



Provincial Outreach  
Program for the Early Years

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Chilliwack  
School District

# POPEY Learning Series Session 4

## *Playful Learning in the Primary Years*

May 27, 2025

8:30-10:30

12:30-2:30

Presenter:

Jacque Anderson



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# The nature of learning

## Learning is holistic

People learn with the mind, body, and spirit and in a relationship with others and the environment. Children are gaining knowledge as they create and test theories, explore the world, and express ideas. Learning does not occur in a predictable linear progression; rather learning is **rhizomatic**, moving in unexpected and surprising directions as children are in relationships with people, place, ideas, and materials.

## definition

### Rhizome:

A plant, such as a fern, that sends underground shoots off in many directions with no predictable pattern. The image of the rhizome is a useful way to think about pedagogies. Thinking of learning as rhizomatic leads to understanding that learning cannot be predetermined or have a prescribed outcome but is always producing something new.

British Columbia Early Learning Framework

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# Learning in the Primary Years

British Columbia

## Learning in the Primary Years



- Intended to support K–3 teachers across BC
- Part One: Foundations for Learning
- Part Two: Connecting Learning & Teaching Practices



Ministry of  
Education and  
Child Care





# Social and Emotional Well-being

It's not one  
more thing on  
the plate, it IS  
the plate

**Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl,  
CASEL**



*Research has shown that social and emotional development is essential to a child's future academic success and health and well-being (Hemmeter et al., 2008; Rucinski et al., 2018; Voineau & Damian, 2014).*







# The CASEL framework



- SEL competence is associated with emotional competence, academic success, health and well-being
- *SEL is not about* compliance or social behavior expectations
- *SEL is about* developing an internal motivation for adapting to demands and challenges



# Literacy and SEL



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# The play continuum

## Pedagogical Strategies for Play-Based Learning



Adapted from Pyle and Danniels, 2017

## Designing With Intention:

### collecting traces and child voice

teacher observations  
opportunities for reflection: whole  
group and personal  
photos and video  
conversations and discussion  
anecdotal notes  
artefacts  
class and individual learning stories

**teacher inquiry:**  
**how can I make the thinking and  
learning heard and/or visible?**

### environment as the 3rd teacher

cultural materials  
variety of spaces and seating  
shape of the day  
wide variety of materials  
ease of flow in the space  
aesthetics and and function:  
*beauty and efficiency*  
a learning community  
learning in circle

**teacher inquiry:**  
**how does the space facilitate my  
goals?**

### outcomes and intentions

underlying cultural themes  
connection to place  
building relationships with people  
and living and non-living things  
literacy foundations  
numeracy foundations  
identity and agency  
social and emotional well-being

**teacher inquiry:**  
**what am I learning about my  
students?**

# *The play-learn connection*

“ The continuum of play-based learning is an alternative to simply alternating direct academic instruction with free-play periods. Instead, educators can intentionally design play-based learning experiences from across the continuum with varying degrees of child direction and educator guidance. The type of program and who the children and educators are will influence how the continuum is used.”

(Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 39)



# Affordances for play



High affordance  
("unscripted")  
materials nudge  
children's thinking and  
expands the scope  
for representing  
their ideas.



# Free Play





# Inquiry Play



# Collaborative Play





# Playful Learning



# Games with Rules







# Private Reflection

*Four corners:*

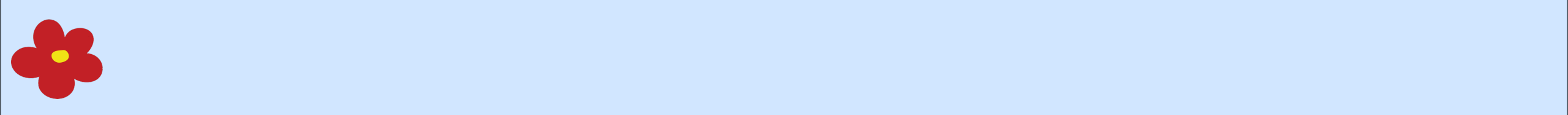
What kind of play happens most often with your learners?

What are you doing during that play time?

What challenges you about play with your learners?

What might you like to try differently?





*“Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.”*

FRED ROGERS

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# Competencies and the Play Environment

- Personal and Social Identity
- Thinking: creative and critical
- Communication



- ✓ *In the play setting, all of these are actively engaged.*
- ✓ *When we use envisioning language, we help children identify as learners.*





# *The Role of the Teacher*



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# Bringing the CC to life....

