



Windows into Children's Thinking

BIALIK COLLEGE
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
JOURNAL 2015

From the Principal of Bialik

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the Bialik College 2015 Windows into Children's Journal.

An incredible amount of work, dedication and care goes into nurturing our children's wellbeing and learning throughout Bialik and in our ELC, a provision known worldwide for our Reggio Emilia-inspired approach, nothing is more evident than this in our journal.

We talk of the hundred languages of children and we certainly see them here. We document the children's learning – their actions, drawings, words, thoughts, models, actions, beliefs and make believes are all here in this documentation.

This documentation is not static. It isn't something that that we do and then leave, or do and then display. Here every child is on a learning journey and we use the documentation to give us a framework for observation, interaction and planning the next steps. And what better way to explore journey than, especially for younger children, through stories and narratives.

Stories are central to children's development. Philip Pullman, an author of books directed at older children, wrote that "after nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world." Through stories, our children wonder, explore, contemplate, analyse, make connections and learn about the world.

The art of story-telling is something that all parents can do. A quiet place with phones switched off, a snuggle on the sofa, a pause in the busy afternoon, a calming time at night time – we can all read stories. As parents we can spend engaging periods of time in book shops and libraries with our children, experiencing different stories and genres. Stories also release the inner thespian in all of us as we experiment with voice, tone and expression. Indeed, one of our themes is 'Home- everyone has a story – what's yours?'

As our children grow older, they become increasingly active collaborators - story telling morphs into story-sharing. When we read together, explore together and share experiences together with our children, we combine the art of story-telling with the art of listening.

Daniela Lanzi, Pedagogista at the *Istituzione Scuole e Nidi d'Infanzia* in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, reminded us last year that "Listening needs to be given time because listening has no time. Listening requires waiting."

In the hustle and bustle of modern life we can forget the importance of stopping, listening to and sharing our stories.

I do hope that this year's journal inspires all of our community to stop and listen. Listening to our children, and engaging in shared experiences such as story-telling and story sharing helps create the conscious and subconscious memories that are the building blocks of our children's futures.



Jeremy Stowe-Lindner

From the Head of the Early Learning Centre

"The teachers task is to preserve as far as possible, the naturalness of the children's creative and practical processes in the conviction that children have the necessary resources of going much further than we might think" Loris Malaguzzi, 1995

Our responsibility concerns the quality of education we offer to our children and our families, the quality of our resources and in particular the richness of our approach. We continue to ask hard and deep questions while trying to build answers, challenge our assumptions and evolve in our thinking and actions.

The teacher's goal is the same as that of the children: to find meaning in their work and to see value and significance in what they do.

Professional growth in teachers can be achieved from the exchange of ideas, discussion and collegiality. In order to educate ourselves we need to be open to differences and open to change.

Documenting what has been observed in our work, together with the children, is fundamental to our philosophy. It represents a tool for exchange, for sharing and the valuing of different points of view. When we talk about making the processes of learning visible, we are aware of the importance of reflection, analysis, interpretation and discussion by the teachers as a rich source of professional development.

"When you make learning visible, you make it exist, real, shareable, the starting point for democracy" Carla Rinaldi.

When reading our Journal you will have the opportunity to notice the many "languages" the children have used to describe their theories and to make sense of their world. The words of the children are written in italics, and many of the articles are prefaced by the words of the children.

We hope that in reading this journal you (the reader) will be able to construct your own meanings and questions as active participants of this process.



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 2015 – '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



To access digital content of exhibitions



3 Year Old Kinder

When can we use our imagination again?



“

As educators we ask ourselves who is our group. How do we create a sense of community, connectedness and belonging in our class? What elements influence and impact on this?”

We wondered how the children would respond to their new kinder environment, and how this environment could have a significant impact on them as a group, influence relationships and their understanding of one another. We wanted to create spaces where the children could go deeper than the ‘expected’, rather finding the ‘unexpected’.

It is a given, that as a team of educators we all have similar aspirations and hopes for the children. Mutual respect, collaboration, a time and place for the children’s voices to be heard and where their thinking is valued. A place where they feel safe enough to take risks and challenge themselves, are some of the factors that make up our kinder room. In our Early Learning Centre we see Hebrew as a unifying element where there is a seamless flow between the English and Hebrew learning.

In reference to our environment we reflected on the words of Loris Malaguzzi (the founding father of Reggio Emilia), “**The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it. This is what we are working towards.**”¹

We see school as a place of shared relationships among the children, teachers and parents. We believe that children learn from and with others – children and adults – and actively construct their learning as they interact with their environment. “**An environment is made up of connected elements which predispose us in our doings and sayings.**”² We wanted to create an environment that provided an invitation for the children’s learning, that provoked their curiosity and was aesthetically pleasing. (Fig. 1 & 2)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

As we followed the children's interests and provoked their thinking in a variety of ways we observed a natural inclination towards drama. According to Russell-Bowie, "**Drama is a way of making meaning of the world around us and allows children to live in another person's world and to explore that person's way of thinking, feeling, acting, expressing and being.**"²³ (Fig. 3 & 4)

Dr Rob Pensalfini says that "**By acting, and taking on another identity for a while, an individual has a chance to see the world through other eyes, other viewpoints and learns to develop empathy.**"²⁴

Using drama in kinder is another 'language' through which children express themselves. Through drama they create elaborate scenarios, plan ahead, use language, interact with other children and express a wide range of emotions and feelings as they take on roles and act out these scenes in their play...

A little boy called Mason met a little girl called Natalie, and they met a silly friendly monster. The monster was too scary so they had to scare him off. Then a big, big fairy came, a scary fairy and a monster and they met a little girl called Mia. She said, "Fairy I am going to chase you away because you are a big, scary fairy. Before she chased it off she ate it all up.

There has been much crossover between our Hebrew and English learning especially where drama and the dramatization of stories occurs.

How does drama activate learning in literacy and language?

How does it create a stronger sense of community?

How does it support the development of cultural identity?

Using a much loved and well known Hebrew story, 'Eliezer ve ha Gezer' והגזר אליעזר, which was inspired by the English tale, 'The

Enormous Turnip', we dramatised the song about this story. In doing so the children learnt new Hebrew phrases, vocabulary and developed an understanding of the nuances of Hebrew. Choosing the various characters provided lessons in understanding turn taking, sharing as well as resilience and delaying gratification. All this was done in Hebrew, "Mi rotzeh lihiyot?" ("Who wants to be?") מי רוצה להיות? We discussed the moral of the story with the children – it was all about helping one another, team work and how everybody counts, even the character that could be perceived as the weakest. Above all it was an opportunity to take on another character and lose themselves in the sheer enjoyment of enacting the song. (Fig. 5 & 6)

This experience was played out many times over and over again in our outdoor yard, as the children broke out in spontaneous song using the 'loose parts' to recreate scenes. At a parent evening the parents also had an opportunity to dramatise this very song, and in so doing shared similar experiences to their children.

The children's language was enhanced as their play characters expressed themselves to their peers and social relationships were strengthened. Their cognitive skills increased when they used objects of their own choosing as symbols or props in their play. Their imagination grew as they played out scenarios they created in their minds ...

I'm Batman! But it has Snow White. I'm not Snow White, I'm Batman! I'm a Super girl. We're going in our mission train. Our mission is to fly around the world. Just to fly. I'm flying the train, press the button. When I press that button we go higher. When we push back it's even higher. We're going this high!

As a further extension of this drama project we collaborated with the drama department in the high school. A group of Year 10

students came to our kinder and took the children in small groups to their “Dreamworld”. Our kinder children embraced this initiative with one child wanting to know *When can we use our imagination again?* Something for us to ponder. (Fig. 7 & 8)

Jim Greenman says, *“The quality of the scaffold – the social environment – greatly influences the child’s development.”*⁵

Drama forms a large part of outdoor play too. We wondered how we could provide outdoor spaces that invited genuine, meaningful learning for children, not just a space for physical play but one for enquiry, curiosity and exploration and an outlet for imaginative play. We looked at having open ended materials such as pipes, wheels and keyboards in our playground that would provoke the children’s thinking. Play is seen as children’s work and the way they learn about themselves and the world... *Your brain is telling you what to do. Your brain is making you think. We can build whatever we want to build.*

Outdoor theatre became popular as the children used the ‘loose parts’ as their props... (Fig. 9 & 10)

We observed the children in the playground and saw how they immediately selected the ‘loose parts’, discussed their selection with friends and decided how they would use them in their imaginative play. The idea of ‘loose parts’ was originally expressed in the 1930’s by a Danish architect. C. Th. Sorenson as **“a sort of junk playground in which children could create and shape, dream and imagine, and make dreams and imagination a reality.”**⁶ Plumbing pipes, vacuum hoses and crates are given a new purpose. There have been countless trips to ‘space and Israel’, building houses and playing ‘mums and dads’... *I can connect this pipe to another pipe. I can use them to make a square.* (Fig. 11)

Ron Ritchart says that **“Learning and thinking are as much a collective enterprise as they are an individual endeavour.”**⁷ We have seen how the children have become protagonists in their own learning and co-construct their knowledge working together in a group. These opportunities to experiment, hypothesize and theorize, enable the scaffolding of the children’s prior knowledge to support their future learning. **“Offering the children the opportunity to use their imagination to disappear into another world, do things they can only dream of and develop creativity without boundaries, provides an invaluable experience.”**⁸

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Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

The insight of children – the spontaneous storytellers or the narrative of the young storyteller

“

In our world working with young children we live in a space of vivid imagination, rich experiences untainted by failed ambitions and with so many possibilities. Children weave one component into another and then it becomes their story.”

Storytelling, a most ancient art, feeds the brain and is perhaps the most powerful way that human beings organise experience and it is an essential activity of human beings.¹ It serves a myriad of functions for the young child. Children tell stories as a way of solving emotional, cognitive and social puzzles and to sort out problems or concerns.

Studies have shown us that social interaction is not only the site of emerging abilities such as conversation and storytelling, but that the input of conversational partners can have a strong influence on what the child learns.^{2,3} It has been shown that communities and cultures vary not only in how much they talk about the personal past, but in what kinds of stories about the past they value.⁴

MONSTER...

Once upon a time there was a monster and he found a dragon. Because the monster was connected to the dragon, because they were being friends because they love each other. The monster is blue and he looks bad because he has got one eye in the middle and there is one more eye here. This is a hot air balloon and they were going to the park in the balloon.

Whether presenting their versions of real events or making up tales of adventure and discovery, children enchant us with their stories. But these tales are more than charming bits of imagination. They are genuine revelations into how children see themselves and their world.⁵

I WANT MY MUMMY...

I want my mummy and I will give you a big cuddles when I come back from school. The end. (Fig. 1)

MY STORY...

*My mummy is happy because she wipes her mouth with a napkin
Daddy 'Bees' (gets) angry with our dog Lucy because when Lucy goes upstairs he shouts LUCY!*

Lucy takes my toys and runs away. The end.





Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Young children have no boundaries or rules that confine or guide them when they tell their story. Their stories are often pure, vibrant and often of the “fantasy type”, and upon listening one can really be transported into their world, and the imagination of a young child. Children tell stories as a way of solving emotional and social issues and to sort out problems and dilemmas that they face in their lives.

If you want to know what a child thinks about, listen to his stories.

Rocklan had constructed characters out of popoids, and whilst he was playing with them he told his story.

CHOCOLATE VANILLA AND RASBERRY CHOCOLATE.

Once upon a time there was people in the forest. Then somebody said “Look around” and it crashed into the branch. It was these two people. Then he “seed” a tiger and he ate him. He ate that guy, Chocolate Raspberry Vanilla. Somebody came and said “Don’t eat my brother.” The end. (Fig. 2)

Some have argued that narrative thinking is the optimum form of thinking for learning and expressing what we know about ourselves and other people.^{6,7}

Just as Bruner suggested that grammatical structure is embedded in the early play actions and routines of young children, so too the elements of storytelling are implicit in the play scenarios of young children.

My story is about having a baby wrapped in a mermaid blanket, in her basket.

The mum is happy sad because she is very excited because it is the babies’ birthday.

The big sister is happy because it is going to be sister’s birthday. The end. (Fig. 3)

THE SWING...

Once upon a time there was a swing, and Amy Jin wanted to play. And there was a great big elephant.

Then I will chop that animal because I don’t like elephants. I only like rabbits. There are four rabbits, and they took the elephant to the doctor.

The doctor fixed the elephant by herself. He went to the park.

He saw Amy Jin on the swing and he wanted to play with me.

The swing goes like this – forwards, backwards.

Then the elephant went to play somewhere else. The end. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

This is a story where a sequence of events is being described. The actions have an underlying theme that is meaningful. There are characters, a body and an ending. It has been shown that children engage in this kind of symbolic play more and in richer ways when they do it with a facilitating adult. That is the very reason why it is so challenging for adults to document conversations whilst the children are playing, as their attitude and responses change quite dramatically when an adult becomes an integral part of their play.

“We are all affecting the world every moment, whether we mean to or not. Our actions and state of mind matter, because we are so deeply interconnected with one another.”⁸

DINOS...

Once upon a time there was a monster and he went to find another one. And he didn’t find another one

The monster was trying to look for a dino.

He found the dino and he was his friend. Then he was playing at the dino’s house. The end. (Fig. 5)

Upon hearing the stories do we as adults really stop to listen...not always, but when we do we are taken away into a world of reality mixed with fantasy, intrigue and wonder.

MERMAID SING A FLOWER IN THE SEA...

Once upon a time there was a mermaid and she saw the flower. And then she was playing a race with this mermaid to try and get to the end of the under of the mermaid.

Then they liked to play the race under the sea. The end.

CAT, THE BEARS AND THE LION...

So they played and then wanted to go to sleep. And there was a HUGE sound. Then the lion covered his ears.

Meow, meow said the cat

ROAR.

Oh, I just want to wake up said the mamma bear. And she went out the door, then she came back.

