

# A Search for Decolonizing Place-Based Pedagogies: An Exploration of Unheard Histories in Kitsilano Vancouver, B.C.

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## **Abstract**

*This paper explores the ways that place-based pedagogies can facilitate dialogue on colonization, or some of the “dark matters” of environmental education, specifically by engaging non-Indigenous adults in decolonizing dialogues. I share findings from an action research project with Kitsilano Neighbourhood House in Vancouver, British Columbia. Working with seven adults, I facilitated a series of three workshops, in which I invited participants to learn forgotten or unheard Aboriginal, immigrant, and settler histories in their neighbourhood. Participants primarily chose to research the histories of Euro-Canadian settlers; however, they were willing to talk about colonization, decolonization, and reconciliation. I suggest integrating practices from arts-based education, indigenizing and decolonizing pedagogies, and anti-racism education to further engage learners in decolonizing their place-based learning.*

## **Résumé**

*Cet article explore les façons dont les pédagogies basées sur le lieu facilitent le dialogue sur la colonisation, ou quelques uns des « sujets sombres » de l'éducation à l'environnement, plus spécifiquement en engageant les adultes non-autochtones dans des discours décolonisateurs. Je partage les résultats d'un projet de recherche-action avec le Kitsilano Neighbourhood House à Vancouver, C.B. Travaillant avec sept adultes, j'ai facilité une série de trois ateliers dans lesquels j'invitais les participants à apprendre des récits oubliés ou inconnus des autochtones, des immigrants et des colons de leur quartier. Les participants ont choisi principalement d'étudier les histoires des colons euro-canadiens; toutefois, ils étaient ouverts à discuter au sujet de la colonisation, de la décolonisation et de la réconciliation. Je suggère l'intégration des pratiques provenant de l'éducation basée sur les arts, les pédagogies de la décolonisation et de l'éducation anti-raciste afin d'engager les apprenants dans une décolonisation de leur apprentissage basé sur le lieu.*

**Keywords:** decolonizing pedagogies, place-based education, decolonization, reconciliation, colonization, Indigenous, non-Indigenous

The theme for this issue, *Dark Matters: Turning Toward the Untouched, the Unheard, and the Unseen in Environmental Education*, immediately resonated with my past experiences as an environmental educator. My parents worked for

national parks across the Prairies and the Yukon, instilling in me a love for place-based learning. I pursued this passion and became an environmental educator, first in parks and then in non-profit organizations. However, I escaped many of the challenging or “dark matters” of environmental education, until I began my undergraduate degree in Ontario. There I delved into the environmental justice field. This learning journey continued for nearly a decade while I worked with several non-profits in Vancouver as a climate change educator. Through these professional experiences I came to recognize the naïve, often racist, and Eurocentric assumptions I had made in my previous jobs as a park interpreter and outdoor educator. The shift in my understanding of environmental education occurred through attending environmental justice workshops, where I had dialogues with Indigenous and racialized environmental leaders about racism and colonization within mainstream environmental education. Through these dialogues I began to see myself as a “visitor-settler”<sup>1</sup> on multiple Indigenous territories, as I learned more about local Indigenous communities and my own Western European heritage (Irish, French, German, English, and Swedish).

Weaving together my various academic and professional experiences, I came to graduate school with a passion for finding a way to do place-based learning that would contribute to decolonizing community relationships. In this article I provide an overview of what I learned in my Masters-based action research project, and offer my reflections for how to better engage learners in the unseen, unheard, and untouched in place-based education, or in other words, the “dark matters” of one area of environmental education.

A key tension arising for me is from whose perspective do I speak when I choose to label certain environmental education concepts as “dark matters?” I am concerned that using the term “dark matters” to refer to decolonizing pedagogies relies on a term that was once associated with racism and colonization. European settlers at first contact labeled Indigenous communities as “dark” and “uncivilized.” In this article, the historical association of “dark” with something bad is unresolved in my use of the term. I am concerned that as a non-Indigenous educator it is easier for me to use this term nonchalantly as I have never had it directly applied to my ancestors, family members, or myself. In the end I have chosen to accept the tension in this term to communicate with others in this journal issue. However, place-based educators, myself included, need to reflect carefully on how we conceive of decolonizing place-based pedagogies within the emerging complexities of the environmental education field.

