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# Story Playing and its pedagogy

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2nd ENSEC Conference, 9-12 September  
2009, Izmir Turkey

# The structure of this presentation

1. Background information and project rationale;
2. Theoretical perspectives & conceptual framework;
3. The project (methodological & ethical issues);
4. Emergent themes and (new!) insights.

# 1. Background & project rationale

- Student engagement with voluntary work in early years settings (via active communities fund)
- Perspectives on emotional & social development (mainly psychological- Limited pedagogical applications)
- Emphasis on cognitive development & academic outcomes;
- The importance of personal, emotional & social development in the early years;

## 2. Theoretical and conceptual perspectives

- i. Principles of early years pedagogy (contextually & developmentally appropriate practice);
- ii. Story as springboard of PES development
- iii. Cognition & emotion: and their interdependence;

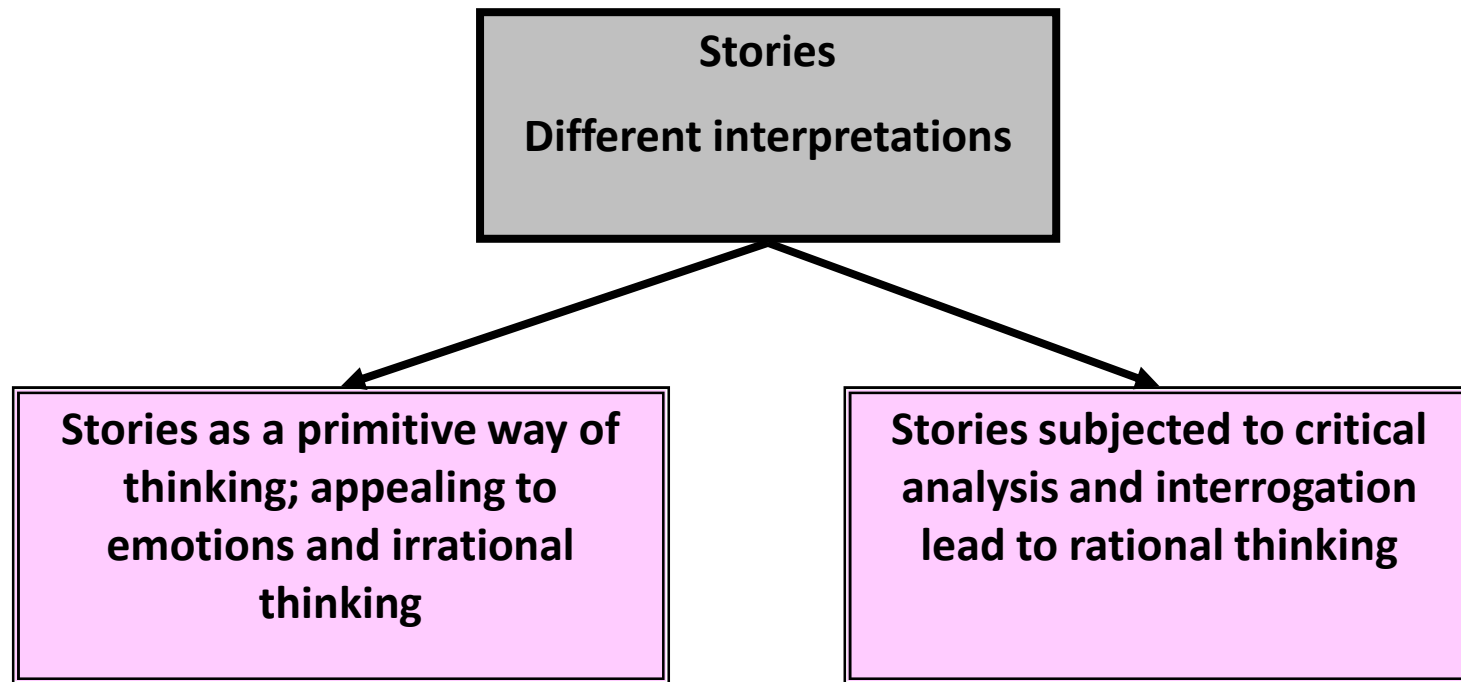
## Contextually & Developmentally Appropriate Practice

