

mind.heart.mouth
Care and Community through Collective Gardening

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ABSTRACT

mind.heart.mouth: Care and Community through Collective Gardening

Andrée Tremblay

Over two years, from 2018 to 2020, I ran a sequence of workshops and initiated a collective garden on the Loyola campus of Concordia University in Montréal. Using research-creation, in the form of a garden, I explored how embodied knowledge can inform experiential learning, care, and sensory experiences. This garden was a site of intergenerational knowledge exchange involving seniors and students. This thesis addresses the interconnected areas of environmental education, embodied cultural experience, and food security. The central claim of this work is that gardening pedagogy providing sensory experiences, hands-on practices, and related prompts can stir reflections, challenge individual and cultural assumptions, and provide a space to foster and transform our sense of care and community. Furthermore, this project contributes to the field of environmental communication by moving away from traditional visual media to consider natural elements, such as dirt, seeds, seedlings, and vermicompost as devices of mediation that call upon all the senses to promote conscious engagement. It is also a small but creative intervention in the field of food security by offering a model of a university garden and companion workshop series that foster skills and build awareness.

Key Terms: *Collective garden, care, community, dirt, connectedness with natural environments, sensory experience, environmental education, experiential learning, embodied knowledge, embodied experience, immersive environment, food security.*

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INTRODUCTION

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas.¹ In the province of Quebec, this number reaches over 80%.² The relationship that many urbanites have with the food they consume is connected to grocery store displays of mass-produced items wrapped and sealed in attractive packaging or enhanced and processed with additives into branded foodstuff. We currently have generations of individuals who have had little to no contact with the way food grows, little comprehension about what goes into the food they consume every day, and little awareness and care about what it would take to regeneratively feed the world's population. Most people are too busy to worry about whether the few companies who control the world's food production care about anything else but the profits they make yearly. We have the capacity to produce enough food to feed the planet while using regenerative methods,³ but the current food system is part of neoliberal free-market principles and a culture that is detrimental to the attainment of this objective.

Alison Blay-Palmer, founding Director for the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems and Professor in Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, discusses how the lack of attention to these dynamics causes grave impediments at every level: "increasingly, food is provided through an industrial food system that separates people from the source of their food and results in high rates of food insecurity, particularly for the most vulnerable in society."⁴ This separation from the way our food grows is combined with a lack of an understanding of, or desire to understand, the ecological processes and methods that come together to produce natural food products that are aligned with our bodies' healthy and balanced functioning.

In the context of a 2020 Mitacs internship in collaboration with the New Hope Senior Citizen Centre in Montréal, I have observed how numerous seniors are living in isolation, with financial precarity, and are struggling to access essentials such as food. Financial struggles that produce issues of food insecurity and poor nutrition also plague student communities everywhere in Canada.⁵ When under financial duress, students frequently opt to buy cheap or low-quality fast food alternatives to feel full for longer rather than consuming foods that would be more nutritious but are digested faster such as fruits and vegetables.⁶ This prevailing state of affairs in Canadian Universities reflects a covert situation within the larger Montréal population and in our country in general. Students and seniors are two groups that fail to get attention when issues of food insecurity are examined, and both groups' well-being stands to benefit from the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships.⁷ They are thus the focus of this research.

Many people living in cities like Montréal do not have cars and/or the time and/or the means to get out of the city to explore natural settings and interact and learn about biodiversity in situ. Urban parks are therefore urbanites' main exposure to the natural world and many of them understand nature as what one encounters when walking through spaces like Beaver

1. UN News, *More than Half of World's Population*.

2. Statista, *Canada - Urbanization 2019*.

3. Holt-Gimenez, *We Already Grow Enough Food*.

4. Blay-Palmer, *Power Imbalances, Food Insecurity, and Children's Rights*. P. 1.

5. Kornik, *A Growing Number of University Students*; and CBC News, *40% of University Students*.

6. According to *MyFitnessPal*, at the time of writing, a Big Mac and medium fries pack 920 calories, and if you get a trio for \$9.19, you can pack up to 1,140 calories - more than half a day's worth of calories for many people. For about the same price, a Cobb salad from the Metro grocery store will provide about half the calories but many will feel hungry again a few hours later.

7. Freedman, *When Old and Young Connect*.

Lake's hilly terrain or when "hiking" in areas like Parc Jean Drapeau. In the field of environmental philosophy, researchers have demonstrated how these spaces can promote mental and physical health, reduce morbidity and mortality by alleviating stress and providing psychological relaxation,⁸ stimulate social cohesion, support physical activity, and reduce air pollutants, noise, and excessive heat.⁹ Unfortunately, being exposed to or simply "enjoying" green spaces in urban environments is not sufficient to educate and trigger environmental stewardship in urbanites. Under the right guidance and leadership, urban green spaces could also be sites of experiential learning that promote connections and respect toward essential natural processes and biodiversity. Our large green parks are generally part of the designs that organize our lives, and, in cities more intensely than in rural areas, we are subordinate to design politics that are in turn governed by market logic and consumption.¹⁰ Too often, urban natural spaces simply present another level of control and power to which we are subjugated—and they generally do not offer opportunities to learn about our planet's ecosystems or interact meaningfully with the natural elements they contain, which, in turn, could infuse embodied experience and connectedness.

In contrast, the past few decades have seen an increase in edible garden spaces in elementary and secondary schoolyards in Montréal. These are efforts to incorporate specific United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals¹¹ into curricula; they entail giving teachers access to wider educational resources while also providing opportunities for children to interact with ecological systems and food production through gardening activities, and ensuring a more extensive and sustainable impact on environmental stewardship.¹² Research centred on hands-on collaborative approaches to curriculum-related activities in school gardens reveals the importance of integrating caring and nurturing practices to promote environmental stewardship and awareness about the way natural healthy food grows.¹³

As a media scholar passionate about issues of disconnectedness with food production, natural environments, and food insecurity, I was moved to further explore and analyze how caring and nurturing practices, behaviours, and values supporting regenerative actions toward our food and ecological systems could be promoted with adult participants. The following initial question spurs my engagement in this proposed research:

How might a workshop series and experiment in collective gardening foster a sense of care and community in a university context?

To address this preliminary question, I engaged in a qualitative investigation based on research-creation,¹⁴ where I combined garden pedagogy and practise with creative writing inspired by autoethnography. Dr. Estelle Barrett, Professor and HDR Coordinator at the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University, Australia, and Dr. Barbara Bolt, Associate Dean of

8. For more on this topic, see: Will & Haeg, *Edible Estates*; Bennett et al, *Environmental Stewardship*; Capaldi et al, *Nature Connectedness and Happiness*; Chawla, *Responsible Environmental Behavior*; Goralnik, *Environmental Pedagogy of Care*; Lloro-Bidart, *Cultivating Affects*; Malnar, *Sensory Design*; Tilley, *Sensory Dimension of Gardening*.

9. Braubach et al., *Effects of Urban Green Spaces*.

10. For more on this see: Braubach et al., *Effects of Urban Green Spaces*; White et al., *Anthropocene Politics I*.

11. IISD, *Unintended Pathways*.

12. Idem.

13. Grella, *Nurturing the Aesthetic*.

14. SSHRC defines research-creation as "an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Government of Canada.

Research at the Victorian College of the Arts of Melbourne University, Australia, have highlighted how engagement with practice through research-creation results in ideas and theory that form the basis for the acquisition of emergent human knowledge, stating that

Heidegger's notion of 'praxical knowledge' or what he theorized as the material basis of knowledge, provides a philosophical framework for understanding the acquisition of human knowledge as emergent. [...] Praxical knowledge implies that ideas and theory are ultimately the result of practice rather than vice versa.¹⁵

Following these principles, under the umbrella of research-creation, I used an iterative mode of engagement to implement experiential learning pedagogy, care, and sensory experiences in local workshops and a collective garden on a university campus. Workshop activities including the manipulation of seeds, edible plants, vermicompost, and soil were conducted in academic contexts: in classroom settings, at a conference, at a Cegep's professional day, and virtually during the Covid pandemic. I created seven iterative workshops (five in person, two virtual) and a seven-week-long installation in the 4th Space of the Concordia downtown campus. Simultaneously, I created a collective garden on the Loyola campus. The garden brought together an intergenerational community composed of students and seniors. In this context, I explored creative ways to better understand how current cultural ideas, values, and natural elements intertwine and how they can be used to attain a fairer balance for vulnerable communities.¹⁶

In the next few pages, I demonstrate how using research-creation in the context of iterative workshops and a garden provided the momentum for experiential learning and the production of novel ideas and theory in this field. I first present a contextual overview that includes the theoretical framework and key concepts pertinent to this research. This is followed by a detailed methodology and a presentation of processes, synthesis, and conclusion.

CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this thesis, I argue that developing a more profound relationship with the planet we live on can promote the level of engagement needed to stimulate eco-awareness. One small way to approach this is through workshops that foster relationships and a caring attitude for the natural environment around us and each other. The following theoretical framework is informed by two challenges I faced. The first challenge was understanding what pedagogical and design elements are needed to create spaces and experiences that engage the senses whilst using a method that reinvents connections to the way food is produced. My next challenge was creating an opening to hold a conversation and inspire new actions related to issues of food production and security in an increasingly challenging environmental, political and social climate.

This research's framework resides at the intersection of environmental education and embodied cultural experience, which is specific to the field of anthropology. My goal was to translate or materialize this framework into an innovative garden model aiming to contribute to food security. Following Heidegger's notion of praxical knowledge—a way by which we

15. Barrett and Bolt, *Practice as Research*, 6.

16. PROOF, *Household Food Insecurity in Canada*.

come to know the world through *handling* and active use rather than through theory—,¹⁷ these fields of inquiry were brought into relation to reveal new ideas and theory that contribute to our understanding and analysis of current cultural dynamics in which the most vulnerable in our society are increasingly affected by climate and social changes. In this work, I join other forms of quiet activism and community-based practices aiming to raise consciousness of our behaviours and facilitate cultural understandings of our relationship with our planet's ecosystems. In a Centre for the Future of Places presentation, Dr. Setha Low, Director of the Public Space Research Group and Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Psychology at City University of New York, highlighted how we are losing our public spaces to “different [urban] processes that are making it difficult for people to come together to have the kinds of relations that are really important for the future of democracy, for a sense of social solidarity.”¹⁸ In my work, I have witnessed how positioning the collective garden as a site of investigation allows us to learn how such a space could be used 1) as a centrepiece in the public space that is the Loyola Campus, where people can meet and discuss social issues; 2) as a space dedicated to experiential learning; 3) to reveal interrelationships that may not have been evident before; 4) to call attention to collective issues that can only get worse in this time of climate crisis, and 5) to spark conversations about collaborative and innovative strategies and experiences to improve the lives of those whose power and rights have been negated. All of these potential connections may lead to a new sort of urban embodied experience. This research-creation project can offer hope for change in our immediate community at Concordia University.

My connections and clashes with my surrounding environment and culture have led me to a reflective writing process that explores the intertwining dynamics regulating our understanding and behaviours in specific spaces and cultures. In what follows, I present the journey that forms the basis for the iterative processes that took place throughout this research-creation project. I borrow the expression “embodied space” from Dr. Low's *Theories of Body, Space, and Culture*, which is central to this research because it offers essential theoretical formulations to material and conceptual intersectionality.

Embodied Experiences Through Cultural and Material Realities and Memories

On one hand, culture is amorphous; it is shapeless, vague, and nebulous. Most of us are not aware of its influence on our daily behaviors. On the other hand, culture is arguably the strongest influence on an individual's cognitive, affective, and behavioral choices.

- James Neuliep¹⁹

Growing Up in Rural Quebec

I was born on a 300-acre dairy farm in the south of Quebec. For the first 10 years of my existence, my experiences and understanding of life were established through my vivid imagination and constant interaction with nature. My family understood our dependency on the natural world and its wisdom. I learned that we must live in harmony with our environment in ways that involve taking care of all living beings, respect our planet, and acknowledge the natural strengths and weaknesses of all elements. I did not see myself as separate from the material elements of that environment. We worked respectfully with

17. For more on Heidegger's concept of praxical knowledge, see Bolt, *Heidegger Reframed*.

18. Low, *UN World Urban Forum*, (00:50).

19. Neuliep, *The Cultural Context*, 87.

nature's elements and rhythms, understanding our interdependence. These early and formative understandings have powerfully influenced my approach to and interpretations of this research.

Growing in the City

I was about 10 years old when I entered a city for the first time. Although we were only driving through, that first encounter with the materiality of the urban space terrified me. I did not set foot in a large city again until I was 17 years old to visit a friend, and I finally moved to Montréal at 19 to attend university. As a young adult, I eagerly settled in urban settings, adapting to new realities and experiences constructed within a fast-urban pace. Many years later, I feel at home in this metropolitan world where I have now spent most of my life.

Miles Richardson, Professor of Human Factors and Nature Connectedness at Derby University in the UK, argues that when we are in a space, we adopt behaviours typical of that space. Being there generally means that we subscribe to the appropriate cultural actions prescribed by the material realities we are surrounded with. Richardson asserts that “it is through actions that Spanish American culture forms, or better, becomes. This ‘becoming’ takes place, literally and socially, in the construction of the two realities and through the dialectical tension between the two.”²⁰

The two realities that I experienced, first in rural Quebec and then in Montréal, conjure up different cultural understandings and behaviours that may sometimes clash but may also often find ways to mingle. By adopting new behaviours and beliefs as we enter new worlds, we are constantly becoming.

Awakening One Material Reality Into Another

In the world of literature, at the turn of the century, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* was an early exploration of the ways in which embodied experience can arouse emotional memories. The next passage, often referred to as the “*Madeleines*,” illustrates this point perfectly.

