

THE EXPERIENCE

LEARNING REFLECTIONS



#THISISOURCLASSROOM

As the sun sets on another amazing semester with remarkable students from qathet and beyond, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to live and learn in this place, with these people, in this way.

Most of the content in this newsletter are reflective moments plucked (with permission) from student journals. As such, they are authentic snapshots of experience, reflection and learning from the semester. Admittedly, a more intentional and refined approach may have led to a better overall read. But with not one regular classroom day in the last month, we are once again reminded that life is often an "ideal to real" proposition :)

When I boil down my role as an educator, into its simplest form, it is this – to facilitate experiences and draw meaning. When meaning is nurtured through experience, learning tends to fall into place. In my own practice, I have recently been exploring Aristotle's idea of Phronesis which translates to "practical wisdom". As opposed to the Epistemic (content/theory) and Techne (making/doing), Phronesis is both ability to both figure out what to do in any given moment while also knowing what is worth doing.



My friend Dr. Hartley Banack describes Phronesis as "useful learning" in that it's knowing how to read the world in light of an emerging context. In our time together this year we have learned how to employ this "useful learning" on forest trails and sunlit waterways. We have learned to maintain our relations, our health, and our wellness along the way. Our cherished students (your cherished loved ones) are off to their next big adventure and our hope is that they move forward with an open mind and an open heart. Their possibilities are limitless. - **Ryan 'Coho' Barfoot**



REFLECTIONS ON OUR CANOE JOURNEY

After already successfully portaging a canoe with my partner, I returned to retrieve the final canoe myself. I quickly realized that soloing the canoe unassisted was not a good idea and made the smart decision to sit down and wait for support. Along the portage, as much as I wanted to solo the canoe, I had to swallow my pride. In doing so, I learned an important lesson about teamwork. That moment made me realize that never before had I felt part of a team so strongly. - **Kohen 'Capra' Butler**

The scenery on this trip was so beautiful. When you are on a self-propelled canoe trip, you appreciate and take in your surroundings (both people and nature) in a completely different way. I really enjoyed our silent paddle that we did at the end, and I felt like the whole group stepped up to get important things done. I think because of this, as a team we learned how to work together even better. - **Danya 'Willow' Loeliger**

This trip was a great experience that I am very grateful for. The landscape and nature were stunning and the combination of clear blue lakes, trees all around you and far away snowy mountains is one of the most beautiful things I've ever witnessed. The opportunity to see Canadian nature from a canoe is ineffable. But most importantly, the team was incredible! Everybody was very supportive, in all different ways. Everyone was ready to help without being asked, and it was beautiful to watch the team believing in each other and demonstrating it in such a supportive way. - **Isi 'Ivy' Haeusler**



REDEFINING WEALTH

Teachings from Melvin's Stories

Wealth = the ability to give. Wealth isn't about money, it's about what you give. In Melvin's words, being able to provide something for others, such as his story of giving your paddle to a neighbour to keep them safe, made you wealthy. This challenges the materialistic ideal that 'just because you can't see something, doesn't mean it's not there'. These words from Melvin connected perfectly with our class discussions surrounding privilege. Just because you can't see someone's struggles it doesn't mean that they aren't there. I strive to be aware that some people don't have some of the privileges I take for granted; I want to be able to show support through their tough times while still letting them grow and push themselves. A final thought after all these wonderful stories and pieces of advice...Melvin spoke of giving your paddle to a loved one so they will always have a spare for safety. This directly relates to our CMA Community Agreement which we built together as a team. It is our map moving forward which guides us to support each other along our collective journey, enabling us to grow and overcome challenges together. - **Andrew 'Crow' Krowitz**

