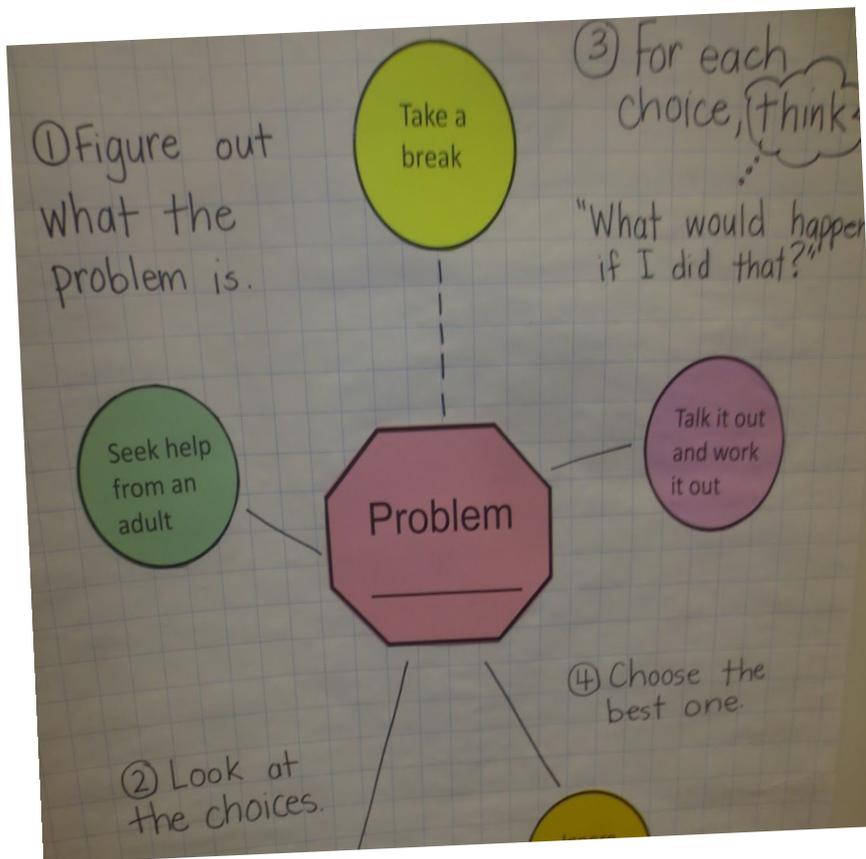


February 19, 2016



Carpe Diem...Thinking Flexibly

My days with your children rarely go precisely as I plan. I am fortunate to have a fair amount of flexibility during each day which allows me to seize learning moments that trump whatever else is on the schedule. This week has been filled with many such moments. We came to school on Monday only to discover that three of our eight crabs had died, or at least “seemed” dead. This led to a lengthy discussion about what might have caused their demise. Great work and deep thinking. Children considered what was the same and what was different in our habitat elements. They wondered whether hand oils might affect the crabs. They thought about the temperature of the room. They wondered why males were dying and not females. They considered the size of the crabs -



were they big or small? Maybe big crabs are older. They wondered about the water. Was the sand toxic, maybe it has chemicals that harm the crabs? Do they need real plants instead of the fake plastic plants? Did the way we interacted with the crabs stress them out? Was our table washing spray getting in the tanks? And the talk has continued throughout the week as we replaced the crabs and yet another died. Our work has certainly veered away from what I had planned but has been richer than my plan.

Before school on Wednesday, I was in the kitchen and Colleen came in. She mentioned that Friday was

supposed to bring 50 degree weather and rain. Our weather that day was lovely - crisp, cold and sunny. I immediately scrapped my morning plans. We went cross country skiing instead. It was a great surprise to the children and a great choice. It's uncertain we'll get to go again.

Another day there was a bit of a brouhaha about the actions of one of our classmates. The talk continued among a number of children even after the children involved had "talked it out and worked it out." This was very upsetting to the child involved. Another opportunity to sit down together (not exactly at that time!) to talk about making mistakes. How it's vital to move on after amends have been made. How each of us would feel if every time we did a mean or careless thing to someone else they never forgot about it. How it would feel to carry every hurt we'd ever gotten ourselves. All agreed that we'd feel pretty bad. We discussed the idea of "having a clean sheet of paper" each day. Thank goodness we each get a fresh start every day.

Thursday, one of the creators of the "cozy spaces" action plan came to me and wanted to talk to the class about how the plan was going. We took the time to do this. The plan is going "kinda good" and some had suggestions for making it better. We tweaked the plan and will check in again in two weeks.

Friday I sat during snack with a group of children. They were chatting about Minecraft and I was trying to understand the lure of the game better. I mentioned that we could perhaps study geometry by

making our own “Minecraft” game in 2-D. There was an explosion of energy and excitement. Some started drawing creepers (or some other such creatures) to teach me about the game. They wanted to talk to the whole class about this idea...so we did. I had to hold them back a bit, telling them that I wasn’t ready to start teaching this today but due to the class’s excitement, I decided to change my math plan for the day. We did some geometry work which will likely lead up to some sort of “Cranecraft.”

The flexibility I have as a educator at Prairie Creek is one of the things I treasure about my work. Your children keep me on my toes. And I believe this flexibility is one of the reasons that children’s engagement and love of learning is high. Their concerns and their ideas are valued. They come to know this. As our school song goes (to the tune of This Land is Your Land), *This school is your school. This school is my school. We want to welcome you to Prairie Creek school. We hope you like it, here in our family. This school was made for you and me.*

DATES FOR THE CALENDAR

Tuesday, February 23

Math Parent Education Night: Michelle ($\frac{1}{2}$), Nancy ($\frac{2}{8}$) and Amy B. (K/1) will be take you through a strand of mathematics starting in Kindergarten and moving up to 5th grade. Come see how we teach math!

Thursday, March 10: True Colors All School Art Event. You will not want to miss this evening. Come see the gorgeous art your children have made and do many hands on art activities together. Special Guest: Arts Residency Artist Colleen Riley will be demonstrating her work on the potter’s wheel.

Thursday, March 17 9:15 - 11:10 Animal Folk Tale Festival Culminating Event for all the $\frac{2}{8}$ children. Children will perform their plays multiple times during the event. Let me know what time you can attend so I can try to schedule your child’s play accordingly.

Fri, March 18 TWIGS Prairie Creek Auction. Save the date! It’s a lot of fun and an important way for our school to offer so many opportunities for your children.

Spring Break: Monday, March 21 - Monday, March 28. **Return to school on Tuesday, March 29.**

Looking ahead: May Day Celebration will be Friday, April 29th. Plan to come for the morning parade, contra dancing, dedicating our new garden stacks and end with lunch.