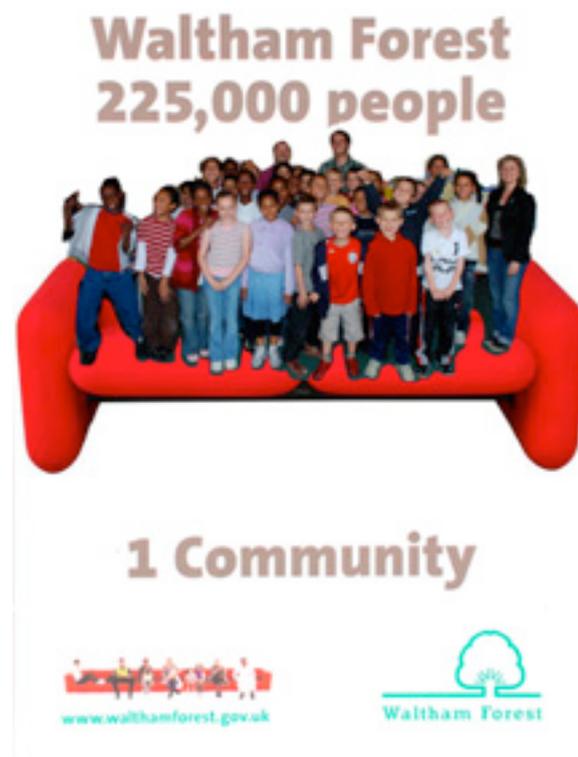


## **EXPERIENCING DEMOCRACY Activity & Impact Report**

A collaboration between  
Proboscis, Loren Chasse and the  
Jenny Hammond Primary School



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Loren Chasse – Lead Artist & Educator

### **Jenny Hammond Primary School**

Students of Year 4 (2006-07)

Deborah Gibbon – Head Teacher

John Harold – Deputy Head Teacher

Sally Labern – Creativity Link Governor

Stephanie Lucas – Year 4 Class Teacher

And other staff, parents and volunteers who helped throughout the workshop.

### **Links**

<http://socialtapestries.net/jennyhammond/>

<http://proboscis.org.uk/storycubes/>

<http://diffusion.org.uk/>

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/1community.htm>

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*The term democracy is derived from the Ancient Greek demokratia (δημοκρατία), which was coined from demos ("people") and kratos ("rule") in the middle of the 5th century BC*

Encyclopaedia Britannica

*Democracy is the belief that the majority of an organised group can make decisions binding on the whole group*

Wikipedia

*Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.*

Abraham Lincoln

## Introduction

*Promoting early engagement in public and community life is crucial to sustaining and building a healthy society.*

*Building a Culture of Participation*, Kirby, Lanyon, Cronin, Sinclair, DFES, 2003

*Experiencing Democracy* follows on from the success of *Everyday Archaeology* (July 2006) and *Sound Scavenging: Listen Your Way to School* (July & December 2005) and is a continuation of Proboscis' ongoing collaboration with the Jenny Hammond Primary School in Waltham Forest, London. The workshop explored ways of integrating democratic values and processes into a classroom environment by experiencing them not just talking about them. *Experiencing Democracy* is also the final project in Proboscis' *Social Tapestries* research programme investigating the relevance of emerging tools and techniques for mapping and sharing knowledge and experience to social and cultural life.

Group work was at the core of the *Experiencing Democracy* workshop. It directly addressed the gap between formal democratic structures and everyday experience of participation in decision-making processes within a classroom setting. The workshop promoted active citizenship, enabling students to explore and learn the skills of negotiation and listening, leadership skills, how to work within a group, collaborate and build confidence to engage in the decision-making process. Led by primary school educator and sound artist Loren Chasse from San Francisco with Giles Lane and Orlagh Woods from Proboscis, it was a five day workshop with twenty-eight students (ages nine to ten) in Year 4. The workshop used some of Proboscis' innovative and inspiring tools and techniques (including Diffusion eBooks, StoryCubes and online mapping technologies) to help students look at the relationships between the individual and the group, explore the roles within those groups and reflect on what it means to be part of a democratic process. It was an innovative, rewarding and broad immersion for the students, teachers, lead artist, Proboscis and the school.

In evaluating the project, we have been inspired by the willingness of the students to engage, learn and share their experiences, as well as the teaching staff who have worked with us to mesh their own teaching with our processes and tools. As well as daily evaluation sessions, we also held an afternoon evaluation discussion between Loren Chasse, Giles Lane, Stephanie Lucas (Year 4 class teacher) and Orlagh Woods at the end of the project to capture feedback and reflect on the workshop overall. Comments from this discussion, as well as descriptions of the activities, written reflections completed by the students and further reflections by the workshop facilitators form the basis of this report. Head Teacher Deborah Gibbon was also invited to comment on the workshop's influence throughout the school.

*The workshop was very successful; the children spoke enthusiastically about what they were doing and felt empowered. They particularly enjoyed the fact that they had choices about things and could display their work anywhere around the school. The children appeared to have a good understanding about democracy and freedom.*

Deborah Gibbon, Head Teacher



**Background and Aims**

Experiencing Democracy aimed to engage young people and their teachers in recording, reflecting on and sharing their experiences of democracy and democratic behaviour in everyday life. The project aimed to build up a picture of what democracy feels like, and the kinds of everyday participative behaviours that help to strengthen democratic culture and engagement. It is built on Proboscis’ work to embrace cultures of listening through new processes, tools and partnerships that cross linguistic, cultural and social divides; in particular work in creating cross curricular tools that by their nature encourage the skills of democratic process: negotiation, listening, articulation, sharing and decision making. The workshop supports a range of key skills from making media, games, storytelling, art and literacy and numeracy and draws upon a number of innovative tools and techniques developed by Proboscis. These encourage sharing of knowledge and experience to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of difference. This in turn inspires students to understand that their voice matters and that they have agency to influence change in their classroom, school, community and environment.

