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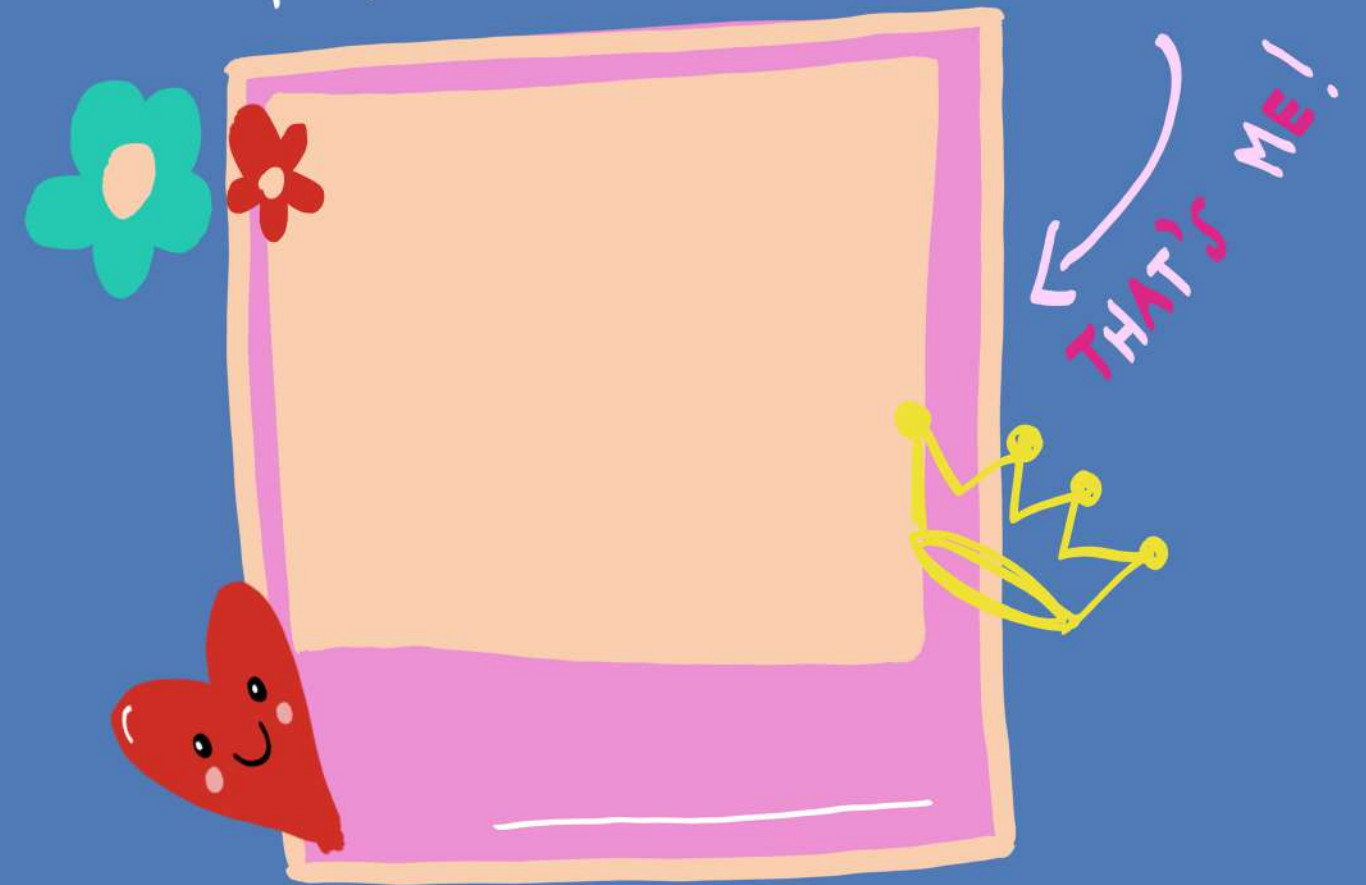
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FOLLOW YOUR
HEART

the school for
multipotentialites

THIS BOOK BELONGS
TO AN INCREDIBLE SUPER



TALENTED MULTIPOTENTIALITE
≡ ARTIST ≡

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a project result of **An Exchange Program on Empathy, Compassion, and Care in Water Governance, from the Perspective of Integral Ecology (ECO_CARE)**, funded by HKDIR-Utforsk 2020/10084 (P.I. Margherita Paola Poto and Giulia Parola), as well as by the Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Publiseringstøtte I 2022).

The authors would like to thank the extended ECO_CARE family, which includes researchers from both law and marine disciplines, students, and teachers from Indigenous and local communities in Brazil, Norway, Tanzania, Canada and Italy. You will find some of them illustrated in Chapter 3.

At ECO_CARE, we believe in the openness and reuse of learning resources to guarantee access to education for all; therefore, this book is open access, and also has an audiobook version. At the back of the book, on page __, you can scan a QR code for more open-access educational resources.

Emily would like to thank Margherita for her support and mentorship over the past year, in both a professional and personal sense, and for bringing ECO_CARE into her life. She also thanks her mom and dad for giving her a nurturing space to grow to her fullest potential; an unconditional loving environment that welcomed big dreams, multiple talents, and emotions. Whilst working on this project, she thanks Anna for bringing play and imagination back into her life after many years of rigid academia and remembers her best friend, Nelia, who had the purest heart and always reminded Emily of all that she could become. Finally, she thanks Valentina for trusting and including her in this beautiful project.

Margherita would not have made it without a considerable amount of good coffee, daily dog walks to local farm shops (The Good Life Project), and visits to bookstores and local libraries. Margherita is particularly grateful to Barbie and Nick for the writing retreat at Windsor Hill House, in Somerset, UK, in the Autumn 2022. She thanks Princesses Poppy and Pebble (the twin dogs) for guiding her to Craig's beautiful farm shop each day, as well as all the children's books, authors, illustrators, psychologists, educators, and researchers that inspired her during this project. This project comes to life in the middle of many rejections and a difficult turn of Margherita's professional life, where she had to face the challenge of not belonging to certain mainstream academic paths. And, lastly, she wouldn't have made it without Emily-Cora and Valentina-Mucho Amor. "Follow Your Heart" originates directly from their warm embrace, their beautifully new-born friendship and their daily words of encouragement and comfort. It is one of the best results of empathy, compassion, and care.

Valentina would like to thank Emily and Margherita for "un montón de cosas" and especially for helping her to transform a business plan (forgotten in a drawer) into a dream book. She also thanks her family, and her dog Scarlett because she feels as if she would be nothing without her cuddles. Valentina thanks Camilla for showing her that it is possible to be a multipotential kid in the world of today.

Emily, Valentina and Margherita would like to thank Elena Astore, Elena Girotti, Gloria Gordini, Jorinde Green, Arianna Porrone, Serena Sarti, and Laura Vita for their inputs to the activities, as well as Ashley Gregg, Juliana Hayden, Melinda Marshall, Giuliana Panieri, Giulia Parola for supporting our project, spreading the news and helping develop a participatory section on the suggested activities.

Lastly, Valentina and Margherita would also like to thank all the Vandas out there, for their rejections and big "no" to crazy dreams. This project celebrates all the rejections that, with love, care, and patience, have bloomed into stunning redirections.



This book was subject to scientific peer review.

MEET THE AUTHORS



THE ECO_CARE TEAM



Emily Murray: author, editor, and creator of the character Cora. After graduating from her masters in the beginning of 2022, she is taking time to explore the world, learn new languages, reconnect with her true interests, and find ways to build out her passions in an impactful and meaningful way. She became involved with ECO_CARE during an internship and her experience has further fuelled her passion for human and planetary health, sustainable development, access to quality education and health care, and knowledge translation. Emily is still finding ways to bring together her multiple interests, and through this project, she feels many steps closer.



Valentina Russo: founder and illustrator of the project "Follow Your Heart". Her passions are art, hearts, and beautiful things. She has loved to draw, paint, sew and create since she was a child and dedicated her studies to this. She is a romantic multipotential artist with a IED degree in Fashion and Textile Design. Over the years she has explored different expressive languages and after some time she discovered a magical universe in the world of illustrations capable of expressing her true inner self. Valentina illustrates childrens' books while spreading love and happiness all over the planet with her own brand "Mucho Amor", which means "much love". She is also the official illustrator of ECO_CARE. You can follow her (with her beloved dog Scarlett) on Instagram @mucho__amor.



Margherita Paola Poto: author and project supervisor. Margherita is a researcher and a professor. She coordinates ECO_CARE and is a project member of many other wonderful research projects (SECURE, UiT The Arctic University of Norway). She believes in the power of knowledge, creativity, and solidarity for a better world. With the help of her creative team members, she tries to inject more art, beauty and love into legal research.

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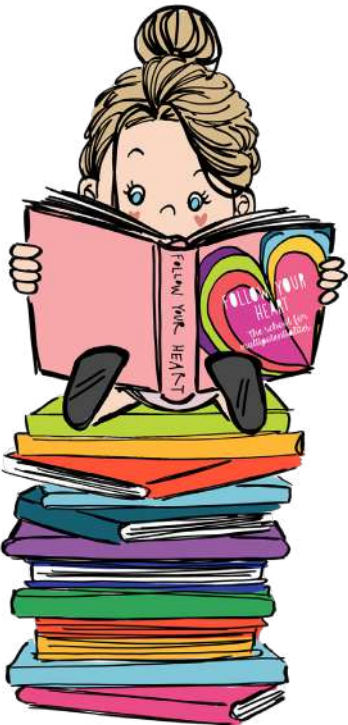
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This book mirrors a **tripartite approach** that targets multiple audiences. *Follow Your Heart: A School for Multipotentialites* begins with **PART 1**, a fully illustrated section with the beautiful story of Cora authored by and created for multipotential children. **PART 2**, for researchers and educators, illustrates the methodological steps that led to the co-creation of the book, the relevance of emotional education for academic legal research, and the teaching philosophy of Follow Your Heart. **PART 3**, for educators and children, is the participatory section with suggestions for how to implement emotional literacy and fostering multiple talents in the classroom. In line with ECO_CARE, the central importance of **participation** and **co-creation** is integrated throughout this book with each chapter providing a dedicated space for notes, suggestions for improvements, and ideas. Similarly, at the end of the **Activities** chapter, there are blank templates for children, educators and researchers to bring their own ideas and insight into the Follow Your Heart space.



AUTHOR: EMILY MURRAY
ILLUSTRATOR: VALENTINA RUSSO

the story of Rosa



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP



OR

POLICE
MAN



OR

DOCTOR



?





I CAN'T PICK JUST ONE!



? THERE IS STILL SO ?
MUCH THAT I DON'T KNOW ?

? ? ?

? WHAT IF I CANNOT CHOOSE
WHAT I WANT TO BE?!

? ?

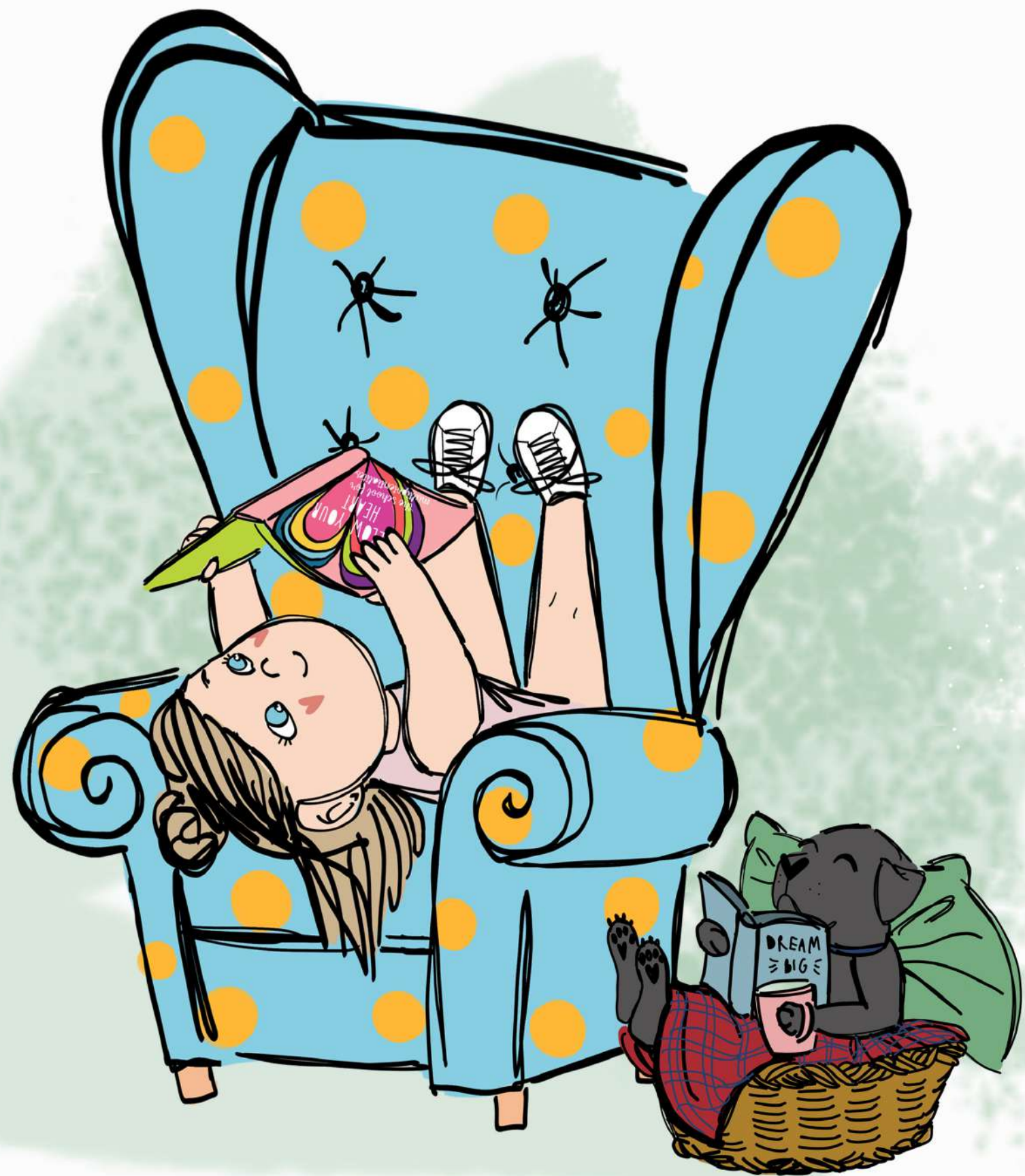
WHAT IF I CHANGE MY
MIND WHEN I GET OLDER ??

? ? ? ?









MULTIPOTENTIALITE

- Someone with many interests & creative pursuits -

PASSION 1



PASSION 2

INNOVATION





As a young girl, Cora (derived from corazón, meaning “heart” in Spanish) feels overwhelmed by the frequently asked question “what do you want to be when you grow up?”. One day she wants to be a teacher, and the next day she wants to be a doctor. She is interested in learning about how the human body works, but also wants to understand why poverty exists and the reason that many children do not have access to quality education and healthcare. As she blossoms into a young adult and begins university, she realizes the influence that society has had in leading her to believe you can only choose one career; and that if you do not feel passionate about one thing, then you better keep searching for it.

If you have ever felt constrained by the question “what do you want to be when you grow up?” then Cora, and Follow Your Heart, is for you.