[...] weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate, a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place.

An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself.²¹

In 2016, I experienced my own “*Madeleines*” moment. Although I was not a gardener at the time, I was inspired to start a vegetable garden in my backyard. With gloved hands and tools, I moved dirt and planted seeds and seedlings, doing my best not to get dirty nor drag dirt in the house. Later in the season, when I began to pick vegetables from my garden, I

20. Richardson, *Being-in-the-market*, 433.

21. Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, 60.

experienced the defining moment that has come to frame this research. These organic vegetables—which I had grown myself out of healthy soil and whose path from plant to plate I followed closely—felt dirtier to me than the ones I normally buy in grocery stores, where fruits and vegetables are set in beautiful displays, nicely organized and shiny, and preselected for me. The vegetables from my garden did not feel dirty in the sense of having dirt on them—it was rather an odd confusion of picking something to eat out of the dirt in my backyard and my embodied experience of the city with its pollution, hard surfaces, chemical grass fertilizer, and pesticides. I had to come to terms with the fact that my connection to the natural world, dirt, and particularly food production was not as innate as I remembered it to be or as I liked to think it was.

Proust's famous passage illuminated a new path and perspectives for my research as I was reminded of how sensual experiences leave profound imprints on our psyche. The media of reminiscence in Proust's text are smell and taste: A sensual action, and not an intellectual endeavour, had taken place. It is indeed consciousness that reconstitutes the thread of remembrance. The evocation of the sensual experience through physical elements such as the vegetable garden and all its components—soil, micro-organisms, plants, and vegetables—had allowed me to recognize and re-establish the embodied connection to the planet that I remember experiencing as a child. It had taken experiential learning, through the work and care required by the garden, and the sensory experiences provided by *being* in that space to be reminded of a world where I feel grounded and in sync with the universe. Turning to Richardson, Low addresses how

[he] suggested that we use objects to evoke experience, thus moulding experience into symbols and then melting symbols back into experience. In his work, embodied space is being in the world, that is, the existential and phenomenological reality of place: its smell, feel, colour, and other sensory dimensions.²²

Richardson argues that our “ability to shift modes of being poses critical questions about the relationship between our existence and the world in which we exist. The very fact that we are capable of such dramatic shifts suggests that there is a symbiotic interdependence between the two modes, interdependence aptly described by Heidegger as being-in-the-world.”²³ Further, “As a single, unitary phenomenon, being-in-the-world means that for us to be we must have a world to be in.”²⁴ Thus, to understand nature and the way our food grows, people must have access to nature and spaces where food grows and be able to interact with these spaces.

For a while, it seemed impossible to extricate or isolate my perception of the vegetables that came from my garden from the immersive urban environment I live in. After bringing this issue to consciousness, I was able to work on ways to reconnect to planet Earth's rhythms by getting reacquainted with specific realities and by investing care in them.

When we are in immersive natural environments, our senses are all at once inundated with multiple stimuli that work together to create the experience of *being in that natural space*. The inevitable participation with, and I would even say assimilation into, the dominant

22. Low, *Anthropological Theories of Body*, 13.

23. Richardson. *Being-in-the-market*, 421.

24. Richardson. *Being-in-the-market*, 421.

culture and collective consciousness plays on our perception and understanding of this world. This is why these connections and embodied experiences with nature are so important: so they can begin to inform the dominant culture and collective consciousness. Through my experience, I have witnessed how consciousness and action are triggered through better ecological understandings acquired through experiential learning within an immersive environment that calls upon all the senses. This shift in our mode of being, to use Richardson's terms, can occur even when the immersive environment—in this case, the garden—is located within another even more powerfully all-encompassing environment—the city. Could creating more immersive garden spaces that include experiential learning promote a shift in cultural assumptions, open up new understandings of our relationship to natural environments, and empower economically vulnerable populations to seek opportunities to access land and learn about our ecosystem to learn to grow food?

Food Insecurity

Peter Andrée, a specialist in the field of politics of food and the environment and Professor in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University, defines food security as “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”²⁵ Megan Horst, assistant Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University and chair of the department's Diversity and Equity Committee, further speaks of food justice as “the right of communities everywhere to produce, process, distribute, access, and eat good food regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, religion, or community.”²⁶

Most of us living in urban areas are separated from the way food grows and from understanding the ecological processes that come together to produce natural food products that are aligned with our bodies' healthy and balanced functioning. We are also separated from the way food is processed. As a society, we rely on industrial producers with chemical formulas that make our brains want to eat products that do not nourish us and which our bodies do not need.²⁷ Whether they consist of chemicals in powdered form, jellied substances produced in laboratories, or colourful snacks, these chemically enhanced foods generate more profits, have a longer shelf life, make people feel satiated, and are cheaper to produce than natural food that is locally grown and produced with simple ingredients. Most people are not invested in what sort of fuel is provided by what they consume, where it comes from, who prepared it, or what it is made of. Food just has to taste good, and, if you have a low food budget, these options are also more affordable.

Wholesome foods, like fruits and vegetables, do not make you feel as full and are often more expensive than what our neoliberal industrial food system, with little concern for the population's health, has created.²⁸ Food insecurity is not simply a lack of food. It is also the inability to access fresh, natural, nutritious, and unprocessed food at affordable prices. In the *2018 Food & Cities Report*, the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition concluded that the way

25. Andrée, et al., *Community-Based Initiatives*, 77.

26. Horst, et al., *Planning, Urban Agriculture, Food Justice*, 279.

27. Crowe, *Food Cravings Engineered by Industry*.

28. Research on food prices revealed that from 1985 to 2000, the prices of fresh fruits and vegetables rose 40% while prices of fats and soft drinks decreased by roughly 15% and 25%, respectively. Unless the fresh produce in supermarkets or green food carts is affordable to low-income families, they will have little incentive to buy healthy food. <https://www.mic.com/articles/7571/obesity-in-food-deserts-must-be-solved-through-education>.

food systems are now set up is a key driver of malnutrition in all its forms.²⁹ A diet mainly composed of processed foods can lead to health issues like diabetes, obesity, and a lack of essential nutrients.

When the UN Special Rapporteur, Olivier de Schutter, came to Canada on an official mission in May 2012, the premise of his visit raised questions in the media and among politicians. Why should a rich country like Canada, overflowing with natural resources and boasting of so-called exemplary social services, be the subject of a UN investigation? However, his report revealed that “a growing number of people across Canada remain unable to meet their basic food needs. In 2007/2008, 7.7% of households reported experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity, approximately 1.92 million people, aged 12 or older, lived in food-insecure households and [...] one in 10 families, with at least one child under the age of 6, were food insecure.”³⁰

On December 16, 1966, Canada became a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), a multilateral treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly. Resolution 2200A (XXI), which came into effect in January 1976, and commits its parties to work “toward the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) to the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories and individuals, including labour rights and the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living.”³¹ Yet, for over 40 years, residual welfare states such as Canada have avoided directly or effectively dealing with the issue of food insecurity, instead preferring to rely on food banks largely supported by active fundraising, food donations, and inadequate government subsidies. Since 1988, the Fédération des Moissons du Québec coordinated the larger part of the province’s food efforts, until a provincial restructuring in 2002 led to the creation of Food Banks of Quebec that now controls and manages the growing demands.³² This organization is part of a network that operates under Food Banks Canada, the national charitable organization representing the food bank network in Canada. Thus, De Schutter reported that Canada was not meeting its obligations. Confronted with increasing numbers of people who depend on these efforts, it is clear that change is needed; it is time for our federal government to acknowledge its obligation to ensure food security as a right for all by seeking active solutions instead of relying on the goodwill of community organizations, large businesses, and citizens. As stated by Graham Riches, Emeritus Professor of Social Work at the University of British Columbia, “In a democratic society that values tolerance, equity and human rights, food banks are symbols of public policy neglect.” If food banks are currently needed, they can only serve as a Band-Aid for a shameful wound.

29. BCFN, *Food & Cities*, 36. They also report that in 2017, “nearly 821 million people were undernourished, nearly 151 million children under five suffered from stunting, over 38 million children under five were overweight, and 672 million adult people were obese. Wasting continues to affect over 50 million children under five in the world. For the world to meet the ICN2 commitments, the 2025 World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets, the global diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCD) targets, and the nutrition-relevant targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prioritized and accelerated action-oriented efforts within the Nutrition Decade are urgently needed.”

30. Blay-Palmer, *Power Imbalances, Food Insecurity, and Children's Rights*, 6: Also of interest, “Furthermore, in 2007/2008, 55 percent of households in which the main source of income was social assistance were food insecure, the result of a pronounced discrepancy between social assistance levels and the rising costs of living.”

31. Canada Without Poverty, *The Right to Food*.

32. Banques Alimentaires Du Québec, *History*.

An Uncomfortable Reality

For nearly 30 years, the Quebec Food Banks network has been pooling resources, expertise, and information to help people living in poverty, actively ensuring the equitable sharing of food between its distribution network and the more than 1,200 associated groups across the province.³³ The 2017 Hunger-Count report published by Food Banks of Quebec states that food demands have been steadily increasing since 2013, specifically requests for emergency food aid and an increase of requests by women, immigrants, students, seniors, and Indigenous communities.³⁴ On the island of Montréal, 16.2% of the population aged 12 and over, or one person in six, lives with food insecurity, ranking it second among Canadian cities where food insecurity is an issue.³⁵ In recent years, the face of hunger has changed in Montréal: In the past, food insecurity was primarily associated with homelessness; More recently, several other groups of the population have also been affected.³⁶

As Blay-Palmer argues, there seems to be an “ill-informed, neoliberal supported impression that food charity organizations are ‘common sense’ approaches that provide adequate aid to ‘needy’ clients.”³⁷ With a hungry population increasing in numbers and a government that is failing to adequately address the situation, it remains clear that innovative solutions are required.

A Shameful Reality

For many, being unable to afford the food they need to feed themselves and their loved ones carries a level of shame or embarrassment that may be difficult to understand for someone who has never experienced it. Elena David, Social Connectedness Fellow at the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness, in Montréal, reports that “many people who could benefit from [food banks] programs opt not to use them. Stigma and feelings of shame are among the most prevalent barriers to food access (others include transportation difficulties and information gaps), and psychological barriers are estimated to be three times greater than barriers of time and effort.”³⁸ This has also been reported by leaders of community organizations with whom I have spoken to during my Mitacs Internship.

Environmental Education: Experiential Learning and Care

The approach used for my MA in Media Studies is greatly inspired by Robert Cox, Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies and Curriculum for the Environment and Ecology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who argues that environmental communication has an ethical duty to educate the public as it “seeks to enhance the ability of

33. Banques Alimentaires Du Québec. Also of interest, “Among the recipients of these services, 57.7% receive social benefits, 11.2% have income from employment, 8.2% receive an old-age pension, 4.8% receive employment insurance, 4.3 have no income, 3.4% receive disability pensions, and 4% live off student loans.” Own translation.

34. Idem. Also of interest, “Among other things, the network reports that each month, 1,886,961 requests for emergency food aid are answered, and this figure is tainted by a lack of food in 50% of the organizations. Moreover, compared to 2016, there is an increase of almost 13.4% in the requests for women, 6% for immigrants, 3.3% for students, 1.3% for seniors and 1% for Indigenous communities.”

35. Idem.

36. Moisson Montréal. Also of interest, “More than 11.4% of food aid recipients are employed. [...] 5.8% of recipients are students in Montreal [...]. Once again this year, the group of individuals who receive social assistance is the highest percentage of individuals who benefit from Food Pantry Programs.”

37. Blay-Palmer. *Power Imbalances, Food Insecurity, and Children's Rights*, 7.

38. David, *Food Insecurity in America*.

society to respond appropriately to environmental signals relevant to the well-being of both human civilization and natural biological systems.”³⁹ Thus, I turn to the field of environmental education to examine previous works and find the best approaches to address my concerns.

In the field of education, many have demonstrated how experiential learning that includes care in elementary and secondary education can promote lifelong environmental stewardship.⁴⁰ From demonstrating the emotional benefits of spending time in nature to gathering evidence on the effects of human behavior on the planet and the possibilities of human extinction, many have sought to design and promote more meaningful and effective environmental policies, initiatives, and educational programs to encourage citizen engagement and environmentally sound behaviours. Highlighting the lack of evidence on best practices and effective approaches in the field of environmental education, University of British Columbia research associate at the Institute for the Ocean and Fisheries, Nathan J. Bennett’s (et coll.) 2017 investigation sought to develop an analytical framework to facilitate research on environmental stewardship. Yet, this examination of current and past efforts only underscores the urgency for more research to assess the efforts to monitor and evaluate the “effectiveness of both local initiatives and external interventions as well as to understand the impacts of focusing efforts on different leverage points (motivations, capacity, governance, etc.) in different contexts.”⁴¹

In a paper published in May 2020, Professor Piyapong, from the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities at King Mongkut’s University of Technology in Thonburi, argues that the general public expects young people today, and particularly university students, to possess the environmental knowledge and relevant education that lead to active pro-environmental behaviours.⁴² Using questionnaire surveys evaluating diverse environmental education strategies, Piyapong demonstrated that there was no significant relationship between students’ environmental behavior and their environmental knowledge.⁴³ Examining multiple studies in the field, Piyapong highlighted their similar results: “Students exhibiting a high level of environmental knowledge did not report high practices of green behaviors.”⁴⁴ In conclusion, Piyapong calls for educational methods that allow students to experience emotional and philosophical aspects of this subject as well as academic components for stronger environmental stewardship.

