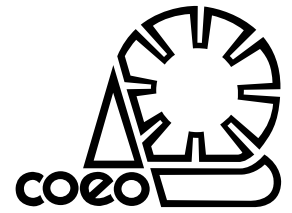


# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF  
Spring 2019, 31(3)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



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# Pathways

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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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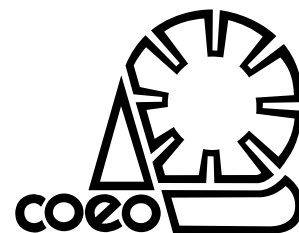
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THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION  
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Over the past ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of outdoor-based early learning programs operating within Canada. So much so, that today most of us are likely to have an educator, group of educators or organization within our local community that is offering an outdoor school, forest kindergarten, nature mentorship or similar learning experience for young children. These programs exist in a variety of forms, from provincially licensed child care centres with a focus on outdoor play to immersive nature-based outdoor learning sites, which are often situated in nearby greenspaces such as parks and conservation lands. In addition to these preschool programs, many kindergarten and primary division public school early childhood educators and teachers have been using the forested and unmowed spaces within their schoolyards and local communities, making opportunities for outdoor learning, physical activity and exploration. The emergence and evolution of such programs and approaches has led to the creation of practitioner workshops, professional development conferences and comprehensive certifications for educators, as well as the production of numerous resources and publications. There is also a growing body of related research, which focuses on pedagogy, learning environment, policy, play, and risk. Within this latest issue of *Pathways*, we are pleased to present some of this work, and hope that it not only informs, but furthers discussion and sparks the imaginations of all outdoor educators who work with young children.

Our first feature article, entitled *The Roots of Friluftsliv in a Pedagogical Context*, is authored by Jørgen E. Nerland and Anita

Nygård. These authors share the results of a small study they conducted that examined kindergarten student participation in a variety of subsistence activities (gathering of wild edibles, fishing, hunting), and the resulting impact it had on their familiarity with and knowledge related to nature and the outdoors. Next, we hear from Enid Elliot and Vicki Finucane-Bell, who kindly invite readers to join in on their conversation as they reflect upon and discuss the pedagogy of being outside with children. Vicki and Enid share stories of their experiences and raise several thought-provoking questions for readers to consider and discuss. Our final feature examines loose parts play and its impact on physical literacy in early years settings. Nila Joshi and her colleagues introduce the Physical Literacy in Early Years (PLEY) project, a study that facilitated unstructured, active and risky outdoor play through the integration of loose parts into the outdoor spaces of licensed child care centres within Nova Scotia. The authors relay the details of this project and share some of their general findings, as well as lessons learned and next steps.

This issue of *Pathways* also includes two contributions to our Explorations column from recent graduates, Katherine Hill (with Tom Potter) and Megan E. Donaldson, as well as the second installment in Laura Molyneaux's Play and Praxis series. Kimberly Squires shares a book review, while Naomi McIlwraith explains How to Make Awesome Bannock!

Kyle Clarke  
Editor

**Sketch Pad** – The art for this issue of *Pathways* was generously contributed by Marlisha Lewis (@marlishalew). Marlisha has a passion for collecting, photographing, painting and printmaking. Her interest in memory, past-story, details in nature, light and focus are some of the inspirational themes that reappear throughout her creative process. Six years ago, Marlisha followed a dream to open a community art space that was accessible to all and began co-developing Art in House, which opened in 2014. Art in House (@artinhouse, artinhouse.org) is a gallery and studio in the heart of Barrie on Lakeshore Mews. There, Marlisha curates local artists and teaches classes for children and adults. Recently, Marlisha has been creating a series of mushroom watercolours stemming from her love for the often overlooked details in nature.

The season of renewal has arrived. A walk in the woods at this time of year is a wonderful reminder of nature's tenacity and courage to begin again. Will you take some time this season to stop and observe nature's changes? Let's take a deep breath, let go of the heavy feeling of winter and, with purpose, boldly enter spring.

In the theme of renewal, it's time again to revise the organization's constitution. Watch for an updated version of the COEO constitution that will be released in advance of the 2019 fall conference. In terms of new beginnings, a successful grant application has provided COEO with funding from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) to offer a professional development opportunity for Secondary teachers involved with outdoor education. This new event, aptly named the Spring FREEver Gathering, will take place at the Tiffin Centre for Conservation on Saturday, May 4th. Also on that weekend, the 4th annual Ontario Wilderness Leadership Symposium (OWLS) will take place at the Norval Outdoor School. OWLS was created to serve the specific needs of developing professionals and provides an opportunity for wilderness leaders to connect, share ideas, and learn from established professionals in the field. These examples, like other COEO opportunities for review, reconnection and support, appropriately demonstrate the organization's strength when it comes to bringing like-minded people together.

At recent events it seems a theme of developing a collective voice for educators has emerged. On March 15, 2019, the Minister of Education Lisa Thompson announced the Ford government's plan to cut millions of dollars from public education. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, shortly after the announcement, thousands responded and attended the Rally for Education held at Queen's Park in Toronto. This event was jointly organized by five unions that represent public school employees to show support for publicly-funded education. A joint statement was also released outlining the principles that reflect the shared values

of the organizations and underscored their commitment to working together for the common good.

No matter what organization or region you represent, now is the time for outdoor educators to come together and support one another. Although we may be a small group of educators spread widely across the province, we have a duty to raise awareness about the comprehensive benefits of time spent outdoors. We must ensure that others appreciate the positive impact of outdoor-based programs and understand that these programs are undeniably important for the future of education, society, and the planet.



Rag-veil Amanita

The time has come for outdoor educators to stand united and make our voices heard. This spring I encourage you to communicate emphatically about the importance of outdoor education. Participate in local events and face-to-face conversations. Share your thoughts with local politicians, social media and far-reaching publications. Ask for support. Connect. Collaborate. I intend to prioritize these actions throughout my travels in the spring and summer months. I hope you will as well.

Wishing you a rejuvenating spring season. Take courage wherever you may roam.

---

Liz Kirk  
COEO President

## The Roots of Friluftsliv in a Pedagogical Context

By Jørgen E. Nerland and Anita Nygård

### The Children are the Future

“Our children are the future.” It’s a statement probably most of us have heard in various settings at one time or another. Also so, when questions related to environmental issues and sustainability are discussed within the framework of pedagogical friluftsliv here in Norway. There is indeed a significant emphasis on the development of environmental awareness when teaching friluftsliv in the Norwegian educational system (Ministry of the Environment, 2001). This is true at all levels of education, from pre-school friluftsliv practiced in kindergartens, all the way to the academic friluftsliv found at university levels. Our national curriculum even states specific learning outcomes related to friluftsliv for the various levels in question (Horgen, 2016).

So far so good, on paper at least. Nevertheless, we would still like to raise some thoughts of concern. Few would argue against available information showing us that global environmental problems seem to have an increasing effect on civilization (IPCC, 2014), and that these issues need to be handled urgently at all levels in

our society. So initially, what reasons for optimism can we realistically have when observing the current generation of children or adolescents and their relationship with nature? Secondly, what can we as educators actually do about this within the context of pedagogical friluftsliv?

### Screen Time over Time in Nature

Both from theoretical and philosophical perspectives one can say that the foundation for working with environmental issues in pedagogical friluftsliv is extremely good. The key being, of course, spending time in nature, leading to nature experiences, familiarization and fondness. A commonly used pedagogical approach is related to use of variations of the environmental staircase progression model (Dahle, 1990; Braute & Bang, 1994; Ministry of the Environment, 2001; Heggen 2015). Variations of this model are mainly used in the Scandinavian countries it seems, but similarities can be found, for instance, in the works of Blanchet-Cohen (2008) and in Green, Kalvaitis and Worster (2015). In the simpler versions, the model describes the progression of steps from being in nature, via knowledge and understanding, onto

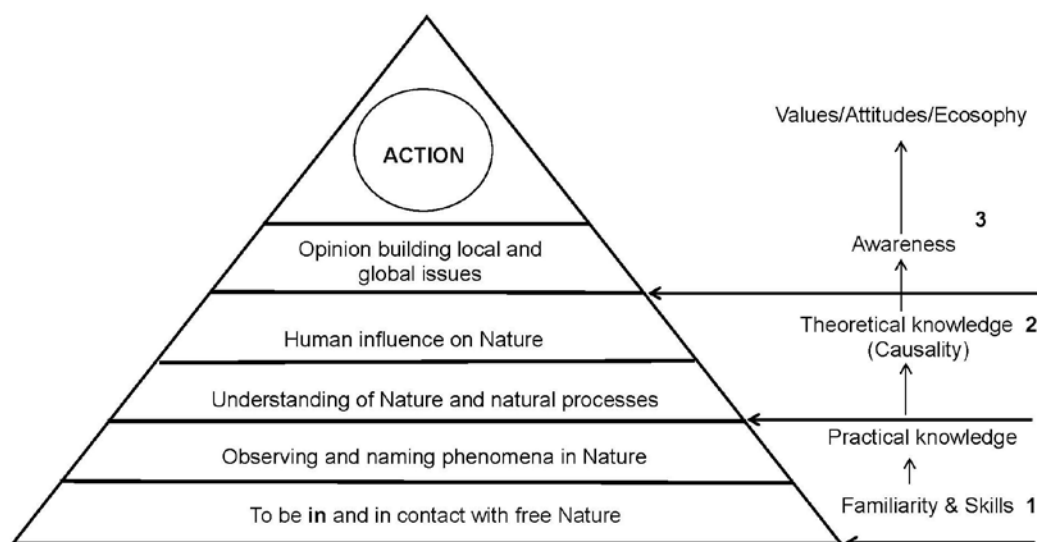


Figure 1: Advanced Environmental Staircase (Nerland, 2002).

environmentally friendly actions. The more complex versions also include the philosophical depth of deep ecology (Næss, 1989).

This advanced version of the model operates with three main levels. The foundation relies heavily on children being able to play and explore in direct contact with nature, gaining knowledge, experience and skills. These then form a basis for understanding how nature actually works and how we as human beings are a part of nature and affect it with our actions. In turn, this will expectantly lead to awareness of environmental issues and in the end produce attitudes and behavior that can be regarded as environmentally friendly. This last level is also linked to deep ecology and the development of a life philosophy such as Arne Næss' Ecosophy T, where self-realization, as the most elevated level, can only be achieved when you identify yourself with all things living (Næss, 1989). Another ecosophical direction with merit worth mentioning when dealing with the perspective of environmental education in friluftsliv is the one created by Setreng. His views on children and the importance of their outdoor activity, both play and meaningful work, in the complexity of nature truly have a pedagogical potential worth taking advantage of (Sætereng, 1994).

