

Story & the Landscapes of Learning

English Practice Journal
Vol. 58 No.1, 2016



English Practice provides you with the opportunity to write and be read. Your viewpoints, lessons, opinions, and research (formal or informal) are welcomed in formats ranging from strategies, lesson plans and units, to more formal compositions and narratives exploring big ideas in teaching and learning, to creative writing. We have four sections with the following guidelines to assist you in preparing and submitting your writing:

- Teaching Ideas
- Investigating Our Practice
- Salon
- Check This Out

Submissions can be emailed to:
englishpracticejournal@gmail.com

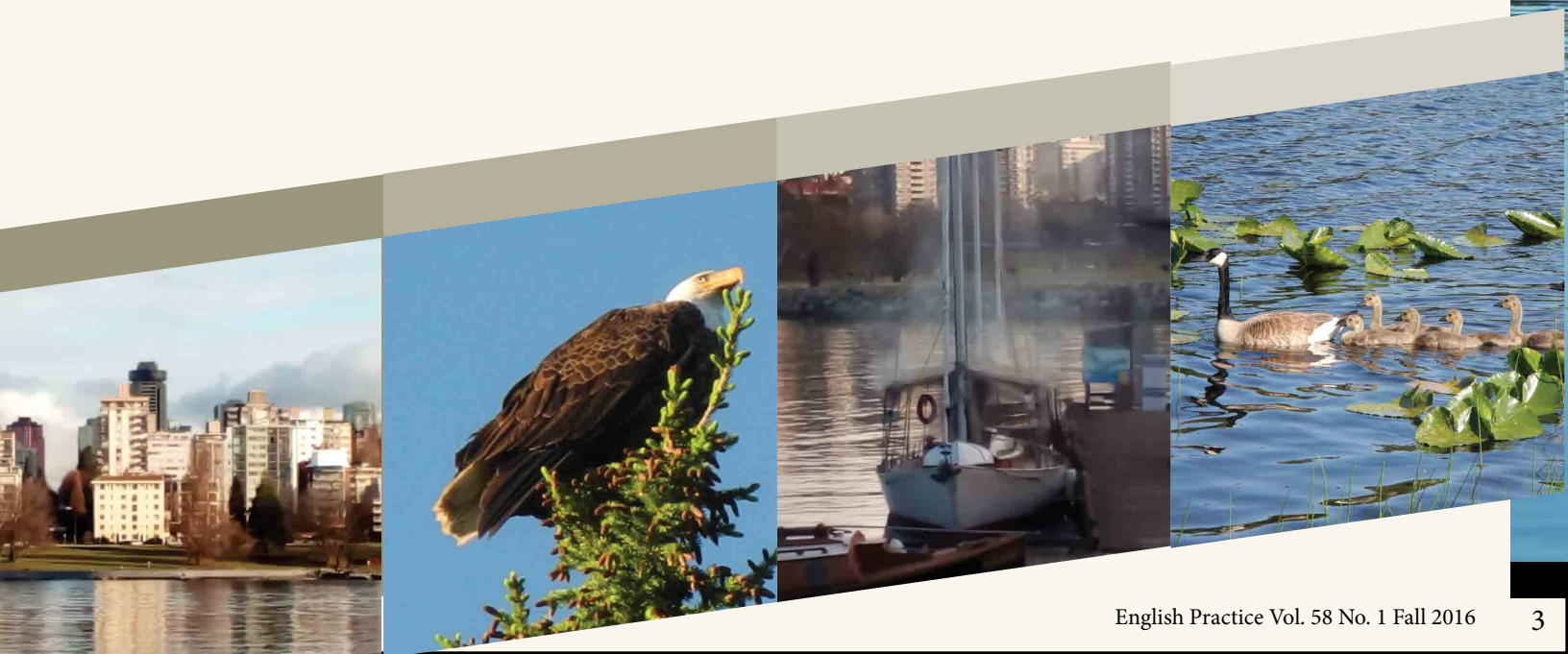
English Practice is the Journal of the BC Teachers of English Language Arts which also publishes the President's Newsletter and the Student Writing Journal. English Practice and other periodicals are distributed to BCTELA members throughout British Columbia and exchanged with other provincial specialist associations of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. They are also distributed to other specialist associations across Canada. English Practice is a member of both the CCTELA and the NCTE Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement. English Practice is registered with the National Library of Canada under International Standard Serial Number ISSN 0315-2189.

Story and the Landscapes of Learning

Welcome to our issue on story and place-based learning. In this issue, we invited educators to explore the ways we relate to and are shaped by our environment. We asked: How is our environment our teacher? How do places influence teaching practices? How can we help students develop a sense of home, place, and identity? How can we teach in such a way that students realize their connections to their environment and become stewards?

In English Language Arts, we know well that stories are a powerful way to understand ourselves, others, and how to be in the world. What do stories have to do with place-based learning? What do we mean by our theme: story and the landscapes of learning? Learning about the natural world, about practices that sustain our environment, and about how to be ecologically mindful can all be part of the English Language Arts curriculum. Through diverse texts and literature, we learn to navigate our physical, personal, and social geographies in meaningful ways. Stories of all sorts help to awaken creative ways of engaging with our world. Stories about teaching and classroom practices where place-based learning and ecological awareness are the focus, make a powerful contribution to our shared understanding.

Every classroom community is a vital landscape of learning enlivened by the stories of each member. Each child's story extends back through family, ancestors, and the places and cultures these people have known. It is through telling stories about ourselves, others, and life experiences that we construct a sense of self, shape and reshape our identities, and see how we have grown and changed. Like the stones on a beach that are connected by generations of past stones in the grains of sand that surround them, the webs that connect us are impressive.





And, a classroom is a place where new stories are woven and new ways of understanding and being may emerge. May these new ways offer possibilities steeped in a sense of connection, compassion, and ecological awareness. May these new ways engender love and a better world for the future.

In this issue, we learn about how educators are connected in powerful ways to place and how it influences their practices. Through their stories, we learn about the significance of place in their teaching and in their lives. We also learn about the rich benefits for students when they are encouraged to connect with, care for, and contribute to their surroundings. We invite you to engage with the inquiries, narratives, images, poetry, and teaching ideas that take up our theme in diverse ways. We hope that through this issue, you are inspired to engage with new place-based learning possibilities in your own classroom, and weave new stories about the shared environments we call home.

Pamela Richardson
Sara Florence Davidson
Ashley Cail

Pamela Richardson PhD, is an Assistant Professor at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC, and Head of the Masters of Educational Leadership program in the School of Education & Technology. She believes poetry is essential to our humanity. Through poetry we cultivate essential connections with ourselves, one another and our natural world.

Sara Florence Davidson PhD, is a 12-month lecturer in Indigenous Education at the University of British Columbia. She is a Haida educator who has taught high school in the Yukon and rural British Columbia. She is a literacy enthusiast, a narrative writing advocate, an incessant sock knitter, and a compulsive tea drinker.

Ashley Cail MA, is a new teacher, currently teaching English in the North Okanagan. She has a Masters in English from the University of British Columbia, and is passionate about inquiry and critical thinking in the ELA classroom. She recently received the Leadership Development Award from the NCTE.

Salon

“You have just walked past something very special!”

Seniors’ stories about teaching with the land

Anna Keefe with Jolie Mayer-Smith

7

A Place for Storytelling

Jenifer Barsky

10

Apis

Laura Barker

12

Wasley Lake

Vicki Green

13

At Witty’s Lagoon, Two Teachers

Kyle McKillop

15

Charm

Susan Telfer

16

Just Raven, Mosquito, & Earth in the Glassed Distance

Margaret McKeon

17

Surface

Starleigh Grass

19

Investigating Our Practice

A Journey to Place:

An Exploration of Place-Conscious Learning

Celia Brogan, Selina Metcalfe, Kerri Lanaway, Tyler Cernak, & Barb Hinson

22

Fostering Pedagogies of Engagement for All Learners:

Attending to Place, Culture, and Personal Identity

Donna Kozak

27

Navigating Place: An Integrated Approach

Nicki L. Yee & Alexandria Gallon

32

Teaching Ideas

Place-Based Learning on Haida Gwaii

Angus Wilson & Joanne Yovanovich

43

Using Children’s Literature in the Intermediate Classroom

Cara Santucci

48

Inquiry Centres in Intermediate Classrooms:

Why Play Doesn’t Stop at Primary

Belinda Chi

50

From Writers’ Workshop to Inquiry: Evolving Writing

Don Blazeovich

52



Photo credits: The cover and back photographs are by Joanne Yovanovich. Other photographs in this issue are by Pamela Smith, Vicki Green, and Joanne Yovanovich. Please consider submitting photographs for our future issues.

Anna Keefe with Jodie Mayer-Smith

“You have just walked past something very special!” Seniors’ stories about teaching with the land

Our dear James was always quite distracted and really not on board at times. However, he showed us his brilliance [during a] rainy walk in the forest, and his account of it after in our closing circle. The poetry that came out of him was amazing... (Stella, senior volunteer recollections about a child in her group)

Stella is a volunteer in the Intergenerational Landed Learning on the Farm Project, which partners young and older adults with children at an urban farm to teach them about soil, food growing, healthy eating, and environmental issues (Mayer-Smith, Bartosh, & Peterat, 2007). Referred to as “farm friends,” volunteers work with a small group of children throughout the school year, mentoring and teaching their group using experiential, hands-on methods (Mayer-Smith & Peterat, 2015). During my doctoral studies in literacy education, I became a volunteer with this project as part of a service-learning requirement in a place-based education course. I had the opportunity to watch elementary aged children visit the farm bi-weekly with their classes and run from the school bus to greet their farm friends with stories, hugs, and laughter.

The Intergenerational Landed Learning on the Farm project relies on volunteers to give the children extra attention and guidance as they learn about and from natural cycles and phenomena. Each session begins with a brief introductory lesson in the greenhouse taught by farm staff. From there, a team of about two volunteers and four children work independently to set the agenda and priorities for their own garden plot. They journal about their observations, problem-solve together, and do the work of composting, planting, weeding, and harvesting. They also take turns with additional responsibilities such as cooking and photography and use free time to explore the surrounding forests and fields.

The children and adult volunteers use many forms of communication to get to know each other, including writing cards, sharing stories, and using digital media to represent their experiences together. In both their social interaction and learning on the farm they have the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their skills through a variety of modes of meaning-making. This dialogic, multi-literacies approach to learning can be particularly beneficial for children who are less able to show their strengths through text-based classroom literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). When the children get back on the bus, the farm friends gather to share some food and ideas about how they can keep engaging the children in new and interesting ways.

I was captivated by the meaningful intergenerational exchange and learning I saw unfolding at the farm, and looked for opportunities to stay involved. I became a communications manager for the project and a member of the research team focusing on how to better understand volunteer involvement. In my role as researcher, I surveyed and interviewed volunteers to learn more about their motivations and experiences with the project. In this piece I share how seniors’ stories helped me understand the powerful teaching and learning that can happen when we take our cues from the land.

¹ All names in this piece are pseudonyms

Teaching with the land

Seniors' stories illustrate an understanding of the farm and its surrounding environment as a space to learn through observation, caring, and connection. Grounded in an understanding of the power of place, volunteers encourage the children to learn and wonder with them: "I can be there as part of their discovery process, because I'm discovering too, you know? Everything's always new." Even when teaching more directly, they take their cues from the garden and surrounding forests, looking for learning opportunities to emerge:

We took a walk in the forest and I engaged the kids by several times commenting that "you have just walked past something very special!" They would stop and look puzzled -- and then I would show them the fungus or the salmonberry or the woodpecker hole and talk a little about the significance of what they were looking at. They seemed to love it.

The volunteers show equal patience in their approaches to working in the garden and guiding the children. For instance, Marlene was having a tough time getting Joseph to work in the dirt or touch worms. Rather than force him to do it, she told stories about the worms to explain how they were helping create rich soil. Marlene has noticed that, "gradually, gradually, each time, it's a slightly different experience and he's slightly more willing to do things... it is like planting a little seed....like lots of radish seeds, it might not go anywhere. But on the other hand, it might grow..."

In addition to joining in the discovery process and sharing knowledge and stories, volunteers are intentional about demonstrating care for the land, as well as for people. They show the students how small actions can have positive and negative impacts on the plants, the soil, and the helpful insects. They also model kindness and cooperation with the other volunteers and teams. One volunteer offered this advice for new volunteers starting out:

Don't worry too much about "getting things done". The most important thing is developing your relationship with the children, developing trust and appreciation for each of them and who they are. The most important part of the program is the caring--for each other, for the land, and for the earth. Everything else will follow from that. Listen to the children, ask them questions about themselves and their experiences (don't 'quiz' them, though!).

This interpersonal caring is often seen as a bridge to having positive relationships with the earth as well because children, as one volunteer put it, "need to be fed with knowledge, understanding, support and love in order to figure out their connectedness to the world in which they live."

Learning with the land

Volunteers observe a great deal of social and emotional development taking place with children in the program, which is often attributed to relationships developed with the land and on the land. Volunteers notice that the children are able to take up new ways of learning, communicating, and interacting partly because the space is, "so screened by forest that it feels remote, rural, away from the city, 'real.' The children respond to this, displaying a sense of freedom to explore and experience and adventure." They note how the students begin to take ownership of themselves, for instance by developing "more trust in their own process of learning and discovery by being more fully engaged with their senses." One volunteer felt that stepping outdoors allowed shy children in her group to open up and take initiative; "this one girl, when we get out in the garden, she looks at me as if, yeah, I know what to do..." In addition to the new learning approaches and confidence-building, many volunteers notice healthy emotional responses to learning with the land; "I know that the more these children get into nature, dig in the dirt, have all of these experiences which are using their left brain, their right brain, their nervous systems are being calmed by the effects of nature..." The impacts of being in contact with nature were often most notable for students who were withdrawn or had ongoing behavioural challenges. Stella was particularly moved by the transformations she saw in James:

I witnessed James with the bees where he stood absolutely still for at least 15-20 min[ute]s while bees crawled all over him...I saw how nature does her work to bring out the best in all of us and it did with him. He touched me deeply with his card on our last day. In there he said sorry for being hyper and not listening but he sure had fun. It really touched my heart. It's very meaningful because when nature is allowed to unfold as it does beautiful things happen.

Just as they are observant and caring in their preparation of seedlings and soil, these farm friends take the time to notice and nurture learning opportunities that present themselves in spaces of synergy between children and the land.

My reflections

My involvement with this project, and particularly these seniors, provided me with new insights as an educator, artist, and researcher. I am someone who values structure and I sometimes miss opportunities because I am sticking to a plan. I have learned a lot from the volunteers' stories of teaching with the land through observation, caring, and letting the learning path emerge. Recently I read a New York Times article called, How to Cultivate the Art of Serendipity (Kennedy, 2016). The article explains that while serendipity has come to mean a lucky encounter or accidental discovery, its original meaning was linked to the skill of observation. It is based on a fairy tale in which three princes from the Isle of Serendip have superpowers of observation and sagacity that help them find things that they are not searching for. I believe that the volunteers at the farm, particularly the seniors, are showing us how to cultivate the art of serendipity in our lives, in our teaching, and in our relationships to land. If I took my cues from the land, could I also learn to see everything as new, to stop when I see something very special, to plant seeds of hope when I do not know if they will grow, to put relationships ahead of getting things done, and to care for others in order to reveal our connectedness to everything? Or perhaps if I take my cues from the land the learning that emerges for me will be different, and I will open myself to the unexpected in the world and in myself.

