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**Carnegie Mellon University  
Children's School**  
Accredited by the National Association for the  
Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  
Licensed as a PA Private Academic School  
**Carnegie Mellon University**

# CMU Children's School: A Learning Laboratory Modeling & Refining Research-Based Practices

- Our goal is to promote effective learning for all of our constituents, including researchers, undergraduates, preschoolers and kindergartners, parents, educators, and pre-service teachers.
- Educational designs for each group begin with intentional alignment of learning objectives with formative and summative assessments so that we can plan versatile instructional programs to help all types of learners achieve their goals.

## Developmental Goals for Young Children

The Children's School's approach to preschool and kindergarten education is based on theories and research in Developmental Psychology and the Learning Sciences.

### Goals -> Program -> Assessment

We use our **developmental goals** as a systematic framework for focusing our program and assessment design.

- **Self-Esteem & Independence** - encouraging each child's growing self concept and confidence, as well as increasingly independent self regulation and self care.
- **Interaction & Cooperation** - promoting children's social skills for effective adjustment to school, group participation, classroom citizenship, and peer interactions.
- **Communication** - facilitating comprehension and expression skills beginning with oral language (listening & speaking) and progressing to written language (reading & writing).
- **Discovery & Exploration** - fostering a positive attitude toward learning through scientific and mathematical inquiry with varied materials to build strong concepts related to diverse themes.
- **Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety** - giving children opportunities to develop small and large motor skills, healthy living habits, and essential safety practices.
- **Artistic Expression and Appreciation** - cultivating each child's ability to express ideas and emotions through art, drama, and music and movement, as well as to appreciate the artistic expressions of others.

## Goals Guide Early Childhood Program Design

Our teachers are familiar with a **variety of educational approaches**, and we choose teaching strategies, daily routines, classroom arrangements, and curriculum structure that will encourage each child's development.



