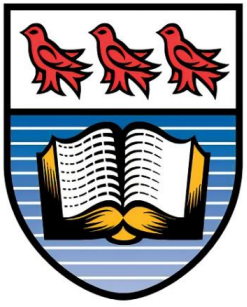




Lunch and Learn





**University
of Victoria**



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean



**The learning landscape –
From Canada to UHI: creating connection,
increased understanding and collaboration in
our virtual learning environments**



Recipe for success: ingredients

Agenda

Connection

- The ask – an email, a zoom call...
- Introductions and flexibility
- Permission and paperwork
- U of Vic's Practicum guidelines

Organization of Practicum activities

Sharing practicum student with various faculty (coordination)

- Content sharing (Angela, Emma, Alastair, Julie)
- Student feedback
- Final laps

Take-away

University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada



Land Acknowledgement



Practicum Process

Val

(Practicum Student)

- Connections
- Networked to UHI
- Practicum hopes dashed/Covid/
- Medical issues
- An invitation to do a virtual work around



Julie
(Supervisor)

- Invitation
- Process
- Bureaucracy
- Lead supervisor
- Managing/process issues

Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility



**Working in the caring
professions**

Culture is a system of shared assumptions, beliefs and values. *It is the framework from which we interpret and make sense of life and the world around us.*



“Cultural competence is about our will and actions to build understanding between caregivers, parents and children and to be respectful and open to different cultural perspectives; to strengthen cultural security and work towards equality in opportunity” (Livingstone, 2014).



How to develop cultural competence?

In sum, for students cultural competence allows them to develop important cognitive skills and attitudes that, according to Livingstone, encompass:

- **Being aware of one's own world view**
- **Developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences**
- **Gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views**
- **Developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures**
- **When approaching cultural competence in your early childhood education classroom it is necessary to find resources and materials that are culturally relevant and accurate and that are created by people from the culture being described.**
- **Take necessary steps to approach cultural education with respect and care. Also, remember that even the little things can count.**
- **It is about children seeing a variety of cultures represented in positive and meaningful ways.**

Source:

Livingstone, R. (2014 July). What does it mean to be culturally competent? Retrieved from We Hear You.

In practice, in order to help children develop cultural competence, early learning caregivers/educators must first look inwards and examine the state of their own cultural competency.

Questions to consider:

