The Final Report

On Saturday, April 2nd, 2011, twenty students from the SFU Semester in Dialogue held Tales from Terminal City: 125 Years of Vancouver, at Performance Works, Granville Island. They invited the public to share in the stories of Vancouver through creative dialogue that inspires community engagement, personal reflection, and collective curiosity.

SFU Semester in Dialogue, Spring 2011 Class
4/7/2011
Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us most. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, make a difference?’ Actually who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in all of us. And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

- Maryanne Williamson
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Introduction

Who Are We?

We are the Spring 2011 Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue, twenty students from diverse academic, social and geographic backgrounds united through a passion for hard work, creativity and communication. Our semester's theme? The Local Exchange – a chance to celebrate Vancouver’s 125th birthday by learning its stories, sharing our own and attempting to weave the two together.

Throughout the semester we have experienced Vancouver through its countless stories. We have stoked our inner curiosity by going on walking tours exploring off-the-beaten track corners of the city. We have sunk our hands into the earth during discussions of urban gardening and created personal artworks depicting local landmarks. We have read historical accounts and personal reflections authored by some of Vancouver's most prominent scholars, and delved into our own archival, anecdotal and personal research. We have spent our semester searching for what it is that makes this place uniquely Vancouver.

The most important clues in our search have been found during our classroom dialogues at Harbour Centre. Over the course of the semester we have hosted exciting artists, noted philanthropists, influential politicians, gifted storytellers and internationally recognized architects and engaged them in open discussions. Through this practice of Dialogue we found that they were all working toward one thing: making their Vancouver a better place.

Creating Tales

We were inspired to do the same – we wanted to make our Vancouver a better place. In order to spread this inspiration into the community we set out to plan and execute an event that would recreate for our guests the experiences that we had as participants on the Local Exchange.

Our Mission Statement? Inviting the public to share in the stories of Vancouver through creative dialogue that inspires community engagement, personal reflection and collective curiosity.

It was important to us that our event be held in a beautiful and unique space in a storied part of Vancouver, and Granville Island seemed like a
natural fit. We also felt strongly that the event be inclusive to families and participants of all ages and abilities, and that it should take place on a weekend in order to allow for everyone interested to attend.

The name of our event, *Tales From Terminal City: 125 Years of Vancouver* was carefully chosen to reflect both our love of this place, its history and its stories while also leaving room for us to add our own.

**The Big Day**

On the afternoon of Saturday, April 2nd 2011 we welcomed 97 participants to Performance Works to share in our adventure into Vancouver’s stories. We aimed to guide our guests through a similar process to the one that we ourselves had been through. Our “keynote storyteller” Naomi Steinberg explained the power of story and its connection to Dialogue, and 3 class members told stories that they had written. We then engaged our guests in a hands-on public art project, an urban gardening workshop and led them on historic walking tours. The event culminated in meaningful small group discussions.

Our guests, who included friends, family, past Dialogue guests and walk-in members of the community participated in two of the three available activities: public art, gardening or a walking tour. We then gathered them in small groups and ventured to ask them: *What do you love about Vancouver?*

This deceptively simple question led us to a rich and fruitful discussion about the city that we all share, and led to the more complicated question: *What could you do to love Vancouver more?*

**Why Should You Care?**

This event was about community building. It was about reflection. It was about connecting people to each other and to their city in a meaningful way, about encouraging civic engagement and new friendships. Most importantly it was about fun – taking a concept as daunting for most people as “Dialogue” and making it accessible and friendly without minimizing its importance.

The day’s successes can be measured in many ways – in the smiles of people busily crafting canvases, in the awestruck faces of walking tour members staring up at landmarks with new eyes, in the words of gardening participants claiming that they will be starting their own apartment gardens. But perhaps one sentiment that we heard echoed again and again throughout the day sums it up best: “I feel inspired.”

Inspired to play, inspired to participate, inspired to create. What do you love about Vancouver?