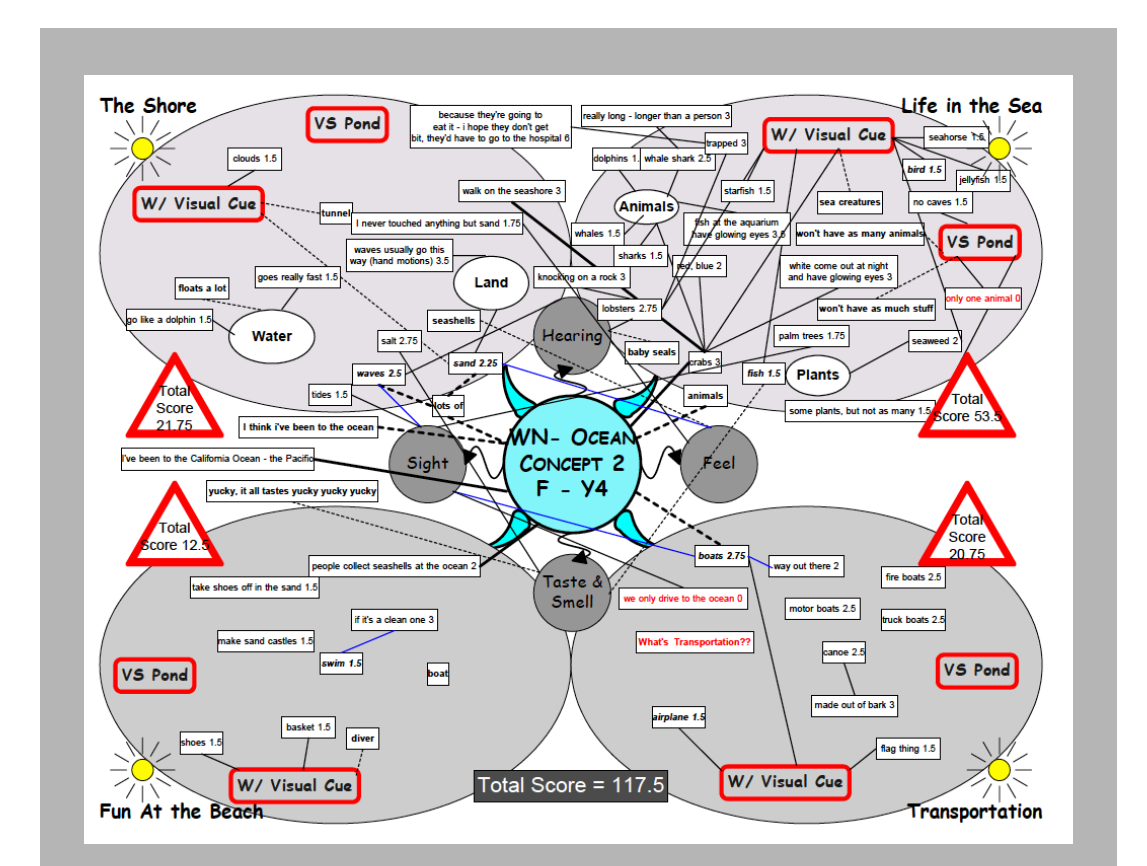
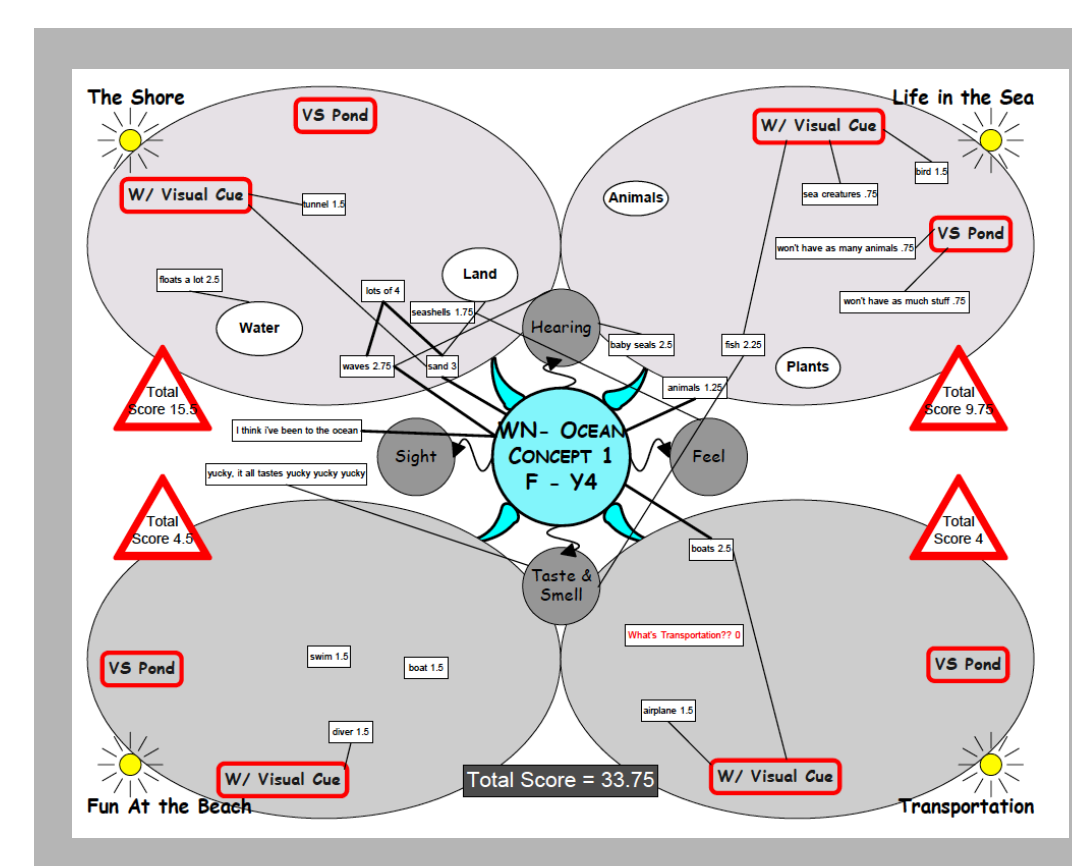
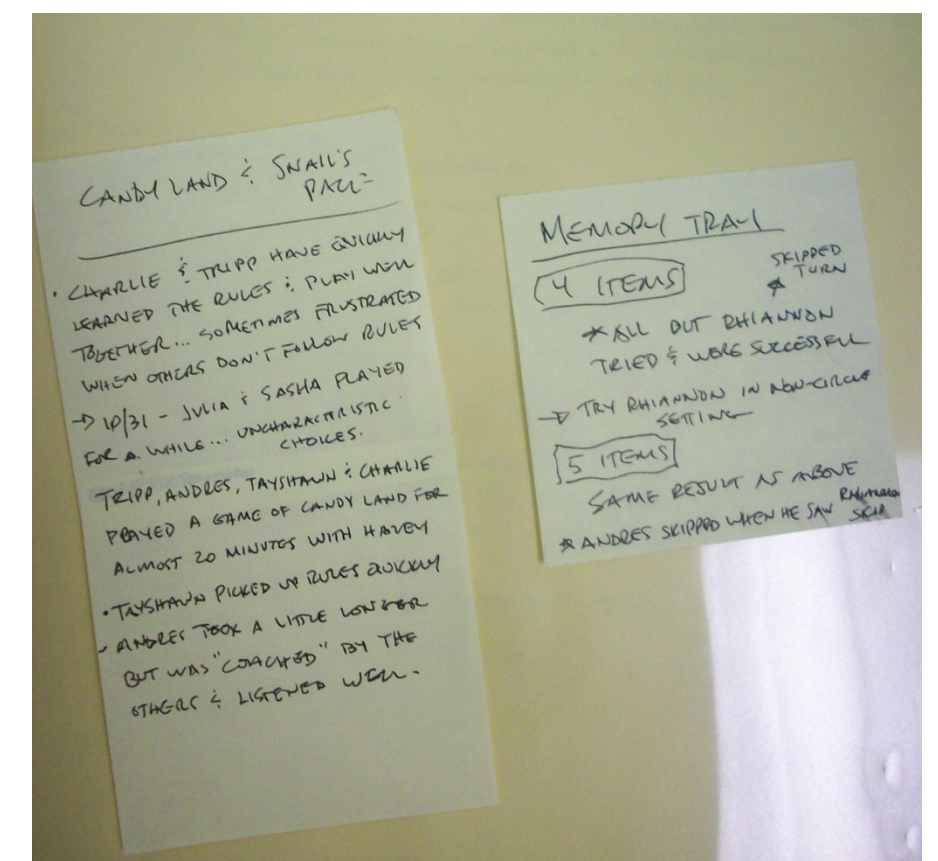
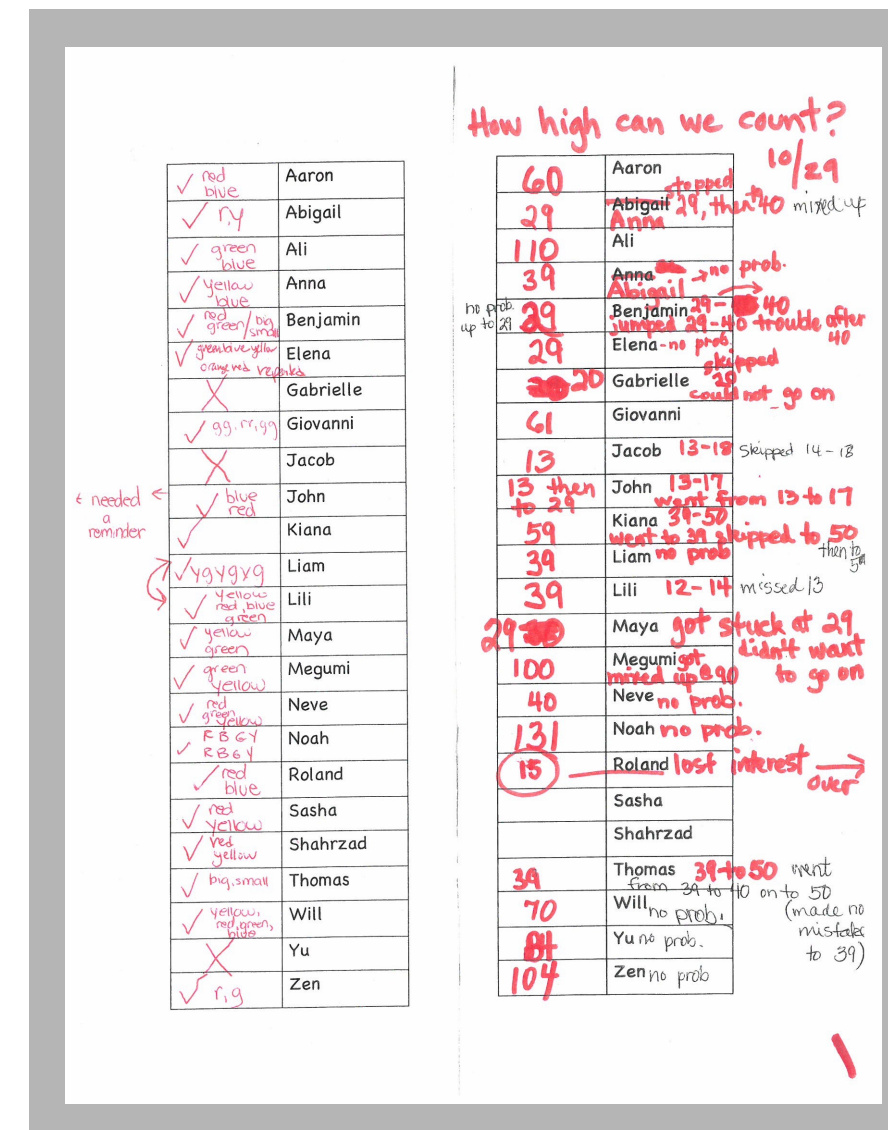
**DIVERSE LEARNING CENTERS** simultaneously promote growth in all areas of development. Undergraduates in the Practicum in Child Development course develop displays like these to alert observers to the developmental benefits of each center.

**EXPLORING THEMES IN DEPTH** fosters knowledge building while children strengthen skills in all developmental domains. We build conceptual foundations by discussing quality non-fiction resources and children's literature. We strengthen concepts via songs, games, puzzles, and dramatic play, as well as home, campus, and community connections.



## Goals Focus Assessment & Feedback

Teacher **observations** and **diverse documentation** of individual progress are used to adjust the program to better challenge individual development, as well as to conference with parents about ways we can work as a team to support each child. To appropriately cover our six developmental domains, educators utilize **simple checklists**, **anecdotal notes** with observations and quotes, **photographs** of interactions and constructions, and analysis of **work products**, and then collect it all into a **portfolio** of evidence to document growth.



Researchers sometimes do **more detailed analyses of progress**, as is evident in these images from Cheryl Ciecieski's honors thesis regarding the growth of a child's knowledge structure about the ocean from the beginning to the end of a four-week thematic unit.

**Other Laboratory School Learners include researchers, researchers in training, parents, educators, and teachers in training.**

