



Windows into Children's Thinking

BIALIK COLLEGE
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
JOURNAL 2014

From the Principal of Bialik

Dear Parents,

It is with great humility that I introduce to you the 2014 Windows into Children's Thinking journal. I use the word humility because the words, thoughts, knowledge, skills and (most importantly) thinking of the children in this journal are simply inspiring.

Bialik College is inspired by Reggio Emilia, a municipality in the north of Italy which, in the ashes of the Second World War, re-visioned its approach to early years education. With an investigative approach centred around questions, children explore their world in a meaningful way. We nurture the reality that there are a 'hundred languages of children' (Loris Malaguzzi, the untiring promoter and originator of the Reggio Emilia approach) and that the enunciation of thinking is undertaken in a plethora of ways.

We develop key literacy, numeracy and other skills within the framework of our investigations and we document the learning journey of the children through quotations, observations, audio clips, images, films and the like. The documentation is not a static task, something summative and something that is simply displayed. At Bialik College, inspired by Reggio Emilia, we use the documentation to constantly reflect on our children's thinking and plan the next steps in their journeys.

As you explore this journal you will see the many languages of children in its pages. I encourage you to follow the web-links and to see and listen to the voices of children – both your own children and others. Our teachers have certainly lived up to Loris Malaguzzi's challenge that "teachers have to dare". When I had the privilege of visiting Reggio Emilia, I was inspired by a volunteer telling me that "we made the open choice to be an open member of our community". This journal, and our Windows into Children's Thinking Exhibition, is a part of our openness, sharing our learning journey with you.



Jeremy Stowe-Lindner
Principal

From the Head of the Early Learning Centre

"I believe that the challenge facing us today is...To think how to interconnect-that is the watchword for the present and the future- a word that we need to understand deeply and in all its forms. We need to do so keeping in mind that we live in a world made not of separate islands but of networks...In this metaphor is contained both the construction of children's thought and our own thought construction...which belongs to a wide archipelago where interference, interaction, and interdependence are constantly present even when we do not see them." Loris Malaguzzi (REchild2006)

Over the years we have recognised the importance of the relationship between professional development and research as an ongoing means of creating quality in our education. This journal which is based on the learning and research of both teachers and children is a clear example of linking our theory and our practice.

Working together with groups of teachers allows multiple perspectives and different interpretations to take place. The documentation allows for reflection and revisiting by the teachers and the children who were part of an investigation or by another group of children.

When reading the journal you will have the opportunity to **"listen"** to the words of the children and teachers.

"Listening is not easy. It requires a deep awareness and at the same time a suspension of our judgements and above all our prejudices: it requires openness to change. It demands that we have clearly in mind the value of the unknown and that we are able to overcome the sense of emptiness and precariousness that we experience whenever our certainties are questioned." (Rinaldi,2006.)

We hope you enjoy our 2014 journal "Windows into Children's Thinking"



Daphne Gaddie

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The conventions in this book

A number of styles have been used throughout Bialik College Early Learning Centre Journal 2014 – 'Windows into Children's Thinking' to designate different voices.

Serif Italicised Font

Indicates the voice of a child

Serif Bolded Font

Indicates the voice of an adult



3 Year Old Kinder

The flowers can be friends if they want to. When no one is looking they grow invisible mouths.



“

It was the beginning of the year and we wanted to encourage a curiosity about the children's new kinder environment. My colleagues and I had a love of the outdoors and we planned to have regular visits to the kitchen garden as well as the kinder garden. The children were eager to observe and comment on what had changed since their last visit.”

The pumpkin was green when we saw it. Now it has turned orange and is much bigger.

See those flowers. They weren't here. Now there are bees and orange petals
All the passion fruit has gone. Where are they?

Observing these children noticing subtle changes in the environment made us think about how the children could think more deeply about the changes they were seeing. Our intent was to look at the growth and change of plants in the kitchen garden and to connect it to plant growth in our classroom and playground.

At the same time our intent was to broaden the children's discoveries about growth in as many ways as possible. This then provided us with a springboard for observing the growth of bulbs and seeds and developing theories about what was happening and why.

Before we planted bulbs we questioned the children as to what may happen when they were put in the soil.

It looks a bit like an onion

No, maybe it will grow into a carrot.



Fig. 1

It has skin. Why does it look like that?

Maybe it's not going to grow

The children recorded their observations and theories by drawing and painting as the beans and bulbs grew. They had also collected leaves from the garden and the children were curious about all the different colours on the leaves. The children looked closely at the different shapes and the lines on the leaves. When the children were drawing the leaves one child commented, *we need to put some colour on the leaf and to make the lines.*

What do you think these points may be?

What shape do they look like to you?

Can you see any other shapes on the plant?

What do you think they might be?



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The children also shared stories of their vegetable gardens at home;

When it gets cold in winter I cover them (the plants) with a blanket

I picked some tomatoes in my Buba's garden and I share them and eat them

The grapes grow on a little tree and just hang

I've got a scarecrow to scare the birds away because we have lots of seeds

During a pedagogical meeting with my colleagues they commented; "The knowledge and opportunities the children have experienced are very literal. Have you thought about connecting to the children's sense of imagination with growth?" and "have you connected growth to the children's own growth?"

On reflection, we had taken a very literal path in our investigation. The children had commented and made theories about what was happening and what they could actually see;

I can see green. It's coming out of the bean

The bean is coming out because it is soaking the water

We were excited about this new focus but challenged by how it would unfold in the classroom and how the children's interest and imagination would be fostered.

"Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living. It's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope." (Dr. Seuss')

We began asking the children to think about what it might feel like to step inside an avocado seed growing in water, a plant growing in our vegetable garden or a bean plant that we had grown from seeds. The children enjoyed this new 'storytelling'. One child connected how she was feeling to a previous discussion that we had about families.

I am the plant. I feel good because I like sitting in the soil with the other plants. They are my family.

I am the avocado seed. I am a circle. I like the colour of the water. The water is so smooth. I can feel the water on me.

I like being a bean plant because I like to be in the soil. I like my leaves.

I am the green plant. I like to be with the other green ones (leaves). I like to be in the dirt because it's very fluffy and very soft.



Fig. 4

At the same time we read the book 'My First Root Children'² which personifies the flowers and their growth into children, coming from under the ground to the world above.

We believe that young children have the ability to humanize objects. This had come up in our conversations where one child had spoken about covering the plants with a blanket when it gets cold and another had told us, *the children (plants) are cold under the ground*. This surprised us and challenged our thinking.

The children seemed to make connections that adults may have not considered. Miri, my colleague, had been teaching the children about families, and she had been using Hebrew words to describe who the different members of a family might be. One child had connected her learning about the family in Hebrew to the family she felt the leaves represented around the plant that she had 'stepped inside.'

Another child connected their growth to the bean plants' growth. She held the ribbon we had measured her with and told us, *I am bigger than the beans. They come up to here (knees) and my string goes up to here (her head)*

We were also surprised by the child who 'stepped' into the role of the water in the jar. He didn't want to be any of the things growing and related more to the water. *I am the water. I am dirty. I like the avocado seed in me.*

Now we have encouraged the children to record their imagination through the graphic languages.

Together with Helene Oberman, our Art Educator, we met with small groups of children who were taken back to the kitchen garden to observe the flowers and plants growing there. Whilst in the environment, we revisited the children's conversations and posed further questions.

"Do you think the flowers are friends?"

"How do you know this?"

The children were then brought back to the studio and were given the opportunity to use clay to represent their thoughts. The responses varied amongst the different groups.

The flowers can be friends if they want to. When no one is looking they grow invisible mouths. They talk in a funny way if someone is watching them, like a gardener.

These ones are friends. One is the same because it has seeds like this one. This one is not the same so it is not a friend.



Fig. 5

They make friends when they join together. They are not friends when they are not the same colour. They make each other happy when they are joined together. They can't be friends because they are not matching. But these two flowers are friends even though one is bigger and one is smaller. They have the same colour at the bottom of the stick so they can be friends.

I think the flowers can say 'hello'.

They are friends because they are next to each other.

The red ones are friends and the white ones are friends. But the red and the white flowers are not friends together.

One group's interest moved from the friendship between the flowers to the friendship that flowers have with bees.

This is a flower who talks and has eyes and it has a face. I made its mouth. Maybe the flowers can talk about the bees?

No, they are all talking if they are the same or different.

The baby bees are with the mummy queen. The bee will say the bees want honey and she will go. They are sharing the flower because sharing is caring. If the bees don't share they will tell the mummy bee and that's not okay.

As we continue to listen to the children we are noticing that whilst imagination is at play here, there is also a connection with friendship and community that is very real and happening on a number of levels.

Whilst the children are making connections as to how and why the bees and flowers are friends, they are also forming connections and ideas about what is friendship between themselves whilst developing a relationship with the clay.

As the children continue to grow and develop as a community in their next year of kindergarten, and they share their imagination and thoughts with each other, we will continue to listen to their wonderings about communities, relationships and flowers.

References

1. Theodor Seuss Geisel aka Dr. Seuss 1904-1991 www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/d/dr_seuss.html
2. Von Olfers, S. *The Root Children*. Floris Books, 2012

Figures

Fig. 1 Visiting our kitchen garden.

Fig. 2&3 The children recording their observations and theories of growth.

Fig. 4 'Stepping inside' different plants

Fig. 5 The flowers are friends when they are joined together

Fig. 6 Using clay to represent thoughts about bees and flowers



Fig. 6

Because it is me...



Fig. 1

“

When we look at a child, through the eyes of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, we know what we see. We see a child who is competent and capable, resilient and resourceful. We see a child that has the ability to express themselves through one hundred languages and one hundred more as cited by Loris Malaguzzi in his poem “The Hundred Languages” (Edwards.C, Gandini.L, &Forman.G, 2012.p.2)¹. We also see a child who is a citizen of the world. What does this mean to the child? What does the child see? What do they identify as their own original traits? For this child, what does it mean to be “me”? (Fig. 1)”

When a child looks in the mirror and is asked to draw what they see the responses are varied. Some children do not even see themselves. (Fig. 2)



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

I see a sparkling light.

Others see “me”.

This is me.

When asked “**What is “me”?**”

I have a long nose. I forgot my ears, hair. It looks funny, hey? I have dots. They are just me.

Loris Malaguzzi’s statement of “me-ness” of a child refers to a child constructing their own identity. **“He gives himself a face, a body, gestures, movement, speech, thought, feelings.”** (Jackson Nakazawa, D 2003)²

One line here and one line there and then an eye and mouth there.

The child sees themselves and represents it on paper.

The children were invited to the studio in random small groups of four; a mirror was supplied to support their observation skills. They looked in the mirror.

What did they see?

My arms, and my face and my chest.

“What is your face?”

Your eyes, and you can see and talk and you have hair.

“Self- portraits are windows into the children’s identity. Their details tell us how children see themselves and what they choose to emphasise in their drawings about themselves.” (Pelo, A. 2007 p.95)³.

Malaguzzi continues with the child’s concept of “me-ness” **“Our child’s most sought after goal is to recognise himself or herself in others and to see parts of himself on the world around them”.** (Jackson Nakazawa, D 2003)⁴

The children were presented with a collection of cut out features and asked to construct their own self portrait. The facial features were eyes, ears, noses, mouths all from their class peers. Would they look for their own features or would any features do?



Fig. 4

One group looked in the mirror and drew themselves; they randomly selected eyes, noses and mouths to construct their own image. (Fig. 3)

Look how much hair I have on me. I want to use a bit of me and of Alex, of Zabi and Millie as well.

Their images were a collection of the parts of the world around them, a collection of parts from their peers but they still identified themselves in the image they had created.

My own photo. I made it. It is a puzzle. I need a chin, my nose.

Another group of children came to the studio and worked in a completely different manner.

I need my eyes. Where are my eyes?

The child searched through the features, she rechecked her image in the mirror. (Fig. 4)

That looks like my ear.

She selected an ear not knowing that all the children had not been included in the pile of cut-out features. She still constructed her own face with her peers’ features but was certain it was her.

I can see me.

Do the children see their individuality in their features, in their versions of “me”? Do they see themselves and a collection of parts of others as Malaguzzi believes? Are we all the same or are we different?

We read the book “The skin you live in”, written by Michael Tyler. The book discusses the similarities and differences in our skin. It also celebrates that even though we are different we are all unique and important. The concluding line in the book is **“We are special and different and just the same too.”**⁵

Not long after the children had read the book a lunchtime discussion was overheard.

We don’t have the same hair. Look my hands are the same colour as yours.



The children were actually holding their hands next to each other and comparing the colour of their skin, they were making connections between themselves and their peers and also viewing their differences. The children were demonstrating their listening abilities, and showing an understanding of being open to differences and recognising the value of others' interpretations and points of view. (Edwards.C, Gandini.L, &Forman.G.)⁶

To look deeper into the children's' own concept of identity the items that were initially in the studio were added to. We added to the collection with items from our 'Centre of Hidden Treasures' (Recycle Centre in the ELC). The items had no identity as single pieces; they included keys, bolts, pieces of wood and plastic. Would the children put these together and make meaning? Would they identify themselves in the inanimate objects? (Fig. 5)

I see all sorts of things to look at.

I gotta use this one for my chin.

The keys are for my arms.

I am going to put this ordinary thing on my head.

When asked why they used certain items the children responded with:

These are my hands with fingers, my legs and my toes.

My tummy, my ears, my hair.

These are all the things I have on me.

Another response was:

Because this is me.

The children identified themselves in these objects; they had created connections between the pieces and with themselves. They had created another version of "me". (Fig. 6)

The children were also asked to document their constructed self portraits; they did this by drawing and then painting them with watercolours. Children deepen their understanding of a concept or theme when asked to use more than one representational media

to document their work. When they each finished their drawings the children were asked to use their words to describe what they had drawn. The verbal medium allows the children to access a free range of thought and look beyond the constraints of the physical construction of their work. (Katz, L & Cesarone, B 1995).⁷ (Fig. 7)

My painting is colour. A nose and a face. These are colours.

Look at my face, that's my nose and eyes and mouth. That's swirls because I got them on the picture. Mountains there because I got them on my picture.

What have we learnt about the child through this journey of documenting themselves in various forms of self portraits? We have learnt the child sees themselves in each other and that they see themselves in the world around them. They can see their differences and their similarities with no prejudice. What have they discovered about themselves? They have looked closely at themselves, they have begun to discover their own evolving identity.

"A self-portrait is an intimate, bold declaration of identity. In her self portrait, a child offers herself as both subject and artist. When we look at her self portrait, we see a child as she sees herself." (Pelo, A. 2007.)⁸

References

1. Edwards, C, Gandini, L & Forman G (Eds) 2012, *The Hundred Languages of Children*. Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA.
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7. Katz, L.G & Cesarone, B (eds). 1995, *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia Approach*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Urbana, IL.p 37,42
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Nature is when you see different things outside



“

Nature inspires creativity in a child by demanding visualisation and full use of the senses.” (Louv, R)¹

The natural environment is an integral part of one's life. Nature is close to my heart especially during the autumn season. I love the vibrant colours of autumn. I strongly believe that when we bring plants into buildings it makes our internal space come alive. It gives a sense of life. In today's world are we drifting away from nature? Do we give time to see the beauty of nature, to feel the fresh air touching our cheeks or even to sit under the shade of a tree? Do we experience nature through all the senses? With these thoughts in mind we asked ourselves how this group of children are connected to nature. In what way does the natural environment impact on their daily lives?

Claire Warden states **“If we really want children to thrive, we need to let their connection to nature nurture them”**².

Aristotle wrote that **“In all things of nature there is something of the marvellous.”**³

We went back to school after the Term One break, the children began to observe three separate plants with a magnifying glass. These plants had been left in water at the end of first term. The leaves from two of the plants that had no roots were brown and curled up but the third plant which had a root was growing with a lot of new leaves. The children did not seem to make any connection between the root and the growth of the plant.

