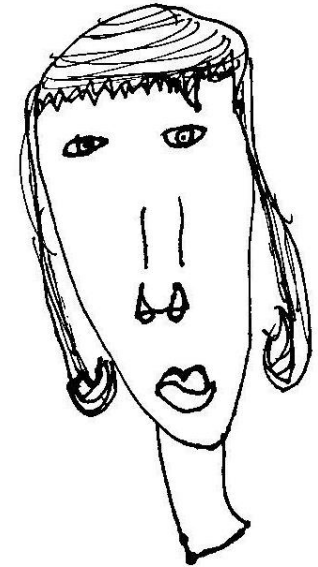


From Teaching to Thinking: Re-Igniting our Role as Educators



Seasons of Change



Early Childhood Australia National Conference 2014

We ought to join our attention to the children's attention, rather than asking the children to join their attention to what we think they ought to pay attention to, or to the learning goals and assessment benchmarks that have our attention.

Carrie Melsom



Learn more about the Opal School:

Caroline Wolfe and Lauren Adams, *Creating Possible Worlds: The Teacher's Role in Nurturing a Community Where Imagination Thrives*. Portland, OR: Portland Children's Museum Center for Learning. <http://opalschoolblog.typepad.com/>

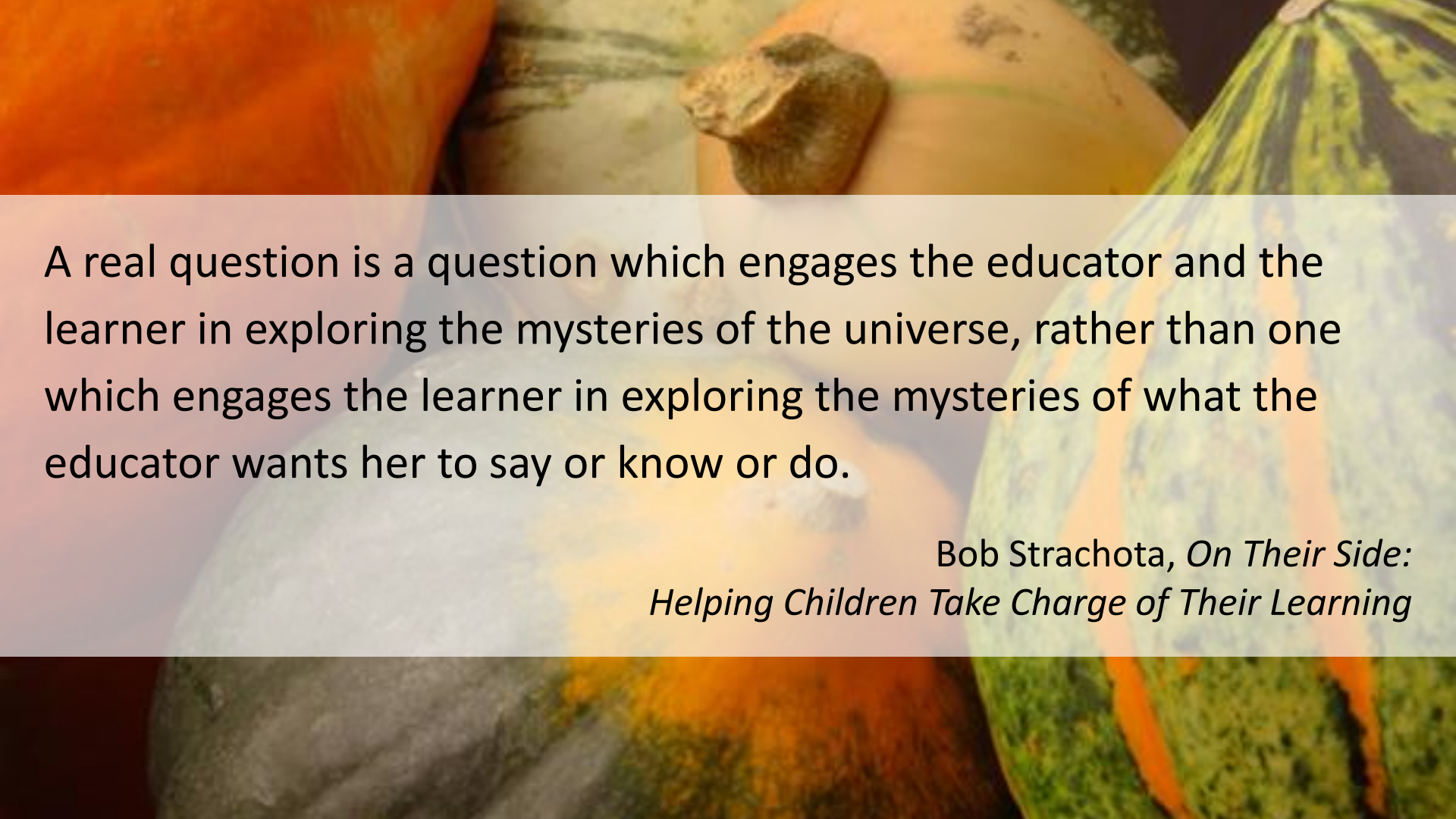






How do these seeds know what to become?
How do they know what to grow into?





A real question is a question which engages the educator and the learner in exploring the mysteries of the universe, rather than one which engages the learner in exploring the mysteries of what the educator wants her to say or know or do.

Bob Strachota, *On Their Side:
Helping Children Take Charge of Their Learning*

The young child is the first great researcher. Children are born searching for the meaning of life, the meaning of the self in relation to others and to the world, the meaning of their existence, the meaning of conventions and customs, and of the rules and the answers we provide.

If we know how to listen to them, children can give back to us the pleasure of amazement, of marvel, of doubt . . . the pleasure of the “why.” Children can give us the strength of doubt and the courage of error.

They can transmit to us the joy of searching and the value of research as an openness toward others and toward everything that is new.

Carlina Rinaldi, “The Teacher as Researcher.”

Innovations, Spring 2003

