

Integrating Community Engaged Learning Initiatives into the Academic English Classroom: An Opportunity for Students to Grow as Language Learners and as Global Citizens

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We would like to share with you

- An overview of the potential benefits of community engaged learning
- How we have implemented community engagement initiatives within our EAP courses
- Student perspectives from engaging in these initiatives
- A project that can be transferred and implemented into different teaching and learning contexts
- Our reflections as project leads



What is Community Engaged Learning?

A form of **experiential education** where students apply, engage, and further their education through community involvement

Often interdisciplinary and hands on, these opportunities **connect classroom learning to** help solve **real world issues** within the community.



Benefits of Community Engaged Learning

- Offers an opportunity to **apply course learning to authentic contexts**, applying course concepts to help develop solutions to social and environmental issues
- Allows students to move beyond the classroom to **practice skills** that they are learning in class, and even **build new** (transferable, resume boosting) skills
- Provides opportunities for **networking**, learning about different possibilities within the community
- Allows students to connect outside of the classroom and **build their own communities**, out of the campus bubble
- A chance to **give back** to the community and make a **positive change** in the world!



The Centre for Community Engaged Learning at the University of British Columbia

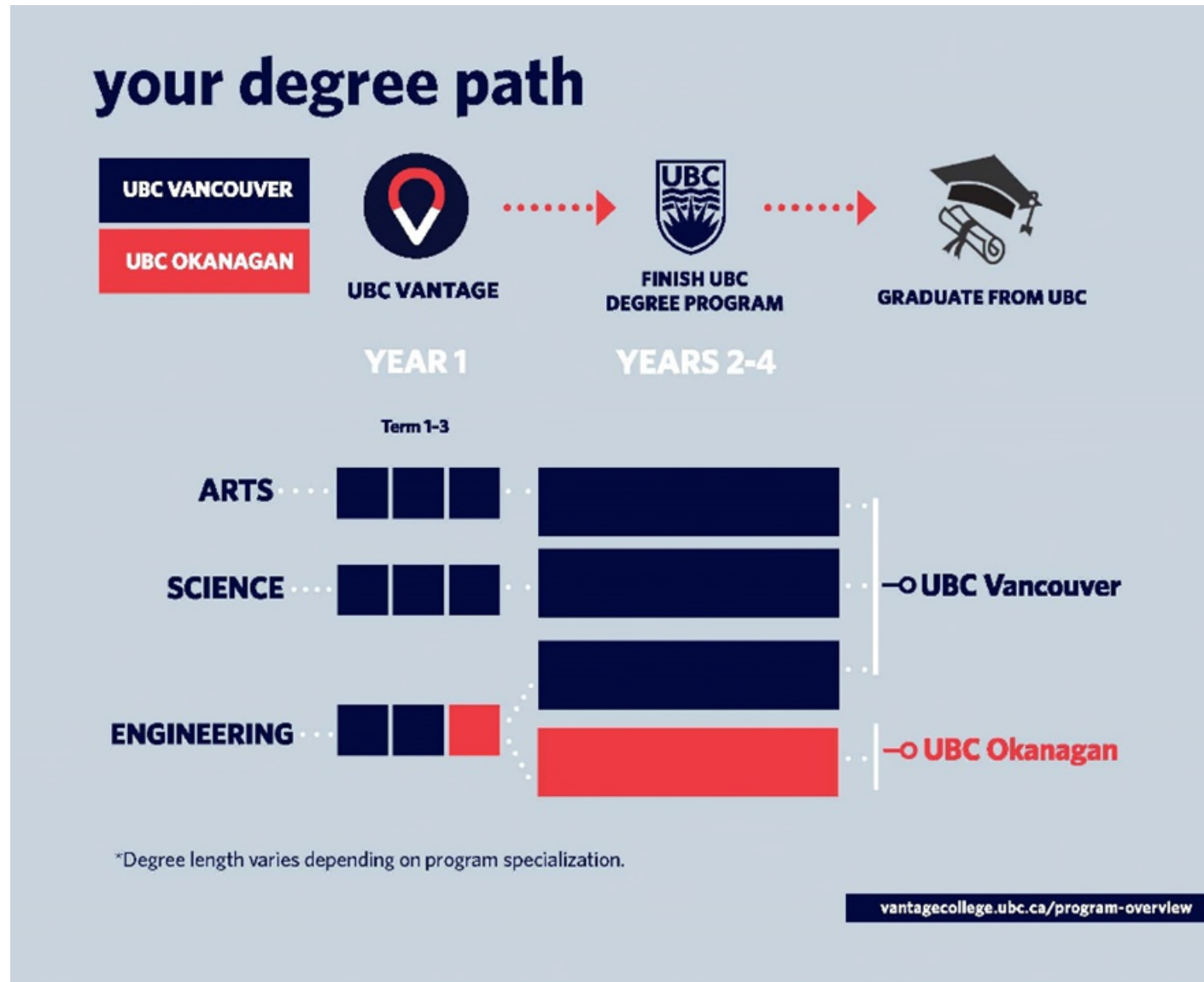


A UBC Funded Project:

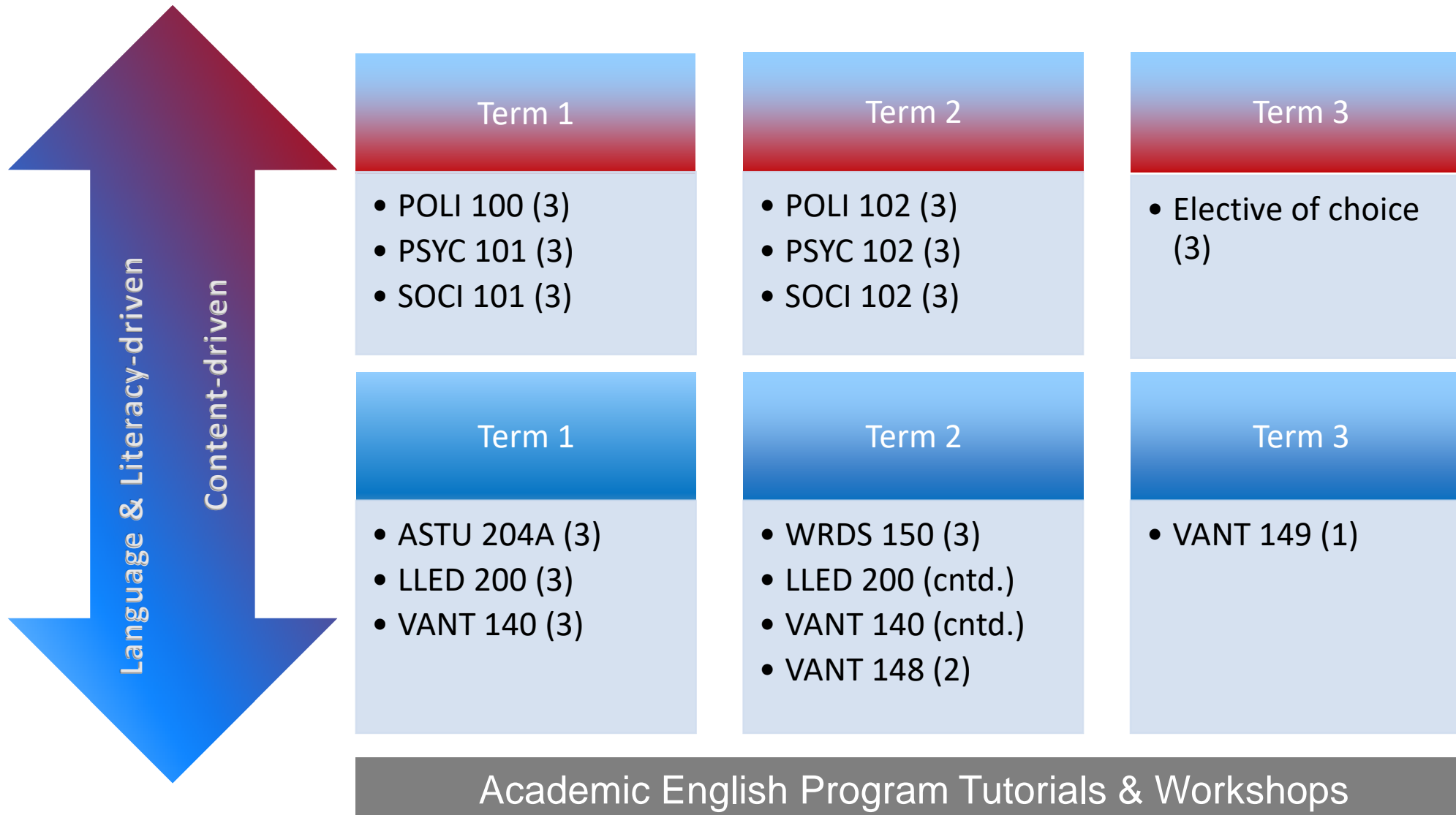
Expanding Community Engaged Learning Opportunities Across First Year Cohort-Based Programs

