

Place-based Activity Lesson Plans

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Purpose of this Guide

This guide outlines five place-based activities/assignments that instructors can facilitate for learners in higher education. The focus is on learner-centered and experiential activities, with specific connections made to sustainable development goals (SDGs) for students to intentionally engage with climate action, clean energy, connecting with life on land and water, health and well-being, reducing inequalities, and more. These can be applied in a broad range of courses and disciplines.

Broad Focus

These activities are broadly applicable across the disciplines. The intention is for instructors, or other facilitators of learning, to adapt them to their specific course needs or learning outcomes. Use this as a guide to get you well on your way to offering engaging place-based learning experiences. These are the recipes; you add any additional ingredients.

Layout for Each Activity:

1. Overview of the activity and its relevance
2. Clear time breakdown and required materials
3. List of relevant SDGs to connect to this activity
4. Assessment, Location, and Accessibility
5. A step-by-step process for the activity
6. How to adapt for your discipline/course, with examples
7. KPU mentors to contact
8. Reflection questions to ask students

Campus as a Living Lab

Walking Curriculum

Storytelling

Local Field Trip

Campus Scavenger Hunt

Avoiding “I do, we do, you do”

As Carolyn Roberts discusses in her 2024 book *Re-Storying Education: Decolonizing Your Practice Using a Critical Lens*, a colonial, or assimilative, approach to education emphasizes that there is one right answer and one way to do things. Students are shown how to learn, they do this together, and then they do the work on their own. The closer they copy or mimic their instructor, the better their grade. This deters creative and innovative thinking. The activities in this guide disrupt this hierarchical model by using a learner-centered framework, where student ideas, creativity, and approaches are welcome—if not vital—to the learning process.

Place-based Learning

Typically, these activities/assignments are hands-on, collaborative, and many take place outdoors though some can occur in the classroom. The benefits of taking learning outside, or place-based education, are numerous. Learning outdoors is inherently engaging, relevant, and more personalized. Learners are challenged to witness the world through ecological, social, economic, and/or political lenses. Place-based education can cultivate a connection to the land and/or local communities, as well as enhance social-emotional learning, ability to focus, and well-being. The often-[interdisciplinary](#) approach of place-based learning aligns with real world situations.

Accessibility

Everyone can experience accessibility barriers, and everyone experiences these uniquely. Regular check-ins with students before, during, and after activities will help illuminate student experience. Traditional educational environments possess their own barriers; outdoor experiential learning can mitigate these but can also introduce new obstacles. This is an opportunity to uncover our own biases regarding where and how education occurs. We can also consider turning obstacles into opportunities such as embracing flexible and compassionate pedagogy. For each activity, specific accessibility considerations are provided, as well as ideas for alternate options and/or aspects to clarify for learners.

Note: the template used for this guide was adapted from Alice Macpherson's wonderful [*Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Courses*](#) (used with permission).

CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

Overview: The university campus becomes the site for teaching and learning about real-world issues and solutions. Students engage with the campus grounds as a living lab to inspire locally-relevant projects through experiential and action-oriented lenses.

Time	Instructor Activities	Learner Activities	Techniques/Equipment
30 min	Assess student knowledge of Campus as a Living Lab	Research and share findings on Campus as a Living Lab	Internet search
60-90 min	Lead or host a tour of the campus grounds. Acknowledge the land.	Attend tour, ask questions, make notes, brainstorm project ideas	Invite tour leader familiar with campus
Varies	Provide formative feedback to students on their projects	Propose, create, and present on their projects	Formative feedback such as project proposals, discussion, reflections, and peer comments



Relevance: The campus can be a source of germane, experiential learning where students can collaborate with campus partners and propose action plans connected to sustainability or other topics. Cross-collaborating with another class—or Facilities, the Office of Sustainability, [Climate+ Challenge](#), [KPU Wild Spaces](#)—can increase the stakeholder group.

Objective: Students complete a learner-centered and/or [inquiry-based](#) project connected to the campus that proposes solutions that are ecologically and socially sustainable.

