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TEACH

EDUCATION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

5

ESSENTIALS
TEACHERS NEED
THIS SUMMER



NOTES

The summer season is well underway in North America, with many of us taking some much-needed time off to rest and recuperate before our busy schedules resume in the fall. However, as nice as it is to slow down a little, going from high gear to a complete standstill can be a bit of a shock. That's why we've packed this issue full of exciting ways to keep you occupied over summer break. From simple light-hearted activities that will fill an afternoon, to more intensive time commitments, there's something for everyone within these pages.

Start off by taking a look at our annual *Summer Essentials* guide. This year's edition offers five unique options for teacher self-care. Be it listening to a podcast, doing some eco-friendly cleaning, or making a delicious home-cooked meal, you're sure to feel a boost after trying out these rejuvenating activities. And if you're in the mood for something more ambitious, we've also included a list of road trip apps that will surely be useful when setting off on your next big adventure.

On the subject of travel, be sure to check out our two regular columns that can help you take your globetrotting game to the next level. Spend time camping in the beautiful mountains of Western Canada or visiting the magnificent forests of Scotland, among other stunning destinations, with the help of the travel guides featured in *Bookstuff*. Or take a tour through some of the world's foremost architectural hotspots, from Chicago to Japan to Copenhagen (and more!), as mentioned in *Field Trips*.

But while travelling around the world can certainly be a lot of fun, it's also important to think about our carbon footprint, and keep in mind how our actions impact the world around us. One thing we've all been witness to this

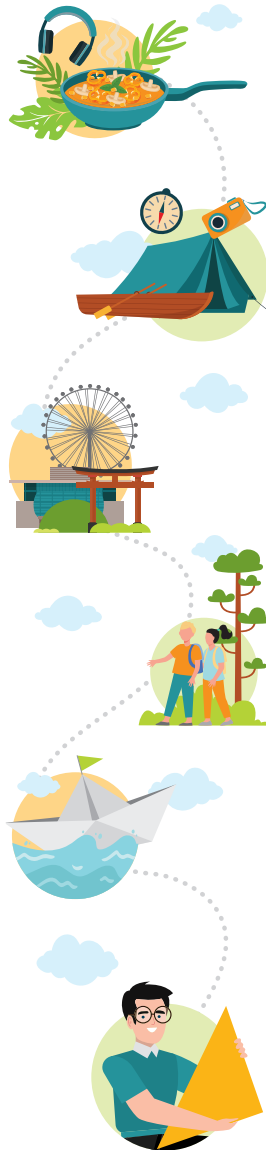
summer is the increasing effects of climate change. With forest fires burning across much of Canada, there's never been a more crucial time to start preparing for a rapidly changing climate. In this issue's *Feature* article, equity practitioner and writer Krystal Kavita Jagoo explores innovative approaches that some schools across Ontario are taking to incorporate concepts of "climate readiness" in their curriculums, or, in one case, the very design of the school itself.

As the climate continues to change, we are going to see an increasing number of people around the world be displaced from their homes. As more refugees make their way to Canada, whether due to environmental-related disasters or any other number of reasons, we must have open dialogues with students to help them develop empathy and understanding for the circumstances faced by these newest members of our country and population. This issue's *Curricula* can initiate those conversations, as its ready-to-go lesson plan uses dual English and French books to introduce students in Grades K-3 about refugee children and asylum seekers.

And in the spirit of lesson planning, it's never too early to start preparing for the upcoming school year; in particular, choosing a strategy for building relationships with your new students—and their parents. Luckily, ELA teacher Eric Gaestel was happy to let us in on some of his tried and true techniques for forming positive relationships with students and their families. He shares these tips in his *Classroom Perspectives* piece, "Building Blocks that Matter." This is one article you won't want to miss!

We hope you enjoy this issue's content, and we wish you a safe and joyful rest of the summer.

See you next time!



KELSEY MCCALLUM
ASSISTANT EDITOR

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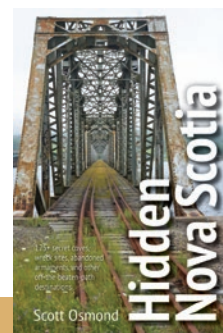
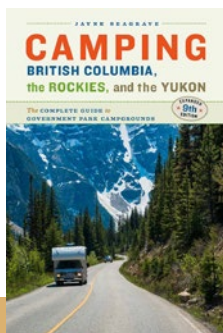
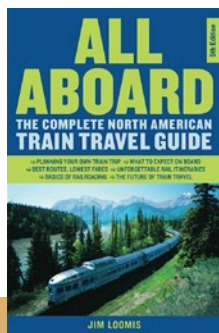
Rose Dotten
*CEO and Head Librarian,
Shelburne Public Library*



TRAVEL

School's out for the summer and, for many of us, that means it's time to start making travel plans. Not sure where to go or what to do? These fun and unique guides can provide you with some inspiration! Each one is jam-packed with plenty of tips, recommendations, and insider advice to help you make the most of your vacation.

Whether you're looking to stay close to home or are planning to head abroad, there are plenty of fascinating destinations to choose from for your next great adventure.



2 CAMPING BRITISH COLUMBIA, THE ROCKIES, AND THE YUKON
BY JAYNE SEAGRAVE

Heritage House (February 2023)

This quintessential camping guide has something for everyone. Whether you're parking an RV or pitching a tent, Jayne Seagrave's bestselling book tells you everything you need to know about provincial, territorial, and national campgrounds in Western Canada. *Camping* also includes maps and directions, 100+ photos, and an updated list of health and safety regulations.

3 THE FOREST GUIDE: SCOTLAND
BY GABRIEL HEMERY

Bloomsbury Publishing (June 2023)

Gabriel Hemery's practical guide is a must-have for anyone planning to explore Scotland's extraordinary forests. The book offers a summary of 365 woodland sites across the country, along with how to access them, and a description of their notable features. It also contains a number of maps and over 200 photographs that showcase the stunning Scottish woodlands.



4 HIDDEN NOVA SCOTIA

BY SCOTT OSMOND

Boulder Books (August 2023)

For anyone wanting to discover some of Nova Scotia's lesser-known destinations, this book is the one for you. Follow along with adventurer Scott Osmond as he leads you to secret coves, hidden shipwrecks, abandoned industrial sites, and more. For each location, Osmond provides historical details, information about the area, and of course, directions for how to get there.

