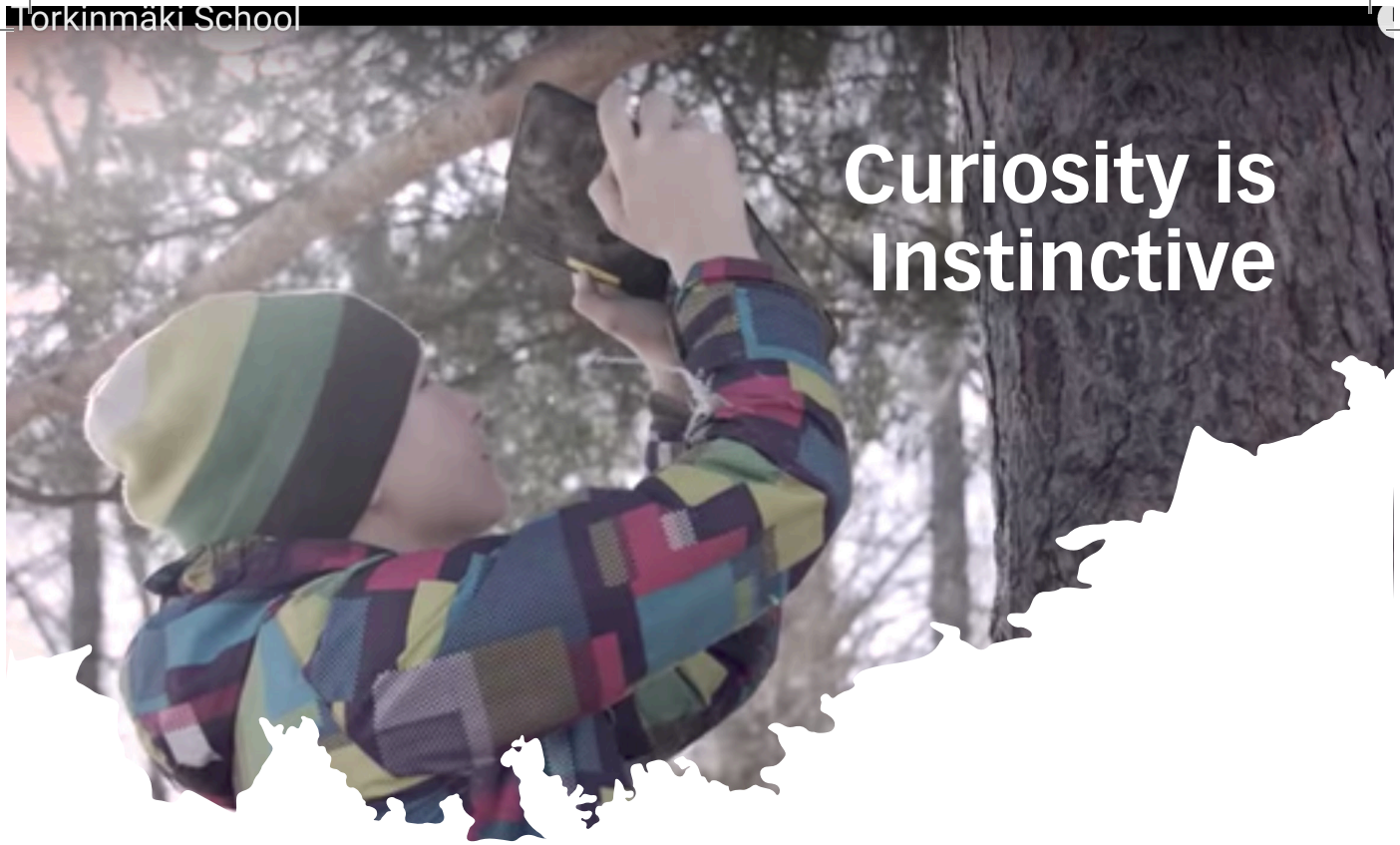

Curiosity is Instinctive

Two teachers set out to try a new approach to teaching biology and literacy skills with their 12 year old students. With a forest next door to the school, they assigned the students the following task: to adopt a small area of the woods and study it closely over time by taking notes, photographs, and measurements. Students were asked to keep a digital diary of what they were observing.

We don't normally associate outdoor learning with technology but for this task, it was natural. The students used iPads to capture the information they were collecting. They generated new knowledge and learning artifacts then they used power point to convey what they had learned.

And the insights that emerged could not come from a textbook. By carving out their own little space in the woods and studying it over time, students began to notice the micro-wonders that live there—the trees, insects, soils, flora and fauna, the changes in seasons and the effects of climate change. They were learning how to see a familiar forest with new eyes and feel a greater appreciation for the fragile species that inhabit it. And through that experience, students acquired competencies in character, citizenship and critical thinking.

The students weren't the only ones surprised by what they observed. The teachers noticed that when they released responsibility to the students and provided them with choices, students thrived. As one teacher said, "It was enjoyable to watch the children work self-reliantly and enthusiastically." Curiosity is instinctive. Deep learning is natural.

"Lessons were carried out without teacher interference. I only gave advice and motivated students." Teacher

Curiosity is instinctive. Deep learning is natural.

Grade 7