

Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Summer 2005, 17(3)



Pathways

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COEO

Formed in 1972, the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes safe, quality outdoor education experiences for people of all ages. This is achieved through publishing the *Pathways* journal, running an annual conference and regional workshops, maintaining a Web site, and working with kindred organizations as well as government agencies.

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Features

- Reconnecting with Nature: Highlights from the Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders** 4
Bryan Grimwood
- Strategies for Sustainability: A Case Study of Outdoor Environmental Education in an Integrated Curriculum Program** ... 12
Laura Kittle and Erin Sharpe
- Quite Contrary in How Their Garden Grows: A Photonovella Research Project** 17
Cynthia Soullière
- Lessons from the Great White South: Experiential Education and Antarctica** 23
Pat Maher
- The Value of Serendipitous Learning** 28
Willem Krouwel
- An Outdoor Educator Researches His Practice** 33
Stephen Fine, Ph.D.

Responses

- Reconnecting with Nature** 10
Michael Elrick
- Strategies for Sustainability** 16
Patti Huber
- Quite Contrary in How Their Garden Grows** 22
Barb Imrie
- The Value of Serendipitous Learning** 32
Barb Imrie
- An Outdoor Educator Researches His Practice** 36
Maranda Smith

Columns

- Editors' Log Book** 2
Bob Henderson and Erin Sharpe
- President's View** 3
Grant Linney

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Building Bridges — Connecting Research and Practice

Although we think that everybody would agree that research is important, most outdoor educators don't exactly find themselves poring over research studies to find information to help them in their work. If asked, a typical outdoor educator would likely explain this with the following comments: "I don't have the time to search for it, the academic style of writing is boring and obtuse, and I find little information that resonates with what I do on a day-to-day basis." In other words, the gap between the world of research and the realities of outdoor education is awfully wide.

One of COEO's initiatives this year is to try to bridge that gap, and find ways to connect research to the practice of COEO members in a way that is informative, accessible, and useful. This issue is our first step towards this goal. Presented here is a collection of current research in outdoor education that examines the "how, what, and why" of what we do. Although the styles of research in these reports range dramatically — we have everything from phenomenology to case study to survey research to narrative inquiry — what the researchers have in common is that they have written up their work in an informative and engaging way.

We also invited a number of outdoor education practitioners to participate in the preparation of this issue. We sent out each research report to someone who has firsthand knowledge of the aspect of

outdoor education that the researchers addressed in their report. The insightful reflections of these practitioners on how the research findings relate to their outdoor education practice help to further strengthen the bridge. Enjoy!

Bob Henderson and Erin Sharpe

Bob Henderson teaches Outdoor Education at McMaster University. Erin Sharpe teaches Outdoor Recreation at Brock University.



Sketch Pad — Art for this issue of *Pathways* is generously provided by Helena Juhasz (cover and pages 6, 18, and 23), Josh Gordon (page 2), and Heather Read (page 26).

The Ecological Imperative of Outdoor Education

July 13th is Ontario's 36th smog alert day of 2005. At this early stage of summer, we have already exceeded the total alerts for last year (35), and we will break the 2003 record (37) before the end of this week. So, we've had more than five weeks' worth of smog alerts already, and the area of their impact is constantly increasing. Just think: it is now frequently unsafe to breathe on the lakes and portages of Algonquin Park! And this is only one of many pressing and global environmental concerns (e.g., climate change, other forms of pollution, and habitat and species loss).

Yet, despite a few notable exceptions (e.g., Ontario becoming the first political jurisdiction in the world to commit to a complete phase-out of coal-fired electricity plants), we continually fail to muster the sustained will and commitment to make the changes essential for a healthy future ... and present. This commitment needs to happen on several levels: individual, family, and groups of all kinds, including COEO.