CHAPTER I THE PROJECT STEPS & CONCEPT



THE ORIGINAL IDEA: ENVISIONING EMOTIONAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS

This book originates from a project plan created by Valentina Russo with the title: “*SIGUE A TU CORAZÓN*”.

Valentina received her education in a Western school context (Italy), and like many children of her ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural background, she experienced a substantial **inadequacy of support within the school system regarding her emotional well-being** and ultimately, **a lack of nurturing her multiple inner talents** and aspirations.

Valentina’s experience is certainly not isolated and can be related to research results and survey data about priorities in academic performance of school systems in Europe and across the world.¹

Whilst international evidence endorses the positive impact of developing primary pupils’ **social and emotional learning (SEL)** in the educational system, it also shows how the integration of evidence-based interventions within the mainstream academic curriculum, and their implementation and sustainability within the context of the wider educational system are far from being solidly established.² Among the challenges to integrate SEL programs into routine school practices is the competition for time and space in school curricula, as well as the lack of training for educators on emotional well-being and the practices that can be used to foster multiple talents and skills.³ It seems that private and independent schools place much greater value on emotional literacy and dedicate class time to developing their pupils’ social and emotional skills within their curriculum.⁴ Additionally, empirical research shows that there is a big divide between the methods of teaching used in private and public schools (where the class size in public schools is larger than in private schools and therefore it is more difficult to manage one-to-one and tailored teachings) which leads to major gaps in academic outcomes, professional performances, and life satisfaction. One of the many privileges of being able to afford and attend a private school is the personalized attention that children receive, as well as more flexibility and creativity with teaching methods, student engagement, and lesson plans.

As Fadoua Rhazoui puts it:

“From my experience, I found that private schools rely on using a progressive method of teaching which emphasizes learning through experiencing and students’ having role in what they learn and come across every day. It is student-centred where the students play an important role in the learning process. That is, I found out that private school students are always a part of planning and motivation; solving problems, leading discussions, as teachers always try to make them actively participate in constructing ideas. [...] Unlike what teachers rely on in the private school I am working with, the teachers in the public school always felt bored repeating things everyday with every classroom, and also tired of lecturing a lot inside the class. From their daily complaint, anyone could touch a kind of syllabus boredom and a sense of relying on a method which requires teachers to talk a lot inside their classrooms. I believe that those public school teachers based their teaching approach on the traditional one,



which requires a teacher-based method where the teacher should lecture and explain all the time. [...] [T]eachers tend to belittle students and by using this method, they absolutely forget about the capacities of students and their main role inside the classroom which is production and activeness. In other words, the pupils’ status in this kind of classes and within traditional education remains always receptive and obedient; while the textbook is the main material that the teacher relies on to convey information.”⁵

To overcome barriers and inequalities within education systems across the globe, which is one of the main targets of the **Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 4 Quality Education**⁶, we propose a learning tool and overall teaching philosophy that could be used by independent schools and offer integration tips and activities for the conventional curricula used in public schools.

ECO_CARE BRINGS THE PROJECT FORWARD BY TARGETING A WIDER AUDIENCE

Treasuring Valentina’s intuition and continuing the path of creativity for better education and research, the **ECO_CARE** team decided to support and develop the original project plan into an English illustrated book, “Follow Your Heart”, with a multipurpose scope (**scientific, educational, and playful**). **ECO_CARE** is a research group that focuses on bringing empathy, compassion, and care into the world of water rights and environmental law, and felt inspired to take on this project. Creating space for youth to develop emotional intelligence and pursue multiple interests will foster future generations who care and have the skills and strengths to make the world around them a better place. **ECO_CARE** also values open educational resources and bringing creativity into learning. The idea to promote research and a co-created effort towards the realization of this book is in harmony with the vision and mission of the **ECO_CARE** project—rethinking research and education through the help of emotions.

With the overall aim to instil innovation and creativity in research, education, and outreach activities, this book has a **broad target audience**, which includes: **(1) researchers and university students** involved in research, academic courses and interconnected outreach on emotional education, environmental awareness, compassion, ethics of care and human rights; **(2) educators (teachers, librarians, educational assistants, etc.)** who are inspired to design their classroom activities and develop new teaching techniques and stretch the boundaries of school curriculum by including activities that engage student imagination and strengthen learning; and **(3) multipotential children (of all ages and abilities)** who want to explore and discover new areas of knowledge and creativity. Finally, it is our hope that this resource can reach policymakers within the educational system to spark a shift towards promoting changes that encompass emotional education in school curricula and teaching programmes.

FROM PROJECT PLAN TO MULTI-AUDIENCE BOOK: A CO-CREATION PROJECT FOR PUPILS IN TANZANIA

The book idea was further developed by listening to the community needs of our **ECO_CARE** project partners from Tanzania, located in the remote area of the Ruvuma region, in the southern part of the country. In this region, the majority of the public and independent schools are facing similar challenges from a lack of basic infrastructure (electricity, water, adequate school facilities) to inadequate educational resources (shortage of learning materials, educational equipment, training for educators, and accessibility options for children with special needs).

Responding to the specific request from the Nyerere English Medium Day Care in Songea, an early childhood institution with a lack of resources, such as teaching materials in English, the **ECO_CARE** team raised funds—first through a crowdfunding platform and progressively through the project Ocean Senses, partly funded by the Faculty of Law UiT The Arctic University of Norway—to develop research on environmental consciousness, the role of emotions, and the importance of creativity in raising the citizens of tomorrow. The funding supported the acquisition of basic materials for the school (from food for the pupils’ meals and bedding sets to stationery and toys), and then the development of this book as a joint project and toolkit for educators and children. Learning from the experience of the Nyerere English Medium Day Care, its teachers, and Agnes Haule (our project coordinator in Tanzania), **ECO_CARE** is planning to extend the dissemination of this book to the Matimira Secondary School (located in the village of Matimira, Songea District, Ruvuma Region, Tanzania) and the vocational school Veta Herdis Training Center, Ruvuma Region, Nyasa District, Tanzania.

In the long term, the philosophy, teaching activities, and vision behind the project **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** are expected to be shared with an increasing number of schools, and in line with the **ECO_CARE** vision, this process will remain mutual, aiming to co-create materials with the collaboration of all pupils, educators, artists, researchers and scientists involved.

THE "FOLLOW YOUR HEART" RESEARCH QUESTION AND DESIGN

The research question at the core of this work is the following: **what are the teaching techniques that educators, with the support of researchers, need to develop to nurture the emotional well-being of school pupils, in a way that encourages the development of their talents?**

To answer this research question, we have expanded Valentina Russo’s original idea, giving a central role to creativity in the support of nurturing emotional well-being, and proposing a methodology centred around student autonomy, imagination, and creativity. Within an open-minded, creative classroom environment, educators and pupils can together develop their emotional capacity to deal with different learning and life challenges, and how to balance and reinforce emotional intelligence with logical reasoning when facing a conflict, both inside and outside the classroom.

Ultimately, the answer to the research question is the development and implementation of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART**, as a **book, method, school, subject**, and a **safe space to grow**.

HYPOTHESIS

This book aims to place the powerful concept of emotion at the centre of educational curricula and practice. The central hypothesis of the work is that greater recognition of an emotional dimension within learning—developing emotional engagement in school activities, stimulating emotional engagement through appropriate learning contexts, and facilitating activities that engage emotions and creativity—helps strengthen the pupils’ learning confidence and nurture their talents.⁷



CHALLENGE

This book project aims to address the challenge, highlighted by **Maria Montessori**, known as the “founding mother of experiential education”⁸, one of the most inspirational educational philosophers in the Western world⁹, to **achieve an education that helps children open themselves to life**. In Maria Montessori’s view, this is only possible by cultivating, in the educators, “the spirit, more than the mechanical skill of the scientist.”¹⁰ In other words, Montessori’s idea is to overcome the challenge of ineffective, mechanical teaching that does not nurture talents, nor prepare children for life outside the academic environment. It is necessary to “direct the teacher”¹¹ towards an awakening of the “scientific spirit that opens the door [...] to broader and bigger possibilities.”¹²

It is our hope that this book project will “**awaken in the mind and heart of the educator an interest in natural phenomena** to such an extent that, loving nature, [the educator] shall understand the anxious and expectant attitude of one who has prepared an experiment and who awaits a revelation from it.”¹³ Educators who choose to embody a **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** teaching philosophy are challenging their linear, highly structured Western education and training, creating more possibilities to change the status quo and **instil empathy, compassion and curiosity in future generations**.

MISSION AND SOLUTION



Drawing on Maria Montessori’s idea, and with the aim to train researchers, educators, and children in **an experiential education that involves emotional input** and guides them to **empathy, compassion**, and **care**, this book provides tools and ideas to establish schools, enrich longstanding school curricula, and encourage studies that strengthen and support multipotential children.

The rich implications of the term “**multipotential**” will be developed further in the following chapter. In this section, we will briefly explore a fundamental aspect of multipotentiality—its adaptability to any human being and any skill.

With a quick Google search, you will find that there are many definitions of what it means to be a “multipotential” person, and most of them delimit multipotentiality to a certain subset of the younger population, gifted with many talents and often struggling with decision-making, follow-through, and conventional school curricula.

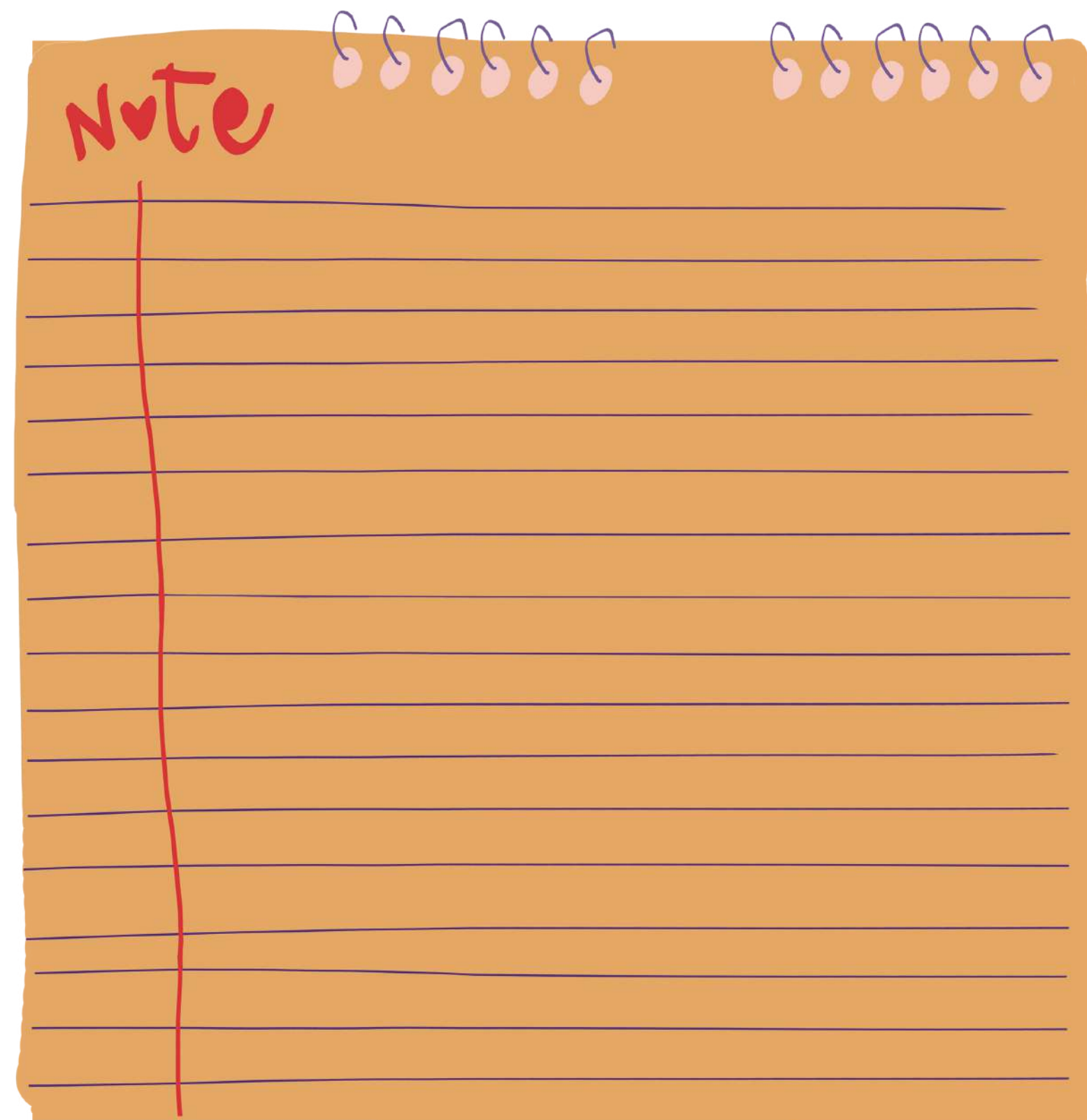
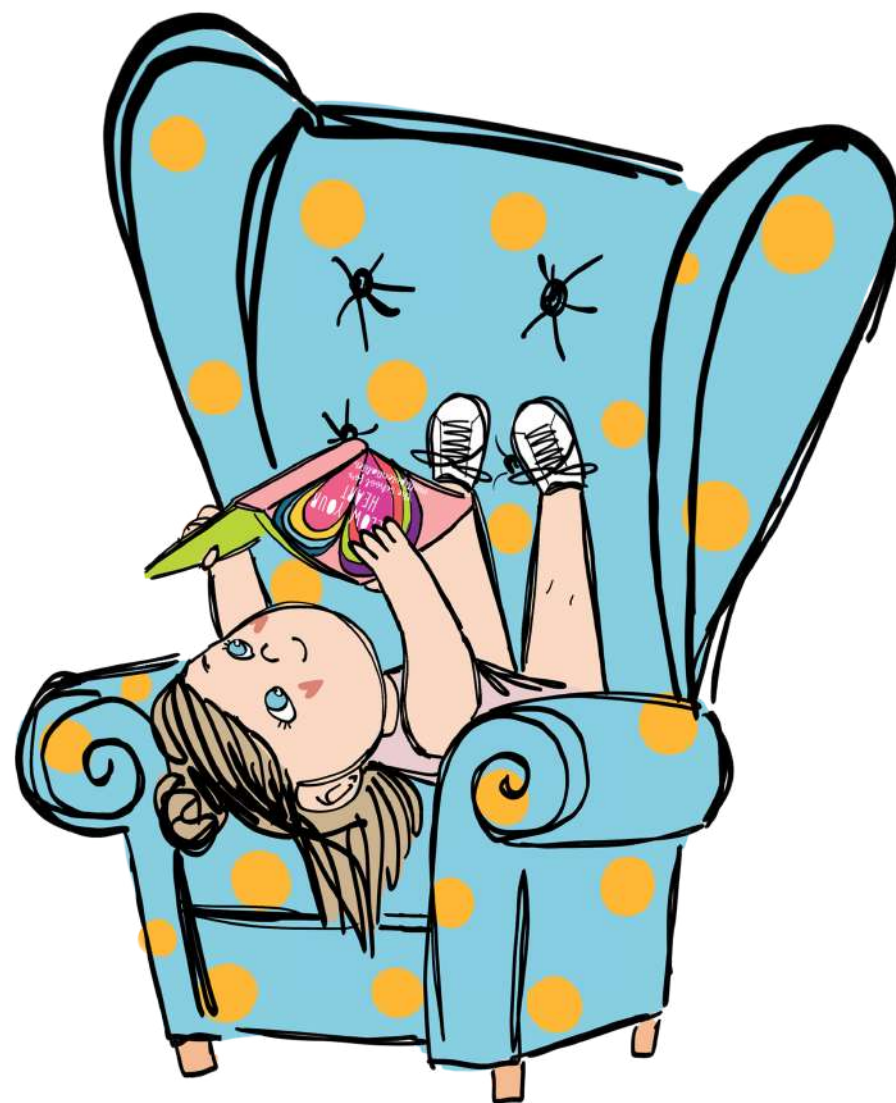
FOLLOW YOUR HEART is based on the premise that every child has multipotentialites and is gifted with multiple, innate talents; thus, it is important for educators and parents to recognize and nurture them from early childhood into adolescence. The limited room for creativity in the classroom and encouraging children to pursue one, clearly defined path in their lifetime limits their multipotentiality and consequently, lessens their potential to create a fulfilling life that speaks true to who they are at their core.

