

## Supporting SEL and Playful Literacy Learning Through Outdoor Learning in K-3

Presenters:  
Lisa Thomas & Jen Kelly

Wednesday, February 1st

3:15 – 4:15pm

\*Workshop handout & resources available at [padlet.com/POPEY](http://padlet.com/POPEY)

Use the Chat Box to share **where** you are today,  
and **what you're teaching** this year...

Messages  
Type message here...

We will start in ...

Live captions available  
in the Zoom toolbar.

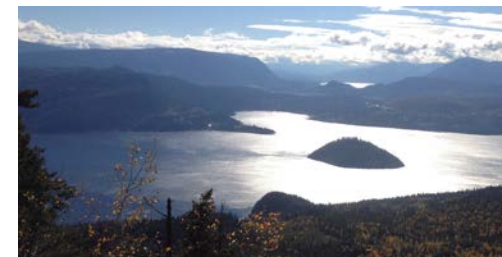


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*I live and work on the  
unceded traditional lands of  
the xʷməθkʷəyəm  
(Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh  
(Squamish) and sel̓wítulh  
(Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.*

*I acknowledge that I live, work,  
learn, and play on traditional,  
ancestral, and unceded  
Secwepemc territories.*



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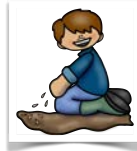
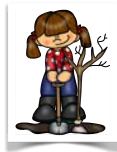
\*Additional K-3 literacy resources available at [popey.ca](http://popey.ca)

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## Today we are exploring...



Strategies, resources and ideas to incorporate outdoor learning and time in nature into meaningful & connected K–3 literacy learning experiences



In our families and our schools, a **sense of belonging** comes from laughing, sharing and learning together. Equally important is the sense of belonging that arises from **being immersed in the natural world**. All children should be given the chance to recognize that they are **part of a larger community of other living things**. Building community is about **creating long-term relationships**, not only with each other but **with the natural world**. And like any relationship this involves commitment, time and effort.

## Nature Numbers to Ponder



The number of advertising messages a child encounters in a day

**2500**

The number of hours the average North American child sits in front of a screen each year

**2738**

The number of corporate logos the average child can identify

**300**

The number of native plants and animals the average child can identify

**10**

## Purposeful Play & Inquiry



The process of **inquiry** is a **perspective** on learning that begins with an **intense curiosity**, a curiosity that generates **close observation, noticings, wonderings, and questions** that lead to **new** and interesting **ideas**.

Inquiry injects a **PLAY MINDSET** into all learning because it is a process that occurs when playing.

Setting off to **answer big questions** through **observation** and **experimentation** is a more formal description of an inherently **natural process**.

## A Continuum of Play for Educators

To: Everyone  
[Type message here...]



Adapted from Pyle and Daniels, 2017



Choose 2 types of play from above, and share your thoughts on how they could connect to outdoor learning opportunities.

BC Ministry of Education's Play Today: A Guide for Families

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## Connecting Learning to Land and Place

Making connections with place in English First Peoples courses is an integral part of bringing **Indigenous perspectives** into the classroom.



Peoples' **perspectives** are influenced by the **land** they are **connected** to. That means including **experiential learning** in local **natural and cultural situations**.

Wherever possible, look for **opportunities to take learning outside** in order for students to **make connections with the land and place** they are situated on.

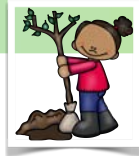
This may be as simple as a **nature walk** or an **outdoor story reading**, or it may involve a more **complex study** of a local **habitat or environment**.

In Our Own Words: Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K-3 Classroom – FNESC

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## I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of...



An exploration routine that:

- \* supports students as they **develop a mindset of curiosity** and **use language to actively and directly engage** with the natural world
- \* supports **social and emotional learning** by offering skills for **reflection** and by setting a tone of **learning, collaborating, and listening**
- \* helps educators to create an **inclusive and culturally relevant** learning environment, by **scaffolding cognitive thinking skills**
- \* encourages students to **reflect on, value, and share relevant connections** from their **lived experiences and perspectives**

Beetles Project – Resources for Outdoor Science Programs

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## I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of...



Students will...

- \* **Increase curiosity** about and **directly engage** with aspects of the **natural world**.
- \* **Make observations, ask questions, and relate findings to past experiences**.
- \* Learn that **descriptive observations** are distinct from statements of **opinion or identification**.