References

- Cope B. & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4(3), 164-195.
- Kennedy, P. (2016, January 2). How to cultivate the art of serendipity. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/opinion/how-to-cultivate-the-art-of-serendipity.html>
- Mayer-Smith, J., Bartosh, O., & Peterat, L. (2007). Teaming children and elders to grow food and environmental consciousness. *Applied Environmental Education and Communication*, 6(1), 77-85.
- Mayer-Smith, J. & Peterat, L. (2015). Slow Pedagogy and Slow Research: Understanding learning about food-environment relationships. *Of Land and Living Skies*, 3, 15-22.

Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge assistance by Samira Thomas and Stacy Friedman. The Intergenerational Landed Learning on the Farm Project is supported by multiple public and private donors, including significant funding by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

Anna Keefe is a PhD Candidate in Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. She has a passion for creating spaces in which people can amaze themselves.

Dr. Jolie-Mayer Smith is a Professor Emerita in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include teacher education, postsecondary science education, and environmental and garden-based education. She and Dr. Linda Peterat initiated the Intergenerational Landed Learning on the Farm Project.

Jenifer Barsky

A Place for Storytelling

When I was a student in school, I used to dread those assignments where my teachers would ask me to explore my cultural or ethnic heritage. They'd ask us to share details of our ancestors' past: birthplace, languages, traditions, dress. I would cringe at the thought of reporting out to my classmates that my grandfather had been born in North Vancouver, the exact city where I currently reside. He spoke English. He ate turkey and cranberry sauce at Christmas and hid chocolate eggs for his three daughters at Easter. He wore collared work shirts and Levis.

I would marvel at my peers' ancestry. My friends would come to school, posters in hand, and speak of aunts and uncles who were born in places I'd rarely heard of: Trinidad and Tobago, Senegal, Ukraine, Indonesia. They spoke many languages and celebrated holidays not listed on the calendar on my kitchen wall. They wore saris, turbans, and kilts. I envied how vibrant their traditions seemed compared to my tiny, localized experience.

Despite my feelings that my own upbringing lacked a cultural richness, I had always appreciated the stories my grandparents told me of living through the Depression, fighting in the Second World War, and raising children in the 50s. My Nana would recall going to school in flour sack dresses with sugar sandwiches packed for lunch. Through the stories of her childhood, I learned about resilience and hope. My Grandpa G spoke of the summers he spent as a fisherman in Prince Rupert. Through his tales, I learned to love and respect the ocean and to remain persistent even in the face of defeat.

My involvement in "Stronger Together," the Aboriginal Learning Team in the Burnaby School District last school year, reminded me of the power of story to connect people to each other and teach important lessons. It reminded me that the history of our families, and their experiences, pushes us to heal and forgive and to be inspired.

I created an English 10 unit focused on ancestry designed to teach personal narrative writing. The texts in the unit – poems, short fiction, and informational text – all related to family. We read a poem by Maxine Tynes called "In Service," (as cited in Davies & Wowk, 2003) about the sacrifices made by a generation of African American women so that their children could have better lives. We read a personal narrative by Amy Tan called "Fish Cheeks," (as cited in Evans et al., 2013, p. 16-17) about how the traditions of our ancestors don't always align with our own desires. And, we read a poem by Lucille Clifton called "Forgiving my Father" (as cited in Christensen, 2000, p. 66), which helped us to recognize that though we often inherit admirable qualities from our parents, sometimes we also inherit their pain, their suffering, and their mistakes.

In the middle of the unit, Karla Gamble, an Aboriginal Resource Teacher in Burnaby, visited our classroom and presented on family crests and totems in Indigenous communities. Through story and images, Karla shared with my grade 10s about her own life, explaining much about the value of family and community among the Indigenous people.

She also guided us through the drawing of a raven, after which students created an ancestral image of their own,

which they painted onto a ceramic tile. Each tile symbolized aspects of the student's family, ethnicity, and/or religion using shape, colour, and design to denote emotion, place, and experience. Students chose their symbols carefully, and worked painstakingly to create pieces they took pride in.

One student drew the Ying Yang, turning one side into a sunrise and the other into a sunset. He wrote of how the image represented his family here, and his family in the Philippines – while one awakes, the other rests. He stated that despite their geographical divide, they possess a harmony, and balance, just as the Ying Yang implies.

Another student painted the background of his tile black, but then painted over it with yellow. In his words, “The black represents the pain and suffering of my ancestors, but the yellow covers the black, because they overcame the hard times and became farmers. The yellow is for the wheat they grew. When wheat is ready to harvest, it becomes a bright yellow.”

Now my students are beginning to write their own stories through the stories of their ancestors. I have read about a grandfather who was a surgeon in Afghanistan and a grandmother who taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Scotland. I have read about a father who survived a typhoon in the Philippines and a mother who has raised five children, alone. My students write with passion, with love, and with honesty. They want to share stories of the people they come from. The words pour out onto the pages because they know these stories. They have lived them.

I will likely be a North Vancouverite for the rest of my life. Like my grandfather and my parents, my place is here among the North Shore mountains, beside the trails that line the Capilano River, in my neighbourhood of friendly families.

This unit, with its focus on the stories of our ancestors, helped me to appreciate the life I live and where I live, and prompted me to celebrate the lives of those who have come before me. In observing my students while they are writing their stories, I listened to the conversations they had with each other, and how they spoke with such pride and confidence of the relatives they love. My students' stories revealed aspects of character that parallel the qualities of my own ancestors. Whether it be a grandmother from Greece, an aunt from India, or my bubba from North Vancouver, these stories illustrate universal traits and experiences: hardship, sacrifice, honour, and devotion. Our ancestors' stories – every one of them – help us understand each other and ourselves.

I had the honour of hearing Richard Wagamese speak a few years ago at the BCTELA Conference. He spoke of the writing process, and the power of storytelling in general. For Wagamese, stories have helped him heal, helped him reconcile, helped him forgive. My grade ten students' connections to family and place, explored through narrative, helped strengthen their relationships with each other, their environment, and themselves. Wagamese said that stories live in every one of us, we just have to find them, and then tell them. We did. We are.

Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, writing and rising up: Teaching about social justice and the power of the written word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Evans, K., Davison, P., Pare, B., Clarke, C., Alvaro, A., Schmaltz, L., Burton, W., Bashutski, C., Fornasiero, N. (Eds.). (2013). *Nelson English 10*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.

Davies R., & Wowk, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Inside poetry*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.

Jenifer Barsky is a Faculty Associate at Simon Fraser University, working with Secondary School student teachers. Her favourite places are the classroom, Gambier Island, the tops of mountains, and the beach.

Laura Barker

Apis

Last year, for the BCTELA 2015 Provincial Conference, we developed a writing workshop for educators. Designed to encourage us to nurture our own practice as writers, we provided a range of collaborative and individual activities to support writing in and about place. In one activity, participants were invited to use images to write post card stories.

At the end of the workshop, we invited everyone to submit their pieces to English Practice as a way to engage in the writing process. One of the participants, Laura Barker, submitted this poem that she wrote in connection with the image below.



Apis

Their honey has been stolen from them.

Without that source,
that beating heart
at the centre of their colony,

all rhyme and rhythm
come to a
halt.

Some of them fly in tiny circles, funneling ever-
upward until they simply disappear.
Others refuse to leave their newly emptied
hexagonal chambers.

And some become aggressive, jousting with one
another, or bashing head-first into tree trunks and
buildings, then falling, tumbling in fuzzy bounces
to the ground.

Without their busy-bee task driving them,
structuring their days, delineating their purpose,
they are lost.

With what will they fill their souls and hearts now?

Laura Barker is an adult educator in Surrey and the First Vice President of the Surrey Teachers' Association. She is also a former member of the BCTELA Executive as well as a former co-editor of English Practice.

Vicki Green

Wasley Lake

Wasley Lake is high in the interior plateau on the Douglas Lake Ranch, in fact, it takes about ninety minutes to drive from the home ranch to the lake. Along the double rutted trail is a series of locked gates, barbed wire gates, and cattle guards to ensure you drive slowly and take in the amazing vista as you climb to over 4500 feet. The wild flowers are blooming at this time, so each gate stop is awash with the aroma of mixed flower scents while the eyes feast on wild colours of red, pink, purple, pale yellow, butter cup yellow, and white. To ensure you pay close attention to the gate configurations, opening and closing each gate is not easy. Each one requires your full attention to leave it as found.

It's hard to adequately describe the drive to the lake, as it reminds me of driving into the interior when I was young. Not all roads were paved. Often roads were single lane and often wound their way around large rocks, between huge trees and beside sloughs. The road to Wasley Lake is like that.

During our trip up to Wasley the sunlight broke through dense fir and pine. The forest was dotted with meadows. In one meadow we spotted a ginger colored black bear. We saw deer and fox too. There were five horses that refused to move off the road as we approached, so we waited and waited. One came over to completely block our way until the others had a good look at us and the truck. Finally, we inched around them with our right wheels in the tall grass beside the road.

The truck was in four-wheel drive as parts of the road held deep puddles left over from torrential rains. I was delighted that we missed the rain and the accompanying lightning and thunder. Lightning strikes and resultant fires are a summer hazard in British Columbia.

We headed downhill toward Wasley and were welcomed with a flock of geese including goslings that shared our yurt site. Overhead, sitting at the top of a pine tree was a bald eagle keeping a watchful eye. In the lake waiting for us to help them fish sat two loons. The air was filled with butterflies; yellow, black, multicolored and white. Frogs were making a racket. It has been too long since we've heard the sounds of frogs. They've all but disappeared from lower lakes. Frogs were a more common sound in our childhoods.

The yurt is in a gentle setting with a white outhouse in the trees at the end of the well beaten path. A shower with cold and hot running water is built beside the yurt so anyone wanting to feel the refreshing water has to run outside to enter the shower. It is worth it, however, as the view of the lake is taken in while the water cascades.

We unpacked, got settled, and were ready to try our luck fishing. It was hot! No fish were eating. Bugs weren't coming up from the bottom of the lake. We tried different kinds of chironomids, leeches, dry flies, and classic flies. Nothing!

We decided to enjoy a chicken dinner on the barbecue, including salad and blueberries accompanied by Thornhaven wine. The cool breeze on the deck was favorable while we ate. We had just finished dinner as the sun was dropping behind the trees. The lake in front of us was shaded. All of a sudden fish were rising and sipping bugs off the lake surface everywhere. They barely broke the surface of the lake. If you watched carefully, you could see their wake just before they took the bug. We laced our dry lines through the guides and tied on Tom Thumbs. Fortunately, I had previously tied many number 12s and 14s Tom Thumbs with dark green under bodies. I put on the bigger fly. Within two casts I had a rainbow hit my fly. The fish ran and jumped again and again. I brought the fish close to the boat to be netted, unbuttoned, and released. Another cast, another fish. It continued over and over again. Fun is defined as catching rainbows on a dry fly. I watched the circles forming on the lake. As they formed, I cast in front or just behind the circles. Fish didn't hesitate grabbing the big Tom Thumb as I slowly stripped it across the water. Cast, strip, strip and wham! The water explodes, the line tightens, the reel screams and a fish jumps high in the air.

All of a sudden the lake was quiet. Very quiet. It was quite dark and about ten-thirty at night. Time is confused when you concentrate intently for a long time having fun. Luckily, we brought the flashlight to enable us to find our route up to the yurt after safely securing the boat. We laughed at the ease with which fish were caught. They were all between a pound and three pounds. We drank cups of hot tea while recounting the experience to secure it in long term memory. We snuggled under the quilts as the air was cooler than we expected. Imagine! We will have to do it all over again in the early morning.



Vicki Green, professor emeritus, UBC Faculty of Education, co-founded the UBC Fly Fishers for faculty and staff at the Okanagan campus. Vicki's passion for fly-fishing began as a young girl. She fly-fishes because it offers a great sense of anticipation, surprise and fun resulting in stories of awe and wonder, shock and disbelief.

Kyle McKillop

At Witty's Lagoon, Two Teachers

Down where the beach overlooks the strait we curl up
against the driftwood, the smooth log skulking
at the high point of the gravel the way disaffected students
gather at the back of our classrooms—bodies

that would tell a journey. Time shapes what we know,
the chain cuts and beetle holes, the burls and grain,
the water-stripped bark and the specks of sand
or white shell that the tide fondly tucks inside the crags.

We too are sanded down, knowing that nothing
stays and not sure that it should— these splinters
ought to break free, the bay's surface should calm,
a seagull feather should disintegrate. The log bears us,

lets us shape it with our warmth, and takes little else.
Complacent thing: we can't help ourselves. We push
the log to the ocean's surge and hope that the water
will float it, that the log will not sink, that the tide will pull

it out, that it will not return to where it was found. We heave
it offshore, nose-first, to swagger along the corridors
of waves. And when we leave, we look once more and it's gone:
the driftwood sails itself somewhere, alone, fierce, certain.

Kyle McKillop lives in Surrey, where he teaches secondary English and collects concussions. A master's student in UBC's Optional-Residency Creative Writing program, he can be found online at kylemckillop.wordpress.com.

Susan Telfer

Charm

I'll chant the old charm
in the slow cadence of my mother—

Similkameen, Similkameen

where peaches bake sweet on laden trees
in ovens heated only by the wind.
Roll down the windows, let the hot breath in
—feel it dry out our lungs.

We park the van in dust by roadside stands
in Keremeos, crowded with orchards,
those miracles of irrigation.

Soft piles of ripe fruit: tomatoes, peaches,
Sunrise apples, cherries, plums, apricots.
How long I've wanted this.

Similkameen, Similkameen

A box of peaches jammed by my bare feet,
a fragrant box of peaches on my lap.
Drive north onto the Okanagan bench.
Taste and see the orchards and vineyards.

The names they print on boxes don't define here,
not even the word peach. I bite the velvet
skin and juice drips down my chin—I'm alive.
The valley's oldest nation's name still rings,
still echoes off each river-sliced, dry hill,
ever since dark matter's origin:

O Similkameen —

Which might mean home, or milk of paradise,
or—hear my mother's incantation
in warm wind—first garden of creation.

Susan Telfer is a Canadian author and teacher. Her poetry has been published coast-to-coast and anthologized. Her second book, *Ghost Town*, was published by Oolichan Books in 2016. In 2013 she won the Vancouver Writer's Festival Poetry Contest. She lives in Gibsons, BC.

Margaret McKeon

Just Raven, Mosquito, & Earth in the Glassed Distance

Just Raven (From UBC Botanical Garden)

Do you watch the cedar tip
drops slowly swelling
in tension suspend
time. Outstretch
your rough tongue... Now, now.

My mother taught
wrap the mouth round
these windless, pregnant needles.
Drink deep.

Texture your cheek, crumpled ear,
listen through bark. Trans-planted
trees world-round
suckle this soil. But songs
sound the same: you don't get
their dialects.

Of Raven's nest of twigs,
twine and red-silver Mylar tape
you ask, is she still wild?
But like you
she is just, Raven.