While my facilitation skills aren’t perfect, they are what I am most proud to have learned this Semester. My small dialogue group at the event wasn’t without its own awkward pauses and minor tense moments, but I loved it. I felt comfortable in the role of facilitator. I felt – I feel - empowered.

Jessica O’Neill
Preparation

The process of putting Tales from Terminal City: 125 Years of Vancouver together required efforts from multiple sources inside and outside the classroom. Countless hours were dedicated to creating, branding and developing the event and while many additional ideas and duties were proposed, a significant amount of time was spent on the following:

The Name
Once the idea of our event was established we began the name selection process. Branding the event with a name was a challenge as we wanted to include allusions to storytelling, the City’s 125th birthday and the past, present and future. Over a week the class suggested, established and revisited names several times and after many votes Tales From Terminal City: 125 Years of Vancouver was decided on as it best incorporated these vital themes.

Poster and Program Design
Once the name was chosen, the art design team held a meeting concerning what would be an appropriate visual representing the themes within. Our final consensus was that the logo should be of an open story book spilling forth images of the Vancouver skyline. The original blueprint of our logo incorporated symbolic images of our past, present and future through the various images we see in Vancouver daily.

We then converted the sketched drawing into a digital image through Adobe Illustrator and when completed added the image into the layout on Adobe InDesign with the help of Katie Raso from the Centre for Dialogue. A final copy was printed and circulated for potential edits by other classmates.

The design of our poster influenced the design of our event program. Previous programs were looked at from past dialogues for design and information purposes. The final edit incorporated the agenda, importance of dialogue and stories as well as important notes and a thank-you page. The final edits of the program were made on Adobe Illustrator and InDesign as well.

Logistics
The venue responsibilities were given to the logistics group, who then began a search for an appropriate

It was amazing to see so many people from diverse backgrounds and celebrate Vancouver in a way that was creative, educational, and personal. I have never felt more connected with this city; the event was definitely a contributing in grounding me in this magical place!

Cristin Talenti
location for the event. Duties were split amongst the five members on the logistics team as each member took two to three different possibilities and began inquiring in person, by phone and email. After a week of researching two options were made viable, neither of which was on the day we wanted.

The following week we were overjoyed to find Performance Works on Granville Island and were lucky enough to benefit from decreased federal government arts funding from last year. Because of this many annual events were suspended, and somehow the exact date we wanted was the only Friday, Saturday or Sunday still available until January 2012.

At this point Logistics went to Performance Works and confirmed the booking, phoned in the deposit with help from Brenda, and arranged for contract signing the following week. The next week we sent in the draft versions of the schedule and floor plan in addition to contact information for day of as well as the special events form. A deposit was required as well as minor staffing, SOCAN fees, and a theatre improvement fee.

The second big task that Logistics took on was to create the schedule of the day (See Appendix A). This started with breaking down what was happening during the day on minute by minute basis. After the schedule was determined, we started inserting what was needed to be done for each segment of time, and how many people were needed for each task. In addition a list was created with all supplies that we would need.

A big section of the schedule that the Logistics Team created included an Events Plan and Floor Plan for what would be happening during the day. This schedule made referencing easier for all aspects of the event planning. A copy of the schedule can be found in Appendix A.

**Website**

The Marketing and Public Relations team that felt it was important to incorporate a website for not only RSVP purposes but as a tool to help promote our event. The website ([www.talesfromterminalcity.net](http://www.talesfromterminalcity.net)) was the primary area for guests to learn about the event and RSVP to it. It went online in early March, and collected over 90 RSVPs over one month.

We created the website using the free online template service Weebly. This service enabled us to quickly and efficiently build an aesthetically pleasing and functional website in far less time than it would have taken to code it from scratch. We made the decision to include maps, schedules, a guest list, a contact to include maps, schedules, a guest list, a contact form, and an RSVP function to allow users to

This project allowed me to both give and receive a very similar lesson. I helped to give people the space to engage in dialogue through an artistic means, and feel confident in the work that they produced. I learned that people will create something amazing if you just give them the space and perhaps a few tools.

Jessica Udal
completely understand the event as well as RSVP to it in one place.

