Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Summer 2019, 31(4)

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COEO

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

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Pathways is published four times a year for members of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO).

Pathways is always looking for contributions. Please contact the Chair for submission guidelines.

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Features

Columns

Editor's Log

Over the past 12 months, *Pathways* has been the recipient of some outstanding artwork. We are very pleased to be able to share these fine contributions within the pages of our journal. Although our Editorial Board works hard to cultivate the best in current research and meaningful ideas relevant to outdoor learning, we also strive to maintain the quiet yet pleasing aesthetic which has always been the hallmark of this journal. And so, we are very grateful to those artists who have shared their talents over the years, and are more than delighted with the current group, whom without much cajoling, provide their blackline drawings, watercolours and computer rendered illustrations to *Pathways* on a regular basis. I would like to thank these artists for all their time and effort, and would encourage readers to support these folks with either words of encouragement and thanks, or by purchasing their artwork if available. Our Editorial Board acknowledges contributing artist(s) in the Sketchpad note that appears at the bottom of page 2 or 3 in each issue, and the artist's contact information or website is often provided here.

I am excited to share this Summer 2019 open issue of *Pathways*, as it offers several illuminating articles, which are bound to ignite reader's interest and imagination. Our first feature article, entitled Outdoor Adventure in the UK is a Male Privilege, is authored by Cath Hempsall. This author explores how the history of outdoor adventure in the UK, compounded with gender stereotyping, has led to the outdoors being a space currently dominated by men. Through this article, Cath hopes to both inform practitioners and prompt reflection on inclusive practices, while also beginning a dialogue with her Canadian counterparts in order to understand the similarities and/or differences that exist between women educators and participants in our two nations. Next, Ryan Kasperowitsch discusses visual art as a form of inquiry, sharing how individual reflection within the outdoor experiential learning process may be enriched by artistic practices. COEO member Tobin Day makes a timely and important contribution to Intersections—the *Pathways* column dedicated to Integrated Curriculum Programs. Within her article, Tobin shares her experiences as an educator supporting student voice and action, as the student-led climate change protest movement came to her community. Regular *Pathways* contributor, Chris Peters, begins a new series of articles wherein he introduces the concept of Hjemstedslaere, or Homestead Knowledge, its place in Newfoundland's educational history, and potential use in schooling today.

This issue of *Pathways* also includes the third installment in Laura Molyneaux's Play and Praxis series. Kimberly Squires provides her insight on the Lawson Foundation's recent discussion paper on Advancing Outdoor Play and Early Childhood Education. And Bob Henderson shares a lesson on the properties of wood, and why this knowledge is critical when constructing and maintaining a fire for warmth or cooking.

Kyle Clarke
Editor

Sketch Pad – The art for this issue of *Pathways* was generously contributed by Jessica Del Sole (cover and pages 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 18, 22, 25, 26 and 32). Jessica is an illustrator and teacher who has lived most of her life near the Humber River. Her artwork considers our complex, etheric relationship to the natural world. In her teaching, she explores these ideas with her students through sensory activities and outdoor education. More artwork can be found at https://delsolej.myportfolio.com.

President's View

Summer offers many educators a chance to step back, reflect and perhaps even for a few moments, relax. It also offers a time to think ahead to the coming year, reach beyond the daily "must-do" tasks and, for some, use this time as an opportunity to take broader action. For several COEO members, this particular summer has been primarily about advocacy.

Hil Coburn, current COEO Secretary, did everything she possibly could to fight for the continuation of the Halton Region's Bronte Creek Project, an integrated, multi-credit environmental leadership semester program. Deb Diebel, current Past President, collected surveys from members about the impacts on OEE from the government's recent cuts to education and kept COEO's Facebook account updated all season. Grant Linney, a long-time COEO member and Board member, a generous and passionate retired educatorwell versed in speaking engagingly to audiences on the issues around climate change, suggested outdoor education was in need of a boost in awareness at multiple levels in the province. Buoyed by his unstoppable support and energy, an effort was launched to bring the importance of outdoor and experiential education (OEE) to the attention of government officials, media, social media followers and members of the public.

In order to ensure the value of outdoor education is recognized beyond COEO, Grant's support has helped the organization take an active role in promoting the multiple benefits of this approach to learning. To this end, COEO has recently taken steps to create a(n):

Greater presence on social media;

Increased awareness through publications in public media;

Opportunity for meetings with members of the provincial government to advocate on behalf of endangered outdoor programs and recent funding cuts to Ontario's public education system.

Some of the positive steps forward made in the summer of 2019 included publication of an Op-Ed article on July 15th in the Toronto Star entitled "The Value of Outdoor Education". A submission to the new Minister of Education Stephen Lecce was made on behalf of COEO. Marit Stiles, NDP Official Opposition Critic for Education, met with COEO representatives and wrote an excellent Letter of Support for Outdoor Education Centres.

COEO advocates for the following government actions:

1. Acknowledge the value of OEE by preserving current levels of funding, and educational opportunities, for OEE in future school years;

2. Maintain a mix of local and further afield OEE locations;

3. Preserve continued development of curriculum-based OEE through appropriately qualified OCTs, with the teaching carried out by both OCTs and instructor specialists.

Want to get involved in advocating for OEE in Ontario? Please contact your local MPP and ask that they write a letter of support to the new Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce. Write an article about your OEE experience and submit it to *Pathways* or a local media outlet. Finally, be sure to follow COEO's social media accounts, visit the newly updated advocacy tab on the website and keep an eye on local media as we continue our advocacy efforts.

Hope to connect with you in person at this year's fall conference.

Liz Kirk
COEO President

Outdoor Adventure in the UK is a Male Privilege

By Cath Hempsall

The UK has a problem in the outdoors. It is a space occupied for the most part by men. This is borne out by participation rates in outdoor sports. A 2015 Sport England Report on "Getting Active Outdoors: A Study of Demography, Motivation, Participation and Provision in Outdoor Sport and Recreation in England" identified participation rates of 65% males to 35% females. Males were also more dominant in the sub categories of adventurer, thrill seeker, freestyler, challenger, tribe member and learner. Women were slightly more dominant in the categories of fitness in nature and explorer (Sport England, 2015). This is a significantly worse position than that of the US, where the 2017 Outdoor Participation Report noted a gender imbalance of 54% male to 46% female participation in outdoor activity (Outdoor Foundation, 2017). Does this mean that adventure in the outdoors in the UK is a male privilege?

The idea that outdoor adventure is a male privilege is a provocative one for two reasons. Firstly, there are many women who would regard themselves, and be regarded by others, as adventurers. Secondly, no definition of adventure includes the specification that the participant must be male. But this article will suggest that the history of adventure in the UK was dominated by male influence, leaving a legacy of female exclusion, and that key aspects of outdoor adventure privilege masculine traits (which socialisation aligns with the male sex).

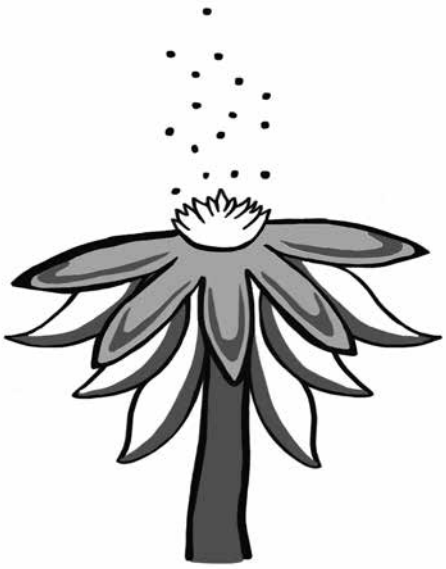
The history of adventure and adventure education in the UK has left a legacy perception that it is a space for men. During the Age of Discovery (1415-late 1600s) women in Europe rarely had the independent means or familial support to facilitate travel and exploration. By the late 19th century, women of independent means were able to participate more readily in outdoor sports and travel, including trips to the Alps. The Ladies' Alpine Club in Britain was founded in 1907 and women completed notable first ascents, sometimes casting off their skirts in favour of breeches as they left the public areas of Alpine towns (Williams, 1973). Whilst by the end of the 19th century women were participating in this new outdoor adventure field, and in many cases alongside and as successfully as men, it was male expeditions that captured the public imagination. Shackleton's planned Trans-Antarctic expedition was the apotheosis of this phenomenon. Described by Winston Churchill as an "adventurer" rather than an "explorer" as the pole had already been reached, Shackleton's desperate struggle for survival captivated the world on his return, and set a standard for arduous, remote and male adventure that seeped far into the 20th century (Gooley, 2013).

The role of militarism in creating a male-dominated environment in adventure should also be highlighted given the large-scale military cataclysms of the 20th century. In Britain, this took the form of the Scout Movement founded by Baden Powell in 1908[1], and the Outward Bound Movement established by Kurt Hahn in 1941 in Aberdovey. Both men were interested in improving the physical fitness and moral character of their (male) charges by arduous, outdoor challenges that encouraged competitiveness and independence (Allin, 2002). When girls were included in the movement, they gained access to programmes designed by men for boys. Simultaneously, where large scale programmes for girls existed before

[1] The Guide Association for Girls was set up in 1909 in response to the Scouts being for boys only. Although there are great opportunities available within the scheme, it is not immune to the pressures of socialization with the report "In Search of Adventure" noting "the lack of qualified leaders and the concerns of parents about safety inhibit the provision of genuinely adventurous activity" (Hunt, 1986 p70).

the 1950s, when courses specifically for girls were provided at Outward Bound, they focused on organised team sports, calisthenics and gymnastics. In fact, the establishment of specialist physical education colleges for women in the UK comes incredibly early, with the first institution founded in 1885, some 45 years before the first male equivalent. However, whilst these colleges embraced the values of competition in some respects, they highlighted the practice of bounded activities conducted under supervision and the ideal of 'being in shape' rather than experiencing adventure (Hargreaves, 1994; Whittingdon, 2006).

Alongside the historical legacy, which unwittingly established outdoor adventure as primarily a male activity in the UK in the 20th century, there are aspects in the way that boys and men are socialised that predisposes their ability and eagerness to access adventure. Before we start down this line of in quiry, the idea of masculine traits and feminine traits should be teased out. Their identification with the biological sexes of male and female needs to be understood as a social construct, and a problematic one. Men are often more constrained by concepts of masculinity than women are by femininity, and women are able to flip between definitions with far more acceptance and ease than men (Hargreaves, 1994). However, characteristics that are seen as relevant to outdoor adventure are identified more as masculine. These include competency, competitiveness and risk taking[2]. Whilst feminine characteristics— including a regard for nature and high levels of intuition—are also identified as important in outdoor adventure, they are drowned out as advantageous by more frequently reported feminine traits such as dependency, incompetence, cooperativeness and physical weakness[3].

