

~Inquiry Research~

I'm hoping the ideas explored here offer a forum to actively stretch thinking around what makes learning environments fabulous ones through taking that inquiry spark, the essence within all beginning learners, their birth right, and nurturing a flame to last a life time. I welcome your comments because ideas that resonate invite social connection.



Lorraine Sands:
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The language of learning



What happens when the unexpected happens is often a real insight into the character of a learner. Curiosity, creativity, persistence and camaraderie require vulnerability. Putting yourself out there, being brave in every sense of the word, is a way into exploring something new and not giving up, even when the 'new' is tricky. Whether learning is inside the intricacies of making and being a friend, writing letters that at first are so difficult, exploring our natural world with the wonder that comes from deep within or when an 'actual' spider falls into your gumboot, how we respond keeps us open to further inquiry or not.... hearing the language of learning helps to build resilience, resourcefulness and reflective inquiry, three of Guy Claxton's learning power words. And the fourth, so very powerful for learning, is wrapped up inside social learning where we bump ideas around together and come up with innovative, collaborative efforts that are far more than individuals can muster on their own.

Guy's latest book, the Learning Powered Approach has expanded

these original ideas and has a chapter on 'learning elements'. These dispositional words are easily transported into your Learning Stories. Obviously they need to be meaningfully connected to the narrative, however, they are extraordinarily useful when we are considering what kind of language to use to alert families and children about learning, and give specific feedback that grows learner identity. For example:

Today, Jasper, you maintained your focus, despite the many distractions around you. I think that you were so engrossed in the learning goals you had set for yourself that you 'locked' your mind onto learning.....

This is the way Guy describes dispositional aspects of learning and what these mean in terms of how learners respond to learning opportunities. If you are 'curious' then you will have an inquisitive attitude towards life and you will wonder, question, explore and experiment.

Curiosity: Having an inquisitive attitude towards life

Wondering: Being alive to puzzles and incongruities

Questioning: Seeking deeper understanding

Exploring: Actively and adventurously investigating

Experimenting: Trying things out to see what happens

Attention: Locking your mind onto learning

Noticing: Being attentive to details and patterns

Concentrating: Maintaining focus despite distractions

Contemplating: Letting perception unfold

Immersing: Being engrossed in learning

***Determination: Sticking with challenges
that matter to you***

*Persevering: Staying intelligently engaged with
learning*

*Recovering: Bouncing back quickly from
frustration*

*Practicing: Mastering the hard parts through
repetition*

***Imagination: Creatively exploring
possibilities***

*Connecting: Using metaphor and association to
leverage new ideas from what you know*

*Playing with ideas: Allowing the mind to bubble
up with possibilities*

*Visualising: Using mental rehearsal to refine skills
and explore consequences*

*Intuiting: Tapping in to bodily based nuances
and inklings*

***Thinking: Working things out with clarity
and accuracy***

Analysing: Reasoning with logic and precision

Deducing: Drawing inferences from explanations

*Critiquing: Questioning the validity of knowledge
claims*

Systems thinking: Thinking about complex states

of affairs

Socialising: benefitting from and contributing to the social world of learning

Collaborating: Being an effective and supportive team member

Accepting: Being open to ideas and feedback

Imitating: Being permeable to other people's good habits

Empathising: Adopting multiple perspectives

Leading: Playing a role in guiding and developing

Reflection: Standing back and taking stock of learning

Evaluating: Appraising the quality of your own work

Self-evaluating: Knowing yourself as a learner

Witnessing: Quietly watching the flow of your own experience

Thinkering: Blending doing and thinking together

Organisation: Being methodical and systematic about learning

Learning-Designing: creating your own learning activities

Planning: Anticipating the needs and pitfalls of the learning journey

Resourcing: Building your bank of learning resources

The Learning Story below has these ideas embedded into it. Once we thought Learning Stories were written primarily for the child, however, over time we have come to realise what a valuable resource they are to engage families in wider conversations about ways to nurture children's learning identities. When these stories form part of teachers ongoing conversations with families, they support partnership, so children's deeply invested interests can flow between home, centre and beyond.

Mathematics and art connect...with the disposition to be creative!



**There
are some moments that
stop you in your tracks! This was
one of those.**

How do art and mathematics join together to offer the maker and the watcher such emotional satisfaction?

My thoughts on your learning Maeve....

I was walking past when this wonderful art installation caught my attention. I stopped to watch and became fascinated by the degree of thoughtful logic that went into making this thing of beauty. Was it about the juxtaposition of joining silverware to the children of Tane in a way that had pattern and beauty combined? I can't answer this question and can only wonder at the simplistic synergy that you created. What I can say though is that your mahi was strongly focussed on the effort to find the resources you needed. You seemed to have an overview of how you wanted this to look because you systematically returned to the barrel to find the pieces you needed to cover every stone and tree trunk across the whole garden. This was art on a large scale, the kind you might find in a garden ramble, coming across an installation designed to capture a wanderer's heart and mind.