## Theoretical Framework

Defining decolonizing place-based pedagogies led me to delve into multiple theories, which at times were not easily synthesized into a unified theoretical framework. I drew first upon several place-based educators to shape the decolonizing place-based pedagogies I adopted in my research. Here I use the

term *pedagogies* to refer to a suite of teaching methods. I used Gruenewald's (2003) pairing of two goals—reinhabitation with decolonization—to inform my pedagogies. As he explains, “If Reinhabitation involves learning to live well socially and ecologically in places that have been disrupted and injured, decolonization involves learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (p. 9). A third pedagogical goal, reconciliation, is proposed by Scully (2012), who defines her Aboriginal place-based education as “a practice of both social and ecological justice—an opportunity for Canadian learners to be in right relations to the peoples and the lands of Canada through territorially and culturally specific teachings” (p. 149). She argues that combining Aboriginal education with place-based studies provides an unsettling of learners, but in a familiar place where they feel they have agency. In my own research I drew upon these place-based theorists and loosely followed a three-pronged approach (reinhabitation, decolonization, and reconciliation) to study decolonizing place-based pedagogies, specifically aimed at asking non-Indigenous learners to explore what had happened historically in their own neighbourhood.

The decolonizing place-based pedagogies I adopted in my study were also informed by Somerville's (2007) new place literacy. Somerville states that, “place learning involves a contact zone of contested place stories” (p. 149). She further explains, “[c]hanging our relationship to places means changing the stories we tell about places” (p. 154). My research delved into this contested contact zone in an urban Canadian neighbourhood, where I asked learners to explore new place stories, as a way to reinhabit their neighbourhood.

In addition to place-based theorists, I looked to Indigenous theorists to further refine the decolonizing pedagogies in my study. Grande's (2004) *Red Pedagogy* informed my understanding of the term “decolonizing” when she highlights Indigenous sovereignty, a nation-people, and self-determined and self-directed communities as central goals in her pedagogy. My explicit inclusion of Grande's theory attempts to avoid Tuck and Yang's (2012) concern that “decolonization” has become an add-on term, especially when used by non-Indigenous scholars, that can obscure the central goals of decolonization (i.e., return of stolen Indigenous lands). Although my research falls short of centralizing Grande's goal of Indigenous sovereignty, I continue to seek a greater understanding of the unsettling nature of decolonizing pedagogies (Tuck & Yang, 2012) through exploring the tensions between decolonizing and place-based education theories.

I adopted a third theoretical lens, one couched in a mixture of critical, decolonizing, and anti-oppression theories, to help me navigate the racial dynamics of working with predominately non-Indigenous learners. I knew as a non-Indigenous facilitator that I faced additional challenges leading a group of non-Indigenous learners in decolonizing their understandings of place. Specifically I relied on Regan (2010) to further inform my decolonizing place-based pedagogies. She has facilitated learning among non-Indigenous Canadians about their relationship to colonial history, specifically the Indian Residential

School system. Regan's approach (2010) catalyzed learners to engage in reconciliation and decolonization community processes—specifically, I adopted Regan (2010) and Moosa-Mitha's (2005) recommendation of becoming a learner rather than an expert in “anti-oppressive experientially based research” (Regan, 2010, p. 26). In this sense I saw myself as a learning participant in the action research group, which is reflected in the workshop facilitation practices I used to study decolonizing place-based pedagogies.

Theorizing decolonizing place-based pedagogies requires a journey with multiple theories, which are sometimes in tension with one another. Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that decolonization is incommensurate with other theories such as critical pedagogy. However, they argue that it is this incommensurability where decolonization begins. My three-pronged theoretical framework, perhaps a bit naively, has attempted to find points of connection and insight in order to create a space for place-based pedagogies to seriously engage in decolonization.

## Methodology

Designing this action research project I sought to explore how decolonizing place-based pedagogies can encourage visitor-settlers to learn about colonization, engage in forms of decolonization, and become supportive allies in Indigenous struggles for sovereignty—or in other words, to begin a journey through the often-untouched aspects of their environment, specifically in their neighbourhood, to reinhabit their place of living. To explore my research questions, I initiated an action research project with Kitsilano Neighbourhood House (Kits House), which is a community development non-profit organization that offers programs and social services for families, seniors, youth, and newcomers on the West Side of Vancouver. I chose action research as a methodology because it aligned with my understanding of decolonization, a goal that required concrete action rather than merely thought. Or, as Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, I did not see consciousness-raising to be the end goal. Hence, action research provided an opportunity to ground truth in a set of pedagogies and to engage myself and other learners in a combination of action and reflection, with a goal of initiating concrete steps towards decolonization.