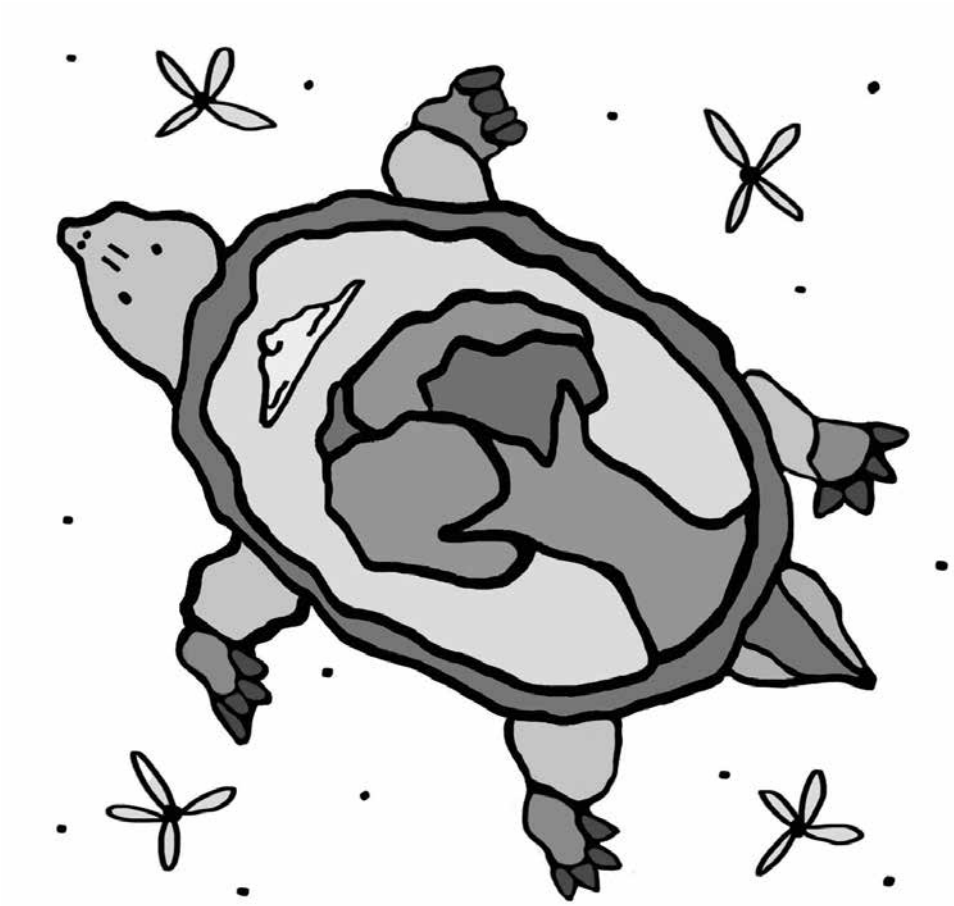


Society values the ability to access the unknown, competitiveness and competency more in men than it does in women. As children, boys are more frequently encouraged to play outside and roam further away from home, whilst girls are kept indoors, and under closer supervision (Allin and West, 2013). Women bear the greater responsibility for child and elder

[2] Identified masculine characteristics include: autonomy, power, competitiveness, strength, determination, authoritarianism (Whittingdon, 2006) active and competitive (Hunt, 1986) active and free roaming (Allin and West, 2013) competition, confidence, strength, toughness and the need to prove oneself (Sharp, 2001) active participants, culture, reason and mastery (Lugg 2003) risk taking, independence, physical competence (Woodward, 2002) physical, aggressive, actions and accomplishments, heterosexuality, dominance (Hargreaves, 1994) competency (Loeffler, 1997).

[3] Identified feminine characteristics include: beauty, compliance, sweetness, niceness, cooperation, cheerfulness, less capable, less physically skilled, poorer decision makers (Whittingdon 2006) supportive (Hunt, 1986) passive, home stayers (Allin and West, 2013) cooperation, emotion, personal development, consensus decision-making and being relationship oriented (Sharp, 2001) passive observers, nature, intuition and nurture (Lugg, 2003) physical weakness, incompetence (Woodward, 2002) glamorous and sexualised, role of mother, wife/girlfriend, vulnerable, dependent (Hargreaves, 1994).

care in many families (reproductive labour), occupying their 'leisure' time and side-lining their opportunities (Collins, 2003; Allin and West, 2013). They also therefore find it harder to be away from home for extended periods to attend residential experiences or undertake longer trips (Woodward, 2002). The socialization of women encourages them to 'put the family first' and to avoid 'dangerous' activity, especially conducted alone (Loeffler, 1997).



The competitive aspect of adventure was solidified by the blurring of the boundaries between exploration and adventure, conquest and resource extraction, and the desire to get to the highest mountaintops, the poles, around the world, and across the deserts in the name of scientific discovery, and later, by the need to 'test' the moral and physical courage of participants. This competitive approach to adventure in a bigger and better way is reflective of the dominance of the male value system in society. As Chapman writes "The whole history of men is one of competition for the objects they value" (Chapman, 1993 pp10). The desire to compete, in what is not (any more) a zero-sum game of adventure, has created a world of adventure defined by 'firsts'. Men establish their dominance over women (and other men) by proving their manhood by engaging in competitive and arduous activities and sports (Wearing, 1998). A disproportionate number of men participating in activities in the outdoors marks it as a male place, which perpetuates the impression that it is not one for women.

The skills required to access the outdoors, and therefore the ability to have adventures there, are also valued more by society as traits in men rather than women. Traditionally, these have been defined as 'hard' and 'soft' skills, although there is now pushback against these terms, for the reasons outlined below. 'Hard' skills are technical and measurable skills such as ropework and navigation. 'Soft' skills are also known as people skills and include group management and communication. Soft skills are less tangible and measurable than hard skills and are (perhaps consequently) given less acclaim and less teaching time in structured courses (Warren, 1996; Sharp, 2001). The

emphasis placed on the acquisition of hard skills privileges men in two ways. Firstly, men are socialised in biomechanical skills from a young age, encouraged to play with building materials, which improves their fine motor skills (Warren, 1996). Secondly, women are socialised to perceive themselves as less competent, which harms their confidence in their abilities and may even, in mixed environments, inhibit them from demonstrating a competent skill-level to avoid emasculating men (Loeffler, 1997; Morse, 1997; Warren, 1996; Hunt, 1986; Whittingdon, 2006).

Presenting adventure as remote and risky operates to maintain the dominance of men. As Warren notes "the wilderness trip is painted by the message bearers of the media and tradition as a scary, uncomfortable and intimidating event" (Warren, 1996 p12). This off-putting message is compounded by the lack of competency felt by women, even women who regularly participate in outdoor activities as instructors (Lugg, 2003). Where women push past the socialised convention of participation in the outdoors being "unfeminine", "butch" (Allin, 2002 p52), "weird", "deviant" or "lesbian" (Loeffler, 1997 p119), they may end up adopting masculine traits to such a degree to succeed in a male dominated environment that they end up being seen as 'superwomen' and therefore unrelatable as role models to other women due to their extreme technical and physical competency (Warren, 1996). The lack of role models, and paucity of access perpetually reinforces the idea of adventure as a male privilege, because it is a physical and virtual space that is dominated by men. This disparity in participation translates into fewer female instructors (Sharp, 2001), which is doubly insidious to both mixed and single sex groups hoping to access the outdoors. Whilst radical feminists would disagree with endorsing a male hegemonic space, women-only courses have had good success in overcoming socialised fears about relative competency, opening the door to the outdoors and its potential for adventure (Libby and Carruthers, 2013). The problem with this is that by opening the door rather than changing the room (Allin and West, 2013) the male dominance of adventure itself remains unchallenged, and it is this construct that is alienating to anyone outside the stereotype, as previously discussed. The archetype of the heroic quest of adventure in this regard is problematic as it develops values of confidence and competence, which do not have the same social value for women as they have for men (Warren, 1996).

The lower participation rates of women in the outdoors in the UK is matched by lower participation rate in sports generally, with 65% of men playing sport weekly, compared to 60% of women (Sport England, 2018). This gap has shown no significant change in the last three years. Given what we know about the positive effects of physical activity on mental and physical health, this is a concern. Outdoor adventure has become rarefied, commodified and privileged. This has disadvantaged not just women, but also anyone who doesn't fit the stereotype of the white, wealthy, educated, heterosexual male. Adventure isn't a determined male privilege, but it is a masculine one, and due to the social construct of the dominant culture (Griffiths, 2013) that makes it in the large part a male one. Women who transgress into the realm of adventure are still outliers and are perhaps less likely to be glorified as pilloried. This is a position not aided by the delivery of adventure education, which is many peoples' first induction, and which is still rebalancing from a legacy of many decades of male dominance.

Whilst the media and corporate interests continue to promulgate an ideal of adventure experiences as increasingly bigger, riskier and more remote, it will be difficult for practitioners and educators to disrupt the perception of adventure as a male privilege. However, there are signs of progress towards a more equitable future. Whilst overall participation rates by women in both outdoor adventure and sports are lower than those of men, the number of women participants is increasing. The recognition by key practitioners that the

world of outdoor adventure and adventure education is a 'macho' world is a first necessary step to potentially reforming practice (Beames, 2006). The ability of like-minded women to connect through social media to demystify access and competency is working alongside women-only courses and groups to encourage more women into the outdoors. The development of micro-adventure (Humphreys, 2014) and slow adventure (Honoré, 2004) is chipping away at the competitive nature of bigger, further and faster. This is important because the current perception of adventure as remote, arduous and risky is alienating to not just many women, but also to those identifying as any gender who feel that outdoor adventure is not for them.

This article has outlined how the history of outdoor adventure in the UK along with gender stereotyping has caused the outdoors to be a space currently dominated by men. Understanding how this has come to be the case might help us as practitioners to look for ways to open the door wide to groups who currently feel excluded. It is hoped that this article will stimulate reflections on the position and experiences of women in the outdoors in Canada, both as educators and participants, and whether they are similar or different to those of women in the UK.