Proboscis is a creative studio which researches, develops and facilitates innovation. It creates artworks and acts as a production company, commissioning agency, design studio, think tank and consultancy. Collaboration is at the core of its creative practice and ethos. Jenny Hammond is a diverse, high achieving primary school which believes in enriching the curriculum in imaginative and creative ways. In 2006/07 it had 200 students of which 53% were girls and 43% boys. 25% of these students’ first language was other than (or believed to be other than) English. Loren Chasse is a primary school educator and sound artist from San Francisco.

The project demonstrates that the Social Tapestries’ approach to integrating creative practices into learning responds to individuals’ skills and gives less confident students a voice. Our approach to public authoring, listening and creating, teaches how to link ideas between subjects; associative skills that encourage critical, empowered thinking about space and environment. It also demonstrates the benefit of working with an artist who can bridge artistic and school environments, allowing students and teachers to explore new artistic processes and ideas.

**Collaboration**

In response to the previous year’s evaluation, Proboscis collaborated very closely with Stephanie Lucas, the class teacher from Jenny Hammond Primary School and Loren Chasse, primary school educator and sound artist from San Francisco to design and develop the ideas around the Experiencing Democracy workshop. There was real investment from the class teacher in both the workshop and the process because of this

in depth collaboration at the beginning. This led to real motivation and investment in the continuation and sustainability of the concepts after the life of the project.

*I was really excited about the workshop which of course the children picked up on. This excitement was contagious within the classroom even before the workshop began...*

*This type of in-depth collaboration is vital for the workshop to be successful...*

*If you have already invested in the planning and delivery of the workshop, you'll want it to continue. It therefore becomes part of your everyday teaching*

Stephanie Lucas

### **Student Participation**

The students were encouraged to reflect on what they had learnt by constantly getting their feedback on the various activities and by filling in their eBooks daily. The content and language of the workshop came from the students.

*By being flexible and open to change and giving the students a voice, the workshop became empowering for the students. They felt that they are part of decision making process from the offset. This did a lot to allow the students to be invested.*

*We were giving them a voice by constantly getting their feedback.*

Loren Chasse

### **Questions Posed**

- Are there times when other people make decisions for you?  
How do you feel about this?
- Do there have to be times when other people have to make decisions for you?  
Is this fair?
- How are decisions made in your home / classroom / school / with your friends / in your neighbourhood?
- Can you give examples of democracy in your home / classroom / school / playground / public spaces?
- What things do you think are undemocratic in your classroom or in the playground?  
(for example bullying)
- How could they be changed?
- Is democracy different within different cultures?  
Have you or someone you know lived in a place without democracy?
- If you or your parents wanted to try and change something in your school or neighbourhood, how would you go about it?
- Is it important to be part of the decision making process? Why?
- What do you understand by the word 'democracy'?

### **Learning**

Throughout the week, the students explored, through fun and playful activities, some fundamental life skills and ideas around democratic values and decision making processes.



*The children didn't realise what they were learning, they were having so much fun*

Stephanie Lucas

These included:

- How to select and organise themselves within different groups
- Exploring through playful activities the importance of roles within a group and the skills needed
- Importance of knowing the purpose of an activity prior to making a group
- How to work as a group and rely on other people and have respect for other people's skills
- How to participate, compromise and vote as a class
- Negotiation, listening skills, democratic decision-making processes
- How to transfer what they were learning at school into different contexts
- Connecting the ideas of Citizenship – working as a group; working as a class; working as a school; working as a community

*The students became more comfortable in talking about groups and taking an active role in a group's decision-making processes*

Loren Chasse

*These practices help the teacher in the long-term.*

Stephanie Lucas

### **What went well**

- The content of the workshop came from the students and they evaluated and reflected on the learning throughout the week. They therefore felt that they were part of creating the workshop and by being given the opportunity to constantly feedback they became more invested and involved in the learning and therefore took it more seriously.
- Whilst the workshop structure was carefully planned out in advance, it was also designed to allow for changes and adaptations to happen (depending on the issues arising for the students) through daily reflection and feedback sessions between the Proboscis team and the teacher taking into consideration the input from the students.
- The learning process was made transparent to the students. They were introduced to the idea of critical appraisal by trying to understand why and what they were learning – the methods and processes being used.

- By the end of week many students were gaining confidence – in particular, some of the less confident and more reticent students were speaking up more.
- Having the different contexts gave the students a chance to reinvent themselves and start from scratch. The “expert” relay was great for improving team-building skills. *It doesn’t matter if the other team wins. It just matters that we’re having fun*  
One student to another during the ‘expert’ relay activity
- There was a real interest in the project from other students within the school. *Students were asking why a picture was in a certain place? Whose was it?*  
Stephanie Lucas
- Other discussions were taking place in other classes and within the school community *The workshop really got the students thinking about democracy and made me think about what is democratic in the school. What choices do the students have?” Children were talking more on a political level.*

Stephanie Lucas

*We enjoy having visiting artists in the school; it is always very exciting for the children and can be an inspiration to the staff. Proboscis are always welcome.*

Deborah Gibbon

### Important Lessons Learned

- Making the workshop immediately personal to the students *They were immediately given a choice that they’d never had before using something they’d already created from the previous week.*  
Loren Chasse
- Having, as far as possible, the same teacher for the whole project or a teacher who has been well briefed on the aims and objectives of the project.
- Giving students a real context for learning. The students are much more engaged and put in a lot more effort when what they’re learning is connected to things that they feel passionate about.
- Having real in depth collaboration between all parties to ensure sustainability of the ideas and concepts
- Introducing game-making through something they know already. This makes it easier for the students to concentrate on how the groups work together. At a later date, after these initial ideas are learnt, the game-making can be more interlinked with their curriculum work. *By this stage, students will already be aware of how to work in a group so there will be less need to discuss behaviour within the group.*

