



**KOH-LEARNING IN
OUR WATERSHEDS**

Transforming education by connecting students, communities, and waterways



**Amplifying lessons from the Koh-Learning in our Watersheds Program:
An investigation into transformative education and design**

INFORMATION LETTER and CONSENT FORM for Collaborators, Educators and Administrators

Research Title: Amplifying lessons from the Koh-Learning in our Watersheds Program: An investigation into transformative education and design

You are invited to participate in a design-based, collaborative research project being conducted by University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) Researchers, in partnership with School District 91-Nechako Lakes (SD91,) entitled *Amplifying lessons from the Koh-Learning in our Watersheds Program: An investigation into transformative education and design* (“Amplifying Lessons”). Research lead, Dr. Hart Banack and co-investigator, Dr. Margot Parkes are based at the University of Northern British Columbia. Co-investigator Deb Koehn is based out of SD91 and SD91 is a core partner for this project (*contact information below*).

BACKGROUND

The Koh-Learning in our Watersheds (“Koh-Learning”) program is a UNBC-SD91 collaboration focused on the benefits of learners, educators and partners learning together about ‘Koh’ – a word for *waterway* in the Dakelh language. Koh-Learning emphasises education system transformation nested within community and watershed contexts. As a systems-change initiative, Koh-Learning aims to fuel youth (Indigenous & non-Indigenous) to become informed, connected stewards and change agents for the well-being of their environments and communities, influencing decisions and processes affecting their futures. Launched in May 2019, Koh-Learning activities are now taking place in schools throughout SD91. The school-based activities are conducted through SD91 with support and coordination from UNBC. This ‘Amplifying Lessons’ research project aims to explore the design of the Koh-Learning program and how the design affects program impacts and Koh-Learning goals.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Youth are key to thriving rural and remote communities. There is much evidence that youth, particularly Indigenous youth, are disconnected from school and learning. The program called *Koh-Learning in our Watersheds: Transforming education by connecting students, communities and waterways* began in 2019 with three transformative learning goals: 1) foster student stewardship of their local environments; 2) develop student influence and connections across community sectors; and 3) empower students as change-makers within and beyond their own systems. In 2021, a fourth, over-arching goal was added: 4) contribute to decolonizing and Indigenizing the BC Ministry of Education K-12 curriculum for enhanced student success by honouring diverse ways of knowing, supporting student agency, and centering well-being in education.

The intentions of Koh-Learning come from how Koh-Learning designs the program’s learning experiences. Through explorations of historical and present-day practices in Koh-Learning, **this ‘Amplifying Lessons’ research project seeks to understand:** How might the intentional design and implementation of the Koh-Learning program offer lessons that can support future learners, educators and educational designers to shift practices of “mainstream” schooling to support the development of practical wisdom to enhance leadership and learning.

Importantly, this research project seeks to amplify lessons for the benefit of future learners, educators and educational designers as well as to support theory development and education research.

PROCEDURES

You are being invited to take part in the “Amplifying Lessons” research project because **you are engaging or have engaged in Koh-Learning activities as a collaborator, educator and/or administrator**, as a result, we believe you will bring valuable insights that inform the design and evaluation of the Koh-Learning program. ***If you choose to participate in this research project, you may withdraw at any point, with no consequences and your data will be removed.***

Data collection for this “Amplifying Lessons” research project will include interviews. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Interviews will last between 15 to 30 minutes and will be audio recorded. All research data derived from audio recordings will be aggregated (combined together), anonymized and kept strictly confidential between the members of the research team (Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and Research Assistants). All recordings will be transcribed with Otter.ai, a software program that transcribes audio recordings using artificial intelligence. Otter.ai adheres to Canadian privacy legislation. Only anonymized audio will be uploaded to Otter.ai, remaining on the site for only the length of the interview plus 30 min, at which point the audio data will be removed and no records will be kept by Otter.ai. You shall not be asked to review transcripts, and total participation time should be 30 minutes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are minimal risks associated with participating in the research project. Data collection will take place only after you are made fully aware of the research project and after informed consent is obtained. However, you may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed during data collect events, by group interaction and/or the questions raised. Research team members will be available as support and a resource list of additional services offered by UNBC and SD 91 will be provided on the research [project webpage](#). As participation is voluntary, you decide which, if any question(s) or processes, you wish to partake in.