Mosquito

No matter you

your tech-weighted asymmetry, screenlensed
sight of real, Nature Deficit atrophied heart

your metro-biophobic foreignness
here

always
she welcomes you

not shy like thrush, deer, wolf
she folds you in her web

rhythms of life and renewal
unhesitantly ties you

to frog, bat, berries
humus, spruce

no matter your short stay
she stitches you to Land

Earth in the Glassed Distance

Would've been smoother
had I slept home. Not contorted
to morning's first flight,
raised to restless sleep
on the gentle catch of belief,
wings waking the density
of a mauzy pre-dawn.

Had robin not cracked night's shell,
his piercing song silver
as I tumbled house to car.

I am yesterday's fly bites
born to the press of Pearson
International: itchy, alien,
inflamed. Noise smothers
standard air, blankets thick
like tropical heat.

Nest-stolen and albumen-clung,
I wait naked in this ward for life
as sickness, its secure sterility.

To sleek grey-block carpet,
I brush soil, caked
from calves. Garden stubborn
under fingernails. Earth
in the glassed distance.

Margaret McKeon is an outdoor educator, poet, and doctoral student in language and literacy education at the University of British Columbia. A person of Euro-settler ancestry, her research focuses on relationships with place and land.

Starleigh Grass

Surface

Editorial note: While the following poem by Starleigh Grass was received as an early submission for our next issue, we feel that given the current vital work of reconciliation and Indigenization of curriculum in BC, it is timely enough to be included in this issue on place-based learning. We also invite readers to consider, through listening to the emotional experience and voice as shared in this poem, the importance of engaging in place-based learning in light of reconciliation work and connections between the two.

I wrote this poem a few years ago after eight months of doing frequent presentations on residential schools. Shortly after I wrote the poem, piloting of the project went into high gear. After the pilot sites began their work I felt a burden lift because they shared the emotional work of the project. I'm glad I captured the moment before piloting and saved the poem. The residential school resource that I worked on was emotionally challenging, but the gravity of the project made it worth the emotional work. It gave me an opportunity to work through my own thoughts on reconciliation and helped me come to peace with injustices done to my family because sharing the resource was helping to address the injustice.

I share this poem now to remind people to be kind to those raising awareness about residential schools and to remind those doing this kind of work that if they feel like they are screaming inside once and awhile that feeling is not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of their own humble humanity, and to remind them to take extra care of themselves and seek out people who care for them.

I surface
I hold children
I make beautiful things
I sing loudly
I eat salmon that I hung in August

I surface
I breathe in
The love of my mother
The love of my father
The love of my sisters
The love of my brother
The love of my son
The sense of physical safety
Loving closeness

And then I go in again
To write emails
Edit documents
Tweak meeting logistics

I put on my suit
And my heels
And my beadwork
And then I go in
PowerPoint
Agenda
Feedback forms

Every time I say
"We created these materials as an act of reconciliation"
I feel safe and strong wrapped in the integrity of my purpose.

Every time I say
“As the daughter of a survivor the reception to
these materials by teachers gives me incredible
hope”
I feel grounded in purpose.

Every time I say
“Please be kind because this topic is harder for
some than others, and you never know what some-
one’s experience is”
I say it for them, I say it for me.

How am I today?
I am good.
I am always good.
I create safe space where we work
White people
People of colour
Survivors
Intergenerational survivors
And I feel good about it

I prayed today
I feel worried
I prayed
I sang
It will be okay
We start
It is good

I am good
Except when I watch a video
I had no reaction to the first time
This time I watch
I wonder if I am screaming
I hear screaming
The when you used up all your air
And you find a little bit more
And you can’t believe you’re still screaming
Type of screaming

We should scream
When I read
About a 15 year old from my community commit-
ting suicide
When I read
About a police take down of land defenders
When I read
Deaths of children in care
I hear myself screaming

Then I order an Americano
Screaming
And walk by the beach
Screaming
Should we eat in or go out?
Screaming
And eventually it subsides
I am good
I am always good

I query colleagues
Co-facilitators
Other people who
Do this work
And they agree
Sometimes it hits you
And you go down
This is to be expected

We have special skills
Smiling
Promoting our projects
Networking
Writing grant proposals
Celebrating every small win
Compassionately confronting ignorance
Caring for survivors in our own ways
Speaking about genocide without a detectable
trace of anger
Doing the work that needs to be done
(Screaming?)

I talk about genocide
In a soft voice
With a calm demeanour
But I have cried twice

Once when reading an article on hunger and star-
vation in the schools
I remembered
My grandmother’s Tsihqot’in nickname for me
(short chubby little girl)
Her joy when she said it
Suddenly it was set within a dark context
I was at my desk so I
Rearranged papers
Checked my email
Sorted my post-it’s
Tried to breathe
Tried to breathe

Tried to breathe
Tried to leave the office
But only made it to a coworker's office as it all
came out and tried to explain
Why I was crying
Then I went back to my office
And finished the article

You always had to know
My mom later explained

The second time I was at an event
Not my event
A young woman in a video said
Her mother's experience shaped every single part
of her life
I cried
I tried to stop
It was unstoppable
Someone told me
Not to be ashamed of my tears
And I was so relieved
He reminded me
This is not the whole of who we are
We are so much more

Later I sat with a friend
And we agreed that we need to be careful
About the way we tell our story

I talk about genocide
Almost every day
After the hi how are you
I give a project update
A pitch for support
And a comment about hope

At events
I tell people
"It's normal to have feelings, it's part of our hu-
manness"
And we feel relieved

I announce
"In this section there is a map of St. George's and

descriptions of food"
So that we can brace ourselves

When people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, are over-
whelmed
I remind them that we are in the middle of reconcilia-
tion

That's why it's hard
That's why it's important
But we're doing it
And we're doing it together

Thank them for coming
Pack up the books
Put the projector in its bag
Sleep for twelve hours
Surface

I am good.
I am always good
I am safe
I am loved
I am screaming
In my own way.

Starleigh Grass is a Tsilhqot'in woman who currently lives and works on Coast Salish Territory. She is currently an Assistant Director of Field Services at the BC Teachers Federation. Previous roles have included Senior Policy Analyst for the First Nations Education Steering Committee and classroom teacher in the Gold Trail School District.

Celia Brogan, Selina Metcalfe, Kerri Lanaway Tyler Cernak, & Barb Hinson

A Journey to Place: An Exploration of Place-Conscious Learning

This past year nine members of the BCTELA and EEPsA (Environmental Educators' Provincial Special Association) executive committees participated in an inquiry project as part of the BCTF's Program for Quality Teaching. Our central question was "How can teachers use BC place-based literatures in their practice to support students' connections to their local environments and cultures?" The PQT grant includes a trained facilitator and she led us through an inquiry process over multiple meetings and guided each of us to develop a question that was relevant to our practice.

The experience of coming together to share our perspectives on a common passion of place-based teaching and learning was enriching. The group was collaborative and supportive and with our facilitator's guidance we were kept on a path focused on professional learning. We were also very diverse in our backgrounds as educators and current teaching assignments. At each meeting, the conversations were rich and deep. By sharing our questions, assumptions, and challenges with colleagues who are teaching in different contexts, but who all share certain core mind-sets, our inquiries were enhanced. We always went away with more insight and a renewed enthusiasm for our practice.

We have only begun to walk these paths but would like to share where we've been so far. Here are some of our stories.

Celia—BCTELA

I am a teacher-librarian at a dual-track elementary school in Vancouver. I was excited to participate in this PQT inquiry group; there are so many paths I'd like to follow regarding place-based teaching and learning. This, of course, meant that I was challenged to articulate a clear and specific question. I decided to incorporate my professional inquiry into an existing collaborative project in which I was involved: all this year I have been working with a grade 4/5 teacher and a 5/6 French Immersion teacher on an outdoor education initiative. We highlighted a block of time on Wednesday afternoons and tried to go outside together as often as possible. At some times in the year we went out every week; at other, busier, times we got out less frequently.

As I sorted through the possibilities for my inquiry, I had to reflect on my own relationship and lens with sense of place and recognize that my perspective is, in some cases, very different from my students'. Many of our students were not born in Vancouver and a number of them have moved here within the last three years. This fact led me to wonder about my students' entry points in making connections to our local places. I was born on Vancouver Island and have a deep connection to the rainforests there. Students who were born in Vancouver or in larger cities in China and elsewhere, have different types of connections to different types of places. My inquiry question began by directing my attention to uncover what my students actually noticed about the place they inhabit and where they go to school. I wanted to see where they saw themselves with as little direction from me as possible.

I didn't get as far as I had wanted in my inquiry this year. The question I was developing was "How might I allow/create space for students to develop their own personally deep connections to their current place (Vancouver/BC)?" I started with the walks we were taking with our outdoor education group, and I asked the students to "notice" things around them as we walked around our neighbourhood. On two occasions, after our walk I gave them a page on which they were asked to record three of the things they noticed. There was also a space for them to draw the route we took while walking. I coded their sheets into three categories: constructed/urban; about the route of the walk/classmates; and natural world. I found that their observations were fairly equally balanced between all three categories, which surprised me a little. As I read through their observations, I found that my reactions were biased towards those that were about the natural world or employed descriptive language. I might have expected this, given that I had already acknowledged the difference between my background experience and that of my students, but I was interested to note how much I was swayed.

Next year I will be able to move further into finding opportunities for students to recognize and develop their connections to and sense of place. I am interested in finding ways to use literature and other texts and will be aware of my tendency to privilege students' connections and observations that are similar to my own sensibilities.

Selina—EEPSA

My name is Selina Metcalfe; and I am a Humanities teacher at Fleetwood Park Secondary in Surrey. I am also the current president of EEPSA. For the last school year, I have collaborated with a colleague in my department, Greta Visscher-Pau, to teach an integrated Geography and Communication unit to our school to our Humanities 10 students in the park adjacent. We are very fortunate to have a large greenspace with second growth forest and a pretty healthy creek right next to our school property.

In September, Greta and I planned a 12 lesson program that our students would cycle through. The first lesson was a walk through the park to learn some common places and to orient ourselves on our map, and the second lesson was an introduction to healthy salmon habitat that we did with the City of Surrey's SHaRP (Salmon Habitat Rehabilitation Project) team. After that, the students were in groups of 2-3 and each week or two (depending on weather and scheduling), they went out to learn in the park for one 70 minute block. Activities included Creek Dips, Park Clean Up, Mapping tasks, digital recording of stream flow and vegetation, Creative Writing tasks, and the creation of a Public Service Announcement. Each week they cycled through a different task, and each task included a learning reflection. At the end of the year, they did a final annotated map of the Fleetwood Creek watershed to show me everything they'd learned about the relationship they observed between humans and the physical environment.

My observations over the course of the nine months have been:

- Being outside of the classroom is exciting and engaging for kids
- Students do not automatically know how to learn outside through observation and reflection
- I had to teach them an experiential learning cycle and walk them through it (slowly and explicitly at first)
- Being outside led to way more conversation between teacher and students and between students and students
- Being outside fostered really authentic and playful curiosity
- Being outside was calming
- The tasks that we had set up lent themselves really easily to differentiation as students could literally move at their own pace and choose their own entry points
- Students knew SO LITTLE about their local environment and they hardly knew what anything was called
- The tasks that we had set up were very student directed and demanded that the teacher act as facilitator instead of just instructor
- The landscape was a co-teacher

Experiential learning in the community is exactly the kind of student-centered, differentiated, active learning that the renewed curriculum is talking about. It's great learning, but it needs practice. Experiential learning is like any

skill in that it takes explicit instruction at the start, and then a gradual release of responsibility. Students did not automatically observe or make connections within the ecosystem the way I did. They had to be taught how to do that.

As I engage in that never-ending process of reconsidering how I'll teach this next year, I know that I want to explore more specific ways to get kids writing creatively about their park. I also want to do a better job of figuring out how to assess the process of their learning, and not just the product.

Ultimately, I love this type of teaching, and most kids seem to love this way of learning. I'll definitely keep going on this track, and I am going to do something similar with my Humanities 8 students next year.

Kerri—EEPSA

This year, being new to Maywood Community School, I thought it would be interesting (and useful!) to learn more about the community I was teaching in. In a community mapping project that took place in the very urban Metrotown area and spanned about 6 months, through student observations and blogging, I found that students spending time outside of the classroom, exploring places in their local community, became more engaged in their work, demonstrated a natural curiosity and care about their special places, and in general had an easier time reflecting and writing about their experiences.

Throughout this inquiry project our class visited the many places we could walk to (generally within a 20 min walking radius) and mapped these - as well as students' own places of significance on hand-drawn maps.

The project was inspired by the realization that Maywood Community School was a school in constant flux, receiving new students, and new Canadians, year-round. Teachers are left trying to integrate students into their classroom at odd or inconvenient times of the year, while new students - some without any English at all, struggled to adapt not only to a new school with new friends, but to a new home, and country - different customs and ways of being, speaking, and learning! Families need to adapt quickly and the drop into new waters can be shocking. So as a way to learn more about the Maywood community, I began to collect data on all the "special places" of Maywood. The questions were: How can we ease entry to the Maywood community for families unfamiliar with their new home and habitat? How might the students of Maywood welcome new students and friends into the Maywood fold? What are the places that might help build connection and community?

Through a series of student blogs, I began learning of these places: a nearby park where all the kids were playing after school hours, the local community centre where afterschool programs supported working families, a special tree a few of the boys liked to climb together... As a class, we discussed where these entry points for newcomers were, and what about our Maywood community we were especially proud of.

As students continued to work on their maps, they began to share more about these special places. Repeated visits to Central Park in Burnaby built connections to local green space. Students wanted to map their secret places in the forest where they had built a fort or lean-to with a friend. The connections were deepening. Visits to the nearby public library and Bonsor Recreation Centre brought heightened awareness of what was around us in this bustling urban centre.

The project culminated in their community maps going electronic. Using ThingLink, an iPad app that allows pictures (in this case, their handmade maps) to house written blurbs on pinpoints students presented their maps, chosen written reflections, and special places to the class. Final blogs included thoughts on what they would tell newcomers to our class about our community, what they enjoyed about mapping, and how time spent outdoors and 'free writes' impacted them as learners.

"I like sound mapping because I can listen to the sounds and it might sound like music if you listen carefully and I don't have to sit in class all day. I like sitting alone and I can hear birds, crows, and I can think and see the blue sky and it makes me calm. I can feel the wind passing by, I can see trees moving, I can see bees get honey. If I went to the forest and did this I will see bunnies fish birds crows nature. I like free writing because I write my feeling thoughts and I can write word it make me calm and I won't be uncomfortable to nature".

Tyler—BCTELA

As a new teacher, working as a teacher-on-call in Kelowna, finding avenues to explore place-based education are often few and far between. Fortunately, having received a short term contract teaching Senior English in School District 23, I lucked upon an opportunity to teach a novel study unit and focused on using place to draw a link to what we were studying.

I was informed that the class had already begun working on a whole class novel study of *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, by Stephen Galloway. As I prepared to take over teaching, I came across an interview with the author where he stated that his motivation for writing the novel was to allow his audience to understand that if these events could happen in Sarajevo, they could happen anywhere. Using this as the premise for exploring the novel, I began to integrate place-based activities and lessons into our discovery of the novel. Living in Kelowna afforded us several access points in this regard, as we have similar landscape to Sarajevo (a city in the bottom of a valley, surrounded by high, forested hills), we have a history of racially motivated genocide, and finally, while not in Kelowna specifically, we have recently hosted the Olympics in British Columbia. Using the landscape and genocide as the means by which to draw comparisons with the novel, we proceeded to do the majority of our reading and reflection outdoors, which many students indicated helped them gain a deeper understanding of the feelings that many of the novel characters must have had, as they faced the possibility of being shot from the hills at any time, by an invisible enemy. We also explored some of the history of residential schools in the area, drawing upon writings of local survivors, local historical documents, as well as video and testimony from the local Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings.

