

AN EDUCATOR'S EXPERIENCE

XU LILI



Xu is a teacher at Qingyang Road Preschool in Anhui, China. A firm believer in enabling the limitless imaginations of preschool children, she and her colleagues have used a number of LEGO® Education solutions in the past. She has recently started working with StoryTales, for its ability to help hone the children's capabilities in a broad range of areas, including logical thinking, listening and speaking.

Enhancing the desire to perform stories

Xu often begins her lessons by showing film clips of fairytales to engage the children, as well as by demonstrating ways in which stories can be performed. This encourages the children to build their own narratives and inspires them to want to be part of a performance of their story. She also likes to ensure that the children are familiar with the LEGO Education bricks in terms of their shape, size, color and other characteristics. She says, "Being familiar with the materials helps the children to achieve the activity objectives. They also develop their understanding of concepts related to numbers, words and shapes."

Learning before teaching

While Xu enjoys the simplicity and flexibility of StoryTales, she believes that it is a good idea for teachers to become very familiar with the set before using it in the classroom. She says, "Any teacher would be best served by first gaining a good understanding of the set before starting the activity, and by creating detailed and layered opening activities that can pique the interest of the children."

She also strongly believes in giving preschool children lots of freedom to work things out for themselves when using StoryTales. She says, "During the activity, the teacher should give the children room and time to think, and provide recognition, support, and guidance for the children's creative content. They shouldn't try to provide all the answers, but instead work to stimulate the children's own thinking capabilities." This approach has proven to be highly successful, as Xu and her colleagues have discovered that while the children were only able to tell a basic story the first time they used StoryTales, subsequent sessions led to them creating increasingly complex scenarios.

Discovering the Aha moment

Xu appreciates the way in which StoryTales allows the children to engage in storyline design through scenario-building, and show-and-tell with the aid of the pictures and themes provided. However, she also likes the way in which it provides children with the freedom to go beyond the pre-existing scenarios and themes. She told us, "When I use the StoryTales set, the children are always able to create surprises with the LEGO Education bricks. I am able to experience the limitless imagination of young children from the stories that they create and tell. The children are also able to come with many kinds of their own scenarios."



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