

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



**Pedagogical characteristics**

**Pedagogical practices that are planned**

Selecting a story for the *Conceptual Playworld*

- 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 (**Rosie’s Walk - Children experiencing the drama of Rosie being eaten by the fox, in context of Rosie being unaware**)
- A plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation to the children (**How to keep Rosie safe; Map to help navigate around the farm**)
- Being clear about the concept and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed (**Mathematics – spatial relations, use of prepositional language; Design and Technology – plan view of the farm**)



Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
<p>Designing a <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creating different spaces that give opportunities for exploring both concepts (<b>Spatial Relations – Prepositional language</b>) and social and emotional development (<b>empathy with the Fox</b>)</li> <li>■ Designing different opportunities for child initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore concepts and make them more personally meaningful (<b>Mapping the farm</b>)</li> <li>■ Planning different opportunities for representing children's ideas and expressing their understandings (<b>Mind map of features of the Farm</b>)</li> </ul>
<p>Entering and exiting the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whole group enters the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> (<b>Visiting Rosie's farm</b>)</li> <li>■ All the children are in the same imaginary situation (<b>Being on the farm together, enacting Rosie's walk together</b>)</li> <li>■ Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation (<b>be different varieties of hens, similar to ones they have at home or being the fox; cousins, hen families</b>)</li> <li>■ Teacher is always a character in the story or acting as a human prop (e.g., such as <b>Mother Hen or being part of the fox family</b>)</li> </ul>
<p>Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Children have enough knowledge to be able to solve the problem – introduced inside or out of the imaginary situation (<b>Making a map of Rosie's walk; Designing an alternative route</b>)</li> <li>■ The problem scenario is dramatic and engaging (<b>Keeping Rosie safe from the fox; Rosie's Cousin gets lost or Cousin wishes to visit, needs a map, children prepare a map</b>)</li> <li>■ Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned (<b>Cousin leaves a message on the mobile phone to say she is visiting, but needs help to get to the farm – needs a map – have a voice recording of Cousin Hen</b>)</li> <li>■ Being clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation (<b>Map reading; Plan view orientation; Prepositional language and spatial relations</b>)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Concepts are in service of the play (<b>Need to be able to prepare a map, discuss the position of Rosie and the Fox using prepositional language</b>)</li> </ul>
<p>Planning teacher interactions to build conceptual learning in role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teachers working in interactional pairs: Teachers are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted <b>Teacher A takes Hen role, and invites other children to be with her as part of the clutch of chickens; Teacher B is with foxes planning how to catch Rosie and the other chickens</b>)</li> <li>■ 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</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>

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>