

A Map Of Many, Many Happy Thoughts

Amelie's story



"I'm going to draw the map of the farm," Amelie declares making herself comfortable at the table. I quickly grab a camera ready to record her story. Why? Because I am more than intrigued to document Amelie's perspective on what forms a big chunk of her learning life at Greerton. I want to find out how the learning we do at the farm, so deeply grounded in nature, is transported here, to Mitchell Street.

"That's a picture about the farm, to show you where to go. That's the cow in the cow paddock. I am making the stream now. That's the big, long fast water and that's the tree that fall down and ran across the stream. That's where we were, right there,...I was even lots stronger. And that's the chicken coop. And that's an avocado and that's a feijoa. And that's Henry." Amelie continues mapping. When I have a close look at Amelie's work, I am struck by a resemblance: both trees and children are drawn close together, bound by team spirit. Hmmm!

"That's a little nest in the tree with baby chicks." The mud pit is on the edge.



“Im going to do the van, that’s the door and those are the seats.” The hut, flying fox and alpacas (with long neck and smily faces) are all represented. The last thing Amelie does is to sign her map, as if to say ‘I made this’. Of, course!

Unpacking Amelie’s learning....

This is what memories are made of... When children experience freedom to explore, discover, investigate or simply be in nature, the type of learning they do cannot be taught by any other means. It was only the week before that we conducted our stream safety test so, seeing that ‘event’ represented on her map and the image Amelie shaped of herself as someone ‘lots stronger’, is simply priceless. When we build positive, empowering learning identities, children are more likely to tackle life’s uncertainties and challenges. With every farm trip, Amelie is working hard to strengthen hers. And, as Einstein once said, “knowledge (and not only) comes from experience”. Anyone having a closer look at the map, can see that all living creatures (with the exception of trees) have big smiley faces. No doubt, Amelie has established a very joyful, emotional relationship with the farm and these positive emotions, “*broaden* our perception and range of thought, which allows us to see

what we didn’t see before, put ideas together in new ways, experiment with new ways of behaving, and in these ways *build* our repertoire of knowledge, ideas and skills.”(1) During our forest farm adventures we have conversations, ponder in silence, live thrills and question and because of this rich repertoire of happenings, our Amelie (alongside others) is able to grow her intelligences and make them visible through different media. I believe this is how we ‘teach’ literacy, science, numeracy, arts, social competencies and so on; through trust, freedom and genuine presence in the moment.

How can we stretch this learning further?

Dear Amelie, I want to ask you if it is possible to display your map on our wall as a testimony of the different kinds of leanings that happen during our forest farm adventures. My hope is that, as a team, we can further grow our learning and communicate it to our community in different ways. Your map is most definitely a fabulous start.

Cu afectiune/ Arohanui, Cat

August 2018

(1) Gray, P. (2013, p.153) - Free To Learn, Basic Books, New York