There may be social and emotional risks in participating in this study due to differing understandings of Koh-Learning program aims. However, we view such instances as opportunities for collective learning and knowledge-sharing, and participants will be urged to consider diverse interests and perspectives. Throughout the research, participants will be invited to consider the project in action in relation to its design and how goals are achieved and evaluated. Interviews will be framed as conversational dialogue, towards fostering a culture of curiosity, open-mindedness, acceptance, and collective learning where all values and perspectives are heard and esteemed. We do not expect any ‘heightened’ risk to be involved outside of usual day-to-day life or work/school activities.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR SOCIETY

The results of this research project will provide a lens through which to assess and evaluate the Koh-Learning program’s design and aims. These results may contribute to understanding how school may improve health and well-being, connections between humans and more-than-humans, and the transformative dimension of education. Members of the Koh-Learning community who participate in this research project may benefit from the opportunity to consider educational design and assessment, and from the process of exploring the Koh-Learning program through a research lens. Future members of the Koh-Learning community, including SD91

students and teachers, may also benefit from the lessons learned through this research project. However, it is possible that not all participants will experience direct benefits from participating in this research project. Research participants will not be paid for their contributions to the research. Research updates will regularly be posted on the Amplifying Lessons webpage. You can also indicate on the consent form if you wish to be emailed updates directly.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If you consent to participate in this study, your identity in relation to the research data will be kept strictly confidential outside of the members of the research team (Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and Research Assistants). Consent will be obtained electronically via Survey Monkey. A participant key shall be created, and completed consent forms will be stored separate from data collected to protect your identity. All data will be kept only on secure data storage platforms with servers in Canada. Only the Principal Investigator (PI) and Research Assistant (RA) will have access to non-anonymized data and information, and Co-Investigators will only have access to anonymized data post collection events.

The PI and RA will participate in data collection and shall know participant identities. Co-investigators (CIs) shall not participate in data collection and not know participant identities. All data will be anonymized (through a key code) and aggregated, so that participant identities are unknown during analysis. However, due to the small size of the participant pool, some knowledge of participants may be discernable to CIs. Data will be published anonymously, and pseudonyms will be used to report citations. After a 5-year period following the completion of data analysis collected for the project, all data will be destroyed through deletion of electronic files and shredding of hard files. Your name or any other identifying information will not appear in any reports or publications. As this project is working with a small team, even when your identity is uncoupled from the research data and no identifying information is included in reports, please note that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your consent is required before you may participate in this research project, however, your participation is entirely voluntary. You will have two weeks to decide, once you have been invited, if you wish to participate. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the research project, at any time without any consequences. **If you choose to withdraw from the study, information you have previously shared will be kept except for where we can easily identify information you have shared. Anonymized kept-information may be used in this and other related studies.** By clicking “yes” to the various options (see copy below) on the URL provided below, you are consenting to participate in this study. Once you have been invited to participate, you will have two weeks to decide whether you wish to join.

RIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

The plan for this research project has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or desire further information about this research project or would like to request an update about the project, you may contact Dr. Hart Banack (hart.banack@unbc.ca). Please be aware that you are not waiving any legal rights in consenting to participate in this research project. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at UNBC Office of Research (Research Ethics Board) at 250-960-6735, toll-free at 1-855-960-5852, or via email at reb@unbc.ca.

CONSENT

Participant Consent and Signatures

Below is a copy for the consent. Please click this link to consent online: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/GJ66L9Z>

I have read or been described the information presented in this consent form about the research project.

YES NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this research project and to receive additional details I requested.

YES NO

I consent to joining the Amplifying Lessons research project, which may include video conferencing (i.e. Zoom) or in-person meetings. The meetings may be audio and video recorded and will be stored on Canadian servers.

YES NO

I understand that if I agree to participate in this project, I may withdraw from the project at any time and information I have shared will be kept, with the exception of where the research team can easily identify information I have shared. The information kept may be used in this and other related future studies.

YES NO

I have been given a copy of this form.

YES NO

I agree to be audio recorded.

YES NO

I would like to receive research updates

YES NO

if Yes, email: _____

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature

Date

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Sincerely,

Hart Banack - Principal Investigator

Assistant Professor
School of Education
University of Northern British Columbia
Email: hart.banack@unbc.ca
Phone: 250-960-5317



Margot Parkes - Co-Investigator

Professor
School of Health Sciences
University of Northern British Columbia
Email: margot.parkes@unbc.ca
Phone: 250-960-6813; Fax: 250-960-5744

Deb Koehn - Co-Investigator

District Vice-Principal
School District 91
Email: dkoehn@sd91.bc.ca
Phone: 250-981-2711