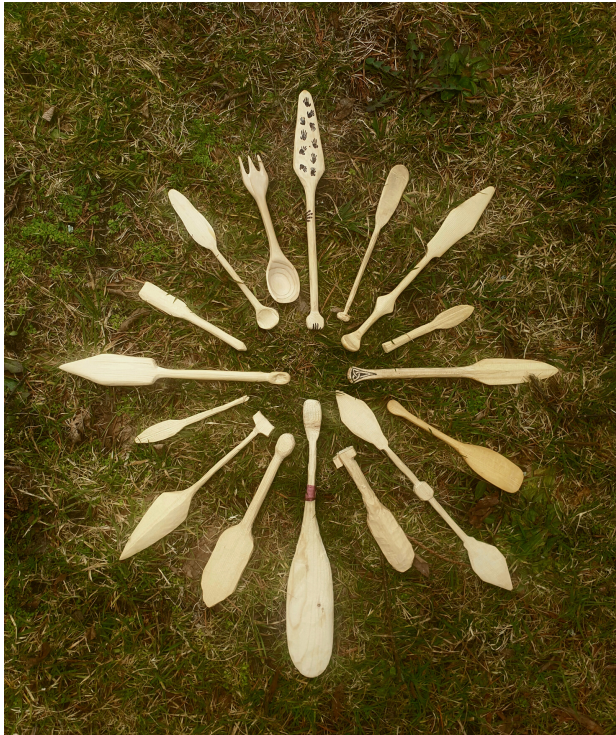


WILLOW

A tradition in the CMA community is to choose a 'nature' or 'spirit' name. For my nature name I chose Willow. When I was a child my family and I would always go to this park near my hometown in Basel (Switzerland) and have picnics under the same tree. A willow tree. We would go to every summer.

I have always loved this place, the specifically the willow tree. For me, that tree felt like a safe space, like home. I can't exactly say what it was, but I've always felt drawn to that tree. Today, I still try to go to that tree in the park and read books, do schoolwork, or hang out with friends. I chose the name Willow because it reminds me of all these times, but also because I want to be the way that place makes me feel. I want to make people feel welcomed and secure and safe enough to be their own selves around me. In my own way, I want to be their willow tree.

- **Danya 'Willow' Loeliger**



PADDLES

My paddle shape connects me to Haida Gwaii and my childhood. By making my paddle in the traditional Haida warrior shape, I have the opportunity to expand my own knowledge of the Haida culture and share it with my peers.

- **Chelsea Doug' Leslie**

I heard the expression “we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors but borrow it from our children”. I want my paddle to represent the land that my kids and grandkids will live on. Rather than signifying the past, I want my paddle to signify a hopeful future.”

- **Andrew 'Burl' Durie**

Being able to canoe the Sayward canoe route using the paddle that I had made was a very valuable experience. It made me think about the life of the tree and the hundreds of years it had been alive until it had been cut down and sold. Thinking about this part of its life is sad, seeing something that had lived through so much could be cut down within minutes. However, to transform it into something as beautiful as a paddle, and then to use this paddle to give us these experiences, provides meaning to this sadness. - **Andrew 'Crow' Krowitz**

My paddle feels different than other ‘things’ in my life because I have a direct relationship with it. I’m making it with my own hands, with a clear purpose in mind. You always end up knowing a thing better when you make it yourself.

- **Raphael 'Raven' Joly**



TEAM CHALLENGES

“If your life has no challenges, you are not really living it”. This quote describes the entirety of the Coast Mountain Academy program. The first day we shared together at Gibsons beach, we committed to seeking discomfort and overcoming obstacles as a team to enhance our bond. We started by getting to know each member of the group through completing several short hikes and developed trust with rock climbing partners. We quickly desired more hikes to strengthen our leadership skills and aimed to tune in with our bodies through mindful movement and meditation. Although none of this was trivial for us, we strived for even greater adventures! To stay safe during our endeavors, we acquired our Wilderness First Aid, FoodSafe, Outdoor Council of Canada & Paddle Canada Certifications. This motivated us to drive toward longer hikes, overnight campouts, and new experiences including skiing, snowboarding, carving, kayaking, canoeing, survival skills, leading youth programs and more! Each experience encouraged us to push the edge of our comfort zones, develop new teamwork strategies and challenge our skills in unique ways. With every struggle, we returned a more resilient and fearless squad. One of our greatest obstacles was using our hand-carved paddles to propel us on a three-day canoe trip, and to use them to teach the local grade 7 students canoe skills. These experiences were certainly challenging for us all yet left us with the most memorable times while truly unifying our team.

If I learned anything during my time in CMA, it is that within the moments of absolute discomfort I can find the most comfort. I believe that, for the rest of our lives, every single one of us will continue to follow a seek discomfort mentality, to propel us forwards building meaningful, resilient, and lasting friendships. “We do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard.” (John. F Kennedy).

- Kohen 'Capra' Butler



FINDING SPACE FOR PRIVILEGE

Estine said, “if you can’t explain it to a five year old, you can’t know it well enough”. I tried to explain privilege to my then 6-year-old cousin and I was unable to. She nor I was able to grasp the complex web of things that society holds higher than others. She kept asking me "why, why I do have more benefits than my friend without a dad?" I had to pause, because I couldn’t explain it. I don’t know all of the ins and outs of privilege, but I know that I have some privileges and not others. I keep finding out new ones about me all the time that I didn’t realize. I don’t know how to combat them or how to live with them, all I can do is try to recognize them, so I get a better idea of how they influence my life and those around me. Everyone has different privilege tools in their 'toolbox'. I strive for a world where humans are cognizant of the tools they hold, and where I can share my tools with others when they need them, and they can share with me when I'm in need.

