



Co-designing Places for Outdoor Learning Facilitation Guide

Design Engagement 1: Histories of Places

Activity Purpose

The goal of Histories of Places is to use different time scales to consider how the school yard came to be the way it is today, and what it could be in the future. Histories span across land, plants, animals, and human communities over time. Every community has histories of the place(s) in which they live – some of which may be in conflict because of lived experiences and positionality. Thinking across time scales allows us to incorporate these many perspectives and allow for multiple and diverse stories to be told and honored, and factor into decision-making – including designing an outdoor learning site. Understanding and considering how human decisions have shaped, and continue to shape, the land is critical to creating ethical, just and sustainable futures.

Key Terms

Historicity and History: While **history** is often viewed as a series of 'facts', **historicity** recognizes how people's perspectives and positions have shaped their understanding of history and visions of possible futures. Historicity is inherently powered – in other words, systemic power dynamics shape the structure relations between and among individuals, communities, and institutions (involving humans and more-than-humans).

Time Scales: This project names six different time scales. You may have other names for these time scales, but what is important is to consider how these time scales interact and are layered.

Activity Overview

This is a two-part activity.

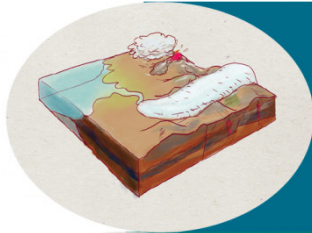
- » **Part 1:** Conduct research about the histories of places related to your school, the surrounding neighborhood and the region more broadly using activity sheet 1.A.
- » **Part 2:** Share the research from activity sheet 1.A with the group. Walk the school yard together and use activity sheet 1.B to explore the various time scales. The time scales will help inform the decision making and design process of the outdoor learning place. Identify opportunities for further research and imagine future possibilities, that may include an outdoor learning place.

Extension/Alternate Activities:

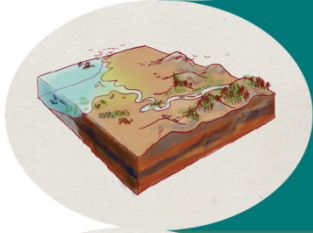
- » There are several options for the co-design group and facilitator(s) to prepare for the Histories of Places walk. Each time scale could be researched by one member of the co-design group, or participants could research all time scales and compare notes, or the facilitator(s) could research and present a Histories of Places via powerpoint or another method.
- » After the Histories of Places walk (part 2), identify opportunities for further research by taking note of people's wonderings. Invite other community members to share their histories of the place.
- » Continue to think across time and places by opening up each meeting with new research about the histories of this place.
- » Read the Histories of Places and/or Power and Historicity framework found at learninginplaces.org

Socio-Ecological Histories of Places Framework:

The socio-ecological histories of places framework involves thinking across six time scales. This is a crucial practice when co-designing places for outdoor learning because it provides a lens to grapple with the layered histories of a place. These histories continue to shape the present and are necessary to understand in order to live into ethical responsibilities and possibilities. For example, we can consider how Himalayan blackberries that were brought over from Armenia to the Pacific Northwest (Nation-State Time and Global Time) have been widely dispersed by birds (Plant, Animals & Soil Time) and now interact with food sovereignty efforts of local tribes (Indigenous Peoples' Time). These layers all intersect with the questions: How should we relate to blackberries? and, Whose knowledge systems are used to find solutions (Living Ethical Responsibilities and Possibilities Time)?



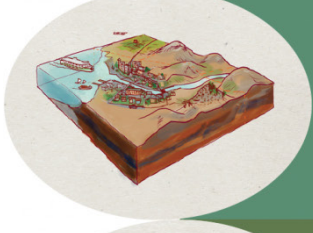
Geologic Time includes the histories of lands, oceans, and other water processes.



Plant, Animal, & Soil Time includes the histories of plants, animals, and soils and their relationships to lands and waters.



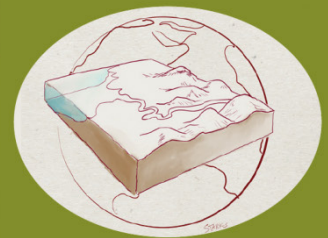
Indigenous Peoples' Time recognizes First Peoples' histories, presents, and sovereignties in places and across time.



Nation-State Time refers to global shifts in political and economic structures that often include human movements across continents, powered shifts in technology, language, culture, and human relationships with the natural world.



Global Time includes how our local places are connected to, impact, or are impacted by other places across the earth and interact with other time scales.



Living Ethical Responsibilities and Possibilities Time includes the possible stories for places in the future.