The domain was purchased from Weebly for just under $30 after our art team and instructor Janet Moore approved the design. Throughout the event planning phases the websites RSVP function was monitored, ensuring ease of use in transferring the online information to the day-of-guest list used for registration.

Overall, the website was a huge success and allowed us to collect all of our guest’s information, including which of the three workshops they wanted to attend. The contact form also enabled us to make changes to the guest list if people were needed to changed plans.

Press Kits
The Marketing and Public Relations team also distributed 10 press kits to local media outlets:

- The Vancouver Sun
- The Province
- The Georgia Straight
- The Courier
- The Westender
- CBC Newsroom
- CKNW Newstalk 980
- Shaw TV
- CityTV Vancouver
- CTV Vancouver

The kits included an official invitation; press release, promotional dialogue materials, business cards and samples of student work in the form of a newsletter. These documents were contained in an SFU folder with attached business cards. We also sent event listings to multiple publications within the city in hopes to promote the event.

Our press kits received attention from two of the ten outlets out of which Shaw TV profiled our event for the weekly television magazine show “The Express.” We also had featured event listing in the Vancouver Sun, The Georgia Straight and 24 Hours news. A copy of the press kit is available in as Appendix B.

Partnerships and Outreach
The Partnerships and Community Outreach Working Group began as a stand-alone, and later merged with the Public Relations team. Partnerships and Outreach had three main objectives:

1. Identify community organizations to serve as potential partners in the final project, including but not limited to co-hosting or sponsoring

2. Work with the Public Relations Working Group to identify an exclusive media sponsor

3. Promote the final event to select community and other organizations

When the time came to facilitate a dialogue in the gardening workshop I was worried no one would speak. The question for the dialogue was “Is gardening important to Vancouver?” Every participant had something to say, the conversation was absolutely wonderful. I left the dialogue feeling I had learned so many new facts and stories about gardening.

Tanya Otero
Although the Working Group's plan was developed early on in the process, the fact that the class did not finalize the vision and name for the event until much later on meant the plan could not be implemented to its full potential.

Once the name was chosen, the City of Vancouver was approached as a potential partner and the CBC as a potential media partner. Emails were sent and promptly followed up with phone calls. The City was keen to participate but it was too late in the process to bring them onboard as a partner per se; by the time their response was received the event content had been finalized and the promotional poster printed. Instead of a formal partnership, the City and the Dialogue class instead decided to cross-promote one another’s events.

The CBC responded promptly to our request but was unable to become an official sponsor, as they require at least three months' lead-time. Despite the lack of formal partnerships, both the City and CBC agreed to promote the event on their websites. Efforts to target invitations to specific community organizations were ultimately abandoned in favour of more general promotion through the media and direct invitations to personal contacts.

Upon reflection, the inability to secure formal partners was not a bad thing as it left the Dialogue class with complete control. While the idea of a partnership with the City was a nice one, one wonders if the project would have been as well-received if it was promoted as an 'official' event of the City. While a media partner would have been nice for promotion and possible broadcast of the event it, attendance targets were met regardless and broadcasting a dialogue based on personal narratives might have had the undesirable effect of stymieing the open participation of attendees.

Food
The class came to the realisation that food was an important component to the event somewhat late for receiving large sponsorship donations. That being said, through class contacts at Choices Markets and Cobs Bread, we were able to arrange for meat and cheese platters, and bread. Our instructor, Janet Moore, gave us a personal contact to Ethical Bean and helped us arrange for coffee sponsorship. A polite, in person visit to Cookies of Course resulted in a donation and discount of enough cookies for all attendees.

The event being held at Granville Island was a perfect opportunity to showcase local food businesses and offer them some exposure. Letters were targeted to the food and grocery shops in the Granville Island directory. There was no response to the letters, which in retrospect were impersonal.

Story no longer is the burden that suffocates personal growth; instead, it is the phenomenon from which I grow.

It is something to be shared and shaped, a process that fosters only empowerment.