As an organization, COEO promotes four key values of outdoor education: education for environment, character, well-being, and curriculum. I believe that this far-reaching scope is both a blessing and a bane. It is our strength to speak of how outdoor and experiential learning has so many powerful benefits. It is our weakness when it comes to "branding" and promoting our profession, because we cannot (and should not) be identified with just one of these attributes. It is also a weakness when it lets us off the hook in terms of making the kind of clear and unequivocal commitments that our times call for. So, here's my take on this.

Outdoor education, in its full and wide variety of forms, is needed now more than ever. At a time when North American consumerism lulls us further and further into a mesmerizing, seemingly passive and at the same time insidiously destructive lifestyle, we desperately need hands-on experiences to remind us that we are active players in our natural surroundings. We

constantly make choices that have an impact not only on our own lives, but on all life on this planet.

All environmental educators must provide direct hands-on experiences in natural settings. This is what powers the spark, the connection, and the will to be an agent for change.

All outdoor educators must include what Lakehead professor Tom Puk refers to as the "ecological imperative" of our times. (Thanks to Tom for some great discussions on this.) Every outdoor education program, centre, and class needs to carefully consider the nature of its students, program, and location within this urgent and overarching context of ecological literacy.

Ask the following questions:

- Am I personally up to date when it comes to my knowledge of environmental issues and how to think ecologically? (If you're still focusing on the "3 R's," you have some catching up to do!) Is the place where I work also up to date on these matters?
- Do I fully appreciate the difference between teaching, say, a science lesson on dragonflies, and placing such knowledge within a broader context of ecosystems thinking? Education for environment must involve ecological context.
- How can I capitalize on the outdoor experiences I provide to get my students/learners/campers to think and connect ecologically? Further, how can I modify the outdoor experiences I provide to bring this ecological dimension more to the forefront? If teambuilding is an important part of my program, how can I show that a sense of human community can provide the kind of support and empowerment that leads to changed ecological behaviours? If outdoor pursuits (e.g., cross-country skiing, hiking, and canoeing) are my passion, then how can I use these experiences to foster ecological understanding, connection, and commitment?

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Reconnecting with Nature: Highlights from the Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders

by Bryan Grimwood

Introduction

The blend of positive personal, social, and environmental outcomes in outdoor education and recreation is certainly not an extraordinary idea to academics (e.g., Arnould & Price, 1993; Hanna, 1995; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998) or practitioners — individuals who study or witness these benefits regularly. In an era of constant and considerable environmental degradation and disrespect, the realm of outdoor education has the responsibility and capability to inspire change and encourage humans' reconnection to nature's spaces and places (Henderson, 1990; Henderson, 1999). Wilderness recreation programs, in particular, have the potential to contribute to this grand challenge. Although a variety of anecdotal evidence supports this claim (Haluza-Delay, 1999), the styles of many wilderness recreation programs and their guiding leaders are not necessarily compatible with the promotion of human-nature connections. Take as an example programs and leaders that seek, as their primary motive, risk and adventure during their wilderness experiences (Ewert, 1989; Miles & Priest, 1999; Priest & Gass, 1997). Conquering nature and its obstacles (Haluza-Delay, 1999) and using wild lands as a playing field (Hogan, 1992) to achieve personal and group development goals becomes the focus. These ideals of adventure-focused programs oppose the potential for participants to learn about, connect with, and develop positive feelings for and relationships with nature.

My intentions here are not to belabour this point (see Grimwood (2003) for more food for thought). Rather, the purpose of this paper is to highlight findings from

current academic research that are transferable and imperative to the practice of wilderness recreation and outdoor education. Specifically, by reviewing the purpose, methods, and selected findings of a recent qualitative research project, this paper will demonstrate that although some wilderness recreation programs and leaders inspire improved human connections to nature, there is a need for wilderness programs to place more emphasis on learning about nature and reconnecting people with nature.