Vivian Gussen Play writes in her book “The Girl with the Brown Crayon”⁹ that before there was school there were stories. She speaks about living in an immigrant neighborhood where children stayed at home and found their stories there. She says **“when I saw the children acting out their stories I understood their play in a new way. We can’t separate this play from the stories they learn to tell.”**

Storytelling is profoundly an act of authorship – almost as soon as a child can speak they start to engage in storytelling.

Studies show that there are positive effects in intellectual, social and emotional development of children who are encouraged to use storytelling.¹⁰



Fig. 6

I LOVE LIONS...

There was Lions in the king.

He was saying, "go away lions."

They did roar to the king. He ran faster. They were eating him. The end.

THE MERMAIDS...

Once upon a time there were two mermaids.

And then they came in a boat and one fell out and then the other one fell out.

And they had a swim in the ocean and said "hello" to every single fish. The end. (Fig. 6)

Conversation is a key component to help the young child build on his story. Being attentive is vital to the budding young storyteller. It has a powerful effect on their experience of telling a story. The attentive listening is an invaluable insight into the child's experience. It is an opportunity to sit with the children and listen to their stories and scribe for them so that their story can be shared with others.

We listen to children because;

- It acknowledges their right to be listened to and their views and experiences to be taken seriously about matters that affect them.

I can't write the story because I can't write.

So what shall we do about that?

Amy can write the story for me.

- The difference listening can make to our understanding of children's priorities, interest and concerns.

I LOVE LIONS...

Once upon a time the lion roared to the princess.

She said, "Go away lion."

Then they got home. The end.

- The difference it can make to our understanding of how children feel about themselves.

My dad and my mum went for a walk, because they are going to work.

Dad looks surprised because it is his birthday at work.

Mum looks angry because she has the day off and she wants to go to work.

That is a kelpie dog and her name is Milly. The end. (Fig. 7)

- Listening is a vital part of establishing respectful relationships with the children we work with and is central to the learning process.¹¹

Listening to young children can challenge assumptions and raise expectations. Seeing and hearing children express their interests and priorities can provide unexpected insights into their capabilities.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

When Rose told her story about the Mermaids falling into the ocean she mentioned that they said hello to EVERY single fish. We know that Rose considers all the other children in her group and this is how she responds to show her caring, nurturing side of her personality. She acknowledges every single peer.

Listening to young children's views and stories and not responding could have a negative impact.

"Asking children what they think, but taking it no further will send a message that there is little real interest in their view."¹²

It is apparent then that the form of children's stories reveals much about what concerns them, and that content can reveal much about how they organize the world mentally. The action of telling a story is one way children negotiate the boundaries between inner and outer life. Children express and consider their ideas, experiences and impulses by embodying them in stories. The process, form and content of stories allows them to discover the boundaries between what is revealed and what is concealed, and to develop some control over those boundaries.

THE GINGERBREAD MAN...

There was a girl and a boy and a pig and a cat.

They all went home and put costumes on. And they all went to sleep.

Then they had breakfast. They are eating the crumbs. They all had cereal. They all live in a castle.

They have a dog. The end. (Fig. 8)

Young children are natural storytellers. Where it starts one is never quite sure but one thing we can be certain of is that every young child has a story to tell.

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If you want to go fast go alone...
if you want to go far go together...

(An African Proverb)



“

We believe young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, and these relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development. In our environment children and teachers learn from each other in reciprocal interactions that enhance critical thinking, wondering, curiosity and a desire for learning.”

We started our journey with a decision to celebrate the differences and similarities of the children in our group. Opportunities were created to bring children together to communicate, cooperate and learn with one another. It became apparent through observation that painting was of great interest to this group of children.

Collective intelligence – the great pleasure of working together:

At this young age, at the beginning of the year, children are often together but not engaged with each other and appear to be content in their own play. We wondered how the setting of our kindergarten environment could orient children to their peers and provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration.

We started with setting up a table with one large piece of paper, paint and brushes. The children were asked to be mindful of where other children had already painted as they approached this area. I was keen to know how the children would respond and in what way it would affect their learning. This group painting was the first in a series of five experiences, each one following the other. In each one the children made a choice of colours and independently approached the experience. All the children in our group contributed over the course of three months. (Fig. 1–3)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

We made a colorful picture together...

It has waves, lines and foot print lines...

You can't mix the colours because it's going to be all one colour...

If you use one colour every time it will look beautiful...

Our picture got lines, big lines...the lines are going up and down and the paint can also go up and down... (Fig. 4)

Documenting the process of learning, together with the children, and making it visible and accessible within our space offers children and adults an invitation to revisit and reflect. The children commented with a great sense of ownership:

WE did it, I did it too...

This is OUR painting, it's the kinder painting...

When we paint together we learn about the brushes but we also learn how not to paint on other people's painting...

We learn to wait our turn...

It's up for the mums and dads to see...

When we do work together we can put it up on the wall...

Working in small groups gave the children opportunities to learn from and about others, to develop respect and acceptance, and to broaden their social competence. With intentional planning and attention to the classroom environment, their interactions and relationships started to become more meaningful, positive and very successful. We also offered small groups of children opportunities to explore colour mixing as part of a colour investigation.

When we mix the colours the paint touches...

What will happen if I put more white? I think it will get bigger and bigger...

When you add more white it turns more lighter...

When you mix red, white, red, white its getting rainbowish...

The paint is helping the brush because it sits on it before it's going on a paper...

Black is not a colour... black is a drawing... (Fig. 5)

At this point we noticed that although we were only a few months into our first year together the children started to demonstrate

great respect for each other's learning, thoughts and ideas and became more responsive to each other. We asked ourselves if the constant opportunities for group learning could affect the children's social interactions.

The metaphor of the 'Hundred Languages' (Malaguzzi 2012)¹ is the recognition that young children have and construct unlimited ways of expressing their thoughts and of making sense of their world. Verbal discussion is certainly the main element of negotiation within the group and it makes learning together possible. Through their 'hundred languages' children are also offered the possibility of making their thinking visible.

Sharing contributions to the group, unpacking possibilities and negotiating ideas were dispositions the children demonstrated as beautiful flowers were brought to our kindergarten by one of the children. Verbal and graphic languages were used together in this group learning experience:

I like the orange one best...

It is not like the yellow flower, it is smaller but bigger...

It has lots of orange... I like to smell it...

Can we draw now?

I placed a long piece of paper and one black fineliner in the middle of the table on which the children were mixing colours. The children examined the flower by touch, smell and with attention to its detail. (Fig. 6)

The drawing began. Each child from this group of four contributed to the one flower they decided to draw together. (Fig. 7)



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Drawing stimulates the brain to grow and increases its intellectual capacity to observe and express. Whilst there are many benefits to any drawing experience, observational drawing in particular encourages the child to slow down, take the time to observe closely and learn to pay attention to detail. Transferring words into graphic representation is not simple because it involves making strong selections. Sometimes children need to pause, think and share their ideas before putting them down on paper and making them visible to others. (Fig. 8 & 9)

Group learning is an opportunity for interaction not only through a sense of friendship; it is an interaction of exchanging ideas and transformation (Edwards, C. Gandini, L & Forman, G. 2012)¹

This group learning experience gave great satisfaction to the children and inspired us all to continue with our journey of collaboration.

We read the story 'How the birds got their colours' (Albert, M. 2011)² to the whole group. We then invited four children to the studio to unpack the concept of colours in nature. I presented a question and a great interaction between the children started:

Does everything have a colour?

Yes

No

People don't have colour...

Animals sometimes have black colour like birds or spiders...

Kisses don't have colours... only if you have pink lipstick and you kiss someone in their tummy you can see a pink kiss... and pink is a colour.

I referred the children's attention back to the story and offered them paper and pencils:

Birds are something that fly... sometimes birds look like a cat...

My bird lives in Melbourne...

My bird lives in a big green place a long way away where only birds live...

Birds talk with their beaks, like that... twee twee...

Birds can hear with their brain...

They l i s t e n with their mouth open...

Birds can sometimes say I love you...

How come different birds have different colours?

The green birds got the green from their nest...

All the birds got their colours from the rainbow...

The children made connections to previous learning experiences where we had explored the colours of the rainbow. They constructed meaning to complex queries and together in a small group they created a story which represented their theory of how the birds got their colours:

Once upon a time there was a rainbow. When the rain came down all the colours left the rainbow and landed on the birds. The rainbow lost its colours. When the sun came out all the colours came back to the rainbow but you couldn't see it, only on the next day when the rain came back. Some birds hidden in their nest so they didn't get any colour. They need to ask the rainbow to give them strings of colours. The end.

How can we share the story with others?

We can tell the story...

We can make a book...

We can draw the pictures...

I can draw the rainbow... I can draw the birds... I want to draw the rainbow and the rain and the string and the splashes of colours...

This group of children returned to the studio for a few days in a row to continue working on their group learning experience. The intent was to foster 'effective learning that benefits from organized collaborative situations which vary(ing) in form and requires time' (Vecchi, V. Project Zero p. 178).³

As educators our pedagogical practice encourages us to see learning as a social activity and to value collaborative learning. In this experience and through the story the children documented themselves and made their ideas and theory visible. Each child is seen as an individual in a group and our focus is on how she/he learns in relationship with others (Millikan, J. Giamminuti, S 2014).⁴

Making the learning visible through documentation makes children feel that this is their space, a place that waits for them, welcomes them and respects them...even if its not always themselves, even if they see images and work of other children it is a strong message that this is a place that belongs to children. "Children learn a lot from other children... children love to learn among themselves, and they learn things that would never be possible to learn from interactions with an adult. The interaction between children is very fertile and a very rich relationship" (Mallaguzzi, L. 1993).⁵

How do we build the momentum for intentional teaching? How do we as educators ensure the continuity of meaningful group learning?

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4 Year Old Kinder

Trees make air we need it



“

How do children perceive the changes in the seasons beyond the rudimentary collecting of leaves during autumn?

As stated by Albert Einstein, **“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”**¹”

How did three kinder 4 classes focus on these natural phenomena?

How did their developing capacity to make connections, as they noticed minuscule changes also enhance noticing of changes in themselves, their thinking and sharing this with others? As in a quote attributed to A.A. Milne, **“Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.”**²

Autumn had come and gone from the previous year, yet some of the leaves, hardened and brown still remained from the children's collection. These were left behind as they moved into their prep year. A group of kinder children arrived in the studio and on close inspection noticed the leaves as well as withered seed pods and other natural materials. These were 'the finds' from their predecessors.

The intent with the three classes of kinder 4 children with whom I met in the studio during the year, was to observe how each group, unique in their perspective, might explore the changing seasons during the year. This would be both from exploring in 'the outside' and from their observations of the 'outside' through the inside looking outside. A sense of excitement and anticipation ensued. Both children and adults continued to admire the beauty of nature and to conjure reasons as to how the leaves got their colours and changed their colours.

At this time of speculation, I recalled a comment made by an eminent lecturer in Early Childhood Education when she asked the audience provocatively why we perpetuated these fantasies to our children, for in fact the leaves were dead and hence we need to let the children know why this was the case. She continued to share with early childhood educators the scientific reasons why there was not 'magic' in these colourful leaves and that the colours indicated that the leaves were dying and each stage of the changing colour indicated the leaves' deterioration. And that was that.

However our belief is that young children's understandings can be scaffolded, although yes one could go down the scientific path. If we did shift to this scientific focus would the children still be able to marvel at the brilliance of colour of the leaves? Would they still conjure imaginings and theories? Is it about uncovering what they already know and what they bring to us? Much has been written about children not being empty vessel needing to be filled?



Fig. 1

One child had aptly replied when crunching a dried brown leaf, *the leaf is dead and dried up*. This did not stop him collecting many different coloured leaves to return with to the studio.

These groups did in fact come to look beyond the hues of the leaves and looked more closely at the minutiae differences in each leaf. Small boxes, baskets and other containers in hand, one group displayed much excitement as to what they would collect when they visited the playground. Swirling winds created dances with the leaves and the children, clutching a handful placed them on the ground, biggest to smallest, according to shape and colour. Then the leaves were off again and swirled as the wind took hold. This was a game the children eagerly repeated, but knowing that the positioning of the leaves on the ground was temporary, the children used iPads to 'make permanent' their arrangements.

Others in this group chose to collect many of the same 'kind' of natural materials fallen/shed by the trees in addition to the leaves. They looked at the variety of shapes.

Was it about the science of trees or the relationships children have with trees; bringing with it awareness and memories of the trees in our school?

Investigation and Inquiry

Other groups of children walked through the school grounds, through the different garden areas, our schools 'Kitchen Garden' and finally their own kinder garden areas which they use on a daily basis. On returning to the studio, they handled their finds with great care admiring each other's and sharing their thoughts and wonderings about them. This continued for some time. They ordered and reordered, arranged by colour, texture, shape and type.

They took photos using iPads of the areas where they found these natural materials.

What did they notice? What surprised us?

Did they make comparisons - a tree is not just a tree the same as all the other trees?

Trees and feelings... *Are the trees cold and lonely in winter?*

Using the senses of touch, smell (bending leaves to smell gum leaves) see, hear and taste?

Researching, using iPads of the birds, bugs and insects in our area to assist with adding to their drawn observations.

And what of the concept of reciprocity – *bees need pollen, nectar, butterflies, ants, caterpillars.*

Each group named and noticed some of the trees bearing fruit that they had either seen or tasted before.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 5

A group of children explored 'nature' through an old branch which they found and carried back to the studio as if carrying an important message for others to see. They placed it in the middle of the table and considered what they had found. *Where were its branches? Why was it on the ground? Where were all of its leaves? Are the trees cold and lonely in winter?* What unfolded was the desire for children to offer empathy to the branch, *it might be cold without leaves. Who would come to this branch now it did not have any leaves?* Yet another group was interested in sorting and classifying by shape, pattern and colour. Another group were interested in drawing from observing their 'finds' outside. This became a larger focus with their drawings beginning to link to each other's. With the addition of imagination, a 'race' ensued. Who would finish first? The ants or the spiders as they chased each other across the page?