One of the world’s most renowned composers, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, is an example of a multipotentialite—a child with pure, innate talents that were nurtured by his father. Not only was Wolfgang Amadeus capable of playing multiple instruments (piano, violin, horn, flute, harp, bassoon, oboe, clarinet, and trumpet), but he also started composing at the



age of five. His father, Leopold, believed in his child's talent and nourished it from an early age. Less commonly known is **Maria Anna Mozart**, Wolfgang Amadeus' sister, who was also exceptionally talented. In a letter, Leopold wrote: "My little girl plays the most difficult works which we have... with incredible precision and so excellently. What it all amounts to is this, that my little girl, although she is only 12 years old, is one of the most skillful players in Europe."¹⁴ Pity that when Maria Anna reached the age for marriage, her father stopped taking her on the road—but she carried on composing until her marriage in 1784. A lack of nurturing her musical talents after marriage is likely the reason why her compositions did not last and why she has never been recognized for her talents in the way her brother has for centuries.

This story of the Mozart siblings tells a great deal about the need to continuously nurture and encourage talents, throughout one's whole life, regardless of social conventions and cultural restrictions. All children are multi-talented, and they need to be continuously reminded of their uniqueness and potential.¹⁵



Note

CHAPTER 2

BEYOND LINEAR THINKING

TOWARDS EMOTIONAL LITERACY
& MULTIPOTENTIALITY



THE INFLUENCE OF CAPITALISM ON WESTERN EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Contemporary Western society is ruled by economics, and nearly everything is assessed through the rule of competition, economic dominance, profit, success, and failure (i.e., capitalism). Capitalism has deeply influenced academic and school knowledge, to the point that universities and schools are increasingly viewed as mechanisms for enhancing competitiveness, developing individualism, and profit-driven mindsets and behaviours.¹⁶ The heavily structured and linear approach¹⁷ to learning, which dominates the Western education system and academic institutions around the world, must be challenged to foster future generations who realize their potential to make a meaningful impact during their lifetime.

MOVING BEYOND LINEAR THINKING

FOLLOW YOUR HEART is a nurturing learning space that focuses on the **personal realization** of everyone and the role that each child has in this world. A place where children, **free from external influences and judgments**, can develop their personalities, learn to know themselves and how to purposefully interact with their surroundings. This space moves beyond the conventional academic environment and the heavy focus on mainstream subjects to give children the **freedom to create their future careers and professional lives by listening to their inner voices and developing their multiple talents.**

From an early age, children are continuously asked the question, “**what do you want to be when you grow up?**” and although it is important to have direction and career aspirations as a source of motivation, children are often only exposed to the linear, “conventional” careers (i.e., teacher, doctor, lawyer, etc.) and are not aware of the immense amount of opportunities that exist “out there”. Consequently, children focus on an academic curriculum that does not foster emotional and social well-being, creativity, and entrepreneurial qualities. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** moves beyond this linear approach and attempts to remove the pressures placed on children to figure out their future selves at such a young age. This classroom environment allows children to **keep their hearts and minds open to different future possibilities** by nurturing their multiple interests and talents, giving them the **space to grow outside and beyond the expectations of society**.

MULTIPOTENTIALITY

Multipotentiality is one of the main concepts that composes the **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** learning space; a space where **all** children are welcomed to join and are encouraged to develop and follow multiple interests and talents. It provides tools and ideas to raise healthy **multipotential** children, where multipotentiality is seen as a driver of innovation and ideas. Ensuring that children have an understanding of multipotentiality from a young age, as well as their caregivers and educators, will foster future generations who recognize the beauty in having multiple talents and passions, and have a better awareness for how to utilize their gifts.

Emily Wapnick, award-winning author and creator of the platform Puttylike, defines multipotentiality as:

“a person with many interests or creative pursuits.”¹⁸

As children develop, they usually learn to associate “wrong” with doing many things because of our culture which encourages choosing one interest or passion and pursuing it. The question “what do you want to be when you grow up?” can elicit a cute, innocent response at the age of 5, but often becomes internalized as children grow up and ultimately, it ends up defining their future decisions. The question translates into choosing between science or drama class in high school and then, dictates what a young adult chooses as a major in university. In her Ted talk, *Why Some of Us Don't Have One True Calling*, Emily Wapnick brilliantly says, **“while this question inspires children to dream about what they could be, it does not inspire them to dream about all that they could be.”**¹⁹

Barbara Kerr, a distinguished professor of Counselling Psychology at the University of Kansas and an American Psychological Association Fellow, defines multipotentiality as:

“the ability to select and develop any number of career options because of a variety of interests, aptitudes, and abilities.”²⁰

Multipotential children are attracted to multiple disciplines and can excel in all of them, not staying particularly interested in a single subject matter for an extended period of time. Multipotential children are known to hop around from interest to interest, and later in life, may be characterized as someone who switches career paths often. Multipotentiality also manifests itself as uncertainty, indecisiveness, and anxiety when thinking about future decisions and what to “be” when one grows up.

Being multipotential **should never be seen as an obstacle to success**, although it can sometimes feel that way when individuals associate their lack of passion for just one thing with not being good enough. The **atypical characteristics of a multipotential person are differences that enrich: the world needs both specialists and multipotentialites.**



These are some of the abilities that **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** encourages to seek and strengthen in every child, nurturing their multipotential talents:

-  **Excellent synthesis abilities:** multipotentialites have multi-fold competencies and with their ability to explore and investigate problems from different perspectives, they can develop creative solutions in different forms (ideas, products, study approaches);
-  **Quick learning abilities:** multipotentialites are hungry for life, knowledge, and abilities, they do not fear new beginnings and love to get involved and start from scratch every day;
-  **Adaptation:** multipotentialites are resilient and are able to quickly adjust to new environments and challenges, and this virtue is of key importance in our time of change;
-  **Systematization and connection:** multipotentialites are connectors by nature, love building bridges, and constantly see connections between apparently far realities. By connecting and bridging gaps, they bring forward innovative ideas and solutions.

EXAMPLES OF MULTIPOTENTIALITES



LEONARDO DA VINCI

Leonardo Da Vinci was a great Italian painter, interested in just about everything. He was also a scientist, sculptor, architect, theorist, and an engineer. Leonardo is the emblematic figure of the Italian Renaissance, an epoch of economic, artistic, cultural, and political rebirth in Europe (13th-17th century). He was attracted by the curiosity to learn and discover everything regarding human nature and all that surrounds us in the physical world. He is a true example of a multipotentialite, along with the other influential people discussed in this chapter.

Malala Yousafzai was born in Pakistan in 1997, named after a famous Afghani poet and warrior named Malalai of Maiwand. In 2012, she spoke out publicly on behalf of girls and the right to learn, which consequently made her a target. In October 2012, on her way home from school, she was shot by a masked man. After recovering, she devoted her entire life to supporting education for girls around the world and became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Together with her dad, Ziauddin Yousafzai, she founded the Malala Fund in 2013 to champion for every girl to receive 12 years of free, safe, quality education. Check the references for a link to Malala’s website to learn more about her organization.²¹



MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870 and grew up to be a physician, educator, philosopher, and three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee. She was an advocate for women’s rights and providing education for children with learning difficulties and founded an evolutionary education system, one that inspires this project and our team. Maria’s teaching philosophy can be found in both private and public schools around the world. Check the references to learn more about Maria’s educational training and teaching method.²²



ALBERT EINSTEIN

Albert Einstein was born in Germany in 1879 and fell in love with physics when his dad gifted him a compass. He excelled in mathematics and physics, but left school at the age of 15 because of how strongly he disagreed with his school’s teaching method which limited creative thought and the spirit of learning. Albert developed the infamous theory of relativity which has helped scientists understand how the universe works. However, Albert was not only a genius in the physical sciences— he was also passionate about philosophy and music, and rarely left home without his violin, Lina, who he declares inspired him to develop his best theories.



WANGARI MAATHAI

Wangari Maathai was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1940. She was able to go to school thanks to the support of her elder brother, Nderitu, who convinced their mum to send Wangari to school, even though she was a girl. At the age of twenty, she graduated in biology at the University of Pittsburgh, US and from that moment she started her revolutionary idea of planting trees to heal Kenya and Sub-Saharan Africa. As a biologist and Earth supporter, she was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1977, she founded the Green Belt Movement planting more than 51 million trees in Kenya. She has written many wonderful books on the importance of taking care of our planet: among our favourites, you can find “Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves and the World”. Check the references to learn more about the Green Belt Movement and this inspiring multipotentialite!²³



MARIA ANNA & AMADEUS WOLFGANG MOZART

Maria Anna Mozart (Nannerl) and Wolfgang Amadeus (Wolfi) Mozart, as previously mentioned, were two musical geniuses born in the 1750s in Salzburg, Austria and grew up to be extraordinary players and composers. Once Nannerl got married, her father no longer supported her musical talent and stopped taking her on his journeys to the courts of Europe.²⁴ However, she continued collaborating with her brother, who praised her for her compositions and kept a long correspondence of letters stating so. If it were not for Amadeus’ testimonies, we may not have known about her musical talents, especially because her compositions did not survive. Wolfgang Amadeus was the great composer the entire world knows. Check the references to get a taste of Mozart’s wonderful music!²⁵

Sônia Guajajara is an Indigenous activist and environmentalist born in the Indigenous land of Arariboia, Maranhão, Brazil, in 1974. She holds a master’s degree in culture and society and has worked as both a teacher and a nurse. As a defender of the Earth and Indigenous peoples’, today she is bringing forward a campaign in support of the Indigenous peoples of Brazil. She has been elected as the first federal Indigenous lawmaker at the 2022 Brazilian general elections. Immediately after she won her incredibly successful election, she shared the inspiring words: “Let’s join minds and hearts, and build a new Brazil. We’re together.”



Sônia Guajajara

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE SPACE OF "FOLLOW YOUR HEART"?

FOLLOW YOUR HEART focuses on developing all talents and skills whilst teaching children the importance of emotional intelligence. As the project name suggests, this is **an educational space that encourages children to follow their hearts**.

What is the consequence of accumulating knowledge whilst ignoring the emotions of our hearts? The Western education system often pushes for academic brilliance and tends to reward this type of intelligence over others, such as emotional, musical, or spiritual. Those who have a high IQ, or what we can call “textbook” smarts, excel academically and perform well in complex, individual tasks, but can lack empathy, interpersonal and communication skills, and struggle to navigate relationships.²⁶ **Emotional intelligence**, which is the ability to understand and manage one’s own emotions and relationships, and awareness of the emotions of others, is necessary for a productive and successful life.²⁷ Thus, **the emotional dimension is an integral part of human growth and education**; to read the external world, **we need both cognitive and emotional literacy**. The education system needs to provide tools to develop emotional intelligence, in both private and public school settings, to give all children a well-rounded skillset to build a successful, meaningful career.

And is it not true, that conflict and social injustice stem from a lack of solidarity, empathy, and love...rather than a lack of scientific literacy? Emotional intelligence is also important for understanding and working towards creating solutions for the most pressing concerns of the 21st century, like climate change. Scientific literacy will only get our future generations so far; whilst empathy, compassion and caring for others (including our planet) are necessary for making the world a better place!

Beyond teaching conventional subjects such as mathematics and natural sciences, a school curriculum inspired by the **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** model is expected to include training on positive thinking skills and encouraging emotional intelligence to inspire children to choose their work and fulfil their dream of a beautiful and meaningful life.

The philosophy of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART**, therefore, is in line with the teaching method developed by Rudolf Steiner, which cares for the three dimensions of each human being: **body, soul**, and **spirit**.²⁸ From this perspective, educators are encouraged to observe and respond to each step of a child’s development, listening to their needs and helping them in their intellectual, emotional, and physical growth. The learning activities of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** should support the development of the three dimensions.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART attaches great importance to a **rounded and balanced education** that gives space to arts, crafts, and creativity, in a way that encourages children to harness their natural talents.

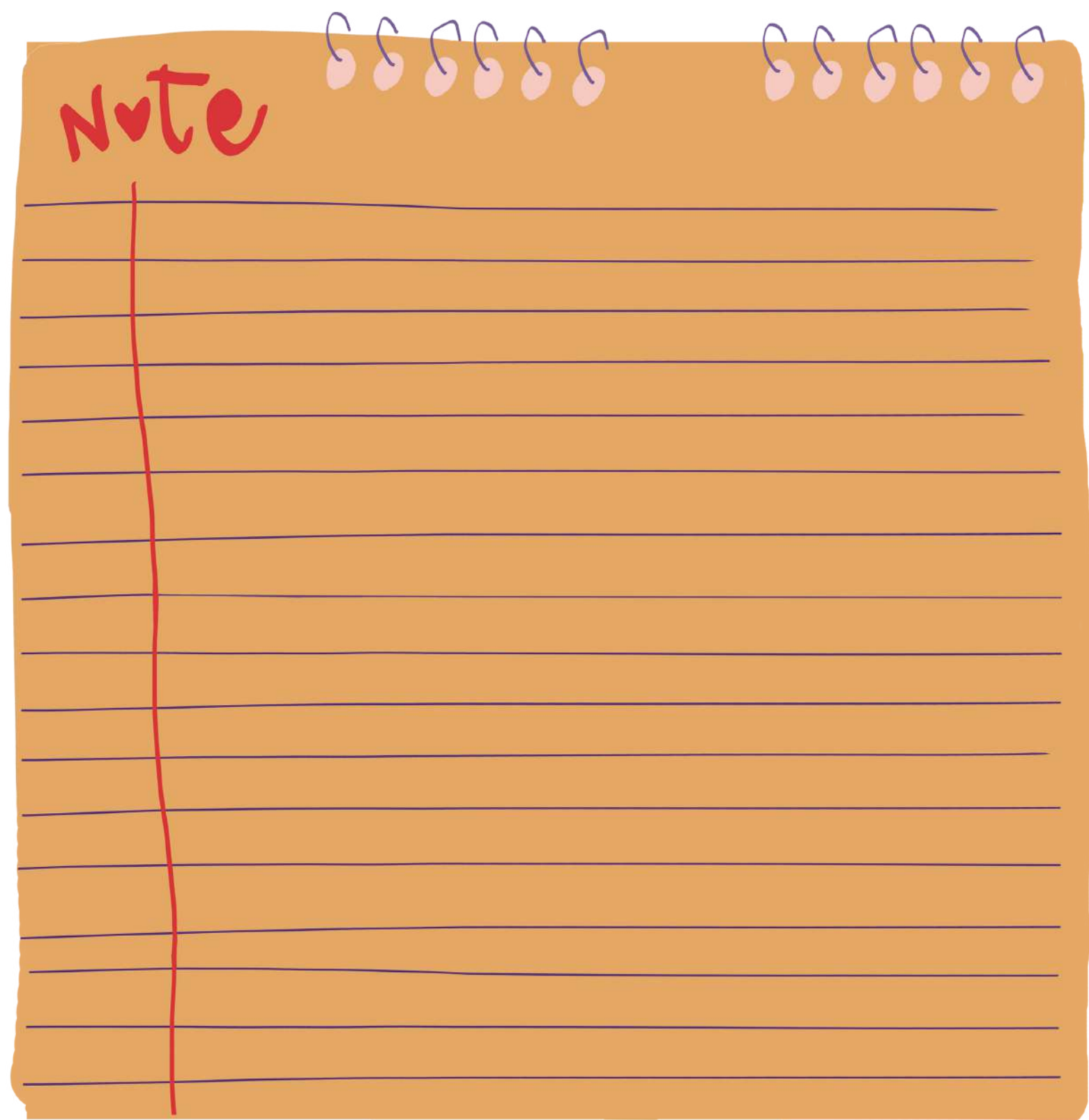
FOLLOW YOUR HEART enables projects and creative activities that are taught through play,²⁹ yet it does not intend to exclude reading, writing, and learning mathematical skills. Though erroneously considered a distraction, **play is one of the main ways in which children learn**, helping them to build self-worth, a sense of their abilities and to feel good about themselves. We can find examples of using play and creativity in conventional school subjects, such as literature: classical studies can be taught and understood through staged production dramas, where body, breath, and voice are engaged, and the theatrical piece is taken in its literal term of a “play”.³⁰ Similarly, children can learn the basics of human anatomy and physiology through a wide range of activities that go beyond memorizing diagrams and cell cycles from a textbook: they can use their senses, carry out scientific activities, and can be asked to draw posters on how to take care of their bodies.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART is a space that gives priority to **empirical search and knowledge**, fostering a learning process created through the transformation of experience and first-hand observation, whilst engaging the body and mind.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART is an **open space**, with no walls, because art, creativity, and empathy have no boundaries and it is only through free practice and play that children can truly **develop strong interpersonal and communication skills, and emotional awareness**. An open, borderless space, with different parts dedicated to each sector, enables everyone to freely cross-experience different sectors of knowledge, letting children choose what they prefer to learn and how. In the space of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** children can interact with the world through hands-on, live experiences and learn with peers of different ages, and finally build their knowledge autonomously.

