

Plato Academy-Room 9

Classroom Journal: **Melting Clocks, Snowballs, and Exit Slips**

1/19/2018

This week the children recreated the melting clocks they studied last Friday of Dali's "The Persistence of Memory" painting. They had to figure out how to make a paper plate to look like it was melting and practice writing their artistic process. How did you make a melting clock? What colors did you use? Why? Why do you think Salvador Dali used melting clocks to symbolize "memory"? What do clocks do? Are clocks important things? Does time ever stop? What does persistence mean? The children practiced paying close attention to detail and through observation and discussion really challenged their minds to think about the setting of the picture and furthermore the meaning. For example, on Friday, they were completely sure that the painting took place in a desert; on Tuesday morning while the painting was projected a few children noticed a body of water in the background: do deserts have large bodies of water? Through research, we discovered the painting did not take place in a desert but actually in Catalonia, Spain! The most interesting fact however might still remain, that Salvador Dali had a pet ocelot :)





The children continued practicing exit slips every day this week. They have become a regular part of our end of the day routine. The questions are always at least two (sometimes three): a comprehension question referencing the text directly (evidence based) and an inference question about what their individual thoughts/predictions are. I know I briefly mentioned in the last newsletter but I have noticed how beneficial they have become in recalling information as well as how thought provoking a question like “why do you think the tapping heels bothered the old man?” can be. It can be quick and easy to recall what you heard (a direct text reference) but then to turn that around into what you think the author meant (symbolism/foreshadowing) can be quite challenging since its thoughts you have to construct, evidence based of course, while creating your own theories. Because our book has a lot of symbolism and figurative language it has become a deeper study as we carry on. I can’t wait to see the artistic aspect of cross-sketching unravel...!!

Because it organically came up through our reading, we discovered that there were a lot of marks called “apostrophes” in our book. Why are these used? How come sometimes it goes after the “s” and sometimes before the “s”? The children were quite curious on Wednesday and lead to a discussion of why these marks are used and how to use them. They became SO interested in these marks that they even corrected me during our decomposition of chapter 5, “Ms. Bia you forgot the apostrophe after Hugo because its Hugo’s father not Hugos father; it is HIS dad so he needs the mark before the s”! A demonstration of how when things organically arise through our reading and how it really remains with the children. PS What does horologist mean? (ask your child :)

Our book takes place in Paris in 1931 and we are slowly transforming our minds and bodies to place ourselves in 1931. What was the world like then? What was Paris like? Next week we will be going to the library for non-fiction books on some artists, scientists, and leaders. Each morning we enjoy French jazz from the 1930’s and even some French words here and there! How do you pronounce Georges? What are jouets?

How long ago is the year 1931? (one of our math questions). The children had to figure out the difference between our year today 2018 to the year of our book 1931. What mathematical function might we use to solve the difference between two numbers? Some children counted by 10's and some subtracted. We had two answers: 97 years ago and 87 years ago. Like all of our math the correct answer is decided by the children, after they present their mathematical evidence they decide collectively what the right answer is. The most important part is that they are able to always prove their answer to their peers and of course remain accountable for their work in their math/science journal.

The children have continued the "Story of Pawn" series and have finished the first book. Mr. Foti is working closely with them Tuesday and Thursday. These books really break down each piece through a fictional story. This week they took a large chess board to the gym and practiced a collaborative game of chess. Although some children might know the game, no one is an expert and so the children that already know the game are challenged to new moves/strategies, reasoning and defending their moves, and of course keeping score correctly and efficiently. This unit Mr. Foti has intentionally prepared incorporates literacy through the story and math through point keeping and strategizing. Chess is that much more fun on a jumbo board with jumbo pieces! There are 4 books to the series and the children are eager to continue the story plot.



As important our academic studies are, our outdoor play is equally treasured. Through safe snowball fights the children practiced strategy and developing rules as they organically came up throughout this game. For example, the placement of bases was "not fair" one side

had more snow than the other. How can we solve this? One student suggested to measure each side. The children practiced a lot of negotiating and rule-making appropriating to a game they created. It was one of the most exciting things for them this week. More importantly the students were negotiating what was fair and not fair and really practicing building even stronger relationships with one another. It was only our class and so they exercised their relationships amongst our room 9 community. Ms. Bia even joined the snowball fight :) In lieu of our snowball excitement the children created snowball launchers with their buddies in Ms. Dionysia's class! We enjoyed recess with Ms. Dionysia's and Ms Alex's classes to be able to launch our snowball launcher together with our buddies.









Have a great weekend!!
Warmly,
Ms. Bia & Mr. Foti