

S·A·L·O·N

President's Message, Summer 2021

As we enjoy warmer weather, the patios open and the vaccines roll out across Canada, I am so delighted to welcome all of our member-associations from coast to coast to coast to our new network of social studies educators. We are dedicating ourselves to work together to advocate for social studies education, to facilitate networking and cooperation among social studies educators and to engage with our partners in the development and implementation of policies and resources related to social studies education across Canada.

Over the last year, we've all had a lot more experience with virtual meetings, and the SSEC / RESSC executive is no different. We now meet monthly across 5 time zones to keep each association updated on the provincial learning and teaching environments, projects and opportunities available to all of our members.

We are excited to start building our website and getting our social media off the ground so we'll be able to share news and events in our network more easily. In the meantime, we are finding lots of ways to provide connections and resources to social studies teachers across and within provincial and territorial boundaries.

To learn more about these events you can follow us on Twitter @SSENCRESSC or watch for updates from your provincial association or your territorial representative.

We are excited to engage with our members and partners as the year progresses. Three of our member-associations: OHASSTA, MSSTA and ATASSC will be presenting our first SSEC / RESSC virtual conference October 21-23, 2021 with the support of our partners at the Association for Canadian Studies. We're gathering the workshop proposals and it looks like it's going to be a fantastic way to connect with colleagues across Canada. We've got lots more in the works, so watch for more ways to get involved in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Rachel Collishaw
President, Social Studies Educators Network of Canada
President, Ontario History and Social Science Teachers' Association

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EDITOR'S NOTE RE: EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN A PANDEMIC - ACCESSING THE OUTDOORS

Like teachers all across Canada we have been looking for ways to get students out of the four walls of a classroom, so this issue is all about “Outside Opportunities”. So many community-based organizations are eager to connect their resources with curious and engaged students, sometimes all we need to do as teachers is ask. In Manitoba, New Brunswick and Alberta, teachers share their experience of taking students outside. And across Canada, students may soon have the opportunity to be part of one of the largest civics classroom in the country – working at a Federal election. Share your outside opportunities @SSENCRESSC

CANGeo - Outdoor Education Experience

Last fall, I was assigned to teach Geography of Canada 120 for the first time. I knew that this course would lend itself nicely to outdoor experiential inquiry-based learning, an area that has been strongly encouraged during these COVID-19 times. Located along the St-John River valley in rural New Brunswick, our community is surrounded by gently rolling hills and sweeping hardwood forest, a valley that follows a winding river through the province, gorges, waterfalls and rich soil ideal for agriculture.

As we started to dive into our physical geography unit, I wanted to help my students understand the geological forces and processes which have produced and continue to change our landscape, while giving them the opportunity to develop inquiry skills that engage them in authentic field work.

We needed to get outside and start exploring our local environment.

My first step was to reach out to the Meduxnekeag River Association (MRA), a community based non-profit environmental organization that provides tours and free curriculum linked environmental programs to local schools, to see if we could design a workshop geared towards my GeoCan students. The association was eager to help and its knowledgeable guides gave us a personalized tour that focused on land formation. Students enjoyed soil sampling to understand the interconnectivity between climate, landforms, vegetation and soil.

We were the first high school class to take part in this type of workshop. During the activity, students collaborated, made observations, and conducted an experiment. Students were divided in 3 groups, given a pack full of tools and a shovel and then led deep into the woods to their “work site”. The guides pointed out that the area was once used to harvest red pines, a very tall self-pruning tree once used as utility poles.



Our workshop was such a success, that the MRA is now looking into extending its programming for high schools. The River Association used our results and recorded our data to help monitor soil conditions on the reserve. Students enjoyed the opportunity to interact with experts in this field. And assessment was easy, students physically demonstrated their inquiry skills with a messy, hands on experience.

*By Michelle Byrne.
Woodstock High School, NB*

landED: landscape + education

As Canadians, our best childhood memories take place in the great outdoors. We remember skating on the river until we couldn't feel our toes or exploring our neighbourhood's parks and trails, searching for shade on the hottest summer days. The identity we found in our surroundings as children is a key factor to maintaining mental and physical health in our adult lives. With most Canadians living in urban centres, the importance of seeking out these natural spaces is even greater. By establishing robust outdoor education programs in schools, we can help students develop habits of understanding, comfort, and access to nature, improving long-term quality of life. In 2020, Manitoba-based design firm Little Bluestem Landscape Architecture + Design established the landED environmental education program to share a passion for the nature-human connection.

The primary goal of landED is to build and maintain a relationship between education and the landscape. The guiding tenets of landscape architecture are the same as those that make good social citizens: consideration of environment and culture, natural resource management, mental and physical health advocacy, and social equity.

To this end, landED's programming refocuses environmental education for youth through the lens of design.