Moreover, the open space of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** enables **dynamic learning**: in conventional schools, students have limited possibilities to move around, and generally, the environment is not welcoming to their movements. In conventional schools, the good is wrongly associated with immobility and being able to focus for hours on end, whilst the natural growth of a child demands movement. If movement and freedom of expression are allowed, students can find themselves in the position to fully develop their communication skills and natural talents, among other benefits. Instilling the importance of dynamic learning can also encourage educators to continuously change their teaching materials, techniques, and lesson plans to keep their creativity flowing.





Note

CHAPTER 3
FOLLOW YOUR HEART
PHILOSOPHY



TARGET AUDIENCE

The learning space and teaching method of **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** is suitable for children of **all ages and abilities** and will especially resonate with children who have multiple interests and excel across many disciplines. This educational resource has been created with three specific target groups in mind: **(1) researchers and university students** interested in developing this method further and carrying out community-based research to co-create further evidence of the importance of teaching emotional intelligence and nurturing multiple talents; **(2) educators** who teach anywhere from kindergarten up to secondary school and have the motivation and willingness to change the status quo of Western education; and of course, **(3) multipotential children** who, like our inspirational character Cora, feel limited by the question “what do you want to be when you grow up?” and are eager to explore their interests, learn from their peers, and better understand and develop their emotional intelligence.

CURRICULUM

A **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** curriculum is one that brings play, creativity, mindfulness, and emotions into learning. In the Activity chapter of this book, you will find a diverse collection of activities and lesson plans that can supplement and/or be adapted to the curriculum set by the overarching education system. Along with the **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** philosophy and teaching model that has been defined thus far, it is also a space that should promote **mixed-age classes or teaching opportunities**. Mixed-age teaching is not the same as “split” or “multi-grade” classrooms where the educator splits their time between teaching the curriculum of two different grades; rather, mixed-age is a teaching model that uses more of **a shared curriculum** and incorporates **differentiated and individual learning** with flexible, mixed-age groupings where **older students help to teach/** guide younger students. Educators act more as facilitators and give children the **freedom to problem solve and work through open-ended questions**.³¹

Research shows that children in mixed-age activities increase their social and emotional understanding, engage in both collaborative and independent learning with greater ease, and have more positive interactions than their counterparts in single-grade settings. Ultimately, mixed-age activities (or classes) provide children with opportunities to become leaders and innovators in their learning and within their community of learners, because they are **more self-confident, empathic, and in general, better communicators** than their peers who have only been exposed to single-grade classes.

Of course, we recognize that in the typical, Western educational system, children are separated based on age, and it is not feasible to uproot an entire education system and change curricula within a few weeks. Thus, it is our hope that **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** and the other resources found at the back of this book, can help to motivate educators to get creative in their teaching methods and how they deliver their “standard” curriculum. It is encouraged for teachers of different grades, along with librarians, teaching assistants and other education personnel, to work together and experiment with activities that bring different ages *and* abilities together.



A **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** classroom should ensure that the curriculum:

-  Provides an integrated and interactive learning experience that enables students to see each activity as part of a meaningful whole;
-  Employs highly effective methods for developing core academic skills in language, reading, writing, mathematics, the sciences, and the arts;
-  Fosters social and emotional growth as well as character development through storytelling and story co-creation;
-  Prepares students for the world beyond the classroom through the early introduction of different languages, professions, creative pursuits, and global issues;
-  Encourages effective learning and life skills through classroom routines and structures, an emphasis on responsibility, and instruction in specific techniques such as organizing, planning, learning how to work with others, and ways to use resources;
-  Cultivates key skills such as creativity, effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.

OVERALL AIMS

Overall, **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** is a space that aims to:

-  Foster multiple talents and interests within children and ensure they have the opportunity to explore them;
-  Bring awareness to educators about multipotentiality and how to recognize such characteristics within their students;
-  Encourage entrepreneurship and believing in one’s own potential to follow through with their ideas and passions;
-  Move away from the narrow-minded question of “what do you want to be when you grow up” towards more open-ended questions like “what makes your heart happy”;
-  Instil emotional intelligence and mindfulness in future generations to ensure they have the communication and social skills to tackle any conflict or challenge.

THE SPACE

FOLLOW YOUR HEART combines indoor and outdoor learning.

Part of the learning process should take place outdoors, possibly in a school courtyard and if the surroundings allow it, in forests and public gardens as well.³² The process of outdoor learning facilitates knowledge-gathering and social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical development. The experience of outdoor learning creates a safe, non-judgmental nurturing environment for children to experiment with their skills and grow in harmony with the Planet. Outdoor learning inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how we relate to nature and the connectivity of all that we do.

Outdoor learning has *many* benefits, besides improving learning skills! Here are some of them, as listed by Allen Cooper, from the National Wildlife Federation in the USA. Outdoor learning:



“Advances Physical fitness and Gross Motor Development. Children who play outdoors are generally more fit than those who spend the majority of their time inside. Children who play outside in natural areas also show a statistically significant improvement in motor fitness with better coordination, balance, and agility [...]. The mere presence (with no additional programming) of an outdoor learning environment with natural features and a looping pathway is associated with a 22% increase in physical activity [...]. Children’s physical activity is motivated by diverse outdoor environments [...] and the preschool outdoors is a determinant of preschool physical activity [...].



Improves nutrition. Children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables [...] and to show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition [...]. They are also more likely to continue healthy eating habits throughout their lives [...]. Gardens that support children’s engagement with vegetables and fruits and increase frequency of consumption are associated with acceptance of diverse tastes [...] as a positive strategy to support healthy eating [...].



Improves eyesight. More time spent outdoors is related to reduced rates of myopia (nearsightedness) in children and adolescents [...].”³³

For these reasons, and many others (including our love for nature!), FOLLOW YOUR HEART encourages the development of outdoor activities that help children and educators to become healthy, resilient, creative, and independent members of the planet—our common home.

Gardening is a wonderful teaching activity that stimulates creativity and love for nature.³⁴ The collective effort of growing a school vegetable garden is easy and extremely rewarding: it is sufficient to have a small piece of land in a sunny yet cool place, with access to water, care, love, and patience. Although dependent on the region, vegetables that are typically good choices and easy to grow include carrots, salads, tomatoes, onions, and beets. Vegetables, fruit and tasty seeds are always a good choice for young children, who can enjoy snacking and tasting whilst taking care of their plants. In this sense, gardening becomes a wonderful multisensory activity for multipotential children!³⁵ Be inspired by our suggested activity “Creating, Caring, and Growing in the Garden” on page ____.

MULTI—LANGUAGES

“Languages hold infinite potential for creativity”³⁶
(Jane Hiddlestone and others, Creative Multilingualism, A Manifesto)

EVERY CHILD IS A MULTILINGUAL

Classes are expected to be taught in multiple languages, preferably the official teaching language, as well as the native languages of the children and of the educators, as well. Research shows that bilingual people tend to have a better working memory which is important for problem solving and carrying out multiple tasks, and children who grow through their core developmental stages while learning multiple languages can think with more flexibility and better focus their attention.³⁷ The more languages, the better!

The designers of Creative Multilingualism (cited above) have much to say about the connections between multilingualism and creativity. Here are some of the best lessons we can draw from their study:

“Creative Multilingualism puts linguistic creativity at the heart of languages and language learning, and builds on the fact that we are all innately multilingual. Languages come from deep inside us and are intimately bound up with our creative potential and its expression. From before we are even born, our languages help to shape who we are, allow us to develop rich and meaningful relationships, and give us infinite possibilities for expressing ourselves creatively. We learn to switch effortlessly between different registers, from grunting to poetic utterances. We acquire the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively in different ways with our family members, best friend and pussycat. In our day-to-day interactions, we may use different accents, one for home and one for school or work; different dialects, depending on the region we come from and where we find ourselves; and for some of us, our cultural environment prompts us to develop that potential into a command of two or more different languages.”³⁸

The multiple-language program is designed to provide our youngest learners with a **well-balanced learning environment** where they lead their learning across the four principles of child development: cognitive, social, emotional, and physical. The children are expected to engage in appropriate activities where they can develop their independence, co-create together with teachers and peers, and explore the world around them. Learning languages, even the basics, opens the minds of children to learn about different cultures, as well. The program is intentionally designed to foster their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and to support them, their families, and the whole community in an exciting learning journey.



MULTI-WAYS TO ENCOURAGE MULTILINGUALISM

There are many ways to encourage multilingualism in a typical FOLLOW YOUR HEART setting:

- Getting outdoors for a nature walk, and naming plants, animals and the surroundings in different languages. Don't forget your notebook that could become a little dictionary, with drawings and a glossary;
- Singing songs in different languages;
- When possible (and when it's rainy outside), watching your favourite cartoon in another language would help, too! Using subtitles of the language in which you are watching the cartoon in can help for visual learners;
- Going home and asking your grandparents and relatives to speak to you in their native language;
- Organize a "pen friend" exchange with a classroom in another part of the world. You could exchange letters, post-card, mail art, and short videos of your activities. The ECO_CARE team has members from all over the world, speaking, among others, English, Italian, Norwegian, Kiswahili, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Ukrainian. Ask them and they will be happy to arrange a language exchange for you!

THE IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE

Languages are fascinating and words are beautiful tools, but silence has a special power, too. As a final suggestion and activity to bring calm and peace to any learning environment, the FOLLOW YOUR HEART team recommends exploring the wonders of silence. You can decide to have a quiet moment every day, at the beginning or at the end of each class, or during break or mealtime, to sit and relax, and observe nature outside. This is a powerful way to help the children enjoy the moment, and **value the importance of stillness and silence**—something that is often forgotten about in our fast-paced, highly interconnected society.³⁹

A wonderful possibility to explore the value of silence together and build bridges between educators and learners can be the practice of enjoying **a silent book** together. A silent book is normally an illustrated book with no words but FOLLOW YOUR HEART encourages educators to use other resources as well, such as illustrated books in languages still unknown or barely explored by the class. The most well-known initiative of silent books has been supported by Ibby, the International Board on Books for Young People.⁴⁰ To build a first place of care for the refugees from Africa and the Middle East fleeing to the Italian island of Lampedusa, IBBY launched the project "Silent Books, from the world to Lampedusa and back" in 2012.⁴¹ The project created the first library on Lampedusa to be used by local and immigrant children and developed many tips that can be followed for Silent Books reading.

Here are summarized some of the ideas and abilities that a silent book experience can boost and strengthen:

- Silent books help create a quiet space, where a group gathers, to simply be together and experience the peace of silence;
- Silent books help to develop tactile and other sensory skills: children are encouraged to touch, handle, browse and even smell the pages or listen to the sound of the page browsing;
- Silent books help to smile at each other, experience the momentary strangeness of being all quiet and enjoy the absence of words;
- Silent books teach us the value of listening to what happens when experiencing a book without words;
- Silent books make everyone feel included. Everyone can read a silent book;
- Silent books help develop a sense of gratitude at the end of the experience;
- Why not try the silent book experience also with this book and listen to your heartbeats?



“On every teacher and every parent, I urge not great instruction, but humility and simplicity in dealing with small children.”⁴²
(Maria Montessori)

In a FOLLOW YOUR HEART environment, the classroom team can consist of educators, artists, and caregivers. Every school is different, and resources vary, so as long as those who are supporting multipotential students can adopt a FOLLOW YOUR HEART mentality and understand multipotentiality, students will have the room to explore and foster multiple interests and develop a strong emotional intelligence. The team should have a good understanding of Chapters 1-3 and consult the extra resources on emotional intelligence and multipotentiality found at the back of the book. Additionally, you can scan the QR code found on page ___ a list of open-access materials regularly updated on the ECO_CARE website.

The **educators** are encouraged to **design (or modify) a curriculum** and **learning environment** that, to the possible extent, is personalized around the pupils' needs and talents. Additionally, the team of educators is encouraged to ask for help from external trainers and supporters, **creative persons**, **artists**, **musicians**, and **caregivers**.

The ECO_CARE team members, and any guest teacher or trainer who would like to join, shall **support** the pupils in their growth and **observe** and **help** the educators to ensure that the learning process is smooth and reaching the goals of a FOLLOW YOUR HEART environment. As with their parents and other caregivers, children who receive **strong emotional support** from their educators approach learning opportunities with a more positive outlook and greater confidence, and the quality

of those relationships has a lasting impact on their success both inside and outside the classroom. Our team will provide emotional support to the children, with simple explanations on the reasons why we are feeling the way we do, suggest strategies for resolving conflicts, or engaging children in collective decision-making processes that involves different viewpoints and opinions.

It is important that the **supporting team** shares the highs and lows of their educational path and career journeys to teach children that although it will not always feel easy, trial and error is all part of the process. Storytelling, performances, and simple explanations of their fields of expertise will form part of the learning journey.



Along with Emily, Valentina, and Margherita, the following are the **ECO_CARE** team members that will be participating alongside you in the wonderful teaching and learning adventure.