No matter how good our pedagogical approaches might be, or the depth of our philosophical foundation, it all boils down to the essentials of children having to enjoy their interactions in and with nature. And herein lies probably our greatest challenge as teachers. How to compete with the complicated but alluring technological development in modern media?

Even here in Norway, with our relatively easily accessible and abundance of nature, the trends among children and adolescents indicate a behavior creating distance to nature. Giddens' (1996) theory of modernity can perhaps be used as a basis for understanding this development in our society, but to us, some of the numbers and what they imply are quite concerning.

According to Statistics Norway (2012) people between the age of 9 – 19 spend an average of 15 hours a day at home. A lot of this time facing some kind of screen. With the technological development of more advanced smartphones the hours spent on internet outside of school have increased over 100%, from 45 minutes in 2006 to 116 minutes in 2016 for the age group 9 – 15 years (Norwegian Media Authority, 2016). Among 10 year-olds, only 1% of the boys and 2% of the girls report that they do not have access to any kind of mobile phone (Norwegian Media Authority, 2018).

Another consequence of the advances in technology is the change in culture related to how children and adolescents carry out their social interaction. Among girls coming from lower socioeconomic layers of the population, about 50% report that their main activity most evenings is related to various forms of social media on the internet (Bakken, Frøyland & Sletten, 2016). Boys spend less time on social media than girls do, but more time playing digital games (Norwegian Media Authority, 2016).

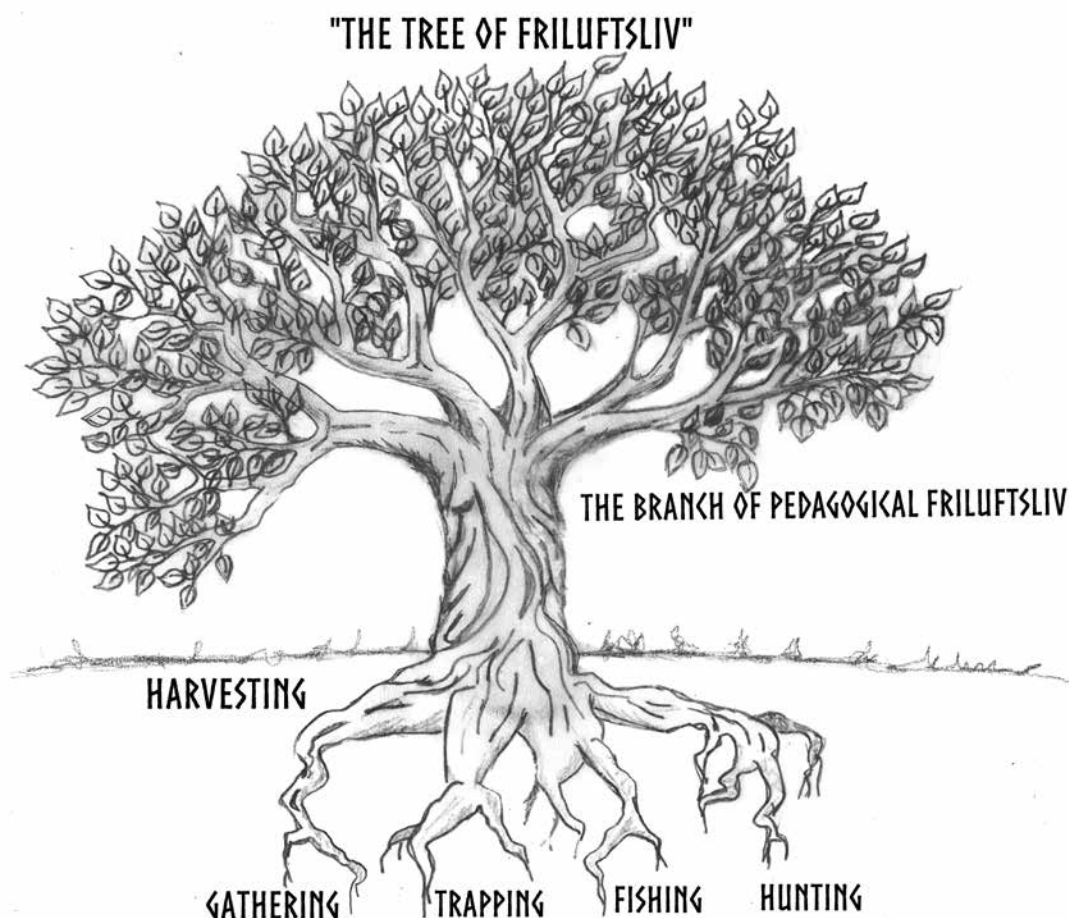
A cautious estimate based on the 2016 and 2018 statistics from the Norwegian Media Authority reveals that average time spent in front of some kind of screen for the age group 9 -16 years old is as high as four hours each day. The tendency based on the development in the different age groups indicate that this number is rising. In comparison, the trend seems to be negative when it comes to free unorganized play in natural surroundings (Mjaavatn & Fjørtoft, 2008; Breivik, 2001, 2009). In addition, most physical activities among children and adolescents are organized by adults and often take place indoors (Samdal et al., 2009; Hammer, 2017). This leads to less time spent in contact with nature. An interesting observation related to time use surveys about children and adolescents' friluftsliv is that questions often are asked with a 12-month time period in mind (Statistics Norway, 2013). Not per day as in the media surveys. In an ideal world, one might like to see this reversed.

### Engaging with the Roots of Friluftsliv

We face a real pedagogical challenge when it comes to remedying the development of less interaction in and with nature in our population. How can we as teachers engage children and adolescents in outdoor activity that will lead to increased knowledge and a change in behavior and attitudes? How can we tear them away from their little screens? One can indeed say extreme measures are necessary to achieve this. In our attempt to find an answer, we consequently looked to the roots of friluftsliv. The rural form of friluftsliv, which has the longest traditions, can be said to date back to the subsistence living culture when people were living off the land. Even when the farming culture took over, subsistence activities provided an essential addition to the farming households in Norway long into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It

might be difficult to experience more excitement and to come closer to nature and its' importance then when you gather its' abundance of growths, fish in the happy streams, trap the warm pelts you need for the winter and hunt the delicious meat you need to eat.

However, serious considerations about using these kinds of activities in a pedagogical context with children have to be made. With the level of nature estrangement that seems to be developing, one has to consider relevant factors among the children and not the least get parental consent. Another challenge might actually be the competence of the teachers involved. Do they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out these kinds of activities in a pedagogical setting? In



"The Tree of Friluftsliv" (drawing by T. Verdal and S. O. Nygård, 2018).



Norway, for example, it is necessary to have a 30 hours certification course to hunt, and even qualify through a practical rifle skills test every year if you want to hunt large game. Once the practicalities are squared away, then there are the ethical questions. Several of the subsistence activities involve taking a life. Indeed, this serious matter needs to be discussed thoroughly among colleagues before heading down this path. The debate over whether these kinds of activities are appropriate in a pedagogical context can definitely go both ways. But remember, most of us do not have to go back more than four or five generations to find ancestors who engaged in these kinds of activities as a part of everyday life. Moreover, the transferal of related skills from parents or grandparents to the children were actually necessary in order for the children to contribute to the household. The positive qualities in subsistence activities get even clearer when looking at them from an ecosophical point of view. Setrengs' (Setreng, 1999; Sætereng, 1994; Kvaløy 1979) concepts of the Life Necessities Society, Meaningful Work and Complexity vs. Complication are perhaps linked to his ideal about small farming communities, but are equally prominent seen in the context of subsistence living activities. It could be that these kinds of activities might have a potential to offer some valuable learning outcomes and change things in a positive direction. A direction away from the screen and into nature.

### On the Hunt

Two kindergartens in rural parts of western Norway were contacted in an attempt to investigate the pedagogical potential in these kinds of activities and to see if the concept would be worth further research in the future. A small study was created with a quasi-experimental design based on which of the kindergartens would be easier to carry out our experimental activities. In the kindergarten that was to be exposed to the experiment, we ended up with a group of 12 children, compared to 13 children in the reference group. Giving us a total of 25 children (N=25). All of them were in

the age group four and five years old and the number of boys and girls was evenly distributed between the groups.

A small questionnaire was constructed for the children in order to figure out whether the little experiment would have an effect or not. The decision was made to focus our attention towards the knowledge dimension in order to get concrete, measurable indicators as a basis for evaluating the project. The questionnaire consists of a few easy formulated questions with pictures where needed. These were asked verbally and shown to the children while the researcher wrote down the individual answers in a printed copy. The questions were divided in to three different categories: Fishing, Hunting and Knowledge about Nature, which allowed us to be able to search for nuances in the results.

In the pre-test enquiry conducted before the experiment period started, the results between the two kindergarten groups showed no significant differences when using an independent t-test. In the category Fishing, each child could score a maximum of 5 points. The experiment group scored in average 0.25 point and the reference group scored 1.5 points in this category. For Hunting the results show 2.1 versus 1.8 points in favour of the experimental group. The maximum achievable score here was 8 points. The last category we decided to focus on, and perhaps the most interesting, was Knowledge about Nature. A few more questions were asked in this category and the highest score possible was therefore 21 points. The results from the pre-test showed an average of 6.6 points among the experimental group and 7.2 points for the reference group in this category.

The experimental period consisted of business as usual for the reference kindergarten following their half-year plan for pedagogical content based on the specifications found in the National kindergarten curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research 2017). In the case of the experimental kindergarten, the three weeks of the experimental period involved

pedagogical activities a bit out of the ordinary. Each week focused on one of the main categories of subsistence living. Since logistical problems only allowed three weeks to carry out the experiment, it was decided to forego activities related to trapping – mainly because the experiment took place during the fall and trapping for fur is best during the winter months.

In the first week, pedagogical activities were related to gathering and development of general knowledge about nature. The children went on a trip into the forest and found, among other things, hazelnuts and rowanberries. These and the experiences related to this trip were then used in various pedagogical activities the rest of the week. One of the more popular doings seemed to be using the nuts and mixing them with chocolate to make homemade “Nutella” for lunch. Go figure! The making of rowan jelly was also popular, but seemed to be more of an acquired taste.

Week two revolved around a freshwater fishing trip. Both fishing rods and nets were used and gave a decent catch of freshwater trout. Those of the children that were comfortable with handling a knife got a chance to learn how to gut a fish. Anatomy and physiology of the trout raised a lot of curiosity. How is it possible that the fish can breathe under water? Try to explain this to four and five year-olds in a way that they can understand it. Strangely, even the children that normally did not like to eat fish seemed to enjoy the fish they had caught and roasted on the fire themselves.

