



ReCOGNITION

BIG IDEA EXPERIENCE: THE PROJECT APPROACH

ReCognition

November 19, 2016 Collective Thinking | by Kathy Boelsma

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About the Author

Kathy is the Lead Collaborator, a passionate advocate for self- learning, a creator of professional learning opportunities, and a collector of quality resources in the early years. Kathy's knowledge and thinking come from her 12 years of work as a Children's Librarian and her 16 years of work as an Early Literacy Specialist in Lanark County. Her current interests include the pedagogical approaches of Reggio Emilia, graphic materials and their use by children, and the art of collaboration across different areas of interest to create paradigm shifts in thinking with individuals or groups.



Preface

On November 19, 2016 in Kanata, Ontario, 111 early years educators gathered to listen, learn and think about an approach to learning which offers a competent view of the child.

Tracy Sims and Cheryl Emrich, are a Full Day Kindergarten Early Learning Team. They work at Howard Robertson Public School in Kitchener, Ontario for the Waterloo Region District School Board. Tracy and Cheryl have been working in partnership together for 5 years. They have taught in both the Extended Day and the Core Day program.



Together, they offer a program that focuses on emergent, inquiry based learning. They draw inspiration from many different approaches to teaching such as the Reggio Emilia philosophy and Project Based Learning.

The Project Approach: Learning with Children provided a hands on workshop that provided educators with an opportunity to: learn about real projects in an kindergarten classroom, reflect on the process and planning of project work, discuss how to capture and embrace the true interests of children.

This is our collective thinking as a group that we can share and reflect on.

Your Pre Reading before you came, we wanted to help you think about this:

“If you are interested in this approach to learning, explore Lilian Katz and the Project Approach here <http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org/illinoispiip/blogs/katz/index.html>.

Many links are to the new Kindergarten document in learning *with* children. Also see Sylvia Chard from the University of Alberta <http://projectapproach.org/>.”



We were getting ready for you....

Big Idea Experience: The Project Approach

November 19, 2016
The Agenda for our Day

- 8:30am-9:00am Registration and Continental Breakfast in the Cafe
- 9:00am Start time with Tracy and Cheryl, Welcome by Kathy and ReCognition Team, Begin Session
- 10:30am 10 minute ReFresh Break
- 10:40am-12:15pm Continuing Session
- 12:15pm-12:45pm Lunch with live music by Scott Landry (wraps, salad, dessert and Perrier, fruit teas and water)
- 12:45pm-1:05pm A ReFocus Time
- 1:05pm-2:30pm Continuing Session
- 2:30pm-2:40pm ReFresh Break
- 2:40pm-4:00pm Closing Session

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A good morning and words of encouragement about the great influence and job you do for children and families from Rev. Allan Summers, Senior Pastor at The Bridge Church, Kanata.

What is the Project Approach?

“A method of teaching in which an in-depth study of a particular topic is conducted by a child or a group of children. The Project Approach is incorporated into the curriculum but does not always constitute the entire curriculum.”

The Why

“Innately curious, children explore, manipulate, build, create, wonder, and ask questions naturally, moving through the world in what might be called an “inquiry stance”. Educators observe and document the children’s thinking, ideas, and learning; interpret and analyze what they have noticed; and express their own thinking and wondering as they interact with the children. In a Kindergarten classroom, the educators adopt an inquiry stance along with the children, and a culture of inquiry characterizes the learning environment.”

The Kindergarten Program 2016 pg 20

“Asking questions and making sense of information to expand understanding are at the core of all inquiry. Through its focus on an inquiry approach, the Kindergarten program promotes the development of higher-order thinking skills by capitalizing on children’s natural curiosity, their innate sense of wonder and awe, and their desire to make sense of their environment. An inquiry approach nurtures children’s natural inquisitiveness. As educators give children opportunities to seek answers to questions that are interesting, important, and relevant to them, they are enabling them to address curriculum content in integrated, “real world” ways and to develop – and practice – the higher-order thinking skills and habits of mind that lead to deep learning. “

The Kindergarten Program 2016 Pg 21

“Children develop problem-solving strategies from first-hand explorations and from exchanging ideas with other children and with adults, all of which can help them to see things from different points of view. Children develop “working theories” as answers to their questions by observing and listening, and by exploring, discussing, and representing. Their theories become increasingly useful for making sense of the world and for giving them some control over the problem-solving process. “

The Kindergarten Program Pg 88

“Some Benefits of Projects

Teachers who wish to offer their children meaningful opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they acquire through direct instruction may choose to incorporate project work into the curriculum. As children make careful observations and inquiries through their project work, they are likely to have a reason to use literacy and numeracy symbols to represent and communicate to others what they are learning about their topics. As Dewey (1916/1966) explains, much of our thinking is stored in symbols. It is reasonable to assume that what each child chooses to communicate to others is meaningful to her or him. In this way, the Project Approach can serve as a useful and meaningful complement to a more typical, systematic, or direct form of instruction.

A further advantage of the Project Approach lies in the context it offers for children to develop desirable dispositions—or habits of mind—toward learning, toward themselves, and toward others (Katz, personal communication, August 5, 2000). Based on her reflection on the projects that transpire in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, Katz (1994a) asserts that we can see in children's work clear evidence that

1. all young children have active and lively minds from the start;
2. the basic dispositions to make sense of experience, investigate it, care about others, relate to them, and adapt to their physical and cultural environment are dispositions within children from the start; and
3. these in-born dispositions can flourish, deepen, and strengthen under the right conditions. (p. 8)

If orchestrated correctly, the Project Approach has the potential to provide children with the right conditions under which to develop these dispositions. We can conclude from research (Marcon, 1992) that these dispositions may be damaged at an early age if children are overly drilled in skills with academic instruction and not given many opportunities to develop their investigative dispositions.”

<http://ecrp.illinois.edu/v8n2/clark.html>



Self-Regulation Studio Space

Corry Goddard, our collaborator, with the Studio Space was showing us how so many items can be used to help with this idea of self-regulation. Reading books about this topic, sensory items, like essential oils, fans, heavy items pressing down on us...all these ideas can be tried as beginning places to help ALL children learn to self-regulate. If we could see that some of these items are not just for children with special needs but can be used by all children when needed. This creates an inclusive environment where we all get our needs met.