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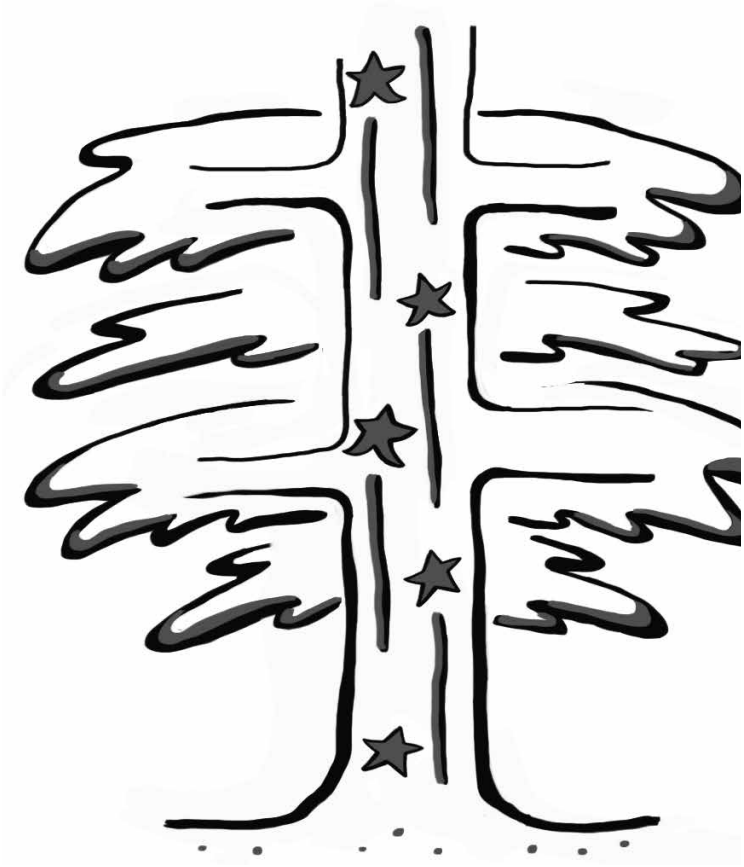

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Cath Hempsall has been a Senior School teacher in the UK for 13 years and is currently completing her MA in Outdoor and Experiential Education at the University of Cumbria.

Critical Reflection and Watercolour Painting: Finding Meaning in the Outdoors Through Art as a Form of Inquiry

By Ryan Kasperowitsch

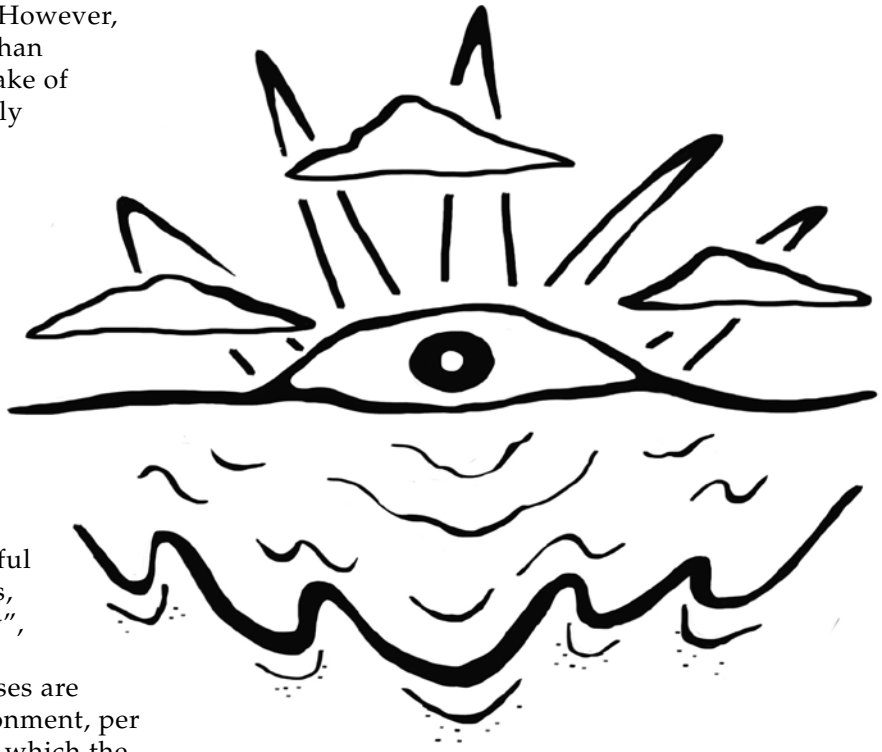
Being an outdoor educator and adventure guide, I have led students and clients of many demographics through wilderness environments, evoking a sense of meaningful learning through a clashing of identity and action upon their world. What I provide through my programs is the opportunity for experience. Not just an experience for the sake of itself, but an experience which requires critical reflection on how identity and reality can be challenged and developed for improvement. John Dewey, a foundational scholar of experiential learning, states that "every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (Dewey, 1938, p. 39). A technique for reflection and making sense of the experience in myself, which I use with my students, is the practice of watercolour painting. With this article, I hope to share my perspective on art practice as a form of inquiry, and pose the question: how can the practice of watercolour painting help reveal aspects of the self and experience, and act as a form of inquiry for identity development and critical reflection in the learning process? I have spent a great deal of time teaching myself to paint watercolours, and it has been through this process that I have learned much about myself, and gained deeper perspectives on life. Connecting literature on experiential learning and art as a form of inquiry, I will share how reflection of experience in outdoor education and the learning process itself can be enriched by artistic practices.

Meaningful Experience Through Communication with Your Environment

Something that outdoor educators typically believe in is the universality of "having an experience". Transcending all races, genders, sexualities, religions, classes, and abilities, is the value of learning through action upon one's world. With a motivation to provide meaningful learning for my students, my career has led me to supply an opportunity for them to experience something outside their comfort zone, take personal action within that experience, and guide reflection in the student to understand their identity in context with their reality. As Freire (1970) states, "thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world", and that "authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication" (p. 50). The communicative relationship I want my students to have is one between the individual and their experience. To bring attention to the individual's conscious self, it is my responsibility to "abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world. "Problem-posing" education, responding to the essence of consciousness – *intentionally* – rejects communiques and embodies communication" (p. 52). The reason I gravitated towards outdoor and adventure education was guided by the question: how can I best facilitate a communication between the individual, their environment, and their experience?

Having found potential for development of identity through meaningful learning in my own lived experiences in Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE), I felt compelled to provide the same opportunities for others. Captivated by the simplistic and romantic idea that outdoor adventure was pure experience, I delved into the field to share these moments with others. As Hildreth (1951) asserts, "self discovery of principles is made possible in a program which provides for experiential learning" (p. 183). That is what my intention was, I felt, as

my career moved forward. However, there was something more than just the experience for the sake of itself. Why was it specifically the wilderness evoked this meaningful learning in myself? Hattie, Marsh, Neill and Richards (1997) provide insight into this relationship with the environment, stating that "the most compelling reason for using the natural environment is that it requires certain responses which are of value: cooperation, clear thinking and planning, careful observation, resourcefulness, persistence and adaptability", and that within the natural environment, "these responses are not demanded by the environment, per se, but rather the manner in which the program forces students to interact with the environment" (p. 43). It was up to me as a leader to guide students into the space where an experience/interaction could be had.



If my feelings of the overall education agenda are for the development of the individual in the areas of identity and his/her place in the world, then it was natural for me to operate in a wilderness environment. "Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) programs focus largely on outcomes related to personal growth, with participants often reporting significant emotional, spiritual, and transcendent experiences as a result of spending time in nature" (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011, p. 238), and with this in mind, I have been motivated across my entire career to guide individuals to experience this profound improvement in the self on their own in communication with the natural world.

Art as Inquiry and Critical Reflection

Upon outlining the connections of experience and meaningful learning as the backdrop for my motivation to help students transform their perspectives related to identity, and subsequently provide the opportunity for personal development within their own hands, I will move to addressing a reflective practice which I have enacted with great success among my students. To help my students make sense of their experience, I have employed the practice of watercolour painting.

In the facilitation of critical reflection sessions in my outdoor education programs, I have used art, more specifically watercolour painting, as a way for students to reflect on their experiences in the outdoors. To first frame an understanding of critical reflection, and how this relates to the meaningful learning which I wish to evoke in my students, Mezirow (1990) refers to this process as:

> a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation. By this definition, reflection would include making inferences, generalizations, analogies,

> discriminations, and evaluations, as well as feeling, remembering, and solving problems. It also seems to refer to using beliefs to make an interpretation, to analyze, perform, discuss, or judge– however unaware one may be of doing so (p. 5).

I have used many different techniques for reflection motivated through this definition, including journal writing, story-telling, prescriptive reflection circles, and even types of theatrical presentations. In my early years of guiding, I most commonly used journal writing, as a transcription of one's thoughts onto paper can help organize and make sense of ideas and feelings related to experience; art is just an alternative textual representation of the same form of inquiry.

Moving forward in my guiding career, I decided to bring in my experience of watercolour painting for my students to use as a reflective practice. Art as a form of inquiry allows students to use alternative ways to critically reflect on their experience, in that

> it is defined broadly as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual use of the artistic process, and the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 29).

Adding to their outdoor experience, the act of producing the art provides "aesthetic experiences that integrate knowing, doing and making: complexity through a third space" (Irwin & Cosson, 2004, p. 34). It is in the process, and interpretive reflection, which students can evoke different ways of knowing, wherein art can provide an alternative to writing as a form of reflection on their experience.

Leavy (2009) discusses how arts-based

Figure 1. Island of Tranquility (Kasperowitsch, 2017)

practices are often useful in studies of the self, identity, and socio-cultural phenomena, and that through critical reflexivity, individuals can evolve their understanding of lived experience through artistic expression. Findley and Knowles (1995) expand further on this stating that through art practices, individuals can "value imaginative representations for their expanded dimension of including that which cannot be seen, but is intuitively grasped" (p. 118). It has been through art practice as a reflective technique that both my students and I have revealed unconscious connections to experiences, and effectively made them conscious. Revealing the unknown through art as a liminal space offers the opportunity to express that which cannot be shown through traditional means, therefore making the unknown known.

Furthermore, Irwin and Cosson (2004) express that "art and writing unite the visual and textual by complementing, refuting, or enhancing one another. Image and text do not duplicate, but rather teach something different, yet similar" (p. 31). There is an overlap between the interpretation and art itself, but through individual representation and reflection, there can be advanced understandings of identity and phenomena. Sullivan (2006) discusses the art process as one that helps the individual understand their lived experience more deeply, stating that "understanding emerges within the process of media experimentation, and this performative knowledge can be likened to more traditional grounded strategies such as observation and empirical confirmation" (p. 31). What I draw from this representation of art practice is that through the creation of art forms one is able to explore the making of the final product and use the process as a form of inquiry. It is in this way that I find art as a form of inquiry into nuanced ways of understanding the self and experience.

Watercolour Reflections Upon the Learning Process

Sharing one's artwork can be simultaneously liberating and anxiety provoking, as it allows one to share their hard work and creative perspective, but also reveals inner conscious thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Through critical reflection and interpretation within the artistic process of my watercolour practice, I can reveal some of the personal findings of philosophy and perspective as my art practice relates to education as a whole. These paintings were done upon completion of my first year in the PhD program at Brock University while on personal outdoor trips, and expose the benefits of praxis at the intersection of outdoor education and art-based inquiry.

