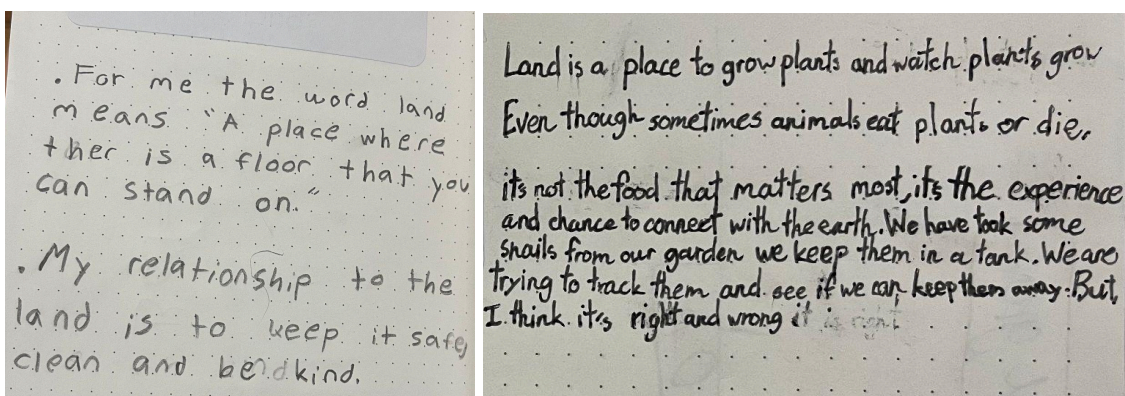


Building Relationships with Our Land

Dr. Christine Lee and Intermediate Demonstration Teachers Monica Acosta, Chris Wilson, and Sylvia Gentile are investigating students' learning of the interconnected relationship between humans and land. The goal of this work is to understand how students develop from individual perspectives of land to honoring and acknowledging the connected, dependent, and often complicated relationships we have with land.



As the class planted with Elliot Kuhn, from Cottonwood Urban Farm, they learned about the importance of planning, close observation, taking care of our plants, and how their journey of working in the environment has changed or grown. In addition, students have explored how the Tongva/Gabrielino people, the original caretakers of the land at UCLA Lab School, lived and their relationship with the land. Planting transformed students into the caretakers of the garden space, which organically gave rise to the complications and consequences that come with planting. Not only has planting opened up spaces for students to reflect and challenge ideas around our ecosystem but also how they are connected and interdependent to living things in our system. Our analysis of students' planting journals over time tracks these changing dispositions, illustrating the power of planting as more than a socioemotional benefit to young students, but as a meaningful and critical activity that questions one's relationship and place in land.



Example of a journal entry from February (left) and a journal entry from April (right)

This project is also supported by Elliott Kuhn, Cottonwood Urban Farm; Lazaro Arvisu, Tongva/Gabrielino educator; and undergraduate research assistants Laila Shaaban, Curren Mandon, Gayeon Koh, and Darwin Hernandez.