

Wolves and Humans Humans and Wolves

Planning an Interdisciplinary
Project and/or Inquiry

submitted by
Heather Dean
Nelson, BC

Wolves and Humans, Humans and Wolves

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Context

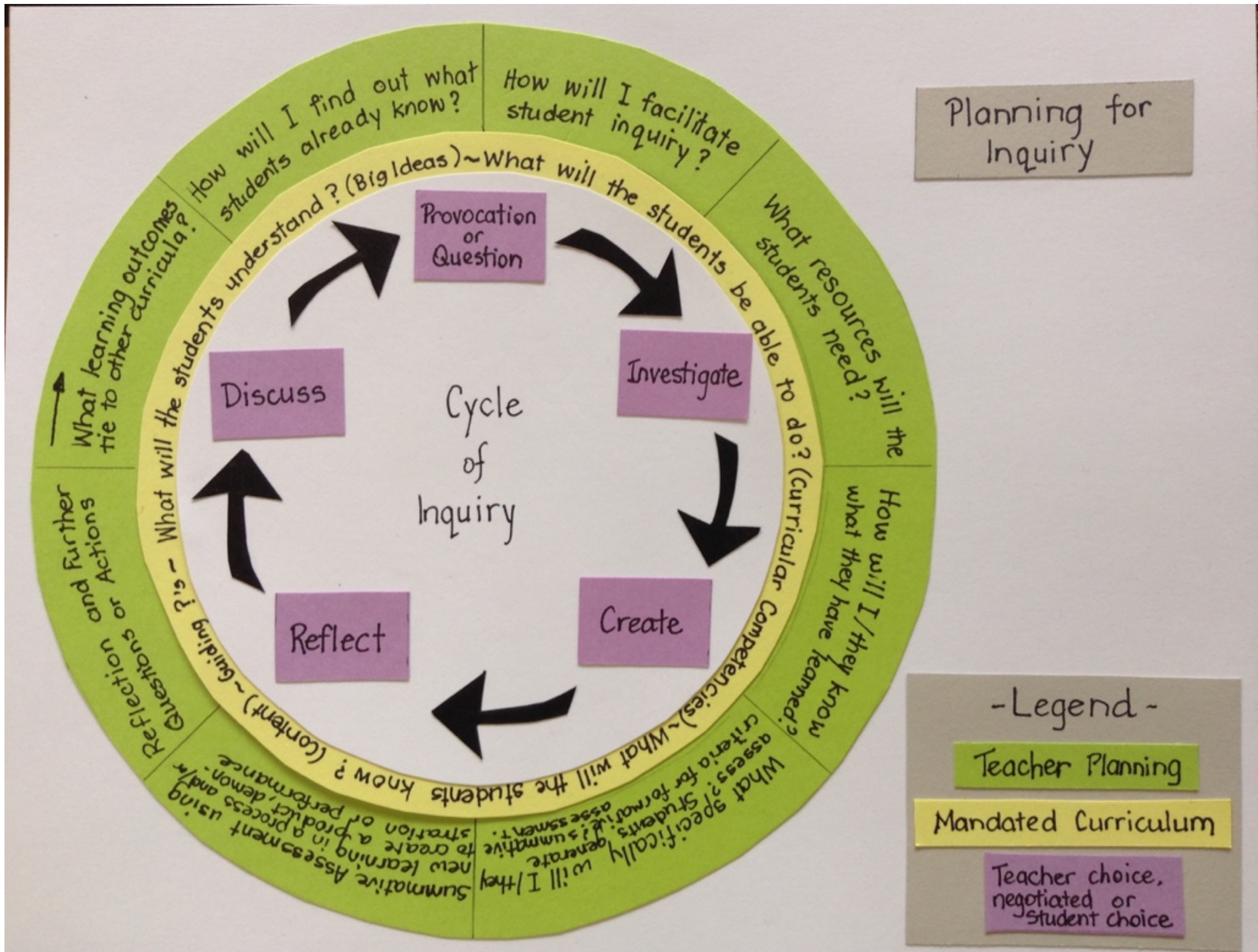
This presentation is meant to show the thinking of an elementary teacher beginning to plan an interdisciplinary unit of study for a multi aged class (most likely Gr 3/4).

However, it is the method the teacher uses rather than the content that is important.

The method can be applied to planning a whole school project, several classes working together or for a single class.

The Model

In this planning model, the teacher does not begin with the end in mind. Rather, the beginning is the result of a provocation that could either come from the teacher or the students. From the initial provocation the teacher begins to formulate questions connecting the topic to appropriate curricular content and competencies. These questions may be helpful as the students engage with the project. In this case, the teacher is directing the initial stages of the project. Once the students have some basic information and understanding the teacher turns the project back to the students, listening to their questions and interests. From this point the students choose a path to pursue on their own or in a small group. The teacher facilitates the learning by providing guidance with the skills and processes needed, resources suitable to the inquiry, and helping the students determine the criteria for assessing their work. In the end, the students present their work to each other and the teacher concludes the project by returning to the initial provocation. The students write a reflection and they may have further questions or actions to pursue.



