

Foreword by Instructor, Dr Kari Grain

This publication is a collaborative project co-authored by the students and instructor of EDST 520: Experiential Pedagogies, in 2024. Each experiential pedagogy covered in this handbook was authored by a different student or pair of students as part of their "pedagogy witnessing" assignment. As pedagogy witnesses, each student led the discussion of a specific pedagogy at the end of class; They were responsible for interweaving key concepts from the readings, noticing poignant moments that arose among our group as we practiced those pedagogies, and leading a class discussion on strengths and complexities. As a follow-up to the class, students were asked to create a two-page story or written illustration of their assigned pedagogy – the collection of which comprises this handbook. It is important to note that the pedagogies covered in this handbook do not represent an exhaustive list of possible experiential pedagogies but rather some notable clusters that are a part of the course curriculum.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN GOALS FOR THIS HANDBOOK:

- Illustrate the potency of storytelling and witnessing in the context of experiential education
- Prioritize knowledge mobilization through the creation of an open-access resource that students and other current or aspiring educators can use for pedagogical inspiration
- Practice experiential education through an applied assignment



COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to enable students to explore diverse understandings of experiential education through practicing a variety of pedagogies and witnessing ourselves both as learners and as educators/facilitators. Experiential education, as it is often conceptualized in institutional contexts, draws heavily on the work of Kolb, Dewey, Hahn, Kuh, and other primarily White, Western, male scholars whose perspectives have been historically privileged. This normative framing of experiential education has excluded a rich profusion of scholarship from other gender identities, racialized authors, Indigenous peoples, community activists, and other groups that have been marginalized in institutional spaces. This course aims to resist a normative framing of experiential education, while still considering those contributions that are commonly discussed as foundational to EE. While traditional approaches to experiential education are touched upon, in this course we privilege a broader and more diverse panoply of authors and experts, some of whom are situated as community leaders and practitioners rather than academics. As a learning community, we engage in a variety of pedagogies and also discuss how we experienced them, how we might take into account issues of accessibility, equity, and decolonization in our approach to the pedagogies. In tandem with our own reflections, we discuss key theoretical traditions in experiential education, and deepen learners' understanding of the possibilities of technology in experiential education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the foundational reasons that this course was created, was to diversify the voices and ontologies that guide the conversation about what constitutes experiential education. To help us push beyond the normative framing of EE and illuminate the expansiveness of experiential pedagogies, we were honoured to be visited and/or hosted by gifted educators who shared with us their diverse forms of expertise across cultures, frameworks, and disciplines. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to those educators who led us in song, movement, activities, and an expansion of our understandings.

Thank you to UBC's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF) for the generous financial support that enabled us to create this handbook and to pay the guest speakers and community members who offered their expertise to our learning community. It is only possible to do community engaged learning in ethical, reciprocal ways if we have the funds to fairly pay people for their labour, and to mobilize the resources that we develop. Thank you for supporting us to be ethical in our endeavours and creative in our resource development.

Thanks also to the UBC Farm and the UBC Learning Exchange for hosting our class, and giving us the opportunity to learn in several of the beautiful spaces that community members have so lovingly built over the years.

A huge thank you to the champions and supporters of this work in the Department of Educational Studies: Holly-Kate Collinson-Shield, Himadri Udahage Dona, Sophia Choi, Deirdre Kelly, Hartej Gill, Andre Mazawi, Michelle Stack, and Jude Walker.

Special thank you to the talented graphic designer, Jessie Lee, who transformed some word documents and photographs into the artful publication that you see before you.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our learning in this course happened on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam Peoples. We have learned primarily outside, beneath cedars, among ferns and roses, or in the bustling urban city scapes that exemplify both vibrancy and complex social inequalities. From the first day of our course, we discussed the connections between experiential education and decolonizing practices, and we have been guided in this work by two Indigenous teachers in particular: Nuxalk Hereditary Chief, Rhonda Schooner, who flew to Vancouver to teach us about Indigenous pedagogies and land-based learning; and Dr. Dustin Louie, whose article on Indigenous pedagogies set the stage in our first class for moving beyond hegemonic understandings of EE, and whose visit in our final week of the course, helped us to situate Indigenous ways of knowing in relation to experiential education. It is with gratitude that we learn on this land from Indigenous colleagues, friends, and teachers.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Thank you to our two class photographers, Ella and Natalie, who documented special moments in order to share them in this handbook. All students and guest speakers in this course have given explicit permission for their photos to be used in this publication.

FRIENDS AND GUEST EDUCATORS

Thank you to the incredible educators who were guests in our classes throughout the semester. You have exemplified to us what experiential pedagogies can look like across lived experiences and diverse forms of expertise. Our guests included:

Dan Ahimbisibwe	Rhonda Schooner	Lucas Wright
Amelia Ahimbisibwe	Matt Hume	Dustin Louie
Tamara Baldwin	Katherine Cheng	Benny Grain
Khari Wendell McClelland	Rohyn Leuty	



A NOTE TO MY STUDENTS:

Thank you for gifting me with some very special "teacher moments" (laughter and tears) this semester, which I will carry with me for many years to come. I have been inspired by your curiosity, your willingness to push beyond your comfort zones, and your motivation to learn and teach in creative ways.

-Kari-

If you have questions about this handbook or would like to stay in touch, please contact me anytime at kari.grain@ubc.ca



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ARTS BASED PEDAGOGIES

BY ANGELA LIN AND ELIZABETH DONNELLY

The cool coastal wind and bright sunshine made for an enjoyable start to our class on arts based pedagogies. Upon arrival at the UBC Rose Garden, we observed two eagles chasing crows away from their nest, protecting their young—a raw and powerful reminder of nature's resilience. The sighting of a coyote on campus, which had attacked two dogs earlier, added a startling element to our day, grounding us in the unpredictable reality of nature.