## “Collecting traces of learning” (ELF)

*Notice and Name: make the learning visible*

Connect the photos to the competencies

- What were you doing?
- So, you were...(connect to competency)?
- Why do you think I took this picture?

What is it showing?

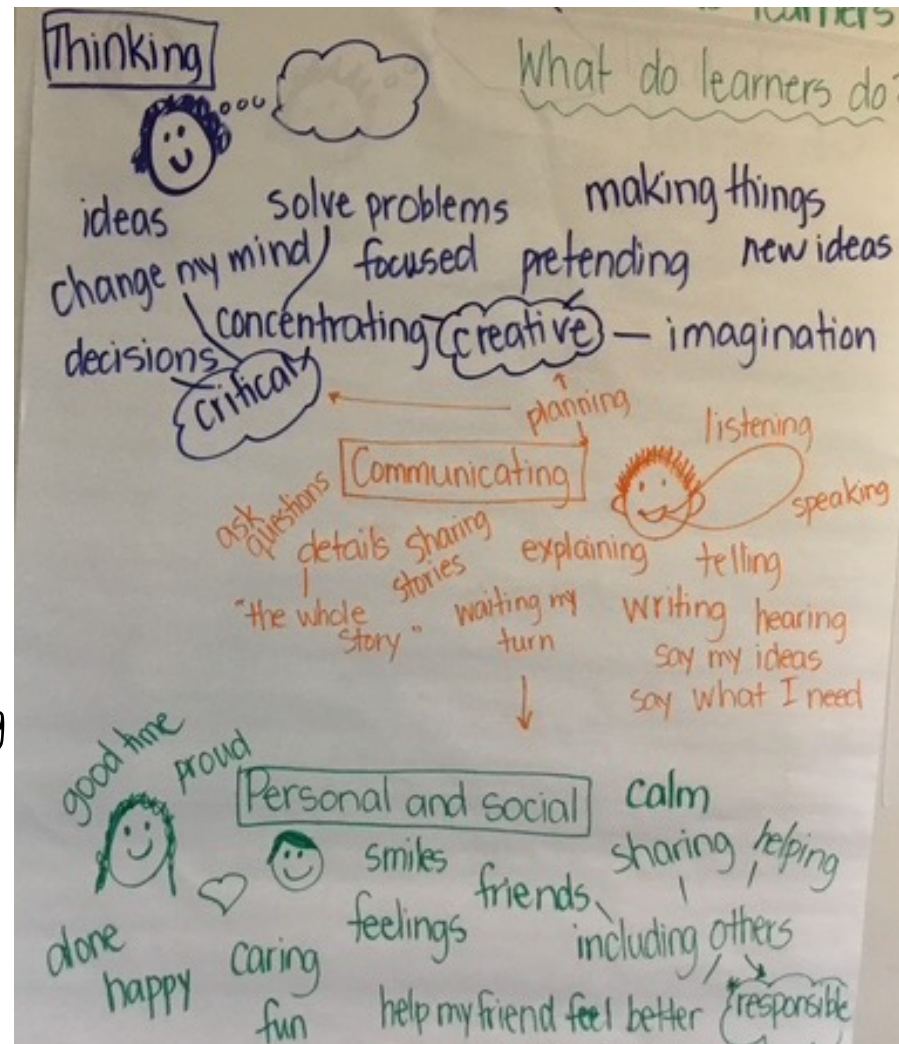


# Bringing the CC to life....

*Notice and Name:*

*make the learning visible*

- Focus on action words
- Use children's own words
- Use envisioning language of being learners



Questions:

How were you a learner today?