We wondered why. (Fig. 1&2)

It almost looks like a vine

A vine is something thin and long and it keeps growing

The leaves are dying because they are brown and curly

The leaves are green that means they are not dead

The leaves that drink water stayed green



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 4



Fig. 3

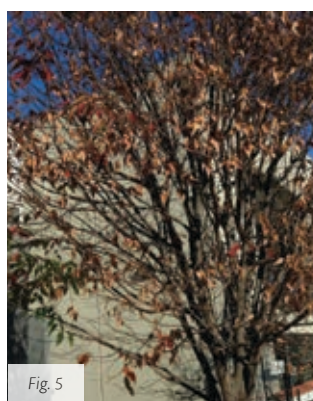


Fig. 5

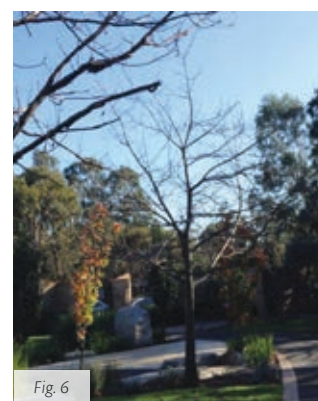


Fig. 6

These were the children's observations from the plants we had inside our class room. But what would be their hypothesis for the natural environment? We began our first walk to explore and investigate the natural environment at Bialik. We posed questions to the children as to what they thought they might see. (Fig. 3&4)

We will see autumn, different colour leaves – red, yellow, orange and brown, purple, birds' nests on the trees. We encouraged the children to observe colours in the natural environment. Our experience tells us that children are innately connected to nature from birth. As they grow older we question how much they use their senses to observe and feel nature in their environment? These nature walks continued on a weekly basis and the children began to notice the differences in nature. Some trees were losing their leaves. The time came when winter had set in and there were hardly any leaves left on these trees. (Fig. 5&6)

Some trees are always green and they are called evergreen trees and some trees lose their leaves when it is autumn and they are called deciduous.

The trees look sad. They don't have any leaves.

They must be cold because they lost their leaves.

We saw a bird picking up a shiny thing and took it to its nest.

The birds make their nest up on the tree.

They use the twig and straw and lots of nice things.

The birds make their nest up on the trees because they fly up high.

The nests are camouflaged. When they are camouflaged they are hard to see because they look like a tree.

We cannot see any nest.

The children were disappointed that they did not see a nest as they had predicted. One of the children brought a nest from home to share with the class. At the same time our teacher librarian heard about the children's interest and she brought us different types of nests that she had collected over the years, together with many interesting books about birds and their eggs. These resources provoked further questions from the children. *How did the bird put a ribbon in the nest? Will the bird be looking for its nest? How long does it take them to make a nest?* The children decided they would create nest using a range of materials as they were intrigued by the structure of the nest. (Fig. 7–9)

At the same time some of the leaves that we had collected became curled up and had dried out after a few days losing their shape and colour.

We should put them under some heavy things so they will stay straight.

We can stick them up with a sticky tape.

We can press them in clay so they won't curl up. (Fig. 9&10)

The children tested their theories. The leaves that were pressed in a flower press were nice and straight. They had also put some leaves under heavy books and these remained straight too. The leaves that

had been stuck down with sticky tape still curled up but some of the leaves that were pressed on clay stayed flat, some bubbled up and others did not stick down at all. The children shared new theories:

The clay dried out that's why the leaves popped out.

The clay dried out and the leaves got stuck in it.

We did not stick the leaf hard enough.

Clay has to be bigger than the leaf.

We need to make clay flat.

Another collection of leaves of different shapes, sizes and colours were offered to the children for exploration and sorting. We wondered on what basis the children would categorise them. (Fig. 11&12)

The shape has to be the same

They are same shape but not same colour

The lines in the middle are there so the leaf can stay together

This is the front and this is the back of the leaf

These don't have lines but they are still together (succulent)

They are thin and look like a stick

The thick leaves are soft

The children had decided that in autumn different leaves change colour at different times and to determine if they are from the same tree we need to look at the shape and not the colour.

After we had been on a few nature walks we asked the children what they liked about nature.

I like nature because nature is when you see different things outside

I like different colour leaves that shines in the sun

I like to play in the grass and I like running outside

I like looking at leaves with my friends

I like running around the trees

I like nature because the sun makes me warm

Inside the class room it's not nature. Because nature is outside.

During our nature walks we began to notice that the children were becoming more aware of their natural surroundings and were asking questions. Does the power of nature inspire children's thinking and wondering?

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1. Louv, R (2008) Last Child in the Woods (p 7) Algonquin Books
2. Warden, C. 2007. Nurture Through Nature. Mindstretchers Ltd. UK
3. Aristotle – <http://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/nature/Definition>

Figures:

Fig. 1 Observing the plants

Fig. 2 Looking at the first and only root

Fig. 3 Collecting autumn leaves

Fig. 4 Looking around different trees

Fig. 5 Leaves drying out in autumn

Fig. 6 Trees losing leaves in winter

Fig. 7 Making nests with wool

Fig. 8 Using clay to make nest

Fig. 9 Looking at display of nests

Fig. 10 Pressing leaves in clay

Fig. 11 Sorting leaves

Fig. 12 Making patterns with leaves



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

4 Year Old Kinder



Israel is Hebrewish!



“
How do children identify with and connect with a country they have never visited?”
”

It's fair to say that out of the nineteen children in Kinder 4J, very few have actually ever visited Israel. Yet, we see them forming a strong connection with this country every day.

According to Loris Malaguzzi, “...a child's self-identity is constructed out of relationships formed with people and things in the environment.”¹

Based on this theory, we reflected on our environment within the school and beyond, including the daily rituals and tasks.

Many children in our class have family connections in Israel. We have many Israeli visitors and shlichim (Israeli emissaries that visit Australia and other diaspora countries, creating tailor made programmes for specific communities' needs to increase Jewish awareness, knowledge and pride). My colleague and I have strong connections with Israel, one of us having been born there and the other having lived in the country. We take a bilingual approach which we believe also infuses strong connections. “**Having a strong sense of their own cultural history and the traditions associated with it helps children build a positive cultural identity for themselves.**”²

In one of our discussions with the group we asked the children what Israel means to them.

Israel is Hebrewish

We can learn Hebrew, so we don't just have to just learn English

In different countries you learn different languages

You learn how to write the Hebrew letters

We want to learn Hebrew, how to speak to our cousins in Israel

To learn how to do the Israel flag (Fig. 1&2)

We explored the concept of rituals and symbols. As Loris Malaguzzi said, “**Symbols are used by children to acquire culture, grow and communicate. Symbols can be said to be the bearers of culture for a person.**”³

This is no more obvious than in the classroom where the children are highly aware of the various symbols and their significance relating to Israel. During our weekly 'Shabbat walks' through the school grounds, the children have become familiar with the various symbols that reflect our culture and religion. This included the Mezuzot (a scroll mounted on the doorpost, designating the home as Jewish and reminding us of our connection to G-d and our heritage); written Hebrew signs such as the Magen David (Star of David) and the Bialik sculpture of a statue of Chaim Nachman Bialik (a well known and much loved Israeli poet and songwriter after whom our school is named); our biblical garden which



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

includes olives, dates and grape vines; through to our ritual use of Shabbat symbols of Jewish religious practices. (Fig. 3&4)

We asked ourselves how environment is linked to culture. Within our school the children's connection to Israeli culture develops through their experiences which are reinforced through the many chagim (Jewish festivals) we celebrate, including Purim, Yom Ha-atzmaut, Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah, where we discuss how Jewish festivals are celebrated in Israel.

The children have Hebrew names given to them when they are born in addition to their English names. The children's Hebrew names, their shape, their sound and their meaning are used constantly and this is done with great pride. When learning to write their Hebrew names alongside their English names, the children became even more familiar with these symbols and their significance. Names play an important role in Judaism. A child's Hebrew name will uniquely identify them in the Jewish community with many Jewish parents choosing to name their children after a relative, a biblical character whose personalities or stories resonate with them, or using the Hebrew name of items found in nature that illustrate particular character traits. (Fig. 5)

The children are beginning to learn the Hebrew language, and it quickly becomes part of their daily vocabulary. These Hebrew words, songs and music have become an integral part of our daily program and routine. We believe through language, traditions, behaviours, beliefs and values children learn to communicate and understand their world and of their connection with Israel. Language has been a strong link with this group.

We then questioned the other connections children receive from beyond the classroom knowing that many members of our class community hold strong ties to Israel. We invited family members who were born in Israel to share their stories of growing up. Zeide Ittamar, regaled the children with stories of his childhood in Tzfat where there were no cars or buses and so they travelled everywhere on donkeys. Savta Gila told us about growing up in Haifa and how proud she felt to have served in the Israeli navy, having even kept her navy hat all these years. David grew up on a kibbutz and read us his favourite Hebrew



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

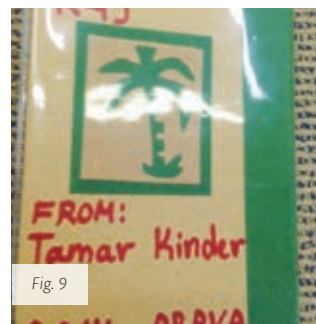


Fig. 9

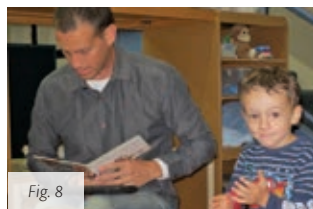


Fig. 8



Fig. 10

childhood story. With the children identifying so strongly with Israel, these stories helped create a further link. (Fig. 6–8)

Our Art educator Helene collaborated with us during this investigation and shared the following insights as to which direction she and the kinder staff would focus on:

Judy and Pazit were very interested in the time I spent in the Arava region of Israel earlier this year in kindergartens. Two of the teachers from Gan Tamar (Tamar Kindergarten) had visited and taught in our kindergartens a few years ago as part of a teacher exchange program.

During the time I assisted in this kinder in Israel, I spoke to the teachers and children about sharing aspects of their kinder in the Arava with the kinder children at Bialik. The children in Gan Tamar were eager to highlight the different areas in their kinder, both their inside and outside environments, through drawing, photos and films clips which also captured their discussions. Together with the teachers and children we created a film using the documentation, which was viewed by both kindergartens there and here at Bialik. Our children were curious and at the same time compared the differences and similarities of our kinder to theirs. Our children noticed that the children's name labels were only in Hebrew. Whilst watching the film they asked, *When do they have morning tea and what food did the children eat?*

The children also wondered why their large outdoor play area was mainly sandy. Some of the trees in the playground were like ours (flowering gum) others were not. *They use pencils and crayons like us...* Our children watched and listened intently as the kinder children spoke in Hebrew with one another in negotiating their play. Our kinder children recognised particular Hebrew words spoken whilst at the same time they commented incidentally about other cues used by the children such as hand gestures, facial expressions or objects/equipment the children were using.

We wanted to continue these connections both with the teachers and the children at this kindergarten.

As this exchange continued our children's discussion now focused on ways of communicating beyond the verbal language. The children posed questions. *Why doesn't everyone speak the same language?*

Whilst Judy and her colleagues pondered about what makes strong connections between countries and peoples, I focused on connections with others who may not speak the same language and yet still make connections. How would this look, what strategies could be used?

The conversations evolved and included many ways of sharing one's thoughts.

There are different countries that people are born in. Then they speak a different language.

If someone comes from Israel to Melbourne why do they speak English and Hebrew too?

We are all in the same world that is how we understand each other. You can't have the same language that's how it is.

We don't have to speak the same language. Different countries have different languages.

There are different worlds. This is the world called Melbourne and one is called Israel. They don't speak the same language.

If you fly to half of the world there you understand where you are or the other half where you need to talk Hebrew.

Some people do speak English.

Yes on the other side of the world.

How about Spanish.

Yes some people in the world speak Spanish.

There are different times in different parts of the world.

You could use your hands to show them you want something.

Or your face could show if you are angry or happy.

You can use your hands to talk.



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

The children's discussions and acknowledgement of the many ways of communicating beyond verbal language gained momentum within the group

The ongoing exchanges with these two kindergartens could also be viewed as action research both for the children and the teachers. Video clips, photos, books, and New Year cards via email were shared and reflected on as to the meaning of what messages the drawings, photographs and dialogue conveyed.

Judy and Pazit shared these with the class.

The children read a book sent by the children and teachers at Gan Tamar. (Fig. 9&10)

We know the names, with the Hebrew letters some children are the same letters, so we can read it

Half their names are Hebrew the other half from our class.

During the latter part of the year we organised another Skype session to celebrated simultaneously Rosh Hashanah (New Year) with our children and the children at Gan Tamar. (Fig. 11)

Judy, Pazit and I felt that the children now viewed this kindergarten as perhaps an extension of their own. Although their contact with the children and teachers at this kinder was not on a daily basis the frequency of exchanges offered great insights into the children's understandings of the world, both physical and perceived values.

When one of our students and his family visited the Gan Tamar kindergarten in the remote Arava region the class were very excited and waited for news of his arrival in Israel, and continued contact on a regular basis until his return. The excitement too of the teachers added to the momentum and anticipation of the students observations whilst he was at the Gan Tamar kinder. (Fig. 12)

This investigation and research traversed to values such as friendship and responsibility. Children began to voice their views about the world and one's care of it.

You can be a friend even though you speak a different language.

We need to look after the world.

Friendship means if someone is sad you need to make them happy. People need help and no one might help them. Responsibility is when you are helping someone it is important.

It doesn't matter what people look like.

We need to have peace. Peace means giving people hope and share.

As Helene mentioned this exchange has also reinforced core values that we uphold.

Through this exchange during the year, as well as our links to the country of Israel and Judaism, we also focused on values such as responsibility, equality and empathy. This continues in our discussions, actions and everyday life in the classroom and beyond.

To answer our original question on what Israel means to them, the children in this group certainly view Israel not just as a country overseas but as a place they can identify with in many ways. This is exemplified by their love for the language, values, symbols and rituals they experience in class every day.

Many of our children and their families would now like to visit Israel and specifically Gan Tamar. The ongoing exchange with this kinder, the children and the teachers has been an authentic opportunity to understand the similarities and differences we share.

Together with our children we have embarked on this journey over the past two years. We wonder how this learning will unfold and grow with the children in the future. Will they maintain this connection? Will it go further and how will we know?

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Connecting our Learning and Learning to Connect

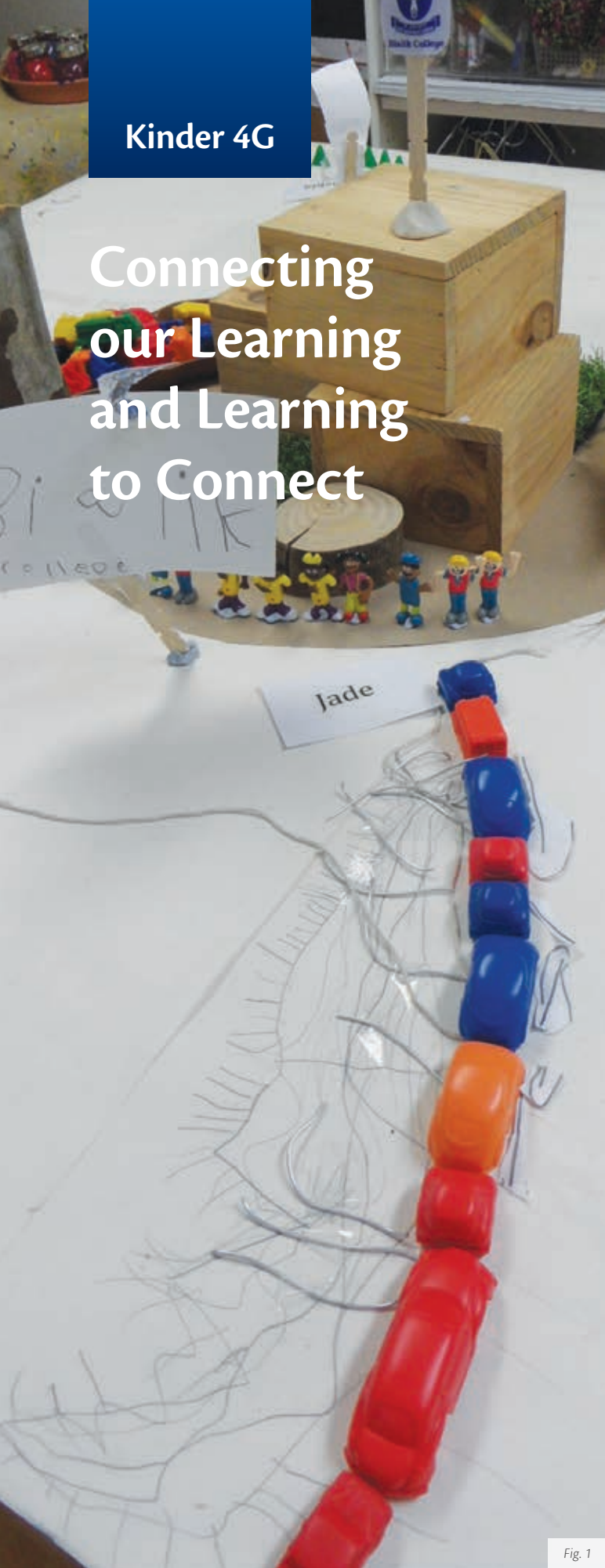


Fig. 1

“

Our investigation honours the desire and need for people to connect and to be connected.” Giamminuti, S 2013.¹

Throughout our first year of kinder a wide range of maps, symbols, signs and graphic marks were shared and exchanged. This year we wanted to revisit with the children their understanding about maps and to explore further how connection between us affects ones' sense of self. We started with the physical connection between home and school. The children used a variety of material to represent their way to school precisely from their memory. (Fig. 1)

What does it mean to map something?