Marissa Lawrence
The real success was in a courteous phone call to inquire about opportunities for outreach or sponsorship. Many businesses also said that they require more than a few weeks notice for sponsorship requests, but not all. Zara’s Deli gave us gourmet olives to share with our attendees, and Dussa’s Ham and Cheese offered a wide selection of cheese and crackers to serve. Food platters were borrowed and bought, as well as utensils, cups, plates etc.

The Food team did end up needing a budget (based on projected attendee count), for additional snacks such as muffins, juice, tea, and cream for coffee. This was minimal, thanks in part to strategic timing of the event in the afternoon, and to generous donations.

*Connecting to community, people and that tiny voice hidden within me. Engaging with others became the biggest lesson - teaching me the co-dependent relationship between listening and speaking.*

Olympia Koziatek

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I was extremely proud of the event we held because it brought so many people together and I felt that we really shared a part of our class and what we were about to other members of the public. I was very grateful and humbled by the opportunity to share a small piece of my childhood in a story about Chinatown. For a moment, the audience experienced Chinatown the way I did as a child and were able to understand why it holds a place in my heart.

Katherine Kwan
Event Components

Gardening

Overview
This working group changed ideas several times throughout the process of creating the urban gardening workshop. We realized that we were trying to include too many creative ideas and content into a 35-minute activity. We were also trying to change our content to fit into the theme of storytelling by telling stories of gardening in Vancouver's past, present and future.

We took the time to review our script and realized that less is more. We recognized that everyone has a connection to food in one way or another, and as a result, everyone has a connection to growing food. By incorporating our own stories of how we connected to urban gardening, we invited the participants to share their stories of gardening.

Acknowledging that we aren't experts, we decided to approach the 'workshop' component by giving each guest an opportunity to plant a seed in either an herb or vegetable planter. We were inspired from what we learned at CityFarmer and SOLEFood and we think that gardening and local food will become more relevant in the future. Our goal was to create an opportunity for people to become aware of their potential to grow their own food. By sharing stories of everyone’s connection to gardening, we hope that participants will be inspired to take the first step into the world of urban gardening

Findings
After a quick introduction with stories of how we personally connected to urban gardening, we invited the participants to engage in a dialogue, starting with the question:

Is gardening important to Vancouver?

There was a consensus between both groups that urban gardening is incredibly important, and because of food scarcity and Vancouver’s fertile land, we need to learn to sustain ourselves by growing our own food. Whether or not they considered themselves gardeners, most participants were able to find a connection to food. While some were intimidated by the commitment needed to maintain a garden, most agreed that understanding where food comes from is important for nurturing those tendencies. Some feel as though people have

Dialogue has changed my perspectives, taught me new skills, and made me a braver person than ever before.

Annjeet Gill
lost their connection to food because most don’t know where their food comes from. By gardening, we reestablish that connection and learn how to be self-sufficient.

We envisioned this workshop as being an opportunity to open up the dialogue in the community around the issues of urban gardening and local food. What resulted was a group of people coming together, engaging in dialogue, making connections with one another and with their city, and hopefully learning something new, however big or small. We asked them to finish the workshop by planting a seed in our community planters, a small action that represented something much larger; taking the first step in their life as a new urban gardener, or fostering their already-established connection to local food.

After reflecting on the urban gardening workshop, we acknowledge that there were some areas that could have improved. Even though we allotted 20 minutes out of the 35-minute workshop for dialogue, it felt as though it was too short, and that we had to end just as we were getting deep into discussion. Also, we found that time was used up by having the participants move from their seats twice, once from the large group introduction, and then from their small group dialogues to the planters. In retrospect, while the planters provided an opportunity to take action on the issues being discussed, there wasn’t enough dialogue supporting their use, so after the participants planted their seed, they either stayed behind to chat, or left the workshop entirely.

Overall, we feel that the urban gardening workshop was a complete success. Young people previously uninterested in the topic were engaged in the discussion, and older participants were inspired by students’ initiative to create a community dialogue around urban gardening. We acknowledge that urban gardening has and will continue to be relevant to our city, and we hope it will become a larger part of our collective story.