Planning for Inquiry

-Legend-
 Teacher Planning
 Mandated Curriculum
 Teacher choice, negotiated or Student choice

Hi!
I am an elementary school teacher. I have a multi-aged class of Gr 3+4 students. I am going to show you how I plan a cross-curricular study that will support a variety of inquiry projects. I will use the framework to look for connections in the curriculum.



Recently I noticed an article in the local newspaper about a proposed wolf cull in our area. The article seemed to be lacking information and I started thinking about the relationship between Wolves and Humans. I wondered what my students might think?

I have so many thoughts and ideas already running through my head now. I think I will use a large piece of paper so I can begin to map them out, looking for connections between the curricula.



I think Wolf Island will be a great resource

I wonder if the kids would want to make life size wolves?

I bet the Aboriginal connections will be interesting.

Little Red Riding Hood might have an idea or two on this topic!

Math

The Arts

Initiating Idea
or Provocation

Social Studies

Science

Language Arts

What are a wolf's physical dimensions?

How are wolves portrayed in the arts?

Math

The Arts

Social Studies

Initiating Idea or Provocation

Science

What makes a wolf a wolf?

What is the social structure of a wolf family?

What role do wolves have in the ecosystem?

Language Arts

How are wolves portrayed in literature?

What are a wolf's physical dimensions?

How are wolves portrayed in the arts?

Math

The Arts

Initiating Idea or Provocation

Social Studies

Science

What makes a wolf a wolf?

What is the social structure of a wolf family?

What role do wolves have in the ecosystem?

I will use yellow to represent anything related to The Ministry of Education Curriculum. Green will be my thinking.

ture?



How are wolves portrayed in literature?

Language Arts

Social Studies

What is the social structure of a wolf family?

What relationships do the First Nations people have with wolves?

Initiating Idea or Provocation

Science

What makes a wolf a wolf?

What role do wolves have in the ecosystem?

Math

What are a wolf's physical dimensions?

What statistics will we find about wolves?

The Arts

How are wolves portrayed in the arts?



This is the beginning of my mapping. I try to frame a big question for each subject area. I have left the Initiating Provocation blank because I am not sure what it will be just yet.

Science

Grade 3 - Draft Curriculum

Big Idea →

All life is diverse, can be grouped, and interacts in its ecosystem.

Grade 4

Big Idea → All life responds to its environment

What makes a wolf a wolf?

I think this may be the place to start with the whole class. I don't think the kids actually know very much about wolves so we better all learn the basics first! I am sure we will be able to access basic facts about wolves in our school library as well as from some websites.

What role do wolves have in the ecosystem?

Celia Godkin's book, Wolf Island (1993) will be a good resource to use to introduce food chains as well as balance in an ecosystem.

I will pull together as many stories where wolves play a role. Just for example, Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Pigs, Nanny Goat and the Seven Kids will be a good start. Perhaps I could read "Never Cry Wolf" to the class? I will find legends and stories from other cultures and First Nations. Perhaps our Elder will share some with us, too.

How are wolves portrayed in literature?

Language Arts

I am beginning to think this study could become quite big. Maybe once the students have a grasp on 'what makes a wolf a wolf', they will divide into interest groups or inquiry groups. Not every one has to do everything.



At this point my mind has shifted to thinking more about how the study will play out in the classroom. I have a brief outline (map) of areas we might connect to once we get started. However, until I can assess the interest of my students after the initiating activity, I will leave the mapping for the time being.



Initiating Provocation

I think I will start with the weekly question from the newspaper. It was the provocation for my thinking so I think will have an impact on my students as well. I will ask them to respond to the question; Do you support the decision to cull wolves in the South Selkirk area in order to preserve the Mountain Caribou? Yes or No?

I am guessing they will realize they need more information to make an informed decision.

Next I will have them draw a picture of what they think a wolf looks like. I will give them fine tip markers and white paper. They can add colour with pencil crayons. This will be a drawing without looking at any resources. I will keep them for another look after information gathering.