When creating a watercolour, the artist builds the piece through creating washes of colour layering over each other. Working through different techniques of wetting the paper, and then adding colour, the artist layers the work gradually as they move into the foreground of the painting. *Island of Tranquility* (Figure 1), was created through a series of washes, with the first one being a yellow ochre band across the middle of the paper. This needs to dry before proceeding onto the subsequent washes. Adding layers of cobalt blue and creating a gradient wash towards darker in the top and bottom provide a sense of depth and perspective.

My experience through my educational career, and how I enact my individual learning, is similar to this process of building washes onto each other. One lesson may provide just a slight understanding of a concept or theory, but through a period of rumination on the learning, personal knowledge and understanding has a chance to dry onto the page that is my mind. This prepares me to receive further information, as the previous lesson has had a chance to sink in. So, as I go through each lesson, my understanding of concepts and theories are built like a series of washes in my mind, each with

Figure 2. Deadwood of Winter (Kasperowitsch, 2017)

a chance to dry, and each time providing a more contextual picture of acquired knowledge.

In my painting of *Deadwood of Winter* (Figure 2), I started with a vague and implied background of a forest in the distance. It was not until painting the foreground tree which both I as the artist, or the viewer, would be able to make sense of the hazy backdrop. This technique called aerial perspective, provides context to the background as closer objects become stronger in colour, value, and more detailed. Similar to the learning process, new information leads to contextual understanding of previous information. So, whether it be examining and observing areas of learning in my own life, my students' lives, or even an interaction with my surrounding environment, the foreground and details of the present, provide a contextual understanding of the past. Working in tandem with my previous artistic interpretation, these paintings represent my own perspectives and philosophies related to education.

Look Longer, Feel Deeper

I have found both in my students and myself, relationships towards the environment strengthened through painting in the outdoors. When an artist looks at their subject, a deeper connection can be gained through the pointed focus on their environment, and I have observed my students looking at their surroundings with more love and respect after engaging in watercolour painting. Even in myself, for example, when I look at a tree, I no longer see an abstract object which can be objectively categorized as a tree, but rather I see more deeply into the shapes, the colours, and the intricacies in the bark and leaves which make it unique. I look longer at, and feel deeply connected with the subject. It may be possible to

evoke a stronger relationship between the individual and their natural environment through art, as a way to educate students with a critical environmental desire. Could it be through this connection of adventure and art, that individuals may find greater meaning and understanding of experience in the outdoors leading to a genuine interaction with their environment? Providing the opportunity for students to interpret their experience through reflective artwork may provide insight into ways of learning in the same way I have presented here.

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Critical Thinking in Controversial Times

By Tobin Day

As teachers, we occasionally find ourselves in situations when significant and unexpected questions need answers quickly. It feels as though a split second decision could have long-term consequences for students, colleagues, administration and personal beliefs about education. Lewington (2019) states that teachers need to use their professional judgement, relying on "pedagogical training, ethical values and ethos of lifelong learning" to make what she calls increasingly high-stakes choices. My judgement was tested during a moment like this in March, when my students decided to walk out on me.

During the spring of 2019, I was running an integrated outdoor education program in the small city of Owen Sound. My class contained an eclectic mix of students ranging from workplace to university level with a few German exchange students adding to the diversity. Most students sign up for the promise of three overnight trips (winter camp, spring hike and a canoe trip in Algonquin Provincial Park) and hopefully, in part, because of the rich nature of integrated learning. Many students had little or no background in environmental issues or science prior to enrolling in the program.

For bureaucratic reasons I will leave out, the program matched my geography/science/outdoor education qualifications resulting in an environmental science/resource management heavy program. Through the process of conducting a school-wide waste audit, students' eyes were quickly opened to the unpleasant reality of how much plastic our school sent to the landfill and how destructive plastics can be on ecosystems and human health.

While we studied this multifaceted issue, and attempted to make social change at our generally unecologically minded high school, I would periodically ask students if they had heard of Greta Thunberg. This 16 year old activist had, by this point, inspired 2,056,408 youth to protest climate inaction in 135 different countries (https://www.fridaysforfuture.org/events/list). Until late March, my students always answered, 'no'.

On Friday, March 22 students returned from their dual credit at Georgian College and let me know, ten minutes before the

Practical Details about the ECHO Program

This program ran for two years at Owen Sound District Secondary School. It was the foundation of the Environment SHSM. Its last configuration of courses included:

- Environmental Science (SVN3M or E)
- Environmental Resource Management (CGR4M or E)
- Outdoor activities (PAD 3 or 4)
- Co-operative Education
- Dual credit in Environment Issues at Georgian College (college and high school credit granted)

The 2018 version of the program included Indigenous World Perspectives and Horticulture. The program is not running next year due to budget cut related circumstances.

start of class, that they all planned to skip last period and protest climate inaction at City Hall. And that was my moment of choice.

I had a blanket permission form previously approved for day trips in Owen Sound. My decision: turn the protest into a field trip, or mark everybody absent.

Take a moment, think it through. How would your administration react if a photograph of your class conducting a surprise protest appeared in the paper (especially only two days after a highly structured and organized student walkout inspired by Ontario's recent cuts to education)? How would parents and guardians react to an unapproved absence? How would you feel telling students it is not approved to raise their voices and ask for change? Which needs would you prioritize?

I had an awkward text conversation with my principal, let her know of my decision (field trip!) and accompanied my class down to City Hall. We had FUN! In the spirit of student leadership, I mostly remained in the background and intervened only once–when a shy, polite student appeared trapped in a conversation with an overly persistent passerby. The media did not show up, but students interacted with a wide variety of pedestrians and successfully caught the attention of staff inside City Hall who appeared to move to quieter locations.

Overall, the experience was positive, boosted students' confidence as well as their hopes about making changes. They quickly decided future protests were in order and that decision lead to the truly hard part of this experience for me as an educator.

My principal, supportive of the original protest, was not pleased with the possibility of weekly walkouts. She had the following requests:

- Hold tests or other high-stake activities on Friday afternoons
- Call all parents/guardians to communicate that we do not approve the protest
- Call the exchange company responsible for the German students
- I should never attend any future protests

Before you jump to any conclusions about my principal, you should know she is kind,

conscientious and supportive of outdoor education. She is also responsible for the safety of over 1000 students and their teachers as well as our recovering image and sense of culture after a controversial school merge.

Even so, her instructions felt like an impossible request between keeping my students and administration happy, while promoting change in our conservative town.

Friends and colleagues helped me through a thoughtful weekend, eventually revealing a way forward. I wrote a letter to all parents and guardians (but not the exchange company) explaining all the curricular based ways, such as the waste audit, that students were using their voices in addition to this message:

> "On Friday March 22, the ECHO class organized their own climate change protest at Owen Sound City Hall. The students organized this event completely independently. It is important to note that the OSDSS EHCO teacher and administration encourage students to find and use their voices in ways that do not lead to missing important curriculum and course work. In other words, we cannot approve anyone skipping classes."

The only response I received was from a parent offering to arrange a guest speaker with expertise in one of our major ecology topics.

I also worked with the students to modify the protest time. Moving the protest to 2:10 p.m., when we finished our last class, allowed me to teach Friday afternoon. It also allowedfor the students to appear to skip class. These actions appeased my principal and gave my students the chance to continue to push for change. And push they did.

My class kept up their protests until the end of the semester, building a community of supportive adults and other youth or children. Some weeks my class protested alone, once they gathered 77 people–an impressive number given our location.

My journey as a quiet supporter of the protests was not over. There was a disconnection between the community adult supporters and the students. Social media created the divide: the teenagers used Instagram to organize themselves and the adults Facebook. The main student leader breached the gap as did one or two of the adults but many of the older activists in the Owen Sound community did not join Instagram to follow the students' lead. On Facebook, these adults brought up a significant controversy when an outwardly homophobic man (who fights for the right to fly the straight pride flag at City Hall) took access to the megaphone as a climate protest. My students were exposed to the divisions that sometimes reveal themselves as you get closer and closer to the core of activist communities.

Positive connections were forged as well. Ole, the main student leader, was invited to be a speaker at a youth roundtable on the environment and almost my entire class participated in the event. Students were also included in a local film entitled *Resilience,* highlighting local opportunities for change, and inspired a "Barn Academy" focused on farming and social change. All

Practical tips from the frontlines of student climate protests:

- If possible, keep your administration informed.
- Be aware that protests attract people with firm beliefs. Strongly minded vegans and the straight pride advocate forced us to confront controversy within the climate change advocacy community.
- Encourage students to make email/social media accounts specifically for their activism to ensure their privacy and safety
- Ensure that all students have choice to participate or not.

of these opportunities became significant threads in the fabric of the integrated program and whenever possible, I linked their 'extracurricular' protests to our official studies in the program.

At the end of the semester, the class scattered across the world to summer jobs and home countries. Without student leadership, the protests fizzled and I am unsure if they will start again in the fall. I remain grateful to the students for striving to make change, and for pushing me to become a better educator. Their fight has also inspired me to consider how I can address the climate change in future classes.

As the dangers of climate change cease to be on the distant horizon, but rather a part of our daily lives, we need to address these environmental and resulting social changes with our students. Referring to her work with researching climate change education in Canada Vamvalis's (2019) suggests that many educators feel that climate change should still be framed as a controversial issue. Instead, Vamvalis (2019) urges that schools should be sites of change and we should challenge students to think critically about which particular solutions are the ones we should adopt. Climate change, or the climate crisis or emergency as the Guardian has become describing it, is going to be a defining experience in our lives. As Barrack Obama succinctly stated (quoting an American governor), "we are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it" (2014). In the midst of education cutbacks and, in my case, an ongoing fight to carve out outdoor/environmental education programs in Bluewater DSB schools, we must not forget the bigger fight for climate stability. We can frame many subjects through a climate change lens and, as I learned, support students by making the best possible decisions when facing split-second decisions.

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Tobin Day lives and teaches in the Grey/Bruce area, despite her firm teenage belief she would do neither when she was "old". Two of her daily pleasures are living at the boundary of a dark sky preserve and close enough to a waterfall to hear it from home.

Peeing in the Woods, or The Necessity of Hjemstedslaere, Today

By Chris Peters

The day closed in suddenly, until we were immersed in a grey wall of rain that pounded down. Underfoot, the cliff we stood upon was slippery; the roil and suck of the North Atlantic breaking against the shoreline beneath us.

We would find out later that it had been 'splittin' rocks' in St. John's. But that high-front, bringing with its clear skies and warm temperatures in town, forced the emerging low down upon the Avalon Peninsula's Southern Shore. So, from Cape Broyle to Cappahayden the day alternated between the thick swirls of fog chased about by the wind, and cascading downfalls of rain.

Right exactly where we were.