- **Liam 'Sasquatch' Gottfried**

HONOURABLE HARVEST

Inspired by the Honourable Harvest chapter in Braiding Sweetgrass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer



Once the gift in reciprocity for what people have taken comes, when those left with minuscule fractions are compensated, we can create a balance in the harvest and a level of equality among all humans. If done correctly, the honourable harvest could be a way to create a sustainable earth. I aim to be more conscious about the bigger picture when harvesting a resource, especially when the passage talks about never taking the first nor the last. I believe that some degree of honourable harvest should be practiced unanimously worldwide, as in today’s society, it seems nothing is sustainable, but integrating core values from this book would allow our world to become united and move forward as one interwoven system of vitality.

- **Austyn 'Otter' Leach**

APPLETON CREEK - BLINDFOLDED CONTEMPLATIONS

As soon as my blindfold went on, I felt cut off from the outside world. The only thing I could focus on was the rumble of the river next to me. All other sounds were masked by the raging river, and it got me thinking about all the other sounds I missed. All I could focus on was the river. This led me to connections found in my everyday life. Sometimes, I feel that people focus so entirely on one thing that they miss everything else, especially when they're unable to see those things. When I took off my blindfold, I realized how many things were going on right in front of me. Birds were flying, branches were swaying, and the most ironic part was that I couldn't even see the river. - **Andrew 'Burl' Durie**

It is amazing how with only our ears we can make sense of many fundamental cycles on earth. In this sense I found one example of the life cycle, where plants grow to provide food for bugs and animals yet feed off them when they decompose into the soil. I could also determine a small part of the water/precipitation cycle. In my example, glacial water melts to provide the water in this creek that the trees thrive on. The roots of the trees soak up the moisture and release some in the air where it returns to the mountains and glaciers. In this activity, just focusing on the sounds around me, I was able to study the beauty of nature's precision. - **Kohen 'Capra' Butler**



HOME

7,748 km away from "home". The trees dance differently in the wind. The sea makes smaller waves, and the birds sing different songs. Sometimes the small town makes you feel lonely; it's those moments when you forget about the dancing, the waves, and the songs. It's those moments, where you forget what it feels like.

Sometimes those moments stay forever, feel like forever. My "forever" was interrupted, by people who laughed like at home, from people who hiked, swam, canoed, and sang like at home. Coast Mountain Academy welcomed me with open arms. They shared with me their trees, oceans, and birds. They taught me to love the foreign dances and songs until they felt like home to me. - **Anneke 'Ember' Sichart**



WILDERNESS FIRST AID

Bear attacks, strokes, and broken legs – to a stranger passing by Oceanview it must have been quite a concerning sight! Fortunately, all these accidents only happened in ‘scenario world’. They were part of the Wilderness First Aid course presented by two great instructors from WMA Canada. Though the scenarios were a highlight, they taught us more than just new acting skills! In 40 hours, we gained knowledge and were empowered to handle first-aid situations – all in relation to a wilderness context. Even though it was a lot of material to understand, study and remember, it was definitely a rewarding experience that provided us with an increased feeling of safety and confidence when being outdoors. - **Isi 'Ivy' Haeusler**

THE STORY OF THINGS

Something that I own that I know where it came from is my baby quilt. Every stitch came from the hands of my grandmother. Each colour in the line represents the temperature from every day leading up to my birth. The thread in the quilt was made by hand, from a woman living in my mother's hometown in South Africa.



My baby quilt was brought over on a boat, from where my grandmother sat making it in a red and gold patterned armchair, which now sits in my grandfather's house. My baby quilt has a rich history, its story providing meaning to my life and symbolizing where I come from.

- **Thea 'Monarch' Healy**

A COLLECTIVE RITE OF PASSAGE

The Grade 7 camps were our final cumulative project for the 2022 CMA semester. These camps encompassed and utilized all the skills and knowledge we gained throughout our time with the program. Our role was to organize, facilitate, and develop programming for the four district-wide camps. We collaborated with the OLC and members of their team for several weeks to plan and prepare for our upcoming project. Our goal for the program was to give the students the opportunity to experience nature-based activities, gain useful outdoor skills, and share our learnings in this beautiful rite of passage.