In this Art-based experiential learning class, we had to use our senses to rediscover some moments linked to our past learning experiences. Just as Auguste Rodin said, "Beauty is everywhere. It is not that she is lacking in our eyes, but our eyes which fail to perceive her." (Paul Gsell, 2019) We met up with our special guest Khari Wendell McClelland in the UBC Rose Garden who had a very calming presence, and who is a talented musician, activist, and community facilitator. He was feeling inspired by the trees adjacent to the UBC Rose Garden and asked if we would follow him to that space. We stood, surrounded by trees, in a shape loosely resembling a circle. He encouraged us to take in the senses of the nature around us, recognizing the Musqueam peoples who originally inhabited the land and reflecting on the 'living memories' of the space. We closed our eyes to experience other senses and identify the various sounds we could hear, and identify what we were feeling, both internally and externally, in the forest clearing. The coastal wind rushed past our clothing and bodies and rustled the leaves, birds chirped above, and the faint sounds of traffic were distant. The smell of nature and crisp, clear, clean air heightened the sensory experience. When we opened our eyes, our surroundings appeared more vivid, with the colours and contrasts of the trees and sky more vibrant. This moment of sensory immersion highlighted the importance of being present and mindful of our surroundings.

We returned to the UBC Rose Garden to begin an activity wherein Khari guided us through movements that required us to fill empty spaces in our circle and move at varying speeds. Khari had us recall positive and negative learning experiences in our lifetime, and share stories with our partners. As educators, in one way or another, it is wise for us to frequently reflect on our learning experiences as students, and this collaborative reflection activity was quite helpful. We are constantly learning, and our experiences of learning setbacks can become valuable lessons for ourselves or others. We can also use empathy to consider our students' learning difficulties from their perspective.

Khari's ability to weave stories, history, and music into the learning experience was captivating. Additionally, he spoke further about the importance of recognizing the "living memories" of the land, encouraging us to reflect on our own identities and connections to the space we were in. This approach aligns with arts-based experiential learning, which emphasizes the integration of sensory experiences with reflective practice. A thought-provoking question that Khari posed was "On whose shoulders do we stand?"

Khari's metaphor of walking as an iterative process of catching oneself over and over resonated deeply. "What is remarkable is that those who witness these events are often drawn to cheer for the one who tries with great effort as they fail, falling victim to gravity, over and over again. One way of understanding what is happening is failure. Another way to understand what is happening is iteration" (McClelland, 2022). This metaphor captured the essence of our quest for understanding ourselves and our relationships with the world around us. It's a dance of vulnerability and strength, where each step forward is an act of courage and curiosity. Many experiences in life can remind us that life can be seen as one big iteration. The journey is a powerful symbol of resilience and grace, a continuous cycle of stumbling and regaining balance.

The session culminated in a powerful singing exercise, which was both exciting and moving. Khari taught us a call-and-response song called "Let Life Move Me," accompanied by gestures which matched the lyrics. The song's message of gratitude or thankfulness for life and resilience resonated deeply, evoking personal memories and emotion in each of us. Initially, there was some awkwardness as we sang and moved together, but by the second round, we had found a collective rhythm and harmony. As Khari mentioned in his autobiography, "Songs are like maps, leading back to the past" (McClelland, 2022). This moment highlighted the transformative power of music and storytelling in building community and fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Our time with Khari, and our discussion afterward, was a testament to the power of experiential pedagogy. By engaging our senses, reflecting on history and our own experiences, and connecting through music, we were able to witness the truth of our learning in a profound and meaningful way. The approach that Khari took with us embodied the principles of arts-based methods, where learning becomes a holistic, embodied experience. This experience has left an indelible mark on our understanding of teaching and learning, inspiring us to incorporate similar practices in future pedagogical endeavours.





LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

BY ELLA WRIGHT AND REBECCA MONNERAT

In honour of the memory of Elder Doris Fox, who passed away on May 21st, 2024, and who led the UBC Learning Exchange's Button Blanket Project.

Our session at the UBC Learning Exchange began with theatre sports – an exercise from Theatre of the Oppressed (Campbell, 2019). Kari helped us get to know each other through attaching alliteration to movement in order to help us memorize each other's names. We had "Elephant Ella", "Kaleidoscopic Kari", "Sleepy Sunday" and many more. As pedagogy witnesses, we could feel the discomfort of being in a new place, uncertain of its histories, protocols and energies. The exercise was a wonderful grounding exercise to lighten the mood and allow us to remain open.

The UBC Learning Exchange is located in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver, on unceded traditional lands of the unceded ancestral lands of the x^wməθkw əyʻəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwəta⁴ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. A blanket hangs on the wall here, comprising hundreds of individual buttons made of abalone shells. x^wməθkw əyʻəm Elder Doris Fox designed the blanket, with the community voting on the logo design. It was made in ceremony; it was made as ceremony. Every person who sewed on a button told a personal story, in relation to others.

As a group, we leaned into this relational atmosphere. We were reminded that "water settles here" – that the DTES is a place of rich stories, cultures, vibrant beginnings, and also of suffering. We tapped into all our senses as well as our 6th sense: of knowing and intuition. There is privilege in holding that pain. Matt Hume, the Student Learning Coordinator at the UBC Learning Exchange, spoke about the DTES as a place of many wisdoms. He reminded us that community is land and that land is experience. Matt invited us to think about what preconceptions and assumptions we hold of the community. He invited us to examine how we know about the DTES, then showed us many examples of news headlines noting the tendency of the media to provide a long list of deficits associated with the community in their headlines – "so many commas", Matt remarked, shaking his head.

