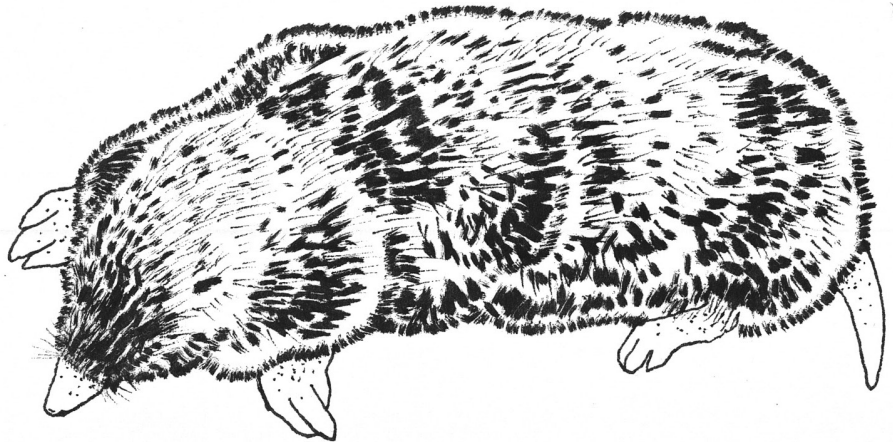


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Winter 2022, 34(2)



Pathways

COEO

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

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Pathways

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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ISSN: 0840-8114

Pathways is printed on FSC recycled paper.



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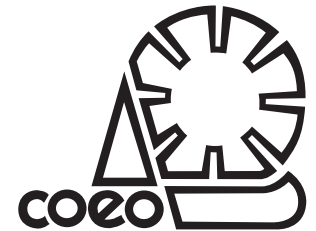
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I am pleased to share with *Pathways* readers details regarding some of the upcoming special theme issues that we currently have in the works. To begin, I realise that many of you reading this will already be aware of, and likely anticipating, the soon to be released spring issue, which will explore the multiple and lasting benefits of school canoe trips. The Guest Editor of this issue, Grant Linney, has worked earnestly, spending many hours in support of the contributing authors, and has assembled what will surely be seen as an important and consequential issue of the journal. Following this, the summer issue of *Pathways* will delve into climate change education. Dr. Ellen Field of Lakehead University has brought together a group of fellow faculty members and graduate students, and they are compiling a collection of work that will highlight some of the breakthroughs and barriers to teaching and learning about our changing climate.

In 2022 we will also include the work of graduate students from Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria, as they plan to put together a theme issue, which will draw on ideas of kinship, entanglement, relationality, and existing in a more-than-human world. *Pathways* Resource Editor, Bob Henderson, is also putting together an upcoming issue inspired in part by several exciting and innovative community-based canoeing programs that are connecting people to nearby waterways, wildlands, urban spaces, and each other. This theme is likely to make a nice complement to the forthcoming school canoe tripping issue. Lastly, snow and outdoor learning will

be the theme for the 2023 winter issue of *Pathways*.

Now, while some of these issues are complete and awaiting publication and/or distribution, the calls for articles of others are still open, and so for those interested in contributing to the pages of *Pathways*, please email a note of interest, a description of a proposed article, or your completed work to pathways@coeo.org.

This issue of *Pathways* opens with an article by Simon Priest. Priest, now retired, reflects back on his career as a guide, teacher, professor, and executive, and shares the many ways (10 to be specific), in which he made an effective use of humour in his work. This piece includes many excellent takeaways for outdoor educators and concludes with a nice tribute to the late, great Karl Rohnke. Next, Ben Blakey and Stephen Fine report on the results of a study involving students and teachers from four school sites in a large urban area, examining the multiple benefits of nature-based learning. Then, Morten Asfeldt pays tribute to Dr. Garry "Gibber" Gibson, a Canadian outdoor education innovator and pioneer at the post-secondary level, while *Pathways* Resource Editor, Bob Henderson, explains why he is pro-complexity. Katie Hannah reviews a brand new resource entitled *Countdown to Camp: Your Guide to Designing a Student-Led Leadership Camp* by Karen Kettle, and lastly, this issue closes with a poem by Naomi McIlwraith entitled *nêwo isihtwâwina kê-kiskiskitân - Four Ways to Remember*.

Kyle Clarke
Editor

Sketch Pad – The art for this issue of *Pathways* was contributed by M Nowick. Exploring nature is a life-long influence in M's art practice. Inspired by Art Hives, they believe in using creative expression to support diversity, inclusion, mental health and wellbeing. Currently in Orillia, M is a supply teacher for SCDSB, and the YMCA. They are working with Bass Lake Farms to cultivate garden-based learning programs. Instagram: @mxmorus. Regular *Pathways* contributor Jazmine Yerbury drew the two portraits of Dr. Garry Gibson included on pages 24 and 25.

President's View

As winter loosens its chilly grip, I'm doing a long solo classic loop, finding solace and inspiration in the meditative motion of kicks and glides. What has infiltrated our deep inner cadence when so much of our time is occupied with Zooming these days? That verb rattles in our collective rib cage as we collapse geography with online OE experiences. I hope that you have found nourishment and collegial comfort through online forums, and that you've also sought solace in the outdoors. As another of COEO's anchoring events is pandemically postponed, have you Made Peace with Winter? I'm finding peace as I explore 20 kilometers of snowy trail beneath a blue bird sky. Something quicker than a ponderous pace to be home before sunset... but not a Zoom.

COEO has greeted the winter season with professional ponderings. David Spencer—along with a curious team from the COEO board—invited members past and present to take stock of how our council is supporting each of us; to celebrate our own individual experiences and to collectively hope for the next 50 years. Your responses have renewed our confidence that this incredible community will thrive forward, with deep reverence for our roots, and ready to rock and right the boat of outdoor ed.

You asked for professional enrichment, and as the winter solstice set upon us, April Nicolle invited us 'round the fire with virtual storytelling. April wove words—both her own and those of her daughter—as well as stories that had been passed from generations of storytellers in a powerful tradition of sharing allegories that transcend generations, and help prepare ours.

In February, Grant Linney asked, "To ski or not to ski?"—his Shakespearean/OE medley on the role of outdoor education in confronting the climate crisis. From his years as a champion of OE and over 700 presentations about climate change, he provided a practitioner's guide to the scientific underpinnings and how-to for outdoor educators and teachers to respond with lessons and activities that engage

students in climate action outdoors at their age, stage, and curriculum.

Grant and April are mentors amongst so many in our COEO community that's 50 years young! What mentoring do you need? What mentorship moments allow you to sit in the centre of your challenge and be reminded of what we require of participants when we invite them into a new experience? So many of you have proven again and again that we can meet and mentor each other just where we are—online, mask-to-mask, or soon, face-to-face. That we will bring our smiling eyes, keen with wisdom, and professional practice, whether we kick and glide or Zoom through a day.



What skills are you flexing? As we shed layers and change seasons, what new outfits and opportunities will you try on? That volunteer hat would look really good on you! With all that we do it is hard to believe that we are a volunteer run organization, but we would not be able to make so much happen without the incredible volunteer efforts of so many of our members. I urge you to think about how you can give back to this community. Join a conference planning committee, suggest a potential future host site, write or create art for *Pathways*, contribute to our fundraising efforts, and be sure to read the e-newsletter each month for more ways to get involved. And of course, make sure to mark your calendars for our 50th Annual Fall Conference, which will be held September 23-25th at Camp Muskoka. I hope to see you there!

Karen O'Krafka
President

10 Ways I Have Used Humour Over the Past 50 Years

By Simon Priest

The First Word: Fun

As an outdoor educator, I teach the fourth R: relationships. I split my instructional efforts between environmental learning, with an emphasis on ecosystemic and ekistic relationships, and adventurous learning, where the subject matter is intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships (Priest, 1986). I am happiest when I can blend both together and highlight spiritual relationships including affinity for place. My work outdoors ranges from recreational (changes feeling), through educational (changes thinking) and developmental (changes behaving), to therapeutic (changes resisting and/or maladaptive behaving).

In my retirement, I have reflected back over the decades as a guide, teacher, professor, and executive to realize that I have employed humour in ten pedagogically different ways. Some of those have even been used by students, learners, and clients to counter my educational efforts. I'll share more about each of the ten ways later, but for now, consider this brief and funny story from early in my instructional career.

Working with an intact group of adults and preparing for a scavenger hunt, I started my introduction with *"the first person you need to find is your boss! Once the boss is back with this team, you can search for the next items."* I finished explaining the activity and then asked, *"Now, as we plan to look for your boss, what is the first thing you will all need to do?"* A hand shot up at the back of the group and the second in charge called out, *"Update our resumes!"* Great laughter ensued and, while the group lost the plot for just a moment, they got back on track with a renewed and jointly shared sense of engagement.

I was very young at the time: younger than everyone in that group. I was acting so seriously because I was feeling responsible for their learning, yet with a distinct lack of

confidence. The humour helped me clearly see again: learning was meant to be fun. I committed myself to making it so from that day forth.

Understanding Humour

I view humour from a perspective of psychology, where it is largely defined as a social phenomenon, since others provide context for an interaction of humourist (sender) with humoured (recipients). So, "humour is a broad, multifaceted term that represents anything that people say or do that others perceive as funny and tends to make them laugh, as well as the mental processes that go into both creating and perceiving such an amusing stimulus, and also the emotional response of mirth involved in the enjoyment of it" (p. 3, Martin & Ford, 2018). At the heart of this definition, humour is meant to be fun. By analyzing humour, we tend to change it away from being spontaneous or entertaining and toward being planned or sterile.

Analyzing humour is like dissecting a frog; few people are interested and the frog dies of it.
—E. B. White

Humour researchers have dissected their subject into types (Attardo, 1994), styles (Martin, 1996), models (Ruch, 1998), and several theories (Raskin, 1985). However, I enjoy dividing humour into comedic genres. Among my favorites are: anecdotal, character, deadpan, improv, observational, physical, satire, sitcom, sketch, and wit. Comedy is simply something you have inside you. It is mostly an attitude toward living.

Most comedy is based on getting a laugh at somebody else's expense and I find that that's just a form of bullying in a major way; so I want to be an example that you can be funny and be kind, and make people laugh without hurting somebody else's feelings. —Ellen DeGeneres

Obviously pedagogical humour has to be funny and not injurious. Deliberate use or careless misuse of humour with the intent to marginalize or disempower learners is professionally unethical. Incorrectly applied in this way, humour can be a fatal weapon to inhibit learning and alienate students. Thus, only teachers secure in their own egos and characters can avoid employing sarcasm, mockery, and ridicule.

So, steer clear of these other comedic genres: aggressive, cringe, heritage, insult, offensive, and shock. To evade unpleasantness in public settings, where the composition and characteristics of an audience are unknown, avoid certain other potentially funny subjects: politics, profanity, race, religion, sex, and dark topics or disturbing events. Other than this, beyond all else, do no harm, while trying to be funny.

Readers might ask: *what else is left?* Self-deprecating humour is a possible solution: put yourself down instead of others. Leaders utilizing self-deprecating humour were perceived by others as more effective than those not using any humour (Gzorezis & Bellou, 2016) and rated higher by others on factors of transformational leadership compared with leaders using aggressive humour (Hoption et al, 2013). Self-deprecating humour is the easiest way to avoid anyone being hated, harmed, or hurt by comedy.