We created three skill-based stations based on the elements: fire, water, and earth. As CMA students we took on various roles in these camps, trying our hand at different positions such as programmers, camp councilors, and station agents. We utilized our knowledge and skills from both the OCC certification and our Paddle Canada certifications.



These experiences allowed us to further develop our leadership skills, solidify our ability to work as a team, and inspire younger students to appreciate being in the outdoors. Overall, this was a rich experience that was full of learning and growth for the entire CMA team and was a shared Rite of Passage for all involved.

- Danae 'Coral' Charlton & Sage 'Basil' Worthen

POETRY

Soaring

Kohen 'Capra' Butler

I used to be the ruler of sky
Not even the trees could contain me
Up in the clouds I felt safe and sound
Struck jealousy in the mere mosquitos and flies
Every inch was green, from mountains to shores
Now I wish that there could be more
You've destroyed my home and continue to take
Filling my view with an ugly grey landscape
Your loud machines shake my head
On ground, on water and where I most belong
The air and sky you fill with smog
And take my freedom and my song
I am left to be stealthy under the remaining
fauna
Learned to enjoy it like Coho and his sauna
Though looking down and seeing you
Find comfort just like I do
Gives me hope that I will one day
Get my wings back

Pop Can

Andrew 'Burl' Durie

I was created across the world
Wrapped with bright colours and filled with joy
I spent most of my days in a dark room
The bumping churned my insides
I thought I was special, going somewhere meaningful
That was until the doors opened and the light revealed
itself
I was the same as the rest no matter how hard I tried,
there were hundreds like me
Me and 5 others were shoved in an ice cold room, where
I sat waiting
I waited
And waited
Until one day me and the others were taken
I thought I was finally free
But the very being cracked open my head and emptied
my insides
Then I was stuck to a tree
Watching the kids go by where I was left to rot

Ivy on Trees

Danae 'Coral' Charlton

I am climbing up these trees
As I am being circled by some bees
Although I am thriving
Some of these trees are barely
surviving
The sun is shining on my leaves
As some of the vegetation pleas
For me to stop spreading
As their life may be forced into
ending

Silent Perspectives

Andrew 'Crow' Krowitz

Small, still, silent.
Searching, stretching, striving
for sun.
A small sapling surrounded
by the darkness of dusk.
Lost, lonely, waiting.
Waiting to be seen.

Sunlight

Chelsea 'Doug' Leslie

I am warmth I am light
I am happiness I am bright
I dance among the leaves and trees
I fuel flowers that feed the bees
I am safety I am fun
I am the radiant glowing sun

WE CAN MAKE A COMEBACK

There are these questions that always stick in the back of my mind. How do we empower humanity to change its behaviours, to stop the impending ecological and societal collapse? How do we bring humans together to work towards a common goal during this age of incredible polarization? How can we imagine a future that supports equality and health, celebrates and embodies indigenous wisdom and sees intrinsic value in all species, while not feeling overwhelmed and 'shut down' at the immensity of the task ahead? When I daydream about solutions, collaborating on the local level with a strong focus around community comes to my mind.

This year we had the pleasure of sharing a week with musician and activist Luke Wallace. Luke was incredibly inspiring, and filled me with hope and energy for continuing forwards through struggle towards a better future for all. We both graduated from the outdoor education program TREK, and just a year older than me he forges on, seemingly fearless, in his pursuit for a better world. His storytelling, paired with beautiful musical interludes, was relatable, relevant, emotional and engaging; his talks around purpose and meaningful lives deeply resonated with both the students and myself.

Not only did we collaboratively run workshops envisioning a sustainable future for gathet with Brooks, we also had the pleasure of creating music with Luke. The CMA Family Band made its debut at Max Cameron Theatre, with a tuba, trumpet, piano, trombone, banjo, spoons, guitars and a 'shmarm' of maracas no less.



Making music was an important step in building our community, and brought us together around a shared message we all could agree with, no matter our opposing views or varying backgrounds. We send gratitude to Luke; it was a joy to collaborate and learn with such a beautiful human. I still don't have eloquent answers for those questions in the back of my mind, but as our students prepare to head out into this crazy world I find solace knowing that through their experiences community building, connecting with nature and sharing music, they're building a solid foundation grounded in hope and fueled by passion. I know they will flourish, linking arms with their communities, building a bigger wolf pack and striving towards a comeback.

- **Kelsey 'Sea Star' Livingstone**