Within these groups the children were used to supporting each other's thinking and the 'lending' of a skill. We also challenged the groups by asking how they would explore their ideas and theories further. Many were familiar with the use of iPads and technology to *'find out more'*. Using search engines to explore butterflies, bugs, caterpillars and ants that they wanted to include in their collaborative drawing; which was now becoming a story based on their knowledge and what they would like to happen!

Each class had explored in a different way, both due to their interests and scaffolded by the teacher as per the intent of the research. A further focus was to explore if each class, having different experiences within the same environments, would, when coming together in cross class groups, still have the same responses to the changes of the seasons? Or would sharing their theories precipitate a change in their understandings now and for future encounters when entering the next class?

As their Kinder 4 year of learning nears the end, we proposed to the children another collaborative initiative of working together and sharing their thoughts and understandings with the intent of leaving something for the next group of children entering their Kinder 4 year. A series of small canvases were offered to the children to use to record their discussions and make decisions as to what each would represent.

Several groups used the canvases to continue to focus on the leaves and their shape and colour. However they now looked more closely and commented to each other about the *veins* which made the patterns on the leaves. Others wanted their canvas to reflect the blossoms they collected and looked to their earlier drawings to assist them. When returning to the outside kindergarten area to collect more, the blossoms were no longer, the trees had quickly transformed into the next stage of their cycle. Large green leaves had replaced the blossoms. This intrigued the students who chose to represent the deep greens of the new leaves on their canvas.

Another group was interested in the caterpillars that needed the leaves. They told others in their group that there also needed to be butterflies in their painting as soon the caterpillars would become butterflies. And the flowers required *bees to take the pollen and nectar to make honey for us to eat.*

This investigation was underpinned by the understanding that providing opportunities for children to challenge their thinking was fundamental.

Together we explored new ways of sharing their thinking, acquiring new skills and tools to manipulate and construct their theories.

“Nature – as with a painting, sculpture or building – only becomes significant when we make an active connection with it. Like a canvas in a gallery, a landscape or aspect of the natural comes to life in the eyes of the people who look at it. The act of observation in nature and not as a virtual experience brings about a very different experience that is capable of sometimes posing questions.”³

Through this investigation the children came to know that others were interested in their ideas, and that they would be creating something that they would leave as a memory of their thinking for future groups, family and visitors to the school. Their legacy would be accessible as a living archive of resources.

This investigation has transcended the literal. We understand that knowledge is analysed and reinterpreted; making sense if only for a while until we explore further. For young children opportunities to unpack their thinking is valued.

People have to stop shooting with guns so there will still be animals alive.

Animals give you food, like cow's milk, make stuff with meat, cheese and lots of stuff to stay alive.

“If we really want children to thrive we need to let their connection to nature nurture them.”⁴

When reflecting back on the words of the educator who spoke about the seriousness of facts to understand the ‘nature of things’, we lamented the potential loss of a sense of wonderment, curiosity and limitless imagination of young children. During a recent conversation in which we asked the children to reflect on our time together one child began:

Nature is actually air made out of little tiny weeny bits, all those bits are like in medicine. Like tiny cells, I think. The air is tiny bits all around us. My mum writes about Air Science.

Another child responds: *Bees need to collect pollen and nectar from the flowers, if they don't we wouldn't survive.*

Trees make air, we need it.

A further child contributed: *Air is important, the cells or another name, he was talking about you breathe them in and out and it makes us alive.*

I would like to add to this. If you didn't have trees you wouldn't have clean air in your mouth.

If you do not have clean air in your mouth you would have to brush your teeth all the time.

For thousands of years.

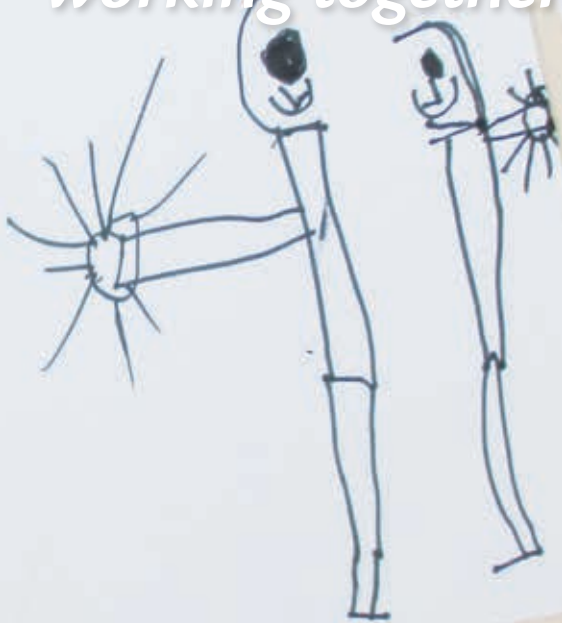
“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”⁵



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I see the children's hearts. They are happy children working together.



“

When groups of children come together, we believe the essence of what they create together is based on how they share, negotiate and listen to each other. Our team wanted to research this further. Creating opportunities for the children to practice decision making and working as part of a group would encourage them to develop life skills that they could use in any situation, and would empower them further.”

“Children learn collaborative skills in part by seeing how the ideas and perspectives of others can enrich their own learning.”¹

We set the scene by communicating to the children that our expectation was that they were going to create together in small groups and that everyone's opinion would be valued when making decisions about what materials they would choose to use and how they would be used.

We need to listen to each other.

You have to think about what other kids like to do also.

Amelie is really good at drawing. Maybe she can help us draw things.

We thought carefully about the materials we would provide the children and the opportunities they would create for collaboration.

Fineliners and paint were chosen for the first collaborative experience. The children had had a lot of experience and prior knowledge in using these materials to develop their ideas.

One group drew a city using their skills to create windows and stairs. Another group created their family members interspersed between other children's families. Whilst most groups chose



Fig. 1

fineliners, one group chose paint over the fineliners as they wanted to paint clocks, to fill in the spaces within the clocks and then to write all the numbers. (Fig. 1)

Following this we discussed these experiences with the whole class.

We didn't have our own space. We all had to share the paper and draw together.

We had to go right to the end of the paper so everyone could fit in.

When someone couldn't draw something. You had to think of a new idea so everyone could help.

There is only one piece of paper and four people, so we need to do it together.

It's hard to know where you painted because all of our paints joined together.

We observed and documented the strategies that took place and then as a team we discussed how we would take this further. We had used the word 'collaborating' with the children in relation to the way they worked together and how the adults in the room worked as a team.

Did the children actually know what collaboration meant?

Could they use words to describe their behaviour?

Could they share their words and make them understood to the rest of the group?

We showed the children a series of photos of themselves collaborating in a variety of situations and asked them to describe what they thought was happening.

Our expectation was that the children would be so familiar with working together that they would be able to describe the conversation and contexts of the photos. To our surprise, the abstract quality of this experience did not lend itself to some children's ideas and conversation. A few children were able to express their thoughts:

I see the children's hearts. They are happy children working together.

I see the children's eyes looking at the spider web because they are all holding on together.

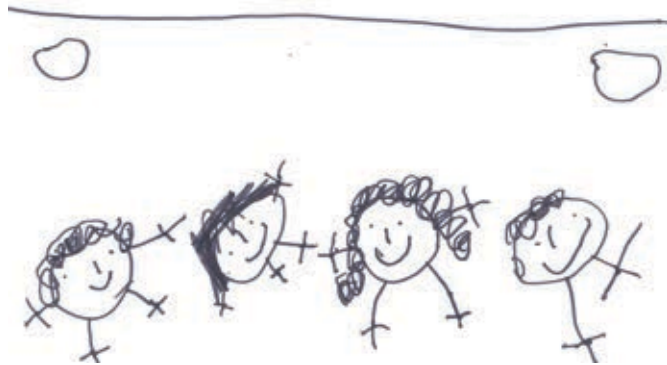


Fig. 2

I see Nico smiling at Noah when he is mixing colours. They are looking into each other's eyes.

The children are working together because it is hard work. It takes a long time.

You trust your friends.

We decided to use the children's enjoyment of dance and movement as a way of making their way of working together more visible.

“Supporting children's reflections on their learning processes is the key to nurturing their capacities to learn together. Making the learning process of groups visible enhances children's metacognitive awareness of how to learn from and with one another.”¹

After this experience, the children reflected on how they had worked together and what strategies they used to make this possible:

You need to talk about it with the other person.

You had to listen and try each other's ideas and see what worked.

You had to decide together what you wanted to do.

Some children realised that sometimes collaboration can be difficult:

We were trying to do 'wash the dishes' and we had three people, too many.

Sometimes you need more than three people to make an octopus.

The people were doing 'wash the dishes'. They smiled and they were holding hands and they were facing each other. (Fig. 2)

It was when we went around in circles. We looked at each other and smiled and worked together. (Fig. 3)

What was revealed to us was that the conversations processed the collaboration process but their images did not. The children were not facing each other or looking into each other's eyes.

After listening to the children's theories and looking at their images, we encouraged small groups of children to come into the studio to share and revisit their theories about how they now could create children facing each other.

A small group of children used their knowledge about 'pop up' books, storybooks and puppets.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

You need to cut them (the drawings of people) and connect them (with sticky tape). They need to be puppets that fit on your fingers. Then you can make the fingers face each other. (Fig. 4)

Mine don't need to be on my fingers. Cut a little bit out, make them flat and then they face each other. (Fig. 5)

Well mine are going to be in a book. First I stick the pages in the book. Then on the first page are the children. The book opens and closes and the people face each other.

One child watched intently as another created while she spoke; *you need to draw people next to each other. Then you fold the paper in the middle and the people face each other.* He too drew his figures on the page and bent the paper in half. (Fig. 6)



Fig. 5

See my people are facing each other. I used sticky tape on the sides to hold them together. But if they were back to back, like 'wash the dishes' (based on a rhyming song called 'Wash the dishes') then my drawing would be different. Then one person is on the back and the other person on the other side of the paper. They have really long arms so they can hold hands.

Mine are next to each other, but yours are cut out. The sticky tape here and here (top and bottom) pushes the people together.

Well I've got another idea. One person has no legs so he (the other person) is carrying him and they are facing each other. (Fig. 7)

Another group of children believed that it was how you made the people look rather than what you did with the paper.

Everything is half...the mouth...the nose. If I do it the whole way round then they look as if they are facing upwards. You make one eye, a half mouth on the side. The face needs to be like it is looking on the side because you can only see half. (Fig. 8)

Another child commented, *I can't draw like that. I think it is in the eyes of the people.* He drew two people side by side and then used the fine liner to make the eyes turn. As he did this he explained, *see the eyes start here and then they move to the side to look at the other person.*



Fig. 6

The children continue to observe each other in a group testing their theories about collaboration and using strategies necessary for understanding it. Even though they are working as a group they are still developing their own graphic skills through learning from each other. And even though we were looking at collaboration, other wonderful opportunities such as drawing for understanding have made the children's experiences even richer.

Children go back and forth between verbal dialogue and graphic representations, but may also move to different symbolic languages, requiring new interpretations of their ideas. This process recognizes and provides opportunity for strengths of young children to be utilized, and demonstrates the many potentials and capabilities that children bring to their learning.²



Fig. 7

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Fig. 8

“Imagination is the power of the mind over the possibilities of things.”¹



“

My belief is that if we want to save our planet from becoming a waste dump then we need to work together as a community to reuse and recycle materials.”

Cardboard boxes and cardboard packaging material had been donated to our class. The children used their imagination as they explored the possibilities of these open ended materials. These materials offered endless creative possibilities. They not only intrigue our mind but also play with our eyes and hands. This second year of kinder with this group meant that our expectations for a longer period of sustainment could be met. We wanted the children to work together on a project for a longer period of time. How would this work? **A new idea, material or an activity may be interesting for the short term, unless it fits in with children’s interests and offers a number of possibilities to pursue, they are unlikely to remain purposefully engaged. Together, time, space and materials provide the ‘invitation to act’.**² We reflected on last year with the children as to what they remembered about recycling. *It means you use things again.* This gave us a starting point. **Children possess a natural openness to the potential of materials. When an adult become aware of this process, they find ways to watch and listen to children. Children and adults become collaborators as they discover, collect, sort, arrange, experiment, create, construct and think with materials. The goal is to allow children to become fluent with materials – as if materials were a language. Bringing materials into the classroom and discovering their potential for learning involves many of the same process skills used in math and science and interpreting literature. It is a way of thinking about things.**³

Before the children began building with the materials we discussed some of the language related to constructing houses.

A project is when we have to do something together.

We need an instruction for building a house.

Builders first make a plan then they build a house.

An architect and the builders are not the same. Architects make a house plan and builders build the house. But they work together in a team

My zaide is a builder

My dad is an architect (Fig. 1)



Following these discussions the children began to study the floor plan of a house we had been given. This sparked keen interest amongst the children as they began to understand the floor plan and decode the symbols and abbreviations. The children exchanged ideas as to what they thought it might be. This brought out the children's prior knowledge and experiences. (Fig. 2)

There is a knob so it is a door.

No it is a rectangle shape. It is a bath with a plug hole.

I think it is a fridge

I can see ABCD

Where is the study? It should start with "S". There is no study in this house.

You can make a study in one of the bedrooms.

What is LDRY? It is a laundry and PTRY is pantry

I know this is a Garage because it starts with "G" (Fig. 3)

The children were now ready to draw a floor plan of their house. Drawing their individual plans gave the children ownership of their own creativity and imagination while working within a group. These drawings helped the children see what the next steps were in their project. I wondered how the children would transform their thinking from drawings into constructing a floor plan out of recycled materials.

The group decided to build one house plan which incorporated all of their ideas. After deciding the rooms, some children took turns to write the name of the room while the other children spelled out the letters of the rooms.

We need doors and windows for the house.

I found a window, I found the door. (Fig. 5-9)

They worked as a team collaborating their thoughts and actions.

The children called themselves the *KAR BUILDERS*.