Everything is funny, as long as it's happening to somebody else. —Will Rogers

Humour is created from dissonance and paradox. Dissonance refers to the cognitive clashes that result from two contradictory elements of humour. Examples of minor dissonance include oxymorons (two seemingly contradictory terms like “sustainable mining” or “clean coal”), and the pun (exploits double meaning or sounds of words such as “bleached paper isn’t just bad for the environment; it’s tearable!”).

When a statement appears to be simultaneously wrong, but okay, threatening, but safe, or disturbing, but acceptable, it has dissonance. This explains why so many

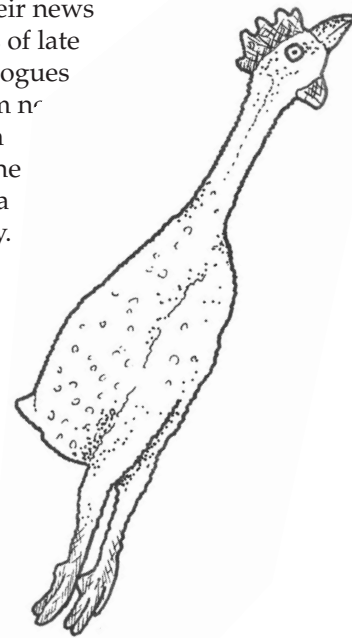
people prefer to get their news through the ironic lens of late night talk show monologues rather than mainstream news networks. Similarly, an incongruity between the content and format of a statement can be funny.

“I Googled ‘alternate energy vehicles’ and found this amazing new invention that burns fat instead of fossil-fuels; it’s called a bicycle!”

These discrepancies can be enhanced by exaggerating the absurdities of a situation. However, too much cognitive dissonance, and the comedy becomes confusing, while too little causes the joke to fall flat.

A wise person once advised a professor and a physician to avoid following the advice that they had just been given and thus created a paradox for a pair of docs.

Paradox refers to a statement that contradicts itself or runs contrary to conventional expectations, but with an underlying truth that makes the statement seem absurd. For example, “I am a liar!” The paradox represents a breakdown in logic, where the mind cannot comprehend in relation to everything else that is already known in its database of experience (Fry, 1987). If you will, a cognitive hiccup has occurred and the brain has to reboot itself. The classic paradox that readers might be familiar with is Catch-22 (a book and a movie), where pilots can get out of combat duty, if they are psychologically unfit, but everyone attempting to do so is thus proving their high state of psychological fitness. The many situations in the movie or book are both paradoxical and funny. In real life learning situations, planned humour tends to be less effective than emerging spontaneous humour. Even though a forced effort may be both dissonant and paradoxical, it is likely to fail because it is



either telegraphed or anticipated. In short, “humour stops being functional, when it is used functionally” (p. 180, Hovelynck & Peeters, 2003).

Humour has to surprise us, otherwise, it isn't funny; it's a death knell for a writer to be labeled a humourist because then it's not a surprise anymore. —Garrison Keillor

Unexpected surprise (arising from dissonance or paradox) is at the center of humour. Consider this joke meant for older children. *Question: What is the easiest way for Americans to address climate change and reduce high temperatures? Answer: Switch their temperature scales from Fahrenheit to Celsius!* In this example, the listener is sincerely thinking about how to make a difference in global warming and has received the question in a serious light. When the punch line comes, the listener is shocked to realize this was a joke and is possibly relieved to no longer have to answer a tough question. The tight combination of shock and relief stimulates the brain, which resolves the incongruity, and a little laugh is released as an enjoyable emotional expression to relieve the tension built up by paradox or dissonance.

Humour Outdoors

If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it; perhaps this is what Thoreau had in mind when he said, “the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think the same is true of human beings. —David Sobel

Humour is likened to play (Bisson & Luckner, 1996). Humans have an innate need for play and/or fun (Gladding, 1992). Since play is also a large part of outdoor learning, the two fit together naturally. Since outdoor learning is a distant departure from classroom-based learning, the location affords teaching and learning flexibilities, while these flexibilities allow for introducing humour and thus improving student emotional engagement with the topic or task (Hoad, Deed & Lugg, 2013). Humour very simply promotes relaxed learning environments that support learner

interactions (Tziatis, 2012) and develops strong bond alliances between teacher and learners or facilitator and clients (Rothwell et al., 2011). Humour has also been noted as a mechanism for negotiating or managing enjoyment and safety outdoors (Sullivan, 2014) and for coping or protecting one's self in school or other learning environments (Woods, 1983).

When I teach the formal curriculum, I have the chance to think about it ahead of time, rehearse it, illustrate it with self-deprecating humour and humble-sounding personal disclosure, and make it come out just right. —John Ortberg

Humour has an impact on the learning environment and on students' emotional states (Banas et al, 2011). It is not about telling jokes or getting laughs, although these help. It is more about creating a joyful mood around learning or a lightness that facilitates the process (Shibinski & Martin, 2010; Streaan, 2011). Through the careful use of humour, students can be encouraged to greater levels of attention, creativity, critical thinking, change, social interaction (Hurren, 2005/2006), knowledge, comprehension (Hackthorn et al., 2011), and engagement (Morrison & Quest, 2012). Use of humour requires carefully not overdoing, but dispersing it in small amounts now and then to clarify or introduce subject matter.

Good humour is a tonic for mind and body; it is the best antidote for anxiety and depression, lightens human burdens, and is the direct route to serenity and contentment. —Grenville Kleiser

Reacting to or resolving paradox or dissonance releases dopamine in the brain and this neurotransmitter has been closely linked with tension relief, motivation, memory, imagination, learning, and most of the ten ways of humour that follow. So, look for the conscious use of dissonance and paradox in these ten.

1. Humour breaks the ice

Humour is this great equalizer; it gets people's defenses down, and once they're down,

you candiscuss some really difficult topics.
—Luvvie Ajayi

Sometimes timing is lacking and ice-breaker activities are just not possible. At other times, individuals or groups have been forced to attend an outdoor event and are reluctant to even try any activities. In both instances, I use humour to lower their defensive resistance. To get the group talking, I use this line: *“When I meet someone new, I immediately bring up the topic of global warming; it’s a real ice breaker!”* This tactic usually elicits smiles at a minimum, but at least we now have permission to talk about global warming and the process of breaking the ice in social situations. Either gets us going with a discussion.

2. Humour builds rapport

The only way I could get comfortable around people was to make them laugh. —Tina Fey

For many, humour removes the awkward aspects of social interaction, especially with strangers at first meeting. Rapport building can take place among students or between students and teacher. Enhancing the teacher-student rapport is most commonly discussed in the literature (Bryant et al., 1980; Tatum, 2021). However, I also like to use humour to build rapport among group members, especially those who are not an intact group and are meeting one another for the first time. I frequently ask them to tell us stories about the funniest experience in school, family, work, or life (according to their ages and spheres of daily living). I find that simply by sharing humour, participants quickly open up to one another in more private areas of their lives (most often in outdoor therapies). This openness leads to mutual rapport and better subject matter conversations and group process discussion in the future (Rosenheim, 2018).

3. Humour boosts morale

Humour does not rescue us from unhappiness, but enables us to move back from it a little.
—Mason Cooley

Humour has been shown to be a morale booster in all populations, but especially for older adults (Simon, 2009; Tennant, 2021). While working outdoors with senior citizens, I found that most of my attempts at humour failed miserably, until I shared comic strips from their generation (Beard & Rhodes, 2002). Examples from Gasoline Alley, Barney Google and Snuffy Smith, Blondie, Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, and others boosted their morale and interest in the subject matter. I was even able to find a few updated examples with environmental content to aid in their reflection of what we had been learning. For example, fracking and its detrimental impact was a continuing storyline on Dick Tracy (Beans, 2013).

4. Humour establishes pro-social skills

A sense of humour is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done. —Dwight Eisenhower

In training outdoor leaders and facilitators, I impart the importance of humour in enabling relationship learning and change. I like to use the railway tracks construction cartoon depicted in Figure 1. When I show this image, people suddenly see the importance of developing teamwork and pro-social skills. Without these, social relationships and group tasks can easily get misaligned (Cater & Jones, 2013).

Humour is known to enhance the three foundation elements of teamwork: trust (Hampes, 1999), cooperation (Cooper & Sosik, 2012), and communication (Meyer, 2015). In trust, humour shows the authentic self lurking under a professional mask. With cooperation, humour highlights how people can get along and help one another. For communication, humour clarifies helpful intent through feedback. Humour has also shown improvements in team problem solving (Zhou et al, 2021) and group decision making (McClane & Singer, 1991). Collectively, these pro-social skills further potentiate teamwork.

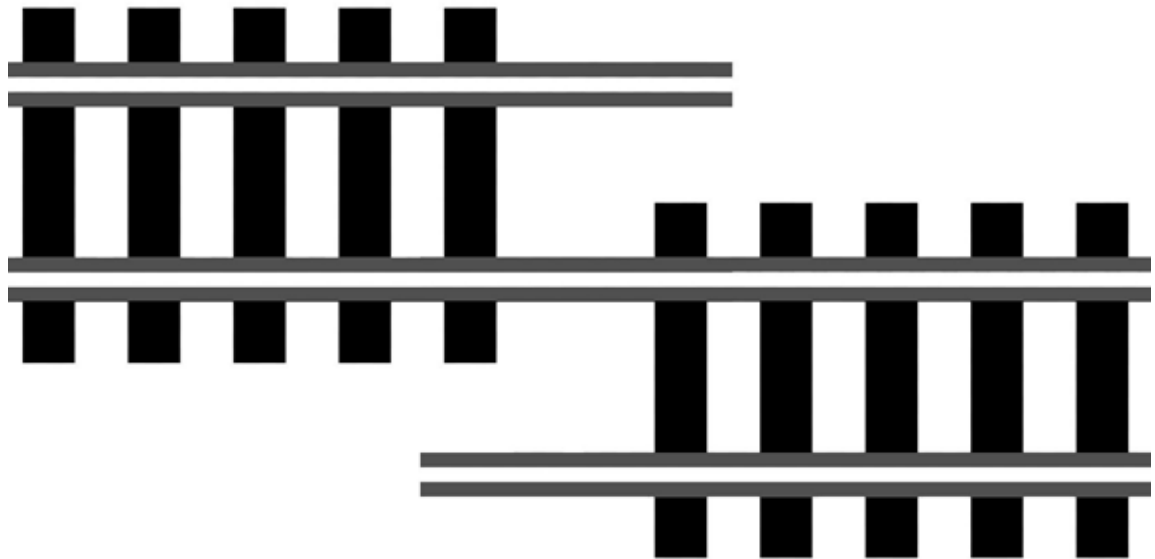


Figure 1: A lack of teamwork or missing trust, cooperation or communication.