The students were sullen and drenched. Some of them had tried to 'lighten up' their hike by playing tunes on BlueTooth speakers, but had succeeded only in draining their batteries and data plans. I encouraged and cajoled. But my inspirational cry, in the midst of the deluge, that we press on because we were only, "an hour and half, two hours max from camp" was received like the news that they had an exam tomorrow.

So we trudged, me keeping up a happy line of questions and stories and exclamations that landed with all the effect of squirting citronella oil into the boreal during black fly season. They were not happy. Their backs hurt, their feet were wet, they were sweating. Some of this, no doubt was for effect. Anyone who has led an outdoor trip, or been in a classroom can comment on the impact of 'Group Think' on the well-being of any gathering of people. All it takes is the influence of one person saying, "Hey! This is great!" to lift moods.

Likewise, a couple of people muttering dark oaths under their breath can quickly infect a whole swath.

We were moving though. Perhaps 30 minutes from camp, however one of my students asked, "When are we going to get there because I really have to go to the bathroom?"

I swept my hand around grandly and suggested that anywhere, really would be a good spot. We had gone over bathroom protocol in the woods. *This* was a great time to practice.

"No, but you don't understand," the student went on in a hurry. "I have never gone in the woods before. I need a toilet!"

I started to laugh. Which probably sounded cruel. But the 'toilet' at the campsite was a rustic seat overlooking the boreal into the Atlantic proper, entirely open to the elements. And it would turn out to be accessed only by clambering up a mud slickened trail, grabbing at tearing branches of spruce and fir for leverage.

Now the whole group had stopped, their faces falling at this news. "But we've been waiting all day!" they chorused. "We really need to go!" We had started the hike at 10:30am. It was closing in on 3:00PM.

Hjemstedslaere?

> "*Markland children, along with doing household chores attended school, which included instruction in the Norwegian subject* **Hjemstedslaere**, *or homestead knowledge. The subject involved cooking, carpentry, the cultivation of a school garden, the running of a dairy and the study of nature…*"
>
> —Voyage to Discovery p. 175

The Great Depression of 1929 hit Newfoundland (and Labrador) particularly hard. The economy sagged when the price of saltcod and the other natural resources it was built upon floundered and drowned.

The Dominion government, suddenly responsible for hundreds and then thousands of needy dependents with little means of feeding and warming themselves wanted to declare bankruptcy and stop paying back the accrued debts of The Great War. This resulted in Britain stepping in and taking over the government and effectively returning Newfoundland to the status of a colony, governed by an appointed Commission of Government (Higgins, 2007).

These officials did their best to right the course of this place. For a long time, Newfoundland had been governed by the whims of the merchants who controlled the saltcod trade and the seal hunt. Here, in the midst of so much change was an opportunity to modernize this island through education, the rule of law, and by making the people stand on their own two feet, financially and politically. So they were receptive when a former soldier, William Lidstone, alongside nine others and their families applied for a land grant and the upfront money to make themselves *self-sufficient*. After due consideration, the government would grant Lidstone the equivalent of two years relief and land to turn from boreal forest into working farmland (Handcock 1994).

This was the beginning of what would be called the Land Settlement Scheme. However, there were strings attached. The government expected a return on their investment. To that end, trustees were enlisted to watch over the scheme and make reports on the successes or failures of the venture (Higgins 2007).

Lidstone and the others were granted land in Markland (Norse for *forest land*, believed to have been Labrador), which fit the trustees criteria that the dependents be far enough away so as to make leaving difficult, but close enough to St. John's that they could be easily monitored. The first group proved successful enough that Thomas Lodge, the Commissioner of Public Utilities at the time, was of the opinion that more communities like Markland—with co-operative housing, farming arrangements and non-denominational schools—could become the future communities of Newfoundland (Handcock 1994).

Frederick Emerson was a lawyer by training, but a musician and advocate for the Newfoundland Spirit by inclination. He was also a Markland trustee and under his suggestions, **Hjemstedslaere** was included in the schooling of Markland children. Hjemstedslaere was, "(homestead knowledge) consisting of history, geography and civics. It involved the cultivation of a school garden, the care of a dairy, collecting wild flowers and studying the work adults were doing on the farm…" (Hancock 1994).

But the course of study suggested was more nuanced and encompassing. It was an idea developed by Anna Sethne, a Norwegian educator and philosopher who was hugely influential in the 1920s and 1930s. She wrote a book titled the same in 1928.

Sethne envisioned an interdisciplinary course of study for the first three grades, wholly organic in nature. Students would hike in forests, take note of the seasons. They would follow adults and look at the jobs they did—farming, logging, carpentry, gathering water, cooking—to better appreciate the connection between nature and the place-based context of their lived community. The aim was "to foster a more sensuous and concrete experience" for future learning in academic course offerings like geography, history, or biology. The world around them became their place of study and their curriculum. They became grounded to a place. So rather than translated as homestead knowledge, Hjemstedslaere would be better understood as Home Environment Learning (Aagre, 2016).

In that context, Hjemstedslaere might just be the means to help students who have never peed, or spent meaningful time in the natural world around them.

The Need for Home Environment Learning, Again

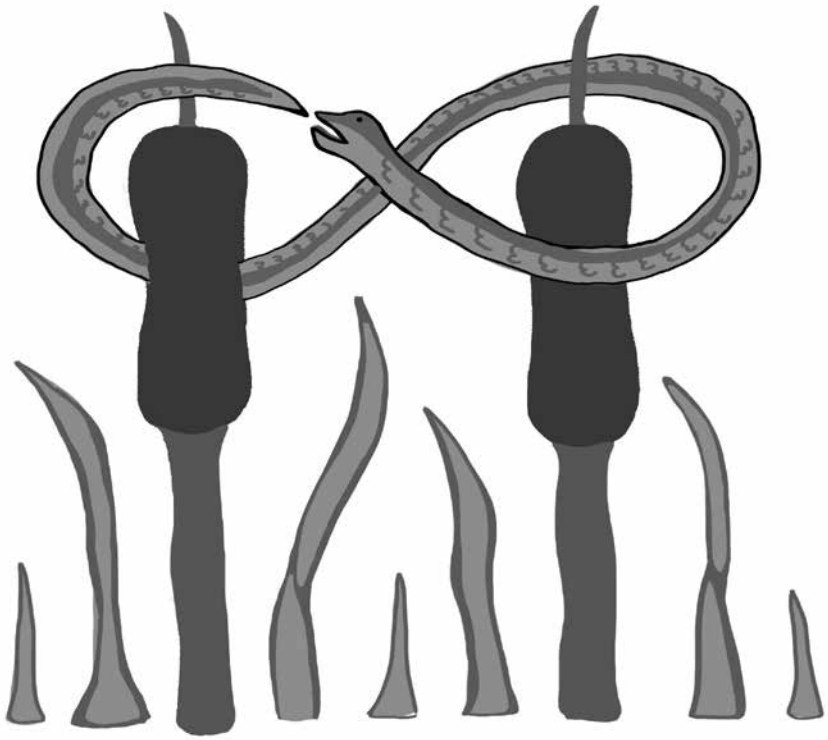
> "*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.*"
>
> —John Muir, My first summer in the Sierra (2015)

The Great Depression marked a societal and economic revolution, in the sense that jobs and money disappeared and people and governments had to scramble to survive.

At first glance, things aren't so dire in 2019. And yet, great swathes of Siberia are on fire. Have been since June. Much of Central Asia is blanketed under smoke. The fires are like the unwanted standard herald of the great drying out of the Arctic (Greenpeace International, 2019). The Arctic has, trapped in ice and permafrost, massive deposits of carbon and methane. The release of which would tip the climate crisis into a new and stark reality. And the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world (Martin 2019). Europe has sweltered under successive heatwaves, and July set a new record for heat in a month, globally! Worse still, glaciers across Europe and in particular the Greenland ice sheet—a massive contributor to global climate—set records for melt (Harvey, 2019). Oh, and the Brazilian rainforest is being destroyed at a record clip, worrisome for a forest described as 'Earth's Lung' (Farand, 2019)

It all gets a bit overwhelming. How can Home Environment Learning, or peeing in the woods do anything to combat this?

My suggestion is that much of teaching and learning has come to reflect the global world we live in. We seem to have forgotten the places we *live* in. By way of example, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador (and many citizens too) now hopes that the price of oil will climb higher and make viable again the hard to reach oil and gas deposits found under hundreds of feet of heaving seas. Yet this ignores the centuries old tradition of harvesting from the seas the rich sealife which flourishes here. In fact, offshore oil extraction places the slow recovery of the cod, the annual migration of capelin which bring with it whales and sharks and an air armada of birds\(puffins and gannets, kittiwakes and petrels and others besides) and the phytoplankton blooms *in the very places where oil extraction takes place,* in very real peril (Carter 2019).



Because there has been a severing of the connection between people and the land (and here in Newfoundland, the sea) we don't notice the loss. We are numbed by distance from the effects our actions have upon the world we depend on. To have never peed in the woods is but a symptom of this loss. The same could be said of

never walking under a forest canopy in a rainstorm, of sheltering behind a boulder during a sudden snow squall, or splitting wood with a maul. This might sound quaint, but I would suggest they represent points of connection between ourselves and the natural world.

Norwegian philosopher Sigmund Kvaloy Setreng suggested that, "the overriding political goal of all concerned for the future of the world must be the creation of ecological and social balance in which humans may *live in harmony with nature and at peace with themselves* (emphasis mine)" (Henderson & Jensen, 2015).

Until our young people (and, frankly the rest of us) feel as comfortable in the natural world—including using the bathroom where there isn't a toilet—as they do in a classroom, or on a tablet, or keeping their Snap streaks alive, then we are all in real trouble.

Which is why we need to revisit Hjemstedslaere, Home Environment Learning. Again.

