Playful storytelling in public libraries

Exploration 4
Chile 2017-2018

Activity facilitation manual
The general aim of the Exploration is to promote children’s interest and motivation for literature, through playful methodologies of learning and development, helping them become storytellers with the help of artistic expressions, such as drawing and music.

In order to achieve this aim, this activity manual was created to equip play facilitators with playful storytelling methodology.

**Age range for children:** 4-12 years.

**Approximate duration of the activity:** 30-40 minutes.

**Materials needed for the activity**

- Two boxes to keep the drawing and sound-making materials.
- Wool, different colours.
- Tissue paper, different colours.
- Masking tape, different colours.
- Cushions, a rug, cosy decorations for the space.
- Paper sheets.
- Extra-large crayons (with broad tips).
- Sound-making objects, from everyday life (a wooden spoon, empty bottles, containers with rice or lentils, paper bags, a grater and a spoon, seeds in a jar, a bowl with a marble, or anything you can think of).

This is a Exploration about Playful storytelling in public libraries, it was created in collaboration between Fundación La Fuente and LEGO Foundation, as a part of the PlayFutures community initiative. The aspiration of the work is to share methodology that promote playful interactions and children’s approach to reading.
A. To prepare for the activity (previous day)
1) Read the manual and watch the tutorial video.

B. To prepare for the session (30 minutes before)
1) Build a place for play and creativity, using materials such as wool, coloured tissue paper, cushions, a rug, and other objects you have access to. Using the tape, draw different areas on the floor, creating a place for the story to be told, and a different one for children to draw.
2) Prepare two boxes with the materials: one with paper sheets and crayons, and one with sound-making objects. These materials should be in the boxes until they are used.
3) Inform parents and tutors about the activity, so they know what the children will be engaging in. If you need to have a consent form from them, this is the time to ask for it.

2) Pick a story that you can read in five minutes, that has at least two milestones, a fortunate one and an unfortunate one. You will tell the children that the story will be divided in three parts: a beginning, middle and an end (you will use the milestones as the dividers),
3) Choose the two milestones of the story. It is important that both are easily identifiable as part of the story, and that they allow you to divide the story in the three parts.
4) Collect sound making objects. They should be easy to get, and are probably already in your home.
5) Think about questions that promote creative answers from children. As an example, you could ask “What do you think the story is about?” while showing the book’s cover.
C. To implement the activity (30-40 minutes) – 11 steps for a Playful Storytelling experience

1) Greet the children at the entrance of the area, showing your hands and maintaining eye contact. Invite the children to take off their shoes and sit in a circle. Explain that they are going to draw and discover new sounds, and that they will tell their own version of a story.

2) Casually introduce the sound-making objects. Take them out of the box and show examples of how they can be used. Make sure to activate curiosity, creativity and imagination.

3) Tell them this is an experiment of play and creativity, and that they will have to navigate through it with sounds and drawings. Give them roles, assigning them in two groups: one of drawing creators, and one of sound makers.

4) Tell the story until the first milestone, also showing the images. Then stop, make a pause and invite the children to represent what has happened, using paper and the crayons, or the sound-making objects, depending on what group they are in. You should interact with both groups. The pause should last about ten minutes.

5) Once done with the drawing and sound-making, the children should put the materials back in the boxes. The drawings should be displayed on the ground or the wall.

6) Resume reading, now taking the children to the second milestone. Once you reach the milestone, stop again for a pause where you invite them again to draw and make sound, but this time they switch roles: the children who drew will now make sounds, and the other way around.

7) The children draw and create sounds for ten more minutes. Once again, you should interact with both groups. Make sure to control the time, so both groups have about the same time on each activity.

8) Resume reading, telling the last part of the story. Then close the book and invite the children to tell their own version of the story, using their drawings and the sounds they have discovered. Invite the children to narrate. One should start, but more kids can participate.

9) The new narrator should now occupy your seat and start telling the story. He or she could use the book, if it is appropriate to their age and the ambience of the activity. When the new narrator gets to the first milestone, you should invite all the children to make sounds and show their drawings.

10) The new narrator (it could change, if more children are interested) keeps telling the story, up until the second milestone, when you will invite the children to make sounds and show their drawings again. After that, the narrator will tell the end of the story.