Although action research is typically associated with studies done in the formal education system, I adapted the methodology outlined in Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) seminal handbook to Kits House, an informal adult education context. Many of Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) 17 characteristics of action research aligned with my research methodology, especially the participatory and collaborative nature of action research, its focus on improving educational practices, as well as its inclusion of “*self-critical communities* of people” (p. 23) researching and learning together. Throughout my research, I acted as a participant observer and engaged community members and myself in the “plan, act & observe, reflect” spiral of action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 596).

To undertake this study, I recruited seven Kits House members to participate in a Forgotten Histories Study Group. I invited members who were interested in learning about forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant, and settler histories on the West Side of Vancouver to join the group. All seven participants were women, residing in Kitsilano or nearby neighbourhoods, with a range of ages from early adulthood to seniors. Five participants (Mary, Natalie, Claire, Sarah, and Erin)<sup>2</sup> identified with Western European ancestry and one (Jane) with Chinese ancestry. One participant requested to withdraw from the study after the completion of the study.

My study of decolonizing place-based pedagogies included three components: (a) documenting local Indigenous, immigrant, and settler histories through document analysis; (b) facilitating and observing decolonizing place-based learning processes in three workshops; and (c) interviewing participants to further reflect on their learning process. After the workshops and interviews, I held a final meeting with participants to request feedback on my initial data analysis and research findings (see Henry, 2013 for methodological details).

At the first of three workshops, drawing loosely on photo elicitation methods (Harper, 2002), I invited participants to bring photos related to forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant, and settler West Side histories, and to share what they knew about local histories as well as what they would like to learn. As a co-participant, I shared what I had learned about Snauq (pronounced “sun’ahk”), an area about a 15-minute walk from Kits House, near what is now called Vanier Park. I talked about Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh’s Nations’ territories, the seasonal harvesting grounds of Snauq, and how this area was declared an Indian Reserve by the Canadian government in the late 1800s. I explained how later, Squamish community members, who were living on the Reserve, were forced to relocate as part of larger colonization efforts in Vancouver (Barman, 2007; Maracle, 2004). After everyone shared their historical stories, we went on to discuss the scope of the research project, including research questions, goals, and our choice of historical research topics.

Between the first and second workshop, participants researched a specific neighbourhood history topic. At the second workshop I invited participants to draw a visual representation of their history topic. I also shared new information about Snauq, the Kitsilano Indian Reserve, and the formation of Vanier Park. In the second half of the workshop, I facilitated a dialogue about colonization and the implications of history on today’s community relationships. I concluded this workshop by inviting participants to bring photos for a public collage that we would create at the third workshop.

At the last workshop, I showed three vignettes from the *125 Vancouver* video, which was produced by the City of Vancouver to commemorate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The video excerpts included stories about: (a) unceded Musqueam territory in the Endowment Lands, near UBC; (b) two visitor-settlers’ connection to Locarno Beach, a local beach; and (c) a Chinese-Canadian family grocery

store in Dunbar, a West Side neighbourhood. I showed this video as an example of a collage of stories from multiple perspectives and asked a series of questions to guide the group in collectively assembling a physical collage. After the collage completion, the group turned to the action-planning phase by discussing ideas for acknowledging histories in their new neighbourhood house. Finally, I explained the next steps in the research project, including participation in individual interviews and a final meeting to discuss emerging research findings.

## Discussion

History of the place we are in is something that we share with those who live around us so it's one of the ways that you build or solidify your relationship with your neighbourhood. Cause that's one thing for sure, that everything else may be different, but the place where you live has had a particular history. (Claire, Workshop 3)

I set out on this study to find out how to use place-based pedagogies to open dialogues on colonization, one of the often-untouched areas of environmental education, and specifically to engage others in decolonizing their understanding of their neighbourhood and to encourage non-Indigenous learners to take action towards supporting decolonization projects led by Indigenous community members. What transpired in this study often surprised me and forced me to rework my original research goals. At the first workshop participants came with photos and stories of forgotten histories on the West Side of Vancouver. Interestingly, the bulk of the chosen histories were focused on forgotten settler histories. The following topics were researched by the participants: Arbutus Coffee Shop (Erin and Sarah), railway development, Delmont Park, and Japanese internment camps (Sarah), the Old Barn building at UBC (Jane), neighbourhood Greek history (Natalie), hippies and social change (Mary), railway development at Trafalgar Street and prejudice experienced by Irish immigrants (Claire). For the most part people were motivated to learn about their topic because they had some personal connection to it and, in some cases, people lived adjacent to the area that they researched.