Is it a plan? Is it a connectedness?

Connecting school and home was almost natural for the children as they come and go every day. Therefore to enhance children's belonging to the school community we started to look at the connections within the school, people and the physical environment.

Working in collaboration with teacher Helene, our art educator, we decided to each focus on a particular connection with specific groups both in the classroom studio and in her studio. We planned to reconvene meetings with each other on a regular basis to discuss the data and interactions, both the children's questions and our own.

In this article you will hear the shared voices of both teachers, Helene and myself.

What is a connection?

What does it mean to connect?

Looking at the way children develop relationships with each other within the kindergarten made us wonder how the environment supports and fosters relationships. We decided to pose the same questions in both studios:

“What do you know about the school?”

“Who are the people in the school?”

“How do people get along?”

There are lots of people in the school...

People take care of people...

One person takes care of another person and another person takes care of another person...

People that come to the school have to be part of the school...

Mums and dads need to respect the children in the school that is how they can be part of the school...

People need people...

Our intent at this stage was to focus on the human social side and the physical environment.

In the classroom we read the book 'The Giving Tree' (Silverstein, S 1964)². This for us highlighted the concept of friendships:

“What is a friend?” “What are friends for?” (Fig. 2)

A kind of person you meet...

Friends need to look after each other,

that is how you don't lose them...

At school you make friends...

Friends can be different... (Fig. 3)

Family are your friends..., Friends are to share ideas, imagination, love...

We need to trap our love then we can give it to someone else...

Love stuck in your talking, inside nice words...you need to be nice to your friends...

“The confidence to persevere, to motivate, to believe in oneself and speak out, is all part of the aspect of emotional intelligence. The more ownership children have the more likely they are to persevere due to intrinsic motivation.” (Warden, C 2012)³.

Throughout this investigation we have noticed that the children reflect on their feelings in relation to friendships and relationships. We introduced the 'emotions cards' to the group to foster emotional literacy, followed by the book: **'Have you filled a bucket today?'** (McCloud, C 2012)⁴

When my bucket is full I feel happy...

When you have a bad feeling it makes a hole in your bucket...

To extend children's ideas of friendships and relationships with each other, we provided an opportunity to represent how things can connect: objects, space, and people. We revisited children's drawings representing their perspectives of friendships. We offered clay to transfer their views into the new material. We focused on their first forays into making a resemblance of themselves. Helene would later revisit their representations. (Fig. 4&5)

Mapping Space and place in the large studio with Teacher Helene.

In the exhibition 'Melbourne Now' this year, one of the artists presented the viewers with drawing easels and invited them to **'Show us your world'**⁵

We asked;

“What does a place, a space tell us?”

“What is our relationship to a space?”

The world means you live in a place...

I live in a faraway land in flower garden...

Your world is near your neighbour's house...

I went to a place in England, far away and today I am going here...



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Previously the children had explored literal maps in different shapes and sizes. Gali and I discussed the developing of the idea of mapping, and asked ourselves does the concept of mapping as a tool include to forecast or plan one's direction in life? Or is it about internalising decision making and acknowledging different points of view? Using several picture storybooks as provocations, the children came together and we began the discussion.

At this point it is important to clarify the concept of groups of children. Gali and I discussed in great detail the interests of the children and their personalities – who made up the groups?

In **'My Map Book'** (Fanelli, S 2006)⁶, a collection of imaginary illustrative picture maps of unexpected places included: Map of my day, Map of my tummy, Map of my bedroom... these whimsical and humorous illustrations generated discussions between the concept of a map and reference to clues about someone or some place. The children's discussions led to the redrawing of their place/home in relation to the school and other significant places they wanted to include. From their drawings the link between place and significant people was inextricable. This was also illustrated in the book **'My Place'** (Wheatley, N. & Rawlins, D. 2008)⁷ with the concept of place and time; illustrated life and place in Australia in historical fiction through children's eyes. The connection of family to place was again highlighted. A grandparents place, as well as their own home, was now included in a drawing as was the child's emphasis on a particular view one could see from this place. *You can see the trees of Bialik from my grandparents' house.* Gali and I decided to delve further into what spaces were important to the children and what they saw. What were those spaces that the children associated with their environment? We wanted to explore the connections the children made with the Bialik community. The relationships between people to people and people to place. Could one have one without the other?

The children were given iPads to record answers to the question:

"What do you think you know about Bialik College?"

In small groups they went off exploring. What was photographed was not the buildings but rather spaces and perspectives that were captured by the children; as they crouched down to observe a construction of blocks, a view through a reflection into an atrium of luscious growing plants around a pond, the reflections of the panelling of the dining room floor and the keys of a piano in the dining room. The children appeared to take on the challenge to find those places not yet discovered, so small or ever changing that they were able to capture on film. In some respects these were objects or spaces to some, which may be considered the everyday mundane and not worthy of another glance for others.

"The network of relationships and communication... and by learning together and exchanging points of views and ideas... these connections contribute to creating an awareness of the value of relationships and a pleasant aesthetic sense." (Edwards, C. Gandini, L & Forman, G. 2012)⁸

When we have lots of ideas together everything looks better...

Revisiting relationships with others.

Gali had previously discussed how the children viewed themselves using clay so we now explored, in the large studio, who made up the Bialik community, and what were their roles and interactions within it.

During initial discussions children spoke about families and related this also to the neighbourhoods and communities in which they lived.

How did children perceive their relationships within their neighbourhood community and their relationships within the Bialik community? The children again used iPads to photograph who they saw in the ELC at different times of the day to collect their data. The major focus of discussion was the involvement of both their immediate and extended family who either came to Bialik regularly when bringing them to or collecting them after kinder or special visits by grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins as well as their teachers, specialist teachers, the cook, the head of the ELC and the principal. As conversations flowed and debate ensued about who and what their role was, the children began to shape in clay those who they viewed as an integral part of the community. The continual focus on relationships and strategies of connectedness with the other was observed. Children lent skills to one another and this was in part our purpose of including some children who had been part of one group who then mentored the next. Representing themselves in clay, imaginary, fantasy and real, the children continued to look deeper, observing details and looking for clues. (Fig. 6&7)

The school magazine was also a source of curiosity for the children, as they opened the first page and noticed that it was covered with names. Whose names were they and why? Some of the children discovered their names and encouraged others to find theirs. As



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

they looked at each page they discovered photos of themselves from their first year of kinder, an older sibling photographed in a sporting team or drama performance, photos of their teachers, messages from the principal and other staff. This magazine was *the book about the Bialik community*.

The magazine further emphasised for them an awareness of the larger school community and the connections and interconnections between each other, local and broader school communities.

The concept of who is part of our community and what connections we make have travelled through the year through both the support of Gali and myself.

The latest drawings of the children depicting 'our community' have shown a growth in who they know, and how they are linked together in some way as well as how and where they see these links in the school environment. We also observed with this knowledge a greater degree of detail and planning in their drawings as they recorded their observations and prior knowledge and understandings. (Fig. 8)

School is where we become like one big family...

Exploring these ideas with the children in parallel spaces including the larger studio with Helene and the classroom studio with myself, revealed interesting point of views. The children started to make connections between the two strands previously discussed; the human and the physical. We decided to swap over the focus between both studios and to look at *A Place that does matter to the children* a phrase coined by one of the children. As a whole class, the children contributed towards a shared drawing of our kindergarten space as they perceived it. A smaller group of children investigated further in the studio:

The studio is important...

That is where WE get to work together...

That is where my brain reaches my mind...

My mind gives my brain ideas and then it goes away, it only comes back when it has more ideas...

Sharing, communicating, exchanging ideas, problem solving and collaborating among the children created 'a studio' within the studio. (Fig. 9)

The children's strong sense of connectedness to the studio space made us wonder what makes this space 'the' place of thinking for this group of children.

What is a studio space and what is its purpose?

Is it the size of the space?

Is it the children-teacher ratio?

Is it the sitting around a large table?

Or is it the time element given for revisiting their thinking and the opportunities for learning to connect and connect the learning?

Our research thus far with regards to making connections between the strands of human and physical environments still challenges us.

Together we continue to wonder what the connections are we make and how do these connections evolve?



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Working with Helene as a cohesive team has been a key resource for this meaningful and incomplete research. However, vast acknowledgement must be given to the children who have continued to shape this journey; "... educators must be able to catch the ball that children throw us, and toss it back to them in a way that makes them want to continue the game with us..." (Filippini, C 2012)⁹

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Capturing the imagination, creativity and the brain...



“

This investigation needs to start off on a personal note.”

I have often been told that I am “so creative.” This made me wonder what people saying this to me actually meant.

Am I a painter, a good writer, a great storyteller, a musician? Do I have an aesthetic pleasing to others or is it the way I dress? Do I use materials in a particular way as a means to express myself? Why do people say this to me?

So I began to research what creativity means.

Creative people are curious, flexible, persistent and independent with a tremendous spirit of adventure and a love of play.”

(Henri Matisse)¹

We work in an environment that is constantly changing and evolving. The children’s way of thinking and way of learning and playing is unique to them and it has always fascinated me to the point where we continually ask about the child; what are you thinking?, how did you reach that point in your play?, what questions did you pose to your peers?, what discussions take place whilst you are working and creating?, what makes you say that?

We realize that the only way to learn and understand how children think, is when we really listen to them and support them in their endeavors.

The “business” of child’s play appears to have its own rules and boundaries. Their creativeness in developing play at times seems so pure and unconditional and it appears that within their own boundaries and rules of their play there is a huge potential for creativity.

“The children express themselves in a multitude of ways, traditional and untraditional. When given the opportunity to express themselves through many vehicles – poetic languages of arts and science and simultaneously being in the company of those who ‘listen’ through these non-typical communications, great understandings and empathy are developed.”

(Malaguzzi, L. 1998)² (Fig. 1–4)

Psychiatrist and researcher Nancy Andreasen was interested in the idea of a creative personality type. She identified traits common to highly creative people. Some of these include: being open to experiences with a tolerance for ambiguity and unanswered questions, a willingness to have adventures and explore, a sense of playfulness, curiosity, persistence – this is necessary because of the repeated knockbacks “creatives” inevitably encounter thanks to pushing limits and seeing things in new ways.

On reading this I realised that the children show evidence of almost all these traits. Did this mean that all the children in this group were “creative”?

“Education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society...but for me...



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

education means making creators...You have to make inventors, innovators, not conformists.” (Andreasen, N. 2005)³

Not all children were creative in this particular sense, but what was evident was that children at this age are highly creative in so many different ways. This was very exciting. We decided to observe and listen whilst the children were at play, to get a sense of their thinking, and to try and determine from where the creative inspiration or storyline was emanating.

We observed them using manipulative toys, drawing, discussing and working together in different parts of the school. (Fig. 5&6)

Was it about the children thinking with their hands, manipulating materials and then a storyline developed or did the creativity unfold whilst manipulating the materials? How was their thinking articulated? What “language” was being used? (Fig. 7&8)

We observed that the more the materials were available together with uninterrupted spaces of time the richer and more complex the play became. The materials were used more creatively and in a way that was not prescribed. Stories began to develop along with the manipulation of certain materials. This added another layer to their creative thinking.

“I define creativity as the entire process by which ideas are generated, developed and transformed into value. It comprises what people commonly mean by innovation and entrepreneurship.” (Piaget, J (1990)⁴

Creativity is more than a product – it is a process. An interesting painting or a thought provoking comment may be examples of creative work but the decisions people make as they paint, sculpt, write, speak, play and think are at the core of the creative process (Fig. 9&10)

Creative people are uneasy about the status quo: they live on the edge of their competence. They place themselves in situations where they don't know what is going to happen. They accept confusion, uncertainty, and the higher risks of failure, as part of the process.⁵

This was evident whilst observing most of the children.

I wonder what will happen if I mix green on red.

Look at mine...it is mixing all together

No it is not, it will rip if it is too wet. (Fig. 11&12)

This made me wonder even further about the absolute creativity of the young child. How often does the child actually place



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

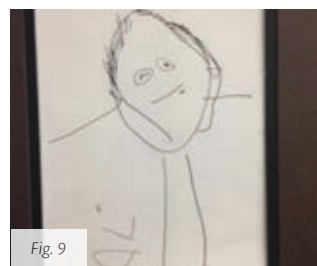


Fig. 9

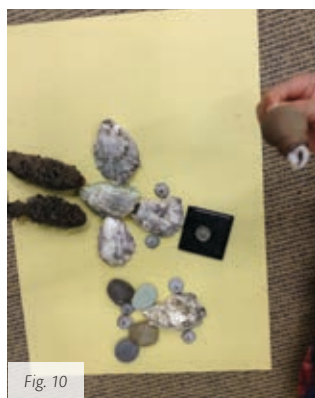


Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

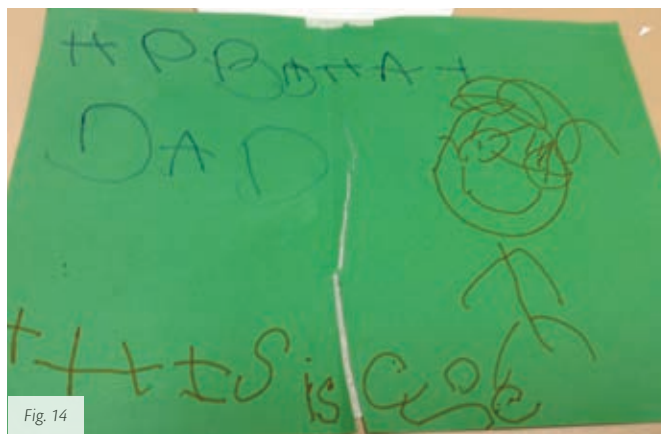


Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

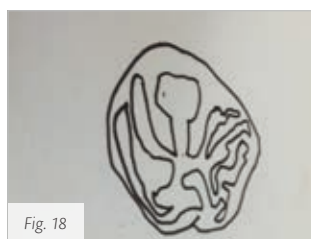


Fig. 18

themselves in situations where they don't know what is going to happen? They openly accept confusion and uncertainty and are prepared to theorise about the possibilities. (Fig. 13&14)

Alongside this creative flow it was evident that there was always a story to accompany the creative play. Children devour words and stories and the literal component of creativity becomes evident in the desire to tell a story, and stories develop alongside the manipulation of certain materials.