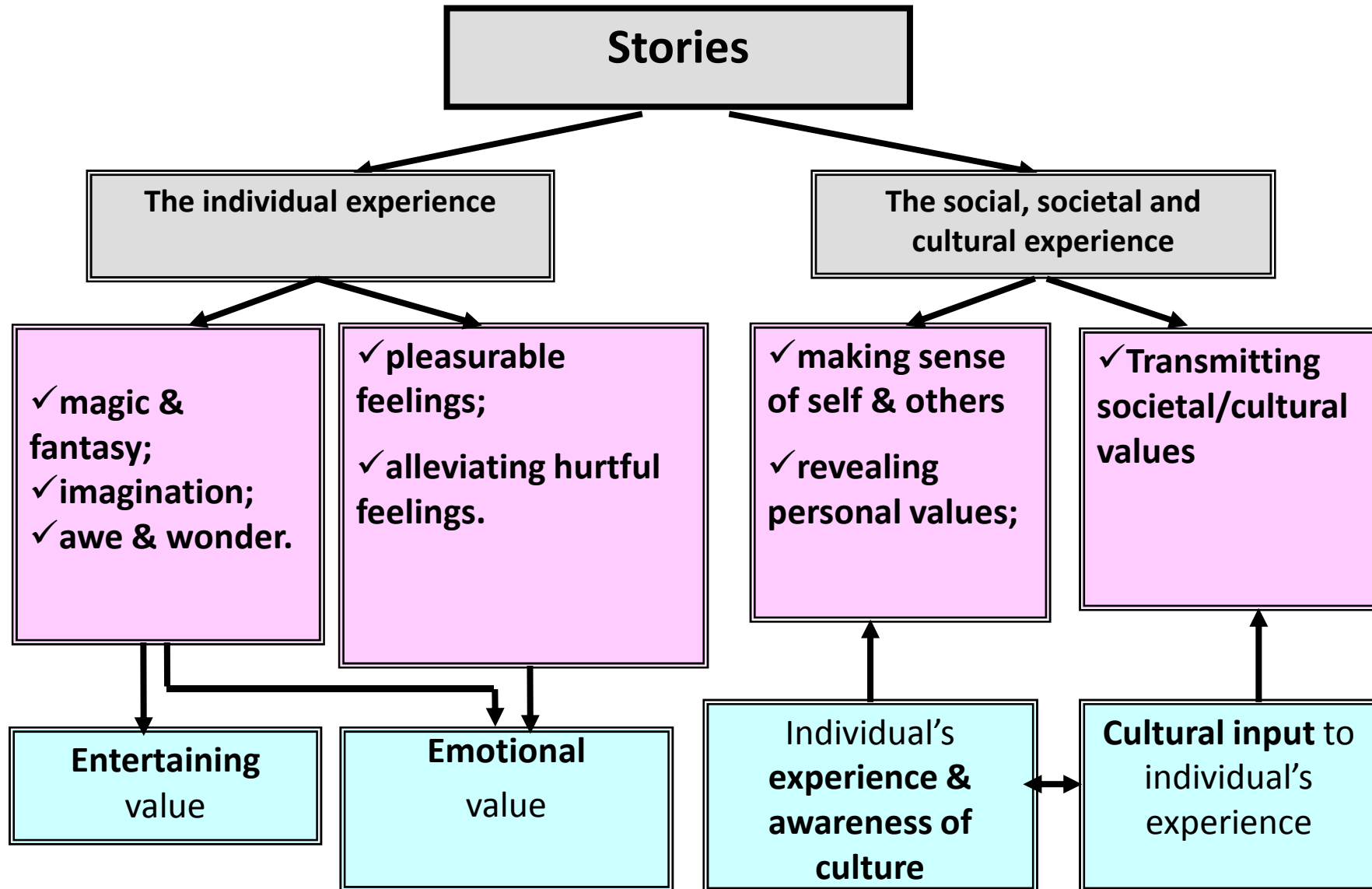
Starting from

Children's experience &  
extending experience

Children's level of  
development & extending it

Children are influenced by and influence  
their social and cultural environment





# Emotions

- Subjective state, thus of little significance (behaviourists)
- The outcome of cognitive processing of external stimuli (cognitive psychologists)
- Independence of and primacy over cognition (Zejonc- late 20<sup>th</sup> century);
- Operate in neural space beyond consciousness (neuroscience)
- Bodily responses to internal sensations (william James 19<sup>th</sup> century);

Emotions are understood as being subjective states which do not have a place within a scientific psychology which addresses observable and objectively measurable behavioural outcomes (early 20th century - behaviourists);

