



SEA TO SKY

Outdoor School for Sustainability Education Inc.
Sunshine Coast, British Columbia, Canada

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Students learn in a variety of ways. The eight styles or ways of learning referred to as 'intelligences', are recognized to be potential in all students. Together they form a 'pizza' of possibilities that if exercised, make learning fun, effective and meaningful. What follows is a list of possible school based activities categorized by the 'intelligence' it most exercises. Needless to say most activities will tap into multiple intelligences.

Visual/Spatial

- ❑ Mental maps: students sketch their mental map of the lower mainland-Howe Sound region as they would imagine it from a highflying bird or aircraft. Atlases, wall maps, etc. not allowed. Ask them to include all physical features that come to mind such as mountains, rivers, lakes, beaches. Have them include the following towns and cities if they can as labeled dots on their map: Gibsons, Squamish, Whistler, West/North Vancouver, Vancouver, Richmond. Students should also locate their school and where they live. Follow this exercise with geographical overview of our bioregion and where they are going for Outdoor School.
- ❑ Logos and Lifeforms: students draw the corporate 'shapes' or logos they know followed by the same detailed shapes of different tree leaves with which they are familiar.

Logical/Mathematical

- ❑ Reasons for Seasons: graph the changing times of sunrise and sunset over the course of a given year. From eight-hour winter 'days' to 16 hour summer 'days' the variation is pronounced. Now look at where the sun actually comes up and goes down. Plot the changing cardinal points of this 'migrating' sun across your school's horizon. How long is a day when you're at Sea to Sky and where will the sunrise? (eg. SE sunrise on Dec. 21 compared to a NE sunrise on June 21) Add lunar phases and their impact on tides for added wonder.
- ❑ 4 Spikes: The four megatrends of human population growth, resource consumption, species extinction and CO² levels are all rising exponentially. Plot human population growth over time and see the 'spike' develop.

Verbal/linguistic

- ❑ Pictionary from Sea to Sky: download Sea to Sky's dictionary, review and play 'pictionary' from Sea to Sky. Teams of 2-4. Selected team member comes up to see hidden word, then returns to their team speechless and ready to draw the word. Each group shadowed by a scrutinizer who ensures fair play. First team to guess the correct word gets a point, and then a new word with new artists, revealed.
- ❑ What is that?: A wonderful exercise that encourages students to get beyond the façade of words. Pick any noun. Use other words to more accurately communicate what the object actually is. Eg. TREE: a food factory that serves as water and oxygen pump that purifies the air we breath. HUMAN: water blob with macromolecular thickening to hold it together.
- ❑ The House: A short parable that can be read and analyzed. How is this like or unlike the world we live in? Create alternative endings.

Musical/Rhythmic

- ❑ Song writing: Pick a familiar melody everyone knows and rewrite the lyrics with an outdoor and/or environmental message. Convert to a song sheet and practice. Plan to perform it (and others) at an island 'campus fire'.
- ❑ Rap-a-Tap: Choose an environmental issue facing British Columbia, research for content and develop a loose rhyming pattern that tells the story and shares the emotion behind what you've learned. Add percussion using simple materials. Perform on the island at Sea to Sky.

Bodily/Kinesthetic

- All Systems Go: Build a miniature E-tron (Ecospher-o-tron) out of plasticine with all functioning parts. Create a different E-tron for each of the five steps in the history of life; pre-human, early human, overshoot human, crash human and sustainable human.
- Eagles and Orcas: designate half your class as Eagles and the other half Orcas. Arrange these teams shoulder to shoulder across the 'line' from each other approximately 4 metres apart. Standing off to the side you will be the 'caller'. If you make a statement that is true (eg. 'Outdoor School's on an island!') the Eagles chase the Orcas. If it is false (eg. Keats is the largest island in Howe Sound) the Orcas chase the Eagles. If an Eagle tags an Orca (or vice versa) before they can reach their safety zone they join the other team. Play until everyone is an Orca or Eagle.

Interpersonal/Social

- Line Up: begin by students mingling. Next, instruct them to line up, without talking, according to age, height, shoe size, etc. To increase challenge (if needed) students close their eyes as well. Other criteria such as first letters of island names, distance from school of favourite outdoor experience, etc. are all doable (some may require talking).
- Improv (Freeze Game): Two students begin on 'stage'. First player to speak presents an imaginary character in an imaginary situation. *Important that students follow the rules of Improv and 1. Show not tell (be demonstrative!) 2. Always say Yes! (ie. accept what's going down) 3. Believe you're what you are portraying 4. Be spontaneous! (first thought, not best thought).* Second student responds. Back and forth as the plot thickens. Within 15-20 seconds someone from the audience says "freeze!". Both players freeze in the exact position they are in. The caller runs up, taps one of the players who leaves. This caller stands in exactly the same position as the player who left and then launches a new situation to play out. If the frozen player was in the middle of jumping on one foot (due to an imaginary bee sting) the replacement player might start by saying "I'm in training for Outdoor School!" Subsequently this new interpretation of the action takes the sketch in a brand new direction. After another 15-20 seconds another member of the audience says freeze and replaces a player and on it goes.

Intrapersonal/Introspective

- Solitude Spot: have students evaluate how many minutes a day, week or month they sit quietly, away from machines, books, other people, gadgets, noise or food in a natural setting. Brainstorm how and why this is a valuable way to spend time. Give your students a 30 minute solitude spot outside on or near school property. Reinforce the 4 S's of silence, stillness, safety (eg. not up a tree) and solitude (ie. away from anyone else)
- Yes / No / Depends: Create a class set of 4" triangle cards that have the letters Y, N and D – one at each point. Organize students in three groups each forming a circle and each having a triangle card. A question is posed that requires ethical or moral reflection and can only be answered with a Yes, No or Depends answer. Students are given 10 seconds to consider their response at which time they drop the card on the floor in front of them. How they are responding is a function of which letter on their card is pointing into the circle. Someone is asked to speak on behalf of the Yes voters, No voters and Depends crowd who do not see the question as 'black and white'. Further discussion and then another question is launched. Sample questions might be "If you found a wallet would you return it with the money in it?" or "Do grizzly bears have as much right to live in British Columbia as humans do?"

Naturalist

- Nature's Gallery: Using natural materials (but not living things) collected from the school grounds students create a 'cavass' of either abstract or concrete design. No adhesives or artificial materials allowed. Showcase each work when the 'gallery' opens with commentary provided by the artist at their worksite.
- Bioregional mapping: An exercise that connects students to their natural home. Students create maps of their yards at home, school grounds or the immediate residential community that surrounds the school. Using a variety of map making tools such as symbols, colours, patterns and textures students locate and identify natural features and living things in their study areas and include them on their map. The more they come to know what is there, the more they will see.