

Reifying Optimism, Solidarity and Empathy: Articulating Curriculum as Basis for Land-Based Youth Leadership

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Landscape Architecture

University of Washington 2017

Committee:
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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
Department of Landscape Architecture

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Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis is to propose land-based learning tools for use in urban public-school education. The main question of this thesis is: *How can urban public-school curriculum cultivate urban land stewards with visions toward climate/environmental justice?* The region of focus is the Duwamish Valley, specifically high schools in what is known as South Seattle, and within the Highline School District in particular. This curriculum is not intended to be replicable, due to its place specificity. Nonetheless, there are broader lessons learned that can be extracted to form the foundations of other place-specific curriculum elsewhere. These learning tools will address five topics -- *topography, land-use, demographics, movement networks, and local knowledge* -- with accompanying lesson plans for each. These topics are explored through creation of maps, spatializing information gathered within the classroom setting during each learning activity. A focus on land provides youth the ability to make connections between their neighborhood and the region in which they live to situate their lived experiences in the classroom setting. The activities in each lesson plan centralize the neighborhood, and the city/region in the education process using land to learn about and ground student experiences of the built environment around them. These lessons enable students to explore the built environment and the ways in which it sustains complex systems and remnants of historical ecologies, and how it has also historically hindered, and continues to stagnate, community development of historically oppressed communities. To ensure the lessons are adequately understood there will be an assessment by students, educators, and administrators for effectiveness. Further, this curriculum articulates the ways students and youth leadership can be supported and sustained for the future of communities impacted by historical processes such as, but not limited to settler-colonialism, industrialization, and global capitalism. Finally, the role of Optimism, Solidarity, and Empathy are offered as guiding values to cultivate in youth through the 4 C's. A strong and permanent connection to land is made possible through the curriculum framework of *contestation, contextualization, commitment, collaboration*. These Four-C's are the underlying themes for each proposed curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wanted to thank several people in this document. This thesis is dedicated to the communities that raised and nurtured me throughout South Central Los Angeles; from the homelands of the *Tongva* People, now known as Los Angeles, to the homelands of the *Duwamish* People, now known as Seattle. These communities continue to exist throughout these regions, and should not be relegated to the past, and we should actively engage in solidarity work to ensure their futures are possible. I also wanted to give thanks to the different families that have raised me as I navigate higher education. This thesis is also dedicated to my mother, my sisters, my brother, my nieces, and nephews who were always curious about what I have been doing so far from home. Cynthia Morales and her work with the Graduate Opportunity-Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) have also helped in minimizing my stress and helping me on my first year at the University of Washington. Most importantly, the endless support and guidance provided by Lynne Manzo and Jeff Hou in this journey, I thank the both of you for supporting this endeavor. Along with the entire Department of Landscape Architecture who provided foundational learning experiences in my time here. I also wanted to give thanks to Vanessa N. Lee for her day-to-day support in navigating this institution. There are countless others to thank who have provided a joke, a hug, a drink, and appreciation which has made my time in higher education possible: ZAJM, RJR, JCCC, ANE, CM, LCF, RR, MH, JB, RU. Most importantly I wanted to thank my mother, Berta Barragan-Estrada, and the countless *tias* and *mujeres* that raised me with her. This one is for all of you. *La Lucha Sigue*.

Chapter 2: Situating *Self, Land, Education, Leadership*

In the last chapter, I provided a sense of my values and positionality that led me to this thesis. In this chapter, I aim to provide critical context for my project and the curriculum I propose. This chapter will provide a look at how my position shapes this curriculum proposal, as advocated by the work of Bang in educational justice (2016), the emphasis on land as a point of departure for building curriculum; the interest in education will also be addressed, and its relationship to building leadership capacities in high school youth. The readers should understand where this curriculum building project gathers its vision, and that is both through my exposure to environmental justice movements in Los Angeles, and the legacies of environmental degradation, as well as the scholarship I have found in higher education.

Firstly, I begin this chapter by situating myself and my own value-laden subjectivities guided by *optimism, solidarity, and empathy*. This is instrumental in drafting a vision for the curriculum that I propose. The curriculum presented in this thesis is intended to cultivate in high-school age youth the core qualities of optimism, solidarity, and empathy.

Secondly, in this chapter I will situate the land that this thesis is written in to begin contextualizing opportunities for learning experiences. I argue that there are rich learning experiences throughout the city we now know as Seattle, and the Duwamish Valley specifically, that can and should be incorporated into a land-based curriculum to cultivate leadership and learning experiences around optimism, solidarity, and empathy.

Thirdly, broadening the scope out to situating education in the United States and throughout the state of Washington helps in providing an idea of the focus on the relationship between this land-based curriculum and environmental education generally. Environmental education is important to refer to considering the emergence of the No Child Left Inside program from 2007, which will be elaborated in the forthcoming paragraphs.

Finally, curriculum building sets the stage for a discussion on the role of leadership, and the ways this may look in different contexts, whether in formal institutional settings, or in informal day-to-day organizing. This curriculum's cultivation of land-based leadership draws on values and worldviews such as *optimism, solidarity, and empathy* with close relation to my experiences and subjectivities. These values are explored in detail in the section below on "Situating Self" because these are individual psychosocial qualities, worldviews and values that can be fostered with a greater grounding of self in place. Further, these values guide the 4 C's framework for this curriculum, which are: *contextualization, commitment, contestation, and collaboration* which are described more fully in the "Situating Leadership" Section in this chapter.

SITUATING SELF:

Environmental Justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

Source: 16th principle from the Environmental Justice Principles, as drafted by the First National People of Color Summit held October 1991.

As discussed earlier, my high-school experiences provided me with a grounding on environmental justice organizing in my own community in the Los Angeles basin, the ancestral and occupied homelands of the Tongva people. Over the course of my educational trajectory, I found my coursework guided by a commitment to the work of environmental justice and the scholarship around it (Pulido, 2000; Peña, 1998; Bullard, 2005; Agyeman, 2016; Di Chiro, 1998, Goldman 1998). This environmental justice scholarship is based on the Environmental Justice principles laid out in 1991 by the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The vision behind this document you are reading builds on this foundational moment in the Environmental Justice movement happening throughout the United States. In this thesis, I am taking on the Sixteenth principle quoted in the opening of this section. This environmental education curriculum will focus on educational outcomes that are geared towards high-school age youth.

Exploring curriculum for high-school age youth comes from my own encounters with the legacy of environmental degradation and the emergence of environmental justice movements and local organizing in the Los Angeles Basin. My high school experiences were spent participating in extracurricular activities which embodied youth organizing as an important developmental asset for Latino youth. Kirshner & Ginwright (2012) explore the importance of critical youth development through engaging in political organizing to instill leadership in high-school age

youth, as envisioned by this thesis as well. These extracurricular activities cultivate youth agency, and critical youth development and are important and strong work happening outside of the institutional setting.

My interest lies in providing opportunities for critical youth development to happen in the classroom, while highlighting the importance of extracurricular activities as instrumental youth development. In this thesis, I advocate for high school curriculum to reflect a commitment to critical youth development. This form of youth development is intent on supporting leadership to enact social and environmental change with a place-specific and contextualized lens. Leadership is intended to be guided by optimism, solidarity, and empathy, supporting a framework of the four c's. These four C's are commitment, contextualization, contestation, and collaboration, which will be elaborated in forthcoming chapters.

The critical youth development I seek to foster with the land-based curriculum proposed in this thesis is structured around opportunities for the cultivation of positive worldviews, outlooks and sensibilities in youth that are often eroded through the legacies of social inequity and environmental injustices. Therefore, I focus on the cultivation of optimism, solidarity, and empathy as qualities central to the proposed land-based curriculum. Below I describe each one in greater detail.

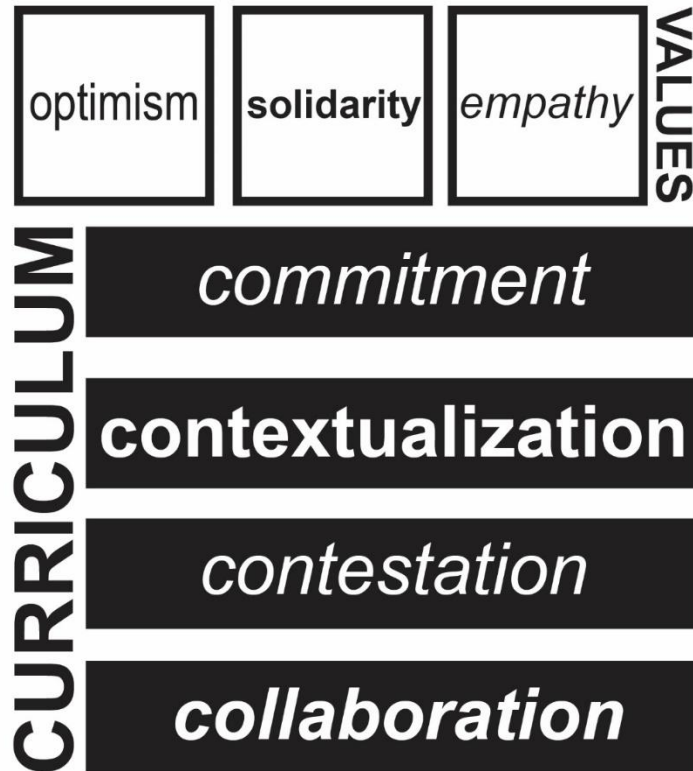


Figure 1: Laying out the Four C's and Values

Optimism, a disposition, or tendency to look on the more favorable side of events or conditions and to expect a favorable outcome. Looking toward a favorable outcome often reflects a future-orientation as well. While youth who live under conditions that work against their favor, in terms of health outcomes and opportunities, it is instrumental to cultivate an optimism that is critical of these conditions (as advocated by Duncan-Andrade, 2009). This is especially important, yet equally challenging to instill, in youth of color from urban areas given their marginalization historically. Yet instilling such optimism and a future-orientation is crucial to promote higher achievements amongst youth. This future-orientation is an attempt at building hope, a complex quality advocated in the work of Duncan-Andrade (2009). Instilling hope and a future orientation promotes equity because it requires educators to collaborate with youth in imagining their lives outside of the conditions they live under, to envision and strengthen their capacities as students and learners. Fostering a future orientation in the face of the legacies of injustices faced by working class communities and communities of color is a powerful and impactful vision. It is important to recognize that optimism is something that can be cultivated outside of high-school curriculum and in families, but institutionalizing and operationalizing this value and orientation is essential to this project. Another important outcome to instilling optimism is to instill commitment to a future that ensure the communities in which youth grow up reflect healthy and just living conditions through the inspiration and articulation of youth-leadership.

Solidarity is an agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group; it is an action-oriented value. This value demonstrates that any work carried out is intended for a collective of people, and often for a

collective that reflects a range of experiences, that still shares struggles with larger systems of oppression. There are two spaces that can be referred to that are a manifestation of Solidarity, here in Seattle. Both the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center and El Centro de La Raza are spaces with significance to indigenous communities and Latinx communities respectively. These spaces operate independently, but attribute their emergence to the important work of the Civil Rights Movement, a movement led by Black communities of the United States¹. Today this solidarity work continues to flourish and serving the communities in need of the range of resources they provide, from using the space to share cultural practices across a range of indigenous communities who now call Seattle home, to providing day-care for families in the area, respectively. This solidarity work is requires complemented by the values of empathy, and also instrumental in this curriculum proposal.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. This idea reflects a strong connection to visioning and administering justice. Research has demonstrated that empathy promotes informal learning in racially diverse schools (see Shin 2011). With this consideration, empathy is one of the ways I envision carrying out my work in this profession. Empathy towards both people and land are central to the curriculum being proposed. Escobar (2001) demonstrates a strong case of an *Afro-Colombian* community's empathic organizing in defense of land and people. This defense is of the human communities that these *Afro-colombianos* are a part of, and a defense of the environment that sustains them. This defense was catalyzed by a sense of empathy for the land and people that were being devalued and it shapes their articulations and struggles for justice, against environmental degradation and land theft.

¹ <http://www.elcentrodelaraza.org/about-us/history-evolution/>

Empathy, therefore, becomes essential to visioning justice, and making the connection between empathy towards land and people alike helps lead us toward spatial justice.

These three themes of optimism, solidarity, and empathy provide a framework for the learning goals of land-based education, and offer a critical platform to reconceive traditional education models to reflect a connection to this curriculum proposal. With the values of optimism, solidarity, and empathy connections to land can be made in curriculum development. These three themes in curriculum are intended to cultivate and nurture effective leadership in relation to the degrading landscapes throughout the United States.

SITUATING LAND: Exploring the learning opportunities found throughout land

Now that we have been able to unravel the importance of optimism, solidarity and empathy, it is important to begin connecting these values to land. This chapter demonstrates the vast opportunities that land and sites offer to provide rich learning opportunities for high school age youth. As we move from the guiding vision of this project shaped by my positionality in the previous section, this section will explore the significance of land in a land-based curriculum.

In the Duwamish River Valley, there rests a heavily polluted waterway². This waterway has a rich history that can serve as an important point of building learning experiences. Specifically, outdoor, and environmental curriculum for high school youth. This exploration is an example of

² The US-EPA declared this a Superfund site in 2001. The Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, a local non-profit committed to the health of the Duwamish River Valley and its waterways, has been effectively working toward cleaning this waterway in collaboration with other organizations.

the potential of a land-based curriculum which uses place names in modern cities to uncover potential learning experiences and to cultivate leadership.