Matt showed us a clip of a TedX talk by Cormac Russell (2016) who calls on researchers to consider how community-engaged projects may be experienced as violence to some community members, liberation to others. Matt spoke about Morgan and Ziglio's (2007) Asset-based community development (ABCD), a sociological approach to cultivate community-centred projects, viewing education and responsibility as conduits of hope. The work is premised on the ongoing cycle of "reimagining, re-enacting and responding", allowing the community to lead projects which build off each other.

After our tour, we sat in a circle to process and discuss our reflections. "This place iAfter our tour, we sat in a circle to process and discuss our reflections. "This place is my childhood", remarked one of our classmates, overcome with emotion, adding, "so this feels like a full-circle moment". She spoke of having been raised here but not feeling as though she could ever speak on the community's behalf. We spoke of the tensions involved in doing community-engaged research—a historically extractive practice—in communities who are over-researched, the dangers of speaking for them or of making sweeping generalizations (especially when most scientific research is

premised on the idea that generalizations must be made in order to code and categorize quantitative and qualitative research). How does one engage with communities (vs in communities) in such a way that does not exhaust or re-traumatize community members? We discussed the complexities, tensions, and responsibilities involved in doing this kind of work. The room felt heavy as we held some questions which did not bear clear and immediate answers. Dr. Grain reminded us that feeling that tension is a sign you're probably doing it right, because to engage in this work is to struggle with it constantly.

Katherine Cheng, Community-Based Research Coordinator at the UBC Learning Exchange, connected us with the principles of ethical research. We considered how educational pedagogies and research can be extractive, consumptive and steeped in hierarchal, colonial systems of oppression. We learned the stories of UBC researchers (among others) offering 'help' to communities within the DTES, which links to Grain and Land's (2017) critiques of charity and white saviorism. We witnessed the critiques of such approaches, which can be idealistic, condescending and often fail to address systemic issues. It takes considerable time and resources to conduct research in new ways that do not re-traumatize for community members. We appreciated hearing directly from these community members using multimedia documentaries and the DTES research manifesto (Boilevin et al., 2019). One member spoke of being part of a large number of research projects, of asking a researcher for a copy of the paper produced from the research, and being told it lives behind a pay-wall. Throughout this discussion, we observed how even our questions often use inaccessible language, jargon and generalizations. We realized how difficult it is to effectively do knowledge mobilization.

As pedagogy witnesses, we closed the experience by reflecting back our observations during the session. Community engaged research can be a non-linear process. Community members and organizations are knowledge keepers, who know and understand very deeply what the deficits and assets within their communities are. Communities should lead on all aspects of research which involves them: from driving the ethics review of the research proposal; pressing researchers on the "WHY" and central purpose of the research; prioritizing reciprocity; flexibility with timelines, ensuring quality over quantity; and ensuring research is community-centered and accessible. Indeed, water settles here, and now, so do our own stories, as metaphorical buttons sewn onto a beautiful landscape, as part of a manifesto in practice.





INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING

BY MONICA LEE AND CHRISTINE LIU





Upon stepping into the classroom, we were greeted with cheerful music and we were warmly welcomed by Kari and our special guests - Dan, Amelia, and Tam. A midnight black linen was draped gracefully atop the symmetrically arranged table. Dan and Amelia Ahimbisibwe are dedicated Ugandan activists and social change makers who have been leading numerous community projects, including the Kitengesa Community Library and AFRIpads. We were also fortunate enough to have Tamara Baldwin, the Director of UBC's ORICE (Office of Regional and International Community Engagement), sharing her expertise on global community-engaged learning.

Although this was the first time we had all sat together, there was a sense of connectivity that naturally flowed as our conversation unfolded. We forged a connection to the speakers through the stories we had read about them. Kari, Dan, Amelia, and Tam, on the other hand, shared an unyielding bond that has lasted for over a decade, as Kari had done her graduate research with Dan in his village. We found ourselves unable to suppress a smile at this warm rapport shared in the space. As Tam revealed, the classroom space was intentionally designed. This was not just any table, but Dan's kitchen table, where countless UBC students gathered over the years to engage in conversations and reflect on their experiences after a day of community-engaged learning in Uganda. At the table, no one is the sole knowledge holder, but learners who engage in dialogue and curiosity. It is where people's assumptions are challenged, world views collide, and where people humbly learn about the community and themselves in ways that they never have before. As Dan shared his expertise, we were fortunate enough to experience even just a little of the learnings that took place at Dan's kitchen table in Uganda. Below we outline three topics that stood out to us throughout the session.

