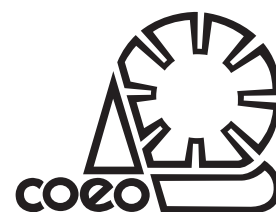


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Summer 2016, 28(4)



Pathways

COEO

Formed in 1972, the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes safe, quality outdoor education experiences for people of all ages. We achieve this by publishing the *Pathways* journal, running an annual conference and regional workshops, maintaining a website, and working with kindred organizations as well as government agencies. Members of COEO receive a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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Pathways

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Wild pedagogy is an idea: We can do education better. Education can be more place-responsive, in local or remote “wild” places. We need to recover wildness in our lives. Wild in a place denotes a self-willed integrity to exist and evolve in a healthy, ecologically sound manner. Wild in a person denotes a self-determined (not determined) quality with freedom to be self-determined (again not determined), with purpose and capacity to develop and test one’s curiosity and powers for self and community.

Educators can help learners self-discover. Learning can and should often be student-centered with authentic (real world) practices in socio-ecologically conscious communities involving learners advancing who they are becoming. There will be uncertainty involved, along with some mastery of skills and knowledge. Wild pedagogy has a mandate to consciously change this world for the better. This will involve learning from the land and all human and more-than-human beings that inhabit places; it will involve cultivating eco/social justice with a cultural mindedness that challenges personal and community practices and values. We must change who we are on the Earth. Does it not sound inversely radical and unreasonable to stay the course of the cultural status quo? Wild pedagogy infers that society would be more a function of education than the status quo of education being a function of society.

Wild pedagogy involves challenging dominant cultural notions of control—of each other, nature, education and learning. It rests on the premise that an important part of education can involve intentional activities that provide a fertile field for personal and purposeful experiences without controlling the outcomes. The work of wild pedagogy will validate, even restore, the professional teacher while at the same time blur the teacher–student separation relationship towards one of a shared enterprise—a relation of co-learners with real world issues relevant to one’s life. A big part of this restoration of the teacher’s role in society is to allow teachers the freedom to generate creative spaces for students—and themselves—as learners where personal knowing is honoured.

The papers in this issue of *Pathways* are arisings and responses to the Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium on the Yukon River in 2014. This canoe travelling gathering of like-minded folks proved a sound way to bring together those with specific interests in outdoor, experiential, environmental and art education to discuss our practice and angst as educators while learning from and with the wild place that is the Yukon River.

Students of wild pedagogy would celebrate the joy of learning—a most natural instinct. It is edgy and messy work, with rewards in the rich complexity of places that we can see as wild and in considering what is it to dwell with good manners in this place. Carl Rogers once said, “Since it’s my experience that the only real learning is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning, I won’t try to teach you anything. It is my job instead to create an atmosphere where you can teach yourself” (Jensen, 2004, p. 20).

We believe many people get the above sentiment, but find it difficult to work from Rogers’ grounding. Many who might call themselves wild pedagogues come to this fundamental understanding early, and then find they have to negotiate against the grain of conventional schooling bent on something more controlling, authoritative (teacher-centered) and coercive (standardized operational and evaluative procedures). Wild pedagogy as adventurous learning necessarily involves seeking out the wild in places, education and ourselves.

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Polly Knowlton Cockett
Guest Editor

Ahhh, summer...that time of year when we solar-powered outdoor educators recharge our batteries! Dipping paddles, pulling water, cracking drinks, catching fireflies, sparking fires, burning marshmallows, slapping bugs, flipping (possibly vegan, gluten free, organic) burgers, swinging hammocks, and making a break for it! Whether this summer finds you taking a break from the demands of the school year, or immersed in the break-neck pace of summer camp and guiding season, we on the COEO Board of Directors wish you a season of rejuvenation and adventure!

While you take a moment to kick back and relax with this edition of consider the future of COEO for a moment. There are exciting times on the horizon...

We are currently looking to membership for feedback on where COEO is heading next and, more importantly, how. If you are looking for some more dock-side reading, consider reviewing COEO's Constitution, now available on the COEO website. Our Constitution is the most important guiding document for everything COEO does, and some important updates and changes have been proposed. Take a look and send us your feedback! All proposed changes will be discussed at our AGM at the fall gathering.

Our fall conference team is currently hard at work reviewing proposals for our Folk School gathering and annual meeting taking place September 23 to 25, 2016. Soon you will receive your invitation to attend the conference at Camp Wanakita, together with your membership renewal form. We are lucky to share in the wealth of knowledge and energy that are hallmarks of our fall gathering. We hope to see you there—save the date! It will also be our pleasure at the fall conference to highlight and celebrate some of COEO's most dedicated, long-serving, and up-and-

coming members.

If you would like to nominate someone for one of COEO's awards, please contact COEO Past President, Allyson Brown at abrown@bss.on.ca with your nomination. This year we hope to unveil a new award, the details of which will be announced soon.

This year's AGM will mark our 45th year since COEO's inception! The longevity of this organization is a testament to the relevance outdoor education in all of its diverse forms maintains in the overall education of each of our students. This landmark anniversary begs the question: what do we want to accomplish by our 50th year?! What concrete strides will we be able to point to in order to mark the positive change we are making in the lives of our students and for the planet? What do you, our membership, want to be celebrating by 2021? Something to dream on this summer while you watch the clouds drift by...

Happy summer reveling!

Deborah Diebel
COEO President



Sketch Pad – The artwork included in this special Wild Pedagogies theme issue of *Pathways* was contributed by the following authors: Vivian Wood-Alexander, cover and pages 7, 14, 16, 18, 22, 25, 32, 35 and 36; Bob Jickling, pages 5 and 6; Victor Elderton, pages 3 and 19; Marcus Morse, page 26; Ingrid Ng, page 23; and artist Donna Griffin-Smith, pages 10, 12, 28, and 34.

Wild Pedagogies: A Floating Colloquium

By Bob Jickling

Sometimes wandering down different trails can suddenly bring divergent experiences into close proximity. As trails bend towards each other, there can be, as if from nowhere, a moment of resonance—unannounced, unanticipated, uncontrolled—arising out of the earth, through our footsteps and into our being. It is this kind of wild arising that gave life to the idea of wild pedagogies.

One of these trails leads to wilderness. Here I mean literally real places and existential experiences with wilderness. In a world of postmodern skepticism, some of us have not given up on the reality of wild places as places of engagement. Another entwined trail explores the idea of wilderness, and a need to reclaim and refresh understandings of this idea.

On a different track, there is a trail that leads to pedagogy, and the stifling control, or taming, sometimes felt by educators. This does not feel like a crucible for inspiration and transformation. Travelling this track can lead to wonder about a wilder pedagogy. Resonant notes arising from these paths play out in the interplay between wildness and control.

It is also this wandering that gave rise to a graduate course called *Wild Pedagogies* in 2012. Then, in the summer of 2014, contributors to this issue of *Pathways* gathered on the Yukon River for the *Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium*.

In the following sections of this brief paper I will outline some starting points for framing this colloquium. The first begins to refresh the idea of wilderness. The second challenges the domestication of pedagogy. And the third brings these two together to launch wild pedagogies.

William Cronon (1996) began his famous paper, "The Trouble with Wilderness," by stating: "The time has come to rethink wilderness." And he did. At the time,

rethinking wilderness was overdue. He pointed to many problems with what wilderness had become—both as real places and as a concept.

Rethinking wilderness means examining the concept and its relationship with the real world. The thing is, concepts aren't static. They live, shift and vary between interpreters and their places of arising. Rethinking should be an ongoing process, and we should be sharing our evolving insights. Another important thing about concepts is that they aren't simple; they are never about just one thing. They have a number of components and are shaped by their context. So, part of the wild pedagogies project is to take up Cronon's invocation and to again rethink wilderness.

Cronon's analysis pointed out that for too long one component—the absence of people—had disproportionately shaped understandings of wilderness. He pointed to 18th century usages that described wilderness as "'deserted,' 'savage,' 'desolate,' 'barren'—in short, a 'waste.'" These usages were contrasted with later sentiments, such as Thoreau's assertion that "in Wilderness is the preservation of the World." The juxtaposition of such disparate conceptions left Cronon to conclude that wilderness is, simply, and "quite profoundly a human creation."

By asserting that wilderness is a human idea, and a vastly unreliable one at that, Cronon has provided a generation of skeptics with the ammunition needed to distance themselves from wilderness, and sometimes to belittle those who cling to "nostalgic" notions about it. For experienced wilderness travellers, it can be hard to imagine these skeptics ever raising a blister while using an axe, or dipping a paddle, or eating a stew spiced with campfire ash.

Other scholars, however, trace wilderness to the Old English "wildoerness." They

argue that “wil” is linked to wild, or willed; “doer” is linked to beast; and “ness” is linked to a place or quality. Putting these together suggests that wilderness describes a place of wild beasts, or more evocatively, self-willed land (e.g., Foreman, 2014). Whether these etymological tracings can withstand rigorous critique may not be settled. But, wilderness is clearly descriptive of real places characterized by their wildness. It is not simply reducible to a human idea; place comes first. Such wild places are characterized by a will to realize their own ends—an inherent wildness. Descriptively, then, “self-willed” is an apt component of a reimagined idea of wilderness.

Still, wilderness is not quite this rationally sanitized. In reality it is much more visceral. There has been an aching recognition, deep in my sinew, that wilderness—in idea and place—needs to be refreshed and reclaimed. And a good start is to place uncontrolled wildness at its heart.

Another trail is educational. I speculate that people drawn to wild pedagogies feel that their most significant learning—learning that has actually been in some way transformative—was encountered outside of formal education. Or, perhaps it was at the very margins of their schooling, inspired by brave, insightful and rebellious teachers. But what components of these experiences transcend outdoor education? It is time to rethink another concept: education.

I suspect that those drawn to wild pedagogies know that bringing “outside”

education into the mainstream is easier said than done. My teachers-in-training at Lakehead University knew this well. Many came with pedagogical experience. Some had been outdoor and environmental educators who worked in summer camps, for wilderness operators, with nongovernmental organizations and as interpreters. Others had been involved in social justice issues and worked abroad with organizations committed to bringing about fairness, justice and equity. These students wanted to make a



difference. Many had already learned that education could be more inspirational, and pedagogy more transformational, than what they experienced during their own schooling. These students also struggled with a teacher education system that pushed to the side things they most valued. As it turns out, most of their transformative experiences don't fit neatly into prescribed “teachable” subjects.

The keyword here is “prescribed.” This is where student learning—and student teacher learning—must serve predetermined educational outcomes, preferably those that are measurable.



There is plenty of research suggesting that curriculum content and pedagogical strategies are bent to align with testable outcomes. Learning not amenable to testing is edged out. Even in education faculties, enormous efforts are made to prescribe, control and tame education (e.g., Au, 2011).

Still, as Arjen Wals (1990) reminded us, “What you can’t measure still exists.” And despite curriculum control and testing pressures, many committed teachers find ways to resist—to create space for “real teaching,” for the immeasurable (e.g., Au, 2008; Jickling, 2009; Astbury, Huddart, & Théoret, 2009). What conceptual components of education are missing for these and other teachers?