5. Humour fosters creativity

Humour has bailed me out of more tight situations than I can think of; if you go with your instincts and keep your humour, creativity follows. —Jimmy Buffett

Humour is also known to improve cognition and creativity (Ziv, 1983; Ruch & Heintz, 2019), with humour seen as a subset of creative thought (Murdock & Ganim, 1993; Garner, 2006). To stimulate creative thought prior to problem solving exercises, I like to present cartoons without captions and have the clients write these. Writing humour requires exaggeration (overstatement or understatement), contrast (reversals or opposites), comparisons (similarities or differences), transmogrification (changing an object into something unlike itself), emphasis of the unusual (abnormal or unexpected), the literal (rather than the figurative) use of language, focusing on the wrong subject (distraction or abstraction), and yet still concrete in sensory imagination (Rishel, 2002). Humour is play, play leads to creativity, creativity aids problem solving, and problem solving helps deal with everyday challenges and future changes in life.

6. Humour relieves stress

If stress is the villain, humour is the superhero. —Andrew Tarvin

Like immersion in nature, humour is most well-known for its relief of stress, burnout, and anxiety (Martin et al., 1993; Lefcourt & Thomas, 2010). In nature-based eco-therapy, clients present with stress, anxiety, and mood disorders (Jordan, 2014). The basic mechanism of change is the psychotherapeutic replacement of negative emotions with positive ones derived from sensory immersion in nature. When clients can't make the switch, due to blockages from outside stressors, I ask them to think of something funny or engage them in a search for past funny memories. This breaks their negative concentration on worries and allows them to mindfully consider positive inputs coming from the natural environment. In situations where nature is unavailable, I substitute humorous videos and immerse clients in comedy.

7. Humour diffuses conflict

When you get into an argument, one of the best ways to diffuse it is to be funny; you don't want to hide away from a point, because some points are serious, but you'd rather

have an interchange as a discussion, not an argument. —Ed Sheeran

The only good conflict is a resolved conflict. Occasionally, I have placed teenage clients in situations where conflicts might naturally arise, such as during an expedition in unforgiving or remote wilderness. By learning to resolve their conflicts, troubled youth gain important social skills. Infrequently, they fail to work things out and the aggression escalates to eventual violence. In these moments, humour is useful to diffuse the conflict by building a bond between the conflicting parties and showing they at least have common ground in the enjoyment of comedy. This strong bond is also a buffer against disagreement and argument. In the midst of heated conflict, I prefer to call a time out and freeze the action. Next, I depend on one of my recent and more liberal anecdotes. I tell a brief story like this one.

Aliens land on the planet Earth and threaten conflict. They provide us with two options: total extinction from their superior weaponry or tell a single joke that makes them laugh and they will leave peacefully. However, they have already consumed the entire database of humour found on the Internet. With an effort to generate new comedy, we gather together the world's greatest comedians, but they are in conflict over the best joke that they think will make the aliens laugh. Finally, they go to the aliens and ask them, "What was the funniest joke that you already laughed at?" They reply, "The one where a reality TV star becomes the leader of the American Empire!" The scientists think for a moment and respond with "That was no joke; it actually happened." The aliens burst out laughing and depart immediately.

While this story has nothing to do with the argument at that moment, it is at least related to conflict and so garners the group's attention. Expecting an insightful moral to the story, the punch line catches them by surprise and tends to setback the conflict to a point where it becomes more manageable. The story can also be studied for conflict reduction strategies using humour and the metaphor of extreme choices: extinction

or laughter. Humour in conflict interrupts the power struggle, eases interpersonal tension, and permits both parties to regain perspectives or begin to establish commonalities (Norrick & Spitz, 2008).

8. Humour heals

Humour is an antidote to all ills. —Patch Adams

As a professional clown and physician, Dr. Hunter D. "Patch" Adams (comedian Robin Williams played him in the movie) is well-known for prescribing humour and play for improving well-being and developing passionate connections to patients (Adams & Mylander, 1998). Humour has been shown to reduce pain (Cogan et al., 1987; Hudak et al., 1991), lessen worry during surgery (Trice & Price-Greathouse, 1986; Gelkopf & Kreitler, 1996; Schneider et al., 2018), decrease grief and sorrow (Rotton et al., 1996), and strengthen the immune system (Lefcourt, 1990). Humour increases catecholamine secretion in the body, which in turn raises dopamine production in the brain leading to lowered cortisol (Berk, 1989), bringing less muscular tension and normalized blood pressure (Fry & Salameh, 1987). Psychotherapy uses humour to break client resistance, generate catharsis, improve group cohesion, and attain therapeutic goals (Dziegielewski, 2015). It also minimizes or even prevents professional therapist burnout (Franzini, 2000).

Faced with a group of highly resistant youth suffering from substance use disorder, I brought in a local, but well-known, stand up comedian to teach them humour. They viewed videos of comedy routines chosen by the expert and learned what makes a joke work. They then formed subgroups to write jokes about current events and merged these into presenting a singular stand up comic routine. Enhanced openness to discussing their drug and alcohol abuse followed, during which they noted humour (and working together) temporarily alleviated their pain and made talking about their issues so much easier.

9. Humour tackles difficulty

*Humour must not professedly teach,
and it must not professedly preach,
but it must do both if it would live
forever. —Mark Twain*

When humour becomes rhetoric, the pedagogy gets a little trickier. Competent comedians can use their humorous routines to raise public awareness about edgy issues like racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, and the oppression of indigenous peoples, but they tend to be representatives of those much marginalized minorities. However, carefully applied comedy can be used pedagogically to begin conversations about social justice or environmental issues, but with the risk of a potential backfire (Mayo, 2008; Lindo, 2010).

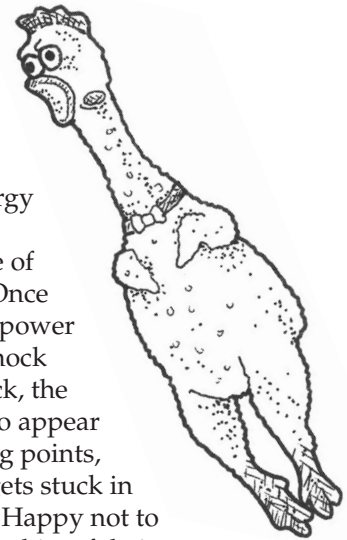
For example, I recently asked high school students to write and present satirical news in the genre of late night talk show hosts that examined future global environmental crises (Chattoo, 2019). The students put on a show that not only had news, but also covered the future weather forecast and changes in sport as a result of climate deterioration. They added funny advertisements, to break up the reports, and even conducted one specialized story about a local stand-up comedian: a young student who was a natural performer. Humour allowed us to accelerate into deep mindful discussions about the environment. Without humour, we would never have reached the meaningful intensity that we did.

10. Humour deflects change

*You may not be able to change a situation,
but with humour you can change your
attitude;... humour can alter any situation
and help us cope at the very instant we are
laughing. —Allen Klein*

This is the negative one that I saved for last. I've used it and I've had it used against my best efforts to facilitate change. Just as a group is making a breakthrough and seems ready to transform for the better, one member cracks a joke and everyone breathes a collective sigh of relief, because they no longer have to

address the issue. At these times, I have had to expend considerable therapeutic energy to bring them back to the edge of change again. Once they realize the power of humour to knock progress off track, the jokes continue to appear at critical tipping points, and the group gets stuck in its dysfunction. Happy not to examine the ugly bits of their maladaptive behaviors, they become rigid and complacent.



One solution that I have found helpful in this instance of sabotage, and so as to overcome the power of humour, is to prescribe the symptom. During discussion, I would begin by asking, "How is humour utilized in this group?" Clients would then share their perspectives on the positive ways they used humour (and often avoided acknowledging the negative ones). We would share in the celebration of all the good that humour does for them: smoothes interaction, forms a collective identity, and secures pertinent behavior (Rothwell et al., 2011). I would then encourage more humour to take advantage of its many benefits, thus prescribing the symptom. "I'd like us to spend time profiting from humour by telling more jokes."

Typically, groups placed in this psychotherapeutic double-bind would react with one or the other of two behaviours: perform more humour or stop being humorous. As the facilitator, I never really cared which they chose, because I was confident that both paths would lead to successful outcomes. If they stopped being humorous (possibly because they weren't ready, willing or able), then we could move on with our much needed change. However, if they attempted even more humour, then it was likely short-lived or failed miserably, as few members were reliably funny. Either way, they simply got it out of their system.

Ethically, this was a technique of last resort, when all other direct attempts to bypass their blocks failed me. I used this indirect procedure with their best interests in mind (to help them move toward change) and not as a power trip to manipulate or cause harm (Priest, Gass & Gillis, 2000). My request for humour from the group was paradoxical and quickly became confusing, yet they were unable to resist fulfilling it.

The Last Word: Seriously?

There's something very authentic about humour;... anybody can pretend to be serious, but you can't pretend to be funny.—Billy Collins

Some people prefer to resist and oppose humour, especially the ones who are serious all the time. For example, colleagues didn't necessarily like to hear laughter coming out of my lectures, because they believed that learning required serious concentration. "Instructors may have taken their subjects so seriously because that was how they were taught, or because traditional attitudes about the instructor-student relationship was a stern and professional one in order to invoke a sense of seriousness and maturity" (p.326, Lei, Cohen & Russler, 2010). Humour is consistently mentioned among best classroom teaching practices (Stone, 2004), but is rarely inculcated in teacher training (Huss, 2008; Ziv, 2014).

It's your outlook on life that counts: if you take yourself lightly and don't take yourself too seriously, pretty soon you can find the humour in our everyday lives and sometimes it can be a lifesaver. —Betty White

After I returned from student field trips, colleagues would often remark, "You've been away for the weekend playing, so why should you get a break or time off during the week?" They were visibly upset by returning students exhibiting smiles and mirth. The faculty preferred to resist anything educational that diminished the power they had as a professor over their students. Humour threatened their power by lessening the imbalance and bringing both parties onto the same

level (Tapley, 2006). A very secure teacher is required to put students on a pedestal and reverse this power structure (Priest & Gass, 2018).

I found the most effective method to get my colleagues to understand the environmental and adventure experiences I was conducting outdoors was to simply engage them in some. After participating in the same activities and humorous situations, about half got on board and began trying similar techniques in their classrooms, while the other half remained resistant, yet their silence indicated their tolerance.

It is a curious fact that people are never so trivial as when they take themselves so seriously. —Oscar Wilde

In closing, a good friend recently passed away. He was probably the funniest outdoor facilitator that I have ever encountered as evidenced by dozens of his books full of fun games and the common reactions of participants from thousands of his international workshops about how to have fun outdoors. He was a pioneer in the development of some very serious problem solving activities and the modern ropes or challenge course that have been used throughout his lifetime to make differences in the lives of millions of clients. In reaction to those of us who applied his activities for serious purposes, he was fond of saying, "Let's have some FUNN: Functional Understanding Not Necessary." He noted "that it is okay to occasionally have fun for no other reason than experiencing laughter and enjoyable time together" (p. vii, Rohnke, 1996). Karl Rohnke never took himself seriously and always made time to have fun. I think his attitude to life was the embodiment of his humour, because he genuinely liked to hear people laugh.

A sense of humour... is needed armor: joy in one's heart or some laughter on one's lips is a sign that the person down deep has a pretty good grasp of life. —Hugh Sidey

As we grasp at life, by learning and teaching outdoors, humour protects us

against life's difficulties. With the exception of a dire personal or universal tragedy which temporarily eclipses the emotional self, a sense of humour is ubiquitous and evolutionarily bred into us as a biological and genetic characteristic in humans (Fry, 1994). How we choose to express and accentuate that sense of humour is our own personal choice. To novice and burned out educators, I suggest tasting a little humour and, if it is delicious, take a big bite out of it. If it continues to work for you, then make a full meal of it. As I have done, I believe you will find that you benefit from this comic relief foodstuff as much as those you teach and change.