Purpose of Research

Much like wilderness recreation pursuits where there are a variety of travel forms that allow access to natural pristine settings, there exist a number of approaches to studying any one question or problem. Of the qualitative traditions of inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002), I selected phenomenology to describe and highlight the experience of nature for wilderness recreation leaders (Grimwood, 2005). Phenomenological research seeks to describe the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Patton, 2002). As such, the goal of my phenomenological research was not to explain causal relationships or provide predictive formulas related to wilderness recreation leaders and their nature experiences. Rather, *the purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders.*

Specific to this research, wilderness recreation leaders are the focus because of their potential to create change in the environmental consciousness and

connections of their wilderness trip participants (Duenkel, 1994; Hanna, 1995; Henderson, 1990). Moreover, the sample of residential summer camp canoe trippers that I selected for inclusion in this study represents an important and sizeable segment of the wilderness recreation leader population in Canada (Henderson & Potter, 2000). These wilderness leaders mediate young people's experiences in remote natural settings for days on end and fulfill the role of guide, educator, instructor, first-aid giver, counsellor, and guardian. Through this exploratory, descriptive study, the ways that wilderness recreation leaders experience nature are illuminated, deconstructing the assumed environmental benefits of and practices used in outdoor recreation, and offering a foundation for advancing an environmental ethic among wilderness recreation leaders, participants, and organizations.

Research Methods

The phenomenological research involved five canoe trip leaders selected from a camping organization that offers 21- to 25-day wilderness recreation canoe trips to 15- to 16-year-old boys and girls. Each of the five study participants led one of these extended canoe trips during the summer months of 2003. Two unstructured and in-depth interviews were completed with each study participant, and a final member check was executed to verify the results. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. These transcriptions embodied the majority of the data, which was analyzed according to Colaizzi's (1978) thematic analysis guidelines. To maintain and honour the multi-dimensional and multi-layered nature of lived experience (van Manen, 1997), the final result was presented as a narrative account of a wilderness recreation leader immersed within the various interactions, both adverse and valuable, between and among the natural environment, other people, and himself or

herself. Although this narrative account is the cumulative piece of the research, this paper presents highlights from the exhaustive description of the thematic clusters that provide structure to this phenomenal experience.

Research Findings: Connections to Nature

The structure of the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders was described in four broad thematic clusters: the meaning of nature, connections to nature, behaviours in nature, and emotions in nature. The following descriptions integrate raw data statements taken from interviews with study participants, which provide the foundation for the key research findings associated with these four areas. To support the intentions of this article, however, I have only described the "connections to nature" theme here. The connections to nature described by the wilderness recreation leaders in this research included the following:

- a struggle between a vision of themselves as fundamentally part of nature versus divorced from nature
- an interaction among the self, others, and nature
- nature's rewards
- giving something back to nature

For a complete review of all themes derived from the research, see Grimwood (2005).

Part of Nature

Wilderness recreation leaders described that, as living creatures on this Earth, humans are a part of nature and the interactions that we have with the environment are fundamental to nature. For instance, one participant indicated that

I don't like going out into the wilderness and feeling like I shouldn't touch anything. I really don't like that. I very much like

feeling that being here at a proper kind of scale and a proper level of impact — that I am fundamentally kind of part of this environment and in a way not damaging it, but in a way almost helping it. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Sarah shares Tom's idea that we are fundamentally part of nature:

That's the connection, feeling of connection — that we're a part of nature. That is, [nature is] not something separate maybe that we go and visit from here...that's where we came from. The bottom line is that we're not different than those things [living in nature]. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

Participants hint at human involvement in natural processes and our similarity to other creatures and entities of nature. Perhaps, as Kyle suggests, humans and nature are simply interdependent:

I think everything is tied into the environment. I think we're very much a part of the environment. As much as we try to get away from that these days, we still are alive and a part of the Earth as it

once was, and because of that we are totally interdependent. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Divorced from Nature

Despite wilderness recreation leaders' convictions that humans are a part of nature, the results of the qualitative research also highlight humans as being divorced from nature. Humanity's desire to control things, for example, has contributed to this severed connection with nature: "There's no denying that we have separated ourselves from the land and, you know, here I am in concrete land and I control this, I control that" (Sarah, April 04, 2004). To some degree then, the safety, planning, and supervision (i.e., all factors established to control the experience) that are involved in an extended canoe trip of this sort, and which rightly require the regular and devoted attention of the wilderness leader, can contribute to individuals experiencing a divorced relationship with nature. As Tom puts it, "I took my role as a professional very seriously and it really alienated me from nature" (Tom, March 16, 2004). This circumstance accommodates an element of irony, as many wilderness recreation leaders appreciate canoe trips because they



provide an escape from the regular institutions and routines governing society.