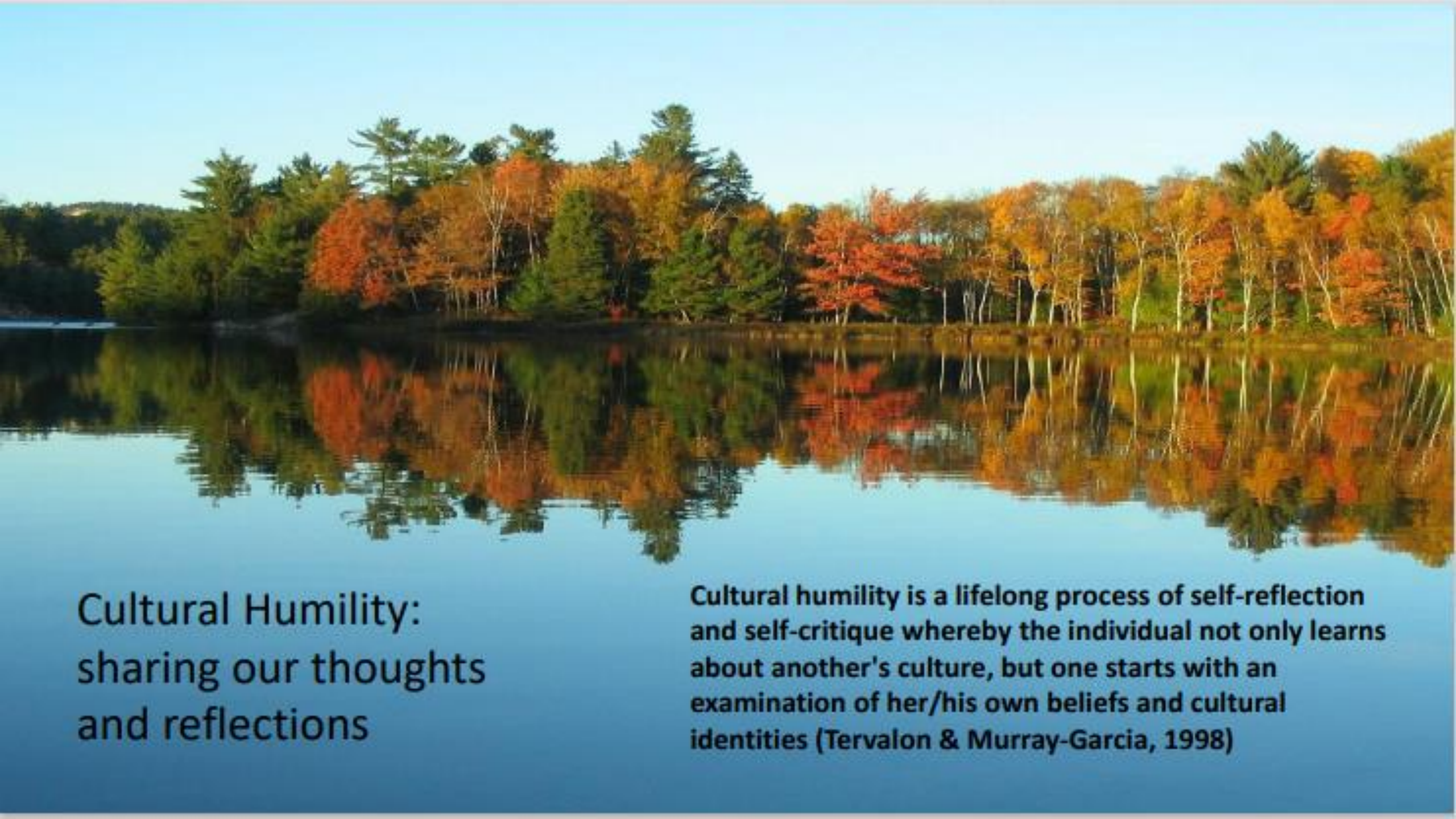
Do you celebrate multiple ways of learning and knowing that exist across cultures?

Do you value diversity and incorporate it into your care spaces in positive ways?

Are you willing to learn and grow when it comes to cultural understandings?







Cultural Humility:
sharing our thoughts
and reflections

Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs and cultural identities (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998)