The Duwamish Waterway is named after the ancestral and existing indigenous inhabitants of the region, *Dkh^w'Duw'Absh*, roughly translating to “People of the Inside”, a group belonging to the larger Coast Salish community in the region, along the Puget Sound (Lucignani, 2005). This connection to the indigenous presence is instrumental to building curriculum about land and place about the city we now know as Seattle. As is the case for the nation now known as the United States, which are in the ancestral homelands of a diverse range of indigenous communities with a range of complex cultural practices.

The Duwamish River is referred to as *Dxwdəw*, by the ancestral inhabitants of the region. This river already demonstrates a rich breadth of storytelling opportunities with this place name, serving as an example of the potential for a place that could be at the heart of a land-based curriculum. The use of ancestral place names is a way to look past the present geopolitical borders of the US nation-state. This colonial nation-state has historically subjugated populations toward a project of nation building that attempts to erase and dispose of a range of communities. In the local context, this indigenous community we now know as the Duwamish, who hold no federal recognition, yet continue existing and living, sharing their traditions and their presence in the city through the Duwamish Longhouse Cultural Center in West Seattle. Invoking indigenous place names serves as a contestation of this attempted erasure, and is a way to uncover knowledge and place-based stories, as documented through multimedia projects (Becker 2015).

Nonetheless, these place names will be used with currently known and formal place names as necessary throughout this document to coincide with the statistical information gathered according to the dominant political place names.

In this thesis, I propose a land-based curriculum that focuses on the part of the southern Duwamish Valley, also known as the Highline School District. In the case of the region we now know as Seattle, within the Green-Duwamish Watershed, there are opportunities to explore those policies that subjugated native communities, and have led to the degradation of environments, namely the Duwamish River. This polluted waterway can offer an instrumental connection to begin building a context-specific land-based curriculum for the high school youth of the southern Duwamish Valley. Throughout the Coast Salish and Duwamish territories specifically, there are other opportunities to explore sites to speak to the indigenous presence from Prairie Point which became Alki Point (Thrush, 2007), or as mentioned earlier Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center among other sites, where some are degraded, and some thrive as a cultural hub for indigenous communities today. Overall these lands serve as a basis for formal high school learning experiences which immerse youth in environmental education that explores history and engages social critique heavily.

The communities in the Southern Duwamish Valley are composed of higher populations of both communities of color, and Latino populations, often Spanish speaking. Over eight languages are spoken at the homes of the students within the Highline School District, providing

an image of the diversity within this community³. Not only is this area comprised of working-class communities of color, it also contains sites of heavy industrial zoning, and a superfund site, the Duwamish River, which is an important point of conversation for youth of the region. Such settings, when brought into the curriculum through land-based learning can enable youth to tackle the range of environmental impacts they face every day, and become harbingers of change for their communities.

Refer to the maps in the Appendix to see the Duwamish Valley mapped. The make-up of these communities, demographically, and physically, provides a unique opportunity to work toward an environmental educational curriculum that uses land and its rich histories, to manifest the 16th principle quoted earlier.

The 16th environmental justice principle laid out by the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit noted earlier advocates for an educational curriculum that provides opportunities for diverse communities to understand and contextualize their social and environmental world, in relation to their experiences. These maps will be an important part of this curriculum, it is also important to situate curriculum in relation to a region or cities' indigenous presence, as I will do in Chapter 3. Providing this connection to the indigenous presence of a region works against the legacy of erasure that indigenous communities continue to face. One effective curriculum tool that I propose is the use of the Waterlines Map, created by

³ <https://www.highlineschools.org/cms/lib/WA01919413/Centricity/domain/65/annual-report/2016-English-Highline-Public-Schools-Annual-Report.pdf.pdf>

4Culture and the Burke Museum. This exercise would be composed of learning opportunities for understanding place names of areas throughout Duwamish territories, now known as the City of Seattle. This Waterlines Map⁴, which is an existing resource provided by the Burke Museum, uses ancestral place names of the region in the closest English translation from Lushotseed, a Salishan language. This language has ancestral ties to this region where the University of Washington is located and the territories the City of the Seattle occupies. The map becomes an effective learning tool to begin a conversation about place names outside of the imposed colonial place-names we now know.

With the use of the resource of the waterlines map, we have an opportunity to begin exploring sites throughout the region, uncovering newspaper articles, interacting with local public libraries providing research opportunities for high-school youth, and even uncovering stories by visiting local cultural centers. The Waterlines Map becomes an effective resource to bring in this conversation into the classroom, and approach youth with tangible evidence of the indigenous presence in this region.

An important part of the curriculum is acknowledging that what we now know as King County and the city of Seattle are the ancestral homelands of the Duwamish people, and Coast Salish Peoples respectively. Acknowledging this, and moving beyond current political definitions of the land demonstrates a *commitment* and *solidarity* with the Duwamish people who are not only still seeking federal recognition, but also respect and dignity in practicing their

⁴ http://www.burkemuseum.org/static/waterlines/images/maps-and-images/waterlines_map_medium.pdf

cultural traditions. Legacies of power imbalances that have led to environmental degradation of the land have not gone without action and mobilization by communities. Land-based leadership exists in Seattle and a goal of this thesis is to uncover some of the ways to cultivate and mobilize this leadership through public high-school curriculum.

SITUATING EDUCATION: The case for environmental education

We now see the way my values and positionality shapes this curriculum, along with the significance of land in this curriculum. The focus on education, apart from the 16th Environmental Justice principle, is also a result of the resources provided for environmental education. This proposal for land-based education builds upon such programs as No Child Left Inside, which provides resources and grant funding supporting outdoor experiences for youth considered to be “at-risk.” This No Child Left Inside program is intended to specifically serve any agencies which interact with youth from K-12. In the past, funding has been provided to Seattle’s own Wilderness Inner-city Leadership Development, which is a non-profit focused on providing environmental education to inner-city youth, and specifically Asian/Pacific Islander youth, to learn about environmental stewardship. Often, these learning experiences supported by the No Child Left Inside provide trips to state and national parks. These trips are effective ways to approach environmental education, though it is not an approach taken on by this curriculum. This curriculum proposal instead uses urban areas and their rich history to engage an urban environmental education ethic. The No Child Left Inside promotes recreational opportunities to

promote health, educational attainment, and positive health outcomes amongst youth, the legislation reads as follows:

***Intent—2007 c 176:** "It is the intent of the legislature to establish an outdoor education and recreation program to provide a large number of underserved students with quality opportunities to directly experience the natural world. It is the intent of the program to improve students' overall academic performance, self-esteem, personal responsibility, community involvement, personal health, and understanding of nature. Further, it is the intent of the program to empower local communities to engage students in outdoor education and recreation experiences." [2007 c 176 § 1.]*

This funding for outdoor experiences fits especially well for the intention behind the land-based education being proposed here. Land-based education has a close connection to indigenous scholarship, and as such, the scholarship published in this realm will be discussed, followed by tracing its connections to place-based education, critical pedagogy, and landscape literacy. With these subjects in mind, and considering No Child Left Inside, it is important to consider the ways outdoor experiences can be integrated into classroom learning, building a case for more funding at the federal state, and city level for outdoor education.

Nationally, the passage of the No Child Left Inside Act has led to an increased investment in outdoor education since 2007. This demonstrates the value of an outdoor

curriculum that specifically targets urban communities. This Act provides funding for outdoor recreation for children to address health outcomes. However, in 2017 there has been a 9.1 billion divestment from education which demonstrates a tumultuous moment for proposing curriculum with a strong social critique lens. This divestment will have a drastic negative impact on historically oppressed, often considered “underserved” communities. In the realm of decreasing funding from public agencies such as school districts, leaving less resources for these districts, in neighborhoods already burdened with minimal tax revenues. To continue advocating for funding, in the face of this divestment, we can look to the strides made in the state of Washington. Close to 1 million dollars in funding to organizations committed to outdoor education, demonstrating a positive impact in student “academic performance, self-esteem, personal responsibility, community involvement, personal health, and understanding of nature.” This funding saw 8% go toward Public Schools⁵, where private non-profits saw close to 63% of grant funding allocated. This document demonstrates the funding is promoting leadership across different communities, and facilitating outdoor experiences for youth in many regions with positive outcomes. Nonetheless, while these did have positive outcomes overall, of the collected racial/ethnic data, the recipients of these programs were largely White or Caucasian students served. With a focus on the Public-School Agency of the Highline School District, within the Southern Duwamish Valley, there are opportunities to reach more communities of color, composed of Alaska Natives, American Indian, Latino⁶, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian, and Black/African American communities with a focus on Highline School Districts.

⁵ <http://parks.state.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/6008>

⁶ Latinx discussion, x used as gender inclusive. Latinx also a term that supports a project which erases indigenous presence throughout Latin America, but decision should be made on whether this argument should be brought into the discussion.

SITUATING LEADERSHIP: Actors in movement building

I have so far emphasized the value of situating the self and the land in a personal, political, environmental, and historical context. In this section I wish to now focus on the importance of situating leadership and different possibilities that can emerge from optimism, solidarity, and empathy framework discussed in the Self section. This framework is applied to the Four C's proposed in this section. Further, these Four C's then draw on specific roles within movement building, to describe some of the ways leadership can look.

Leadership is integral to stirring up and contributing to the multi-generational environmental justice movement. Contributing and expanding leadership in response to environmental injustices is to mobilize communities to react to land uses that continue to threaten the quality of life of historically oppressed communities, as well as to find ways to lessen or entirely remove the impact of pollution and environmental degradation in communities. A major critique of environmental justice movements sees this rallying against new projects as reactive, but this view falls short of recognizing the necessity of being reactive to struggle for the livelihoods of communities. This reaction against existing degradation is not mutually exclusive to a more proactive stance to ensure the health and well-being of communities. It is important to couple this “reactive” approach, with proactive planning for sustainability, and taking on professional leadership roles in envisioning “sustainable communities.” This is an approach advocated by Julian Agyeman (2016) with his scholarship around “just sustainabilities;” I want to give credit to “reactive” organizing and reactive leadership because as they interact with the

institutions that are responsible for the environmental degradation and negative health outcomes, these organizers, helpers, rebels, and protectors make community concerns legible to the institutions responsible. Understanding the different actors that make community concerns legible will be explored in this section.

I want to be sure actors in movement building are assessed for their ability to address the Four C's framework proposed of *contextualization, commitment, contestation, and collaboration*. These Four C's are defined as follows: (1) *commitment*, the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action over a pro-longed period of time; (2) *collaboration*, the situation of two or more people working together to create or achieve the same goal, (3) *contextualization*, to consider an idea, event, activity, etc. together with everything relating to it, in order to understand it better; (4) *contestation*, to call into question and take an active stand against; dispute or challenge These definitions are an overview, but will be further elaborated in Chapter 3, under the Articulating Curriculum Criteria section. This overview situates the different leadership roles/actors.

Interacting with institutions responsible for ongoing degradation of environments and communities requires consistent leadership and vigilance, whether across one generation, or across several. Leadership in all its forms is intended to be the outcome of this curriculum proposal, encouraging youth to engage in on-the ground organizing, or planning and visioning sustainable communities, or theorizing in academic institutions, or building professionals cognizant of these struggles for justice, among other outcomes This curriculum looks to

demonstrate that power does exist in these communities, knowledge and sustainable visioning is also present in these communities. Most importantly, the everyday lives of community leaders and their work in bringing up local concerns to light with mobilizations of communities is indicative of the power that communities hold.

There are several important components to this thesis that demonstrate a commitment to the power that exists in communities. This includes acknowledging some of the roles taken on in existing work in relation to mass incarceration (refer to Hunter, 2015). Examining the roles of actors in movement building is important and will be addressed thoroughly in the forthcoming paragraphs. I reference actors participating in the work of ending mass incarceration. Alexander & West (2012) effectively *contextualize* the relationship between legacies of racism and policy embedded into the nation of the United States after the Jim Crow era, and its disproportionate impact on black communities nationwide. Unraveling some of the roles taken on by people in this movement to end mass incarceration and contextualize the different “actors” in movement work, generally, can help illuminate the type of leaders/actors that can emerge from this curriculum proposal that centralizes *optimism, solidarity, and empathy*, are three key qualities that I hope to instill in youth through this curriculum.

The guide “Building a Movement to End Mass Incarceration...” (Hunter, 2015) is relevant for the proposed curriculum because it advocates for moving toward an understanding of leaders as “actors” in movement work. While this guide speaks to movement building in relation to Mass Incarceration, this was an effective ordering of movement actors. In this way,

we can begin to see some of the different positions, such as administrators and faculty, that can contribute to collaborating on the future of a curriculum proposal. This provides the reader some context on how to assess different actors in building future curriculum. Although these actor descriptions in the forthcoming paragraphs provide a vision for my own position in carrying out my professional work, these actors discussed in Hunter's (2015) work provides an opportunity to identify specific actors that can contribute to a robust context specific and land-based curriculum.

Identifying different "actors" can be facilitated with the use of the summary of roles provided in the book, "Building a Movement to Ending Mass Incarceration..." (Hunter, 2015). The roles actively responding to injustices range from the helper, the advocate, the organizer, and the rebel, through this thesis I hope to be able to fulfill many roles simultaneously, under the scrutiny of my audience.