These builders continued to design in clay and other materials.

"A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative networking of the impressions he has acquired".⁴

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Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 6



Fig. 4



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 5



Fig. 9

Stitching their place...

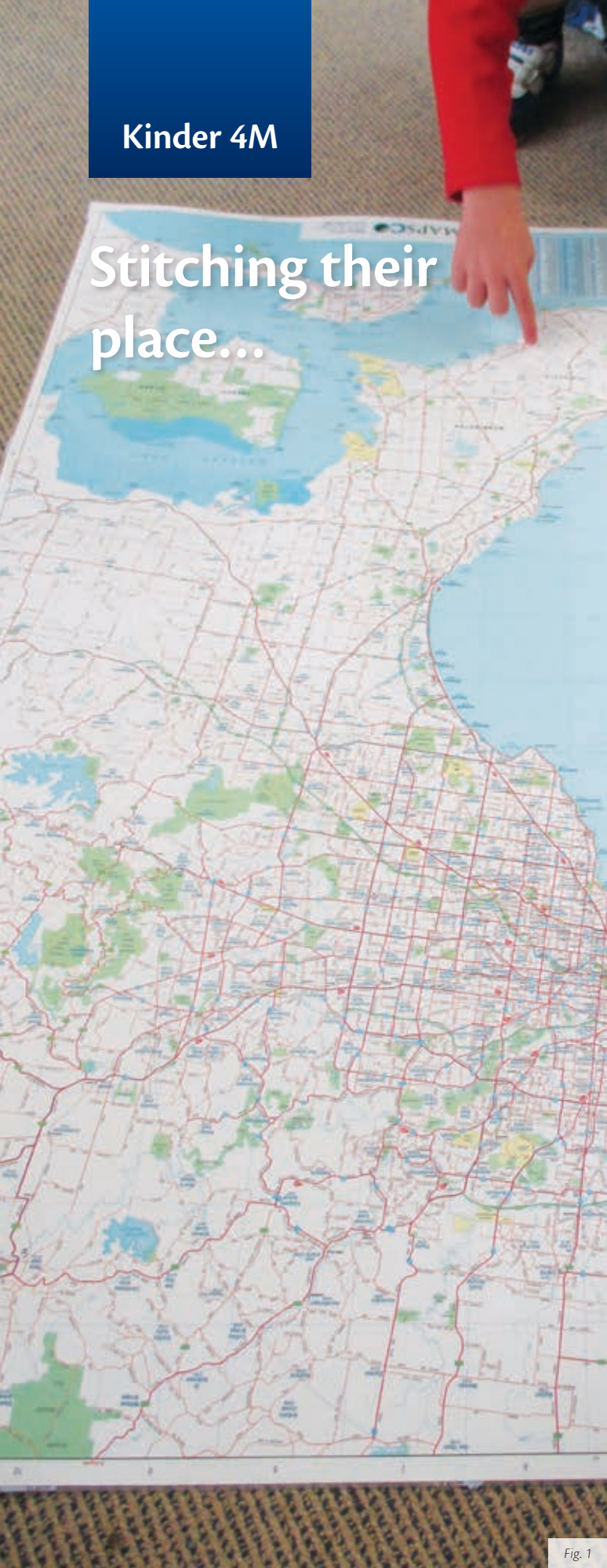


Fig. 1

“

Using the lens of the Reggio Emilia approach to view our practice in early childhood, we look at making the invisible visible. We wonder what knowledge and connections the young child brings with them to kindergarten and how we can make this visible.”

Loris Malaguzzi discusses the importance of the child and their connections when he states **“When we think about the child, when we pull out a child to look at, that child is already connected and linked to a certain reality of the world – she has relationships and experiences. We cannot separate this child from a particular reality. She brings these experiences, feelings and relationships into school with her.”**¹

We began by asking the children questions on what their connection is with their location,

Where do you live? At the same time the children had a map of Melbourne available to them.

Australia

This is where Melbourne lives.

What do you see?

I can see Melbourne.

The city, it has lots of things.

It is the whole earth. It has a hundred stuff in it.

Is it the place or is it the community, experiences and relationships around the child that they remember? According to Denis Wood, in his book, *Everything Sings* **“a map is a glimpse of the soul of his neighbourhood.”**²

We revisited the map of Melbourne.

It has roads

It has traffic lights

Home, because it is where we live.

I need to go to my place...

When the children looked, at the map, they saw the obvious. (Fig. 1)

Reflecting on these answers we looked to deepen the connection. We asked the children **“what is the place that warms their heart?”**

My Nana’s and my Papa’s beach house and I love the sea and the sand.

Bali, because I get to go in the swimming pool and it was so deep. My Mum whooshed me around and I swam on my own to my Dad.

The answers have described relationships and experiences of great importance to these children. How could we make the connections



Fig. 2

to these experiences visible? Which one of the “100 plus 100 more” languages could be used to express the child’s understanding of what is their world? **“A map of their place in the world, their terrain which can be at once physical, cultural and emotional.”**³

The children were asked to ‘map’ their place. They began the process with drawing on paper with fine liners. They were grouped in small groups and their voices and conversations intertwined as they drew.

My Dad fixed my soft toy once...

We get to go to the beach and the beach is not your home...

This is my neighbourhood; the doors are my neighbours...

I’ll draw a door because you get to open it and go inside...

The connections to their relationships and experiences became maps in their drawings. (Fig. 2)

If I didn’t have a map of the neighbourhood I wouldn’t know where my neighbourhood was. Sometimes people forget where their neighbourhoods are and where they live. Sometimes I do when I go away.

Real neighbourhoods and not real neighbourhoods don’t match together. Real neighbourhoods are outside and not real ones you draw inside.



Fig. 3

This child located himself within his neighbourhood; he recognised himself as part of his neighbourhood and represented it with the multiple doors in his drawing. These are his neighbours these are his connections.

I know my neighbours but not their names. (Fig. 3)

“How else can the child represent their map? What other media can we use to deepen their understanding? What is a medium that the children are not familiar with and will emphasise the process, as this is where the learning occurs.”⁴

The words of Elizabeth Ingraham³ refer to **“stitching a sense of place”** and how we can fabricate our identity, history and



Fig. 4

understanding of the world. The challenge of being able to embroider their place in the world was presented to the children.

These are children who have strong connections to the digital language, how would they relate to the experience of stitching? The challenge of the materials could offer the opportunity to enrich their learning and get to the heart of their understandings of connections of place.

There was a group discussion on stitching. The children's understanding was limited. The materials offering the children prospect to explore new techniques and language.

What is this? Holding up the needle.

One child related the stitches to a previous experience.

I used to have stitches in my forehead.

Before the children began stitching they had to edit their drawings of 'their place' to a simple stitchable image. The children were challenged with how to keep the essence of their drawings (Fig. 4) with minimal lines. These images were then transferred to hessian.

Once given the opportunity to use the new materials the children quickly understood the process. A few children who had difficulty drawing found ease in the sewing. **"It is through offering challenges to children that they demonstrate the ability to walk along the path of understanding."**⁵

I need to stitch two more lines than three more.

I am going to look at my drawing to make sure I have got the lines right. (Fig. 5 & 6)

The children seemed to embrace the time that it took to produce the work. They used the time to create deeper relationships and connections with their peers; they formed sewing communities and again their conversations intertwined. The children took time in the process.

"Value should be placed on contexts, communicative processes, and the construction of a wide network of reciprocal exchanges among children and between adults and children"⁶ (Fig. 7)

"Through making their maps visible, celebrating and conserving their sense of place"⁷, the children were making the invisible truly seen. Through the process of sewing, the children, were deepening their understanding of connections and relationships with their peers and their educators as well as acknowledging the connections they bring to school.

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Prep



Inside Outside

“

There is a garden in every childhood,
an enchanted place where colours are
brighter,
the air softer,
and the morning more fragrant than
ever again.” Elizabeth Lawrence¹

The late Elizabeth Lawrence was a well-known American horticulturist and author who believed that the outside was a place of wonder for young children. In my teaching I have found that it is in the natural world where children's curiosities are truly able to unravel, deepen, develop and expand so that they are not only learning about the world around them but that they are also becoming highly skilled, imaginative, scientific and investigative learners.

The children were asked to bring in an interesting object from their summer holidays. One child brought in his collection of shells from the beach. Captivated, the children asked for magnifying glasses to see the colours and lines of the shells more clearly. They wanted to hold the shells, they wanted to hear the ocean inside the shells, they wanted to draw the shells and they wanted to develop theories.

I think that sand is still inside and there might be animals living inside it.

I wonder if the shell fell off a sea snail.

In the same week another child brought in his own shell collection along with other obscure natural objects which the children called 'witches hats' due to their shape.

With excitement, a third child brought in a large bulb to plant and the class enjoyed making predictions about what might happen. (Fig. 1)

I think that it will turn into a tree and oats will fall on the ground and everyone will take them home and we will make porridge.

I think this will become a really big flower and when it dies something will come out, and when its stable, it will grow back again and it will grow bigger and when it dies again it will be a flower.

A coconut shell became another provocation for a class story entitled 'Where did this object come from?' Our natural collection grew further as another child came to school with a Bottle Brush. The children held the plant and wrote what it felt like to be the Bottle Brush.



Fig. 1

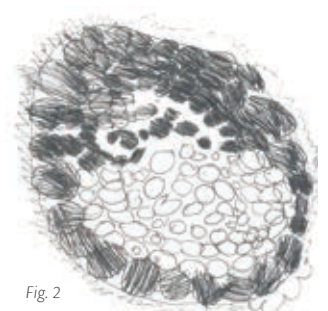


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

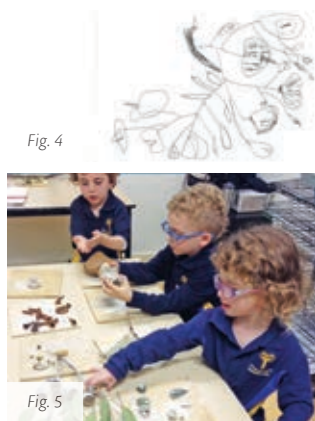


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

I am light and tickly.

I am old, 180 years old.

As a class collection of natural objects started to take form so did our big ideas. **What is outside? What is inside?**

Our community of 'gatherers' expanded as one grandfather discovered a wasp's nest in his garden, which he gave to his grandson, who brought the interesting object into class. Using a document camera the children were given another perspective of the wasp's nest, marveling over the images close-up on the interactive whiteboard.

They live in straws. The stuff that looks like straws. They are not a straw but made of wild paper. It is paper that you find in the wild.

It is made of what candles are made of because it looks like it.

They photographed their drawings of the nest (Fig. 2) and recorded their thinking on the iPad using the app 30 Hands. We used the app so that the children had the opportunity to explain their thinking in more detail and broaden their experiences using technology.

The children brought in gum nut branches (Fig. 3 & 4), leaves, crystals, rocks and unique natural objects to add to the 'Museum of Natural Objects', which was curated by the children in the studio (Fig. 5). The studio started to reflect the developing class culture and the values of the learners inside it. **"Space has to be a sort of aquarium that mirrors the ideas, values, attitudes, and culture of the people who live within it"** said Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy.

What do we see, think and wonder when we look closely at these natural objects?

I see two shells that have the same stripes. I wonder if they were from the same shells and the waves pulled them a part?

I wonder if these leaves came from a pinecone tree, a vegetable tree or a fruit tree?

I wonder if this crystal came from the sea because it looks like salt all stuck together?

In his paper 'Cultivating a Culture of Thinking in Museums', Senior Research Associate of Project Zero at Harvard Graduate School of Education Ron Ritchhart highlights the opportunity for museums to

create 'good thinking'. Whilst the 'Museum of Natural Objects' was not a true museum, its purpose fits his line of thinking. **"In museums, students are interacting with and trying to make sense of new objects and experiences and must think to do so. Specifically, they must: look closely; wonder and question; make interpretations and form hypotheses based on evidence; make connections to things they already know; consider different perspectives and viewpoints; delve below the surface to uncover complexity; and form conclusions..."**³ Indeed this line of thought connects to our whole school pedagogy.

The wonderment continued as the children had the opportunity to visit a temporary butterfly enclosure within the school.

What happens inside a cocoon?

I think the butterfly think about stuff and they decide, maybe they can change in to something else or something else, like an insect or a butterfly and then they decide to become a butterfly. He is transforming.

It is a caterpillar, he might be growing wings out, then the lines on the wings and then the colours.

It is where the butterfly gets its name.

At the same time the children took a great interest in our class snails. (Fig. 6)

I think he is happy because you gave him food.

He looks cool because of the patterns and because his eyes can move around.

The children's understandings of the natural world deepened, their vocabulary was expanding and the narratives of the world around them were becoming more rich, intricate and scientific.

The documentation revealed four foci threaded throughout their conversations – transformation, protection, time and home. We revisited some of the children's theories:

I wonder if the big rock is from a volcano and if it erupted and whether the rock came crashing out of the lava. Then there was the cavemen, the olden days and now we are in the future. So what does time look like?

The wasps eat a tiny bite and that's what makes the hole. They lay eggs in the hole. When they are scared, they protect their babies. What does protection look like?

The children explored clay to develop their responses to these abstract questions (Fig. 7 & 8).



Fig. 8

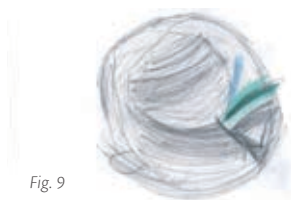


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

At this time the children observed a bird's nest, which was found by a teacher. The children drew the bird's nest with grey led pencil, again looking closely through the document camera (Fig. 9). Whilst looking at their drawings the children noticed a commonality; a blue string in the nest. Stories were created of how a blue piece of string came to be in a bird's nest. This learning experience showed the skills acquired from their previous learning, including analysing an outside object in an inside space and looking inside the object itself to extrapolate a deeper, more complex understanding.

