October 5, 2016

Revised Individual Learning Plan for Heidi Lessman

*Educational Objectives*

I am so excited to be a part of the Masters of Education for Sustainability Program at UBC and City Studio. I believe this program is innovative and impactful. I know that my research will be useful and it will inspire others to care for our environment. I look forward for the opportunity to have revered professors and fellow students as well as City of Vancouver staff give me feedback so that my project can be the most sound project it can be. I intend to develop exciting, relevant and inspiring Sustainability Curriculum for schools and organizations alike. I would like to highlight and celebrate current sustainability initiatives around the world (both local and global), including those in First Nations Communities past and present. I believe that in order to inspire sustainability initiatives we must first inspire people to feel connected to nature. I believe it is possible to connect people to nature through stories of the past and present to realize the possibilities and how these connections not only promote a healthier world to live in but they promote healthier people. I am currently teaching in Squamish and have worked with one of our First Nations teachers to develop a presentation about Sustainability initiatives in the Squamish Nation. My students were captivated by the history she shared about how the First Nations lived so integrated with the natural environment. I would love to help facilitate more of these stories to be shared.

I am very excited about the long-term affect of nature based and experiential learning on our future generations and how that will impact our development of healthier lives and healthier more sustainable communities. I want to be a leader in this movement as I raise my young, nature-loving daughter in this world that needs more sustainability support.

*Readings and Information Gathering*

In addition to the assigned course readings, that I have already found to be thought provoking, I would like to take a look at some of the following resources:

Oct/16 - I am adding in this book: Fostering Sustainable Behaviour by Doug McKenzie-Mohr

Strategic Leadership Towards Sustainability by Karl-Henrik Robert, et al

Vancouver Soul of a City by Gary Geddes

Light at the Edge of the World (A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures) by Wade Davis

Good News for a Change – How Everyday People are Helping the Planet, by Daivd Suzuki and Holly Dressel

Teaching Truly – A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education, by Don Trent Jacobs

Hot, Flat and Crowded – Why We Need a Green Revolution and How it Can Renew America, by Thomas L. Friedman

Where Rivers, Mountains and People Meet, Squamish Lilwat Cultural Centre

The Rights of Nature – A History of Environmental Ethics by Roderick Frazier Nash

I currently own all of these books listed above. Some of them I have only briefly looked at and read excerpts. I am excited to have an opportunity to read them further with a sustainability lens.

*Effort and Time*

This is an area that I intend to approach in a sustainable way. At this stage in my life, with a family to care for and part time work, I have practice balance. I have to be present for my family and make time to pursue my passion for sustainability education as well. I will work hard to balance my workload in all areas and put my best effort forth. I intend to be 100% present and participate fully in all of our Saturday classes but I will not be able to work on my schooling 7 days a week; I will need to set out a reasonable schedule for my success. This is an area of uncertainty for me at this time as I am still learning about the workload.

*Sub-fields in Education*

I have so many interests that I need to narrow my focus. At this point, I believe my research project will uncover the lasting effects of Nature Based Education and Nature Connectedness on the motivation of the current, and future generation to drive sustainability. I will focus secondary research on leading academic curriculum around the world and the relationship between the degree of nature connectedness and the resulting environmental sustainability. I intend to examine what techniques are used to create positive connections with the environment and how they are shared within the broader community. My research will also examine the government support systems in place in leading countries for sustainability initiatives.

As I mentioned in my first section, I am also interested in Aboriginal sustainability practices and the stories of these efforts. I’d like to compile some of these examples to share with students.

I would also like to create some Service Projects related to sustainability initiatives for all ages to support the experiential model of inspiring learning.

*Feedback*

Feedback is a critical part of learning. It helps us to reflect upon our experiences and our contributions. I encourage feedback at all times. I feel very comfortable asking for feedback from peers, teachers, community members and advisors as I believe this shows my sincere interest in bettering myself and it is such a wonderful opportunity to apply these life skills in our learning environment to better prepare us for our future endeavours. I am open to both written and verbal feedback.

*Positive Personal and Professional Habits*

I believe this Masters of Education program is a wonderful opportunity for a personal check in on my own sustainability practices. It is an opportunity to ask myself if I am “walking my talk”, am I setting the example that I want to set. I felt so incredibly inspired by Lisa and her Lupii Café. I can see that she is so compelled to prove that Zero Waste is possible in food production without compromising taste. In just one week I already feel compelled to make some changes to my daily habits and go back to some of my Zero Waste goals, especially in relation to food choices.

I also strive to professional and respectful with my fellow students and teachers as we go through this learning experience together.

*My E portfolio*

I think this is a great way to formalize my professional identity. I intend to use the blog from the UBC site. I would like to include links to articles, video clips and inspiring sustainability stories. I would really love to write short story myself one day and also make a short mokumentary or educational video. These are long term goals. In my experience as an educator I feel that these areas/resources are lacking for students from middle school to high school age. Maybe I can make a contest for students to make a video.