Activities inspired by landscape architecture offer students insight into the design process of landscape space and create a sense of personal agency to improve their physical surroundings and build community.

landED began with our Teaching Tuesday series, short videos demonstrating outdoor activities for learning at home or school, alone or together. COVID-19 restrictions were a catalyst for Teaching Tuesday's inception. Through Teacher's Guides to Outdoor Learning (free content published seasonally on the website), educators have tools and resources to feel comfortable taking their classes outdoors in all seasons, establishing nature as an extension of the classroom.

By the landED team: Jane Hilder, Krista Renwick + Darcy Granove
<http://www.littlebluestemla.com/landed>

Jane's Walk

Jane Jacobs was an activist and journalist recognized as one of the most important thinkers in the field of urbanism. Concerned with the state of democracy she saw cities as a manifestation of democratic ideals. She believed in diverse cities where local governments preserve historic buildings, promote public transportation, and create walkable communities. She advocated flexible and gradual development. Jane's Walks began in Toronto shortly after her death as a celebration of her ideas. These walks encourage people to meet their neighbors in an inclusive setting that celebrates diverse opinions, ideas, and observations. Led by volunteers they provide participants the opportunity to share stories about their community and observe, reflect, and collectively re-imagine their city. Many educators have adopted the ideas behind these walks to provide their students with an opportunity to get out of the classrooms and view their communities in a different way.

Edmonton teacher Mary Sekulic led a high school class on a Jane's Walk in the community of Highlands. She found that her students were genuinely interested in learning more about their city. They were happy to be outdoors and were relaxed and receptive to the information shared at the four designated sites on the walk. She found that the students improved their understanding of public and private spaces through the activity. For one of the stops, the home Marshall McLuhan lived in as a child, she utilized some pre-teaching on "the medium is the message" concept. This helped engage the students at the micro-museum located in the house that is dedicated to McLuhan's life and research. Students were enchanted by the humble home which was beautifully decorated and curated.

Another stop on the walk found the students standing in front of a stained-glass window inside Highlands United Church. They listened with fascination to the story of Reverend Richard Davies who served as padre with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg. Six weeks after D-Day Davies was walking through a mostly destroyed church in France when he came across a piece of stained glass. He took it back to his regimental aid post and over the next few months, he collected pieces of stained glass from 24 churches in France, Holland, and Germany.

Upon his return to Canada, he had the shards of glass fashioned into the memorial window the students stood before.

The fascinating story enthralled many of the students and provided them with a

new perspective on World War II.

Sekulic found Jane's Walk to be an engaging way to build rapport among her students as they learned about their physical community. The students gained a new perspective on their city while getting out of the classroom and experiencing the world around them. Teachers wishing to utilize this approach should start by investigating what resources already exist from their local Jane's Walk community or from books and websites featuring local historical walks. Teachers will want to find curriculum connections that help them meet outcomes for the topics they are teaching. Having a list of critical thinking and historical thinking questions is a good way to prepare for the walk and ensure students are building skills and competencies. Through these walks students see themselves as members of an urban community. And as citizens of a community, they start to see how they can help make it a better place to live. As Jacobs said in the *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, "The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts... Most of it is ostensibly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all."

Working in a Federal Election - Experiential Learning and Active Citizenship

The goal of civic education is to prepare young people to participate in electoral democracy. Elections Canada offers a suite of educational resources to support teachers' curriculum outcomes. There is another type of learning experience that may be of interest to students who are 16 or older: working in a federal election.

By working at the polls, students can learn first-hand about the inner workings of our elections. To start, they will undergo training and learn to follow the strict procedures in place to keep our elections fair and secure. They will observe how voters prove their identity and discover what political parties and candidates can and can't do on advance polling days and election day. Students will learn the importance of neutrality in the election process and how it's maintained. For example, as poll workers, they'll have to avoid wearing party colours!

Students get the chance to interact with members of their own communities as they help them actively participate in our democracy.

While the work is only for a few days, the valuable experience the students gain



will look great on their resumés and allow them to serve their communities. Poll workers are needed in every community across Canada. No matter where your school is located, you can help connect students to this first-hand learning experience. Since training is provided, no experience is necessary.

We don't know when the next election will be, but when the time comes, students 16 and older will be eligible to work at polling stations. We hope you'll help us spread the word about this opportunity to prepare future voters as they become active citizens. To learn more about the kinds of positions available, students can visit elections.ca/jobs.

Get messy – in a hurry. Outside Opportunities for students, links for teachers:

[Set up an outdoor classroom](#)

[Walking Curriculum & Annual Challenge K-12](#)

[Themed historic walking tours by app](#)

[Local Museum walking tour brochures like this one from Richmond BC](#)

What do you need to get outside? A pair of shoes and a jacket. Lined or blank paper for sketching. A pen or pencil. A clipboard. No budget for a class set of clip boards? Bulldog clips and the covers of discarded library books or the stash of 1998 yearbooks still in the book room will do the trick.