a Conceptual PlayWorld to support imaginary play and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) thinking and learning (Fleer, 2022)*

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned	Conceptual PlayWorld in action
<p>Selecting a story for the <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Selecting a story that is enjoyable to children and adults. Summary of the story.</li> <li>■ Building drama for the characters in the story.</li> <li>■ Building empathy for the characters in the story.</li> <li>■ A plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation. Overview of the problem.</li> <li>■ Being clear about the concept(s) and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed.</li> <li>■ Adventures or journeys that spring from the plot (e.g., chapters)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This book is about lovable family pet, a dog named Magoo, and brings about the concept sense of smell.</li> <li>■ The book is playful, “silly doggo”. Magoo wants to feel accepted but s/he keeps getting up to mischief.</li> <li>■ Magoo is a Detective Super Sniffer. What happens when s/he loses his sense of smell? Concept - sense of smell (olfaction).</li> <li>■ Possible plot extensions: Magoo could meet other Super Sniffer Detective Dogs, the children could have fun being dogs e.g. digging, chasing balls, rolling in the dirt, following a smell, going on a smell hunt</li> </ul>
<p>Designing a <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Finding a space in the classroom/centre/outdoor area suitable for an imaginary <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i> of the story.</li> <li>■ Designing opportunities for child-initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Turn any space in the classroom into the ‘Detective Agency’. Detectives are busy. You might go on adventures, interviewing witnesses or collecting evidence. What can you smell? It might give you clues about the mystery?</li> </ul>

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned	Conceptual PlayWorld in action
	<p>concepts and make them more personally meaningful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Planning different opportunities for children to represent their ideas and express their understandings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To help Magoo understand her/his loss of smell children could, e.g. draw the structure of a dog's nose/nostril, e.g. olfactory receptors, or pretend to be dogs (with your nose to the ground), how far can a dog smell? Interview each other as Detective Dogs explaining how you use your nose to solve mysteries. Learning more about the olfactory sense will help Magoo solve the mystery.</li> <li>■ Maybe someone has a dog at home who could visit your preschool?</li> </ul>
<p>Entering and exiting the <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plan a routine for the whole group to enter and exit the <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i> of the story where all the children are in the same imaginary situation.</li> <li>■ Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation.</li> <li>■ Adult is always a character in the story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To signify entering the imaginary situation, the Detective Agency, together you could sing 'Doggy Doggy Where's Your Bone?' or make dog masks.</li> <li>■ Children and adults choose to be characters e.g. Magoo, a Bloodhound who works for the police, or a Beagle who works at the airport or a German Shepard who is a rescue dog. You could be one of the family members. Or you could be an expert e.g. a vet who knows about Super Sniffer Dogs</li> </ul>
<p>Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned.</li> <li>■ The problem scenario is dramatic and engaging.</li> <li>■ The problem invites children to investigate solutions to help the play in the <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i>.</li> <li>■ Being clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation. Concepts are in service of the children's play.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The children receive a letter: Dear Children, I'm a Super Sniffer Detective Dog and that's how I solve mysteries. But I've lost my sense of smell! It's terrible. I can't smell anything and I can't solve mysteries. Please help. Love Magoo. Bark, Bark.</li> <li>■ Investigating sense of smell in dogs and in humans, learning about the anatomy will help e.g. nose/nostril/receptors/signals to the brain, and how smell is perceived.</li> </ul>

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned	Conceptual PlayWorld in action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Children can focus on their sense of smell by pretending to be dogs e.g. recognising smells. I wonder if it smells different to a dog?</li> <li>■ Concept - sense of smell (olfaction). Humans and animals perceive by their sense of smell, e.g. What can you smell?</li> <li>■ Pretend to be a vet to learn about the dog's anatomy and sense of smell.</li> </ul>
Planning adult interactions to build conceptual learning in role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adults are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted.</li> <li>■ Planning of who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem. There are different roles adults can take: Adults plan their role for the <i>Conceptual PlayWorld</i> to be <b>equally present</b> with the children, or to <b>model practices</b> in role, or to be <b>needing help</b> from the children. Their role can also <b>be together with</b> the child leading (primordial we), where they literally cradle the child or hold their hand and together act out the role or solution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are different roles adults can take: Adults plan their role for the PlayWorld to be equally present with the children (e.g. "Let's explore how Magoo's nose works to help him/her smell?"), or to model practises in role (e.g. I'm a Super Sniffer Detective Dog. I can smell up to 100,000 times better than humans!), or to be needing help from the children (e.g. "Why are dogs super sniffers? How is a Magoo's nose different from a human?") Their role can also be as together with the child leading (primordial we) (e.g. "Let's pretend to be Magoo together. We could play with the family and get up to mischief playing in the mud. Shall we sniff the mud?") where they literally cradle the child or hold their hand and together act out the role or solution.</li> <li>■ Conceptual intentions are planned: Planning of who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem.</li> </ul>

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<https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/conceptual-playlab/publications>