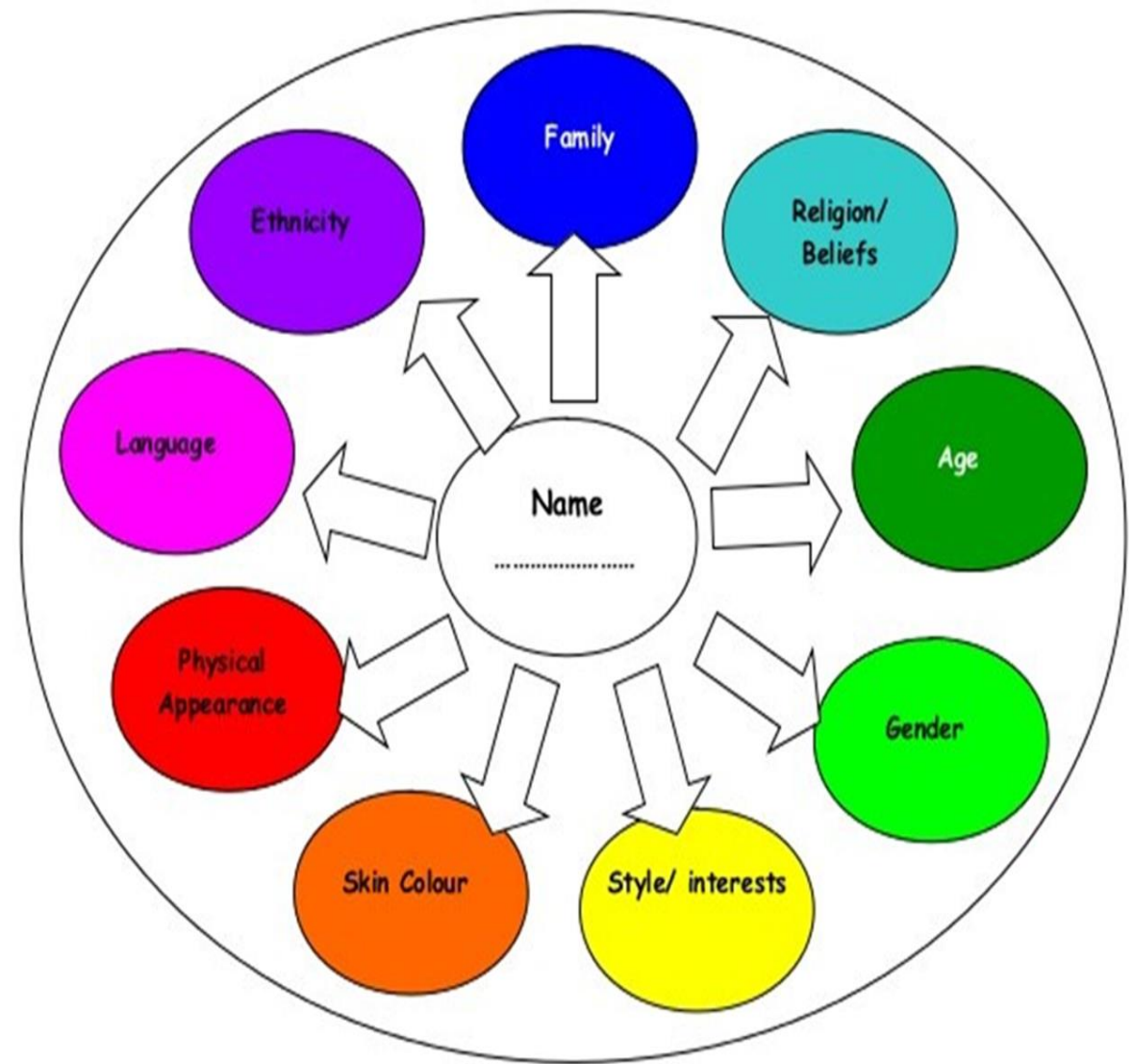
Cultural Humility is a way to engage in life-long learning and compassionate self-reflection, and be open to engaging and learning with the people around us who make up many diverse communities.

At the end of the 1990's, the concept of cultural humility was proposed. It was coined by two healthcare professionals in the USA, Trevalon and Garcia (1998).



A close-up photograph of a hand reaching down towards a row of white letter tiles. The tiles are arranged to spell out the word 'HUMANITY'. The hand is positioned above the tiles, with the index and middle fingers pointing towards the 'A' and 'N' tiles. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and blue, suggesting an outdoor setting. The tiles are placed on a dark, reflective surface, creating a subtle reflection below them.

H U M A N I T Y



Nature, Landscape and Our Early Learning Experiences

Val Neaves M.Ed



Agenda

- Territorial Acknowledgement
- Who am I, my research interests?
- Where am I at in my research?
- The research question?
- Situating ourselves
- Current statistics
- Our childhood nature experiences
- What was your experience?
- The Canadian landscape experience?
- How does your experience shape your nature experiences in ECE?
- Next steps





India



Northern
Alberta

Who am I?



England and
Scotland



Cree territory

Map of Northern Lakes College Service Region



My background



NorQuest College – Day Home Provider Program



Language, Culture
and Landscape:
shaping our
world and our work
with children
...in nature