5 IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE:

AMERICA'S POP CULTURE LANDMARKS BY CHRIS EPTING

Santa Monica Press (August 2023)

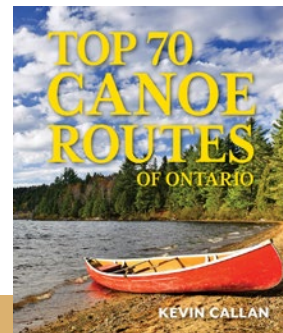
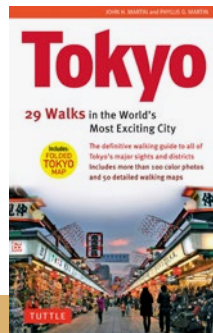
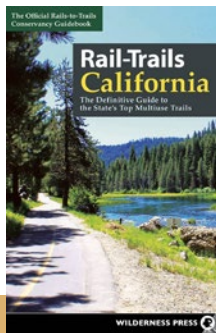
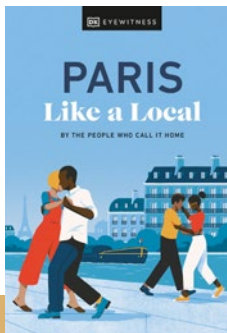
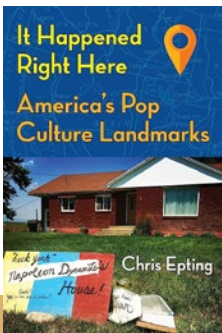
Looking for a different kind of road trip? *It Happened Right Here* will take you on a journey of pop culture across America. This guide showcases locations where some of America's most popular events took place. From spots featured in the *Stranger Things* TV series to the famous Bigfoot site of 1967, you're sure to make plenty of weird and wonderful stops on this iconic road trip.

6 PARIS LIKE A LOCAL

BY YUKI HIGASHINAKANO AND BRYAN PIROLI

DK Eyewitness Travel (April 2023)

Get a more intimate look at Paris through the eyes of its local residents. Within the pages of this insider's guide to the city of love, you'll find hidden markets, cozy diners, secret picnic spots, and more. The book also includes six themed walking tours, an outline of the city's different neighbourhoods, and special suggestions for how to make the most of all Paris has to offer.



7 RAIL-TRAILS: CALIFORNIA

BY RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY

Wilderness Press (June 2023)

Walk your way across California with the help of this detailed guide. Inside you'll find a list of 72 railroads that have been converted into public multi-use trails. Whether you're looking for paved trails or rugged paths, a beachside view or a walk through an old-growth forest, *Rail-Trails* has it all!

8 TOKYO, 29 WALKS IN THE WORLD'S

MOST EXCITING CITY BY JOHN H. MARTIN AND PHYLLIS G. MARTIN

Tuttle Publishing (August 2023)

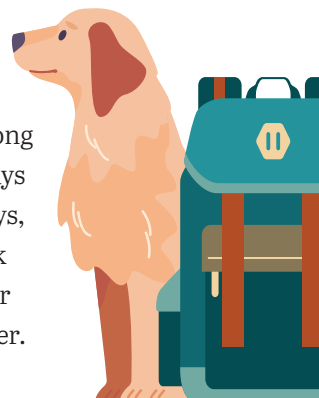
Exploring the modern metropolis of Tokyo has never been easier, thanks to this pedestrian-exclusive travel guide. As it says in the title, *Tokyo* presents 29 different walks across the city, taking you past famous historical sites, unique attractions, and more. It also includes over 100 photos, 50 maps, and a handy pull-out map for while you're on the go.

9 TOP 70 CANOE ROUTES OF ONTARIO

BY KEVIN CALLAN

Firefly Books (March 2023)

In the latest edition of this best-selling guide, readers will find 70 of the most scenic canoe routes across Ontario's lakes and rivers. From quick day trips to week-long excursions, along well-known pathways or on secret journeys, Kelvin Callan's book offers something for every kind of paddler.





ESSENTIALS

TEACHERS NEED THIS SUMMER

You can almost hear it. Teachers everywhere are breathing a sigh of relief as they kick up their feet and bask in the freedom of summer break. After an undoubtedly busy year, it's finally time to focus on yourself. Whether you're seeking inspiration for activities or looking for interesting new solutions to daily life, we've got some ideas for you.

1

ROAD TRIP APPS

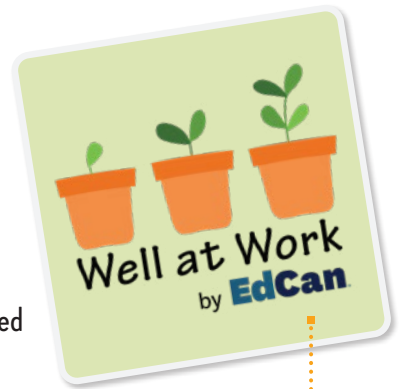
There's nothing like cruising down the open road and feeling the wind in your hair. But even the most laid-back road trips need *some* planning, so if you're going on a long drive this summer, here are some apps you might want to keep handy.

To help get the most out of your trip, Roadtrippers finds the best places to stop along your route, including unique attractions, scenic points, eateries, and more. Avoid running out of gas in the middle of nowhere with Gasbuddy, which shows the cheapest gas stations near you. AllTrails highlights nearby trailheads where you can hop out and stretch your legs, and if you need to find the nearest washroom, there's always the aptly named Flush.





The Balanced Educator



Well at Work



The Transformed Teacher



The Burned-In Teacher



SELF-CARE PODCASTS

As much as you love nurturing young minds, the demands of the classroom undoubtedly take their toll. Teachers, too, need support and as you make time for yourself during the break, there are podcasts dedicated to teacher self-care that are worth a listen.

Hosted by two Canadian teachers, The Balanced Educator empowers teachers to feel more calm, balanced, and joyful. There's also Well at Work, a conversation with Canadian K-12 educators about workplace mental health and well-being. When it comes to teacher burnout, The Burned-In Teacher Podcast is a great resource. Looking for something more uplifting? Check out The Transformed Teacher, a podcast by educator Meredith Newlin that is designed to help transform the overwhelmed to overjoyed.

3

SUSTAINABLE CLEANING PRODUCTS

Tru Earth Eco-Strips



Between your long school days, extracurricular activities, and after-school grading, it can be hard to keep your home tidy. Summer break can be a good opportunity to give your space a little freshening up. Like the idea of going sustainable? Here are some local eco-friendly brands you can try.

Tru Earth Eco-Strips are a powerful zero-waste option, and if you purchase them from the website of environmental initiative OnePieceADay, all proceeds go towards supporting their work to keep our planet clean. From Elva's All Naturals comes 1 Cleaner, a plant-based multi-surface formula that does it all. You can also check out Pure for a whole line of naturally sourced, toxin-free products created to tackle the toughest of stains (available for bulk refill). Other noteworthy brands include Nellie's, Attitude, Saje, and Eco Max.

Eco Max



Saje



Pure



Attitude



Elva's All Naturals 1 Cleaner



Nellie's





COOKING CLASSES

Have you been thinking about trying out a new cuisine, or discovering different ways to shake up the same old meals? Then perhaps you'll be interested in some fun cooking classes this summer.