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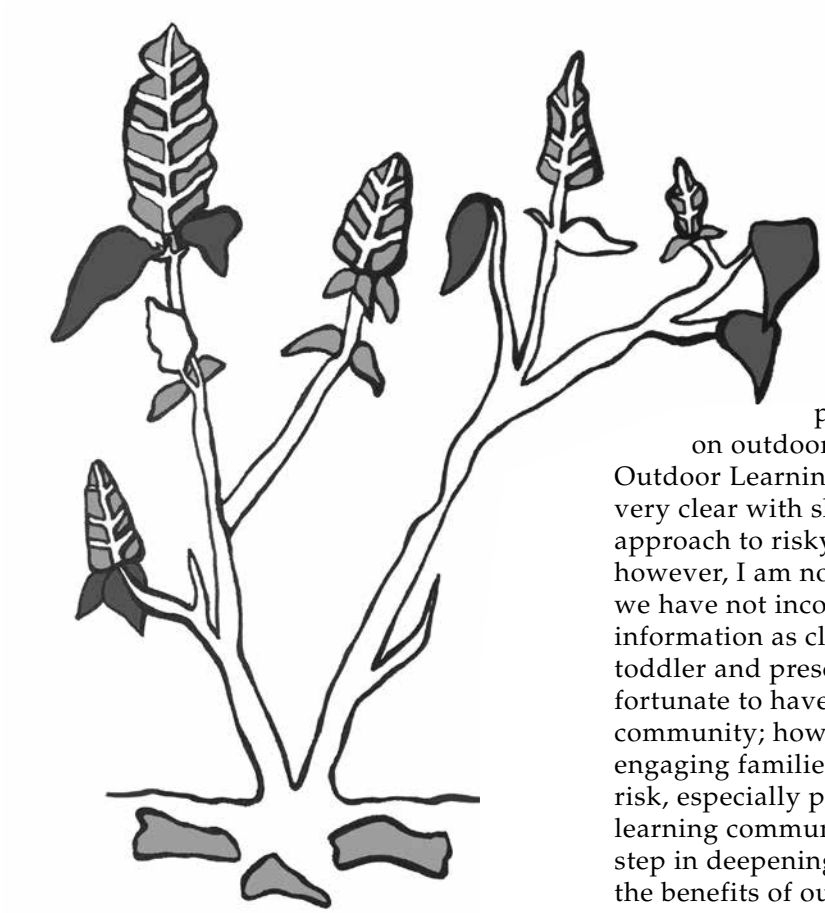
Reactions from Reading *Advancing Outdoor Play and Early Childhood Education: A Discussion Paper* by the Lawson Foundation

By Kimberly Squires

Outdoor play has become an increasingly popular topic in the field of early learning and care over the last ten years. In fact, in recent years, my work as Pedagogical Leader at the University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre has focused on this topic. As a Centre, we have been considering how we can help the children in our care more authentically connect to and create lasting and meaningful relationships with the natural world. We provide licensed care to 121 toddler-and preschool-aged children each day, which means that we develop relationships with approximately 160 families each year. Outdoor play is a critical part of our licensed programs and they frequently spend more than the legislated two hours of time outside per day. In fact, we have recently significantly invested in a complete reconstruction of our outdoor learning environments to move from more traditional playgrounds to naturalized playgrounds. As a further commitment to outdoor learning, we have also developed a seasonal outdoor learning program for school-age children that incorporates our on-campus Arboretum. The children and educators in this program spend at least 80% of their day outside engaging in a variety of hikes, explorations, and activities. It is also important to note that, within our context on the University of Guelph campus, we act as an early learning laboratory school by contributing to research and teaching over 60 undergraduate practicum students studying to become Registered Early Childhood Educators.

While reading the Lawson Foundation's *Advancing Outdoor Play and Early Childhood Education: A Discussion Paper*, I recognized many of my existing ideas surrounding the importance of outdoor early learning experiences but also noticed new ideas that will inform my future work related to the six major themes that were discussed. Each theme prompted me to think about how our Centre could improve our practices and how we could more meaningfully support our children, families, students, and community members. In particular, I found the themes of adopting a multi-sector ecosystems lens, integrating Indigenous curriculum, building support for risk in outdoor play, and making outdoor play pedagogy explicit in post-secondary early childhood education training especially impactful for my work. The discussion questions throughout the paper also encouraged me to reflect on my current understandings and practices, while the proposed actions offered useful and tangible next steps-—a barrier that often impedes our progress. We can have the best of intentions, but until we understand how to reflect these intentions in our practices it will be challenging to see change.

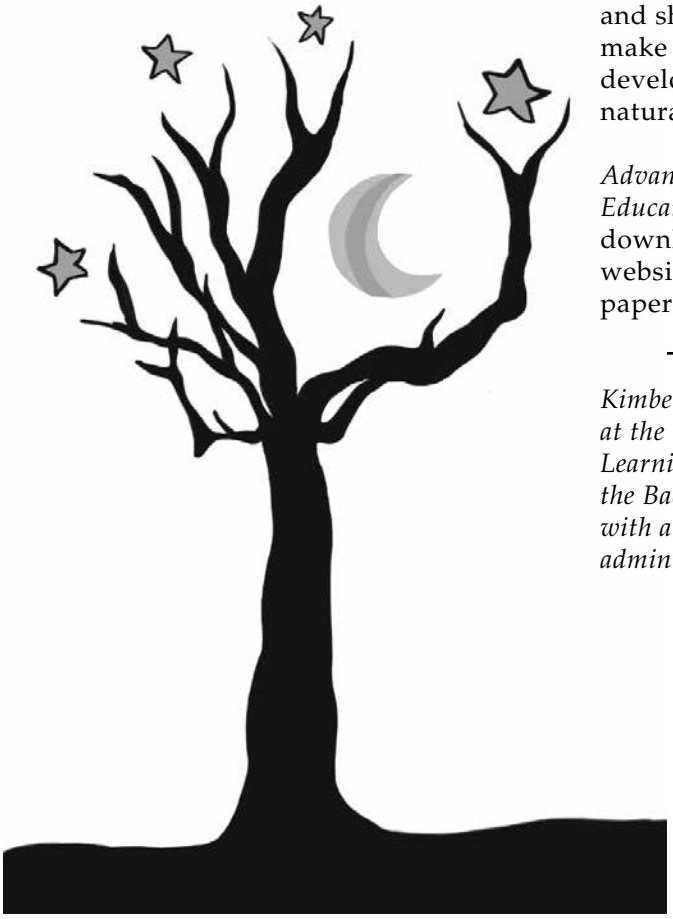
A key message that stuck with me throughout the discussion paper was that we cannot and should not do this work alone. At the beginning of the document, the authors state that there are many stakeholders who could benefit from the discussion paper. This served as an important reminder of the various contexts that I personally represent within my work with children, families, and students: a member of non-profit organization, post-secondary instructor, and researcher. It is important for me to consider each of these perspectives in any decisions that I make and actions that I take. While explaining the ecosystem lens of outdoor play, the authors discuss the various sectors, disciplines, and stakeholders who need to be involved for meaningful change to occur within the field. Later in the paper, they also mention the various international perspectives who offered their stories during the Symposium. Within our context,



we at the CCLC have thought deeply about our own pedagogical decisions and actions, but this discussion paper made me step back and take a more abstract view of outdoor play and to consider my place within this wider ecosystem. How can we create meaningful networks and alliances within this field? How can we work together to increase the quality of outdoor play experiences for children in early learning and care programs? What impact do our actions related to outdoor play have on others within our community and within the field as a whole? It is important for us to be continuously sharing our knowledge, seeking out alternative perspectives, and advocating for outdoor play within our broader community. Connecting all of these pieces is a daunting task; however, I found it empowering to consider exactly how much we *can* do to advocate for outdoor play.

It is essential that we consider all members of our learning community. As mentioned, within our Centre, this includes many families and undergraduate students. While reading through the section on the theme of building support for risk, I was prompted to consider each of these perspectives and how they might perceive risk and risky play. With such a focus on outdoor play in our seasonal Outdoor Learning Program, we have been very clear with sharing our pedagogical approach to risky play with these families; however, I am now left wondering why we have not incorporated the same information as clearly within our regular toddler and preschool programs. We are fortunate to have a very supportive family community; however, more intentionally engaging families in conversations about risk, especially prior to them joining our learning community, is an important next step in deepening understandings about the benefits of outdoor play. Additionally, as an undergraduate teaching institute it is important for us to consider how effectively we are supporting preservice Early Childhood Educators with their understanding of and training related to risk and outdoor play. Over the years, I have had students ask about various risky behaviours that they have observed in our outdoor learning environment and have explained our approach to them. This topic has often come up fluidly throughout the students' on-site experiences with us; however, the topic of outdoor play deserves more intentional recognition within their learning. Taking a more formal approach to integrating training related to outdoor play while emphasizing the importance of outdoor play within our undergraduate teaching will be a critical step in enhancing this knowledge amongst the preservice educators with whom we work. In fact, after further considering the new paradigm for early childhood education described in this paper, I will be integrating more parallel practice outdoor play experiences in my teaching of third-year undergraduate students.

With further awareness of alternative perspectives comes a need for us to consider cross-cultural understandings between Western and Indigenous perspectives. In the discussion paper, Dr. Angela James encourages us to consider many key Indigenous values and their visibility within our programs, such as Elders' love for children, parents as first teachers, holistic developmental understandings, spiral learning, storytelling, and relationships to people, place and time. Reading through the "assessment" that she suggested, I was able to consider how these values might currently be visible, or not visible, within our programs. We have worked on bringing Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into our pedagogical approach over the last several years; however, we have not felt successful in meeting this goal. Like the barriers mentioned within the paper, as non-Indigenous educators we have struggled with the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous viewpoints into our work with children and families. We have connected with local Elders and members of Indigenous communities but are cautious due to the potential of misappropriating cultural understandings within our programs. Though a "road map" may not exist, I am left considering these values and the ways that we can continue to support children in learning both *from* and *with* the land.



After reading *Advancing Outdoor Play and Early Childhood Education: A Discussion Paper*, I am left with many reflections and questions, but also several tangible next steps that I am eager to explore within my future work. Through continually strengthening my relationships with others in our outdoor play ecosystem, I can better connect my work and develop allies that can help me advocate for the importance of outdoor play. By learning from each other, considering the impact of our actions, and sharing our knowledge, we can make a difference in children's learning, development, and relationships with the natural world.

Advancing Outdoor Play and Early Childhood Education: A Discussion Paper can be downloaded from the Lawson Foundation website, https://lawson.ca/op-discussion-paper/

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.

The Invention of Snatch-Fall: Risk Assessments and Empathy

By Laura Molyneux

A sense of challenging oneself is an important part of child development. The perception of risk is unique to each individual child. Some children may find the feelings of sliding down a hill or slipping on the ice overwhelming, while others have mastered these skills and perceive them as simple and enjoyable activities.

Forest school can provide for a child's need to challenge themselves physically through the six categories of activities that can be defined as risky play. They include speed, height, tools, elements, rough and tumble, and disappearing (Grey, 2014). Through these activities, children learn not only the physical skills of hand-eye coordination, balance and body awareness,they also learn how to problem solve, learn resiliency and overcome anxiety and apprehension.

Activities such as tree climbing, tool use, mud puddle play, hiking outside the boundary with a team, visiting the chickens and sliding/rolling down a hill are all activities that our school does regularly during programming. In order to assess risky play, we carefully weigh the difference between the hazards (situations that can cause significant harm to a child) and the sense of risk that is manageable and beneficial to a child's development. Daily site checks are done and Risk-Benefit Assessments are carried out for every activity we plan during a session. In addition to these, a dynamic risk assessment is performed for each activity based on the knowledge we have about a child's level of development, competency in the area being challenged, personality and conditions of the activity (i.e., is the climbing tree icy today?). These risk-benefit assessments allow us to weigh the skills a child will learn through participation and the potential harm that could occur.

