



Voice & Land

Learning Guide
April 2021



A photograph of a stone structure, possibly a wall or a pile of rocks, in a field. The background shows a hazy landscape with mountains and trees. The text is overlaid on the image.

Ask..

Who or what has
voice?

How can you express
your voice?

What message do
you/does land have?

Front Cover Image: Hannah S Rabbit & Habitat w/ Emma S & Maisy R
This Page: Gavin C Stone Structure

VOICE and LAND Learning Guide

Included within this exhibit there are many students' artworks within the collection of community voices, expressed here in digital formats, painting, ceramics, assemblage, fibre art, sound art, written and spoken word.

For photos of the work like the ones of land art below follow this link:

[LCAG Voice and Land artwork](#)



This is an example of a spontaneous creation on the shoreline of Okanagan Centre by a group of students- responding to what was there, in response to found ice and materials on the beach.

In this guide for the exhibition 'Voice and Land' I am going to suggest something a little different than you might expect. It is the suggestion that as guides of learning, and learners ourselves that we go out onto the land and listen. Whether it is a grove of trees by the schoolyard or a lake across the road, you GO OUTSIDE with your students with the intention to listen together. This creates a situation of, dare I say, LAND being Teacher, and 'teacher' in the traditional sense, joining the learners.

For the type of adventure that I propose it does involve some risk. Letting go of control is one of the most difficult things teachers are often able to do but it is very important in order to model for the students what it is to actually open your senses and perceptions.

Some things are caught not taught and as long as we lead learning sessions with our intentions preplanned upfront as to what the learning goals will be we are inviting students to heed us and what we have perceived previously. This negates the possibility of opening to perceptions in the moment.

Opening to one's perceptions in the moment on the land is the key here in the Voice and Land exhibit. The subtleties of the land are imbued with grace and beauty and depth that we could not possibly ever 'teach' our students. Our job is to create situations in which students may perceive the land for themselves. This will enable them to develop a lifelong connection with their local places that goes far beyond any of our intellectual interpretations of what their place means to them.

What I am suggesting here is an openness to the power of the perceptions of our students and their ability to develop their own ideas and constructs from their perceptions rather than ours. There are several ways that we can provide opportunities for this to happen which I will elaborate now.

ART IS VOICE

Art is voice. Voice is not simply speech expressing ideas and thoughts. Whether a dance, a song, spoken word, a painting, a sculpture, a digital creation, human expression has many forms. It is innate within us as human beings. This is what essentially it is to be human. This voice. Our voice.

The present show entitled Voice and Land invites us to play with our perceptions of land and what the land might be saying right now to us. We ARE an integral part of land (Descartes's separation of man and nature, in the Renaissance led us astray).

With a new BC curriculum with one of three core competencies being communication, art is now given its rightful place.

LAND HAS VOICE

Many cultures including the indigenous perspective in our world recognize that humans are a part of nature, and there exist many more-than-human beings alive in nature with their own intelligences.

Creative Process

In Breath

This process begins with what I call the 'In Breath'. This 'In Breath' is the attending to our perceptions. This may include in-depth research of the plight of the forests in British Columbia or an outside study for a month on a piece of land to come to understand the land in a more visceral way, or simply taking one's dog for a walk and noticing the movement of a quail just ahead on the trail then hearing the flutter of its feathers as it takes flight avoiding contact with your dog. These perceptions involve all of our senses. In response to the Voice and Land exhibit the preferred place to notice our perceptions is outside.

After this 'In Breath' as Piaget, a well known pedagogue would say "we mull over our new perceptions, ideas, and feelings to come to new ideas in new places of being". It is important to have reflection time with those new perceptions. As Piaget has stated all learning is in reflection and as artists we must value and attend to this. A part of this reflection is an inward gaze, noticing how you feel in response to the thoughts or if any thoughts arise within you. The important thing here is that you are connecting your new perceptions with your previous knowledge and beliefs.

Out Breath

Once each learner, including you, has integrated there in breath within themselves it is time to explore an appropriate way to express their new revelations. Understanding the parameters of your learning environment it is important to be as flexible as possible, including the possibility of a student seeking out technical skills of new areas on the Internet. This is where you are setting the stage for lifelong learning. Once a student identifies a curiosity and desire to learn a new skill, giving them the rain to pursue learning is your job. Especially during Covid there are a myriad of different programs for learning such as to draw, paint, sculpt, create digital videos and try out photography... The list is endless. Are you ready? This is quite a ride!

Clustering and collaborating

In our experience we have found that students will naturally identify clusters of similarities in their interests.