Loren Chasse

- Using the student’s language initially so they feel invested and part of the process



*The students came up with the various roles needed within a group. It may have been directed by the workshop leaders but the students came up with the language.*

Giles Lane

*This workshop is a really good example of what can be done while still being fully productive.....*

*...it made me realise how powerful a tool video can be.*

Stephanie Lucas

*For schools that follow a creative curriculum where there is flexibility in the school day it could be very easily incorporated into the curriculum. It would be much harder for a school that has a very rigid timetable to follow.*

Deborah Gibbon, Head Teacher

### Future Directions

- Develop a pared down version of the workshop which could be delivered by a single teacher at the beginning of the school year and could therefore integrate and transfer some of the activities and decision making processes into the curriculum and work throughout the year. The workshop could be adapted to fit with all ages. It develops good principle values for group work which the teacher could refer back to throughout the year.

*the students will take the ideas into the next year*

Stephanie Lucas

- Link the workshop to a history lesson e.g. Ancient Greece exploring the historical context of the political ideas of democracy
- Develop links with schools in other countries so they can share their experiences of democracy
- Develop and deliver professional development workshops for teachers and student teachers
- Develop a larger project with the whole school including students, staff, governors, families and community on a particular issue e.g. school uniform as an exploration of the democratic process. Activities could include data gathering, surveys and fieldtrips. It was agreed that this would need more commitment, time and funding.

*It is important to link the subject to something the students are passionate about.*  
Giles Lane

*With a longer term project, it would be great to shift the teacher role and have more variation between the class teacher and the invited teacher/artists to make it more like team teaching*

Stephanie Lucas

### **Diffusion eBooks**

Diffusion eBooks are used to create custom engagement and notetaking books for specific projects as well as for publishing essays and project documentation. They can be used as a way to gather, collect and share knowledge and can be a personal means of ongoing reflection. The eBook format allows us to design and distribute a notebook that participants in a project or workshop can fill in by hand (writing, drawing or adding stickers as they wish) which can then be scanned and turned back into a PDF file for sharing – either within the group or more widely. This 'virtuous circle' moving from digital to material to digital is at the core of the 'Shareables' concept. The eBooks are free to download, cost almost nothing to make and can be shared (or re-distributed) as both physical objects and PDF files.

<http://diffusion.org.uk>

### **Use within Workshop**

The eBooks were used by the students as an educational tool to reflect on what they had been learning every day. These learning diaries gave them the opportunity to see that what they'd been doing throughout the week was important and not just fun and games. The students were engaged in completing and embellishing the eBooks because they were both personal to each of them, they were a novel way to record their learning and because they were specifically tailored to the project and workshop.

*Unbelievably I left the class for 2 minutes when they were filling in their eBooks and asked another teacher to keep an eye on the class. There wasn't a word spoken. 28 children with their heads down just writing their eBooks. I hadn't said that they needed to fill them in silence. They were just so focused.*

Stephanie Lucas

*Children's self esteem was raised by the appreciation the Proboscis staff gave to the children regarding their work. They all felt valued. They liked the fact that they got something out of it by having a book each showing their work over the week.*

Deborah Gibbon

### **Future Uses and Lessons Learned**

The eBooks could easily be modified for any age group. e.g. Giant eBooks for a reception year. They would be a great way to focus a literary project e.g. if the class were reading a whole book, you could use the eBook to tailor questions, queries and reflections on the book throughout the reading.

*The kids were still excited even after the workshop had finished every day – it hadn't ended for them they were still able to work on the eBooks*

Stephanie Lucas



### StoryCubes

StoryCubes are a tactile thinking and storytelling tool for exploring relationships and narratives. Each face of the cube can illustrate or describe an idea, a thing or an action, placed together it is possible to build up multiple narratives or explore the relationships between them in a novel three-dimensional way. StoryCubes can be folded in two different ways, giving each cube twelve possible faces – and thus two different ways of telling a story, two musings around an idea. Like books turned inside out and upside down they are read by turning and twisting in your hand and combining in vertical and horizontal constructions. We have begun to use these in projects with communities and schools to help reveal different sides to the stories people tell, enabling them to see from others perspectives and viewpoints, promoting a higher level of thinking, negotiating and decision making process.

<http://proboscis.org.uk/storycubes>

### Use within Workshop

The students began by making the 3d StoryCubes from a flat sheet. They then selected stickers printed with images taken throughout the week to cover the sides of the cube and tell their own particular story from the project. Some students preferred to draw or write on the sides rather than use the printed images. The students then worked in groups to tell their stories from the week's activities and share and listen to other student's stories from the different perspectives. Discussions continued on the overall project, activities, groupwork and democracy as an idea.

### Future Uses and Lessons Learned

It is important to introduce the StoryCubes at an early stage in the workshop so the students get used to using them as a tool and don't get too excited by the images. The StoryCubes are a great tool though with a more timid group it is important to keep the numbers small so everyone has a chance to contribute.

*As the cubes were used, they were looking at pictures of themselves or images they had made and trying to make stories. As it was the first time for the students to use them, they weren't ready to do freeplay.*

Loren Chasse

### Case Studies with Stephanie Lucas (Year 4 class teacher)

**Student 1** was shy and very unlikely to speak up or give opinions in class.

*Even when knowledgeable in an area the student never oozes confidence*

Stephanie Lucas

She grew in confidence throughout the week. On the second day she was placed in the position of having to lead a group of 6 other children. She did this particularly well, not necessarily telling the other students what to do but giving everyone a voice and helping the group to come to decisions together.

*It was an amazing achievement. The confidence definitely came from the workshop.*

*She talked so diplomatically about what leadership was about – using words like compromise*

Stephanie Lucas

**Student 2** was a reluctant reader and writer. It was always difficult to get him involved in school work.

*Throughout the week he kept asking to get his eBook out – even when he'd done what was asked, he wanted to add to it and make it better.*

Stephanie Lucas

**Student 3** was a complete leader and a little intimidating to the other students in the class. He gives the impression that he's too cool for school and pretends he isn't interested.