The last week was supposed to be based on a deer hunt, but an opportunity arose giving an opening to stalk grouse instead. The choice was easy since this option would lead to more activity for the children than hunting deer from a blind. Up on the heights, the children followed the stalking hunter through the moorlands with great suspense at a safe distance. Even though they walked quite a bit they did not seem to tire. Their resilience paid off in the form of three beautiful birds. Two grouse and one male blackcock. The children were utterly amazed

by the patterns and colors of the feathers, which later got used for arts and crafts activities. The feathers from the blackcock were especially scrutinized vigorously. At a distance, this bird looked black, but while twisting a feather in the sunlight, it seemed to change to many different colors; very intriguing for the children and it produced a number of questions that made us venture into the world of physics. All the birds were consequently consumed for lunch with great pleasure, but there definitely were more reflection and talk among the children related to ethics and life and death questions here than compared to the fishing activity.

A few days after the last pedagogical activity, the questionnaire and pictures were once again presented to the children in both kindergartens. Seeing firsthand how enthusiastic they had been in the activities, hopes were high that this would have an effect on the results. Post-test results for the Fishing category show quite an improvement for the experimental group with an average of 2.7\*\* points out of a possible 5. The reference group scored pretty much the same as before, averaging on 1.6 points. In the Hunting category, we can see a similar improvement with a new average score of 6.0\*\*\* points out of a maximum of 8. The score for the reference group averaged at 1.4 points. When it came to the Knowledge about Nature category, we found that the reference group, on average, scored 7.8 out of a possible 21 in this post-test. In comparison, the improvement in the experimental group left them with an average as high as 16.2\*\*\*. All of the results for the experimental group have improved, and are now according to the t-test, significantly higher than the statistical means in the reference group.

### Contemplating the Catch

Even though finding statistically significant differences is exciting, our sample is of course too small to generalize anything outside of the context of these two groups. However, generalization to a larger population was never our intent. We simply wanted to investigate whether pedagogical friluftsliv activities originating from “the

roots” could have something to offer seen from an educational standpoint, and perhaps be worth exploring further.

The fact that we found such positive differences in advantage of the experimental group indicates to us that there might just be something here. According to the advanced environmental staircase model, increased knowledge could mean that the children in the experimental group are well on their way to progressing upwards. Experiences related to step one and two are good building blocks, creating familiarity and hopefully, a growing love for nature. Some of the children may even be headed towards step three and a budding understanding of some natural processes like life and death, where our food comes from and perhaps even a contextual dependent appreciation of the importance of nature.

Expectations related to the children’s understanding of Setreng’s ecosophical ideas might have been a bit of a stretch, albeit they did get experience with some of the concepts. The complexity embedded with harvesting from different environments in nature is immense. Know-how related to these kinds of activities can hardly be gained through theoretical lessons but has to be acquired by practicing. The participating children will likely be internalizing the skills they have practiced during these activities, giving them a basis for further development. Furthermore, the personal development that one has to assume took place and the fact that these activities also led to concrete results in the form of food on the table for anyone involved leads us to believe that this could be characterized as meaningful work. At least, we think Setreng would have appreciated that the children now know that our food does not originate from the supermarket.

Whether this kind of interaction with nature could actually cause less time spent in front of some kind of screen is uncertain. Only the future will tell when we continue to research possible benefits of having children engaging with the roots of friluftsliv. However, why don’t those of you who have the opportunity

give it a try? Spending time in nature with children and adolescents in a pedagogical context like this is always time well spent in our opinion.

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## An Invitation to Join Our Discussion

*By Enid Elliot and Vicki Finucane-Bell*

In British Columbia over the past several years, there has been a growth of Forest Schools, Nature Kindergartens and just plain going outside with young children. These programs are based in a number of school districts and early childhood programs.

Both of us have been involved in early childhood education programs, situated in Coast Salish territory on southern Vancouver Island, that began seven to eight years ago. Over the past few years, we have engaged in a dialogue about the pedagogy of being outside with children and would like to share with you a small piece of those discussions of children's and our own learning, as well as our relationships with the living, breathing world. We would like to invite you into this discussion.

The following story, written and illustrated by Vicki, takes place at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, located on W'SANEC First Nations territory. Every morning, the Nature Sanctuary runs a preschool program for three and four-year-old children with Vicki as the educator; each group has sixteen children.

Open to the teachings the local landscape offers, Vicki trusts the children to ask questions, think about what they observe and become responsible learners. Vicki's stories prompted Enid to question, reflect and think more deeply about what we do as educators. We both hope that children will experience their place and begin relationships with the life and materials found in the unpaved, un-sidewalked, un-digitized spaces of their communities.

Vicki shared a story with Enid of what she experiences with the children and then, thinking together, we found another story emerges which suggests countless other possibilities. Anna Tsing (2015, p. 37) suggests that listening and telling "a rush of stories is a method... to learn anything we must revitalize arts of noticing and

include ethnography and natural history. But we have a problem with scale. A rush of stories cannot be neatly summed up". In any setting, there are multiple stories to be told; "a rush of stories". Stories come in many forms; maps, bird songs, owl pellets, scientific naming, oral, written, visual. We can learn to listen closely to the different tales told and hear the echoes of our own stories.

Vicki has done the drawings and told the story of the children, as well as collected snippets of children's words. Her drawings and written words are reminiscent of nature journals, and that was the image she had in her head; we can all create journals to remember stories and capture ideas and questions.

The narratives that follow may enrich our pedagogical understanding, discussions and approaches. They ask us to consider a number of questions: can we step aside from our roles as educators knowing that children are absorbing rich and textured teachings from the trees, clouds and rocks? Can we learn to listen to the water and the land? Moving through the seasons, what can we learn about life and our rhythms and how we connect to all that surrounds us?

Vicki's story and Enid's discussion offers an invitation into thinking, questioning and wondering. We don't believe in 'right' answers to these kinds of questions, but there may be questions that lead to reflections and even more questions. What would you add to the dialogue or discussion? Let us know!

### **Enid's Reflection on the Beginning of the Year**

Heading out to explore the land around Swan Lake at the beginning of the year, the children must slowly discover and connect to the place where they find themselves. They will learn to see the details of the

Vicki's Swan Lake Story

We are new to the forest but already in this past month we have noticed plenty of change. The leaves are turning from green to red, yellow and brown and are falling from the trees. The ground is damp and the puddles are inviting. Alongside the trail we notice spider's webs glistening with morning dew and villages of mushrooms popping up before our eyes.



While gathering stock for mud soup this morning we noticed a giant mushroom lying on a bed of leaves.

Knowing not to touch it but fascinated by its size we crouched down close and peered under, over and around it. Out from in among the gills slithered a great big, slimy slug. It steadily glided over the cap, chomping its way through the flesh and inside the mushroom.

We gazed in awe. Could it be true?

Does a slug call a mushroom a grocery store and a home?

That information took some digesting! A home and a way of being so different from our own. Back on the trail with this new found knowledge little feet tip-toed to avoid the villages, while little fingers slowed to lend a helping hand.



land, the small creatures, taste the air and feel the wind. Being new to the concept of *preschool* and to the place, Swan Lake, the beginning can be overwhelming for there is so much to see and think about as they walk the trails, turn over stones and logs and cross bridges. The first days are exciting, and it takes time to see the anthills or bird's nest or the owl watching from above. Over days and weeks, they begin to notice the small variations within a tree or bush; they observe the different rhythms of the ant colony. They begin to see the slugs and early mushrooms. As the children observe these details and connect their discoveries to their own personal lives, they begin to discover the marvels that surround them.

What are our early memories of feeling the presence of the trees or listening for the birds? It takes time to see, feel and hear. The children saw the slug and the mushroom and began to make connections. That memory will be different for each of them, but it can be the beginning of connecting to the web in which we are all entangled. Understanding the relationship of the slug to the mushroom and perhaps noting unconsciously that dampness brings mushrooms, the children begin to sense and know the rhythm of life that surrounds them.

Place, children and educator are all interconnected and impact each other in a spiral. Place offers invitations and teachings to children and educator; the educator brings her story and knowledge into the interactions and the children impact each other, the educator and the place. It is a tangle of relationships. Parker Palmer (1993) says, "to know something is to have a living relationship with it— influencing and being influenced by the object known" (p. xv).

As children connect the slug to their own lives and experiences, they learn more about the place in which they live and they learn by being immersed in the experience. Plumwood (2002) suggests that we become *place sensitive* when we understand place

emotionally and critically. One aspect is to "explore the more-than-human as a source of wonder and wisdom in a revelatory framework of mutual discovery and disclosure" (p. 233). Other aspects to learning about Swan Lake are to uncover the histories of that place, listen to the stories it holds from ancient times, and to appreciate the layers of life found there.

What questions might you ask of your place? What narratives might you listen for? What are the stories held by the land of development, of ownership, of ancient wisdom? What stories might the slugs tell? Or the mushrooms or the water?

Learning to critically understand and appreciate the histories, memories, and experiences embedded in a place takes time, and perhaps seeing and connecting with the local life is a first step to becoming aware of and engaged with place.

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## PLEYing Outside the Box: Using Loose Parts to Increase Physical Literacy in the Early Years

*By Nila Joshi, Karina Branje, Jane Cawley, Sara Kirk, Rebecca Spencer and Michelle Stone*

What are loose parts and how can they impact children's health? Loose parts are open-ended, natural or synthetic materials that can be moved, manipulated, stacked, carried, and/or combined in various ways (Nicholson, 1971). Loose parts materials, like those shown in Figure 1, can vary from recycled tires and buckets, to twigs and pinecones, to fabric or planks of wood. Any object without a predetermined purpose that is age appropriate can be a loose part (Houser et al., 2016).



**Figure 1. Example of loose parts play kit developed by the PLEY project.**

Loose parts are about real-world learning for children. By engaging with loose parts, many aspects of children's health and development are enhanced (Maxwell et al., 2008). Research has shown an increase in children's problem-solving skills (Neill, 2013), participation, socializing and creative thinking; loose parts play has also been shown to promote situations that foster teamwork (Bundy et al., 2017). They also encourage children to act in a more physical manner (Drew et al., 2015) through the pushing, pulling, lifting and rolling of loose parts. This encourages the development of children's fine and gross motor skills, balance, and coordination. Loose parts play creates an opportunity to develop physical competence, confidence, motivation, and

the knowledge to participate in physical activity, collectively known as physical literacy (Tremblay et al., 2018). Loose parts play also introduces an element of risk taking in play, which is important for developing confidence and resilience, encouraging learning, and improving mental and physical health (Brussoni et al., 2015). Through this type of play, children are given the opportunity to play independently and discover, master and own their environments.