A skin, shed by a pet snake, became another provocation. (Fig. 10)

I think in winter it grows more skin, when it is the new year, in the summer, it sheds so it won't be too warm.

When they shed they already have skin under their last skin. We keep growing and we get our second layer of skin.

I'm wondering when the snake sheds the skin?

The children's skills in constructing meaningful conversation, by listening to one another, by posing questions and unpacking big ideas, were more developed than at the beginning of the year.

"Nature provides a blank canvas of open-ended opportunities to think, create and investigate."⁷⁴

Educators and environmentalists have been looking very closely at the effects of the modern world upon children. How will future generations feel connected to the planet if they have little exposure to its cracks, curves, craters and crevices? Will they know where birds live or how wasps build protection or the transformation of caterpillars if they never come upon these items in the environment? Will they choose to sustain the world around them if they stay inside? Will they obtain deep levels of understanding and curiosity if they have limited experiences to draw upon? How does a child develop true empathy or create vivid imagery when reading about Charlotte and Wilbur if they have never seen a spider or a pig?

Author and journalist Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods* claims that children in the new millennium are suffering from 'nature-deficit disorder'. He writes, "...as the young spend less and less of their lives in natural surroundings, their senses narrow, physiologically and psychologically, and this reduces the richness of human

experience."⁷⁵ Louv continues to argue that it is the responsibility of parents and teachers to connect their children to the planet because **"how the young respond to nature, and how they raise their own children, will shape the configurations and conditions of our cities and homes."** If the purpose of education is to equip young minds with the skills that will extend humankind and shape our environment then, as our planet becomes weary, it should be an imperative, as educators, to ensure our children engage with, nurture and sustain it.

Professor of Education at Wittenberg University Lowell Monke wrote, **"Education must help children come to know themselves, become good citizens, and (with increasing urgency) come to terms with the natural world around them... The most obvious thing schools can do in this regard is give children experiences with real things toward which symbols are only dim pointers. Unless emotionally connected to some direct experience with the world, symbols reach kids as merely arbitrary bits of data. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but to a second grader who has held a squiggly night crawler in her hand, even the printed symbol 'worm' resonates with far deeper meaning than a thousand pictures or a dozen Discovery Channel videos."**⁷⁶

The children's interest in the natural world was integral to our class culture in two pivotal facets. The first being that the natural objects themselves became authentic provocations to anchor curriculum foci; to explore a range of materials such as fine liner, pencil, clay and technology; to develop speaking and listening skills and to create a unified community of 'gatherers' who were acquiring skills in making connections, logistics, observation and analysis. The second was that the process itself developed integral connections between the students and the environment around them, to each other and, ultimately, to themselves.

More recently one child asked, *what is inside the animal?* A cascade of questions followed – **What is inside the inside? What is inside us? What can we learn about ourselves and each other? What lies under our skin?**

A book, *In my Heart: A Book of Feelings*, encouraged the children to talk about how they feel inside. **"My heart is like a house with all these feelings inside."**⁷⁷

The children will continue to explore the inside and outside. And as the class continues to investigate their relationship with the environment and the impact of the environment on their relationships, as well as the children's understandings of themselves and each other, it is my hope, they will continue to grow... and grow...

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The Story of Who We Are



“

Home – Everyone has a story what's yours?”

This was the title of an exhibition held in Melbourne in January 2015, which provoked our thinking, in particular towards our Prep focus of 'Who am I?'

We asked our students:

'What does the word home mean to you?'

Our home is key to our survival. If you didn't have a house you would die because you would have no protection.

Your Mum, Dad and family are inside and that makes it home.

Home is a safe place where you can be yourself and express yourself and feel free to use your imagination.

The children seemed to be moving their thinking away from the physical aspect of home to the non-physical and began to speak about home as being a place of protection, survival and the importance of the family influences that make a house a home.

During science week at school we were able to further the children's thinking about home, and the influences that impact on who we are. The students observed butterflies in an enclosure in the ELC and the children began to explore the home of the butterfly in the chrysalis as it grows and transforms from a caterpillar into a butterfly.

The butterfly is inside the chrysalis thinking how to be a grown up.

The chrysalis is like your mummy's tummy.

From your Mum you are in the tummy and you are growing.

And the butterfly inside the chrysalis is the same, it is living and getting older.

And bigger.

It seemed like the children were now thinking about change, growth and transformation as they began to find links between their growth and that of the butterfly.



Fig. 1

The children were able to explain and make their thinking visible through their drawings of how the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly inside the chrysalis. (Fig. 1 & 2)

When it is in the chrysalis it doesn't recognise it grows wings and then it wakes up and tries to fly. (Fig. 3 & 4)

The patterns come in the middle of the night because the butterfly is sleeping and when it wakes up it has patterns on its wings.

I think we grow when we sleep because we get taller and bigger every day.

I can feel myself growing when I sleep. I am small and I am growing bigger and bigger.

From this experience of observing the butterflies they began to develop theories about growing and changing.

We need to be healthy, you have to grow and then you will be an adult.

We wondered what they meant by "to be an adult".

We asked the children **"What do we take with us from our family home, from our parents and from other adults that becomes part of who we are as we grow and transform into adulthood?"**

Your Mum and dad teach you to be kind so that when you grow up you can be kind and tell your children and they will tell their children.

That is the life cycle.

My Mum teaches me to call it a flock of birds and I want to teach my kids that so they know. (Fig. 5)

The life cycle will never stop.

What could have just remained a physical and literal thinking of home had developed into the values and cultural influences that lead to transformation.

Parents and grandparents have the opportunity of modelling and imparting family values. These values can play an important role; instilling a sense of responsibility, empathy, integrity and a moral code that children formulate and come to understand as they grow and experience the world around them.

You learn from lots of other people too.

One is reminded of the proverb

"It takes a village to raise a child." African Proverb¹

Our school, in partnership with parents, seeks to support values of respect, integrity, perseverance, responsibility and empathy, providing the children with the context in which they can further their sense of ethics.

"The environment should act as an aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people who live in it."

Loris Malaguzzi²

Our role as educators is to support and encourage children to be responsible and independent thinkers with a sense of individual awareness as well as community and social accountability.

I am a kind person. My Mum says that I am kind. When you are a grown up if you are good you don't go to jail. (Fig. 6)



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

“The conscience of children is formed by the influences that surround them; their notions of good and evil are a result of the moral atmosphere they breathe”. Jean Paul Richter (German Novelist and humourist, 1763-1825)³

When I grow up I am going to be a nice person. I am nice to everyone and I say thank you.

I think being nice is important when you are a grownup. If you are nice you will have friends.

Children develop positive relationships with others through social interactions that promote empathy, trust and kindness.

You need to know who you can trust. (Fig. 7)

It is interesting that the idea of trust and empathy is imbedded in the children's sense of values.

If you know you can trust your Mum you have to trust her because she knows the right things for you.

If you listen to your parents they know what to do. You can give your parents your idea and they can tell you what is best for you.

You need to be kind and responsible. You don't lose things when you are responsible.

Out of the conversations the children imparted a heightened sense of responsibility.

A sense of responsibility may be gained through mindful interactions that develop the awareness of the impact we have on others and ourselves.

You need to learn not to be shy at meetings when you are seeing all the people you don't know.

As part of creating our sense of class community in Prep, the children's thinking is valued and their contributions are welcomed within a safe environment. Within this context children are more likely to take risks that promote further growth, achievement and success.

It is important to learn how to help yourself.

If someone tells you what to do you have to think for yourself. First to see if you have to do it. If he tells you what to do and it is not right you might get into trouble.



Fig. 7

Through many experiences and interactions, with guidance and support children begin to develop their thinking of consequence; the 'what if...' where making choices determines the path that is followed.

It is important to be a brave person.

So that you can teach your children to be brave.

Because if you think something is going to hurt and you are brave after you do it you will know how it feels, and if it hurts and you are brave you will feel how it is and it helps you.

Imparting courage helps the child to strengthen their ability to persevere.

“They (children) are autonomously capable of making meaning from their daily life experiences through mental acts involving planning, coordination of ideas, and abstraction... The central act of adults, therefore, is to activate, especially indirectly, the meaning-making competencies of children as a basis of all learning. They must try to capture the right moments, and then find the right approaches, for bringing together, into a fruitful dialogue, their meanings and interpretations with those children.”⁴

Transformation and growth is a continual and reciprocal exchange involving both adults and children. It is the way we travel together that creates the journey and the story of who we are.

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Figures

- Fig. 1 Explaining how the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly.
 Fig. 2 The patterns come in the middle of the night.
 Fig. 3 The colours on the wings come when it is sleeping.
 Fig. 4 While the butterfly is sleeping the wings grow.
 Fig. 5 A flock of birds.
 Fig. 6 I am a kind person.
 Fig. 7 You need to know who you can trust.



Digging Deeper



“

When our group of Prep children came together at the beginning of the year we asked them to talk about themselves and their families with children they did not know. This allowed the children to discover what was similar or different about each other and find common threads within the group.”

We both have a younger brother and we both like fairies. We also like drawing and playing dress ups.

He has lots of brothers and sisters and I don't. We both like football but we go for different footy teams. I go for Hawthorn and he goes for Carlton. We also both like building with Lego.

This gave the children opportunities to find links with one another and in turn begin to form relationships. This linked with our initial intent, which was looking at ourselves within our environment, the similarities and differences in our environment and our relationship with the environment.

As part of a Science Week at our school the Prep children had an opportunity to observe butterflies and became fascinated by the transformation that occurs when a caterpillar changes into a butterfly in the chrysalis. They started by drawing their theories about what happens inside the chrysalis and then discussed their theories in small groups.

The caterpillar is sleeping in the cocoon. While it's sleeping it transforms into a butterfly. First it gets its antenna and body, then it gets its wings and then it gets its legs and after that it gets its patterns and colours. At the end it eats a hole in the cocoon and gets out.

How long does it take?

It takes two weeks.

What makes you say that?

Because I heard the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. (Fig. 1)

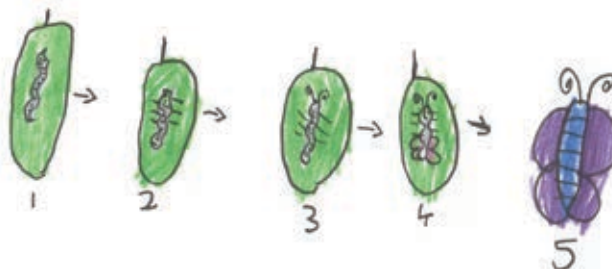


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

It became apparent that animals and their homes and surrounding environments intrigued the children in our class, in particular what made the environments they lived in suitable habitats for these animals. As a result of this interest the children began to bring in items such as nests and shells to share with the class.

I never knew a bird's nest could be so small.

So I think it must be a really small bird to make a small nest.

I think there might have been some little eggs inside it.

The birds use their mouths to carry the stuff.

Because they don't have hands.

I wonder how they know how to make the nest.

I think they fly down to the ground to collect the sticks and they make it quickly.

The birds get things from the tree to make the nest and then they build the nest. (Fig. 2)

The children used magnifying glasses and other tools to further explore these items.

The bird's nest is a 3D shape. I saw through the magnifying glass that there were a few holes in the nest. I noticed that there were lots of pieces of string and grass on the inside and then I saw it had a green stick on the top that the nest is attached to. And there is wire and twigs in the nest. I noticed the nest had little pieces of grass that turned a bit brown. (Fig. 3)

A visit from some Year 10 students living in the Arava in Israel and their power point presentation about some of the animals and their habitats in the Arava further heightened the children's curiosity.

The children began to look in depth at the landscape of the Arava and in turn formulated hypotheses, researched their ideas and tested their theories in relation to the animals of the Arava.

This is a Camel spider and they live underground because it's warm there but not too hot, because when they are too close to the sun they get too hot and start to sweat. So they dig their way down into the ground and go underground because it's not as hot under the ground. The Camel spider is digging a hole underground and he is burrowing down and it gets cooler the deeper he goes, but if he goes too deep it gets really, really cold so he digs up a bit until he is out of the cold section.

When I look at the photos of the desert I think it is cold when the sun sets because it gets cold in the desert at night. It gets really cold at night and it is really hot in the day. So the animals that are close to the ground during the day stay close to water to drink the water because it's so hot. In the photo of the desert in the day the yellow colour of the desert means it's so hot. I have chosen a snake because there are snakes in the desert. If the snake can't find any water it has to go underground to keep cool. It has to go back and forth and back and forth to make a hole and then it goes into the hole to keep cool. The further it goes down the cooler it is because it's getting away from the sun. When the sun sets and it is not as hot the snake comes up to the top of the sand and it knows because it does it every day. (Fig. 4)

Reflecting on the children's conversations we noticed that the children's questions and wonderings came more from what the children wanted to know based on their understandings of what they had discovered so far.

After attending a recent conference where Professor David Perkins spoke about how Big Wonderings and Big Questions energise and

organise learning we reflected on the questions the children posed as well as our own questions.¹

As a result of the discussions on animal habitats the children began to look more closely at cause and effect. Did the change in the seasons and weather have an effect on the choices the animals made as to how they chose to live in their environment? (Fig. 5)

The birds travel to a different country when it's too cold.

Bears hibernate in winter. They go to sleep because it's so cold. They sleep in their home. Their home is a cave.

It's similar because some of the animals hibernate or fly away when it's cold. Not all animals hibernate because some animals go to different countries to find different food.

Or some animals that don't hibernate have really thick fur so they don't need to hibernate or travel to where it is warm.

It's also if the animals want to be cold or hot. Because different animals might not like cold or hot.

For us however it was about their wonderings beyond the facts that we wanted to explore deeper. We wanted to challenge the children's thinking individually and as a group. To do this we asked the children to show their theories and explain these to the other children in the group. Some of the children chose to draw in pencil others used fine liner and some used the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate their thinking about how the animals live in their habitats.