The equipment (educational materials and sensory toys) items were (available from fdmt.ca):

- Therapressure brush
- Ghost
- Koosh balls
- Play dough/therapuddy
- Bean bag chair
- Weighted lizard and dolphin
- Weighted blanket
- Manual head massager
- Weighted shoulder wrap
- Disco sit cushion
- Vibrating pillow (corduroy covered)

The TMC Self-Reg Tool Kit for Educators

Learning to incorporate Self-Reg into educational practice is an ongoing learning journey. The MEHRIT Centre offers a growing kit of tools to help schools and teachers incorporate Self-Reg into their day-to-day practice and assess their Self-Reg progress and learning. The tool kit includes a classroom environment assessment checklist, a rubric for monitoring teachers' Self-Reg learning and competencies, and various tools for gauging students' self-regulation across different contexts.

Since there is a learning curve associated with effective use of these tools, TMC offers consulting on how to use them. For more information please contact: info@self-reg.ca

<https://self-reg.ca/toolkit/>



Other ideas shared by everyone:

Fans

Soft blankets pillows

Mini fountain

Lava lamp

Words with photos to describe emotions

Thera-Putty

Mirrors non breakable

Infuser with lavender

Fidget coils

Ribbons and soft material etc.

Skwish (tangle toy by Manhattan Toys)

Carpet

Soft lighting

Inflatable pea pod

Sensory-including soft scents

Weighted lap pillows

Bubble seats

Meditation/yoga

Nature sounds

Classical music in background



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The book resources were:

- Zones of Regulation by Leah M. Kuypers
- Calm, Alert and Learning by Stuart Shankar
- My Mouth is a Volcano and accompanying activity and idea book by Julia Cook
- When My Worries Get Too Big! By Kari Dunn Buron
- The Incredible Five Point Scale video by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis
- The Green Zone Conversation Book by Joel Shaul
- Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods that Make My Day by Jamie Lee Curtis
- Boo Hoo Bird by Jeremy Tankard
- Grumpy Bird by Jeremy Tankard
- The Way I Feel by Janan Cain
- How are You Peeling? Foods with Moods by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers
- Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes
- Goldie is Mad by Margie Palatini
- Sheila Rae the Brave by Kevin Henkes



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We also need to take care of our own self-regulation, in order to help others; Sue Cavanagh helped us with that idea after lunch.



The Book Area, we hope you had a chance to look here; we highlighted a few books you might like to continue to explore.



From Tracy and Cheryl's Blog.....

“Educators are always looking to books, articles, and videos for inspiration. We wanted to share some of the books and articles that have **shaped our practice and influenced our thinking**. We have included some information about each text.

Our philosophy around professional development is to **choose one thing to focus on at a time** as educators. We then zone in our reading and learning in that area (e.g., early mathematics, documentation, observation, behaviour).”

Tracy and Cheryl

An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students



Topics: Project Work, Elementary Inquiry (K to 8), Creating a Culture of Excellence, Feedback

What We Think: We studied this book across a variety of grades. It was helpful in understanding how project work and inquiry could extend beyond the early years classroom. Ron Berger provides genuine examples of projects and studies done by students at a variety of grade levels and how this type of learning brings to the surface so many academic skills through the context of their project work.

Favourite Quote: "I want students whose work is strong and accurate and beautiful; students who are proud of what they do, proud of how they respect both themselves and others"

"I believe that work of excellence is transformational. Once a student sees that he or she is capable of excellence, that student is never quite the same"

A Place for Wonder



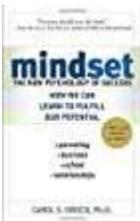
Topics: Inquiry, Reading and Writing, Nonfiction, Outdoor Learning

What We Think: This book provides practical ideas and examples that will support educators in creating a sense of wonder in their own classrooms. If you are just beginning to understand inquiry and aren't sure where to start or how to engage - this book will provide many starting points, prompts and ways! This text can be used at the Kindergarten or Early Years age, but is more geared and in support of primary grades.

Favourite Quote:

"Many primary classrooms are now teaching to a test in classrooms where opportunities for curiosity, creativity, and exploration are rare".

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success



Topics: Mindset, Growth vs Fixed Mindset, Changing Mindset

What We Think: Learning about mindset is so important in supporting students to value the process of learning. We have found that teaching children about brain development, growth, and the importance of making mistakes has encouraged our children to take more risks and to persevere.

Favourite Quote: "If parents (teachers) want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence"

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead

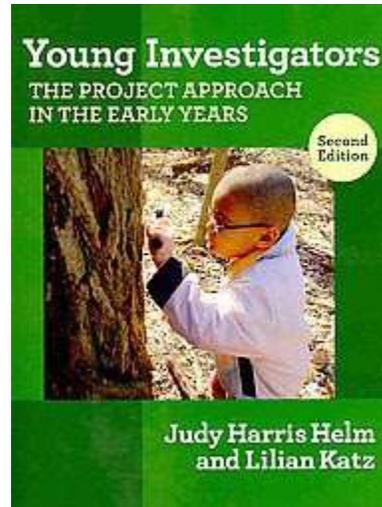


Topics: Courage, Vulnerability, Relationships/Partnerships

What We Think: Brene Brown has been very influential in our understanding and learning in terms of relationships. A large part of working on a team in a school is building and maintaining relationships and partnerships that are effective and built on trust. Brene Brown shares experiences to help understand the importance of being courageous and vulnerable in our interactions and learning as educators.

Favourite Quote: "You can choose courage or you can choose comfort. But you cannot have both"

All books taken from their blog: <http://passionatelycuriousinkindergarten.blogspot.ca/p/resources.html>



and of course, this book!

Another great resource mentioned, in case you didn't catch it...

<http://www.naturalcuriosity.ca/pdf/NaturalCuriosityManual.pdf>

The Project Approach Handouts

Your handouts were sent out by email and at 26 pages, it is pretty lengthy! The photographs go along with the stories told that day. Go back and reflect on those pictures, maybe start building your own stories with your documentation?

For additional support see the following guides for practice....

The Project Approach Guides

The Project Approach: Helping Children Ask Questions

The main thrust of a project is to find answers to questions about the topic the children are investigating. But teachers often find that preschool-age children have trouble formulating questions. Here are some ways to help children develop and express their own questions during each phase of project work.

