

Decolonizing Environmental Education:  
A Resource Guide for Non-Indigenous Educators  
by  
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### **Research Question**

The question that guided my research was: *How can environmental educators integrate and center Indigenous knowledge in curriculum as a primary source and model for sustainability, understanding natural systems, and developing whole-hearted relationships with nature in order to deepen student learning, create inclusive and contextual learning environments, and to work towards restorative justice?*

### **Project Summary**

The project I created in an effort to answer my research question is a resource guide website for non-Indigenous environmental educators seeking to critically examine their own role in settler colonial systems and engage in co-resistance and Indigenous resurgence by centering Indigenous voices in their teaching. Using transformative learning and social justice education frameworks, the resource guide website includes self-reflective practices and resources for critical analysis to decolonize curriculum and center Indigenous perspectives, as well as teaching resources for use with students in the classroom or field.

Many scholars that I referenced in my literature review cite the need for Indigenous voices and perspectives to be centered in education in order to move towards a process of decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenous resurgence (Irlbacher-Fox, 2014; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018); however Indigenous sovereignty over the narratives and teachings shared needs to be maintained and prioritized (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). In order for non-Indigenous educators to be able to guide students towards critical understanding of the history and context of land in

environmental education, they must first investigate their own identity and assumptions within settler colonial society and education (Cannon, 2012; Irlbacher-Fox, 2014).

The resource guide utilizes Hackman’s “Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education” (2005) as a framework, which consist of: content mastery, tools for critical analysis, tools for social change, tools for personal reflection, and an awareness of multicultural group dynamics. Sections move through tools for educator self-reflection and critical analysis to resources for factual, contextualized content created exclusively by Indigenous authors. While the resource guide offers starting points for non-Indigenous educators to move towards concepts of decolonization, there are no conclusive solutions provided. Readers are encouraged to grapple with sometimes conflicting viewpoints and perspectives in order to challenge colonial narratives and assumptions, and to invest in the resurgence of Indigenous cultures and communities.

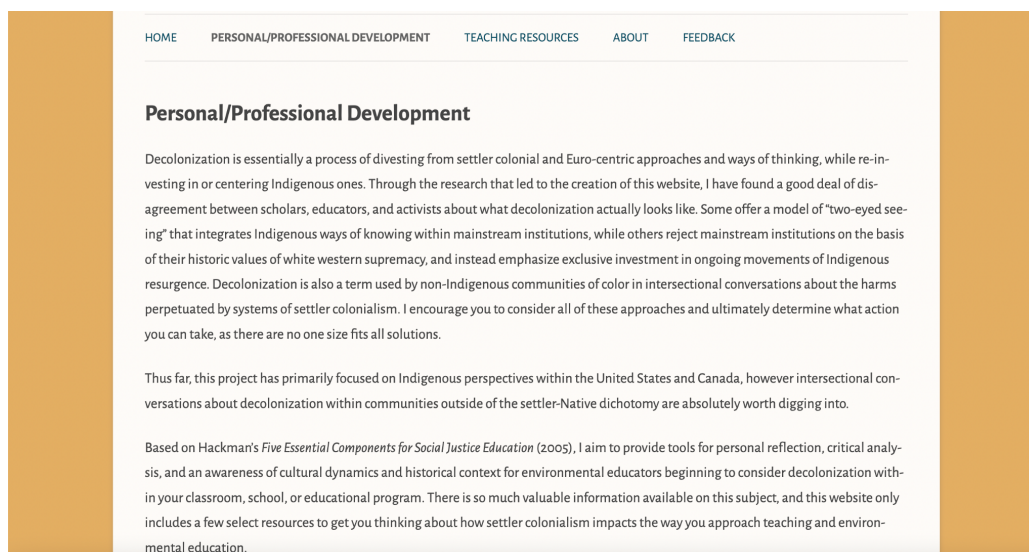
### The Project



The resource guide website created for this project can be found at:

<https://decolonizingenvironmentaleducation.wordpress.com/>. The landing page of the website introduces the topic and the rationale for educators to engage with the ideas of

centering Indigenous perspectives and decolonization in environmental education. It outlines the intended use for the resource guide, and suggests ways in which educators can utilize the website, encouraging educators to work through the Personal/Professional Development section at their own pace before making use of the teaching resources.



The professional development page of the website offers exercises for critical self-reflection and understanding how racist, settler colonial ideologies persist within mainstream environmental education institutions and models of teaching. Annotated resources allow readers to choose the most appropriate tools to further investigate internal biases and develop a personal path towards self-decolonization in order to facilitate similar critical and transformative learning experiences for students. Between the resources there are guiding questions and writing prompts to facilitate critical reflection.

The Teaching Resources pages of the website offer practical classroom and curriculum resources, organized by student age and grade level in a drop-down menu. The main Teaching Resources page contains tools for selecting and assessing classroom resources and suggested professional development workshops.

HOME PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT **TEACHING RESOURCES** ABOUT FEEDBACK

**Teaching Resources**

Select from the drop-down menu to view suggested resources for your classroom organized by grade level. You will find some overlap, as some resources may be useful for a wide range of grade levels.

PREK--2ND GRADE  
3RD--5TH GRADE  
6TH--8TH GRADE  
9TH--12TH GRADE

All teaching resources listed here are created by or in collaboration with Indigenous authors. These resources are intended to be a starting point for educators beginning to consider how to integrate Indigenous perspectives into curriculum. These lists are by no means exhaustive, and I encourage educators to look into what resources may be available in your own area, especially if you are located outside of the Twin Cities.

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*Connecting with local Indigenous organizations, educators, and communities is the best way to help your students learn from the people and culture Indigenous to your area. If there are existing programs already in place, prioritize those resources!*

The remaining pages under the drop-down menu are labeled and organized by grade level: Prek-2nd Grade, 3rd-5th Grade, 6th-8th Grade, and 9th-12th Grade. The resources listed on each page are appropriate for use with the respective grade levels. Resources intended for classroom or field use with students are exclusively authored by Indigenous scholars and educators. These resources include books that could be read aloud to classes or assigned as readings to be discussed in class. They also include potential field trip experiences, Indigenous organizations that offer educational programming, and curriculum plans. Annotations for each resource include suggestions for use in the field or classroom.

Finally, there is a Feedback page with a survey to collect participants' locality, the type of educational setting they teach in, age of their students, as well as which resources on the website they accessed. It asks readers to rate how likely they are to use them in their teaching, as well as the level of new knowledge gained through their use of the resource guide on a provided scale in order to assess their attitudes, knowledge, and plans to utilize the resources.

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