

Uncovering Learning:

Looking for BC's Core Competencies at Home



Wondering about how to help you and your child see the learning that takes place in hands-on, experiential experiences?

What did learning look, sound, feel like when you were growing up?

Did it include vast amounts of time sitting in a desk with paper and/or listening to a talking head at the front of the room?

As educators, we have had years to interrogate our own beliefs about education systems and structures and have chosen to be a part of this community to help envision and enact something different. If you are struggling with tensions around what education and learning “should” look like during this time at home with your child(ren), please know that we have too and continue to learn to be able to see, name, extend, and create learning opportunities as children unveil their interests, inquiries, and passions! Rest assured, there are rich learning opportunities happening everyday for your child(ren)! It can be hard to see and name all the curricular connections in daily experiences, so I'd love to help... please send me your photos with a short explanation or better yet, videos, and I'll feature them here to give other families inspiration and reassurance their children are learning the BC Curriculum!

Send photos and videos to:
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It started with a wonder...

In a learning story shared by Hector and his Dad, Anders, they explore a wonder posed to Hector by his brother, Cosmo: “Why are summer days longer than winter days?”

In the moment the question was asked, Anders could have answered Cosmo and moved on, he could have directed the boys to reference a book, but instead he began with letting his boys sit with their wonder and he held onto the little nugget until they had the time to give it what all wonders deserve... exploration!

Learning to be attuned to your child(ren) and listen, not only with your ears, but also your eyes can give you insight into what they might be wondering about. Are they fascinated with the feel of seaweed at the beach? Are they noticing the way the wind makes branches dance high up in the canopy? What might your observations tell you about what they are wondering about? This important first step of listening for or noticing wonders can lead to the co-creation of rich guided inquiry that is interdisciplinary and can inspire more wonders and build a love of learning.



The curricular learning that took place in this learning story was largely scientific, but there was much more happening than just a lesson about the changes that occur due to the Earth’s axis, rotation, and orbit. In our BC Curriculum, the curricular content (such as learning about the motion of the Earth) is 33% of the curriculum. The other 66% is made up of the big ideas (understandings) and curricular competencies (skills, strategies, and processes) together 33% and core competencies (interconnected, foundational skills for lifelong learning) the other 33%. So although the passion, question, or wonder may stem from a search for answers to content-related questions, it is the journey, the quest for knowledge, the 66%, that we need to focus in on, remind ourselves of, and help children to articulate as the learning. In Hector’s case, listed on the page below are the scientific big idea, content, and competencies from the Grade 4 Science Curriculum and following them are a checklist of the core competencies he demonstrated through the experience. I hope this helps illustrate how you might think about the richness of learning experiences, because they are rich, you are doing great, and we so appreciate all your efforts!



So, what did Hector learn through his experiment?

What generalizations and principles (big idea) does my child UNDERSTAND by going through this learning experience?

- the rotation of the Earth on its axis as it orbits around the sun causes the change in the amount of sunlight we see on different parts of the Earth at different times of the year by lighting a candle (representing the sun) and physically moving the “Earth” on its axis around the sun demonstrating how the light changes throughout the rotation.

What topic (curricular content) does my child KNOW as a result of this learning experience?

- specialized vocabulary and knowledge of the changes that occur as a result of the motions of the Earth through reenactment including moon, Earth, south and north poles, equator, “the moon circulates around the Earth in all different shapes”, “[the Earth] spins on a tilted angle”

What skills, strategies, and processes (curricular competencies) is my child able to DO when engaging in this learning experience?

- demonstrate curiosity about the natural world, observe objects, make suggestions and work co-operatively to design an experiment, safely use tools such as the pole and candle, reflect on the experience, and communicate findings

CORE COMPETENCIES

Creative Thinking

- Did I recognize and borrow ideas that were new to me? ✓
- Did I come up with ideas inspired by the world around me? ✓

Critical Thinking

- Did I ask questions about myself, others, and the world? ✓
- Did I consider and gather information from multiple sources?
- Did I put information into my own words? ✓

Reflective Thinking

- Did I express my own thinking and share it with others? ✓

Positive Personal and Cultural Identity

- Did I take any risks? ✓
- Was I gracious and/or patient with others or help them take things up?
- Did I strengthen relationships with my family and community members?
- Did I demonstrate a growing capacity to trust and work through conflict that threatens trust?
- Did I recognize and appreciate aspects of my ancestry, culture, language and/or beliefs?



Personal Awareness and Responsibility

- Was I willing to consider feedback about myself? ✓
- Did I reflect on the effects of my actions and respond to others thoughtfully? ✓
- Did I notice, identify, and respond to feelings that arose?
- Did I notice and respond to stress by persevering?

The checkmarks indicate what I saw as an outside observer while watching the video, but if the learner was to reflect by using some of these questions, would we find that more core competencies were actually enacted through this one learning experience? If you give it a try with your child(ren), let me know how it goes.