Elliot Eisner’s (1985) “expressive outcomes” provide openings for resistance. These outcomes are the consequences of activities planned to provide rich learning opportunities, but without explicit or

precise objectives. They aim to shift emphasis away from evaluation and back to considering what good learning opportunities would look like—first and foremost. As Eisner says, “The tack taken with respect to the generation of expressive outcomes is to engage in activities that are sufficiently rich to allow for a wide, productive range of educationally valuable outcomes.” A key point is that these outcomes arise from a combination of activities and context. They are, in important ways, self-willed, uncontrolled, even wild.

The term “wild” challenges dominant cultural ideas about control—of each other, nature, education and learning. It rests on the premise that an important part of education can include intentional activities that provide a fertile field for personal and purposeful experience without controlling the outcomes—hence wild pedagogies.

This “wild” entrée riffs off of the Old English wilderness, or self-willed land—as opposed to tamed or domesticated land. At times, wild places have been sources of inspiration and insight. These places have provided glimpses of other ways of being in relationship with the world. Often, wilderness pilgrims did not set out as “nature lovers.” Rather, they were social critics who went into the woods to be in places that were less hostile to their task. There, in emergent relationships with wolves, fleas, woodland linnets, big trees, small flowers and Indigenous folks, they broadened their understandings of the world and what it can mean to be human. Their transformative moments were not planned; they arose from the landscape in moments of attentiveness and resonance.

Visiting wilderness areas—and what some call hybrid spaces—can be crucibles for knowing and being in the world. Visitors often respond to the experience in diverse and expressive ways—so vague, yet so rich. The more profound outcomes defy control. Yet they do exist.

The Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium set out to bring folks together to experiment

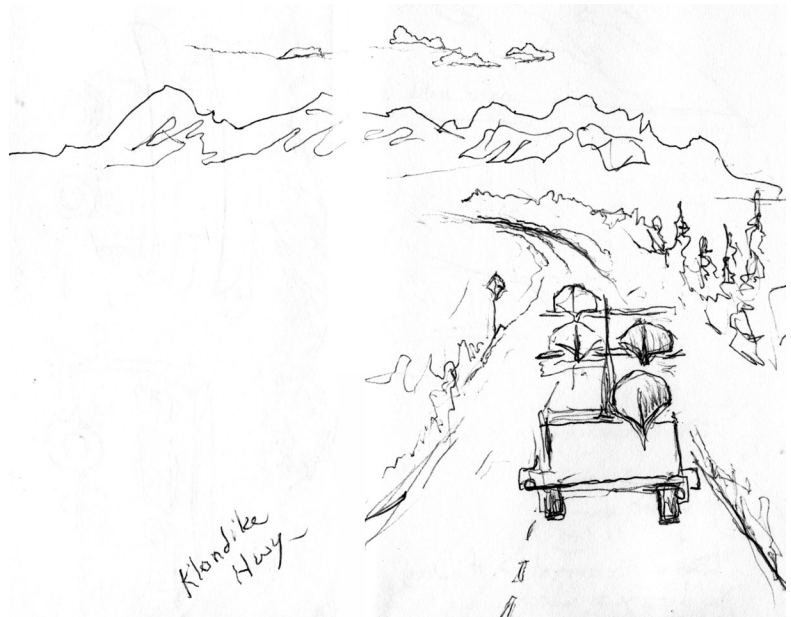
with educational ideas in a wild place. We began with some questions:

What is there about wild experiences that people value; what are the core elements? And, at this core, are there elements important for everyone in education? If core elements can be framed as wild pedagogies, how can they be welcoming and relevant for people across disciplines? What could self-willed pedagogy or self-willed education look like?

These questions are just starting points, not boundaries, for wild pedagogies. As Jay Griffiths (2006) reminds us, "All things that represent life at its most vital and wild wiggle. Words wiggle into metaphor; sperm wiggles; dancing and jokes and giggling wiggle; the shape and character of tumultuous life is a wiggling one" (p. 66). In the papers that follow, we share our conceptual, artistic and ontological experiments in wild pedagogy. And here, too, we all wiggled in our own wildness.

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Bob Jickling has been an active practitioner, teaching courses in environmental philosophy, environmental, experiential and outdoor education, and philosophy of education. As an Emeritus Professor from Lakehead University, he has returned to his home in the Yukon where much of his inspiration is still derived from travelling in that landscape.

The Travelling Conference: A Fine Wild Pedagogy Idea

By Bob Henderson, with Aage Jensen, Morton Asfeldt and Nils Vikander

I like professional conferences: the informal and formal interaction with colleagues and direct immediate learning. Over time though, as an outdoor educator, mobilizing for a keynote presentation in Ballroom B of a chained-brand hotel, or in a quandary choosing among conflicting concurrent sessions, I have been left feeling that something was disingenuous in our field. The customary conference surely is not an example of anything close to what could be labeled “wild pedagogy” in action. Though a privilege to attend for personal and career development, there is often an ominous feeling that such professional conferences do not guarantee the development desired for the outdoor educator. Enter the travelling conference!

The *Wild Pedagogies: Floating Colloquium* was a fine example of an emerging idea in outdoor, experiential and environmental education. The travelling, small group, practical and theoretical conference is a genuine fit with the professional learning and values of our field, and supports a wild pedagogy sensibility, bringing people together as “folks” for more intimate and direct engagement with idea development. The wild pedagogy idea also implies an inherent challenge to conventionality towards something perhaps more truthful, more beautiful and more intrinsic. Be it a hiking trip, a hut-to-hut ski tour, a canoe trip or a bus tour of site visits, the travelling conference is all about equanimity in spirit, equality in relations and high energy-enhanced opportunities in self awareness and self expression. Hey, the 3Es of the travelling conference: Equanimity, Equality and Energy!

The 2009 Henrik Ibsen Conference, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Ibsen coining the Scandinavian word “friluftsliv,” involved students and educators hiking hut-to-hut along the Norway–Sweden border. Aage Jensen, conference co-organizer, captures the 3Es admirably:

Tearing down the walls for participants makes it possible to contribute and share. I still remember being in a subgroup led by Stephan Svenning. After walking for some time, we stopped at a place with plenty of blueberries. While we sat, Stephan was walking around picking berries and talking about his topic. We relaxed into listening and discussion.

This outflow of sharing helps presenters open up such that they might drop a professional guard. Beyond sharing their given topic, they might go to the “edge of their thinking,” discussing that edgy powerful content they are uncertain about, launching into wild pedagogy.

At the Wilderness Educational Expeditions Conference in 2010, international university educators prepared a theoretical and practical session for a canoe trip on the Mara–Burnside Rivers flowing to the Arctic Ocean. The International Conference of the Outdoor Learning Environment (ICOLE) has conducted “wandering conferences” as site tours in Israel (2013) and Germany (2014), with a mandate to promote research to study “efficient ways to implement outdoor learning activities as an integral part of the formal school curricula.” The 2017 Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium (CATS) is planning a pre-conference canoe trip on the Churchill River to allow participants to spend time with keynote speakers.

There you have it: a collection of travelling conference examples, with the *Wild Pedagogies: Floating Colloquium* part of—dare I say—“a movement” to bring wild pedagogy thinking to conferencing.

Bob Henderson has been teaching in university settings for over 30 years. Most recently he has been involved in field-based university course work. Aage Jensen and Nils Vikander both taught at Nord Trondelag College, Levanger, Norway. Together they organized the Henrik Ibsen gathering. Morten Asfeldt, along with Simon Beames, organized the Wilderness Educational Expeditions Conference.

A New Beginning?

By Aage Jensen, with Nils Vikander

"Do you really believe in this idea of sustainable development?" I asked Oystein Dahle during a short walk. A chemical engineer, Oystein has held the posts of Vice President, Exxon Mobil Norway and the North Sea, head of the Worldwatch (WWI) Research Institute, USA, and leader of the Nordic division of WWI; he is now Emeritus Director of the WWI. He was also secretary of the Brundtland Commission, which published the report *Our Common Future* that underlined the idea of sustainable development.

"No, never," he said. I did not say anything further.

When *Our Common Future* was presented, there were both positive and critical comments. Setreng (2014) notes the report lacks a deeper analysis of the society that caused the problems we are facing. Without this, it is difficult to know and understand what sustainable development really is, and why it is an arduous or even impossible challenge to educate for it. Engelmann (2013) underlines the magnitude of the task ahead: "In order to alter these trends, vastly larger changes are needed than we have seen so far."

The planet is at risk. It is suffering from fever—a symptom of a deep and serious illness. It does not seem that using ideas from sustainable development and environmental education can cure the planet. We need something else. We must act on what causes the fever.

We need to consider the situation with new eyes and perspectives. A closer examination of the ideas of the French ecophilosophy pioneer, Henri Bergson, may inspire hope. In Bergsonian philosophy the mechanistic worldview disappears, and movement—processes—dominate in a dynamic worldview (Kolstad, 2007).

Bergson set out to establish a new ontology where life (or nature) is duration. The recognition of duration is, according to Bergson, reserved for one certain ability—intuition. This capacity he defined as the simple and indivisible experience of sympathy wherein one is moved into the

inner being of an object to grasp what is unique and ineffable within it. Bergson uses the word "sympathy" according to its original etymological meaning: to describe an inner communication between two different beings that are partakers of a common nature. (Sympathy does not mean "the ability to feel with" but "the ability to be one with.")

Finally, we arrive at the pedagogical question: What can we do as teachers to help students develop their intuition so they are able to discover the duration in themselves and thus in nature, and that we thus are all parts in a common duration? This question will be left for a future forum. However, even at the present stage of the inquiry, the path ahead could well be illuminated by further refinements of the wild pedagogy idea. A "new beginning" is leading to a harmonious relationship between nature and the presently over-industrialized human being. The traditional Scandinavian "friluftsliv" can be one important inspiration for such a journey.

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Aage Jensen is educated in biology and pedagogy and, now retired, has been working in teacher training education since 2003. Nils Vikander works with teacher education in the US, Canada and Norway. His main interests are sport psychology and philosophy.

Imagining Wild Pedagogies

By Jane Frances Powell

Close your eyes. Imagine. You are in a canoe, floating gently down the Yukon River. You can hear the silt on the bottom of your boat. It almost sounds like the canoe is sizzling from underneath. Yesterday's camp was at Fort Selkirk, an old long-abandoned gold rush settlement. Today is your rest day, so you have been assigned to the "canoedio"—a self-designed creative "studio" in the middle of the boat. You lie back and rest your well-worked shoulders against the well-placed dry bags. Pulling out your drawing board, camera by your side, you begin to personalise your canoedio. As you do so, Zabe, one of today's sterners, notices your chosen mode of expression—through art—and comments on the different ways people interpret and express the natural world that surrounds them. Soon a lively conversation blooms within your boat and then beyond its borders to the other boats floating nearby. Everyone has their own take, opinions depending on a colourful variety of backgrounds and experiences, from outdoor and environmental educators to craftspeople and artists. The conversation then jumps course when a moose and her two calves are spotted swimming across the river in front of you. They climb up onto a grassy shore and disappear into the bush, leaving their intensely observant silent spectators hoping for more. The silence is special, as the silt continuously weaves its way through it. The lull in the conversation welcomes new threads and you are soon

talking about the art of pinhole nature photography, and how the moose likely wouldn't stay still long enough to make that picture a possibility. The evening before you had sat stock-still for eight minutes, trying not to laugh at silly jokes, in a rickety antique rocking-chair, in an old log trading-post cottage, while your colleagues attempted to take that perfect ghost shot with Bob's homemade pinhole camera. Tonight, after a tasty communally prepared sushi dinner, you will relax in your Therm-a-Rest chair, on a vibrantly colourful stony beach, with the colleagues that have become your friends, and you will present your professional passions—in essence, fitting your own piece into the puzzle that is Wild Pedagogies.



