

Teaching at the Edge – Polar Experience in Tiniteqilaaq

Kamilla OLIVER

Independent researcher, Poland and Sweden

✉ olikamilla@gmail.com

Abstract

This presentation delves into the lived experiences of a primary school teacher working in a remote Greenlandic settlement. The challenges and opportunities inherent in Arctic education will be highlighted through educational projects carried out at school.

Tiniteqilaaq is a traditional fishing and hunting settlement in East Greenland which about 70 inhabitants call home. It is considered remote even by Greenlandic standards. It lies about 30 km into the majestic Sermilik icefjord, on the Greenlandic mainland in beautiful surroundings. The views across the fjord with its enormous icebergs are spectacular. Local living conditions are rather spartan compared to what one is used to in a so-called “civilized” world. Drawing from my time spent living and working in Tiniteqilaaq, this presentation discusses several topics informed by firsthand personal experience.

Overview of the educational system in Greenland and insights into culturally responsive teaching practices, with emphasis on engagement with community-based educational projects, the integration of local knowledge and language into the curriculum, and the unique rhythms of school life shaped by seasonal cycles and small community dynamics.

Particular attention is given to collaborative educational projects developed with learners, including building a kayak and sledges, nature-based learning, storytelling initiatives, and interdisciplinary work that bridges traditional knowledge with formal education.

The presentation also reflects on the teacher’s role as a cultural mediator and learner, navigating linguistic diversity, community expectations, and the socio-emotional needs of children growing up in geographically and socially isolated region.

These reflections aim to contribute to broader discussions about decolonizing education, sustaining indigenous knowledge systems, and building resilient learning environments in the Arctic and other remote regions, discuss a local perspective on hunting, development of tourism and environmental changes in the form of climate change.

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