

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES for Remote Learning



Be the Change Earth Alliance
Published April 30th, 2020

What is the Experiential Activity Toolbox?

It is a growing list of activities which create opportunities for students to meaningfully connect to themselves, others and the natural world. These activities explicitly encourage experiential learning and meaningful connection, away from screen time.

What's Inside?

Inside the Experiential Activity Toolbox there are a series of resources, including:

- A series of active, experiential activities teachers can pull into their lessons, units, or SLC Action Packs, which assist with remote learning.
- A dedicated student activity page, which can be copied, pasted and/or altered by the teacher based on their course needs. A word document can be downloaded at the [Climate and Connection Unit](#) teacher page, for easy editing.
- A dedicated Teacher page with suggestions for alterations, additions and cross-curricular connections. Each activity also includes a table that shows which of the BC Core Competencies the activity either strongly, or softly meets. Green shows which BC Core Competencies are strongly met. Orange shows which are softly met and/or could be strongly met with additions.

Pedagogical Approach

Each activity in the Experiential Activity Toolbox:

- Aligns in some ways with First People's Principles of learning.
- Encourages a head, heart, hands pedagogical approach to learning
- Promotes learning through connection to self, others and the natural world which, in turn, fosters alignment between values and actions (i.e. the Integral model)
- Meets several BC Core Competencies
- Was created in collaboration with and practicing teachers and teaching candidates

Considerations

- Some activities require teachers to make edits or additions to tailor the activities to their course and provide post-activity instructions, such as work submission or student accountability. Some activities work best when students can freely reflect and experience without pressure of an adult reading their work. Consider structuring work submissions to allow experiential freedom.
- Consider different types of learners. Some students may best submit reflections through means other than writing, such as art.
- Many of the activities can be paired with music and can engage family members or friends.
- The activities were created to comply with COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines (as of April 29, 2020). We recognize that due to rapidly changing circumstances, there may be new rules to follow that we have not accounted for here. We want to stress the importance of taking precautions to keep students and our communities safe!

We want to hear from you! Please send your new or revised activities, suggestions or questions to admin@bethechangeearthalliance.org!

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE

ACTIVITY 1: I SPY: THE ONES THAT CALL TO ME



Purpose: To walk through and enjoy a natural space, while curiously exploring and connecting your awareness to plant life. Practice listening openly and becoming aware of what thoughts, feelings and senses come up as you spend time observing and appreciating plants as beings of their own. Explore what connection you feel with other life forms in the natural world.

Student Instructions:

In this exercise, you will explore, observe and appreciate plant life. We can learn a great deal about the natural world -- and ourselves -- when we spend time observing nature and noticing our own thoughts, senses and feelings in the process. By doing this you are practicing becoming aware of yourself and how you feel in the present moment, while finding your own personal connection to other living beings. People who practice this awareness regularly often tell stories of magical moments and experiences they have!

Head outside with a notebook and go for a casual walk or hike in a park or natural space accessible to you. Remember, since time immemorial, First Peoples have been practicing close relation to nature on the land you will be exploring. Take a look at whose [Traditional Territory you are on here](#). You're going to walk around and visit the first plant you see that catches your eye, or one that makes you feel *certain* or think "that one!" Sit, kneel or stand and inspect the plant. You may choose to touch or feel it, but do so gently, avoid damaging plant life.

Now, see what happens when you quietly listen to the plant and focus your senses on it. For example, take notice of what you see and any thoughts, feelings or senses that come up as you are with it (remember, everyone feels differently, and anything you feel is ok!). Consider asking yourself questions like: What do you like about it? What are you curious to know more about? Try saying "I see you as a part of me" aloud a few times as you look at it. How does that make you feel? Does the plant feel like a friend? Do you feel it watching you back? What does connecting to this plant mean to you, based on your values? Do you want to give it a name to remember it? Have patience in this process and let your mind relax and quiet down. Try taking 6 slow deep breaths to help you relax. Spend at least 5 minutes per plant, but feel free to spend more time if it feels right.

When you feel done visiting a plant, reflect for a moment in your notebook about what you saw, felt and thought. Think about questions that came up and write them down. Visit at least 2 more plants that catch your eye and repeat the process. Feel welcome to visit more, if you like.