Parallel to participants' discussions of settler histories, I also engaged participants in a dialogue about Indigenous histories, in an attempt to re-focus dialogue around colonization and decolonization. Indigenous territories and histories are not currently acknowledged in Vanier Park. To address this silencing, I shared archive photos with the study group that depicted Snauq and the Kitsilano Indian Reserve. Explaining some of the history of Snauq engaged participants in discussions about local Indigenous histories and I used this as a catalyst to ask people about their understandings of colonization, decolonization, and reconciliation. When I asked participants about their reactions to learning about Snauq I heard divergent reactions. Jane reflected:

Like (I had), not very much emotional reaction because (it was) just another piece of the Aboriginal histories that I've learned here in Canada. Cause before you told me I'd learned the residential schools, and also, like, the UBC school is on Musqueam people's land so I learned those signs before.

Jane's reaction differed from my own, which surprised me. I had been upset when I learned about the extent to which the history of Snauq was unseen and unheard in my neighbourhood.

Natalie expressed a different reaction to learning about Snauq. She explained:

Yeah you know so ...it's an interesting reaction I have because it almost feels like it's not part of my history. So having said that though I went back after that workshop and in conjunction with some other stuff that happened at work, and I googled the India(n) Act and I started doing some research on it to learn about what the India(n) Act was, when it was put into place, why it was put into place.

Here Natalie explains how discussions at the workshop sparked her to look further into Canadian policies of colonization. This was the type of learning I was hoping to facilitate through the Forgotten Histories Study Group. However, this type of self-directed learning about colonization or the "dark matters" of place-based learning was not as easy to facilitate as I had thought.

That being said, I found participants were able to relate to the concept of reconciliation and often associated this with the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In fact, I added the concept of reconciliation to the action research as a response to participants' interest in the term. Natalie explained:

I'm still thinking out loud, I don't actually know that I agree that reconciliation needs to take place, to me reconciliation the term implies that a wrong has been done and one's trying to make amends for it, one is trying to turn that around so within the context of that question it would imply to me that Kits Neighbourhood House has done a wrong and now needs to make up for it or chooses to make up for it.

Whereas Natalie associated reconciliation with specific wrongs, I viewed Kits House as needing to reconcile past wrongs given its present-day location on unceded Indigenous territories. As Regan (2010) explains, I saw decolonization as central to "authentic reconciliation." I wondered what role Kits House and its predecessor organization may have played in colonization, and wondered for example if it had been involved with residential schools?

Whereas participants associated reconciliation with the Canadian context, three participants initially connected decolonization to different countries and continents (India – Erin and Natalie, Africa – Natalie, and Hong Kong – Jane). This international association made it more challenging to initiate dialogue about decolonization in Vancouver and Canada because people did not identify local examples of decolonization. Further complicating this was the fact that some people didn't understand my use of the term *decolonization*. When I asked Sarah about decolonization, she said, "I associate with it but I think it's a word

that you have to be very careful how you use it because it could be offending too.” In further discussion it became apparent that Sarah didn’t understand the term. Jane was also cautious, saying, “decolonization (pause) I’m suspicious of all the ‘de’ words.”

Excerpts from my research journal further illustrate the challenges I navigated in my search for decolonizing place-based pedagogies. Three days before the first workshop I wrote:

July 10, 2012

And how do I hold both convictions of anti-racism principles and yet be open to learning and open to others’ opinions? It just doesn’t work for me to be a “know it all” anti-racist facilitator.

A week after the second workshop I continued to reflect:

August 21, 2012

I do feel conflicted about facilitating with an agenda and/or having really specific/political learning outcomes for the participants. The tension between inviting learning and multiple perspectives versus forcing people to learn a specific way of looking at the world (e.g., critical consciousness) ... people might be really resistant if I forced them to agree with my opinions about reconciling history. Yet, I do feel some responsibility to push for social justice action ... maybe it’s key to be reminded that as a facilitator I am also a learner and participant.

