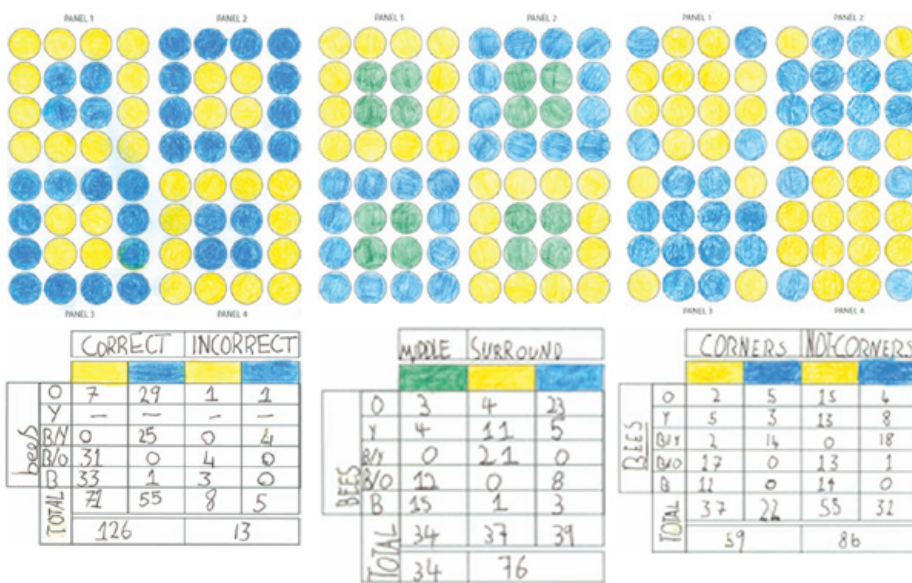


(Hat Tip to [Ed Yong!](#))

At the end of December, Biology letters published a quite unusual [paper](#) entitled "Blackawton bees". It contains some very refreshing conclusions such as: "We also discovered that science is cool and fun because you get to do stuff that no one has ever done before." The reason it is so refreshing is that it has been written by 25 children aged between 8 and 10 from Blackawton Primary School in Devon, England. Their paper, based on fieldwork carried out in a local churchyard, describes how bumblebees can learn which flowers to forage from with more flexibility than anyone had thought. It's the culmination of a [project](#) called '[i, scientist](#)', designed to get students to actually carry out scientific research themselves. The kids received some support from [Beau Lotto](#), a neuroscientist at UCL, and David Strudwick, Blackawton's head teacher. But the work is all their own.

The class (including Lotto's son, Misha) came up with their own questions, devised hypotheses, designed experiments, and analysed data. They wrote the paper themselves (except for the abstract), and they drew all the figures with colouring pencils.



This very interesting project puts forward the idea that science is not so esoteric and that anyone can understand and devise scientific projects. It would be interesting to think about how the same kind of study could be done in cognition and culture (although it requires first to agree that anthropology is about doing hypothesis and trying to refute them, an idea on which, [unfortunately, not everyone agrees!](#))

To know more about the project and the article (and it got published), read the wonderful [post](#) by Ed Yong in [Not exactly rocket science!](#)