Bedouins, Egypt



Mongolia

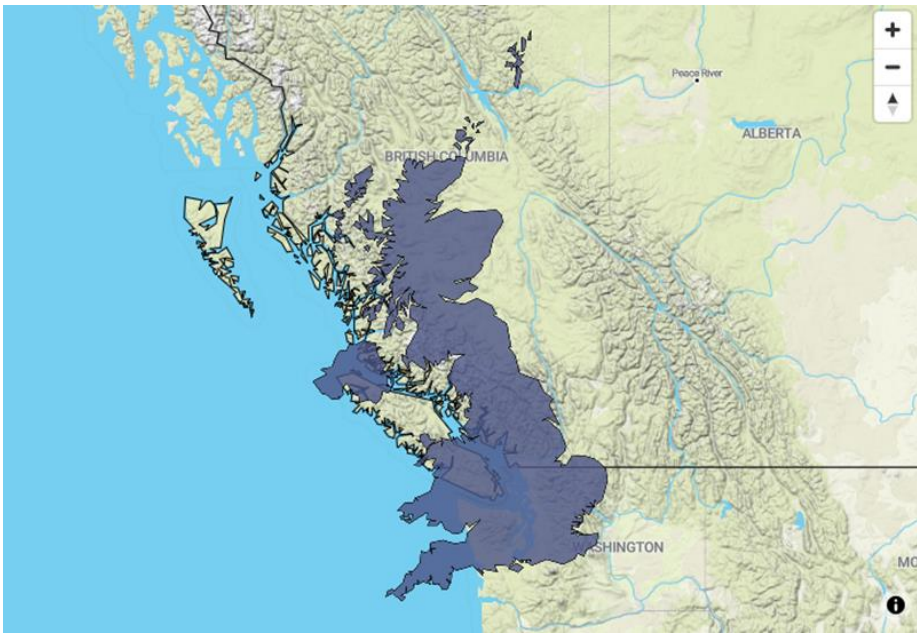




A photograph of two young children standing in a forest. The child on the left is a boy with curly hair, wearing a blue jacket and dark pants. The child on the right is a girl with brown hair, wearing a purple puffer jacket, pink pants, and colorful shoes. They are standing in front of a large, old tree with peeling bark. The forest is lush with green ferns and other plants. The text 'History and the state of Early Childhood Carers in Canada' is overlaid on the right side of the image in yellow.

History and
the state of
Early
Childhood
Carers in
Canada





We are 41% bigger than the UK in land mass
Our population is 37 million and yours is 67 million

The name “Canada” likely comes from the Huron-Iroquois word “kanata,” meaning “village” or “settlement.”





Artist Kent Monkman



<https://youtu.be/TK483UHGd7k>

An estimated 150,000 children attended residential schools.

An estimated 6,000 children died at residential schools (records are incomplete).

In total, over 130 residential schools operated in Canada between 1831 and 1996.



INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

FRAMEWORK

Children hold a sacred place in the cultures of Indigenous peoples and a sacred responsibility to care for them.

High-quality, culturally-specific and well-supported early learning and child care (ELCC) programs, services and supports that are specifically designed for and with Indigenous families and communities will make a genuine difference in the early experiences of children.

High-quality Indigenous ELCC programming empowers young children with a strong sense of identity

ELCC programs can holistically support parents and families to participate in their cultures and languages.

“The Framework was co-developed with Indigenous partners following a comprehensive national engagement process...Through this process, thousands of Indigenous people provided their vision of ELCC for their children, families, communities and cultures.”

Earnings

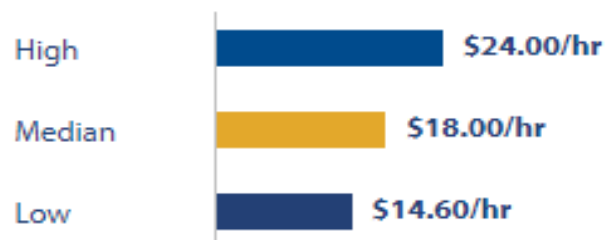
Annual provincial median salary

\$37,541

Source: 2020 Job Bank Wage data

Note: Estimated median employment income based on 2020 Job Bank median hourly wage rate (median annual salary = hourly wage rate x 40 (hours per week) x 52.14 (weeks per year))

Provincial hourly rate



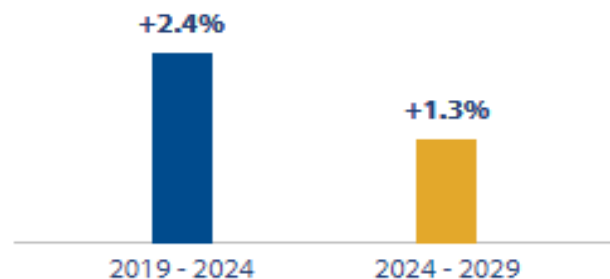
Source: 2020 Job Bank Wage Report

Annual provincial medium salary converted to pounds 21,818.21

B.C. Labour Market Outlook (2019-2029)