Much of the literature on care highlights the need to develop emotional relationships with the environment. In a year-long study, Melissa Grella, Antioch University’s Environmental Studies PhD graduate, investigated the aesthetic foundation of the Waldorf pedagogy, which includes the affective domain in all aspects of the educational process, to understand how art and aesthetic experiences may contribute to the development of care toward the environment. Grella writes: “Waldorf educators believe that it is the feeling realm where care is nurtured, and that for a child to fully learn—to move over the threshold from knowledge into action—a child needs to care about what is being learned.”⁴⁵ Grella’s study

39. Cox, *Nature’s ‘Crisis Disciplines,’* 15.

40. For more details, see Dewey, *Art as Experience*, Noddings, *Caring*, Bellocchi, et al., *Exploring Emotions*, Capaldi, et al. *Nature Connectedness and Happiness*, Fien, *Work, Learning, and Sustainable Development*, Goralnik, et al. *Environmental Pedagogy of Care*, Martin, *Caring for the Environment*, Grella, *Nurturing the Aesthetic*.

41. Bennett et al., *Environmental Stewardship*, 608.

42. Piyapong, *Factors Affecting Environmental Activism*, 619.

43. Idem, 623.

44. Idem.

45. Grella, *Nurturing the Aesthetic*, ii.

posits the need for experiential education to be “infused with affect.”⁴⁶ Expanding upon this idea, Dr. Peter Martin (2007), Associate Professor at Federation University in Australia, argues that “better knowledge of environmental issues [that occurs with successive years of schooling] has no correlation with the development of a relational concept of the environment.”⁴⁷ Martin suggests instead that students should be given experiential educational opportunities to build relationships with their learning environment, stating that people are more likely to develop care for the environment if they can interact with it.⁴⁸ Supporting this, Alejandro Paniagua, Analyst and Doctor of Social Anthropology, and David Istance, former senior analyst for the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Education and Skills Directorate, define experiential learning (EL) as “approaches where learners are brought directly in contact with the realities being studied.”⁴⁹ In this approach, the human experience is at the centre of the learning experience, and, as such, the design of the learning environments needs to focus on the human experience as part of the learning. Paniagua and Istance highlight four main components of EL: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.⁵⁰

Inspired by these perspectives, I set out to curate concrete opportunities for people to experience connections with natural elements. In my work, experiential learning combines with notions of embodied experience to provide the guiding principles around which I designed workshops and the mind.heart.mouth garden. In the next section, I explain the methodology used to relate the key concepts highlighted above.

METHODOLOGY

In this research-creation project, I used in-person and virtual workshops as well as a vegetable garden on a university campus to initiate experiential learning pedagogy. I hoped that this emergent research might challenge cultural understandings about food, dirt, and dirtiness while also questioning dominant discourses that alienate us from the surrounding world. In this research, I am experimenting with garden practices as sites of engagement, and asking: “What natural elements can I integrate, and how? I am constantly exploring and testing ways to foster and challenge our cultural assumptions, sense of care and community. This exploratory mode that incorporates my own experience and reflections is akin to the autoethnographic approach. Inspired by autoethnographic methodology, my research journal helped me make sense of my process and reflections using storytelling features focused on interpreting the cultural aspects and contexts as they unfolded. This approach is inspired by Dr. Joanne James, from UK Northumbria University, who advocates a similar approach to autoethnography in her work on coaching practices.⁵¹ Dr. Heewong Chang, Professor and Chair of Organizational Leadership and Education at Eastern University, Pennsylvania, explains that “autoethnography shares the storytelling features with other genres of self-narrative but transcends mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation.”⁵²

46. Idem, 105.

47. Martin, *Caring for the Environment*, 62.

48. Martin, *Caring for the Environment*, 63.

49. Paniagua and Istance, *Teachers as Designers of Learning Environments*, 110.

50. Idem.

51. James, *Autoethnography*, 106

52. Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*, 43.

My investigation began with the creation of experiential workshops; these presented opportunities to explore how affective connections toward natural environments can be formed through experiential learning, care, and positive sensory experiences. Participants were also encouraged to reflect on the benefits we can gain from connectedness with the planet's ecosystems and the ways our food is produced. Highlighting the role of the senses, Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan proposes that "an object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind."⁵³ Focused on my research question, I set out to create immersive environments that would call upon the senses in all-encompassing and pleasurable ways and provide a sense of well-being and meaningful memories while also provoking reflections on our relationships to curated elements such as soil, seed and seedlings, vermicompost, and water. These experiences were in the form of seven workshops and the mind.heart.mouth garden.

The various workshop iterations, described below, were spread over two years and were inspired by an iterative process specific to the critical-making model proposed by Dr. Matt Ratto, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto and Bell University Labs Chair in Human-Computer Interaction. Ratto explains that "the use of the term critical making to describe our work signals a desire to theoretically and pragmatically connect two modes of engagement with the world that are often held separate—critical thinking, typically understood as conceptually and linguistically based, and physical 'making,' goal-based material work."⁵⁴ Combining this method with the research-creation methodology enhanced the critical analysis, informing which materials to include (and how to use them to reach optimal outcomes), the workshops and garden designs, the planning around various constraints, and how to create a practice-based engagement while also engaging with pragmatic and theoretical issues.⁵⁵ This also corresponds to "research-creation approaches [where] the theoretical, technical, and creative aspects of a research project are pursued in tandem, and quite often, scholarly form and decorum are broached and breached in the name of experimentation."⁵⁶ In the context of the workshops, this approach allowed for practical exploration exercises through which participants were encouraged to reflect critically on the proposed prompts that I designed. In turn, running each workshop through the iterative process provided the creative outlet and technical and theoretical analysis that led and shaped the mind.heart.mouth collective garden.

As part of my methodology, from January 2019 onward I maintained a research journal. The use of the research journal facilitated the reflective process and engagement with the analysis and interpretation of the various workshops and garden events discussed in the final section of this paper. As my project evolved, I analyzed the different dynamics of each workshop iteration through a reflective writing process and the theoretical framework that informed the next iteration.

Workshops—Description and Process

Workshop #1 Pilot Workshop

53. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 18.

54. Ratto, *Critical Making*, 252.

55. Idem, 253.

56. Chapman and Sawchuk, *Research-Creation*, 6.

A workshop constructed as a term project during the first semester of my MA provided the foundational format for this project's workshops. I include it in this paper as a pilot. Each workshop was conducted in different environments and presented different challenges. The workshops were led over two years in tandem with the garden, which ran from June to October 2019 and June to October 2020. Here, I discuss how the workshops changed over time, including how they adapted to new dynamics as the Covid pandemic forced many of us to move to virtual formats, and finally, I make my way to discuss the garden. There were five in-person workshops and two virtual ones (during the Covid pandemic).

For a term project in COMS 680/893—Media and Aesthetics, taught by Professor Tagny Duff in the fall of 2018, I challenged my fellow students to *engage with the trouble*⁵⁷ and play with dirt, seedlings, and worm casting. This idea was pivotal in orienting my MA research. The foundational analysis on how to stimulate consciousness and care around natural elements began with this first pilot. Following my tacit understanding, I saw it as primordial to seek ways to stimulate care and positive feelings through the workshop exercises. Ratto explains the importance of affectual relations in meaning-making in constructionist pedagogy, arguing that this approach incorporates the emotional dimension of learning, noting that the assimilation of new models of the world always involves endowing new understandings with a 'positive, affectual tone.'"⁵⁸

The main objective of the first workshop was to challenge the participants' beliefs and ideas about soil and, more precisely, the notion that soil is dirty. Following my reflection on embodied cultural understanding, I was interested in exploring the ideas, promoted in our culture and supported by the English language, of the word dirt (soil) as synonymous with dirt (dirty), of the word soil as the root of "soiled," and of ground, mud, filth, and so on, as synonyms for dirt. How can we think of the "dirt" upon which so much of life on earth depends, including from which most of our food grows, without these conscious or unconscious associations?

This first workshop hosted 20 students. To encourage my classmates to put their hands in the dirt, I asked them to plant edible seedlings with their bare hands. In this first workshop, participants were first invited to discuss their relationship with dirt with the person standing next to them. I then asked them to write on an anonymous paper the main points of their personal reasoning. Edible plants such as kale, romaine lettuce, and spinach were used—as opposed to flowers or fruit or vegetable producing plants—because they are said to trigger a deeper sense of care: the investment of time and energy builds upon the expectation of providing for oneself while also promoting participants' inquiry and learning of best practices to obtain the most food production. Investing time and energy in such a way also promotes emotional engagement. Most of the students happily participated and "officially adopted" a baby plant that they were going to nurture until they could begin to eat from it. Care instructions were also provided.

See Appendix 1 for pictures of Workshop #1 (Pilot): Term project for COMS 680/893—Media and Aesthetics (December 2018)

57. The topic of this MA class was the Anthropocene, and Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble* was a central reference.

58. Ratto, *Critical Making*, 254.

Reflecting critically upon this first workshop, I wondered how to further challenge people on their cultural assumptions about dirtiness. British anthropologist Mary Douglas argues that there are multiple levels to our cultural perception of dirt and that we are left today with old notions of purity that have long been applied to systems of class in society.⁵⁹ This relates to social changes brought on by industrialization and the City Beautiful movement that have powerfully contributed to North American urban culture's systemic understandings related to dirt.⁶⁰ Largely initiated by Daniel Burnham and Fredrick Law Olmsted from the late 1800s to the mid 1930s, the City Beautiful movement promoted a new aesthetic approach to the built environment claiming its power to create moral and civic order, specifically among the working-class en masse immigration to urban areas to work in factories.⁶¹ It occurred to me that most people have a different relationship with sand than they do with soil; truly enjoying walking barefoot or sitting in the sand, though they would not so readily walk in dirt without shoes. Brainstorming on how to challenge people using these notions, I bought small wooden boxes and a large bag of sand. I made cards with data on bacteria content in sand and soil, showing that soil may contain bacteria but that they are generally beneficial life-giving bacteria, unlike sand. I offered these cards to the participants.

See [Appendix 2](#) for Workshop #2—Concordia Sustainability and Beyond Conference (March 2019; Text and photos).

Title: mind.heart.mouth a workshop

See [Appendix 3](#) Workshop #3 GPTK 703—GradProSkills Graduate Seminar in University Teaching (August 2019).

Title: Nature Connectedness through Sensory and Space Experience

Workshop #4—4th Space Residency (October 24-December 19, 2019)

Title: Nature Connectedness through Sensory and Space Experience

At the time of this residence, the Concordia University 4th Space was open most of the day, six days a week. It is a walk-in space used for academic conferences, exhibitions, and presentations. This iteration was quite different from the previous workshops as I would not be presenting in front of an audience nor be on the premises all the time. I had to really think about how to engage people in reflection while not physically being there to offer prompts.

I bought planks of wood and cut them to build three wooden boxes (though I ended up only using one box). I chose to show a large box of dirt and a smaller box of sand. One of my concerns was that I had to leave the materials for long periods and that I had no idea about the number of participants I would have. I ordered 100 saplings online, and I collected hundreds of tree seeds on the Mount Royal. I bought as many biodegradable pots and a basket to organize and store extra materials. Though the administrators were excited about the big box of soil, I was worried about making sure that there would not be a mess. Lighting was also a problem as the lights were often dimmed and the staff did not readily turn on the grow lights when they arrived in the morning.

I created a text with instructions asking guests to walk in and help themselves to the materials to plant a seed or sapling of their choice, adding that I would water and care for their

59. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 44-45.

60. Blumberg, *City Beautiful Movement*.

61. *What Is the City Beautiful Movement?*

little one until it was time to plant them outside. I provided 4th Space with a video produced by my MA Director, Liz Miller, during a session with volunteers in the garden. This allowed people to better understand the aim of the installation.

See Appendix 4 for 4th Space instructions text and photos.

Workshop #5—John Abbott College Professional Development Day (January 16, 2020)

Title: Nature Connectedness through Sensory and Space Experience

This was an hour and a half workshop. Inspired by the world café methodology, I first presented my MA research and the mind.heart.mouth collective garden project. Then, I asked people to break into groups of four to discuss selected questions. After each group had discussed a question for about 10 minutes, one of the members presented the highlights of their discussion. I brought the sand and soil boxes used previously and seedlings (prepared 5-6 weeks prior to the event's date). People looked happy and lively during the workshop. I received positive feedback afterward.

See Appendix 5 for John Abbott College Professional Development Day PowerPoint presentation.

Virtual Workshops in Covid time

Workshop #6: CUathome: 4th Space Virtual Gardening Workshop (May 2020)

Title: Nature Connectedness through Sensory and Space Experience

In April 2020, a few weeks after mandatory Covid isolation measures were put into place, I received an email inviting me to present a virtual workshop on starting a balcony or backyard garden. For this virtual iteration of my workshop, I had to integrate natural elements in a new remote presentation. To achieve this, I provided a list of the ingredients previously used in in-person workshops and included it in the event's description, suggesting that participants who wanted to register for the workshop should acquire the ingredients prior to the date.

Logging into the event with both my phone and my computer, I had a stationary camera and I had someone hold my phone to provide close-ups and a variety of angles. I introduced my MA project and the philosophy upon which my work is based, including our cultural perceptions of dirt and dirtiness. As there was no interaction with participants other than with the workshop moderator, I missed the interaction with anyone watching on the other side. This highlighted the importance of interaction with participants to establish the caring and sensory connections proposed in this research.

Proposing to use natural elements as the tools of experiential learning did not, on its own, establish the connections I aimed to achieve in my research. Yet, I wonder if possibly these connections might have happened while I could not witness them. Future virtual iterations might be more aligned with my purpose when I can communicate with the participants.