Pre-assessment: Do students know what Campus as a Living Lab is?

Most Relevant SDGs: Quality education, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, climate action, and life on land. Students decide which to focus on.

Time: Can be adapted to a single class or span an entire semester.

Location(s): Campus grounds and campus buildings.

Accessibility: In exploring the campus, choose a route that limits obstacles to mobility. Provide learners with clear expectations for the campus tour, including if (and how) they should take notes. Have a discussion about accessibility needs and ask learners if there are places on campus they would like to explore.

Process:

1. Have students research Campus as a Living Lab and share their findings.
2. Do a tour of the campus, which could be led by the Office of Sustainability or Facilities, and stop at specific sites. Be sure to acknowledge the land you are on and the Indigenous and/or colonial history of this place.

Possible sites include:

- a. KPU Langley: vertical raingarden, Horticulture greenhouses, Logan Creek, parking lots built over the creek
 - b. KPU Richmond: KPU Farm, parking lot, Wilson School of Design, Lansdowne mall, SkyTrain station
 - c. KPU Surrey: parking lots, Westerman Property, main courtyard/pond, pocket forest, inner courtyard, campus garden
 - d. KPU Tech: Auto mechanics, millwright, e-car charging stations, outside west entrance
 - e. KPU Civic Plaza: Collaboration space, SkyTrain station, parking lot, living wall (Surrey City Hall)
3. While on the campus tour, have students notice and critically reflect on what in their surroundings may be connected to a sustainability challenge or strength (or your course's theme). Ask them these questions developed by Alicia Gowan:
 - a. Why might we be standing here in this location?
 - b. What in our surroundings may be connected with a sustainability challenge? A sustainability challenge KPU may face?
 - c. What might be missing that would better support your needs as a student at KPU, and how might this relate to sustainability?
 4. Students write a proposal for a project that connects one or more specific campus sites to 1-2 SDG goals. Ideally, they should collaborate or consult with an internal or external member who has expertise on their chosen topic. E.g., facilities, campus planning, or the KPU mentors listed below.
 5. Students complete their project with regular formative feedback from their instructor, and do a final presentation.

Accountability: Students will present their project to the class and invite collaborators and/or community members to attend.

Adapt for your Discipline/Course: Get familiar with your campus. Walk the grounds and connect with the Office of Sustainability, facilities, Wild Spaces, or one of the KPU mentors listed below. Based on your campus walk and conversations, brainstorm ideas for potential SDG-relevant projects students can work on. Determine the most suitable campus locations to visit during the campus tour, and what questions to ask students.

If you teach Educational Studies, the campus tour might include different learning environments (standard classroom, e-classroom, science labs, outdoor sites); students explore the quality education or reduced inequalities SDGs. If you teach Horticulture, Environmental Protection Technology, or Sustainable Agriculture, the campus tour might include greenhouses, gardens, forested areas or waterways; students choose to explore zero hunger, good health, clean water, climate action or life on water/land SDGs.

Students can also consider other resources for exploring their sustainability issue, such as the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#), the [KPU Strategic Plan/Vision 2026](#), or the [KPU2050 Campus Plan](#). You also might adapt the Campus as a Living Lab [project proposal form](#) on the University of Toronto website for use in your course.

KPU Mentors: Kathy Dunster, Andrea Niosi, Monica Affleck

Post-Assessment: Think-pair-apply (instructor poses a question—connected to a practical application—based on the campus as a living lab student presentation, in pairs students discuss this question and ideas for applying this in their own lives, then they share with the larger group ways to implement this in the real world).

Reflection Questions: 1. What unexpected obstacles did you face, and how did you overcome them?
2. How has your relationship with the university campus changed? Do you feel more or less connected?
3. What are the limitations and/or future considerations for your project? Are there any connections to the [xé?el̓ KPU Pathway to Systemic Transformation](#)?