Walking Tours

Overview

The Walking Tour group met and decided to prepare a tour that would both provide an historical overview of Granville Island and introduce participants to a range of activities that presently take place there. The Group also decided to highlight the value of direct engagement in and with the city (i.e. touching, seeing, smelling and tasting as opposed to just reading) and the infinite number of other experiences one could have on Granville Island beyond just those sites visited on the tour.

My experience at the Tales from Terminal City event was completely positive. My primary role on the day was to guide walking tours and I enjoyed preparing and practicing the same with the skilled and supportive walking tour group. Upon reflection, I particularly enjoyed the performative aspect of conducting the tour with a live audience. I was very proud of what he had collectively achieved.

Ryan Stewart
The group met and received a brief overview of the walking tour that one group member had led in the past. Based on the information she provided and group members' personal interests, individuals volunteered to research specific places and stories. The group met on Granville Island to share research findings, provide feedback on proposed script content, map the tour route and visit potential tour stops. The group also received tips and pointers from another professional tour guide.

Following the planning meeting and site visit, group members revised and refined the parts of the script they had written. One group member agreed to compile the parts into a single script and shared it with the rest. The four members of the group who served as tour guides on the day of the event worked individually and in their guiding pairs to remember and rehearse content, and the entire Working Group visited Granville Island several days before the event to assist the guides in their practice 'dry runs'. Further 'test' tours were conducted with other class members prior to the day of the event.

**Findings**

The walking tours had participants connect with and think about the physical city, indulging people's senses and getting them to slow down and pay closer attention to things they might otherwise overlook. The mix of First Nations, colonial and modern industrial history on the Island with stories of current artistic, educational, cultural, community, artisan craft and food activities helped to show that the story of the city is always being written and rewritten.

The tour guides' presentations were peppered with teaser questions that were meant to encourage and maintain active participation.

**Questions included:**

- Who has been to Granville Island before?
  - Who is here for the first time?
- Who owns Granville Island?
- Why was the first Granville Street Bridge built?
- What is a railspur?
- Who has ever tasted sake?
- Do you have a favourite food stall at the public market?
- How long does a totem pole typically last?
- Why do you think Ocean Concrete stayed on Granville Island when all the other major industry left?
- Who was Emily Carr?
- What else is brewed on Granville Island other than sake?
- What are some of the names of Granville Island Brewery's beer?

Responses to our questions were varied. The intent wasn't so much to build consensus as it was to get

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I learned valuable management skills essential for running an event including organizing logistics leading up to the day and keeping our 20 person team on track and on schedule during the event.

_ Rachelle Jones_
people thinking about the place and the stories it holds.

Participants seemed generally engaged in the tours. For the most part the groups stuck together and paid attention; any side chatter was related to whatever we were looking at or talking about at the time, e.g. a couple discussing coming back to attend the Ocean Concrete open house. Some would stop and look more closely at things we had mentioned and a few snapped pictures and took occasional notes. Partway through, one tour group picked up some random members of the public who asked the guides how often the tours were offered, i.e. even people not part of the Dialogue event got engaged!

The multiple trips taken to Granville Island prior to the event to research, plan and practice the tours were very worthwhile. The helpful input and support of the two non-guiding members of the tour group was much appreciated, as was the willingness of some classmates to serve as test participants on practice tours. The significant amount of prep work left the guides feeling generally comfortable and confident, and working in pairs meant we could play off of and support one another during the tours.

Participants seemed interested in the stops we selected and presumably would have enjoyed more time to explore. In other words, a greater allotment of time would have enhanced the activity.

If we were to do this activity again, we might practice the tours with a larger group, as this would have given us a more realistic sense of crowd dynamics and walking time. If we were to do it again we would ask the entire class to serve as tour test subjects for practice purposes.

**Art Workshop**

**Overview**

The Art workshop team started with a question: how can art be a means to inspire other forms of creative dialogue? As the theme of our final event developed we wanted to marry the idea of storytelling with art and broaden the ways in which participants could share their experiences of Vancouver.