*He really developed over the week and began to think about what group work meant and was extremely engaged in the sessions. He really got into the project and encouraged other more timid students to be involved.*

Stephanie Lucas

**Student 4** was a really good student but very quiet. He had the potential to be left out a little in class.

*Throughout the workshop, other students realised what a role-model he was. The other students seemed to have more respect for him than they did prior to the workshop. He was a quiet leader. He shone for all of us*

Stephanie Lucas



**Local Influences**

In travelling to and from the school everyday we encountered a poster campaign created by the local authority (London Borough of Waltham Forest) – Waltham Forest, 225,000 people; 1 Community. The posters were designed to demonstrate the rich diversity of the borough’s community and reinforce perceptions of tolerance.

The posters were familiar to the students, being prominently displayed in public places around the borough, and provided a key opportunity for a discussion on the fourth day of the workshop about representation and democracy in the local community. On the last day of the project it was suggested that we make our own version of the poster to reflect how the class itself represented the diversity of the borough.

**Workshop Day by Day**

The workshop took place over 5 days. Throughout the week, the students were introduced to various ways of making groups. Each day they would have to make different choices, building up their knowledge of what is needed to be part of a group, the various roles that are important within that group and the skills needed for those roles. Through playful activities, they learnt to think about the skills needed for a group to do a particular thing and the necessity of knowing the activity prior to making their groups. Each afternoon, the students were given the opportunity to reflect on the day’s activity and what they’d learned by filling in their eBooks and continuing the discussions with their class teacher. See below for a more detailed breakdown of the day’s activities:

**Day 1 - Choice**

Objective: Today we would like you to have an opportunity to make a choice you usually don’t get to have in your school day. Also, we would like you to experience about how individuals contribute to groups and how groups contribute to larger communities.

Activity: The students were given the choice to make their own groups and took the pictures they’d created from the previous week and placed them anywhere in the school.

Some Questions:

- How did you feel being told which group you were going to be in?
- Did anyone take a leadership role in your group?
- Did your group members listen well to each other?
- Was anyone able to persuade someone else to agree with their idea about the story?

**Day 2 – Roles and Responsibilities**

Objective: Today we would like you to learn about what it means to be responsible to a group of people.

Discussion about group work and the roles people play, the skills needed within groups

and the responsibilities towards other group members.

Activity: Making a Game. Again the students were asked to work in groups to do a creative activity, It was important to give the students something they knew how to do. This meant that all students could immediately take part and put more attention onto how they delegated roles and responsibilities within their group.

Some Questions:

- What are some roles (jobs) that are important to have when you are working with a group of people?

*I noticed a tough guy putting his arm around a timid guy and getting him more involved*

Loren Chasse

*It was really exciting for them to make their own game. We got out of it exactly what we wanted. Normally in school if games are made they are based around the curriculum. This was more about the groups.*

Stephanie Lucas

*My impression from filming the students was that some of them thought a good leader was someone who would come up with all the solutions and tell the other students what to do. As the week went on that shifted. All the students began taking more responsibility for what was happening within the group. They were all more involved in the decision making process*

Orlagh Woods

### **Day 3 – Fairness and Choice**

Objective: Today we'd like you to have an opportunity to think about the choices you have when you are at school and how you might participate in creating new choices for yourselves. We'd also like you to learn about how the purpose will affect your choices.

Activity: School Survey – think about all the spaces and classes in the school and how those spaces are used. What choices do you have when you are in a certain area of the school?

Some Questions:

- Which of the roles that we discussed yesterday might be important for today's group activity?

### **Day 4 – Expert Relay - Inclusion and Participation**

Objective: Today we'll be giving you the opportunity to experience and discuss some of the issues around Inclusion, Participation, Equity and Representation

Activity: 'Expert' Relay - A series of 7 activities:

- Football – dribbling round cones
- Pictionary
- Cutting out a shape
- Multiplication / Division Problems
- Hula-hoop
- Making something
- Countdown – spell and write with chalk on playground 10 words beginning with Z

These were undertaken by the students in the playground using numeracy, creativity, literacy and movement skills to further explore different ways of working together as a group. The students were initially asked to select their top 2 skills from the list



above. Groups were then made from this knowledge and when they found out what the activities were for the expert relay, they were given a short time within their groups to decide who would do which activity. After the 'expert' relay, the students worked, again in groups, to come up with their own relay activities.

*It was important for the students to do the activity as a model prior to coming up with their own 'expert' relay.*

Loren Chasse

*The competition part wasn't really important and kids weren't fixated on it. The team that won may have had a moment of glory but that wasn't what the activity was about.*

Stephanie Lucas

### **Day 5 – Reflection and Wrap-up**

Objective: Today we'll be Reflecting on the week's activities through Storycubes and online mapping tools. There will also be a discussion about Democracy and what that means within the class, school, family and community.

Activity: Making StoryCubes, Google Maps and sharing stories from the week's workshop

Some Questions:

- How many of you believe you had an opportunity this week to vote for the way something would be done in class? How many of you felt you were part of a majority? Or a minority?
- What would you say to someone, such as a parent or a friend from another class, if they asked you what you learned in the workshop this week?
- Do you think it was meaningful for you to be doing these activities and having these discussions with us?

*At the end of the week, a debate got going about what democracy meant. The students realised through the discussion that what they'd learnt throughout the week had all been about democracy. They were really interested in it and came up with names like Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and The Queen.*

Stephanie Lucas

*I was amazed to learn that the students in my survey group had not been in the cafeteria when it was not being used for meals. With its tables folded and pushed up against the walls, the room appeared cavernous and provided a wide open space into which the students immediately ran, tumbled and slid.*

*"Why don't we have break in here on a rainy day?" one of them asked.*

Loren Chasse

Appendix A – Student Learning Diary Cover Pages



Appendix A – Student Learning Diary Cover Pages ...continued



## Appendix B – Teacher’s Notes and Reflections

The workshop is ‘personalized’ – grounded in the students’ prior experiences from the start. With the intention of introducing what may be new concepts, we intend that there will always be a context that is familiar to ground the students in their exploration.