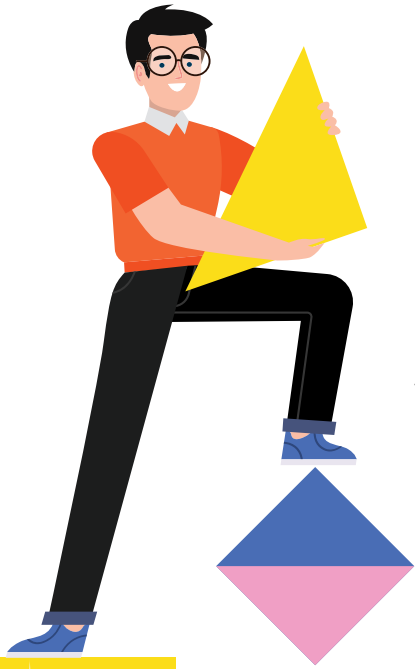
Cozymeal lets you take your pick of chefs offering cooking classes from around the globe, with options for in-person, online, or private experiences. For easy weeknight meals, Craftsy offers hundreds of classes for home cooks looking to elevate their skills. Vegan enthusiasts can head over to Veecoco, and free cooking classes are available on Homemade.

5

CHALK

The humble piece of chalk has remained unchanged for years in many North American classrooms, but recently there's been buzz about Hagoromo—touted as the “Rolls-Royce of chalk.” This Japanese-made product writes as smooth as butter and is practically dustless. It's also vibrant, nearly unbreakable, and rubs off like a charm. If you're looking to stock up on some classroom supplies this summer, give Hagoromo a try for when school is back in session.



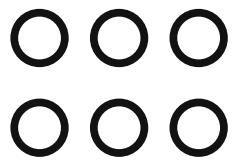



BUILDING BLOCKS THAT MATTER:

Forming Positive Relationships with Students and Families

By Eric Gaestel

“Tries hard, but finds the subject difficult.” A statement that was often printed on my report card as a kid. I came to school fully ready to learn, but still I struggled to keep up with my peers academically. Even though I was so young, my mind was consumed by thoughts of my perceived lack of ability to succeed and this deeply affected my self-esteem. Once a young person becomes convinced that they will never be successful, no amount of academic remediation will help.





What *did* help was having teachers who took the time to get to know me and understand where I was coming from, and who chose to be a positive influence on my school experience. Teachers like Mr. Prail, my 8th grade social studies teacher, not only inspired me as a student, but also influenced my decision to become a middle school teacher. In fact, what he did is exactly what I strive to do now: form positive relationships with my students.



TAKE AN INTEREST

Mr. Prail taught me the importance of showing up when it matters most. He would always attend our sporting events, chorus concerts, dance recitals, and drama performances. Every single time I caught a glimpse of him in the audience, my face would instantly light up. Simply by being there and showing support for his students, I learned from Mr. Prail how a small gesture that leaves a large impression on a young person is always worth your time.

Now, as a teacher myself, I always make the effort to show up for my own students. I love cheering on my 8th graders at their after-school events, and, as I have discovered, these events are also prime opportunities to meet parents in a relaxed, casual environment. These early, less formal interactions are a great way to make a good first impression that will start the school year off on the right foot.



“FIVE ON FRIDAY”

Another technique I have for winning over parents is called “Five on Friday,” which I was introduced to by one of my graduate school professors, Dr. Jeremy Hilburn. I have used this strategy since my first year as a teacher, and it remains one of the most successful methods I can


share to help other educators build a solid foundation with students and their families.

At the beginning of the school year, every Friday after class I call the parents of five students on my roster until I’ve reached every family. When the parents answer their phones, I greet them enthusiastically and inform them that I have the pleasure of being their child’s English Language Arts teacher for the year. I let them know that I have carefully reviewed their child’s past grades and spoken with their previous teachers, and I could not be more excited to have them in my class. During every conversation, I also take carefully crafted notes, making sure to highlight any specific details I may need in future conversations.

Many times, parents only hear from the teacher when there is a problem to discuss. Not contacting a family until you are experiencing a behavioural or academic issue with a student can spoil any hope of forming a good relationship with that family. But if you take the time to make a positive first contact with every parent at the very beginning of the school year, you will be far better received should you need to make a negative call later.

The 2021-2022 school year offered a wonderful example of just how indispensable that positive first contact can be. This particular school year was a little bit different than previous ones. Returning to the classroom for full-time in-person instruction after the upheaval of the pandemic was a challenging transition for everyone and, normally, I would have met each child in person prior to utilizing the “Five on Friday” strategy. But since this year would be the first that many parents and students would be experiencing middle school in person, I wanted to ensure all parties that they were in good hands.

My decision to make those positive first contacts paid off when I later needed to make a phone call home that was not so positive. One of my students was having great



difficulty readjusting to attending classes in person. From insubordination to engaging in physical altercations with fellow students, this young person needed a hard reset to successfully reach the end of the school year. I took out my “Five on Friday” notebook and reviewed the notes that I had taken during my initial contact with the child’s parent back in August, then dialed their number.

The subsequent conversation proved to be a very meaningful one. Since I had already spoken with the parent earlier in the year, they were familiar with who I was and knew right away that I was calling with good intentions. I was able to kindly, yet directly, explain what the issues were and the three of us—myself, the parent, and the child—came up with a plan to get things back on track.



A PROPER FOUNDATION

Every student is on a unique learning journey. Sometimes a student’s inability to see their own potential can lead to behavioral issues which, arguably, are a cry for help. What I believe, however, is that when the same student recognizes that their teacher genuinely supports them, it helps foster the mindset necessary for success.

For my classroom, I focus on creating a safe and positive environment where my students can feel comfortable taking their time, letting their guards down, and allowing themselves to try, fail, reassess, and ultimately, succeed. This teaches my students that they can accomplish anything, and, most importantly, that I believe in them.

As I sit in my current 8th grade classroom, I cannot help but reflect on how I arrived here and be thankful for all the kind, caring, and supportive adults who had such a profound effect on the trajectory of my professional and personal life. Many of those who influenced me most were teachers who took the time to intentionally, thoughtfully, and selflessly form positive and meaningful relationships with me. As they showed me, and as I am reminded every day with my own students, teachers can make a huge difference in the life of a child if we take the time to get to know them and allow them to know us, as well.

ERIC GAESTEL is a teacher at McClintock Middle School in Charlotte, NC. He provides mentorship to new and beginning teachers through McClintock’s teacher support program, offering them guidance and support as they navigate their first years as educators.



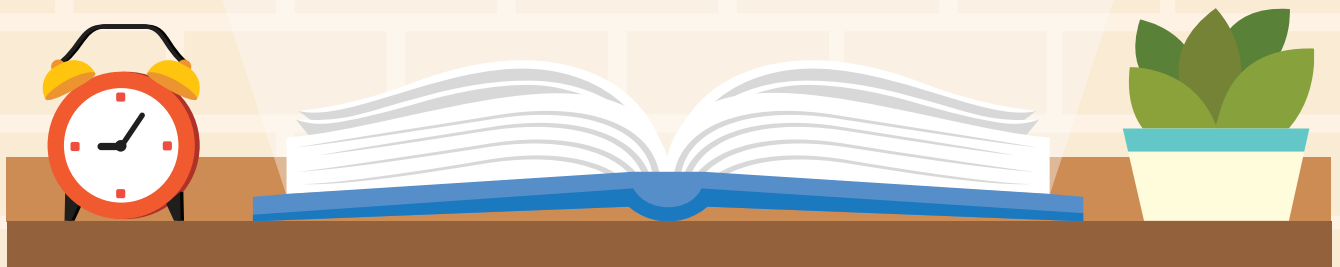


TEACHMEDIA

TEACHING THROUGH BOOKS

Introducing our newest video series all about books on Diversity and Inclusion!