The impact of recognizing similarities between the two locales and genocides was powerful for many of my students and led to far deeper comprehension of what had occurred. In many cases, this link also worked in the other direction, as many of my students were so shocked that a work of fiction, such as this novel, could be rooted in truth, that they felt compelled to explore their local history in more depth. As an initial exploration of teaching using place as a focal point, I am happy to see how it has allowed for deeper learning and understanding.

Barb—EEPSA

The merging of EEPSA and BCTELA in an inquiry project has been an eye-opening experience for me. It has allowed me to launch myself with growing confidence into strands of the new BC curriculum that encourage big ideas, student ownership and the inquiry process. From the central inquiry question of "How can teachers use BC place-based literatures in their practice to support students' connections to their local environments and cultures?" I have journaled, researched, and developed my own question of, 'How connected/comfortable am I/we with nature?' into an exploration of the best literature and media I could find to encourage my students to know themselves, their place called school, and their relationship with nature including their family history, plants in the schoolyard, and the animal community. Through revision my final inquiry question reads: As an elementary teacher, how can I use selected literature and media as a springboard for respecting and experiencing nature in our local inner-city environment?

My best "green reads" to date for achieving this goal are: *Beyond the Pond* by Joseph Kuefler; *I Know Here* by Laurel Croza; *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert; 'Andy Goldsworthy, educator and artist' images (viewed using the internet); *The Nature Connection* by Clare Walker Leslie; *A Lump of Coal* by Lemony Snicket; *The First Drawing* by Mordicai Gerstein; and *The Ladybug Garden* by Celia Godkin. Experiencing this media together with my students provided the springboard into many exciting hands-on and reflection activities that ranged from composing culture maps,

creating found art, nature journaling, and creating smudge art and science charts using leaves and plants. Most rewarding and surprising for me was the final student-initiated research group called 'Save the Bees' whose curiosity and enthusiasm went beyond the classroom framework.

In my innercity school many of my students do not wander outside of their neighbourhoods. They do not fully know what a wild habitat looks like, smells like, sounds like or tastes like. However, a place in nature in any schoolyard can be found in the smallest of squares with the right amount of encouragement and focus. From this inquiry process – with the selection of springboard literature and getting out-of-doors—I have as a teacher become much more comfortable in exploring place-based learning and, in turn, am becoming a naturalist.

Conclusion

Our stories are different, but all share key elements: we tried new things this year, we invited our students to meet us where we all are and moved from there, together, and we did it with the support of our colleagues. Our group was diverse in geography and teaching assignment and this diversity manifested in the projects we each undertook. The wonderful part is that within our common passion, while the age groups and specific lessons differ, the successes and discoveries felt by students and teachers alike all share foundations in locality and connections to place-based experience. Coming together to share this inquiry into place-based pedagogy and literature has benefitted our practice and will continue to do so.

Celia Brogan is a teacher-librarian in Vancouver. She served on the BCTELA executive committee for eight years and on the executive committee of the Vancouver Teacher-Librarians' Association (a chapter of BCTLA) for two years. She enjoys working with colleagues to mobilize the knowledge in our collective practice.

Selina Metcalfe is a Humanities teacher in Surrey. She is the current president of EEPsA.

Tyler Cernak is passionate about using place as a reference point for his students to explore, personalize, and interpret their learning. He teaches senior English and Social Studies in School District #23.

Kerri Lanaway teaches at Maywood Community School in Burnaby.

Barb Hinson teaches at David Lloyd George Elementary School in Vancouver.

Donna Kozak

Fostering Pedagogies of Engagement for All Learners: Attending to Place, Culture, and Personal Identity

From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school. That is isolation of the school – its isolation from life. When the child gets into the schoolroom he has to put out of his mind a large part of the ideas, interests, and activities that predominate in his home and neighborhood. So the school, being unable to utilize this everyday experience, sets painfully to work, on another tack and by variety of means, to arouse interest in school studies. (Dewey, 1956, p. 75)

As with many of Dewey's thoughts written over 100 years ago, this quote invites us to consider the significance of bridging what occurs in classrooms with the life world experiences that our students bring with them and why this might be so vital to meaningful and personalized engagement with learning. When learning emerges from a place of curiosity and familiarity, rather than from compliance, memorization, and recitation, students can be positioned as knowledge holders who exercise their own voices as authors of their own learning.

Place-Based Learning and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Smith and Sobel (2010) write of the potential of educational experiences that are grounded in place and community to bridge differences between home and school by situating learning in a place that values and legitimizes the experiences of students and their families. The philosophy that underpins place-based learning is based on the belief that learning is not contained just in classrooms or found in textbooks. Place-based educational experiences view schools as integrated with rather than segregated from the lives of our students and the local context within which their lives are embedded (Smith & Sobel, 2010). So much more relevance and richness is made available to student learning when the boundaries between classrooms, life worlds, and community become permeable.

Place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003, Smith & Sobel, 2010) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) are well-suited pedagogical and curricular partners. Developing a sense of place is a way to awaken students' reflections of personal identity and connections to their family, community, and environment. It gives students the opportunity to investigate their identity and discover more about their culture and the cultures of the place in which they live. Culturally responsive pedagogy can build bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities (Gay, 2000). It can also teach students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages (Gay, 2000, p. 29). The knowledge children bring to school derived from personal cultural experiences is central to their learning. To overlook these funds of knowledge is to deny children access to the process of relevant and meaningful learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

A District Collaborative Inquiry Project

The theoretical frameworks of place-based learning and culturally responsive pedagogy informed a recent collaborative professional learning endeavor in a southern BC school district.

District leaders in Aboriginal Education and Early Literacy came together with common questions around how to facilitate opportunities for elementary Aboriginal advocates and grade one teachers to work together in ways that could ultimately transform their traditional roles of working in parallel to each other to working in collaboration as co-creators of a place-based early literacy project.

The dual lens approach of Aboriginal Education and Early Literacy led to an invitation to grade one teachers and their school-based Aboriginal advocates to join together in an inquiry-based learning community. Twenty-two grade one teachers and twenty Aboriginal advocates representing eighteen schools all came together on three occasions from February to June to answer the inquiry question: How can we enhance instruction and learning for all students in grade one classrooms by partnering Aboriginal student advocates with grade one teachers through an early literacy focus?

The First Peoples Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2014), which reflect a respectful and holistic approach to teaching and learning provided a foundation for our collaborative inquiry work around place-based and culturally responsive teaching and learning. The place-based learning theoretical framework is guided directly by the principle: “Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)” (FNESC, 2014). The draft of the new redesigned BC curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2013) privileges competency-based education and attends to developing positive personal and cultural identity. This competency is echoed and reinforced in two additional First Peoples Principles: “Learning requires exploration of one’s identity” and “Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story” (FNESC, 2014). In addition, culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1995) and the philosophy of place-based learning (Gruenewald, 2003; Smith & Sobel, 2010) served as the background theoretical framework for the inquiry.

Since part of the strategy in bringing teachers together with the Aboriginal advocates was to realize a more meaningful and effective collaborative partnership around literacy instruction and student learning in classrooms, a literacy-focused photograph book project became the vehicle in which this collaboration could be realized. Based on the design of the Ontario study “Using Photographic Picture Books to Better Understand Young Children’s Ideas of Belonging: A Study of Early Literacy Strategies and Social Inclusion” (Cleovoulou, et al., 2013), the photo book project became the catalyst to not only bring their respective pedagogical and Indigenous knowledge together but also to embed a developmentally appropriate and inclusive early writing activity into each of the grade one classrooms. The use of student’s own stories from their homes was a strategy in keeping with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002), as well as a way to contextualize student learning through the use of their place-based lived experiences (Smith & Sobel, 2010).

Two of the three collaborative sessions were held on First Nations land where the teachers and advocates experienced traditional teachings from an Elder, songs and drumming performed by students, and traditional food. The learning sessions were intentionally located away from the district’s usual professional meeting spaces to facilitate the potential and power of immersive learning in a space and place that both honored and profiled Indigenous ways of being. The First Peoples Principles of Learning (FNESC, 2014) nurtured the collaborative learning experiences. “Learning involves patience and time,” gave the participants permission to build relationships and community, to reexamine the potentiality and possibilities for Aboriginal advocates to have a more meaningful place in the classrooms, and to learn about the pedagogical knowledge around children’s literacy development through authentic and meaningful writing opportunities.

Pedagogies of Engagement

The collaborative partnership facilitated pedagogies of engagement that gave meaning and purpose for all children to engage with their life world knowledge to create personalized photo books that prompted story writing about their homes, families, and neighborhoods. Pedagogical relationships were also nurtured as teachers and advocates drew from their respective experiences and wisdom to co-construct knowledge which lead to deeper

understandings as well as motivation to expand on classroom instructional strategies. Multilayers of pedagogical engagement resulted between home and school, teachers and advocates, students and writing.

Once photo books were completed in each classroom, teachers and advocates jointly analyzed their student's writing using provincial writing performance standards which fostered a rich conversation around how students develop early literacy skills. This contributed to the advocates' growing understanding of early literacy development and an appreciation for how students' writing develops along a continuum. Participants were invited to consider how the photo book experience might be used to further fuel and enrich a place-based curriculum as well as contribute to teacher funds of pedagogy which, according to Zipin (2009), are the ways of knowing and transacting knowledge related to life experiences of learners. This is echoed in the reflection by a grade 1 teacher:

It caused me to hold my students in a higher regard and notice how open ended the curriculum can be if you let the students lead the way! Because I was learning so much from my students, I was eager to share their stories/ what I was doing in the classroom with my advocate, colleagues, and parents. With the help of my advocate, I was incorporating a lot more FN [First Nations] vocabulary: "Medicine Wheel," "Regalia," "Okanagan language..." and FN practices: talking circle/ seeking FN speakers to be guests in our classroom. Our advocate would add to our conversations, sharing her knowledge and expertise, and in turn, I would share my literacy knowledge/ vocabulary so she could effectively help the students. (Grade 1 teacher participant, Reflection)

Students' Lives as Pedagogical Resources

The characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy include: an ethic of care based on deep relations underlying all classroom interactions; power sharing between students and teachers; challenging deficit theories of achievement by maintaining the highest expectations of every learner; and making students' cultural and ethnic identities and knowledge fundamental dimensions of curriculum design (Gay, 2000; Harcourt, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Place-based education is about using the local community, people, and environment as starting points to teach concepts that span the curriculum and position learning in what is local and familiar to students. It also looks outward to leverage community, family, and environment as potential pedagogical resources for deeper and more meaningful student learning (Smith & Sobel, 2010).

Culturally responsive teachers consciously and consistently connect students' lived experiences, emotions, beliefs, family history, and tacit understandings to the content of the curriculum (Harcourt, 2015, p. 30), as echoed by a grade one teacher participant's reflection.

I feel like this project has provided support to our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in many ways. First, it has allowed students to better understand and embrace their culture. Students seemed more open and receptive to share stories about their families/traditions and began to show pride their culture. Many students actively volunteered to bring in culturally significant artefacts to share about their culture. It was really neat to learn from them! Second, it has assisted students to better understand cultural diversity; our non-Aboriginal students can have a positive appreciation of the Aboriginal culture and vice versa. (Grade 1 teacher participant, Reflection)

Scherff and Spector (2010) suggest that the relationship between culturally responsive pedagogy and place-based education is one of "emphasis claiming that culturally responsive pedagogy strives to use learners' cultural ways of being and knowing as a vehicle for instruction as well as a source of content, while place-based learning takes as its starting point the varying contexts from which learners come" (p. 141). Bridging between the classroom and students' lives creates learning that is both natural and meaningful. Learning naturally emerges not so much from force and direction as from curiosity. Learning is meaningful when it is connected to activities valued by both students and those they love (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 29), as echoed in a grade one teacher's reflection.

I got the sense that each of my students grew to a place of greater pride in sharing about their backgrounds and family traditions with one another. We were able to celebrate our differences and find enjoyment in learning about cultures apart from our own. The photographs and writing the students put together to create their photo books brought excitement and confidence to our sharing of ourselves, who and what matters most to each of us. (Grade 1 teacher participant, Reflection)

The learning place and space co-created by teachers and advocates facilitated a newly constructed discourse that enabled them to think, plan, design, and talk together about what they were learning and how it would be realized in their classrooms. When teachers collaborated with their Aboriginal advocate partners, they were able to draw on place-based education in partnership with cultural responsive pedagogy to be more responsive to each of their students' unique historical, cultural and ecological contexts.

A final word from the District Principal for Aboriginal Education speaks to the significance of attending to place, relationships, the lifeworld funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 2005), and personal and cultural identity all people possess.

Being open to learning a new perspective which encompasses the whole child and the child's connection to the land, community and everyone and everything around them really honors any child for who they are and what they experience as young individuals.... This project helped to develop confidence and understanding for both advocate and teacher... It is a feel good, honoring way to interact with each other; as professionals one to one, and as teachers to all of our students. I believe that once they realized it was good for all students, the learning was immense. The advocates felt validated, valued and the journey was beneficial for all. (District Principal for Aboriginal Education, Reflection)

References

- BC Ministry of Education. (2013). *Aboriginal education*. Retrieved from: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/aboriginal_education_bc.pdf
- BC Ministry of Education. (2013). *Transforming curriculum and assessment*. Retrieved from: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>
- Cleovoulou, Y., McCollam, H., Ellis, E., Commeford, L. Moore, I., Chern, A., & Pelletier, J. (2013). Using photographic picture books to better understand young children's ideas of belonging: A study of early literacy strategies and social inclusion. *Canadian Children*, 38(1), 11-20.
- Dewey, J. (1956). *The child and the curriculum and the school and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). (2014). *First Peoples Principles of Learning* [poster]. Retrieved from: <http://www.fnesc.ca/resources/publications/>
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2) 106-11.
- Gruenewald, D. (2003). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 3-12.
- Harcourt, M. (2015). Towards a culturally responsive and place-conscious theory of

history teaching. *He Whakaaro Ano*, Set 2, 36-44. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.18296/set.0016>

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–91.

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D. and Gonzalez, N. (1992) Funds of knowledge for teaching using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms, *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132–41.

Rowell, J. (2006). *Family literacy experiences: Creating reading and writing opportunities that support classroom learning*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.

Scherff, L. & Spector, K. (2010). *Culturally relevant pedagogy: Clashes and confrontations*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Villegas, A.M. & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Zipin, L. (2009). Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between lifeworlds and schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 30(3), 317-331.

Donna Kozak has been a teacher for 32 years and currently coordinates school district projects in the Central Okanagan focusing on literacy, inclusion, and mentorship for new teachers. Donna is currently a PhD student studying the interplay between life worlds, school literacies and the potential of parents and teachers as learning partners. She teaches literacy courses in UBCO's elementary teacher education and post-baccalaureate programs.