- Building faculty knowledge and confidence in developing CEL opportunities in first year cohort programs
- Sustainable resource support
 - Specially trained CEL TA Fellows who, combined with CEL Mentors, support new practitioners of CEL in exploring this innovative pedagogical method

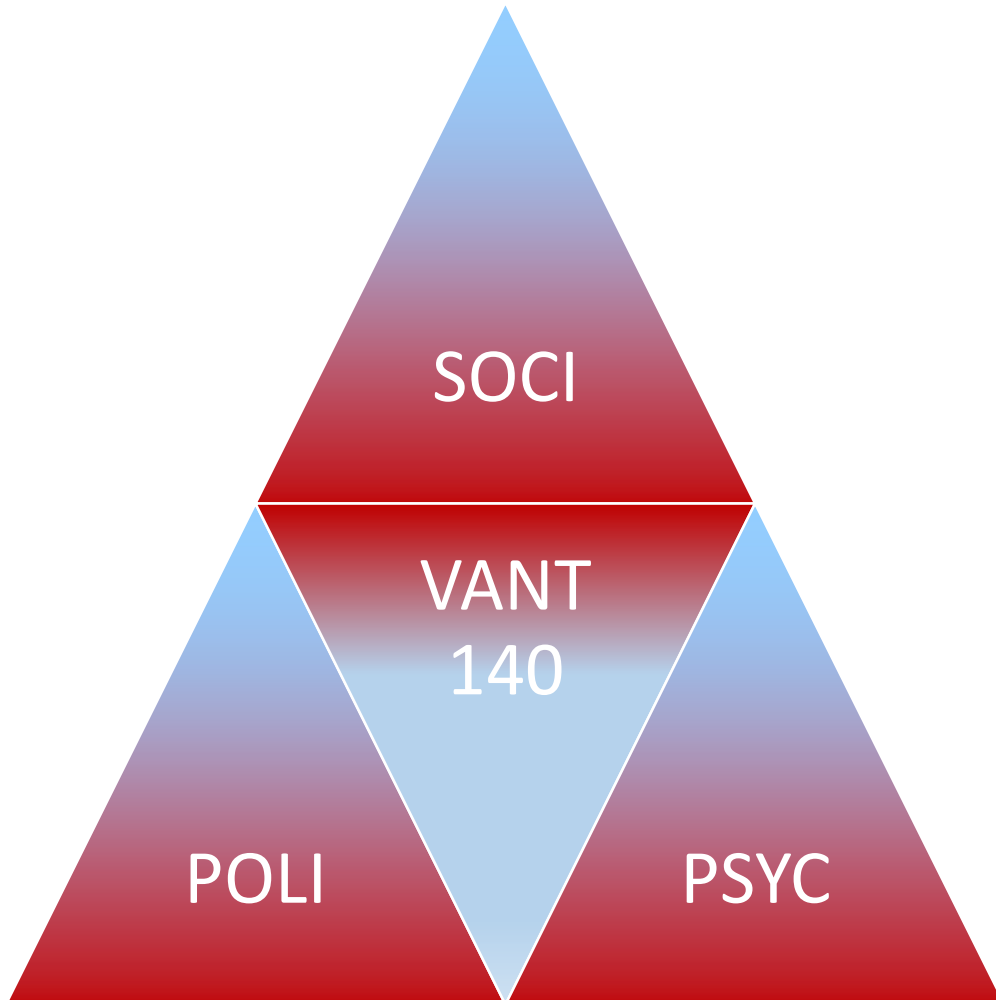
Our Context: The Vantage One Programs at UBC