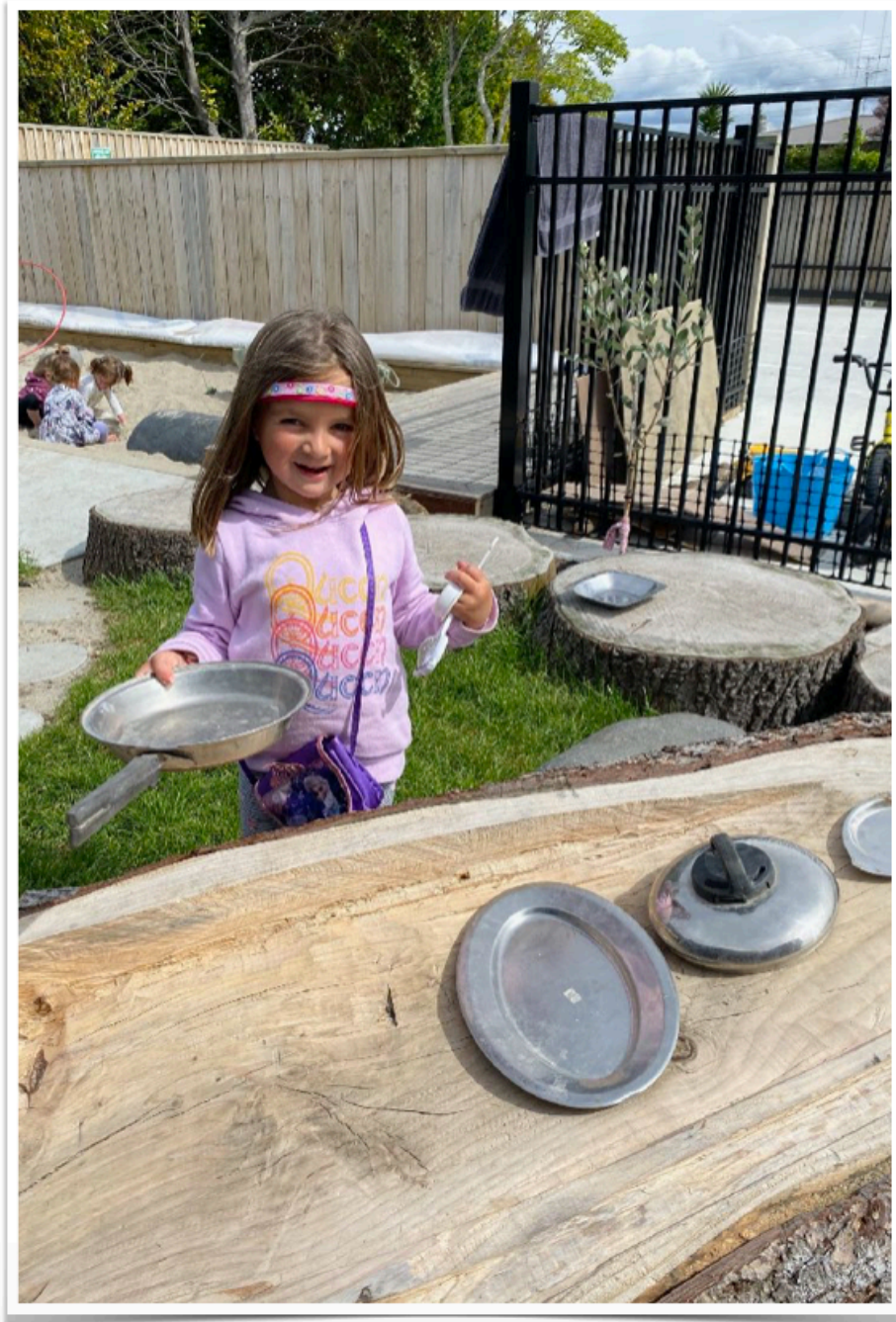
I was also struck by the way this kapai whakaaro belonged to you and how you stuck with your project despite all the action around you. You concentrated until the job was done; your job; to your satisfaction. This is about setting a goal and sticking with it - a great learning disposition to be developing. This takes time, effort, patient reflection and diligent execution. Was this something that came from deep within, a heart led curiosity to see what was possible?



How might our community nurture this learning further?

Maeve, this is always an interesting thought for us and particularly something like this. It's because you were the one who had the kapai whakaaro, for none of us would have thought of combining nature and silver containers in just, quite this way. I think it is about giving you the freedom to manipulate, move and combine all of our resources in imaginative ways that sets the scene for this kind of

learning to take place. Noticing it and writing about it will give you an opportunity to revisit these ideas and talk about them as we read through your folder together, here and at home. I wonder if your whānau have noticed your interest in this kind of mathematical concept of one-to-one correspondence and this artistic arrangement? I'll be interested to have a chat with your Mum and Dad as we see them next. Arohanui Lorraine



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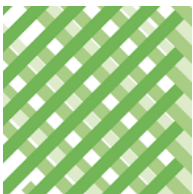


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