The three roles: *Helpers, Organizers, Rebels*, as discussed in the forthcoming paragraphs touch on some of the different ways the curriculum goals of *commitment, collaboration, contextualization, and contestation* can manifest in settings outside of education. Helpers are instrumental in meeting the immediate needs of a community, or community member. Organizers make connections across different communities and facilitate effective conversations across different spaces. Rebels are constantly pushing the conversation forward, and questioning intent to broaden the way vision and justice should look under legacies of oppression faced by communities. These roles will be elaborated further. It is important to recognize that this curriculum would encourage a range of leadership and "actor" approaches. Unraveling these

different explanations and summary of roles will lay out some of the ways leaders/actors would be cultivated in drafting this curriculum.

"Helpers" provide an immediate help with a problem. They are often criticized for not assessing the root of the problem; nonetheless, they provide an immediate help with the individual resources that this person has available to them. Advocates are also similar to helpers in that they use the resources available to them to navigate a range of policy efforts, or larger scale efforts, recognizing the inherent flaws in a system, but providing assistance to those that need it, and having the ability to operate through loopholes for services; this role is often criticized for complacency in working within a set way of doing work, instead of actively dismantling this way of doing work with the goal of stronger forms of human autonomy. Helpers are often committed individuals and effective *collaborators*, but the element of *contestation*, or *contextualization* is not considered in this role.

On the other hand, "Organizers" play an important role in recognizing the illusion of permanence for injustices, and their root causes. This closely relates to the concept of *contextualization*, and effectively engages *contestation* as well, along with *commitment* and *collaboration*. Their intent is to find ways to reach goals by finding ways to gather a critical mass of people (*collaboration*), make the space to have them share their encounters with injustices (*contextualization*). These roles of organizers are action-oriented (*contestation*), event-oriented and are useful in cogently tapping into the abilities of others to fulfill a goal (*collaboration*).

“Rebel” is often in opposition to many of the roles listed above. The rebel often find ways to bring action and energy into a conversation as well as push forward different ways to enact direct action (*contestation*). The rebel is often one who does not flinch at the opportunity to sacrifice something to teach others the importance of dismantling the systems that are responsible for the injustices historically oppressed communities face (*commitment*). These actors play in important role in embodying contestation, commitment, and fall short of *collaboration* and *contextualization*.

Laying out this range of actors helps highlight some of the positive attributes of tackling injustices, some have strengths in commitments, and others in contestation, and all are important actors, when thinking about responding to the legacies of injustices. We can look to the richness of leadership that exists across Seattle. Of relevance to this thesis, leadership comes in the form of land-based social activism, growing environmental stewardship, cultivating creative expression. However, these have been present in many activities promoted as extra-curricular involvement opportunities for youth. These are crucial learning experiences for students and will be addressed in the next section, yet, as this thesis argues, such leadership can be cultivated within the curriculum as well.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I am a Chicano student traversing a master's program in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington. I am the first of my family to pursue higher education. This identity is a point of departure that has shaped my commitments to historically oppressed communities in the academic setting. With this background, I am motivated to explore the important histories in this region that relate to populations that are of Mexican-origin, as well as the ancestral communities of the region, and the diverse communities throughout Seattle. My specific interest in this project is making these histories and legacies of injustices legible to high school age youth in the form of learning experiences, specifically a curriculum focused on place and land in the public education setting. It is my contention that a land-based curriculum is particularly suited to revealing histories and injustices alike and has with it, at the same time, potential for empowerment and liberation. Overall, a vision of cultivating *optimism, solidarity, and empathy* guide this curriculum to cultivate a generation of leaders.

The University of Washington has provided me with access to a range of scholarship related to indigenous studies, environmental studies, psychology, public health, in addition to resources related to environmental justice organizing throughout the city now known as Seattle. I draw inspiration from the organizing that happens around me, as well as the scholarship that documents generations of organizing toward environmental justice. There exists documented work by a generation of scholars that deviates from the traditional scholarly work which has been dominated by white men at the start of the 18th century. This alternative scholarship and positionality provides me with stronger aspirations as a scholar with commitments to archiving and contributing to the ongoing generational struggles for justice and the archival work of

scholars immersed in these struggles (see DiChiro, 1999, Peña, 1998 & 2005, Pulido, 1996 among others).

Growing up in communities made up of Black and Latino populations facing some of the harshest environmental conditions, which has been home to some inspiring efforts, I have been able to find *optimism* from the tireless organizing of these communities and their leaders. From the historic mobilizing and commitments of the Mothers of East Los Angeles working against the construction of a new prison (see Pardo, 1998; Diaz 2004), to the tireless work of Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles fighting to keep incinerators from being built in the community I call home (DiChiro, 1999), this scholarship has become my point of reference shaping my historical connection to the land and place that I come from, shaping my *optimism* in relation to the generation of environmental justice work before me. These organizers and protectors have committed themselves to work that will provide me and the generations after me with a slightly healthier quality of life. I am presented with an onus to honor their work, and find ways to continue to do the same. Therefore, working toward curriculum revolving around environmental education is where I see my thesis project contributing and honoring the heritage and legacy left behind by scholars and community leaders alike.

As a Chicano student, I am interested in working towards scholarship that exhibits *solidarity* with a range of historically oppressed communities. In the case of this project, this involves recognizing the diversity of urban public schools in Seattle, the ancestral homelands and territories of the Duwamish people, and choosing a school district that reflects the diversity of our country to propose learning experiences. In addition to this diversity, exploring the connection to the ancestral communities that belong to these territories, and continue to live here become points of *solidarity* for this project. *Solidarity* is advocated to ensure a bridge between

different communities facing legacies of injustices are drawing on each other's capacities to build collective relationships and a movement toward justice.

Before having access to this scholarship about justice in my career through higher-education, I witnessed the leadership of my mother which were some of the first encounters I had with what local justice looked like in the area. This leadership was one driven by *empathy* for the *mujeres* -- my mother nurtured relationships and built community within South Central Los Angeles. This shaped my understanding of the importance of community leaders and their tireless day-to-day organizing that is instrumental for articulating a form of justice. This justice was one driven by context of the relationship between my mother, a community leader, and the *mujeres* she shared relationships with in the neighborhood where I was raised. My upbringing exposed me to her leadership in gathering resources with the help of a local church to distribute goods out of the local community center. This required partnerships across the city, which were sustained and taken on by my mother to provide for the families in my neighborhood. She continues this work in the people she builds relationships with across the different spaces she interacts with on the day-to-day. These experiences provide an ability to shape my values around *empathy* for the community I come from, and the people within them.

In addition to the growing up around my mother's leadership, another important developmental experience in relation to building empathy for my community was witnessing and participating in the organizing from local community organizations such as Communities for a Better Environment throughout my high school years, with organizers such as Daryl Molina, Roberto Cabrales and Mark Lopez. This engagement, outside of the high school setting provided me a focus on the built environment and shaped my commitments to environmental justice

specifically. This experience provided me a specific focus on empathy toward the land, and commitment to the health of our environments, and the human-communities within them.

Considering these developmental experiences, there was a disconnect between the high school I attended, its curriculum, and the ability to share these learning experiences that were embedded into the community and places I grew up in. I see this thesis as an opportunity for Public Agencies, and specifically urban Public Schools, to shape stronger connections to the places and land they are situated in to provide grounded learning experiences relating to the communities that youth belong to. This move to acknowledge and recognize the knowledge, stories, and power that exists in communities, provides an opportunity to cultivate strong youth leaders out of high-school, through a place-specific or land-based curriculum aimed at cultivating optimism, solidarity, and empathy. Precise definitions of these concepts will be elaborated on in Chapter 2, and connected to a curriculum framework of *commitment, contextualization, collaboration, and contestation*. A crucial component of this thesis is providing the foundation on which this curriculum proposal stands. Chapter 3 will provide the important context for the staff, administrators, and educators accessing the resources presented. This context goes into the legacies of exclusion, the relationship between exclusion and education, and goes on to address the role of curriculum in visioning justice. This chapter draws on important literature which provides the framework for a land-based curriculum.

Chapter 4 provides the range of tools and resources that can be used to employ a land-based curriculum. This chapter provides a justification for the range of topics chosen, presents a range of activities that can be used in the classroom, as well as draws on resources that are already existing to ensure educators are well-equipped to administer a land-based curriculum.

Finally, Chapter 5 will provide an overview of the conversation presented. The discussion will conclude with next steps, the expectations of the curriculum being proposed, as well as shortcomings of the position taken in this thesis.

Chapter 3:

This chapter is aimed at contextualizing a history of land and the human communities in them with regards to exclusion, both in Seattle and Los Angeles. This is followed by a connection to exclusion in relation to education, as well as the agency that exists in communities in response to the legacies of exclusion. Considering this agency sets the stage for speaking about the ways public high school curriculum can become an important tool for youth, and contribute further to the agency in communities, by sustaining youth leadership. This chapter will begin to articulate curriculum criteria elaborating the Four C's, identified in chapter 2. Finally, the literature on land-based pedagogy will be summarized to set the stage for the following chapter, which proposes specific activities and outcomes in learning expectations. Finally, this literature review will provide an overview of place-based education, youth agency and draw from the realities of ongoing environmental degradation. A project toward environmental education should situate the terrain of educational literature to date, as well as situate the historical terrain, as this chapter will do.

SITUATING THE TERRAIN: Desettling Curriculum, Contextualizing Exclusion

With this project overall, I am advocating for an educational curriculum that explicitly acknowledges the legacies of injustices created by policies reflecting a historic exclusion of communities, and the impacts of these injustices on land and people. This requires a general overview of the range of exclusionary acts perpetrated on different populations within the United States and Seattle specifically. I will then connect these legacies of exclusion in the Pacific Northwest to education and exclusion of communities in Los Angeles to continue linking this

project to my own history of being raised in the Los Angeles Basin. Finally, I will focus on understanding the role of education in perpetuating injustices, and the ways curriculum can work toward undoing the injustices that have led to stagnation in working-class communities and communities impacted by legacies of exclusion by sustaining leadership. By stagnation I refer to the quality of life resulting from environmental degradation, and the policies which contribute to the degradation of the health of human communities. This stagnation in communities and the environment emerges in the form of exclusion from decision-making processes in environmental regulation (Lynch, 2008). In providing this context, I look to uphold the importance of historical analysis in shaping a land-based curriculum, as advocated by Tuck, Mackenzie, & McCoy (2014). A central part of the argument is making a connection between the legacy of exclusion impacting both the human communities and the land of a region, and the ways environmental education can uncover these legacies. By providing opportunities to engage legacies of the land and the human communities that live there, environmental education, in turn, offers a unique opportunity to engage in a commitment to articulating justice. There are a generation of youth who can use this curriculum in their emergence as budding scholars, professionals, and residents of the ancestral homelands of indigenous people.

Indigenous people's traditional cultural practices require connections to unpolluted land, air, and water. The proposed curriculum contributes a small amount to the work of decolonization in several ways. First, by acknowledging that for many indigenous people, a connection to land demands an appreciation to the sanctity of the ancestral homelands on the one hand, and recognizing their devaluation and ecological degradation by the settler-colonial state that continues to subjugate communities within the United States on the other hand. These communities include indigenous people, along with other communities such as immigrant and

refugee communities throughout the United States. Second, this project also seeks to contribute to the work of decolonization by recognizing the legacies of power imbalances that indigenous communities face throughout what we now know as the United States. These power imbalances have manifest themselves historically through law and policy. Decolonization is not a concept to be taken lightly, it is a process that expands beyond a conversation about education, addressing the legacies of environmental degradation that has impacted many communities throughout the nation-building project of United States of America. In response to a history of colonization, decolonization is intended to support lifeways of indigenous peoples, and communities impacted by legacies of settler-colonialism, often these lifeways require addressing land specifically and its degraded condition. Land-based education, like that proposed in this thesis project, becomes a gateway to immerse leaders in the work of decolonization toward the future of indigenous lifeways, and the lifeways of historically excluded communities subjected to the conditions created by settler-colonialism. Nonetheless, education serves to approach the ongoing work of decolonization but is limited in scope if it does not adequately acknowledge the ways oppressed communities outside of indigenous communities, benefit from the nation-state established by settler-colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Understanding the interactions between settler-colonialism and capitalism in the establishment of the nation-state on ancestral territories of indigenous populations provides a frame for curriculum embracing contestation and social critique. Coulthard & Simpson (2016) provides a significant proposal to understanding and defining settler colonialism – that is, a structure of domination predicated on the ongoing dispossession of indigenous peoples’ lands and the forms of political authority that govern relationship to these lands– this definition can be used to set the stage for the process of nation-building with the use of land, labor, and the lives of

indigenous peoples (2016). Providing the *context* of the nation-building project with a heavy social critique lens provides youth an ability to connect the past with the present, empowering them for visioning their communities by naming the range of policies and power is used against the livelihoods of historically oppressed communities, particularly indigenous communities.

Indigenous communities continue to defend and protect land. As I write this, various tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest¹, North Dakota, and Florida, to name a few places, are actively mobilizing around environmental issues of coal trains and oil pipelines threatening waterways. These land defenders seek to protect both ancestral lands, access to water, and the lands we all inhabit. One good local example of this is the work that the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition has taken on. This work has similar values of environmental justice advocates with whom I have worked closely throughout the Los Angeles Basin, who mobilize and organize for the defense of land, family, and communities (human and non-human) toward safer and cleaner water, air, and land. This comes in the form of scrutinizing industries that continue to pollute neighborhoods of working class communities; most importantly this mobilization also takes the form of effectively building capacity with community members to sit on boards and steering committees to be part of decision making processes at a formal level Puget Sound Sage in the Pacific Northwest and Communities for A Better Environment in the Los Angeles Basin are two examples that accomplish this cultivation of leadership to contest the legacies of injustices. This land-based education model is another contribution to this range of ways to cultivate agency and leadership in communities. provides an opportunity for students to enrich their communities by having access to and naming the woven systems of oppression that affect them and other historically oppressed communities in their everyday environments.