Vantage College Curricular Model:



Embedded Literacy Support



EAP instructors work closely with the content instructors in order to:

- ascertain the literacy practices common to the discipline and how those fit with course expectations
- advise content instructors on ways in which they integrate a focus on language in assignments or lectures
- deliver a course that supports students' acquisition of academic literacies related to the discipline.

Benefits of CEL for International EAL Students

Allows students to learn about Vancouver and connect with the community beyond their Vantage cohort

Beneficial particularly for EAP language classrooms by “enhancing the linguistic and **communicative competence** of language learners and advancing the **intercultural competence** that is necessary for global citizens to engage with a diverse world” (Lee et al., 2017, p. 169).



Our Projects



Various Levels of Engagement Opportunities Provided

Sociology & EAP Course Collaboration

Provided students an opportunity to volunteer as classroom assistants in Vancouver elementary schools for three consecutive days during their Winter Reading Week

- Joint Assignment:
 - Produce a **Community Engaged Learning Reflective Essay** based on their experience
- EAP Course Focus:
 - Stages of a critical, reflective essay with comparison and contrast writing to demonstrate their understanding of community before and after the placement



Food Communities in Vancouver



Our EAP Course Focus:
Food Sustainability

Community Partners & The Project

Overview of the off-campus
1 day Placements



Option A:

Village Vancouver Community Garden

Village Vancouver envisions Vancouver as a vibrant city at the leading edge of sustainability, where residents know their neighbours and participate in collective actions to minimize their ecological footprint. The focus is on local food production and distribution, a full-employment local economy, renewable energy, and low-impact transportation.



Option B:

Food Stash

Food Stash Foundation is a Canadian Charity with the goal of rescuing surplus food directly from suppliers and redirecting it to households in our community that experience food insecurity, while reducing the environmental impact of food waste.



Option C:

Food Stash Stall at Riley Park Farmer's Market

Riley Park Farmer's Market envisions the creation of community space and social cohesion to promote promote food security.



Class Visit to the UBC Farm

Students participated in a **walking tour** of the site, stopping at different **research projects** and **production field areas** (bee hives, orchards, blueberries, truffle planting), and learning about **community programming**, exploring topics such as biodiversity, urban/rural relations, organic practices, and Indigenous ways of knowing and education

➤ Lowest level of CEL engagement



Written Project Assessments

- Before volunteering, interested students submitted applications
 - Based on a resume writing and cover letter EAP class
- Final Term Assessment: a Community Engaged Learning Reflective Essay



The Student Perspective

Findings from our Focus Group Interviews



The Student Perspective:

Noticing Communication Challenges & Barriers

1. Language Barriers

“Their [other UBC students and people at the organizations] English is good and... it's more stressful to communicate with... sometimes I can't... I also don't understand what they are talking about.”

2. Subject Knowledge Barriers

“It's also difficult to say what I want to say and if the topic is about nutrition and there are a lot of professional words that I also don't know in English.”