Great teaching traffics in enduring puzzlements, persistent dilemmas, complex conundrums, enigmatic paradoxes. On the other hand, certainty is closed, and closed streets don't interest the mind . . .

Great ideas have legs. They take you somewhere. With them, you can raise questions that can't be answered. These unanswerable questions should be a source of comfort. Puzzlements invite the most precious of human abilities to take wing. I speak of imagination, the neglected stepchild of education.

Elliot Eisner, "The Satisfactions of Teaching,"
Educational Leadership (63), 6



Caroline: “Let’s use our imaginations and play with ideas; I don’t know the answer but I think it would be fun to think about.”

Lois: “I think there’s a little brain inside the seed that tells the seed to be brave.”

Caroline: “Why does a seed need to be brave?”

Kaleo: “They’re scared in the dark, underground.”

Pavi: “They’ll stop being frightened when they start growing.”

Lois: “They need friends.”

The potential of the child is stunted when the endpoint of their learning is formulated in advance.

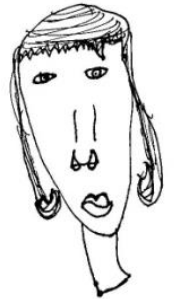
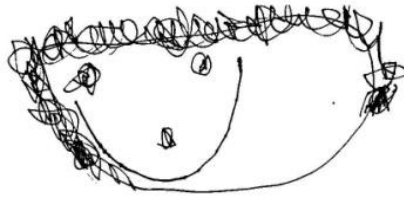
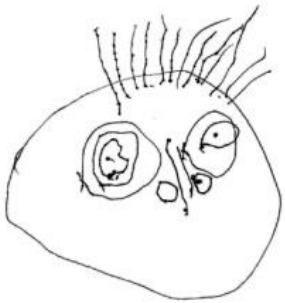
Carlina Rinaldi, "The Emergent Curriculum and Social Constructivism."

The Hundred Languages of Children

What touches my heart?

What values are stirred as I listen?

What catches my attention, leaves me curious, eager to hear more?



We believe that the children will have things to tell each other and us that we have never heard before.

We are always listening for a surprise and the birth of a new idea.

Louise Boyd Cadwell, *Bringing Learning to Life*

What touches your heart?

What catches your attention, leaves you curious, eager for more?

What values are stirred in you as you watch Jamie?

What does Jamie have to tell you that you have never heard before?

What surprise is he offering you? What new idea is being born here?