Jane Frances Powell is both a freelance environmental educator in Golden, BC and a Program Coordinator/Instructor at The College of the Rockies. She has created 20 Environmental Education (EE) Activity Cards that can be used during outdoor adventures with children, and freely downloaded from her blog: www.inaboutandfor.blogspot.ca.

Bill Peruniak and The Ecopedagogy of River Seminars

By Zabe MacEachren

Floating colloquium, river symposium, educational expedition—the terms are mounting to describe the way outdoor educators are increasingly holding their professional gatherings in the field, instead of at expensive conference centres in large cities.

Historically related to the floating colloquium, Bill Peruniak (1936–2003), founder of the *Atikokan Outers*, established in the 1970s what became the longest running high school-level outdoor program in Canada. Later, when Bill was Associate Dean of Education at Queen's University, he used his administrative position to hire innovative faculty that could establish an outdoor-based university program based upon the principles of Kurt Hahn, founder of many Outward Bound and experiential education ideas. Thanks to Bill's vision, Queen's Outdoor & Experiential Education (OEE) program is the longest running outdoor-based university program in Canada. It would be hard to deny that Bill Peruniak played a phenomenal role in the establishment of outdoor education in Canada. Lesser known are the programs he established using large 24' North Canoes to serve corporate leadership and newly emerging graduate programming. These programs, known as "river seminars," were like the floating colloquium outdoor educators are embracing today. They were an authentic way to share research and explore best outdoor practices in an outdoor setting, thereby reflecting an ecopedagogy. If pedagogy refers to the how and why we teach the way we do, then adding the natural environment, the land, to the fore of pedagogy can well express the way an ecology of place is part of a teaching and learning practice and increasingly makes our research practice authentic.

Bill's unique behind-the-scenes leadership style is probably the reason his strong influence on outdoor and experiential education in Canada goes largely unrecognized. He impelled others to become

leaders without directing attention to himself when doing so. There are two maxims that emphasize the way Bill encouraged others to initiate decisions and lead: 1) The less said the better—their experience is more eloquent than our words; and 2) A third-rate original solution is worth more than a first-rate hand-me-down. Through participant-driven decision making, Bill encouraged authentic participation and leadership development in many aspects of his river seminars.

I like to think that Bill would be pleased to know that today outdoor leaders are still encouraging youth in a manner that does not cast a direct light on a leader, but instead encourages a moment of quiet reflection. Recently I witnessed outdoor educators gathered around their final campfire together to participate in a selection of group-designed activities and songs. As the evening passed, they started sharing poetry with each other. Some poems were memorized and recited aloud while others were read from their modern version of a Parnassus—their cell phones. Such an image captures the true legacy Bill shaped for many through his quiet leadership style, the ecopedagogy of his river seminars, as well as the many other programs he made possible. His concept of ecopedagogy is personified by both the scene of paddlers working together in unison to paddle a North Canoe on a vast canvas of Canadian Shield countryside and in every opportunity we make to share our ideas along a water's edge. Learners and leaders engulfed in the land they live on is a dignified way to understand the concept of ecopedagogy, no matter what educators call it.

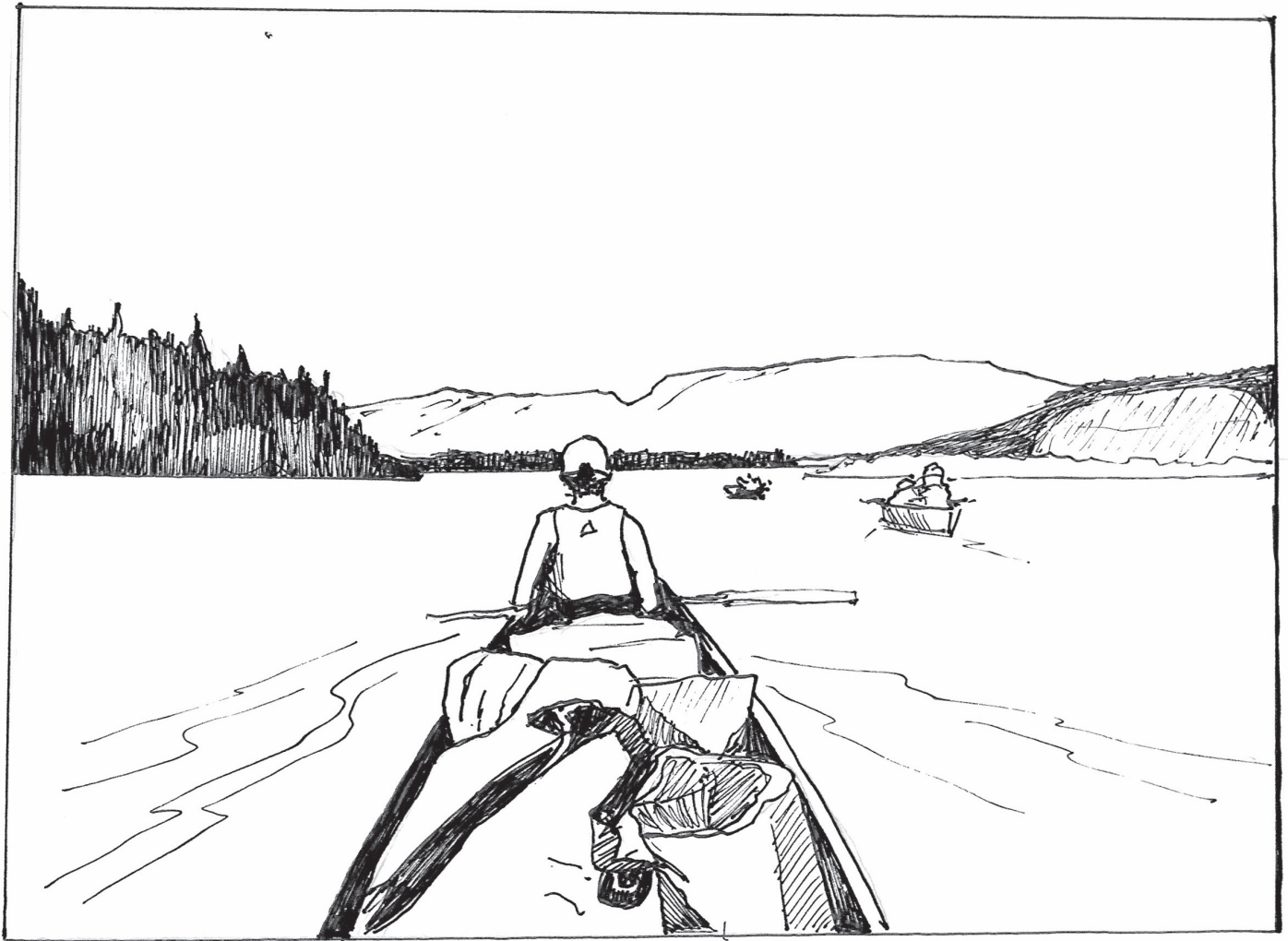
Zabe MacEachren coordinates the Outdoor & Experiential Education Program at Queen's University in the Faculty of Education. She can be reached virtually at maceache@queensu.ca or found somewhere paddling in her canoe named "Instinct."

A Paddling Cinquain

By Mary Breunig

paddling
asynchronous camaraderie
collaborating, adventuring, learning
together, a-part, unknowing, knowing
(a)drifting

Mary Breunig is an associate professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University and the Graduate Program Director of the Social Justice and Equity Studies Program. She is both an outdoor enthusiast and urban flaneur.



Who the Wild Pedagogues Are

By Sean Blenkinsop

Picture this: You are standing calf deep in the moving river, just taking a moment to get a better sense and feel for this place. After two days on the Yukon River in northern Canada your more urban, urbane life feels a long way away. It is the sun that first draws your attention. Its strange position, north of west in the sky, and the way—even at 11:30 pm—it still lingers just above the horizon. There is limited warmth radiating from it now, but like the not unwelcome last guest at a fantastic house party, it is unwilling to leave. And so it will continue to turn, barely dipping below the northern horizon for a few hours only to return somewhat north of east for its next apparent revolution.

Below the sun you can see the steps of this river-carved valley rise away from you, each indicating events in a process that has been millennia in the making. It is the rivers that dominate and shape this landscape; they are the construction crews of its infrastructure and the blood vessels of its body and they bring structure, succour and sustenance. The diversity of this cold and at times challenging place crowds along the river's banks. The salmon travel thousands of miles to spawn, their dead bodies producing the nitrogen the forest so patently needs. The lesser yellowlegs (a particular favourite of mine) have their broods of ungainly long-legged young within sight, and these giant puffballs on stilts add an equally needed kind of nutrition: levity. The moose too is drawn into the river's embrace. This sunken corridor of black spruce and birch, warmed by the waters and protected from the worst of the wind and weather, allows the great horse of the wilderness to happily exist well north of its predictable range. The big brown bear is here too, spreading itself across the hundreds of square miles of territory required to genuinely sustain, nay even to flourish, a single animal. One wonders how a bear, forced into narrow tracts between recreation properties and cutblocks, actually feels about this loss of freedom, this constriction of its range of possibility. And what might the comparable restrictions be in human educational terms?

Good questions for this group of 19 human wild pedagogues who have joined in this adventure....

But back to the river, for it is the reason you have come to the North. Your feet, immersed in its unrelenting flow, are cold but not completely frozen, and yet your toes are invisible due to the massive sediment load the river bears with it. Gone is the iridescent, aquamarine clarity of the glacial stream it once was; this is now a massive force rolling inexorably towards the sea and with it go untold measures of earth. Woe to the paddler who misses an eddy or drops something overboard, for both quickly slip out of sight. And yet it is not an intimidating overpowering river; it just keeps rolling, a slow, relentless and endless freight train. As you step out of this silt-laden current you remember, alongside its movement and inscrutability, that it can play and laugh. You remember that perfect moment today when everyone was quietly drifting, and the silt was sparkling along the hull of the boat, a symphony of laughter played by tiny percussive granules on an ABS tympanum.

As you turn towards your campsite and those 18 other wild human pedagogues, you are reminded that this is a wilder land than the setting from which you come. Not wild as in savage, uncivilized or empty, for that is the language of the destructive settler, of the colonial mindset, but wild meaning able to be and do as it wishes, a self-willed land where bear and bird, fish and spruce have the space to live more on their own terms in relationship to one another and the river that flows through it. And then you wonder if maybe this place, this river, these more-than-humans are not the real wild pedagogues and if you should not be quiet, listen and learn.

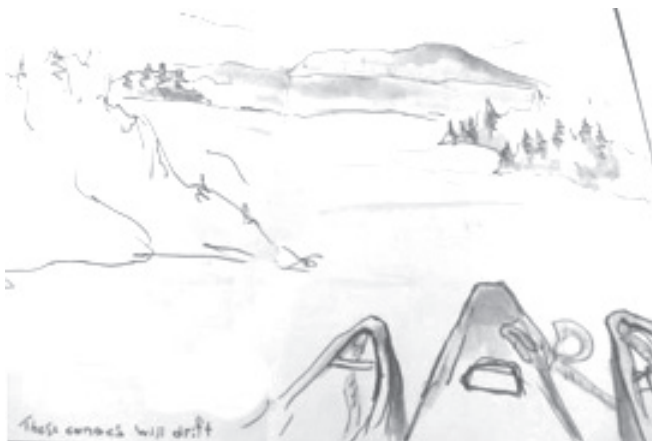
Sean Blenkinsop is a professor in the Faculty of Education and in the Semester in Dialogue at Simon Fraser University. He is a philosopher of education and has published widely in environmental, outdoor and experiential education.