Giuliana Panieri is a professor in marine geosciences working in Tromsø and Italy, and with many connections all over the world. She is coordinating the AKMA project⁴³ on methane in the Arctic Ocean. Her research passion is the study of foraminifera (planktonic creatures living in the Arctic Ocean), and she is working to make science fun for school children around the world.



Agnes Haule is a lawyer, activist, and legal aid helper from Songea, Tanzania. Agnes supports her community and students in many capacities: organizing workshops and laboratories on girls’ education, gender equality, and education for children with special needs. She is also an entrepreneur, and a mum, and helps **ECO_CARE** by developing sponsorship programs for school children.



Arianna Porrone is a doctoral researcher in global studies, with expertise in gender studies, anthropology, and law (Italy). Arianna has been working with the **ECO_CARE** team since the beginning, contributing to it with many scientific publications, including two comic books created in collaboration with the Chiquitano People from Mato Grosso, Brazil.



Loyua' Ribeiro F. M. da Costa is a lawyer and an activist engaged with the protection of the Chiquitano People from Mato Grosso. She is also an artist who has created some beautiful illustrations for an **ECO_CARE** book.



Silvano Chue Muquissai is a master’s student in law and a Chiquitano law researcher from Mato Grosso, Brazil. He has been helping the **ECO_CARE** team in building a relationship of trust with the Chiquitano People and has coordinated many creative projects with students and his community.



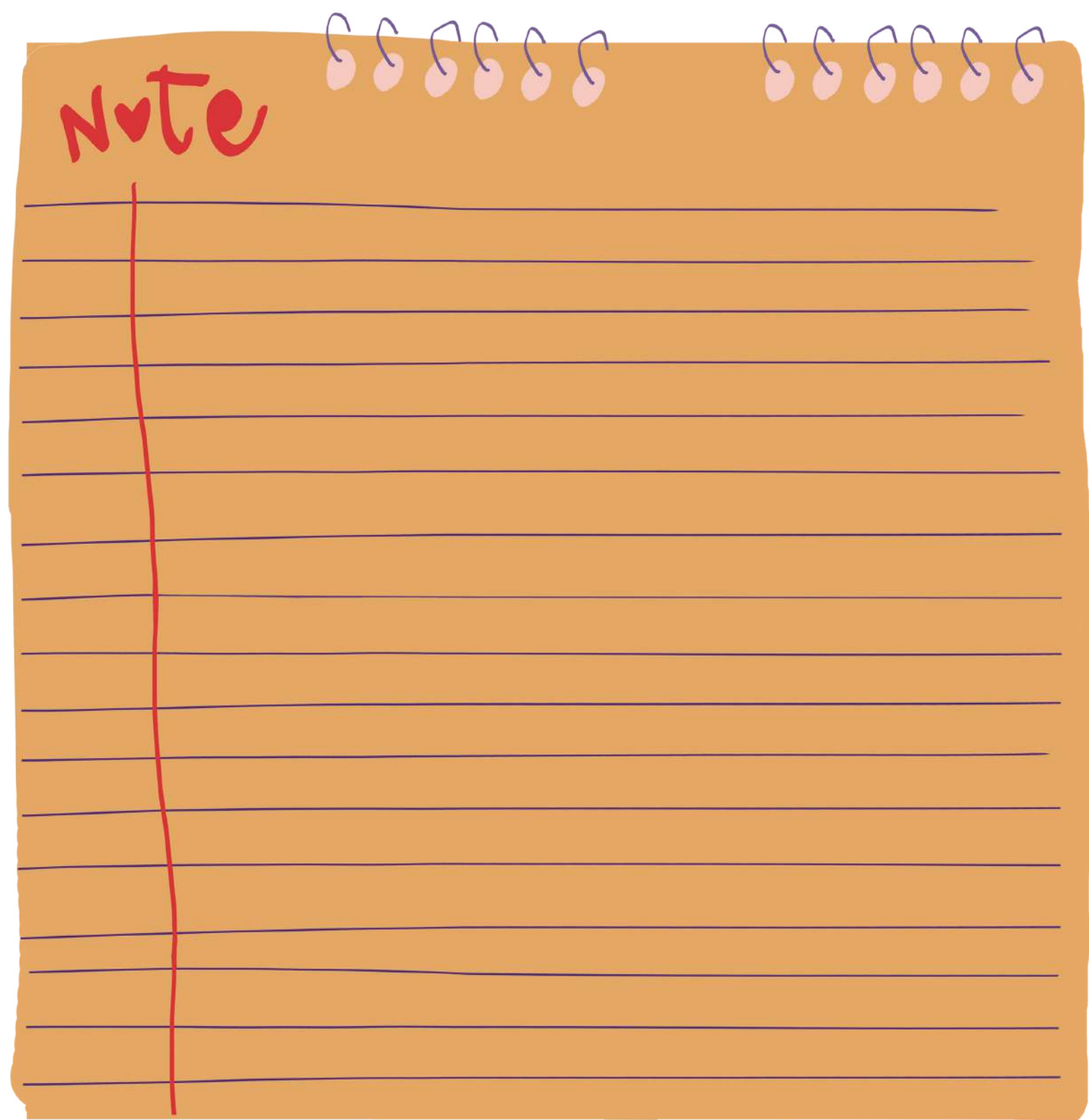
Giulia Parola is the **ECO_CARE** project coordinator for Brazil, a researcher and professor working in Brazil and Italy. She is an expert in environmental law, legal design, and visual law, and works with the Indigenous community of the Chiquitano People, from Mato Grosso, Brazil. She has recently developed many innovative educational materials, including a co-created story on a river, with the help of children and Indigenous representatives.



Camilla Neema Haule is a specialist musician (violin and piano), dancer, and student at the Wells Cathedral School in Somerset, United Kingdom. She is also a talented illustrator and one of the youngest inspirers of many activities for **ECO_CARE**.



Juliana Hayden Nygren is a PhD Student in law, eco-health and emotions at the University of Turin, Italy. She comes from a global health background (Canada) and has a past as a professional ballerina. She is a project crafter and has been helping the **ECO_CARE** team map project opportunities and apply for major project calls.



Note

CHAPTER 4 ACTIVITIES





STIMULATING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MULTIPLE TALENTS

FOLLOW YOUR HEART is an educational space that brings creativity and imagination into the structured, routine Western academic environment and suggests activities that can help educators reshape their lesson plans and incorporate innovative teaching techniques. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** is also an overall teaching philosophy that can be incorporated on a deeper level in private school settings that have more freedom over class configurations and curriculum. The aim of these activities is to **foster the multiple talents and interests** of multipotential children and keep their minds and hearts open to all possible life and career paths. Many of the activities are designed around the theme of **emotional intelligence**, as well.

Evidence-based research on play-based learning (both directed and non-directed) demonstrates the **importance of play in early childhood education**, and its impact on emotional, social, physical, academic, and cognitive development.⁴⁴ Although play is highly encouraged in the first couple years of primary education, the onset of learning more complex skills, such as reading and writing, lead to less playing and more sitting. We believe that there are many talents and interests that are repressed and not given the freedom to fully develop when play is limited to the younger years. With the following interactive activities and **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** tips and tricks, it is our hope that educators can step outside the box and give their students more autonomy and freedom in their learning and development.

In Valentina Russo's original vision, **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** would also be a space that welcomes past, present, and future, allowing children to explore as many professions as possible from traditional crafting activities (woodwork, tailoring) to the latest jobs of the 21st century (among others, coding, graphic design, makeup artist). Introducing such careers and bringing these activities into the classroom can help children realize the immense number of possibilities that exist beyond the traditional, linear-career path professions (teacher, physician, nurse, lawyer).

ORIGINAL "FOLLOW YOUR HEART" ACTIVITIES

The following activities are meant to encourage **mindfulness** and **imagination** and to give children the space to express themselves in a creative manner to facilitate a better understanding of their multiple interests. The main theme with these activities is to steer away from asking questions that can lead to limited thought processes such as "what do you want to be when you grow up?" to more exploratory, open-ended questions like "what makes your heart happy?". Each activity has guidance, rather than step-by-step instructions, so that students (and educators!) can bring in their own creativity and imaginations.



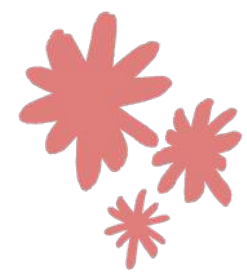
FOLLOW YOUR HEART: SEWING LOVE

This activity follows the theme of Crocs®— the popular rubber sandal that can be personalized with little “charms” to portray your favourite sports, animals, hobbies, etc.⁴⁵ This sewing activity involves a little heart-shaped pillow that, similar to Crocs®, will be decorated with symbols to represent the students’ interests, or whatever it is that makes their hearts happy and full. Traditionally, education systems heavily focus on what is your “favourite” subject or sport, and rarely give children the chance to understand that you can have more than one favourite and you can be good at more than one thing. Additionally, we tend to focus more on logical reasoning and the interests that favour a particular career path and less on the emotional, creative parts of a child’s brain and heart.



Materials Needed:

- Fabric
- Thread
- Needle
- Safety pins or stapler
- Glue/hot glue gun
- Pillow “stuffing”
- Little “tokens”/charms to represent interests/likes/etc.



Guidance: pupils can trace a heart onto fabric, and then cut out two hearts that are the same shape and size. Use safety pins or a stapler to temporarily fasten the two pieces of heart-shaped fabric together and then have the children stitch two rows of thread around the perimeter of the heart whilst ensuring a 3 cm gap is left so that the heart can be turned inside out and stuffed to create a little pillow. Children can stuff the pillow and then stitch the opening to seal the pillow. Using a thread and needle, or glue depending on the type/shape/materials of the “charms”, children can adhere the charms to decorate their heart. This pillow can stay with children for the year and as they develop new interests and find what speaks to their heart, they can add to their pillow.



Extra-love: before sealing the pillow and after inserting the stuffing, children can write a small note to themselves about what it means to them to follow their heart and put it inside the pillow (similar to “Build-A-Bear” concept).



ECO-tip: we encourage educators and children to use recycled fabric for both the heart and the stuffing—either from a second-hand store or by bringing in materials from home that are no longer needed for their original purpose.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART: VISION BOARD

A vision board is a creative way for students (or anyone!) to express their multiple interests, passions, and goals in a way that can be used as a reflective exercise... like journaling! It is also an “**ECO**” friendly activity that requires reusing, recycling, and repurposing old sources of literature (magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.). Students can use this activity to search through old newspapers and magazines to cut out words and images that represent their interests, future aspirations—whether that be career, family, or personal-orientated—or anything that brings them joy. This creative exercise can help educators better understand their students (and students to understand each other), and help students visualize how diverse their interests may be and for older students, this can help create some future career links.



Materials Needed:

- Recycled cardboard (e.g., cereal boxes)
- Magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Optional: Mod Podge to give the final product a glossy look



Guidance: Following the theme of a creative, collaborative classroom environment, divide the class into small groups and set them up at stations with recycled literature and scissors. Each station has different stacks of literature that some students may find more interesting than others. Every 15 minutes or so, groups change workstations to have the opportunity to flip through other sources of literature. Once groups have rotated between all stations, they can begin adhering their clippings to a heart-shaped cardboard cut-out previously prepared by the educators or pupils themselves.



ECO-tip: we encourage pupils and educators to bring in old magazines, newspapers, etc. from home rather than purchasing new materials.



FOLLOW YOUR HEART: JOURNALING

Journaling is a wonderful practice that promotes mindfulness and self-reflection, whilst improving reading and communication skills, reducing stress, and helping the user find inspiration and motivation. Of course, a journal entry does not have to be coherent, well-structured paragraphs—students should be encouraged to fill their journal with anything they feel inspired to draw or write about. Leonardo Da Vinci, a well-known example of a multipotentialite, came up with some of the most innovative ideas in his journals! Sometimes it can be difficult to start when journaling is a new practice, so below you will find journal prompts, but it is also encouraged that educators and students share unique journal prompts with each other. We therefore encourage pupils and teachers to share their activities with the **ECO_CARE** team members, and think of ways to co-create learning materials by coordinating school pupils from different background and age groups. The **ECO_CARE** team is happy to support this project further!

Materials Needed:

- Journal—remember, it does not have to be fancy... anything works. You can even use the beautifully illustrated ‘Notes’ provided throughout this book!
- Writing tools
- A quiet, reflective space (try outdoors!)

Guidance: Invite pupils to find a quiet space, in either an indoor or outdoor setting, and to sit alone with their thoughts and feelings. Explain that this is a very open activity that can become a regular part of their routine, and that their journal is for their eyes only. Tell students they can write about what is on their mind or give them a journal prompt to write at the top of their page.

Journal Prompts:

Reminder—in order to dig deeper, each question should be followed with the question “why?”

WHEN ASKED THE QUESTION, "WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?" THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MY MIND IS

IF I COULD CREATE MY OWN FUTURE JOB, IT WOULD BE

IF I COULD CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT MY SCHOOL, IT WOULD BE

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE MAKES ME FEEL

WHEN ASKED THE QUESTION, "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?" IT MAKES ME FEEL



FOLLOW YOUR HEART: MIND—HEART MAPPING

Mind-mapping is a type of brainstorming that was originally created as a note taking technique to improve information recall and to help the brain uncover different perceptions it may have about a particular subject.⁴⁶ Mind-mapping is known to strengthen the imagination and boost creativity and has been shown to work as a self-improvement tool rather than exclusively as a study tool. Mind-heart mapping is an exercise that can be used to help pupils (literally and figuratively) draw connections between what they see logically, in their minds, and what they feel emotionally, in their hearts. Creating a visual representation of everything a person feels inside can help them feel a greater sense of awareness for their interests and emotions, and an overall better sense of self awareness.

Materials Needed:

- Blank paper (any size)
- Writing tools
- Free time, self-reflection and creativity!

Guidance: this is a very open-ended activity with very little direction; however, if pupils have a difficult time starting from scratch, you can tell them to write their names in the middle of the paper and start filling the empty space with the people/places/things/subjects that make their hearts happy.



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

JORINDE GREEN, LALA LAND, TORINO, ITALY

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

MYSTERY BOX

SCHOOL LEVEL

PRESCHOOL TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MATERIALS NEEDED

BOX WITH COVERING

3D LEARNING ITEMS (ITEMS THAT REPRESENT
VOCABULARY TO BE LEARNED I.E. FRUITS, VEGETABLES, TOYS)

FLASH CARDS (CREATED TO MATCH THE 3D LEARNING ITEMS
IN THE BOX, IN LANGUAGE TO BE LEARNED)

FOCUS

LEARNING NEW VOCABULARY BY
SPARKING PUPILS' CURIOSITY AND
LEARNING BY FEELING, SEEING AND
HEARING

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE (OR ANY NEW LANGUAGE!)
IN AN AUTONOMOUS AND INTERACTIVE
WAY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

- Ask your pupils to arrange themselves in a circle sitting on the floor
- To increase autonomy during the mystery box game, present the flashcards one-by-one to the class and have your pupils repeat the words after you
- Invite one pupil to take the flashcard back their seat and place it on the ground in front of them; repeat until you have given out all the flashcards
- Now, introduce the mystery box. You can create a “mystery box” song in advance or have a phrase the pupils say to “open” the magic box (option: include sign language)
- Count to 10 and then open the box—make the activity more engaging by pretending to hear something in the box, or act as if it smells or as if there is something inside making the box move. This will spark their curiosity and excitement to learn!
- In teams of two, pupils come up to the teacher/mystery box. One pupil pulls out an item and the other finds the matching flashcard within the circle and places the item with it. Ask pupils to repeat the English word for the item and have them spell it aloud. Since you went through the flashcards at the beginning, pupils have a better chance to remember which increases satisfaction and autonomy!
- Variation for older pupils: divide them in two teams. Alternating between each team and have one pupil at a time pull an item from the mystery box. Each time the team can remember the word—they get a point. This increases their concentration and sense of teamwork. It also enhances their strategic thinking... they can feel the items inside the mystery box and may only choose to pull out the items they think they recognize and can remember how to say in English.