3. Social Barriers

“The other one specifically for me, and I bet a lot of international students also like relate with, was like the cultural language... The slang? Between when you hang out with friends... and then like names of people that I am not really familiar with, so like celebrities or... accents, connotations when you are speaking, the content itself as in very different mindsets... they have different ideologies, different perspective, open mindedness which I struggle with a lot... certain etiquettes and social norms which I wasn't really exposed to before, so I was not familiar with.”

The Student Perspective:

These barriers can lower EAL student confidence

“I kind of feel bad about myself because **I didn’t really speak a lot**. But maybe because there’s so many native speakers over there **I feel very shy**. And, **doesn’t have the encourage to speak**. Cause I always thinking if the grammar is right or something like that.”

“Well, to be honest, **I feel less confident to interact with them** because I...If I know they are from Vantage I kind of feel more confident because I least know they are not native speakers. So, they are like the same level of English compared to me... I also, I think the willingness to learn and communicate is also a big essential tool. Because, **some of the students will like to stay in their comfort zones**. They just don’t want to and just like keep up with their...like, students that they know.”

The Student Perspective: Breaking through the Barriers

“There was this one girl in the classroom and I was assigned to read with her. She was very shy, because when I asked to read, “Could you read with me please?” And she said, “No, I’m not going to read. You will read for me.” And, I didn’t want really to argue with her, I didn’t know maybe she is shy, maybe she has some problems with reading. So, I started reading with her... I felt really happy... when she corrected me, like, I made some... maybe mistakes in public so that girl could correct me and say something. And I felt a little bit better... she kind of interacted with me.”

“I was feeling very anxious before the experience... I was really frightened... But, after this experience, I understood like maybe people do not really pay attention to my mistakes, like grammar mistakes or pronunciation mistakes. Like, not a lot of people really care about all that. And it made me a little bit more confident in English.”

The Student Perspective:

Noting the Linguistic Learning Opportunities

“I think it all still provides, like pushes me to really interact with others... although you’re in Canada, you’re studying in Canadian university, your opportunity to really speak English with others are still limited in this program. So, I think attending this Reading Week Program somehow is like **pushing me to, like, go out; to like explore and just communicate with others.**”

“In this way, **I have more chances to speak in English rather than class.** Cause they’re always too many people in class. The professor don’t always have time to, like, communicate with EACH one of them. And, like, especially when I communicate with kids, like...Cause, like, their English skill is better than me I know. Cause sometimes there are communication problems. So, I have to EXPLAIN to them, and they have to explain to me like some local food I don’t know or yeah. So, in this way I have to improve my English.”

“Sometimes I can ask them, what's this word about? And they can help me to paraphrase or just make some examples and **teach me.**”

The Student Perspective:

Learning about Cultural Differences, the Community

“I learned a different kind of teaching method in Canada... In China, we only do a lot of homework in the elementary school but they're really heavy.”

“I understood, like, okay there are children that there are also kind of different cultures and maybe they also have some problems even though they kind of growing up in this country.”

“Actually, I said “no” one time, and suddenly, I found that “no” is a harsh word for them, actually, when I said “no”, the child went silent and suddenly I realized this is not gonna be okay and I have to change.”

The Student Perspective:

Connecting through Community & Culture

Connecting through their culture

“In the elementary [school], there are still some, like Chinese students... but they born in Canada, but part of them, they can speak a little Chinese. And I think, when they first saw me, they have the sense of familiar, and they are willing to talk to me and learn from me cause I’m the only foreign student in my group. They kept asking me questions about, like, some questions about Chinese background, or, even ask me to teach them some Chinese phrase.”

Building Community within UBC

“For this time, I am engaging with students, but I’m also engaging with my peers, they’re also, like there are local students, there some international students from other countries, this project provide us a chance to like, communicate with each other, to share our experience to make more friends, and provide me more opportunities to engage.”

The Student Perspective:

Implications for Future CEL Initiatives

The importance of supportive CEL environments

- “I have a lot of support from the teachers in elementary school. Sometimes if I say something too difficult for kids to understand... the teachers can always rephrase it to another funny way to say it, so I think I get a lot of support from the teacher and also, I learnt how to say things in more interesting way.”