Children develop their own self-regulation of risky play when provided the opportunity to experience risky play and given the opportunity to make their own choices over their own bodies.

The Invention of Snatch-Fall

Snatch-fall was invented in the Fall of 2015 by two children who needed the opportunity to experience big body play. The game began as these two children running and crashing into each other in the middle of the forest play area. Snatch-fall is the type of game that many ECEs immediately veto the hazards of the game, particularly inside, are too great. However, our program allowed us to document the process and collect anecdotal evidence to

support our policies that risky play has a place in forest school.

Risk Mitigation

The first part of involving the children in the risk mitigation process was to host a problem-solving circle. Problem solving circles allow all voices to be heard and to allow the children to maintain control over their decisions. Educators may identify problems or hazards we are witnessing (people's feelings, unsafe areas, etc.) and then the children weigh-in the solutions to the problem (see Pathways spring 2019, The Air Contest, for more information on problem solving methods).

The educator identified that playing snatch-fall in the forest play area was not only disrupting the other children but also identified several hazards to playing a pushing game in a small wooded area.

The children identified that the meadow would be a safer place to play.

Once we were in the meadow the other children began to join us in the game. Once again this created the need for a problem-solving circle as children had different levels of comfort with big body play.

The children who were most comfortable with the intense nature of snatch-fall suggested they create a wrestling area outside of the regular play zone. This allowed children to know they were entering the "snatch-fall zone". Those less comfortable with big body play quickly left the "snatch-fall zone" and continued playing elsewhere.

Creating Environments of Consent

The critical piece of big body play is the idea of consent. Risky big body play is only successful if consent is built into the community standards ("rules") from the beginning. As a game like snatch-fall begins the educators immediately check in before allowing the game to continue. This can be as simple as "is everyone okay with what's happening?" or it may be more of an elaborate circle to establish community standards. Educators continue to monitor all big body games, remaining neutral, and watching all children for visible or audible signs that they are no longer consenting to the game. At any point during the game the educator will poll the children individually to ensure everyone is still comfortable with the game and can end the game if the community standards are not being followed or if children are demonstrating that the game is no longer enjoyable.

The Power of Consent

Educators support children to understand the following concepts of consent. At any point during big body play the children know that educators will end any activities if the following concepts of consent aren't being followed:

- Consent can be given or taken away at anytime: People can change their minds whenever they want and we have to stop when people change their mind.
- Consent must be sought: We have to ask EVERY time we want to play a game like snatch-fall.
- No means no. Non-response means no: You HAVE to hear "yes" or "it's okay" before you proceed.

How Snatch-Fall Ends

When children are allowed to experience their own limits, the relationship between them and the educator are strengthened. Big body play often creates an unnecessarily antagonistic relationship between the educator and the children in the name of safety. This can cause children to approach this game in secret or take other risks without the mitigating support of a trained adult. Instead snatch-fall came to an organic end:

End of Day One: Educator vetoed the game after 20 minutes to establish community standards.

End of Week One: Most children identify snatch-fall as an "unfun" game. Only two children continue to play.

End of Month One: Children half-heartedly ask to play each session but each time game naturally dissolves into something else. This continuous asking is identified by the educators as children reaffirming the relationship between the children and the educator.

End of Year One: The inventor of snatch-fall and I met for a summer camp a year later, during the camp we had the following conversation:

"Remember that game that we invented? The one in the meadow? I don't think I want to play that today. It wasn't always very fun."

References

Grey, P. (2014, April 7). *Risky Play: Why Children Love It and Need It*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com

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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.

Wood Ain't Just Wood: A Lesson About the Properties of Wood

By Bob Henderson

Fewer and fewer people these days are using wood burning fireplaces for heating and/or aesthetics. Heck, when I was determined to switch from a gas fireplace to a wood burning insert, in a new home, I was repeatedly reminded, "but you already have gas!" Why switch to messy, smelly, more work wood. Part of my answer to the confused installer was, "but I really like the work". This is not my main discussion point though; I'm wondering about the knowledge of wood use. So similarly, I have found that fewer and fewer people these days are camping and burning wood burning as a main source of heat for cooking. It follows that as less and less wood burning is practiced when camping or at home; less knowledge about the properties of wood type is understood. Correspondingly, more and more folks are going to be disheartened by the quality of their fires to the point where you can wrongly blame the fire as an activity NOT the fire maker.

If fire lighting and maintenance is deemed valuable still (and I think it should be for camping—in the right places—at home, and for survival knowledge if nothing else) then what follows is an activity/lesson to help students "experientially" gain knowledge of various wood properties. This is important because all wood ain't just wood and knowing the differences will make or break or "smoke out" your fire.

The Lesson

Take equal amounts of similarly rolled up newsprint or birch bark as fire starter. Then make fire piles of starter separated four feet apart. Add fire piles of kindling ready for ignition. You will start five fires in a long line ready to light. Have prepared, on the ready, one wood type per fire. In the Canadian Shield—most of Canada—I suggest you use cedar, pine, poplar, birch and maple as the wood choices for your five fires. Spruce, tamarack and balsam of course are optional. You will have a similar fire kindling construction with similarly cut sizes of kindling followed by large pieces enough to maintain your exclusive wood fires for fifteen minutes.

Have students start the fires at the same time then have the group stand back and watch the properties of each wood type unfold before all eyes. The cedar fire will burn fast and furious and die out quickly, thus, it showing it has a poor long-term heat value. The maple fire will start slow if it takes at all (kindling must be small) but holds out a long time, beyond fifteen minutes. Birch will be more like maple, pine and spruce will be more like cedar. Cedar and maple should be the extremes. Students will learn all wood isn't the same. First, they identify the visual qualities and then burning properties. Then there is fragrance and spark release. The learning is easy to see.

As for sparks, avoid sitting in a puffy down jacket by a campfire made with lots of poplar and tamarak, and if fragrance is in high demand seek out poplar or cherry. One warning: do your best to ensure all wood is dry! There is lots of set up here, but the it is worth it.

The main point to learn will be self-evident. Start your fire with cedar or pine and maintain it for heat value…say, for baking a bannock…with birch or maple.

To learn from the Scandinavian attention to wood-use, see *Lars Mytting's, Norwegian Wood: Chopping, Stacking, and Drying Wood the Scandinavian Way.* Abrams Image; New York, 2015.

Bob has been involved in Outdoor Education for over 40 years now. He still has lots of irons in the fire, as they say. www.bobhenderson.ca

Field Notes

By Adrienne Blattel

Montreal's Intercultural Outdoor Recreation Program held its 10th annual introduction to canoe camping activity in late July. We had 14 newcomers participate in this adventure, including three asylum seekers. These new Canadians originated from many different countries including Nicaragua, Venezuela, France, Spain, Canada, Algeria, Colombia, Turkey, Morocco and more.

One of the asylum seekers, Xochil from Nicaragua, had spent a lot of time outdoors while growing up in Nicaragua, lifeguarding and swimming in lagoons with crocodiles! Although she admitted to finding the 12 km paddle we did on the second day of the trip a challenge, she developed some of the best paddling technique of the group. She was thrilled to have the opportunity to try canoe camping, which was something she had only seen on television before and couldn't believe she was actually doing it herself.

Xochil wrote the following description of her experience:

"From July 19 to 21, I was benefited by the special spots reserved for asylum seekers through which I was able to participate in the Canoeing Camping organized by the Programme Plein Air Interculturel of the Association Récréative Milton-Parc.

This activity was attended by people from several countries and we did several activities that allowed us to interact with each other and with the nature of the places where we were.

This experience allowed me to interact with new people, get to know places of Canada with extraordinary landscapes, camp in them and do canoeing for the first time.

I am grateful to the program, which sponsored the special spots reserved for asylum seekers, and toYener Sánchez of ALPA, who served as a liaison between us and the program, because without all this it would not have been possible to have lived this unforgettable experience or shared it with so many people from different countries."

Xochil and her friend Oscar, also from Nicaragua, brought along a home-made hammock improvised from a sheet and two ropes, and attempted to sleep outside to enjoy the stars, though their efforts were thwarted by the rain. They also boiled water to make instant soup by putting an empty plastic soft drink bottle filled with water directly in the fire. It alarmed me at first, and probably isn't perfectly safe by some people's standards, but according to other participants it's a pretty standard way of heating up water in parts of the world. Interesting.

Please visit the following URL to read a nice article written by some of the participants: https://www.pleinairinterculturel.com/2019/07/canot-camping-interculturel-au-lac-long/

This summer also included one of our biggest camping groups ever at the Lachine Canal during the Parks Canada Learn to Camp overnight in June. Despite the rain, around 120 people, mostly families and new Canadians, tried camping for the very first time.

We also organized two introductions to stand-up paddle boarding courses in a calm section of the St. Lawrence, with a local company called KSF. Most of the participants had no idea it was possible to swim and play in freshwater right here in Montreal. Around 20 people participated in each outing, mostly new Canadians, and they had lots of fun.

Adrienne Blattel is the Coordinator of the Intercultural Outdoor Recreation Program in Montreal, Quebec

The Camp Kirk Impact

By Tara Allman

Camp Kirk is a non-profit residential camp program for children and youth with social, emotional and learning challenges. We were founded in 1993 by a group of concerned and dedicated parents. Our camp was built and is maintained by members of the Lions and Lioness Clubs of District A-16. Each summer we welcome 144 children with challenges including learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, autism and anxiety. Since the beginning, we have been committed to helping these children discover their strengths, abilities and talents. We aim to help campers build effective coping strategies, self-confidence and self-esteem through participation in a wide variety of outdoor activities and group experiences.

Our adventure-based program provides campers with the opportunities to participate in activities that challenge and encourages them to stretch beyond their perceived or self-imposed limitations. We help them discover untapped resources and strengths, and explore problems or challenges rather than become overwhelmed or incapacitated by them. Each session, we provide children with a small and supportive community of 34 counsellors and 36 fellow-campers. This helps our campers to take safe risks that are social, emotional, and physical in nature.

The peak experience for many campers involves the use of a High Challenge Ropes Course and a Climbing Wall. These activities, which involve elements that are 40 feet off the ground and higher, are supervised and facilitated by highly-skilled and trained instructors. Participants are allowed to choose their own level of participation, and no one is ever forced to do more than they are comfortable with and ready for.

Understanding the impact of the camp experience is very important to our team. Feedback from parents can provide us with important insights into our program and will guide any changes or additions to our program in the future. In 2017 and 2018, we asked parents to complete an online survey to learn how their child has changed since their time at Camp Kirk. Parents provided testimonials and responded to statements on a Likert scale. 58parents responded to our survey in 2017 and 43 parents responded in 2018. We are happy to share some of the results of our survey in Table 1 and in the testimonials below. The Camp Kirk team is honoured to work with these wonderful children.

