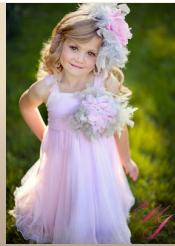


Media based play



Dr C. Glenn Cupit
Developmental Psychologist
Vice President
Australian Council
on Children and the Media
Flinders University of South Australia

Question!

How do we know how to behave in different situations ?

Answer!

We follow 'scripts'

- at a party script
- at a parent/ teacher interview script



- at a funeral script
- at a romantic evening script

It is no different for children

How do children learn how to behave in different situations?

They also learn to follow 'scripts'

- at mat time script
- at a play date script



- seeing a lolly at the supermarket script
- in trouble with Mum script

What sort of scripts?

- Not detailed 'dialogue scripts' which spell out what to say, where to move, what emotions to show, and which need to be followed to the letter



• Concept scripts

- Basic narrative sequence
 - These are appropriate/inappropriate ways to behave in this situation
- Standard language elements
 - Some speech is expected/inappropriate in this situation
- Detail varies from occasion to occasion



Where do we and our children get our scripts?

- Lived experience
- Other people
- Media

Play ideas are also organised around scripts and have the same sources

Where do children get their play ideas?

- Lived experience



Where do children get their play ideas?

- Other children



Where do children get their play ideas?

- Media



Why today's media based play is different 1



Why today's media based play is different 2



Why today's media based play is different 3



The contemporary context

- ❖ The world of today's child is not the world most adults remember
- ❖ Children are 'digital natives'; born into a media saturated world where they respond as much to that electronic environment as did previous generations to theirs
- ❖ Many adults are 'digital immigrants'; entering the digital world later in life and still feeling somewhat alien
- ❖ Some of us are just 'digital tourists'

Play for a digital native

For today's children, to base their play on content related to electronic media is **the most natural** thing to do



So how do we respond?

We start by identifying what sort of play we are thinking about

Play is not all that simple.

People describe play in an incredible array of ways (this is from a brief literature review)
active, associative, attunement, body, challenge, collaborative, communication, competitive, construction, cooperative, creative, deep, dramatic, exploratory, fantasy, guided, imaginative, manipulative, mastery, object, onlooker, parallel, pretend, quiet, rôle, rough-and-tumble, sand, sensory, social, socio-dramatic, solitary, storytelling-narrative, symbolic, transformative-integrative

What 'play' am I talking about?

- Play is a very old word which originally indicated "to leap for joy, dance, rejoice, be glad"
- We also use 'play' for what we do with music, and for theatrical performances, both of which require imagination and are related to enjoyment
- While 'sport' and 'games' suggest purposeful activity, 'play' suggests 'just mucking about' (and there's nothing wrong with that)
- Play is never children's **work**, but is often their **education**
- Many different definitions, but I like "Activity engaged in for enjoyment or recreation"

Media based play is **mainly** (but not exclusively) concerned with three types of play:

- Narrative
- Dramatic
- Socio-dramatic

Narrative play

Children's individual activities follow a story-line, which may be either a re-enactment of remembered events or a construction based on gathering remembered elements together in new ways.



Dramatic play

A development of narrative play where children imagine themselves as a person other than who they are.

They may play at being a parent, a doctor, a teacher, a horse, a superhero, a fairy or a mermaid.



Socio-dramatic play

An extension of dramatic play which occurs when shared with others who interact in agreed roles and usually co-construct the story-line.



Why does contemporary media based play differ from that of other sources? 1



Why does contemporary media based play differ from that of other sources? 2



Why does contemporary media based play differ from that of other sources? 3



Why does contemporary media based play differ from that of other sources? 4

Parental
limitation

- So
- A
- M
- In



Characteristics of play based on electronic media 1

- **Lack of flexibility**
- **Being repeatedly visualised creates an expectation of how you should play**



Characteristics of play based on electronic media 2

- **Reduced negotiation**
 - Shared access by most children means shared understandings of how to play
 - Diminished need to talk through what each will do



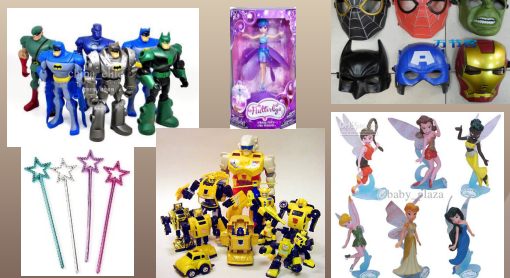
Characteristics of play based on electronic media 3

- **Diminished creativity**
 - To try to play 'outside' the formats other children have learned creates a difficulty and so children tend to conform to the fixed patterns
- {Children can still show great creativity in circumventing bans}



Characteristics of play based on electronic media 4

- **Purchasable props**



Characteristics of play based on electronic media 5

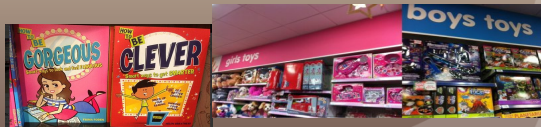
- Gender stereotyping



- Intrinsic to the content

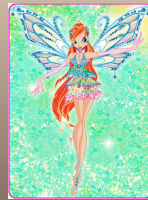


- As a deliberate 'product differentiation' marketing ploy



What are the most common current media playscripts?

• Superheroes



• Fairies, Princesses, and Fairy princesses

Why these playscripts are very popular with many children

- gross motor
- pretending
- ego boost
- withdraw
- participat
- leadership
- friendship



This allows -

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- E
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So -

Media based play **will** occur.

What matters is how we respond to it



Genuine concerns about superhero and fairy play

Opportunity cost



Genuine concerns about superhero and fairy play

Gender stereotyping



Genuine concerns about superhero and fairy play

Commercialisation



Responding to superhero and fairy/princess play 1



Responding to superhero and fairy/princess play 2

- Prevention
 - May meet so
 - E.g., 'cooling
 - Not supported
 - Fails to respond
 - Children find
 - Ongoing need
 - Adult-child relationship learning



Responding to superhero and fairy/princess play 3



Responding to superhero and

- Engage
 - Deliberate
 - Relate and
 - Use to convey challenge or
 - Fixing solving / stereotyping



Responding to superhero and fairy/princess play 5

- Programmed engagement
- Good education extends from children's interests and these forms of play are obviously interests. For instance:
 - *Ben 10* could lead to exploration of some of earth's more bizarre life forms (biology/zoology, language, geography, science)
 - *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* can lead to content (including vocabulary) about turtles, Japanese culture (from Ninjas), diet (from pizzas), and Renaissance art (from their names)
 - *My Little Pony* can lead to art, culture (tales of unicorns), social education (friendship, courage)
 - 'Fairies' and 'princesses' lead into folk stories, including some which challenge their glamorous and kindly depiction. They can also lead to dance and movement activities.
 - *Winx Club* (sorry I have to draw a line somewhere)

General advice

- Stay in control
- Be specific about what you mean
- Choose when and where the play occurs
- Discuss the play with the children
- Avoid bought (or brought) props
- Introduce alternative elements to existing narratives

Further Reading

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