Nicki L. Yee & Alexandria Gallon

Navigating Place: An Integrated Approach

Introduction

Bryan is a gifted hunter, taught by his Indigenous father. He finds reading and writing boring and his teachers often ask him to expand on the simple answers he fills in worksheets. He knows he needs certain classes because he wants to go on to post-secondary education, but he struggles to meet the requirements. Many students like Bryan may struggle to maintain motivation and interest in compulsory courses or government mandated curriculum. This problem disproportionately impacts Indigenous students and their teachers. Of those that leave school before graduation, 20% of status Indian students cite boredom as the primary factor for leaving (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2005). Colonialism in social institutions and curricular narratives may be heightening students' sense of disenfranchisement from schools and creating multiple obstacles within the education system (Battiste, 2013; Marker, 2009). A lack of high school or post-secondary education may have significant social and economic impacts for Indigenous people and their communities.

Non-Indigenous teachers across curricular areas and grades may be ill-equipped to meet the learning needs of Indigenous students (Battiste, 2013; Harper, 2000; Madden, Higgins, & Korteweg, 2013). Despite increasing Indigenous content in both pre-service education courses and school curricula, many non-Indigenous teachers report that they do not feel comfortable teaching this content (Deer, 2013; Mason, 2008). In light of recent statistics that suggest education systems are not meeting the needs of Indigenous learners (BC Ministry of Education Aboriginal Education, 2013), teachers may be particularly interested in exploring alternatives to better support all students.

To address this challenge, we propose a pedagogy that integrates decolonizing and self-regulated learning (SRL) approaches, with an emphasis on place-based learning. Decolonization involves a critique of power in society, and re-imagining of relationships (Battiste, 2013; G. H. Smith, 2000; L. T. Smith, 2012). SRL involves deliberate use of cognition, metacognition, emotion, and motivation within cycles of strategic action to meet personal goals (Zimmerman, 2008b). By integrating a pedagogical approach developed among Indigenous scholars (i.e., Decolonizing Pedagogy), with an approach rooted in Western educational psychology (i.e., SRL), it may be possible to develop an alternative way for non-Indigenous teachers to facilitate learning for all students. Using this framework to learn from the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples offers an opportunity to engage all students in learning and decolonization in inclusive environments.

In this article we explore the possibilities for place-based learning within the framework of an integrated decolonizing-SRL pedagogy. To do this, we bring together our individual expertise in education and environmental biology. Nikki, a special educator and classroom teacher for 13 years, is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of British Columbia researching the development of decolonizing-SRL pedagogy and accompanying practices. As part of her experience as a research assistant she has had the invaluable experience of seeing SRL put into practice in schools across the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Alexandria's undergraduate program in

environmental biology has involved both a hands-on approach from a technical school combined with a more theoretical approach from studies at the University of Regina. In her experience as a student of diverse teaching styles, Alexandria is able to identify some of the advantages and disadvantages of significantly different approaches, especially in consideration of place-based pedagogy. Together we have constructed a place-based grade 7 science unit, grounded in the principles of a decolonizing-SRL approach. To understand where our lesson plan gets its foundations, we will first address decolonizing and SRL pedagogical approaches, and their points of connection.

Perspectives

Decolonizing Pedagogy can address the multiple and lasting barriers colonialism creates for Indigenous peoples. Pedagogies around decolonization aim to interrupt colonialism and encourage reconfiguration of social relationships and structures (Battiste, 2013). Decolonization involves a critical examination of the systems that sustain colonial power, followed by action to redefine fundamental colonial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on an individual and social level (G. H. Smith, 2000; L. T. Smith, 2012). A pedagogy based on decolonizing principles might focus on: interconnections (Battiste, 2002; Deloria, 1999; Marker, 2011), relationships between people (Archibald, 2008; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Corntassel, 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), and a centering of Indigenous perspectives (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Battiste, 2013; Dion, 2009; Newhouse, 2008; G. H. Smith, 2000; L. T. Smith, 2012). Just as colonialism can be understood as a social structure applied to all people within Canadian society (Cesaire, 2000; Stoler, 2008), so can a Decolonizing Pedagogy be relevant for not only Indigenous students, but all students within an inclusive Canadian school. Non-Indigenous teachers seeking to better support all students using Decolonizing Pedagogy may find SRL frameworks particularly helpful.

SRL refers to a Western educational perspective that recognizes the student as the agent in their learning. Students are responsible for controlling thoughts, emotions, and actions to meet personal goals within particular contexts (Perry, Turner, & Meyer, 2006; Zimmerman, 2008b). In a socio-constructivist model of SRL (e.g., Butler & Cartier, 2004; Cartier & Butler, 2004), learning starts with what students bring to the classroom. Students contribute prior knowledge, strengths, beliefs, and experiences to a learning context with supports and feedback to expand understandings. Learners are invited to engage in further learning through repeated and recursive cycles of strategic action (Butler & Cartier, 2004; Cartier & Butler, 2004). Students interpret what is expected of them in a given task or activity, plan how to carry it out, implement a particular strategy, and then monitor and reflect on the process to adjust accordingly (Butler & Cartier, 2004; Cartier & Butler, 2004). Engagement with an activity is facilitated by emotion and motivation, along with appreciation of the importance of an activity within a particular context (Butler & Cartier, 2004; Cartier & Butler, 2004). Students are in control of the overall cycle of strategic action, allowing for further learning in a self-regulated manner. Understanding learning through the lens of SRL may help non-Indigenous teachers to see how re-imagined, decolonizing relationships might be purposefully developed in learning activities.

Points of Connection

Though different perspectives inform SRL and Decolonizing Pedagogy, the two connect in various ways. These points of connection can provide an entrance into Decolonizing Pedagogy for non-Indigenous teachers who feel more comfortable using a European-based approach. Points of connection can be addressed as three main groupings: 1) Foundational beliefs about learning, 2) Environmental interconnections, and 3) Key internal processes. As illustrated in figure 1, these groupings can be further broken down into nine areas where decolonizing and SRL approaches appear to overlap. Rather than an 'add-on' to curricular demands, an integrated pedagogy represents an orientation to teaching (Battiste & Henderson, 2009) that allows more students to work critically and independently on their own learning journeys, and frees teachers to focus attention on those students who require additional support (Butler, Schnellert, & Perry, 2017). Thus these points of connection can present an opportunity to strengthen learning for all learners and allows SRL to act as a springboard into the uncomfortable issues addressed in Decolonizing Pedagogy.

Self-Regulated
Learning

Decolonizing
Pedagogy

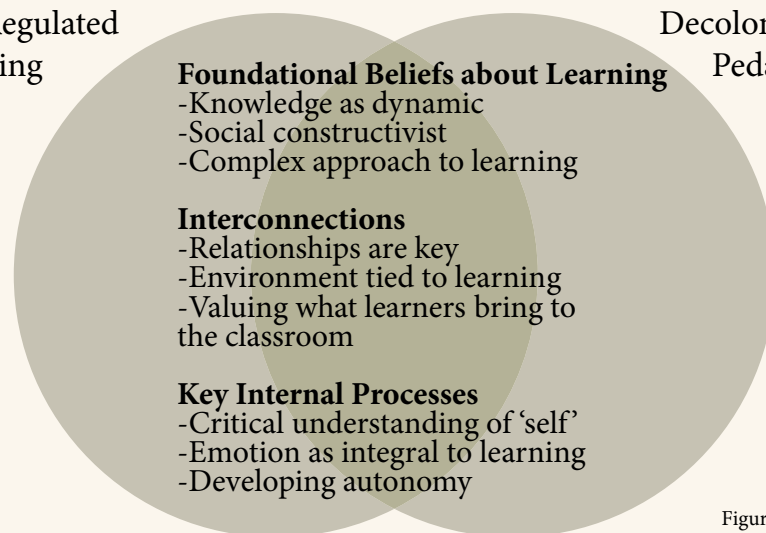


Figure 1. Nine points of connection.

Foundational Beliefs about Learning. This area is concerned with the basic understandings about what knowledge is and how it is constructed. In both perspectives knowledge is understood as dynamic and socially constructed. Within SRL, knowledge creation is seen as an ongoing, messy, and recursive process (Zimmerman, 2002). Knowledge is provisional and ever-changing. Similarly, in decolonizing approaches, knowledge is viewed as a process, rather than an endpoint (Deloria, 1999). Both SRL and decolonizing approaches emphasize working in relationship with others to construct new understandings about the world, embedded in particular social, political, and historical contexts (Archibald, 2008; Butler & Cartier, 2004). The pursuit of knowledge then is complex, involves multiple layers, perceptions, and connections to shape learning. In both decolonizing and SRL approaches, complex and non-linear learning pathways are expected for a meaningful learning experience (Deloria, 1999; Perry, 2004).

Interconnections. The second grouping involves overlap between Decolonizing Pedagogy and SRL in terms of deeply embedded interconnections amongst humans, and between humans and their environment. These interconnections revolve around the key role of relationships, including relationships with the environment, and valuing what each learner brings into the learning environment. Relationships are central in decolonizing perspectives (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). While decolonizing perspectives provide guidance and support for the creation of positive relationships, SRL tends to focus on how various relationship types and interactions support learning (i.e., co-regulation, Hadwin, Jarvela, & Miller, 2011; socially-responsible regulation, Hutchinson, 2013; socially-shared regulation, Volet, Vauras, & Salonen, 2009). These complementary views help clarify social interactions in the classroom and provide guidance on how effective relationships might be fostered.

Understanding about relationships extend to the environment. The kind of knowledge produced through learning is tightly connected to the specific environment of the learner (Basso, 1996; Butler et al., 2017). Decolonizing perspectives tend to focus on understanding and supporting positive relationships with place, while SRL looks at how context shapes learning. The individuals within a particular environment then become key contributors to the learning of others. Both perspectives value the rich experiences, strengths and challenges, metacognition, and knowledge and beliefs that diverse individuals bring to the broader community (Butler et al., 2017; Phillips, 2010). Interconnections between people and people and the environment can thus profoundly impact the type of knowledge available to learners.

Key Internal Processes. This area focuses on what a learner feels and experiences internally during the learning process. Notably, both decolonizing and SRL perspectives cultivate a critical understanding of the self, view emotion as integral to learning, and prioritize the development of autonomy in students. Metacognition and self-reflection are key to both SRL and Decolonizing Pedagogies. Thinking about the self aids students to

monitor and adjust their thinking (Butler et al., 2017), as well as identify imperialist thoughts within their own understandings of the world (Battiste, 2013; Strong-Wilson, 2007). In the sometimes emotionally fraught world of self-reflection, SRL and Decolonizing Pedagogies embrace the critical importance and influence of emotion as a precursor, facilitator, and outcome of learning. (Brayboy, Castagno, & Solyom, 2014; Butler & Cartier, 2004; Cartier & Butler, 2004; Newhouse, 2008). These deeply transformative internal processes support the development of autonomy. Both approaches seek to develop skills and sophistication in practicing critical, self-reflective thought so that students can become agents of their own learning and of their own realities.

Decolonizing-SRL Pedagogy in the Classroom

The theoretical points of connection between SRL and Decolonizing Pedagogy provide a basis for extending the discussion to practical classroom activities. A decolonizing-SRL approach based on SRL promoting practices has not yet been assessed in authentic learning environments. A next step in establishing the usefulness of this approach is to imagine how it could be implemented in a real-world setting. Thus in the following section we outline a grade seven science unit plan to exemplify possibilities for a decolonizing-SRL pedagogy within a place-based framework. This unit plan has been inspired by our own experiences in the classroom, as student, teacher and observer, and through learning about inquiry in classrooms through resources such as Butler et al. (2017; see also Butler, 1998; Perry, 2013; Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006). In addition, we take to heart the lessons imparted by decolonizing and Indigenous perspectives (see Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Cajete, 1994; Madden, Higgins, & Korteweg, 2013; Newhouse, 2008). Following the description of the unit we will show how specific aspects address the points of connection described above.

The planned for unit occurs over several weeks and connects most closely with the topics of evolution and climate change, as described in the recently revised British Columbia grade seven science curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2015). However, connections could be made with other curricular areas such as English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Arts. Furthermore, connections can also be made with the BC First Peoples Principles of Learning (BC Ministry of Education, 2016), due to the prioritization of Indigenous perspectives and the integration of pedagogical approaches embedded in the unit. Table 1 provides an overview of lessons and illustrates connections with both the BC curricula and the decolonizing-SRL pedagogy outlined above.

Lesson Plan Ecosystems	Decolonizing-SRL connections
<i>BC Curriculum Big Ideas</i> The theory of evolution by natural selection provides an explanation for the diversity and survival of living things.	
<i>Learning Standards – Curricular Competencies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make observations aimed at identifying their own questions about the natural world. • Identify a question to answer or a problem to solve through scientific inquiry. • Collaboratively plan a range of investigation types to answer their questions or solve problems they have identified. • Ensure that safety and ethical guidelines are followed in their investigations. • Experience and interpret the local environment. • Demonstrate an awareness of assumptions and identify information given and bias in their own world and secondary sources. • Contribute to care for self, others, community, and world through personal or collaborative approaches. • Co-operatively design projects. • Express and reflect on a variety of experiences and perspectives of place. 	
<i>Learning Standards – Concepts and Content</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival needs and interactions between organisms and the environment • Evidence of climate change over geological time and the recent impact of humans 	

<p><i>Instructional Objectives</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will co-operatively build their understanding of an ecosystem, and creatively explore their own relationship to a local ecosystem. • Students will be able to use their communication skills to (1) further their understanding of the historical and contemporary relationship of humans to the ecosystem, and (2) to demonstrate this knowledge. • Students will take strategic action to self- and socially-regulate their learning. • Students will learn Indigenous perspectives on ecosystems. • Students will reflect on their own roles in the ecosystem, how this might relate to colonialism, and the impacts felt by Indigenous peoples. • Students will develop a sense of responsibility to the environment, and the ability to take strategic action consistent with their goals. 	<p>Complex approach to learning</p> <p>Socio-constructivist Relationships as key</p> <p>Learning through environment Critical understanding of self</p> <p>Emotional development</p> <p>Developing autonomy</p>
<p><i>Materials/Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Supplies – a variety of media • Text Set – about 20 texts at different reading levels describing ecosystems in general and a particular local ecosystem (i.e., pamphlets, web sites, books, newsletters, etc.). Text sets should be centered around topics of interest that students have identified. • Guest Speakers - Elder or Knowledge Keeper who might be willing to tell students some stories about the area, another Elder or local resident who has a close connection to Stanley Park in the Lower Mainland BC Ecoregion to meet us there and share some stories or knowledge connected to the land. • Field Trip preparations – permission slips, bus, several magnifying glasses, binoculars, etc. 	
<p><i>Procedures</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell students that today we will be sharing our understandings of ecosystems. During silent reading time, invite students to read the available texts on ecosystems if they think they will have little to share. 2. In a sharing circle, invite students to share their understandings of ecosystems. Ask students “How might we keep track of what we already know?” Use one of the class’s strategies (such as concept map, or KWL chart) to illustrate and track the development of thought. Ask students “Are there any special terms or words we might use when talking about ecosystems?” to ensure that key vocabulary has been discussed. Encourage students to think about their own role in ecosystems and question ways that humans may be disrupting ecosystems. Then ask students “What questions might we still have about ecosystems and how could we keep track of our questions?” Use a KWL chart, create a Wonder Wall, or use another strategy. Give some time to have students read more information about ecosystems to address their questions and/or those of their classmates. Discuss reading strategies (such as skimming/scanning, highlighting, or note-taking) to find and keep track of information they get from texts they are reading. 3. Present students with some short picture books, or use other media (e.g., askiboyz.com) that illustrate Indigenous connections to the land. Have students reflect their own relationship with the land on which they live and play. “What kind of connections do you have to the land?” In small groups or individually, have students create a symbolic representation of their relationship to the land using a media of their choice. Provide mini-lessons on perspective, colour, form, etc. as required. As a follow-up ask students “How do you think Indigenous peoples’ connection to the land has been changed since Europeans and others immigrated to Canada? What is our role in this change? How is our relationship with the land connected to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?” 4. Prior to the field trip. Tell students that their task for this unit will be to complete an inquiry project about the Lower Mainland ecoregion. Revisit questions that remain from the previous activity. “What questions are staying with us? Since we have now learned something about ecosystems, what might we wonder about the Stanley Park ecosystem? How can we deepen our learning about ecosystems?” When thinking about inquiry questions, encourage students to be critical of human impacts on ecosystems and how these changes might also impact Indigenous peoples. In addition, they may wish to choose a question that would be helpful to their communities. Discussion with students “What makes a good inquiry questions?” They may communicate what they learn to their class and guests in any format they like, but they must meet particular criteria. Set the criteria for the inquiry project as a class. Use guiding questions such as “How will we know if our learning has been significant and important to ourselves and to our class and community? What skills will it be important to develop and practice in order to answer our questions and share our understandings? How can we make sure our sources of information can be trusted?” A resulting rubric will be used for both formative and summative assessment. 	<p>Knowledge as dynamic</p> <p>Socio-constructivist Valuing what learners bring</p> <p>Critical understanding of self</p> <p>Complex approach to learning</p> <p>Emotion integral to learning, critical understanding of self</p> <p>Critical understanding of self, relationships</p> <p>Complex approach to learning</p>