Mmmmm...shloo shloo...but the way...it is the face it is using these zappers in its' eyes...but sometimes it gets back up...it only comes in for a minute...well it rockets through the air...pshoo...but when it sees it watch out... chmm...he eats the stem...then he throws it away... and it is also an alien...these two are aliens too...see...what is an alien?...it is something that freaks you out in the planet...and these guys...this guy lives on Planet Archargarus...tsh...stsh tshs...watch out... (Fig. 15)

Learning and creating is not black and white. The journey each child takes is an individual one, but within a group. As the educators in the room we understand where each child is at, their individual strengths and difference.

It is also about trust. We have the same group of children for two years and over this period of time each individual is acknowledged for who they are. They have time to develop a trusting and honest relationship, and when this happens creativity and true learning experiences are able to develop and flourish.

“We believe the brain is not imprisoned by genes, that thought can be modified in as much as it interacts with the environment and that intelligence is the result of the synergetic cooperation of various parts of the brain.” (Perkins, David. 1981)⁶

Being creative is like making stuff.

It is like you are good at creating things

It can also mean that you are good at using materials

Like my laser gun. It took me a long time to figure out how to build it.

You can create something like a boat or a robot.

Today I will make, make, make all day.

When children revise their methods of construction, especially if the construction collapses or is not successful, they often engage in a two step thought process called “divergent thinking”. First the child uses prior knowledge and then generates new ideas. Divergent thinking is key to problem solving and is the backbone of creativity. All possibilities are imagined and considered.

“We all have creative potential,” according to Mark Runco, Ph.D., director of the University of Georgia's Centre for Creativity.⁷

Children in a trusted secure environment feel most free to play, create and take risks. Creativity focuses on the process of forming original ideas through exploration and discovery. Creativity develops from their experiences with the process rather than a finished product. Creativity is about thinking, exploring, discovering and imagining. (Fig. 16&17)

Andreasen talks about thinking in a free and uncensored way where thought just comes to the surface. In our observations with the children in this group we feel that this is a natural state for them, which also allows them the opportunity to notice and verbalise details that many adults might not necessarily notice. The ability to observe and describe details certainly fosters creativity.

There is a Ninja that has 4 swords and he is trying to fight Batman when he is upside down.

The transformer is trying to get all the people in the world to eat them. He is trying to get the Ninjas and the Superheroes to fight him so that he can't eat them...

Limb, by studying the way jazz musicians played, was able to shed light on how the creative activity in the brain emerges. He noticed a switching off of areas of the brain that were linked to self-monitoring and inhibition, while the regions that let self-expression flow were activated. This process of improvisation deactivated “the self-censoring in the brain so they could generate novel ideas without restrictions.”⁸

“Essentially a musician shuts down his inhibitions and lets his inner voice shine through.” (Limb, C.)⁹

We felt that this was what we were observing with the children. The young child displays the lack of inhibition in their play. Their creative ideas flow, similar to that of the jazz musician. Limb's study offers important insights to consider when nurturing creativity in both children and adults.

“Art may be one of the best ways to train the brain to have this kind of creative fluency”(Limb, C.)¹⁰

According to Limb creating is core to the human experience. Creativity may be hardwired into our brains- we just need to encourage it along the way.

When you have a thought it comes from your brain, in your head, in the middle, your whole brain. (Fig. 18)

There are pipes, plastic pipes. They send messages down to all parts of your body. (Fig. 19)

You use yourself to get the thoughts from your brain. Your brain tells you how to play with your friends. (Fig. 20)

We had many different discussions about our thoughts, and how we could share them through drawings.

During these discussions the “brain” was a constant topic, as well as “making stuff.”

It seemed as if the children connected making things in kinder to the ability to use one’s brain. After much debate and discussion the word “creative” was used. Some children had their own theories about creativity and some had no idea what it meant.

What does creative mean?

It means you need to make stuff and think about what you make.

When you make things you get an idea.

No, creative means you can cook something.

It could be anything, constructing, listening.

Creative is all about inventing stuff.

You can be creative in everything.

I then showed the children a painting done by Picasso, the Weeping Woman. I mentioned that he was a creative genius.

Well, Albert Einstein was a creative genius.

What makes you say that?

Well he discovered neurons and you can't actually see them but he knew they were real.

We understand that children are instinctively creative. They have an innate desire to make, and when given the time and support their ability to make, create, reuse and recreate becomes very evident.

Do I still wonder why as an adult I am often told “you are so creative”? The answer is yes, but maybe I was given the opportunities as a child to use materials with no prescribed reference, so the process was the aim, and I am now able to share my love of “creativity” with the people I work with.

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Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Prep

What does Responsibility Look Like?



“

This year, together with the students, we are investigating the understanding ‘Who am I’ and ‘Who am I in relation to the group’. Students started the year by developing their understanding of themselves.”

They wrote and developed books about themselves. These books were used to develop their understanding of themselves and others. They drew self-portraits and drew each other. They spent time interviewing each other in order to get to know each other better.

The students investigated the concept of a group and what makes them a group. They began to explore the notion that members of a group often have similar values.

“What is a group?”

A family

A soccer team

A class

What makes them a group?

They stick together

They pass the ball together in the sporting groups

They don't run away without each other

Do they value the same things?

At my ballet group we all try our best and listen to the teacher

Our soccer team value playing fair and having fun

We then looked at ourselves within our Bialik community. We began to take a closer look at our school values and together discussed what these values meant to each of us. At Bialik we foster five main values “Students and staff are encouraged to be ‘menschen’ and demonstrate respect, empathy, integrity, perseverance and responsibility in relationships with each other.” (Fig. 1&2)

The children discussed what the different values meant to them.

“What is respect?”

Not hurting

Respect your teachers

Respect your pet

Respect your friends

A child in the class became very interested in the idea of responsibility following our initial discussions. She came to school very excited one day because her mother had given her more



Fig. 1

responsibility at home. The children wanted to discuss what responsibility meant to them further.

“What is responsibility?”

Do what you are meant to do

Taking care of other people

Doing something without the teacher telling you what to do

The children drew what responsibility looked like to them. (Fig. 2&3)

Getting out of the bath by myself (Fig. 4)

Watering my garden

Taking the chalk upstairs

Taking a just right book

Looking after my friends when they are upset



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The drawings show the children taking responsibility for themselves, their property and others. (Fig. 5)

After further discussion students became more aware that they had responsibilities at home as well as at school.

I am responsible for some things at home and I push the chairs in at school

I also have to pack up at home

We need to look after each other at home



Fig. 4

We decided to further investigate this idea. We wanted to know other responsibilities the children had at home and how important responsibility was to our families. We had recently been talking about different modes of data collection and the students decided a survey would be the best way. The children answered the survey independently. (Fig. 6)

We discovered that most children wanted more responsibility at home.

I feel proud and then we mightn't need cleaners at our house

After exploring these results the children started reflecting that they were capable of more responsibility at home. These discussions heightened their awareness that they were capable and what they do matters to themselves and to others.

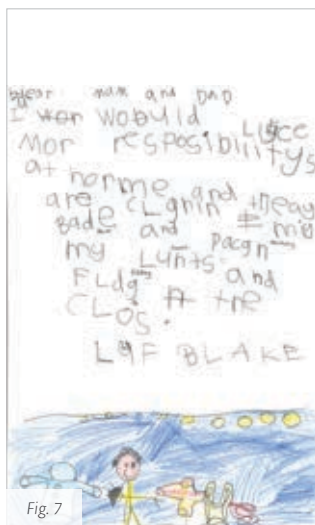
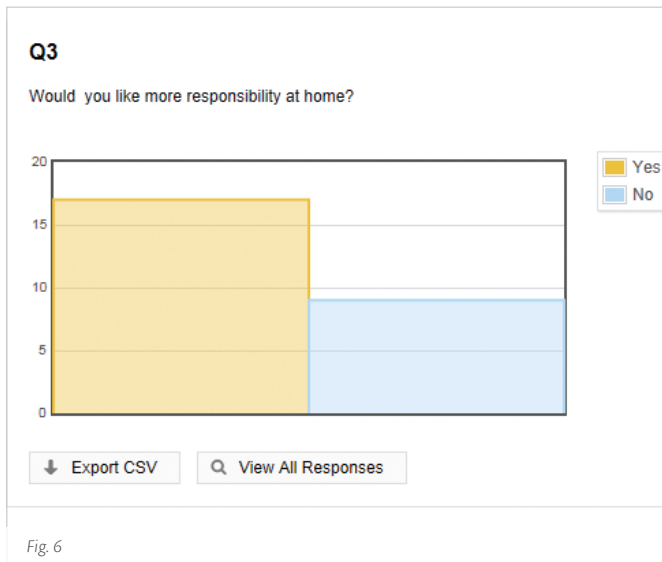


Fig. 5

Cadwell relates, **“Children are strong, rich and capable. All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, interest in constructing their learning negotiating with everything their environment brings to them.”** Furthermore Cadwell suggests **“Children who are seen as capable and competent, individuals with unique potential will always succeed at a higher level than those who are viewed in a limited or negative capacity”¹**

This realisation amongst the children inspired more children to seek out other things that they could do at home and they decided to write letters to their parents asking for more responsibility at home. (Fig. 7–9)

In addition we were interested in exploring the perspective of the parents towards responsibility and expectations within their



families. We created a survey for the parents to complete to give us an indication of their thoughts. Some responses that followed were:

“My children all contribute to the house by helping, such as setting or taking off the table, making school lunches and feeding the cat. They are also expected to put things away when they use them.”

The responses showed that there was a correlation between what the families, children and school viewed as responsibility. It was valued at home and school in the same light.

The Family- School Partnerships Frameworks suggests that **“Schools have an important responsibility in helping to nurture and teach future generations and families to trust schools to provide educational foundations for their children’s future. At the same time, schools need to recognise the primary role of the family in education. This is why it is important for families and schools to work together in partnership.”**²

Having raised the children’s awareness of the value of responsibility, both at home and at school, this may now pave the way for similar connections to be made in the future where we investigate our other main values of respect, empathy, integrity and perseverance.

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Figures

- Fig. 1 Students investigate the school values
 Fig. 2 Students investigate the school values
 Fig. 5 What responsibility looks like
 Fig. 6 Graph that students made about responsibility
 Fig. 7 Letter to parents
 Fig. 8 Letter to parents
 Fig. 9 Lola’s letter to her parents



There's always room for one more



“

Beginning a school year can bring with it much excitement as well as anxiety of venturing into the new; new teachers, new environment, new expectations and new friends.”

While many of our Prep children may be acquainted with one another from the previous year in kinder, their interactions may have been limited. In Prep they are now faced with a new group of children and are expected to cooperate, respect one another and form new relationships. Some children are able to embrace these opportunities with ease, while others may be more cautious in approaching their peers and initiating new bonds with other children.

Feeney, Christensen and Moravcik wrote that **“getting along with others in a group is not an inborn trait but rather a slowly learned skill that occurs as a result of interactions between people.”** They state that **“children learn about relationships through being part of a group and interacting with people and the environment.”**¹ It is therefore our task as educators to provide the children with the skills and **“opportunities to cooperate, share, be helpful, understand the viewpoint of others, and solve interpersonal problems”**² to assist them in developing respectful relationships with their peers and to develop lasting positive friendships.

For a group to be cohesive, we provide opportunities for positive and successful interactions to take place.

There are times when children can struggle to feel as though they belong in the group. **“Just because two children live in the same neighborhood or share the same classroom doesn't mean they'll become friends. Children as young as one-and-a-half or two years of age show preferences for some peers over others.”**³ In the same vein, five year old friendships can shift where children are friends one day and not the next. Research has shown that children from 0-7 years old can be naturally egocentric (this is a healthy developmental stage) and that, according to Louise Porter, **“competition cuts across cooperation (and in so doing fosters self-centeredness) and it leads to a lack of respect for the intrinsic worth of individuals ...Foster what the students have in common; foster interaction and cooperation between them; ask students to listen to each other and use encouragement rather than praise.”**⁴ We do not reject competition, it is a healthy part of life, but it has its place. We also encourage the children to have 'good friends' rather than 'best friends'. It is therefore important that we set up experiences that enable children to explore different relationships at different times. Where one might have a successful 'working' relationship, it may not follow that it is as agreeable when interacting socially in the playground or vice versa.

What does it mean to make positive friendships? We felt that it was important to begin by asking the children;

“What does friendship mean?”

You need to play and be happy and have fun.

You need to be fair. If you have six lollies you have to share them. It's not fair if someone has nothing and someone has a lot.

You have to be kind.

We found that most of the children's comments were based around play times so this is where our exploration began. At playtime we focused on three types of experiences within which the children might form friendships. There were times when they were asked to choose one person they might like to 'grow a friendship' with, other times they were asked to consider two or three other children and at other times there was *always room for one more*. After each play, we discussed how the children had interacted with one another and highlighted what the children were discovering about one another, the relationships that were developing and those that needed further support. To help us document our thoughts, we created a 'friendship web' to track some of the relationships that were developing within our class community. To begin with, there was a lot of reflection in regards to what one another liked to play in the playground. (Fig. 1)

Eden likes to make dinosaur things in the sandpit.

Ofri likes to play chasey.

Ella D likes lying in the sunshine.

Benji likes to play football.

We noticed that the children began internalising their understandings of what makes a successful relationship and that their language was beginning to change. The children were modelling our phrases and were giving one another encouragement and praise. They were also beginning to take note of what their peers didn't like to do during play times.

I learned that Isabel doesn't like to play the surprise game.

Lex is good at playing in the cubby house. He plays fairly. He always gives people a turn. (Fig. 2)

I've been growing a friendship with Joey. I learned that he likes playing footy. I learnt that he is good at it because he can kick very far.

'Growing Friendships' had become contagious. Some children were revisiting friendships they had begun to grow and others were beginning to consider children from other classes to play with and were sent to organise meeting spots before play time so that they did not lose one another. We also observed that the layers of friendship were deepening where children were starting to choose others to play with for different purposes. That is, they were no longer just choosing people to play with because they were friends, but were thinking about the spaces that they wanted to play. They were becoming more independent and resourceful in their interactions.

I want to continue my friendship with Josh.

I really want to go on the monkey bars but I know that Ella D doesn't like the monkey bars. – I can do one thing on the monkey bars. Maybe we can do something else after?

I want to grow a friendship with Emilie. We can play in the sandpit.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

We noticed that some children were beginning to compromise with one another when negotiating play. By compromising with one another, they were able to not only try new things, but were considering what was more important at the time, growing a friendship, or playing what they wanted to. Over time, the children began to revisit developing friendships and were naturally finding commonalities amongst themselves through play and exploration. They also began reflecting on experiences they had with their friends outside of school. (Fig. 3)

Arel always plays footy with me. We also do Aus Kick together.

Eden likes going to the park and so do I.

Josh and I both like playing on the monkey bars.

We also want to extend the children's friendships and interactions beyond the playground. In doing so we set up opportunities for the children to learn in small groups and reflect on their experiences. Were they being cooperative? Were they all listening to one another? What worked well for them in being able to achieve their goal?

While we observed many successful relationships beginning to blossom, we were not without complaints which we spent time attempting to solve as a group during our discussions. There were children who would run away and couldn't be found, those that would complain about getting hurt or being left out. With each concern came the opportunity to discuss safe choices and the need for looking after one another. The children acted out different scenarios where they had to solve a problem together that had been experienced either in the playground or the classroom.

We established that there was one rule that the school asked the children to respect as a part of building positive relationships with one another when playing, **"you can't say, you can't play"**. The children embraced the phrase exploring what it meant to feel left out.

Sad because I had no-one to play with. I wanted to play with —, but they said no.

I saw that — wasn't playing with anyone and I asked him what was wrong and he said nothing. Did you want to play? Yes.

There's always room for one more.

In response to the children's concerns and the last quote, we began to explore how we could further embrace the idea to support the development of the children's friendships. We posed to the children that just like baking a cake, 'growing a friendship' required different ingredients and asked them to consider what they thought these might include. The children's ingredients for a good friendship included *being kind, sharing, listening, giving each other space, helping each other and cooperating.* (Fig. 4–6)

At this point, rather than asking the children who they played with and what went well, we began asking them to reflect on when they had seen their peers demonstrating one of the ingredients they had noted for being a good friend.