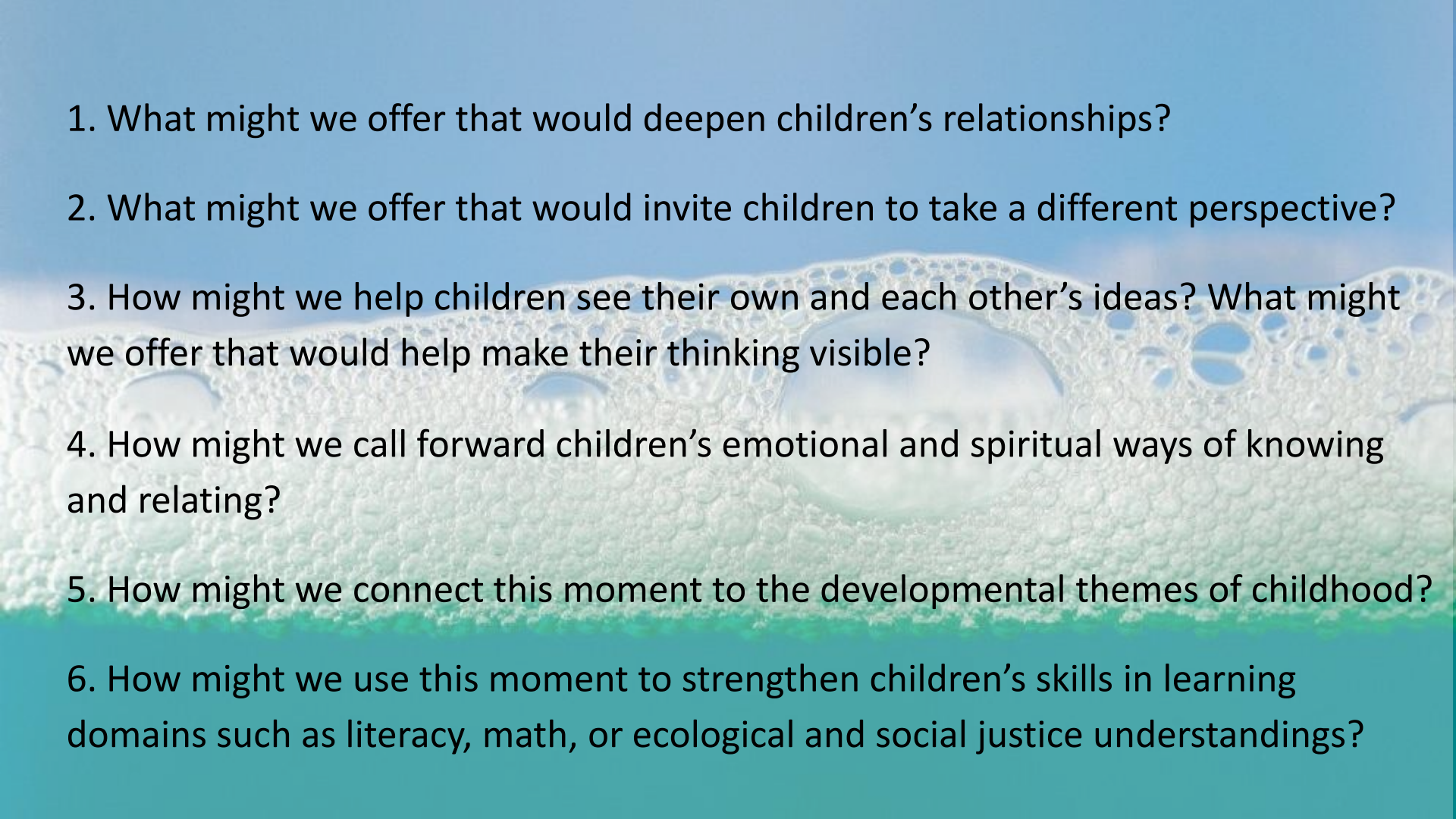
What are the children trying to figure out?