**"I see no more than you, but I have trained myself to notice what I see."**

– Sherlock Holmes

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I Notice ...

I Wonder ...

It Reminds Me Of...



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People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community, and place

Children develop a sense of place when they connect with their local communities and outdoor environment. Early learning is “of a place” when children and educators engage with local histories with respectful curiosity and a desire to contribute and share. Indigenous peoples have been the knowledge keepers of these places for hundreds of generations. Indigenous languages are some of the voices of these places.

BC Early Learning Framework

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## The Walking Curriculum

The simple act of taking a walk can emphasize the importance of place.

### The Motion Walk

Use as many senses as possible to complete this challenge. What is moving around you? What is on the move? Besides seeing movement, how else can you tell something is moving?

### The Line Walk

Find a human made line. Follow it. Where does it lead? Find a natural line (a track from an animal perhaps) – where does it lead? Once you return inside, visualize the lines you followed. Try to draw them and make a map of your walk.

### The History Walk

What evidence can you find on your walk of something that happened here before this moment? Use words to describe in as much detail what you think happened here. Pretend you are a detective and you are figuring out a situation.

A Walking Curriculum: Evoking Wonder and Developing a Sense of Place (K–12) – Judson

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## Leading a Walk or a Hike

Students can engage with the natural world by...

### Means of Engagement

Noticing  
Identifying  
Sketching  
Labelling

### Living Things to Notice, Identify & Describe

Birds  
Mammals  
Amphibians  
Invertebrates  
Fish  
Trees & Shrubs  
Wildflowers

### Descriptive Language & Communication

Qualities  
Attributes  
Describing Words  
Questions

The Big Book of Nature Activities: A Year-Round Guide to Outdoor Learning by Monkman & Rodenburg

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## Leading a Walk or a Hike: Some Pointers

Getting past the barriers to outdoor learning...

### 1. Dress Well

### 2. What to bring

a teacher backpack/bag with crayons, pencils, pencil crayons, erasers, nature journals, blank cards/notebooks, ziploc bags/jars for collecting samples, digital camera or smartphone – and backpacks for kids so they can be hands free

### 3. Hush mode

at times, you may want total silence to see/hear many kinds of animals; set it up so when you say "we're now in hush mode" all talking stops and walking is done quietly

## Leading a Walk or a Hike: Some Pointers

Getting past the barriers to outdoor learning...

### 4. Halfway past

if you see something you want to point out, keep walking until about half the group has passed it; then stop and step back to the middle of the group to discuss it, so all can see it

### 5. Kid containment

if you have a large group, designate a leader and a sweep

### 6. Getting back together

have a pre-arranged signal like a bell, a whistle, or a special word to bring everyone back to the meeting spot

### 7. Transitions

give kids a task as you walk – "How many natural noises can you hear between now and our next stop?" or do a scavenger hunt to focus their attention

## Fostering Engagement through a Forest Walk



## Fostering Engagement through a Forest Walk



## Fostering Engagement through a Forest Walk



The Walking Curriculum – Judson

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## Sit Spots: Storytelling inspired by observing nature



- \* self-selected spots that students can return to many times
- \* promotes careful observation and reflection
- \* stories can be factual or imaginary, or a blend of both
- \* stories can blend what they're seeing in the natural world with their own lives – e.g. *maybe that spider is a really good drummer*
- \* students might imagine what plants or animals are thinking or feeling; what would they say if they could talk?
- \* repeated visits to these sit spots can also highlight changes in the seasons and how these plants and animals are impacted

[Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children](#)

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## Sit spots for cultivating our powers of observation

- \* Choose one photo as your virtual sit spot
- \* What do you notice, wonder, or connect to?
- \* Write 2–3 thoughts about your chosen photo in the ChatBox



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## Some “Back Pocket” Outdoor Activities

### Possible activities you can do during an informal walk:

- \* stop every once in a while and closely investigate a fallen tree trunk, a log, or under a stone; areas where there are different kinds of moss are good; closely investigate leaf veins, flower parts, seeds, tree bark, etc.
- \* collect natural objects such as rocks, leaves, seeds and bark of different shapes and colours; do a bark rubbing or a sketch
- \* sit and listen for several minutes – in complete silence – and then compare notes on what you heard. What were the natural sounds?
- \* scan the area for signs of birds, including holes in trees, feathers, nests, and droppings
- \* do the same for mammals, such as tracks, scat, half-eaten cones, fur, bark gnawed off shrubs, or trees felled by beavers
- \* follow a bearing – using a compass, strike out in one direction, then crouch down every ten paces and find out what is living there