I saw children taking turns when they were using the chalk.

People were listening to each other when they were building with the blocks.

I saw someone in our class help someone else when they fell over.

I saw children helping each other lift up the bucket of dirt.

We are still growing our friendships with one another and documenting our reflections. The children are continuing to notice and name the characteristics that their peers demonstrate. We now have a new focus to pose to the children for consideration. How, in fact, do you know that you are friends with someone? And, How do you know if the friendship is working or not?



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

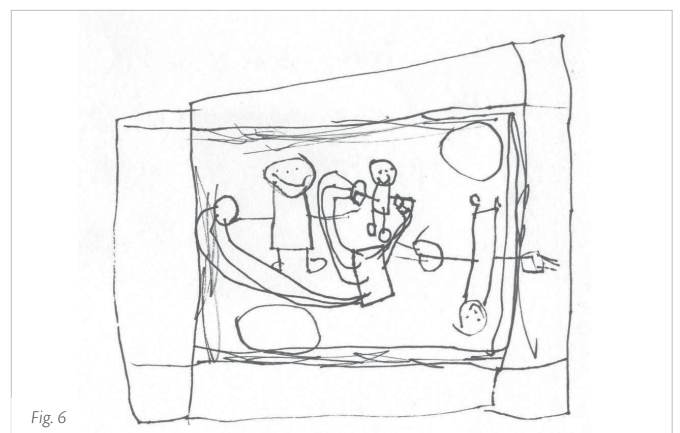


Fig. 6

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Figures

Fig. 1 Creating our 'Friendship Web'

Fig. 4 Share with your friends

Fig. 5 Listen to each other

Fig. 6 I saw children helping each other lift up the bucket of dirt



“I am because we are” (Ubuntu quote)¹



“

As teachers and researchers we knew that this new group of children would need many bonding experiences to feel that they belonged together; that they belonged to a unique group which they would be part of for the following two years.”

With this in mind we began the year with the big idea:

‘Who am I? Who am I in relation to the group? Who am I in relation to the world?’

We are the people we are because of those we have come in contact with, together with the experiences we have had in life. It is this persona that we then add to ‘the group’ to give it its special flavour, its special uniqueness. As the teacher of this very special group I wanted the children to realize this; to understand that the many layers we have each had, added to our lives, would be what provides the rich fabric that will carry us through as a cohesive and strong team. The Zulu term ‘Ubuntu’ says: **“I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to your.”**² This is speaking about our interconnectedness. The concept of Ubuntu can be explained further as **“You are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well it spreads out.”**³

Together we made books about ourselves as individuals and presented them one by one to the class to illustrate the layers that had formed us (and are still forming us) up until we met. We wanted to become aware of each other and what was important to each one of us. Exploring who we are through photos and explanations of our background added to the building of our identity in our group.

These books have proven to be very popular and have been continually borrowed and reborrowed, taken home to be read by parents and in families, ensuring that there is an ongoing level of ‘knowing’ and an understanding of each other’s identities.

Oh I’ve been there too!

Yes my dog looks like yours except he doesn’t sleep on my bed.
(Fig. 1)

As the connections grew, the second phase of our big idea needed to be teased out. We began by asking the obvious, ‘What is a group? How would you explain a group and which groups do you know of?’ These questions set off animated discussion as several children took sides agreeing and disagreeing on whether a group needed to be at least five people.

A group needs to be splitted up. It needs to be 5 or 6 not more than 12.

No a group is 2 and you meet up.

I agree and groups need to be separate so they don’t bump into each other.

Eventually the differing parties decided that it meant two or more people. A group existed if there was more than one in it. Learning about each other as part of a group caused us to look at other groups and what brought them together as a group. We looked at the various groups we belonged to. We realized the first group we had ever met was our family, our parents and maybe siblings if we had them. After that, *it was our cousins and oh yeh, our uncles and aunties and our Zaida and Bubba.*

What other groups have you belonged to?

Our crèche, our kinder, Auskick, Ballet ... and so on.

'What was it that took you to these groups?'

We all wanted to play footy.

My mum wanted me to go to Kinder so she took me.

Did this group relate to other groups in the community? Could they make the connection that people all over belong to groups for the same reasons that they are part of a group? Did they understand that the pull, the call of a group is universal, to belong, to be with others where there is a similar purpose?

As researchers we pondered the question of how to give the children these experiences. After much discussion we decided that the city would provide us with a range of groups to observe and to interview in regard to what brought them to that place and what were they doing there? After spending several hours in the city researching the areas we wanted to take the children to, it became apparent that the city buildings played an integral part in the destinations of the groups we saw. With this in mind, that the environment underpins much of what we do, we knew that this was another element that the children should consider when they were observing different groups. (Fig. 2)

In preparation we conducted several mini excursions where, in small groups, the children toured the school to find other groups. They were found in various places, such as the school library, the Sports Centre, many of the rooms used for specialist lessons and so forth. These mini excursions gave the children cause to investigate the environs of their school further as well as most relevantly discover that their learning was being replicated in various areas they had not previously been aware of.

What are you doing here?

We're having a Maths lesson with our Year 12 teacher.

We're here to play basketball.

We're in Year 11 and we're doing Media Studies. We're planning a movie.

We discussed the building that we learn in five days a week, our ELC, and how important it is to our daily lives. We observed it from both the inside and the outside; drawing the facade and taking note of the windows, the mural, the box like structure which houses the staff room. The children concluded that it is important to us because:

We come here every day and we love it because it is part of our class family

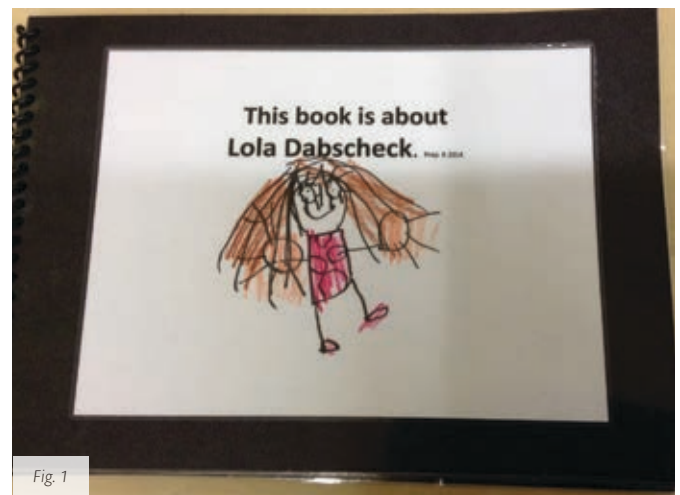


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

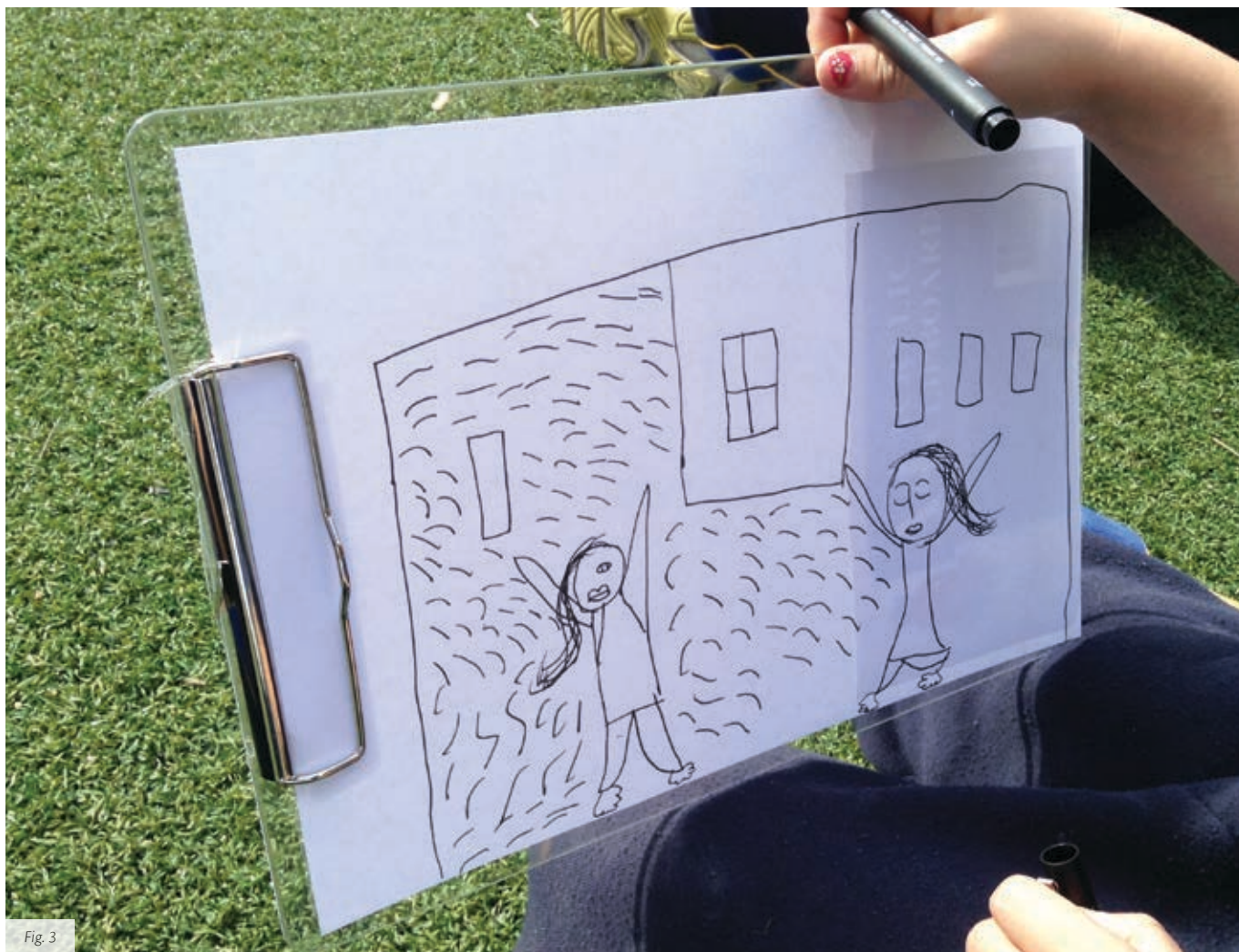


Fig. 3

We are part of Bialik and this is our part. (Fig. 3)

Loris Malaguzzi believed **“it takes a village to raise a child”**⁵⁴, while in the movie ‘The Vow’, the main character, Leo tells us *“Each of us is the sum total of every moment we’ve experienced and every person we’ve known.”*⁵⁵

The notion that we are the sum total of all we have done and all we have met suggests the concept of layers constantly being added the framework of who we are. Thus it follows that this is the same with the group we belong to. Each person essentially brings their layers to the group and in turn the group consists of these many layers. Where our group exists, the environment in which it operates also creates a sense of place, a sense of belonging.

One of the values the children needed to add to the bonding layer of their makeup is the sense of strong friendship where you stand by your friend because that’s what friends do. We discussed how you forgive and move on with your friend if there is a disagreement. In support of this and with the 100 languages in mind we looked at the song ‘Stand by me’. The version we listened to was on the album ‘Song around the World, Playing for change’. This song continues to remind us that music has the power to

break down boundaries and overcome distances between people. The music teacher has begun to teach it to our class and they can be heard nonchalantly singing it while they are working or playing. The concept of standing by your friend was evident when one of the boys hurt himself at recess and another boy said:

He’s ok cos I standed by him. (Fig. 4)

Malaguzzi tells us, **“Children learn a lot from other children... Children love to learn among themselves, and they learn things that it would never be possible to learn from interactions with an adult. The interaction between children is a very fertile and a very rich relationship. You never come in an isolated way; you always come with pieces of the world attached to you.”**⁵⁶ (Fig. 5)

The metaphor of education as relationship provided Loris Malaguzzi with the fundamental premise for his philosophy and pedagogy. **“The child--seen as powerful, rich in resources, competent, and social--seeks from the beginning of life to find out about the self, others, and the world through interaction: knowledge is co-constructed. Education, hence, must focus not on the child considered in isolation from others, but instead on the child seen as interconnected with particular others in nested communities:**



Fig. 4

home, classroom, school, neighbourhood, city, region, nation, and eventually extending out to include the whole world.”

“An effective school connects people, to create community...and an effective school connects learning to life, to build character.” (Boyer, E. 1995)⁸

The ongoing challenge for us as educators is how do we continue to support this group of children in maintaining their sense of belonging and identity within the various groups they will further encounter in our learning environment?

“I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours.”⁹

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Figures

- Fig. 1 An example of one of our books showing what is special about us.
 Fig. 2 Interviewing a group to find out what brought them to the city.
 Fig. 3 We drew our ELC building where we love to learn
 Fig. 4 Singing “Stand by me” to wish our friend farewell
 Fig. 5 Sharing our learning



Fig. 5

*You learn about
you by drawing
about yourself.*

*I want my
self-portrait to
say about me.*



“

‘Windows into Children’s Thinking’ could be our guide if as teachers we were asked: What is your role as a teacher? Will you prepare the children for life at school? Will you prepare them for life after school? How will you do this?’”

We have come to understand that the teaching of facts is considered not a teachers main aim as these facts are readily available with the pressing of a keyboard, swiping of a mobile device; the list grows as to the accessibility of the latest facts. However we are told that it is the way one searches for the facts, through strategies and skills, to research and collaborate that are paramount in our teaching beyond the teaching of facts.

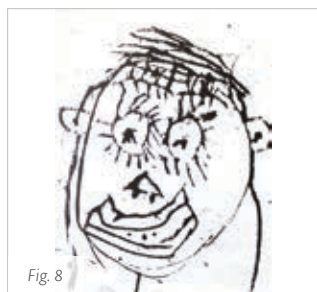
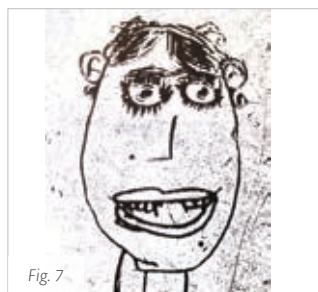
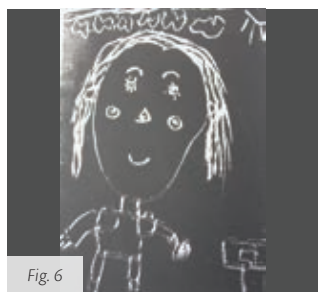
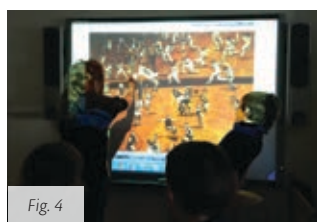
Considering this age of technology or should we say the continuance of the technological age, a presenter at a recent conference I attended spoke about no longer referring to ourselves as digital immigrants and the children as digital natives. We all are in fact digital natives as technology is now and we are living it. This reference to digital natives and immigrants, which has been attributed to Marc Prensky and now refuted today as not applicable, paused many colleagues thinking.¹

When reading several articles in newspapers, online broadcasts, podcasts and media websites the term ‘selfie’ has become part of our language as a means of communication.

A ‘selfie’ or ‘selfies’ as describe in the Oxford dictionary pertains to: **“A photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media: occasional selfies are acceptable, but posting a new picture of yourself every day isn’t necessary.”**²

Together with my Prep colleagues we proposed to focus, both within and beyond the classroom, on the concept of ‘Who am I and who are we as a group?’ We discussed the various paths we would explore with the children as they began their first year of school.