- > Today we would like you to have an opportunity to make a choice you usually don’t get to make during your school day.

It is important that people feel they have choices that are truly their own, not just those ‘choices’ that are chosen for them. So the workshop begins with an activity for which the students are given choices to hang artwork they have made the previous week with their classroom teacher. Before setting out in groups to do this, there is a discussion about the factors/considerations/etc. that inform the choice-making process.

- > *Think about the places where you are normally allowed to display your artwork and then imagine some places where you wish you could hang your artwork. When you’re making your choice remember to ask yourself, “Will my action have a positive effect on the school?” An example of a negative effect might be something like hanging your artwork over a fire exit sign or covering something someone has already put there.*

Experiencing democracy means to experience how individuals contribute to groups and how groups contribute to larger communities. A structural principle for the workshop is that of group work. Throughout the week, the students will go about organizing themselves into groups in diverse ways, each time taking more initiative in this process as the teachers gradually relinquish their own authority. The first instance of group-making for the week is perhaps the most conventional as the choice is made arbitrarily by the teacher without consideration for the individual students.

- > *I am going to begin by making groups. Since I do not know any of you very well yet, I will use the class register your teacher has given me. When I call your name please go to the group I assign you...*

Another structural principle for the workshop is that of reflection. At all stages the students will be invited and encouraged to meta-cognate in regard to the learning process that is taking place. No activity will pass where the students are not given an opportunity to provide feedback to their teachers and to each other.

- > *Do you remember how groups were chosen this earlier this morning before we went out to hang our artwork?*
  - How did you feel about being told which group you were going to be in?
  - Did you mind?
  - Do you think it was fair?
  - What other ways can you suggest for making groups?

In order to make reflection meaningful, it is necessary to provide the students with linguistic frameworks (grammar and vocabulary) so they have access to the oral genre and may participate with confidence.

**Some example sentence frames:**

"I think/believe the way we made groups this morning was fair/unfair because\_\_\_\_\_."

"I propose another way for making groups by\_\_\_\_\_."

Discussions begin with the generation of vocabulary 'banks', posted so the students may refer to these words throughout the week. While new vocabulary will be introduced by the teacher, it is a priority that we begin by using the students' own language so they understand their own role in generating the content of the workshop and are subsequently encouraged to participate as their own words are validated in this way.

> *What are some roles (jobs) that are important to have when you are working with a group of people?*

The students words are charted side-by-side with synonyms introduced by the teacher:

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| LEADER/FACILITATOR        | SCRIBE/WRITER/NOTE-TAKER |
| CLOCK-WATCHER/TIME-KEEPER | SPEAKER/PRESENTER        |
| PROCESS-KEEPER/MONITOR    | AMBASSADOR/COMMUNICATOR  |
| READER                    |                          |

> *Who will be responsible for making sure the group has what it needs?*

PERSON WHO GETS MATERIALS/GO-GETTER

As the discussion of group work takes on this element of the role, the teachers become more diligent about modeling their own roles for the students in their facilitation of the workshop.

- What has been my role yesterday and today?
- What role has your classroom teacher been playing?
- What about the other adults involved?
- Do you believe you can have more than one role in a group?
- Do you think if you are not any of these things that you still have a role in your group?
- What could it mean to be a listener?

For reflection we borrow a practice from the methodology of Reggio Emilia and provide the students with an opportunity to critically review a video documenting their group work from a previous day.

> *Today we are going to begin by taking a few minutes to look at some video from yesterday's group work.*

- What do you notice?
- What worked well?
- What could have gone better?
- Do you think being video recorded changed the way you behaved?

## GROUP WORK

As the week proceeds and the workshop evolves, group-making takes different forms with a gradual turning over of choices to the students. It is important, first, that they are informed/educated (as in any democracy) about why group work is taking place, how it works and what its purpose is.

- > *For our next activity we are going to make groups in a slightly different way. This time you will not be told where to go. There is just one rule you need to follow: You must make six different groups. It doesn't matter how many students are in each group, only that you have made six groups!*
  - How did your group work together for this activity?
  - Were there any disagreements? Were you able to solve them? How?
  - Did anyone take a leadership role in your group? Did your group members listen well to each other? Was anyone able to persuade someone else to agree with their idea about the story?
  - Do you think making groups this way was a good idea? Does it seem fair? Why or why not?
  - Do you believe our way of making groups for this activity was fair? Why or why not?
  - Today we made groups before knowing what the purpose of the group was. If you had been told you were going to be making a game, would you have chosen a different role for yourself?

And later in the week:

- > *We've been making groups this week in different ways. Now we are at a point where we need to make groups again.*
  - Does anyone have an idea about how we should do it?

Students suggest several choices and vote.

## CHOICE

Before making a choice, it is best we have some knowledge of what not to choose based on the requirements of the situation. It is important that we understand the contexts in which our choices will affect others and that we practice choosing while considering what the outcome might be for all. A great component of this practice is the capacity to empathize – that is, to imagine the perspective/experience/etc. of another person even though you have not had that perspective/experience yourself. Since children still cling tightly to their individual desires to a point where compromise and agreement across a whole classroom might become quite difficult and belabored, it might work best to provide smaller groups with opportunities to evaluate possibilities and to reach consensus among a lesser number.