Resources:

[University of Toronto - Campus as a Living Lab](#)

[The University Campus as a Living Lab for Sustainability: A Practitioner's Guide and Handbook](#)
[KPU2050 Campus Plan](#)

WALKING CURRICULUM

Overview: Learners walk with imaginative intention in order to change perspectives, encounter the world differently, seek evidence of human-nature relationships, and/or locate natural or human systems in action. This [interdisciplinary](#) approach to outdoor learning cultivates relationship to place and can deepen understanding of course topics such as those connected to the SDGs. Students can walk in an urban or rural area, or visit a local park, and explore biodiversity, urban planning, health and well-being, or other sustainability issues. Developed by Gillian Judson, A Walking Curriculum has been applied in 15 countries to over 100,000 K-12 students. It is adapted here to be applied in higher education.

Time	Instructor Activities	Learner Activities	Techniques/Equipment
15 min	Gather and attune learners to an outdoor space. Provide handout. Acknowledge land.	Come prepared to walk and explore	Handout on 1-3 specific Walking Curriculum prompts.
30-60 min	Facilitate one or more Walking Curriculum prompts (examples given at the end)	Engage in walking curriculum prompt, move slowly with senses attuned, and may take notes or photos	Clear walking route
30 min	Lead a debriefing discussion	Discuss their experiences, and (optionally) share photos or other documentation	



Relevance: This holistic approach engages the body, mind, and imagination. Learners increase their attention to detail, connect with a local environment, and can witness real world evidence of colonization, sustainability, or other issues in their community.

Objective: Engage in an embodied experience that deepens connections to a specific place with a focus on SDGs or other course themes. From Gillian Judson: “With my adult learners I find a story-focused walk is great for exploring the different ways we understand concepts *and* as a way to engage with the living, meaning-full and evocative aspects of Place.” She asks: *What’s the story here? What engages your emotion? And what could be the back/forward story?*

Pre-assessment: Are students familiar with the SDGs that will be relevant for this intentional walk? Has the instructor considered accessibility options?

Most Relevant SDGs: Good health and well-being, quality education, clean water and sanitation, sustainable cities and communities, life below water, life on land.

Time: 30-90 minutes

Techniques/Equipment: Human bodies.

Location(s): Campus grounds, city streets, KPU Farm, Newton Greenway, other local parks/green spaces.

Accessibility: Check in beforehand with your class regarding any physical or other accessibility needs. Be explicit in your expectations for any walks you do. Are they meant to be reflective and solitary, social and communicative, or something else? Providing clear details can help learners better prepare for this experience and encourage them to raise questions or concerns.

Process:

1. Inform students of the place the walk will occur, terrain, length of walk, if there will be a break, and washroom availability. Make a clear invitation to students for accessibility questions or concerns.
2. Set a conspicuous meeting location for students. If meeting inside the classroom, be sure you can lock their extra belongings inside. If meeting outdoors, be sure everyone knows where to meet and provide a contact phone number or email.
3. Connect your learners to the outdoor place. This may include a territorial acknowledgement, sharing stories of this land, or asking learners what they know about this place or how they feel in this place right now.
4. Provide students with a handout on 1-3 specific Walking Curriculum prompts. Emphasize how they should focus their attention, the importance of slow walking, engaging the imagination, and anything they should document (e.g., writing down reflections or taking photos). As Gillian Judson says: "Let us seek the stories, notice the places we walk, and attune to details."
5. Students engage in A Walking Curriculum.
6. Gather again at a new, or the original, location. Invite students to share their experiences.

Accountability: Students can debrief in a circle with the larger group after their walk. Additionally, they can be asked to take photos during their walk and share these with written reflections on Moodle.

Adapt for your Discipline/Course: A walking activity is applicable to any discipline. Think of this as an opportunity to get learners moving and engaged and focused on a particular topic, while being mindful of accessibility needs. The trick is to make it relevant for your learners and the course subject or themes.

For example, if you teach in Design you can have learners look for examples of biomimicry (sustainable communities SDG), or patterns in nature and human-made structures that are (in)efficient for energy use (clean energy SDG). If you teach History you can have learners do a History Walk (see table below) and look for evidence of the past and the stories that live in this place connected to colonization or racism (reduced inequalities) or discrimination based on gender (gender equality). If you teach Creative Writing your walk can focus on imagining what it would be like to encounter this area as a fictional character facing economic hardship (no poverty), facing lack of food (no hunger), or connecting with nature (life on land).