The concept of self -portraits was raised as a ‘useful tool’ which on many levels could offer a vehicle to understand children’s thinking, developmental stages and rich conversations for children to engage in as they pursued this course. What pre discussions would be conducted with the children and how would this provocation be introduced? Educators have often asked children to draw themselves and it is of interest as to what are the means by which the children do this? Do they draw from their imagination as to how they imagine they see themselves? Do they look in a mirror to draw what they see? Is the drawing of a portrait modelled by the teacher? What are our expectations? Are we looking for figurative representation, use of colour, use of space and placement on the page and how do we



assess this? In addition to looking for developmental milestones and expectations, what of research into how one's environment impacts on how one performs and how one sees oneself? (Fig. 1–3)

Is the concept of a self-portrait foreign to today's children or could the way we introduce the concept still adhere to curriculum frameworks and outcomes, which includes the past, the present and future thinking.

When thinking about self-portraits and portraits, do we all conjure in our minds the likes of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa, self-portraits by Vincent Van Gogh and Rembrandt or, closer to home, the portraits represented at the Archibald in Australia? The list goes on. However are these discussions reserved only for older children when studying art history? For many of the public who do not frequent galleries, they often come to know of these portraits from advertising products, through controversies as to authenticity of a particular work or from the days of their own schooling in this subject, which for many was either in suffering or a less stressful subject study option.

In beginning this discussion with the children and being aware of their world, I offered a series of images that we viewed through online galleries and search engines using an interactive whiteboard and iPads. (Fig. 4)

We wanted the students to discuss and question why these images were painted or drawn. Was there a story or message and how was this represented? What did the artists want us to know about them? What was the age of the artist and what country might they have lived in?

Some of the self-portraits were black and white, and therefore where no colour was used how did the use of line describe the features of that person? Where colour was used in other self-portraits some showed the face abstracted, made of shapes.

We could have read authors and reviewers comments to the group however we wondered what was revealed to the children from their viewpoint.

We wanted to bring to their attention specific devices that created an effect and strengthened the message that the artists wanted

to convey. The developing of strategies to 'view an image' are skills that we believe one can transfer to other situations or experiences beyond the Arts. We see these skills as looking for clues as to how one might go about doing something through these strategies.

From an early age we encourage 'mark making' and 'mark meaning'; developing an awareness of this concept for both children and teachers. Our youngest children explore materials that they might not be familiar with or explore new relationships with these materials previously encountered. A relationship we seek to continue as the children use these materials to design, problem solve ideas and create in their communication with others.

In discussions about 'Self-portrait as Boy' by Albrecht Durer (1484)³. The children focused on whether this was a portrait of a boy or girl. Interestingly the feature of hair determining gender and too their claim that the clothing appeared as a dress *It is the olden days there were not many boys' clothes and they wore long hair*. The children were also surprised and interested that this was a self-portrait of the artist when he was 13 years old and of the importance of this self-portrait. My purpose in featuring this image was the monochromatic effects and the reliance on line to create the illusion of texture and light as the focus. The children explored printmaking techniques; engraving lines to create a self-portrait. The unpredictability of this medium and the element of surprise when an engraving was printed using the printing press, engaged great discussion amongst the group. Simultaneously others used iPads to record each other as they used the printing press and then revealed their printed self-portrait. This too revealed another concept of 'portrait' captured at the time. (Fig. 5–8)

Using the iPad as a viewing tool, as a documenting tool and as a creative tool (in addition to clipboards, paper and a pencil) the children explored the National Gallery of Victoria's Australian collection. This was specifically to view some of the self-portraits we had viewed in the studio and to think about why these paintings were displayed in this gallery and viewed by so many.



“...among today’s preteens and adolescents, arguing that the self-portraits are an extension of their self-absorption, while others view it as nothing more than an outlet for self-expression, which just happen to be shared more publicly via the communication mode of our times — social media.” (Alexandra Sifferlin)⁴

Dr. Andrea Letamendi, a clinical psychologist and research fellow at UCLA states: “As tweens and teens try to form their identity, selfies serve as a way to test how they look, and therefore feel, in certain outfits, make-up, poses and places. And because they live in a digital world, self-portraits provide a way of participating and affiliating with that world...”⁵

Does one look more closely at one’s self when drawing, painting or fashioning a self- portrait? Is it akin to a diary in a visual form? Is the ‘selfie’ transitory? Momentarily of interest to oneself and others? Or perhaps this is its purpose; instantaneous, to be responded to and forgotten.

The children used iPads to capture images of people, groups in the gallery and around the city as well as using it as a ‘viewer’, another lens to look at the paintings in the gallery. Interestingly the sense of importance was felt as the children wanted to photograph themselves in the gallery. They too sensed the gallery housed one form of the past and the present and they theorized the purpose of this place.

It is important to see how it was back then in the olden days.

As this investigation progressed and moved from viewing oneself to viewing groups of people this too became a focus in the gallery.

The painting ‘Collins Street, 5p.m.’ by Australian artist John Brack in 1955 conveyed a sense of place and time. Ironically the depiction of the location in this painting was very close to the gallery, Collins Street Melbourne.⁶ This feature evoked much curiosity. Only some of the children knew the street name and place. Others were keen to explore and compare ‘there then and here now’. As mentioned earlier, an awareness of one’s place and environment was part of their schema, for us it was alerting, provoking all to think about this fact and why was it important.

This man only is not looking very happy.

There are brothers they look exactly the same thing. They have wrinkles.

“What did you think about this painting?”

It is in the olden days because it’s all grey and black, not colours we have in these days.

They are wearing black and white and grey clothes.

The people are going home

It’s in the city.

The people are working for their family.

The purpose of this investigation was not a topic in isolation rather the revisiting of the everyday, how we communicate with each other, noticing and naming the different forms of communication.

“How does your portrait represent you?” “What would you like people to know about you?” These questions further reinforced the awareness that what children say and do matters and conversations, drawings, photographs and dialogue are documented by both children and teachers for revisiting.

“Everybody’s face tells you about the society they live in, and what they are feeling inside...faces are maps.”(Ford, S)⁷

As one prep child claimed, You learn about you by drawing about yourself.

I want my self-portrait to say about me. I love sunsets and when a rainbow appears.

‘Self-Portrait with seven fingers’ by Marc Chagall offered other visual clues of colour and shape beyond the figure represented; as cited by the children because of the type of clothes and appearance.⁸ Where was the scene set and how did this determine ‘Who am I?’

Many of the self-portraits that were observed included something about the artist, where they were at the time, a view from a window, or artefacts in the room or place they painted themselves in. They were often seen painting themselves painting another picture.

That man must be in Paris, and he painted himself painting another picture. We can see the Eiffel Tower.

Look at the background.

One child felt uneasy by the depiction of the face and the sharp corners of the shapes used as the face. For this child it appeared the person was cross, very serious or angry. It is interesting to consider the emotional reactions stimulated by shape and colour. The children did not focus on the fact that the artist had depicted himself with seven fingers on one hand. Could one conjecture that the age that the children are living in, particularly the use of technology and games where there is a strong feature of fantasy in the films watched or toys played with that seven fingers was not a focus with regards to their imagining of reality? Or was the focus on the dynamism and power of the geometric shapes, as described by the child as angry, the main focus for the children?

Putting forward the idea of change and time, as was alluded to by the children in their discussions of these paintings, I asked the children to think about, “Who am I today?”, “Who was I yesterday?” and “Who will I be tomorrow?”

The heightened awareness of people and places around them continued and encouraged the children to use all of their senses.

The children continued to refer to time and place.

Back then.

It helps us, we need to know because maybe we could see other people and maybe they are wearing the same clothes or different.

You have photo albums then you can see what they look like.

Then you can remember. Your memory.

You need to so you don't forget something special.

You want to remember your grandparents and to have something what they looked like.

Spurred on by this sense of importance in documenting the ‘now’ for the future, the children began to record the everyday. Playing in the playground was recorded ‘for history’ by the children just as they saw in a series of paintings of children playing ‘back then’ by Australian artists John Brack and Charles Blackman.⁹

Back at school groups of children observed and documented a lunchtime football match, (Fig. 9–12) sports classes and a physical education class with their peers. (Fig. 13–16)

They observed and documented a group of year 12 students studying in the school library. (Fig. 17&18)

(Fig. 19&20) A group of children were playing in the playground. The children used iPads, drawing and painting to record this everyday event.

Viewing a large group painting by Indigenous Australian artists, our intent was to focus further on ‘Who am I and who are we?’ in relation to time, place and elements that describe a particular place, people and story.

This was in contrast to paintings we had seen which depicted groups of people.

This particular painting was created by a group of twelve women artists.

“What do you see?”

Material with paper? Stamped? Slowly made with lots of detail. It did not happen in one day.

Fifty eight days

A year.

“What do you wonder about this painting?”

I wonder if this is a piece of land.

Is it water and ground? Is it the country side? Not much buildings or houses.

Further to their wonderings we also discussed not only what could be seen but also wondering what could not be seen?



Fig. 13

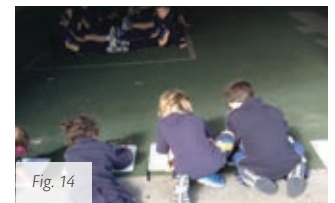


Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

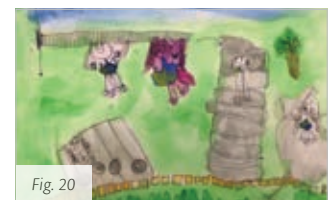


Fig. 20

There are no houses

Could be the small circles are like bushes and they might be houses too.

Yes the dots could be houses.

Does human nature need to see something recognisable, searching for something as an anchor to make sense of what one sees?

This investigation will be ongoing and not solely pertaining to this year level. As we continue to consider the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ with regards to our role as teachers, as listeners to gain insights into children’s thinking’ so too do we enrich our own practice, our own insights in supporting the children in their journey of learning and doing. The many communicative tools to do this grows and empowers us to challenge our ways of doing.

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Year 1

My mind is something I imagine with and my brain is something that I think with...

“

How do we encourage children to draw on their own experiences and imagination while inspiring thinking from different perspectives?”

When children are presented with diverse opportunities that further curiosity through new experiences, children are more likely to be actively engaged in their learning and are more inclined to share, present, challenge and broaden their thinking and understanding.

Through this engagement, different viewpoints can be exchanged. This discourse can lead to further understanding and an awareness of the standpoints of others that help to internalise and validate one's own thinking in making sense of the world.

Carlina Rinaldi states, “**True innovations are so difficult to accept and appreciate. They ‘shake up’ our frames of reference because they force us to look at the world with new eyes. They open us up to what is different and unexpected.**”¹

What does this mean for us as educators?

That we seek and provide children with authentic, purposeful experiences that promote in-depth observations and questioning and offer time for reflection, scaffolding and valuing new interpretations, ideas and discoveries.

Last year in Prep the children explored the questions; what is imagination and what is fact or the truth? This arose from the children's discussions on light and where light comes from, as they drew on and challenged their thinking based on their understandings of what they thought to be the truth or their imagination. This year in Year One we have addressed the concepts of 'Imagination, Innovation and Creativity.'

We asked the children;

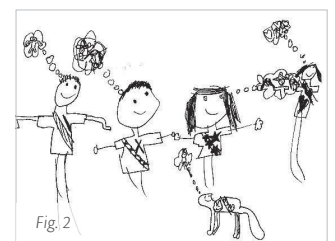
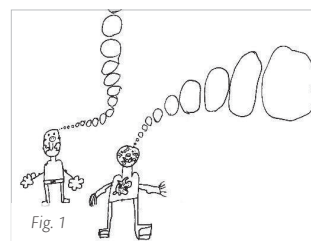
“What is an idea?” “Where do ideas come from and when do we have ideas?”

Ideas are like something new or an invention.

It might be real and it might not be real.

It is like a plan to go somewhere, a plan to do something, a plan to make something, or to say something.

An idea is you might make something up and it might be real and you can write it on paper with colours you are going to use. (Fig. 1&2)



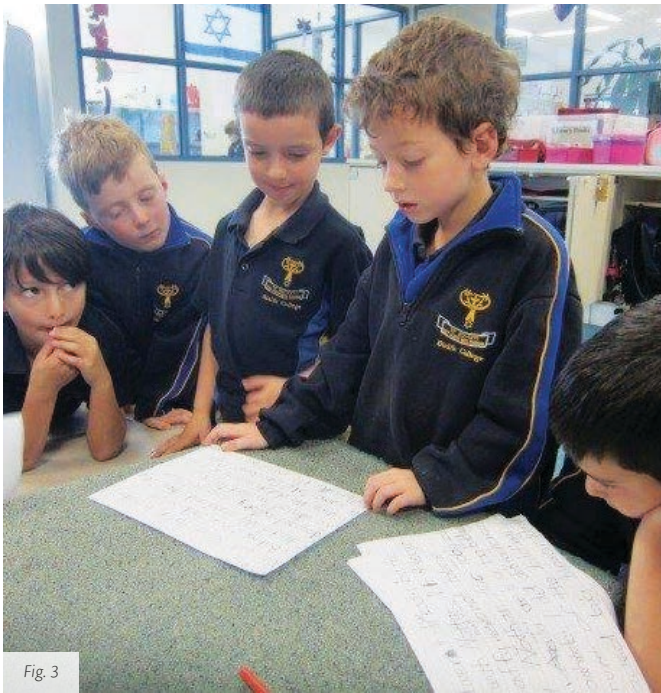


Fig. 3

In these drawings thinking is viewed as coming from the brain, through imagination and sharing ideas. A deeper understanding and the forming of connections may then transpire into action and innovation.

The children's imagination was sparked through the story of 'Charlie and the Glass Elevator'.² The imagery of the glass elevator began working as a metaphor for how we view the world from different perspectives and through different experiences. The children drew on their past experiences while tapping into their imagination as they wrote their own stories of travelling with Charlie, Wonka and Grandpa Joe in their imaginary glass elevator. Their experiences of place were highlighted as they chose places that they had been to, and then again when they continued to write their next chapter as they travelled in the glass elevator to Bialik, recounting the places in Bialik where they thought that their imaginations and ideas were encouraged and fostered.

I get ideas when I am in the classroom and when I am on the monkey bars.

When I am building with Lego next to the shared room, where I build from my imagination.

The cubby house where me and my friends play with the dirt and we give people food out of sand, dirt and leaves and water.



Fig. 4

Common experiences were the impetus for a group of children to work together in constructing and recreating the buildings of two hotels they had stayed at. Drawing from their stories of the glass elevator travelling in the sky, and how the view is altered from a bird's eye view, the children began a dialogue of the proportions of their construction. (Fig. 3&4)

Using what the children already knew about these buildings and adding to this their own designs using their imagination, the children began making observations regarding differing perspectives.

This is big Ballah and this is little Ballah.

No they are the same size and it is Allunga and Ballah.



Fig. 5

In reality the two hotels were of similar height but in their construction one was smaller than the other. The children also gained insight from a parent who offered more information on the construction of the two buildings as these had been designed by a member of their family. Continued discussion led to the realization of how a model may be a representation of what is real; however, when combined with imagination and free expression, the children accepted their estimated constructions from their perspective as they listened to individual ideas and formed a group consensus.

We should connect the buildings by connecting into the car park. We should connect it by a bridge from the car park.

I want to connect the buildings by a diving board and swimming pool.

We could build a bridge and that's how we should do it.

I want to connect it by two lifts, four ramps, three flight planes, two 5 metre pools and a bridge. (Fig. 5&6)

The importance of new experiences was followed when the children travelled to the city to explore the ideas of place, time and construction with regard to purpose and design. The

children's interests and strengths were considered through their choice of how they wanted to view the city; through the eyes of a cartographer, historian, tour guide or architect. By looking through the eyes of, or donning the thinking hat of, one of these perspectives the children were able to focus their attention on their observations and engage in finding the answers to the questions they posed and wanted to explore.

What can we see from a bird's eye view? (Fig. 7)

I used to think I would never see a bird's eye view but now I have. It isn't like when you look straight at something, it's like when you are looking down at something.

I used to think that maps were only used for finding treasure but now I know that maps can be used for other things like finding things in the city and finding buildings that you have never been to before.

We could draw maps of roads and buildings from high up. We could draw maps looking up and comparing the heights of buildings.