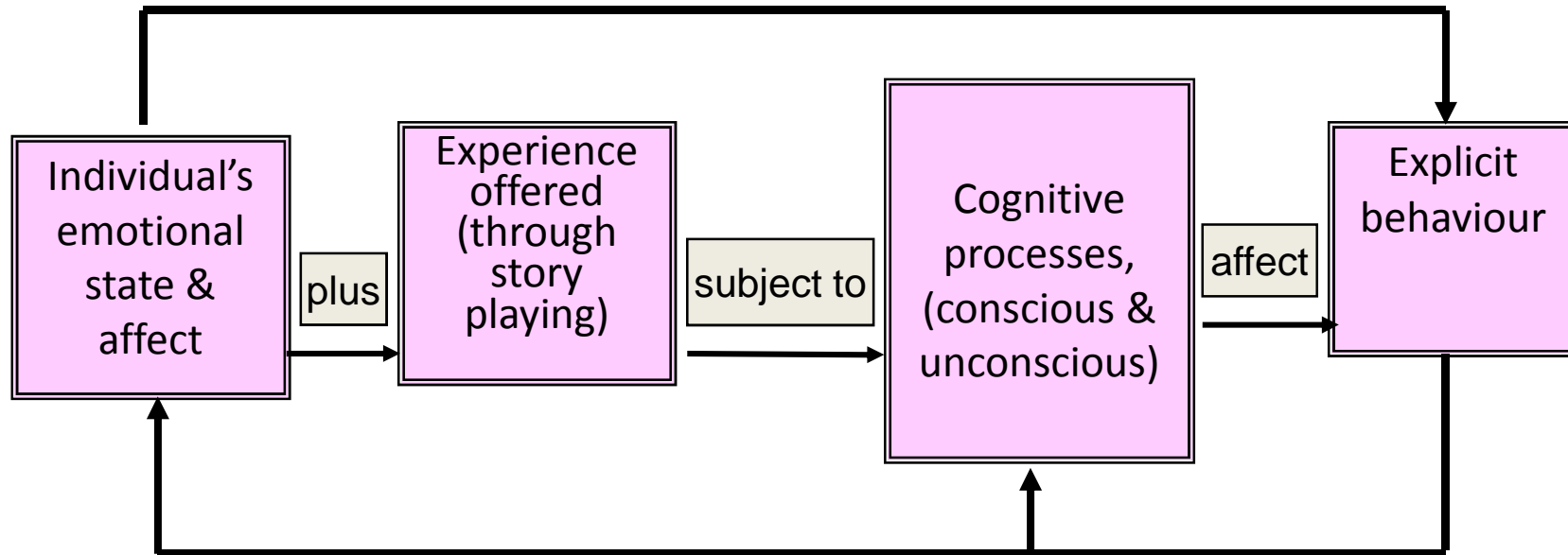
Emotions defined as being the outcome of cognitive processing of external stimuli producing an affect, *or* mood state (mid-20th century - cognitive psychologists);

Emotions understood as having primacy over, and being independent of, cognition.  
Emotions and cognition are two separate functions of the mind (late 20th century Zejonc). There is more to an emotion than cognition, a collection of thoughts or reasoning;