Featuring an incredible collection of Canadian titles, here you'll find book recommendations from educators and librarians themselves, showcasing valuable teaching resources to help engage young learners.



CANADIAN
SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

GLOBAL ISSUES:

Refugees

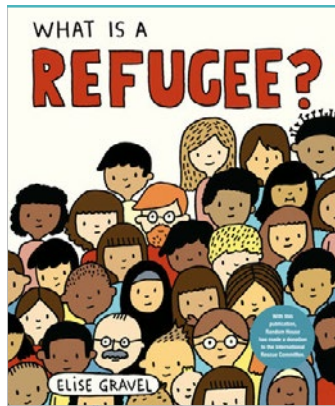
By Derek Acorn

GRADE LEVEL:
PRIMARY (K-3)

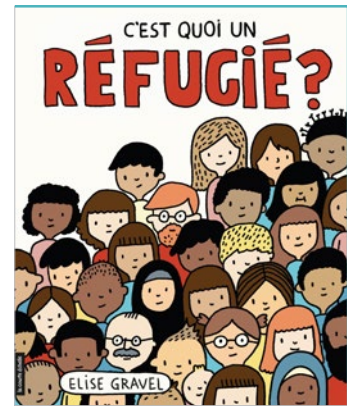
THEME:
GLOBAL ISSUES

SUB-THEME:
REFUGEES

 **FEATURED BOOKS**



What is a Refugee? by Elise Gravel
(Schwartz and Wade Books, 2019)



C'est quoi un réfugié? par Elise Gravel
(Courte Échelle, 2019)



Where Will I Live? by Rosemary McCarney
(Second Story Press, 2017)



Où vais-je vivre? par Rosemary McCarney
(Éditions Scholastic, 2017)



LEARNING FOCUS

What are refugees? Refugee children are among the most vulnerable children in the world and are often seeking safety and refuge from circumstances not of their making. Half of the world's refugees are children and many have come to make their new home in Canada. Students will use images and definitions to build their understanding of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers. Students will also connect their learning to how their local and national community works to support refugees who have come to live in Canada.



LEARNING EXPERIENCE

MINDS ON PROVOCATION

Select certain pages, or show all of the pages in the book *Where Will I Live?* by Rosemary McCarney. Use of a document camera would be a benefit for this activity. Do not read or show the text if using a document camera. Use the pictures only.

Ask students what they notice in the pictures. Provide them with a chart that has the headings “That’s Good,” “That’s a Problem,” and “I Wonder.” For older students, they can fill out their charts independently. For younger students, work collaboratively. Display their words on a bulletin board, white board, or in a document via a projector.

Tell the students that they will be learning about refugees. Using the bank of words that they created, help students compose a definition of what they believe the word “refugee” means.

READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

Read the book *Where Will I Live?* by Rosemary McCarney. This time, read the words and re-explore the associated pictures. Go back to the definition of “refugee” that was created in the previous section. Was it accurate, based on the text? Would the students make any changes? Adjust the definition if the students decide it is necessary.

Read the book *What is a Refugee?* by Elise Gravel as a mentor text. Students will use the following guiding questions: What is a refugee?

ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS TO SUPPORT THESE SUB-THEMES



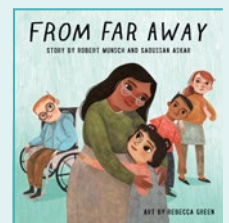
My Beautiful Birds by Suzanne Del Rizzo (Pajama Press, 2017)



Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees by Mary Beth Leatherdale, illustrated by Eleanor Shakespeare (Annick Press, 2017)



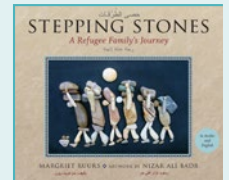
Story Boat by Kyo Maclear, illustrated by Rashin Kheiriyeh (Tundra Books, 2020)



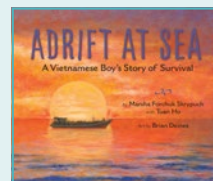
From Far Away by Robert Munsch and Saoussan Askar, illustrated by Rebecca Green (Annick Press, 2017)



Y'a pas de place chez nous par Andrée Poulin, illustrations de Enzo Lord Mariano (Québec Amérique, 2016)



Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey by Margriet Ruurs, illustrated by Nizar Ali Badr, translated by Falah Raheem (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)



Adrift at Sea: A Vietnamese Boy's Story of Survival by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch and Tuan Ho, illustrated by Brian Deines (Pajama Press, 2016)

Why might refugees have to leave their countries? How can our local community support refugees who arrive from other countries?

Teachers can choose one of the following activities to further explore the guiding questions. They can also choose to do several of the activities if they want to go deeper into the subject.

- **Draw your feelings:** Students draw a picture to reflect their feelings while reading the book.
- **What's the word?** Students pick one word from each two-page spread to add to a blank piece of paper that they think reflects the idea of the spread. After reading, they can add small visuals or icons to the words to represent the ideas. For younger grades (K-1), start with images and add words as a class.
- **Guided Inquiry:** Who helps refugees in your local community? What questions might we ask them to better understand what supports refugees need when arriving in a new country? What might we do to help local refugees arriving in our community?
- **Social Studies:** On a map, identify countries that Canada has recently accepted refugees from.

MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

Teachers will provide the students with an option of how they might present their learning and new questions that have been created over the course of the study. Educators should provide a list of choices to students that includes products they are familiar with and have had experience creating before.

Raise awareness for local refugee organizations using either a video or posters.

Create a [marble maze](#) to represent the journey of a refugee. To increase the connection, place related words from previous activities on levels of the maze.

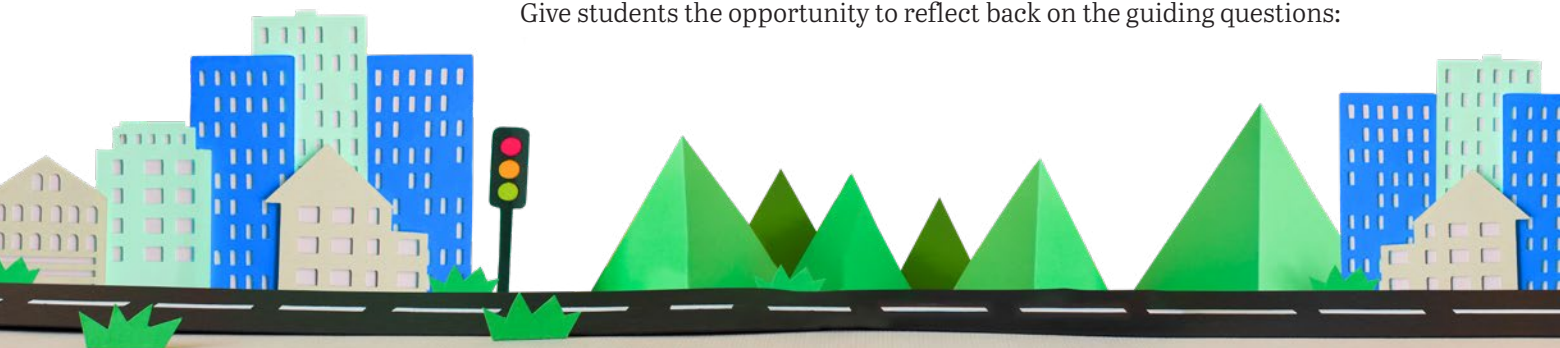
Create a comic in the style of Elise Gravel to represent the idea of what a refugee is. (Use the comic [What's a Refugee?](#) by Elise Gravel as a mentor text during this activity.)