Oral sharing

Once the students have had some reflection time individually there is a very incredible way to develop their ideas further. This idea is something I did in a classroom of adult learners with Bob Kelly (creativity book) from U Calgary. Divide into groups of three. The first group of three forms a large circle bullet point; the second group of three will each go to a person in the initial circle and they will travel the circle clockwise once the rounds start. The third group of three shall each join the circle but when each round is over they will travel anti-clockwise. During each round each student will explain their idea to the other students in their group, then receive feedback/responses/questions which might carry their ideas forward. Each group may require different times for the rounds but I suggest five minutes for each group. This gives each person one minute to speak and one minute to hear responses and discuss. The group will rotate around the circle as needed with each student hearing a myriad of different ideas and input on their ideas. It is an amazing cross-fertilization of these ideas in response to the land.

Primary

Whole class discussion, students brainstorm various responses to being outside-walks, sit spots, bicycle rides... You can put charts on the wall of what they are hearing or thinking, classed by potential artistic medium or idea. Let their voices and choices ring!

These shall be loosely guided...for instance if mapping communities students could draw their neighborhoods in geographic areas on large paper. Share with them your inspirations or inklings- be honest- some things are 'caught, not taught'.

All Grades - Mindfulness

The ability to be fully awake in place precludes the culture in schools of students attending solely to this prescribed intention of the teacher. Creating authentic art begins with a more mindful attentiveness to what is around us...and here, in a response to the Voice and Land exhibit at the LCAG, a mindful listening to the land.

There is a lot written these days to help students become mindful in their place. Mindfulness improves self regulation lowers anxiety and increases the ability to learn. I do not suggest that we have to justify assisting students in attending to their perceptions by saying it will help their 'other' learning; this should never happen.

Books I recommend are:

Everybody Needs a Rock, by Byrd Taylor - a read aloud for the students- any age

a still quiet place by Amy Salzman, MD (2014)

Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness by Deborah Schoeberlein

“Mindfulness is the unified experience of paying attention to awareness.”
(Schoeberlein p. 63). Taking this outside is powerful, then creating art as a response is even more so.

Grades 4-12

#rememberearth

From Outside the Lens:

#Remember Earth

A Guided Lesson from the ArtHouse:

[#rememberearth session- Express yourself globally with this photo class!](#)

For teachers use:

[Lesson Plan](#)

[Lesson Plan Slides](#)

VOICE and LAND extensions

Potential Links for Outdoor Learning, such as BC's Classrooms 2 Communities - to support YOU to move learning onto the land around you!

[ImaginEd- examples of Gillian Judson's 'Walking Curriculum'](#)

[imaginED – education that inspires learners of all ages](#)

[Learning for a Sustainable Future](#)

[Kootenay Boundary Environmental Education – Empowering Thoughtful Action](#)

[Climate Change Education Resources \(cbeen\)](#)

[Classrooms to Communities – BC EDUCATION NETWORK](#)

[EcoLinks 2021 Workshops – Ontario Society for Environmental Education](#)

<https://getoutsideandplay.ca/>

[Science, Sport and Environmental Education](#)

[Alberta Council for Environmental Education](#)

[SaskOutdoors](#)

One of the first educators who coined the term and promoted Place Based Education:

[David Sobel](#)

<https://outdoorlearningstore.ca/about/>

Articles by Timbernook:

[Therapeutic Benefits](#)

There is no such thing as bad weather- only bad clothing. Check this out:

<https://outdoorlearningstore.ca/product/reusable-rain-jacket/>

rainy days are the best! buckets, pails, spoons, tarps, ... These days were always the best, just be properly dressed.

I had a huge learning curve attending a zoom conference with COEO Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario this May. Subjects on decolonizing outdoor education and addressing anti-black / anti-racist education. It was truly eye opening. There are links to resources here: www.coeo.org

“The Whiteness of Green” Sheelah McLean

Yes Ian Pike & Mariana Brunson conducted amazing and thorough research

This was just shared by CBC:

[CBC Climate-action- considering racial justice](#)

[Ontario Wilderness Leadership Symposium | 2017 | COEO](#)

(council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario- 2021 resources

[Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network](#)

[Child and Nature Alliance of Canada](#)

[Global Oneness Project- fabulous site- many specific lesson suggestions](#)

‘Cultural Responsive’

It is important to recognize the refugee experience where the outdoors sometimes really ISN'T safe - communicating safety to families that may pass on intergenerationally traumatic relationships with nature spaces.

If you are interested to pursue an outdoor connection with land further in your practice, I suggest the following books:

Coyote’s Guide to Connecting with Nature, by Jon Young, Ellen Haas, and Evan McGown, 2010

Native Scienc: Natural Laws of Interdependence by Gregory Cajete, 2000