1. SLOW AND STEADY

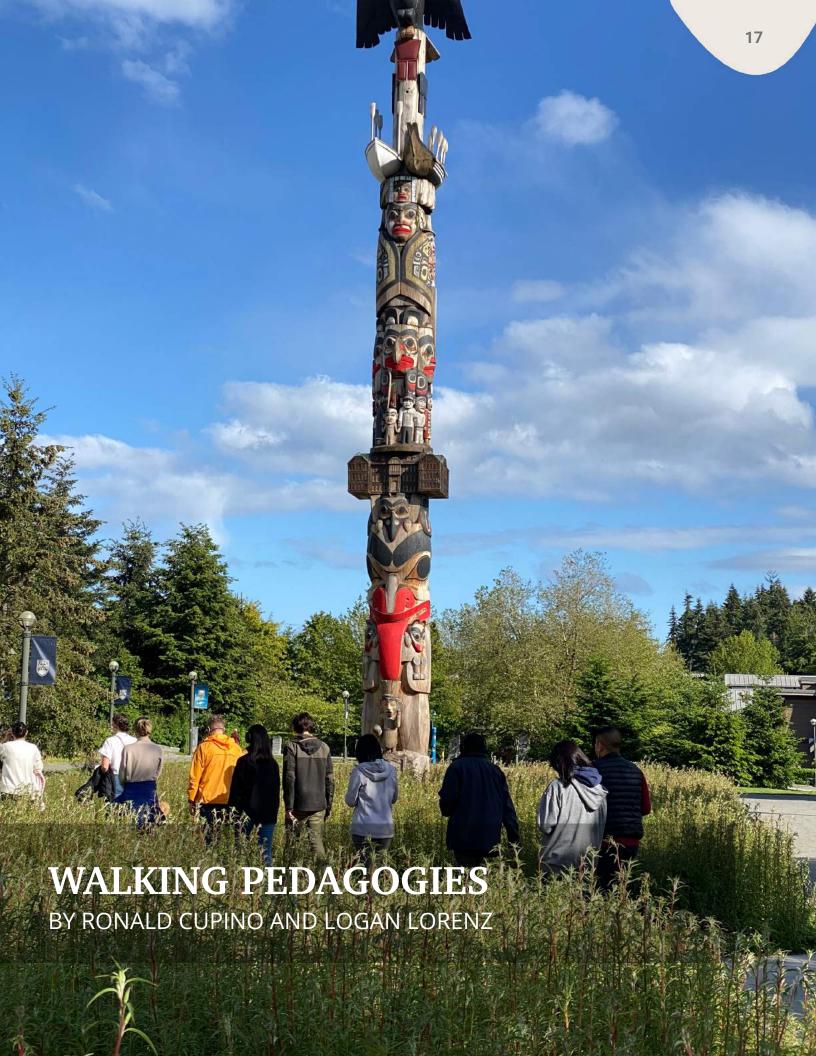
One of the conversations that we had during our pedagogy witnessing discussion was the concept of slowing down and learning to listen. One piece of advice that was given by Sophia, the co-founder and director of AFRIpads, is that people need to engage more to listen and think ("Learning to Listen", 2023). Additionally, "Beyond Baselines" (2024) talked about the value of getting different perspectives, which grants the opportunity for broader perspectives of the operation of the current system and its challenges. Dan even mentioned that the multiple conversations he has had at his dinner table have granted him the opportunity to learn more about himself. Currently, society is operating at a pace where hustling and efficiency are the norm of living. It gets to the point where there is an embodied resistance towards a slower pace. When the pace slowed down during our conversation, we felt as though we could truly sit down and hear the stories being shared. Although the speed of the conversation was slower, time seemed to move faster. Society needs to be less obsessed with production and efficiency to truly embrace learning moments like these.

2. WORK ALONGSIDE THE COMMUNITY, NOT FOR THEM

The second conversation topic that stood out to us was the concept around the focus of the global community-engaged learning program. Tam talked about asking the students three questions before being granted this opportunity: why, what, and how. Oftentimes, students take an interest because they want to 'help the less fortunate and save them'. This misconception is what can cause major issues down the road during the time in the project environment. Jeanne, a former economics undergraduate who took part in the AFRIpads project, even mentioned how she learned the importance of true collaboration and the difference between learning with partners side-by-side rather than leading ("Learning to Listen", 2023). Grain (2022) also suggests that those who would like to cultivate critical hope through community development should start small, but dream big. The bottom line is that the students are not needed, and there is nothing that needs to be salvaged. Global service learning cannot be just student-centered.

3. RECONSIDER THE KNOWLEDGE HOLDER

Our final takeaway was the importance of recognizing that no one is the sole knowledge holder. Academic credentials do not necessarily make university students or staff more knowledgeable. The people in the community are the true experts of their local setting and their own lived experiences. Adopting this mindset is crucial for establishing a reciprocal and collaborative relationship with the community. The Impact can only be realized when the work is based on a profound understanding of the local community. True learning can only happen when students are humble enough to listen, think, and challenge their assumptions, far more than they act ("Learning to Listen," 2023).



We often think of urban spaces as transitional places, allowing us to go from place to place as we carry out the daily tasks of our busy lives. For our class on walking pedagogies, we were asked to independently and concurrently listen to a podcast titled "The Thrilling New Science of Awe and Wonder" (Tippett, 2023) while walking together on campus. The walk was led by Dr. Grain. This meant that as learners, we only had a general sense of where we were going. Saldanha and Torres de Eca (2021) cite Debord's (1958) concept of "'dérive' as an unplanned journey through a land-scape, in which participants let themselves be aware through sensory and emotional experiences of what they may encounter and share the experiences with other participants of the journey." This setup seems like the foundation our walking pedagogy was based, with the addition of listening to a podcast episode. With personal head-phones in hand, we were ready to enjoy the sunny, albeit windy and slightly chilly day at UBC's Point Grey campus. We set off to explore the university in a different and exciting way.

The experience started and ended outside of Ponderosa North Commons. The journey had many twists and turns as we snaked our way around the campus. We passed by the expected parts of a university campus, mainly academic buildings, framed by well-kept sidewalks and gardens. The walk also passed by important landmarks such as the Reconciliation Pole, as well as points of tension and protest such as the pro-Palestinian encampment. Along the walk, we also encountered other people and animals. Benny, Dr. Grain's incredibly friendly and sweet Golden Retriever, joined our walk and even met another Golden Retriever, seemingly his long-lost twin. These represented variations of expected and unexpected, and planned and unplanned, parts of our journey.