Accompanying the notion that wilderness recreation leaders and other humans are divorced from nature is the idea that people on a canoe trip are “visitors” to natural environments. In fact, Jamie mentions that he is “kind of the intruder into the land” (Jamie, April 01, 2004). In this capacity, the wilderness leader respects nature’s control but still appreciates and enjoys the surrounding pristine environments. Humans, however, have the potential to inflict hazards or leave traces of their presence in natural environments that can diminish the sense of discovery and connections to nature experienced by others. Katie compares her experience in nature to visiting a friend’s house and cleaning up after yourself so that “you don’t leave a trail of your mess behind you” (Katie, March 09, 2004).

Interactions Among Self, Others, and Nature

Emerging from the thematic analysis of the participants’ interviews is the suggestion that humans and nature share a relationship that involves interactions among the self, others, and nature. Certainly, there are personal and social moments that the wilderness recreation leader experiences on these canoe trips, but both personal and social episodes are housed within the context of the natural environment. Humans interact with other humans in the landscape of nature. This provides powerful, concrete experiences among humans and pronounced feelings of connection to nature. Tom explains,

So if you’ve been down a really crazy set of rapids with someone it’s kind of unspoken but your friendship is more concrete because you shared that similar experience and you’ve shared something that’s very unspoken

but you probably both felt it, right? Or if you’ve seen a beautiful waterfall you’ve shared a common experience and that really bonds your friendship. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Sharing the experience of nature with others is important to the relationship that humans have with nature. A special bond is created among members of a canoe trip:

I think with your group you can share it...you’re experiencing the same thing at the same time and so you can have more of that relation and that connection. Where I think that if you’re just telling someone about it they’re like, “Oh, wow, that’s really neat.” But really they don’t understand what it looked like, how it was, how big the waterfall was, or how big the rapids were. They don’t really understand all the components of it. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

Nature’s Rewards

As part of the connection between humans and nature, humans derive personal experiences from nature that, in the moment, may be positive or negative, but that ultimately lead to beneficial changes in a person. Simply put, nature enriches us (R. Kennedy Jr., personal communication, June 06, 2004). The challenges and risks provided by the river and the surrounding natural landscapes on extended canoe trips push wilderness recreation leaders’ boundaries and their comfort zones, contributing to their character development. Admitting to being a thrill seeker, Jamie explains how nature experiences can boost his self-confidence:

I just find it’s kind of fun to do things that are semi-dangerous. Like white water — there is definitely a risk element in there and if things do go wrong you could get hurt or other people in

your party could get hurt so it gets the blood rushing a little bit, the adrenaline pumping. And when you do complete it successfully it's just, kind of, "Yeah!" You look back and you're like, "Yeah! I just did that." (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

Nature also offers moments that, when compiled, form a collage of learning about, understanding of, and appreciation of natural wonders. The rewards that nature extends to humans also satisfy a spiritual yearning for wilderness recreation leaders. For Sarah, the vastness of nature ignites innate feelings of connection and being humbled by the grand circle of life: "There's obviously that idea of humbling...like you can't deny there's a spiritual connection to being in the wilderness. Just innate within us" (Sarah, March 16, 2004). Sarah continues later, "The idea of there being the feeling like a force that's bigger than something that we know. There's something bigger than us. Not something like a person but just some force" (Sarah, April 04, 2004).