Workshop #7: BiteMe (October 1, 2020)

Title: Grow your Greens Indoors all Winter

As a Concordia Food Coalition (CFC) funding recipient for the mind.heart.mouth collective garden in 2020, I was required to participate in events organized by CFC. One of those events is BiteMe, held every fall. I was invited to present a virtual workshop on creating an indoor garden to grow greens all winter. Once again, I prepared a list of items for the

participants to obtain before the workshop. This time, I only used my computer's stationary camera. As I was able to interact directly with my workshop participants and answer their questions, I could see how people engaged with the prompts and materials. Yet, once I reflected on this event, I still noticed a disconnect. There is something that only seems to happen in person as we interact with the various prompts and elements together, in community.

A more in-depth synthesis and analysis about the workshops is presented on page 20.

mind.heart.mouth Collective Garden 2019—Description and Process

The mind.heart.mouth collective garden concept stems from the workshops' iterative process and a personal vision about fighting food insecurity. Building upon other models of urban agriculture projects—such as Alemany Farm⁶² in San Francisco; the cross-cultural community garden led by the Datta family at the University of Saskatoon,⁶³ which I visited in June 2019; and NDG Dépôt collective gardens in Montréal⁶⁴—I developed an intergenerational collective garden on the Loyola Campus. The mind.heart.mouth collective garden aims to promote food security on campus by providing free local organic food to any member of the Concordia community who wishes to volunteer in the garden, to the Hive Co-op, which provides free lunches for all, and to neighbouring food banks.

I was also inspired by American artist Fritz Haeg's Edible Estate project, in which he promoted replacing grass lawns with food gardens. By reframing our approach to front lawn aesthetics with an innovative concept consisting of a fresh vegetable garden, I hoped that we might fill gaps in the availability and consumption of nutritious food to meet dietary needs without having to transport food over far distances.

Aiming to disrupt beliefs and ideas on our relationships with dirt and edible plants, I transposed the workshops' ideology into an immersive environment where, following Paniagua and Istance's prescribed characteristics for experiential learning pedagogy,⁶⁵ I hoped to offer concrete experience through active involvement, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The research-creation and critical-making processes supported the design of the mind.heart.mouth collective garden as a tool to highlight how growing vegetables can indeed be as attractive as a grass lawn. In that space, hands-on activities provide the momentum for care ethics and sensory studies to work hand-in-hand.

Soon after conducting the workshop at the Concordia Sustainability in the City and Beyond Conference in March 2019 (Workshop #2), I presented a funding application to the Sustainability Action Fund for the mind.heart.mouth collective garden project. I was awarded \$1,500.00 and the Eric Saint-Pierre Research Award. This funding allowed me to transpose what I had learned from the workshops into a further iteration of the concepts and elements to create a collective garden on my university's campus.

A few days after receiving the awards, I was contacted by Professor Rebecca Tittler, Coordinator of the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability and Faculty member in the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability and the Biology Department of Concordia University, to join the Loyola Campus Greening Committee. This process set the stage to discuss the location of the garden for my project. In April, along with members of the

62. Alemany Farm.

63. Datta, *Growing a Garden*.

64. The Depot, *A Community Food Centre in Montreal*.

65. Paniagua and Istance, *Teachers as Designers of Learning Environments*, 27.

Greening Committee, I walked around the Loyola campus while discussing plans for a tree-planting initiative to be launched in fall 2019. Walking between 1930s brick buildings of religious character and by vast expanses of grass, trees offer some shade here and there where people could sit or lie down directly on the grass or at picnic tables. We identified areas that would have at least eight hours of continuous sun and chose the space that was to host the mind.heart.mouth garden. Coming from the residential area on the north side of the garden, you walk through a system of paying parking lots between a new glass building and student residences. I was given permission to grow my garden in the space against a six-foot-tall metallic fence bordering the campus, near the P5 parking lot.

In June 2019, I met the superintendent of the Loyola campus, Gerry Barrette, and we discussed my plans for the garden. From that meeting onward and throughout the season, I consciously worked very hard to establish and maintain respectful interactions with Gerry and his team. It was not difficult, but I was always extremely conscious that I was in *their space*, and I made every effort to respect *their rules*, whether official or informal. When I was not familiar with the rules, I inquired about them. I also did my best to make sure that anyone who volunteered in the garden acted according to the rules. Gerry told me that since the garden was on campus grounds, he could supply wood, build boxes, and provide soil. Thanks to his generosity, I could build more beds and allocate my funding to *Urban Seedling's* high-quality soil mix to add to the soil provided by Gerry and to seedlings, fertilizer, and garden tools. Because of my lack of experience in this sort of endeavour, I wanted to keep it small to ensure I could manage the project, so I only asked to build eight beds. The design and placement of the garden beds were agreed upon (see Appendix 10). On the given date, I arrived on the premises midmorning to find that soil had already been poured in built boxes, while another group was hard at work to complete the rest of the wooden boxes. I then met Patrick, Gerry's assistant, who wanted to know if everything was as I had hoped and inquired about what I would like between the boxes.

“Should we put river rocks between the beds?”

I was surprised as I had not given much thought about what would go between the boxes. In the school gardens I had visited, the space between the beds was simply covered with grass. Money was tight and I told Patrick that I could not afford river rocks. He answered that it was not a problem; they had some already. Since the aesthetic aspect of the garden was extremely important for my methodology, I promptly agreed.

Initially, I had envisioned a garden that would be used primarily by students at Concordia University. By early June, however, when the details concerning the space I was allowed to use were finalized, the winter semester was long over, and starting a campaign to get student volunteers to work in the garden over the summer seemed unrealistic. Having set aside the recruitment posters and social media posts that I had prepared beforehand, I was determined to start the season as a solitary gardener in training when Christina Weiss, Kinesiologist, Supervisor of the Conditioning Floor, Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, of the Perform Centre of Concordia University, contacted me to find out if I wanted to include a group of elderly people and cancer patients who were receiving care at the centre in the garden's activities. I immediately accepted.

Just a few hours before the first session was to begin, Urban Seedling delivered my seedlings. I had not been able to select the varieties I wanted since the project came together quite late in the planting season. Thus, I had to take what was left. This was a first encounter with what came to be our group's motto: *let it go*. By the time the 12 participants arrived at 2 p.m., I was ready for them. They seemed surprised when looking at the garden beds that contained only soil.

I announced that we were going to plant the garden, and they seemed excited, though I sensed that some people were nervous. I soon understood why. When I told them to each take a box of tomato seedlings and plant seven in a row, with about a foot between each, on the east side of the beds, they all just stared at me. Stefano asked, “Can you show us how you plant a seedling?” “Yes, of course.” I realized that I needed to start from the *very beginning*. Here was a second *let it go* (assuming seniors have basic knowledge about growing food). That was not a problem, but watching people haphazardly follow my instructions triggered doubts that anything would grow if the people doing the planting did it *wrong*. This was another *let it go*; I had to learn leniency and patience to coach people toward caring in this environment. I had to hope for the best and accept that I could not control the outcome. There is, in fact, so little under our control when working in a vegetable garden. All we can do is learn how to work with nature and people and respect them. I needed the garden to grow vegetables, but that was an absolute that I had set for myself. To teach how to work in harmony with nature, I had to do some shifting in my personal approach. The volunteers were all doing their very best. And I was learning too. I was going to have to work consciously over the following few weeks to learn to model working together with mother nature’s ways of growing vegetables. I soon understood that sometimes I might find ways to overcome it, sometimes I might be able to manage it, but, most of the time, I would have to work with it and surrender to its great forces while also making way for other people’s attempts at getting it right. All I could do to make room for the proposed experiential learning was to make my instructions and demonstrations as clear and descriptive as possible, and allow my participants to experiment, make mistakes and reflect on their experience.

After the first session and as the weeks passed, I got to know each of the volunteers a little better and enjoyed their company in the garden. All summer and fall, I witnessed how dedicated they had become to ensuring that the garden looked nice and the space around it was inviting. Over a few weeks, the seniors and I had become a caring community. All through July and August, we met every Tuesday and worked hard. We were particularly excited when, during the last week of August, our garden intern Jacqueline Trudel, a Geography student, joined us as part of an internship within the Sustainability Minor offered by the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability. Soon, to our great pleasure, as September rolled in other students joined us in the garden, and everyone, young and older, truly seemed to delight in interacting in the space. The seniors always noticed when students were absent, asking, “Where is so-and-so? Why did they not come this week? Are they OK?”

Unfortunately, by the time school started and students begun attending steadily, it was time to close the garden. I hoped that the second iteration of the garden would bring more consistency in student attendance.

In the garden, people enjoyed moving back and forth between working quietly and interacting with one another. For me, it is this movement between the meditative work and the social participation that allows the caring to take root and grow. I understand and respect that individuals will experience this with great personal variations, but the hands-on practice and experiential learning create the space to refine one’s relationship to natural elements and to community and create memories. These events are conducive to the initiation of embodied experiences. All garden participants reported how relaxed and at peace they felt when they worked in the garden, saying that taking food home was nice but that they really looked forward to just *being* in the garden.

My instructions were usually to pick what was ripe as one moved through while trimming and weeding. At the beginning of each session, everyone took a basket and clippers and picked a spot to work in. At the end of the session, all the baskets were brought together and the food was

divided into bags for each of the workers, saving a portion for the food bank during the summer or the Hive during the school time. Many of the volunteers would take some or all of their portion and offer it to someone who might need it more. I loved the group's kindness toward one another. It was also clear that my volunteers understood how they were participating in and contributing to community life. Not only did they get the opportunity to grow food for themselves and thus contributed to improving their situation of food insecurity, but they also helped others in need in the community. Their participation in this collective garden model allowed them to feel pride in the work they did. I sensed this through the way participants began checking-in on one another and how they began to take initiatives around the garden, acting with expertise and confidence. This work can also contribute to removing the stigma often experienced by people who depend on food banks for their sustenance.

All the participants left their mark on me in their own way and, I believe, on one another. What's more, this newly formed community intertwined with the Concordia community and particularly the Hive as the senior participants began asking about the Hive: "Did you bring them the harvest? Did they like it? What did they say? Who gets *our* food?"

When we were closing the garden, I found out that anyone could go to the Hive and partake in the Free Lunch Program. This was something I wished to integrate into the next iterations of the garden.

See Appendix 6 for photographs of the mind.heart.mouth collective garden.

WORKSHOPS AND GARDEN SYNTHESIS

Growing Pains: Challenging Expectations

In this final section, I reflect on what I have learned through my experimentations. This reflection supplements the participants' testimonies of the workshops and the garden and the effect that the presence of the garden space on the Loyola campus had on passersby for two years.

The work that I engage with in this research-creation project supplies praxical knowledge, as defined by Heidegger, and defined above, revealing new ideas and theory that I share within these pages and that might provide support for those who come after me aiming to challenge cultural dynamics through which increasing numbers are vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis. Like the rake's fingers scratching the garden soil, bringing out elements that would otherwise remain hidden just beneath the surface, my writing reconnaissance now leads me to linger on the ideas or assumptions, challenges, and unintended consequences that arise from stories and moments of meaning that came to the fore when reflecting on this research. The following stories, I hope, can gather notions, principles, and knowledge that might inform others who wish to engage in practices involving care and experiential learning with communities. Barrett and Bolt suggest that research-creation "not only produces knowledge that may be applied in multiple contexts, but also has the capacity to promote a more profound understanding of how knowledge is revealed, acquired and expressed."⁶⁶ Over the past two years, I have witnessed how the iterative processes and hands-on learning through physical and intellectual engagement parallel embodied experiences brought on by everyday life. Through the analysis that is also part of this process, I reach a depth of experience and understanding that I would not have achieved using other research methods. Furthermore, the takeaways go beyond the creation

66. Barrett and Bolt, *Practice as Research*, 4.

of a vegetable garden and can be applied to other realms of research-creation that are informed by collective and iterative processes.

In the previous sections, I tried to demonstrate how the problem and a helpful solution reside in the same place. Being exposed to a space of beauty that contrasts powerfully with the environment that contains it can create awareness of the strangeness that is cast in the shadows of the existing omnipresent culture. The mind.heart.mouth workshops and collective garden iterations grew out of my earnestness and my intuitive and creative processes, which provided insights to curate the elements brought together in specific shapes and forms to address my research question:

How might a workshop series and experiment in collective gardening foster a sense of care and community in a university context?

Informed Guesses, Hunches, and Imaginings

I started this work without an entirely clear research agenda and was rather motivated by a conviction to contribute to my immediate community. This orientation is supported by Barrett and Bolt, who state that “Since creative arts research is often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns, it operates not only on the basis of explicit and exact knowledge, but also on that of tacit knowledge.”⁶⁷ Research-creation then presented itself as the ideal approach to engage in research aiming to address my main concerns and create spaces and experiences for people to explore their relationship with natural elements. I hoped that the materials, spaces, and conversations spurred during the iterative workshops and in the vegetable garden could support people in bringing to consciousness the state of their connection to natural elements while also instilling knowledge on food production.

The project was developed through a pre-logical phase of knowing in the form of what Polanyi terms “tacit knowledge,” also referred to by Barrett and Bolt, as cited above. This phase is composed of intuition and insights based on my exploration as I sought to unearth connections and understandings buried deep in my consciousness. Professor Mark K. Smith, from the University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom, explains that “the informed guesses, hunches and imaginings that are part of exploratory acts are motivated by what [Polanyi] describes as ‘passions’. They might well be aimed at discovering ‘truth’, but they are not necessarily in a form that can be stated in propositional or formal terms.”⁶⁸

The reflections between each of the workshops grounded the links that then became clearer. In turn, this helped develop the ideas and achieve a greater understanding of the relationships between the various components, allowing me to move into a logical phase of knowing for further workshops and for developing the model and theory that would be applied to the garden.