### Physical Literacy in the Early Years (PLEY) Project

In 2015, the Lawson Foundation introduced a funding call through their Outdoor Play Strategy identifying projects that inform communities on how to improve opportunities for unstructured outdoor play. The Physical Literacy in Early Years (PLEY) project was one of the successful few. It aims to facilitate unstructured, active and risky outdoor play among Nova Scotian preschoolers (age 3-5) through the integration of loose parts into the outdoor spaces of 19 regionally-dispersed (urban, suburban, and rural), licensed, child care centres. The primary aim was to evaluate the efficacy of our loose parts intervention in enhancing children's physical literacy.

As the PLEY project unfolded, we were able to document how the introduction of loose parts, combined with focused educator mentoring, changed the way children played, as well as how the educators understood and supported that play. This was done at intervention sites through focus groups with educators, photovoice documentation of loose parts play, parent interviews, collection of environmental data, and assessment of children's physical activity and fundamental movement skills.



Many lessons have been learned, informing our next steps. One gap, and identified need, is the trained educators' lack of familiarity with the concept of physical literacy and concomitantly, its connection to healthy outcomes for children. Through informal discussions, focus groups with early childhood educators, and the delivery of a workshop at the Provincial Early Childhood Education conference last year, we gained valuable insight from parents, educators and other early years stakeholders. We discovered that there is insufficient focus on physical literacy and its role in children's healthy development in many early years settings. Furthermore, there is a need for greater support of children's risk-taking during play (while avoiding injury). Another identified need is to support communication between educators and parents on the value of loose parts play for enhancing children's outdoor play experiences and overall development. There are huge gaps in early learning service delivery that our work has been progressively filling. Admittedly and excitingly, there is still considerable work to be done.



**Figure 2. Example of children engaging with loose parts materials.**

Our overall mission is to build on the Lawson Foundation's investment in our innovative loose parts intervention work within Nova Scotia child care centres and expand this work into additional early years settings (home, school, and wider community). We look forward to taking the lessons learned into the next stage by scaling up our efforts and enhancing the sustainability of our work. This project

has been an impactful experience for parents, educators, and the research team alike. As the project continues, we hope to collaborate with more community members to help raise awareness of loose parts play and its role in increasing physical literacy.

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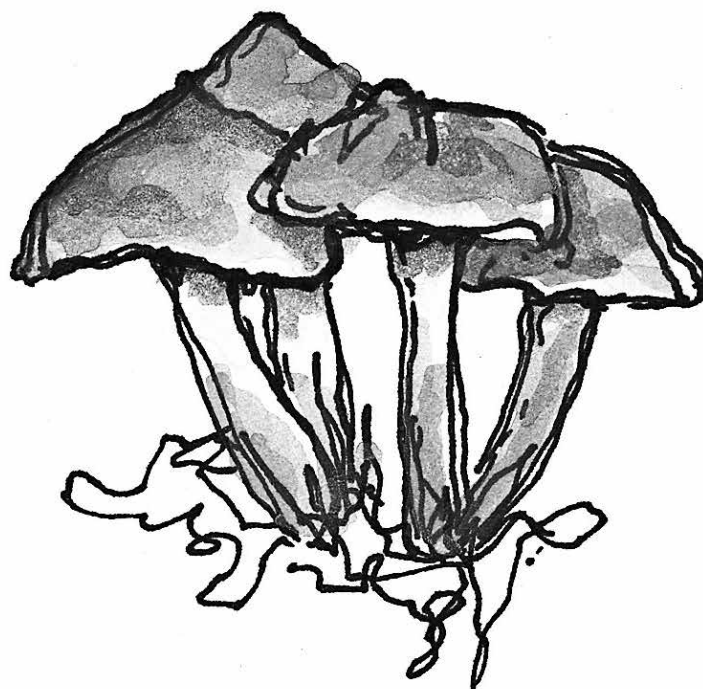
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## Social Media and its Influence on Participation in Outdoor Recreation and Travel

By Katherine Hill and Tom Potter

### Introduction

Access to information about outdoor recreation, education and tourism opportunities has substantially increased with the development of social media and other online resources. It has allowed people who may not consider themselves to be the 'outdoorsy type' to join in on outdoor activities. Whether it's just to be able to say "been there, done that, took the picture", or to get out of their comfort zone participating in a new activity, people are connecting to the natural world. The rise of viral videos and listicles from organizations such as BuzzFeed detailing "places you won't believe exist", such as the Subway in Zion National Park and the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, also attracts people to visit new locations. These places are posted about frequently across social media platforms and their actual accessibility ranges from easily accessed from a parking lot to requiring a strenuous hike to reach the destination.

Inspired by the first author's experiences, this study sought to determine whether people's motivation to participate in an outdoor activity that is new to them or to travel to a novel destination is affected by their perception of accuracy in social media-based posts and the trust they have in the content creators. The study also investigates the effect of visual media versus text-based media on the intentions of the viewer to participate or visit a destination.

In this article the working definition of social media, derived from Baruah (2012), is: "Social media is any form of online channel that allows users to connect with others and post/share their opinions, ideas, media, etc. It includes but is not limited to blogs, social networking sites, content-sharing sites, collaborative platforms such as wikis, and reviews sites."

### Literature Review

The majority of literature regarding tourist behaviour is limited to discussing Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and TripAdvisor. More recently, Instagram, Snapchat and other similar media-sharing sites have also become popular for sharing experiences with social networks (Vaterlaus, Patten, Roche, & Young, 2015).

As such, social media has changed the way companies offering outdoor recreation and education interact with consumers as they are now able to connect with hundreds and thousands of people at once in the same fashion that people can connect with friends and family. While these social platforms have given companies this ability, consumers are often reluctant to connect with them due to privacy concerns (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Thus, outdoor recreation and outdoor education organizations must be proactive in encouraging connections with consumers over social media in a way that users relate to and are not hesitant to



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use (Li, Robinson, & Oriade, 2017). The speed of electronic word of mouth is considered to be much faster than traditional face-to-face communication. This may challenge organizations as publicity that poorly represents an organization's mission, goals, or values may gain traction much faster than by traditional word of mouth (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Williams, Inversini, Buhalis, & Ferdinand, 2015). In Lim, Chung and Weaver's 2012 study it was found that user-generated videos

about Las Vegas had a considerably higher average number of views and comments in comparison to those created by marketing organizations. However, the comments left on user-created videos tended to be more provocative or negative. Since user generated content is used and trusted more than those from marketing organizations, this could lead to a negative destination image. User recommendations and opinions are more likely to be influential than content from a marketing organization, particularly when recommending an experience-based product (Becker, Naaman & Gravano, 2009; Senecal & Nantel, 2004).

In a study of primarily Australian residents that looked at the use of user-generated media in the travel planning process, it was determined that written reviews by other users on travel websites were rated more important than photos posted by other travellers (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjens, 2011). When asked what users like about websites with user generated media, the theme “trust in the source” was the most prevalent answer and was related to the fact that the information came from other users. Another important theme that emerged was the diversity of opinions, as it demonstrated that the reviews were likely genuine.

During the pre-trip phase of travelling, people use online channels to discuss their findings with family and friends in search of further opinions, suggestions, or encouragement (Ho, Lin, & Chen, 2012). Due to the nature of travel products, such as outdoor adventure tourism activities being typically experiential and new to consumers, purchasing these products requires extensive high-risk decision making (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

### Methodology

Eight participants, four male and four female, were chosen purposively for this study based on their social media use and participation in outdoor recreation and tourism activities. The sample was chosen from students enrolled in Lakehead University’s School of Outdoor Recreation,

Parks, and Tourism. Each participant was asked to participate in an open-ended semi-structured interview including ten structured questions.

### Results and Discussion

To begin, participants were asked to list the social media platforms they use most often and the types of outdoor recreation activities they do regularly. Every participant listed Facebook and Instagram and a majority listed Snapchat, blogs, TripAdvisor, Airbnb, and YouTube. Analysis of the interviews resulted in six themes presented in three clusters. These clusters essentially outlined the decision-making process: First Impressions, Furthering Knowledge, and Deciding Factors.

#### First Impressions

This cluster is made up of the themes ‘Access to the Knowledge’ and ‘Visual Media’. Access to the Knowledge includes the use of particular media platforms and Visual Media covers the use of visually pleasing elements.

**Access to the Knowledge:** The use of platforms such as Instagram as jumping-off points into doing further research on locations or activities was common among study participants. One participant noted that they used platforms such as Instagram and Facebook where it’s less common to post detailed information much more regularly than sites with specific details about the activity or destination.



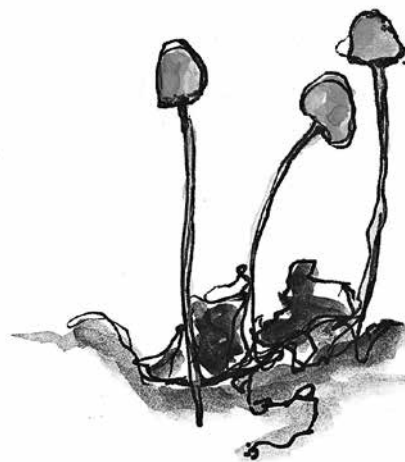
**Visual Media:** Photographic or video posts that have instant visual appeal encouraged the participants to look further when they felt a positive reaction to that particular piece of media. Consequently, these posts more often encouraged users turned towards more informative and detail-oriented sites. Elements of that visual that would pique the interest of the audience included aesthetically pleasing composition, preferred landscapes or geography (mountains, forests, obvious climate such as extremely hot or cold, etc.) shown, or knowing a person in the piece of media or knowing who posted it. Photos were cited more often than videos in this study as being the inspiration to look further. Building off the point that it is easier to access new knowledge on mobile social apps, it is interesting to note that many of those platforms are primarily based on the use of visual media as opposed to text-based posts.

### Furthering Knowledge

This second cluster is made up of the themes 'Methods' and 'Trust and Accuracy'. Methods unpacks what the users use to make decisions. Trust and Accuracy covers the perception on reliability in the information given in social media posts.

**Methods:** All participants named Google as their main research point. Aside from Instagram and Facebook, which every participant listed, very few specific sites were cited as supplementary sites for researching activities and outdoor locations. Specific websites named included Parks Canada and provincial park websites, TripAdvisor, Reddit, and Narcity. Two participants named activity-specific phone applications such as LighterPack (ultralight hiking) and TrailForks (mountain biking). Offline resources such as speaking with family and friends and literature such as Lonely Planet guides were also listed as primary resources for planning.