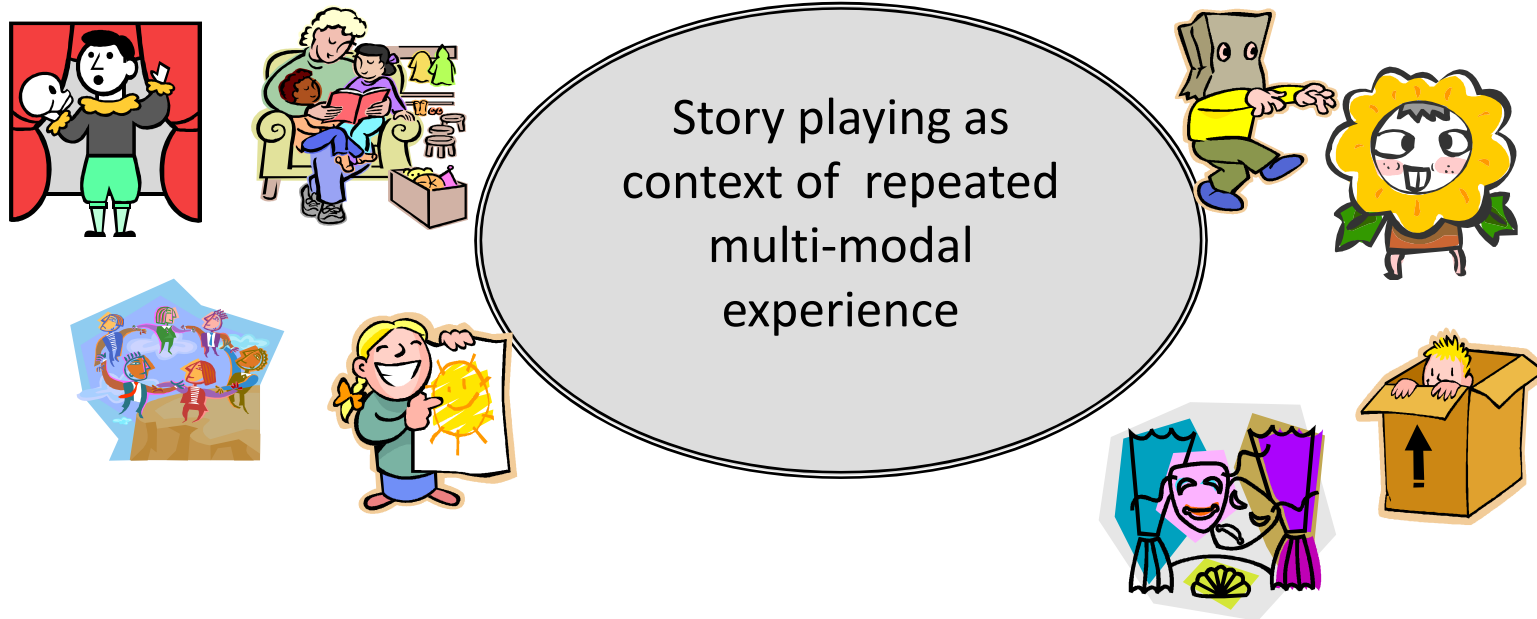
Emotions seen as being different from other states of mind and associated with bodily responses that give rise to internal sensations (19th century-William James);

Emotions operate in some psychic and neural space, beyond conscious cognitive processing, that is not readily accessed by consciousness (current understandings - neuroscience);

## Conceptual framework



# Story playing



# 3. The project (methodological & ethical issues)

## **Implementation**

- In five early years settings (Nursery classes, Reception & Year 1);
- over a period of ten weeks;
- by five undergraduate students studying for a degree in education studies and early childhood education;
- with the support and supervision of regular staff in the setting.

**Ethics:** participant information, consent, anonymity, confidentiality **etc**

**Data** collected included:

- Project development in a portfolio
- Students' participant observations of children's engagement, responses and participation in the activities,
- students' reflection on their own experience;
- informal discussions and feedback from the early years professionals/teachers who supported them in each setting;
- reflective dialogues between the project co-ordinator of the project and students.

## **Analysis of data**

Thematic analysis for identification of emergent issues

## 4. Emergent themes - the student experience

<b>Who am I?</b>	Personal emotional investment;
	(lack of) confidence; (dealing with) anxiety;
	Emotions a tricky business
	Self-awareness
<b>Beyond recipes</b>	Response to children's interests
	Multi-modal activities (de-fragmentation)
<b>Curricula integration</b>	Integration in weekly & daily planning
	Emotional, communication and literacy skills
<b>Meeting individual needs</b>	Ability to confront and deal with uneasy situations

## Who am I?

*... some children were more advanced than others and I was not sure how to handle this*

*[this experience]...allowed me to build a strong bond with the children...*

*I relaxed around them and found that this helped my communication skills with children*

## ***Language and communication***

*Often the children would make responses which were difficult for the adult to engage the very young in talks that are meaningful for adults.*

***Adult:*** *Oh look, there's Rabbit. I wonder how he's feeling -he's lost his friend*

***Child:*** *He feels pink*

## ***Emotional and literacy skills***

*I looked at literacy from one angle and how to help children progress through practising writing skills. Through linking emotional development and literacy I found that you can help a child progress in both areas simultaneously.*

*to promote emotional learning in children is quite tricky...emotional development is hard to pinpoint and everyone is at different level.*

## ***Beyond recipes***

*I also felt that some children felt shy to discuss how they are feeling in front of others. I tried with them different strategies... it worked*

# In conclusion

- For emotionally literate children, we need emotionally literate adults;
- Emotionally literate adults needs conceptual frameworks and skills, experience and conducive environments.

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