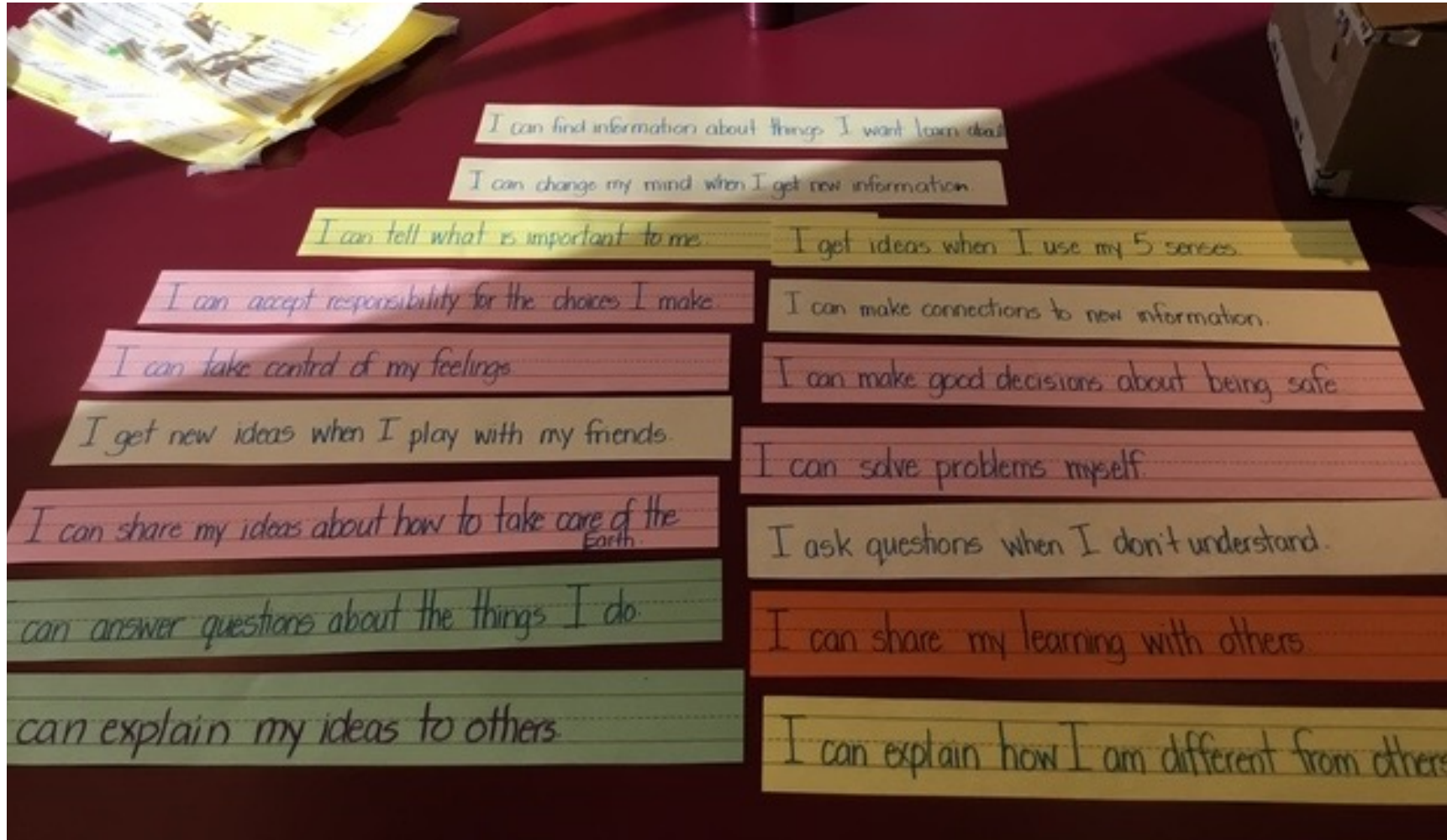
Where do you think your playing fits on this poster?

What were you doing?

What happened?