Time commitments of CEL activities

- “Three days are really tiring because I need to use my second language to communicate.”
- “Actually, I don't improve a lot because it's only three days. Most of the time is the Vantage College that helps me improve my English.”

Students enjoyed interacting in CEL contexts & expressed a desire to learn more about “daily” communication skills in our EAP classes.

A Transferrable Community Engaged Learning Project

Promoting Social Activism



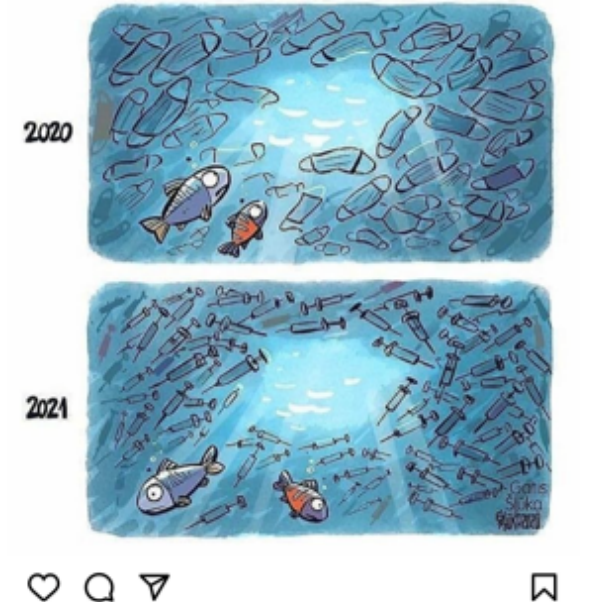
A Transferrable CEL Project for EAP Classes

- Our challenge: How to make this more sustainable
 - Online challenges with COVID-19
 - Transferrable to different disciplinary linked courses
- Theme of **Advocacy** linked to course assignments
 - Written blogs and social media posts
 - Letter of advocacy



Many question why millions of children and adults across the world are taking the time to strike: don't they have school, work or other responsibilities?

The answer is simple: **We strike because we have no choice.** We are fighting for our future and for our children's future. We strike because there is still time to change, but time is of the essence. The sooner we act, the better our shared future will be.



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curious.about.our.planet 🌍 We shouldn't disregard externalities from measures introduced to protect our health while negatively affecting the health of other living beings on our planet.

🌊 The oceans shouldn't suffer the consequences of this pandemic.

📷 @karikaturalv

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#reduceuserecycle #reducewaste #plasticfree
#reusablemask #reusables #zerowasteliving #zerowaste



MEAT PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

A BLOG BY UBC VANTAGE COLLEGE STUDENT



lighterfoodprint



lighterfoodprint UBC Vantage College Student Blog 🌟

"Environmental Impact of Meat Production"

Did you know that you contribute to the effect of meat production (and therefore, climate change) when you eat a juicy steak? 🍖

Lighter Foodprint is working very hard to inform people how food production is responsible for climate change.

Not all food is produced the same way: meat requires more space, fertilizer (synthetic or organic), and energy, and hence has a higher potential to contribute to climate change — a larger carbon footprint.

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) did research that states that beef reared traditionally have the most carbon impact of all the foods. The production of one pound of typical feedlot beef results in the emission of 26 pounds of carbon dioxide. What a huge number!

Comment below with your ideas on how to mitigate these effects, how to change behaviour and help our planet! 🌍

Click on the link in our bio to read the entire blog!

Edited · 3d



Our Reflections

- This project offers a pedagogical example of how less explored genres in academia, such as the genre of blogs and social media posts, can be used to provide possibilities for community engagement within the academic English classroom.
- These CEL initiatives provide students a chance hone their research skills, learn more deeply about course concepts, and produce an authentic piece of writing used to inform the general public, while also benefitting partnered community organizations.
- These projects also serve as a way for students to engage with the host community, a particular challenge for international EAL students.



Thank you!

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