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We were instructed to refrain from directly interacting with one other. Instead, we were told to listen to the podcast episode and pay attention to our individual and group experiences. After starting the podcast at the same time stamp, we began walking together in contemplative silence. Almost immediately, each person seemed more focused and aware of one another's presence. After a few minutes of silent negotiation, we not only found our shared pace, but our facial expressions, arm and leg movements found synchrony. Each participant silently negotiated a personal bubble of space around them. Contrary to what we would characterize as more natural behaviour in this setting, nobody consistently walked beside another person, perhaps to prevent interaction. Other than a few turns, short pauses, and adjustments in relative location to each other, our pace and movement became synced. One of our peers joined us near the end of the walk. This created a poignant learning moment where our established group walking norms were initially disrupted by her joining. However, after a few moments of slight disruption, she soon joined the pace and demeanour of the group as we walked back to the classroom. As a learner, it was uplifting to experience this collective effervescence, our "collective state of being and possibility" (Keltner as cited in Tippett, 2023). As stated by Godfrey (2023), "[the] experience of walking together, but privately, is a really beautiful thing," (para. 29) and we believe that our class truly experienced this. Amid the busyness of our individual lives, it was calming to be with one another in silence and in synchrony. Listening to the content of the podcast, which spoke of the human propensity for harmony and togetherness, all while experiencing that, was a synergistic moment.

After the walk, our class debriefed the experience outside of Ponderosa Commons North. The debrief reminded us of Bairner (2011) who described two types of learning that can occur through (urban) walking. While walking, we can learn by attending to "[the] buildings, [the] smells, [the] sounds and from the snatches of conversation" (p. 379). A second type of learning while walking can occur by not paying attention to these elements where we take "the opportunity to daydream or, less whimsically, simply to think" (p. 380). Some of our peers mentioned (trying to) focus on the podcast while blocking out other elements on the walk while others found it difficult to listen to the podcast due to variety of stimuli on the walk. Some of these stimuli included sounds (e.g., wind, talking), smells (e.g., plants), sights (e.g., buildings, plants, greenspaces), and touch (e.g., feeling the ground with our steps). There seemed to be consensus that no one could exclusively focus on listening to and thinking about the podcast nor exclusively focus on the walk itself. Together these became linked and intertwined through the practice of walking. As educators, this leaves a lasting impression, or questions perhaps, of when and for whom walking pedagogies can be





Nuxalk Hereditary Chief, Rhonda Schooner, came into our classroom with her elegance, grace, and wisdom. There was a feeling of instant excitement upon realizing that our class would spend some time by the First Nations Longhouse to listen to Rhonda's heartfelt stories and teachings. This seamlessly aligns with the importance of our relationships with the land and how land-centered learning involves spirituality and a desire to connect with non-human beings within this class (Hill *et al.*, 2022). As a group, we all started walking towards the Longhouse and decided to sit on the grass in the beaming sun. As we glanced around, we saw people take their jackets off to make it their blanket, people sitting down with their legs outstretched and crossed-legged, and Kari Grain, our instructor, took her socks and boots off to feel the bristles of the grass as Rhonda began to share her journey in finding her Nuxalk way of being. It felt like a safe space for all of us.

Rhonda placed a beautiful poster in the middle of our sitting circle that encapsulated her Nuxalk way of being and she was pointing to the poster using a feather to define firstly, what Stl'mstalliwa means. As she spoke, we realized how disconnected much of our institutional learning had been from the land. Confined in a traditional classroom setting, one would use a PowerPoint, pen, or some sort of digital tool to present their lecture. Instead, Rhonda gracefully used her feather to point to the poster outside on the grass with us, illustrating her raw relationship with the land. This instantly pulled me back to one of our readings, such as "there is only one body of water on earth and that same waters moves throughout the world, the water [the children] drink in a glass could be the water a salmon swam in" (Hill et al., 2022, p.15). We should be reflective of ourselves and appreciate how we are integrated with the land, the animals, nature, and technology, such that we are all connected in different ways (Hill et al., 2022). It felt peaceful while absorbing Rhonda's wisdom and stories.

Rhonda shared due to intergenerational trauma, it was difficult for her family to communicate effectively and as a result, silent treatment was practiced throughout their lives. Rhonda lost her son several years ago and consequently, she had at one time struggled to deal with the pain, grief, and loss. However, Rhonda steered her story to say it is our human experiences such as loss, abandonment, fear, and anger that become your teachings and it brings your spiritual levels to a higher place every time you encounter them. This brought Rhonda to hold two paddles chest-level and walk around in a circle to inspire us to have our own paddles with mirrors facing ourselves so that we can be aware of our spirit, our ancestors, and most importantly, to hold ourselves up. We learned that it is important to find your own gift and ways of healing whether it is weaving hats, singing songs, painting art, or figuring out ways to support each other because we are each other's medicine. As learners, we felt this was courageous and powerful.

For the second half of the class, we shifted to a kitchen space to learn more about Rhonda's expertise with collecting various kinds of funghi, vitamins, leaves, and herbs as medicines. Rhonda shared that she would boil some of these natural remedies to combat health issues, to heal cuts on fingers. and to relieve pain and mood swings related to menstruation. As we glanced around, our classmates were attentive, quiet, and we sensed everyone's strong interest and curiosity to learn more about each herbal medicine. This made me think- perhaps we need to take a step back and connect to traditional lands through the restoration of specific rituals and practices to heal our body with nature (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Lana reflected that "This moment made me think of when I used to work as a Pharmacy Assistant in a healthcare environment that prescribed patients with medicine made in laboratories by mixing a number of chemicals. In a way, it felt like a very processed way to heal our bodies, and it felt opposite to herbal medicine that is closely tied to nature in its truest form."