The group of children who had constructed the hotels were able to explore the construction of the bridges that they observed in the city and how these bridges connected buildings and walkways. The children used their observations, new experiences and different perceptions to continue their building and decided to use a bridge to connect the two buildings.

I used to think that bridges had stairs and then you walk across and go down but now I know that they can have ramps.

Through exploration, observation, documentation and discussion each group reflected on their experiences through their unique perspective.

Following on from their experiences in the city the children eagerly wrote their third chapter – "Travelling in the glass elevator with Charlie, Wonka and Grandpa Joe to explore the city." They combined their observations of the city as well as using their imagination to add to their adventure stories. They were able to use their firsthand experience of what the city looks like from a bird's eye view from the 34th story of a building in the city, comparing this to their imagination of what it would be like to travel over the city in the glass elevator.

"When we say that school is not a preparation for life but is life, this means assuming the responsibility to create a context in which words such as creativity, change, innovation, error, doubt and uncertainty, when used on a daily basis, can truly be developed and become real. This means creating a context in which the teaching-learning relationship is highly evolved; that is, where the solution to certain problems leads to the emergence of new questions and new expectations, new changes. This also means creating a context in which children, from a very young age, discover that there are problems which are not easily resolved, which perhaps cannot have an answer and, for this reason, they are the most wonderful ones because herein lies the 'spirit of research'."³

What we noticed is that imagination and experience can run parallel. The ability to gain different perspectives and viewpoints are vital components that enhance and develop thinking and understanding.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

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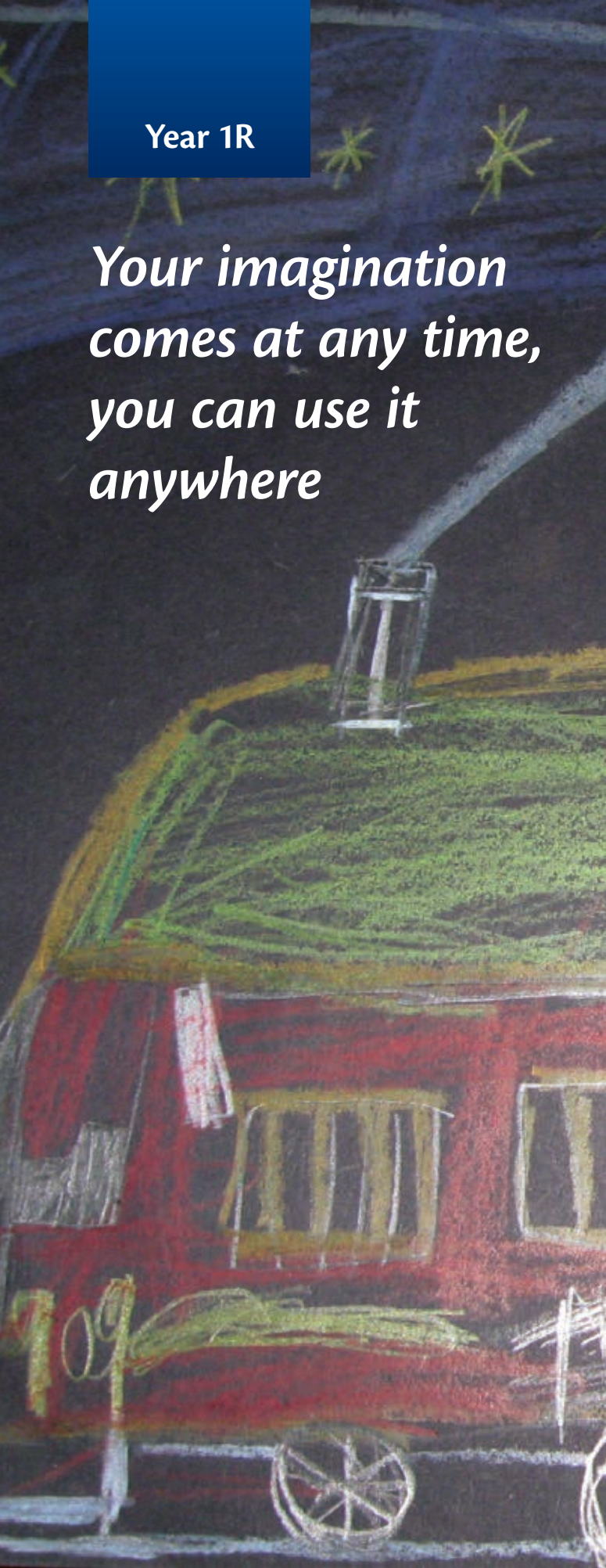
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Figures

- Fig. 1&2 *What is an idea? Where do ideas come from and when do we have ideas?*
 Fig. 3–6 *Constructing two hotels, discussing different ideas and viewpoints and deciding on how they will be connected.*
 Fig. 7 *What can we see from a bird's eye view from the 34th floor of a building in the city?*



*Your imagination
comes at any time,
you can use it
anywhere*



“

This year the ‘big idea’ for the Year One children was ‘imagination, creativity and innovation.’”

In our class the investigation focused on two main areas, one being the City of Melbourne, particularly the spaces and places that the children were interested in. The areas identified were based on the children’s choices during our initial discussions.

We began this aspect of our investigation by asking the children;

“What do you think you know about the city of Melbourne?”

In the city there are lots of tall buildings. The buildings have lots of glass. The glass is blue. The Yarra River goes through the city. There are lots of boats on the Yarra. There is a big screen at Federation Square that shows videos about all different things.

We had many discussions about what the children were interested in finding out about the city and why. From there the children decided as a class where they wanted to go in the city and what areas they were keen to explore. During this process the children posed many questions, discussed their reasons for wanting to visit certain places and spaces and researched the significance of the places they had chosen. These places were selected based on the lenses the children chose to use; being historians, architects, town planners and cartographers.

I want to know why the buildings in the city are made of different materials.

How do the train drivers know which station to go to? How do they know which platform is the right one?

I want to visit Flinders Street Station because I am interested in how old it is and how long the trains have been going there.

I want to go to Federation Square because I want to see what types of materials they used to build it with.

We then visited the city giving the children an opportunity to further explore the places and spaces in depth. Looking through their lenses, the children drew maps, sketched the areas and their features, gathered information to help them answer their questions and used iPads to document their findings. (Fig. 1–3)

I discovered that Federation Square has buildings made of all different materials. I saw glass, metal, steel, concrete, bricks and wood.

I chose to draw the clocks at Flinders Street Station because I was very interested in them. I want to know why they are there. (Fig. 4–6)

From there the children reflected on their visit, tested and retested their ideas and theories and discussed their findings. This included looking closely at many different types of maps of the city of Melbourne; aerial maps, street view maps and maps incorporating the symbols used to depict different significant landmarks in the city. In response to their discoveries, the children were encouraged to justify, elaborate and explain their thinking, drawings, models and plans and theories.



Fig. 1

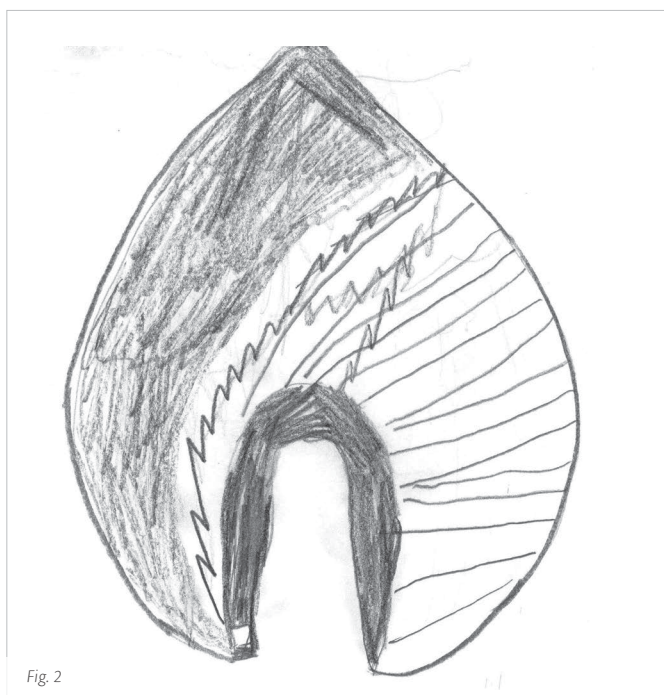


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

When I drew Flinders Street Station I used grey lead and smudged it a bit.

Well I noticed that it is old.

It's not shiny, it looks dirty, and it's not new like Federation Square.

Our second area of our investigation focused on stories and imagination as the children had a strong interest in storytelling. In small groups the children wrote imaginary stories using the city and the places they visited as their backgrounds and settings. This gave them the opportunity to use their knowledge of the city, their imagination and their creativity to further explore and make connections.

Brunton & Thornton, through their research, suggest that children are innately creative and should be encouraged and given the time and space to develop their creativity freely. **“The Reggio Emilia approach promotes the idea that children’s creativity can develop unabated by restrictions and boundaries. By giving children time and space to explore materials, freedom to test things out and varied opportunities to learn and develop new skills, children will inevitably employ their natural creativity and curiosity to make meaningful connections between their experiences and the wider world.”**¹

Throughout this process the children refined their stories, changed parts of the story or plot, redeveloped their characters, added events and/or places and experimented with shades, textures and colours for their backgrounds and illustrations.

The use of the technology available to the children including laptops, iPads and class computers enabled the children to test their ideas and storylines using many different programs and Apps. They were the authors, illustrators, editors, publishers and presenters.

We decided to go to the city. We got our map of the city out to see how to get to the city. We looked at all the different paths and chose the path



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

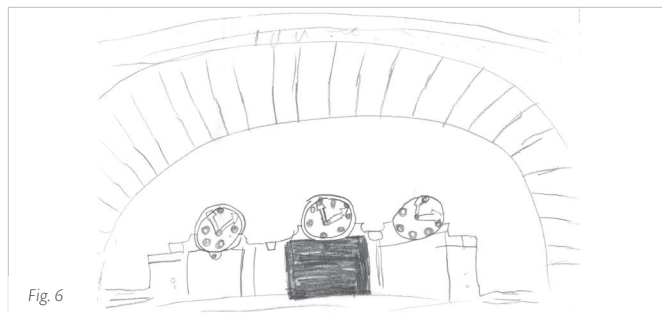


Fig. 6

that was the quickest. We chose to go to Birrarung Marr. We worked out that it would take us three hours to walk. So off we went. It was a cold and spooky night, we were shivering....

We looked at the 3D mountain of black rocks, the painting with the metal hands and finally found the next clue on the hand of one of the woven people. It told us to go to the Yarra River under the bridge and look in the water and the clue will appear. (Fig. 7)

We decided to lead the slime creature down a drain under the city to get rid of him. We sprinted up the stairs and out into the courtyard where the ground is made of bricks. We found the metal lid of the drain and lifted it up and we went down the drain and the slime creature followed us.

The drain took us under Flinders Street, under the platforms and train tracks of Flinders Street Station and came out under the bridge over the Yarra River.



Fig. 7

As we know, story telling can take many forms, something the children looked at closely.

We think our story would work really well if we use Photo Story because it takes place at night and our drawings look spectacular on the black paper. (Fig. 8&9)

Also we can tell the story and use music for special effects. (Fig. 10)

Loris Malaguzzi believed that **“when we perceive children as strong, capable and creative we inspire children to the highest of their creative potential. Instead of seeing children as empty vessels that need filling up with information and knowledge, he sees them as already full of creative potential and artists in their own right.”**²



Fig. 8

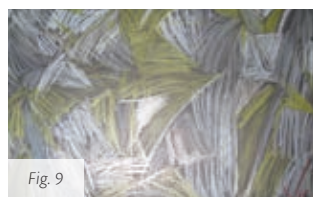


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

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Purpose of place An invention could be a room

“

After exploring the idea of light and darkness, the children became more and more interested in the known and unknown, the seen and unseen. The children were especially interested in what human beings think and feel.”

When posed the question, “What is imagination?” many of the children focussed on dreaming, sleeping and the brain. (Fig. 1)

Imagination is when you want to think something. Imagination is one side of your brain. If you don't have imagination you can't live because it is part of your brain. When we do yoga, at the end, we have to think and you think in your head. That's imagination. Pictures come in your head.

“What are other parts of the brain?”

A big part of your brain is ideas. Quite a big bit.

Ideas are a big part because it is an idea of what you want to do.

Using their imagination, the children decided to design and construct their idea of the brain using paper and wire. Many agreed that *imagination* was a large part of the brain accompanied by *ideas, dreaming, thoughts, memory and parts to control the body.* (Fig. 2–6)

Whilst reading the book 'Iggy Peck, Architect' by Andrea Beaty' the children commented that the character Iggy Peck used both imagination and ideas to create his buildings. They elaborated;

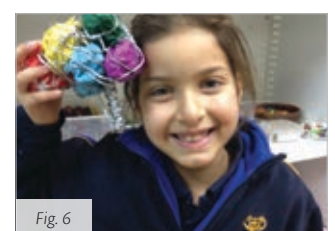
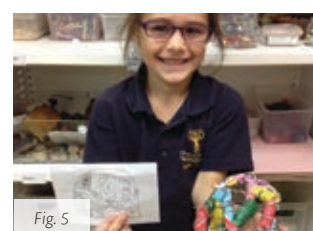
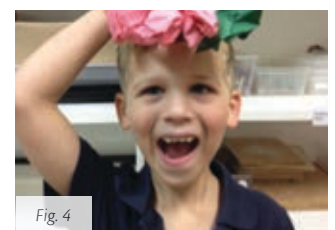
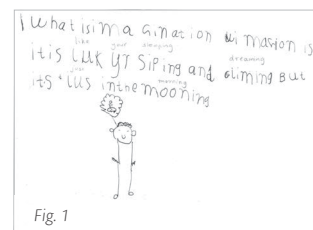




Fig. 7

Because architecture is like an invention for buildings.

An invention could be a room.

The way we understand 'a room', i.e. space and place, is an interesting realm of theory. Social theorist Henri Lefebvre wrote, "Terms of everyday discourse serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces, and in general to describe a social space. They correspond to a specific use of that space, and hence to a spatial practice that they express and constitute."²²

What is a child's understanding of space and place? Place as innovation, place as construction, place as an idea, place as purpose. "The quest for deeper understanding of the familiar world around them."²³

Following our conversations about Iggy Peck, the children were given an outside space to create their own vegetable garden. As the children began preparing the patch and planting seeds, the children's 'quest for deeper understanding' was demonstrated in their observations and questions focussing on the purpose of the place that they were constructing. (Fig. 7&8)

What will we do with the vegetables we grow?

Who will eat the vegetables?

What will we do once we have picked the vegetables? Will we plant more?

For the children it was important that this 'place' had a purpose, that the 'space' we were about to grow (literally) had meaning through authenticity and intent. The children were eager to share their families' innovative techniques in making this place fit for the purpose, *My safta [grandmother] puts wine in her garden so the snails drink the wine and they do not eat the vegetables. It has to be something the snails like.*

During an excursion to a vegetable garden in the city of Melbourne on top of Federation Square, the children deconstructed this big idea – What is the purpose of this place? (Fig. 9)

They met a chef who shared his reasons for using the vegetable patch which was built close to his restaurant (only 350 steps away as measured by some children).

Back in the classroom we looked more closely at a broader concept of 'our place'.

Our place, in the ELC, there are lots of classes.

The children is the purpose, if we didn't have any children then what would be the point of school.

Teachers can learn from kids. The children can also teach the teachers, so if there were no teachers, how would the children teach the teachers?

If there is only one child and one teacher then that is not so fun because you would be alone.

Because we are here to make new friends.

If there was a playground and no children, would the teachers play on the playground?

This conversation revealed the children's unravelling understanding of the purpose and human element of their every day environment – to learn, to teach, to connect. "(Social) space is a (social) product."²⁴



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Sense of place...

“

Our direction within the Year 1 cohort was to revisit concepts from the previous year which included the focus on ‘sense of place, community and identity.’”