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/projects-questions.pdf>

The Project Approach: Phase 1—Getting Started

Projects are like good stories. They have three parts: a beginning, middle, and end. Phase 1 usually lasts about two weeks, including selection of a topic. Here are some tips to help with getting the project started.

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/projects-phase1.pdf>

The Project Approach: Phase 2—Doing Fieldwork

Projects are like good stories. They have a beginning, middle, and end. The middle phase is for fieldwork and finding answers to children's questions. It can last from three weeks to several months. Here are some ways to help children do fieldwork.

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/projects-phase2-getting.pdf>

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/projects-phase2-doing.pdf>

The Project Approach: Phase 3—Concluding the Project

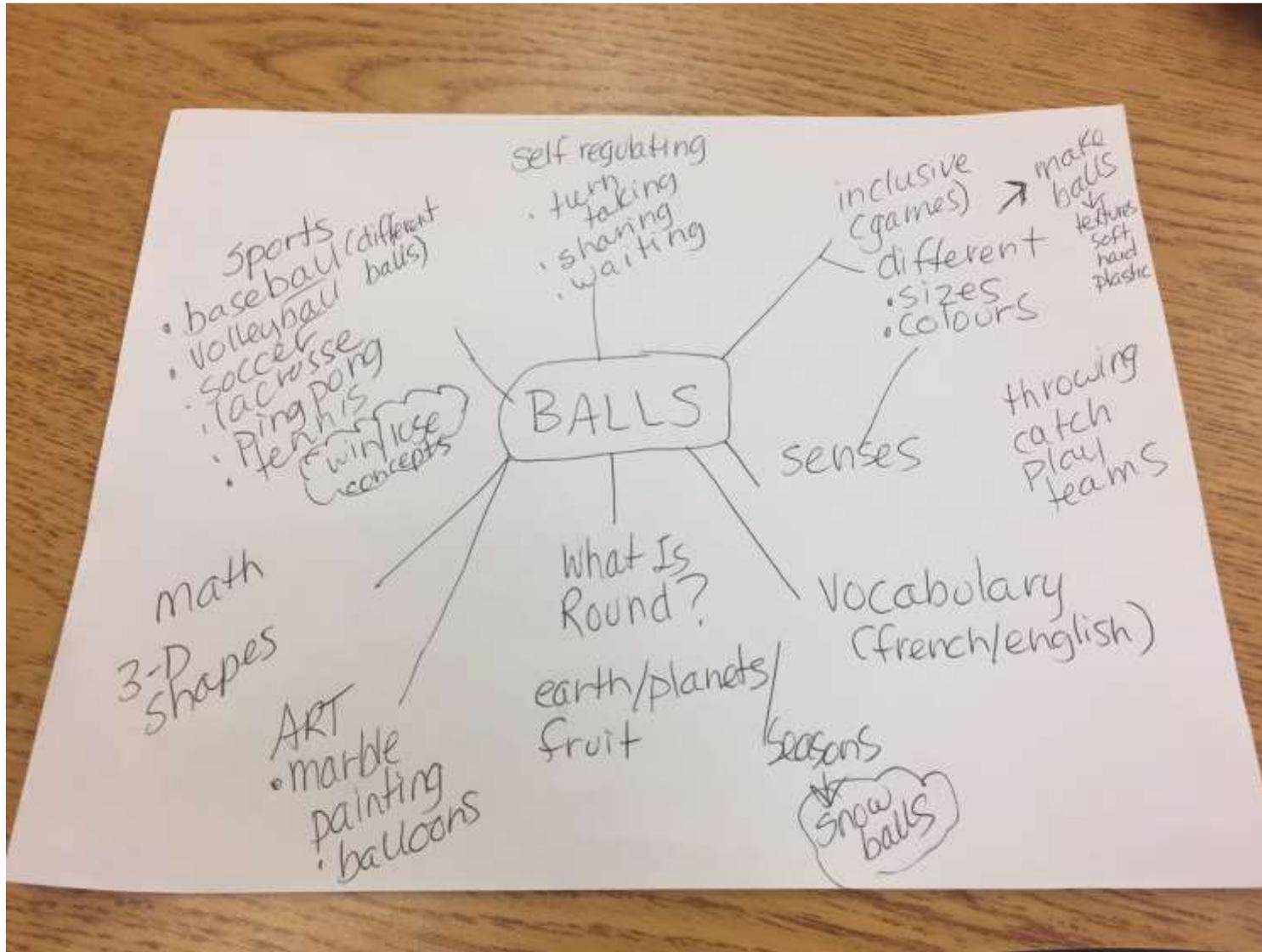
Projects are like good stories. They have a beginning, middle, and end. Projects can last from a week to several months, depending on the topic, the children's interest, and the resources available. Here are some tips to use during the last phase of a project to help enrich what the children have learned.

