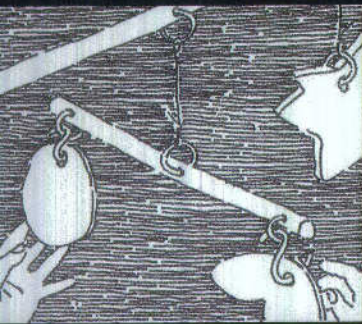


I have no special talents, I am only passionately curious. -- Albert Einstein



innovation through open-inquiry learning in the learning commons

Will open-inquiry build children's innovative thinking and doing?

Then there is the instinct of making -- the constructive impulse. The child's impulse to find expression first in play, in movement, and make believe, becomes more definite, and seeks outlet in shaping materials into tangible forms and permanent embodiment. . . .

Children simply like to do things and watch to see what will happen. -- John Dewey

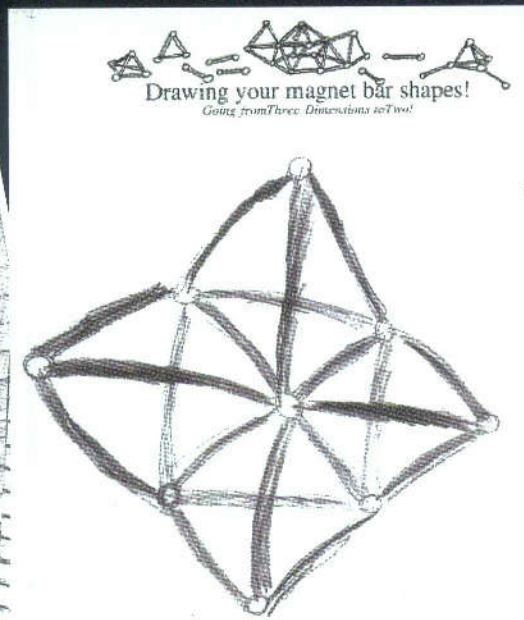
A lab in action. Children first gather in a circle with lab instructors and together talk about a particular aspect of finding and meeting challenges. Children then choose from inventory of student-directed projects and work independently or in small groups for forty-five minutes. Through an apprentice-like pedagogy, instructors teach by becoming fellow discoverers, builders of thinking-centered conversations, as well as transfer, further exploration, and research guides. Educators give the essential affirmation to set the instructional stage:


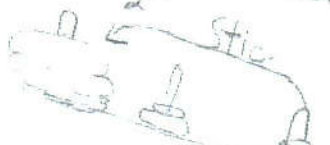
I believe in your choice, I will follow you there.

process-based thinking & doing...

While working with tangible, open-ended, skill-based, and age-dimensional projects, children find their own challenges, enrich the process, and make a few statements or "products" along the way. . . .

(A) you! #8 nicholas
Yesterday I went to the
think I am and used Kapla
Bolcks to create a
Kapla bridge. I discovered
that to make the Kapla
bridge, you have to
have a lot of back
support and top support
The back support levels
out the weight and the
top support holds up
both sides. Another thing
I discovered is that it takes
groups of two or three
people that will work together
and will not fiddle around.



What system have you used to move the

I Moved the top pole
to the third stic.
then I move the second
one to 2nd

Stic

We never gave up
the challenge
on. We took tons
of steps. We kept on
fixing it. It took us
about 30 minutes. It
kept on falling off
I got frustrating. I
would do it again.
next time if I can
I really liked it becau
it was a challenge.
think we used math
The first step was

a two little dynamics.
The other one was the one
The reason it was hard
was on the bottom of the
an. I had to guess which
train of thought because I
had to go back and guess again
self a million times. The
thing at a time. What helps me
ugh it hard or mark the pole that I
well,
I never give up and

Children want to be part of the thinking-centered conversation.

You really have questions in your mind.

-- Lab student

Hands-on challenges give structure for thinking about thinking.

Yes, I felt a light bulb moment when I found out that there's lots of things we could do with those magnets.

-- Lab student

Students are eager to put their finger on what it takes to think and do well.

To meet our challenge, we had to take a chance.

-- First grade lab student

If you are doing teamwork, you have to learn how to deal with someone not using teamwork.

-- Lab student

You learn that frustration can be good for thinking.

-- Lab student

Intelligence is a big commodity in our society, and children feel it.

Inquiry experiences go home and program pedagogy transfers out.

She's making a discovery room in our basement!

-- Volunteer Parent

My son now has a stash of 350 strawberry baskets, all his own. Perhaps not as many as in the lab, but still a lot! Look at this photo of a recent new arch system that my child designed!

-- Volunteer Parent

I remembered here I had to plan a strategy with something. When I had to study at home I remembered back, and planned a strategy for the study.

-- Lab student

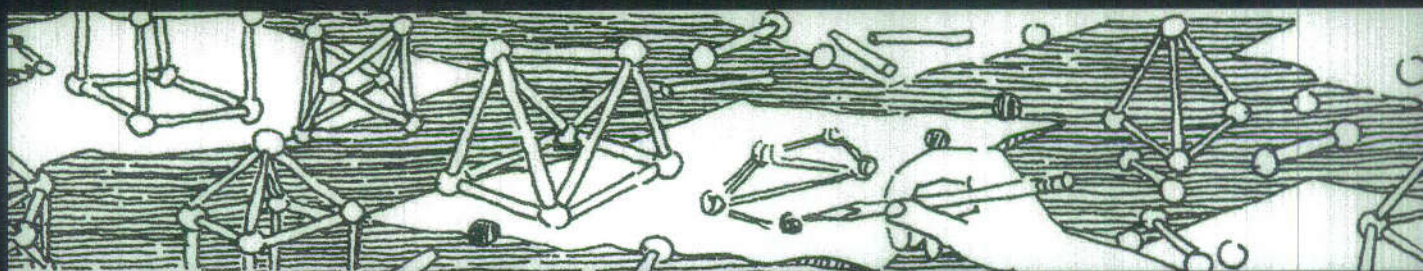
[For] some reason, whenever I climb my tree, I think about what smarts I'm using. Is it visual?

-- Lab student

The lab sets up a multi-generational thinking and learning community.

I just had a meeting on this very discussion on the lack of active listening skills in our office! Guys, you wouldn't believe how essential this habit of mind is in my workplace!

-- Volunteer Parent



CULTIVATING CURIOUS MINDS

My ideas seem to come from constantly looking for problems to solve. -- Inventor, Jerome Lemelson

Children reflect upon and anticipate their time in the lab.

During the summer, at 11:50 on Wednesday, I think about the Think Tank and my time going there.

-- Lab student

When it's raining it would be nice to come to the lab. It's like being outside.

-- Lab student

I always think of when I was using the Magnet Mural in the lab. I think of the people I made dancing.

-- Lab student

Successful lab projects put a focus on skills and are made of simple hands-on parts -- empowering creativity and leading children to design their own technologies.

Open-inquiry animates innovative and industrious thinking.

Jake and I actually invented electricity! -- Lab Student

I've been learning to do things I thought might have been impossible to do.

-- Lab student

I learned . . .

. . . to look at things from different angles. [literally]

. . . it's OK to fail.

. . . to build and get new ideas.

. . . to go step by step.

. . . a lot of thinking words.

. . . about different ways we think.

. . . to find the questions. -- Lab students K-6

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