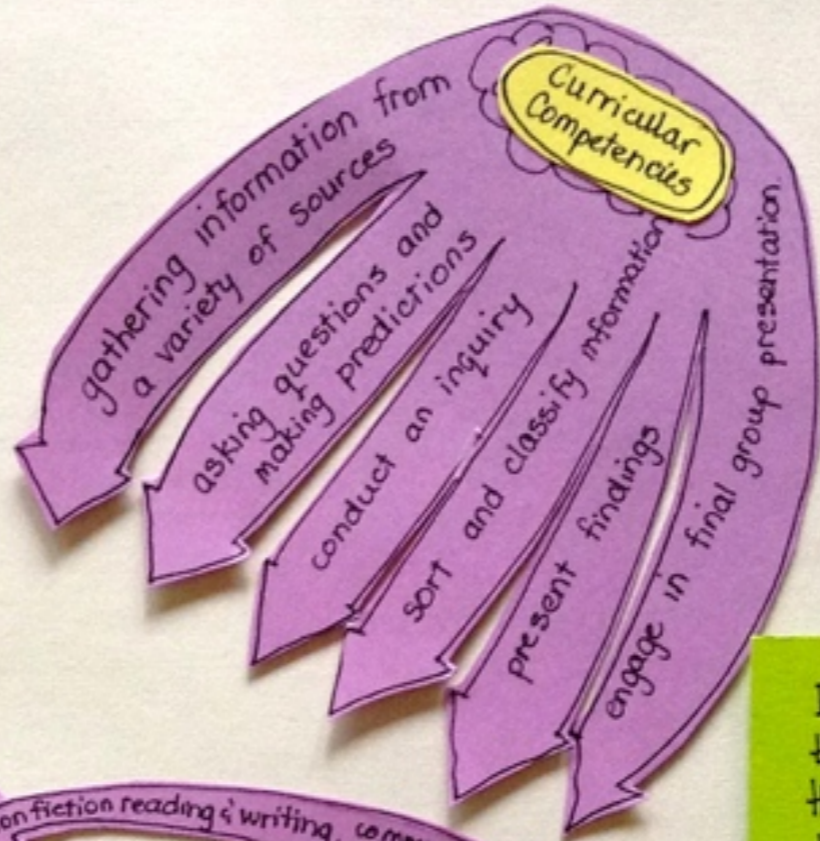
There are few things to keep in mind when planning this study. The Science Curriculum (and all curricula) has Core Competencies, Big Ideas Curricular Competencies and Content which are all mandated. I also want to see how the First Peoples Principles of Learning feature in the work of the students. This project and the inquiry that will come from it are Place-based. We are beginning from an issue raised in the local paper. However, the work the students do will take the issue to a broader level. It may begin local but I know they will connect to the wider, more global issues. It is also about their place in the issue.



This study seems to fit nicely within Science but there are great connections to Literature, The Arts and Social Studies.

I am going to add some arrows to my map to show connections.

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How are wolves portrayed in literature?

Language Arts

What relationships do the First Nations People have with wolves?

Social Studies

What is the social structure of a wolf family?



Provocation

Science

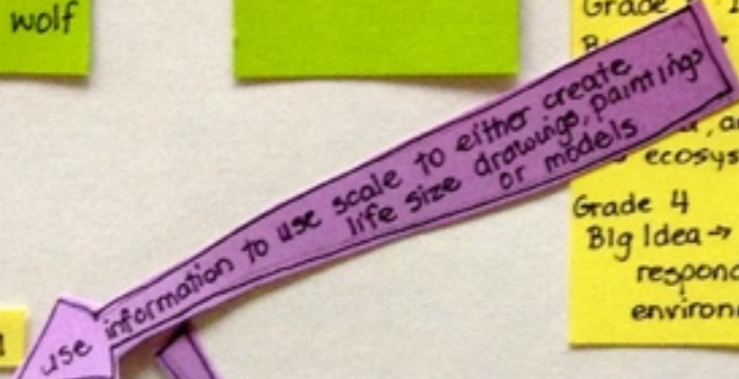
Grade 3 Draft Curriculum

diverse, can be and interacts in ecosystem.

Grade 4 Big Idea → All life responds to its environment

What role do wolves have in the ecosystem?

Celia Godkin's book, Wolf Island (1993) will be a good resource to use to introduce food chains as well as balance in an ecosystem.



Math

What are a wolf's physical dimensions?

What statistics will we find about wolves?

The Arts

How are wolves portrayed in the arts?

I am happy with how my planning is going. I think I have enough to get started and to see how my students respond to my provocation.



Once everyone has contributed to the initial fact finding about a wolf's physical appearance, I will have them sign up to find out other facts of interest and present to the class their findings. Once we all have a good understanding of what makes a wolf a wolf, I will lead them further in the role of wolves in the ecosystem.

My thinking is that I will have small groups or individuals work on inquiry projects related to the initial provocation. Not everyone will do everything the same.

In the end each group or individual will present their findings. We will return to the initial provocation and again answer the question. They will do a final drawing of a wolf to compare with their first one.



I know there is enough to interest everyone in the class. I know some will want to make those life-size wolves and some will want to interview a biologist. I think this will last a good long while.

I look forward to what they will be teaching me!