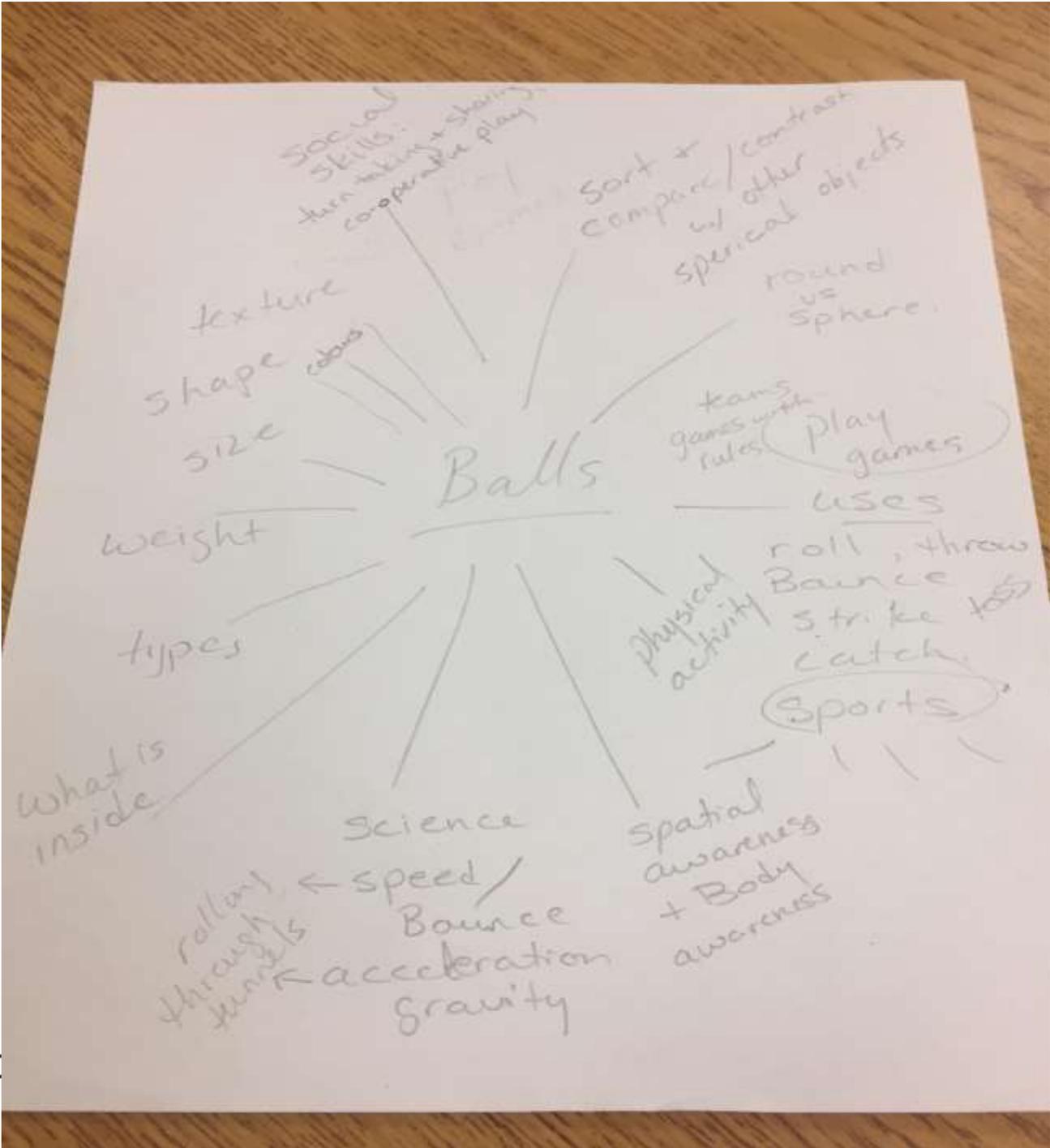
<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/projects-phase3.pdf>