Activity 1: For Teachers



Teachers can add post-activity instructions to the student instructions above, such as a submission of their reflections. Teachers should decide whether they would like students to submit some of their journal reflections. Students may lose deep introspection and reflection if they know someone else may read what they write. Consider asking for written work in a way that allows students to freely express in the moment and selectively choose what they submit later. Structured questions may be best here.

Example of post-activity instructions:

When you have completed your exercise, send [Teacher] an email with answers to the following reflections:

- What further questions do you have after completing this exercise? (ie. questions related to the plant's biology, or something related to the plant or yourself that you are curious to learn more about)
- What was your favourite moment during your exploration time?
- What feelings came up when you were visiting with each plant?
- What did your favourite plant look like? Why was it your favourite?

Additions/Alterations

- Assign a number of open questions students can write down during their experience that give them the freedom to inquire about whatever inspires them. They may choose to research or ask someone about these later.
- Ask students to share some of their experience with loved ones or a friend.

Examples of Cross-curricular Connections:

Use these ideas or find new ones!







Science

- Students can develop their own nature journals by drawing plants, insects, etc. and paying attention to the features of each species and/or the connections across species. Older students may be able to identify plants they find, with guidance.

Social Studies

- Invite students to consider what the First Peoples of the place they explore used the native plants for, and at what times in their own lives they have been aware of the interdependence of humans and other natural or living things.
 - [FNESC Resource Guide for teaching Science First Peoples](#)
 - [Plant Knowledge of the Salish Sea Region](#)

CORE COMPETENCIES

Communication		1. Connect and engage with others	2. Acquire, interpret, and present information	3. Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities	4. Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments
Creative Thinking		1. Novelty and value	2. Generating ideas	3. Developing ideas	
Critical Thinking		1. Analyze and critique	2. Question and investigate	3. Develop and design	
Positive Personal & Cultural Identity		1. Relationship and cultural contexts	2. Personal values and choice	3. Personal strengths and abilities	
Personal Awareness & Responsibility		1. Self-determination	2. Self-regulation	3. Well-being	
Social Responsibility		1. Contributing to community and caring for the environment	2. Solving problems in peaceful ways	3. Valuing diversity	4. Building Relationships

Note: Green shows which BC Core Competencies are strongly met. Orange shows which are softly met and/or could be strongly met with additions.

ACTIVITY 2: NATURE'S ARTIST

Purpose: Enjoy and connect to a natural space, while allowing your creativity to free-flow in the form of art. Access inspiration from nature and practice playful self-expression.



Student Instructions:

You are going to visit an accessible natural space to enjoy for creative inspiration and create art in! Visit any safe space you have access to with natural life such as a park, backyard or garden. Find a comfortable spot in that space, close to nature. If you don't have access to a natural space, you could also look out a window or spend time with a plant you have at home. You, the artist, have now reached your temporary creative space among other natural beings that are also creating things!

While being considerate of the life in that space and respectful not to destroy what is alive, make a piece of art using natural objects available to you, such as loose leaves, sticks, rocks, grass, pinecones and so on. Can you make a drawing with what you find? A stack of objects? Some pieces laid on the ground or some standing up? A sculpture?

Let your mind roam free and without judgement for what you make. If you cannot touch or move natural materials in your space or if you are choosing to observe a view of a natural landscape, bring along any art materials of your choice and create with those instead.

Consider how all the natural objects in your artistic creation relate to one another. How were they made? How do you think your objects came to be where you picked them up?

Feel free to leave your art for someone else to find, or if you want to disassemble it to be respectful of others, take a picture or simply "erase" it!

Activity 2: For Teachers



Additions/Alterations:

- Teachers might ask for reflections or images (if possible) of what is created.
- Instead of creating art from natural objects, students might be instructed to tap into their existing creative hobbies or interests, such as painting, in a natural space where they can visit for inspiration. (there is a suggestion for this already in the exercise).

Examples of Cross-curricular Connections:

Use these ideas or find new ones!





Mathematics

- Ask students to make notes about the geometric shapes and the different types of symmetry that exist in the natural elements that they chose for their art

ADST

- Ask students to create a sketch of an invention (either one that already exists or something new they can imagine) that draws on the forms or processes of some of the natural elements they found. Encourage them to think creatively here and not worry about having a fully-fleshed out idea for an invention or polished sketch of one (relates to the engineering concept of Biomimicry)
 - [Biomimicry video on Youtube](#) by "Sustainability Illustrated"

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