Rhonda further provoked us to consider how we are all part of the ecosystem. Sunday commented: "How herbs, leaves and roots are used as remedies for healing and healthy living is something that resonates with my African heritage and upbringing. Growing up in Ibadan Nigeria, herbal medicine is something that I was introduced to early in life and have been part of my healing practices since then." Not only are herbal medicines used and consumed by Africans for healing, but they are also believed to have symbolic and spiritual significance.

Rhonda corroborated this in her demonstration of how nature works for us and for our health, strengthening our immune system. One of the readings titled "Twenty-five Indigenous Projects" (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2021) emphasized the importance of making connections to and establishing relationships with people through the land and nature. In other words, human beings cannot be disconnected from the air, trees, plants, and water because no human can survive without them.



This powerful lesson reminded us that some pedagogies might not be culturally appropriate for non-Indigenous educators to introduce to learners (Hill et al., 2022). Rhonda mentioned that although Indigenous communities are one mind and one heart. tribes differ from one another because of different origins and stories. Rhonda expressed that to her, Indigenous pedagogies are about sharing stories and not speaking on behalf of anyone. She encouraged us to build knowledge through collaboration with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers as non-Indigenous individuals. Throughout this session there were many stories and teachings that were passed onto us from Rhonda, and we hope to share it with others to bring forth land-based pedagogies and Indigenous education.



EMBODIED PEDAGOGIES

BY JIA QIAO AND ERIN TEDFORD

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Embodiment encapsulates and incorporates many ideas; just a few of these are: realization, expression, sensory experience, intuition, mindfulness, relational and holistic connections to the world. Experts in the fields of health and education are highlighting what Indigenous peoples have consistently emphasized: the need to apply more holistic approaches to healing and learning and avoid the Western, rationalist tendency to see the body and mind as disconnected. For instructors of experiential pedagogies, helping learners to construct knowledge and skills through attention to what is happening in the body has immense benefits, which we experienced through the course of this lesson (Carello and Thompson, 2022; Freiler, 2008; van der Kolk, 2023).

Our embodied learning activity occurred in a notably warm, stuffy classroom in the basement with no windows, where a loud humming sound added to a perceptible tension at the outset during a busy summer term. Students were invited to move to the center of the room for warm-up exercises and initially the class appeared nervous, uneasy, and hesitant to fully engage and share their thoughts. It seemed that hearts had not yet been warmed up or opened to the experience of moving during an 'academic' lesson. The atmosphere changed considerably following a series of breathing exercises, body movements, and mindfulness practices that shifted awareness to the body, emotion, and being more present. Postures visibly relaxed and laughter came more easily. When Dr. Grain shared a harrowing story of an accident, causing serious injury, years of healing, and new awareness, students' attention was rapt, and they seemed more willing to contemplate and share trials of their own after the lesson's opening. This propensity is outlined in literature, which notes that instructors who are willing to speak of their difficult experiences with authenticity and trust promote a reciprocal inclination in students, enhancing connection, insight, support, and equity in their classrooms. Discussion followed that was open-minded, courageous, trusting, and introspective; the potential for embodiment to enhance learning was noticeable. The immense benefits of mindfulness and contemplative practices are also clearly illustrated in literature. Instructors who start lessons with short mindfulness practices help students to be more grounded, focused, and willing to reflect on challenging topics with compassion for self and others. These exercises heighten our senses, awareness, and resilience, and they make us more mindful of how we interact with the world (Abegunde, 2017; Magee, 2021; Murphy, 2023; Shiboya, 2021).

During an exercise done in pairs mapping our relationship to hope, it was initially difficult to avoid the tendency to analyze questions and act based on logic and cognition alone, instead of considering bodily feelings or instincts. This likely stems from years of educational and societal training that values logic over emotion and the body, and deems this reasoning as situated only in the mind. However, body position emerged in a significant role, as both participants were seated on the floor and reported feeling more connected, equal, and willing to be vulnerable here. Also, students revealed that moving stones chosen to represent fear, distraction, and hope to different locations on a circle in relation to their body - in front or behind them - changed their feelings and perceptions toward these things and heightened feelings of empowerment in relation to them. Influence over the psychological was enhanced through physical movement of a symbol, and the connection between the physical space and the mental space was evident. In this activity, knowledge and understanding were deepened by engaging the body as a site of learning in connection with symbolic and rational spheres of knowing (Freiler, 2008).

Given that the body is a site for learning, and our brain-body system is designed to facilitate restoration, healing, and projection of ourselves into the future, our environment and feeling of psychological safety have tremendous influence on our well-being and functioning. Unsafe environments and interactions can generate barriers to reflection and hopefulness within our bodies; when people feel unsafe and are in a state of vigilance or defensiveness, learning and retention become more difficult. This also influences our flexibility and ability to use different learning styles, especially in complex and difficult situations. An essential foundation to the success of this pedagogy was the careful establishment of a safe learning environment where respectful communication and peer support was facilitated by an educator acting as a guide. Instructors who begin lessons with short mindfulness exercises, create safe, inclusive learning environments, and incorporate embodied learning into their methods will likely see enhanced trust, learning, and growth in students as a result (Freiler, 2008; Grain, 2022; Imad, 2021; Peterson, 2016; Sharma & Kolb, 2010).



