

Observing and Engaging in the Garden

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: Sense and Observe the Garden

 Overview	Students will spend time in the garden/outdoor space, being mindful, present, and focusing on using all of their senses.
 Materials	Journals, pencils (optional)
 Time	20 minutes

- 1. Introduce** the idea of mindfulness (additional activities in [Mindfulness in the Garden](#), UBC). Remind students that when they go outside, they are doing so quietly, and thoughtfully. Gather the class to go outside.
- 2. Engage** by having students quietly stand around the garden space, spread out from each other but close enough to hear you. You can say something along the lines of, "We will be using all of our five senses to be in the garden today. Ask yourself, "What am I seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting [remind students what is safe to eat, or offer samples if they would like]?" Listen quietly, feel free to close your eyes if you are comfortable." Instruct students to sit or

stand for 2-5 minutes quietly. Then ask students to share what they saw, heard, smelled, touched, or tasted. Dig deeper, "Where did you feel the senses in your body? Did you feel any emotions? Did it remind you of anything?"

- 3. Discuss** by asking the students, "What sights, sounds, and smells would you expect to be in the garden, but are not here right now? Why?" Discuss what elements were missing, e.g. certain birds, wind, sunlight.
- 4. Extension** - Students could find a spot to sit, and in their journals, draw a picture or write about what they sensed.

This lesson was originally taught on the traditional and unceded land of the Secwepemc Nation, and the language and story shared here are from these people. By highlighting the language and stories of different Nations, we celebrate the long history and current relationships with the Indigenous people in BC. Connect with your school's Indigenous Education Coordinator for more information on your local Nation's stories/language if desired.

LANGUAGE: To incorporate language into the lesson, visit the [Secwepemc language page on First Voices](#).

STORY: [How the Animal People Stole Fire](#), from the [SD73 Secwepemc Resource page](#).

SEASONALITY:

This lesson would be very effective in the Spring before the garden is planted to begin crop planning conversations. If you do not have access to a school garden, these activities can be adapted to other outdoor classrooms or spaces such as nearby forests, fields, or meadows.

CREDITS

This lesson was developed by Shelaigh Garson and Maureen Zutz.

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Maureen Zutz is a teacher at Skeetchestn Community School. She is a 15th generation settler on her mother's side and a 1st generation settler on her father's side, and is of Scottish, French and English ancestry. She has been working at the school and the garden since 2013.

They both reside on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation.

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LEARNING ACTIVITY #2: Interact with the Garden

 Overview	Students will consider the impacts of sun, water, wind, and other elements in the garden. This could be a continuation of the Learning Activity #1, or done on another day.
 Materials	• Paper, pencils, clipboards for each student • Large paper taped up, marker
 Time	45-60 minutes

SEASONALITY:

This lesson would be very effective in the Spring before the garden is planted, to begin crop planning conversations. If you do not have access to a school garden, these activities can be adapted to other outdoor classrooms or spaces such as nearby forests, fields, or meadows.

- 1. Introduce** impacts of sunlight, shade, and water on plant needs.
- 2. Discuss** while standing in the garden, and brainstorm as a class how these different components are impacting your school garden and the plants growing in it.
 - a. Sun:** Encourage students to feel the sun on their face, where is it in the sky? Where would it be at noon on a day in July? What about in December?
 - b. Water:** Encourage the students to walk around the garden, and notice where is the water pooling? What beds are wet? Where is there water access in this space?
 - c. Wind:** Is it windy today? Where does the wind usually come from here? Is the wind usually cold or warm when it comes from different directions? What might that do to the plants in the garden?
- 3. Engage** in small groups - Students work in small groups to create a map of the garden. Here are the layers for students to map out (based on these [six important garden planning maps](#)):
 - a. Sun paths:** Where is the sun? Where is it in July? Where is it in December?
 - b. Sun access on the space:** Are certain areas shady all year?



LEARNING ACTIVITY #2: Interact with the Garden

- c. **Water access, pooling, drainage:** Is the soil in the beds frozen, wet, dry? Where is the water source?
 - d. **Physical infrastructure in the garden:** (e.g. garden beds, shed, irrigation, fencing)
 - e. **Wildlife in the garden:** Does any wildlife travel through the space? What animals interact with it?
4. **Discuss** - Back together as a class, combine the physical attributes of the garden onto a large piece of paper with all of the layers (a-e above). The individual papers could be taped onto the large paper, or the garden map redrawn.
5. **Reflect** - Do we need to make any changes to the garden layout? What do we need to think about when we plant our crops?

Additional Garden Activities

1. Find an item in the growing space - what is its role in that ecosystem?
2. Create pencil rubbings of different objects (e.g. tree bark, rocks, leaves) - can you guess the object? How do the textures and patterns of plants differ?
3. There are many more gardening ideas in FNEsc's resource, [In Our Own Words – Bringing Authentic First Peoples Content to the K-3 Classroom](#), specifically Unit 2: Gifts from the Earth (p. 51-76).

Curricular Connections

The K-12 curricular connections listed below are not exhaustive, but reflect the main subject areas that align with this lesson. Extension activities could also be included in PHE (healthy living), Math (counting, measuring), ADST (food studies), and Art (visual representations like drawings).

ELA	Kindergarten: Explore oral storytelling processes
	Grade 3: Develop awareness of how story in First Peoples cultures connects people to land
	Grade 9: Recognize the influence of place in First Peoples and other Canadian texts
Social Studies	Questioning and predicting: Demonstrate curiosity about the natural world; Observe objects and events in familiar contexts (K-9)
	Processing and analyzing data and information: Experience and interpret the local environment; Identify First Peoples perspectives and knowledge as sources of information (K-9)

