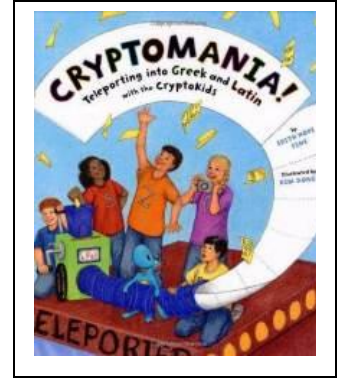


Children's Book Author, Edith Fine, shares her story:

That Light Bulb Moment

In the mid-1990's a third grader made my day. As their writer-in-residence, the kids and I had been exploring Greek and Latin roots all year. They took on the challenge with relish and their understanding led, eventually, to my *CryptoMania! Teleporting into Greek and Latin with the CryptoKids*. Once each week we'd explore new roots together, then I'd turn them loose with dictionaries and my fat Barnhart's *Etymology* and they'd explore on their own. That day I'd introduced thermo-, pachy, rhino-, cero, -meter, and derm.



"Wait! I have an invention," blurted Zack.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It's a thermo meter," he said.

"And what does your thermo meter do?" I asked.

"It measures how hot stuff is," he announced.

"Of course," I said. "Meter for measure, therm for heat. Great invention."

Because of Dr. Eleanor Duckworth* from Harvard who wrote a stunning essay called "The Having of Wonderful Ideas," I didn't just tell him how to pronounce his invention. Her contention is that students who make discoveries, make knowledge their own, understand and grow as learners. Discovery is the key to intellectual development. Her ideas harkened back to a college piano lesson when I told my teacher I'd found something amazing . . . I could start at middle C, play C D E F G, move thumb up to G and do another five notes and so on all the way to the top of the keyboard, down to the bottom, and I'd end up again at middle C. She had me show her, encouraged my excitement, and at the end of the lesson said sweetly, "By the way, that's called the Circle of Fifths."

The third graders and I went on to talk about how a rhinoceros (horn on nose) was a pachyderm (thick-skinned) as were the Latin elephantus and a hippopotamus (river horse).

"Potamo? Like Mesopotamia?" asked one student.

Yes, indeed, it was the land between (meso) two rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates.

And so went that day's exploration.

Because of Eleanor Duckworth, I waited until I was leaving to catch Zack's eye and point to the thermometer on the wall. You teachers know that I could practically see the cartoon light bulb flash on over his head!

* *The Having of Wonderful Ideas: And Other Essays on Teaching and Learning*, Eleanor Duckworth

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