Visit “LaLa Land”⁴⁷ on Facebook for more information or to reach out to Jorinde for activity suggestions!



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

MARGHERITA PAOLA POTO, ARIANNA PARRONE, VALENTINA RUSSO,
UIT ARCTIC UNIVERSITY OF NORWAY

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME
KNOWLEDGE TREASURE HUNT

SCHOOL LEVEL
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

A STORY ABOUT KNOWLEDGE BY A. PARRONE,
M.P. POTO, V. RUSSO. ILLUSTRATED VERSION
(OPTIONAL)

THE "TOUCH BOOK" OF A STORY ABOUT
KNOWLEDGE (OPTIONAL)

STATIONERY (OPTIONAL)

OPTIONAL: SMARTPHONE/CAMERA TO FILM
EXPERIENCE

FOCUS

ANSWERING A RESEARCH QUESTION
("WHERE CAN WE FIND AND TREASURE
KNOWLEDGE?") IN A CO-CREATED AND
CREATIVE MANNER

STRENGTHEN IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY BY
SEARCHING FOR A CO-CREATED ANSWER TO A
RESEARCH QUESTION. DEVELOP INQUIRY ABILITIES,
TEAM BUILDING SKILLS AND AN UNDERSTANDING
OF THE IMPORTANCE TO TREASURE OUR PLANET
WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

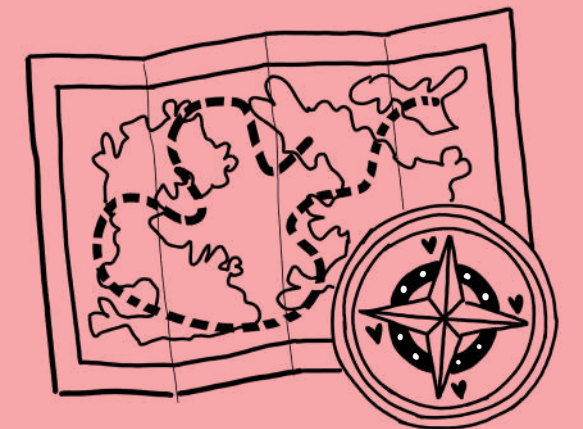
Following the theme of a creative, collaborative classroom environment, divide the class into small groups (10 pupils per group maximum) and set them up at stations assigning the task to identify the best place where to find and treasure knowledge. You can pose the question "where can we find and treasure knowledge?" and remind them to keep their minds and hearts open. There are no right or wrong answers, let the imagination and creativity flow!

Ask the pupils to co-create the answer by listening to each other, being inspired by the stories they know, thinking of their most favourite place (their home, a beautiful natural landscape, their classroom, etc.).

Pupils will be given 60 minutes to develop their co-created tangible answer to the question, then 15 minutes to expose their project to the classroom. The tangible answer could come in the shape of a song, a play, a drawing, a big poster with a mind-heart mapping, or even like a little treasure-hunt game.

Check the References at the back of the book for an example of how the project was developed by a group of researchers, using the book A Story About Knowledge (A. Parrone, M. P. Poto, V. Russo), Aracne, 2021.⁴⁸

NB: This activity has been already implemented in the ECO_CARE curriculum for researchers and students and can be inspirational to introduce the importance of inquisitive learning, through questions and collective answers. Our experience in ECO_CARE is that research, as learning, is much more fun when it is a collective and collaborative experience, where all talents and answers are valid and fundamental to solving a problem. It is inspired by an indigenous story from the Arctic, and tells us also how beautiful it is to have Mother Nature as our teacher.



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

SERENA SARTI, ACCADEMIA DI BELLE ARTI DI
BOLOGNA (ITALIA)

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

ARTISTIC EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

SCHOOL LEVEL

PRIMARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

AN EMPTY PHOTO FRAME (EVEN A CARDBOARD CUT-OUT; LARGE ENOUGH TO ALLOW PUPIL TO STAND BEHIND)

SMALL BAG CONTAINING PAPER NOTES WITH EMOTIONS (HAPPY, SAD, ANGER, ETC.)

PHOTOS OF ART PAINTINGS AND PORTRAITS

FOCUS

DEVELOP EMOTIONAL OBSERVATION
ABILITIES IN ART

LEARN TO OBSERVE ART PORTRAITS FOCUSING
THEIR ATTENTION ON THE EMOTIONAL AESTHETIC
DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTIST

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

PART 1

On a table, place the large (empty) frame against a pedestal so that it stands straight and firm, and arrange the children in front of the table and frame (as if they were at an art exhibition staring at a painting).

In turn, each pupil pulls a paper note from the bag of emotions and settles behind the empty frame to interpret and communicate the chosen emotion to their classmates.

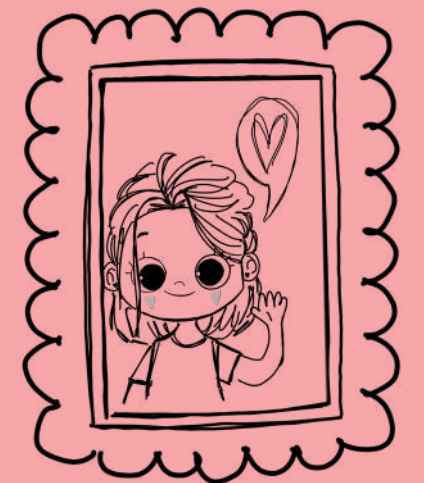
Sitting in front of the frame, the class observes their peer and the mimed expression and tries to guess the performed emotions.

PART 2

After everyone has mimed their emotion within the frame, they will look at the art portraits/ paintings (printed or projected on a screen). Provide some background on the painting and then asking your pupils questions such as:

- What emotional expression did the artist want to represent in your opinion?
- How did you come to decide on this emotion? What are the elements that make you think it?
- What is the emotion that you are observing?

This conversation often opens dialogue and debate about emotions and perceptions. Children can learn to observe in a detailed and careful way every detail of a picture and grasp its themes with themselves in an empathetic way.



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

MARGHERITA PAOLA POTO, UIT ARCTIC UNIVERSITY
OF NORWAY

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

CREATING, CARING AND GROWING
IN THE GARDEN

SCHOOL LEVEL

PRIMARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

GARDEN TOOLS (SMALL POTS, SHOVEL, TROWEL)

STICKS AND MARKERS FOR LABELLING SEEDS

A VARIETY OF SEEDS

A CALENDAR

A GARDEN JOURNAL PER CHILD

FOCUS

DEVELOP A CONNECTION WITH NATURE,
A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF WHY WE
NEED TO CARE FOR OUR PLANET, AND
STRENGTHEN PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

DEVELOP A DEEPER CONNECTION TO AND
RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR PLANET, TAKE CARE OF
OTHER BEINGS AND IDENTIFY THEIR NEEDS, AND
LEARN ABOUT CYCLES OF SEASONS, WATER, AIR,
AND IMPORTANCE OF LIGHT OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

1. Introduce the idea of a community garden and how growing your own vegetables and fruits is a sustainable practice that is both rewarding and good for the environment
2. Encourage pupils to learn about the local environment and terrain, which will lead to choosing the most suitable seeds to plant and seasons to grow and harvest. If the outdoor environment is not suitable to planting, each pupil can have their own “mini garden” in a personalized pot
3. Show your pupils the tools that you will be using and explain their purpose—of these tools, create a class calendar to keep track of planting dates
4. Prior to planting and during the gardening process, have pupils learn about what plants need to thrive (importance of water, natural light, air, and a safe place to grow)
5. Prepare the community garden plot together—when pupils are involved in the entire process it is more rewarding and they will feel more accountable for taking care of their plants
6. Prepare the soil and as children plant seeds, explain why you are doing this and what we expect will happen in the coming weeks
7. Water the seeds and create a daily time slot for a “garden check” for pupils to tend to the needs of the plant and make observations—encourage children to keep a journal to make notes and drawings on their observations (and emotions) on the process of growth

- BE PREPARED FOR LOTS OF FUN (AND SOME MESS!)
- TASTE SOME OF THE EDIBLE PLANTS: YOU CAN PREPARE A SALAD OR A SNACK ALTOGETHER TO CELEBRATE YOUR CREATIVITY AND THE WONDERS OF NATURE!



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

ELENA GIROTTI, UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

PHOTOGRAPHING EMOTIONS

SCHOOL LEVEL

PRIMARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

PAPER AND MATERIALS FOR DRAWING

FOCUS

LISTEN TO ONESELF AND OTHERS, AND
LEARN TO RECOGNIZE, EXPRESS AND
SHARE THEIR EMOTIONS

LISTEN TO SILENCE, TO THEMSELVES AND OTHER
PEOPLE IN AN ACTIVE MANNER; DESCRIBE
AND EXPRESS THEIR OWN EMOTIONS AND
THEIR PEERS' EMOTIONS CREATIVELY; AND CO-
CONSTRUCT A VISUAL NARRATION REPRESENTING
THEIR EMOTIONAL STATE IN A PRECISE MOMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

Sitting in a circle on the ground with your pupils, introduce the activity by explaining that the focus will be on listening, expressing and understanding our own emotions and the emotions of our peers. Ask them to think about how they feel. Remind them it is *okay* to think for a moment and not answer immediately. Invite the pupils to remain seated, hold hands together and listen to the silence and themselves.

Now, ask your pupils to go around and search for an object in the surrounding space that represents how they feel. They can stay in the classroom, but it would be great to have the opportunity to go around and wander in an open-air space (e.g., a garden). Call the children back to the circle and divide them into pairs.

Invite them to work in pairs and to share how they feel by using the chosen object and explaining why they have chosen it and what it represents to them. Give the children a precise time; approximately 10 minutes in total to share their experience. Divide the time into 2 parts: the first one dedicated to one pupil; the second one for the other. Clap your hands to signal the beginning of the first time period. In the first 5 minutes, one pupil talks about themselves and their object and emotions, while the other person must listen and not ask any questions. If the narration ends before the 5 minutes expire, both children shall remain in silence and reflect.

Clap your hands again after the first 5 minutes have passed to signal the pupils to switch roles. In these remaining 5 minutes the other pupils explain the chosen object and their feelings and emotional state while their peer listens.

Once the time has expired, invite the children back to the circle. Give them time to draw the objects and the emotions described by their working partner. Space should be given to everything that has emerged (there is no right or wrong: it could be interesting to see all the facts related to the emotional state even though they belong to a different field).

Put all the drawings and objects together in the centre of the circle, so to have a visual representation. Let the children explain what they have realized and share their emotions and experiences with all of their peers.

Option: conserve the objects collected and repeat the activity regularly to become aware of how and why pupils' emotions and mood change from day to day.



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

ARIANNA PORRONE, UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA AND HATHA
VINYASA TEACHER (YOGA ALLIANCE)

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

BECOMING A TREE

SCHOOL LEVEL

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

A SPACE WHERE PUPILS CAN BE DISTANCED FROM EACH OTHER AND MOVE THEIR BODIES FREELY (A GARDEN, CLASSROOM WITH NO CHAIRS, ETC.)

COMFORTABLE CLOTHES

STATIONERY FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

FOCUS

MOVE THE BODY, CONNECT THE BREATH,
MIND AND SPIRIT, AND BECOME AWARE
OF THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT BY
BECOMING PART OF IT

DEVELOP EMOTIONAL AWARENESS OF WHAT IT
MEANS TO BE PART OF NATURE AND UNDERSTAND
THE IMPORTANCE OF NURTURING AND TAKING
CARE OF OURSELVES AND OTHERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

Allow pupils to spread in an open space at their disposal. Explain to them that they are going to experiment with what it means to become a tree, which are very special beings. Indeed, through photosynthesis, they ensure life on Earth. They are extremely intelligent and sensitive, connected to the soil through their roots, and communicating and spreading information thanks to the wind.

Guide your pupils as follows, but remember you are encouraged to improvise and speak from your own heart!

- First, we are going to warm up our bodies and branches [pause] close your eyes and start breathing at a normal pace from your nose. You will be standing still for several minutes [pause] start moving your body intuitively, staying in one place [pause] now, starting with your hands down by your side, imagine you are drawing lines with your hands by moving them up and down alongside your body. Starting with the left arm, reach up and then down [pause] now, with the right arm [pause] imagine that your arms are the branches of a tree and they are filled with leaves [pause] what colours are the leaves? [pause] now, draw circles with your wrist—imagine that your hands are the special leaves that move when the wind comes [long pause, allow pupils to experiment with their movements]
- Bring your arms back down by your side [pause] now, move your hips (this is the trunk of your tree). Explore the space around you by swinging your bodies [pause] now, reaching for the sky, take a full body, and cross your right leg over the left, and then stretch your hands to the right (making a banana shape). Repeat on the other side
- Open your eyes. How does it feel to dance at the wind's pace?
- Now that we have warmed up, I want you to start thinking about ... [describe the trees in your region and talk about parts of their life cycle]
- Feel your feet on the ground, with all four corners of your feet [pause] make some small movements with your feet, imagine having strong roots that slowly connect you to the ground [pause, and explain that the roots are trees' base and means to receive nourishment from the earth (water, minerals)]



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

ARIANNA PORRONE, UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA AND HATHA
VINYASA TEACHER (YOGA ALLIANCE)

- Once you feel still and strong, lift your right foot from the ground and keep the knee folded in front of you, making a 90 degree angle. Look for your balance and breath [pause] now slowly open your leg towards the right and lay the bottom of your foot against your left leg (which is strong!) [pause] place the foot either on the left ankle or above the knee (but not directly on the knee) [pause] look for your balance [explain that the tree is growing and that it takes time, energy and love for it to become an adult. Remind your pupils that it is okay to wobble and feel shaky]
- Now, join your hands at your heart [pause] start imagining that you want to reach for the sky, the sunlight above you and the fresh air all around [pause] stretch your arms up and place them on top of your head [pause] breathe normally from your nose (5 breathe cycles)
- Slowly come back to standing position with both feet grounded on the floor. How does it feel to become a tree? Was it hard?
- Now, we will repeat on the other side [repeat the activity starting with the other side of the body]

Follow-Up Activity:

You can start a discussion with the pupils on what and how they felt during the activity. You can suggest a drawing/colouring session to allow the pupils to represent what they saw and/or felt. According to the needs of the class, the follow-up activity can replace the main activity—suggest mind movement rather than full body movement. Being/becoming a tree involves many emotions and feelings that can be expressed with different colours and shapes. You may tell the story of a tree's life cycle, the encounters with different living beings (worms, organic matters, water, pollution, birds, CO2, human beings), etc.

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME GARDENING YOUR PASSIONS

SCHOOL LEVEL SECONDARY (ANY AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

A SPACE WHERE PUPILS CAN BE DISTANCED FROM EACH OTHER AND MOVE THEIR BODIES FREELY (A GARDEN, CLASSROOM WITH NO CHAIRS, ETC.)