Provincial outlook

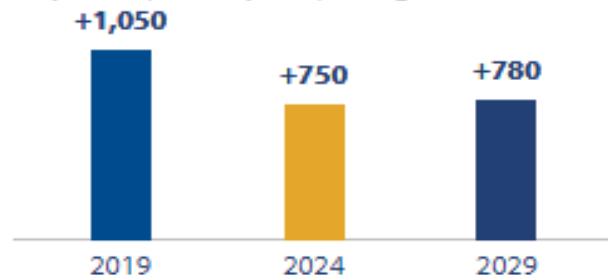
Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 8,610



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

\$14.00 per hour (low end of ECE) wages is about 9.71 Pounds Sterling



\$10 A DAY CHILDCARE FOR FAMILIES

**MEILLEURS SERVICES DE GARDE
POUR LES FAMILLES**



If our feet leave the earth we no longer live in peace.

(Sudanese Proverb)

Akuage Nyok Bol & Val Neaves

AKUAGE AND I MET IN 2012 IN A COLLEGE DAY HOME Provider Program in Edmonton, Alberta. I was teaching in the program and she was a student. Often we'd find ourselves talking of our childhoods and sharing stories of the joyful experiences we'd had adventuring in the outdoors.

Our lovely conversations connected us deeply as we realized we shared a mutual feeling of connection to nature that stemmed back to our childhood experiences and ultimately shaped who we are today and what we bring to childcare environments.

We ask you to pour a warm drink and sink into a comfortable space as Akuage and I share some childhood memories with you. Akuage and I feel very strongly that nature affected us in profound ways as children and continues to do so today. As we moved into our respective careers, it was sometimes difficult to recall those memories of how our interactions with nature nurtured, sustained, and shaped us; yet, the connection to and with nature remains at the core of our souls. Helping children build natural outdoor connections has become of great importance to us.

This is our shared story

We were two little girls who went to sleep in different parts of the world. In South Sudan, Akuage would bed down under her mosquito net and snuggle in beside her sister. She would listen to the frogs, hyenas, and the crickets. Winds would gently brush through the trees and corn fields, and hearing these rhythmic sounds, Akuage would fall asleep thinking about the following day's outside adventure.

6 PLAY OUTDOORS WINTER 2022

In northern Cree territory, known now as Athabasca, Alberta, I too would fall asleep to the sound of coyotes, owls, frogs and crickets. Sometimes the snap, crackle and pop of lightning and thunderstorms would light up my room; shadows would dance across the walls and thunder would make the windows shake. The rain sounds were often hypnotic. Soon I was in a deep sleep anticipating the outdoor adventure that the next day would bring.

Akuage grew up outside the village of Biomne. Her father was a descendent of the Dinka people and her mom was Nuer. My mom was of British and East Indian ancestry, my father, Scottish and English. Both of our parents worked tirelessly for their families and would let us roam free in the natural environment around our homes. There were rules of course. Parts of the forest in South Sudan were filled with hyenas, lions, snakes and other territorial animals that could cause serious harm. Not only were children taught to respect the safety perimeter of the farm, by staying clear of where they were instructed not to go, but they were also taught the skills required to safely navigate the woods and grasslands.

For me, the wild boreal forest was rife with moose, bears, muskrat and beaver. Mosquitos would take over at various parts of the day, a persistent humming choir in the woods. Unlike Akuage, who was surrounded by siblings and friends, my partners were two dogs. These loyal canine brothers had both a keen sense of smell and hearing. Their combined smarts helped keep me safe. Roaming on the land in a self-made perimeter of safety, the smells and visual feast of my environment became deeply imprinted in my psyche.

A childhood in South Sudan

Reminiscing on the phone a few weeks ago, Akuage described for me, in vivid detail, the deep, rich green corn fields, the mango and coconut trees laden with fruit, the smell of the land after the rain, and the incredible melody of the birds. This symphony of senses was the backdrop of Akuage's many childhood adventures.