- > *Today we'd like you to have an opportunity to think about the choices you have when you are at school and how you might participate in creating new choices for yourselves. We'd also like you to learn about how purpose will affect your choices.*

## School Survey

The layout of a school and the designated purposes of its areas are most often determined before the day students arrive. Yet despite the institutional plan, there are ways in which space may be personalized or used alternatively from individual to individual, group

to group. Breaking up the monotony of routine is important to the process of teaching and learning. If a particular subject is learned at the same time each day, under the same lighting, within a static physical framework, there is a slight risk that the subject matter will become identified with that environment and that the student will have trouble transferring the lessons of the experience elsewhere. Before giving students an opportunity to propose alternatives to the specific situations in which they learn, they are sent out to survey their school environment as a means for informing their sensitivity and awareness of what is and isn't available and/or possible.

- > *Today we are going to conduct a survey of your school.*
  - Can anyone tell us what a survey is?
- > *Your school has many different places that are used in different ways.*
  - Can someone name a place at school and describe how it is used/what it is used for?
  - Where do you spend most of your school day? How do you use your classroom?
- > *You will be going out in small groups for a walk around school. We would like you to think about how different areas of your school are used in different ways.*
  - What are they like?
  - Are they noisy?
  - Are they peaceful?
  - Is there a certain kind of activity that takes place there?
  - Is it a place where you can be social with your friends?
  - Is it a place that's good for listening or speaking?
  - For playing, eating, reading...?
  - Are there places where you are not allowed to go?
  - Do you know why?
  - Is it a place you think you should be allowed to be in?
  - Also, how does an area change depending on what time of day it is?
- > *The Big Question we want you to ask yourselves is:*
  - What choices do you have when you are in a certain area of the school?

**Word of the Day: democratic**

We used StoryCubes as a way to look at and talk about what we did together this week.



I help grandma with washing-up. Talking at dinnertime; I always look after myself; Helping classmates with their spelling; Speaking positively; By helping to stop fights; Spend more time with my mum; I helped my mum cook some food and make me and my sisters pack-lunches; Look, Listen, Speak, Help; Give my cat a haircut; My ideas and support; Participate in discussions, present ideas and answer questions; I acted out that I was planting a flower; By encouraging someone on my team when they thought they could not do the activity

I was helping get the ideas in place and choose a good game. I also helped encourage my team mates in their challenges in our game expert relay; Help everybody choose a game; Helping my team get through the race; Cheering for my friends; Encourage my friends; Look after my mum and dad

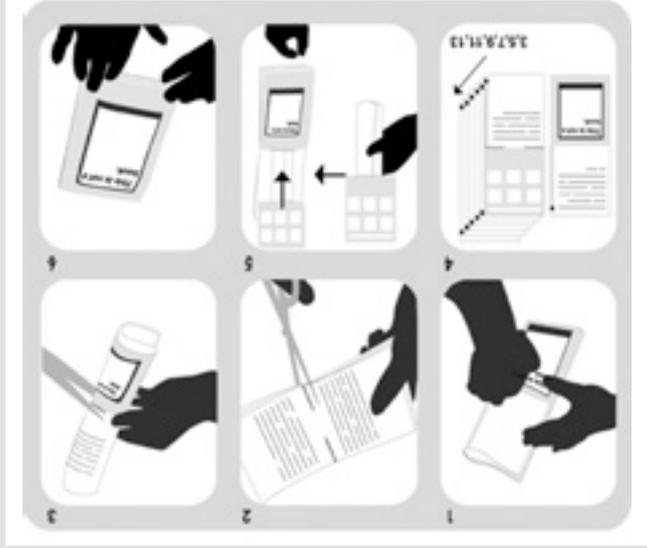
Give my mum my nintendo when she wants it in her room; Play with my cat; Help cook dinner

.....

# Experiencing Democracy Workshop - June 2007

Year 4 Jenny Hammond Primary School





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**Experiencing Democracy Workshop - June 2007  
 Year 4 Jenny Hammond Primary School**

During the week beginning June 25th 2007, Year 4 took part in a five day workshop called *Experiencing Democracy*, led by Loren Chasse with Giles Lane and Orlagh Woods of Proboscis. Our own teacher Stephanie Lucas and teaching assistant Michelle also played a big part in running the workshop! Throughout the week we kept eBook diaries about our experiences each day. This eBook is a collection of some of the most important words and ideas we learned, as well as our favourite drawings and photographs.

Created by: Fatma, Jade, Tahjah, Denas, Lee, Courtney, Kai, Corelle, Bethany, Glen, Yacoob, Mustafa, Darnell, Jordan, Shohaib, Corey, Daniel N, Daniel O, Ayisha, Thomas, Coral, Ashar, Amardeep, Inderveer, Javon, Morgan, Snita and Mike with the help of Stephanie, Michelle, Loren, Orlagh and Giles.



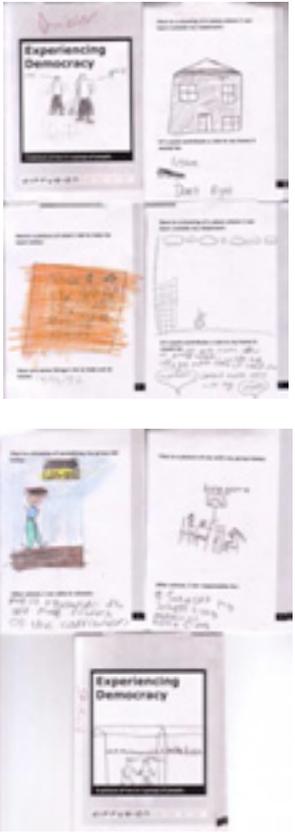
Today we had an opportunity to choose a place at school where we could hang our artwork.