# Bringing the CC to life....

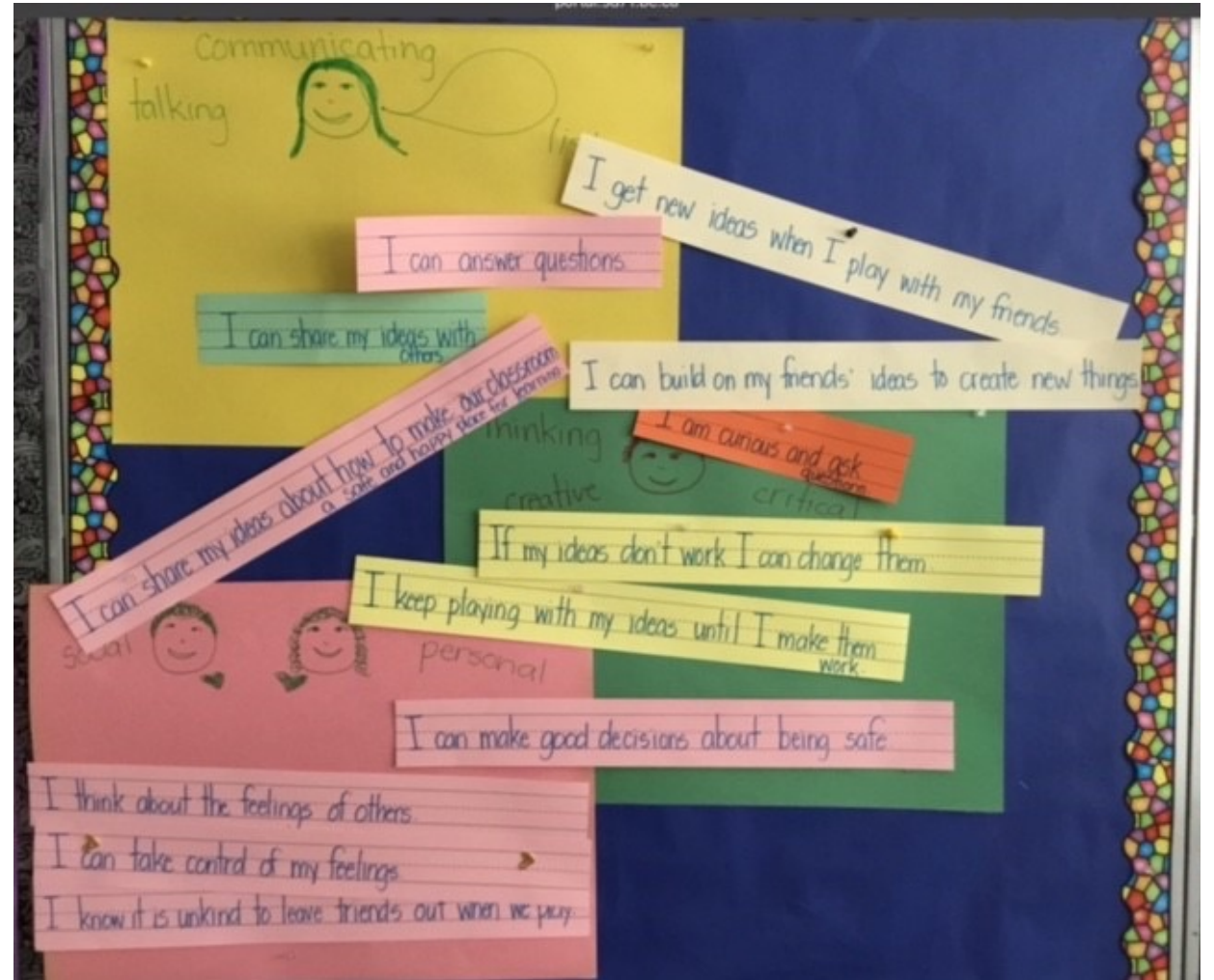




# Bringing the CC to life....

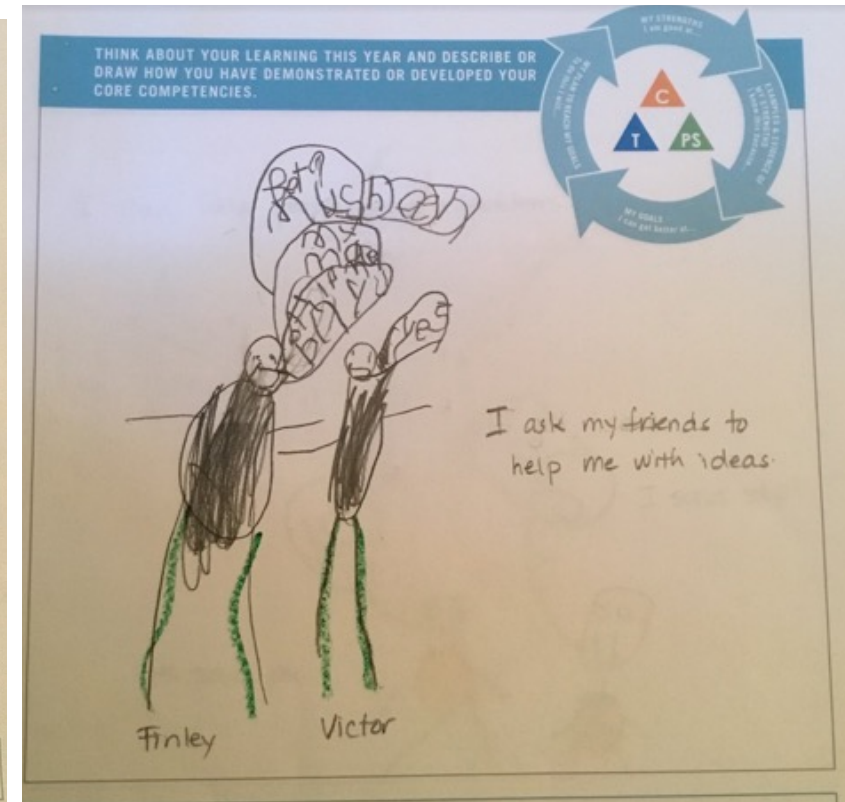