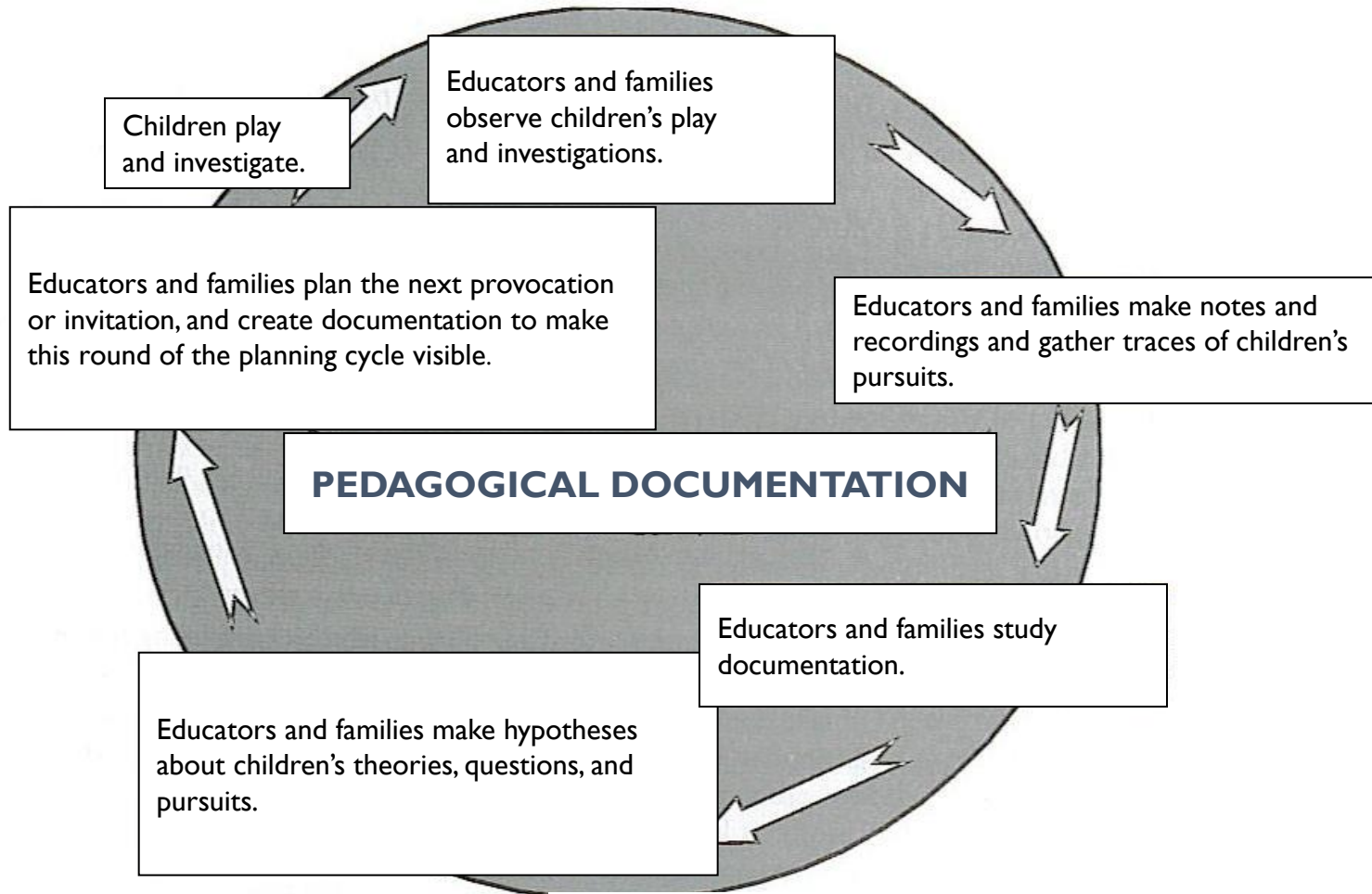
What theories are they testing? What questions are they asking?

What understandings and misunderstandings are the children drawing on?

Are there patterns in their inquiry that reveal a trajectory of thought or questioning?

Are there inconsistencies or contradictions in their thinking that reveal a cognitive knot?

- 
- The background of the slide features a close-up, cross-sectional view of a plant stem, likely a celery stalk, showing its internal cellular structure and vascular bundles. The top portion of the image is a clear blue sky, and the bottom portion is a solid teal color. A thin layer of green water is visible at the very bottom edge of the plant stem.
1. What might we offer that would deepen children's relationships?
 2. What might we offer that would invite children to take a different perspective?
 3. How might we help children see their own and each other's ideas? What might we offer that would help make their thinking visible?
 4. How might we call forward children's emotional and spiritual ways of knowing and relating?
 5. How might we connect this moment to the developmental themes of childhood?
 6. How might we use this moment to strengthen children's skills in learning domains such as literacy, math, or ecological and social justice understandings?



Adapted from Pam Oken-Wright and Marty Gravett, "Big Ideas and the Essence of Intent."
Teaching and Learning: Collaborative Exploration of the Reggio Emilia Approach

Children appreciate the fact that we are side-by-side with them in their search for answers: the child-researcher and the teacher-researcher.

Only in this way will children return with full rights among the builders of human culture. Only in this way will they sense that their wonder and their discoveries are truly appreciated because they are useful.

Only in this way can children hope to reacquire their human dignity, and no longer be considered “objects of care.”