GEN AI AND TECHNOLOGY BASED PEDAGOGIES

BY JONATHAN LOPEZ

Until about 2022, news of GenAl was akin to hearing an odd rattle in your car before leaving on your morning commute: it was cause for some concern, but you didn't know just how much, and you hoped it wouldn't affect your ability to get to work. Starting in about 2023, GenAl in the form of chatbots like ChatGPT captured the public's imagination with its ability to do anything from writing a simple computer program to improving your tone in day-to-day emails. This new technology left teachers and administrators in the precarious position of having to legislate how they would enact transformative education given that their students could now rely on GenAl to complete their assignments.

Our EDST 520 class waded into this issue having read "Transformative learning, epistemology and technology in adult education", watched a video surveying Artificial Intelligence in Adult Education by the Coalition on Adult Education (CoABE), and led by an expert on the topic. Lucas Wright, of UBC's Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology, walked our class through many of the teaching and learning issues associated with GenAI, using ChatGPT as an exemplar. Although many in the class had heard about the massive undertaking involved in building ChatGPT, the details of the magnitude that Lucas shared with the class astonished everyone. An informal polling of the class after the session showed that the ethical considerations surrounding the building of ChatGPT concerned some in the class.

Lucas' teachings showcased how much more powerful ChatGPT could be with better prompting. Whereas a Google search is limited to displaying information from the most relevant hits, you can give ChatGPT feedback on the answer it gave you to refine your results. For example, if you ask ChatGPT to create a lesson plan about the Law of Thermodynamics and the initial output is too technical, you can ask ChatGPT to simplify the explanation or provide more detail on an aspect you want to emphasize. Prompting ChatGPT with the "persona method", asking it to give it's response while pretending to be a certain kind of person, to further customize the response you're seeking. Extending this idea further, one can train ChatGPT on a specific set of data so that it becomes an 'expert' in the specific knowledge you feed it. An exciting prospect Lucas shared with the class was training a custom GPT to tutor a student. The various other use cases that Lucas and the CoABE video present, further illustrate the scope the GenAl can play in learning environments. On one end, it can significantly cut down on a teacher's prep time allowing them to enhance their teaching practices. Or, with a little bit of training, GenAI can provide each student with a private tutor in any subject.

Given the scope and power of GenAI, it is imperative that we integrate it intentionally into our teaching practices to avoid adopting a techno-centric approach. The theoretical framework that educators employ in their pedagogy can be vital to the ways that they choose to approach the integration of GenAI. For example, transformative learning as Mezirow, Wang et al. describe it is about challenging the assumptions of an individual, getting them to reframe a problem, and transforming their habits of mind (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield).

I suggest that GenAl can be approached in a learning-centric way on the various epistemologies that Wang et al. explore. The upshot here is to make GenAl tools more approachable to a teacher that is hesitant to adopt it into their teaching practices. Positivism, in an educational context, is the view that knowledge is out there in the world, waiting to be discovered and is amenable to rational and objective scrutiny (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield). A post-positivist teacher could encourage their student to be sceptical rather than just accepting everything it generates as true. One exercise that might be employed to this end is to have a student question the GenAl about a topic they already know a lot about and try to detect deficiencies in the GenAl's explanations. "The central tenet of contructivism is that knowledge is subjective, as individuals seek and understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield). Since the constructivist would expect meanings to vary by an individual's lived experience, a helpful learning exercise would be to employ the "persona method" to see how a GenAl's responses might differ between two different personas.

The advocacy/participatory approach invites the learner to develop the learning goals alongside the teacher as a co-learner (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield). This epistemological approach is especially helpful in addressing the needs of the marginalised or disenfranchised of a society (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield). One might imagine that a marginalized community could create a custom GPT which could help outsiders prepare their knowledge base and core understandings so that they do not not "parachute in" with questions that the community has answered many times already.

Pragmatism, in the context of education, is the epistemological position that prioritizes action and hands on learning (Wang, Torrisi-Steele, and Reinsfield). GenAls like ChatGPT would lend themselves very well to helping learners develop solutions to various kinds of problems. A teacher's role, in this epistemology, would be to provide guidelines for the safe usage of tool like ChatGPT and perhaps have them reflect on the solution to their problem by looking back at the chatlog.

Though I have just outlined suggestions for how GenAI might be subsumed under various epistemologies, I don't expect to have extinguished hesitancy over adopting AI in education. GenAI is a powerful tool which is only getting more powerful so continual vigilance seems warranted as we grapple with the many ways that GenAI can be used ethically in educational settings.



On a sunny spring day, we sat under a canopy of tall trees at the UBC farm. Ella, our community expert and classmate, introduced the session with a powerful topic: "land and trauma." She began by sharing her story of land as a sacred space of connection, healing, wisdom, and home with the powerful quote from her mentor, "The earth holds you; you are never alone." This sentiment perfectly aligned with the theme of the exercise we were about to do, which I'll call "The Place Activity."

"THE PLACE ACTIVITY" CONSISTED OF THREE STEPS:

- **Envisioning a Place:** We closed our eyes and envisioned a place we knew well, in a specific season and weather, immersing ourselves fully in that space.
- Creating a Map: We created a map of our chosen place on a piece of cloth using natural materials found around us. This 10-20 minute activity allowed us to physically engage with our surroundings and express our connection to the place through creativity.
- Walking and Sharing: We walked along a path, following each other's maps and listening to the stories behind them. Sharing our childhood memories and personal connections fostered a sense of community and understanding among us.

MY EXPERIENCE OF FOREST-PEDAGOGY

At the start of the session, I felt lost. We were asked to envision a specific place, but nothing came to mind. Then it hit me: all my memories were centered around people, not places. Reflecting on this, I thought of my childhood home, where every memory was intertwined with my family. My father was like a big tree, anchoring us with his strength. My mother was the green leaves with red fruit, bringing liveliness and shelter. As the first-born, I cared for my younger brother.

