Impact on Student Learning

Students were more engaged

- Children were very engaged when they saw pictures of themselves learning.
- Children participated in building the panels by deciding where specific photos fit and this was really engaging for them. As one educator explained, “They identified where it fit and they identified themselves therefore they were very interested and engaged and it was exciting for them to be part of the process.”
- Children were very motivated and engaged when they got ideas from other children (see structure example below).

Students were better able to identify the learning

Students could also name the learning that was happening in a picture and decide where the picture should go on the documentation panel.

- We noticed that providing students with the language of learning -- "You continued a pattern", "You showed facts about snakes in your picture" -- enabled them to label their own learning. Student: "This is a pattern. You should put in next to ‘I can make a pattern.’"
- Students could also name the learning that was happening in a picture and decide where the picture should go on the documentation panel.

Children learned more from one another

- When one child wrote ‘OMA’ and ‘OPA’ on the whiteboard, she explained to the class how she stretched out the word slowly to hear the separate sounds. The students all began to stretch words out to identify the sounds.
- In one class some children were building structures. The educators introduced the idea of being architects and then documented the children’s learning by taking pictures and posting their ‘plans’ for their structures. After the children showed their learning to the class more children started creating structures and plans.
Students had more ownership over their learning and were more independent learners

- We noticed that children were asking more questions.
- Students were asking to put things up on the panel.
- The children were expressing their ownership of the panels by referring back to them.
- We noticed that students took ownership of their learning and pursued information independently. "We should look on the National Geographic Website to find that answer." "Look at this Page! I found the answer to how snakes shed their skin."
- Students were asking to look things up in books and on the computer

Students began thinking more deeply

- The children were better able to be critical thinkers. One educator witnessed a conversation between two children. One child saw ants on a tree and one saw them on the ground. So they had a discussion about where ants live.
- Children began asking deeper questions -- "How do shark’s muscles not get tired when they keep swimming?"
- Children began integrating new information -- "Oh, we said ostriches made their nests in trees, but the book said they made nests in sand."
- We noticed that the children could demonstrate higher level thinking skills without necessarily demonstrating factual knowledge (e.g. children could describe a triangle and compare without being able to label the shape as a triangle).