¹ <http://www.sightline.org/2017/06/20/mapping-the-thin-green-line/>

The context provided in the following section is intended to set the stage for the overlap between exclusion, and exclusion in relation to education. This context sets the stage for building commitment from educators and administrators to the curriculum being proposed, and thereby to actively *contesting* existing educational practices that are rooted in the exclusion of communities. Moreover, an important component to this thesis is exploring the intricate legacies of environmental racism in the Seattle region and their relationship to settler-colonial legacies. In exploring these legacies, this project moves toward the cultivation of leadership from the *contextualization* of these legacies. The following paragraphs will situate the realities of exclusion across different geographic communities, setting the stage for the context of exclusion and education.

EXCLUSION: Duwamish and Coast Salish Territories

The value of land-based education and the kind of curriculum I propose in this thesis is supported in the discourse on what is called “Desettling education” (Bang, Warren, Rosebery, Medin, 2012; Tuck, McKenzie & McCoy, 2014; Vossoughi et al, 2016). Desettling education achieves multiple critical goals. To begin, it reframes educational possibilities for marginalized youth by recognizing and drawing attention to power and equity. In addition, it recognizes that the construct of the nature-culture definitions are connected to dominant views with a relationship to settler-colonial values. Desettling education begins to question assumptions about learning and teaching; for example acknowledging that nature is socially constructed and culturally bounded. A desettling educational practice seeks to go beyond conventional and prevalent educational values, including those tied to a Western conception of nature, and embraces a more inclusive and indigenous lens. In order to desettle education and undo this constructed nature-culture chasm that structurally undervalues indigenous knowledge, it is

important both to explore the legacy of settler-colonialism, and the ways it can be learned in high school curriculum, and to connect settler-colonialism to the legacies of exclusion in both everyday life and in education specifically. This section will summarize some critical exclusionary practices from history as a way to set the stage for a response to this history as expressed in the proposed curriculum in Chapter 4.

To uncover the legacy of exclusion, it is important to unravel the Acts, treaties, and Residential Schools and the role these educational institutions played in impacting communities. When discussing these acts in Seattle, and throughout the Pacific Northwest, we must recognize that they continue to impact communities today. For example, the Duwamish tribe holds no federal recognition, but continues striving for access to unpolluted land, air, and water. Exploring the impacts of settler colonialism in the emergence of the city we now know as Seattle requires an overview of the range of policies which led to the exclusion of indigenous communities in the throughout Duwamish and Coast Salish Territories. The Native Exclusion Act of 1865² made it legal to prevent indigenous communities from being within the city of Seattle, hence supporting the ongoing forced removal of indigenous people from their ancestral territories. Another important legal reference is the Treaty of Point Elliot which solidified the granting of land to settlers by the indigenous communities of the region. The Dawes Act reinforced this exclusion as it led to the further division of land on reservations. Finally, Residential Schools, which are government-sponsored religious schools established to assimilate Indigenous children into settler culture, also contribute to the legacy of injustice faced by indigenous communities and will also be discussed in this section. Overall, this exclusion in relation to these territories sets the stage for the importance of a land-based pedagogy that addresses colonial legacies, to provide a critical

² <http://www.historylink.org/File/10979>

lens for students to acknowledge the histories and stories of the lands they walk on. Each of these Acts will now be examined a bit more closely.

Another impact on indigenous communities, and specifically the Duwamish, in establishing Seattle was the Treaty of Point Elliot. This treaty formalized the signing of indigenous land to settlers, while establishing hunting and fishing rights to indigenous communities. This was a tumultuous moment in establishing the city of Seattle. Conflicts between Euro-American settlers and indigenous peoples created the “Indian War” in 1856 (Thrush, 2007). This moment branded the resistance and agency of indigenous peoples responding to dispossession as hindrances on the establishment of the city, placing these indigenous communities as scapegoats for the city’s problems (Thrush, 2007). The signing of this Treaty paved the way for the emerging city which effectively urbanized the region, impacting the sustenance and lifeways of indigenous communities. This land dispossession was part of the project of erasing indigenous communities, leading to centering, and valuing settler-futures.

The Treaty of Point Elliot led to land dispossession of indigenous communities in favor of the emerging settler city, and infringed on indigenous sovereignty. Nationally, the Dawes Act further contributed to this land dispossession and sovereignty as it further divided the land that was indigenous communities were relegated to, which were what we know as reservations. The Dawes Act created land allotments and instilled the idea individual property rights across several communities. These land allotments were intended to force the process of assimilating into Euro-American values of land ownership³. The Dawes Act was rationalized as a response to a demand for land with the “land rushes” throughout the 1890s, leading to a formalized method of

³ <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=50>

distributing land for indigenous communities on reservations (Thrush, 2007), and it contributed to changing the relationship of indigenous communities to land from a communal one, to an individual one, which had a lasting generational impact.

We can look to the burning of longhouses, local tribal peoples' traditional communal dwellings, throughout the city of Seattle as a part of the settler-colonial legacy of exclusion. This act of burning longhouses belonging to indigenous communities happened in tandem with the Native Exclusion Act of 1865. Longhouses continue to be an important resource for communities throughout the Salish Coast, now known as King County and the greater region. Just in 2016, the first longhouse-style building since this historic exclusion was built on the University of Washington campus, thanks to tireless advocacy, and leadership. The Intellectual House, wəłəbʔaltx^w, is now an important resource for native students on the University of Washington campus. Another longhouse-style building is an important cultural resource in Seattle. The Duwamish Longhouse and Tribal Cultural Center is also another example of the leadership and agency in the Duwamish community. The legacy of exclusion, and dispossession, led to close to a century and a half of indigenous communities facing harsh environmental conditions in attempts of erasure from the budding settler city of Seattle. Nonetheless, these two cultural centers are a direct contestation of that erasure, and a way to reinscribe indigenous futures into the landscape. They are indicative of the struggle, and agency of the people whose identities and histories were being erased, and they are a testimony to futures that include the Duwamish Tribal community specifically, and indigenous communities in general.

Another lasting generational impact is the legacy of Residential Schools, or Boarding Schools, have been used against indigenous communities throughout the United States. These Boarding Schools are another instance of exclusion of the cultural values, knowledge, and

learning styles of the diverse indigenous communities. These communities were affected by this project of assimilation, or forced assimilation through schooling and education. In the case of Canada's relationship to Boarding School, the generational impacts manifest in youth losing a connection to their ancestral languages, and negative educational outcomes if a parent, specifically a mother, attended these schools (Feir, 2016). Residential Schools served an important role in advancing the project of settler colonialism at the turn of the 20th century (Marker, 2009). This was a role of educating Coast Salish communities on reservations, though leading to psychological trauma and loss of cultural traditions. Marker provides an effective and nuanced analysis on the intricate impacts of Residential schools on Coast Salish specifically, as a community impacted by policies from both the United States and Canada. These institutions served to erase the traditional practices, namely language, among other things, of indigenous youth for many decades. While the curriculum proposed in this thesis cannot alleviate the generational impact of a century of exclusionary acts and practices like Residential Schools, it can help address the imbalance in the educational system and approach educational goals that explicitly address these legacies to cultivate critical youth leadership grounded in the lands and regions they call home. Today, King County has acknowledged this history. ⁴ This curriculum upholds this legacy as one that should be discussed and acknowledged directly as well.

EXCLUSION + AGENCY: Los Angeles Basin

Legacies of exclusion are also a part of Los Angeles' history, therefore I wanted to reference the most recent forms of exclusion that have happened throughout Los Angeles, to expand the conversation of education's impact on other diverse communities. In Los Angeles,

⁴ <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/tribes-confront-painful-legacy-of-indian-boarding-schools/>

we can look to the past decade to demonstrate this country's continued commitment to the exclusion of communities from power and the educational process. Proposition 187 was intent on restricting services, giving power to public service providers to enact policing measures based on citizenship status (Fenton, 1995). This proposition was put on the California ballot to public approval, this act passed for a short time but finally ruled unconstitutional; it demonstrated the permeating impacts of settler-colonialism that has turned into nativism held by current voters. Nativism is defined as a commitment to anti-immigrant sentiment. This historic exploration of discrimination and exclusion in California policy provides a frame for understanding the ways exclusion is enacted against communities.

While policy can be used against communities, I did want to draw on agency that exists in communities, by drawing on the historic work of the Black Panthers and the East LA Brown Berets. The Black Panthers provided a historic model of organizing within communities responding to injustices. Often the Black Panthers engage in providing everyday needs for children through school lunches, and health services out of Oakland, California (Basset, 2016). The East LA Brown Berets were a group of youth mobilized communities by supporting walkouts in East Los Angeles⁵, addressing educational disparities (Montejano Montoya, 2014). While their work is done outside of the institutions of education, it is still indicative of organizing around the experiences of communities and their encounters with injustices, which is at the core of the proposed curriculum.

These movements approach a vision of justice that recognizes the differing and shared experiences of African-American and Mexican-American communities in urban areas throughout the U.S and Los Angeles specifically in the case of the Brown Berets. These

⁵ <https://www.kcet.org/shows/departures/east-la-blowouts-walking-out-for-justice-in-the-classrooms>

communities are bounded by their encounters with the legacies of oppression, and indicate the agency that exists in communities in the face of injustices. This work across both groups provides opportunities for solidarity when each group can draw connections between points of support across struggles between different ethnic and cultural communities.

In addition to this on the ground organizing, and engaging in extra-curricular commitments, building leadership through this curriculum is an attempt to be a part of the range of decision-making that historically excluded communities, namely working-class communities often composed of ethnically diverse communities. To contest this reality of historic exclusion would require building leadership in high school curriculum, and extracurricular activities as demonstrated by the work referenced in the section on precedents, and the historic work of the Black Panthers and East LA Brown Berets. Overall, this proposal is an attempt to contest dominant decision-making processes in relation to land-use and/or educational policy that affect such communities negatively, and contributes to the historic work of the commitments of the Black Panthers and East LA Brown Berets.

This general overview of exclusion of indigenous communities and other historically oppressed communities in geographies in Seattle and beyond offers a window into the range of strong community work being done to desettle education, and largely desettle the land. This overview provides an angle for educators to gauge this history more fully, specifically for committed educators and those administering this proposed curriculum. This thesis serves as a point of reference and resource to the vast resources that exist on historic work, and current work. These histories set the stage and context for a curriculum responding to these legacies. Dissecting these settler-colonial histories, and legacies of exclusion help build the skills of historical analysis and critical thinking in the high-school setting among youth from historically

oppressed communities. Cultivating leadership in these youth means taking on these legacies in public high-school curriculum, exploring their lasting impacts, and seeing the ways environmental education can be the gateway into these learning experiences.

COMMITMENTS TO LEADERSHIP: Approaching environmental leadership

In this section, I speak to the goals of this proposed curriculum more thoroughly. I also acknowledge the range of organizations and agencies committed to this goal of cultivating environmental leadership among youth of color with the use of environmental education. Some of these organizations include Duwamish Infrastructure Restoration CORPS (DIRT Corps), Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development (WILD), and IslandWood. This section also provides an exploration of the state of environmental education within a specific campus in the Highline School District, the Waskowitz Outdoor Education Model, as well as IslandWood's educational models. I will provide an overview of both education models, and position some of the learning experiences offered by this model as helpful to constructing the activities I propose. That said, I also critique both models, drawing on the context established in the earlier sections of this thesis.

Duwamish Infrastructure Restoration Training CORPS (DIRT CORPS) is an important program that provides the ability for residents within South Seattle, or the Duwamish Valley, to learn the technical skills of building green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) and to contribute to the emerging leadership in the GSI industry throughout the Duwamish Valley. Two of the program goals that I would like to highlight are: Cultivating leadership and entrepreneurial skills with South Seattle young adults, and showcasing to wider Seattle/regional/national audiences the economic and neighborhood benefits of creating educational and training pathways for young

adults to access the expanding green infrastructure careers. These two goals become a more precise articulation of leadership development around a specific region, the Duwamish Valley. These learning experiences provided by DIRT Corps become effective programs addressing the green ceiling, or the disproportionate representation of communities of color, and other historically under-represented communities within the environmental field. The green-ceiling will be elaborated in the final chapter.

Spotlighting the Wilderness Inner-city Leadership Development (WILD) Program

Leadership development is important not only in fostering young leaders, but also in nurturing intergenerational connections. The Wilderness Inner-city Leadership Development (W.I.L.D.) program provides leadership development opportunities that build a strong foundation for youth from immigrant and refugee families to focus on environmental and social justice issues that impact the Chinatown International District.

Source: Interim Community Development Association (Interim CDA) Website⁶

The Wilderness Inner-city Leadership Development (WILD) program is an important extra-curricular activity for youth around the cultivation of environmental stewardship and leadership, geared toward first- and second-generation Asian American high school youths. (Hou, 2014; Shastri, 2017). As stated by the quote above, WILD, and InterimCDA the larger Agency WILD is a part of, focuses their work on immigrant and refugee communities and sustains environmental leaders of color in/around Chinatown/International District. An important part of their work is seeing their leadership development as part of a generational effort, amongst youth and elders, which is important to consider in my curriculum proposal.