Something Wild in British Columbia's Public School System

By Sean Blenkinsop

wild¹ – *adjective* 1 living or growing in the natural environment; not domesticated or cultivated; 2 uninhabited, uncultivated, or inhospitable, not civilized; 3 lacking discipline or restraint; 4 not based on sound reasoning or probability...

Over the last five years at the Maple Ridge Environmental School Project (MRESP), British Columbia (BC), you will see something of the "wild" (e.g., culturally challenging, norm defying, unrestrained) results we are glimpsing and recognize some of the implications these might have for the work we, outdoor/experiential/environmental educators, do and might do better.



If we begin with two assumptions: 1) that Canadian culture, specifically the modern/Western version thereof, has a pretty instrumental and alienated relationship with the natural world, and 2) that public education's role, loosely construed, is to induct the next generation into these, and other, cultural norms and ways of being, then how might education play a role in the cultural change necessary to make sustainability and ecological well-being a possibility? It was in response to this question that the MRESP was born, opening its metaphorical doors in 2011 (see <http://es.sd42.ca/>). The school has no buildings, all the learning happens

outdoors, and there is an active process of questioning every component of mainstream understandings related to school and schooling. Although legally required to teach the BC provincial curriculum, MRESP has some latitude to think creatively and work differently to explore new conceptions of learning, teaching, assessment and evaluation while pursuing a curriculum that is place-based, community-based, emergent, experiential, outdoor and environmental.

Having opened a couple of sizable kettles of fish, what can we say about "wild pedagogies?" For the projects we work with, they are about creating spaces where students can "grow in the natural² environment," where its denizens, the plants, birds and fish, have the opportunity to speak and be co-teachers in the educational process, where we try to actively resist, uncivilize, the push of the school system towards a detached/alienated cultural norm, and where we try to allow students to better be who they are as they fight the restraints and "sound reasoning" being placed on them by a cultural form of domestication.

Notes

¹Oxford Dictionary of English. (2003). 2nd Ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

²Understanding the long literature about what are natural and romantic concepts of wilderness, this is simply a suggestion that being outdoors all the time is "more natural" than the average indoor school environment.

Sean Blenkinsop is a professor in the Faculty of Education and in the Semester in Dialogue at Simon Fraser University. He is a philosopher of education and has published widely in environmental, outdoor and experiential education.

Embracing the Wild: Wild Pedagogy in the Early Years

By Andrea Welz, with Rachel Laurenti, Megan Turner McMillan, Chrystal Morden and Cathy Van Buskirk

My story begins with an errant dry sack. As we unloaded our canoes and gear to begin our Yukon River colloquium, it became quite clear that my dry sack (with sleeping bag and mat) was not among the piles of packs. To truly understand the impact this had on me, you'll need to know that I am a planner and like to make sure that everything is under control. Weeks before a trip I make lists to ensure I am prepared for every possible event. You might be asking, what does this have to do with wild pedagogy?

The colloquium provided an opportunity to explore Bob Jickling's description of wild pedagogy as participants shared their varying perspectives. For me it was quite enlightening, both in expanding my understanding about wild pedagogy and learning more about the different ways educators connect people with nature. The topic of "control" intrigued me and I wondered about my own need for control. I thought about my initial reaction to the loss of the dry sack: doom and gloom. The loss of control was debilitating. What I didn't count on was the support of others; with multiple offers of materials and encouragement, I regained my footing. I realized how much I rely on control and how its loss unbalances me. It also taught me that letting go can lead to totally unanticipated outcomes, such as how to accept help, reinforcing the impact of selfless acts of kindness.

Further reflection also led me to think about my field: working with young children. I wondered how a need to control impacts the development and learning of young children and how it influences our interactions and relationships. My interest in nature-based early childhood programming is definitely tied to this aspect of wild pedagogy, and I believe it needs to be more than just connecting children with

nature. If we are hoping to build a society that will be able to live sustainably and in harmony with each other and the more-than-human world, wild pedagogy opens the door to fostering the dispositions, skills and knowledge to do so. In order to truly run such a program, control needs to be explored. And bound to this is trust; can we trust the children, trust in others, trust the process and trust that nature will provide its own form of learning?

With these thoughts driving me forward, I listened to the stories of dedicated educators committed to making change through nature-based early childhood programming. What prompts educators to engage in this "risky" business, and what does early years programming look like for those that have adopted a wild pedagogical approach? Two stories stood out, from two different educational systems. I approached the educators to explore wild pedagogy concepts together, and our discussions were rich with insights about their work, which I've briefly summarized below.

Cathy and Chrystal's story begins with an observation of preschoolers in their licensed childcare centre reaching through the wire fencing to collect spruce and pine cones scattered beneath the trees, just outside the fenced-in playground. It caused them to wonder why their playground was devoid of natural elements. This prompted them to make significant changes: to expand their playground to include more natural elements, and to spend the majority of the day outside—both in and beyond the playground.

Working within a public elementary school system, Rachel and Megan, along with the full kindergarten team, planned a "two weeks outside" pilot project with a class of four- and five-year-olds. Their plan involved daily 100 minute blocks outdoors

in a small wooded area just outside the fenced-in playground. They planned activities for the first week and then wanted to explore emergent curriculum the following week. They dropped the educator-directed planned activities after the first few days and moved into emergent curriculum for the remaining time.

The practices and insights of these educators describe wild pedagogy in action and affirm for me that it can be integrated into early years programming. To begin with, their passion for teaching and exploring ways to support young children's growth and development seemed to fuel their work; both teams shared their plans to continue and expand their work with children in natural settings. These educators' ability to self-reflect and acknowledge how control impacts their teaching and, more profoundly, how letting it go enriches the learning process for children, are key components to this way of thinking about and practicing teaching. All four educators talked about the shifts in their work with children when it was less controlled. It wasn't just a free-for-all. There was still an intention in which observing, facilitating and building on children's play and ideas became an integral part of the work. They came to trust that children can be active participants in their learning. Their trust extended to nature as a teacher. This combination led to rich, engaged and meaningful learning experiences where children's play became more independent, creative, cooperative and sustained.

The educators themselves became risk-takers, willing to move out of their comfort zones and try new strategies that were not in line with common practices. These were individuals who were able to overcome the fear of letting go of control, fear of parents' and administrators' perceptions, or fear of failing. While very open to new ideas, they did not accept them lightly. Ideas were critically examined and any changes were well thought out to ensure their practices were in line with what is best for young children.

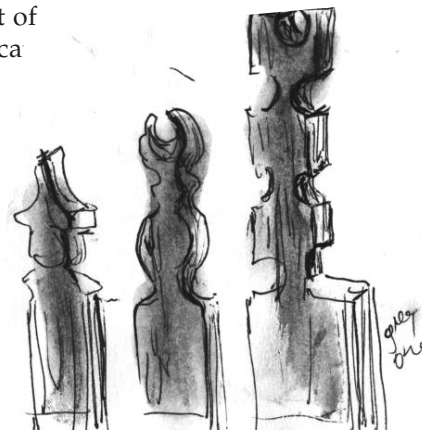
What was also very evident was the importance of teamwork. During our discussions I noted the camaraderie and support they gave each other. They mentioned that doing this on your own is not feasible; the whole team, including support from administrative staff, was important.

Letting go of control is a challenging endeavour for those entrusted with the care of young children, especially in light of our North America societal beliefs about childhood.

Doing so in natural settings adds another layer as our fears about the natural world can also be inhibiting.

Based on these conversations, first steps involve a supportive team, lots of time for acknowledgment of fears, and reflection on how to overcome them, as well as trust in each other, the children and nature's offerings.

Embracing wild pedagogy in early years programs as an educational approach is not only viable, it is an approach that can offer deep and meaningful learning opportunities that support the holistic growth and development of the young child. Its time has come.



Andrea Welz, as an educator and parent, feels that connections with nature are an important part of human development and a way to foster an ecological consciousness, which consequently has led to her exploration of nature-based early learning programs. Wild pedagogy offers a fresh new perspective that is broadening her understanding about nurturing connections with nature in early childhood.

Reflections on “Being in the World” While Canoeing the Yukon River

By Shelley Serebrin

It was during my immersion in the wilds at the *Wild Pedagogies: A Floating Colloquium* that I developed a great curiosity about the possibility of qualitatively different ontologies: those in the world of the wild versus those in the human-built world. I felt a rumbling, an awakening in me, of a different “sense of being” especially as we paddled down the swift Yukon River, where the wild places and creatures triggered a shift in what I felt in my body, mind and spirit. The change manifested itself as an expansion of my sense of self in terms of my relation to the more-than-human world, including land, water, air, sunlight, ancestors and more. It was marked by a heightened sense of connection with nature as the mask of “otherness” evaporated into the atmosphere of the midnight sun. As I moved through and interacted with the river’s ecology, the shift seemed to have cognitive and profound visceral and emotional aspects. What I experienced moved me to wonder what grounded this change; could this be of importance to a theory of wild pedagogy? Furthermore, could this sense of being in the wild contribute in meaningful ways to students learning of their connections to the natural world?

Welcomed warmly at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, I began my immersion into wild pedagogy. The introductory sessions invigorated discussion about wilderness, wildness and what benefits wild pedagogy might bring to learners. We considered how to enhance experiential learning—be very present, slow your pace, bond with place; be bold and “look” at things in a different way; point, show, wonder; dwell in, feel, recognize “thisness;” nature is teacher; say prayers of thanks, show respect and appreciation for all that is; mix philosophy with photography, storytelling, drawing, writing; allow for learning to “wiggle.” In this way my mind opened to a vast array of

possibilities, where my story of “being in the wild” could form.

Leaving behind some key human accoutrements—watch, phone and laptop—and with my PFD secured, I stepped into the bow of a canoe. Perhaps at that moment I passed through some kind of anthropocentric looking glass and gave myself the opportunity to enter a more “other”pocentric sense of reality, focused on my senses and what I was experiencing. I relied on my physical, psychological and spiritual self to inform me of what my reality was. For a moment I hung on to the thought of being on the river without any quick access to help if something went wrong, but it was soon forgotten as I became engrossed in paddling, keeping a sense of rhythm with my fellow paddler. I felt the surge then glide of the canoe, and became one with the opaque cool water.

Noticing my breathing changing, I inspired more deeply, perceiving a fresh sweetness in the air. As we paddled downriver, I could feel my mind quiet: life’s usual clutter and chatter withdrew and all my senses sharpened. I was better at detecting the direction and distance of nature sounds, like the call of a peregrine falcon. When I bathed I felt the substantial force of the current upon my skin and how my muscles worked to counteract that force; the biting coldness shot pain through my body and awakened my mind to a state of heightened alertness. I was aware that I too am water; it moves through me and circulates within. Water was a fundamental connecting entity that strengthened my relationship with the natural world. So too were the air, the minerals in the soil and the rocky cliffs I floated past. More than ever, I felt I was an integral part of Nature. With my combined suite of senses I became more conscious of not just me or humanness but of a whole wider, bigger-than-me world where “otherness” was not foreign.

At these moments, which I would call expanded mind, I felt present, truly alive, connected.