One of her childhood adventures was building 'farms' from the rich, slick, mouldable clay that surrounded her village. I could hear the rising excitement in Akuage's voice as she took me on a field trip of her memories to the days of her childhood. "Val, we'd play for hours building a farm out of sculpted clay, and we were all so engaged in our creations that we would ignore the call for lunch," she said. Building a farm was no small task. Akuage's Dinka ancestral people are known as the great cattle-herding people of South Sudan. As a child, she was adamant about sculpting a large herd of cows from clay – and so that is exactly what she did! "We sculpted and shaped many cows,

goats, and dogs," she explained. There were all different forms, shapes and sizes of animals emerging in this creative adventure! She talked about scooping up many natural materials, leaves, twigs, mud, wood, and hay. "You know Val, we'd often talk of getting the dowry ready for ourselves, and the more cattle we had, the better our dowry was!" We paused and sipped our tea. We took some time to reflect. "Oh Akuage, it sounds delightfully consuming. What fun!" Then I took a turn to describe some similar childhood experiences.



A childhood in Northern Canada

One day when I was small, I had collected various coloured sticks. These sticks morphed into a collection of various horses, all named and all with different personalities. In my pretend paddock, I had a small bit of material for saddles. These various materials would be tied carefully onto the stick 'horse'. A string around the top of the stick would suffice for reins. I would trot around the forest paths and fields, feeling free and exhilarated. I'd talk endlessly to the 'horse' and, together we would explore, listen and feel the sensations of the forest and the moss beneath our feet. I could smell the various grasses, hay, roses, and gooseberries, the high-bush cranberries, and the wild flowers. My 'horse' and I would stomp on puffballs, often the size of baseballs. These white, round fungi would pop and puff, giving off great plumes of brown, cloudy dust.

Similar childhood experiences

We both laughed and I asked Akuage if she made forts or climbed trees. "I was just like a monkey, at four years old. I would go up the tree and with my dad keeping a watchful eye on me, I would shake the tree so that the ripe fruit would fall down. I was quick and agile and had little to no fear for my safety. He coached me and cheered me on," she said. "In fact," he said, "fear will grow if you don't take risks." He was such a smart man, and good at combining work with play. He was a great teacher and would take us fishing and teach us the names of the plants and trees." When Akuage, the pretend monkey, came down from the trees she would resume land activities with village friends. One day, they made a hay and stick fort and were very proud of their accomplishment. When it was time for lunch, she and her friend took a bit of cornmeal from their respective houses and made some food for their little cottage. Corn is a staple food in South Sudan and corn

fields reign supreme on the land. "Unfortunately, we didn't ask our parents' permission and we got caught," Akuage giggled sheepishly and then she shared that her sister-in-law told her, "Next time Akuage, just ask!"

We were both laughing as I shared a story of my experience in northern Canada when I, like a thieving racoon, found some flour and took an egg from the chickens to make leaf and twig stew in the early morning whilst everyone was sleeping. My leftover eggshells in the arbour were a telltale sign of my escapade! I, too, was requested to ask before taking things. Our narratives reveal how our chores and adventures as children combined play and learning. We both had tasks to do that contributed to the family and community we lived in. Yet, as we worked, played, learned and experimented, we both grew to love nature and the land, animals, birds, and insects that lived in concert with us.

Sharing our childhood experiences through story telling brought us closer together. Our stories show how important it is to connect children to nature and nature-based activities. Overall, by interacting with the natural world around us, we can find calm, creativity, adventure, insight and beauty. As Akuage stated, "The younger we are when learning about the natural world around us, the better." Being with a tall, majestic tree, a pungently sweet rose bush, a lush forest floor, soft moss, a corn field's height, a bird's song, a cricket's chirp – these things are part of the beautiful, complex environments that connect us to our greatest gift of all... Mother Nature.

"The interior landscape responds to the character and subtlety of the exterior landscape; the shape of the individual mind is as affected by the land as it is by genes."

Barry Lopez



Akuage Nyok Bol

Akuage is a mother and Child Care practitioner at the YMCA in Edmonton.