⁶ <http://interimicda.org/whatwedo/healthy-communities-program/wild/>

While these leadership opportunities are expressed through extra-curricular activities, they are effective in externally supporting the type of curriculum I propose in this project. The WILD program has specific points of analysis and learning goals, drawing on environmental education intersected with culturally relevant education. While I mention this region's existing leadership building experiences for youth, I seek to focus on a public-school model which provides an opportunity for a social critique and contextualized curriculum focus to flourish. The Waskowitz Outdoor Education in the Highline School District⁷ provides a model of foundational learning experiences about land and environment for youth, and this outdoor education model has existed for the past 50 years.

This outdoor learning is organized into two main programs that provide Leadership training for 10th-12th graders: The Waskowitz Educational Leadership & Service (WELS) and the One Week Leaders (OWLS) Program. The intention behind WELS is to serve as a leadership building program for students through partnerships with Puget Sound High School and the Waskowitz Outdoor School. The OWLS program provides a shorter experience to cultivate this leadership, where high-school students work with 5th and 6th graders during a week-long camp. These high school students learn skills in providing learning and counseling opportunities for the 5th and 6th graders participating in the program, demonstrating a commitment to intergenerational learning. This outdoor school provides its resources to schools within the Highline School District and community organizations alike. A summer program sustains the work of community organizations with their own goals. The Outdoor Education Center located in Snoqualmie Falls supports this programming.

⁷ <https://www.highlineschools.org/domain/719>

Waskowitz Outdoor School has an effective structure for outdoor learning that I would like to draw from. This outdoor curriculum has 9 core lessons, 7 enrichment activities, and 8 pre-trip activities. This outdoor school takes students from schools throughout the Puget Sound to a camp in Snoqualmie Falls, which the 8 pre-trips prepare them for. These core lessons include explorations on plant identification, salmon migrations and survival, and navigating with a GPS, among other lesson plans. I value entirely experiences such as these, although these were not part of my own upbringing. The curriculum in this outdoor school provides learning experiences that explores ecosystems, science, technical skills, very heavily. In addition to these learning skills, they also harbor multi-generational leadership. In addition to these learning experiences and leadership cultivated, the core lessons found on their website are tailored to the Outdoor School and place-specific, which is valuable in any curriculum. My main critique of this model is two-fold. While the curriculum is place-specific, it does not engage settler-colonial histories directly, leaving no room for instilling a critical lens to environmental education. Further, does not question the relationship between nature-culture, and instills the idea that urban areas are deprived of nature, and the only place to find them would be in an area that is seclude from urban environments. Land-based education has a specific commitment to undo this idea that nature is outside of urban areas and establish the idea that richness and learning experiences exist in urban areas, whether it's about the environment, or history, among other subjects. These learning experiences can bring in ideas about the environment that uplift multiple knowledge systems that have a different construction of nature. Nonetheless, I owe a great deal to Waskowitz Outdoor School's easily accessible learning experiences (curriculum) which helped me shape the range of activities being proposed in this document.

IslandWood Goals:

- *Work closely in partnership to support schools and teachers, including incorporating school standards such as Next Generation Science Standards.*
- *Reinforce and build upon the student learning that occurs in both formal and informal settings.*
- *Broaden the idea of environment to include urban systems and emphasize human impacts on ecosystems.*
- *Are learner-centered, culturally responsive, and adaptable to the participants and the needs of their community.*

Source: IslandWood's Urban School Program, Website⁸

Another program I would like to highlight is IslandWood, and their educational goals listed above. These educational goals draw on a number of important points which I want this curriculum to address. These program goals advocated by IslandWood, also heavily influence this curriculum. IslandWood has advocated for outdoor education since 1999, and has successfully gathered several organizations to receive funding under the No Child Left Inside Act⁹. This organization operates a large 250-acre environmental educational center, as well as sites scattered throughout Seattle. From valuing student learning in formal and informal settings, to acknowledging the importance of culturally responsive and learner-centered education. These values listed above provide a guiding vision for my own work.

⁸ <https://islandwood.org/educational-programming/urban-school-programs>

⁹ <https://islandwood.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015CommunityReport.pdf>

Overall, these different forms of cultivating leadership demonstrate that collaboration is ripe to include a range of community partnerships. While this thesis does not engage this collaboration fully, it points to drawing from the breadth of experiences from staff in organizations responsible for cultivating environmental stewards. These already exist, and are effective models to draw from. The region of Seattle has had a commitment to building environmental stewards from historically underrepresented communities, and this curriculum follows that tradition, but clarifies a framework for shaping new learning experiences for youth. The next section will begin to articulate and define the curriculum framework.

CURRICULUM CRITERIA: *Commitment, Contextualization, Contestation, and Collaboration.*

This section provides an overview of the guiding framework, called the Four C's. This framework for curriculum building is supported by drawing from pedagogies that are exemplary of each criterion. This section sets the context for the following chapter, which goes into proposing specific curriculum activities.

There are four important criteria that shape my approach to land-based education: contextualization, contestation, commitment, and collaboration. First, this framework considers the exploration of social and material conditions in communities through *contextualization* by larger structural forces. This contextualization is enacted through a *commitment* by educators and administrators involved in designing and facilitating curriculum. This commitment requires research and dedication to ensure histories of exclusion are effectively contextualized by

educators, and youth interested in leading classrooms. Commitment and contextualization is intended to support critical thinking and leadership in the classroom setting which may result in *contestation*. In addition to commitment and contextualization, contestation can come into healthy fruition by bringing in community organizations sharing their work that is working toward articulating the voices of historically oppressed communities. Contestation is intent on social critique, and manifesting critique into making demands in formal settings to address injustices, whether it is demanding for affordable housing from proposed development projects, or demanding changes in curriculum. Finally, *collaboration* in this context involves attempts to uplift ongoing leadership building efforts in a setting supporting collective or group settings supporting mutual understanding amongst youth. It is harder to shape this curriculum collaboratively, as collaboration was minimal. Nonetheless, the intention of collaboration encourages discussions between educators and youth to shape future curriculum expectations. This collaboration is also intent on sustaining partnerships with local organizations who can help influence curriculum for high-school students, as IslandWood advocates. This curriculum development project hopes to build partnerships between public high-schools and local community organizations to build a commitment toward critical youth development. Specifically, from Seattle schools that are racially and culturally heterogeneous. This would be done by providing presentations to local schools talking about the professions within the college of built environment. This conversation will start to find administrators and teachers interested in pursuing, or already enacting, place-based education models to collaborate closely together. These four themes are instrumental to an effective curriculum shaping process and are explored in greater detail below.

Commitment

Commitment is defined in this curriculum as an engagement, or obligation that encourages a course of action guided by a larger vision. Jeff Duncan-Andrade, a professor at San Francisco State University and high school educator has chosen to live in the Oakland community of his pupils to ground his experience in that context and to share the everyday experiences of his students. This demonstrates a connection that speaks to the importance of recognizing the neighborhoods and environments that students live in, to approach teaching in the classroom. Grounding curriculum in the neighborhoods that students come from provides an institutional mechanism to continue the project of critical youth development (Ginwright and Cammarota, 2002), as well as teacher development (Duncan Andrade, 2007). This example of Duncan-Andrade immersing himself into the community of his pupils is a manifestation of commitment, by educators, to commit to this concept of land-based education, because the context he lives within is a shared one with his pupils, making it easier to facilitate discussions about their neighborhood and easier to integrate into curriculum, although this is not an approach taken by Duncan-Andrade, it does inform his curriculum development. Another instance of commitment can come in length of time dedicated to the development of a project. Anne Whiston Spirn's work in Mill Creek drew on environmental justice advocacy, and worked closely with communities impacted by legacies of racial discrimination (1998; 2005). These commitments have led her to advocate for learning about design and urban planning in these communities through the concept of landscape literacy. *Commitment* to critical youth development is done through exploring the potential of place-based and land-based education models which highlight and enact leadership potential through civic participation.

Contextualization

Contextualization is defined in this curriculum to consider an idea, event, activity etc together with everything relating to it, to understand it better. Scully (2012) engages contextualization by her acknowledgement of the impacts of settler histories. Scully approaches the values of desettling education through pedagogies engaging settler histories and their impact on indigenous people on the regions she holds her classrooms in. This demonstrates a commitment to contextualization of the impacts of settler colonialism. This approach is also seen through work of Henry (2014) which creates anti-racist curriculum and directed pedagogical practices discussing colonization and decolonization, exploring the settler histories in the neighborhoods of adults in Vancouver British Columbia (2014). Both authors effectively engage themes of contextualization and commitment. These themes demonstrate values of solidarity with the indigenous peoples of the regions they commit their work to. Effective contextualization is helpful in preparing youth leaders to engage in professional, personal, political, and scholarly endeavors that centralize contestation.

Contestation

Contestation, to call into question and take an active stand against; dispute or challenge. Social critique, or contestation, becomes an instrumental outcome of this curriculum. Leadership that specifically contests the legacies of injustices discussed earlier. This contestation recognizes that the legacies of injustices are woven into the decision-making processes responsible for the conditions of these neighborhoods and the experiences youth have within them can be used in addition to this cultivation of social critique through high-school curriculum. One of the ways contestation can also manifest is by looking to scholarship that dispels traditional discourse related to human-nature constructions (as advocated by DiChiro, 1999). In addition to scholarship, contestation has close connections to agency, and even provides the ability for

discourse to move forward if the work of communities is acknowledged and respected. This idea of contestation comes across as critical interruptions in the work of Pezzulo (2002), where advocacy for amplifying the voices of communities to emulate committed leadership.

Contestation requires a dedication between several groups, and a mutual commitment to future-visioning through collaboration.

Collaboration:

Collaboration, to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor. Including collaboration in this curriculum framework is to address ways to facilitate negotiations with power between educators and youth. Collaboration encourages an attempt to approach a method of providing youth with the ability to shape their own learning experiences, in close collaboration with educators. In addition to youth and educator collaboration (as advocated by Wadia, 2016), this framework looks to the opportunities presented in collaborating with local community organizations, state-wide organizations, and other fruitful partnerships to expose youth to the leadership and agency that exists in their communities. It is important to assess the ways the agency in communities can promote intergenerational learning, as well as reconstruct the relationship to public school institutions, through community partnerships (as demonstrated in Bang, Faber, Gurneau et. al., 2015). These partnerships would be sustained between administrators and educators of a public high-school facility with community leaders. This kind of collaboration sustains leadership that connects youth to their communities, and promotes the cultivation of leaders having control over their educational curricula.

These Four C's provide a framework to understand the purpose of the curriculum proposal. It is important to understand that these Four C's consider the use of optimism,

solidarity, and empathy, as described in chapter 2. The following section will provide a review of the literature review of place-based education, and situate environmental education before moving onto chapter 4.

SITUATING THE TRAJECTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

This section begins to synthesize a range of discussions in multiple fields from indigenous scholarship, science, education, as well as geography and landscape architecture that has informed the development of the curriculum I propose. All of this scholarship provides a contribution to discussing the relationship between place, context, and educational models. Literature from these different disciplines scrutinizes the relationship among land, people, nature, colonial legacies, and reading and understanding landscapes. This section is dedicated to reviewing that literature, starting with environmental education, moving to place-based education and critical place-based education, and the relevance of youth agency in this proposal. This literature review will contribute to the ongoing discussion that proposes land-based education as an alternative to place-based education.

Environmental Education, Place-Based Education, toward Land-Based Learning

The emergence of environmental education can be traced back three decades to the 1970s. Environmental education, outdoor education, and place-based education all have some overlap. A century ago, Dewey (1902) advocated for using the environments of children to ground their learning experiences. This work paved the way for outdoor education and is specifically referenced by the Waskowitz Education model. These three educational models are fundamentally about the centrality of place and its value as an educational tool. These three forms of education help provide some precision in defining the proposed land-based education in

this thesis. Land-based education is part of an ongoing conversation among scholars advocating from a number of perspectives including science-learning outcomes that integrate knowledge from the elders in the communities youth belong to throughout Chicago (see Bang, 2015); integrating cultural and ecological politics with a heavily critical pedagogical practice (see Gruenwald, 2003); integrating a collective biography of place as an instrumental activity for students to document their communities (Wakeman, 2015), as well as emphasizing the role of place in Native Education toward self-determination (Deloria, Wildcat, 2010). Moreover, the aim of this thesis is to propose a land-based curriculum specifically, with the potential to be funded through the No Child Left Inside program.

There is important literature covering place-based learning (McLuhan, 1977; Greenwood & Kirschbaum, 2014), and there are advocates who have argued for critical-placed based learning. Such learning has centralized the experiences of students in relation to injustices based on their varied social positions (Gruenewald, 2003) so that it is on par with the knowledges valued in education. The combination is intended to question and encourage new ways of knowing (Brandt 2004). An important part of this literature gathers the work of indigenous scholars to inform *place*-based learning, but the use of place does not capture the important discussions scholars are producing around *land* as a distinct form of place, and physical connections to land, as well as the historic disavowal of treaties and land rights. Differentiating between place, and land, makes a clearer connection to indigenous struggles for access to land, and ultimately sovereignty. The argument of moving toward a discussion of *land*-based learning draws on this literature, as well as literature that is tied to the material. In this case, the material conditions of communities, the material that exists in place, and the ways sensory experience complements these experiences, or inhibits them. Ultimately, the framework laid out in this

thesis, which seeks to reify optimism, solidarity, and empathy, is intended to build this connection between students, or youth, and the lands they inhabit.