I often felt hesitant to force learners to adopt a specific decolonizing worldview because it felt at odds with my participatory action research methodology. I had committed to working with the participants to shape an action piece, specifically envisioning ideas for acknowledging forgotten histories at Kits House. Yet at the same time I did not want to lose sight of the goals of decolonizing place-based pedagogies: reinhabitation, decolonization, and reconciliation (Gruenewald, 2003; Scully, 2012). In the end I took an “everything is welcome” approach to facilitation, in which I invited participants to choose their own place-based historical study topics. On the positive side, Mary said, “you know you kept it open enough that we could come out with our own ideas ... which was great and you added a little play in there, you know, with the drawing and things, so you made it kind of fun.” However, as illustrated in the research topics selected by participants, this approach also left a lot of space for learners to avoid delving into the implications of colonization during their independent historical research.

In my journey with unheard histories, I also found myself wondering if I could still be considered an environmental, decolonizing place-based educator. Even though the urban environment was only 125 years old, it significantly impacted participants’ choices of study topics. Much of my time was spent talking about specific settler histories that did not immediately appear to relate to my initial interests as an environmental educator. However, I felt more confident about the potential of my pedagogies when the participants’ feedback reconfirmed that I had facilitated specific place-based learning. Jane described:



I don't feel any connection [to] the history of this place but for the Old Barn Community Center, when I spent time learning its history, I kinda feel more, not like rooted, but similar, more comfortable staying there I think that's what I learned from studying history. [It] helped me understand the people and the place.

While Jane felt more comfortable and knowledgeable about her place of residence, Natalie felt more personally connected:

I go around and think of each of the individuals and the stories that they told, whether it was around the railway line or whether it was around the hippie days and hippie culture, whether it was around UBC the barn out there, so yeah, I learned a lot about and it just brought it, it became more personal for me. So Kitsilano became more personal, it's not just a geographic place on a map where I happen to live and yes I have connections and friends and I do a lot in it, but it was a different sort of personal.

Both Jane and Natalie's reflections highlight the strengths of place-based studies and the ability of these pedagogies to connect people to their neighbourhood. I concluded that I had facilitated place-based learning in Kitsilano, encouraged participants to reinhabit their urban living environment, and that there was potential to refine these pedagogies to facilitate deeper learning about colonization.

## Conclusion

My action research project offers a search for decolonizing place-based pedagogies in a community-based, adult learning environment, and aimed to invite learners to delve into the untouched implications of colonization in their neighbourhood, or the "darker matters" of their place of habitation. Findings from my study are not neat and tidy; however, I have several recommendations for environmental educators interested in delving into the colonial legacy of place through decolonizing our pedagogies. Based on my experience in the workshops, I would recommend non-Indigenous place-based educators further clarify their understandings of decolonization and secondly, carefully select their specific decolonizing pedagogies when working with other non-Indigenous community members.

Specifically, I would take more time to clarify the meanings of two concepts: history and reconciliation. First, I realized that although an interest in history drew people to join the study group, understandings of history went unquestioned during the workshops. In future workshops I would spend more time discussing different cultures' notions of history, especially Indigenous understandings of time and place, as well as the impacts of history on current-day community relationships.

Second, I added the term *reconciliation* to my lexicon mid-stream in my research and integrated it into my theoretical framework as a response to

participants using this term. During the review of my draft thesis, Dr. Tracy Friedel, one of my committee members, expressed some hesitation around this concept. She explained that this word didn't exist in several Indigenous languages and that some Indigenous scholars chose to talk about Indigenous resurgence, "a concerted demand by Indigenous peoples for the right and responsibility to express their full humanity in the context of a long history of domination that includes being socially and recursively constructed as inferior" (Friedel, Archibald, Head, Martin, & Munoz, 2012, p. 4). This had never occurred to me, and I quickly realized that I had speedily adopted *reconciliation* into my theoretical framework without reflecting on its meaning.

The way I used the term *reconciliation* during the workshops reflects my limitations as a non-Indigenous facilitator, attempting to lead decolonizing dialogues with a group of predominately non-Indigenous learners. It may be an example of settlers moving toward innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012), given that at times reconciliation placed too much emphasis on building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and led non-Indigenous participants, myself included, to ignore other actions that could be taken to actively decolonize our own understandings and habitation of place. I would continue to use reconciliation to engage learners, but would be more aware of the pitfalls of the term and re-emphasize Regan's (2010) approach of explaining that decolonization is central to reconciliation.