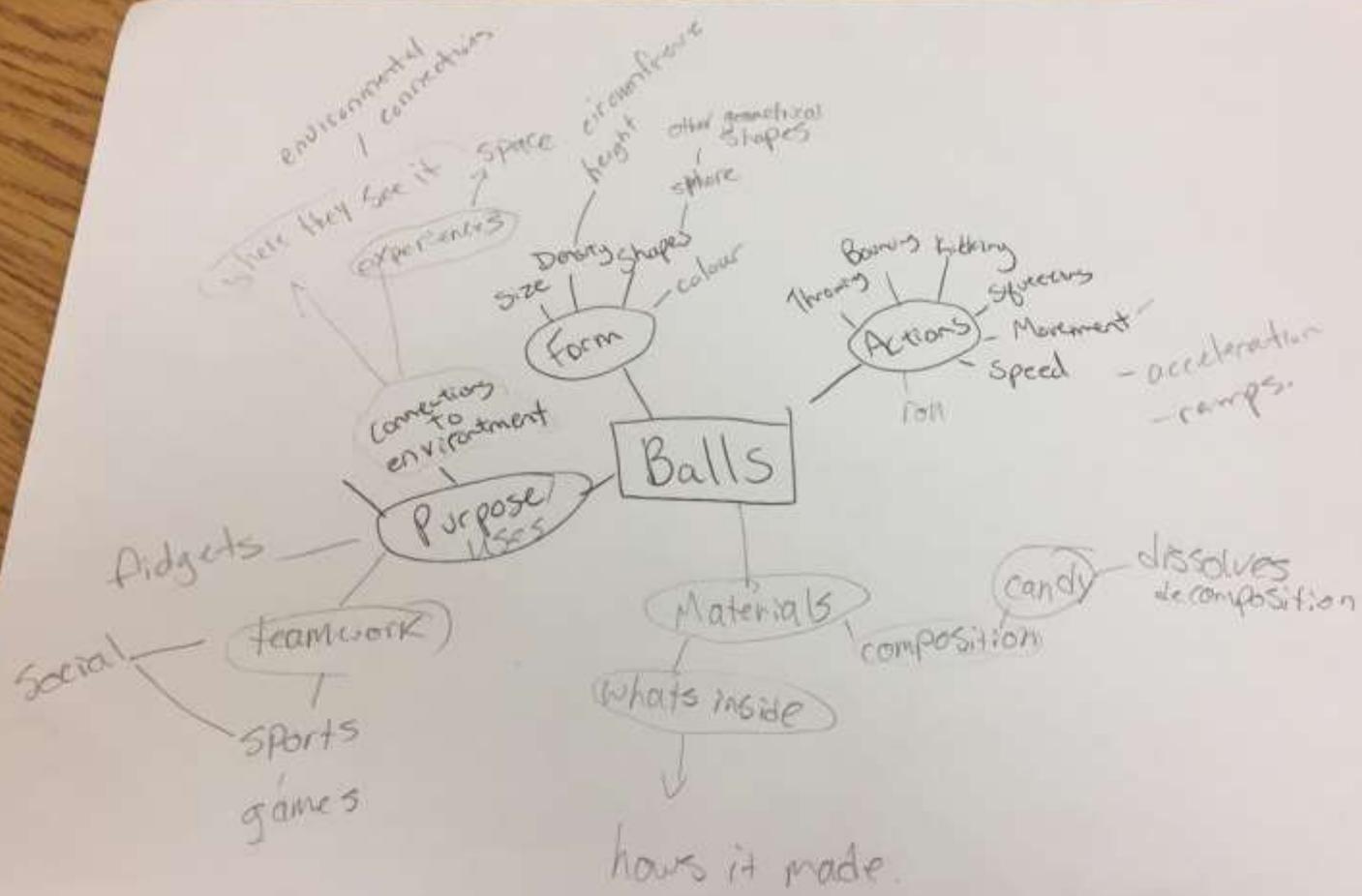


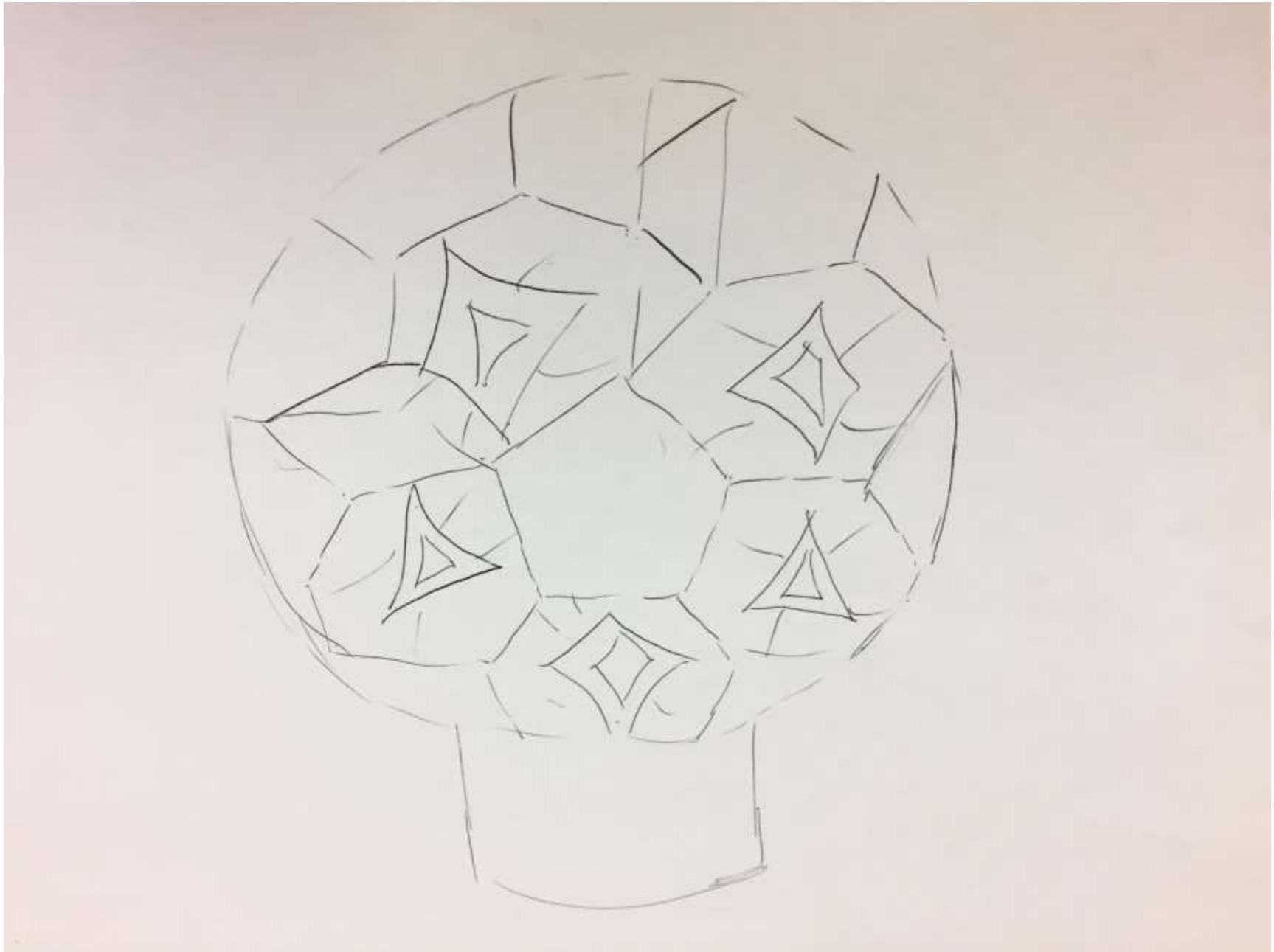
It takes some time to get there, give yourself permission to learn and take time to create your own experience. Slow down...