<p><i>Procedures Continued</i></p> <p>Invite students to think about what they already know about the Lower Mainland ecoregion and Stanley Park, and to read further texts if they don't feel they'll have something to contribute. Ask students to work in small groups to discuss and make a visual representation of what they already know about Stanley Park. Each group should also brainstorm a list of questions they might already have.</p> <p>5. Field Trip – Preparation: have students bring a learning journal and pen. In addition, discuss as a class what we can give to the resource person who will meet us there in return for their time and knowledge. On the way to Stanley Park ask students to talk to the person next to them about what questions they might have and what they might hope to learn.</p> <p>Activities at Stanley Park: Once there, have students first look around and explore the area to choose and refine or revise one question they want to inquire about. “Carefully observe and experience the environment using all of your senses. Think about the Elder’s teachings and your own relationship with the land and Indigenous peoples. How do you feel here? What do you notice? What seems strange? What might you have questions about?” Discuss how students could interact with the area while being respectful of the ecosystem. Ask them to make drawings or write down any notable observations in their notebooks. Meet with each student during this time to check in on inquiry questions. Expect that students might explore questions such as:</p> <p><i>How does human presence affect the flora and fauna in the park – past and present?</i> <i>How has the biodiversity of organisms within the area changed over time?</i> <i>Where are different animals found more frequently?</i> <i>How can humans co-exist with predators like coyotes?</i> <i>How does human protection of Stanley Park help or hinder the health of the ecosystem?</i></p> <p>Have an Elder or Knowledge Keeper meet the class to talk about personal, historical, and scientific knowledge and experience associated with this place. Allow time for students to ask their own questions and to demonstrate gratitude for the knowledge shared. Have students reflect in their journals about what they learned. Give additional time for free exploration that could help students begin to answer their questions.</p> <p>Follow-up: Ask students to meet in small groups to talk about how they could continue answering their questions. Make sure each student has a research plan following a scientific process (Western, Indigenous, or other) about how they will answer their question.</p> <p>6. Provide a resource set about Stanley Park to the class. Set aside several classes for the students to work independently or in groups, on their inquiry projects, both researching the topic of their inquiry and preparing a presentation. If students finish early they may choose another one of their questions to answer. Several times each class ask students “Take a moment to think about how well you are working and what you are learning. How would you rate your learning? How would you rate your work habits? What strategies could we use to improve even more?” Encourage students to reflect on how well they are addressing their question, using the criteria previously discussed. Support students to offer constructive peer assessment, and provide formative assessment using the same criteria at key points. In particular, ask peers to focus on “What is your friend doing beautifully, that they should continue to emphasize in their work? What aspects could your friend work on? What questions can you ask that will help your friend see things in a different way?”</p> <p>7. Inquiry Projects – Students will share the information they have found over the course of their inquiry. Following the field trip and referencing other resources, students should come to understand concepts such as: the interconnectedness of organisms and their environments. Organisms interacting with one another through communities, predator-prey/producer-consumer relationships. Acknowledging the process of the relationship between independent and dependent variables and resulting changes to an area and its organisms.</p> <p>They may choose a format that best showcases their learning. Summative evaluation will be determined in discussion with students about the class criteria determined above. “How well do you think you met the criteria? What was a strength of your inquiry project? What do you need to work on next time? What kind of growth or improvements have you made over the course of this assignment?” Self-assessment will also be incorporated into the students’ final marks for the project.</p>	<p>Relationships key Critical understanding of self</p> <p>Socio-constructivist Valuing what learners bring, knowledge as dynamic</p> <p>Environment tied to learning</p> <p>Environment tied to learning, emotion as integral to learning</p> <p>Broader community context Relationships key</p> <p>Environment tied to learning Knowledge as dynamic</p> <p>Complex approach to learning</p> <p>Critical understanding of self, developing autonomy</p> <p>Socio-constructivist</p>
--	---

Table 1. Ecosystems unit plan

The unit plan on ecosystems exemplifies how points of connection between Decolonizing Pedagogy and SRL can be addressed in one unit. It is important to stress that this unit has not been taught in the classroom, but serves only as an example to show how a teacher might structure activities that are already being taught as part of the curriculum to enact principles of an integrated pedagogy. Although specific aspects of the unit have been related to the points of connection, many times the overall structure and orientation to teaching can be more fundamentally tied to the integrated pedagogy.

Relating to Points of Connection

Foundation Beliefs about Learning. The kind of inquiry activities described in the unit plan supports complex approaches to learning. As students form questions about their specific topic of inquiry they may be encouraged to branch out into other disciplines, or represent their understandings using skills developed outside typical scientific protocols. For example, a student may inquire about why Stanley Park has such a large and successful colony of great blue herons (*Ardea herodias fannini*). To determine the answer, this student may need to conduct a statistical analysis, or explore historical observation and/or population records of herons from the area. Alternatively, the student may ask the Elder about stories describing the life histories of the herons. Inquiry questions may be answered through various means, and students can be encouraged to explore diverse perspectives in their learning. To represent their knowledge, students may decide to build on skills in a particular area. For example, a student may wish to represent learning using a poem, dance, newsletter, comic, or a more traditional essay. Content area classes represent a key opportunity to demonstrate the complexity and interconnectedness of how knowledge may be understood.

The unit pays particular attention to knowledge as a process. In our example, the class co-constructs a shared background knowledge from which students can build an inquiry question. They are then asked to plan, discuss strategies, and reflect on their learning in order to complete a project, either individually or in small groups. Encouraging students to engage in a back and forth process to define and refine their learning helps them to see their own learning as a process. In particular, after inquiry projects have been shared, the teacher may ask if students still have questions, or if their questions have changed. Incorporating this simple discussion may encourage students to see their knowledge as ongoing and ever-changing.

In the ecosystems unit, learners work together to socially construct both content understanding and learning strategies. This development occurs through large and small group work, and co-constructing assessment criteria. Approaching learning as a socio-constructivist activity demonstrates value for a range of perspectives. For example, using the reports, visual representations, and presentations of other students' inquiry as an important part of the class learning creates a context where diversity is essential to deepen and broaden our understanding of the world and humans' place in it. This kind of environment has the potential to create positive and authentic learning communities where social relationships are less likely to reflect colonial stratification.

Interconnections. Relationships among students and community members can also be fostered through the activities in the ecosystems unit plan. The group work mentioned above can provide opportunities for students to regulate one another (co-regulation, Hadwin et al., 2011), for groups to regulate themselves (socially-shared regulation Volet et al., 2009), and for students to regulate themselves in the service of others (socially responsible regulation Hutchinson, 2013). For example, when working on projects together, students may ask each other to repeat instructions, decide together how they want to present information as a group, or encourage one another in their learning goals. During this time a teacher can support students to develop effective strategies to work effectively in groups, or the class may co-construct some rules about expectations during group work.

Beyond providing opportunities to develop relationships, the unit also encourages students to create specific relationships with Elders, or other knowledgeable people in their communities. By asking students to think about how they might thank the Elders for the gift of their knowledge and time, students are taught how to create responsible, respectful, and reciprocal relationships. Students might perform a task to help the Elder, think of a

gift the class could present to the Elder, or share something they have created such as a story, song, or dance based on the knowledge the Elder shared with them. These kinds of activities not only help the class create a better relationship with that particular Elder but also nurtures a decolonizing perspectives that prioritizes Indigenous knowledge and develops respect for Indigenous knowledge keepers and perspectives.

Classroom environment described in the unit plan is tightly connected to the kind of learning that may occur. In an environment where diversity is deeply valued and respected, students may be more likely to work with creative and critical ideas, or further explore different perspectives. In particular, our unit is embedded in the specific context of the school and the broader community where the students live. Taking the educational context beyond the physical space of the classroom may extend the imaginative and emotional possibilities for student learning. Students become engaged with the natural environment. They can see, in a concrete way, how they are connected to plants and animals in the web of life. Alexandria experienced this first-hand in her technical education and found this to be a very valuable tool in her own learning. The Earth becomes forefront in the learning process as an additional teacher, classroom and resource for students. Students gain first-hand knowledge and experience to bring together the pieces of the whole picture of our Mother Earth—how she functions, how we all share this precious gift, and where all organisms, from human to plant, fit in to the whole.

What learners bring to the classroom is important for this unit, as it is based on the co-constructed background knowledge of the class. This foundation gives the entire class a starting point from which they can build their inquiry. In addition, the co-construction process helps students identify peers who may be possible resources for their particular question. Working in groups allows students to share key research and learning strategies that emerge from diverse perspectives. Students are able to learn a greater diversity of understandings and perspectives on ecosystems through the contributions of their classmates. Furthermore, sharing strategies and approaches allows each student to be better equipped in facing learning challenges in the future.

Key Internal Processes. Although we highlighted one main area where emotional learning is specifically targeted, it may be integrated throughout the unit. In particular, students are encouraged to think about their relationship with particular ecosystems in developing an art project. We hope that using a creative form of expression might facilitate emotional learning about students' unique relationships to the land they inhabit. In addition to this larger project, students can be encouraged to share their emotional connections to ecosystems in discussions of what they already know. Incorporating emotional knowledge into co-constructed background knowledge can demonstrate the validity and value of emotions in learning. Furthermore, students are encouraged to incorporate emotion into the formation of inquiry questions, research, and final projects. By infusing learning with emotion, students are able to gain balanced perspectives on curricular content.

In the unit plan we suggest that students can be supported to be metacognitive about their role in the surrounding social context and environment, and also about their own learning. For example, we built in strategic questions where students are asked to reflect on humans' impact on specific ecosystems, and their particular relationship with an ecosystem. These questions give the teacher and students an opportunity to explore how social structures and individuals might serve to harm and benefit various ecosystems. Critiquing social structures and human activity in an ecological context may spur motivation to re-imagine social relationships. Within this context, students are asked to reflect on their own thinking and learning. In our example, the class co-constructs assessment criteria for their inquiry project. This kind of activity helps students to reflect on the kind of learning they feel will be important and valuable. In addition, this criteria can be used as a framework for students to think about their own inquiry process. By developing a critical awareness both of society and self, students are able to autonomously set and achieve socially responsible goals.

Autonomy in the unit presented here develops through the meaningful choices provided throughout, and through the sharing of inquiry projects. In particular, students are supported to create a refined inquiry question that is relevant to their own experience and within the framework of their own diverse communities and perspectives.

Focusing time and energy on those questions most relevant to students acknowledges and supports the development of student autonomy over their own learning. In addition, students become interested and motivated to meet their personal learning goals. Students are able to further practice autonomy over how they represent their learning. This choice enables them to direct skill development in a particular area that might be more useful to personal or community goals.

Conclusion

Consideration of place within an integrated decolonizing-SRL teaching approach can be especially useful for non-Indigenous teachers interested in supporting the diverse learning needs of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. Attending to the points of connection between decolonizing and SRL pedagogies creates a springboard for non-Indigenous teachers to begin wrestling with the more uncomfortable aspects of colonialism in the classroom. Learning can become more closely tied to student life experience when students are able to direct their learning within a decolonizing-SRL approach. Using place-based approaches in combination with Decolonizing Pedagogy and self-regulated learning can help ensure non-Indigenous teachers are able to support all learners in acquiring knowledge about the earth and her web of life.

References

- Archibald, J. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Basso, K. H. (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Battiste, M., & Henderson, J. (Y. (2009). Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge in Eurocentric education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 32(1), 5.
- Battiste, M. (2002). *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education: A literature review with recommendations*. Ottawa, ON: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Ltd.
- BC Ministry of Education Aboriginal Education. (2013). Aboriginal education enhancement agreements. Retrieved from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/agreements/welcome.htm>
- BC Ministry of Education. (2015). Science seven curriculum. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/science/7>
- BC Ministry of Education. (2016). Aboriginal Education Resources. Retrieved from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/documents.htm#fppol>
- Brayboy, B. M. J., Castagno, A. E., & Solyom, J. A. (2014). Looking into the hearts of Native peoples: Nation building as an institutional orientation for graduate education. *American Journal of Education*, 120, 1-24.
- Brayboy, B. M. J., & Maughan, E. (2009). Indigenous epistemologies and teacher education: The story of bean. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(1), 1-21.
- Butler, D. L., & Cartier, S. C. (2004). Learning in varying activities: An explanatory framework and a new evaluation tool founded on a model of self-regulated learning. *Annual Meetings of the Canadian Society for Studies in Education*, Winnipeg, MB.
- Butler, D. L., Schnellert, L., & Perry, N. E. (2017). *Developing self-regulating learners*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.
- Cartier, S. C., & Butler, D. L. (2004). Elaboration and validation of the questionnaires and plan for analysis.