Here are some [Creative Tools for Making and Sharing](#).

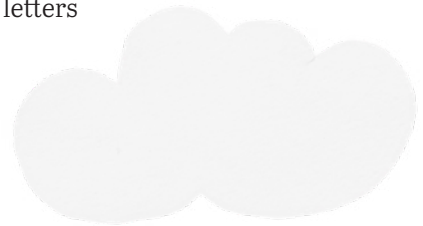


REFLECT AND CONNECT

Give students the opportunity to reflect back on the guiding questions:



- What should our final definition of a refugee be?
- What do we know about why refugees might have to leave their home countries?
- Who helps refugees in our community when they arrive in Canada? What do they do to help?
- If wanting to go deeper, connect with your local organization and write letters of welcome to refugees in the community.



ADDITIONAL BOOK LISTS TO SUPPORT THIS SUB-THEME

- Annotated book list that highlights [refugees and immigrants](#) (Canadian School Libraries Journal)
- Annotated book list that highlights [social justice, diversity and refugees](#) (Canadian Children’s Book Centre)
- [I Read Canadian: Six books about the refugee experience](#) – Annotated book list that highlights refugees (UNHCR Canada)



ADAPTATIONS FOR THIS LESSON

Lesson contains books available in both French and English.



MORE RESOURCES

- [United Nations Refugee Agency](#) – There are articles and videos on this site that can be used by the teacher. Preview carefully if wanting to use with students.
- Statistics on [refugees in Canada](#)
- [“Canada now resettles more refugees than any other country, mostly through private sponsorship”](#) (*National Post* article)
- [“Art project helps students understand life for refugees”](#) (CBC Kids article)
- [Canadian Resources to Support Inquiry Learning](#)



ARCHITECTURE TOURS

Have you ever come across a building you couldn't help but admire? There is no doubt that architectural gems are quite the sight to behold—especially up close. Be it the preserved structures of a bygone era, or clean-lined modernism, architecture has long been considered the “mother of all arts.” And what better way to experience some of these man-made marvels than through a guided tour! Whether you consider yourself an architectural aficionado or someone who simply appreciates beautiful design, we've rounded up several amazing (and oh-so-Instagram-worthy) places you can explore this summer.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Mosaics, curved lines, ornate ironwork, stained glass—ah, the beauty of Art Nouveau. Brussels is a paradise for lovers of this unique style that originated there in the late 19th century. [Visit Brussels](#) offers an architectural itinerary through bourgeois communes like Forest, Saint-Gilles, and Ixelles where examples of Art Nouveau still exist widely. The city is also home to several other styles including Baroque, Neoclassical, Art Deco, and Eclecticism. [ARAU](#) takes you through them all, with its rich selection of guided tours revealing extraordinary buildings in every district of the city.



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Denmark's capital city shines in the spotlight more than ever before after being designated the World Capital of Architecture for 2023. Book a tour with the [Danish Architecture Center](#) and discover what makes Copenhagen one of the most livable and sustainable cities in the world. See award-winning housing projects like [Krøyers Plads](#) and [8 House](#), visit cultural institutions such as the [Royal Playhouse](#) and the [Black Diamond](#), and behold some of the world's most extensive circular buildings like the [Resource Rows](#) and [Upcycle Studios](#).



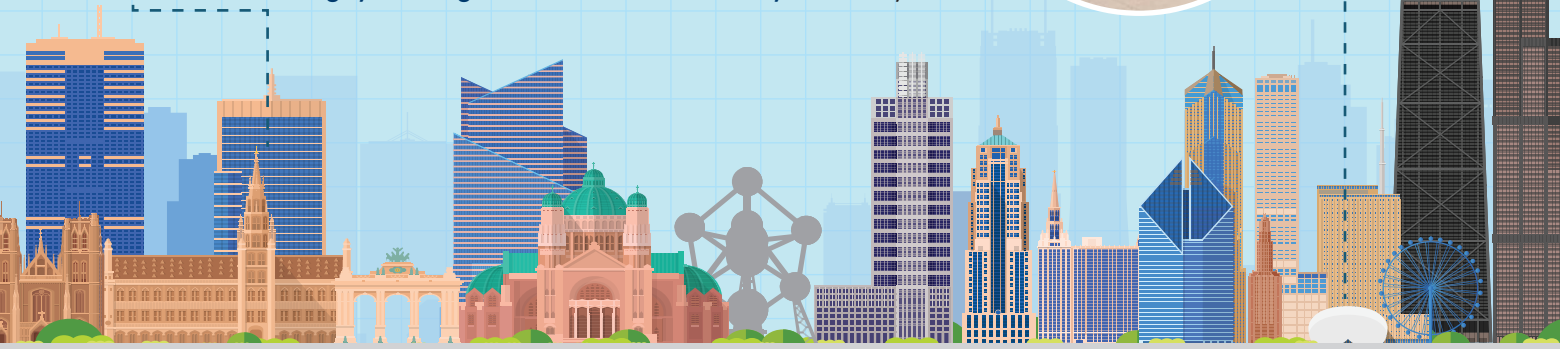
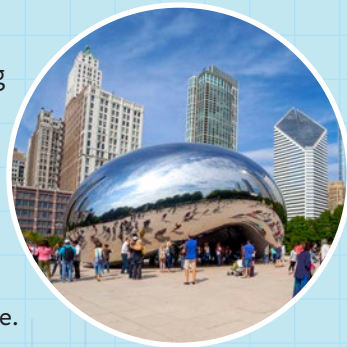
JAPAN

Ancient shrines and temples? Check. Super cities? Check. From enchanting monuments to hypermodern facades, Japan is a true feast for the eyes. Consider [Luxury Tours Japan](#) for its variety of tailor-made architecture tours. You'll have opportunities to visit some of Japan's oldest buildings and classic oriental dwellings, witness local craftsmanship firsthand, and even observe the intriguing fusion of traditional Japanese aesthetics in contemporary modern-day buildings. Architecture day trips are also offered by [Japan This! Tours](#) and [artchitectours](#).