We had the idea to create a visual art piece that would allow for individuals to reflect on their Vancouver. The concept grew into the idea of a ‘pixilated’ portrait of the city. We provided participants with small 4”x4” canvases to express their love for the city and afterwards pulled them together into the shape of Vancouver to create a cohesive whole. The concept? Vancouver is many things to many people – and we believe this can be visually represented in a way that celebrates our diversity.

Dialogue allowed me to break down the barriers that I created for myself. It helped me to push myself beyond what I thought I was capable of, and ensure my voice is heard amongst the crowd. What an incredibly opportunity to engage and affect change in your life...

Jessica Collins
Once the canvases and other supplies were purchased we began preparing some of the canvases as examples for the day of the event. Additionally, we created templates to provide participants with an idea of what the final project will look like and how their piece will be a valuable contribution.

**Findings**

We created this project to visually exemplify the collection of stories and experiences present in Vancouver. As it has become apparent to us in the past months, there is no one story of our city – rather, it is a compilation of many individual stories.

This project is important because it displays the value of creative collaboration – something that we learned in dialogue – in a visual and tangible form. The end product reveals the value in creating something together. We asked the question:

**What sorts of visual images do you associate with Vancouver?**

The bulk of participants reflections/visual representations were focused on Vancouver’s natural landscape. The two predominant elements that came through were green space in Vancouver and the ocean – nothing received more canvas space than these two. There was also a fair amount of pictures around food, bicycles, rain, and cityscape building. Additionally, there were poetic reflections and words. Overall the pieces were quite different, as they displayed what was important to particular people.

Participants seemed very willing to create. There was some initial apprehension when we began, certain individuals said things like, “I’m not creative” – but as we progressed, people became more confident with themselves and their pieces. It was great to see these participants enjoy themselves and follow up with thanking us and letting us know that they had really had fun.

For the most part people were fairly quiet – but we feel this was because they were engaged and reflecting on their connections to Vancouver. Occasionally they would share ideas, which we had encouraged, but it became apparent that most wanted to spend their time introspectively.

Many people commented on the fact that they hadn’t done anything like this in years – and that they left thinking about whatever creative outlets they could seek out in their lives.

Notable comments from participants included:

“You know I’m not usually artsy, but this was so much fun. I’m inspired…I want to do more.”

The event affirmed that the worth of our stories deepen when shared. I was moved to see the spirit of community and support, that we had built amongst one another, spill into this space and create an environment for people to feel safe and welcome to share their stories.

Krystal Renschler
“You created a space where we could just play – thank you.”

“It’s amazing once you sit down to think about Vancouver, so many images come to mind.”

As facilitators it was very rewarding to watch people overcome their fears in creating a canvas that was reflective of their experiences. Through watching this, we also were able to overcome our fear the project may not turn out to be aesthetically pleasing. We learned that everyone is creative – sometimes they just need a space to discover how they see a place.

It was also very rewarding to watch people come by the art table and look at what other people had created. They would look and say things like, “Ohh, that’s SO great! I never thought of it like that before!” It made us aware of how powerful creative forms of dialogue can be in opening people’s perspectives of a place. We feel that the art project was a huge success in the way it exposed people to other citizens experiences within the city, hopefully encouraging them to reach into some of the things they may have saw on canvases other than their own.

We look forward to having this displayed in a public space so that participants can see the final product.

If we were to do the dialogue again in the future we’d possibly organize the supplies specific to certain tables so that people knew what to find in what space. Because of the time constraint, this may have been a benefit.

**Final Dialogue**

**Overview**

The Facilitation working group first discussed what the intentions for the final dialogue should be. We all agreed that we would like the dialogue to give participants the opportunity to discuss a positive connection to Vancouver but also be able to offer an opportunity for self reflection of people’s past, present and future. This would allow participants to explore their own personal narrative.

