

Learning in Depth with IEE Topics

The project Learning in Depth (LiD) involves each child being given a particular topic to learn about through her or his whole school career, in addition to the usual curriculum, and building a personal portfolio on the topic. The concept lends itself to the goals of IEE as well. Engaging the body and its emotions through direct contact with their given topic, often in their own backyard, students gain deeper insight into their own situatedness and relationship with it.

The following topics allow for this kind of somatic engagement.

Algae	Fossils	Salmon
Amphibians	Fungi	Sea Otters
Ants	Grass	Snails and Slugs
Bats	Insects	Snakes
Bears	Leaves	Soil
Beavers	Mammals	Spiders
Bees	Mice and Rats	Swamps and Wetlands
Beetles	Mollusks	Trees
Berries	Moss	Turtles
Birds	Oceans	Vertebrates
Butterflies and Moths	Oviparous Animals	Volcanoes
Compost	Ponds and Lakes	Wood
Crabs	Rabbits	Worms
Ferns	Reptiles	
Flowers	Rocks and Minerals	

Here are some starting questions for each topic. As students learn more about their topic and spend time observing and exploring, new and deeper questions will emerge.

Algae

- What colour are the algae?
- Does there appear to be anything “stuck” in the algae? (eggs for example)
- Where are the algae located? (in a pond, ditch, lake, etc)

Amphibians

- What do amphibians eat?
- Are amphibians poisonous?
- What are amphibians’ main habitat?

Ants

- What colour are ants?
- Observe ants: What do they do? (carrying food, forming a line, etc)
- How far away from an anthill are the ants?

Bats

- What is echolocation?
- What time of day do bats appear?
- What do bats eat and how do they catch their prey?

Bears

- What colours are bears?
- How large are bears?
- What do bears eat?

Beavers

- Do beavers live on land or in the water?
- What are the characteristics of the beaver? (flat tail, large teeth, fur color, etc)
- Do beavers make a sound?

Bees

- How many flowers does a bee visit in order to produce one pound of honey?
- Do honeybees have hair on their eyes?
- Are there any other insects that produce food for humans?

Beetles

- Do beetles vary in size? If so what is the smallest or the biggest in B.C.?
- Where do beetles live?
- Are beetles harmful to the environment?

Berries

- How many varieties of berries are grown in B.C.?
- Are all berries edible? Which ones are and which are not?
- Which berries are used to make pigments for dyes or paint?

Birds

- Do birds live in large groups or are they independent?
- What do birds eat?
- What kinds of habitats do birds live in?

Butterflies and Moths

- What is the difference between a butterfly and a moth?
- Which species of butterflies or moths live in B.C.?
- Are some butterflies or moths endangered?

Clouds

- What are the different types of clouds?
- What is your favorite type of cloud and why?
- How do clouds form?

Compost

- What kinds of materials go inside of a compost box?
- How long before compost can be used to fertilize a garden?
- Does your family have a compost box? Why or why not?

Crabs

- What kinds of crabs live in the oceans near B.C.?
- Have you tried a certain type of crab? What did it taste like?
- How do crabs catch their prey and what do they eat?

Ferns

- How many species of ferns are native to B.C.?
- Did ferns exist in the time of dinosaurs?
- Do any animals eat ferns?

Flowers

- What is your favorite flower and why? What is your least favorite flower and why?
- How do flowers grow?
- Which flowers have a scent, and which flowers do not?

Fossils

- How are fossils made?
- What is the name of the scientists who dig up fossils?
- Have you seen a fossil in real life? Draw a picture of what the fossil looked like

Fungi

- What kinds of mushrooms have you seen? Draw a picture of what some looked like.
- Do fungi grow on trees?
- How big are the biggest mushrooms? How small are the smallest?

Grass

- What are the different types of grass?
- Where does grass normally grow?
- What sorts of animals eat grass?

Insects

- Which insect releases a chemical that smells and tastes terrible so that the birds and other predators won't eat them?
- How many eggs does a female ladybug lay in her lifetime?
- How many species of beetles are there in the world? Did you know that they are the largest order of insects in the world?

Islands

- How many islands does B.C. have?
- Which is the biggest B.C. island and which is the smallest?
- What is one interesting fact about your favorite island?

Leaves

- What shapes are leaves? What colours?
- Which types of trees have leaves? What distinctive leaf shapes identify types of trees?
- Do leaves change colour or size? Why? How?

Mammals

- What are your three favorite mammals that live in B.C.?
- Do some mammals live in large groups or live independently?
- What is the difference between a mammal and oviparous animals?

Mice and Rats

- What is the difference between a mouse and a rat?
- What kinds of mice or rats inhabit B.C.?
- Do you think mice and rats are pests or pets? Why?

For more theoretical and practical advice on working with LiD topics, please visit the LiD Project page at circesfu.ca.