For instance, if projecting my assumptions about people’s perceptions by stating that we eagerly play in the sand but would not so readily play in the dirt triggered giggles during workshops, it also stimulated conversations on the subject. I kept the sand exercise in the workshop because it was a source of reflection and learning even for those who preferred playing in the dirt. The conversations encouraged everyone to reflect on the reasons for their preference and gave them a chance to push their intuitive or tacit knowledge to a state of knowing that can lead to confidence, curiosity, and further inquiry about natural elements.

67. Idem, 4.

68. Smith, *Michael Polanyi and Tacit Knowledge*.

Each in-person workshop hosted between fifteen and twenty-two participants. Participants usually demonstrated characteristic joy and excitement when arriving at the workshops. From the first workshop that was led as a term project, the participants always seemed eager to engage with the activities. That was true whether they just happened to be there—as was the case for the students who were in my MA class—, in which case I would specifically state that no one should engage in any activity that makes them uncomfortable, or whether they had registered for the workshop—as in the second workshop held at the Sustainability Conference. I believe that this joy stems from a human need to connect with natural elements. Even if we do not often experience opportunities to play with natural elements, many people feel good while doing so. The beneficial effects of interacting with nature have been well documented,⁶⁹ and as they left the workshop some participants commented that this was a wonderfully refreshing break between the various presentations.

During the workshops, people would smile, laugh, converse, and generally seem relaxed. They actively engaged with the prompts and appeared to be deep in thought or pensive when considering their relationship to dirt, and how dirt/soil is positioned in our culture. Adding the sand in the second workshop seemed to enhance these reactions. From these exercises, I learned that it was possible to instill in others the Proustian mnemonic process that I had experienced when picking vegetables in my own backyard (or to initiate new consciousness in people) for them to reflect about their relationships to our planet's ecological elements by prompting them to touch garden elements such as soil and edible seedlings. I believe the combination of reflective, experiential learning, and social communication during the workshops at the very least planted a seed in each participant for a shift in their own understanding. Future research projects should include a method to evaluate such changes in perception and understanding on this topic.

From the first workshop, I felt that adopting edible seedlings was an important step for people to engage with care. The participants always looked surprised that I would offer the seedlings for them to take home; most people asked, “I can really take it home?” with a hopeful expression on their face. There was also great interest in understanding how to care for the seedling. Furthermore, participants who planted seeds or seedlings at the 4th Space event regularly passed by to visit their seedlings or water them. Some even later contacted me to inquire about how it was doing. This was a powerful way to set the stage for an environment of care both for the community and for natural elements.

There is a parallel between what was accomplished in the workshops and in the garden: both spaces are sites of learning where a community of care was formed around playing in the dirt, caring for edible plants, and socializing in ways that involve paying attention and listening to one another. During both activities, people have expressed how from the beginning to the end of the session they thought it was a fun and relaxing activity. As such, even if the workshops were run indoors, they still provided an alternative form of gardening with benefits akin to those that can be experienced outdoors. For this reason as well, those of us living in four seasons regions can greatly benefit from continuing to grow greens indoors during the colder periods of the year.

The workshop that I conducted at John Abbott was longer than the ones I had conducted prior and I included discussions in the world café methodology.⁷⁰ Divided in groups of five, the participants engaged in discussion about the prompts for about seven minutes, and then shared the main points with the rest of the group. This format allowed me to learn about people's thoughts and processes more clearly than when just prompting people to share their thoughts with

69. Franco, Shanahan, and Fuller, *Benefits of Nature Experiences*, 864.

70. For more on this see *The World Café* website, or the slides from Appendix 5.

the person sitting next to them—not only when each group share with the class, but also, when I walked from group to group to listen and engage in conversation with the participants. (See Appendix 5.1 for examples of notes from Group. 1) This allowed me as well to offer more prompts and encourage further reflection, and to also see first-hand what my prompts triggered in the way they were formulated. This is a favourite approach that I would repeat in and encourage with larger groups (more than twenty people) and when the workshop is more than one hour.

Garden Volunteers' Motivations and Takeaways

In the garden, the volunteers usually worked hard most of the hour-long session. However, some of them just came to hang out. Stefano, a senior volunteer who was born in Italy and who reported having worked on farms all his life, said this was perfect for him because he could not work in a garden very long due to a bad shoulder. Yet, he expressed that he missed it so much and thus this garden was perfect for him because he could work for just an hour and grow a variety of vegetables. “I couldn’t do that by renting a plot in a community garden. Here, I can also just hang out and help people if that’s OK with you.” I have a feeling that this might indeed have been the reason that most of them came to the garden week after week.

Many of the senior volunteers said that spending time in the garden gave them a reason to move and be outside. Others said that their main reason to come was to socialize and have something to do, as it gave them the chance to be as busy or do as little as they wanted. Students and seniors alike talked about how they felt relaxed while they were working or hanging out in the garden and how they felt a sense of peace doing the work itself, like harvesting vegetables, trimming, or weeding. Participants may have had other motivations to come work in the garden week after week. Future research should include inquiries about these motivations. Overall, whether they were food insecure or not, the garden provided a way for seniors to join a community in an active way. Collective gardens’ capacity to provide a sense of community and fight isolation has been well documented.⁷¹ However, the mind.heart.mouth’s contribution went beyond this. Here, the volunteers participated in the larger community as well by working to grow fresh organic produce not only for themselves but to support other people’s needs as well.

The intergenerational format of the garden enhanced the care aspect and promoted young people’s exposure to the older generation, humanizing seniors. The seniors were clearly happy to spend time with students and vice versa.

Ava and Firsts

From the first gardening workshop with the Perform Centre participants, on July 2, 2019, Ava always arrived on time. There was a powerful energy about her, and I could not quite decipher it. She worked quietly for the hour that the session lasted and left. For weeks, she did not interact very much with me or with any of the other participants. Upon arriving, she would put her blue bag down in the shade against the brown brick wall of the students’ residence and would wait for my instructions. New at gardening, she seemed most comfortable once she received very specific instructions accompanied by a demonstration. Once everyone had started, I would always come back to her to check in and try to engage in conversation. From her brief, one- or two-word answers, I got the impression that she just wanted to work quietly. I thought she may be a shy person, and I tried to respect that and to give her space.

On a warm Sunday afternoon, early in August, as I was working on my own in the garden, I found our first *real* cucumber. It was about seven inches long! I wondered how I had

71. Datta, *Growing a Garden*.

missed it until then. Filled with excitement, I wished my Perform Centre group was there to share the moment. I hid the prickly treasure under the broad green leaves, praying no garden thieves would rob the group of the glory of the event. On Tuesday afternoon, arriving before everyone as I always did, I quickly checked that my surprise was still intact. Once everyone had arrived, I invited them to gather around to show them the fruit of their labour. As I lifted the large green leaves, the oohs and aahs resounded around me. When I turned around, I noticed that Ava was just standing there staring with her mouth opened. She looked at me, and I smiled at her. Suddenly, her eyes filled with tears, and she exclaimed, “This is the most beautiful thing I ever saw!” We had our first group hug! Ava later told me that she had never seen cucumbers or any other food growing on a plant before. Here, she had contributed to this miracle. That moment alone made all the work, the hours, and the energy spent on this project worthwhile. Because Ava had been so quiet until then, this felt like a big breakthrough for everyone. From that moment on, though she was still very reserved, Ava talked with everyone. She even shared that since she started eating the vegetables from the garden, she stopped having stomach pains. As her energy changed, the atmosphere in the space also took on a different feel—a more engaged one.

It would seem that—as I have said many times—growing food was a pretext for so much more.

Over the summer, we all learned to deal with various pests, with Japanese beetles, blossom end rot on tomatoes, and with mildew on tomato plants. When I would spot something, I would quickly email Urban Seedling or find YouTube videos and talk about the solutions with everyone. Some seniors even provided counter solutions that we also tried. Having to deal with various issues and problems promoted reflection about how to work hand-in-hand respectfully with Mother Nature.

There were many *let it gos* throughout the summer. However, the biggest one was when we closed the garden during the last week of October. At first, it was so difficult to pull out all the plants we had nurtured all summer. We kept looking at each other with sadness. Soon, everyone began to move with more energy, finding the exercise cathartic. Afterward, we planted garlic. Garlic bulbs are planted in the fall and begin to grow when the ground thaws in the spring. I heard somewhere that planting garlic is like a gardener’s show of faith in the future, in the coming of spring and all its beauty after the hard winter. We all parted after a little picnic and promises of getting together the following March to plan our summer’s work.

Then Covid happened.

I truly miss my gardening partners, and I am hopeful for the possibility of a 2021 iteration of our garden.

Growing Solo: mind.heart.mouth 2020

In February 2020, I met with Christina Weiss from the Perform Centre to plan a possible collaboration with the group of seniors for the upcoming summer. Around the same time, I met with the Sustainability Action Fund team to discuss funding possibilities for the coming summer. I met with Gerry Barrette, the property manager, to discuss the expansion of the garden to use the entire space that I had been allocated in the spring of 2019 and to ensure I was conforming to the process required by the university concerning my use of the land. Gerry explained to me that there were new people in the administration, and we needed to get their approval. At the same time, I was also looking for a greenhouse to plant seedlings. I had been turned away from the Concordia Greenhouse downtown because they said they were using the space for their seedlings. The biology department on the Loyola campus also turned me away, saying they were worried about pests. Finally, Professor Carly Zitter, from the Biology Department, took pity on me and

allowed me to use her lab. March rolled in and I began planting some seedlings (tomatoes and peppers), planning to soon meet with the Perform Centre group to plan the rest of the garden. I was in the midst of back-and-forth emails with Dominique Dumont, new Director of Space Planning, to get permission to expand when Covid-19 hit and the University shut down. On the Saturday morning before the University closed, I went with my 20-year-old child to rescue about 400 seedlings from certain death. We filled up my car and then my home with the growing life forms and accompanying grow lights.

Following mandated isolation measures, rumours of food scarcity were spreading, and my mission shifted from wanting to expand the garden to simply hoping to get permission to access the garden space on campus. Finally, after having moved from refusing expansion to refusing access altogether, Mrs. Dumont sent me a final refusal where she included the following highlighted text from the Concordia website:

Access to campus continues to be limited to those essential services personnel designated by their supervisors to keep the university operational, and a restricted list of researchers who have been granted exemptions by the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, because of the nature of their work.

I turned to my MA Director, Professor Liz Miller, and we learned that Professor Acland, the Chair of the Department of Communication Studies, was meeting with the Dean 24 hours later. I was given the chance to fill out multiple forms to describe the fieldwork that I needed to do in the garden. After a suspenseful few days, I was granted access, but I had to work alone. All the documents confirming this permission were in Professor Miller's name. I understood how much of a responsibility I was undertaking.

The University's refusal to allow members of the Concordia community on campus unless they had been granted permission by the Dean meant that I could not have student volunteers in the garden even after the Quebec government authorized the opening of community gardens across the province and even if people from the neighbourhood walked through the campus and the garden space all day long. The mind.heart.mouth model had to go on according to a very different iteration than the one I had intended. I worked alone with a new mission to deliver all the food to food banks. From June, I developed collaborations with the NDG Food Dépôt, Women on the Rise, and the Concordia Food Coalition's Food Baskets program to deliver hundreds of pounds of vegetables every week from June to October. While my activities in the garden did not expand, my efforts around food security in the community did.

All summer, I missed the volunteers who had grown the garden with me in 2019. After a few weeks of 25 to 30-hour weeks in the garden at the end of my workdays, I counted for the first time that 12 volunteers working in the garden one hour a week total 12 hours of work a week! It seems so obvious. Yet, during the first year, at least until September, I was too busy worrying about my performance as a guide and teacher to realize how much work was getting done and how much these people meant to me.

From Imposter Syndrome to Humble Gardener

Over the past few years, urban agriculture has gained in popularity. During the pandemic, global worries of food scarcity and increasing food prices, the inability for so many to go to work, and work from home have caused an explosion of urban home garden initiatives.⁷² What

72. Fawcett-Atkinson, *Urban Gardens Growing Strong*.

few mention when chanting the glories of such initiatives is that while growing food responds to one of the most basic human needs, our long-term disconnect with nature's ways also means that most of us know very little about agriculture. More importantly, a large portion of the population living with food insecurity—incidentally, those who would indeed benefit from growing their food as prices went up—does not effectively have access to land. This highlights this research's premise.

Offering a very public display of urban agriculture with the mind.heart.mouth garden also positioned me as an expert in the field in a way that I had not anticipated. If, at first, I denied possessing any mastery, people either thought I was refusing to share *my secrets* or that I was not interested in explaining. Either way, it was not a positive interaction. After all, here I was, standing in a luscious garden filled with vegetables. I then adopted a full transparency stance and began to share what I knew and was experimenting with. I also posted a sign from Urban Seedling telling people that I had learned everything I knew from them and YouTubers. I was just learning, and I was far from feeling as if I possessed any sort of expertise, but since I had started my MA, I had been spending 20 to 35 hours per week all summer growing food and trying to learn everything I could about how to do it.

I soon realized that these moments also provided opportunities to teach about regenerative agriculture methods, ways to work in harmony with the ecosystem of the region we live in, the importance of compost, waste reduction, and pollinators for the vegetables to grow. Was this not what I had set out to do in the first place with this research-creation project? In many ways, in 2020, my community of gardeners was expanding from volunteers in the garden in 2019 to other community practitioners.

Surveillance and Boundaries

For me, being in the mind.heart.mouth collective garden presented multiple levels of self-awareness. This was true in 2019 as in 2020, though in different ways. When I first started to garden on campus, I often felt fairly odd thinking that I was growing a garden on land that did not belong to me. The space is situated at a busy intersection on the Loyola campus and surrounded by multiple surveillance cameras. In this immersive space, I would usually become completely absorbed by my activities and forget whose land I was cultivating and who was watching. I would easily become absorbed by the gestures required to trim this and that, my thoughts focused on the appearance of the plants.