Another situation reinforced this familiarity with the other. We encountered a moose and her baby swimming across a wide section of the river. Awestruck, I could only point, show and wonder. I sensed that she was aware of us, that she had slowed her swimming and was assessing the situation, trying to make sense of what was happening. Empathically I knew we needed to give the two space to proceed unimpeded. We altered course to give them a generous berth and they resumed their previous swimming, following their progress until they were safely on shore. From my perspective the presence of the moose was encountered on her own terms, a sentient intelligent creature possessing a consciousness. Again I had that feeling of expanded mind, I felt present, truly alive, connected and happy.

On the last night on the Yukon River we stayed at Ancient Voices, a sacred campsite and retreat of local First Nations. We were treated to a sumptuous meal, lovingly prepared. All the flavours, colours and textures gave me a dreamy sense of comfort, a sense of being perfectly nourished. Afterward we gathered in a circle on the grass. The Chief had been asked if he could speak

to us about residential schools, truth and reconciliation, and how he was shepherding a healing process for youth through restorative justice. I had followed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as it documented the stories of residential school survivors, so I was eager to hear what the Chief had to say. He spoke eloquently with deep humility about his loss of culture and the loss of lives of family members. I was unprepared for my emotional response, unselfconscious feelings as a flood of tears streamed down my cheeks. He then described the dedicated work to reinvigorate their culture and to assist in healing. This work shared many features of wild pedagogy and deep ecology with a special focus on self-reflection and learning spiritual wisdom. I came to a realization that “being in the wild” was not just life giving, it was life healing.

After the trip, being back in the anthropocentric world reflects messages of unlimited economic growth, control over nature, and human separation from nature. Sometimes I’m able to dampen these messages when I teach children the routine of “sit spot” to observe bird language, or while watching hordes of bees collect nectar from flowering lavender, or when hiking in the mountains. When I do these things time slows down, my mind calms, I am present, alive, connected to the natural world. Having personal experiences of this kind shapes how I think and act when tuned into the community of the natural world. Is it not fundamental to a full education that students experience a sense of “being in the wild?” I believe that being in the world is a key feature of student learning within a theory of wild pedagogy. It could lead the conversation for nurturing an ontology lost, and give students and teachers agency to pursue its regeneration.

Shelley Serebrin is a teacher on Vancouver Island and networks with others to develop curriculum and professional development that enhances students’ learning of their connection with nature.

Don't Tip the Canoe: Finding a Balance Between Practice and Theory

By Victor Elderton

Throughout my career I have sought professional development (PD) that enhances my practice while exposing me to current ideas, instructional strategies and theories. Like many, I have been to multiple workshops, seminars and conferences. My quest has been to find balance and intertwining of what theory suggests and daily practice makes imperative in public education.

My practice over the past three decades includes daily teaching of children ages eight to thirteen, mentoring educators entering the field, working on numerous charitable nonprofit boards, and offering public presentations to parents seeking better ways to engage their children in nature-based learning.

The characteristics of PD I seek—the same that led me to the Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium—are as follows:

1. Authentic: a gathering crafted so its main purpose is intrinsic to how it is implemented;
2. Exciting: designed in a way that will be rejuvenating and potentially guide me through currents of discourse so that I might glean some snippets of new and interlaced ideas that will become embedded in my practice;
3. Communal: offering the potential for long-lasting networking relationships;
4. Experiential: the gathering's success is embedded in collective experience with the potential of being transformational.

For years, my best way to express my learning has been through photo-journaling or evolving entangled doodles. The doodles are a stream of consciousness developed throughout the experience expressing feelings and emotions, a form of self-regulation helping me concentrate on active discussion and discourse. These entangles are both formative as they are created, and summative when complete.

While canoeing with the wild pedagogues, I produced four entangled doodles that, like the meandering of the Yukon River, intertwined my thoughts, emotions and learning on this powerful professional experience. I present these representations of my experience and learning, each with a short explanation of what they meant to me then, and now as I reflect on them two years later.

Day 2 – Day 3

Ventures often begin chaotically, unsure excitement, anticipation; you have to simply trust in the process and individuals that will share this journey with you. The beginning doesn't make sense; it's too new, with too many undefined directions. Other place-based factors informed these insights as well. Our first preparations were held in the Kwanlin Dün cultural centre on the bank of the river we would be paddling, while the Peel River hearings and demonstrations were occurring at the courthouse in Whitehorse. These emergent currents were co-mingled into the foundation of the colloquium, reinforcing key concepts while illustrating its "wild" attributes.

Key practical ideas of those initial days:

1. The importance of place and context;
2. Direction and purpose are not always evident as learning begins;
3. Ideas and perceptions are just that, they are ours and not necessarily those of others now, in the past, or moving into the future.

Adopt – Canoe – Yukon – Sheep – River

Once on the Yukon River we were challenged as a fledgling community to take the plunge together, adopt each other as fellow learners on a journey with broad outlines and aspirations but no specified outcomes, accept that which nature was willing to yield and



what our senses were able to glean from its complexity. Our canoes were floating on a river of learning, like our own lives, a learning space filled with ideas and opportunities to engage. The river was our discussion and interaction and the canoe our means of moving from one learning to the next. Paddling this was punctuated by place—the Yukon and other life such as Dall sheep that for fleeting moments shared their place with us. If they noticed our passing they gave no discernable recognition of it.

Key practical ideas of those first days on the river:

1. Develop community;
2. Environmental understanding is the journey;
3. Keep open to opportunities experiences provide.

Time – Victor – Shelly – Mary – River

As learning unfolded guided by the river, a perspective on time enveloped us. The landscape was a product of the river today and the river of millennia. Grasping a sense of that time and earth processes that surround us, we often do not pay much attention to what was graphically etched in these days. The influences of time on the esthetic of place, you, and your fellow learners become clear. The relative passing of time was reinforced, through the current of the river, the rhythmic stroke of the paddle, the flow of conversation and dialogue. With each kilometre, a better knowing of ourselves, others and a sense of nature became strikingly vivid.

Key practical ideas of mid-journey on the river:

1. Changes of internal and external environments over time;
2. The world we live in is complexly non-static;
3. Learning takes courses and weaves patterns that can be predictable.

Echo – Wind – Moose – Big Brother – Little Sister

We were reminded of the unexpected, the big patterns celestial movement and geology play out on scales so vast they seem static to us, yet aren't necessarily. In the echoes of

our conversations in narrow canyons on the Yukon, it was as if the land was talking to us with its stories; we were laying down our stories on the land as well. A sudden wind also reminded us of our humility; we were just the merest film on the surface tension of the world, hardly grand or omnipotent. Our chance encounter with two moose cows and their calves reinforced that a moment's pause can create opportunities for encounters and possibilities. Without taking some time to reflect and wait for wind conditions to improve we would not have been at the proverbial "right place at the right time"—clear lessons in both interdependence and interconnectedness, all woven into a tapestry without gaps.

Key practical ideas of end of journey on the river:

1. Our impacts are wholistic; destructive, constructive, benign, sometimes simultaneously;
2. Lessons are taught through story;
3. Life is fragile and fleeting;
4. The wild teaches both respect and humility;
5. Interdependence of all things.

In conclusion, did the Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium teach me anything I did not already know? Probably not. However, it reminded me to be open to learning, take time to listen, and structure instructional time for reflection and contemplation. It reinforced, like the Yukon River, that some learning is on the surface, easily attainable; other most valued understanding runs deep and takes time, effort and opportunity. This journey helped me to re-commit to my students that these are principles of learning both generally and specifically about, in and with environments.

Victor Elderton is an educator in experiential environmental learning, working in both formal and informal settings for over 30 years. Recently he has served as the Vice Principal of Norgate Community Elementary and before that for 24 years was Principal at the North Vancouver Outdoor School, now renamed the Cheakamus Centre.

Stern, Bow and Canoedio

By Vivian Wood-Alexander

When I was wavering about signing up for Wild Pedagogies Floating Colloquium, two things tipped the balance: my older daughter thought it was cool and there was promise of something called a “canoedio.”

Canoedio, a term developed by Hannah Jickling, refers to the use of a canoe as a portable, mini art studio where one can do a variety of creative activities—play music, write, draw, paint or sketch—while the bow and stern paddlers are paddling. The word immediately charmed me; a new word but a familiar position. Hadn’t I always felt comfortable sitting in the middle of a canoe? And now that space mid-canoe with packs, a padded seat, and my sketch book for guilt-free hours sounded fine. Wouldn’t this nicely balance long paddling days and all the trips taken when I had wanted time to draw or paint en plein air and had only been able to snatch moments here and there; I looked forward to trying out this idea called canoedio.

The first evening presentation, en route downriver, was on “the pre-reflective moment.” Yes, I was with some adventure-seeking philosophers. This presentation made me consider that the activity of sketching or creative work can keep you on that balancing point of concentration without being self-conscious. Sketching can be described as meditative in the sense that there is a single pointed focus, an unbroken connection, less aware of yourself and being swallowed up in the picture in a way. Landscape ecologists speak of this experience. Drawing causes you to spend more time looking as you absorb the focus of your attention. Perhaps we like the feel of this connection. If we presume it is a good thing to look for ways to improve our relationship with nature, or any place, sketching might be a tool for this; it connects us, makes us pay attention to details and keeps us from reflecting too soon, instead keeping us in the moment and the experience.

The physical aspect of the canoedio position might appear languid but the reality is a mind free to think and, if sketching, think through the hand. I have a growing interest in simple mark making and symbols, but for this trip I defaulted to a traditional sketching technique. Sketching from a canoe on the Yukon River was distinct, because here was a river with a current. The still landscape became a moving target. I wasn’t expecting us to be carried along at such a pace. With limited time due to the swiftly passing shoreline, there was and is a certain excitement and more intense concentration that is not the case when staring at relatively still subject matter. Artist and some-time instructor Iris Haussler shook hesitation out of me on that score years ago in a course called “Sketching in a Blink.” She would bring in a crawling baby, a dog, march us off to public places, and put movie clips in front of us. Her exercises were a workout but it helped the skill; the lines can be fresh when the pace is fast and focused and you let go. The canoedio implies movement.

I recently read the sentence, “I do my best sketching when I am lost” (Gabriel Campanario, *The Art of Urban Sketching*), and though I was not lost per se, the landscape was novel, new and strange to me. The scale especially impressed me. It was a much bigger landscape than back home on Lake Superior. Perhaps our pleasure in newness urges us to record experiences through sketching when travelling, thus stilling the clock; I welcome such experiences, as life seems to fly by. An hour sketching has long been known to help one lose the feeling of time passing at all. In case this is beginning to sound just too easy, I was reminded the other day, when I took my sketch book with me on a short excursion, that it isn’t a given that one can concentrate. Sometimes we just don’t get into the mode and we fail. The page remains blank. The canoedio felt like a place that supported concentration.



There is the question of why try to reproduce or interpret on this floating colloquium. Why not just record with writing? But on this floating colloquium the place was important and I felt a loyalty to the surroundings—they were part of this. The landscape was passing, fleeting; sketches are a glimpse, a flash, a way to remember. As an inherently unfinished art form, sketching is minimalistic with limited materials and time and without a finished end product in mind. However, a sketch, when it works, can feel quite complete.