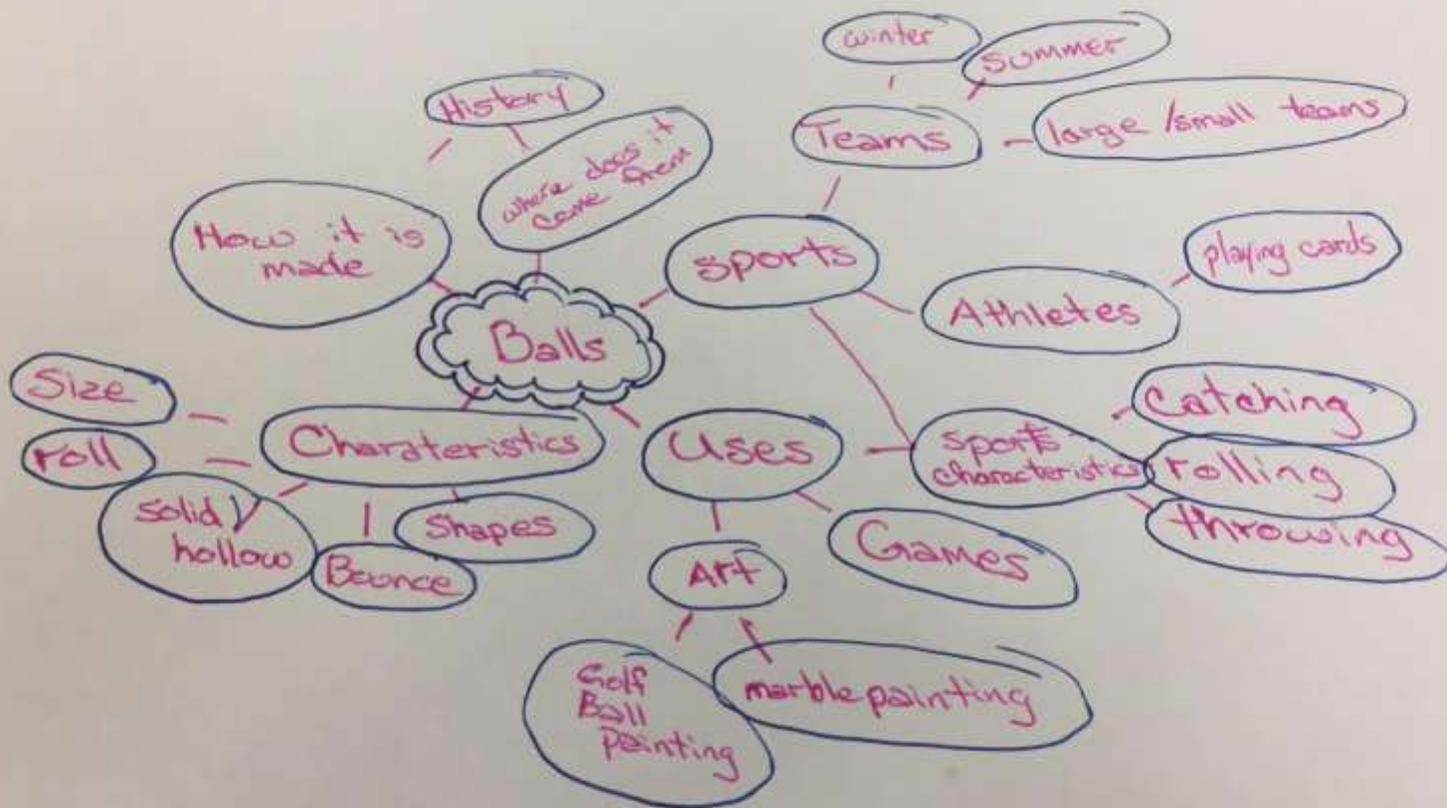
Collecting our Thinking

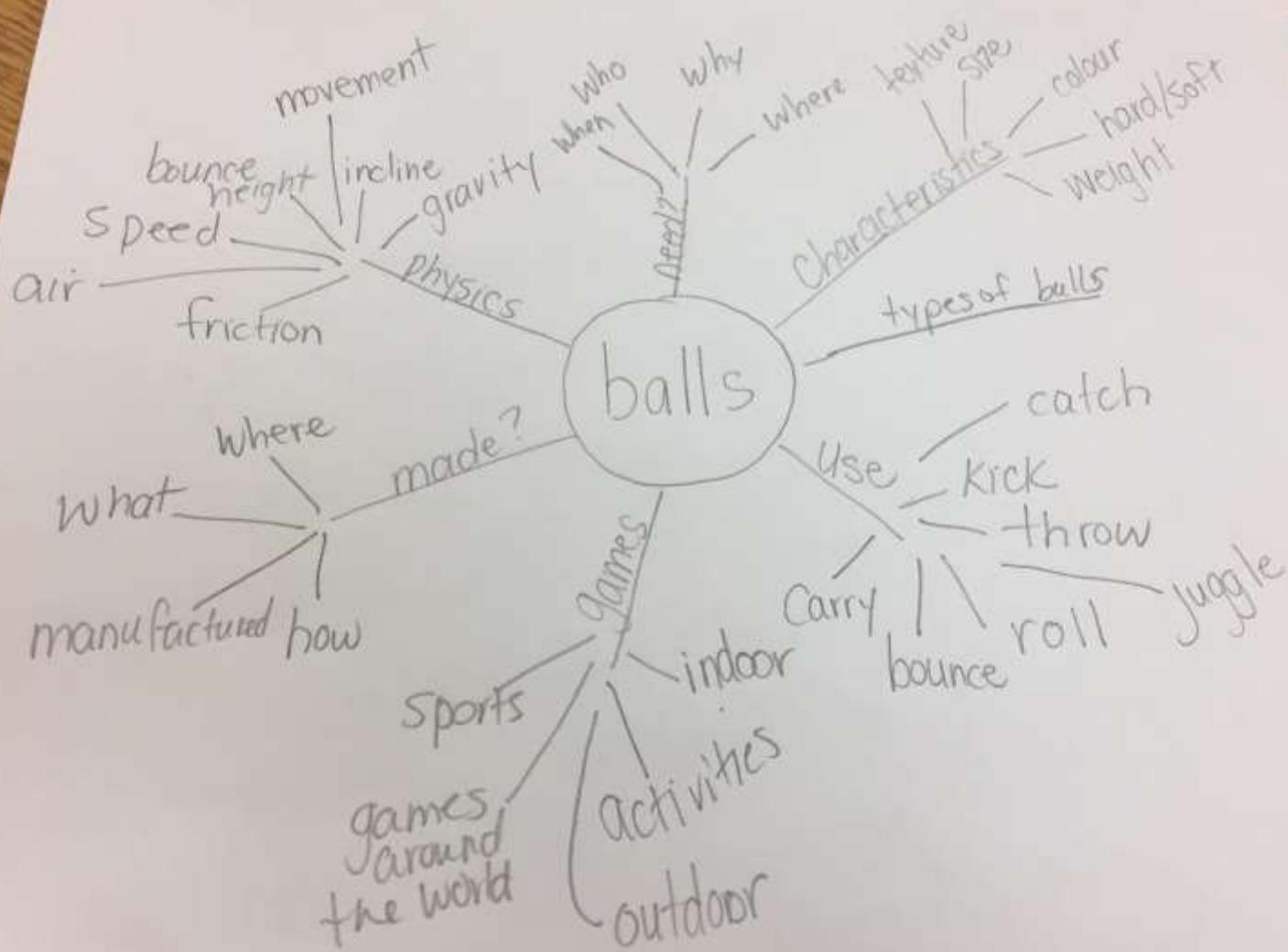












Math

- counting bounces
- measuring - height of bounce
- shape / size

Art

- bouncing painting
- marble painting
- drawing

Physical

- sports
- play with friend
- yoga balls
- balls + dance
- snowballs
- ball in stockings
- rolling / throwing
- standing

Balls

Science

- height of drop
- " " bounce
- flat
- make w Borax
- gravity
- materials - how made
- air pumps

Social

- safety
- retrieving
- sharing
- turn taking



Open Ended Materials to Support Ball Project:

- Various balls (e.g., Styrofoam, spheres, golf balls, whiffle balls, ping pong balls, billiard balls, snowballs, football, hackey sacks)
- Globes
- Sensory Bins: cotton balls, marbles, water beads
- Tape
- Pencils
- Tubing
- Elastics
- Ramps
- Fans (to blow), hairdryers
- Hoops
- Clay
- Cars
- Tires
- Water
- Measurement tools: timers, tapes, rulers, metre sticks
- Weights
- Ball Pump
- Bowling Kit
- Timers
- Magnifying glasses
- Scales
- Pompoms
- Bubbles
- Tweezers
- Clipboards
- Pendulum with ball