KPU Mentors: Gillian Judson (SFU), Lee Beavington

Post-Assessment: Daring doodle (have students draw a concept or aspect of their walking curriculum experience).

Reflection Questions: 1. How did this engagement (e.g., walking) differ from more conventional instruction such as lecture and note-taking?
 2. What new plants/people/places did you discover in this community? How might you connect with them further in the future, especially in relation to one or more SDGs?
 3. What did you observe or encounter that surprised you? Imagine this place differently, in regard to an SDG. What would you change in terms of the path, accessibility, the plant species, and/or human-built structures?

Resources:

[Walking Forward: Learning from Place](#)
[imaginED – A Walking Curriculum](#)
[hundrED – The Walking Curriculum](#)

There are 60 walks described in [A Walking Curriculum](#). Six are provided briefly in the table below.

Walking Prompt / Focus	Guiding Questions / What to Notice	SDG Connections
Systems Walk Identify parts of a given system.	What are the different parts of the system? How do the parts connect? If looking at a human-built system, what impacts do you observe of the system on the environment? <i>Engaging imagination: What alternatives to the system can you imagine? How do people impact this system and how could it be improved?</i>	• Reduced inequalities • Climate action • Sustainable communities • Life on Land
Water Walk Route with water (pond, stream, culvert, ditch, fountain, downspout)	In what different ways are people using water? Is there evidence of water being wasted or polluted? How could water be used more efficiently without polluting it? How does the look, smell, or feel of the water change at different points in the walk? What might cause these changes? <i>Engaging imagination: Visualize a stream buried in this area, and then this stream being daylighted (restored back to the surface).</i>	• Clean water • Good health • Life below water
History Walk Notice and imagine the past.	What evidence can you find on your walk that something happened at that location in the past or before this moment? <i>Engaging imagination: What mental images emerge as you envision the beings who came before you in this place?</i>	• Life on land • Climate action
Human Impact Walk Industrial area, shopping mall, well-used path.	What might this place be like if people had never been here? What might be here that isn't? What is here now that might not be? <i>Engaging imagination: How might the area have looked 100 years in the past, or 100 years in the future? Write or draw these visions.</i>	• Clean water • Responsible consumption • Climate action
Welcome Walk Campus grounds or local area.	What spots (from large to teeny-tiny) do you find <i>inviting</i> ? Which attract your attention? Which are <i>welcoming</i> ? <i>Engaging imagination: Think about the qualities of inviting versus uninviting spaces, and identify these areas.</i>	• Reduced inequalities • Well-being
Borders Walk Notice areas of transition.	Where are the borders to your walk? What borders appear to you within your walking space? Are these human-made or natural borders? <i>Engaging imagination: How do you know it is a 'border'? What are the clues?</i>	• Sustainable communities • No poverty

STORYTELLING

Overview: Storytelling is an engaging way to connect personal and professional lives, reflect on experience, and make our educational journeys relatable. Oral storytelling is common practice in Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, and can be applied in many classrooms or learning environments.

Time	Instructor Activities	Learner Activities	Techniques/Equipment
5-10 min	Share a story. This sets the tone and prepares students to share their own stories. Think about including humour.	Active listening	Confident voice
5 min	What story will students share? E.g., “a powerful learning experience,” “the first time you recognized the climate crisis,” “a time you worked effectively in a team,” or “a story of home.”	Think of a story to tell in small groups	Supportive invitation to share
20-30 min	Break students into groups of 3-4. Give plenty of time for stories to be shared.	Students take turns sharing stories. Groups that finish early can be given follow-up questions or the next task below.	Small group discussion
20 min	Ask each group to pull out the key or common noticings/ideas/themes from the stories that were shared. Discuss.	Students pull out key/common ideas and write them on the white board (or cue cards if outdoors)	White board (or cue cards) and markers



Relevance: Storytelling is engaging and experiential, and a way to decolonize more formal learning practices by inviting more personal heart sharing. As Jennifer Grenz writes in *Medicine Wheel for the Planet*: “Storytelling isn’t just for teaching about something, it is for figuring things out too...I have used storytelling to reach students, the general public, colleagues, and politicians on topics such as weed science, invasive species management, and environmental policy.”