The focus on land-based learning is an attempt to recognize the vast histories and learning experiences that can be learned through physical, and educational immersion in places. This idea of land-based learning is intended to specifically bring in conversations that revolve around contestations and injustices experienced by land and the sentient beings within them. Land-based learning provides an opportunity to not only nurture future stewards and leaders in the environmental realm, but provide these recipients (in this case, youth) with the ability for the of land-based learning and curriculums that make claims to land from the existing indigenous communities in the region visible. In addition to exploring these claims to land and the legacy of treaties, there are opportunities to learn about the threats to land that have rendered the lives historically oppressed communities' disposable.

These conditions and legacies of neglect have not been accepted by historically oppressed communities, and have been active points of ongoing organizing by groups such as the Black Panthers, the Brown Berets, as well as countless other organizations to date (Noguera, 2006, Shames & Jones, 2006, Montejano & Montoya, 2014). This range of agency and *solidarity* is indicative of resilience in historically oppressed communities, and although this action was made possible by education outside of formal institutions, this thesis paper advocates for the opportunities inherent in integrating a critical *land*-based education model (Gruenewald, 2003 uses *place*) in an institutional setting. Moreover, by specifically examining the optimism and resistance that has surged from youth programs in North America ranging from extracurricular to curriculum specific (see work of Andrade, 2008, Ginwright, 2008) we can recognize the way a

land-based curriculum supports these efforts of building youth leadership and youth agency in a critical and region-specific way.

Land-based education models mean nothing without immersing the self in place as a way to understand the complexities of the lived experiences of people and land. The guiding values I propose, of *optimism, solidarity, and empathy*, demonstrate a complexly woven range of values that can be taken on by both individuals and collectives to articulate their own subjectivities as a way to move toward greater justice. Nonetheless, land-based education also focuses on the subjectivities of students, namely, grounding student knowledge in their environment and realities, and contextualizing a collective vision of solidarity. This thesis will provide examples of land-based education curriculum, or lesson plans, reflecting a connection to the common core, and will be committed to uncovering settler-colonial histories through immersion and the lands around the communities of high school youth.

The ethic behind land-based education is to garner attention to the value of exploring and contextualizing social, economic, and environmental conditions and to integrate these into high school curriculum. By bringing in the nuances of a neighborhood, city, region, and bioregion and a historical analysis of the conditions which created these places, themes of power and hegemony can be scrutinized. For example, exploring the historical events of the lowering of Lake Washington in Seattle is a defining moment of the domination of land by settlers, reshaping connections, and relationships to land physically, and a manifestation of the processes, and ongoing impacts, of settler colonialism, in addition to the policy mentioned earlier in this chapter. Overall, there are educational opportunities presented in the lands inhabited by public high-schools, and exploring these contexts provide an opportunity to ground student experiences and draw on what created the conditions of their community, whether it's the realities of

environmental degradation, and/or poverty. This curriculum proposal will take these considerations into account, and contribute to a land-based curriculum that is committed to uncovering legacies of injustices faced by both the indigenous communities and their homelands, and the historically oppressed communities that have inhabited these indigenous territories in more recent years.

Chapter 4: Curriculum Activities

This chapter proposes specific curriculum activities, in addition to providing an explanation on the origin of the range of topics covered in this curriculum proposal. In creating this curriculum, I draw upon a breadth of mediums to shape the learning experiences for high-school youth. These mediums include mapping, photography, interviewing, journaling, and archival research. These are instrumental in exploring the capacities of youth, developing their life long skills, and meeting Washington State standards of environmental education for each curriculum activity proposed. I will provide an explanation of my interest in this range of mediums, speak to potential applications of these mediums in relation to curriculum activities, then describe my interest in the five proposed activities. As explained in Chapter 2, my experiences heavily inform the five topics chosen for this curriculum proposal. These five topics are: *(A) topography, (B)land-use, (C)demographics, (D)movement networks, and (E)local knowledge*. After elaborating these five topics, the proposed curriculum activity will be in this chapter as well.

My experience in Landscape Architecture, namely the skills of spatializing information, mapping, and making a strong connection to land advocating for a context-specific curriculum heavily informs this curriculum. This land-based curriculum will use the tools and software learned across several of the disciplines I have been exposed to related to the built environment. These tools I am familiar with include Geographic Information Systems, Rhino, SketchUP etc. This software provides the ability to situate youth knowledge, and the knowledge within their communities, in addition to new ways of learning formally. Learning this software provides a connection to technical skills building toward awareness of professions such as landscape architecture, among other fields. Software such as those mentioned earlier become important tools to incorporate into curriculum activities. An important consideration when including the

use of software would be the reality of limited resources, or accessibility, in public high-schools. This hurdle of accessibility will be addressed by accessing open-source and low-cost software. Overall, this field of Landscape Architecture has provided me with a range of resources to shape the proposed curriculum in this chapter.

Apart from my field of study influencing this proposed curriculum, I would like to draw on my interest in landscape photography in creating this curriculum. Photography is a medium advocated by many educators and scholars as a form of advocacy, especially through Participatory Action Research (Masuda, 2010). The use of photography in these curricula will be a useful one to consider. Photography can be implemented into curriculum activities such as land-use, movement networks, or even local knowledge. Photography can be used to document existing infrastructure in an industrial area, the presence of vacant land in a community, or even the range of parks, hence land use. In addition to showing up in the land use activity, photography can also show up in the movement networks activity. Photography can be used to document networks such as ports. Some of the photos provided within this document speak to this example. During the Winter 2016 Academic Quarter, I was enrolled in Meredith Bennett's photography class offered by the Department of Architecture. This class provided me the ability to explore landscape photography in relation to Seattle's port infrastructure. By exploring the port infrastructure, I was interested in exploring the history behind the use of the mouth of the Duwamish River for industry, and its impact on the health of the river. This draw to this geographic area demonstrated a richness in existing work undoing this legacy of degradation, that has its roots in settler colonialism. I saw this photographic exploration as a way to uncover these stories thematically. Finally, photography can also be used to garner local knowledge. One of the way's this can be explored would be by providing students the ability to capture portraits

of community members, and asking about their stories. Overall, photography serves as a diverse medium to explore several different curriculum activities, but this hinges on access to camera hardware to propose this curriculum activity. One way to overcome this hurdle, would be by exploring cell-phone use in this activity.

Some more important work that would contribute to youth learning experiences is navigating the processes of Archival Research. This curriculum incites the ability for youth to interact with local institutions that hold archival data to gather information and learn how to present their findings and ideas. This archival research can tap into local libraries, or cultural centers, such as the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center, Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, El Centro de la Raza, and local libraries, among other important centers in the Seattle Region. Archival research could be incorporated into the activities under *local knowledge*, encouraging youth to interact with local histories in a nuanced way.

Another encounter with local knowledge in this curriculum would be through the medium of interviews. Interviewing provides skills in relation to the knowledge that exists in the community of youth. One of the ways to tap into this would be the use of interviews to gather local knowledge. The use of interviews gathering local knowledge provides the ability for youth to build relationships with community leaders in their neighborhoods. The idea behind interviews provides a gateway to relationship building which is instrumental in the skills built by any emerging leader.

Another crucial element of cultivating critical thinking would be the use of journaling and documenting the everyday experiences of high-school youth this curriculum is intended for. The use journaling experiences from youth becomes an instrumental piece to humanizing the

statistics that are also important in advocacy work for environmental education, and largely environmental justice work. A community report put together by IslandWood emphasizes the contribution of journaling to also nurture reflection about the life-long experiences gained through interaction with different learning experiences, namely IslandWood curriculum. “When children have opportunities to reflect through journaling and other exercises, new knowledge and awareness come forward, helping to ensure the concepts, skills, and confidence they gained with IslandWood last a lifetime.”¹ By documenting the experiences of youth, they begin to value their voices as emerging leaders, and honor the stories their communities hold, in addition to gaining appreciation for their interactions with educational curriculum that values the context their community is situated in. Journaling can be an activity found throughout each of the five activities.

These different mediums elaborated previously all share the potential to be included as part of any of the 5 curriculum activities. I will be proposing one curriculum activity for each topic mentioned; the learning activities proposed are guided by the values of *optimism, solidarity, and empathy*, with a framework of *commitment, contextualization, contestation, and collaboration*. These five activities are, topography, land-use, demographics, movement networks, and local knowledge. The following section will provide the justification for focusing on these five topics, and the ways they address the Four C’s framework, as well as the way they cultivate any of the values of optimism, solidarity, and empathy.

¹ <https://islandwood.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015CommunityReport.pdf>

A. *Topography*

An exploration of topography is instrumental to environmental education for several reasons. Topography provides a physical land indicator of the movement of water, and in the case of Seattle, provides a strong connection to a historical analysis. Generally, this topic is of interest to me because of my participation in Ken Yocom's critical cartography studio which encouraged students to engage with mapping in new methods that recognize the values we hold as map-makers/cartographers. This studio specifically explored the legacy of re-plumbing of Lake Washington which led to the Black River being drained (Thrush, 2007). This legacy is one of settler-colonial control, and demonstrates an opportunity for youth to engage this historical event, connect it to broader social connections, effectively, a method of *contextualization*. This contextualization provides multiple ways for youth to develop a sense of empathy for the natural processes that were impacted by the lowering of Lake Washington, namely the salmon runs in Coast Salish territories. This empathy begins to cultivate solidarity with the human and non-human communities impacted by the draining of a river, and lowering of Lake Washington. Further, in order to cultivate optimism in the face of these harsh legacies, students learn about the range of commitments currently held by organizations to ensure the survival of cultural traditions that have a relationship to the salmon runs, specifically that of indigenous peoples of the region. These connections cultivated in the topography section can range from exploring watershed-level impacts of the lowering of Lake Washington, the ways climate change impacts watersheds and the human and non-human communities within them; in addition, topography becomes a method of familiarizing youth with the skills of navigating topographic lines. Getting youth comfortable with this activity contributes to their preparation for careers related to the built environment, and map legibility, as required by urban planning, geography, and landscape architecture.

B. Land-Use

The interest in land use comes from my background in urban planning as well as being closely connected to environmental justice advocacy in Los Angeles. Urban planning in my undergraduate career provided me with the formal language and tools to name the concerns of communities. Some of these were looking at land-use maps at the city or county level to see the concentration of facilities that were commercial and industrial. Growing up in South Central Los Angeles, within a few blocks from the historic site of the South Central Farm. This lot was slated for holding a waste incinerator, but the work of community organizations actively fought against it, making the South Central Farm possible between 1992-2006 (Pulido, Barraclough, Cheng, 2012; DiChiro, 1999). This connection to the now vacant lot, provides me with the onus to ensure youth are connecting with the built environment around them exploring the ways underutilized spaces affect them, but also encourage a sense of visioning for futures. This is intended to cultivate *optimism*, or future-orientation (as described by Noguera et. al., 2006), in the youth who are a part of the classroom.

C. Demographics

The interest in demographics is from being interested in the diverse make-up of communities. I grew up around. Making a connection between the relationship between the demographics of a neighborhood, and the land-uses that exist within them provides youth with the ability to draw connections and ask questions about what made the conditions of their community possible. This curriculum activity becomes one that can cultivate solidarity as students recognize the communities that face the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation. In addition to learning about these impacts, navigating census information becomes an instrumental learning

tool for these youth life-long career choices, especially if they go into careers that draw on this statistical information. Exposing these youth to these resources provides them with effective leadership skills to articulate themselves in whatever capacity is required of them.

D. *Movement Networks*

My high school experiences involved learning about the impact of the goods movement which brought commodities from the ports into the warehouses in my community. This good's movement is supported by a regional network of trains, and highways which has led to the degradation of the health of communities surrounding the area.² This demonstrates an importance I place on connecting with local movements who share a global vision of justice³. This has been a point of my own critical youth development and interest in environmental justice movements, and is one that would be reflected in the topics within the curriculum topic called *movement networks*. This theme also provides an opportunity to engage with the movement networks of non-human life-forms such as bird migrations, salmon migrations, or even bees. This topic is a rich opportunity to explore a number of themes, and the activity proposed reflects an encouragement of different movement networks to trace and map throughout the Pacific Northwest.

E. *Local Knowledge*

Finally, the topic of local knowledge is intended centralize knowledge that communities hold, and their efforts in organizing for the defense and protection of their communities. This is

² <http://www.cbecal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Crude-Injustice-on-the-Rails.pdf>

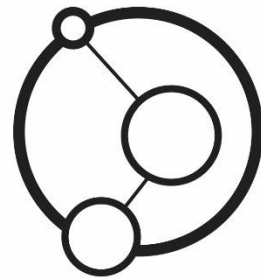
³ Community Alliance for Global Justice, Got Green, Puget Sound Sage, Anakbayan Seattle, Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, - this is not an exhaustive list of Seattle organizations committed to this vision, but some of the ones I was a witness to in my time in Seattle.

something that was learned in my time hearing from youth organizing with organizations such as Communities for a Better Environment, and the work of East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice. The work of community organizations such as this place the voices of their community members at the forefront to advocate for a healthier quality of life. This curriculum looks to follow suit, building up youth leaders who also begin to share these values of empathy. Another important component of local knowledge is the opportunity presented to interact with local cultural institutions, such as museums, libraries, or cultural centers.