Print Materials to Support:

- Episodes of “how it is made”
- Books about: space, sports, athletes
- Juggling books/videos
- Dr Seuss Planet (book)
- Snowball Family (book)
- Can I play too? By Mo Willems (book)
- A big guy took my ball by Mo Willems (book)
- Big, Small, Red Little Ball by Emma Dodd (book)
- Snowballs by Louis Ehlert (book)
- The Something by Rebecca Cole (book)
- Ball, Ball, Ball by Kelly Donner (book)
- Flyers from Stores (round, spheres, balls?)
- Flyers from sports stores
- Historical photos
- Sports/Games from Around World (pictures, videos, posters)
- Photographs of different balls
- Sports Illustrated for Children

Vocabulary:

- Sports Specific: Basketball, Soccer, Bowling, Football, Baseball
- Shape: circle, sphere, oval, round, 3D, 2D
- Movement: roll, bounce, throw, pass, bounce, slide, juggle
- Size: big, small, weight, height
- Description: flat, stack, hard, soft
- Directional Language: in, over, under, above, up, down, distance
- Weight: heavy, light
- Texture: rubbery, dimpled, smooth, rough, ridges
- Scientific: Float/Sink, force, deflate, inflate, predict, incline, gravity, friction
- Speed: slow, fast, acceleration
- Mathematics: Measure, estimate, graph
- Catch, Throw
- Comparing, Describing

Interesting Questions:

How do you define a ball? Is a globe a ball?

Can we find balls in nature?

How do you balance a ball?

What is inside of a ball?

How do balls work?

Is a globe a ball?

Why do some balls bounce higher?

Why does a ball roll? What else rolls?

What would happen if you cut a ball in half?

How do rocks get rounded like a ball?

Why do balls look flat on paper?

Why do balloons float?

How are balls made?

If something rolls or bounces, is it a ball?

From Themes to Projects

Sylvia C. Chard

Abstract

Many teachers who begin to implement the Project Approach are familiar with a learning center or theme approach to teaching. Often there are some important differences to become aware of. Projects are especially valuable for children in undertaking in-depth study of real-world topics. This paper presents the reflections of several teachers on their experiences moving from the use of a theme approach in their classrooms to using the Project Approach. The paper is presented in two parts. First there is a description of how a project on shoes undertaken by a kindergarten class might unfold, based on a synthesis of several teachers' accounts of how they proceeded with such a project. The description serves as an example of the potential of a project for the in-depth study of a topic. The second part of the paper is a commentary, interwoven with the narrative description of the project, and draws on the work of different teachers who have also carried out projects on the topic of shoes. This commentary, which features the different possibilities that may occur for teachers in different locations and working with different ages of children, also discusses a few of the challenges commonly experienced by teachers beginning to do projects, particularly the distinctions between projects and themes.

<http://ecrp.illinois.edu/v1n1/chard.html>

An Artist to Inspire You



Dale Chihuly

"Glass itself is so much like water. If you let it go on its own, it almost ends up looking like something that came from the sea."

"The process is so wonderfully simple, yet so mystifying."

<http://www.chihuly.com>

Live Music Adds Life



Scott Landry. Scott Free Music

'Underneath the Stars' is an album for everyone underneath the stars.

“It speaks to what I’ve discovered over the last two years of writing. That while the universe is vast and the world is grand, all of us underneath the stars aren’t that different.

At the core of who we are, we all know the pain of loss and regret, and we long for the same things: love, connection, and more than we’ve experienced. This album is my attempt at providing a soundtrack to all of those feelings." See his new album here.

<http://www.scottfreemusic.ca/media>

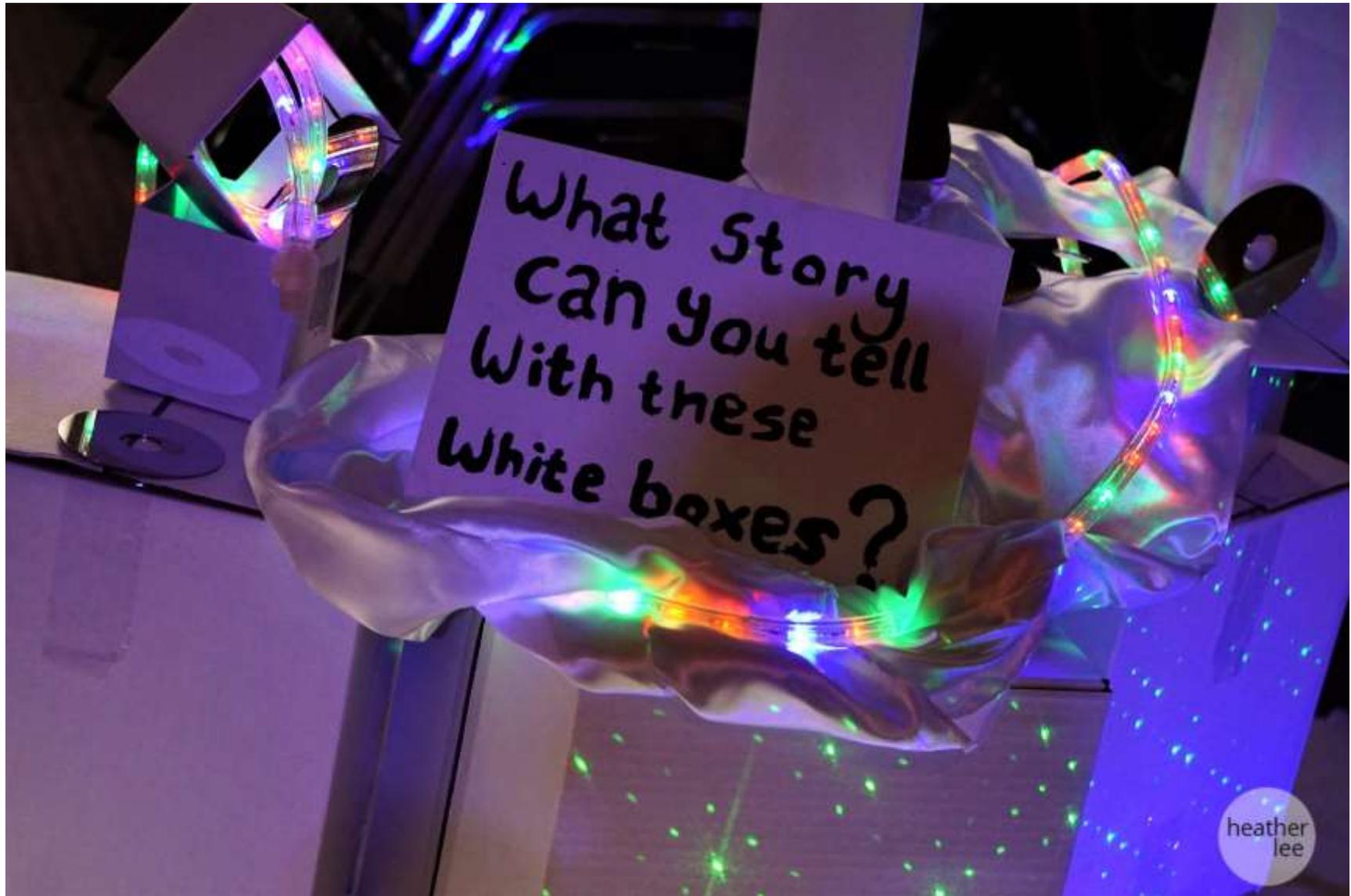
People said:

“Thanks for the great location and Scott’s wonderful music!”

“Loved the openness of the environment. The location was easy to get to and access. Loved the musically interlude at lunchtime. I enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere offered through the use of music and visual effects (lighting, photos and interactive displays)”

“ I personally liked the music by Scott Landry over lunch and the food was amazing! The networking was highly beneficial and the connections that were made that day.”

Our Provocations of Recycled Materials





White boxes, small and large from Uline https://www.uline.ca/BL_425/White-Corrugated-Boxes

Old DVD's

Hard drives from old computers

Cloth from Salvation Army Thriftshop

Rope lights from Giant Tiger \$15 each.

Projection Light Giant Tiger \$20 each.









Larges hexes are from a stage set, salvaged materials.

Old CD's

All those circles,are from inside old computers

Cloth from Thrift Shop





Taking time for tea and chocolate, the lovely things in life....





People left us feeling...

engaging, learning community

Insightful and reflective.

Wonderful!

It was enriching, relaxing and just lovely! It was helpful and engaging. The beautiful atmosphere, relaxation period and food/drinks made PL feel like a treat!

Very informative

A great day to learn and collaborate.

An amazing day from beginning to end! Well worth giving up a Saturday for

Inspiring and worth pursuing

Everything about the experience was intentional - felt welcomed and appreciated as a co-learner.

I really enjoyed the opportunities to explore the provocations that were laid out. The presenters (Tracy and Cheryl) were excellent, and provided a wealth of knowledge.

A wonderfully informative and engaging conference. It made me 'want' to try the Project approach!

Provided a glimpse into a wonderful classroom with amazing ideas and teachers.

It was an amazing eye opening experience!

So fantastic! My brain has not stopped thinking about the experience, I have wanted to incorporate this model for a long time and now I am!

Amazing! Thought provoking, stimulating and engaging. I will always sign up for any ReCognition workshop/conference as they are always well worth the time.

Positive co-learning environment Excellent presenters Well planned by Kathy and team

Engaging, lots of great ideas.

Very thought provoking, engaging and inspiring. ??

Absolutely inspiring and relevant!

It would help those who are struggling to understand what Inquiry, project based learning looks like. It also gives a healthy example of what a teaching team of CT and RECE looks like, and should be like. ECE's can do far more then outdoor duty and setting up/ cleaning up the centre work. One of the Best Co-educating examples I have seen!

Great day of learning and connecting with others. Makes me feel excited about working

An excellent opportunity to network and collaborate around other like-minded professionals

The examples are very doable and will be used greatly in the kindergarten environment.

Connecting with Nature

Thank you to Heather Lee Photography for helping us “see” the world.















Other Ideas to Explore as Suggested by You:

Susan Stacey, Karyn Callaghan

Reconnecting children to the natural world

Math and literacy, documentation and assessment, using technology in the full day kindergarten classroom.

I am always looking for ways to incorporate inquiry and Project approach, etc... with my French immersion students/FI classroom... any ideas or support/PD would be greatly appreciated!

Flow of the day. What activities centers are the other students involved in so that time is available to engage in these meaningful conversations with students.

More ideas on documenting the process and their schedule of when they are able to accomplish it.

I would really like to get our principals on board about the importance of a team working together for more than one year. I really feel that is so valuable after hearing the experience you both have had.

Setting up a Reggio Emilia inspired environment.

Self-regulation Documentation

Documentation, play base, ministry documents...

Explore in greater detail the four domains of HDLH and what that actually looks like in our classrooms both in the preschool and kindergarten domains.

How to obtain funding, approval and support for outdoor play, equipment and storage for outdoor equipment.

Role of the ECE and CT how to advocate and communicate effectively as a team

I would love to gather ideas of outdoor education. We already take weekly trips to the local conservation area so further ideas to support this would be welcomed.

We are working on some of your ideas, like us on Facebook or sign up to receive notices. Looking forward to more learning together...

Collaborators for this experience:

Tracy Sims
Cheryl Emrich
Scott Landry
Sue Cavanagh
Heather Brown Fortingdon
Heather Herron
Angela Boelsma
Corry Goddard
Angie Giles
Phyllis Learn
Kathy Boelsma
Dominique Leger
Krista Graham
Joanna Ashworth
The Bridge Church, Kanata

Connecting

Passionately Curious Educators: Learning through Project Work



Staying Connected:

We welcome your questions or inquiries via email or social media!

Twitter: @TracyPick
@CherylEmrich

Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/passionatelycuriouseducators

Instagram:
@passionatelycuriouseducators

Email: passionatelycuriouseducators@gmail.com

Our Blog:
<http://passionatelycuriousinkindergarten.blogspot.com>

#connectinglearners



ReCognition

Sign up to see what we are up to and to share your ideas with us here:

<http://www.re-cognition.ca/experience-sign-up-and-share-an-idea/>

See what we are thinking about in our Thinking Studio

<http://www.re-cognition.ca/the-thinking-studio/>

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Re.Cognition.ca/?fref=ts>

Contact us by email at: info@re-cognition.ca







Thank you for thinking with us....see you again...