We came up with questions that would present positive undertones to keep the dialogue positive, and the dialogue group came up with sub-questions that would keep on stimulating participation throughout the entire dialogue. When we came up with a skeleton of the structure and questions, we tested out our dialogue in a mock dialogue conducted with other students. We received a lot of constructive feedback and decided it would be best...
to create a facilitation guide with feedback edits for each facilitation group to give them something to refer to.

To make sure everyone was prepared for day-of, we coordinated a mock dialogue practice session before the event to iron out any glitches and give constructive feedback to all facilitators to ensure their confidence in facilitating an unknown audience.

**Findings**

The purpose of our final dialogue was to bring our participants together to discuss not only what they had experienced during our event, but what they experienced in their city every day. We posed two questions to the group, spending about 25 minutes on each discussion.

**Question: What do you love about Vancouver?**

Answers to this question were largely focused on the theme of Vancouver as natural and green city. Many people said that they loved things like the clean air, the beaches, the quality of our water, and the over geography of our city’s landscape.

Nature has been a big part of our local exchange this semester, and it’s hard to imagine a Vancouver that isn’t green. Throughout exploring Vancouver, many of us have discovered new and amazing things about its green spaces, and how much is being done to preserve them.

A lot of our participants also loved Vancouver’s connection to the sea, saying how much they love the fog horns at night and the ability to visit the seaside. Our connection to nature in this city is something that truly defines us.

Others told us they loved Vancouver’s culture. From the accessibility of countless ethnic food cuisines to the sense of community our city gives its multicultural citizens, our participants loved Vancouver’s cultural experiences. Music, celebration, and festival were also a big part of this discussion. Many loved the way Vancouver supported so many cultural experiences, and they felt the city was so much stronger for it.

Some of our participants even named specific observations of Vancouver’s culture, saying that everyone goes out for breakfast on Sundays and that we all love to eat at sushi restaurants. These little traditions are part of what makes our city’s culture strong and readily observable.

**Question: What could you do to love Vancouver more?**

Responses to our second question were more varied than those of the first. Most people focused on the idea of getting involved in the cultural experiences.
so present in our city. Participants named particular events they’d always wanted to see but hadn’t, such as the Van Dusen Garden’s light show. Many also felt like they could love Vancouver more by simply exploring the city and learning about many of its secret places like (like abandoned train tunnels beneath Gastown) or many of its secluded green spaces.

An overarching theme in responses to this question was that participants simply wanted to be more present in their city. They wanted to embrace arts, culture and sports to show their love for Vancouver. Participants said they wanted to take more time to enjoy their city and use less of their time watching TV, and to generally get out more and enjoy what the city had to offer.

Buying local and getting involved with local food markets was also something that was important to our participants in growing to love Vancouver more. Producing and buying local food is part of our civic identity here in Vancouver, so it’s no wonder more people wanted to get involved with local food markets.

FrontYarding was also pitched as an idea to get more people involved in their community, and making it easier for others to join in as well. In practice in involves taking things that are usually done in the backyard (like family games or gardening) and moving it to the front yard to enable more people to see what you’re doing and getting involved with it.

The Canucks hockey team were also targets for people looking to love their city more. By joining in the positive energy that comes from Vancouver’s spirit when the Canucks are doing well, a number of our participants thought they could love our city more.

The overall message was that people needed to get more involved with their city to love it more. They needed to enjoy its amenities, cheer for its sports teams, and bask in its culture.

I came to Dialogue to find my voice; I found much more than that, new friends, new way of learning, and new outlook on Vancouver. Dialogue provided me the opportunity to talk with Libby Davies and Andrea Reimer in a classroom setting, unprecedented in my first 3 years at SFU.

Christopher Mulvena
Feedback

After the event, we were left with thirty one feedback forms returned to us. After the seemingly perfection of the event, we felt that the feedback forms would be a true gauge of our success. The feedback forms consisted of: three statements that were to be answered on a scale of how much the participant agreed or disagreed with them, one question for participants to indicate what workshop they attended and space for participants to freely explain choices or add additional comments.
There was a roughly even spread of attendance for each of the workshops so we are confident in believing that these feedback forms are a good indicator of the overall demographics of the day. The urban gardening workshop had slightly less participant feedback forms, but this was consistent with the overall attendance and should not affect the results of the feedback forms.