**Trust and Accuracy:** While only five of the eight participants listed face-to-face communication as sources of inspiration



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or knowledge, all eight participants stated that knowing the person who told them about the trip enhanced the belief that the information to be accurate and trustworthy. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook were said to be used for connecting with people the participants knew versus strangers, meaning that users felt more comfortable approaching the poster with questions about their experiences. Trust and accuracy were important factors in furthering research for some of the participants and they compared timestamps, comments and reviews to determine which sources were the most accurate and therefore dependable. For example, one of the questions in the interview had participants choose between three posts about the same hike in Kananaskis, Alberta. One text post, one Instagram post, and one post on TrailPeak.com, which is similar in set up as TripAdvisor in that users can leave reviews, comments, and photos. One participant noticed that the text post and the TrailPeak description of the hike offered different information regarding the length, the elevation and difficulty of the hike. This lowered the level of trust in both sources, but since TrailPeak has crowdsourced information, it was deemed to be more trustworthy on the account that many people could verify or deny the stated facts and give their own opinion based on their experiences.

## Deciding Factors

This final cluster covers the human and natural related factors that go into making the final decision to participate. Human Factors covers other people's opinions, experience and habits in relation to the study participant. Environmental Factors cover events that are out of the control of humans that may affect the decision to travel or participate in an activity.



**Human Factors:** In terms of human related factors, the final decision-making process was generally determined on factors such as trust and accuracy of the source and the perceived outdoor skill level and experience of the user who posted the content. When asked about the perception of a destination negatively affecting their decision, participants brought up crowding, litter, and current political or social climates as main deterring elements. Only two participants said that negative reviews or comments would deter them completely. Conversely, one participant stated that negative comments would simply cause them to research it further since experiences and opinions are subjective. Intimately knowing the person allowed the user to compare their own skill level and experience with the poster. If the perceived skill level of the poster is higher than that of the user, they may be thought

of as promoting something too difficult to recreate safely. Conversely, if the poster is perceived as less skilled, they may be promoting something too easy and therefore "boring" to the viewer.

**Environmental Factors:** Environmental factors that affected the decision to participate in an activity or visit a location included the considered dangers or risks, the potential for natural disasters such as wildfires, and wildlife activity in the area, such as bear closures.

## Conclusion

When it comes to planning outdoor travel or activities, social media accounts of friends and family are often the first inspiration to begin the research. There is an evident desire to pursue outdoor activities that are recommended by trusted and well-known parties such as family and friends as opposed to companies and marketing organizations. There is noted worry about paid promotion of activities, destinations and products that leads users to distrust those who have been sponsored in comparison to those who have not. The aspect of trust in the source and the perceived accuracy of the information presented is important to the participants to make a decision. This research found that visual elements are a key draw but do not provide adequate information on which to base judgement and so must be accompanied by in-depth information which can include reviews or visitor comments.

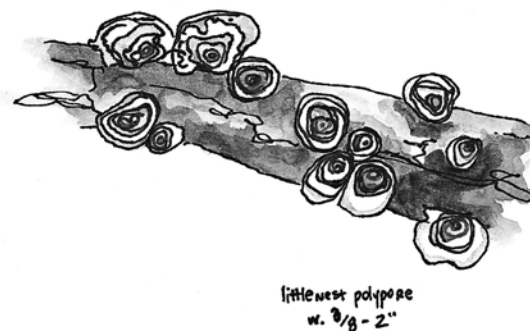
This research can help outdoor education and recreation organizations, such as summer camps, understand what is needed in their marketing strategies to entice users to join them for activities. This is especially important with the rise of varying social media platforms alongside the desire to see and connect with more of the natural world. Creating positive images and providing great service will help with the consumer-to-consumer word-of-mouth which can often be perceived as more trustworthy than business-to-consumer word-of-mouth.

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## Teachers' Perceptions of Overnight Outdoor Education Programs for Adolescent Students

By Megan E. Donaldson

### Introduction

There is no shortage of evidence pointing to our natural environment as an ideal location for learning. It stimulates realistic enlightenment across many disciplines including art, history, science, geography, environmental studies, and physical education (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). It also promotes social development, leadership development, academic achievement and environmental appreciation (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; James & Williams, 2017; Lien, 2007; Maller, 2009). Overnight Outdoor Education (OOE) programs are the primary type of outdoor education (OE) discussed in this paper. These programs are designed for students to develop both recreational and academic pursuits (Outdoor Education School Programs, n.d.). Academic activities give new perspectives to subjects usually covered in the classroom, and recreational activities teach students the value of using leisure time constructively. These programs encourage independence and self-confidence, while at the same time cultivating social skills through group living and learning. These experiences provide children with foundational skills such as teamwork, cooperation and trust that can be beneficial for classroom culture. An OOE experience that fully immerses students in the natural environment provides outcomes and benefits that cannot be replicated inside traditional classroom walls. Which prompts the question: if using the natural environment as a medium for education is so valuable, then why is every student not given the opportunity to attend an OOE centre?

The purpose of this study is to explore how educators perceive the benefits for students who attend OOE programs, and what challenges teachers face when trying to implement these types of programs for their students. OOE facilities fully immerse

students in OE programs which, has been documented as a highly beneficial pedagogy (Cheng, & Lee, 2015; Kime, 2008; Nel, Joubert, & Hartell, 2017; Nicol, 2002). More students need to be given the opportunity to take part in OOE programs. This paper will contribute to the body of research on OOE programs and inform teachers on the impact of OOE programs for their students.

This academic interest stemmed from a lifelong passion for the outdoors, experience teaching OE to adolescent students in a remote setting, and a concern for the lack of student exposure. The issue guiding this study is that not enough students are given the opportunity to attend OOE centres. If policy makers and administrators recognize the value of OOE programs, then it is possible that more students may be able to participate in this experience and OOE centres will become a more equitable opportunity. Many outdoor educators – including myself – recognize the intrinsic value in outdoor experiences and field excursions (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; Gustafsson et al., 2012; James & Williams, 2017; Maller, 2009), and this paper aims to confirm this proclamation by voicing the opinions of three Ontario educators. This paper will be a current resource to inform teachers, parents, public, and administrators of the benefits that OOE programs have for students, and the challenges teachers face when facilitating such trips. A final goal of this research is to provide educators with an opportunity to voice their opinions on OOE programs, and to promote and encourage the OOE experience.

The attitudes of teachers play a critical role in shaping student learning; therefore, I am interested in finding out how educators view the role of OOE centres in students' education. I want to find out what is the driving force behind a teacher's decision to take their students to an OOE centre. Thus, to initiate the research project, a central



question was developed: “What are the benefits and challenges teachers encounter when implementing OOE into their programming?” The research is constructed by interviews, and has been divided further into two distinct parts: the unique benefits and impacts OOE programs have for students; and the challenges associated with bringing students to OOE centres.

### Review of Literature

The term outdoor education (OE) first appeared in educational literature near the end of World War II when L. B. Sharp (1943) suggested that the American curriculum should reconsider the best places to learn educationally worthwhile topics. He presented camping education which highlights the following: “That which ought and can best be taught inside the schoolrooms should there be taught, and that which can best be learned through experience dealing directly with native materials and life situations outside the school should there be learned.” (Sharp, 1943, p. 364). David Sobel, an educator who has made significant contributions to the development of the philosophy of place-based education claims that education cannot be independent of the environment. Children need to be able to interact with the environment throughout the educational process (Sobel, 1997). OE has gained more attention over the last several years because of the growing concern of sedentary and indoor behaviour.

OE has been documented as a beneficial pedagogy by numerous scholars in many parts of the world, including: South Africa (Nel et al., 2017), China (Cheng, & Lee, 2015), the UK (Nicol, 2002), Singapore (Atencio, Tan, Ho, & Ching, 2015), and North America (Kime, 2008) to name a few. OE aims to foster learning based on interactions with thoughts, emotions and actions in the natural world, experiencing authentic situations and practical observations (Gustafsson, Szczepanski, Nelson, & Gustafsson, 2012). This is in contrast to the traditional classroom which is based on theoretical knowledge taught

in a classroom setting. Students who do not typically succeed in a traditional classroom thrive at OOE centres, as seen by James and Williams (2017). Instead of avoiding learning, being unfocused and disruptive, most were engaged, became leaders, and expressed a desire to learn more advanced concepts, which was rare for them in the classroom setting (James & Williams, 2017).

Education research strongly suggests that learning experiences in nature are extremely advantageous for students, with outcomes for personal development, social development, and environmental appreciation. The combined effects of physical activity and the natural environment could be an explanation as to why OE is so beneficial. Studies have proven that experiences in the natural environment benefit children by improving their cognitive function and increasing their attention capacity (Wells, 2000). Sobel (2004) discusses the ways in which hands-on, real-world learning experiences helps students develop stronger ties to their communities and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. A study that gathered information from 40 schools in California found that students learn more effectively within an environment-based context than within a traditional educational framework (Lieberman, & Hoody, 1998). Lieberman and Hoody (1998) observed better performance on standardized tests in reading, writing, math, science, and social science; reduced discipline and classroom management problems; increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and greater pride and ownership in accomplishments. James and Williams (2017) discussed the benefits of OE after collecting data from an OOE trip that middle school aged students attended. The researchers found the value of OOE evident as it connects classroom-based learning with in-context field-based experiences. Students who were fearful of the unfamiliar aspects of the wilderness gained a new appreciation of nature (James & Williams, 2017). Pedretti, Nazir, Tan, Bellomo, and Ayyavoo, (2012) studied teachers’ views on environmental and

outdoor education in Ontario, and found that there exists a dedicated core of teachers who are passionate about environmental education and recognize its link to OE. These teachers realize the essential role OE centres play in Ontario, however the history of OE in Ontario suggests that the Ministry of Education is often ambivalent, viewing OE centres as quaint but expendable facilities in times of organizational strain (Pedretti et al., 2012).

According to teachers in a 2009 study, simply being outdoors and out of the classroom had a positive impact on students' learning (Ballantyne, & Packer, 2009). Teachers noted that physically being in the environment helped students visualize and understand the issues being taught. Students made personal connections which reinforces learning. Improved mental state and general well-being were additional outcomes associated with children being taught outdoors (Gustafsson et al., 2012). This aligns with the theory that when schools use the outdoors in their instructional practices, academic performance improves. When academic achievement improves, so does the mental state and wellbeing of students. Though the study did not find strong evidence for effects on general mental health after the OE intervention, it did find that boys showed a small decrease in mental health problems, in contrast to girls who showed no change in mental health problems.