Yet, even when I was submerged by the plants, my every move could be observed by security cameras, and I could be seen at all times by people who tend to the grounds, walk or bike on the pathways, sit in their cars in the parking lot seemingly waiting for someone, sit on blankets having a picnic, groups of individuals walking in perfect unison staring at their phones in search of Pokemons, parents teaching their child to ride a bicycle or rollerblade or watching their children play while meeting neighbourhood parents and exchanging tips on how to best adapt to sending your kids to French school. All summer and early fall, the space was always buzzing with chatter, laughter, and shouts, with me also surveilling the space and the people in it as I worked.

One Sunday afternoon, I brought one of my dogs with me to the garden. Delphi is a young dog with a lot of energy, and I thought that her presence might help delineate my territory in my ongoing competition with the squirrels. As I usually spent about four to five hours working in the garden, I let her run around a little now and then. After about five minutes of her running wild chasing squirrels, I saw a security guard, who was always friendly with me, walking in my direction. I called Delphi over, knowing I had been caught and that I was *in trouble*.

“You have to keep her on a leash.” “I know. I’m so sorry. I will.”

After a little chit-chat about this and that, he told me that *they* saw her running freely on the security cameras in the office. When I answered, “Ew, I forget that my every action can be seen. That I am on camera all the time when I am in the garden,” he answered, “Why should you worry about that as long as you behave?”

There were too many thoughts and emotions rushing to my brain for me to be able to answer calmly and politely. Was it the guilt of having *misbehaved*? Of having been *caught*? Of being spoken to like a child? All of the above? I stayed quiet and focused on the opportunity I had been given to do this work on the university campus. Yet, I was reminded of Foucault’s passage on Bentham’s panopticon. Of a prisoner’s “conscious and permanent state of visibility that ensures the automatic functioning of power. [...] that the prisoners are caught in a situation of power of which they themselves are the bearers.”⁷³ I was constantly aware of the possibility of being seen. Yet, I had neglected my usual conscious observance of guidelines. The guilt and fear of losing my privileges ensured that I normally followed the rule. I had slipped.

Another day, the same security guard proudly told me how he had caught a woman eating tomatoes.

“You need to change your signs.”

“Really?”

“Well, this woman was having a grand old time eating tomatoes, and when I told her this is not a buffet, that she can’t just help herself, she pointed out to me that the signs say that the research project also aims to have people experience it with all their senses.”

The sign reads: “To look at the many ways in which a vegetable garden becomes a public sphere where people like to walk through and take a moment to experience the garden with all their senses, breathing in the various perfumes, looking up close at the growing vegetables, noticing the sounds of the city contrasting with the experience of walking in a vegetable garden, and some even touch and taste the vegetables.”

“You see! You are telling people to eat the vegetables!”

“This does not tell people to eat the vegetables!” However, I could see the woman’s point.

“Well, this is how this lady interpreted it. Maybe other people understand it this way too.”

He continued to tell me that the woman had taken a marker and circled the passage on the sign. Dumbfounded, I walked over to the sign and saw that this woman had not only circled the passage, she had also written vulgarities all over the sign. Quite upset to see my \$40 sign ruined, I pulled it and the French version posted a little further out and put both in my car.

Once again, if I had not fallen to my emotions, I could have asked, “Why did you let her write all over my sign? Why did you not stop her? That’s vandalism! Isn’t it your job to stop people from vandalizing things on campus?” What was his job? Indeed, if the security guards patrolling the campus had taken an interest in the garden and wished to contribute to protecting it, they did not possess the capacity and power to prevent vegetables from disappearing every day or to stop people from vandalizing my signs.

So, people were taking food. There were times when I was working in the garden and was so absorbed in my task that people took food while I was working and I would not see it at all. One day, bending over tomato plants, trimming suckers, I suddenly heard “Ma’am! What are you doing with these cucumbers?” I looked up and saw the security guard standing in the garden,

73. Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir*, 234. (Translation mine)

looking about 50 metres away toward the science building. My eyes followed his gaze and landed on a woman walking away with tight steps, her arms full of cucumbers. Another time, I looked up to see a woman washing the dirt off carrots in my sprinkler. When I asked what she was doing, she candidly answered, “I am washing the carrots.”

Out of all the eggplants I cultivated, I was only able to deliver five to the NDG Dépôt. So many more had grown. The cucumbers also disappeared quickly. The disappearance of those big vegetables was easier to notice. With the tomatoes, I could not really tell; All I noticed was that one day there were so many almost-ripe tomatoes, and the next day there would be none. I started picking things before they would ripen. It became a race between me and the *thieves*. For a couple of weeks, at the end of July, I went home crying every night after my shift in the garden. I felt like the village idiot, taken advantage of, working so hard so that fewer people would go hungry. I did not think that most of the people who were taking the food were food insecure. However, how could I be certain?

Open supporters suggested I make simple new signs that said, “This garden is for the Food Dépôt.” However, I also delivered food to an organization called Women on the Rise and to the Concordia Food Coalition Food Baskets Initiative; I further worried about using the Dépôt’s name without their authorization because the garden had nothing to do with the Dépôt and I felt it would be misleading for people to think that the food bank had a say in what went on in the mind.heart.mouth garden. Other people said that the signs should just say that the food is not free. I made new signs, big yellow signs on which I wrote in coloured markers, THIS IS A STUDENT-LED PROJECT, GROWING FOOD FOR FOOD BANKS. NOT FREE FOOD. IF YOU ARE FOOD INSECURE, CONTACT THE DÉPÔT. I hated those signs; You could see them from afar, and they were loud. They clashed with my desire for the garden to be a welcoming, sensual, and quiet space. Furthermore, they did not stop the food from disappearing. I felt powerless.

For a while, I struggled to understand my feelings and what was truly going on. Instinctually, I felt an impulse to protect the garden and the mission of growing food for those who lived with food insecurity. This mission was supported by most people, at least outwardly, from the grounds workers to the security guards to people from the neighbourhood. So many expressed their outrage at the fact that people would take from the needy. Clearly, *others* did not buy into this concept. Some people opted in, others did not. My sense of community was being challenged by dissidents. I was forced to consider the gap between my earnestness, vision, and mission and some people’s perception of the garden and its purpose. So many people stopped and asked about the project. I talked about the mission and goals daily, often many times a day. Everyone cheered and expressed encouragement: What a wonderful project! It is so much work! Good for you! Many asked if they could help.

There will always be individuals pushing against boundaries. Many reminded me how grocery stores increase prices to make up for disappearing food, whether it be grapes, food in bulk, or even bigger items: “You have to expect theft.”

One of a gardener’s biggest moments of personal glory, of satisfaction, is when you pick the fruit of your labour from plants that you planted and nurtured for weeks and months. You become attached to that which you have invested so much in. I felt as if I was being robbed of that intrinsic joy, pride, and pleasure—not just from the food. If I could not deliver all the food I had worked so hard to grow, I was just working all these hours without seeing the results.

Earnestness and Uncompromising Idealism

In the spring of 2020, every seed I planted in the garden would disappear. Seedlings were getting chewed up from one day to the next. I contemplated building cages over every bed, which would effectively negate the vision of a garden blending with the campus environment. Was my vision realistic? I began to wonder, to doubt. I tried every *gentle* method offered on YouTube to keep squirrels and groundhogs away from the garden. I collected from my home every plastic fork that I had accumulated over years of takeout food and delivery, refusing to put them in the recycling. I planted them with the prongs up, which was supposed to make it uncomfortable for the small animals to walk in the garden. There was no improvement. I bought plants that deliver smells disliked by animals. I put human and dog hair, cayenne, and black pepper everywhere.

One day, as I watched squirrels run to drink from puddles formed by the overage of water from the sprinklers, I realized that they were thirsty. Then, I thought that these little animals normally fed on leftover food from garbage bins and stuff dropped on the ground all over the campus. As the university was closed, the garbage bins were pretty empty. The squirrels were probably starving. I bought a 50-pound bag of bird seeds, peanuts, walnuts, and mixed nuts in bulk and began spreading these, as well as foods that I would normally put in my compost bin, to feed the campus critters. This did it. I had surrendered. My feelings of frustration, anger, and helplessness shifted to feelings of peace. I was sharing the space with these critters, and I had to *work with them*. As soon as they had other food and water, they left the garden alone.

The Biggest Little Farm, a 2018 documentary about a couple's attempts at creating a biodiverse farm one hour north of Los Angeles, shows the heartbreaking challenges they face while learning to work in harmony with their environment. When their pig Emma gets sick, John is entirely focused on saving her. He sits next to his pig, contemplating her, hoping, and searching for answers. He searches through books and online to find answers to save Emma. I was reminded of the devotion with which I would search for help every time I encountered challenges in the garden and this ardent, feverish need to save the plants and harvest and see what you set out to do come to fruition. And when you cannot do so, when everything you tried fails, including harvesting because others do it without your consent and without allowing you to even see the ripened vegetables, it is devastating. In the documentary, John reflects on this stalemate feeling: "It's all like this slow disillusionment of our earnest intent. Intent alone is not a protector."⁷⁴ Further, he continues, "In trying to save the animals that will one day become food, it naturally develops this bond. And that's not something I've fully processed."⁷⁵ The caring that I want to promote in the garden comes at a price. There is something very powerful about investing care in living plants and beings. There is an investment of self where one's identity merges with the life we are caring for. There is an overwhelming feeling of loss when one's earnestness is met by betrayal and one's uncompromising idealism is challenged. I had managed *to control* the squirrels and the groundhog. I was engaging in daily battles to grow food while mother nature would throw all sorts of challenges at me: mildew, Japanese and cucumber beetles, ants and flies invasions, and those weird worms—squash vine borers—that burrow inside the squash and zucchini stems, effectively killing the plant. If I did not maintain control, I would lose the battle. Or would I?

I was hurting from having to fight for my vision against people who did not buy into my earnestness. However, I could not control those people any more than I could control the natural

74. Chester and Monroe, *The Biggest Little Farm*, (38:00).

75. Idem, (39:17)

elements. So, I stopped hanging on so tight; I let it go. Finally, I was home in the garden, once again.

I did not stop caring—how could I? But I *let go* of the desire to control what I could not. I also let go of talking about how much food was disappearing. The situation was such that the conversations that were taking place in the garden had become increasingly about the food that was being *stolen*. There was an odd energy about that. Once I let go, I was able to bring the conversations back to more important subjects like climate change, soil, compost, and why I had engaged in this project in the first place, how I missed my volunteers, and how I pray that 2021 will see my model back to its proposed iteration.

In future iterations of the mind.heart.mouth collective garden, I may consider fences, but they must be fences that disappear under or behind growing plants. I am not ready to let go of the immersive element that contributes so powerfully to the embodied experience.

Letting go of control was maybe the biggest and most consistent lesson I learned from growing food on campus. It was a lesson that I had set out to teach but that I had truly understood only after two years of experiential learning. My salvation from losing my mind and crying every night over my fruitless attempts at protecting *my* garden—this space I had created and from which I was drawing so much pride—was to go back to the garden's motto: *let it go!*

Conclusion

In the mind.heart.mouth collective garden on the Loyola campus, I experienced how such a space can at once provide resources to people in need, promote conversation and awareness, and empower participants to advocate for themselves and others. Borrowing from elementary and secondary school garden experiential pedagogy and transposing these lessons to settings with adult participants proved to be effective. The focus of the findings centres around the multiplicity of relationships of care and community and the collective concerns for food insecurity that the garden aimed to address. In 2019, people working at Concordia said they started parking on Terrebonne so they could walk through the garden and breathe in the earthy smells before heading to the office. This year, as much as in 2019, I have received numerous expressions of gratitude for the beauty of the space I created from people living in the neighbourhood who made it a point to walk through the garden every day on their evening or morning walk. This effectively demonstrated that replacing grass lawns with a vegetable garden offers an option that is deeply appreciated, thus challenging cultural assumptions about prescribed urban aesthetics.

The garden's public display provided open learning that extended beyond the workshops and gardening sessions: parents brought their children to show them how vegetables grow; Some said they would go home to search online some of the things they had seen in the garden. I heard children asking their parents to stop so they could ask me questions. Countless individuals embarking on urban agriculture—particularly during the Covid-19 food shortages panic early in the summer⁷⁶—came seeking advice, asking how to control squirrels, pests, what soil and fertilizer to use, many feeling frustrated after noticing that it is not so simple to grow food. The learning potential of the space had expanded beyond anyone who volunteered in the garden.

Because of everyone who passed by and looked or even walked between the beds to see things up close, because of all the people from the neighbourhood who stopped to ask questions and those who stopped just to socialize, I believe that the workshop series and experiment in collective gardening did indeed promote awareness about our relationship with natural elements

76. Lourenco, *Canada's Food Insecurity Problem*.

and the way food grows, as well as foster a sense of care and community on the Loyola campus of Concordia University.

This was achieved in this space differently from how it happened in the workshops. The workshops provided a busy environment of human interaction where people were encouraged to think and talk about their understanding of the experiences with the natural elements that were provided. If both used experiential learning, the garden experience was a much quieter form of learning. The possibilities of making memories and knowing embodied experiences were exponential for someone who spent time in the garden space regularly, as did the volunteers in 2019. I am reminded of Richardson's premise, of how when we are in a space, we adopt behaviours inherent to that space and subscribe to the appropriate cultural actions as they are prescribed by the material realities by which we are surrounded.⁷⁷ It follows that simply being in the garden is conducive to realizing one's connection to natural elements.