*The Big Book of Nature Activities: A Year-Round Guide to Outdoor Learning* by Monkman & Rodenburg

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## Kinesthetic & Artistic Connections to Nature

### Bark & Leaf Rubbings



[Edmonton & Area Land Trust](#)

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## Tips for Outdoor Learning



- ☑ SAFETY FIRST – have a safety plan and emergency protocols
- ☑ FIRST AID KIT & CELL PHONE – important school numbers saved
- ☑ SET BOUNDARIES – physical boundaries students know & respect
- ☑ STUDENT CALL BACK – a well-practiced signal to return
- ☑ SAFETY GAMES – fun games to practice safety drills and plans
- ☑ CHILD DRIVEN – follow students' interests and curiosities
- ☑ ALLOW TIME FOR FREE EXPLORATION – discovery & exploration
- ☑ SIT SPOTS – student chosen, for quiet reflection

[Environmental Educators PSA of BC](#)

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## Read Alouds to Support Outdoor Learning

**National Geographic Readers: In the Forest**  
By Shira Evans  
What kinds of interesting critters live amongst the forest trees?  
5-7 Age Range Level 20  
Favorite Assign Hide

[Epic Books](#)

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## Reflect & Share - Supporting Connections

Everyone  
Type message here...

Choose **one** of these to answer in the chat box:

- \* What does it mean to connect with land and space?
- \* What can we help our students notice, wonder & explore?
- \* How can we support our students' communication and thinking skills as they interact with the world around them?
- \* How can we help students ground their stories in land and place?

Share **one** connection, thought, or idea in the chat box,  
but **DON'T** press enter until the music stops.



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## Time in Nature Increases...

- ★happiness
- ★healthy risk-taking
- ★stress reduction
- ★self confidence
- ★resilience
- ★well being
- ★freedom
- ★Oh, and it's free



"No one will protect what they don't care about;  
and no one will care about what they've never experienced"

—Sir David Attenborough

Learning with Nature – Robb, Mew & Packham

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Educators collaborate with children and their families as partners in research. This means educators are continually observing, listening, and experimenting with an openness to the unexpected.



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## Reflections & Next Steps

Reflect on the activities & resources shared today:

- \* Numbers to Ponder – how kids spend their time
- \* Purposeful Play – a continuum, inquiry mindset
- \* I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me Of...
- \* The Walking Curriculum – leading walks, hikes, exploration
- \* Sit Spots – connecting time in nature to story, art, and more
- \* Read alouds to support connections to nature and noticing

Choose **ONE** thing you're most likely to try in your classroom or role. **Share** it in the ChatBox...



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## Anonymous Workshop Feedback

Please answer this three-question poll on your screen:

1. How would you rate this workshop?
2. What aspect of the workshop did you find most valuable?
3. Is there one (or more) strategy/activity you could try with your students next week?

If you'd like to save the Chat transcript...



*Your feedback is greatly appreciated!*

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## Sources

### Info Links

more info links are available on our [website](#)

[BC Ministry of Education's Play Today: A Guide for Families](#)

[BC Early Learning Framework](#)

[Beetles Project – Resources for Outdoor Science Programs](#)

[In Our Own Words: Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K-3 Classroom – FNEESC](#)

[Outdoor Learning Tips – Environmental Educators PSA of BC](#)

[Sit Spots: Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children](#)

### Books

The Walking Curriculum – Judson

The Big Book of Nature Activities – Monkman & Rodenburg

Purposeful Play – Mraz, Porcelli & Tyler

Learning with Nature – Robb, Mew & Packham

### Videos

more videos are available on our [YouTube channel](#)

[Bringing Core Content to Life With Outdoor Education](#)

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We hope to see you again soon...

Wednesday, February 8th – Story Workshop

Wednesday, February 15th – Literacy, SEL, and Global Citizenship

Wednesday, February 22nd – Fostering Curiosity Through Conversation



Lisa Thomas   Jen Kelly  
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## Video: Bringing Core Content to Life With Outdoor Education



[YouTube](#)

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