

From Stars to Synapses: The Bogong Moth Guiding Authentic Inquiry

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This presentation shares how an unexpected visit from Bogong Moths sparked a rich, student-led inquiry integrating literacies in a primary classroom. When moths appeared en masse in the learning environment, student's curiosity drove authentic questioning: Why are they here? How far have they travelled? Are they safe? Rather than postponing planned lessons, educators and the community leveraged the moment to co-construct an inquiry pathway.

Literacy learning flourished through multimodal opportunities, as students undertook research and created texts. As citizen scientists they have become community leaders, advocating for moth protection.

Pedagogical decisions, informed by the work of child psychologist Andrew Fuller, capitalised on curiosity, emotional engagement, and neuroplasticity. By responding to student wonder in real time, the team engaged young learners in a whole brain workout, maximising motivation, and igniting neural pathways, each as diverse as the children we teach.

At a time when standardisation holds appeal for some, this case study reflects how flexibility and spontaneous events can light the way for deep learning - for students and for the teachers who serve them. Participants will leave with practical strategies for harnessing spontaneous events to illuminate literacy learning, amplify student agency, and foster connected, inquiry-driven classrooms.