I hope that this project, by its mere existence on campus, can have a lasting effect on the community and can keep growing and continue to represent and support sustainable practices on campus while contributing to food security for the Concordia Community and beyond. I hope it can stand as a reminder that a space can be dedicated to growing food, look attractive, and engage community members in caring practices. The natural world is the most potent tool we have to instill awareness about the importance of our relationship with our planet's natural environments and with the way our food grows. It has the power to promote a culture that prescribes behaviours that correspond to our need for connection to natural elements and food production. It is essential to create more spaces like the mind.heart.mouth garden, where people have access to natural elements and food production to engage with experiential learning.

Many experience awe when walking in the woods, standing on a beach looking at the ocean, or being on top of a mountain looking in the distance. Yet, experiencing these things only with our eyes leaves us as spectators with the impression that natural environments are there for our enjoyment, or consumption, as is promoted in our urban consumer culture. There is something potent about caring activities that provide the opportunity to be in the moment and the now. I think this is true about caring for an infant, a young animal, or a garden. There is a demand that insists on getting our attention, that forces us to be present. We are not simply consuming, we are participating, often quietly. When our minds experience this quiet, we might experience intense feelings of connectedness to something bigger than us. We might surrender, feel peace with it all, and truly see our place on this planet.

77. Richardson, *Being-in-the-market*, 433.

APPENDIX 1. WORKSHOP #1 (PILOT)

Term project for COMS 680/893—Media and Aesthetics (December 2018)



Photographs by Andrée Tremblay

APPENDIX 2. WORKSHOP #2

Concordia Sustainability and Beyond Conference (March 2019)

Description on the conference website:

“Don’t touch that, it’s dirty!”

—A Workshop

Don’t touch that, it’s dirty! is a workshop aiming to raise awareness about a disconnect with the natural world that is potentially experienced by human beings in today’s increasingly urban environments. Inspired by notions provided by environmental pedagogy of care, these workshops use a hands-on approach to stimulate experiential learning and reflection about our relationship to nature and to the way our food grows.”

Presentation Text:

Hi, my name is Andrea Tremblay

I am an MA Student in Media Studies here at Concordia.

I am interested in environmental communication; particularly in our relationship to the ways our food is produced.

I am also a mother of 3, and food is a big thing in our home.

A few years ago, I decided I should start a vegetable garden in my backyard.

I suddenly had to face the fact that my connection to nature, and particularly to dirt, was not as innate as my pro-nature self liked to think.

When I picked the first vegetables in my garden, they sort of felt dirtier to me than the ones I bought at the grocery store. But not dirtier as in “they had dirt on them”—dirtier as if they themselves were dirty ... like I was eating a little bit of my backyard ... because I live in the city, and the city does feel kind of dirty to me.

So that kind of threw me into a consciousness crisis; and I began to wonder if others could possibly have a similar disconnect with dirt, food and urban gardening—And so ..., here I am doing this research, and this is a pilot workshop to help me plan my research-creation project.

So, I have 3 objectives with this workshop:

1. To think about this connection.
2. To broaden our awareness of our relationship with dirt, AND
3. To get our hands dirty.

If you prefer not getting your hands dirty, that’s OK ... but then, you have to write a paper explaining why you can’t or won’t. I have prepared paper and pencils, feel free to use them.

For our first exercise, take a moment to consider the 2 wooden boxes that are set in front of you.

Then, please turn to the person next to you, introduce yourself, and tell your neighbour which of the 2 boxes you feel safer putting your hand in.

...

Now, I wonder how many of you felt safer touching the dirt. Can I have a show of hands?

...

For our second exercise, I have these seedlings that I planted and have been nurturing for about 2 ½ weeks and I hope you will continue to care for the one you choose to adopt today with as much love as I did.

These seedlings are kale, rainbow chard, and spinach.

I choose edible plants on purpose because I feel that it pushes our thinking a little bit further when we have to decide to eat something we have looked after and nurtured for a certain time.

Here we have worm casting.

And here we have soil.

In front of you on the table, you should find a CowPot for you to plant your chosen seedling.

So ... you will first fill up your CowPot to about $\frac{3}{4}$. You make a little hole with your finger.

Then you put a pinch of worm casting.

Then you choose your seedling, and you dip it in the soil activator.

And you put it in the hole.

You can add soil and make sure it feels solid without squishing it too much.

Be careful manipulating the seedlings, the little roots are quite sensitive.

So let's proceed. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask.

So I have some questions:

1. How many of you have never grown your own vegetables and can remember the last time you put your hands in the dirt? Can you raise your hand?
—Was it less than 1 year?
—More than 5 years?
2. How many of you can't remember the last time you put your hands in the dirt?
3. For how many people is this a first edible plant adoption?
4. And how many of you have eaten food that you grew and cared for before?

Finally...

As I mentioned earlier, this is a pilot workshop for my MA project.

How many people would come to a follow-up workshop?

I am going to pass a sheet of paper around and if you would like me to let you know about it, please write down your name and email address.

To conclude, we are going to look at the first boxes again.

While we think of all the times we have walked and sat in the sand on a beach, or anywhere else, and how this sand gets in our shoes, in our clothes—and everywhere. Thinking also about how little children sitting in the sand may put it in their mouths...

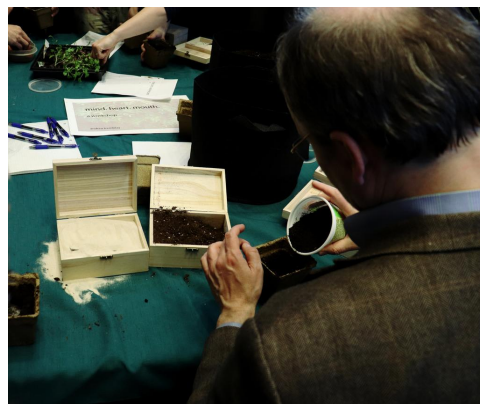
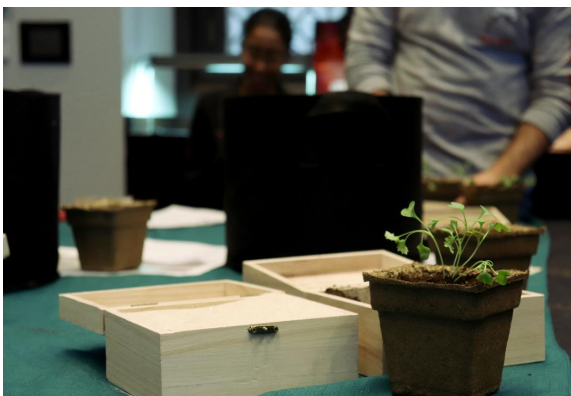
Can we also think about how much of our food actually grows in sand?

So if you DO put your hand in the box of sand, at the bottom of the box, you should find a little card with some information about sand and dirt, and which one is actually safer.

I invite you to consider the life that sprouts from the soil. All the nutrients that it contains and that go into the vitamin and mineral-rich foods that grow from it and that we consume.

On that note, thank you all for participating!

**Workshop #2—Concordia Sustainability and Beyond Conference (March 2019)
Photographs.**





Photographs by Liz Miller and Alessandra LaPosta

APPENDIX 3. WORKSHOP #3

GPTK 703—GradProSkills Graduate Seminar in University Teaching (August 2019). mind.heart.mouth internship proposal :

Mind. Heart. Mouth. Community Garden on the Loyola Campus

120 hours of Community Involvement for credit through the LOYC 420 internship program

Start date: As soon as possible

Description:

Poor nutrition and food insecurity plague student communities everywhere in Canada and Concordia's students are no exception. By growing vegetables on campus, the Mind. Heart. Mouth. Community Garden aims to improve food security while also providing additional resources for Concordia's food organizations. This garden offers opportunities for students to come together with a sense of community by volunteering to look after the garden through workshops and activities that are beneficial for mental health and that promote relaxation. Practicing urban organic farming with diverse indigenous crops plays an important part in supporting our food production system's ecological balance while including pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and birds. The harmony and equilibrium created by biodiversity contribute to insect and weed control, as well as water conservation while strengthening fertile soils. As well, adding new dirt and nutrients will improve the soil and air quality, and reduce neighborhood waste by promoting composting.

By reframing our approach to front lawns aesthetics with an innovative concept which consists of fresh vegetable and fruit gardens, we will be filling gaps in the availability and consumption of nutritious food to meet dietary needs without having to transport the food from great distances.

Promoting and recruiting for this innovative campus garden among the Concordia students represent important contributions to the advancement of knowledge in sustainability while encouraging socially accountable, ecologically sound and economically viable agricultural practices.

Tasks:

Student participating in the Mind. Heart. Mouth. Community Garden program in the context of the LOYC 420 internship program will be involved in various aspects of the community garden coordination, including, but not limited to: social media outreach and management, assisting in running and supervising workshops, overseeing garden activities involving volunteers and various participants, watering, weeding, participating in workshops, as well as working with other sustainability initiatives currently in place at Concordia, namely the Concordia Food Coalition, Concordia Greenhouse, Concordia Compost, People's Potato, Le Frigo Vert, and City Farm School.

Requirements:

Enthusiasm and a desire to learn about organic gardening and how it can help to build community.

Good people skills.

Willingness to work outside and get your hands dirty.

Facilitation skills and experience an asset.

For more information about this internship, contact Andrea Tremblay at and_tr@live.concordia.ca.

For information about LOYC 420, contact Rebecca Tittler at rebecca.tittler@concordia.

To apply: Send cover letter and CV outlining qualifications to Andrea Treambly at and_tr@live.concordia.ca by **Monday, July 22nd**.

APPENDIX 4. WORKSHOP #4

4th Space Residency (October 24-December 19, 2019)

4th Space Instructions Text:

ABOUT

mind.heart.mouth is a research project that aims to promote our relationship to nature and to the way our food grows by creating sensory experiences through manipulating life-supporting elements such as dirt, plants, seeds, compost, and water.

In June 2019, we launched a collective garden on the Loyola Campus to fight food insecurity among the Concordia community and beyond, and we are now enthusiastically sharing our vision in this 4th Space workshop.

mind.heart.mouth received funding from the Concordia Sustainability Action Fund and from the Éric Saint-Pierre Award.

Instructions for the mind.heart.mouth experience:

PART 1

1. We invite you to put your hand in the sand and close your eyes while clearing your mind to simply focus on the sensations you are experiencing through your fingers and hand.
2. We invite you to put your hand in the dirt and close your eyes while clearing your mind to simply focus on the sensations you are experiencing through your fingers and hand.
3. *While many of us sit and/or play in the sand whenever we find it, at the beach or at the park for example, and we tend to rarely sit in the dirt and put our fingers to it just to experience what it feels like.*

Today, we invite you to think about the impression of touching dirt and the impression of touching sand.

Then think about our attempts at controlling dirt, at keeping dirt out and away.

Maybe think of the words dirt and “dirty,” of soil and “soiled.” What are the implications for a culture’s environmental imaginary when essential life-giving elements carry negative connotations?

We invite you to also think and talk about the life-giving properties of each of these elements. How much of our food grows in the sand? How much grows in dirt? What sort of bacteria do we find in the sand? What about dirt?

PART 2:

Instructions for Planting

1.
 - Take a moment to select a seed or a seedling, while thinking about where you would like this living being to grow later on.
 - Do you wish to bring it home today, or in a few days? Or...
 - Do you wish for it to live on the Loyola Campus next spring? In this case, your “baby” will live in a greenhouse until the soil is ready to receive it in the spring.
 - Use a permanent marker to identify your pot.
2.
 - Scoop up some soil with your hands in order to fill up a peat pot.
 - If planting a seedling, make a small hole about 5 cm deep. Deposit a pinch of vermicompost in the hole. Add a little water. Insert the seedling and cover lightly.
 - If planting a seed, make a small hole with your index finger and put a pinch of vermicompost before putting the seed in the hole.
 - If planting a maple seed, leave the “wing” sticking out after covering the main part of the seed.
 - For all other seeds, cover lightly with soil without pressing.
3. When you are done:
 - If you choose to plant your seedling on the Loyola Campus, please leave it in the wooden container.
 - If you choose to take it home, make sure you have a sunny spot on a windowsill.
4. We would love to hear about your impressions. Please take a moment to go on our website and share your thoughts: mindheartmouth.com

Email: mind.heart.mouth@gmail.com

4th Space Residency (Fall 2019)
Photographs






Photographs by Andrée Tremblay

APPENDIX 5. WORKSHOP #5

John Abbott College Professional Development Day (January 16, 2020)

Workshop PowerPoint Presentation

 <p>Nature Connectedness Through Sensory and Space Experience</p> <p>Andrea Tremblay MA in Media Studies Supervisor: Liz Miller</p> <p>Project Funded by:</p>   <p>Concordia Council on Student Life (CCSL)</p>	<h3>Research Questions</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of emotional ties with natural elements and environments can people experience when they have limited experience and connections with the natural world? • Can they know the sort of emotional ties that trigger environmental stewardship? • But how do we form emotional ties to elements or environments?
<h3>Immersive Experiential Learning</h3> <p>"The idea is to create an environment which is immersive in nature. One that engages people from all angles, one that binds them utilizing all their senses (or at least most of them) and engages them emotionally so they become invested in the result of the game so much so that they forget their current reality. When we can create something like that, we can create learning through realization (inside-out), learning that is authentic because it originates from an action you took towards an outcome you truly cared about."</p> <p>- Mohsin Memon</p>	<h3>WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To think about how we can build connections and relationships with our environments through immersive experiential learning 2. To think about ways to integrate this knowledge to deepen our relationship with natural environments 3. To get our hands dirty
<h3>WORLD CAFÉ</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABOUT 5 PEOPLE PER GROUP • IN A GROUP DISCUSSION, WE WILL TAKE 7 MINUTES TO ANSWER A QUESTION • 1 PERSON WILL TAKE NOTES ON WHAT IS SAID AROUND THE TABLE • THEN, WE WILL TAKE 5 MINUTES TO SHARE WHAT WAS SAID WITH THE WHOLE CLASS • AFTER THAT, EVERYONE MOVES TO FORM DIFFERENT GROUPS FOR THE NEXT EXERCISE 	<h3>FIRST DISCUSSION...</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the content of the boxes on the tables, which of the boxes you feel most inclined to put your hands in, and why? • Try to think of the sand in a natural context in which we usually find sand... and do the same with dirt... • You may want to share whether you are a gardener and you grow vegetables or flowers, • Or whether you grew up on a farm • Or you love the sand and you love going to the beach and how it brings you a sense of peace

SAND AND SOIL

- While we think of all the times we have walked and sat in the sand on a beach, or anywhere else, and how this sand gets in our shoes, in our clothes - and everywhere. Thinking also about how little children sitting in the sand may put it in their mouths...
- Can we also think about how much of our food actually grows in sand?
- Then...
- Consider the life that sprouts from the soil. All the nutrients that it contains and that go into the vitamin and mineral rich foods that grow from it and that we consume.