Sketching requires concentration as well. Also, if you try leaving the camera and bringing the sketchbook you will notice the cumbersome aftermath of photography is removed. The sketchbooks will simply be there, ready to shelve, then open and look at, the photo album already done. Looking back on the sketches is another aspect of the practice and sometimes I am pleased and other times I am definitely not. God, they can be awful—I am disappointed in the lifeless quality or the incompleteness of the sketch; it turns out poor drawings are as plentiful as poor photographs.

Thank you to Hannah Jickling for using the term canoedio and to Bob Jickling for including it in our Wild Pedagogy Floating Colloquium...and to those who paddled while I was in canoedio position. While paddling myself I enjoyed the sound of guitar playing, breathing (not quite snoring), I could see there was thinking going on...and there are, after all, so many ways to enjoy the canoedio.

When I returned I found an alternative to the canoedio and took up painting from a kayak. I was looking to recreate that floating feeling from the Yukon...when you are floating, away from shore...you are more than afloat—you are suspended somehow, confined and therefore able to paint.

We all consider our takeaways after a conference; it's hard to predict which of the angles explored in connection to the ideas (of wild pedagogy) will stick, and what part of a wild place, the sensation of the current, or the sifting sound of the boils beneath the canoe. In conversations since the colloquium, the phrase "floating conference" never seems to fail to generate interest and questions; perhaps it gives people a sudden insight and something relatively new to consider, and something they dare to think they might like to experience themselves. Then of course I think I will further delight them with the term canoedio...the interested looks now mingle with some puzzlement. It's not for everyone, but for some there is immediate recognition of the usefulness and perfectness of that place mid-canoe and now, in my lexicon, canoes have a stern, bow and canoedio position.

Vivian Wood-Alexander is currently an art educator and teacher in Thunder Bay. Her Master of Education thesis was on the topic of eco-art, a genre that blends well with Wild Pedagogy; she loves the term "canoedio" and was inspired by the floating conference.

Who is My Wild Self?

By Ingrid Ng

I am forced to stay connected here
Can't ride off on my bicycle
Cook my own meal and eat it by myself
No; the challenge for me
Is to bring my real, wild self to each
interaction

Free of those oppressive stories
those "what are they thinking of me?"
thoughts
those fears of being unliked, unloved,
excluded

Free of the ontology of competition,
Needing to prove myself worthy

To be wild
Is to KNOW
I am loved

To be wild
Is to declare
I am related

To relate wildly
Is glory on Earth.



This poem seemed to write itself on Day Two of our canoe trip. It emerged from my reflections on the way I was interacting with other people on the trip. I noticed I was interacting mostly from a place of fear. A quiet monologue persisted in my head: "What are they thinking of me? How are they perceiving me? Did I do okay?" I felt inhibited and controlled by this fear. I didn't feel free. In other words, my wild

self, though physically re-located to the wilderness of the Yukon River, could not escape the cage of fear that is my judging mind—a mind that developed in a fear- and judgment-based society, so it didn't know any alternatives.

In noticing the fear, something opened up. Suddenly, I had some agency over the fear, rather than it having agency over me. My wild self lit up, ready to radiate. Ready to be curious. Ready to quiet the fearful mutterings of my mind—put it down for a nap, if you will. To invite out and love the wild selves of all those around me. To me, "wild pedagogies" is about questioning the habits and patterns of education that we have inherited. It is about examining the ways in which historical agendas determine what and how students learn. Questioning these assumptions opens up a space and encourages old ways to relinquish control over the way education is enacted.

The "wild self," then, is about questioning the habits and patterns of relating that we have inherited. It is about examining the ways in which historical agendas determine how we relate. Noticing these default ways of relating opens up a space and encourages the old habits to relinquish control over our wild selves. It is not that historical habits or patterns are necessarily bad. But I don't want to be limited to those habits, and I don't want them to run my life. I want to choose how I relate, rather than have my relationships chosen for.

Ingrid Ng has keen interests in environment, ecology and psychology. She completed her MSc in Ecology at the University of Guelph, and has since delved into the social sciences, grief therapy and visual arts.



Encountering Wild in the Yukon

By Greg Scutt

The remarkable diversity of educators and academics that make up the wild pedagogies crew probably rivals the many ways in which we use and understand wild. Wild's resurgence in popular discourse—the so-called “Wild Effect”—shouldn't be confused with some definitive and final understanding of the word. Among wild pedagogies there is certainly no consensus on what wild means nor how we want to use it with pedagogy. But that hardly matters, as the journey of discovering its meaning and implications for education is still continuing in conversations amongst its members, often on trail or a river. No doubt, the roving conversation was one of the aims of the idea of wild pedagogy to begin with, if it even makes sense to talk about aims and wild pedagogies together in the same sentence.

But it is the elusive notion of wild that I think I tried, while on the rivers and in the mountains of the Yukon in the summer of 2014, to think into and attempt to encounter. In one sense I wanted to preserve a familiar and traditional understanding of wild as a kind of free, pure, non-human and unknowable quality of such things as lichen, Dall sheep and starlight. But I was also attracted to and convinced from previous encounters in the wilderness that the quality of wildness may be useful to consider as an ontological concept.¹ Ontological is such an unfortunate and pretentious word. It really just means what something *is*, not how we know it. So rather than using aquatic ecology to talk about, for example, the importance of Arctic grayling, instead I like to play with the question of what a grayling is, *free* from all the human ways of knowing and experiencing it.² I am interested in using such a concept to help me encounter the *wild* Arctic grayling. It is just such a conceptual twist to the notion of wild that I was, in effect, putting through the beginning of a field trial of sorts in the Yukon.

By chance, my second day in Whitehorse was spent participating in a protest against the Yukon government's proposed changes to the land use plan for the Peel River watershed. I wore a placard around my neck with a photo taken underwater of Arctic grayling swimming in a clear northern river. Below the photo the placard read: “United for the Peel because.” And I was in the mood to take it kind of literally. “Because grayling.” Because they are, they exist, like the Peel, Wind, Snake, Hart and Bonnet Plume rivers. And a thing's existence, its being, whether a trembling aspen, boreal river, grizzly or lichen, is what I like to think wild is the home of, where being lives. What makes me awestruck when I encounter a wild grayling is that ineffable and ethereal quality it possesses. Its being is always just out of reach, on the other side of some chasm. It lives in the wild. So, I was not protesting because grayling are a valuable part of a northern aquatic ecosystem or that First Nations have a right to hunt and fish and exist in the watershed. Ecology and First Nations rights are of course all crucial reasons to protect the Peel, reasons I passionately support. But the Peel watershed and grayling also matter because they exist. Because they are—wild. Still, that's not too compelling at first thought. What is also needed is some encounter with that existence, some bumping up against its power and agency.

The group spent their first night at Fort Selkirk on the Yukon. That night I talked about the idea of wildness as that quality of a boulder, spruce tree or moose that remains free from human contexts. What contexts? History, stories, science and language to name a few. But I wish I had begun my discussion by recalling that the Yukon River, the Pacific bound freight train of a river with its hissing, silty and frigid water and unforeseen and unnerving boils actually moved us and our canoes to Fort Selkirk that afternoon. Seems trivial. But it was not the river's history, or its

brehtaking beauty, its velocity or even gravity that moved us. The Yukon River moved us to Fort Selkirk. And it can do that because it exists and is capable of effect. Its efficaciousness is literally boiling up to its surface, meeting the power face of a paddle, turning and propelling canoe hulls. And it is an effect that in no way depends on our concepts and stories about it. That power-effect lies within the Yukon River's wildness. Where its being lives, expressed as its agency. But such encounters with wildness should not be unfamiliar, especially to those that spend time on trail.

So much of our canoe trip down the Yukon together was a constant negotiation and encounter with wild things. The wind and weather forced us off the river. The springtime freshet erased previous camping spots and forced us to move on. Paddling a canoe in wind and river boils was a challenge. You are just a being in a canoe immersed and entangled in a coalescence of river, wind, canoe and paddle power. To propel and maneuver a canoe on a river required attentiveness to the power of the river, direction of wind and boils, angle of paddle—and not mastery over them. It's humbling and fascinating; consider the care taken to set up your tent while the skies darken and the wind whips up the sand on the beach. Tent skills matter. The threat of wind and rain affects us. Lean the wrong way in a canoe when peeling out of an eddy and you risk a long cold dangerous swim. Such awareness and recognition of other forces acting with a power greater than your own agency keeps you alert and attentive. It sharpens your wilderness practices. And it is such encounters with other things' wildness, so typical of wilderness tripping, that decentres us from our traditional positions as masters of other beings. It makes us realize in an uncanny way that we are simply beings amongst other beings (Bryant, 2011).

Maybe wild pedagogy begins to mean then, amongst the myriad of its other meanings, that there is a way to learn from

encounters with the wildness of things like rivers, windstorms, canoes and campfires. Wild pedagogy is literally a move *outside* to a place where human culture and meaning is not at the centre of learning and being.

Notes

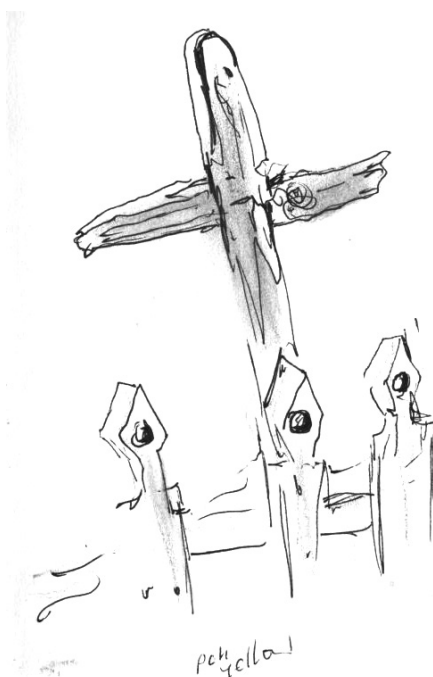
¹ Levi Bryant's (2011) discussion of wilderness ontology inspired me to think through this concept while on trail.

² Graham Harman (2011) has generalized this to an *object* being free from human access to it.

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Heading Downstream: Noticing the Wild on the Yukon River

By Marcus Morse

As we pull away from the riverbank, leaving the first eddy at the put-in, the silent movement of the river draws the bow of our canoe downstream. Entering the flow, we are pulled further into this river, into the place, and into the journey as we embark on a week-long trip on the Yukon River. We are here with our fellow travellers to explore the idea of “wild pedagogies” and to challenge dominant notions of control. This river is very different for me; it is unsettling in scale and movement. I have never been on a large meandering Canadian river or this far north. But as I ease into the journey I feel invited by the place and by the people, invited to pay attention. And it feels like it is this place—the wild self-willed nature of the Yukon riverscape—that is reminding me I should pay a particular kind of attention to the place and to the others I am travelling with (more-than-human included).

Drifting downstream I let my paddle trail through the water, leaving small whirlpools as I pass, and I can feel the movement of the river through my hands. It is a relentless movement, not directed at me, but almost despite me: a movement that drains a vast watershed and draws life towards it. As

we head downstream my line of vision is continuously drawn to the next sweeping corner in the distance as the lines of the river disappear around a series of bends, and I slip onwards towards the upcoming bend wondering what might appear just outside my current field of vision. No matter where I am on the river there are seemingly endless enticements downstream as the river disappears around a corner to the left or to the right.