The camel's legs are very tall because the sand is so hot that it is too hot for the camel's body. If the legs were short the camel's body would be too close to the sand and because the sun makes the sand so hot because the sun in the desert is very hot the camel's body will touch the sand and it will get burnt. (Fig. 6 & 7)

I have chosen the camel spider from the Arava. There are seven camel spiders. They are a family. They live underground, under a tree. They go in the tree in a special doorway in the weeds. They go in and out the same way. They live underground because they find water underground and it's not as hot under the ground, but it's still hot because it's in the desert. (Fig. 8)

All of us have stories that link us to our home and the place that we come from. The Prep children have discovered much about how and why animals make choices as to where they live and how they relate to their habitat. We are interested in the links the children make to their home and place and the understandings they have that this is an integral part of who they are.

References

1. 'Cultures of Thinking' Plenary, Professor David Perkins, Bialik College August 2015.

Figures

Fig. 1 How the caterpillar transforms into a butterfly in the chrysalis.

Fig. 2 Children discussing their findings.

Fig. 3 Looking closely at a bird's nest.

Fig. 4 How a snake moves its body back and forth to make a hole in the ground.

Fig. 5 A group of children drawing their theories of how animals survive in the Arava.

Fig. 6 Using the interactive whiteboard to explain a theory to the rest of the class.

Fig. 7 A child's drawing of why a camel has long legs in order to survive living in the desert.

Fig. 8 A child's drawing of how a Camel spider digs a hole under the ground in order to keep cool in the Arava.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Year 1



Leaves of change

“

The leaves are unique like us, they grow and change like us. The trees are all different like us.”

Leaves come and go, what stays with us? Memories, moments, celebrations, commemorations...?

The changing seasons and cycles remind us of the past, and changes over time. We ask ourselves how does recognising and making connections with the past affect change for the future.

What of the present?

What if?

I wonder how?

I wonder why?

Will our links to the past...?

What connects us? What connections do we make? What does connections mean?

Who are we? How do we know this? What makes us say this? What do we wonder about?

We focused on the concept of connections and how we think about them in learning about the world, cultures, contexts and traditions and our role now and in the future. We considered history as we explored points of view and developed a narrative about the past. Through our references to geography we posed questions in relation to features of place: the what, where, how and why and through the influence of the Arts we considered how we use materials to share what we know about a place.¹

During initial discussions with our cross class year 1, students were asked, “What do you think you know about the word, ‘connections?’”

Doing something a long time ago.

They used to use feathers to write.

And ink

Before that there was nothing.

Well they could have written with sticks in the sand.

In the olden days the stick had black on it, no ink.

Connect means related

If someone says something you would say I have a connection with that, you like connection with your story.

Mines a bit connected you focus on a bit

Connect, you could tell, or read, by saying something, I have a connection with it

Connect to people... you relate when you meet and talk together.

Connections feels like learning together.

One thing connecting to another thing

Throughout this investigation, connections were woven in and out: the literal, the theory, the discussions; comparisons through



connections, using prior knowledge, new knowledge and understandings.

In a discussion presented by Sir Ken Robinson as part of 'Ted Talks', he refers how we mark time... and reflects on the concept- if not the watch as a reminder of time as past, present and future what other indicators are on offer?² How many different paths can our learning traverse over time? What of the connections we make and the many strategies we can encourage our children to explore, to develop their thinking and learning? We revisited our connections with Israel and our relationships with the Arava. We annually meet a student cohort from this region and other delegations from this area. This year a delegation of Agri-Scientists from this region visited our school and shared many insights, challenges and achievements in their field.

We used a thinking routine of 'Stepping inside' to deepen thinking and to gain insights by assuming a stance or perceived point of view from within another element. In this instance it began with a photograph from my travels in the Arava. A desert landscape. (Fig. 1)

*That is a desert, not a beach, no rocks, no sea.
Maybe desert in real life and time. It is a desert first then turns to a beach*

It makes me think of desert, all sandy.

It is a hot place, all yellow, it looks hot.

Egypt is where there is desert and lots of rock. It reminds me of Egypt.

It is a desert too. Very hot.

As the students surveyed this photograph their observations were heightened beyond a reference to colour in relation to a desert. They zoomed into the photograph using the interactive whiteboard and discovered other objects and markings in the sand.

From a distance, a round object which was discerned as a rock now offered new theories:

A turtle shell. Turtles live in hot places.

I still think it is a rock. The sun is shining on it.

No look, it's a ball, a soccer ball

And zooming in on another area of the photograph:

I thought it was dirt that dark colour but there was fire there.

Lots of little sticks, fire keeps you warm.

You can toast marshmallows in a fire.

You can add on with sticks and use fire as light.



There is a big mountain. Maybe they took water to drink and it was dark when the fire went out.

And of the marks in the sand:

There are marks where the car was.

Their conclusion to what had begun as 'desert':

This is the desert.

It has sand mountains.

There was a ball.

Maybe someone left the ball there.

In the photograph it is Israel.

There looks like there are fossils.

They are old, it is a memory that helps us.

There are palaeontologists. My grandfather has old things like a cow face. He has a skeleton of a T-Rex

The continuing connections we have made with the Arava provoke us to reflect on our own environment, our own deserts in Australia. We have considered not only the deep history of these deserts but the fact that in spite of harsh conditions much has been established in these areas. Fig 2. The former Israeli President, Shimon Peres stated of the Arava **"In my opinion, the Arava is one of the seven human wonders of the world... I don't think that there's another place in the world that has performed similar agricultural miracles."**³

We further developed our knowledge and understandings of our connections to Indigenous Australian history beyond reference to a style of painting or a recognisable artefact.

We made connections with Indigenous communities through considering values – past and present, and learning about the many different indigenous communities, languages and names of places.

Through viewing a series of maps of Australia as a provocation for deeper questions, the students noted that although the shape of Australia appeared similar, the references to places were not. The students sounded out words that named places in the different maps that they had not heard or read about before and wondered why? Why do different maps of Australia exist?

One map **"represents all the language, tribal or nation groups of the Aboriginal people of Australia. Aboriginal groups were included on the map based on the published resources available**



between 1988 and 1994 which determine the cultural, language and trade boundaries and relationships between groups".⁴ The other map represented the states of Australia – a map with which many of the students were more familiar. How had Melbourne changed, there then, here now?

Some of the students were able to point to what represented for them, the states of Australia and their relationship to these states, as they made particular reference to the terrain and weather of each place. There were places that they had travelled to with their families. What was striking was the way that the children's thinking evolved. They came to understand that their references to place now focused on a deeper emphasis on seeing, thinking and wondering.

We observed our connections to the Australian and Aboriginal and Torres Islander flags.

Colour, symbol and image came to the fore in reference to both our own and cultural connections.

We looked further at the areas around Melbourne such as Warrandyte where the Yarra River, another iconic landmark, passes through this area. When the original inhabitants were asked about the river by a local surveyor at the time, **it has been recorded that the Wurrundjeri people responded 'Yarro, Yarro' meaning 'it flows' To the original Wurundjeri people, the river was "birrarung" – 'river of mists and shadows'**⁵

The students viewed photographs I had taken from this area. What struck the students was the enormity of the trees, the layers of barks shedding, the crystallized sap. Like jewels on the trees and the flowing river with wildlife in this habitat. We promoted the thinking about what stories this area had to tell, and what clues were revealed to us through these photographs and from some of the natural materials shed from the trees. Some of these materials were brought back into the studio. (Fig. 3 & 4)

The cycle of our year had been punctuated by the revisiting of our Australian history as we commemorated historically important events such as ANZAC day and NAIDOC week. We also celebrated many of our Chaggim (festivals) some of which focus on annual agricultural festivals. We thought about the 'there then, here now' within each festival considering the moral lessons within each festival and the ways in which each festival prompts us to remember our past as well as providing a link to our present. We continued to discuss values, the worth, the time, the importance in the thinking and the responding.

At the beginning of our school year we celebrated the Jewish festival Tu B'Shvat – The "new year" for the trees. There are many commentaries about the acknowledgement of the tree. One of the traditions upheld on this day is to plant new trees; another is the eating of new fruit from the tree...⁶

The tree is seen as a symbol of longevity, life infusing, and life dependent both spiritually and physically. From the broken off twig, the bark which has shed, the old tree stump, each has a story to tell which will continue as we retell it, through the many ways it is shared and reinterpreted.

Students viewed several well-known paintings by iconic artist, Russell Drysdale. The children responded to a painting titled Treeform (1945)⁷ not so much about it as art but rather our discussions were about the acknowledging of different ways of thinking and how this is made visible. When we looked at the painting, we could have begun with offering the provocation or premise that this was a famous painting. However, on this occasion the students viewed the painting and were then asked what they could see. The more they observed, the more they saw, not only instinctively looking for the recognisable, as in the tree form, but the students related to the metaphors or symbolism of the colours, the dark shades, the shadows and what this signified to them.

The students became acquainted with paintings by another artist John Wolseley. He immerses himself in the Australian landscape, creating massive works on paper that convey the expansiveness of this landscape and highlighting the naturally made markings of the land and its elements within its regions. In one particularly large watercolour on paper, he depicts the cycle of earth, water and fire and the regrowth from what we know reappears after the devastation of fire.⁸

When asked to think about 'stepping inside' this painting, the students focused on one element in this painting to 'step inside' and create a 3Dimensional response using clay.

It is a bit like step inside someone's shoes. What does it feel like, that means to feel like the other person.

The students responded to one of the old trees captured in this painting:

'I may be old but the birds still come and visit me, I may have now no leaves but the children still climb me. I have seen a lot.' (Fig. 5 – 8)



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

The students valued the natural items they brought into the classroom from their playground discoveries. They sensed the importance in the uncovering and speculation. They continued to construct with natural materials during their play. However, their increasing interest was in their wondering. They noticed the travels and observed the trail left by a small creature on the inside piece of bark which had now fallen away from the tree. They were mindful of not removing bark from a tree and letting nature take its course. We believe this was due to the students' increased knowledge and understanding about nature. (Fig. 9)

After listening to and observing a session at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre⁹ the students reflected on connections between the handing down of stories and skills from elders and parents. We then related this idea to our focus on connections and our links to our past and our relatives. For some students, they related to a special object, such as a wine cup which was used each Shabbat. For others it was a skill that had been shared by a grandparent to grandchild, or a parent to a child. Sporting skills featured highly. Another recalled the mentoring by their siblings in teaching games and which in turn they offered to teach others. One student's story reflected deep memories of a relative who had written of his experiences during the war which had been published in a book. The story of survival was shared by the student who had heard the relative describe how *his family had to hide because they were Jewish*. Another retold a story in great detail, as told to her by her mother, about the discovery of a family member. This family had not known that they had any family left after the war and became aware that this was not the case when someone recognised the family name.

The students grappled with materials and techniques to share their connections. Clay, printing, and painting were employed. As they explored and created with these materials they focused on what would be shared, the essence of their story. Thinking about connections between the past, present and future, we asked ourselves how changes would promote our growth, mindfulness and connections to our past, to support our future learning and thinking. (Fig. 10 & 11)

As we entered the latter stages of the year, we reflected on the learning focus- traversing stories from history, cultures and

traditions, personal and shared stories. Much of our focus too has been in forging strong links to our local and global environment.

'The Last Tree in the City' a story created by Peter Carnavas, was a story retold to the students that depicts a boy who finds another world within a solitary tree in his city. "**For each small moment every day, Edward knew nothing but the tree.**"¹⁰ Immersed in his own thoughts whilst surrounded by what appears to the reader to be the last piece of nature in the city. Did the students immediately respond to, "Where are the other trees" and "What happened to this city?" In fact there was a long pause until the end of the story when the solitary tree was also no longer there, cut down with only the remains of a tree stump. "Where would Edward now go?" And still there was no comments from the students. Until Edward found a small piece of a tree still with green leaves. When looking for a place to plant it and collecting gloves, soil and spade, the students responded that *he would plant it in a pot* when they saw in the illustration what looked like the rim of a red pot. This was not to be the case when they saw that the small tree was 'planted' in the back of his red tricycle... "**and he carried it everywhere.**"¹⁰ The students were intrigued and laughed with the appearance of small trees planted in most unusual containers and places in the once colourless city. This book offered both a humorous and yet a tragic possibility of a prediction for the future. When celebrating the changes in the seasons in nature and directing our student's attention to this in the various learning areas, we ask ourselves how our actions will promote growth, mindfulness and connections from our past to support our future learning and thinking. The world as described in this story as colourless not only brought colour back to the city but also brought back people into the city. A sense of community, connecting with each other and knowing about the other and their history. Would this make the changes? What changes?

"Be the changes you wish to see in the world"¹¹ (Mahatma Ghandi)

As one of our markers of the time the students have spent in the Early Learning Centre we asked them to consider a collaborative initiative that would be left as a gift to the ELC when they moved to the primary school. The gift was to reflect their values and memories.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

“What will you tell the new children and their families?” “What will be the memories you will take with you?” “What are some of the learning experiences you will share with others?”

There can be a tree for all seasons. That represents us and change. The greens, oranges, reds and yellows.

That tree we use it as a goal post. It is a tree we can sit under too and it means we want someone to ask us to come and play. They will see us and come and play with us.

That tree, over there we pretend that it is a castle. We stretch and try and reach the tree. That tells us how tall we are and that we are getting taller. Each leaf is unique like us. They are all different. (Fig. 12 & 13)

A large collaborative tree was constructed by the students in clay. The students added elements of the seasons on the branches and included clay figures to represent themselves and future students who would overtime use the tree as described by the students and like them create memories and connections to pass on.

The tree will give you shade too. (Fig. 14)

Our school is situated in the City of Boroondara. “**Boroondara is from the Woiwurrung language, translating it as where the ground is thickly shaded.**”¹² Each student also made a unique leaf in clay based on their detailed drawing of one of the leaves they observed on the many trees in the school. Some had fallen in autumn others were new leaves after the blossom of spring. The leaves will be scattered and attached to the walls and corners throughout the ELC as a reminder of these Year 1 students, their connections with each other and the changes that will continue as they grow. Like the leaves the cycle continues. (Fig. 15)

We presented a story familiar to many around the world, ‘The Giving Tree’ by Shel Silverstein.¹³

The students read the story and watch old footage of the story in animation. There are many commentaries about the moral of this story.¹⁴ For our students we observed their heightened senses and respect for trees and the natural environment. This has fostered an understanding of the interdependence and respect of and for each other and our responsibility to maintain and pass on these understandings.