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

From the city that invented the skyscraper comes a soaring skyline of some of the most iconic buildings in America. [The Chicago Architecture Center](#) offers 90 guided tours (90!) by foot, train, boat, or bus. One of the best ways to take in Chicago’s architecture is from the water, so hop aboard one of the city’s abundant boat tours and enjoy breathtaking views of over 40 famed landmarks, including the [Wrigley Building](#), [Tribune Tower](#), [Marina City](#), and many more.



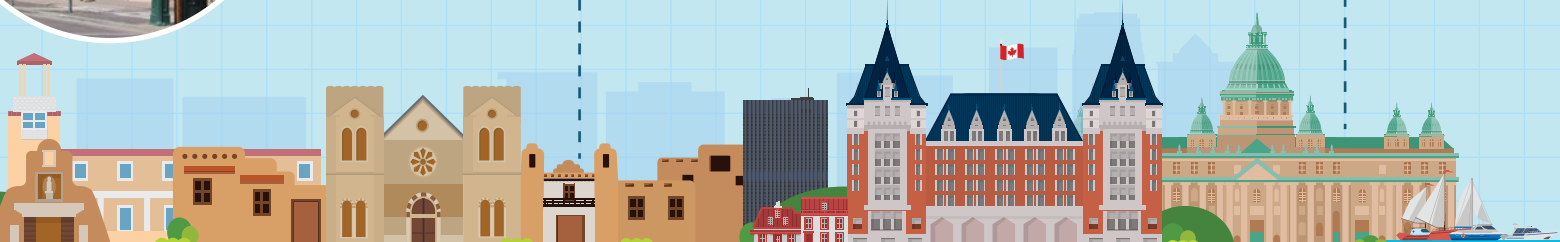
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Nicknamed “The City Different,” Santa Fe is remarkable for its distinctive adobe-inspired buildings. Pueblo-Spanish architecture—rounded edges, flat-roofs, vigas, and earth-toned hues—dominates here, with building codes firmly preserving this “Santa Fe” style even today. On this personal [architecture tour](#), you’ll take a guided walk through the city’s back roads, residential areas, and art districts, visiting sights such as Santa Fe Plaza, Burro Alley, the John Gaw Meem Historic Building, the La Fonda Hotel, and many more.



VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

One of the oldest cities on Canada’s west coast, this picturesque destination is renowned for its colonial English charm, rich with surviving Victorian buildings developed during Queen Victoria’s reign. Look to [Come See Victoria](#) for architecture-focused tours, featuring national historic sites like the Romanesque Parliament Buildings, the Chateau Style Empress hotel, and the Edwardian-era Belmont Building, to name a few. The [Victoria Heritage Foundation](#) even offers self-guided tours through Victoria’s eight historic neighbourhoods, covering many buildings not on the Heritage Register. Photo by Reid Naaykens on Unsplash



PREPARING FOR A CHANGING WORLD:

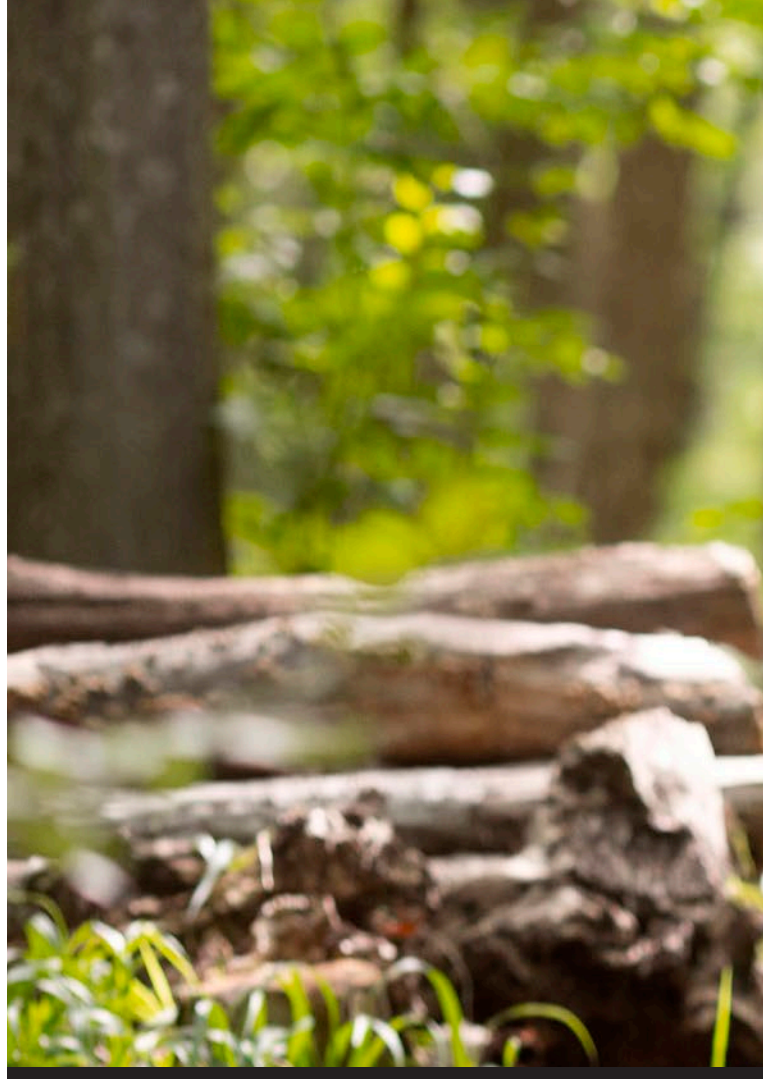
Climate Resilience in Schools

By Krystal Kavita Jagoo

The next generation is often thought of as the trailblazers of the future, but what does that mean when the future of our planet looks uncertain in terms of the vast impacts of climate change?

In April 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report called “[Climate Change and Children’s Health and Well-Being in the United States](#),” which looks at the expected effects of the climate crisis on the education and physical development of children. It notes how extreme heat, poor air quality, flooding risks, and an increased prevalence of infectious diseases will reduce learning outcomes and contribute to learning loss for K-12 students.

The document also states that: “Exposures to climate-related stressors can occur in a variety of ways, some of which are distinctive to children, including through outdoor play and at school. Children ... have less control over their physical environments, less knowledge about health effects from climate change, and less ability to remove themselves from harm.”



In light of these factors, it is important to not only consider how schools are incorporating environmental literacy in the classroom, but how they are responding to climate change on a practical level as well.

THE CLIMATE READY SCHOOLS PROJECT

One way to begin preparing students for the climate crisis is through a new concept known as “[Climate Ready Schools](#).” Developed by Evergreen—a national non-profit organization that works with community builders across Canada to address issues like climate change and housing affordability in sustainable ways—the Climate Ready Schools initiative looks at transforming school grounds into environmentally-conscious spaces.

Too often, the outdoor spaces around schools are covered in asphalt—which captures heat and contributes to the [urban heat island effect](#)—and have little to no trees or plants to provide shade and [prevent flooding](#). However, with a thoughtful, environmentally-focused



design, schoolyards can become important landscapes to mitigate the effects of climate change, while also having positive impacts on the mental and physical health and well-being of students.