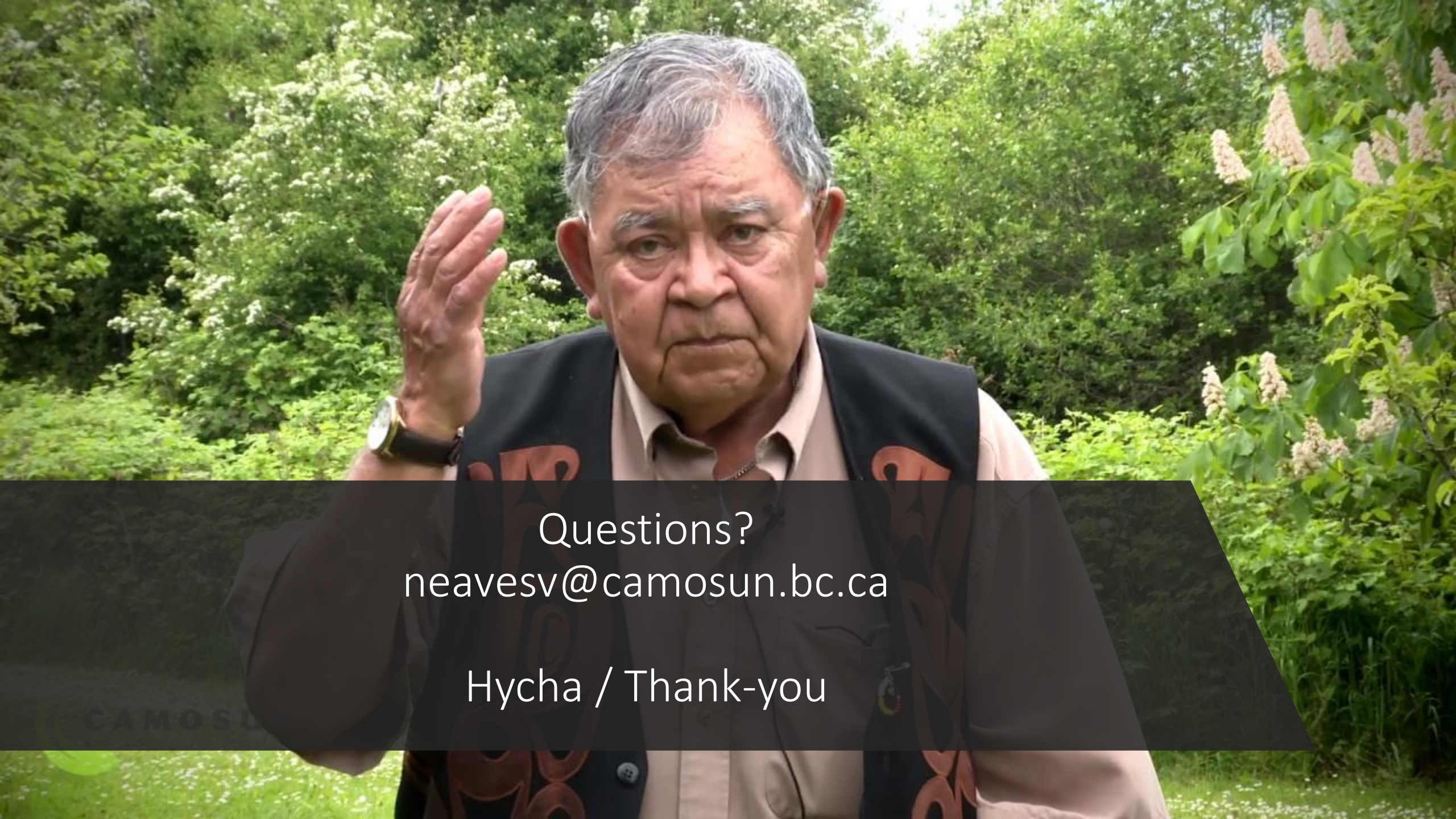


Val Neaves

Val is a mother and grandmother, as well as a Child and Youth Care Graduate Student at the University of Victoria.

7 PLAY OUTDOORS WINTER 2022

Val's next steps: Research proposal, ethics approval, work with newcomer women to Canada. Building on stories of childhood, nature and cultural. Turning western curricula into more diverse and representative voices.

A middle-aged man with grey hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a light-colored collared shirt and a dark vest with a red and white pattern. He is gesturing with his right hand, palm facing forward. The background is a lush green garden with various plants and flowers. A dark grey semi-transparent banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image, containing white text.

Questions?
neavesv@camosun.bc.ca

Hycha / Thank-you