CONNECT TO OTHER LEARNING ENGAGEMENTS

- Family LE 1.C: Taking a Family Histories of Place Walk
- Classroom LE 1.1 & 1.2: Histories of Places Launch and Family Walk

LEARNING IN PLACES FRAMEWORKS TO CONSIDER

- Socio-Ecological Histories of Places
- Power and Historicity

Using the Rhizome in the Co-design Process:

The following Rhizome prompts provide ways to routinely consider the core commitments towards creating more equitable outdoor learning places. The Rhizome foregrounds analyses of **power and historicity** and **nature-culture relations** as they intersect with the other parts of the Rhizome: **complex socio-ecological systems**; **field-based science**; and **culture, families & communities**. Use these questions as a way for the co-design group to keep all pieces of the Rhizome present during co-design.

Culture, Families and Community:

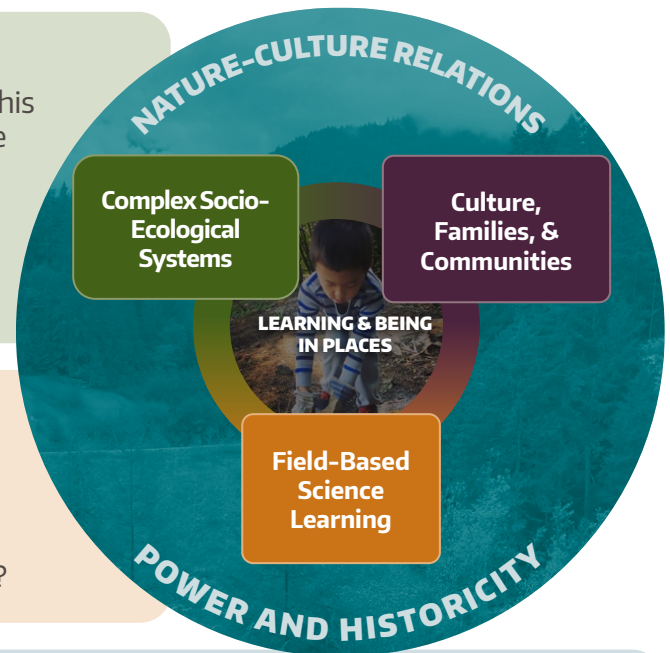
- » Cultivating land is a human cultural practice that has been done across time and places. How has the school site been cultivated in the past? Why was it cultivated in that way? By whom?
- » Many more-than-humans cultivate land in particular ways ("More-than-humans" includes animals, plants, water, etc.). How has the school site, or surrounding areas been cultivated by more-than-humans?

Complex Socio-Ecological Systems:

- » How have human decisions contributed to changes in this place? Which people, institutions, or communities made these choices? Why did they make those choices?
- » How do socio-ecological time scales intersect in our school yard? (example: natural processes, with plant, animal and soil time and recent human decisions?)

Field-Based Science Learning:

- » When engaging in restoration, scientists look at the various historical decisions that have been made to shape the land and waters of a place. What scientific investigations are happening in our community today?



Power and Historicity:

- » There are multiple histories of place, some that are conflicting or contradictory to one another, and some that hold dominance over others. How are people experiencing this place?
- » Peoples' values and visions are shaped by their lived experiences and histories, which inform their decision making, including in designing an outdoor learning place. If different perspectives are not taken into account or a dominant perspective is the only one present, other people's histories and experience are effectively/ essentially erased. Whose perspectives are present in this co-design?

Nature-Culture Relations:

- » How has our Histories of Places research made visible balances or imbalances of power between humans and the natural world?
- » Does the current design of the school yard align with a nature-culture divide model (humans "apart from" nature) or a complementarity model (humans "a part of" nature)?

Part 1: Histories of Places Research

MATERIALS

- » Activity 1.A should be done ahead of meeting as a co-design group. The facilitator can send blank copies of Activity 1.A to the group members to complete before meeting together.
- » Research could also be done as a whole group, but the facilitators will need to ensure resources are available for the co-design group to research Histories of Places.

ACTIVITY SHEET 1.A



Use this activity sheet to organize your research about the histories of places related to your school, the surrounding neighborhood and the region more broadly. This may take several hours, or time over multiple days. Set aside preparatory time to come prepared to the co-design session.

This activity sheet can be used as a way to organize independent research, collect prior knowledge from the co-design group or to support younger co-design members during the walk.

Pre-research is important to complete prior to the walk. This can address power and historicity by dis-allowing a dominant narrative to monopolize the walk. It also helps the co-design team to think, reflect and learn prior to discussing, and to answer some questions on their own without presuming someone can/should answer. The Histories of Places walk can be more generative with research information in hand.