We had previously looked at traditions within families and communities and the concept of ‘light’ within religious rituals, cultural traditions as something that connects us. We explored many ideas and experiences through the observation of visual cues including artworks of both two dimensional and three dimensional forms. From discussions and documentation, several concepts would be pursued by each class room teacher and myself with cross class year 1 groups this year.

Most importantly was the question of, “**where does one position oneself in an experience?**” and with a focus on different cultures, cities and a historical context with the question “**what does this tell us about people and places?**”

The website from the 2014 ‘Melbourne Now’ exhibition held at the National Gallery of Victoria “**celebrates the latest art, architecture, design, performance and cultural practice to reflect the complex creative landscape of Melbourne**”¹ This was viewed by the groups through the interactive whiteboard. The children explored this site and many of the artists featured in this exhibition, in particular the installation by artist Jan Senbergs. One work was titled ‘Extended Melbourne Labyrinth’ highlighted in four paintings, the suggestion of landmarks in the city, a sprawling city, “**...like tentacles**”²

The second part of Senberg’s exhibit, ‘Show us your world’ encouraged the public to draw their world either imaginary or based on reality. He included in this exhibit a series of ‘picture maps’ (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

When asking the children what they would depict as their world the children included memories of favourite places they had visited with their family, their home or other memories of their life. (Fig. 2–4)

This investigation was also directed to the thinking behind actions, inventions, constructions and innovation that prefaced the ‘now’ and the ‘then’.

In a children’s picture story book ‘Clancy and Millie and the very Fine House’³, Clancy and his family have moved houses. Using the packing boxes to occupy himself, Clancy finds a friend in the new neighbourhood where both delight in the many constructions they design and create with these simple cardboard boxes. The children could relate to a feeling of not knowing the ‘new’ and what strategies one uses to adapt to a new situation. They marvelled at the inventiveness of the characters in this story and their use these of everyday materials.

At this stage we furthered this investigation by looking into the design and construction of both art and architecture that related to a particular time, culture and place as well as the different views one could explore with these features.

The book ‘Architecture according to Pigeons’ gives us a commentary by a pigeon named Speck who takes the reader on a journey around the world, a world according to pigeons.⁴ This is both an imaginary and factual book which includes well known landmarks. The names of these landmarks however have been designated with other titles from ‘a pigeon’s point of view’ such as ‘The Iron Tree’ (The Eiffel Tower). The children knew many of the landmarks and in which country they could be found despite the name change by Speck the pigeon. These new titles engaged

the children as they surveyed the materials and designs in these constructions and for what purpose they were used. The different vantage points from which we viewed these architectural feats also raised discussion on the features of an aerial or birds eye view. Children shared their understandings of this viewpoint when relaying their experiences from the air when flying, in a lift or the view from a tall building. Beyond the well know iconic landmarks around the world, in June of this year Melbourne was again celebrating with the annual festival, ‘The Lights in Winter’ festival. This year the theme of “...cycles and circles of life arose...”⁵

A UK architect Asif Khan had been commissioned to create an interactive sculpture for Federation Square. The concept of a sculptural shrine was discussed and the curator of the festival stated that this led to “**the notion of shrines, and the role that shrines play in the city, in community and in individual moments of memorialization and remembrance**”⁶ (Fig. 5)



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

For us it was now the elements of imagination and innovation that became our focus which led to the viewing of a retrospective exhibition by Australian sculptor Inge King.⁷ (Fig. 6)

On return to school several discussions ensued which focused on the sculptures of Inge King seen at the Ian Potter Centre. Websites, articles from media and viewing an interview with the sculptor herself, engaged the children. As did photographs of her sculptures installed in the outside environment, places that the children were familiar with including the centre of the city, Mornington Peninsula and other areas they had visited. This also raised an awareness of Public art and the metaphor of the symbolic forms used in the sculptures created by Inge King and others. The students also viewed a photograph of the artist in her studio and listened to a short film clip of her speaking about her work. This heightened their understanding of using all of one's senses to understand what one sees around them. Over the weeks several students returned with comments about sculptures they had seen over the weekend, when travelling, on a freeway or visiting the city.

A discussion ensued about the age of the artist and the number of years Inge King created sculptures. We understood she was in her 99th year.

My great grandma is 99 this year.

My great grandma is 90.

My great grandma is 95.

Up until this time there had not been much discussion about the artists, the creators of particular works. Perhaps this is a common occurrence when we listen to facts and statements, remember names and places but do not know much about the person.

For the children they were intrigued to see Inge King in her studio and talking about her work. They watched her hands carefully as she spoke and how she created models for her sculpture in her studio. The longevity and passion of such a person for her work was significant for the children.

The students prepared questions they would ask this sculptor.

How do you get your ideas?

How do you make the shapes and connect them?

How much time does it take to make a sculpture?

What do you use to make your sculptures and how do you colour them?

Why are most about nature?

What is your favourite sculpture?

The group also viewed several books on sculptures/statues from different periods in history and compared these statues to the sculptures of Inge King, including sculptures by Henry Moore and Alexander Calder, using shape as a metaphor.

The group discussed statues such as Michelangelo's David, and statues of Roman emperors. They also spoke about the bust of Chaim Nachman Bialik at our school in Kikar Bialik. (Fig. 7)

Those are statues... when you die they make a statue.

To remember them.

Not statues of normal people, kings and queens.

Now the concept of what is a sculpture featured in our discussions.

At this time we viewed a website of the sculptures created by Australian sculptor Andrew Rogers. The children navigated the website and noted the many countries where his sculptures could be seen. They also noted another section on his website referred to as 'Land Art'.⁸ This section was the most thrilling for the children as they watched film clips of the sculptor sharing his designs with people of the various countries where he proposed to construct this 'Land Art'. The children watched the stages of construction, noted the length of time it took to complete and the documentation that was used to record these events. This linked to our previous discussion on points of view and the aerial views by which this sculptor filmed and photographed both permanent and temporary structures. We watched the sculptor fly over or hover using a variety of vehicles and 'flying machines'. This element certainly enthused excitement as the children reflected on what they had seen, heard and discussed thus far in this investigation. This would lead to a much anticipated interview by the children with the sculptor.

A question was posed to the groups;

"If you were to design a sculpture what would it represent and where would it be seen?" Having viewed works by many artists and sculptors thus far the children's depth of understanding as to purpose grew. Many of the sculptures they had viewed were destined for a place in the everyday environment almost to the

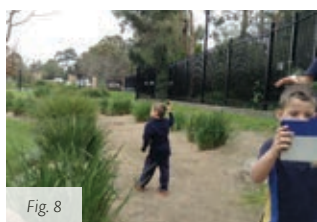


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

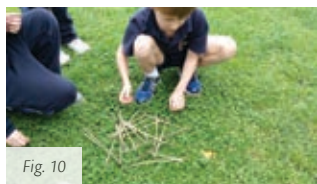


Fig. 10

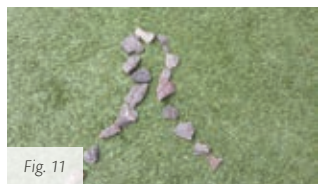


Fig. 11



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 12



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

point of being part of that environment. Was this its purpose and the interrelationship with the other?

The children began using iPads to photograph so as to decide on a place and purpose for the designing of a sculptural piece. Others were interested in the concept of 'Land Art' and looked for materials in the natural environment to create an installation to represent their ideas. (Fig. 8–11)

The children discussed their ideas together and designed and created small models as they had seen in the process that Inge King had used to develop her ideas for large public sculptures.

Some children chose to represent what Bialik College means to them. Several groups chose to do this symbolically and others in a more realistic form. There was to a degree an unknown element as they made their decisions and revisited their ideas. What did Bialik mean to them? Concepts included one's favourite mode of study,

I like art, drawing and making.

This bridge with two people coming together represents friendship at Bialik.

Bialik is a book of learning.

Bialik is represented as the Bialik tree, the circle is the world and the leaves are for good luck.

This is a student learning. It represents Bialik.

This investigation continues as we reflect on the past, the present and into the future. The power of the pen, the brush, the sculpture,

the photograph and other tools continues to engage those who wish to add to our landscape; offering different points of view and the opportunity for discussion and reflection.

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Figures

- Fig. 12 *I like art, drawing and making.*
- Fig. 13 *This bridge with two people coming together represents friendship at Bialik.*
- Fig. 14&15 *Bialik is a book of learning.*
- Fig. 16 *Bialik is represented as the Bialik tree, the circle is the world and the leaves are for good luck.*
- Fig. 17 *This is a student learning. It represents Bialik.*



Contributors

3 Year Old Kinder

Kinder 3E

The flowers can be friends if they want to. When no one is looking they grow invisible mouths.

Zac Alter, Jack Barnett, Ethan Bohbout, Ashley Degen, Toma Ditchburn, Olivia Gaspar, Gemma Gunn, Orli Hansen, Ava Harris, Gisele Hunter, Frida Kallenbach, Miri Karro, Amelie Kohn, Frankie Lasky, Lielle Liderman, Toby Litwinow, Olivia Malet, Lilly Pratt, Jasper Rogers, Camilla Ryan, Jesse Snyder, Ben Wilson, Nicholas Wrobel, Josh Yates, Gabrielle Zimmet

with

Elise Rotstain, Miri Sheffer Waterson, Julia Levine, Chris Georgalas

Kinder 3M

Because it is me...

Rafi Adeney, Eve Akoka, Milla Altman, Ava Beggs, Harlow Birner, Luca Bohbout, Amelia Bram, Nadav Fuchs, Bella Furman, Nathan Goldberg, Zabi Kalbstein, Dylan Kinda, Jacob Kirsbaum, Noah Lakman, Reuben Landau, Ebony Mahemoff, Zaiden Moszkowicz, Maddy Nussbaum, Eden Peretz, Alexandra Ryan, Oscar Rynderman, Aemon Trollope, Sarah Zimmermann

with

Megan Miller, Ilana Cohen, Rosemary Barry, Chris Georgalas, Bella Besser, Nikki Kausman, Zia Freeman

Kinder 3R

Nature is when you see different things outside.

Lyla Alperstein, Sienna Bohbout, Toby Burman, Hayden Cocks, Abbie Dodge, Rosie Fink, Archer Gelfand, Tommy Holzer, Zoe Israelsohn, Hardy James-Wurzel, Mason James-Wurzel, Jack Jolson, Shiraz Kapper, Lexi Koronczyk, Lyla Krasnostein, Luke Lambert, Zac Landau, Luca Meltzer-Burns, Liam Shabat, Orly Steinfeld, Freddie Strauch, Allegra Vainberg, Hazel Wodak

with

Ranjna Najat, Tamar Herman, Margaret Todd, Ayana Shavit

4 Year Old Kinder

Kinder 4J

Israel is Hebrewish!

Ella Carmeli, Jason Dodge, True Drezner, Emi Engelman, Orli Erenboim, Luka Federman, Zohar Galon, Saskia Gelbak, Amber Goldberg, Mia Grossman, Luca Heelan, Noah Herszfeld, Remy Krasnostein, Shane Kravietz, Joshua Morley, Annabel Naphtali, Archie Rosenberg, Sophie Sztar, Hugo Wise, ***with***

Judy Blumberg, Pazit Landau, Leh-Anne Engel, Arlene Meyerowitz

Kinder 4G

Connecting our Learning and Learning to Connect.

Toby Adeney, Samuel Aldworth, Jerome Braun, Jacob Burrows, Yhonatan Carmeli, Lior Feldman, Evie Finkel, Saskia Fischer-Wolf, Eligh Harris, Gabriel Jacob, Coco Koronczyk, Ava Levin, Lior Mazer, Edith Schluter, Jesse Stowe-Lindner, Jade Swart, Noa Whytcross, Eli Wolkenberg, Ohad Yosef, Ashton Zohar, ***with***

Gali Sommer, Dana Elayev, Megan Jay, Rosemary Barry

Kinder 4L

Capturing the imagination, creativity and the brain...

Darcy Arrow, Felix Brooke, Chloe Freund, Gabriel Harrison, Zoe Janover, Sunny Kister, Joel Krause, Harlow Lewin, Evie Lichtenstein, Harry Lurie, Pablo Magid, Albie Munz, Yarin Peretz, Leon Pratt, Harvey Ryan, Joah Scher, Zac Steedman

with

Lindsay Miller, Adi Barzilay, Ortal Erez

Prep

Prep R

What does Responsibility Look Like?

Peri Afranco, Samuel Brover, Tara Filer, Felix Fink, Saffron Fischl, Hayden Goldberg, Josh Holzer, Blake James-Wurzel, Emma Kulbak, Zoe Lasky, Jessie Levin, Asher Lifszyc, Ashley Podlubny, Samuel Razbash, Shani Rom, Nick Rosenbaum, Jacob Rosin, Leo Shaw, Suede Solomon, Alexandra Southwick, Tom Tamir, Lola Upiter, **with**

Rachel Machlin, Sigal Tirosh, Robyn Winograd, Aliza Deutsch

Prep E

There's always room for one more.

Lex Amira, Ori Brod, Eden Castelan, Ella Davis, Zahara Dvir, Arthur Edwards, Toby Gelbart, Eden Givoni, Billy Joachim, Ella Kapper, Joshua Leighton, Sienna Levin, Isabel Levy, Arel Liderman, Sienna Peleg, Emilie Posner, Ofri Rom, Benji Rosenbaum, Joey Somers, Mia Szmulewicz, Ashton Zalcman, Joshua Zimmet

with

Emily Banks, Desre Kaye, Debbie Braitberg, Tonia Barolsky

Prep K

"I am because we are."

Ryder Arrow, Dana Blecher, Nicholas Bursztyn, Amelie Ciddor, Lola Dabscheck, Lara Dodge, Jesse Felman, Noah Goldberg, Jacob Hansen, Olivia Hershan, Jonty Israel, Max Israelsohn, Ty Janover, Gisele Joske, Ori Kleifeld, Halle Krasnostein, Claudia Kutner, Gaby Nussbaum, Raphael Sable, Remy Stimson, Adam Wegener, **with**

Kathleen Georgiou, Rotem Gam, Anne Budlender, Sandy Sher

Prep Cross Class

You learn about you by drawing about yourself.

I want my self-portrait to say about me.

Prep E, Prep K, Prep R

with

Helene Oberman

Year 1

Year 1L

My mind is something I imagine with and my brain is something that I think with...

Grace Brott, Noah Burrows, Lexi Bursztyn, James Degen, Bailey Freund, Nathan Gomo, Phoenix Janover, Raffy Kallenbach, Hugo Krasnostein, Liran Liderman, Jazmin Mahemoff, Jay Marabel-Whitburn, Mika Mihalovski, Ruth Pinczewski, Sascha Sable, Toby Snyder, Jonah Stowe-Lindner, Dylan Swart, Willow Thurston, Ava Wilson, Dion Zukerman

with

Linda Baise, Sigal Tirosh, Nikki Kausman, Zia Freeman

Year 1R

Your imagination comes at any time, you can use it anywhere.

Benji Better, Lola Fisher, Aerin Gaspar, Noa Hansen, Ruby Held, Teal Jacobson, Charlie Kinda, Noah Klein, Justin Kohn, Abigail Krause, Zak Kutner, Rockford Levine, Erica Malet, Eden Mihalovski, Toby Mooseek, Alex Munz, Phoebe Ryan, Lisa Vainer, Woody Weissman, Sophia Wolff, **with**

Roz Marks, Desre Kaye, Mandie Teperman, Bella Besser

Year 1Z

Purpose of place. An invention could be a room.

Zara Amira, Romy Broons, Peaches Cohen, Rochelle Fishman, Liam Gaspar, Ilay Givoni, Asha Goldberg, Nicholas Gomo, Dean Gorski, Jonah Harrison, Omer Hirshoren, Hope Krongold, Jeremy Levy, Ethan Lust, Michael Mashchenko, Helena Mazer, Harry Naphtali, Jack Rogers, Dylan Sormann

with

Zoe Winograd, Rotem Gam

Year 1 Cross Class

Sense of place...

With Year 1L, Year 1R, Year 1Z

with

Helene Oberman





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