

# Building pit houses

You might have thought you'd gone back in time if you were at Armstrong Elementary School recently as Mary Tassie and Susan Brown's Grade 3 students, as part of their weekly outdoor learning, built a replica Secwepemc Pit House big enough to hold a whole class of students!

Each week in the outdoor learning lessons, students take part in a multitude of hands on learning activities that ignite student curiosity, develop critical and creative thinking skills, and expand communication skills.

Over time teacher Susan Brown has gathered and organized a massive stick library needed for these fascinating projects.

A 'Big Idea' in grade 3 Social Studies curriculum is that learning about Indigenous peoples nurtures multicultural awareness and respect for diversity. Recently, these students explored the relationship between Secwepemc people and the winter environment.

In small groups students created miniature Secwepemc winter homes called pit houses. Next all the students worked together to build a life size pit house and learned how to lash sticks together to build ladders.

Each class, with over 25 pairs of helping hands, completed a life size pit house in a few hours. The structures were just large enough for a class of 24 to fit within.

Students took apart the pit houses the same day and later, students recorded their learning experiences in their outdoor learning journals.