It occurs to me that I rarely find myself looking upstream, from where I have come, and I cannot for the entirety of this journey gain a view outside of the valley, either into the next valley or further afield. It is a very different kind of experience to walking on a ridgeline where my gaze can return to home; here I am contained and continuously drawn back towards the river, to where I am. Focusing downstream the river merges into the hills, the hills meet the horizon of the clouded rolling sky, and I am enclosed within this valley, held by it. And there is a feeling of comfort in that. During this journey everything I sense, everything I see, smell and hear is held within the river valley. The weather, the forests, the



ridgelines, the spruce trees and the moose all contain my experience and highlight the way in which I am within this place. The Yukon River is the centre of our journey and it involves my whole-of-body orientation towards it.

There are a series of great pleasures in travelling within the Yukon River. As I lie back in the canoe during a quieter section I listen to the rumbling of the heavy silt load carried from the glacial headwaters upstream, gathered by the hull of the boat and amplified, hinting at geological timescales and processes beyond my understanding. I listen, too, to the gurgling squawks of ravens off to edge of my hearing, reminding me that I am both the watcher and the watched in this place. A place, then, not entirely there-for-me. And I am aware that there is a strange physicality involved with moving downriver by canoe; despite the proximity of my fellow paddler we do not sit face-to-face, but rather, visually and auditorily, our orientation and focus is reinforced towards the river and the place we are moving through and further into.

Camping on the banks of the Yukon River, too, adds to the captivation of this place. To walk on the sandy section of a shoreline is to feel the smoothness of the earth beneath my feet, and I am made aware that the flow of the river is uncontrolled, self-willed—that it rises and falls, and that the sand is washed smooth in these movements of the relentless river. In this way, and in others (like the pebbles worn smooth by the river), I perceive the movement of both the river and time itself through my feet. And as I sit looking across the river at Fort Selkirk I notice myself sitting in the natural position of river campsites: planted on the earth with my back to the hills, on ground that slopes slightly towards the river, looking across the river. In this position of repose to the river valley I notice the unique geology of the opposing hills (apparently volcanic?) on the far side of the river, implying a timescale seemingly unimaginable and at odds with the recent human history of river travel (both First Nations and settler) evident

at this site. The Yukon River cuts into the land and defines it, and in so doing further defines the movements of the river itself, wind, human history, flora and fauna.

So there is a part of this place I am not able to understand and it is unsettling; a part that is foreign to me. But it is also this sense of unknowing and a perceived lack of control that calls to me, that seemingly gathers my attention and holds it. In exercising my attention in this way I am reminded that the place and those with whom I am there (more-than-human included) deserve my attention, and it feels good to offer it. I am left with the feeling that this place deserves a proper treatment from me and there is a sense of rightness in that. Charles Brown and Ted Toadvine (2003) suggest that such forms of experience in the outdoors can be important: “our conviction that nature has value, that it deserves or demands a proper treatment from us, must have its roots in an experience of nature” (p. xi). And in this way such experiences and intimate interactions can involve a perception of connections and relationships that are seemingly already always there, but which do not always appear open or available. In this way the Yukon River journey provides for me a remembering of the possibilities of attending, of what I might offer to a place and what that place might be offering to me.

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Baristas in the Wild: Sense of Place and the Smell of Coffee on the Yukon

By Arjen Wals

Admittedly, I love and “need” coffee—anywhere between two to four cups a day. I am a coffee snob and am quite picky about beans, grind, pressure, type of filter and so on. When going on a camping trip this means careful planning as there are no baristas in the wilderness. On the Wild Pedagogies trip I was somewhat worried as I arrived from The Netherlands the night before we set off for the Yukon River with the whole group and had been unable to participate in the food planning and purchasing. I did not know many of the others and suspected that they would not be preoccupied with coffee.

Organizing food for a group of 19 that spends seven nights on the river is a daunting task (figure about 20 meals and assorted snacks, although we were served a great dinner one night at Ancient Voices). The group was divided in two subgroups for the preparation of breakfast and lunch (with your own group) and dinner (prepared for

the whole group on alternating days). Each subgroup had to plan its own meals that it would need to prepare and also buy all that was needed to be able to prepare them. It was interesting to discover, as the days went on, that the two groups had different philosophies about food on a trip like this: one group seemed to go for fresh and tasty and had a high regard for the culinary dimension of the trip, including fresh avocados and mangos. The other group went for nutritious and functional: gorp and oatmeal for breakfast—no fancy eggs in the morning, no frills for lunch either. This was not a Jamie Oliver canoe trip, but a Wild Pedagogy trip after all. Needless to say I was in the latter group (I think), although I did find a way to kind of hang in between groups and sometimes was given a slice of mango, avocado and even some eggs one morning. Fortunately, my concern for caffeine withdrawal headaches and a loss of sense of coffee was completely unfounded; within both subgroups were soul mates



with the same addiction. Every morning I woke up to the smell of coffee. There were at least four systems—straight up cowboy or bush coffee, French Press plungers, Moka pot high pressure steam espresso, and paper filter conventional drip—going simultaneously. Some groups had bought collective beans but there were also those who did not want to take any risk of having the “wrong” coffee and they brought stashes of their own special variety that they kindly shared (although as Dawson City came close and supplies were running low, for a brief moment there was a fear of running out that may have resulted in the group getting to Dawson City a day early). Within days, people—not all, but quite a few—were bonding around coffee and a coffee culture had been established.

The natural beauty of the Yukon River and the land of which it is part is omnipresent. Born in Amsterdam below sea level—although I was born at home in a flat on the third floor—and having lived in one of the most populated and cultivated countries in the world, my exposure to “the wild” was very limited while growing up. Sure my parents, both nature lovers and environmental educators, took me and my brother and sisters to patches of what we called “het bos” (the forest) and “de duinen” (the dunes) to go on “natuurwandelingen” (nature hikes). For us it was going into nature even though you would always hear or see human activity or occasionally step in dog shit. But still, it was different from our urban neighbourhoods with their green parks and playgrounds: here you could get lost, albeit for just for a moment, and the sounds and smells were different. To see a fox, squirrel or deer were absolute highlights: I imagine much is the same way for people living in Whitehorse who might commonly see a bear on the side of the road or encounter a moose or wolf. While being on the Yukon River and camping on its islands and banks, nature became overwhelming and demanded humility and respect, although I suspect for some group members with lots of outdoor adventure experiences this was hardly a wilderness experience with “so many” people around

and camping in some semi-cultivated campsites. It was, in a way, awkwardly fantastic.

The privilege of being part of such a special group of people coming from as far as Japan, Norway, The Netherlands and Australia, as well as all across Canada, was near embarrassing. Who am I that I can be here and comfortably paddle downstream on the Yukon to connect with people and place, wearing quality shoes and clothes, enjoying a good meal, listening to gripping stories of human and nonhuman suffering as told by First Nations peoples, and then drink barista-style coffee to top it off? I cannot help but have mixed feelings about a “wild” experience like this. I would not want to have missed this for the world. And I do hope that others get to experience this too. But I also know that it would be a “problem” if too many others would be able to do what we did. The coffee from Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, the fresh mangos and avocados we crave, The North Face jackets we wear, the guilt of just getting there—how does this dwell with the sense of place, connecting with the land and the nonhuman and more-than-human world? It puzzles me and I do not wish to diminish an experience like this, and indeed wish for everyone on Earth to have an experience like this—not as a bucket list item or a Facebook post—but as a deeply profound experience that invites interrogation of our everyday lives. At the same time, wild pedagogy is probably needed the most in the places where people are and where most of them cannot leave.

Arjen Wals is Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-ecological Sustainability working in The Netherlands (Wageningen University) and Sweden (University of Gothenburg). A central question in his work is how to create conditions that support (new) forms of learning that take full advantage of the diversity, creativity and resourcefulness that is all around us, but so far remain largely untapped in our search for a world more sustainable than the one currently in prospect.

Introduction to 野 (Wild) の教育 (Education) 論 (Theory)

By Yuko Oguri

Japanese poet Jin Makabe (1907–1984) wrote extensively, and his works have been collected into two series: “野 (wild) の教育 (education) 論 (theory)” and *Culture of the Wild*. Although Makabe did not set out to write about wild education, the concept of “wild” was important for him, and he gradually became awakened to education through his commitments with teachers and the educational sector. “Wild” or “野 (no)” in Japanese has mainly two meanings: One is wide natural plains, slope of the foot of the mountain, or field; the second is derived by putting “野 (no)” in the front of a word to give the meaning of wild nature, in a state of nature, rural or not officially. For example, wild horse is no-ma, wild dog is no-inu, and wildflower is no-bana. To share the idea of the word “野 (no)” as used by Makabe, he writes at age 69 in “Thirst for Wild” (1976):

I stand in the wild. Wild is a field, a spot for production and a sphere of life, and at the same time, the wild is against public, against regime, and against power authority. The word wild can also be found in the expression of “resign public post (下野),” “out of office/power (在野),” “release tiger in the field (虎を野に放つ),” and “able people left out of office (野に遺賢あり).” Wild must not be trod down. It is the space where soft and bulging soil, myriad of underground organisms living and working behind the scenes, and is the historical humane space tied in natural ecosystems.

Standing in the wild, I muttered. I am a sole farmer (百姓hyaku-sho). It was my consciousness that I own nothing but a slight piece of land and especially poor being with no knowledge or scholarship to possess. The poverty of no ownership meant hunger to meet unbounded desire. Give me the world. I wonder since when did I start to think this way.

Not only is it difficult to translate into English, it is deep and complicated for native Japanese. In the same text, he writes in detail about his travels around Japan and the world to search out the origin of the rice plant. He writes, “When I realized I was a sole farmer (百姓hyaku-sho), I came to consider that putting my hand in the soil is consistent with the attempt to grasp the world with the sense of touch through subjectifying widespread thought.” He concludes that he will confront a theory of wild with scholarship and research. He also says that a farmer uses their nails to work and therefore never allows them to grow out. On the contrary, development of machinery eliminates the need for nails. Machinery has high productivity and things can be made by anyone. However, things made by hands, individual fingers and nails, come from the uniqueness of each person and therefore are very human.

Through Makabe’s writings, we recognize his criticism toward the dominant ideology of development that separates humans and society from nature, and can understand he is offering a fundamentally alternative society. The phrase “野の教育論 (wild education theory)” is special in Japan and is not commonly used. However his work is again attracting scholars in the fields of adult and community education. I approach my own work from interests in environmental education and wild pedagogy.

Makabe’s background shaped why he reached the idea of 野の教育論 (wild education theory). He was the eldest son of a landed tenant farmer in Yamagata Prefecture in agricultural northern Honshu, finished higher primary school, and became a farmer at age 14. As a farmer and self-educated poet and writer, he lived through the reigns of three Emperors—years of drastic transformations in the socioeconomic structure of Japan, both

World Wars under the Meiji Constitution, and later under the democratic nation established under a new constitution.

The meaning of farmer (百姓hyaku-sho) is different than in English. Indeed, Makabe mentions repeatedly in his writing how he sees himself as a百姓 (hyaku-sho), a compound word of two Chinese characters: “百 (hundred)” and “姓 (surname).” The origin of this ancient word means ordinary people with many surnames. From ancient to early modern Japan, taxes were based upon paddy fields, and by the 16th century “百姓 (hyaku-sho)” came to be understood as farmer. Furthermore, after the Meiji restoration, 百姓 (hyaku-sho) became discriminatory: a country bumpkin. However, Makabe insists the original meaning of 百姓 (hyaku-sho) is a person who has a hundred surnames, hundred lives, hundred professions, hundred skills, and a person who can overcome bad conditions and produce creatively by his/her own hands and strength.