- Castagno, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 941-993. doi:10.3102/0034654308323036
- Cesaire, A. (2000). *Discourse on colonialism* (J. Pinkham Trans.). New York, NY: Monthly Review.
- Corntassel, J. (2012). Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 86 - 101.
- Deer, F. (2013). Integrating Aboriginal perspectives in education: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(2), 175.
- Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it, you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria, K. Foehner & S. Scinta (Eds.), *Spirit and reason: The Vine Deloria Jr. reader* (1st ed., pp. 40-60). Colorado: Fulcrum Press.
- Dion, S. D. (2009). *Braiding histories: Learning from Aboriginal people's experiences and perspectives*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Hadwin, A. F., Jarvela, S., & Miller, M. (2011). Self-regulated, co-regulated, and socially shared regulation of learning. In B. J. Zimmerman, & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance* (1st ed., pp. 65-84). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Harper, H. (2000). "There is no way to prepare for this": Teaching in First Nations schools in northern Ontario - issues and concerns. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 24(2), 144-157.
- Hutchinson, L. R. (2013). *Young children's engagement in self-regulation at school*. Ph D, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2005). *Comparison of socio-economic conditions, 1996 - 2001*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- Kirkness, V. J., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First nations and higher education: The four R's - respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), 1 - 15.
- Madden, B., Higgins, M., & Korteweg, L. (2013). "Role models can't just be on posters": Re/membering barriers to Indigenous community engagement. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(2), 212.
- Marker, M. (2009). Indigenous resistance and racist schooling on the borders of empires: Coast Salish cultural survival. *Paedagogica Historica*, 45(6), 757-772.
- Marker, M. (2011). Teaching history from an Indigenous perspective: Four winding paths up the mountain. In P. Clark (Ed.), *New possibilities for the past: Shaping history education in Canada* (pp. 97-112). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Mason, R. (2008). Conflicts and lessons in First Nations secondary education: An analysis of BC First Nations studies. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 31(2), 130.
- Newhouse, D. (2008). Ganigonhi: Oh: The good mind meets the academy. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 31(1), 184-197.
- Perry, N. E., Turner, J. C., & Meyer, D. K. (2006). Classrooms as contexts for motivating learning. In P. A. Alexander, & P. H. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of education psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 327 - 348). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Phillips, R. (2010). "Try to understand us": Aboriginal elders' views on exceptionality. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 20(1), 64 - 79.
- Smith, G. H. (2000). Protecting and respecting Indigenous knowledge. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 209-224). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous people*. New York: Zed Books.
- Stoler, A. L. (2008). Epistemic politics: Ontologies of colonial common sense. *The Philosophical Forum*, 39(3), 349-361.
- Strong-Wilson, T. (2007). Moving horizons: Exploring the role of stories in decolonizing the literacy education of white teachers. *International Education*, 37(1), 114-131.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.
- Volet, S., Vauras, M., & Salonen, P. (2009). Self- and social regulation in learning contexts: An integrative perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(4), 215-226.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into Practice*, 41(2), 64-70.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2008a). Goal setting: A key proactive source of academic self-regulation. In D. H. Schunk, & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 267-296). New York, NY: Erlbaum.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2008b). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 166-183.

Nikki L. Yee is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of British Columbia, and a former teacher. She is interested in exploring the concept of decolonization for non-Indigenous peoples, and the implementation of an integrated decolonizing-self-regulated learning pedagogy that will help non-Indigenous teachers support Indigenous students in inclusive classrooms.

Alexandria Gallon is pursuing her BSc. in Environmental Biology at the University of Regina. It was her passion for Mother Earth that led Alexandria to pursue schooling and a career in the field of environmental biology. She is currently involved with research looking at Saskatchewan bullsnakes.

Angus Wilson & Joanne L. Yovanovich

Place-Based Learning on Haida Gwaii

Joanne Yovanovich has been an educator on Haida Gwaii for over twenty years, as an elementary teacher, vice principal, principal, and District Principal of Aboriginal Education. A member of the *Tsaahl* clan, she helps to develop critical pieces of the culturally responsive education approach utilised in School District 50 (Haida Gwaii), as well as ensuring the district observes all protocols associated with embracing Haida ways of knowing in the public educational context. Angus Wilson worked on the north coast for almost twenty years as a teacher, school administrator at both elementary and secondary levels, and finally as Superintendent of School District 50 (Haida Gwaii) for eight years. He recently moved to School District 75 (Mission) to continue his work as a superintendent, committed to hands on and place-based ways of learning.

Meaningful Connections to Place

Place and our relationship to the land defines who we are, what we notice, how we live in the world and how we live with each other. Haida Gwaii is situated in the Pacific Northwest, as a series of 150 islands, includes bogs, and lowlands, snow-capped mountains and cliffs that extend to the ocean, long stretches of sandy beaches and areas that commonly receive 10m waves. It is a land between sea and sky where the worldview that “everything is connected to everything else” means there is a symbiotic relationship between humans and non-humans, natural and supernatural beings. The place of Haida Gwaii reminds us that we are all connected. (Nichol & Yovanovich, 2011, p. 11)

Most educators recognise the value of students receiving education in outdoor, non-traditional class settings, but place-based learning (PBL) is more than field trips to “get some air” or visits to the fire station. True PBL incorporates local experiences into the learning context and connects the learner to a broader community and is usually, if not always, interdisciplinary in approach.

We are an oral culture. Before European contact, our records of events, knowledge and technology were carefully preserved in our oral histories, and accompanied by visual representation in the form of two-dimensional form line, carving, weaving and dance. Even today, almost all Haida objects – from everyday utensils to monumental poles – are painted, carved or woven with our clan crests and histories to show our rights and privileges. In order to properly “read” these figures, one needs to know the histories they represent. (Collison, 2011, p. 17)

This place and culture are inextricably linked together and create one story, in a language unique to this place.

Haida Language reflects the interconnectedness with the land, sea, sky. There are many words to describe the subtle differences related to the land, sea and sky. For instance, there are 16 weather definitions, 15 cloud, 34 rain, 4 sun, 72 wind descriptions, 54 tide and 33 supernatural (beings). (Nichol & Yovanovich, 2011, p. 67)

Place-based learning is almost unavoidable on Haida Gwaii. Blessed with fantastical outdoor opportunities, and limited virtual connectivity or urban environments, we have embraced our strengths and try to ensure our students

are in their local place and culture as much as possible. We hope a few examples outlined below might help others to realise the vast potential for authentic learning experiences.

The Greenhouses

Beginning with an idea from a pair of teachers in 2009, a modest greenhouse was constructed in the yard at George M. Dawson Secondary, a small school of around 100 students. Students from several classes have worked since 2009 with two teachers, Mr. Shulbeck, who has a sciences background, and Mr. Seifert, who has a humanities background, on the development of a local food programme and a comprehensive outdoor educational experience that merges multiple subject areas.

The task began by collecting timber from an old dock in the community of Port Clements; this lumber was then processed by the students in their woodworking classes using an Alaska mill. This lumber was used to lay beds for gardens which grow traditional foods (such as Haida potatoes) and medicines as well as other vegetables that grow well in our cool, wet climate. Produce was then harvested and processed in home economics classes and tied into social studies topics such as the agricultural revolution and globalisation. In science class, the students used both modern technology and traditional Haida and agrarian knowledge to (for example) measure soil acidity, review the seed cycle, and genetics. The students eventually created



multimedia reports on their project, which were in turn reported orally by an entire class to the Board of Education. Since 2010, this programme has been expanded still further; students have built, with the support of maintenance staff, a large greenhouse to expand and extend the number of foods produced. Documentation by students now also involves art and photography. Living on Haida Gwaii, further expansion included utilising the ocean, from clam digging, the use of seaweed, and many other resources as we allowed our students to reclaim their connection to the land. Students also walk in two worlds: while learning about traditions, they embrace modernity through sound use of scientific instruments, electronic devices and the like.

A sample lesson at the grade nine or ten level for social studies might follow this structure: The class is taken to the green house and a small group of students is assigned the



task of collecting beans, snow peas, or a similar vegetable. A second group quickly cleans the vegetables at the benches in the greenhouse as they are brought in. A final group of students are tasked with collecting data on the time the collection takes, the quantity of beans gathered, and the time for the rough cleaning. Returning to the classroom, in a second phase of the lesson, the teacher leads them in a discussion of energy/caloric value of what was collected, and asks the class to estimate how much time and cost would be involved in commercially harvesting enough beans to feed the class or community. The third phase of the lesson then connects this to modern day agriculture with a short

reading on farm labourers in California. The potential final part of the lesson could vary from a class debate on farm automation; think-pair-share on the balance between fair wages for labourers and low cost for food; or a discussion about how early European colonists arriving on Haida Gwaii might have dealt with the challenges of growing crops here.

This greenhouse has been so successful incorporating a multi-disciplinary approach, other schools began their own. Neighbouring Tahayghen Elementary connected directly with George M. Dawson Secondary, their students working directly with secondary students. Our other elementary schools built their own, including the massive longhouse-style wooden greenhouse at Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary, large enough to include beds of vegetables for all of its 150+ students. It is notable that all students in the district receive locally grown food from area farmers as well in a project called Farm to School, which helps connect food security to their sense of self and land.

Local Pedagogy and Practice

“When you weave, the first process of weaving is going into the forest to collect the bark, this step ensures that your hands stay in touch with the earth, the ancestors, and ourselves” (Diane Brown, personal communication). The parents and community members have consistently requested to take students out onto the land. It is strongly believed that children learn from the land.

Place-based teaching practices recognise connecting learning to students by making it relevant and interdisciplinary. Thus, living on Haida Gwaii helps inform everything we do. All students get exposure to the Haida language and culture in not just specialised classes, but in how we teach our other curricular areas from marine biology to English classes. For example, about half of the stories in a secondary school English class might be from an Aboriginal perspective; in a science class, students learn the proper Haida names for the creatures they observe as they walk the intertidal area. Another example might be translating and reading ‘In Flanders Fields’ in Haida and English, which has become a feature of many Remembrance Day ceremonies in our schools, as well as the stories of the young men who served overseas.

PBL works best when it is cross curricular and resonates with students by generating or incorporating story. This can be seen with mathematics, as featured in the book *Thluuwaay 'Waadluxan Mathematical Adventures*. This book connects the place and culture of Haida Gwaii with a variety of math concepts from primary to secondary levels. These range from determining the ratio of length to width of a canoe to estimating the number of creatures on the shoreline. But more importantly, it turns math into a story and that story is connected to the place in which the students are learning. The angle the dock is at, with the rising and falling tides, is linked to what tides are, and even the adventures to be had when caught on a peninsula turned island.

Story is also built by the observer as they enter our schools. We strive to provide the visual cues that inform the observer that they are in a very specific place, and not merely a school. Queen Charlotte Secondary School opened in 2002, and two carved poles representing the two main Haida clans, Ravens and Eagles, were raised in June, 2015 at the school's entrance. The poles welcome students, teachers and community members to the school and acknowledge the clans of those attending this place of learning. If a school can architecturally draw from the traditional style of the local culture, and can structurally allow you access to the outdoors, you are halfway to getting students, educators, and community members to write their own story. Learning is more readily retained and relevant.

Another example is Daguu Sgan (Strong Man), located in the Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary School in Skidegate. The cedar pole was carved by Haida artist Tim Boyko in 1999. There is a steel post that supports the wooden ceiling beams which is the centre of the pole. Strong Man was made using two large cedar pieces the front and back that are held in place around the steel post with large bolts. These totem poles invite the following questions:



How do you think Strong Man was placed in the school? Can you imagine a story with Strong Man in it? What lines of symmetry do you see in the carving? Estimate the length of his braid. How many strands of hair can you see/feel?

Schools have used concepts of PBL to organize three recent events, and, indeed, these events also serve as examples of culturally responsive education at the district level. First, at Queen Charlotte Secondary School, a feast for 400 people followed the pole raising to commemorate the event. A second recent event was the Laa Gaang Nang (Big Feast) hosted by Tahayghen Elementary School in Masset. Tahayghen school teachers and students worked for two years with their Haida language Elders to organize this event. The focus of the feast was to honor and experience traditional Haida feast protocols. Preparation for Laa Gaang Nang involved extensive community-based research to learn about traditional protocols that included traditional seating arrangements, foods served at a feast, and procedures for gifting. All gifts given during the feast were hand-made, and for this event made by the school's students. The third recent event involved the completion of an outdoor mural painted on school grounds of Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary School in Skidegate. The mural designed and painted by two collaborating artists, one Haida and one non-Haida, depicts the life-cycle of the salmon, the school logo, and acknowledges the different perspectives and ways of learning represented in the community. These three events, the pole raising, traditional feast, and mural are examples of bringing the community and school together. As many community members have had negative experiences with school, both as students and as parents, providing opportunities to strengthen this relationship is crucial.



PBL involves learning in place, with a deep connection between learner, location, and activity. We believe that many of our practices here reflect the best ideas of place-based learning and the related concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. We see place, teaching, and learning as an ongoing weaving of interconnected stories, and we continue to strive to make PBL an inherent and necessary part of all our work here on Haida Gwaii.



References

- Collison, N. (2011) Story of the Haida people. In S. Steedman & N. Collison (Eds.), *That which makes us Haida – the Haida language* (pp. 17-20). Skidegate, BC: Haida Gwaii Museum Press.
- Nichol, C., & Yovanovich, J. (Eds.) (2011). *Thluuwaay 'Waadluxan: Mathematical adventures*. Queen Charlotte, BC: School District 50 Haida Gwaii and Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy.

Angus Wilson is the Superintendent of Schools for School District 75 (Mission). Previously he has been a teacher and administrator at both the elementary and secondary level in a broad variety of roles. His knowledge of useless trivia is admirable.

Joanne I. Yovanovich

I was born and raised in the *Ts'aahl* Eagle Clan of Skidegate on Haida Gwaii, my Haida name is *Taanud Jaad*. I work with School District 50 and was full-day kindergarten teacher, vice principal, and principal of Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary School. I now have the position of Principal of Aboriginal Education. I am rooted in my community and the place of Haida Gwaii, I strive to connect the worlds of cultural and school knowledge.

Cara Santucci

Using Children's Literature in the Intermediate Classroom

The story of my wondering began long ago when I first started teaching. Since beginning teaching, I have wanted to find a strength-based approach to reach all my learners but did not know how. As the years passed and my success and effectiveness as a teacher grew, I still had numerous tensions that I wanted to explore. My passion towards literacy was the initial driving force for my recent inquiry. Realizing my own enthusiasm for Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and the potential impact it can have on my students, ignited a passion and curiosity within me to deeply explore how to effectively use children's literature and text sets in conjunction with backward design and UDL principles in content area lessons.

In today's diverse classrooms, students embody a wide range of literacy levels. Consequently, introducing children's literature as a means of reading to learn is an accessible way to convey content area knowledge and support successful literacy learning at the same time. Diakiw (1990) discusses research behind storying, or forming stories in the mind, which suggest that storying is beneficial to all types of learners as it is a scaffold that builds upon background knowledge. He states that "young children find it easier to assimilate new information when this information is presented within the structure of a story" (p. 297).

In my inquiry, I brought story – through picture books – into content areas to support student learning. Fresch and Harkins (2009) suggest that since textbooks are "written to meet the needs of a 'typical' student, they will not meet the reading needs of all students" (p. 4). They provide a strong argument for using picture books, asserting that textbooks have many limitations, such as being "confusing and boring" (p. 3); conversely, picture books are "an ideal genre for developing interest in reading and content" (p. 2). Textbooks, they explain, often provide only one perspective, children's literature can be more culturally inclusive and provide another mode of engagement, which capitalizes well on UDL principles. Children's literature has been an avenue for me to present a new concept in content areas. Picture books "draw us in while simultaneously teaching something new and engaging about their topics" (p.1). Fresch and Harkins (2009) go on to explain that children's literature is a brief and organized way to present information, that "the words and illustrations work together to communicate the message" (p. 5). High interest books are a "way-in" (Bintz, 2011, p. 34) to improve student engagement and motivation in all content areas. Using the strengths and stretches of my students, namely identifying that they enjoy stories, embrace the power of choice and experience difficulty reading grade level texts, I created three comprehensive text sets for grade 4 and 5 units: mapping, forces and machines, and the human body.