There are many limitations that teachers face when implementing OE into their schools and classrooms. In a qualitative study done by Remington and Legge in 2017, it was found that teachers enjoyed going to the OOE centres because they felt they lacked the outdoor skills to teach in a safe and effective manner. A desire for ongoing professional development was suggested by these teachers to mitigate this (Remington & Legge, 2017). Another research project that studied teachers' perspectives on OE found that a large percentage of teachers in the study were concerned with safety and security when it came to taking students to outdoor

centres. They avoided the risks associated with OE activities by staying at school and maintaining control of their large classrooms (Palavan, Cicek, & Atabay, 2016). Transportation is another crucial reason that teachers avoided OOE centres. Palavan et al. (2016) discuss how teachers tend to refrain themselves from facing the risks involved with taking students from one place to another via shuttle bus services.



Although OE has recently been a topic of discussion among social workers, educators, psychologists and other professionals, Gustafsson et al., (2012) believe that there is a shortage of analytical research, and hope future studies can shed light on the influence of OE on children's mental health (Gustafsson et al., 2012).

## Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore how educators perceive the benefits for students who attend OOE programs, and the challenges teachers face when trying to implement these types of programs for their students. This research hopes to inform professional development, education and add to the body of knowledge on OOE programs in order to give more students this opportunity for learning. As seen in the literature review there is a great deal of research about OE, but less on overnight OE, which is what this paper will contribute to. This research project is a qualitative study that explores OE primarily in two ways: the exploration of relevant literature, and through the analysis of three interviews

with educators associated with OOE programs.

Using a constructivist perspective, the research will mainly rely on the participants' views on OOE programs. I used purposive sampling to recruit the participants for this study. All participants were people with whom I have previously worked alongside at an OE centre. To meet the criteria for this research project, the participants needed to have experience taking students to OOE centres. Preferably, the candidate would be an active teacher at a school, as a teacher would be able to comment on the long-term effects of the OE program upon their return to school from the OOE centre. Another perspective that was important to include in this research was that of the outdoor educator. This person could be an educator, or director of an OOE program. This perspective is valuable because the candidate would have an unbiased view of the students who attend the centre, different from that of the teachers' who know their students beforehand. Both categories of participants will be able to discuss the benefits they observe for their students and comment on the factors that restrict them from effectively implementing OOE programs.

The three participants that took part in this research project are supportive of OE programs and all are avid outdoor enthusiasts. Collectively, they have over 50 years of involvement in OOE programs. To ensure anonymity all were given pseudonyms. Jill is a teacher in the Bluewater District School Board and on the board of directors of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO). \she has experience working north of Whitehorse in a small indigenous community. Taylor is the director of an OOE centre in Algonquin Park, and has been for the past 35 years. Caroline is a teacher in the global studies department at her school with previous experience in the Halton District School Board working with the Bronte Creek Project and as an Outward Bound coordinator.

I recognize that my own experiences and background shape this research. The outdoors has been a vital part of my life since I was a young child. I spent my summers in Algonquin Park camping, sailing, and canoe tripping, while my winters were spent skiing. My undergraduate degree was focused around earth and environmental studies. I taught OE at an overnight centre for a number of years and saw first-hand how impactful those programs were for students' confidence, leadership, and self-esteem.

This study was situated in and around Toronto, and the OOE centres that the participants discuss are located in Southern Ontario. Ethics approval was obtained through a signed consent form written by members of the OISE research department at the University of Toronto. Three interviews were conducted in order to collect data surrounding the research topic. An interview protocol was designed with a list of questions and guiding questions to ask participants. Creswell (2014) claims that interviews are advantageous because the participant can provide historical information. Interviews also allow the researcher to be in control of the line of questioning (Creswell, 2014). The interviews were held over the phone, at a time when the participants could talk without interruption. Phone interviews were also preferable because the participants live outside of the city of Toronto. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was recorded using a voice recorder. Each interview was transcribed and then analyzed for emerging themes. I used deductive coding to organize the data into a chart, and then further categorize it into major themes. This helped me determine the educator's personal perspectives on OOE programs.

I anticipated that the participants had seen many benefits for students and this was apparent throughout the interviews. My aim was to gather this information from experts in this field and present it as evidence for policy makers and administrators with the hope that more students will have the

opportunity to attend OOE programs.

## Findings and Discussion

This section of the report is divided into two parts: the benefits of OOE centres, and the challenges educators face when trying to implement an OOE program into their educational practice.

### Benefits

It is apparent from the majority of the participants responses and supported by research (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; James & Williams, 2017; Lien, 2007; Maller, 2009; Nel et al., (2017) that OOE programs provide many benefits for adolescent students.

Character development is important in Ontario schools today. Schools aim to help students learn and practice positive character attributes. Students build good character by learning to respect themselves and each other. Both the participants who work in Ontario schools repeatedly mentioned one of the benefits that OOE centres allow for is character building among adolescents. Jill points out that:

There's these invaluable moments and connections that you make with nature that you just can't make in your backyard or in a city... I can't make that same connection that I do, you know, with a kid on a lake in Algonquin... everything from the sunsets to the loons to taking a poop in the woods. I think all those things are, they're character growing.

Jill highlights that unequalled experiences in nature such as watching the sunset with your peers cultivates good character. Whereas Caroline thinks that students are losing grit and resilience as a result of constantly being connected to their devices in this technological era, especially in middle school: "... with the change to our technological world, we're feeling like we've become less resilient in a lot of ways. That character education piece is so

important to all children's development." Her opinion is that character education is at the root of all learning, and she goes on to say: "If you can't teach a student to be themselves and know who they are, then how can you teach them x, y, and z?" Both participants state that the unique environment of the outdoor space – without the typical school facilities, and without technology – allow for the students to gain good character development – an integral concept in Ontario schools that uses an approach that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

Disconnecting from technology is another factor that leads to many more benefits of OOE programs. When students are forced to leave their phone at home and interact with each other instead of their devices, it leads to better social relationships between students, teachers, and even improves their relationships with themselves. Taylor, the program director of an OOE centre, noticed a huge change over the years as technology has advanced and students are becoming more attached to their devices. She reveals that:

Unplugging became really the priority of the program, and it was really much more important than anything. Then all the other things that stem from it, which are social problems. That benefit became even more important because kids now grow up alienated because they relate with their screens better than they do with other people. So that whole social part of it has increased tremendously.

Taylor is saying that technology has become something adolescents are very reliant upon, and this reliance leads to many social problems they encounter. It is important for them to be able to disconnect from their devices in order to connect to people in real life and work on social relationships face to face, not from behind a screen. Disconnecting is a huge component that OOE centres offer; a component that is hard to do in the classroom and almost impossible to do the city. Children are spending more time engaged in sedentary, technology-related, indoor activity, and less time outdoors, and

this leads to some youth developing a view of the outdoors as being remote, mysterious and frightening (James & Williams, 2017). With technology, comes an influx of information: advertisements, commercials, and social media. It is hard for students to detach from technology completely. While at school, the policy may state no cell phones or devices during school hours, but as soon as students leave the property or get home, it engulfs them. OOE programs that do not permit technological devices on site can be a refreshing change for adolescents who do not know how to unplug.

All three participants validate the importance that OOE programs have on social relationships. Social relationships start on the first day of school, or may have carried over from past years at school. In grades five to eight, most of these bonds form within the classroom. An OOE program allows for new friendships to form and relationships to change, because the activities occurring at the OOE centres are different than those in school. It allows for students to step outside their comfort zone and try things they have not had the chance to explore in school. They discover new things about the people they go to school with, and get to see educators in a new light, away from the typical classroom setting. This leads to new connections between students and other students, while providing them the opportunity to see their peers and teachers in a new environment. Taylor speaks about a social-recreational relationship between student and teacher – a relationship she thinks is very important for students to construct:

We have a very definite policy here, and a belief that we want our teachers to be seen by the kids in a different way than they know and that we don't want them to be known as their teachers. We want them to respect them because they're people foremost. We want them to have a different relationship, like a social-recreational one, rather than you're the teacher so you're going to listen to me.

Taylor claims that a main goal of her program is for students to view their teachers from a new perspective. Respect for self, others, and the environment is a mission of her OOE program, and teaching students to have respect for their teachers is a top priority. Research further supports the claim of social development for students (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; James & Williams, 2017; Lien, 2007; Maller, 2009). Maller (2009), discusses ecological theory in her research, which proposes that contact with nature promotes and enhances social relationships. Bringing enhanced social relationships between student and student, and student and teacher back into the school classroom after an OOE trip could be beneficial for classroom management, collaborative school projects, and the overall wellbeing of the classroom community. Caroline and Jill reiterate this point. Caroline: "Stretching their comfort zone, discovering new things about the people that they're enjoying the outdoors with: it helps to build bonds between students and helps students to see educators in a different perspective outside of the classroom." Jill:

I think for it to be further beneficial there needs to be adult guidance on your return. I don't think you can just expect a grade five or even a grade 10 to come off a trip and necessarily be able to grow all on their own. Like, that's the beauty of going with your school group, because you can really work as you get back that next week.

The strengthened social behaviours many students exhibit after an OOE trip is deemed highly valuable by many researchers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; James & Williams, 2017; Lien, 2007; Maller, 2009), and the participants of the study. The positive and nurturing outdoor program and environment allows for relationships to thrive and for students to become better versions of themselves.

### Challenges

When asked about the biggest challenges a teacher faces when bringing students to OE centres, the participants had similar

opinions to that of recent research reports (Palavan et al. 2016; Remington & Legge, 2017).

An unexpected barrier that two participants mentioned was a cultural barrier that is present when permission forms go home requesting students stay overnight away from their families. In some communities and cultures, it is not typical for children to stay overnight in a remote location for multiple nights, especially daughters. Some families have not been exposed to programs such as overnight camps or overnight educational endeavours. Taylor talks about how many families that are new to Canada find it difficult to send their child away overnight and how the idea may not be something with which they are familiar. “They’re coming from other countries or they’re second generation Canadian. They may never have gone to a summer camp, so staying overnight for the program is scary, especially [at a camp] that has water.” This is not a barrier I had ever considered, as my upbringing embraced a camping culture and I started swimming before I could walk. My life experiences are not comparable to many students in Ontario. According to statistics Canada, roughly 9% of Toronto children have immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011. Camping trips, cottages, and canoe trips may be unfamiliar concepts to immigrant families of Canada, and teachers need to be respectful and aware of this.

The risks involved with taking students overnight deters teachers from going on OOE trips. The participants disclose that although water activities are the biggest perceived risks, the leading risk is transportation. Water risks can be managed and Jill attests to this:

They’ve just implemented that if you’re swimming you have to have a life jacket on no matter what. ... Even if you’re getting water at night, they still need two people, a student, and a teacher supervising you getting water [from the lake for drinking or cooking], and you have to have a life jacket within reach.

