CELP
Community Environmental Leadership Programs
Centennial C.V.I., Guelph, Ontario

www.celp.info
Outline

1. Overview of CELP Programs
2. Grade 10 CELP sample interdisciplinary units
3. Impacts of CELP- heart, head, hands
4. General characteristics of four credit programs- other long-running programs
5. Benefits and challenges of four-credit programs
What is CELP?

- CELP Programs are four credit semester-long interdisciplinary course packages administered by schools in the Upper Grand District School Board.
- Community Environmental Leadership Program for Grade 10 focuses on environmental leadership.
- Headwaters for Grade 12 follows the metaphor of the “hero’s journey” as students discover their role in sustainable living.
CELP Programs take place off campus..

- Students are from four different Guelph high schools - students apply to the program and transfer to a “host school” for the semester.
- Every day students board a bus from their home school to a local camp.
- One teacher for three credits.
- English is taught by a second teacher.
Credits:

- **Grade 10:**
  - English (Academic or Applied)
  - Careers/ Civics
  - Phys. Ed. – Grade 10 Outdoor Education
  - Grade 11- Interdisciplinary Studies

- **Grade 12:**
  - English (University )
  - Phys Ed.- Grade 12 Outdoor Activities
  - Geography: Environment and Resource Management (M)
  - Grade 12- Interdisciplinary Studies
Credits are taught in interdisciplinary units…

Examples:

Grade 10:
- Wilderness Travel Experience
- Earthkeepers
- Civics Biking Unit and Debates
- Active Citizenship Day

Grade 12:
- Moccasin making and winter camping
- Organic garden and “locavore” meals
- Community voices interviews and publication
- Paddle making and canoe trip “home”
Grade 10 CELP
Wilderness trips cover Phys. Ed., Interdisciplinary Studies and English skills and expectations
Student journal:

“This trip has shaped me into a new person. Whereas before I used to be afraid of exposing myself to new things, now I feel the strength and courage to do things I would never usually have done.”
Winter Trip

Feb 15th - 19th

Day 1: Wake up at 5:30 for a 6:30 takeoff. Following the 4 hour drive with a stop in Huntsville for fish & chips, we set out from Canoe Lakes.

The bus got stuck in the snow.

Poor Day 1. We arrived in Gillies, set up camp and ate warm chilli.

Day 2: The second day came with a warm sunrise following the freezing night. In the morning we traveled on a wood cutting mission for tomarocks. We had to cut down the dead ones which had no bark, yet they couldn't be rotten. In the afternoon we snowshoed to Drummer and back.

We returned to find a campfire with a ring of balsam cushioned seats around the circumference; a perfect place for the night's songs & festivities.

Day 3: We hauled the sleds to Drummer Lake, where our tent group (Robin, Sophie, Chris, Wes, Nathan, Rachel, Mrs. God, Dave & I) would set up away from the rest of the campers in a
Student journal:

“We traveled to Gill Lake: it was a beautiful journey. The long expanse of white snow sparkling in the crisp winter sun contrasted with twisting, winding pines really illustrates the perfect Algonquin Park image— as if stripped from a painting (or, I suppose it more logical that the paintings were stripped from the scenes.)…There is a Canadian essence in the moose-track covered paths we break, the condensation in the mornings, the big fuzzy woolen sweaters, snow covered branches and nights with a moon so bright that flashlights are useless in the shine of the moonbeams.”
English
reflective essay, journaling
Interdisciplinary Studies

- Trip reflection comparing heat and cooking fuel sources on trip and at home
Earthkeepers is a three day program taught by grade 10 CELP students to grade five students.
Student journal:

“I am in grade 10: I have been in school for 11 years and I used to like to think I had the teachers figured out. That was until I taught kids myself. I saw teaching as the teacher sees it and it opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking.”
Student journal:

- I think the kids get a lot out of Earthkeepers which is really good. The problem is that adults are the people who need to bond with the Earth... we need a program for adults: they’re the ones who drive the Hummers.”
CIVICS