Evergreen partnered with the Halton District School Board (HDSB) and [Irma Coulson Public School](#) in Milton, ON, to put their Climate Ready Schools initiative into action and create the first school ground in Canada that was constructed specifically with climate resilience in mind.

“The site was designed to develop physical and social well-being as well as demonstrating how a [schoolyard] can be [made] resilient to our changing climate,” states [Suzanne Burwell](#), the Environmental Sustainability Specialist for the HDSB.

She explains that the climate ready schools project also aligns well with the “Environmental Leadership” focus of the HDSB’s [2020-2024 Multi-Year Plan](#), which aims to “deepen opportunities to learn about connections between ecosystems, social justice and climate; elevate local environmental initiatives and practices; and design





Photo Credit: Evergreen - Irma Coulson Public School



Photo Credit: Guelph Outdoor School

and manage learning environments that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development.”

Students, staff, and community members were consulted during the schoolyard design process to ensure that the landscape would serve the additional function of contributing to child development. Along with a variety of native trees and shrubs to moderate temperature and improve biodiversity, and permeable surfaces to absorb rainfall, the finished site also has pathways, gathering spots, and areas that promote active play and learning.

“The climate ready school ground is used extensively by multiple classes,” states Burwell. “Professional development was [created] for educators on teaching outdoors and how to incorporate the site into daily teaching practices.”

CONNECTING WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

The Guelph Outdoor School (GOS) in Guelph, ON, presents another alternative approach to environmental education.

“We give kids a chance to experience nature directly,” says Chris Green, educator, and director of GOS. “In so doing, we create connections between kids ... and the natural world.”

At GOS, children from Grades K-8 participate in nature immersion programs one day a week, while attending classes at their regular school the other four days. GOS’s main location is set in a cedar grove beside the Eramosa river, and includes access to all kinds of other wild spaces, hiking trails, etc. Through each program, kids are taught about environmental stewardship and how they fit into

the broader ecological community, while also learning various skills like fire tending, shelter building, ethical plant harvesting, and more.

“If some [schools] are teaching about climate change, timelines, and CO₂ emissions, we do the art and science of getting kids emotionally, bodily, developmentally connected to themselves and the natural world,” Green explains, “so that when presented with information, they [can] make sense of it, make good decisions, and lead compassionately.”

A former classroom teacher, Green founded the Guelph Outdoor School in the fall of 2012, after realizing the limitations of the traditional classroom format. He saw an opportunity to provide greater options for young people who learn differently and want to experience education in an embodied way.

When GOS first started, it only had five students. “Ten years later,” says Green, “we have a staff of about forty dedicated nature connection instructors and facilitators. We do small groups of fifteen kids with a 5:1 ratio. We want to keep it responsive to what kids need and are interested in.”

Green explains that GOS operates on “a mentorship model where there’s no one broker of information.” Kids receive guidance from several instructors who “are hired

because of who they are, and how they are in community. We have a few people on staff who are certified Ontario teachers, but the rest are geologists, personal support workers, musicians, artists, etc.”



Photo Credit: Everlasting Tree School

RETURNING TO TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS TEACHINGS

Students of the [Everlasting Tree School](#) in Six Nations of the Grand River Territory are reconnecting with nature as they learn traditional Kanyen’kehá:ka (Mohawk) teachings.

“Our curriculum is based on our creation story, which is where we received our original instructions as Onkwehón:we [Original] people,” says [Amy Bomberry](#), Leadership Circle Representative, Karontò:ton (Grades 1-8) Faculty Chair, and co-founder of the Everlasting Tree School. “We were taught that creation provides everything that we need, and it’s our responsibility to uphold the relationship we have [with Mother Earth]. Through ceremonies, we acknowledge the plants, animals, the sun, moon, stars. We acknowledge all of creation within our daily activities.”

The Everlasting Tree School was founded in 2010 by a group of parents and teachers, including Bomberry, who wanted to provide their children with a more holistic

educational experience. It is also the first of its kind to teach and deliver Kanyen’kehá:ka and Rotinonhsyón:ni (Haudenosaunee) culture and values through Waldorf-inspired approaches that emphasize art, community, and nature.

“We’re outside in all [kinds of] weather every day,” notes Bomberry.

Students who attend the school are fully immersed in Kanyen’kehá (Mohawk language) through stories, songs, activities, and conversations, while also renewing their identities as Kanyen’kehá:ka.

“Our curriculum is delivered through our cultural stories and our teachings that have been passed down through many generations,” Bomberry explains.

On top of learning their ancestral language, kids are also taught about traditional foods and how to prepare basic meals. [Food-focused lessons](#) at the Everlasting School are an important part of the curriculum, and often students go on field trips to pick fruits and vegetables in order to see where their food comes from.

Some regular classroom duties for students include [composting and recycling](#), and in the past the school has even organized a community-wide [electronics recycling drive](#) to raise funds.

“We’re teaching the kids to have a relationship with the land, to learn and understand that we’re taking care of the land, and in return, that land provides for us,” says Bomberry. “To me, that is climate justice.”

BRIDGING THE NATURE GAP

Although places such as the Everlasting Tree School, the Guelph Outdoor School, and Irma Coulson Public School each take different approaches to climate readiness, one thing they all have in common is their incorporation of climate justice concepts.

The climate justice movement acknowledges that not everyone feels the effects of climate change equally; often it is historically marginalized groups who are disproportionately affected.

“Globally, those who have contributed the least to climate change, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, are seeing the biggest impacts,” notes Suzanne Burwell.

As the recent EPA report explains, it is the children who are BIPOC, low-income, lack access to health coverage,

and speak limited English who are at the greatest risk of experiencing negative impacts from climate change. Many of these children live in neighbourhoods with lower-quality natural environments and fewer parks, which only exacerbates these effects.

“Access to quality green space is not equal within our communities,” Burwell says. For that reason, the “development of school grounds to support and maximize [the availability of] green spaces is important for [everyone in the area].” Not just students who attend Irma Coulson.

“The Irma Coulson Public School climate ready school ground is open to the [public],” Burwell adds. It is her hope that the space will serve as a community hub outside of traditional school hours, so that everyone can take advantage of the environmental benefits it has to offer.

Chris Green at the Guelph Outdoor School is also conscious of the nature gap, and how spending time outdoors not only improves physical health, but mental health too.

“Access to programs that provide the mental health benefits of natural places must be available to everyone,” he says, “which is why we work at making our programs financially accessible by offering discount codes.”

However, despite all the work that GOS has done to improve accessibility, reduce financial barriers, and trying to welcome more racialized students, Green acknowledges that while an off-road wheelchair could get into both of their locations, their Eramosa Eden site is much more physically accessible with trails that tend to be manicured, flat, and wide.

WORKING IN SOLIDARITY

For Green, operating GOS also means understanding his positionality as a white settler, and attempting to work in solidarity with local Indigenous communities.

“First off, we run our programs on stolen land,” he says. “We’re renters right now, but we’re working towards purchasing that land. And we’re looking at Indigenous land trusts that are happening in the States, and how we can bring some of that momentum up here. We’re [also] doing partnerships on a small level,” Green adds, “like sending a crew of our instructors down to support the summer camp part of the Two Row on the Grand annual event.”