The people who know how to laugh at themselves will never cease to be amused.
—Shirley MacLaine

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- Simon Priest was an outdoor education professor at Brock University for a decade before moving out of the country to work in several nations as a Dean, Provost, Vice-Chancellor, President, Commissioner, and Ministerial Advisor. He has been awarded over 30 visiting professorships around the world and his textbooks have been translated into a dozen languages. Now early retired, he is living the good outdoor life in British Columbia.*

Evaluation of Nature-Based Learning: An Environmental Education Project for Independent Schools

By Ben Blakey and Stephen Fine

Introduction

A growing body of research suggests a wide array of benefits to mental and physical health from contact with nature, and that in order to develop meaningful concern and empathy for the natural world, early childhood experiences in connecting with nature are an integral part of human development (Selhub & Logan, 2012). The health of our planet requires youth to develop a strong appreciation and concern for nature, however the symbiotic relationship our ancestors had with nature is being lost as young people spend increasingly more time indoors and less time in outdoor play, frequently interacting with technology in excessive ways. Author Richard Louv suggests that “the more high-tech we become, the more nature we need,” which is useful in understanding the need for balance in the movement to reconnect children with nature (Louv, 2012). Education has a major role to play in helping to balance our more sedentary modern lifestyles with opportunities involving pursuits in natural environments for the overall health and enhanced cognitive acuity they can provide.

In our increasingly urbanized and digital world, where individuals of all ages spend a disproportionate amount of time indoors, mounting scientific evidence reveals that we are more likely to be stressed, anxious, depressed and distracted. Our societies have increasingly high rates of mental health disorders, childhood learning and behavioural disorders, and sleep problems. In recent decades there has also been an increased volume of information overload, as well as an overall decline in measures of happiness (Selhub & Logan, 2012). As these trends emerge, we may be more inclined to embrace the restorative mental health and cognitive benefits of ‘nature-connectedness’ (Louv, 2005).

The Ontario Ministry of Education released several documents calling for the integration of Environmental Education (EE) in schools across the province, starting with *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future* (MOE, 2007). More specifically, the document envisions EE as “education in, about, and for the environment” that occurs across all grades and subjects in the K-12 curriculum. Additionally it states that “throughout the grades and strands, teachers have opportunities to take students out of the classroom and into the world beyond the school, to observe, explore, and investigate.”

Nature-based Learning (NBL) is a branch of Environmental Education. It encourages children to get outside to natural areas, connect them with nature, thereby enhancing their understanding of themselves within the world they are living in. Some examples of NBL include:

- Promoting school curriculum through contextual learning within natural settings
- Encouraging students to make inquiries and discoveries about the natural world
- Providing ample unstructured free time for students in the outdoors
- Allowing innate curiosity for natural spaces to stimulate motivation and interest
- Incorporating natural materials into the classroom
- Assisting in physiological and psychological development by interacting with nature

Carrier, Tugurian & Thomson (2013) investigated knowledge, environmental attitude, and outdoor comfort levels of 49 fifth grade students, two science teachers, and the principal at a U.S. school using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results showed that students’ environmental

knowledge increased throughout the year, and that teachers' environmental attitude significantly increased their students' outdoor comfort levels. The study also showed that while the school supported outdoor classes, this was difficult to put into practice as significant barriers exist to outdoor programming including limited class time, pressures of standardized testing in the U.S., a lack of outdoor-focused curriculum, and a lack of teacher preparation or professional development.

In a related previous study, Blakey (2020) investigated teacher's perspectives on conditions within Montcrest School during the 2014/15 school year that could foster or deter the integration of NBL, from a qualitative lens using audio interviews. Curricular and extra-curricular elements were examined in order to better understand the value of NBL for student learning and the overall school culture. Results suggested that NBL supported positive student behaviour, happiness and wellbeing, while also assisting academically by enhancing motivation, sense of discovery and cognitive function. NBL was also reported to reduce students' stress and was thereby a beneficial influence on their executive functioning.

Methodology

The current study drew participants from both students and teachers from four schools in the Greater Toronto Area who were part of the Conference of Independent Schools. Informed consent was obtained by the researchers from all teachers, and schools were tasked with gaining consent for the study from parents or guardians of all participating students.

Initially, a questionnaire for science teachers was designed utilizing findings on elements that foster NBL from the initial Montcrest Study, along with curricular connections within the *Ontario Environmental Education: Scope and Sequence of Expectations*. Face-to-face interviews with several science teachers from each school ($n = 12$) provided background to each school's philosophy, policy and direction regarding the S&T curriculum and its modes

of delivery with respect to NBL. Results from the science teacher interviews were then used to inform the design of an online student survey which was administered during school time to 402 students.

Results from both the teacher interviews and the student survey were combined in a mixed methods study meant to explore perspectives of teachers and students on NBL in the S&T curriculum and school culture across all 4 schools. Analysis of student data took into consideration preference for modes of curricular delivery, student attitudes towards the value of NBL, evidence on motivation and interest with respect to NBL, as well as evidence linking NBL to well-being and achievement within the prevailing school cultures. Themes and meta-themes were created through an emergent process involving a detailed examination of teacher and student responses in light of themes from the initial study undertaken at Montcrest School (Blakey, 2020).

Results

Three metathemes emerged from the analysis, namely "observed influence of nature," "applicability of NBL to teaching and curriculum," and "supports and barriers to NBL in teaching and school culture." Students identified as predominantly English-speaking Canadian citizens, and 63% male (37% female).

Observed Influence of Nature

All science teachers saw the value of NBL and had been able to implement it to various degrees within their curriculum. Teachers expressed a relatively strong connection to nature, and many suggested that this was engendered during their own childhood. Most teachers had a professional background related to NBL, while many mentioned having a philosophy of education related to engendering a love of the environment in students, and several suggested that NBL was an effective teaching modality in their toolkit. Most teachers felt very comfortable ($u = 4.4 / 5$) and very confident ($u = 4.3 / 5$) in taking classes outdoors for science.

Many teachers mentioned how students enjoyed outdoor classes due to having tactile and experiential learning opportunities, suggesting that students were often more engaged outdoors, that some paid better attention when concepts taught outdoors were related to elements of their daily lives, and that teaching involving living organisms outside was particularly engaging. Several teachers discussed how students often had better memories of outdoor lessons, that connections to the real world helped foster a better understanding of concepts which could lead to better recall in testing situations, and that natural areas were often deeper learning environments for students. Students responded that they liked being outdoors at school, that having time outdoors at school made them feel happy and relaxed (Q15), and that they felt energized being outdoors at school (Q22).

When asked whether outdoor classes influenced their attitudes towards the environment, 202 (51%) students answered affirmatively, while 85 (22%) students suggested there was no effect, and a smaller group of students had different categorical responses.

Notable quotes from teachers:

“I really do believe it’s fundamental and imperative to a well-rounded education, and I can see it in the things that I have done where I’ve taken them outside. The kids really respond.”

“I think being outdoors no matter what is a much more calming experience, I think it’s more experiential...I think that there’s a lot to be said for that especially at the middle school level.”

Applicability of NBL to Teaching and Curriculum

Many teachers discussed how NBL allowed students opportunities to engage in a modality of authentic learning that was useful in connecting learning to real world issues, and several teachers suggested that this process reinforced their memory of concepts. A few teachers spoke about how students could often be more engaged and productive outdoors as they were able to choose their own space to work, and that some students who might struggle in the classroom performed well during outdoor

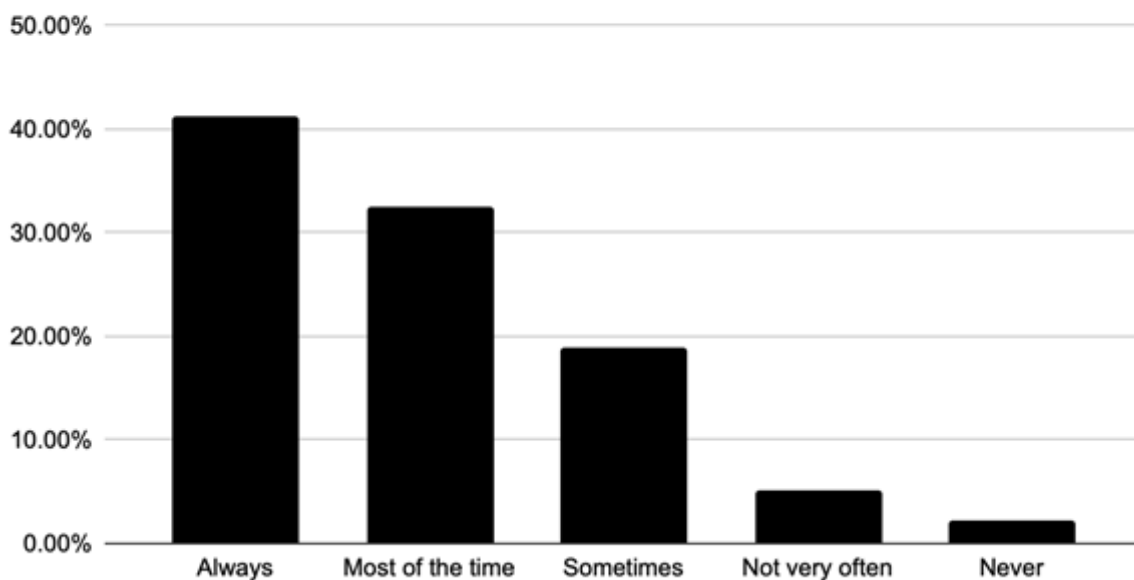


Figure 1: Q15 Having time outdoors during school hours makes me feel happy and relaxed. (Answered: 403; Skipped: 0)

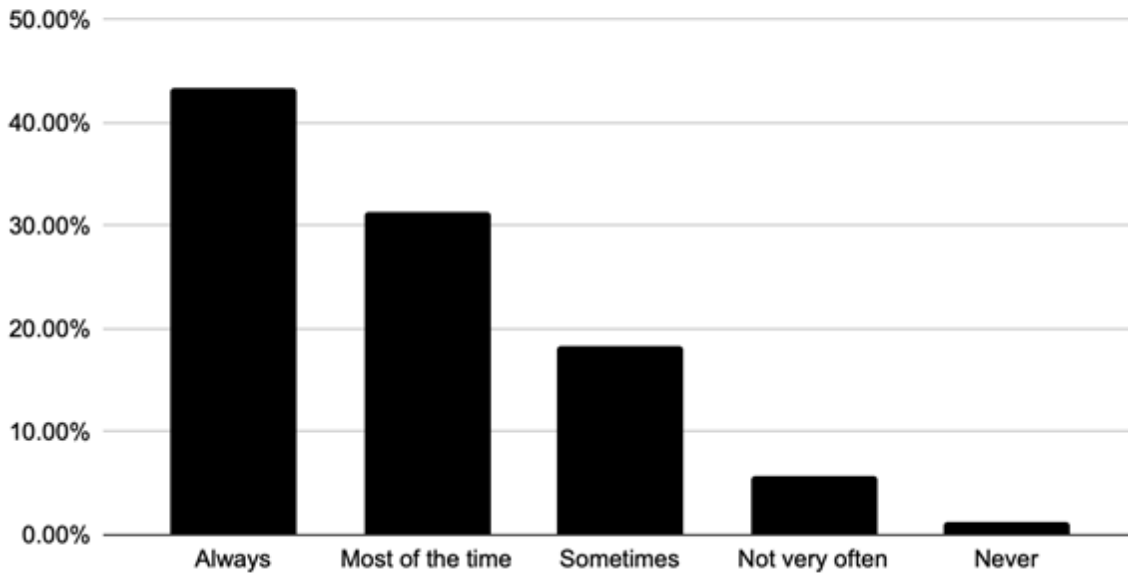


Figure 2: Q22 I feel energized being outdoors at school. (Answered: 403; Skipped: 0)

