



Natural
Curiosity

Natural Curiosity Virtual Summer Institute 2022

Program Overview

Natural Curiosity (NC) is excited to announce the return of our **Summer Institute** on August 16th & 17th, 2022 at 12:00 - 3:00 PM (ET). A renewal of last year's sold-out pilot program, this virtual professional learning is for educators across Turtle Island who wish to deepen their own inquiry into the ecology of Natural Curiosity – growing a learning environment where educators and students experience themselves in relationship with the Land and each other in community.

This year, our Summer Institute is being offered in conjunction with *Aki Kinomaagewinan: Engaging Educators and Youth in Indigenous Land-Based Learning Through Natural Curiosity*, a land-based summer professional learning program - in partnership with ENAGB. Our Summer Institute will ensure that the Natural Curiosity pedagogy is accessible to our learning community across Turtle Island and beyond.

Summer Institute Schedule

Over the course of two days, educators will explore the four-branch framework of environmental inquiry and the associated Indigenous lenses that present tangible entry points towards a reciprocal relationship with the Land participating as a co-teacher. Strategies to overcome barriers will be discussed in a safe and collegial online environment where educators may process their experiences, ask questions, and share stories. A Slack communication channel will be created to allow for conversation and mutual support between sessions. There will be an independent outdoor assignment component between sessions.

Two 3 hour sessions will take place between **12:00 pm and 3:00 pm ET** on **Tuesday, August 16th** and **Wednesday, August 17th**.

Day 1	Tuesday, August 16th, 2022
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Indigenous Opening - pending speaker
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Introduction to the Four Branches of Natural Curiosity and the Indigenous Lenses ☐ Focus: Exploring the pedagogical framework and the <i>Indigenous lenses</i>
1:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Break
1:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Branch 1 & Indigenous Lens I: Inquiry and Engagement/Lighting the Fire; Branch 2 & Indigenous Lens II: Experiential Learning/Sending Out Roots ☐ Focus: Learning from the heart and from the Land; connecting to the natural world through an inquiry approach ☐ Getting outside: addressing barriers and effective strategies for increasing our relationship with the Land

	Take home reflection
Day 2	Wednesday, August 17th, 2022
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Branch 3 & Indigenous Lens III: <i>Integrated Learning/The Flow of Knowledge</i>; Branch 4 & Indigenous Lens IV: <i>Moving Towards Sustainability/Breathing With The World</i> ☐ Focus: Deepening our inquiry through interconnections and reciprocity
1:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Break
1:45 PM - 3:00 PM	Putting it into Action ☐ Focus: Applying and sharing Natural Curiosity through educator stories
	Take home activity

Learning Goals

- Develop comfort with inquiry-based teaching
 - The four branches of NC
 - Knowledge building with students
 - Placing student voice, interest, and heart at the centre of their learning
- Develop a relationship with Indigenous perspectives
 - What is the Indigenous lens on Natural Curiosity?
 - Land acknowledgements and principles of reciprocity
 - How can we use the Indigenous lens of NC to introduce Indigenous stories and history?
- Develop comfort going outdoors
 - Addressing barriers to getting outside regularly
 - NC in all weather
 - Benefit/risk assessment
 - Scaffolding students' capacity to risk assess

Required Reading

- [*Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition*](#)
- Other resources will be referenced in session or on a private online communication platform

Certification

Participating educators will receive a certificate of completion from Natural Curiosity and the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study Laboratory School.

Meet the NC Team

Haley Higdon (OCT) is a guest and settler on Turtle Island and is the Program Director of Natural Curiosity, Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study Laboratory School, OISE-University of Toronto. She has her BEd and MA in Child Study and Education from the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study at UofT. She has spent the last four years working as the managing editor for the development and creation of *Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition: The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives in Children's Environmental Inquiry*. Haley has extensive experience in supporting educators with incorporating environmental inquiry into their practice.

Aleksa Nitsis is a guest on Turtle Island and a recent graduate of the Master of Teaching program at

OISE. She has spent the last two years on the Natural Curiosity team as a Program and Graduate Assistant. Aleksa is thrilled to be part of a supportive team that values the importance of Indigenous perspectives in education.

Megan (she/her) Pham-Quan is a settler on Turtle Island and a Natural Curiosity program assistant. Megan is also a Year 1 teacher candidate in the MA in Child Study and Education program at OISE. She came to this program from her undergraduate studies in women and gender studies and philosophy at the University of Toronto, and is interested in creating justice-oriented, liberatory spaces in primary/junior classrooms.

Schedule

Session 1: Tuesday, August 16th, 2022
Session 2: Wednesday, August 17th, 2022

Contacts

NC Contact: Aleksa Nitsis
naturalcuriosity@utoronto.ca

Registration Information

Copies of Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition

This program will directly refer to *Natural Curiosity 2nd Edition: The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives in Childrens' Environmental Inquiry*. We highly recommend that all participants receive or borrow their own individual copy. OCT educators can borrow NC2 from the Margaret Wilson Library. Additionally, we will provide registrations with a 50% discount code to purchase print and/or pdf copies (in French or English) upon registration.

Have any questions?

If you wish to chat with a member of the Natural Curiosity team to further discuss program details, please do not hesitate to contact Rosa, our Program Manager at rosa.na@utoronto.ca.

Testimonials

"... this has been the first PD where I felt my work as an educator was validated and heard. Your team is amazing!" - Camilla Persaud, Special Needs Educational Resources Facilitator