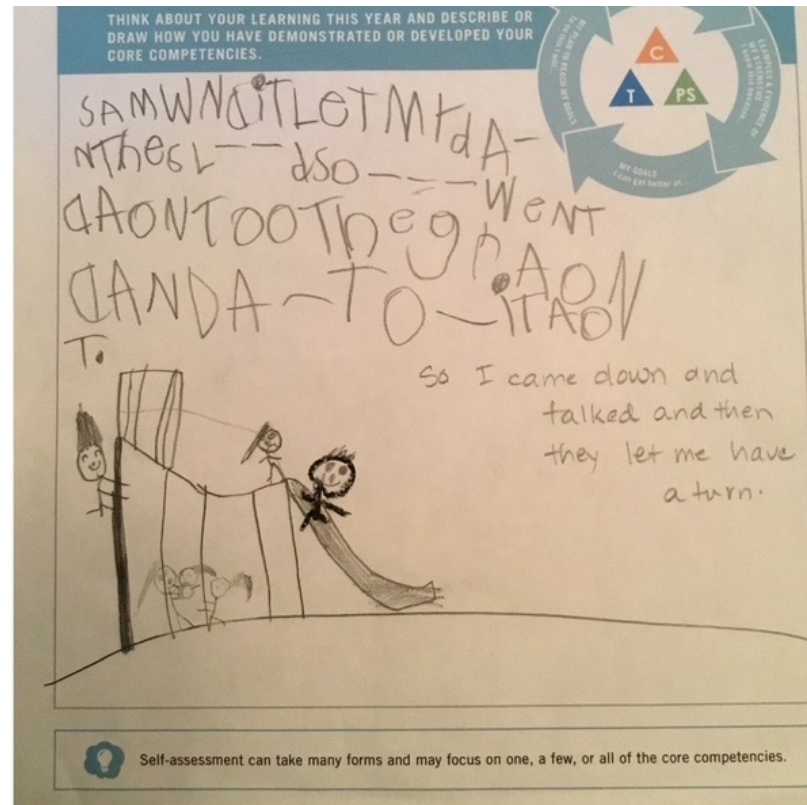
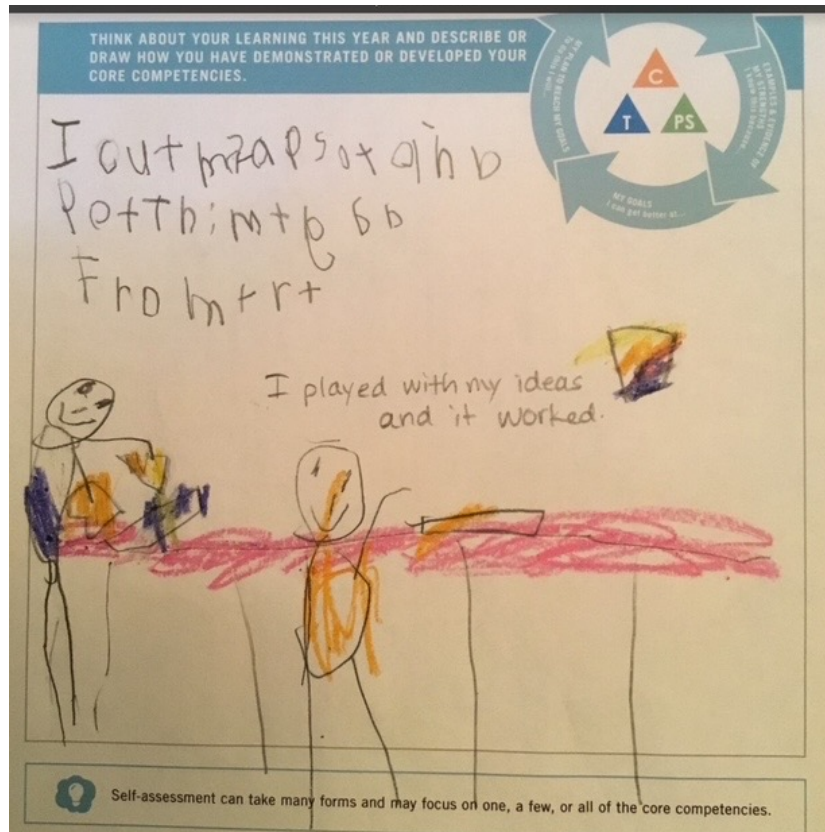
Every few days, gather together and add another couple of statements to the board.