Objective: Have students share stories in small groups on topics related to course themes.

Pre-assessment: Have you, as the instructor, created an environment that is supportive and built on trust and relationship where students will feel safer/braver to share their story? Cultivate a more inclusive learning environment that is mindful of diverse student needs. Give all students a chance to share every class. Engage in active listening and leave space for relational connection and community building.

Most Relevant SDGs: No poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, reduced inequalities, climate action.

Time: 30-60 minutes

Techniques/Equipment: White board (or cue cards) and dry erase markers.

Location(s): In classroom or outdoors.

Accessibility: Foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment where storytelling is the norm rather than the exception (see Pre-assessment section above). Refer students to the [Speaking with Confidence in Class](#) learning aid for ideas on how to mitigate anxiety and strategies for successful class participation and oral sharing.

Process:

1. Start the class with a story. Think of a story, either from your personal life or from someone else (ensure you have permission to share), that connects to your class theme. In Geography, you might share a story of being in an urban or natural ecosystem. In Astronomy, you might share a story connected to the moon or seasons. In Indigenous Studies, you might share a story on traditional practices or ceremony. In Entrepreneurial Leadership, you might share a story of being (or being led by) a good leader. In Marketing, you might share a story of a social media campaign that stuck with you. Including some humour works well.
2. Tell students the storytelling theme, which is dependent on the SDG(s) or other focus you have. For example, if “Climate Action” is your focus, then you can invite students to share a story on when they first learned about the climate emergency, or how climate change has affected their life, or climate anxiety.
3. Have students get into small groups of 3-4. Each student has 3-5 minutes to share a story. Check in with groups periodically to ensure all students are getting a chance to share.
4. Ask each group to think about the collective stories that were shared. Have someone in the group write down 4-5 common ideas or themes that arose from the stories.
5. Have each group write their 4-5 items on the white board (or on cue cards, if outdoors).
6. Discuss the common themes. You might use the reflection questions below for prompts, or as a follow-up assignment.

Accountability: Each group writes their common ideas on the white board.

Adapt for your Discipline/Course:

As Robin Wall Kimmerer says, “The stories we tell about the world shape our reality.” Every person and discipline have stories. In your class the goal is to share stories, and ask the right questions or make the proper invitations, that inspire your students to tell a story that matters to them. Most people love to share stories, but they might feel like they need permission. Give them not only permission but enthusiastic encouragement.

If you teach in Trades, have students share a story of trying to fix a broken appliance or how they would design their dream car/dryer/electrical device (and connect this to the clean energy SDG). If you teach Mathematics, have students share stories about first learning about numbers or a frustrating/inspiring experience learning about math (and connect this to the quality education SDG). If you teach in Journalism, have students share a story from their life where they felt empowered and made a difference (and connect this to the climate action, reduced inequalities, or gender equality SDG).

KPU Mentors: Elder Lekeyten, Anthony Fernandes, Lee Beavington

Post-Assessment: 3-2-1 (students write down three things they learned from the story, two more things they would like to know more about, and one question they have).

Reflection Questions: 1. What did you appreciate about the stories shared by your classmates? What parts stuck with you the most?
 2. How did your story, or stories from classmates, help you connect to a particular SDG and/or class theme? Would a PowerPoint lecture have had the same impact?
 3. What family stories have been passed down to you? What stories do you tell about yourself? Do these feel true and accurate to who you are or want to be?

Extending this Work: Consider starting each class with a story-sharing circle, or doing Circle Work where all voices are invited to be heard in an intentional environment that builds community and relationship (see Carolyn Roberts’ chapter “Re-storying educational” in her book *Re-Storying Education*). For students giving class presentations, they can be encouraged to include storytelling as an engaging and relevant part of their presentations.

