

Growing with

A new book is making it easier for teachers to talk about feelings with children. *I Grow in Grandad's Garden* takes children on a journey around the garden, using interactive questions to discover what they are thinking and feeling. *Bedrock Journalist* Fiona STUTZ discovers how teachers are using the book.

I Grow in Grandad's Garden by Brisbane author Brian Andrew is helping children to share what makes them happy, sad, afraid and excited.

It tells the story of six-year-old Ellie and her grandad taking a personal development journey through grandad's garden. The book was based on Brian's interactions with his grandchild in his garden.

It wasn't until Our Lady of the Rosary School, Kenmore, Teacher Christine Nolan asked permission from Brian to use his ideas from the book that its potential as a learning tool was discovered.

"I read the book to my class of prep children and they just loved the ideas and concepts in the book," Christine says.

"It fitted well with our RE curriculum and also the Queensland Early Years Guidelines in the areas of social and personal learning (prior to the Australian Curriculum)."

Christine says the school already had an outdoor garden space that was "almost begging for Grandad's garden ideas to be implemented".

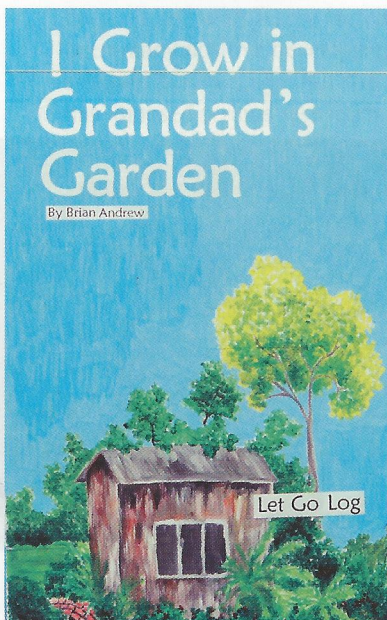
In the book Ellie and her grandad begin by heading outside in the garden to the 'Think and Thank seat', where they both share what they are thankful for.

Then they continue on to the 'Let Go Log' where they question what hurt feelings they may have inside.

Next they walk through a rainforest trail to the 'Cross Over Corner' to consider what takes courage. Finally they wind up at the 'Dream Table' to ponder their dreams together.

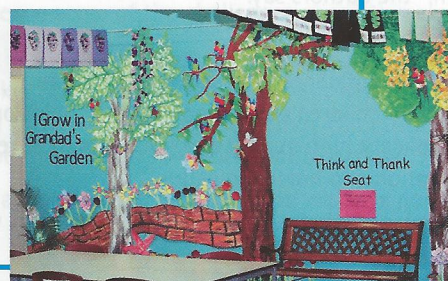
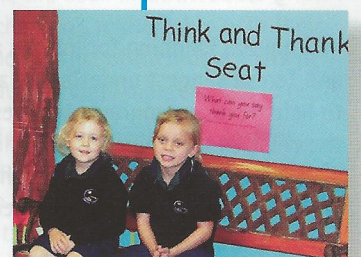
Christine says the imaginative concepts, the Australian setting and the relationship most children have with their grandparents proved popular with her children.

How to use *I Grow in Grandad's Garden* in your classroom:

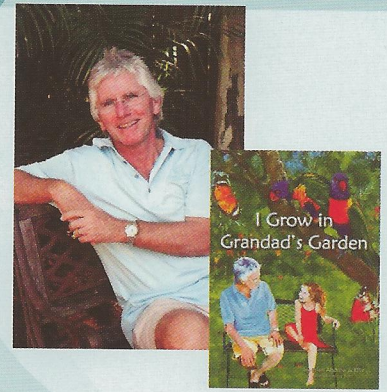


STOP 1 - Think and Thank Seat:

1. Read the story until you get to the Think and Thank Seat Question.
2. Highlight what Ellie says thank you for.
3. Invite your students to share what makes them happy/ what they can say thank you for.
4. Ask them to write a thank you list poster which to put on the class room wall – perhaps it could include a picture of them standing on top of a high mountain.
5. Invite discussion on how they feel inside when they say thank you.
6. Get them to create a Thank You card to take home as a gift for their parents – with a focus on what they can say thank you for at home.
7. Develop a Thank You culture in the classroom by creating the four Stop Spots in the classroom. When there's a bit of complaining stop the class and take the students to the Think and Thank seat and invite contributions.
8. Encourage the children to say thank you every day.



Grandad



"I had a number of special needs children in my class who were struggling with social interactions and managing emotions. We were (already utilising) a sustainable approach with our own chickens and edible 'no dig' garden and native bees and butterfly house.

"The care of the gardens and outdoor area gave rise to our own 'Let Go Log' for resolving conflicts, our own 'Think and Thank Seat' for being thankful and a quiet place to chat with friends, our own 'Crossover Corner' - a place to learn to be brave and try something new.

"We had plans for a 'Dream Table' to link with the concepts of Aboriginal dreaming and care for the land", she says.

Heights College, Rockhampton, Teacher Kerry Goodwin has also used the book in her classroom after being introduced to it by her Principal in 2011.

"We used the book and then talked about the things that were in it and how we could set up our garden around the classroom."

Kerry says the 'Think and Thank Seat' was an easy concept for her students to understand as each child

"had an opportunity to draw or talk about something they were thankful for and then we placed those in the area, so that they had meaning for the children.

"It wasn't just the 'Think and Thank Seat', it was actually something that they had contributed to; it was focusing on being thankful, and taking time to think about things they were thankful for."

Kerry says because the classroom was set up as a garden throughout the term it was easier to refer to it.

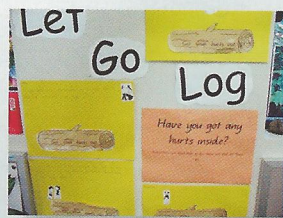
"The whole room was like a garden and all the activities that we did, all our numeracy and literacy and our science even was related to plants and so we did a lot of stuff about the garden. It has lots and lots of scope for all ages and you can just integrate it very well in your literacy, numeracy and even the new curriculum."

Christine believes the book has many avenues for exploring concepts and values with children to aid self-esteem, conflict resolution and personal growth in a positive and affirming way.

<http://www.grandadsgarden.com.au>

STOP 2 - Let Go Log:

1. Read the story until you get to the Let Go Log Question.
2. Explain that Grandad/Brian has read the book to thousands of children in schools and the kind of behaviors that make them sad/hurt them are: a) When someone is mean to me - includes various kinds of bullying such as name calling and pushing and shoving, b) When others won't let me be part of their group, c) When someone talks unkindly about me/behind my back.
3. Invite students to share what makes them sad/what they need to get out and let go.
4. Invite discussion on how they feel inside when someone hurts them.
5. Ask them to write down the things that happen at school that make them sad.
6. Invite them to share their hurts with you and then get them to take their list and...
7. Explain that just as others hurt us, so we hurt others.
8. Encourage the children not to do or say anything that might hurt each other.



STOP 3 Crossover Corner and STOP 4 The Dream Table:

Use the examples of Stop 1 and 2 to develop your application

