

# Using Teacher Dialogue to Bring Nature Based Learning to Kindergarten: The Hippo Inquiry.

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### **Abstract:**

During a three month period, partner and student teachers were involved in a hippo inquiry project with two kindergarten children. Their collaborative investigation centered upon pursuing this essential question: How are we respectfully with hippos? They did so by learning about the Calgary Zoo's support of the Wechiau Community Forest (WCHS), a unique community-based project, protecting and preserving the wildlife and environment of a 40km Volta River in Ghana's upper west area. Nurturing a classroom climate that invites young children to explore geology and make discoveries inherent in an emergent curriculum was integral to this work. Together the teachers explored teaching strategies which helped them work effectively with children of diverse backgrounds, interests and skills; connections with the world outside the classroom motivated this teacher team to invite a zoology professor, a zoo director, and a naturalist to deepen this nature based inquiry.

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