The feedback forms were largely positive. A majority of the participants chose to use the blank comment space, leaving largely positive notes, with only three forms with constructive criticism on them. These comments focused on structural difficulties or things that were unavoidable. One participant felt that we did not have enough advertising, and another felt we “dropped the ball” because we did not have refreshments available during registration period and introduction. Even these negative comments had positive ratings of the overall day.

The positive comments highlighted exactly what we wanted to achieve with the day. As such we have included the image of the keywords of the comments. The bigger the word the more times it appeared in the comments. For example, thank you appeared eight times in the comments so it is larger than Vancouverite which only appeared once.

I really felt like this event connected with the people. We worked together to create and reflect on Vancouver's stories. It brought over 90 people together in a way that they probably hadn't thought possible, and we all left feeling like something great happened here.

Breanna Kato

This event brought together our class, friends, and family and something magical happened. We really heard each other, took the time to appreciate our surroundings, and I think the world is better for it.

Jessica Coccimiglio
Recommendations

After concluding our event, we have discussed recommendations designed to get people more in tune with their city, and to help people engage with the things they find most important in Vancouver.

One of the biggest overall themes of our dialogues was the need to nurture our communities, and to give individuals a place to share their stories with other people. For many of our participants, community was extremely important. They seemed dismayed that not all neighbourhoods in Vancouver have a strong, unified community attached to them.

Therefore, we recommend that all individuals work at nurturing their communities by attending local events, spending time at the 23 community centres and neighbourhood houses and getting involved in local markets, gardens and schools to make them better for all those living there.

Dialogue is a tool for facilitating change through consensus, and communities can use this tool to come to deeper understandings of what its citizens needs, and how to provide it to them. Community dialogues could also make the transition for new immigrants easier, knowing that there is a place they can go to learn about their communities and know that their voice is heard.

Encouraging people to host their own small dialogue groups could be achieved through facilitation workshops aimed at local citizens. Many of our guests expressed awe that something as simple as talking could be so engaging and meaningful to them, and welcomed the opportunity to do it again in both a participant and host capacity.

Finally, many of our participants felt like Vancouver was less of a home to them and more of a stop-over place in their lives. By increasing community involvement, enabling citizen participation, and encouraging community dialogue, we believe that more people would consider Vancouver their true home. And there’s no place like it. Nothing fosters love for a place so much as calling it home.

I wish I knew in my first year at SFU what I know now, that academics is what I make of it. That my education is equal parts instruction and participation and the price tag hanging off of the end of each semester isn’t the true value of what I’m learning. This experience has taught me that “I” am not special, but what I can “do” can be.

Jordan Smith
Conclusion

The Spring 2011 Semester in Dialogue provided its 20 members with the drive, tools and support to make Tales From Terminal City a success. In eight weeks time we were able to conceive, plan and execute an exciting, creative and meaningful event.

As students, we take from this experience myriad lessons both personal and practical. Learning to create a press kit, orchestrate a seamless schedule and solicit donations for a good cause are all valuable real life skills that we will take forward with us into our academic and career lives.

Less tangibly, the skills that we have acquired in facilitation, dialogue and teamwork have changed us individually for the better.

Taken as a whole, we view Tales from Terminal City as a starting point for increasing engagement in our communities and love in our city. Through dialogue, we all can learn to connect more thoughtfully with Vancouver’s heritage, culture, and politics.

We encourage everyone who calls Vancouver their home to get involved with it in some way. Attend an event, take a walk or visit the archives. Find something that you love about Vancouver, and don’t be afraid to share your city with those around you.

Tales From Terminal City: 125 Years of Vancouver was an event that we will never forget and we hope that we inspired our 97 guests to use the power of their stories to engage others and to continue to think about what they love about Vancouver.

What we learned from Tales from Terminal City is that dialogue is a truly transformative process.

Stephen Young
Special Thanks

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Dussa’s Ham and Cheese

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