And you have to have a staff member with an NLS on the trip.

Jill is specifically talking about being on an overnight canoe trip, where the students would be surrounded by water most of the time. An NLS is the National Lifeguard Society certification, which a staff member on the trip would be required to have. The water is scary for many parents and teachers, but it is not an essential part of OOE centres. There are many centres that do not have water activities. Swimming lessons, more teachers, and supervision can reduce this risk if the OOE centre does have water access.

All three participants comment on transportation as the biggest risk. For example, Caroline says: “Transportation is our biggest risk, but it’s not what everyone else sees as a big risk right?”. She is inferring that policy makers and administrators view water activities as the biggest risk, while teachers insist that it is transportation – the three-hours in transit on Ontario highways – that is the biggest risk.

The last finding that was expressed during the interviews and is discussed by past educational researchers (Ballantyne & Packer, 2009; Palavan et al., 2016; Pedretti et al., 2012; Remington & Legge, 2017; Sobel, 2004) is that of professional development (PD). A major factor preventing teachers from including OE in their lesson planning, stems from a lack of OE specific PD which they are able to participate in. In service teachers do not experience much OE focused PD, and pre-service teachers are exposed to even less. Taylor believes that teachers are scared to take their students to OOE centres: “It scares young teachers ... they don’t have the confidence and maybe it’s because they haven’t had the background either, or they’re just young; young in the field”. She says because they are young, they don’t have the confidence to go on field excursions that are deemed high risk. They may have not yet been exposed to much OE in their careers. Caroline expresses that fortunate students get to participate in

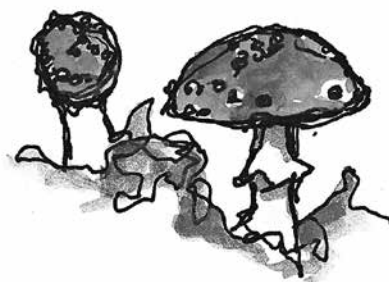
OE programs because they have teachers who are passionate about OE:

I think that students who are participating in outdoor education programs currently are there because they have educators who are really passionate about it, and are on board and have been ingrained in the philosophy of why this is important. I think that if more educators were given more opportunity to discover the benefits – to be educated about the benefits and how it can directly be tied to the classroom – I think that we might be able to get more teachers on board and they could get more school administrators on board and then we can get more kids outside.

Caroline claims that the students who are currently taking part in OOE programs are those who have teachers who are enthusiastic about the philosophy of OE and understand the value that it holds for students. Peredtti (2012) discusses that passionate environmental and outdoor educators sometimes feel like a minority in their schools.

Caroline was not the only participant who also believed that getting the support of the people in power would be helpful in expanding the breadth of OE to reach all students. However, for this to happen educators themselves need to request PD opportunities that cover specific content areas, such as OE. David Sobel's research admits that it is often difficult to get an overworked teacher to volunteer for PD. He suggests that PD needs to happen in many guises over long periods of time (Sobel, 2004). Piggybacking on existing committees and meetings can make it easier for new teachers to get involved. He recommends in-service workshops, multi-day curriculum training, and mini courses on specific OE topics.

These findings add to the growing body of research on OOE programs and on what influences teachers to bring or not to bring their students to these centres.



*Fly agaric*

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The goal of this research was to explore educator's perceptions of the benefits of OOE programs and uncover the reasons for pushback from parents and administrators, with the further purpose of informing PD, educators and administrators. Participants in this study identified many benefits for students including character development, disconnecting from technology, and social relationships. All which lead to stronger classroom community and higher engagement from students. Barriers teachers face when implementing OOE programs are mainly related to risks such as transportation, and not enough PD for teachers and administrators. It is important to get support from all stakeholders in education such as teachers, parents, students, principals, and superintendents in order for OOE to be successfully implemented in the Ontario curriculum.

Following are the recommendations suggested for education stakeholders with the aim of implementing successful OOE programs.

1. **Additional Research:** More research of this type needs to be done, especially to bridge the gap between administrators and teachers' perceptions and beliefs on OOE programs. Research should be done in order to explore solutions to barriers faced by teachers when implementing OOE trips into the classroom.
2. **Ongoing Professional Development:** There is a pressing need for ongoing

PD, and it is a viable recommendation in order to inform all education stakeholders at all levels. More allocation to OE in pre-service teacher education would address safety concerns, and expand resources and information. In-service teachers need to learn more about the benefits OE has for students, and how to be confident when planning an OOE trip. This means more workshops, community sharing, training sessions, and courses being made available for teachers. Parents, principals, superintendents and administrators need to be better informed on the goings on at OOE centres, and the safety procedures in place.

3. Administrator Retreats: A recommendation that originated from one participant of this research project was the suggestion to run an OOE retreat for superintendents, policy-makers and principals. This would allow them to fully understand what specifically the students are learning at OE centres, how it connects to Ontario curriculum, the safety procedures in place, while also exposing the value these programs have for students.
4. Accessible OE centres: More accessible OOE centres need to be established closer to the city. This would minimize transportation time and allow for more students to attend OE centres. These centres could periodically train and inform teachers, administrators, students and parents about OE.
5. Curriculum Integration: OE is worth maintaining as an educational right for all children, and therefore should be explicitly included in the curriculum. If OE was clearly outlined in the Ontario curriculum, then teachers' concerns for not meeting curricular expectations would be made obsolete. OE can be integrated with history, geography, science, art, physical education, music, and literacy. A curriculum that specifically states students need to complete an overnight outdoor

experiential learning activity would allow all students to reap the benefits of an OOE program.

6. Updated Policy: Include the directors and staff of outdoor centres when writing new policies and regulations. When creating documentation for authorization of OOE trips, ask experts in the industry. No one knows their space and program like the people who have been running the program for decades. Including outdoor educators and board trustees and superintendents when creating and modifying policies would be beneficial for the programs.

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- Megan Donaldson spent her summers attending an all-girls camp in Algonquin Park, where she later went on to become a counsellor and outdoor educator. These early experiences instilled in her a deep appreciation for the outdoors, and it was then that she witnessed firsthand the impact that learning in the outdoors can have on adolescents. She is a recent graduate of the Masters of Teaching program at OISE, U of T, and currently working as an occasional teacher with the TDSB.

## The Air Contest: Child Directed Problem Solving

By Laura Molyneux

Anyone who has worked with people knows that interpersonal relationships can cause problems. Any two people, at any given time, can have strong conflicting opinions, which can make it difficult to see each other's point of view. Too quickly, educators and mentors step in to "solve" problems for children. We've all said sentences like, "it's your turn next", "pass it to Johnny now" or "let me set a timer", without thinking about the long-term consequences of this "help" that we are providing.

Problem solving sometimes looks like magic at our Forest School. Other times it can be messy and ugly. Sometimes situations take months to resolve. Staff at Cloudberry Forest School offer support to children to resolve their own problems. We believe that even though this approach is uglier in the short term (i.e., a problem-solving circle early in the term can last easily 20 minutes), we have anecdotal proof that in the long-term, it reduces the need for adult "intervention". And in the long-run, it allows children to maintain control of their own voice and consent. (For more information on our support of consent, see *The Invention of Snatch-Fall* in the next issue of *Pathways*).

### Identifying the True Problem

Oftentimes as adults, we do a poor job identifying problems and/or translating what the problem-solving process may actually be.

One of the most important Forest School rules is that if a child wishes to leave an established boundary, then they must have a teacher go with them. A common problem that occurs at the beginning of the semester is the reality that if there is only one teacher available, as the "Adventure Teacher", the whole team must be in consent as to which direction the adventure will occur. This problem could be easily "solved" with adult intervention, particularly if the adult translates the problem as simply determining which direction to travel. Adult mediated

solutions might look like: "We'll go Annie's way first, then Scott's way tomorrow" or, "I know there's a river down this path, let's go this way".

However, if we look deeper into the "problem" we can see that the children are trying to find their own voices within a group, make collective decisions and discover their leadership abilities. Adult intervention into this problem only teaches children that their voices are not valued and that often the loudest or quickest child will be rewarded because teachers often subconsciously or otherwise support their choice.

### The Air Contest

One of the most prime examples of this was a problem-solving circle that we facilitated shortly into a new term. Six children had decided to go on an adventure and reached a point where there were three choices of which direction to go.

Child 1: I want to go this way!

Child 2: I want to go this way! (Points in another direction)

Child 3: I want to go to the Forest!

Child 4: I want to go with Child 2!

Child 5 and 6 say nothing.

FS Leader: Hmm. I see we have a problem. Does anyone have any suggestions as to what we can do to solve the problem?

Child 1: I know! We can vote! That way we can see more people want to go my way.

FS Leader: Does that solution work for everyone?

Everyone agrees. FS Leader polls the

children which direction they want to go. Results are dead even.

FS Leader: Looks like we still have a problem. The same number of people want to go the same way.

Child 2: Let's go my way!

FS Leader: Does that work for everyone? [No consensus] I don't think that idea works for everyone.

Child 1: I know! Let's have an air contest. Whoever can hold the most air in their mouths can choose which way to go!

At this point the Forest School Leader (and I will be honest here, it was me) thought this solution was absolutely ridiculous and nonsensical and very unlikely to gain much traction. MUCH to my surprise however, the children consented that an air holding contest was the most likely way to reach a solution to this problem.

The thing about an air contest though, is that it is impossible to measure, so we spent the next 45 minutes or so theorizing how to measure our results and then it was lunch time. No adventures were had that day.

## Problem Solving Circles

Problem solving circles are a strategy that we use at Cloudberry all the time. An effective problem solving circle contains the following key pieces:

- Allowing opportunity for all ideas to be heard
- Allowing opportunity for children to veto decisions or ideas that "don't work" for them
- Allowing children to express their emotions, especially in more emotional interpersonal conflict resolution
- Allowing for ideas of democracy and

consent to be developed

- Support via sportscasting/mediation from the adult, echoing the words of the children and facilitating the conversation to help all voices be heard
- Support from the adult in following through with whatever solution is agreed upon to ensure consent is still being given by all participants

As with any teaching strategy, problem-solving circles need to be consistent. At the beginning of each term they are held almost hourly and seem to last forever. There's always a magic session, though, when it comes to problem solving. Last year it came when we were problem solving a shared use of a preferred play space. This particular problem had been challenging us for several previous sessions. After the initial squawks of frustration, I moved towards the play space and gestured for the children to join me so we could solve the problem. The child who had made the squawk looked at me and said "Laura, we don't need you. It's faster if we solve the problem without you."