When I differentiated teaching, or presented information along a developmental continuum by providing text sets of various levels, my students were encouraged to choose based on their readiness, interests, and learning profile; that is, their strengths and needs, which in turn fostered motivation and engagement. During independent work time my students were keen to use a variety of resources available to them and wanted to learn more details than required. I discovered that if my students were engaged and provided with a variety of complexity in materials in order to challenge and support all my learners, they were much more likely to persevere to successfully demonstrate their knowledge.

When asked if they thought the children's literature text sets were for everyone, my students' responses were insightful. One student said "yes, because they still give useful information along with pictures" (field notes, October 27, 2014). One student astutely mentioned that "this storybook gives the same information a textbook might give, but in a more fun way" (field notes, October 14, 2014) while another student reflected that the children's literature used during the mapping unit helped her learn by "giving us information that isn't boring like a textbook!" (field notes, November 12, 2014). From these statements I concluded that my students were able to utilize the text sets within their zones of proximal development: some were able to pull out straightforward facts from the text while others were able to delve more deeply and critically, realizing that just how the text sets were helping them learn.

By providing choices of text sets, my students began to appreciate that if they choose texts at their level, they would learn more. "Picking your own books helps because if everyone had the same book at the same level it would be hard for some or too easy for some, or it might not have the information the person needs," and "choosing your own info book helps because if you need a book at your level and someone gives you a different level you will not really understand what the book is saying" (field notes, June 22, 2015). As Tomlinson (2000) discusses, success is achieved when students are taught according to their zone of proximal development, or slightly more advanced of their readiness level.

Due to my successes in using a variety of text sets to teach content area lessons, I plan to continue to create more text sets that fit with the core competencies of the new curriculum in order to benefit all my diverse learners.



Some of the text sets I created and used. From left to right: mapping; forces and machines; and, the human body.

References

- Bintz, W. P. (2011). "Way-in" books encourage exploration in middle grades classrooms. *Middle School Journal*, 42(3), 34-45.
- Diakiw, J. Y. (1990). Children's literature and global education: Understanding the developing world. *The Reading Teacher*, 43(4), 296-300.
- Fresch, M. J. & Harkins, P. (2009). *The power of picture books: Using content area literature in middle school*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Tomlinson, C. A (2000). *Differentiation of instruction in the elementary grades*. Retrieved from ERIC database (ED443572).

Cara Santucci is a grade 5 teacher at Pearson Road Elementary School in Kelowna, BC. Recently earning her Master's degree, her passion is for inclusion and using children's literature within a Universal Design framework. Contact: cara.santucci@sd23.bc.ca

Belinda Chi

Inquiry Centres in Intermediate Classrooms: Why Play Doesn't Stop at Primary

There's a strange shift that happens when students transition between primary to intermediate. One of the biggest changes that parents focus on is the idea of letter grades. However, for students, when they move from primary into intermediate, they usually feel more of a loss than a gain, and that loss is in centre time. In most intermediate classrooms, we see a departure from centres in the intermediate schedule.

Being an intermediate teacher, I have been guilty of this myself. However, when I talk to my primary colleagues about play, I am reminded about the importance of it and why we need to allow our intermediate students to continue exploring their creative and innovative minds through play.

In my grade 4/5 classroom, I usually bring in recycled materials for my students to play with. Together as a class before we begin our Inquiry Centres, we gather at the carpet and on the board I write the question, "What do you see?" For example, with our most recent Inquiry Centre, I brought in paper towel rolls for the students, so we wrote "paper towel rolls" on the board to begin our brainstorm.

The next question I use to prompt their thinking is, "What else can it be?" Although the question is simple, the importance of it is that it is open ended and it allows the students to imagine what else this paper towel roll can become. That particular day, some students suggested that the paper towel roll could become a canoe, or a rocket, or vase. As we brainstormed together, within minutes, you could feel the excitement of the students; they just wanted to get started.

Once they were ready, each student was given one paper towel roll to create anything of their choice. I usually allow about an hour for students to make their creations. During this time, I would walk around the classroom and check in with students about what they were creating. Sometimes, I would stop them to highlight a student's work so far. Taking the time to highlight what students have done at different points in their creation makes them feel good about what they're doing, and it also allows students to be inspired by another's work. At the end of the hour, I would ask the students to put their creations on their desks and we would do a gallery walk to see what everyone had created.

Inquiry Centres not only allow students the freedom to explore and create, but they are also a great way for students to discover their interests. This kind of activity can also be used as a springboard for an Open Inquiry project. For example, one year, I had a student who was obsessed with folding paper airplanes. I noticed he kept on leaning towards this idea of paper planes each time we had Inquiry Centres. As I engaged in conversation with him about his interest in paper planes, he told me that he wondered what kind of paper plane would fly the fastest. He must have folded more than a hundred paper planes that term, and his inquiry reminded me of Albert Einstein's famous quote, "Play is the highest form of research." When I introduced the Open Inquiry project, this student came back to this question of how he could create a paper airplane that would fly the fastest, and the furthest. He continued to explore folding different styles of planes with various types of paper. This student

was engaged in his learning and was curious about the outcome of his findings, which became his focus for the Open Inquiry project. Throughout the project, this student demonstrated his ability to communicate his ideas, think about his question critically and creatively, and developed a positive personal identity as he felt very successful in his learning.

In conclusion, I believe that Inquiry Centres allow students to be creative and curious learners in the intermediate classroom, and is an activity which creates an engaging environment for learners to be innovative and learn from one another. It also allows students to feel motivated and successful about their work. As we move towards the ideas brought forth in British Columbia's revised curriculum, I believe that Inquiry Centres is a great way for teachers to nurture both the Curricular and Core Competencies in our students.

Belinda Chi is an elementary school teacher in Burnaby. She currently teaches a grade four and five class at a local community school. The focus in her classroom is to build a strong community and positive environment for students to explore their learning through writing, critical thinking, and inquiry.

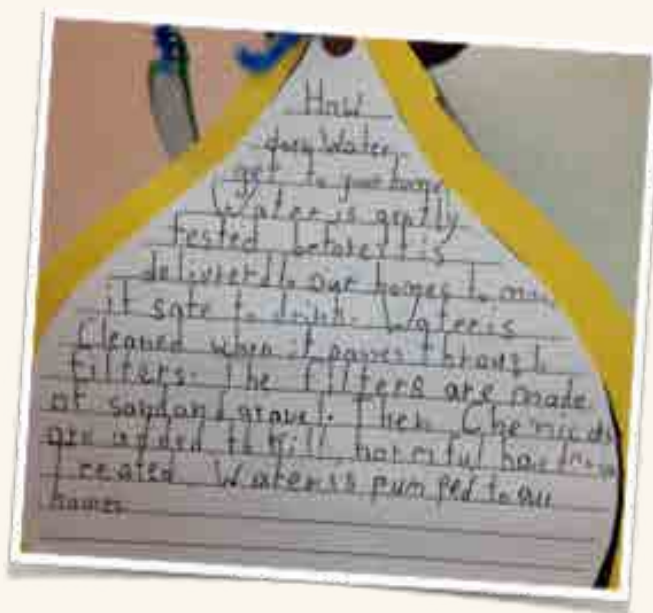
Don Blazeovich

From Writers' Workshop to Inquiry: Evolving Writing

Exploring Writers' Workshop with my students in Grade 2 and Grade 3 invited me along a pedagogical path in my teaching career that honours everyone in a collaborative community of writers. Upon reflecting on my writing program, I found that several of my lessons remained in the scaffold stage where my students merely recreated, or added to, a teacher-provided template. Nancie Atwell and Donald Graves (1998), influential thinkers on my teaching practice, describe a workshop framework for writing that includes all learners by scheduling large blocks of writing time in order to generate topics, check in with students at the beginning of each lesson, teach mini-lessons, have mini-conferences, revise compositions, and publish selected works. Through implementing features of the Writers' Workshop approach, I was impressed with the diversity of writing that came from my students, even when we were exploring the same topic. Through the workshop model, explicit instruction helped me become more responsive to the immediate needs of my students. Time was provided for extended practice and repeated rehearsal of a variety of skills that were applied directly to the craft of writing. Writers' Workshop places value on student choice, which resonated deeply with me because I wanted my students to be active participants in their own learning. They would be encouraged to explore their passions and interests throughout the writing process.

With the revised curriculum in British Columbia being implemented, I wanted to bring what I learned from Writers' Workshop to an inquiry based learning community. How does this fit in with the revised BC curriculum? I feel that the core competencies align quite nicely through inquiry. Many facets can be addressed under "Communication: Acquire, interpret and present information, connect and engage with others, explain, recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments." Where possible, students can carry out experiments to engage in "Collaborate to plan, carry out and review constructions and activities." Critical and Creative Thinking skills may also be employed when students discover, consider, and make sense of the answers to their own questions such as: How can you drink the same water a dinosaur drank millions of years ago?

For the purpose of this introduction to inquiry, my goal was to familiarize my students with the Five Steps of the Inquiry Process, encourage diversity and ownership through asking questions and sharing findings, as well as allowing myself, the teacher, to begin to feel more comfortable looking at inquiry learning through the revised curriculum lens.



Conversation is ripe in a primary classroom and enables us to remain curious about each other. I decided to use both conversation and curiosity to invite my students into asking questions that were important to them and to co-construct curriculum understandings. Through scaffolding and gradual release of responsibility, I held on to a phrase that encourages me to guide my students and include their voices as writers, inquirers and thinkers. From her book, *In The Middle*, Nancie Atwell eloquently states that “freedom of choice does not undercut structure”.
The Structure

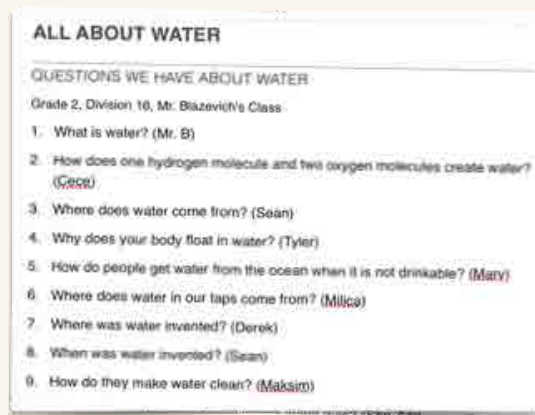
I decided to create five steps to an inquiry cycle for my students. I chose this because they all have five fingers and would likely remember all five steps. They are:

1. Ask A Question.
2. Become Curious. (Ask More Questions!)
3. Find Answers to Your Questions.
4. Make A Web. (Use Your Own Words).
5. Share Your Learning.

Modeling and Choice

1. Ask A Question: What is water?

Looking at the curriculum for Grade 2, the theme of Water is prevalent in Science. I decided to ask ‘What is water?’ as an open ended question and let my students take the lead.



2. Become Curious: Ask More Questions

From that simple question in step one, I prompted my students to ask any question about water that they would like to know the answer to. The only requirement was that, over time, everyone had to have a question to contribute to our Inquiry topic. Helping our classmates come up with a question and sharing similar questions were allowed in this community of thinkers. To my pleasant surprise, we accumulated thirty-four questions!

3. Find Answers to Your Questions

Now the challenging part began, finding answers to our questions. I enlisted the aid of our librarian and asked her to pull all the ‘water’ books in our school library. I also told the students to ask Mom and Dad to help find answers to their questions too. As part of our daily routine, story time became read aloud sessions where I shared with the students the books signed out from our library. Some students brought in articles printed from home to share as well. The sharing of these books, along with time to read in partners, also occurred during our Science time, now referred to as ‘Water Inquiry’. The children delighted in finding answers to many of our questions and gleefully pointed to the questions we discovered the answers to. Throughout the day, my students always had access to the library books on water. Occasionally, students would claim, “I knew that already.”



4. Make A Web: Use Your Own Words

When answers or interesting information was learned about water, I asked the students to tell me the most important word, or words, from the book or passage. I modeled how to add these ‘key words’ to a class web. In this process, I found that my students often shared short statements of fact. Of course, I didn’t want my students to merely state facts they had learned when answering the questions we generated together in Step 2- Become Curious, so we began to pay attention to how the books we read shared information. We practiced expressing

our thoughts using long, interesting sentences that helped us sound like scientists. Through conversation and scribing sentences on the whiteboard, we collaboratively added to the thoughts of our peers to generate a “sophisticated” sentence that would express information in an interesting manner that would draw the reader in. This frequent verbal rehearsal provided repeated practice in creating interesting sentences as well as confirming information that was being processed along the way.



For example, let’s look at the question: How much water is in your body?

Students’ Initial Response: Two thirds. (A mere summative response consisting of two words). Collaborative Response: Some people might not know that our bodies are made up of two thirds water. That is more than half of your body! Your body needs all of that water to stay hydrated and to stay healthy. Water is very important for your body. If you did not have water, you would not survive.

To create a space for further practice, I began to dismiss students at the end of class, or for lunch or recess, by asking an inquiry question for which we had already learned the answer. Receiving help from a nearby peer was always allowed and encouraged.

My students were given the choice of choosing any question from our list in Step 2 for which they would like to find the answer. Many of them wanted to work in partners, which allowed continued conversation, shared curiosity and learning within community. Where possible, I photocopied one page that contained at least part of the answer to their question. Individually, or with a partner, my students circled key words they felt were important to use in answering their question. My students added their key words to their own information web.

5. Share Your Learning

Using only their webs as a scaffold, I asked my students to tell me why they chose their key words. They practiced answering their questions like a scientist. Their job was to create approximately five interesting sentences that would answer their inquiry question. These sentences were proofread, edited, and revised. Their “good” copies were recorded on a raindrop- shaped paper. Several copies of each student’s raindrop were made available for all the students to choose from. The expectation was that if they added a peer’s raindrop to their own Inquiry Cloud, they could answer that question with confidence before adding more raindrops. If students could not read or understand what was written on another person’s raindrop, focused conversation and shared learning became the working noise in the classroom. Motivation remained high as many students wanted to collect every classmate’s raindrop. In the end, we had a virtual water inquiry rainstorm in our classroom.



Using Writer’s Workshop in my classroom previously, I knew that the students would surprise me with their diverse questions and curiosities about the topic of water. My a-ha! moments came when I noticed how engaged my students were while finding answers to their questions. They were so eager to share the answers to their classmates’ questions. When they added a peer’s raindrop to their own cloud, the conversations and questions that arose when talking to each other were genuine and sustained. They were collaborators as learners in an inquiry community. Unscripted by the teacher, they talked about the three states of matter, the water cycle, pollution, types of rainbows, hydrogen and oxygen molecules, and so much more. All stemming from their self -directed list of shared questions.



Revisiting the list of questions naturally occurred in the final step of Sharing Their Learning.

What next? Now that my students understood the five steps of the inquiry cycle, the stage was set for them to choose their own topic and continue to take the lead in their own learning.

References

Atwell, N. (2014) *In the middle: A lifetime of learning about writing, reading and adolescents* (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann/

Graves, D., Atwell, N., & Newkirk, T. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about reading, writing and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Don Blazeovich currently teaches a Grade 2 class in Burnaby, British Columbia. He is continually exploring ways to foster student voice and choice in the learning process, increase engagement, and to co-create shared understandings.



BCTELA

BC Teachers of English Language Arts

bctela.ca