



TDSB/OISE Action Research Team

Research Summary

Introducing the Teacher-Researcher, Students & School:

Teacher: Dimitra Tsanos

Class: CGF3M - Forces of Nature

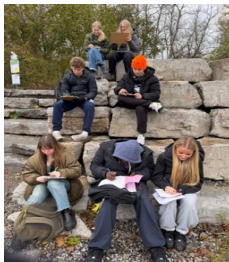
School: Humberside CI

Research Question:

How can journaling about place-based education support students' connections to nature?

Curricular Implementation:

- Having sit spots and time to sketch and listen to nature will help students re-connect to earth - water, air and land.
- Reflective learning through journaling (achievement). It was important to reflect, take notes and sketch with observations.
- Sharing Circles on school grounds (4x), Bluffs/Don Valley Brickworks and High Park



Data Collection Strategies:

- Photos from trips
- Student work samples - Journal Entries/Notes
- Participant Interviews

Insights from this Action Research Study

- Students enjoyed going outside as the weather became warmer and it became familiar and part of their routine
 - Interviews and observations highlighted enjoyment
 - Students would ask to go outside after going a few times, especially on sunny days
- Going outside helped them cultivate patience and fully embodied sensory awareness.
 - Students were starting to close their eyes and listen, even 'shushing' each other during our trips to listen to trickling water and waves at the Brickworks and Bluffs trip
- The journal provided a much-needed reason to sit still, be quiet, and practice attentiveness.
 - Having screen free time in class was important and needed for positive mental health.

- Students were more relaxed after being outside

Other Notes:

- It helped them cultivate patience and fully embodied sensory awareness.
- The process of learning was more important than the product.
- The journal provided a needed reason to sit still, be quiet, and practice attentiveness.

Webinar/Sharing with colleagues:

- PD Day in Feb. 2025 at the Don Valley Brickworks & Feb. 2026 at High Park
- 4 PD workshops (2024-25) with SWSH and UIEC for new Geography curriculum at Forest Valley OEC/UIEC
- 2 PLC (March 2026) workshops for Humberside CI teachers
- 2 Webinar presentations with members of CCAR
 - TDSB/OISE Webinar: [Environmental Learning in Action](#) (April 2026)
 - Canadian Association of Action Research in Education Webinar - *Community-Based Action Research in Environmental and Sustainability Education* (March 2026)

Useful Supporting Literature:

Warkentin, T. (2011). Cultivating Urban Naturalists: Teaching Experiential, Place-based Learning through Nature Journaling in Central Park. *Journal of Geography* (Houston), 110(6), 227–238.

Info about the TDSB/OISE Action Research Team can be found on the [TDSB](#) and [OISE](#) websites