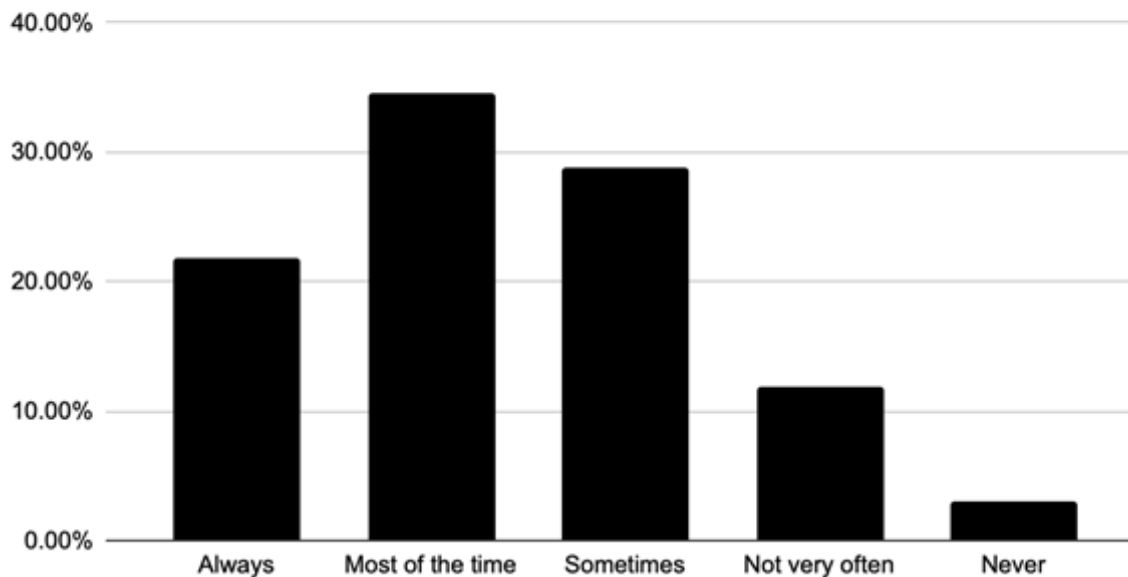


Figure 3: Q20 When I'm learning outdoors I have more creative ideas. (Answered: 403; Skipped: 0)

experiential classes. Students responded that when they were learning outdoors they had more creative ideas (Q20), that it was sometimes easier to focus on learning when outdoors, and that it was not often hard to focus on what they were learning outdoors.

Teachers shared exemplar science lessons involving NBL that included teaching about

the environment, making use of outdoor spaces to teach non-environmental concepts, and interdisciplinary ties to lessons in other subject areas. Teachers suggested that while there were good opportunities in the grade 6-8 S&T curriculum for classes involving NBL regardless of the unit being taught, some units and grades lent themselves better to NBL than others, and that their use of

NBL depended primarily on unit planning in relation to seasonal changes. Several teachers mentioned how outdoor classes allowed for observation and analysis involving tactile and experiential learning about ecosystems, food chains, and invasive species, which gave students a better understanding of complex natural systems and was useful for reinforcing their memory of these concepts.

Students suggested that their teachers were good at teaching science outdoors, indicated that outdoor science classes were interesting (Q17), responded that they remembered outdoor science lessons well (Q19), and rated both their outdoor and indoor science classes highly.

Notable quotes from teachers:

“They seem to buy into the lesson more if they’re able to go outside, explore, touch objects. Especially this age the boys especially need that time to be outside and the tactile learning experiences rather than sitting in the classroom.”

“I do find that kids can be a little restless at times sitting inside all the time especially if they have four or five classes a day. Getting them outside for a little bit means they can, you know, run around for a bit themselves but also explore science around them.”

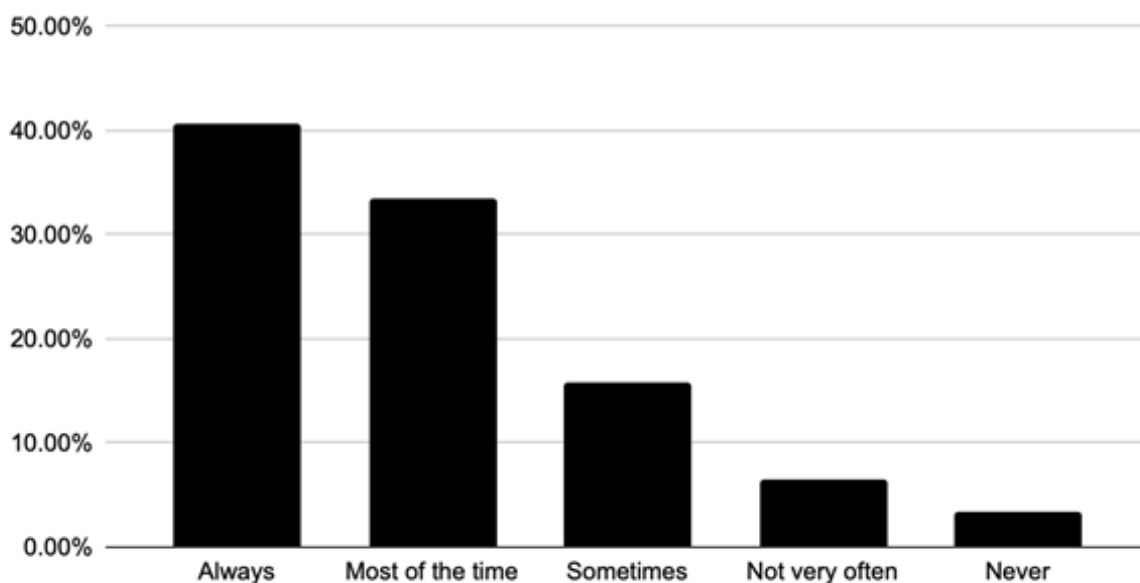


Figure 4: Q17 Science classes held outdoors are interesting to me. (Answered: 403; Skipped: 0)

Supports and Barriers to NBL in Teaching & School Culture

Teachers discussed supports to NBL including each schools’ outdoor education programs, their programs involving earth sciences or leadership, their use of outdoor learning spaces on campus, and their focus on global or experiential education. Some teachers discussed how the schools’ approach to environmental education had increased in the past few years, and how using outdoor spaces on campus had helped

to create a culture of inquiry in classes with less pressure to perform and greater ease of asking questions. Several teachers spoke about co-curricular activities with sustainability components, athletics and community events that made frequent use of natural spaces on campus, and the impact and use of greenhouses or school gardens on campus. Several teachers mentioned how having a collaborative school culture was influential in creating lessons involving NBL, how being given explicit time to plan lessons with other staff involving NBL

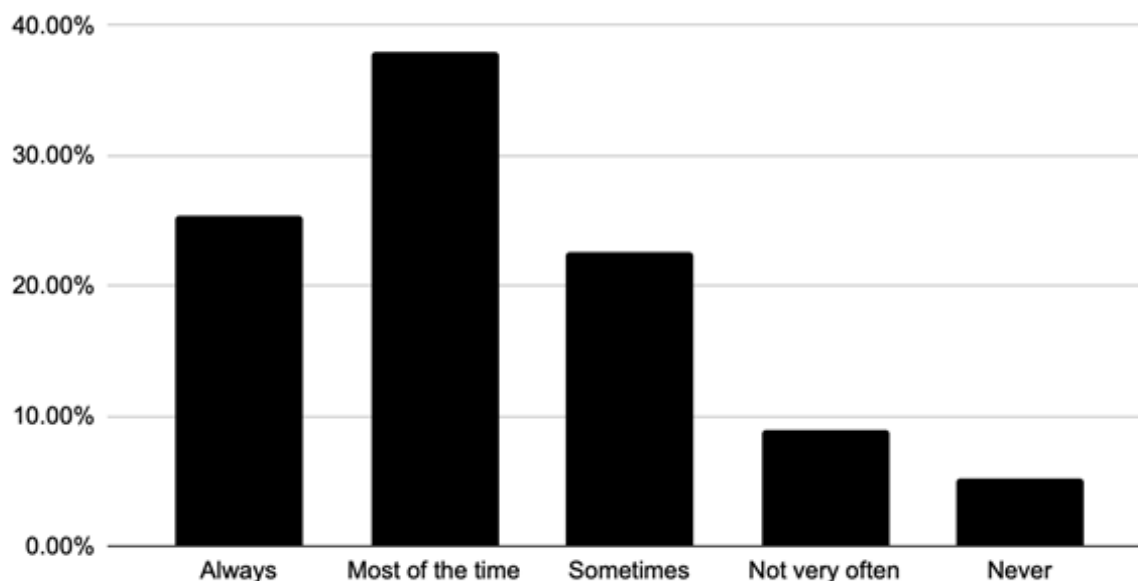


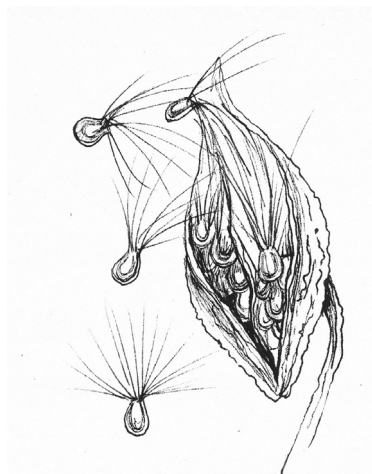
Figure 5: Q19 I can remember my science lessons when they take place outdoors.
(Answered: 403; Skipped: 0)

ensured effective learning opportunities for students, and how guiding principles related to NBL were usually embraced by teachers individually which led to high variability in the use of NBL across the school.

Most teachers suggested other staff members who were helpful in planning activities involving NBL, and how having access to these staff members was one of the most effective supports to enable lessons involving NBL. Many teachers mentioned senior staff who had been instrumental in promoting and supporting initiatives involving NBL, and how these individuals had also helped to encourage teachers to take part in professional development experiences that involved outdoor and environmental education. Several teachers mentioned having access to an outdoor education specialist who supported teachers in programming involving NBL, suggesting that these individuals were particularly useful in having knowledge, experience, and connections to opportunities, as well as in being open to both leading and preparing teachers for lessons involving NBL. A few teachers also mentioned how having an outdoor education specialist on staff sent a clear message that the administration supported learning involving NBL.

