



## “Real world learning without the logistics”

School News Aug 29

Dr Ben Mardell, researcher with **Project Zero** at Harvard Graduate School of Education is an advocate for the rights of young children to have their education suit them.

He has said, “kids learn through all their senses” and “they like to touch and manipulate things”. Attuned teachers know this, and while they are popping a vein trying to come up with new ways to achieve this, external learning providers might be able to take the pressure off. Hosting an incursion (no, not the military kind – it means in-house (ex)cursion), where the learning comes to you, has numerous benefits for student engagement and experience, and can take the pressure off the teacher to constantly provide the stimulus for learning. The students gain access to expert knowledge, delivered by a specialist in their area, who can provide a learning experience that speaks to their specific passion in a way a layperson just can’t emulate.

Teachers learn from incursions too. A single visit from a marine biologist with a portable tank of sea creatures can provide a day of sensory stimulation, excitement and learning and a shift of focus from the teacher, to the presenter. This spotlight shift allows the teacher to gather facts, jot down questions for the expert, as well as new areas for exploration.

**Possibly, best of all, the teacher can observe his/her learners from the shadows of their attention. They can discern what excited them, what didn’t, and identify any students with special interests in the topic. He/she can also get to know each student as a learner, by watching them respond to instruction. Clearer understanding of your learners means more impactful teaching.**

