

Cabbagetown Frogs January 2019 Newsletter

Happy New Year & Welcome Back to School! We hope that you all had a wonderful holiday break and that your new year is off to a great start! Getting back into the swing of things we've been reconnecting and reestablishing our relationships with each other as well as with our shared classroom and natural environments. As we continue to follow and nurture the children's intersecting research interests within the context of our school-wide research question, we've yet again re-encountered the concept of border crossings. **THANK YOU for participating in the class meeting last Thursday too!**



In Reggio Emilia border crossings has been used to describe experiences of exploring nature utilizing digital tools. However, this is not a one way, single direction relationship, as we are also able to collect artifacts from nature, bringing them from the outside world into the inside world for further investigation. Nor is this concept limited to the practical or physical world, it can also be applied to the imaginary and theoretical worlds.



Since the discovery of a sneaky cockroach trying to get into a fairy door at the beginning of the school year, the mini-atelier in our classroom has consistently been a space where children are invited to explore endless possibilities for artistically representing the many insect inhabitants among us. The digital microscope was introduced to the children as a tool for enhancing the details and features of the insects they were interested in studying. The digital microscope has been a vital resource in our studies of the natural artifacts recovered from our field trips to the park, as well as for the upclose investigation of the taxidermy bugs from Mr. Nathaniel's personal collection. Used initially to assist the children in graphically representing various insects, their work has evolved into exploring wire sculpture as a strategy for bringing their 2-Dimensional bugs to life as 3-Dimensional figures.



Borders can exist as a guide or framework, to distinguish between and draw our attention to unique places/spaces, but they're not necessarily meant to be permanent or fixed. The Reggio philosophy emphasizes the importance of approaching early childhood education from an interdisciplinary approach by synthesizing expert research from the fields of neuroscience, psychology, education, and sociology in an effort to form a holistic understanding of child development. This approach is not limited to theory; in practice the Reggio philosophy is known for the concept of one hundred languages, which basically suggests that children are inherently curious, intuitive, creative, and capable enough to construct their own knowledge in relationship with other humans; therefore they deserve the opportunity to explore and express themselves through as many "languages" as possible, as they desire--which ultimately supports their identity formation, their ability to think critically, and their ability to perspective shift. Just as blending together expert knowledge in psychology, education, and the sciences gives us the best insight for how to approach early childhood education, children also crave a deeper, more complex understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and imaginings.



The children in the Frogs class are highly competent and capable of sharing information, debating ideas, and from these types of cultural exchanges they are not only able to, but are constantly co-constructing, de-constructing, and re-constructing knowledge together. Sharing space with insect representation groups in the mini-atelier, children have also begun expressing the empathy they feel for the homeless bugs in our classroom by constructing a home out of recycled materials collected from zero landfill. Simultaneously, the language of clay is being used to support the various entomological work happening in the mini-atelier. Some children are constructing tiny furniture for the bug homes while others, in effort to support continued drawing work,

have begun exploring the idea of carving, or sketching into the surface tile slabs of clay as if it were paper.



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Just as we are able to cross from one border of physically defined space to another, the children in the Frogs class are rapidly sophisticating their ability to distinguish between and identify connections among the real and the imaginary elements of our world(s). The light atelier in our classroom is currently serving as a laboratory for experimenting with the creation and coexistence of multiple magical worlds. Can fairy world and superhero world live together in harmony, or is the intense concentration of powerful creatures just too much for one town? Only time will tell. In the meantime, by exploring the dimensions and possibilities offered within the light atelier, children will continue to engage with the concept of multiple worlds and multiple realities.

Storying has emerged as a strategy for making real and metaphorical connections among the groups of children engaged in this work. Utilizing the language of storying to communicate, children continuously discover commonalities with each other--forging and strengthening relationships. When children share information about themselves they are open to the possibility of making personal connections which facilitates both an awareness of and investment in the story, the experience, and the relationships with the self and others.



Because Winter seems to have finally arrived, the street art research group is taking a short break from the art walk field trips. That does not, however, mean that we are taking a break from the street art world, it just means that we're bringing it into our classroom! Aside from exploring the Krog Street Tunnel and Forward Warrior murals, the children's favorite experience from the field trips so far was when two artists in the free art community (Jolly Bomb and All The Love ATL) joined us on a sticker slapping field trip to the tunnel and brought their own stickers for the children to slap. As the weather has become less fair the children have been offered the opportunity to create their own stickers to slap when it warms up again. Several children have developed their own characters and symbols as they explore the concept of creating a signature tag.

Painting and mixed media collaging are also languages available for the street art research group to continue creating their own living wall murals. To support our class's interest in mixed media design, (specifically with DIY paper), paper making groups will be offered the opportunity to explore this language and the possibilities it offers for making connections to ongoing work related to identity, color studies, as well as the intersections between the natural and urban worlds.



In anticipation of the upcoming annual auction, over the next two months the spaces in the classroom will be (re)designed in ways that will further provoke the children's questioning and wonderings of their four main research interests: Entomology, Magic and Power Studies, Home Construction, & Street Art. Keeping in theme with their interests and the Reggio philosophy, the children have agreed to four (4) distinct, yet related auction projects. Each project will highlight the intersecting research interests among the children, while also showcasing one of the interests, in particular.

While we will go over the proposals for these projects in greater detail at our Winter Class Meeting, we would like to go ahead and introduce you to our ideas for the 2019 auction:

1. Bug House (think mid-century modern dollhouse style)
2. (Water)Color Theory Insect Chart (in a natural wood shadow box)
3. Mixed Media Superhero Insect (taxidermy style in a shadow box)
4. "Trainyard Window" - LED lit shadow box featuring model size freight trains adorned with the children's signature graffiti, complete with the Atlanta skyline in the background

We are so excited about the second half of this year as we go into our third year of exploring the border crossings concept in connection to our research question. We are eagerly anticipating a deeper exploration into and understanding of the diverse range of processes children develop to interpret their interconnectedness within these multiple, intersecting worlds, both real and imagined.

Thank you so much for all of your support!

Amanda, Kelsey, & Nathaniel (along with Ina as Naturalist)

Important Dates and Reminders:

- Picture Day at CT Campus: Thursday, February 7th (2/7)
- School Closed for Winter Break and Educator Workday:
Monday, February 18th--Wednesday, February 20th (2/18-2/20)
- Auction: Saturday, March 23rd at Trees Atlanta

- Please remember to keep at least two (2) changes of clothes (including underwear, socks, and one pair of shoes) for your child in their cubby. It's cold! Please make sure the clothes you pack are weather appropriate. Relatedly, feel free to keep gloves, hats, and scarves in their cubbies as well. Per state law we are required to spend at least thirty minutes outside each morning (and afternoon) when the windchill is 35 degrees and above.
- If your child requires any bug spray, sunscreen, lotion, or cream of any kind PLEASE give these items to an educator (rather than keeping them in your child's cubby). We will keep these items in a safe place, out of the reach of children, and will administer when needed per your request.