Thanks, buddy. I guess my work here is done.

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*Laura Molyneux is a Level IV Early Childhood Educator based out of Newfoundland with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Psychology. After spending several years in Family Intervention and Support as well as program development, she recognized the importance of true free-play experiences, particularly in an outdoor environment, in helping children develop resilience and self-regulation. She is the Owner/Operator of Cloudberry Forest School based in St. John's Newfoundland which offers preschool, caregiver-child programs, open play days and school age programs and summer camps. In addition to her work with Cloudberry Forest School she is a facilitator with the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada and the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador focusing on the Early Learning Framework.*

## Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education

By Kimberly Squires

A review of Dietze, B. & Kashin, D., *Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education*. Pearson Education Canada.

When I first learned about the publication of Beverlie Dietze and Diane Kashin's new text, *Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education*, I was excited to take a closer look. I had felt that a more comprehensive textbook related to outdoor learning in early learning and care settings was necessary but had yet to come across something that fit this description. Many

of the books that I had come across related to outdoor learning were only focused on one topic, such as forest schools, the importance of connecting children with nature, or advocating for outdoor learning spaces. Having one book

that connected information about many of these ideas in a broader sense would be an important addition to the field.

*Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education* is part of Pearson's Canadian Early Childhood Education Collection, which also includes the second edition of another of Dietze and Kashin's texts, *Playing and Learning in Early Childhood Education*. It is written to help early learning professionals of any level in their journey of supporting children's outdoor learning. Throughout the text, the authors are supportive of readers with varied levels of knowledge and familiarity with outdoor play, including those just starting to consider these ideas within their pedagogy and those who are already actively incorporating these ideas on a regular basis. The authors use a variety of strategies to reach a wide early learning audience, such as providing more basic information

about the importance of outdoor play, encouraging readers to reflect on their current actions of supporting outdoor play, and providing many tips and ideas for expanding outdoor learning. Though some aspects of the text could relate to outdoor learning in settings with older students, the book was not written with this context in mind and there are likely other, more related texts available for this audience.

Both Dietze and Kashin are demonstrated advocates for outdoor play through conference presentations that they have given, articles that they have authored, research that they have conducted, and professional development efforts that they have supported. They have both taught in post-secondary institutions for over 20 years, where they have incorporated their beliefs about the importance of outdoor play. Dietze has been the lead researcher on more than one research project related to outdoor play and Kashin is currently the Chair of the York Region Nature Collaborative, which aims to increase meaningful engagement with nature within its local early learning community.

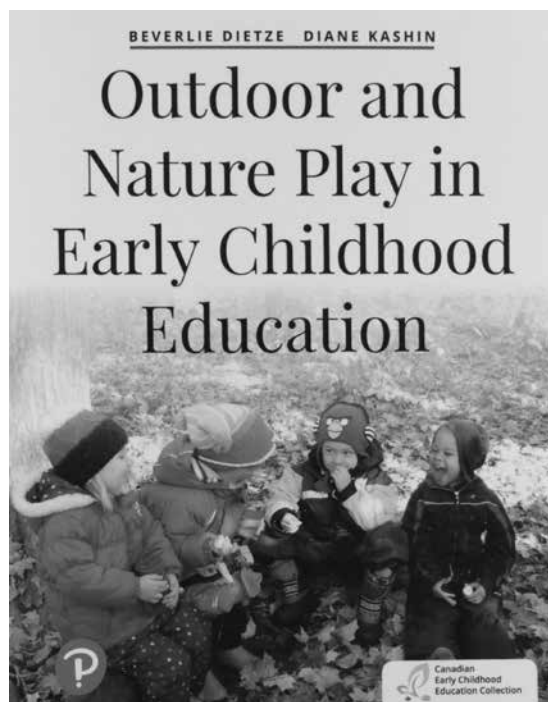
As the authors state in the preface, *Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education* aims to support the reader through a combination of theory, practice and reflection. This approach will be familiar to early learning professionals as it parallels the current approach across the field of early learning and care. As mentioned previously, the text covers a wide variety of topics related to outdoor early learning over its twelve chapters and could easily be used as a starting point for someone wanting to explore these approaches in more depth. Topics mentioned within the text include: the importance and benefits of outdoor play and time spent in nature, information from early learning theorists, international and Canadian research about outdoor play, loose parts, risky play, aspects of nature-based



outdoor learning spaces, sustainability, indigenous perspectives, seasonal changes, documenting children's learning, and engaging families in supporting outdoor play. The breadth of topics is expansive and provides an important knowledge-base for anyone interested in learning more about outdoor play within early learning and care settings. The depth of knowledge that is presented about some of the topics could also aid the understanding of a reader with an already established related knowledge base.

One aspect that I did find lacking throughout the textbook was a connection to the wider range of ages within early learning and care settings. For instance, most of the examples within the text seemed to be related to children in preschool or school-age programs, while infants and toddlers were mentioned much less frequently. I would argue that there is already a more established understanding of the importance of older children connecting with nature and that this could have been an opportunity for the authors to bring more awareness to the youngest children in early learning settings. Educators often cite safety and practical considerations as reasons why outdoor play is more difficult to support with these younger children, so it could have been beneficial to address some of these frequently mentioned "obstacles".

The organization of the text has clearly been given careful consideration. Both brief and detailed tables of contents are provided, as well as a thorough index to help readers look up specific topics. Shortly into the text, the authors explain the over 20 features that each chapter contains, such as: learning outcomes, childhood memories, theoretical foundations, practical applications, professional reflections, case studies, quiet reflections, and key terms. Though many of these features add important information and context to the topics discussed in each chapter, the overall number of features will likely be distracting for some readers. Despite approaching the text with an already well-established understanding of early learning



and outdoor play, I was surprised to find the busy nature of each chapter's structure overwhelming. As the reader progresses through the text, the topics of the chapters build in a logical manner which aids the reader's understanding of the knowledge being presented.

Overall, *Outdoor and Nature Play in Early Childhood Education* is a valuable contribution to the field of early learning and care as well as the field of outdoor education. The text provides readers with a base of knowledge about many aspects of outdoor and nature play within these settings. It would be equally useful as an initial learning tool for an educator just learning about outdoor play, as a companion text for someone developing their outdoor learning practices, or as a reference text for someone with a more established understanding.

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*Kimberly Squires is the Pedagogical Leader at the University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre. She also teaches within the Bachelor of Applied Science program with a focus on early learning pedagogy and administration.*

## Tânisi ka-isi-nihtâ-pahkwêsikanihkeyan How to Make Awesome Bannock! ohci Alice Harkness

By Naomi McIlwraith

Get your fire ready well in advance of baking.

*kotawê pâmwayês kê-pîminawasoyan*

Take six cups of flour – *aski-pahkwêsikan*

3 tablespoons of baking powder –  
*ohpîlhasokan*

¼ of a teaspoon of salt – *sîwîhtâkan*

3 tablespoons of bear grease – *maskwa pîmiy*

1 ½ cups of warm water – *nîpiy*

Some raisins – *sôminisak*

And a whole lot of patience, love, and peace –

*sîpêyîhtamowin, sâkihîtowin, êkwa*

*pêyâhtakêyimowin*

Mix together the dry ingredients,  
then blend in the bear grease and the  
raisins.

Add the water and let it all sit for awhile  
as you tend to the fire  
and get the bed of embers ready.

Who could have known that you would  
bake and serve *pahkwêsikan* to so many  
thousands, hundreds or thousands, millions  
of people from all over this big world –  
*mîsiwêskamik?*

Who could have known that you would  
welcome and teach and encourage so many  
from cities, provinces, countries near and  
far?

When the flames in the fire  
have settled down to a glowing bed of  
embers

now is the time to put a healthy amount  
of bear grease in the frying pan –  
*sâsâpîskîsikan*

Do this with the good-heartedness of the  
Old Lady

*ê-kî-miyotêhêw nôcokwêsiw*

Take heed that this old woman is better  
than the best cook you know – *ê-kî-nihtâ-*  
*opîminawasow*

Watch her as she cuts the bannock  
into pieces the size of your palm

for baking and then puts a slice  
through the middle so it all  
bakes evenly throughout.

Watch closely – *kanawâpamat*  
how she turns that bannock only once –  
*pêyakwâw*

so that it's not too greasy.

*mîyomâsow awa pahkwêsikan*

Watch closely – *kanawâpamat*  
how she moves through her camp

with the skill of an artist –

*awîyak kê-nihtâ-osihcikêt*

Take heed of her peaceful heart –

*ê-kî-miyotêhêw*

*ê-kî-miyoskwêwîw*

*ê-kî-miyo-wâhkômêw*

*ê-kî-wawiyatwêt*

*ê-kî-nanâtohkomât*

*êkwa ê-kî-wanînêt*

*êkwa ê-kî-pâhpiskit mistahi!*

Alice, - *kinanâskomitînân kimiyo-tôtêminaw*

We thank you Old Friend

for your soft heart and your soft ways

*ohci yoskatisiyan êkwa mîyohtwayan*

and all that delicious bannock

*êkwa kahkiyaw ana pahkwêsikan ê-wîhkicisit*

*anohc pîko kê-nîmîhitoyan asici aniskâc*

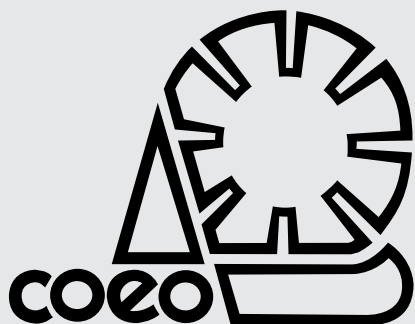
*âniskotâpânak*

*kîhtwâm kê-wâpamîtâhk*

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Naomi McIlwraith lives in Edmonton, Alberta  
(*amiskwaciwâskahikan-Beaver Mountain House*).  
She is author of *kiyâm*, a poetry collection in  
English and Cree. Naomi has worked as an  
Historical Interpreter at Fort Edmonton and in  
2018 completed her first year of teaching school.





## The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please visit our website at [www.coeo.org/membership.htm](http://www.coeo.org/membership.htm)  
for more detailed descriptions of the benefits of each  
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Please print and fully complete each line below.

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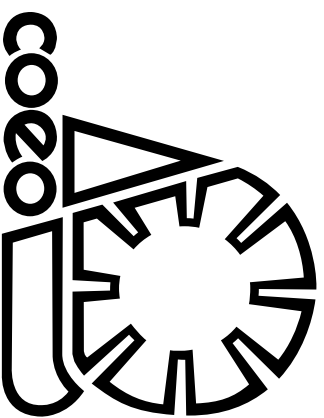
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