Makabe published literary magazines with friends, and in 1949 established a poet society and was named president. He expressed determination that poets must bear responsibility to bloom culture based on natural, cultural and spiritual features of a region. His commitment to education started in 1952 when elected as a board member for Yamagata City and chosen as a lecturer of the Yamagata teachers’ union. Around the same time, triggered by the nuclear fallout from a US hydrogen bomb test, the Yamagata Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs was established, and Makabe was appointed director. He also chaired the Institution of National Education established in 1957 by the Japan Teachers’ Union, and later the Yamagata Prefecture Institution of National Education. Subsequently, Makabe held prominent positions in grassroots movements and engaged deeply in research on educational theory and practice rooted in local settings. Here are a few words from Makabe’s “Wild Bird Can Sense the Storm:”

When considering about developing capability of children and for them to think for themselves and to grow up to be creative human beings, aren’t we teaching too much and being driven only to “memorize?” We are living in the material world, though fact is that they are all not real. Aren’t our mind to make by oneself is being lost?

The more the civilization develops, the more limbs of a child degenerate. This is a crisis of human being. When civilization develops and become abundance, we no longer need to make things ourselves. Man [sic] has to make with oneself. To make is to create. Without creation and production man [sic] will become weak. We lose the sense we had as a human being.

So I want children to develop their human sense to function vibrantly. They should climb the tree, jump into the pond, and get muddy, and grab dojo (loach) with bare hands. They need to gather strength though such wild behavior and gain competency to protect oneself from danger.

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Loose in the Country: Trust, Uncertainty and Questions as Answers

By Polly Knowlton Cockett

Before we ask questions we must have questions to ask, and before we have questions to ask we must feel an awakened interest or curiosity. Action and reaction go hand in hand; interest begets interest; knowledge breeds knowledge. Once started in pursuit of nature lore, we are pretty sure to keep on. When people ask me, "How shall we teach our children to love nature?" I reply: "Do not try to teach them at all. Just turn them loose in the country and trust to luck." It is time enough to answer children's questions when they are interested enough to ask them. Knowledge without love does not stick; but if love comes first, knowledge is pretty sure to follow (Burroughs, 1918, p. 187).

What wild thoughts took me to the Yukon in 2014, having just completed my PhD in Environmental Education (EE), about to turn 60, not knowing anyone else on the trip, never having been in any of Canada's territories, and with but ephemeral experience in canoeing? It was a Facebook post by Bob Jickling in an EE special interest group, calling for participants in the floating colloquium that captured my imagination. What indeed might wild pedagogies be, how might such ideas apply to my work in urban settings, what more might I learn in the North about complex processes interconnecting people and place, bringing us toward caring attentiveness to each other, ourselves and the web of existence of which we are a part? And so, trusting amidst the certain tensions of uncertainty, I turned myself loose in the country.

In my recent dissertation, while writing about processes involved in developing a connectedness to place, I encountered the full context of the near-century-old John Burroughs quote above. I feel it "in effect outlines an approach to developing a sense

of place. With entrusted emplacement, growing awareness and active participation effect attachment, authentic inquiry through shared conversation is attendant, and analogy thus breeds deeper understanding. By further analogy, these same processes can be used in approaching an understanding of sense of place *in situ*" (Knowlton Cockett, 2013, p. 34). Might such situated approaches also be a form of wild pedagogy, seeking and finding places of understanding, places of being?



Arriving: Always the first action is to walk, to bodily inscribe the lay of the land underfoot, to become aware, and here in Whitehorse to greet the storied river that would soon be sweeping me northward, as it has for First Nations, gold seekers, settlers, poets and adventurers before me. I headed straight for the famed and foaming, frothing and cresting eponymous white rapids like the manes of white horses in nearby Miles Canyon, or Kwalin, Southern Tutchone for "water running through canyon." Today tamed by the downstream hydroelectric dam, one must now conjure images of them shooting through the constricting and resilient ~8.4 million-year-old columnar basalts, wreaking havoc with steamboats and shipping laden with hopes and dreams. Here I wondered about notions of control—a central question of wild pedagogy, and analogies to what we oft times seek to control within education, conscripting energies with prescribed

outcomes. What should we control; what controls might we let go of to see what might become?

Putting In: Well below the famed marge of Lake Laberge, below Five Finger Rapids, the ashes of Sam McGee, bear sightings and outsized cinnamon buns, we put in near the abandoned community of Minto. While highway diverges, the river seeks—intertwining and braiding through a plethora of islands and islets, eventually coming upon the formidable basalt cliffs near the Pelly River confluence, juxtaposing eons of geologic turmoil with the humanly profound heritage of Fort Selkirk. Throughout our week on the river, we bodily immersed in the waters of the Yukon, muddied with glacial silt, contributed to by mighty rivers and trickling creeks. Most awe inspiring to me was the surging, roiling, boiling confluence with the White River, choked with volcanic ash eroding at its headwaters from a 30 metre-thick subglacial deposit of the aptly named White River Ash, the result of a tectonic cataclysm 1,200 years ago that sent cryptotephra sailing high on the winds as far away as Europe. Here now, hear now, the glassy pummeled pumice sings on our hulls and paddles, stings on our skin and scalp, excoriates our throats with morning coffee, fully awakening us to oneness with the river, with these people and in this place. And then, many days later, after purging our pores in the wood-fired sauna at Ancient Voices, and after interfacing and interfingering with the sparkling and clear running Klondike River, we emerged from the wild pedagogical waters, taking out at Dawson City.

Taking Out: In this canoeing context, through conversation and collaborating together, we formed community and celebrated our new understandings, evolving questions and deepening friendships. We actively approached our tasks and routines with structure and purpose, yet with openness, awareness, possibility and acceptance. Looking closely—with increasing resolution—at ideas as well as the details of terrain,

we came to larger perspectives and a re-visioning of the whole. Through tenacity, and over time, we met our tensions with trust and became transformed. Perhaps it is these processes and alliterative subprocesses of context, approach, resolve and transformation—the CARTs of cartography—that manifest the undercurrents of wild pedagogy. In coming together to celebrate our multiple voices of a shared experience in this special issue of *Pathways*, we have together created a socioecological cartography: a set of portraits, a mapping out of embodied, in situ wild pedagogies.

We seek elusive answers to the questions of this life...and we have found a joy being together. And in our search for peace, maybe we'll finally see: even to question, truly is an answer (Denham, 1980, verse 4).

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Polly Knowlton Cockett is interested in ecological literacy, sense of place studies, urban native biodiversity conservation, and socioecological cartography. Currently, she is Instructor in Teacher Education at the University of Calgary, and has recently incorporated a society, Grassroutes Ethnoecological Association, to see what she might get up to next.

Wild Pedagogies: A Preliminary Multifesto

By Chris Beeman

What is the wilding of pedagogies?

- a wilding of the place of learning
- a wilding of the subject and content of learning
- a wilding of the practice of teaching
- a wilding of the practice of learning
- a wilding of the reflection on teaching and learning
- a wilding of the identities of teacher
 - what it is to be a teacher?
 - and who is the authority here, anyway? -
 - and does a teacher's ability increase with better answers or better questions?
 - and who is teacher, person or place?
- a wilding of the identities of learner
 - what it is to be a learner?
 - and what is it to learn? -
 - and if teaching is different from conveying information
 - how would 'teacher' and 'learner' collapse?
 - and if 'teacher' were not person but place
 - how would being collapse?

- a wilding of what constitutes knowing
- a wilding of what constitutes understanding
- a wilding of what constitutes being

Where is the wilding of pedagogies?

- outside of a classroom
- outdoors in the city
- outdoors in the country
- inside of outside
- in and by oceans and waters
- in 'the land of birds and trees'
- outside of a 'school'
- in communities of people and other beings
- in journey-learning
- in rites of passage
- in ceremony
- in places less controlled by *homo mobilis*
- in right hemispheric brain-being

How is the wilding of pedagogies?

- through a beyond-species multi-vocality
- a multiplicity of ontologies
- by relying on the more-than-human world as co-teacher





through considering transformation
 undermining of the primacy of
conveying information
 through losing on-ness and off-ness
 rightness and wrongness
 it-ness and us-ness;
 them-ness and our-
 ness

it varies with the weather
 —varies with the terrain—

it engages not conquers
 listens not tells
 attends not wills
 be's not thinks
 learns through love not competition
 is Indigenous or Autochthonous
 in the enacting of another ontos

Why is the wilding of pedagogies?
 because the being-in-and-of-itself of the
 more-than-human world matters
 with or without the knowledge and
 interest of humans
 because it's fun
 because it busts out of the usual
 constrainers of learning and being
 because it challenges the constructs of
 conventional education
 permitting ontological difference to
 bloom

because the voice of the more-than-
 human
 is not a foreign language
 but a language of being
 available to (if not
 spoken by) everyone

because knowing where the teacher is
 going
 is not as important as
 listening to what the place is saying

Who is the wilding of pedagogies?
 all of us who see a different possibility of
 being human
 —one that is inherently connected to the
 natural world—
 all of us who understand that being is at
 the heart of learning
 all of us who understand that the natural
 world
 in and of itself
 matters
 We are the wildlings.

*Chris Beeman teaches in the Faculty of
 Education at Brandon University. His
 research occurs in and around wilder places,
 often with the involvement—and occasional
 confirmation—of Indigenous elders.*

Let Your Best Learning Be Wild

By Remy Rodden

Let your best learning be wild
Let your finest thinking be free
May your connections with the land and
people be
As wide as they are deep
May your spirit be filled with song
Your adventures go ever on
May your mantra be: "curiosity"
Let your best learning be wild

You may be feeling boxed in, by a world of
conformity
Your learning may be stifled by someone
else's pedagogy
You may be yearning for more, a
whispered calling you try to ignore
Get outside, break out of the maze, and let
your Self be free

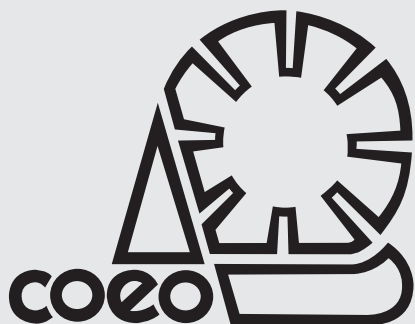
Maybe you're sitting too much, your body
wants to move
In sync with the rhythm of nature where

there's nothing you have to prove
Leave the desk and screen behind, start to
calm that controlling mind
Dance with the wind and the water and
trees, and get back in a natural groove

You may be tired of all of the talk, of a
strange vocabulary
Getting lost in the concepts of some new
epistemology
The more-than-human is happy to share,
you won't find any judgment there
In the quiet of wilderness self-willed land,
you may find who you're meant to be

*Remy Rodden is a singing-songwriting
environmental educator from Whitehorse,
Yukon. To hear this song, please visit [www.
remyrodden.com/wildpedagogies](http://www.remyrodden.com/wildpedagogies). His current
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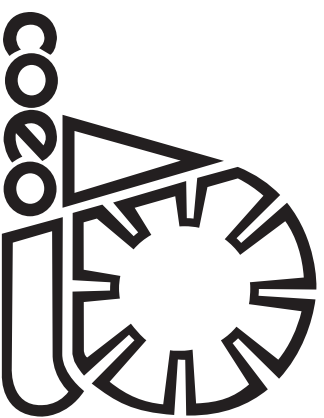
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