Additionally, I would draw more heavily upon anti-racist, decolonizing, and indigenizing theorists to inform some of my pedagogical choices. For example, the word *decolonization* itself is a term needing more time and definition in any future workshops. Given that participants associated this term with the international context, I would bring in concrete examples of local decolonization projects to help articulate this concept to new learners. As I noted in my research journal, I found facilitation challenging. More research is needed to address such limitations of non-Indigenous facilitators; however, the writings by anti-racist educators could provide insights here, as discussions among racialized and white co-facilitators are prevalent in the literature (e.g., Lopes & Thomas, 2006, Section 4, pp. 220-239). As an example of integrating anti-racist facilitation practices, I would seek opportunities to co-facilitate decolonizing place-based workshops with more experienced ally educators and Indigenous educators. However, I am cognizant of the limited number of potential co-facilitators available in this field and the multiple requests Indigenous educators sometimes juggle. If co-facilitators were not available, I would increase the amount of resources used in the workshops that were written or narrated by Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies. Conversely if place-based educators are serious about decolonizing our pedagogies, we need to spend more time learning from decolonizing and indigenizing pedagogies. Studies in the field of place-based pedagogies have begun to integrate decolonizing scholarship with place-based scholarship; however, much more could be learned from theorists in the

decolonizing and indigenizing literature. A step in this direction may include further consideration of the interactions between Indigenous resurgence, decolonization, and reconciliation, as well as the possible incommensurability (Tuck & Yang, 2012) of these concepts. The articles in Volume 17 of the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education: Indigenizing and Decolonizing Environmental Education* provide an example of needed dialogues within environmental education. Specifically, place-based educators need to be equally attentive to decolonizing our praxis as we are to furthering our place-based praxis.

I recommend educators choose their invitation questions carefully. Scully (2012) has outlined an excellent example of questions she uses with student teachers in place-based studies. She asks her students to research a place and answer the following: “What is the treaty region?<sup>3</sup> Whose traditional territory is it in? If this is contested, tell the stories. What is the name of the community/ies in their own languages? Is there a cultural or an education outreach person?” (p. 154). Scully’s questions allow learners to choose a location that they feel connected to for their place-based study, but within a framework that focuses learners to uncover the unknown aspects of places, in this case colonial legacies and Indigenous resistance to colonization. In my study, I invited people to learn about forgotten histories, but in the future I would invite participants to learn about the *relationships* that existed historically between Aboriginal, immigrant, and settler communities, as well as the impact these relationships have on our present-day communities. My refined questions guided learners to understand more about colonization history; however, similar to Scully (2012), I continued to encourage them to choose the specifics of their place-based study.

In future workshops, I would increase the integration of arts-based pedagogies to further strengthen decolonizing pedagogies. Mary (aforementioned), among others, expressed her enjoyment of the arts-based activities, which included the use of photos, maps, drawings, and collage making—all of which encouraged participants to deepen their understanding of their neighbourhood and place. Inwood (2008) calls for combining arts-based and place-based education to allow for an integration of affective learning into place-based learning. Likewise, Callahan (2004) stresses how arts-based activities provide an outlet for learners’ emotions that arise in a critical learning environment. The arts-based activities in my workshops engaged learners more deeply to re-inhabit their neighbourhood and, if further attention were paid to integrating these activities into decolonizing place-based pedagogies, learners could affectively and intellectually understand decolonization as a “larger-than-local socioecological transformation” (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 270), in which they could actively participate.

In closing, I learned that uncovering the colonial legacies in a specific Vancouver neighbourhood was not as basic as I had first imagined. At the same time, locating the workshops in a specific community, and within a specific community organization, encouraged the dialogues to focus on concrete actions that could be taken to learn more about history, colonization, and decolonization. When I consider future work as a decolonizing place-based educator, I am

certain I would make some changes from my first attempt in this field. Luckily I am a member of a practitioner community, and thus I call upon my colleagues to join me in reflecting on the limitations and opportunities of decolonizing place-based pedagogies to reveal the unseen, unheard, and untouched in environmental education.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> I use the term “visitor-settler” to acknowledge that I live on land that has been previously stolen, and that non-Indigenous peoples continue to be visitors on Indigenous territories throughout Canada. My hybrid term highlights that settlers came with the intention of long-term inhabitation (Tuck & Yang, 2012), and yet they continue to inhabit land that is not their own.
- <sup>2</sup> All participant names are pseudonyms.
- <sup>3</sup> This question is not applicable to the British Columbia context in which the majority of lands are unceded territories; however, in other parts of Canada this is an important question to pose.

## Notes on Contributor

**Elizabeth Henry** completed her graduate studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She is deeply missed by her family, friends, colleagues and all those whose lives she touched.

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