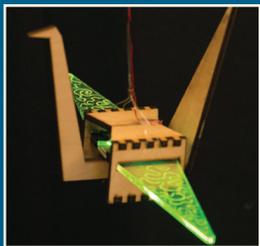
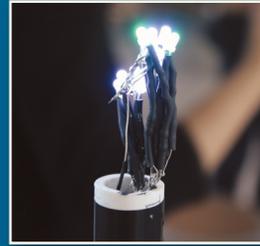


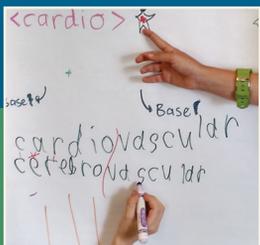
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DESIGN THINKING & ENGINEERING
STRUCTURED WORD INQUIRY

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INVESTIGATING CALENDAR ROOTS

First graders explore the days of the week and uncover the ancient roots of modern English using Structured Word Inquiry.

It started off with a simple question during a Monday morning meeting in Emily Mitchell and Sam Modest's first-grade class as students began creating their calendar pattern for the week.

"Wait, why is it FebRuary? Why is there an R in the middle?" a student inquired.

Sparking the class's curiosity, students launched an investigation into the root meanings of the days of the week. They began theorizing why Sunday is called Sunday and why Monday is called Monday.

"It's Sunday because it's the sunniest day," one student said.

"Maybe it was the first day the sun rose?"

"The word Monday is like moon, maybe it was the first day with a full moon?" two others questioned.

"Monday is like money, and maybe it's because Monday is the first day the bank is open each week!" another exclaimed.

As students continued to hypothesize, the class made the connection that the days of the week include parts of the names of gods and goddesses. Sam elaborated on this idea with a history of the days of the week. The story began with ancient Rome; with the help of some maps, Sam took the students on a linguistic-geographic journey through the collapse of the Roman Empire.

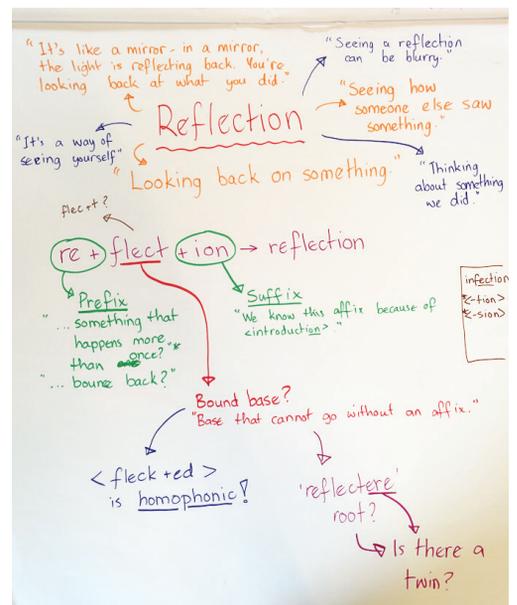
The students learned that the Anglo-Saxons substituted their gods for the names of the Roman gods when the Romans left modern-day England. For example, the day to worship Mars, the Roman god of war, was renamed after Tiw, the Norse god of war, thus giving us Tuesday. When the Anglo-Saxons got to Saturday, though, they did not have any gods left, so they kept the Roman name for the day named after Saturn.

This story then opened up a larger discussion about whether the English language is "pure," as prompted by one student's excited exclamation, "English is corrupt!" The student went on to clarify that English seems to be influenced by so many different languages and to have been controlled by so many different people.

"What arose from this discussion was the beautifully nuanced understanding of the fluidity of English words and their meanings," said Emily.

With this understanding, the students were challenged to move history forward and rewrite the days of the week. Just as the Anglo-Saxons replaced the Roman gods with their own, students replaced the current days of the week with their own values. Each student brainstormed the seven things that are the most important to him or her, and then creatively adapted each into a day of the week.

"Cultural keystones such as the days of the week are communally determined, so it was essential that the students compare and compile their individual interests," Emily explained. Some of the most universally recognized values included "Mommy" (Momday), "Daddy" (Daday), and "Candy" (Canday).



Interestingly, many students chose "Friends" as one of their core values. Their collective appreciation for friends allowed them to keep Friday on the updated calendar. Friday is, after all, named after Friga, the goddess of love and friendship.

"Just as the Anglo-Saxons preserved the Roman Saturday when they rewrote the days of the week, our students did the same with Friday," Sam said. "It looks like history does repeat itself!"