Many teachers suggested that professional affiliations to local organizations, international organizations, and outdoor centres were helpful in assisting with programming involving NBL, and a few mentioned how these experiences helped to connect outdoor education with learning in the classroom. Teachers gave examples of resources they had used to assist with lessons involving NBL, including digital sources, books, professional guest speakers, external organizations, curriculum packages, natural learning spaces and sustainability initiatives on campus, measuring devices, organic objects, financial grants, sketchbooks, and outdoor teaching techniques. Many teachers expressed how parents had shown interest in programming involving NBL, and that they had never heard any discouragement from parents for their outdoor education programs and classes.

Teachers identified a number of challenges to taking students outside for lessons, most commonly citing issues involving logistics, time, focus, and classroom management. Logistical difficulties included limited options for wilderness on campus and transportation requirements for deeper wilderness experiences, issues of safety, difficulties in bringing technological devices



outside, and student mobility issues. Many teachers suggested that time was the most critical factor, as outdoor lessons often took longer for teachers to prepare, transitions from the classroom took longer especially in winter, the school year is opposite the growing season, teachers have concerns about covering enough content, scheduling difficulties occur with other classes, and that older students have more restrictions in terms of curricular timing. Several teachers suggested that it could sometimes be hard to keep students on task and maintain efficient work habits, that difficulties arose with larger groups especially outdoors, that open spaces could make classroom management difficult for particular students and classes, that technological devices could be more difficult to monitor outdoors, that being outdoors could generate too much excitement for some students, and that teachers had less ability to offer more direct support when classes are spread out over a larger area outdoors.

Notable quotes from teachers:

“With respect to science I’d say the school does promote [NBL] and does like us using it and as a staff member I do feel engaged with that.”

“I’ve heard quite a few positive comments [about NBL] in parent teacher interviews... if they were to mention how much [students] enjoyed class a lot of the time what comes up is things that we’ve done outside of the classroom... ‘cause those are the experiences that kids tend to remember.”

Conclusions

All four of the schools surveyed had science programs that utilized some opportunities for NBL and EE. This included the promoting of science curriculum through experiential learning in natural areas, promoting inquiry and encouraging students to make hands-on discoveries about the natural world, providing some opportunities for free time outdoors, and incorporating natural materials into outdoor lessons.

Students benefited from NBL by being in a different environment which was contrary to more traditional educational settings, allowing them opportunities for physical activity, better air quality, and a stronger connection to nature over time through outdoor classes and broader school programming. Connecting students with nature during school hours influenced many students’ attitudes towards the environment, relieved stress for students and adults alike, and provided a respite from electronic media. Teachers indicated that parents had good things to say about outdoor trips and that they hadn’t heard negative views from parents on the schools’ approach to outdoor classes. While there was some degree of ethical investment in natural experiences, a few teachers indicated that deeper environmental issues such as consumption and carbon footprint were harder for the community to approach.

Challenges which impacted opportunities for NBL were mainly discussed in terms of logistics, time, focus, and classroom management. Students’ level of focus and teachers’ ability to keep students focused could often make the delivery and data collection associated with a specific outdoor science unit problematic, unless NBL is integrated into classes more often. A students’ ability to center on what to pay attention to and what to ignore is one of a set of cognitive processes commonly referred to as executive function. Participants were asked to rank their ability, or lack thereof, for maintaining focus on their science lessons within the outdoor setting, however it was unclear as to how

regular each students' experiences with NBL were across schools. The statistical mean for students who indicated no difficulty in maintaining attention was 2.70 whereas the mean for those who were prone to distraction was 3.55, suggesting that there was considerable variability in the potential degree of students' focus outdoors, with some suggesting they could focus well or better, and others suggesting their focus was worse, so no clear conclusions can be drawn.

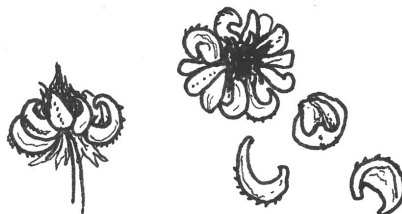
The ability to stay on-task when beyond the confines of the classroom can often be challenging for students when they first enter a natural space, which is a clear hurdle for both students and teachers to overcome in planning effective outdoor lessons. Utilizing particular teaching techniques such as letting students 'run it off' before bringing them in for learning was identified as useful for mitigating these issues, and establishing clear expectations for regular classes involving NBL may also contribute to more effective lessons and a heightened level of focus.

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Stephen Fine, PhD (OISE/UT) is an outdoor curriculum and experiential learning specialist of over 25 years. He is an internationally known researcher and presenter within the world of organized camping, and works closely with outdoor education youth organizations around the world.



Dr. Garry “Gibber” Gibson

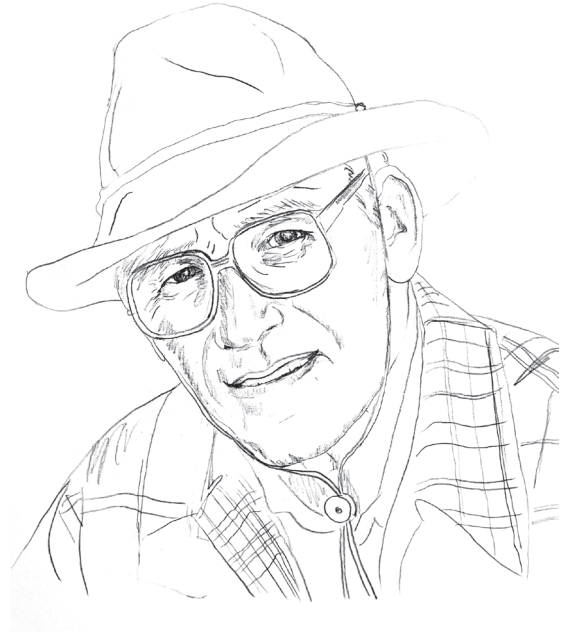
By Morten Asfeldt

For many readers outside Alberta, Dr. Garry “Gibber” Gibson is likely an unknown person and some may wonder why a tribute to Gibber finds a place in *Pathways*. Other readers know of Gibber as a professor, coach, mentor, and friend that either directly shaped their lives through a course at the University of Alberta in Edmonton or Camrose or they heard stories from those who did. In the post-secondary setting, Gibber was an outdoor education pioneer.

Garry grew up in a logging family in the interior of BC and spent much of his childhood and youth learning the ways of logging. Logging enabled Gibber to develop foundational outdoor skills that he shared with students in addition to a deep respect for the natural world. For Gibber, nature was a great teacher that provided inspiration and vision and yet also resulted in sometimes grave yet natural consequences if loggers weren't paying attention.

In 1963, Gibber and his young family moved to Edmonton where he began a Master's degree studying outdoor education (OE). Gibber arrived two weeks before the fall semester began to take an OE course. He was shocked that this OE course was composed of touch football, golf, and other sports that were played outside. This was not Gibber's idea of OE; it did not provide the powerful learning he had experienced in the forests and mountains of BC. After the course, he approached his Master's supervisor, Dr. Don Smith, with his vision of OE. Dr. Smith accepted Gibber's vision and set Gibber loose to create the first OE courses at the U of A. According to Passmore's 1972 study of OE in Canada, the U of A was among the first universities in Canada to teach for-credit OE courses. Gibber was at the forefront of this development.

Gibber went on to create and teach two OE courses at the U of A during his Master's degree. Once completing his degree, he took a job 100 km southeast of Edmonton at



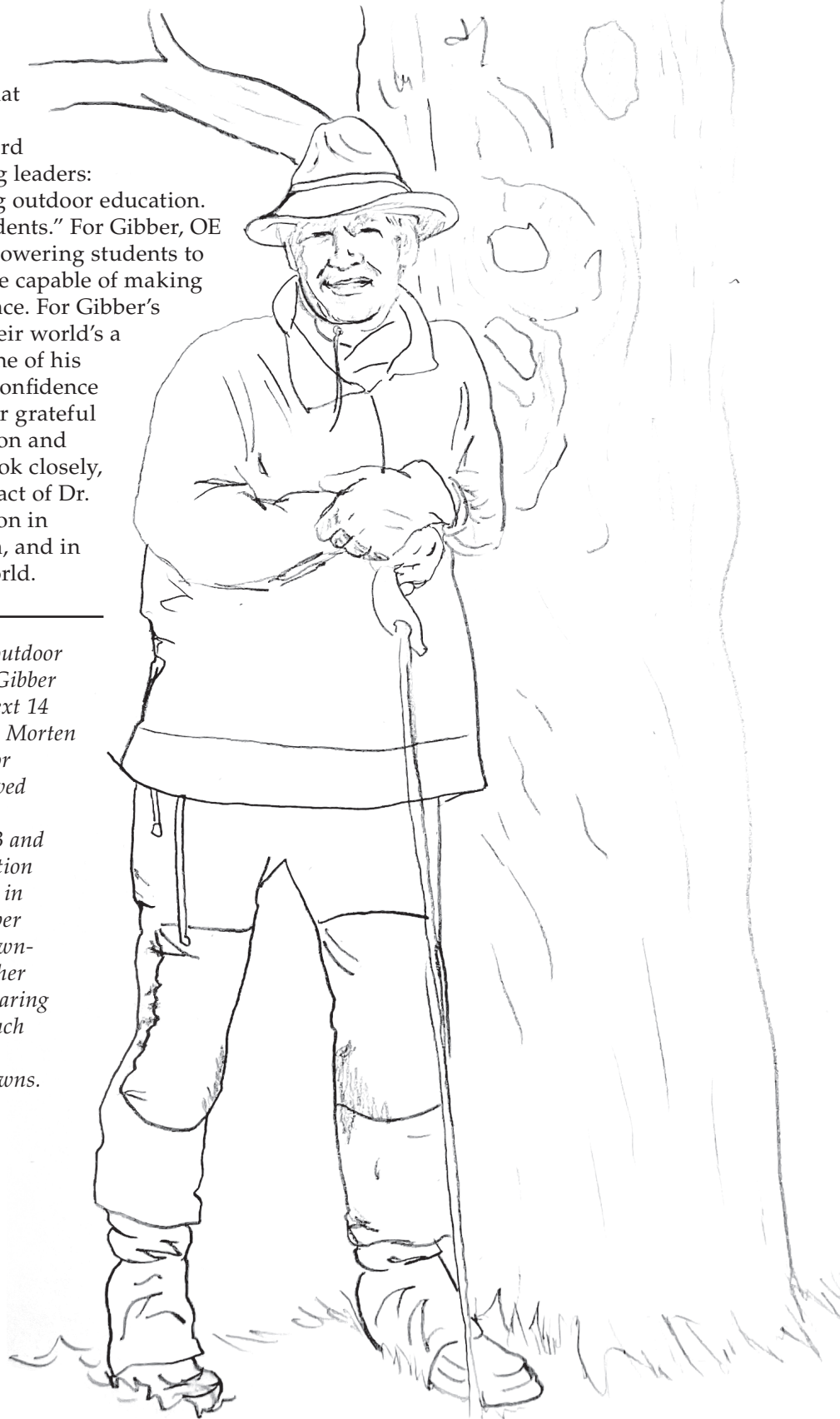
what was then Camrose Lutheran College (CLC) where he continued to teach these two courses. In 1972, in partnership with CLC biology colleague Dr. Dave Larson, they created a 26-day spring course that included extended canoe and backpack trips. These trips were a catalyst for developing group and leadership skills combined with environmental education activities to learn about the places where they traveled. Students from the Edmonton campus regularly completed the spring course in Camrose as there was nothing similar in Edmonton. Many of Gibber's students returned as assistant leaders to help Gibber teach OE courses at CLC and later Augustana.