- In Civics students explore the community by bicycle and do research for debates on local issues
Debates on local environmental and community issues (Civics and English)
Student journal:

“CELP has helped me to realize how I want to live my life: that change starts with me. That it is up to me as an individual to make choices that support things I believe in. That everything I buy, eat, wear, do affects something in a positive or negative way.”
Active Citizenship Day

- Students decide, by a group consensus process, how they will participate in an Active Citizenship Day in our community
“Community Days:” a group cooks for the class (Phys. Ed. and Interdisciplinary Studies)
Cleaning is part of community!
Student journal:

“Often in school I learn things that I will never think about again. In CELP, I have learned how important community is. With communities we learn how to work together. Everything is a learning experience.”
Involving our “Community”
Impacts

- Students learn about different perspectives on global, national, provincial, local and individual environmental issues

- Student learn how to teach ecological concepts to grade 5 students
Impacts

- Heart (examples):
  - Students develop a connection to nature
  - Students feel a sense of “community”
  - Students are motivated to make changes in their environmental habits and become “active citizens”
Student journal:

“An important thing to me about CELP, is it gives me the freedom to bring my heart into my education, and in doing so, I discover more about myself.”
Impacts

- Hands- Students learn specific skills (examples)
  - Canoe tripping
  - Winter camping
  - Bike safety
  - Cooking
  - Teaching
Impacts

- Hands-On: Students learn transferable skills:
  - Teamwork skills
  - Communication skills
  - Conflict resolution skills
  - Research skills
  - Critical thinking skills
“Everything that we learn in CELP actually applies outside of CELP.. all the teamwork activities, community days, accident prevention, etc… Twenty years from now, I will not remember or care what a subordinate clause is or exactly how many people died in the battle of the Somme. I will remember how to work efficiently as a team, how to cook and clean for others, the life skills I learned in Civics and the teaching skills: patience, enthusiasm, and organization…”
Character Development

- Students and parents often comment on increased...
  - Confidence levels
  - Independence
  - Respect for peers and adults
  - Awareness of environmental and global issues
Student journal:

- “We have learned about team building, our personalities, careers, politics, environmental issues and solutions, safety, reflecting and much, much more. One word that does stand out is respect…. Respect for nature, respect for others, respect for places, ideas and ourselves.”
Interdisciplinary Four Credit Programs

- Are usually a semester long - same students all day
- Often include students from different schools
- Often take place in an “out-of-school” setting
- Have a “focus” that ties the courses together (often environment as an integrating context)
- Teachers are paid from core board budgets: this is school!
- Same curriculum expectations met with same numbers
- Program costs are covered by student fees, running an elementary school program, grants, or fundraising
Examples:

- Bronte Creek Project and Royal Botanical Gardens Eco Studies (Halton DSB)
- Da Vinci Arts/ Science Program (Upper Grand)
- Environmental Leadership Program (London Catholic District School Board)
- Geo Ventures (Limestone DSB)
- Eco-Tourism (Bluewater DSB)
General Benefits:

- Structure of the day allows for increased time and depth on a subject
- Flexibility in not conflicting with other courses - field trips are easier
- Students apply to the program so are motivated!
- Closer student/ teacher relationships
- “Place-based” education allows for community connections
Challenges:

- Lots of different skills needed (teachers do trip gear., guiding, first aid, budgeting, advertising, recruitment, webpage, pamphlet, grant writing, administration, etc.)
- Administrative support
- Scheduling
- Start-up money
- Funding for rental and bussing
- Risk-management
- Getting started
Getting Started….

- Find or be a committed teacher
- Follow a successful model- include compulsory courses
- Start small(er)- integrate two courses- half day
- Find the funds first
- Pitch the benefits to admin and parents- find a champion trustee or superintendent
“It is becoming evident how much of an influence the CELP program is having on my life. I constantly question environmental implications to my actions. I am beginning to take initiative! Whether it is riding my bike more or picking up garbage in my path or questioning and talking to others. I am by no means perfect, however I’m trying. I’m making an itty bitty teeny weeny weeny difference and this makes me smile.”