Resources:

Archibald, J-A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. UBC Press.
 Grenz, J. (2024). *Medicine wheel for the planet: A journey toward personal and ecological healing*. Knopf Canada. [see chapter “Storytelling to Connect Us All”]
 Roberts, C. (2024). *Re-Storying Education: Decolonizing your practice using a critical lens*. Page Two.
 Climate Disaster Project: <https://climatedisasterproject.com>

LOCAL FIELD TRIP

Overview: Field trips are immersive experiences that promote community engagement. Making an intentional visit to a local park or organization, or even the campus grounds, can allow students to experientially explore course themes.

Time	Instructor Activities	Learner Activities	Techniques/Equipment
20 min	Provide students with details such as field trip location, accessibility notes, anticipated weather, washroom availability	Prepare appropriately for travel and weather	Clear communication
varies	Ensure everyone arrives to the site	Walk, transit, carpool or drive to field trip site (unless bus is arranged)	Class list
1-3 hours	Facilitate specific exercises connected to the field trip location and topic. Allow time for exploration, discussion, and reflection.	Engage with the field trip site	Outdoor learning, reflective activities



Relevance: Learning outdoors in community has a plethora of well-documented benefits, including enhancing focus, health, creativity, meaning, and academic performance.

Objective: Deepen connection to a specific place while exploring one or more course themes.

Pre-assessment: Are there accessibility needs that should be addressed?

Most Relevant SDGs: Zero Hunger, good health and well-being, clean water and sanitation, climate action, life below water, life on land

Time: 2-4 hours

Location(s): KPU Farm, Cougar Creek, Serpentine Greenway, Logan Creek, other local green spaces or community organizations

Accessibility: Be clear on the purpose of the field trip, where you are going, length of travel time as well as walking time, if and when there will be a break, and other relevant details. Learners should know your expectations (e.g., What should they bring? Should they take notes? Can they focus solely on the experience?).

Process:

1. Ensure students are aware of the location, timing, terrain, weather, and any other pertinent aspects connected to the field trip. Make a clear invitation to students for accessibility questions or concerns. If the field trip is off-campus, [a field trip waiver form](#) will need to be completed.
2. Travel to the field trip site. Many locations are walkable from KPU campuses, such as Cougar Creek (KPU Surrey), KPU Farm (KPU Richmond), and Logan Creek (KPU Langley). Note that travel/walking time is not wasted time. In fact, relationship and community building often occur here. Additionally, you can task learners individually or in pairs to discuss a particular topic or pay attention to their environment during walking/travel time (see Walking Curriculum activity for ideas).
3. Engage with this location with specific intention, being mindful of the land/territory you are on, the learning affordances of the place, and also what can be offered back to this place. See “Adapt for your Discipline/Course” for ideas.
4. At the end of the field trip, or at the start of next class, debrief the experience with students.

Accountability: Students can write a reflection of their field trip experience, or share orally during the following class.

Adapt for your Discipline/Course: Biology, Horticulture and Geography have obvious outdoor applications that relate to the climate action, life below water, and life on land SDGs. Yet any discipline can benefit from field trips.

If you teach Public Relations you can have students take photos or videos outside to use in a media production connected to the clean energy or reduced inequalities SDGs. If you teach Philosophy, ethics connected to sustainability, environment, health care, metaphysics, and life and death are all relevant. Students can engage in “The Last Man on Earth” thought experiment or consider ethics from the point of view of a bird, tree, or river in relation to the life below water or life on land SDGs. If you teach in Psychology, there are many applications connected to behaviour, sensation, perception, health, and environment. Students can participate in an outdoor wellness activity (connected to the good health SDG) or explore how their senses/perceptions change when outdoors (quality education SDG).

In any learning that happens on the land, it is important to consider the First Nations territories you are on, and engage with respect, reverence and reciprocity. Rather than nature being a backdrop, have the natural world be an active participant, and one that students build a relationship with in a reciprocal way.