COMFORTABLE CLOTHES

STATIONERY FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

FOCUS

CARE FOR YOUR INNER GARDENS —
FILLED WITH PASSIONS, TALENTS, DREAMS,
AND HOPES — THROUGH MOVEMENT AND
BREATH

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS THROUGH CONNECTING
THE BODY, MIND, AND IMAGINATION. PUPILS
WILL BE GIVEN THE SPACE TO TAKE A JOURNEY
WITHIN THEMSELVES, TO TAKE A BREAK FROM
EXTERNAL INFLUENCES AND NOISE, AND TO
EXPERIMENT WITH THE PRIVILEGE AND GIFT OF
LEARNING FROM THEIR OWN DEPTHS

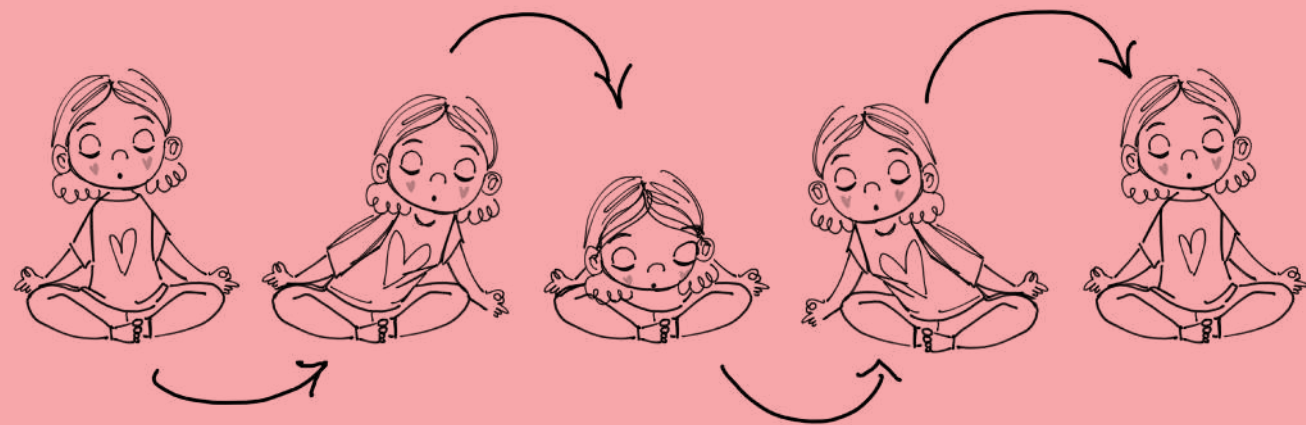
LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

Allow pupils to spread in the space at their disposal and ask them to sit on the floor, positioned in a comfortable seat, with crossed legs. Guide them into the activity by explaining that they are going to experiment on a journey within themselves, with movement and imagination (guided by you!). They will have the chance to walk, run and play into their inner garden.

Guide your pupils as follows, but remember you are encouraged to improvise and speak from your own heart!

- Close your eyes and start breathing at a normal pace from the nose. You will be staying somewhat still during the activity, but your imagination can play as much as you want
- Draw a series of circles with their hips, we will do 5 per side [pause] there is no right or wrong way to do this, do whatever feels right to you. I am only guiding you, remember that [pause] take a deep breath in and let your chest fall towards your right side and then draw a circle in front of you with your forehead, and then as you breathe out, come up again by finishing the circle on the left [repeat this 5 times and then have the pupils move in the opposite direction; see picture for guidance]



- Now bring your chest to the centre, with your back standing tall and the top of your head reaching for the sky

In a gentle tone, give examples of gardens, types of flowers, plants and trees.

- Now, ask pupils specific questions about their inner garden and how they imagine it to be. Ask them to close their eyes and to picture their garden. Ask questions like...What colours are there? Is the garden a vegetable garden? Does it have grass, flowers, big and small plants? Is there a lake, or a pond? How does it smell? What insects and animals live in your garden? Take at least 8 minutes to give your pupils plenty of time to get bored and let their imagination flow, and always accompany them back to themselves
- Next, ask your pupils to bring their left hand to their heart and the right hand to their stomach. Guide them into a few breaths as follows:
 - When you breathe in, imagine filling your stomach as a balloon until you almost feel it explode;
 - Then, when you breathe out, imagine that you are emptying the balloon. Your belly button moving back towards your spine
- After this, ask pupils to close the palms of their hands in front of their chest. With eyes closed, ask them to imagine, very clearly, one of the elements from their inner garden in between their hands
- Lastly, ask them to extend their arms on top of their heads, with the hands still holding their special element and let them appreciate whatever it is they are holding onto
- Ask pupils to return to a seat position and open their eyes

Follow-Up Activity:

Meditation can be followed by drawing, painting, or colouring their tiny inner garden or the element they chose to specifically take care of that day. According to the needs and mood of the class, this follow-up activity can become the main activity, perhaps guided by a beautiful imaginative tale or real gardens and landscapes from around the world.

TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

VALENTINA RUSSO, MUCHO AMOR HOME, ITALY

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME
SILENT READING

SCHOOL LEVEL
ANY LEVEL AND ABILITY

MATERIALS NEEDED

THE ACTIVITY CAN BE CARRIED OUT WITH ANY ILLUSTRATED BOOK (AND FOR THE BRAVEST: NON-ILLUSTRATED BOOKS, INCLUDING THIS ONE!), BUT WE SUGGEST USING 'VALENTINA AND SCARLETT' BY VALENTINA RUSSO

FOCUS

CONNECT WITH PEERS WHO SPEAK
DIFFERENT LANGUAGES AND APPRECIATE
THE BEAUTY IN SILENCE

ENGAGE WITH A BOOK IN A MULTISENSORY
WAY— TOUCHING THE BOOK, BROWSING
THE PAGES, SMELLING IT, LOOKING AT THE
ILLUSTRATIONS, ENJOYING THE COMPANY OF
BEING IN A CIRCLE OF PEERS SHARING THE SAME
EXPERIENCE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

A few suggestions on how to engage with silent reading and silent books:

- The teacher invites children to sit comfortably in a circle, preferably on a carpet or cushions on the floor, where possible
- The teacher invites everyone to be still, and enjoy this adventure with the senses: listening to the noises that a book makes, holding it, browsing the pages, looking at the illustrations, and smelling the book.
- The teacher browses the book following the pace and cadenza they think the story must have.
- When the story reaches the end, the teacher invites the children to feel gratitude for this experience of engaging with a book.
- The teacher can decide to invite children to express their feelings and emotions, and maybe write them down or illustrate them in their notebooks.

This activity can be part of the daily school practice as an early morning routine, or at the end of a long school day. You can encourage your children to work in pairs or small groups and organize their own silent book sessions.

NB: The silent book experience, as explained in more detail in Chapter 3, is largely inspired by the work carried out by the network Ibby, with the project *Silent Books: Final Destination Lampedusa*. The network has developed step-by-step guidance to carry out an activity with silent books and we are happy to share the steps.⁴⁹ In the section *The Importance of Silence* in Chapter 3 you will find the **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** interpretation of these steps and some reflections on the importance to develop this activity as a part of a learning experience.



TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

LAURA VITA, REGISTERED NURSE, ONTARIO, CANADA

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME
MUSIC AND EMOTIONS

SCHOOL LEVEL
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY (ALL AGES)

MATERIALS NEEDED

MUSIC (LYRICAL OR INSTRUMENTAL)

STATIONERY

DRAWING MATERIALS (MARKERS, PENCILS, PAINT,
ETC.)

FOCUS

DEVELOP SKILLS IN IDENTIFYING AND
EXPRESSING EMOTIONS SAFELY

STRENGTHEN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND
EXPRESSION, HELPING TO DEVELOP A DEEP
PERSONAL CONNECTION THROUGH CREATIVE
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

PRACTICE COMMUNICATING FEELINGS TO PEERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

PART 1

1. Distribute paper and drawing materials to pupils, and ensure they know that any form of creative visual expression is welcome; there is no right or wrong way to express their emotions on paper.
2. Have the teacher turn on music for the class; the pupils are encouraged to sit with their eyes closed and experience the music for a few moments. At this point, the teacher will ask the pupils to check in with themselves and identify how the music is making them feel.
3. Pupils, when they are ready, will take the drawing materials and create a visual representation of the emotion they experienced while listening to the music.

PART 2

Invite the pupils to reflect and name the emotion they were feeling. If comfortable, have them share their drawing(s) and the emotion they felt with their peers.



Variation: A variation on this activity is to have all pupils draw on one large piece of paper to create a collaborative art piece.

Educators are encouraged to return to this activity over time, using different pieces of music. This can help build comfort and capacity within their pupils to identify, name and share their emotions with others. Teachers can adapt this activity to the learning level of their pupils.

TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL _____

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

SCHOOL LEVEL

MATERIALS NEEDED

FOCUS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

SCHOOL LEVEL

MATERIALS NEEDED

FOCUS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE

TEACHER NAME & SCHOOL _____

LESSON PLAN/ACTIVITY NAME

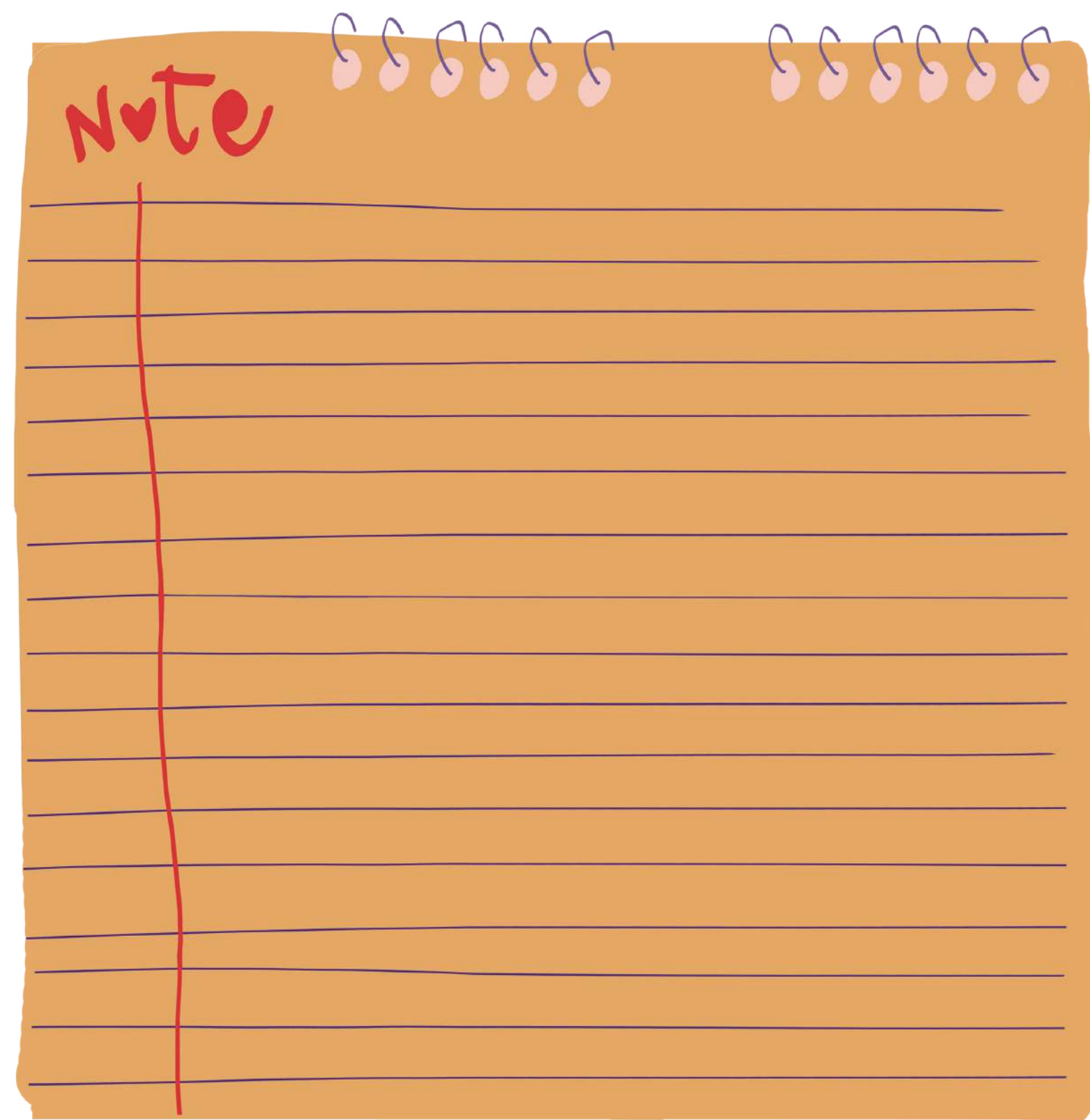
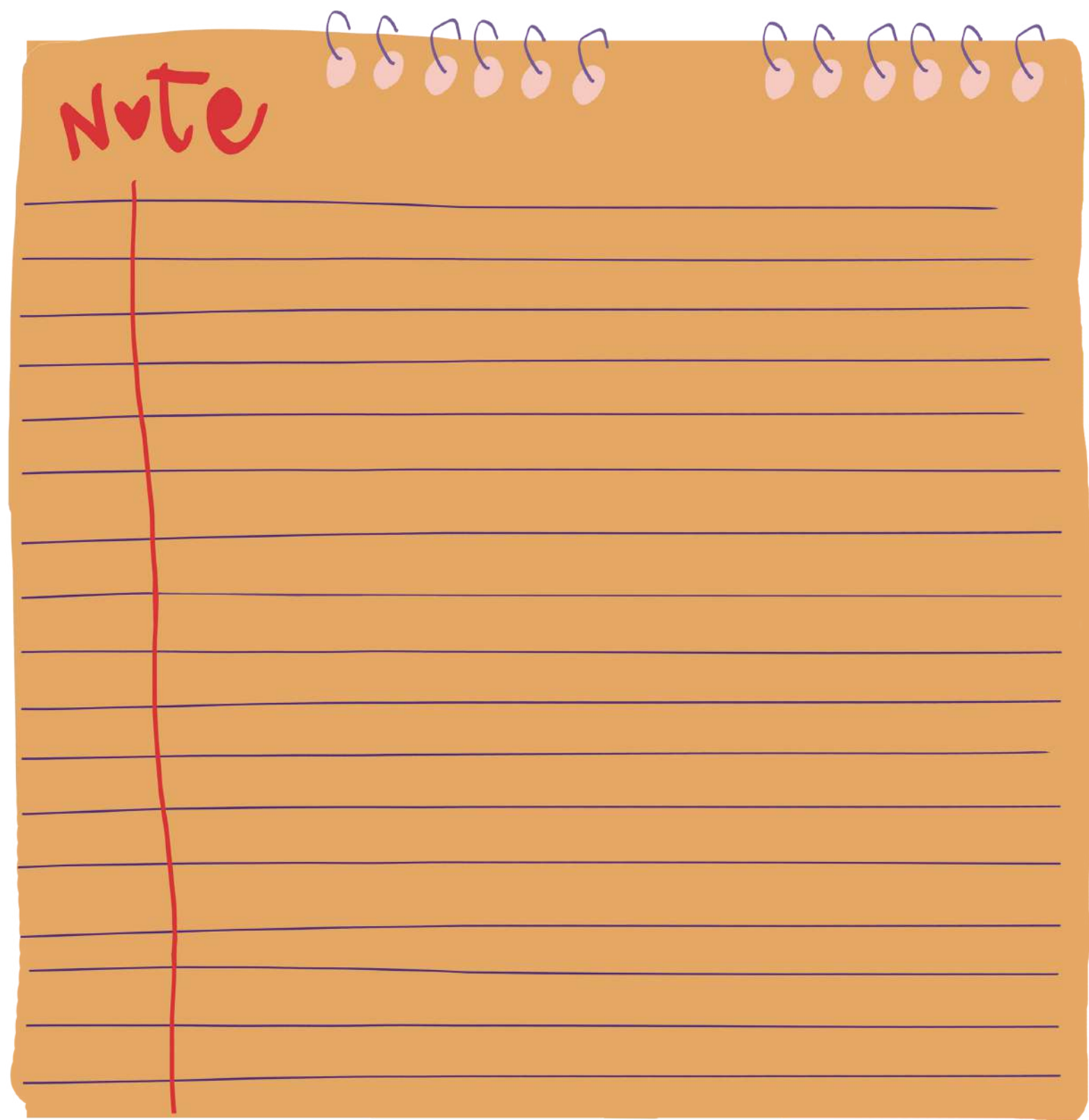
SCHOOL LEVEL