Fig. 11

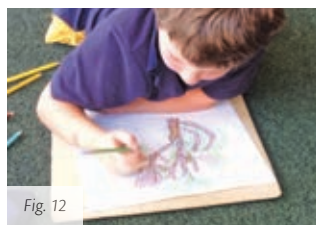


Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

‘Moving backwards into the future’, the title of a recent exhibition of Indigenous Art, “**Central to the exhibition is the idea that Indigenous visual culture – the world’s longest continuing art tradition – is not a fossilised expression of an unchanging society but like the concept of the Dreaming is meta-temporal, that is, it incorporates the past, present and future into a complete and present reality. Moreover, Indigenous art is an aesthetic experience, a courier of visual culture, a seductive and eloquent articulation of identity, time and place.**”¹⁵

For our students and ourselves the challenge is indeed not to remain static but to acknowledge our past histories and learn from them, making connections with them and new connections and sharing them for our future.

“I am what I am because of what others have been in the past. And what I am now in the present will be part of me in the future”. Ubuntu concept.¹⁶

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Dreams



“

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt¹

The song 'I Dreamed a Dream' from the opera Les Miserables was the initial provocation for the Year 1 children's interest in dreams. The song depicts the journey of a woman looking back on her dreams as a child. She wonders what had happened to her dreams. The children heard the song being sung by a senior Bialik student and were thoroughly engaged with the performance. After the performance one of the students talked about her interpretation of the song:

I think the song was about a girl who has a dream. A dream is something that you want to happen but might not necessarily happen.

Other children suggested that dreams were:

Something you think of.

Something you really want to do.

It is a wondering. You wonder if it will happen.

A dream is when you wish someone would play with you when you don't have any friends.

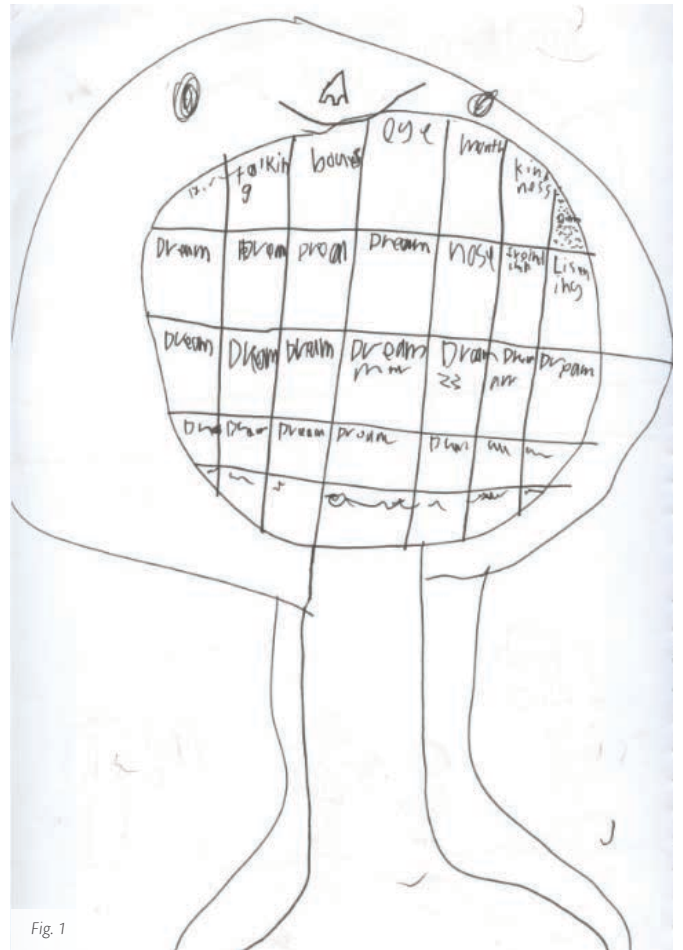


Fig. 1

A dream is something you want to be.

This made me wonder, were there opportunities for dreaming in our curriculum? What would or could these opportunities look like? How do we create an environment where they feel safe or encouraged to dream?

We began to investigate what it meant to be a 'dreamer'. We looked at 'famous dreamers' from our past. We spoke about the life of Martin Luther King and how he dreamed of change. The children viewed, read and listened to his most famous speech, 'I have a dream' and began to discuss what it meant to be a 'dreamer':

A dreamer wants to change something.

If something isn't right and you don't like it - you could dream it wouldn't happen.

Dreaming means you wish something better will happen.

The children began to discuss and identify that dreaming was an important factor in change and progress. They drew what their dreams were for our global community. Some used colour when drawing and others chose to use just black fineliner.

I have a dream that one day there are no wars, no one kicks each other and people don't say rude words to each other.

I dream that people would like each other and that they don't laugh at each other if they have something worse than you.



Fig. 2

I dream that there won't be guns or robbers in Argentina.

When asked what their personal dreams were for the future most cited a career. As they drew their dreams they discussed their ideas with each other and myself.

I dream that one day I will live in a zoo.

I used to want to be someone who made lots of money but now I really want to be a dancer because that is a lot more fun.

Other children focused on imagination as important in their dreaming.

A dream is when you are imagining. I daydream a lot.

Dreams are to keep you from getting bored. You can dream of interesting things and tell your friends in the morning.

The children were asked to imagine and hypothesise how dreams were made. Many of the children drew their brain. They cited thinking, imagining and reflecting when explaining their hypothesis.

This man's brain is reflecting on his day.

I think G-d hypnotises our brains at night to make dreams. He sprinkles a special dust to create the dreams.

You can imagine many things with your brain. Sometimes they (the thoughts) come together as something great.

I think my brain is awake at night. It dreams about things and gives me new ideas.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

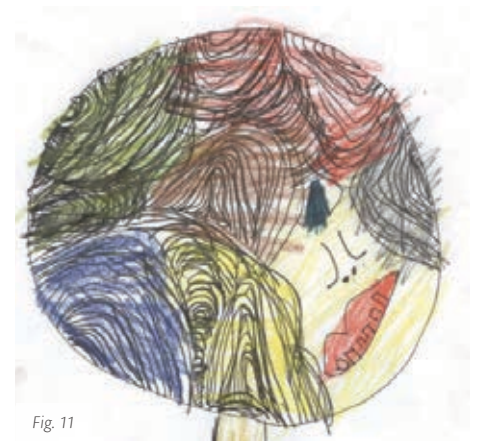


Fig. 11

Giving the children these opportunities to openly discuss their ideas and encourage their questions and wonderings provided for an environment where creativity and imagination could flourish. Journalist and activist Gloria Steinman said, **“Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all is a form of planning.”**²

On reflection the children gave their definition of dreaming.

Fantasy

Imagining

Wishing

Thinking

Reflecting

And these discussions continued in class with the children using clay to further define their ideas about dreams.

I'm making a brain because I think you use your brain to make dreams.

I have made two worlds. One world is a good world and one world is a bad world. On the good world someone is saying they want to make a change like Martin Luther King.

What has become clear through these discussions with the students is the importance of continuing to foster opportunities for wonderment, curiosity and creativity where children can engage with their imagination.

Current research suggests that valuing imagination and creativity in our classrooms is important to our children's success. Leading educational researcher Ken Robinson suggests that creativity and innovation should be as important as literacy in our curriculum. **“Our task is to educate their whole being so they can face the future.”**³ It is integral that as educators we create opportunities for children to explore, question and wonder for them to make change. Albert Einstein suggested, **“To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science.”**⁴

What will the children do with their dreams? What will they need to do to pursue their dreams? Author Sarah Ban Breathnach describes, **“The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers. But above all, the world needs dreamers who do.”**⁵

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Am I grateful for my place in this world and who has been instrumental in me finding my place?



“

The year began with the children returning to their second year together after a six week summer break.”

To help them reacquaint themselves with each other as well as refocusing on themselves after this break, they were given 'strength cards'¹ which carried suggestions of individual strengths. With a partner they discussed which strengths best described each other and interestingly, their choices were both self-revealing and insightful.

I can be trusted

I am a good friend

I am very loving. (Fig. 1)

This raised the idea for us of what made these children think of themselves in these ways. Their ideas of who they were appeared to be both positive and affirming. Was this because of their elders, their parents, their environment, their school friends, their life choices and were they happy with the views they held of themselves?

During a visit to the Melbourne Museum, we met a Senior Koorie Programs Officer who explained the term 'elders' to the children in an extremely respectful way. He referred to our elders as those who have come before us and who have passed on their values and their knowledge to us, which caused us to reflect on **Who are the elders we know and what do they do for us?** The children agreed they were people who are older than you and people who teach you things.

They explain things so you can pass it on to other people like in stories.

It's like your parents and grandparents and brothers and sisters.

John F Kennedy firmly believed **'We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.'**² The concept of being grateful came up in the context that we are grateful to our elders who have passed things on to us.



Fig. 1

im grAt foOL
for my sAden
because He pIcks
me up



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

My Papa teaches me how to ride my bike.

I am grateful that my Dad teaches me footy.

I am so lucky to have my family because they help me (Fig. 2 & 3)

Cicero went so far as to say “Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.”³ In thinking about gratitude, we found that the Oxford dictionary defines it as ‘the quality of being thankful: readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.’⁴ When I asked the children what gratitude looked like to them, their definitions connected with that of the dictionary.

To me it means the people you’re passionate about. I’m grateful for my family because they look after me.

It means you love something and you’re happy when you do something for someone and have a play date with someone.

You’re happy for what you have. You respect what people give you. You be nice to them. Maybe tell them how grateful you are for what they gave you. It’s about having what there is and not asking for more.

I think it means feelings, like good feelings.

As the class teacher, I felt the idea of being ready to show appreciation and to return kindness was one worth pursuing if it was to underpin the fabric of our class relationships. Reading research from Emmons shows that “Children who practise grateful thinking have more positive attitudes toward school and their families.”⁵

How to uncover the children’s feelings, how to make their thoughts visible led me to read that “Gratitude can be trained, and one way to do so is by a gratitude journal. And by training in gratitude, one can become lastingly happier.”⁶ Thus we began keeping individual journals which the children wrote in several times a week. (Fig. 4)

The further we delved into what we appreciate and are grateful for in our lives the more apparent it became that the prime area for the children was that of relationships. Positive reciprocal relationships was what continually came through in their gratitude journals.

I am grateful that I am at school today because if I didn’t I wouldn’t know stuff.

I am grateful that I have friends so I can play with them.

I am grateful that Jonty helped me because it made me feel good.

I am happy to see my friends.

I’m thankful today because people were being bad sportsmen then Ty said, ‘Do you want you play with me?’ and it was much funner.

I am grateful for people encouraging me because it made me feel special. (Fig. 5)

“Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.”⁷

“Gratitude does work! Thankfulness is important not only because it helps people feel good, but also because it encourages them to do good to others. By reaching outside themselves to appreciate gifts they’ve received, they gain a perspective of belonging to a larger, intricate network of sustaining, mutually-

reciprocal relationships and are then more motivated towards future benevolent actions towards others.”⁸

Kindness goes hand in hand with gratitude. According to a recent study at Harvard University, “Children aren’t born with an innate ability to act kindly, but learn it in the same way as they might pick up an instrument or a language. Daily opportunities to practise something as simple as helping another child can make a difference.”⁹ The book ‘Have you filled a bucket today?’¹⁰ by Carol Mc Cloud tells us that everyone carries an invisible bucket. We read her book and gave each child an individual container. Their friends could then fill this container with notes describing acts of kindness, such as how they had liked it when they had given them a smile or played with them or helped them. In this way they could see their container filling up and so understand that their action caused someone in our class to feel happy. The concept, that by making others feel special can fill your invisible bucket and make you feel special as well, is indeed a beautiful one. (Fig. 6)

There are still some questions for me that remain unanswered.

Are the children grateful for who they are and for what happens to them?

Would filling in a gratitude journal become a habit that the children maintain?

Would filling in the journal continue their focus on what is positive about what they have in their lives?

The greatest benefit has been the focus on realising, that with gratitude, these children actively acknowledge the goodness in their lives.

The expectation is that by using the kindness buckets and the gratitude journals this will contribute to the children’s idea of their place in the world in a very positive way. Research supports this. The kind and positive attitudes in the classroom support this. What remains to be seen is whether future experiences for our children will continue to be positive, tinged with gratitude and kind acts. Will their resilience and wellbeing continue to be enhanced as a result of this?

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Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Time moves slowly, but passes quickly



“

I strongly believe that for true life-long learning to take place, one needs to form one's own questions arising from one's interests and as a teacher, I wanted to provide opportunities for students to think and engage in meaningful dialogue.”

This term the students had been exploring Measurement, specifically through Time. We had been looking at time through more complex and abstract lenses, grappling with questions such as:

How do we mark time?

What are different examples and models of time?

We posed the question: What is time? The students shared their understanding through drawing, their theories and writing their thoughts (Fig. 1–4)

Some of the responses were:

Time to me is religion. I mean that there are special times for each religion. Like in the Jewish religion there are special times like for Pesach and Shabbat.

Time to me is remembering when I moved to my house in Australia we did not have much things in my house because we just came from Israel and then we got more and more things to make it look like our old house in Israel.

Time looks to me like question marks and lights in my head because I have to remember everything. Like my things at school and at home.

The time means to me the universe. The universe is all the planets put together. Planets are pretty much the same as Earth. Time created the whole universe. Time created time.

This last quote served as a springboard for us to consider the students sense of time through their family timeline. (Fig. 5–8)

We believe in the integral part that collaboration plays in our learning; how the students build on and connect with their peers' thinking and so this was an opportune time for the students to do a 'gallery walk' where they could look and read their peers' perceptions of time passing.