KPU Mentors: [Wild Spaces](#), Lee Beavington, Farhad Dastur, Kathy Dunster, Nicole Tunbridge

Post-Assessment: Mingle-pair-share (students move around one another and when the instructor says 'stop' they share their experience with a nearby student or talk about a specific topic/question given by the instructor, such as 'What surprised you about this field trip?', 'What SDG felt most relatable during the field trip?', or 'What place would you like to explore further?').

Reflection Questions: 1. Think of an SDG that is relevant to the field trip location we visited. How can you/we further the work of this SDG in this place?
 2. How can we avoid the natural world being a backdrop? What exercises or activities did you do on the field trip that actively engaged with the natural world in a respectful and responsible way?
 3. Think about reciprocity. What is something you can (or did) offer back to this place? Consider Robin Wall Kimmerer's (2024) thoughts in her book *Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*:

What could I give these plants in return for their generosity? I could return the gift with a direct response, like weeding or bringing water or offering a song of thanks that sends appreciation out on the wind. I could make habitat for the solitary bees that fertilized those fruits. Or maybe I could take indirect action, like donating to my local land trust so that more habitat for the gift givers will be saved, speaking at a public hearing on land use, or making art that invites others into the web of reciprocity. I could reduce my carbon footprint, voice on the side of healthy land, advocate for farmland preservation, change my diet, hang my laundry in the sunshine. We live in a time when every choice matters. (2024, p. 13–14)

Resources:

[KPU Wild Spaces](#)

Beavington, L. (2024). A walk to the river: Nature and student mental health. *Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2024.2414191> (email lee.beavington@kpu.ca for full article)

Fleischner et al. (2017). Teaching biology in the field: Importance, challenges, and solutions, *BioScience*, 67(6), 558–567. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix036>

[Wild Pedagogies Six Touchstones](#) – (1) Nature as Co-teacher, (2) Complexity, the Unknown & Spontaneity, (3) Locating the Wild, (4) Time & Practice, (5) Socio-Cultural Change, (6) Building Alliances and the Human Community.

CAMPUS SCAVENGER HUNT

Overview: Students are provided a set of instructions that takes them around the campus. They engage with specific sites, clues, and/or people to learn about the campus and ideas linked to course themes.

Time	Instructor Activities	Learner Activities	Techniques/Equipment
20 min	Set up scavenger hunt clues	N/A	Envelopes, clues, tape
5 min	Provide overview of scavenger hunt (location, timing, meeting site, etc.)	Become familiar with scavenger hunt	Scavenger hunt handout
30-60 min	Facilitate scavenger hunt. Be available for students that need help or guidance.	Complete the scavenger hunt by moving around the campus, and interacting with specific sites	
20 min	Debrief. See reflection questions listed at end.	Engage in discussion and reflection	Group discussion



Relevance: Exploring the campus connects students to their expanded learning environment. Having students engage with specific areas or people is an experiential way to learn.

Objective: Students navigate themselves to sites specified by the instructor's handout, and engage at these locations in a way that connects to course themes.

Pre-assessment: How familiar are students with the campus? Do they know where each building is and what they are called? What about outdoor areas?

Most Relevant SDGs: Quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, reduced inequalities, life on land.

Time: 30-90 minutes

Techniques/Equipment: Scavenger hunt handout, envelopes (with paper inside with clues), tape

Location(s): Specific sites on the university campus. E.g., e-vehicle charging stations, learning gardens, science labs, treed areas, pond/waterways, a particular book in the library, Learning Centre, accessibility ramp, noticeboard, gender-neutral washrooms, cafeteria.

Accessibility: Plan the scavenger hunt for maximum mobile accessibility (e.g., avoid steps without ramps, narrow halls or doorways, high shelving, uneven ground). Give clear expectations for learners in terms of what they need to bring with them, how they will work in teams (if relevant), timing, meeting location(s), and boundaries of the scavenger hunt.