Keep using photos to ground the thinking



# Bringing the CC to life...

## Student Self-Reflections





# Taking playful literacy outdoors

## Literacy and Language Learning Outdoors



OUTSIDEPLAY.org

01:50





# Why outdoors?



Photo credit: Megan Zeni



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# Structured literacy outdoors



Photo credit: Rachel Tidd



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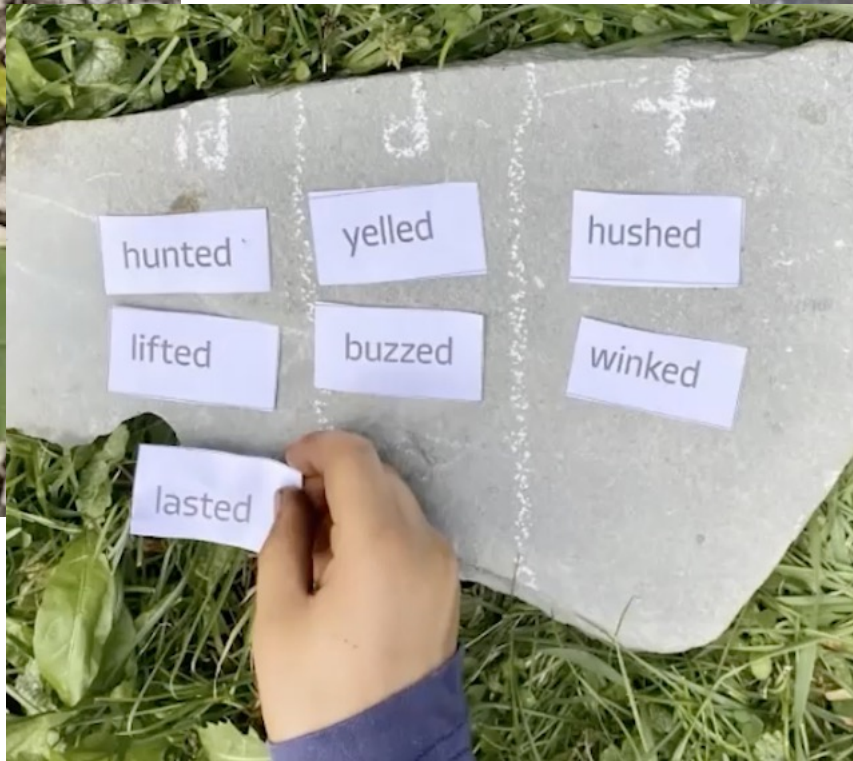