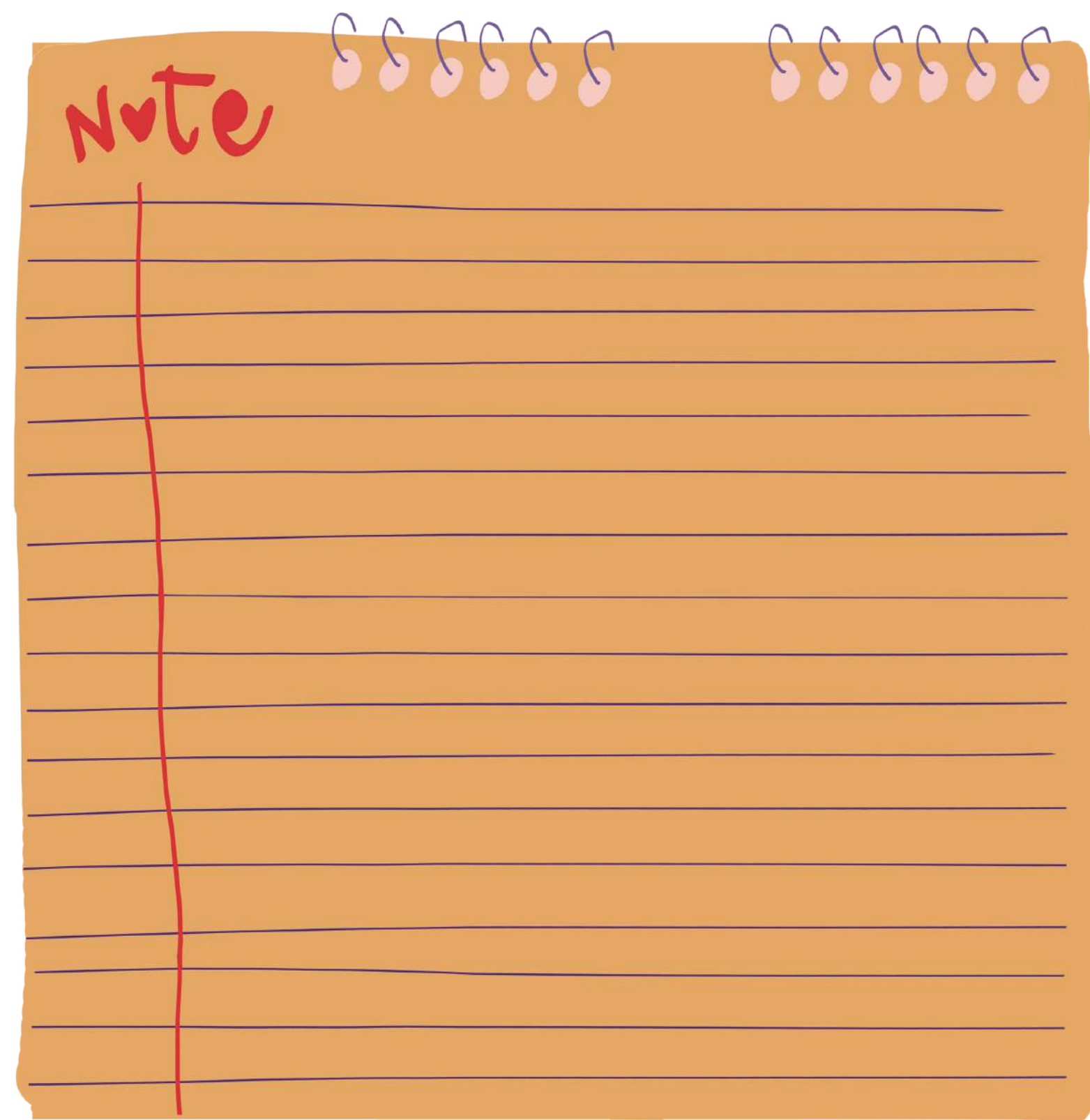
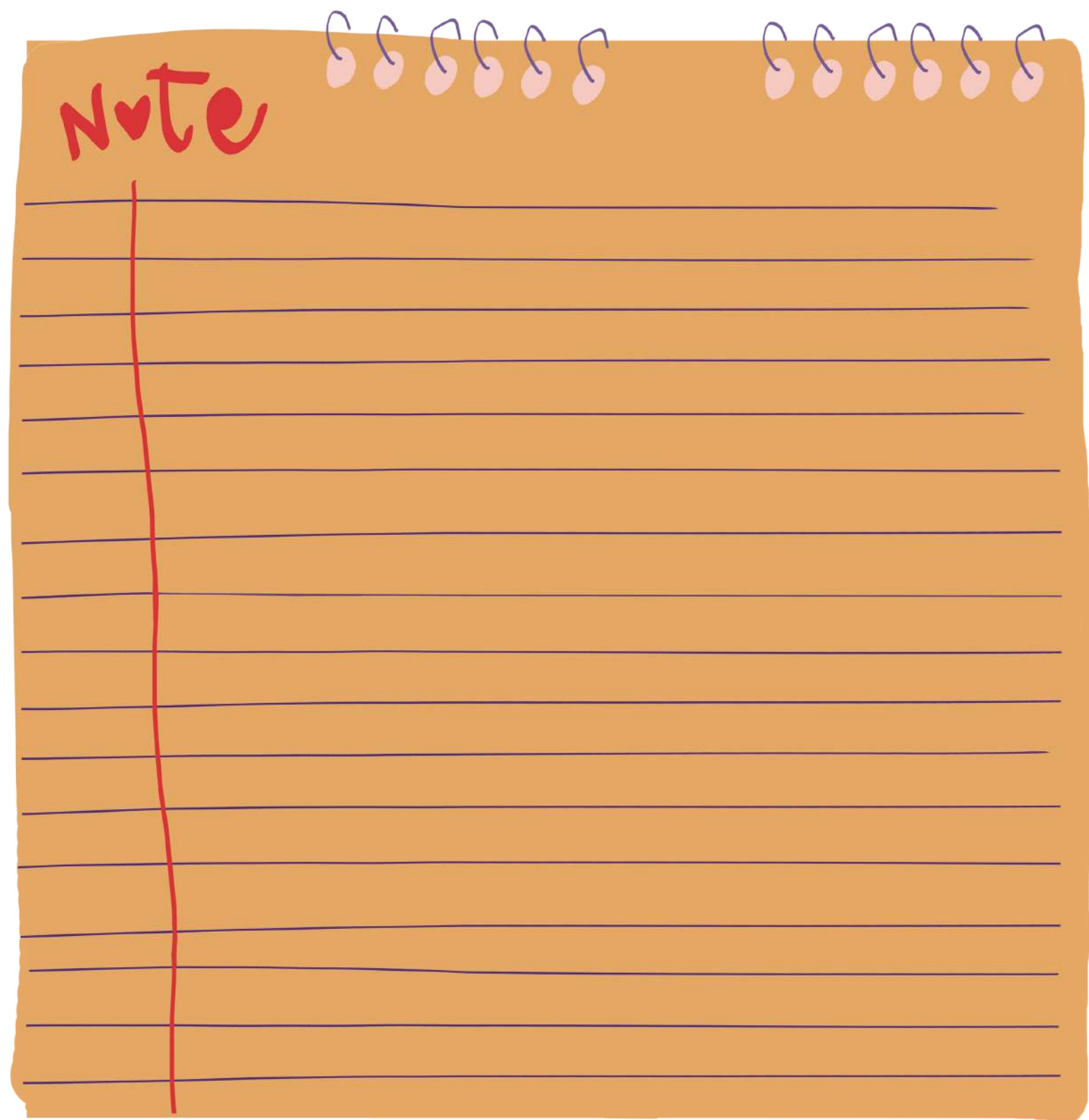
MATERIALS NEEDED

FOCUS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

GUIDANCE





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- Ibidem, p. 9.
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- A beautiful way to put this is the definition of "purple people". See Bell K, Hart B., Wiseman D. (illustrator) (2020) *The World Needs More Purple People*, Random House, New York.
- On the influence of capitalism on knowledge and learning in the Western world see Torres, C. A. (2002). Globalization, education, and citizenship: Solidarity versus markets?. *American educational research journal*, 39(2), 363-378; Kleinman, D. L., & Vallas, S. P. (2001). Science, capitalism, and the rise of the "knowledge worker": The changing structure of knowledge production in the United States. *Theory and Society*, 30(4), 451-492
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- <https://puttylike.com/tedx/> last access September 2022.
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- Learn more about the Malala Fund here: <https://malala.org>.
- You can learn more about her educational training and teaching method here: <https://www.mariamontessori.org/>.
- Learn more about the Green Belt Movement and this multipotentialite here <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/>. You will find additional teaching materials and even help planting trees in Africa!
- The exceptional talents of the two children had spread among the imperial courts in Europe and together with their father, the children traveled through Western Europe: they played before the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, at the Imperial Court; in Munich, Frankfurt, Paris Brussels, and London: Sadie, S. (2006). *Mozart: The Early Years, 1756–1781*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. ISBN 0-393-06112-4.
- You can have a taste of his wonderful music here: <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/mozart/>.
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39. Lombardi Calleja, N. (2019). Silence and observation in early childhood education: the pedagogical basis of a symbol literacy approach (Master's thesis, University of Malta).
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44. Bubikova-Moan, J., Hjltland, H.N., & Wollschild, S. (2019). ECE teachers' views on play-based learning: a systematic review. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 27(6): 776-800. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2019.1678717>
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46. Erdem, A. (2017). Mind Maps as a Lifelong Learning Tool. University Journal of Education Research, 5: 12A, 1-7. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2017.051301
47. <https://www.facebook.com/lalalandtorino/>
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SUGGESTED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

- Big feelings** by Alexandra Penfold & Suzanne Kaufman (2021)
- All Are Welcome** by Alexandra Penfold (2019)
- The Little Prince** by Antoine De Saint Exupery (any edition)
- Pippi Longstocking** by Astrid Lingren (any edition)
- Empathy is Your Superpower: A Book About Understanding the Feelings of Others** by Cori Bussolari (2021)
- Hey You!: An empowering celebration of growing up Black** by Dapo Adeola (and 18 illustrators) (2021)
- Kindness Makes Me Stronger: Children's Book About Magic of Kindness, Empathy and Respect (World of Kids Emotions)** by Elizabeth Coler (2021)
- I am enough** by Grace Byers and Keturah A. Bobo (2018)
- The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family** by Ibtihaj Muhammad (2020)
- In My Heart: A Book About Feelings** by Jo Witek (2014)
- I am perfectly designed** by Karamo Brown, Jason Rachel Brown & Anoosh Syed (2020)
- The World Needs More Purple Schools** by Kristen Bell and Benjamin Hart (2022)
- We All Belong: A Children's Book About Diversity, Race and Empathy** by Nathalie Goss, Alex Goss & Goss Castle (2020)
- Matilda** by Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake (any edition)
- YAY, YOU! Moving Up and Moving On** by Sandra Boynton (2001)
- I Have A Superpower** by Stephen Curry (2022)
- ABC for Me: ABC What Can She Be?: Girls can be anything they want to be, from A to Z** by Sugar Snap Studio (2018)
- Where are you from?** by Yamile Saied Mendez & Jaime Kim (2019)

SUGGESTED READINGS/WEBSITES FOR EDUCATORS

- Ahlquist, E. M. T., & Gynther, P. (2019). **Variation theory and Montessori education**. Journal of Montessori Research & Education, 2(1).
- Barry, M. M., Clarke, A. M., & Dowling, K. (2017). **Promoting social and emotional well-being in schools**. Health Education.
- Gifted Lab. (2021). **Multipotentiality- How To Find My Personal Magic Formula?** <https://giftedlab.org/miona-s-workshop-room/mionas-workshop-adults/multipotentiality-how-to-find-my-personal-magic-formula/>. Last access October 2022.
- Ibanez, Z. R. (2015). **When I Grow Up: Multipotentiality and Gifted Youth**. <https://educationaladvancement.org/blog-grow-multipotentiality-gifted-youth/>. Last access October 2022.
- Mohammed, S. (2021). **Multi-Potential-Ite**. <https://medium.com/@shah.mohammed12/multi-potential-ite-44a001c644ef>. Last access October 2022.
- Puttylike. (2022). **What is a multipotentialite?** <https://puttylike.com/terminology/>. Last access October 2022.
- Rivero, L. (2011). **Multipotentiality: When High Ability Leads to Too Many Options**. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/creative-synthesis/201107/multipotentiality-when-high-ability-leads-too-many-options>. Last access October 2022.
- Serrat, O. (2017). **Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence**. In: Knowledge Solutions. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9_37.
- The Lifestyle Connoisseur. (2017). **Are You a Multipotentialite?** <https://medium.com/@thelifestyleconnoisseur/are-you-a-multipotentialite-d3495ba63f83>. Last access October 2022.

OTHER ECO_CARE PROJECTS/PUBLICATIONS

- Bennett A., Cummins A. (2022) Eco_Care Activity Booklet. A project coordinated by Giulia Parola and Margherita Paola Poto, Aracne, Rome.
- Parola G., Poto M. P. (2021) O Acordo de Escazú Em Quadrinhos Feito Pelo e Para o Povo Chiquitano Um Projeto Co-criado de Legal Design e Visual Law, pp. 1-80, Giappichelli, Torino
- Parola G., Poto M. P. (2022) Tarumã, As Águas Que Falam. Um Projeto Co-Criado De Legal Design E Visual Law Por Estudantes De Direito E O Povo Chiquitano: O Caso Da Poluição Do Rio Tarumã E Os Reflexos No Povo Chiquitano Aracne, Rome.
- Parola G., Poto M.P. (2022) Tarumã, The Waters That Speak. A Legal Design And Visual Law Project, Co-Created By Law Students and The Chiquitano People: The Pollution Of The Tarumã River And Its Consequences For The Chiquitano People, Aracne, Rome.
- Porrone A., Poto M. P., Russo V. (2021) A Story About Knowledge. Illustrated Version. Aracne.
- Porrone A., Poto M. P., Russo V. (2021) A Story About Knowledge. A Learning Tool to Engage with Illustrated Storytelling in Law and Global Studies, Aracne.

Note