Time to me is when you are just born and you grow up to be an adult. First you are a baby and you don't understand a lot of what is around you and as you grow older you become more mindful of what is around you.

This is me from when I was a baby to now. I got the idea because you don't stay the same size you are when you are born. Otherwise you will be really small. But every year you get taller and taller. I am an Essendon supporter and I have been one all my life. I get new Essendon jumpers when I get bigger.

Time is when you grow from a baby to being an adult. It sort of moves. In my family first came my mum and then my dad. So there were two people. They got married and had me then my sister Gaby and my baby



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

brother Max. So now there are five people in my family. So, families grow as the time moves.

Time is about change. Before my zada died we use to go to my buba and zada's house for schmitzel and chips.

There was an obvious range of thinking from traditions to life cycles.

The students were now curious about discovering more information about their family history. **How could they gather information to answer their own theories?** Students returned, filled with excitement wanting to share the knowledge they had found out through their parents, grandparents, siblings and cousins.

I had red hair when I was born and my mum had red hair when she was born. My hair is now blonde like my grandmother and I look pretty much like her. She looks like my dad.

When I was young we lived in another house which was so small. Because it was far away my mum and dad sold it to get a bigger house close to my school because it is a very good school.

My mum had a different last name when she was born and she spoke Russian at home because her parents come from Russia.

When I was born I slept in a cot that my little sister sleeps in now. Then I got my second third sisters bed because she got my other sisters bed. So as we grow we changed beds because our bodies grow and we get taller, so we need longer beds.

Many weeks had been spent on the students comparing growth and time. The students were asked to measure the length of their bed using their feet.

If you have a smaller foot you will have more footsteps

If you are taller you have a longer bed

The students tested these claims by estimating and comparing the length of the mattress they had used in kinder to their body length. They realised the quote **'time moves slowly, but passes quickly'** was relevant to this experience as most of them felt time moved very slowly when they were in kinder.

This is what the students had to say about growth and time: (Fig. 9)

We are almost in Primary school. Next year we will be in Year 2 and our body will grow with our age.

My body use to be too small for the kinder mattress

I remember sleeping on the mattress and my feet would not be near the end. Now, they are way past the end.

When I was in four year old kinder my parents got me a new bed and mattress and it was so long. I have grown into it and my dad said I will need a new bed when I am a teenager.

My mattress at home is way bigger than the kinder one. So I have grown a lot since four year old kinder.

The Thinking Routine, 'I used to think, I now think' gave the students the opportunity to show how their thinking had grown. They were only able to do this after gaining a basic knowledge of how time is interconnected with growth life cycles, traditions and religion. The students were asked to reflect on what they used to think about time and about what they now think.

I used to think there were other religions. I now think there are some things other religions have copied from the Jewish religion.

I used to think that olives came from trees. I now know it takes a long time to prepare the olives and take the bitterness away before they are ready to enjoy.

I used to think you bought olives in a shop. I now think we have olives trees at school and it took months to prepare the olives. I could not wait to share them with my family.

I used to think old people died. I now think it is very sad when your zaida dies.

I used to think indigenous people painted on bark. I now think they painted on bowls and spears. They never used apple green colour.
(Fig. 10 & 11)

Education today is very different from what I was exposed to as a student. We want our students to ask questions, make connections and look at things from different perspectives.

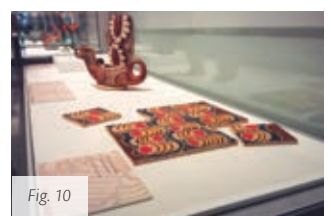
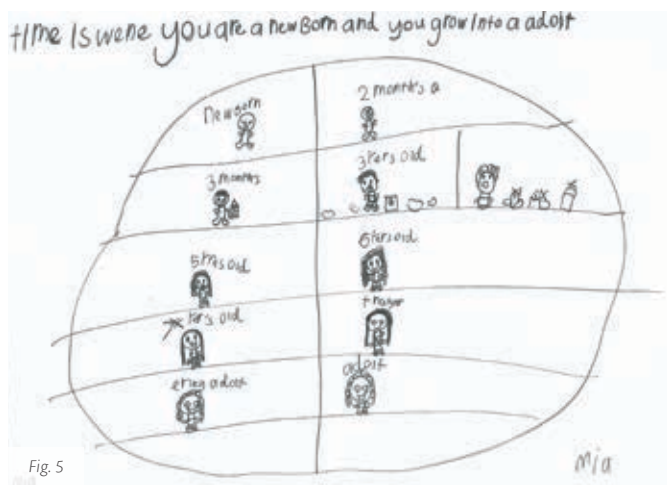
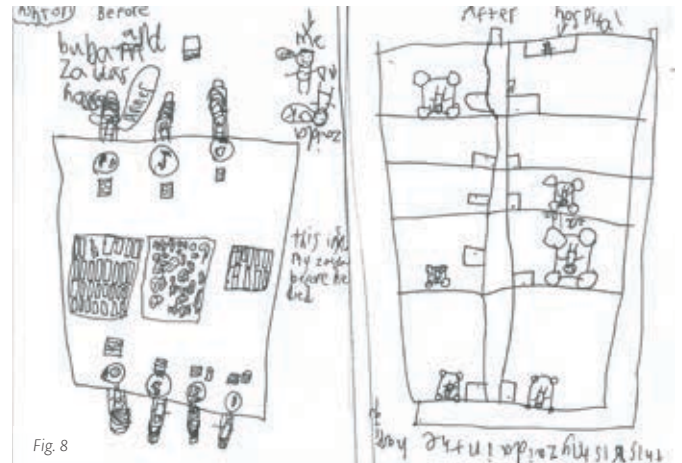
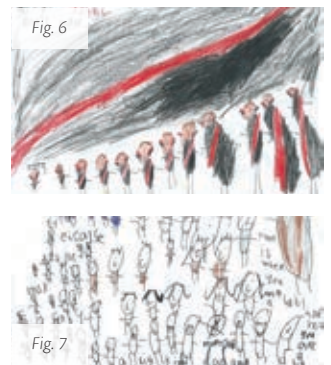
We need to be aware of the student's strengths in navigating their own discoveries and how we as educators assist in facilitating this.

References

1. *The colour Purple*. Alice Walker (1982) Carroll & Graf Publishers Inc.
2. *Making Learning Visible- Children as individual and group learners – Project Zero* Reggio Children

Figures

- Fig. 1 Time is religion
- Fig. 2 Time is moving house
- Fig. 3 Time is questions
- Fig. 4 Time is the universe
- Fig. 5 Time is when you are born
- Fig. 6 Time is from when I was a baby to now
- Fig. 7 Time is when your family grows
- Fig. 8 Time is when someone dies
- Fig. 9 Children comparing bed lengths
- Fig. 10 Punuka Tjukurpa exhibition
- Fig. 11 Olive preparations



Contributors

3 Year Old Kinder

Kinder 3J

When can we use our imagination again?

Daniel Apter, Mia Birnbaum, Jake Block, Tia Blumenthal, Hannah Dzienciol, Laila Engel, Sidney Gauvin, Mason Goldstat-Joffe, Natalie Grossman, Sam Held, Finn Joachim, Mia Kallenbach, Poppy Lust, Charlie Mooseek, Amira Pinczewski, Zoe Robin, Freya Rosin, Joel Skalicky, Billy Slade-Jacobson, Hudson Solomon, Ella Symons, Lexi Whine

with

Judy Blumberg, Ayana Shavit, Leh-Anne Engel, Robyn Winograd, Aliza Deutsch

Kinder 3L

The insight of children – the spontaneous storytellers or the narrative of the young storyteller

Lyla Alperstein, Idan Ben Artzi, Danielle Brod, Coco Dvir, Jasper Fink, Emily Firestein, Rocklan Fischl, Hadar Golan, Ethan Hutcheson, Ezra Janover, Miller Janover, Amy Jin, Shiraz Kapper, Rose Leighton, Chloe Levy, Jake Lichtenstein, Livvy Lurie, Alicia Mackin, Arki Rettig, Levi Roitman, Carmel Rom, Louis Rom, Nadav Sztrajt

with

Lindsay Miller, Adi Barzilay, Ortal Erez, Mandie Teperman, Bella Besser

Kinder 3G

If you want to go fast go alone...if you want to go far go together...

Jacob Aldworth, Remy Asseraf, Eyal Bart, Jaiah Benjamin, Chloe Berkovitch, Dalia Blecher, Ashton Burns, Pia Dabscheck, Annie-May Finkel, Judah Goldman, Sienna Kamil, Madison Keddie, Jacob Kirszbaum, Milan Perry, Ruby Rosenbaum, Esther Schluter, Milla Serry, Aurora Shapiro, Jordan Shapiro, Ben Sheezel, Angus Somerville, Charlie Taylor, Milla Whytcross, Tiffany Yerusolimsky

with

Gali Sommer, Pazit Landau, Megan Jay, Deb Nirens, Zia Freeman

4 Year Old Kinder

Kinder 4 Cross Class

Trees make air we need it

Kinder 4E, Kinder 4M, Kinder 4R

with

Helene Oberman

Kinder 4E

I see the children's hearts. They are happy children working together.

Jack Barnett, Ethan Bohbout, Ashley Degen, Toma Ditchburn, Olivia Gaspar, Gemma Gunn, Orli Hansen, Ava Harris, Noah Herszfeld, Gisele Hunter, Frida Kallenbach, Amelie Kohn, Frankie Lasky, Lielle Liderman, Toby Litwinow, Olivia Malet, Lilly Pratt, Sam Reider, Max Robin, Jasper Rogers, Camilla Ryan, Jesse Snyder, Ben Wilson, Nicholas Wrobel, Josh Yates, Gabrielle Zimmert

with

Elise Rotstajn, Miri Sheffer-Watson, Julia Levine, Chris Georgalas

Kinder 4R

"Imagination is the power of the mind over the possibilities of things."

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

with

Ranjna Najat, Tamar Herman, Margaret Todd, Nikki Kausman, Tonia Barolsky

Kinder 4M

Stitching their place...

Rafi Adeney, Eve Akoka, Milla Altman, Ava Beggs, Harlow Birner, Luca Bohbout, Amelia Bram, Maayan Falkov, Nadav Fuchs, Bella Furman, Nathan Goldberg, Ido Hartman, Zabi Kalbstein, Dylan Kinda, Noah Lakman, Reuben Landau, Ebony Mahemoff, Zaiden Moszkowicz, Maddy Nussbaum, Eden Peretz, Jacob Redhouse, Alexandra Ryan, Hadar Sufaro

with

Megan Miller, Ilana Cohen, Rosemary Barry

Prep

Prep Z

Inside Outside

Toby Adeney, Darcy Arrow, Lincoln Burns, Ella Carmeli, Jason Dodge, Emi Engelman, Luka Federman, Lior Feldman, Eliana Firestein, Chloe Freund, Mia Grossman, Eligh Harris, Gabriel Harrison, Zoe Janover, Yarin Peretz, Jesse Stowe-Lindner, Hugo Wise, Eli Wolkenberg

with

Zoe Winograd, Irit Fishman, Mandie Teperman, Bella Besser

Prep L

The Story of Who We Are

Samuel Aldworth, Lior Bart, Jerome Braun, Amber Goldberg, Jesse Holsman, Sunny Kister, Remy Krasnostein, Harlow Lewin, Hao Li, Lior Mazer, Annabel Naphtali, Romy Rodenski, Archie Rosenberg, Harvey Ryan, Joah Scher, Jade Swart, Noa Whytcross

with

Linda Baise, Sigal Tirosh, Mandie Teperman, Bella Besser

Prep R

Digging Deeper

Abigail Apter, Lior Bartenstein, Jacob Burrows, Yhonatan Carmeli, Orli Erenboim, Zohar Galon, Saskia Gelbak, Gabriel Jacob, Joel Krause, Evie Lichtenstein, Harry Lurie, Joshua Morley, Leon Pratt, Abi Pudel, Zac Steedman, Ashton Whine, Ohad Yosef

with

Roz Marks, Desre Kaye, Robyn Winograd, Aliza Deutsch

Year 1

Year 1 Cross Class

Leaves of change

Year 1A, Year 1K, Year 1R

with

Helene Oberman and Year 1 teachers

Year 1R

Dreams

Peri Afranco, Samuel Brover, Tara Filer, Felix Fink, Saffron Fischl, Emma Fisher, Adam Frishman, Hayden Goldberg, Josh Holzer, Blake James-Wurzel, Emma Kulbak, Zoe Lasky, Asher Lifszyc, Ashley Podlubny, Samuel Razbash, Shani Rom, Nick Rosenbaum, Jacob Rosin, Leo Shaw, Suede Solomon, Alexandra Southwick, Tom Tamir, Indiana Tugendhaft

with

Rachel Machlin, Sigal Tirosh, Anne Budlender, Sandy Sher, Chris Georgalas

Year 1K

Am I grateful for my place in this world and who has been instrumental in me finding my place?

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

with

Kathleen Georgiou, Irit Fichman, Anne Budlender, Sandy Sher

Year 1A

Time moves slowly, but passes quickly

Lex Amira, Ori Brod, Eden Castelan, Ella Davis, Zahara Dvir, Arthur Edwards, Eden Givoni, Josh Jagoda, 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 Zimmel

with

Antonia Provates, Desre Kaye, Deb Nirens, Jenny Rychter





www.facebook.com/BialikCollege

Sam & Minnie Smorgon Campus

429 Auburn Road
East Hawthorn, Victoria 3123
Telephone (03) 9822 7981
Facsimile (03) 9822 0553
P.O. Box 433, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122

Early Learning Centre

Enter from 407 Tooronga Road
East Hawthorn, Victoria 3123
Telephone (03) 9822 3123
Facsimile (03) 9822 7499

www.bialik.vic.edu.au
info@bialik.vic.edu.au