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# Word sorts & syllables





# Environmental print outdoors



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# Vocabulary





# Letter Formation



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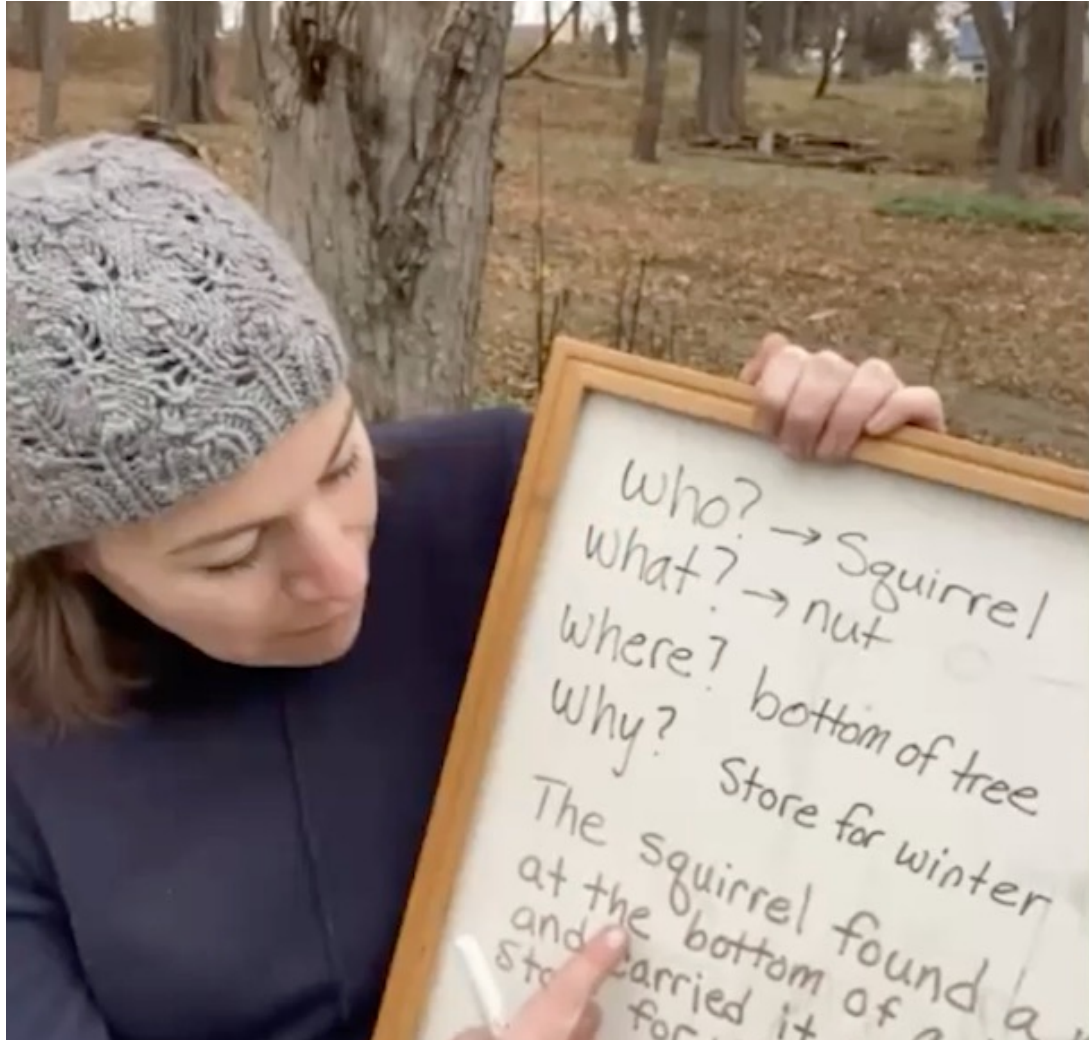


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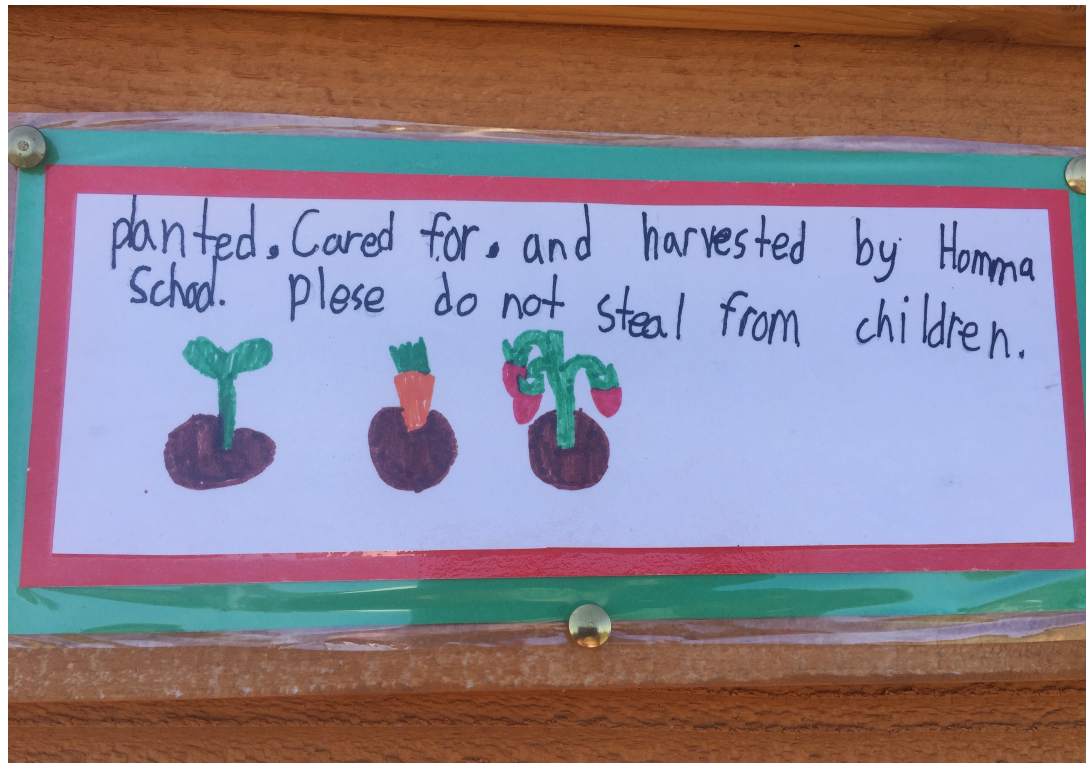