> *"Our youngest son attended Camp Kirk this summer for the first time. Watching him hug the staff the day he departed brought tears to my eyes. The level of comfort he gained at camp has lasted into the school year. His self-confidence soared and he has shown so much positivity since attending. I cannot praise Camp Kirk enough for the love and respect they show to my children."*
>
> — Katherine F.

"When I came to pick up my daughter from camp I was amazed to see how confident she was! She went from a shy child when dropped off to one that glowed with self-confidence... She can't wait to come back next year!"

— Pam M.

"Each year at camp, my son grows in self-assurance and confidence. He looks forward to it each year, and his experience never disappoints. We feel he's given the tools and self-esteem boost he needs to navigate the year ahead, and we are so grateful."

— Louise G.

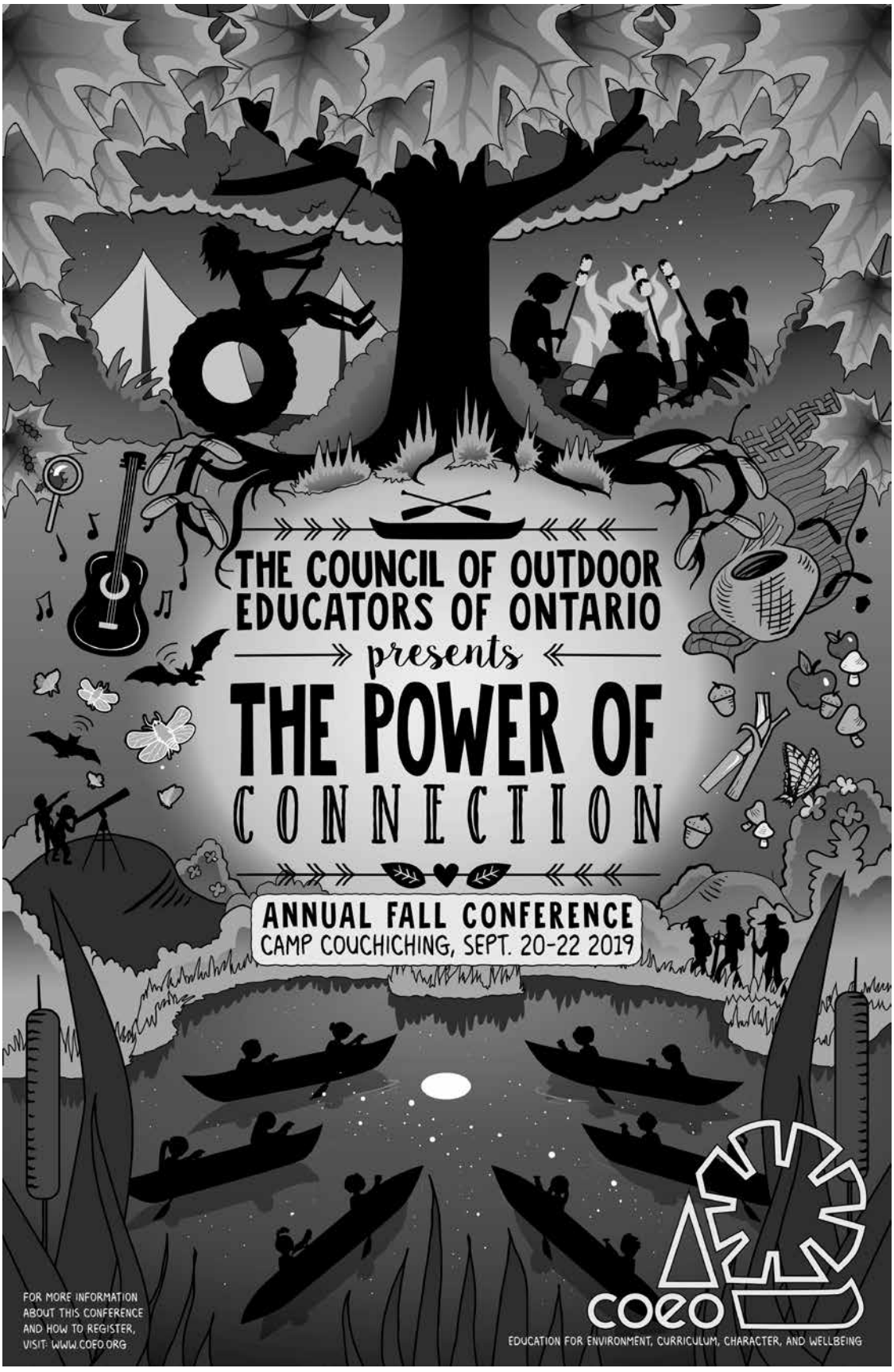
"My son thought that he was weird and that no one would ever like him. Camp Kirk made him realize he's not the only child that feels this way and that while he might be different, it's a good thing. He loves going to Camp Kirk because he knows it is the one place where he will fit in and be accepted...he can just be himself."

— Barb S.

Tara Allman holds an Honours Bachelor of Science in Forestry. She has worked with non-profits in Ontario since 2010 and joined the Camp Kirk team in 2016.

Table 1. Post-Camp Survey Completed by Parents

Survey Question	% Agree or Strongly Agree	
	2017	2018
I feel Camp Kirk improved my child's sense of social acceptance and belonging	96%	98%
Camp Kirk is my child's main opportunity to build meaningful social connections	78%	74%
The Camp Kirk experience has increased my child's ability to work collaboratively with others	76%	89%
The Camp Kirk experience improved my child's ability to express their needs, thoughts and emotions	74%	83%
The Camp Kirk experience has improved my child's ability to manage strong emotions (i.e. frustration, sadness, anxiety...)	69%	70%
The camp experience has made my child more adaptable to change	69%	81%
I believe the camp experience has improved my child's ability to ask for help	62%	79%
The Camp Kirk experience boosted my child's self-esteem	93%	98%
My child is more independent since their session at camp	70%	91%
Since camp, my child views their diagnosis in a more positive light	64%	66%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Purpose

Pathways furthers knowledge, enthusiasm, and vision for outdoor experiential education in Ontario. Reflecting the interests of outdoor educators, classroom teachers, students, and academics, the journal focuses on the practice of outdoor experiential education from elementary to post-secondary levels, from wilderness to urban settings. *Pathways* highlights the value of outdoor experiential education in educating for curriculum, character, well-being, and environment.

Submitting Material

The *Pathways* editorial board gladly considers a full range of materials related to outdoor experiential education. We welcome lesson outlines, drawings, articles, book reviews, poetry, fiction, student work, and more. We will take your contribution in any form and will work with you to publish it. If you have an idea about a written submission, piece of artwork, or topic for a theme issue, please send an email outlining your potential contribution to the chair of the editorial board, bhender@mcmaster.ca

We prefer a natural writing style that is conversational, easy to read and to the point. It is important for you to use your style to tell your own story. There is no formula for being creative, having fun, and sharing your ideas. In general, written submissions should fit the framework of one of *Pathways* 20 established columns. Descriptions of these columns may be found at www.coeo.org by clicking on the publications tab.

Whenever possible, artwork should complement either specific articles or specific themes outlined in a particular journal issue. Please contact the chair of the editorial board if you are interested in providing some or all of the artwork for an issue.

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Use 12 point, Times New Roman font with 1.25 inch (3.125 cm) margins all around. Text should be left justified and single spaced. Place a blank line between paragraphs but do not indent. Please use Canadian spelling and APA referencing.

Include the title (in bold) and the names of all authors (in italics) at the beginning of the article. Close the article with a brief 1–2 sentence biography of each author (in italics).

Do not include any extraneous information such as page numbers, word counts, headers or footers, and running heads.

Pathways contains approximately 600 words per page. Article length should reflect full page multiples to avoid partially blank pages.

Submit articles to the Chair of the Editorial Board or issue Guest Editor, preferably as a Microsoft Word email attachment.

Each piece of artwork should consist of a single black and white drawing (crosshatching but no shading) scanned at 300 dpi.

Submit artwork to the Chair of the Editorial Board or issue Guest Editor as a digital file (jpeg is preferred.)

Submission Deadlines

Volume 1	Fall	September 15
Volume 2	Winter	December 15
Volume 3	Spring	February 15
Volume 4	Summer	April 15

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The lead author receives one copy of the issue in which the article appears and one copy for each co-author. Lead authors are responsible for distributing copies to their coauthors.

Backpocket	Experiential outdoor education curricular ideas, activities, lesson plans, class outlines, framings, processing, teaching ideas and connections to specific topics.
Beyond our Borders	Outdoor experiential education beyond Ontario.
Editor's Log	About this issue, *Pathways* news.
Education for Character	Providing opportunities for personal and interpersonal growth and development through firsthand experiences where feedback occurs through reflection and natural consequences.
Education for Curriculum	Broadening and deepening the knowledge base of all subjects by extending information to real life situations and natural surroundings in ways that stimulate critical thinking, integration, innovation and imagination.
Education for Environment	Fostering personal connections, knowledge, skills and environmental ethics that apply to life-supporting systems in urban, suburban, rural and remote settings.
Education for Wellbeing	Promoting lifelong physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing through environmentally sustainable outdoor and nature-focused activities.
Explorations	A summary of one or more recent research studies about outdoor experiential education.
In the Field	News about an outdoor education program, centre or school; general reports, new initiatives, updates or news of interest to outdoor educators.
Intersections	All about integrated curriculum programs with an outdoor focus including introductions of new programs and teachers, issues and reports of meetings.
Keepers of the Trail	Meeting a COEO member/significant leaders in outdoor education through their activities, personality, qualities and interests.
On the Land	Environmental reports concerning an Ontario lands or waters issue.
Opening the Door	A student (kindergarten to university) perspective, opinion or sample of work including poems and fiction.
Prospect Point	An opinion piece concerning education in the out-of-doors; philosophy, commentary, and personal musings.
Reading the Trail	Review of books, music, websites, curriculum guides and other educational resources.
Sketchpad	About a featured artist, his or her artwork, creative process and more.
The Gathering	Information about past and future COEO conferences and regional events.
Tous Nos Voyageurs	Recognizing the diversity of participants, providers and places connected with outdoor experiential education.
Tracking	Information about outdoor experiential education conferences, news, events, recent resources and job postings.
Watching Our Step	Managing risk during all phases of an experience, legal issues and crisis response.
Wild Words	A look at how language enhances the practice of outdoor education; may explore the meanings of words in languages other than English.

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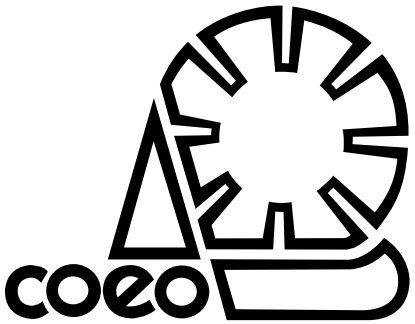

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