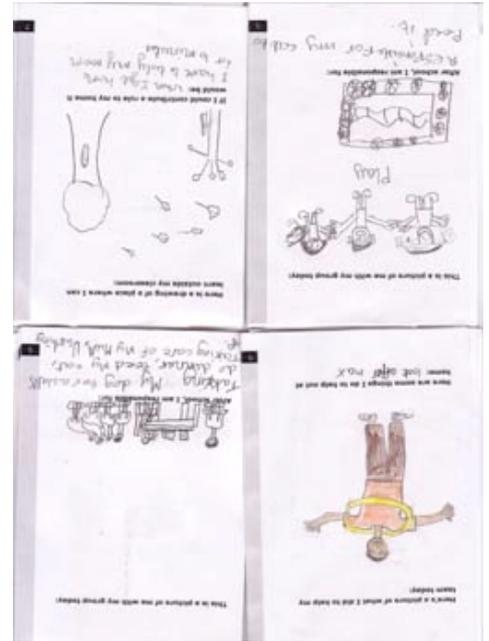
**Word of the Day: choice**



Some other **choices** I have each day at home and at school are:

What to do at golden time; To go on my trampoline; What to read, who to play with, what to wear; To have a biscuit or a crisp; My ideas; Where to sit; What group to work with; What pictures to take with the camera; Where to play; To go to the mosque; What to buy from the shop; Where I put my artwork; Watch BBC London News  
 Feed my kitten; To have tea or coffee; Who I want to sit with; To play inside or outside; What shops to go to; Im able to choose to go to Birmingham; Where to sit at lunch; Choose my favourite colour for the day; I choose to play football; Going to friends houses; Who I play with; Play my videogames; What to read

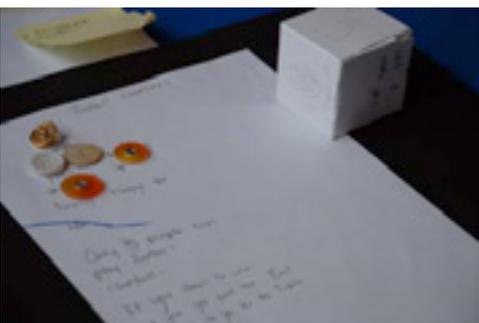
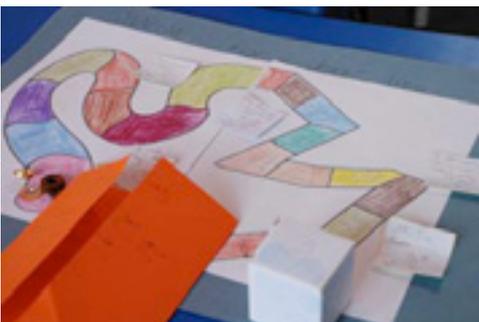




Some of our favourite images from the week are:

**Word of the Day: responsibility**

After discussing how groups of people work together successfully by taking on different roles, we practiced by making these board games...



Teachers can put us in groups but who chooses teachers?

To make things fair so all people are OK

how to work as a group

when you grow up you still have rules

how to negotiate

how to listen

what it means to be democratic

to advocate more for others

how to build blocks that are stable

how to choose a group

Helping other people

Work as a team more and participate more

Being political

I learned about the Sneetches

A person who makes a big decision

How to build a cube tower

*Some things I am **responsible** for in my school or home are...*

My piano practice; Helping in the garden; Compromising with my group; Looking after my brothers and sisters; Walking my dog, feeding my cat, taking care of my mum and washing-up; Cleaning the table and tidying my room; Behaving; Make sure my group is OK; Helping everyone; My eye-glasses and laptop; Illustrating, making things, drawing and colouring; Writing, looking after my guinea pigs; Make the pack lunches; Look after my friends / my bike; Taking the rubbish out of the house; My monitor job; Looking after my things; Writing down instructions; Making designs

Bringing the register to my teacher; Tidying; School property; Looking after my ps2; To make sure that everyone in a group has a job; Making sure everyone was happy with their job; Keeping the table tidy; Looking after my sister; Cleaning my room; My belongings; Practising piano

**Word of the Day: fairness**

We thought it would be fair if we had opportunities to choose where we may learn outside of our classroom. So today we conducted a survey of all the places at Jenny Hammond that could be good in different ways for learning.



***These are some words we learned this week...***

engage, negotiate, rely, compromise, survey, dexterity, majority, minority, democratic, participation, democracy, advocate, criticism, contribute, consequence, analyse, facilitator, organise, fair, fairness, realistic, tremendous, conservative, creativity, Sneetches, scribe, civilization, clarify, trust, awesome, responsible, determination, coordination, recess, advantage, generation, demos, political, improvement, expert, disengage, menace, wisdom, decisions, organiser, anxious

***Some things we learned this week are...***

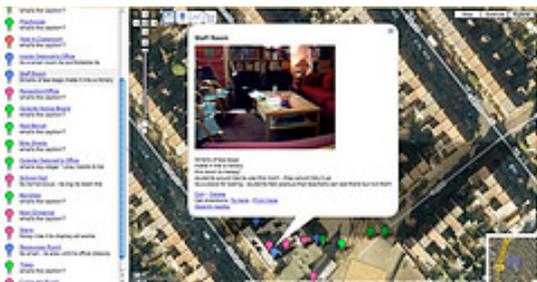
Helping my community  
 How to make a StoryCube  
 How to make a board game  
 the true meaning of fair  
 How to work out how to get into groups  
 I learned how to trust others to make a decision  
 for me

I think being **democratic** means:

A whole lot of people; Community; Teamwork; Public; City; Working together in the tremendous community; To decide that something has to be done; It could be one country; A member of Parliament; Being helpful in a group; Making decisions; People voting in a group and working together in a community; Helping people