# Writing outdoors





# Writing for an audience





# Story play and writing



Photo credit: Megan Zeni



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# Resources for reading & writing outdoors



Photo credit: Rachel Tidd & Megan Zeni



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# Book look

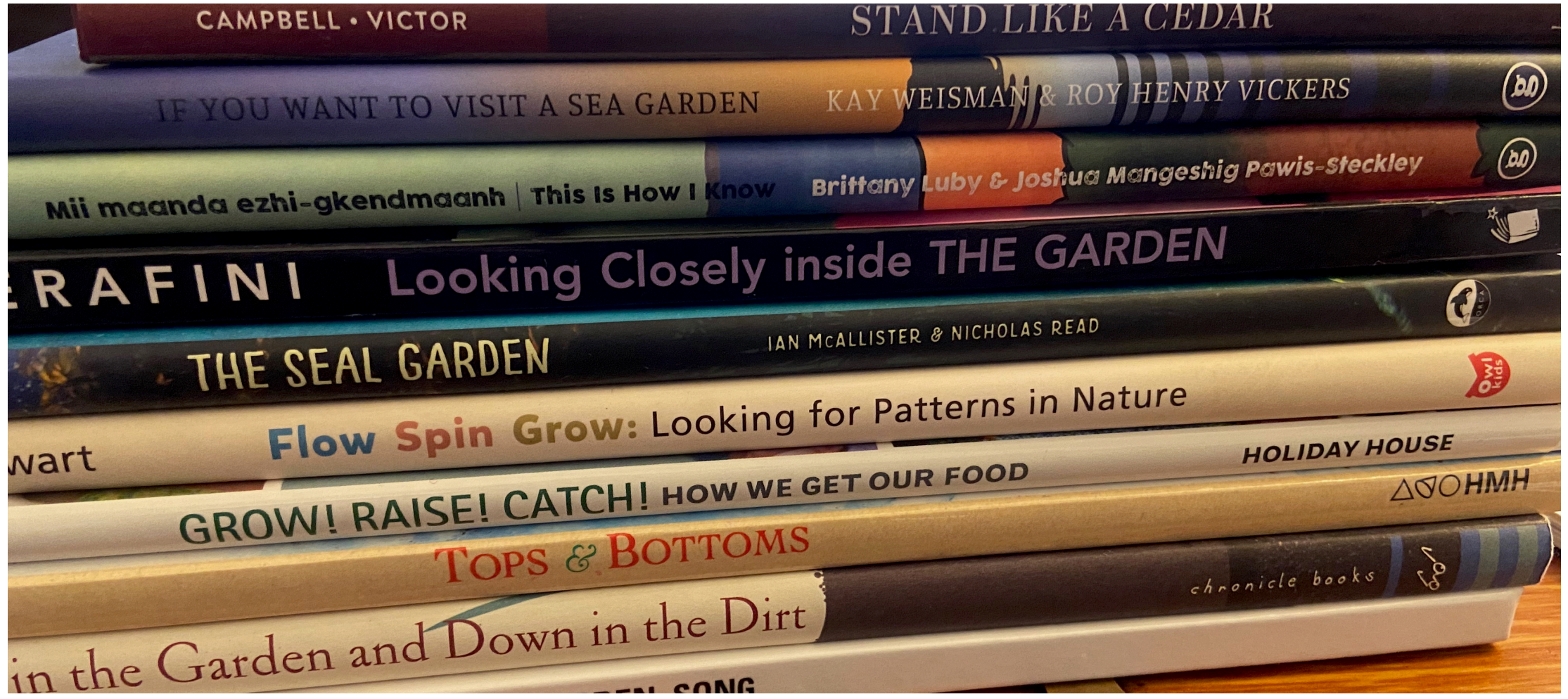


Photo Credit: Megan Zeni



## Resource links

- [Early Learning Framework](#)
- [Learning in the Primary Years](#)
- [Play Today](#)

## Videos

- [Teacher Tool–Outside Play](#)

## Books and Articles

- Art of Awareness—Curtis and Carter
- Play Framework, SD71
- “Listening to What Children Say” Vivian Gussin Paley, Harvard Educational Review Vol. 56 No. 2 May 1986, p. 127
- A Developmental Systems Framework-Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2020).





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Thank you from the POPEY team!