11) Thank the children for being a part of the activity. Ask if they liked it and what they would have liked to be done differently. You should then invite them to put the materials back in the boxes, to put their shoes back on, and to say goodbye showing and waving their hands.
D. Tips to keep in mind during the activity

- The mediation style should be appropriate to the ages of the participants.
- It is good to ask children about their interests, to keep them engaged in the activity, and promote a meaningful experience.
- Keep yourself active as a mediator, engage in the activities.
- Remember to promote the children’s curiosity, making sure the experience is full of surprises.
- Avoid giving answers, focus on making questions, so the children can imagine the answers themselves.
- Try to generate different levels of challenges, to accommodate different ways of learning.
- Don’t pressure children over the time, promote a fun environment, and let things happen.
- Avoid fostering competition, everyone has different things to offer.
- Don’t try to make children think like yourself. Clearly support a way of navigating through the activity according to the aims you have in mind.
- It is important to give clear instructions, to let the children make their own decisions and ask questions that make them the protagonists of the activity.
- While the children are drawing and making sounds, it is good to boost their own way of doing things. If they don’t think of anything to do, help them by giving an example.
Play and learning are like the two wings of a butterfly, interconnected and interdependent.

Carla Rinaldi,
Reggio Children

What is PlayFutures?
PlayFutures is a global research and innovation community launched in 2016. It is convened and funded by the LEGO Foundation. It brings together 1500 researchers and practitioners to contribute to advancing and advocating for the knowledge and practice of learning through play.

6 explorations launched in 2017
After a call for innovation ideas launched in 2016, PlayFutures launched 6 international explorations to give the opportunity to practitioners and researchers to collaborate and study how play and learning can be implemented in a practical way in different contexts and cultures.

The key objective was to reinvent traditional ways of teaching, to better support whole child development needs in the 21st century through play.

In total, 6 explorations have been launched to support learning through play, lifelong learning, lifestyle and wellness innovation. The intent is to accelerate or leapfrog current education issues by bringing learning through play as a natural way to learn in different contexts: at home, at school, in public spaces and natural settings.

Learning through play

What we mean by “Learning through play”
We say learning through play happens when the activity
1. is experienced as joyful
2. helps children find meaning in what they are doing or learning
3. involves active, engaged, minds-on thinking
4. supports iterative thinking (experimentation, hypothesis testing, etc.)
5. promotes social interaction.


The LEGO Foundation
The LEGO Foundation is a Danish corporate foundation which aims to build a future in which learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners. The foundation is dedicated to re-defining play and re-imaging learning to ensure children build the broad set of skills they need to thrive and succeed. The Foundation is headquartered in Billund, Denmark and with office locations in Boston, USA, Mexico City, Mexico, Johannesburg, South Africa and Kyiv, Ukraine.
About the authors

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Verónica holds a primary school teacher degree and a Master’s degree in Education. In 2000 she founded, alongside her family, Fundación La Fuente, non-profit organisation aimed at designing and implementing educational and cultural initiatives that primarily benefit vulnerable populations. As managing director of Fundación La Fuente she has been part of the different projects related to books and reading, focused on creating libraries and cultural centres that are attractive and motivating for people of all ages. Verónica, with her Creating Tomorrow’s Readers programme, was recognised in 2009 as a Latin American Social Entrepreneur by the World Bank and the Schwab Foundation. Email: vabud@flf.cl / Website: www.fundacionlafuente.cl

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Ragnar has developed an interdisciplinary and creative approach to knowledge, while working with Humberto Maturana, and doing research with Muriqui monkeys and Bonobo chimpanzees in Brazil and Congo. He worked as a researcher at the Center for Advanced Research in Education, and founded the RIA Project, an interdisciplinary research line to measure and improve collective intelligence. He has collaborated with the Chilean Ministry of Education to bring play into the classroom. He is founder of Socialmap, a start-up focused on building technology to improve self-awareness, self-organisation, and collective intelligence. Email: ragnar.behncke@gmail.com

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With special thanks to Jamie Denham, Maria Altamirano and Sebastian Marambio who participated in the kick-off of this exploration, the facilitator and the children who participated in the experience.

Learn more about PlayFutures

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