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL: Topography, Land-Use, Demographics, Movement Networks, Local Knowledge



topography



movement networks



land-use



demographics



local knowledge

A. *[Topography]*:

CORE LESSON: *Topography*: Exploring Seattle’s Topographic History, and Seattle’s Current Topography

Objectives and Summary: To explore this theme of topography, it is important that the educator get familiar with the history of Seattle’s different historical moments that reshaped the topography of the city of Seattle. Looking specifically at Native Seattle, Coll Thrush’s book provides a range of historic events to contextualize using archival data. While this book does not provide references to Denny Hill Regrade⁴, it does provide useful way to understand the everyday life of the region. One of the chapters of focus would be *Terra Miscognita*. This chapter provides a contextualization of the terrain of the region when the Denny Party arrives, as well as the range of ecologies in the region. This topic encourages the use of archival research from students, and may require a trip to: MOHAI, and/or navigating the resources available through the Seattle Public Library. This interaction with a compiled book using archival research will encourage students to consider thoughtfully how to construct and gather data for stories about the region. This would encourage the use of archival photos, and information on the impacts of the land-movements, giving students an opportunity to present their findings in a classroom setting.

This lesson will provide students with:

- Contextualization of Seattle’s Topographic History
- Engage in archival research online, and in-person at local libraries, or cultural centers
- Skills in presenting the compilation of data.

Background: An important part of this begins to introduce the place-specific and land-specific events that have shaped the city of Seattle. These moments provide some context of the settler-histories, and provide youth the opportunity to bridge this concept of settlers, to the region they live in.

Materials:

- a. Access to computers
- b. School librarian – to teach about navigating archival research
- c. Journal – every time

Location and Duration: This activity is a week-long commitment that encourages gathering a range of data from multiple sources within the school, within the local public libraries, as well as institutions in the city which hold information about topography.

Procedure: In order to begin this archival research, there would be a need to gather different methods of data collection. This would require a school librarian to teach youth these skills. In addition to the school librarian, students are encouraged to interact with their local public library’s librarian to gather this data on moments related to topography.

Lesson/Activities

Activity 1: Presentation from local school librarian.

Activity 2: Find different places to gather central information about topography in Seattle. This might require collaboration on establishing themes within the classroom.

Activity 3: Collecting Data to present the range of information gathered in the classroom

Activity 4: Reflection on methods employed

Assessment: Students are asked about their understanding and reflections of these connections before the end of class. Journal entries.

⁴ <http://www.djc.com/special/century/10060862.htm>

B. *[Land Use]*:

CORE LESSON: *Land Use*: Documenting your neighborhood's use of land, reflecting on its potential...

Objectives and Summary: This activity encourages story telling through the medium of photography, journaling and on the ground research. This engagement with photography provides a substantiated case for exploring the visual make-up of the neighborhood. This can provide students with recognizing some of the common themes found in everyone's neighborhood, which may be the presence of trees, the presence of infrastructure with a certain quality of maintenance. This visual exploration provides students the ability to understand how their communities look, to develop a sense of pride, and come to terms with the living conditions of their communities. Finally, the journaling component asks students to engage in journaling to begin visioning new futures for their communities. Whether its intervening on a local site, or making major changes. As youth with vast knowledge of their communities, they are encouraged to vision their community through the reflexive component of this assignment. The journaling encourages multi-media use to communicate a point.

- Students will learn to differentiate between land-uses in their areas
- Understand the importance of creating land-use maps to contextualize their neighborhoods
- This program will begin to ask questions about the composition of the neighborhood (cultural composition, language composition, racial composition, depending on the comfort of the student.)
- Cultivate optimism, and artistic abilities in relation to their own communities.

Background: By putting together a small exhibit of photos related to the community youth live in, there is a sense of pride instilled in youth. This pride is intended to approach the values of optimism to ensure youth recognize their role as emerging leaders within their communities.

Materials:

- a. Camera, can be phone
- b. Voice Recorder, can use phone
- c. If voice recorders are not an option, detailed note-taking is a good alternative.

Location and Duration: This activity would also require a week-long commitment from students.

Procedure: Students are asked to access resources within the school such as cameras, voice recorders, and journals. This photographic exploration requires students to have access to local maps of their neighborhood. This would be created by the educator in collaboration with local school librarians.

Lesson/Activities

Activity 1: Find sites for photos

Activity 3: Verbal Visioning through journaling. This would require in-class presentations as well.

Activity 4: Planning an photographic exhibit of the best work, based on student ratings.

Assessment: Students are asked about their understanding and reflections of these connections before the end of class. Journal entries.

C. [Demographics]:

CORE LESSON: Who's my neighbor? An interview

Objectives and Summary: This curriculum encourages the exploration of the composition of the neighborhood of youth. While there is an opportunity to engage census data and hard numbers, the opportunity to have students share their interview/research gives students a unique opportunity to understand the diversity that exists in the communities these youths belong to.

Background: Exploring

Materials:

- a. Planner
- b. Clipboard
- c. Voice Recorder, can use phone
- d. If voice recorders are not an option, detailed note-taking is a good alternative.

Location and Duration: This will require a time commitment of about 1 week, spread over the course of 3 class sessions.

Procedure: Ideally this would be assigned on a weekend, to provide students the opportunity to set-up interviews with neighbors over the weekend. The second class will ask students to discuss some of the methods the used to set-up interviews with neighbors. The third-class setting will ask students to connect their experiences interviewing and share the range of learning experiences they gathered. It could be that students are encouraged to invite a neighbor over for dinner. The interview of their neighbors would require students to determine the theme that wants to be explored. Some of the themes suggested would be questions about the languages spoken at home, the different foods found during a breakfast, a lunch, or a dinner, within the household. To move this conversation forward, I would also propose connecting to the places that the neighbors access their food (grocery store? Grown at a local P-Patch?). Location is preferred, to serve the purpose of building a large class map.

Lesson/Activities

Activity 1: *Gathering the themes to explore during interviews. In-Class may take 20-30 minutes after assigning. This in-class pin-pointing of interview questions is one that promotes collaboration across the educators and the students.*

Activity 2: *Gathering the subjects for interview, ideally over a weekend.*

Activity 3: *Confer with students on potential questions.*

Assessment: Students are asked about their understanding and reflections of these connections before the end of class. Journal entries.

D. [Movement Networks]:

CORE LESSON: *Movement Networks*: Birds, Bees, Bus, or anything that moves through the neighborhood!

Objectives and Summary: This activity provides students the ability to identify the movement of human processes and natural processes, in one map. While the title speaks to the movement of birds or bees, it is not limited to these animal species. There can be movement a documentation of the movement of boats and salmon, among other potential topics. This would require research to be done by outstanding students. 4 students should be selected to provide the migration patterns of different animal species.

- a. Differentiate between scales of maps (School District Map vs Greater Seattle Region vs. King County)
- b. Understand the points of contact between animals and humans in Urban Seattle by looking at maps of residential areas, and maps of local parks, as learned through the Land-Use curriculum activity.
- c. Identify local parks in the area, local water bodies
- d. Gather information about parks in the region

Background: To build the idea that nature exists within urban areas, although impacted by human development, and specifically the legacies of settler-colonialism, nature-human relationships still exist in urban areas. Allow students to think about their routes to school and the different forms of transportation they have access to in their region.

The Big WHY: Understanding inequality can be spatialized when thinking about access to green space, considering land uses in the region, and understanding the scale of maps. This second activity begins to present larger scale maps to students (County level)

Materials:

- a. Previously researched migration patterns by students, up to 4 animals.
- b. Projector, if digital option is preferred by students
- c. 11 x 17 Map of Highline School District
- d. Markers/Color Pencils
- e. Stickers
- f. String/Pins
- g. 4-5 Large maps of King County

Location and Duration: This activity can be done inside the classroom setting, with 60-90 minutes of time.

Procedure:

Lesson/Activity

Activity 1: Map handouts of Highline School District Map gives students the ability to map their routes to school. *Optional:* can also map frequented parks in the school district. (10-15 minutes).

Activity 2: Students present their findings about migration patterns of animal species (35 minutes).

Activity 3: District is identified within this larger map, by student volunteers (5-8 minutes)

Activity 4: More mapping onto King County. Students gather into groups of 4-7, sharing their routes to school, and a chosen migration pattern for each map. (20-25 minutes)

Activity 5: Journal entries/written reflections, instead of class discussion (10-15 minutes)

Assessment: Students are asked about their understanding and reflections of these connections before the end of class. Journal entries.

E. [Local Knowledge]:

CORE LESSON: *Local Knowledge*: Mapping Collective Memories

Objectives and Summary: Students learn about reading the map of Seattle, and the region. This lesson plan encourages students to recall points of interests, and places they have visited as they've grown up in the region. This lesson also uses the bioregional quiz to begin thinking about potential mapping themes. Students get to share the range of experiences they have had in the region, city, neighborhood. Parks they have visited in the region, pointing to sites that may contribute toxicity in the environment. This introductory assignment provides the precursors to future activities and introduces students to map navigation, as well as sharing upbringing, building empathy across the student body.

- Stronger grasp of spatial-mapping relationships
- Get students comfortable with summarizing points covered in each of their different mapping exercises.
- Reading and using maps

Background:

The Big WHY: The most important part of these activities are the use of maps consciousnesses raising about place/land, and the valorizing of students' direct experience of place. This first activity, gathering local knowledge, and memories of land, helps in orienting students and getting them familiar with using the map. This sets the stage for more complex activities being proposed.

Materials:

- 4-5 Large Printed Maps of Seattle, depending on size of class.
- Small Stickers, 3 colors
- Markers

Location and Duration: This activity can be done inside the classroom setting, with a week-long range of activities. 20 minutes dedicated to discussion and collective knowledge building through the Bioregional Quiz. 25 minutes of mapping onto the large printed maps. Then 25-45 minutes of discussion of outcomes and presentation of maps.

Procedure:

The Bio-Regional Quiz is a useful quiz to get students thinking about potential mapping activities, whether it's the vacant lots in their neighborhoods, or the last flowering plants they saw on their way to school. Maps placed in area with sufficient space to crowd around and draw and place stickers onto large maps. Each large printed map should have 4-7 students assigned to each map.

Lesson/Activities

Activity(Day) 1: Bioregional quiz (20 minutes) Students can share within the larger classroom setting, upon finishing time, give students 5 minutes to discuss as a class before moving toward the mapping activity. This is a good warm-up activity to get students thinking.

Activity Day 2: Mapping! Students should take this opportunity to form groups, can be assigned upon educator's discretion. This mapping exercise will have maps placed across the room with enough space for 4-7 students to crowd around poster.

Activity 3: Presenting final maps (3-5 minutes per group, total 25-30 minutes)

Activity 4: Draw out themes discussed in each maps, to continue distilling information (~10 mins.)

Assessment: Student assessment is measured by asking students to draw cognitive maps the following week as a warm-up exercise. This cognitive map would be measured against future cognitive maps in activities throughout the

school year. This would track the mapping abilities of students. Other assessment opportunities would be to measure empathy, by having students journal experiences they connected with during Activities 2-4.

Chapter 5: Discussion

My argument in this thesis lies in emphasizing a land-based curriculum for urban youth, which has been explored for the past century by education scholars such as Dewey (1902) and McLuhan (1977), and more recently throughout the Southwest by Brandt (2004) and in the Pacific Northwest by Bang (2015). These scholars have explored the specificity of place and, I would argue, land, as the foundation for the learning experiences they advocate for, especially making space for historically devalued epistemologies. Overall, it is important that the city and region is understood as a rich learning environment for students at any age, and specifically high-school youth. This knowledge base of a region is used as a point of departure for building agency and leadership across youth populations, toward a project of critical youth development. To think about land-based curriculum, I acknowledge the wealth of knowledge and knowledge building opportunities that come from the neighborhoods and regions youth live in.

This discussion chapter will reiterate the importance of my own personal values, and how to incorporate the social positions of those involved in teaching/learning in curriculum building. This discussion will then move to acknowledging the shortcomings of my analysis in bringing in settler-colonial histories, as well as other instances of exclusion that were not thoroughly explored in the interests of time. From here, it is helpful to acknowledge leadership building within the reality of what professionals have called “the Green Ceiling,” or the disproportionate representation of communities of color in environmental organizations. I will then bring in a conversation about supporting and cultivating professionals and scholars who are working to address injustices in our built environment in formal institutions. This chapter will end with a discussion on the future of this work, and work related to land-based education.

Positionality/Personal Values

My experiences inform this work as elaborated throughout this document. These values have a close connection to my social position. As I engaged in this thesis work, my values were clear positioning *optimism, solidarity, and empathy* at the core of values being cultivated in leadership. This subjective take on shaping a curriculum proposal is an important part of the approach behind this project. I do plan to continue contributing to knowledge around effective ways to engage youth capacity building, youth development, and youth agency through the lens of critical land-based education. This knowledge contribution comes by assessing my role and power in contributing to larger institutional changes advocating with, for and as a person belonging to a range of historically oppressed communities, as a first-generation college student, of Mexican-origin, and part of a working class-community, among other social positions.

The social positions of educators should also be brought into curriculum building, whether as a reflexive exercise, or as one that encourages youth to do the same. This will help uncover the inherent values that exist in educational curriculum, and demonstrate the ways we can make more room for the values and experiences of youth from a wide range of backgrounds. Gathering input from educators to articulate a curriculum is another example of centralizing the subjective experiences of educators as a valuable contribution to visioning this proposed curriculum. Bang (2016) discusses the importance of approaching educational justice by having educators and researchers propose educational curriculum which acknowledges their social position, values, and goals, as I hope was clear throughout my work. This work serves as an examination, and direct criticism, of existing high school curriculum throughout the US, while also emphasizing the ability for student learners to engage in self-awareness (as advocated by Freire, 1970) and land-awareness and literacy (as advocated by Spirn, 2010). This awareness builds youth capacities in pursuing leadership roles in the neighborhoods, cities, and regions they live in,

enacting broader changes in the social, environmental, and economic conditions they are subjected to. The focus on youth leadership is to sustain a long-term vision toward justice. These are often not individual battles that are fought, but values that are carried by individuals and communities over generations. These values carried across generations are aimed at amplifying and highlighting core values of optimism, solidarity, and empathy within curriculum building. I propose reflexive ethnographies from educators as a method to explore commitment and ensure transparency of intentions of educators, which is an important component of the methods employed in this project.