Process:

1. Set up the scavenger hunt. Determine which sites your students will visit (see “Adapt for Your Discipline/Course” below for ideas). Create a handout that includes directions or hints to each site, and have clear activities, questions, and/or reflections for students to do at each site. Put envelopes (or other clues/guides) at each site for students to read or engage with.
2. Give the handout to students. Indicate clear parameters for the scavenger hunt: timing, where to meet up afterward, how to reach the instructor if they have trouble, areas on campus they will visit (or areas off limits).
3. Have students engage in the scavenger hunt. Be available (in person, or phone/email) if any students hit obstacles. To avoid bottlenecks or students all traveling in one large group, have smaller groups start at different parts of the scavenger hunt.
4. Gather with everyone. Ask students to share their discoveries, ask any lingering questions, or engage with the reflection questions listed below.

Accountability: Instructor can arrange specific check-in points at specific times. Another option is to have students document their journey via completing a handout and/or taking photos at specific sites.

Extending this Work: Create a geocache (or ecocache) where students navigate to different sites using their phones or a GPS unit. See the article below by Beavington & Jewell for an example at KPU Surrey.

Adapt for your Discipline/Course: Scavenger hunts bring a sense of adventure and discovery. The one you design will be tailored to your students and course topics; emphasize this relevance to students. Familiarize yourself with the campus, and walk in areas (both indoors and outdoors) where you have never been. Take notes for germane scavenger hunt sites for students to visit.

If you teach Biology, Geography, or Horticulture, students can visit sites on campus that relate to biological or geographic themes, such as trees, erosion, waterways, plant labs, or greenhouses. These can connect with the life on land or life below water SDGs. Example site question: How is your body connected to this tree/water?

If you teach in Computer Information Systems, students can visit the library computer stations, IT service desk (Surrey), one of the Eagle Eye displays (internal digital signage), a room with a large projector (Spruce Atrium in Surrey or Melville Centre for Dialogue in Richmond). These can connect to reduced inequalities or clean energy SDGs. Example site question: Do any unoccupied computer stations have monitors that are still on? How can we be more efficient with our computer use?

If you teach in Fine Arts or Music, students can visit the Langley Auditorium, Spruce Atrium Gallery, other student art displays (e.g., Spruce Atrium), the stage in Grassroots Café, and the outdoor graphic signage for each building. These can connect with the climate action or reduced inequalities SDGs. Example site question: How does this artwork connect with sustainability themes? List one specific connection.

KPU Mentors: KPU Sustainability Club, Lee Beavington, Victoria Tubrett

Post-Assessment: Think-pair-draw (in pairs, students draw the route they took for the scavenger hunt, key sites they stopped at, places they were curious about, and places they would like to explore further).

Reflection Questions: 1. Share your journey. Were any sites difficult to find? Were any activities challenging? For sites with a question or riddle, did some students come up with different answers for the same question?

2. What new place or discovery did you make on the campus? How might you stay connected to these places?

3. Think of a site with a clear connection to an SDG. How can you take action in the future on this SDG?

Resources:

[24 Awesome Scavenger Hunt Ideas for College Students in 2024](#)

Beavington, L., & Jewell, J. (2018). GPS ecocache: Connecting learners to experience and place. *American Association of Philosophy Teachers Studies in Pedagogy*, 4.

<https://doi.org/10.5840/aaptstudies201922539> (email lee.beavington@kpu.ca for full article)

Useful links:

Field Trip – Final release of claims form:

<https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/experiential/KPU-Final-Release-Claims-Fieldtrip-Form.pdf>

Field Trip – Final release of claims form (minor 18 years or younger):

<https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Policies/SR5B%20Final%20Release%20of%20Claims%20%28Minor%29%20Attachment.pdf>

Planning a Field Trip (with bus or van rental for student transport):

<https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/experiential/KPU-Planning-A-Fieldtrip-Form.pdf>

Photo Waiver form:

<https://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/experiential/KPU-Photo-Release-Waiver.pdf>

KPU Farm:

<https://www.kpu.ca/science/agriculture/farms>

Cougar Creek Streamkeepers:

<https://cougarcreekstreamkeepers.ca>

KPU Wild Spaces:

<https://wordpress.kpu.ca/wildspaces>