Amy Bomberry appreciates settler allies like Green who are doing the necessary work of climate justice, and also highlights the importance of the #LandBack movement.

“It’s so much bigger than just taking back possession of the land,” she explains, “because we view it like it’s our mother. We have a responsibility to care for her, and protect her.”

AN IMPORTANT ROLE

There are meaningful ways to begin implementing climate readiness concepts in schools, whether by incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in the classroom, creating climate-ready school grounds, or giving students greater access to green space—along with an unlimited number of options yet to be explored.

Schools have a unique role to play in the climate crisis. As Burwell notes, “Schools are at the heart of our communities.” And by taking efforts to prepare students for a changing climate, we are shaping how the rest of society will be able to respond as well.

KRYSTAL KAVITA JAGOO, MSW, RSW, is an equity practitioner, educator, and artist. Her writing has appeared in such publications as Prism, Everyday Health, Healthline, and Auto Trader.



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Jambox | 11y | Boxer
Location: Texas, USA
Parent: Megan B.

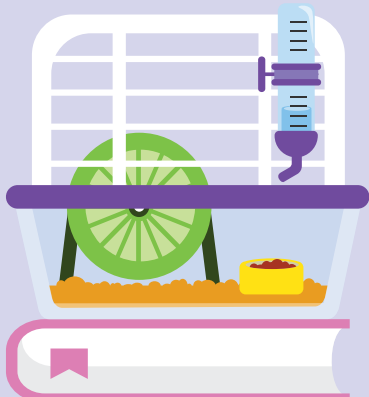
Excitable, Loveable, Toy Destroyer



Elsa | 4y | Welsh Corgi
Location: Puerto Rico, USA
Parent: Ana Celia G.

Faithful, Patient, Sweet

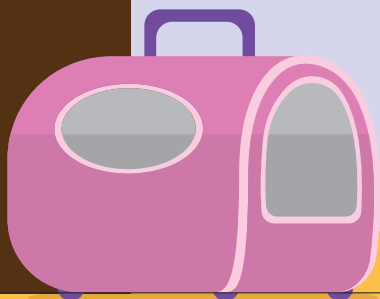
Elsa is a registered therapy dog who helped out at pediatric COVID-19 vaccination sites during the pandemic. She was awarded a medal from the University of Puerto Rico's School of Medicine for her hard work! She is also an honorary mascot at Ana's school, since she visits often.



Jerry | 1y | Syrian Hamster
Athletic, Curious, Soft

Snowy | 1y | Syrian Hamster
Climber, Funny, Quiet

Location: Ontario, Canada | Parent: Marilena M.



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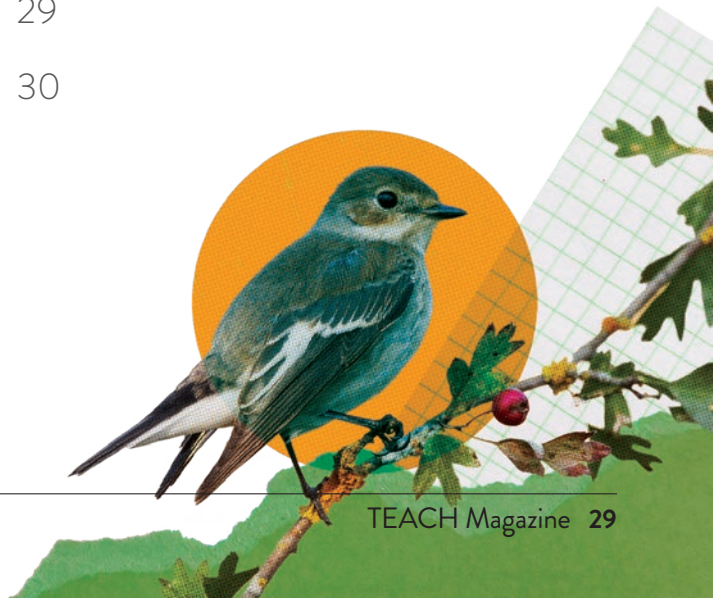
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This is not easily achieved, says Cassie Tabrizi, CEO of educational consultancy, Create-abilities. "It can be incredibly easy to treat lesson planning like a checklist. Objective: check. Standards: check. Activity: check," she says. Education experts say there is a better way. A thoughtful lesson plan can encourage exploration, freeing kids to speak in their own voices and infusing creativity into the learning process. Parents and teachers see the value in this: Gallup research found 87 percent of teachers and 77 percent of parents say teaching that incorporates creativity in the learning process has a bigger payoff for students.

FIRST STEPS

In order for students to find their own unique voices, they first need to feel their voices are valid. Before settling down to craft the lesson plan, teachers need to make an upfront investment in relationship-building.

"Whether it's through surveys or one-on-one interviews, you have to know who is in your classroom in order to create an environment in which they will take risks for self-discovery," says Roswena Shurn, senior policy analyst and program specialist at the National Education Association.

Shurn taught in Prince George's County, MD schools for 14 years, and found that this early effort paid dividends when she moved on to the actual lesson planning. "You take that information—who they are, what they are interested in—and you have that profile in front of you when you make your lesson plan," she says. "It's what allows your students to show up as their authentic selves."

Deborah Poulos is a teacher with over 27 years experience and the author of *The Conscious Teacher*. She studied every student's cumulative record files at the start of every year, and built that knowledge into her lesson planning. "I had strategies to individualize and differentiate so I could meet students at their levels," she says. "They knew I thought they were important."

PLAN FOR CHOICES

How to write a lesson plan that empowers those valued individuals to speak in their own voices? Step 1: Give them choices. Students learn in different ways, and the lesson plan needs to reflect that individuality.

When Wright gives out a persuasive writing assignment, for example, she keeps it loose. "It can't



always be five paragraphs, five sentences in each paragraph," she says. "You can get the same amount of information from them if you let them do it in different ways. They can create a commercial, they can create a blog, they can [create vlogs]. I just need to see that they can make a persuasive argument."

At The Avery Coonley School in suburban Chicago, second grade teacher Sarah Batzel even finds ways to make math an open-ended exercise. "Let's say I want to talk about fractions. I give them patterned blocks and ask them to build a figure that represents 'one-third.' They grapple with the concept, but there is more than one way of doing it," she says. "They make their own choices."

She did the same in science class, as kids designed their own glue. "We tested corn starch, we tested flour, then the children got to design their own mixture in their own way, using the data we had collected," she says.

It's that combination of data—of facts, information, and a clearly-defined end product—that keeps this kind of open-ended work from becoming a free-for-all. "Parameters foster creativity," Batzel says. "It's not just 'go make a shape.' There is real math in there, and they work within that."

Shurn builds her lesson plans on a tic-tac-toe approach: Eight ways of mastering the information (pick your own) plus a blank square if none of the others appeal to you. "Some people can demonstrate their abilities visually. Another student may be more kinesthetic, so

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