Encourage the co-design group to bring photos, books, maps, or other physical artifacts of place.

Part 2: Histories of Places Walk

MATERIALS

- » pens
- » research from activity sheet 1.A
- » printed copies of activity sheet 1.B

TIME: 30 MINUTES



ACTIVITY SHEET 1.B

Activity 1 Part B: Using different time scales to explore the place you are co-designing. There are many time scales that make a place what is today, and what it could be in the future. These time scales (a place's histories) span across land, plants, animals, and communities over time. As you walk the school grounds, use this chart to think about the place you are co-designing. Think about that place from the perspective of these different time scales. Fill out as much of the chart as you want. There are no right or wrong answers! We will use the ideas on this chart in future discussions.

Time Scales	What do we know about our place related to each of these time scales?	What questions or wonderings do we have about our place related to these time scales?	What decisions have people made that shaped this time? Which people? Why did they make those decisions?	What is possible for this place? (Living Ethical Responsibilities and Possibilities Time)
Geologic Time: Land and ocean processes, mountain formation, glaciation, etc.				
Plant, Animal, and Soil Time: Plants, animals, and soils of the area, species extinctions or adaptations				
Indigenous Peoples' Time: Recognizing First Peoples and their histories, current, and future relationships to this place				
Nation State Time: How the development of nations/states over time has shaped and impacted this place				
Global Time: How this place is connected to, impacts, or is impacted by other places across the earth and interacts with other time scales				

Before your walk, share out your findings from activity 1.A by using a large piece of paper or a white board to take notes of everyone's findings. Use post-it notes to gather noticings and questions that arise.

Take a walk outside as a group with activity sheet 1.B. As you walk, encourage everyone to make observations, and ask questions about what they wonder about as they observe (there is no "right" answer). Think about your observations and questions from different time scales.

Facilitation considerations:

- Be aware of the powered roles and intersectional identities of people in the co-design team. Specifically, interactions between families and schools have histories of power imbalances that are raced, classed and gendered. Be prepared and proactive about addressing power imbalances.
- Ensure there is space for many perspectives to be shared to ensure a dominant perspective is not the only one present.
- Review the Rhizome prompts on page 2, and identify specific ways to bring those considerations into the Histories of Places discussion.

- Which time scales do you want to learn more about given your observations?
- What decisions do you think were made about the land that impacted its current features? What evidence can you locate of those decisions?
- What is possible for this place? (this question will be important as we start to vision in activity two.)

Histories of Places Prompts -- use while walking/sharing

Plant, Animal, & Soil Time

- » Who are the plant/animal/soil communities that lived here prior to colonization?
- » Who are the plant/animal/soil communities that live now? If they are different than prior to colonization, how, why, and from where did they come to be here?

Geologic Time

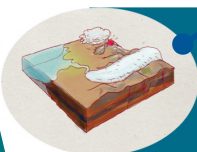
- » How was the land formed through geologic processes?
- » How does geologic time inform how water moves through this place?
- » What kind of soil did geologic processes create? What is the soil like now?

Indigenous Peoples' Time

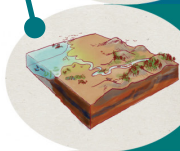
- » To which Indigenous group(s) is this land significant?
- » What is the relationship of Indigenous people to the land since time immemorial? Has this relationship changed?
- » What is the relationship of Indigenous people to the land now?
- » Which Native organizations or local tribes in our community can our co-design team connect to and/or invite to learn more and inform the co-design process?

Nation-State Time

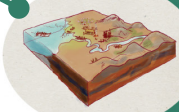
- » What events led to the colonization of the land?
- » What events shaped the land and area? (e.g. immigration, migration, industrialization, city development, land restructuring, rerouting water, etc.)
- » What existed on this land before it was a school? (e.g. industry, farmland, forest, etc.)
- » If there is a garden on school grounds, how did it come to be?



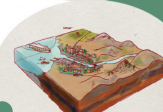
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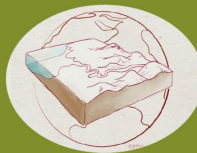
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Global Time

- » How is our school yard connected to, impacted by, and/or impact other places across the earth?
- » How are gardens connected to other places across the earth?

Living Ethical Responsibilities and Possibilities Time

- » How do we want to engage with the school grounds in the future? Why? How?
- » What excites you in this place? What futures are possible here?



Geologic Time



Plant, Animal, & Soil Time



Indigenous Peoples' Time



Nation-State Time



Global Time



**Living Ethical
Responsibilities
and
Possibilities
Time**

Activity 1 Part B: Using different time scales to explore the place you are co-designing

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