Many readers may not know of Gibber because he didn't write about what he was doing. This is partly because research was not a requirement of his career at an undergraduate teaching university. It was also because he was devoted to providing deep learning experiences for students through his courses and volunteer leadership opportunities and this consumed his life. Gibber had an uncanny ability to see the potential for greatness in his

students and was particularly gifted at helping students to see in themselves what they could not see.

Gibber was often heard telling his developing leaders: "You are not teaching outdoor education. You are teaching students." For Gibber, OE was a means for empowering students to believe that they were capable of making the world a better place. For Gibber's students, he made their world's a better place and as one of his students, I say with confidence that we are all forever grateful for Gibber's inspiration and mentorship. If you look closely, you can find the impact of Dr. Garry "Gibber" Gibson in most parts of Canada, and in many parts of the world.

Morten Asfeldt's first outdoor education course with Gibber was in 1981. For the next 14 years, Gibber mentored Morten in the fine art of outdoor leadership. Morten served as Gibber's sabbatical replacement in 1992/93 and took over Gibber's position at Augustana full-time in 1995. Morten and Gibber have literally lived "down-the-alley" from each other for the past 20 years sharing food, tools, shoveling each other's driveways, and mowing each other's lawns.



The Engagement of Complexity: 65 and Wondering If These Ideas are Antiquated

By Bob Henderson

It can be said that in outdoor education, there is a certain way that embraces complex qualities and values. Let me explain. In the thought process of the late eco-philosopher Sigmund Kvaloy Setreng, complexity is a good thing. Complication, mind you, is particularly different and at times, less good. Whether we know it in this way or not, outdoor educators are constantly navigating the complexity/ complication continuum. Sigmund was fond of saying, "in education, the worst thing you can do is take away opportunities to explore one's inner complexity."

Exploring one's inner complexity is a hallmark of outdoor education, though we don't use this language.

Let's navigate this concept with a navigational example suggested to me by Norwegian colleague Jorgen Nerland. Years ago, in high alpine terrain, I found myself without a map or GPS wanting to hike cross-country to a lake without any trail. A friend at the "non-trailhead" casually said something like, "You head north over a ridge and then another, climb out of the valley and you should see a mountain backdrop to the lake. You'll pick up the trail at the lake bringing you east to a road. Bob's your uncle. You'll be back before nightfall."

This friend was confident I could read the unfamiliar landscape to find the alpine lake. I was less sure. This is complexity. "Note that little lead—find the bigger one. Is that a ridge or a spur of a larger hill? Might this rivulet flow into the right lake?" My engagement with the land was paramount and rewarding.

There is a complex understanding in reading nature. An intimacy. This involves deciphering the logic of the landscape. It was exciting and nerve wracking; challenging with a high degree of uncertainty and agency. There were real

consequences to failure and a healthy degree of employment of skill put to the test. A true little adventure is involved in reading the landscapes (Beames and Brown 2016), which is markedly different than relying on your mobile phone's GPS technology; the phone advancing a gap or distancing between a person and the land, the reading terrain closing this gap, facilitating a deeper engagement and closeness between the person and the land. Satellites to GPS on my phone or another device I can understand. Well sort of. It is easy to appreciate the skill set involved and enjoy the confidence the GPS involves in largely taking away the uncertainty. I could understand how all this works in time if I tried and it would be impressive but not wonderous. In short, complication is within my grasp. Complexity isn't. So the other night I went out to observe the Elon Musk satellites. I'd been told they were discernible given their pattern in the sky. I didn't see them but had my usual amazement at the stary night and insignificance of my being. At that moment I heard a truck rambling full tilt down the distant highway. Marvellous machines. I always hope I'll hear a wolf howl or loon call though: human derived complication vs. the beyond human complexity.

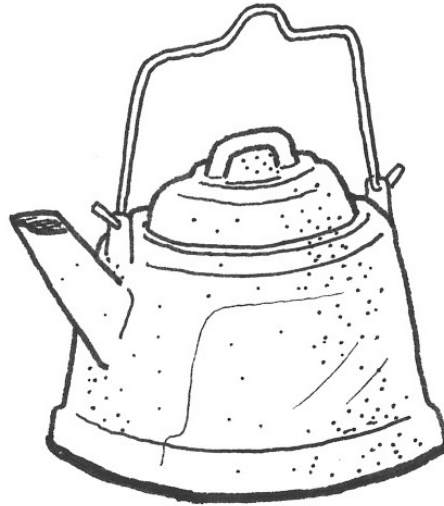
This deeper engagement with nature—the more-than-human world—is complexity at play. You could say complexity is also found in wondering what your cat is thinking when you walk in the door from a weekend away or you faithfully load that bird feeder every other day week after week for the joy it affords. Why do we bring nature closer into our lives? Sigmund would say, we relish the complexity. Now, I wonder about Sigmund and his complexity-complication continuum. If I'd had a map and no trail, this would be pseudo-complexity—a kind of false complexity. If I relied on GPS, it would be complication, relying on a human-derived device where

it is all too easy to watch the device and marvel at it over watching the terrain. I've done the same with maps. Thanks Jorgen for the example that I experienced not far from Sigmund's family farm of thirteen generations.

Sigmund's own navigational example is found in a sketch. He likens flying a jet over the Hardanger Plains as complication; travelling by train gazing through the window or sleeping to the gentle roll of motion as pseudo-complexity; and skiing with a mate into the same plateau landscape, complexity. Don't get caught in the good/bad, right/wrong binary, though. Rather, a complication-complexity continuum is about exploring differences to the human psyche. Recently Imre Van Kraalingen (2021) put it this way: "Employing digital technology is not simply good or bad but the potential is there to change the quality and possible range of human experience."

In our modern times and from the examples above, it is all too easy to dismiss this discussion as *passé*. "Give it up Sigmund/Bob, digital technology is here to stay." But outdoor educators are involved in decision making along these lines constantly: do I bring the group back along a wooded trail or the roadway which would be easier? Do I encourage an early morning camp wake-up so we enjoy a sunrise or an evening lake paddle or summit hike to maximize that mystic closing of the gap with nature.

The complication decision would be opting for ways of interacting that widen the gap with nature largely unintended, mind you. Often, complication involves a technological application, like using a lake bottom scanning fish-finder compared to that slow acquiring of knowledge from fishing the lake and following advice of old times. You can't always say one is always better. There is just a difference: no mystique or just a different mystique. In outdoor education we have so much opportunity for complexity/natural mystic.



The human body/human nature/nature is a dynamic interplay of complexity. Complexity is rooted in relationships, most beyond our true comprehension. It is pre-intellect, thriving in "intuition, sensitivity, love, direct integration of body and mind in rhythmic movement." (Setreng Kvaloy 2015, 53).

Complexity, if we stop to consider it, asks difficult questions of us. There is wonderment. Not just, *what is my cat thinking?*, but *what is one's place/role/being in the universe?* We rarely stop to consider this overtly but it is intertwined in our gazing at a starry night or into the evening campfire and that cat's eyes or a surprise eye-to-eye with a wolf or eagle by a river's edge.

Here's another example of putting Sigmund's thinking into an outdoor education context. Lately, I've been using camp stoves more and more on the trail compared to a cooking fire. There is an ease and convenient factor (until the thing breaks down). There is an environmental factor (say, if on heavily used Algonquin Park campsites or out islands in Georgian Bay where organic material is sparse). I think of the camp stove as complication. It's noisy. It isn't really fun (to me anyway). I doubt I can fix it. I've thrown a Whisper-Lite into the lake once when it flamed up out of control, and I was reading about a premier northern trapper, Hjalmar Dale, who did it all in the North from 1920 until

his death in 1968 in his cabin along the Mackenzie River when his stove exploded and burned 80% of his body. (Ingstad, 2017, 48-71). But camp stoves sure are practical.

Yet there is something missing. I miss fiddling with the campfire, creating the night heat for the moment. I miss organizing the pots on the grill or fire irons. I miss the sounds (not noise). The fire for cooking may not be as easy and convenient but the work is playful, warming, engaging, and mysterious—and at night, the fire offers primal comfort and security.

On canoe trips, some folks also take a twig stove or fire in a can. I suppose this would be Sigmund's pseudo-complexity.

Last example. We always travel with a canoe tripping guitar. It's so pleasurable to sit by the campfire playing in the background while a dessert is baking in a reflector oven and folks are chatting. There is a complexity in this. The warm sound or even the boisterous rhythm of a 60's rocker. People are drawn to the music. It is an engaging ambiance. There's a certain realness.



Now, enter a mini portable speaker. "Hey," someone says, "I have tunes on my bluetooth speaker. I've even got a campsite playlist. I can charge it too with my portable solar panel." We've moved into Sigmund's complicated realm here. I suggest the warmth and engagement is diminished.

"Hey, leave the guitar at home," you might hear.

It isn't so much that one is better than the other—reading the land over a GPS, the campfire better than the stove, the guitar playing superior to the music box—it is that they are different. They influence us in different ways. There is a question of values. There is a place for all, but there is an opportunity in outdoor education to expose students, clients and people in general to complexity at heightened levels within small group, nature-centric experiences. Whether we want to think of it this way or not: we are exposing a value set. So different, not better but with associated values. There is a different "usefulness" between complication and complexity activities.

It seems like an opportunity lost not to seek out the complexity. The complication is so readily with us in our usual day-to-day lives. Throw a bit of complexity into a camping trip and watch the warmth and engagement increase. There is a "beneficial burden" in much of outdoor education complexity. (Thanks to Brendon Munge for this gem of a saying.) Often the campfire cooking experience—a burden compared up against the camp stove—is worth it. The mucking around with gathering and sorting wood/fuel and getting the spark to take to the wood and the spacing for oxygen among the wood/fuel. All this is involved, messy, laborious. But there is more. These three components (fuel, spark and oxygen) do not make the fire. There is a fourth thing: uninhibited chain reactions. Therein lies the mystery. The complexity. I'm reminded of the D.H. Lawrence line of poetry: "water is two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, but here is a third thing that makes it water, and nobody knows what that is." Again, we rarely stop to consider such mysteries. But

for outdoor educators it is an inherent part of the spiritual impulse that brings us to be taking folks into the woods and lakes and mountains and deserts. All this is Sigmund's "inner complexity" which has a significant usefulness as we culturally and individually move further and further from nature.

Sometimes, of course, you go complicated as well. I use the latest high-tech designed tents throughout the bug season, but come autumn, I love to set up a tarp for the few or forgo the tarp and sleep out under the complexity of a starry night. The universe, the stars, the glow from lightyears away: ponder that! That's complexity: warmth and engagement with qualities that demand involvement, deeper questions about our place—a certain, "into the mystic" as songwriter Van Morrison once tried to capture.

Reading the landscape, working the cooking fire, guitar playing at evening camp time, sleeping out under the stars: outdoor educators can do all of that with the folks in our charge. Sigmund helps us be aware that we are bringing a rich complexity into people's lives.