Group of people voting; Country; Parliament; People

**We used a Google Map of our school as a way to share what we did this week.**



*A rule for making my community a better place would be:*  
Don't leave things on stand-by; Find the person you are; Stop drug-dealing; Don't watch TV read books; Be safer; Stop driving; Stop global warming; Bullies have to become nice people and they should get rewards if they listen to the golden rules; Listening, giving answers and sharing; If we are naughty, give us 3 chances to change; More control over my family; To make sure teachers and children listen to each other and sort out big horrible situations; Don't smoke around asthmatic people like me  
Don't through stuff on flowers; Stop wasting water; People have to stop walking out of class; Tidy my bedroom for me and my sisters; Make teacher help children with the work; Stricter teachers; Make sure theres enough time to get our work done; Make sure we know how to do everything; Don't chuck on the floor  
No more fighting; Not to steal or litter; Saving power; Stopping pollution; I have to tidy my room for 10 minutes each day; Be a better person and make teachers write more letters home and give more rewards and consequences; Don't waste power; Have 15 a week for pocket money if I





behave; Not littering; Stop smoking; Longer playtime at school; No TV before school; Nobody can lock their door

**Word of the Day: participation**

Today we organized ourselves into teams based on the sorts of things we are good at. We made sure each team had members skilled in dexterity, creativity, numeracy and literacy because we were had to complete a relay race of events in each of these areas.

Afterwards, we had the opportunity to design events for our own relay.



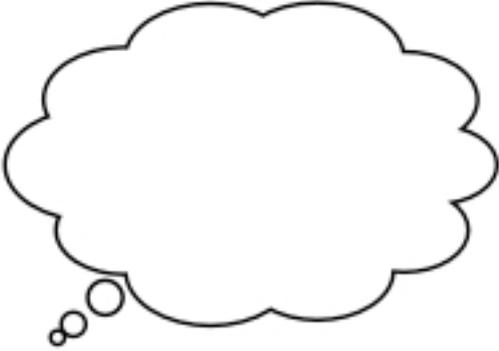
*These are some ways I contribute at home and at school:*



Day 4 Date: .....

These are some ways I contributed to my team today:

SOME WORDS & IDEAS I LEARNED TODAY ARE...



.....

# Experiencing Democracy

A picture of me in a group of people.

If I could contribute a rule to my home it would be:

Here is a drawing of a place where I can learn outside my classroom:

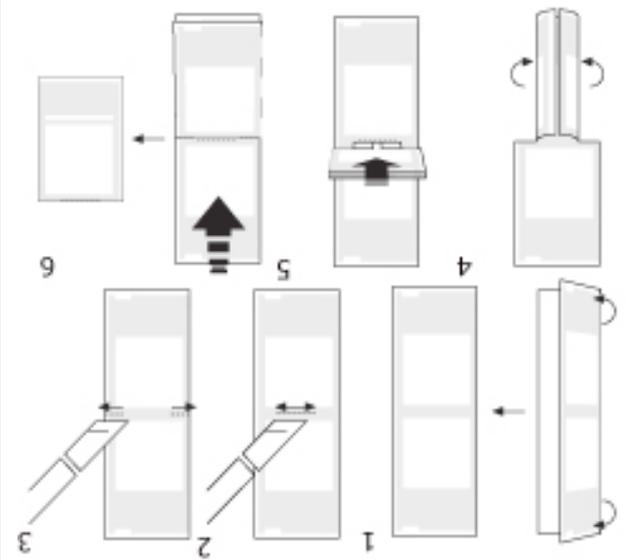
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SOME WORDS & IDEAS I LEARNED TODAY ARE...

Today some of my choices were:

Day 1 Date: .....

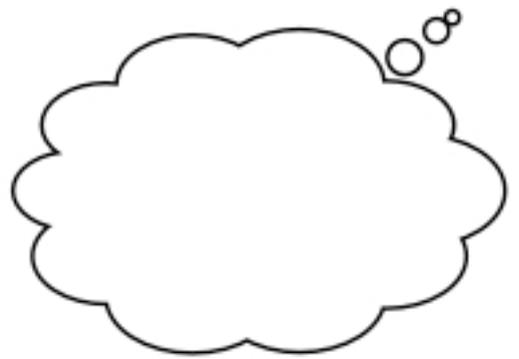


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**Experiencing Democracy**  
**A picture of me in a group of people.**  
 created on: Mon May 14 05:35:42 2007

I imagine democracy could look like this:

**This is a drawing of something my group did today:**



SOME WORDS & IDEAS I LEARNED TODAY ARE...

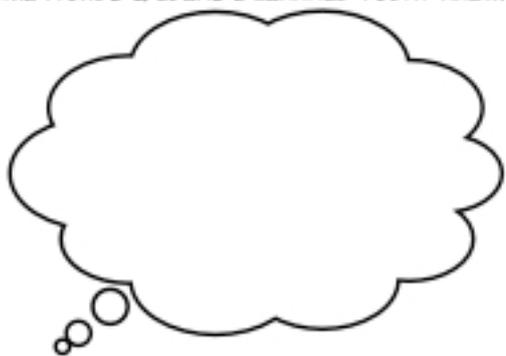
**After school, I am able to choose:**

Day 2 Date: .....  
 Today in class I was responsible for:

Day 5 Date: .....

I think being democratic means:

*SOME WORDS & IDEAS I LEARNED TODAY ARE...*



This is a picture of me with my group today:

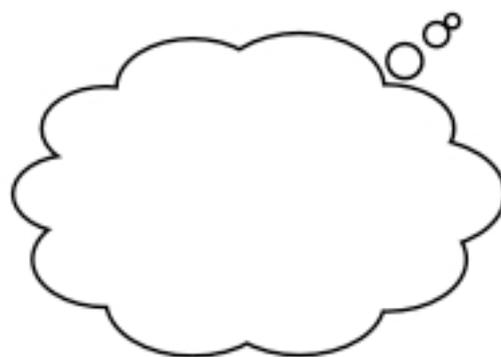
After school, I am responsible for:

home:

Here are some things I do to help out at

team today:

Here's a picture of what I did to help my



*SOME WORDS & IDEAS I LEARNED TODAY ARE...*

If I could change something at school to

make it more fair I would...

Day 3 Date: .....