Settler-colonial realities

The reality of living on Duwamish Territories since 2014 enlightened me of the agency and commitments of indigenous communities throughout the region. Yet, my historical analysis was limited to scholarly work, and did not bring in the everyday experiences of leaders in the region who have committed to the work of indigenous sovereignty and environmental protection. Often this work is illegible to scholars and new inhabitant of the region. While I addressed the wider scale policy impacts in chapter 3 which have affected indigenous communities, and other historically oppressed communities, there are many instances to draw from that were not brought into the discussion. Nonetheless, the overview I provide begins to make room for an awareness of how settler-colonial realities continue to erase indigenous people from lands. This curriculum is geared at supporting the life and futures of indigenous communities and historically oppressed communities in a small way, and contesting the histories that have contributed to this erasure and exclusion of many communities.

Realities of exclusion not explored

There were moments in this thesis where I wanted to unpack the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. This legal decision rests on the federal recognition that segregation of schools is unconstitutional, but it continues to have impacts on communities from Seattle to Los Angeles and beyond, to date. Unpacking this historic decision would have required too wide of a scope to effectively bring into the relevance of the curriculum. Nonetheless, speaking to this reality of segregation begins to construct the realities of the racist history of this country, and how it has impacted the way education is received by historically oppressed communities. Approaching an assessment on the state of education in working-class communities would have been a far-reaching project.

I was also interested in bringing in educational policy in Tucson, Arizona which has limited ethnic studies programs and use of books, requiring the emergence of “Book Traffickers” who found ways to re-incorporate books that were boxed up and stored away by the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) (Goldberg, 2012). TUSD’s Mexican-American Studies curriculum demonstrated positive impacts on educational attainments of Mexican-American youth, but this was hindered by the district (Cammarota, 2014). The specific scope and focus of this thesis work remained within the Pacific Northwest, and the Southwest, where I was raised. To go beyond that, I felt would have stretched the conversation about education much too wide in scope. Nonetheless, I would want to point to environmental education and ethnic studies as important interdisciplinary exchanges. These collaborations between environmental education and ethnic studies would be able to value something as powerful as local knowledge or even “ethnobotany” (Brandt, 2004) This provides exposure to fields such as science, but does not seek its validity, as this field operates to support itself.

Agency

There are several ways critical youth development has looked and emphasized its efforts in multiple scales. An important part of the literature behind critical youth development has focused on supporting the emergence of compassionate educators (see Ginwright, 2016). Another impactful part of the readings about critical youth development have been looking at the role of fostering a learning environment of collective learning (see Fong, 2014, Teel, 2014). I would position the work of Pulido Barraclough's & Cheng's *People's Guide to Los Angeles* (2012) as an effective project documenting the agency throughout Los Angeles, though not related to youth development. Nonetheless, *People's Guide* provides legibility to the informal community work of the people of Los Angeles. There are also opportunities to learn about formal ways the agency in communities.

In examining Urban Youth Programs throughout the United States, Sutton et. al (2015) provided a thorough analysis of formal programs that serve youth of color, and working class-communities of color. The scope of this report was also much too wide to include throughout the earlier chapters. Nonetheless, this was an effective inventory of the range of work contributing to leadership of youth of color throughout the United States. The aim of this curriculum development is enacting the conversations of activists, scholars, professors, and philosophers to articulate critical pedagogy of place, and critical land based curriculum that centralizes the goal of critical youth leadership. With the help of canonical thinkers such as Freire (1972) who provided a goal and process to strive for in education, and the countless work that has synthesized his work to reflect a critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003), we can begin to formulate the way this intellectual thought might look like in practice, and in the classroom.

The Green Ceiling: Leadership for What?

An important discussion on the current state of leadership in the environmental field needs to be addressed, “the Green Ceiling.”¹ While I advocate for environmental stewardship and leadership of youth who are a part of historically oppressed or historically under-represented communities, the current state of environmental professionals demonstrates the need to cultivate more leaders of color, and leaders of diverse cultural backgrounds. The concept of under-representation of racially and ethnically diverse communities in environmental organizations leads to insular recruiting, discrimination, and unconscious bias, as demonstrated by the work of Dorceta E. Taylor (2014) in *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations*. Regardless of the realities of underrepresentation in these fields, this curriculum, along with the range of organizations discussed, is contributing to cultivating more and more leaders in this realm.

Future of this work

This work also seeks to understand how landscape architecture can play a role in advocating for justice. While landscape architecture can play a role in advocating for design participation for individual projects and their project cycle, what does genuine engagement look like for historically oppressed communities over the course of time beyond a project cycle? This proposed curriculum suggests some ways to provide exposure to the profession of landscape architecture. In exposing high-school youth to professions such as this one, there is an attempt to build and sustain leadership within the profession of landscape architecture, as well as other professions related to our built environment. This exposure to professions related to the built environment is one advocated in the work of Spirn (2005) through landscape literacy. Preparing

¹ <http://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>

for these professions in this curriculum can come in the form of creative expression, and learning to navigate and communicate with professionals through activities such as interviewing. Moreover, this leadership cultivated in this curriculum is not relegated to creative expression, or communication, but they serve as examples to expose high-school youth to these professions.

Youth should also be exposed to collaborations across different cultural communities. Educators should recognize the important of working closely and with a long-term commitment to ensuring tribal communities are involved in building curriculum with educators, considering complex indigenous histories and epistemologies are intended to be approached by land-based curriculums. This thesis project does not achieve that goal, but recognizes its importance in future land-based curriculum development.

Finally, the life of this curriculum can take many forms. It is created in hopes of providing an argument in favor of the range of scholarship emerging around land-based education. It also provides educators with a framework to think about their work's contribution to youth leadership, as well as the ways to use their values to shape their own curriculum around land-based education in the future.

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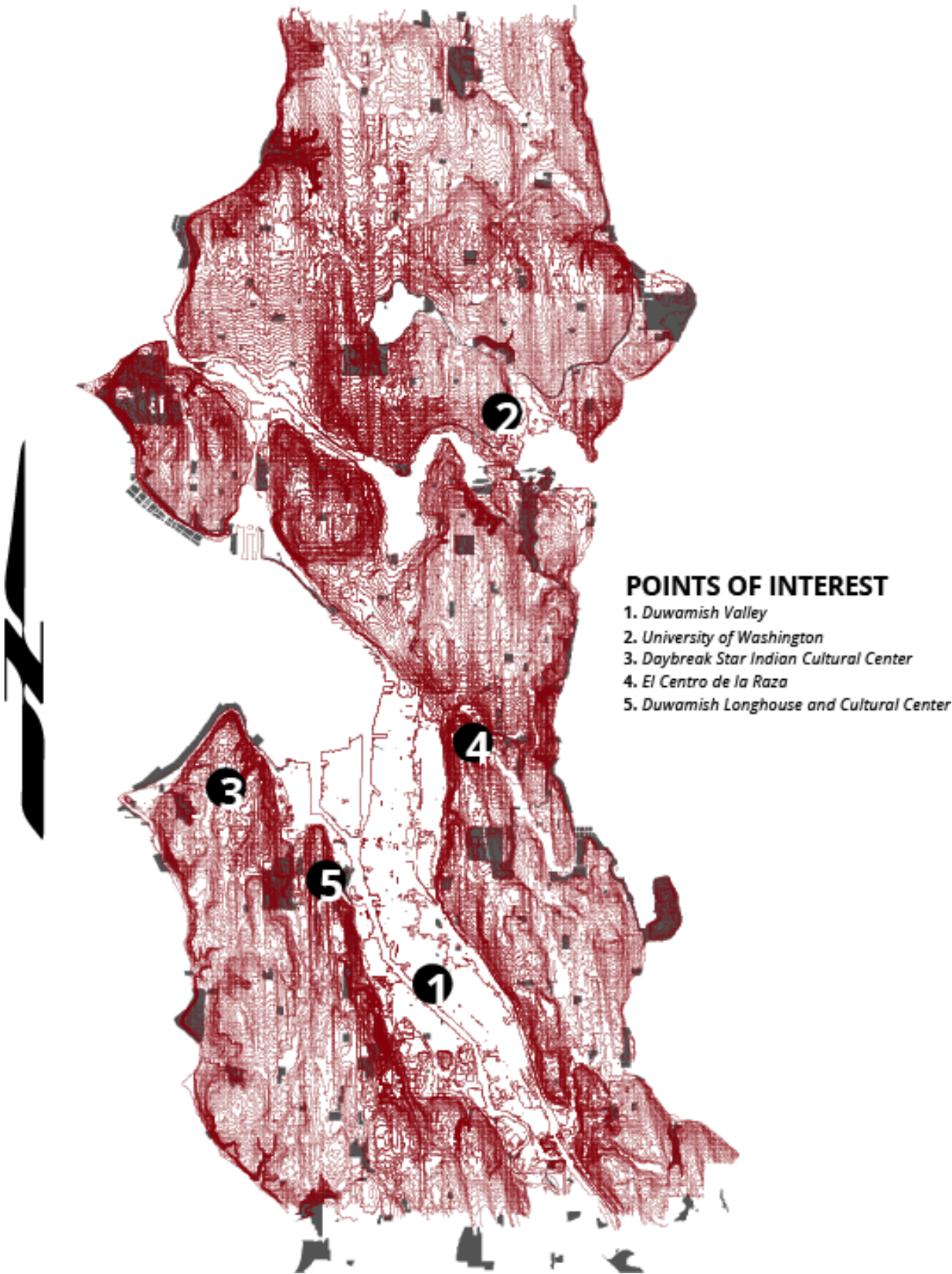
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CITY OF SEATTLE

duwamish homelands



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<https://indigenize.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/bioregional-quiz/>

Where you at? - BIOREGIONAL QUIZ

(Note: This does not have to be completed)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

1. Where does the water in your school (or house) come from? Trace the water you drink from rainfall to tap. Where did the cloud gather its moisture?
2. Where does the water go that drains from your sink? What about the water (& other stuff) leaving your toilet?
3. Choose a favorite meal and trace the ingredients back through the store...the processing plant...all the way to the soil. How many people, states, or even countries helped produce this meal? What went into the packaging and transportation of its ingredients? How many of the ingredients could you (did you?) get locally or even grow yourself?
4. What kind of energy do you primarily use? Where does it come from? Trace the path of energy that powers your home from its sources to you.
5. When your garbage is thrown away, where is "away"?
6. What are the primary sources of pollution in your area?
7. What are the major natural sounds you are aware of in a particular season?
8. What agencies are responsible for planning future transportation and land use in this area?
9. List three critical environmental issues in your area. What can you do to help?
10. Draw a map of your territory, the areas you travel regularly – without using human markers like buildings or street names.

EARTH

11. What primary geological events or processes that shaped the land where you live? (Extra Points: What is the evidence?)
12. What soil series are you standing on?
13. How has the land in your area been used by humans, over the last two centuries?
14. Who lived here prior to white settlement, and what were their primary subsistence techniques?
15. What was the vegetation type in this area prior to white settlement?
16. Where is there wilderness in your bioregion?

WATER

17. What is the elevation above sea level where you live?
18. What is the average annual rainfall for your area? What was the total rainfall in your area last year?

NEIGHBORS

19. What Spring wildflower is consistently among the first to bloom where you live?
20. Name seven common trees in your area. Which ones are native? For the others, how did they get here? Why were they brought?
21. Which indigenous people inhabit(ed) your region before you? Are they still here?
22. What were the primary subsistence techniques of the culture that lived in your area before you?
23. Name five edible wild plants in your region and their season(s) of availability.
24. Name three medicinal wild plants in your region, and what they can be used for. BONUS: which parts are the most effective (stems, roots, fruits...)?
25. Name seven mammals common to your area. Which are native and which are new here? From where did they come? Which animals are extinct from your area?
26. Name ten birds common to your area. (Extra Points: Which are year-round residents? Which are migratory?) (For the EXPERT: Where do the latter winter over?)
27. If you have deer in your area, when do they rut, and when are the young born?
28. Name five grasses in your area. Are any of them native?
29. Name four wild mushrooms that grow in your area, two edible (only if you are an expert) and two poisonous.
30. Describe the defense techniques used by three different other-than-human beings living in your area. (Examples: camouflage, poison, thick skin, thorns...)

Quiz is not my production: Credit goes to this website.
<https://indigenize.wordpress.com/2013/03/21/bioregional-quiz/>

31. What are the major plant associations in your region?
32. What plant or animal is the “barometer” of environmental health for your bioregion? How is it doing?

SKY

33. Sitting in your living room, point North.
34. How recently was the Moon full? What phase is she in now?
35. On what day of the year are the shadows the shortest where you live?
36. From what direction do winter storms come in your region?
37. How long is the growing season where you live?
38. How has the typical weather changed in your area since you were born? (Ask an older person to remember weird weather.)
39. Name one constellation or star that comes out only in winter, and one that comes out in summer.

FIRE

40. When was the last time a fire burned in your area?
41. What caused it?
42. How did the land change after that? What grew back first, second, third? What bugs, birds, and animals followed?
43. How is fire dealt with where you live? (Controlled burns, completely prevented, seasonal controls – what sort?)