This realization brought a flood of emotions. My childhood home, filled with love and laughter, became my chosen place. It wasn't the physical structure but the essence of who I am. Sharing our stories and walking together in the forest, we felt deeply connected. Our places held the essence of our histories and the love that shaped us. I realized it's not always about the place but the experiences and people that make it meaningful. My childhood home wasn't just a physical space; it was a living entity, rich with memories and emotions that anchor me, like the trees in a forest.

CONNECTING TO GRAIN'S (2023) "THREE CONVERGENCE COMMITMENTS"

Reflecting on Grain's (2023) article, I see a deep resonance with the forest-ped-agogy session. Both emphasize the interconnectedness of our experiences and land. Her first convergence commitment, "Locating Oneself," involves understanding life's contexts and the stories shaping our connections to places. This aligns with my realization that my memories are tied to people as well as places. Mapping and sharing exercises embody decolonizing education by integrating diverse perspectives. We learned about each other's histories, our connectedness, and sacredness of places.

Grain also advocates for teaching through arts, including poetry, music, and storytelling. She recalls her former university professor, Dr. Carmen Rodriguez, who sang and played the guitar, changing the entire mood of the semester by showing and allowing vulnerability. This illustrates how educators can soften their teaching through small but valuable actions.

Reading this anecdote reminded me of a powerful moment I encountered as a graduate student at UBC. It happened in the second class of Dr. Kari Grain's Experiential Learning course, where she was sitting on a desk, reading us her favorite poems to the class. That moment was so transformative that it changed my whole approach to learning and teaching. As an international student, I had always felt a subtle sense of being a minority due to language and cultural barriers, despite great support and respect from instructors and classmates in previous courses. However, Kari's act of reading poems was a magical turning point that created a space for vulnerability and courage. With her courage to try a novel teaching method and give her students a chance to feel the poems in their own way, I felt like she was saying, "Whatever you feel, that's great learning. Whatever you feel is valuable here." Together with Kari's consistent teaching practice embedding the values of acceptance and openness, this was an incident that empowered me to summon my courage to raise my hand and voice my thoughts, even when I was unsure if I could articulate myself. And because of this, I had my first UBC course where I felt completely free of marginalization.

This experience solidified my belief in the power of arts in education and holistic teaching that values inspiration alongside knowledge. It also helped me understand what the 'gift of education and mentorship' could possibly be, as beautifully described in Grain's (2023, p.26) writing about Dr. Marker's teaching. Education, like a river, is formed by many streams and sources we may never see. 'What we see as one river is a convergence of many.'



REFLECTIONS IN A FOREST

Laughter,
Vulnerability,
Just like leaves fall from trees,
our layers shed in the forest as we talk about our childhood,
Breathing with the forest
A joy, a lightness
History
Memory
In your body
In your spirit

Van Grol & Fraser (2022) express that educators can enhance their teaching practices by incorporating outdoor contexts and place-based learning through critical reflection on colonial legacies and extractive paradigms, embracing uncertainty and imperfection in interactions with nature, exploring speculative pedagogies to encourage critical thinking, developing responsive relationships with place like old-growth forests, and partnering with Indigenous communities to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems. By adopting these approaches, educators can create impactful outdoor learning experiences that deepen students' connection to the natural world, foster ecological literacy, and promote stewardship of the environment. When we had our class in the UBC forest, we sat together with trust and uncertainty - the duality of emergent learning. Being in the forest felt both familiar and like a bit of the unknown. Yet we were all connected.

It was exciting to hear about everyone's experiences with their "place." It was a sense of intimacy that was unfamiliar within classroom walls. By establishing a nurturing and diverse learning atmosphere, students are empowered to address issues they are passionate about and instill values of empathy, compassion, and social responsibility.

This forest pedagogy class brought us closer together as a community built on empathy and understanding, and it underscored the transformative power of arts and experiential learning, echoing Grain's (2023) commitments to locating oneself, embracing vulnerability, and integrating diverse perspectives. Our time in the forest was more than an exercise; it was a journey of self-discovery and collective growth. In this sacred space, we learned that education is not just about imparting knowledge but nurturing the human spirit and cultivating a sense of belonging and responsibility to each other and the land. This session



CONCLUDING REFLECTION

BY CHRISTINE LIU

We are fortunate to have a wealth of people and resources supporting our learning in experiential education this summer. For me, the most invaluable part is the opportunity to understand experiential education through diverse epistemologies. We have learned from a wide range of literature, as well as from the expertise and lived experiences of academics, practitioners, and community leaders who are doing incredible work across various sectors of society and around the world.

The course has been a great inspiration, demonstrating that education can take many different forms. Being so used to learning with our minds, we often forget that there are many other senses that we could leverage - the body, emotion, and spirit. As time goes by, we may not remember every theory or concepts learned in class, but the lessons from the embodied experiences will live on within us.

Pedagogy witnessing has also played an important role in our learning. In addition to paying close attention to our own feelings and reflections, having witnesses share their observations of the lessons has enabled us to understand the learning experience at a more collective level.

The most special part of our learning together has been the strong sense of community that has developed along the way. We have not only reflected academically as students but connected deeply as human beings. We shared moments telling stories on the grass, navigating our value systems, and learning from different communities. We have supported each other in grappling with discomforts and sharing joy in the process of experiential learning.

We are grateful to Kari and all the people that made these experiences possible, as well as to our cohorts for creating a safe and supportive learning space together. These combined efforts have not only enriched our learning but also forged lasting memories and connections that we will carry forward with us.

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