SAND AND SOIL

- Beach sand is a habitat that supports many microbes, including viruses, bacteria, fungi and protozoa (micropsammon).
- Physical factors, such as water availability and protection from insolation; biological factors, such as competition, predation, and biofilm formation; and nutrient availability all contribute to the characteristics of the micropsammon.
- Sand microbial communities include autochthonous species/phylotypes indigenous to the environment. Allochthonous microbes, including fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) and waterborne pathogens, are deposited via waves, runoff, air, or animals.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4219024/>

SECOND DISCUSSION

Thinking about « touching the dirt » in the exercise...

Can you remember the last time you played in the dirt? Was it less than a year? More than 5?

If you are an experienced gardener, maybe you can think about whether this is something you ever consider.

What about touching the plants, the roots? How did that feel?

LET'S PLAY IN THE DIRT...

THIRD DISCUSSION...

1. Have you ever use something like immersive experiential learning with your students?
 - If yes, could you briefly describe an exercise that you felt was successful?
 - If not, could you imagine an exercise that you would like to try?
2. If gardens can be so much more than just sites where people learn about the way our food grows, can you think of ways to use that sort of space for other things? Can you give examples

THIRD DISCUSSION...

FINAL DISCUSSION...

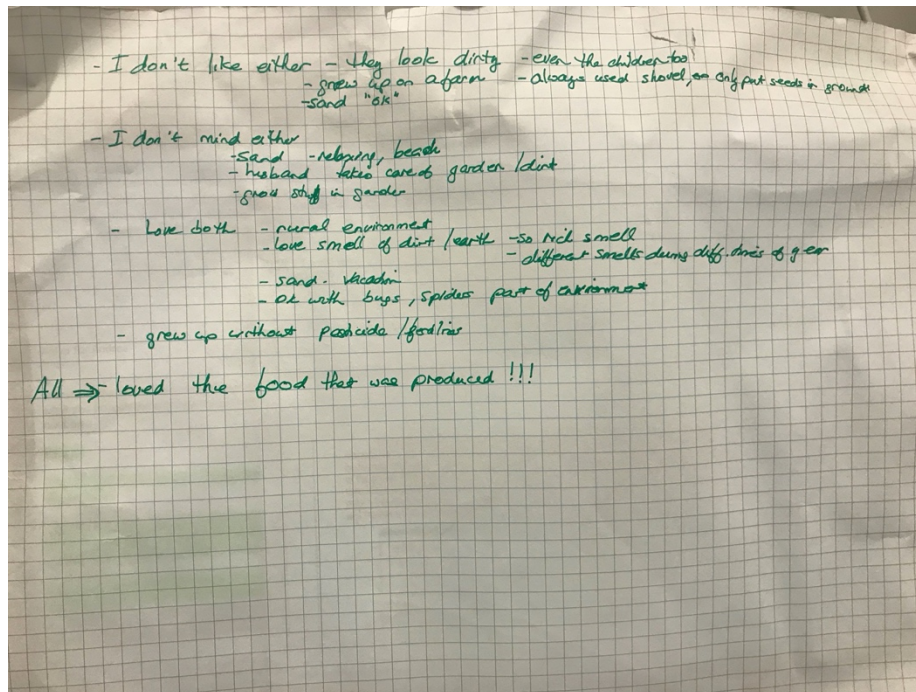
« Today, more than ^{FINAL DISCUSSION...} population lives in urban areas, and in the province of Quebec, this number reaches over 80%. While nature connectedness is a strong predictor of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, many people living in cities like Montreal AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS have limited experience and connection with the natural world and with the ways our food is produced. »

What do you think about that statement?

If you agree, do you think urban agriculture should become mandatory in schools?

If you don't agree, explain why.

5.1. One group's reflection on whether they would prefer play in dirt or sand.



APPENDIX 6. GARDEN SIGNS (SUMMER 2019)

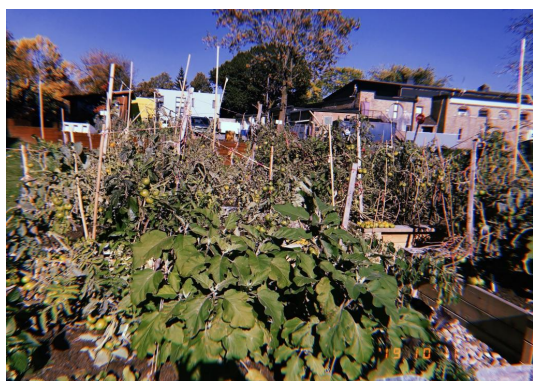


Text and design by Andrée Tremblay

APPENDIX 7: MIND.HEART.MOUTH COLLECTIVE GARDEN (SUMMER 2019)

Photographs by Andrée Tremblay (iPhone)









Colder Nights Mildew Problems:



APPENDIX 9. GARDEN SIGN (2020)



mind. heart. mouth

RESEARCH PROJECT
by Andr  a Tremblay

According to Hunger Count Montreal, more than 68,000 people in Montreal used food bank services in 2019. About 35% were children and 10% seniors. This year, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these numbers are even higher.

The mind.heart.mouth. research project aims to fight food insecurity in our community.

All the vegetables growing in this garden *(those that are not stolen)* **will be donated** to organizations helping people who are food insecure.

While growing food to help our community, this multidisciplinary research project also looks at the many ways in which a vegetable garden becomes a public sphere where:

- Conversations centred around community interests take place, often spontaneously.
- People like to walk through and take a moment to experience the garden with all their senses, breathing in the various perfumes, looking up close at the growing vegetables, noticing the sounds of the city contrasting with the experience of walking in a vegetable garden, and some even touch and taste the vegetables.
- Before the pandemic, volunteers from the community gathered here, working and forming a caring community of their own.
- Also, after experiencing a great amount of theft, we have decided to look at what sort of people steal from private gardens located in public spaces. To do that, we have enlisted the help of people from the neighbourhood and of the Concordia security team, and we have installed cameras.

www.mindheartmouth.com






SUSTAINABILITY
ACTION FUND



URBAN
FOOD COALITION



Concordia Council
on Student Life

Text and design by Andr  e Tremblay

APPENDIX 10. GARDEN PLAN AND LOCATION (2019)

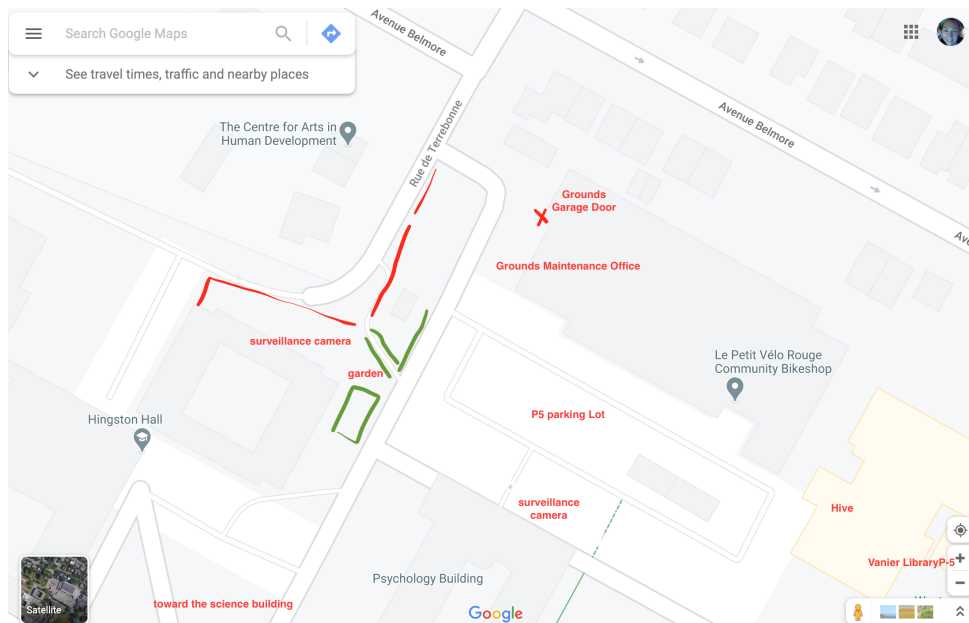
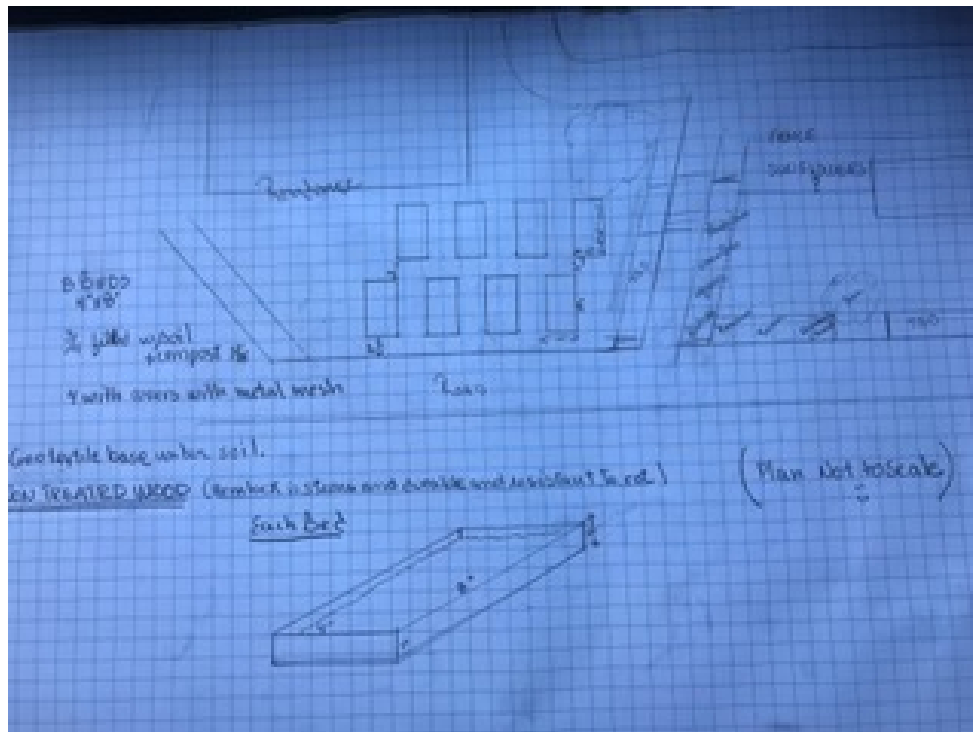


Image from Google Map, add-ons by Andrée Tremblay



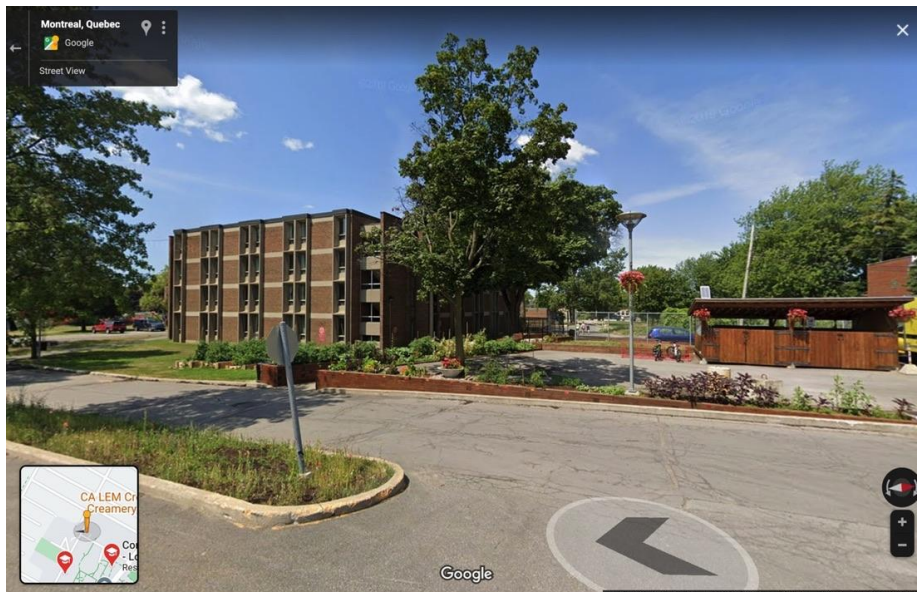
Design by Andrée Tremblay

APPENDIX 11. GARDEN LOCATION PRIOR TO MIND.HEART.MOUTH INSTALLATION



Google Map

Garden location with mind.heart.mouth installation (2019)



Google Map

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