If we are conscious of complexity, we will see and feel it more often and as educators and guides, be better able to find the best place to be in the complexity-complication continuum in the moment of our modern lives. AND, we will be conscious of bringing complexity to our students/clients/participants as guides. It might be using/teaching the GPS, using a map or reading the landscape. It is suggested here that with outdoor education, we move toward complexity often. It's akin to offering gifts to our students. An outdoor educator colleague, Glyn Thomas, in correspondence on this topic, recently—wisely—admonished that "our decision to include or exclude digital technologies should be based on whether it enhances or impairs the achievement of educational objectives." He is calling for solid intentionality whereby our practice/our in the field decisions are grounded in educational objectives. Enhancing one's inner complexity is one such intentional slice of practice. I suggest

here, it tends to exist at a level of subliminal practice.

Perhaps this pro-complexity ramble is just nostalgic wandering into a time and space before the prevalence of devices. That's fair. BUT perhaps too, we should be aware of what is lost when we are reliant on the complication of a world so steeped in human manufacturing which all too easily can be an overbearing quality in our lives. Perhaps, unwittingly, there is a sensory undernourishment that comes with overbearing complication and a dearth of complexity and that certain beneficial burden in our lives. What potential for outdoor educators. Sigmund had this figured out.

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Bob Henderson works within a variety of outdoor education pathways in Ontario and beyond, including serving as Resource Editor for Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education.

Countdown to Camp: Your Guide to Designing a Student-Led Leadership Camp

By Katie Hannah

A Review of Kettle, K., *Countdown to Camp: Your Guide to Designing a Student-Led Leadership Camp*. Volumes Publishing.

I was a student at Port Perry High School as Leadership Camp transitioned from a Student Council celebration to an inclusive program to develop leaders across all of our clubs and connect young students to extracurricular activities. I eventually became a Co-Head of the Camp Committee . We worked all year to plan four days of activities for our peers. We selected a theme; created leadership workshops; booked a guest speaker; fundraised; and planned campfires, teambuilding activities, talent shows and much more. Leadership Camp changed my life. It gave me the skills and confidence to be successful and shifted my career path towards teaching.

I was thrilled to read *Countdown to Camp*. The author, Karen Kettle, was my science teacher and camp advisor. The first half of the book takes the reader on a whirlwind tour of a successful Leadership Camp. It provides a rationale that explains why student-led camps are effective and describes the roles and responsibilities of the people involved. There are lots of hints to get started and how to find the perfect camp partner. The framework provided is tested and true. It balances learning and fun! It's flexible. You could easily change Leadership Camp into an Environmental Camp, a Social Issues Camp, or an Outdoor Education Camp.

The second half of the book is a comprehensive month-by-month description of how to make camp happen. It walks you through everything you need to know about working with your camp partner, chairing cooperative meetings, brainstorming ideas, making decisions, delegating responsibilities, selecting a theme, designing workshops, monitoring your timeline, practicing leadership skills,

registering campers, and implementing camp. The wisdom of keeping camp simple when you start and adding complexity as your committee grows comes from experience. I learned to always have a rain plan...this served me well at camp and more importantly as a teacher.

Countdown to Camp was written for a wide audience. It's a treasure trove for teachers who want to create a leadership program. It can be handed to students on Camp Committee to help them understand their roles and manage their time. It's a guide for principals on how to support camp and mobilize student leaders to make their school better for everyone. Camp Program Directors can use this resource to support their clients as they extend their summer season by hosting schools and youth groups.

Countdown to Camp captures my experience on Camp Committee. We really did feel like we were training as astronauts throughout the year as we counted down to the launch of camp. So many cooperative meetings... so many possibilities brainstormed in red ink on legal paper! We shared laughter and shenanigans. The book comes alive with quotations from Camp Committee members and with whimsical illustrations by Erika Nicholson. It's a guide on the side for advisors and student leaders who want to create their own camp. For those of us who have been to camp, it brings back great memories!

Countdown to Camp is available through Volumes Publishing at volumesdirect.com.

Katie Hannah (formerly Lebel) is an intermediate teacher at The Pines Senior Public School in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

Countdown to Camp

Your Guide to Designing a *Student-Led* Leadership Camp



"Camp is a magical place where you can discover yourself, meet amazing people, and share great memories. The best part though, is that the camp experience doesn't end when you get back, it remains alive in the hearts of student leaders to share with others." - Michelina, Camp Committee

by **Karen Kettle**
illustrated by **Erika Nicholson**

nêwo isîhtwâwina kâ-kiskiskitân Four Ways to Remember

By Naomi McIlwraith

Listen for hope in the east wind:
wâpanohk is where the sunrises
and where the day's plans are made.
Plan well for your children.

nahîhtatân pakosêyimowin wâpanohk

Listen for the energy in the south wind:
sâwanohk will tell you just how the children
will move in the circle from right to left
from east to south to west to north.

nahîhtatân âhkamêyimowin âpihtâ-kîsikanohk

Listen for stories in the west wind
and remember *kîsikôsis* – the little children
those little sky beings the Creator
has loaned to you¹. Remember *kîsikôsis*.

nahîhtatân âcimowina pahkisimotâhk

Listen for wisdom in the north wind
kîwêtin will tell you many things: how to
hold
close your children, walk a good path with
them,
and release them to their own good path of
remembering.

nahîhtatân iyinîsiwin kîwêtinohk

Endnotes

¹ Personal Communication with Elder Jerry Saddleback on February 23, 2016 at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta.

Naomi McIlwraith lives in Edmonton, Alberta (amiskwaciwâskahikan-Beaver Mountain House). She is an educator, poet, and essayist, with a mixed Cree, Ojibwe, Scottish, and English inheritance.



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EDUCATION FOR ENVIRONMENT, CHARACTER, CURRICULUM AND WELLBEING

Special Theme Issue: Learning Through the More-Than Human

The presumed separation of humans from non-human animals, plants, objects, things, or the elements represents a distinctively Western conception of a world divided. It could be argued that these values permeate dominant educational models but are not universally upheld. In what ways can we learn through a critical exploration of our "more-than-human" encounters? What exactly is "more-than-human"? Is there a division between the human and non-human, and if so, where does it begin? In this issue we want to explore the capacity for outdoor education, or educational praxis more broadly, to engage with these questions, or to otherwise introduce alternative teaching practices that incite critical explorations of place, being, and matter. Submissions may discuss but are not limited to: Outdoor, environmental, and experiential education; wild pedagogies; land-based artistic practice; Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, Queer, or otherwise anticolonial teaching pedagogies; Object-Oriented Ontology, and more.

Below are suggested guiding questions and topics for submission; however, one is not limited to the following.

- What does more-than-human entanglement look like in an educational context? How can it shape the way we move through the world?
- What meanings might arise from intra-actions with the more-than-human? What are the affects and effects of such encounters?
- What does making space for more-than-human agency look, sound, or feel like within teaching practice? Could the more-than-human be a co-teacher?
- Embodiment and more-than-human encounters: Does the human body have a boundary? What can we learn from questioning that boundary?

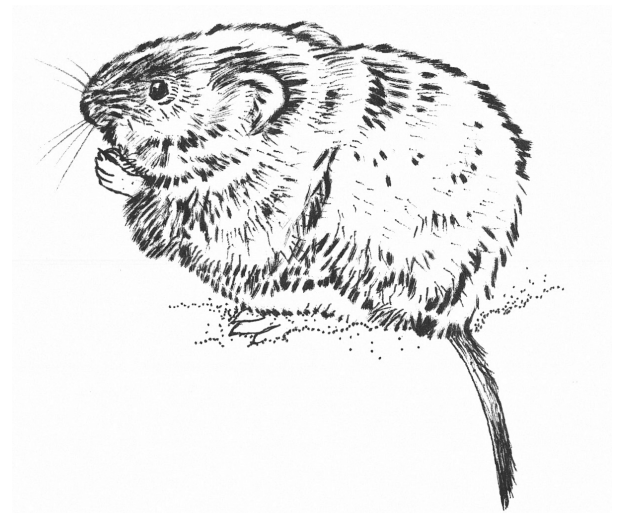
- In what ways do encounters with non-human animals lead us to question the human/animal separation or hierarchy? How can education connect different species or challenge species binaries?

Pathways parameters:

- *Pathways* will be seeking theme related artwork to support this issue. Please note that the journal does not typically does not make use of photos. Black line art is preferred.
- We aim to present many diverse ideas and experiences, and so are seeking submissions that are succinct and focused — ideally 2-4 pages in length (i.e., 1100 to 2400 words). Authors proposing articles of a greater length (5+ pages in length) should seek prior approval from the Guest Editors for this theme issue.
- Deadline for submissions: Monday, August 1st, 2022

Guest Editors: Nina Bakan, Aaron Lefler, and Megan Tucker.

For questions or to submit, please contact Megan: mct14@sfu.ca



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, pathways@coeo.org

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.

Formatting

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 1
Volume 2	Winter	December 1
Volume 3	Spring	March 1
Volume 4	Summer	June 1

Complimentary Copies

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, <i>Pathways</i> 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.



The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please visit our website at www.coeo.org/membership.htm for more detailed descriptions of the benefits of each membership category.

Please print and fully complete each line below.

Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms/Miss) _____

Street Address _____

City/Town _____ Province/State _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Telephone Home (_____) _____ Business (_____) _____

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Type of Membership (*Check one box*)

- Regular \$55.00
- Student/Retiree \$40.00
- Family \$65.00
- Library \$65.00 (Subscription to *Pathways* only)
- Organization \$130.00

United States orders please add \$4.00
International orders please add \$12.00

Journal Format (*Check one box*)

Please select the format in which you wish to receive your four *Pathways* journals:

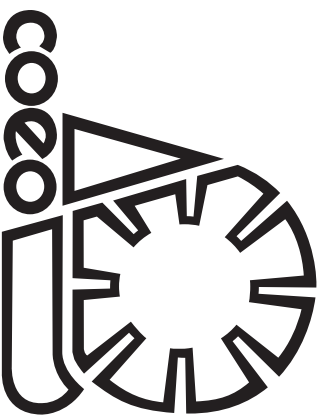
- PDF version through password access to the COEO website
- Printed copy through postal mail
- Both a digital and a printed version
(an additional fee of \$5.00 applies).

COEO Membership is from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

Every *Ontario member* of COEO will be assigned to a region of the province according to the county where (s)he lives.

- | | |
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| Central (CE) | Welland, Lincoln, Hamilton-Wentworth, Halton, Peel, York, Simcoe, Metro Toronto |
| Eastern (EA) | Victoria, Durham, Peterborough, Northumberland, Hastings, Prince Edward, Renfrew, Lennox and Addington, Frontenac, Leeds, Grenville, Ottawa-Carleton, Lanark, Prescott, Russell, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry |
| Northern (NO) | Parry Sound, Nipissing, Muskoka, Haliburton, North Bay, Patricia, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Algoma, Cochrane, Sudbury, Rainy River, Timiskaming |
| Western (WE) | Essex, Kent, Elgin, Lambton, Middlesex, Huron, Bruce, Grey, Dufferin, Wellington, Waterloo, Perth, Oxford, Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk |

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