Giving Something Back

In response to the rewards that nature offers humans, the wilderness recreation leaders' relationship to nature is a very personal feeling that inspires giving something back. This can be achieved by leaders protecting or helping various components of nature, teaching others about nature, or offering thanks for the opportunities to have these experiences. On Kyle's trip, ceremonies of thanks were a regular part of their routine:

I just want to give them [i.e., his trip participants] the opportunity to give something back and in their own way give thanks or say a prayer or do whatever it is they want to do or they feel is appropriate at the time. So I would give them the opportunity

to go off to a place or even to a person or whatever and give thanks. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

Giving something back to nature can also involve teaching others about nature and sponsoring the survival and protection of natural environments. From a societal perspective, Tom notes,

I kind of liked the idea of thinking that, well, by bringing people out here maybe this will trigger something in them and they will go back to institutions we've created in society and try to communicate the kind of intrinsic worth of places like this. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

For Katie, her teachings and support for the survival of natural environments are focused on encouraging her trip participants to advocate on nature's behalf. Katie mentions that she strives for "being able to experience [nature] and being able to come back with experiences about it and tell a lot more people about it in hopes that they practise the same things that you do in order to maintain it" (Katie, April 08, 2004). In this capacity, the wilderness recreation leader aims to assist in the sustainable future and health of natural environments. Because nature enriches humans with spiritual connections, beautiful landscapes, and opportunities for personal growth, people must be respectful and take care of nature. It seems only fitting that we give something back to nature by assuming a caretaker role in nature. In fact, humans have an intellectual capacity and a moral responsibility to be involved in this caretaking process:

I think that we were given the gift of logical and rational thought for reasons like that — where we can take a look at things and evaluate. And if you're using a proper set of morals, and in my way of thinking a very naturalistic or

environmentally sound set of morals, then you're going to do things with the future in mind. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Conclusion: Directions for Future Journeys

So, what does all this mean in the context of wilderness recreation and, more broadly, outdoor education leadership? Well, certainly, the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders are varied and complex and future research journeys are necessary to fully understand the experience. Examining the experiences of different types of leaders in different types of education and recreation settings would be beneficial (Parker & Avant, 2000). Incorporating the phenomenological perspective in future studies has merit, but other research methods and philosophical lenses will also yield valuable insights. In academia and in practice, a holistic approach to understanding and sponsoring outdoor leadership experiences is relevant. Recognizing the intermingling among personal, social, and natural processes during the experiences of wilderness recreation leaders can influence the outcomes of such experiences.

But specific to the aim of encouraging environmental consciousness change and enhanced human–nature connections through wilderness recreation, we can recognize that the challenge and “forming experience” of being in natural environmental settings are compatible and can co-exist with the educational and appreciative aspects of the wilderness recreation experience. Considering the environmental concerns facing our planet and the descriptions of the wilderness recreation leaders above, wilderness recreation leaders should shift their concerted efforts to nourishing human connections to nature. Conquering nature is out; reconnecting to and rediscovering

our place within nature is at the forefront. Although the wilderness leaders described experiences of being both part of nature and separate from nature, the potential for rediscovering human connections to nature is apparent in their voices. Certainly, wilderness recreation programs supply participants and leaders with opportunities for this individual and congregated learning. To emphasize and encourage these connections may entail choosing to change the focus of a wilderness canoe trip, for example, from hard skill development and paddling lengthy distances, to a trip that has a slower, more comfortable pace and that is conducive to appreciating and discovering human–nature interactions. At some point, in order to achieve this change, the organizations and the individual leaders sponsoring wilderness recreation experiences must make this choice.

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Response to **Reconnecting with Nature: Highlights from the Experiences of** **Wilderness Recreation Leaders** by Michael Elrick

In response to the question, "What can I as a practitioner in the field specifically use from this article?" I submit the following:

In the section "Part of Nature," I immediately identified with Tom's comment, "I don't like going out into the wilderness and feeling like I shouldn't touch anything." I feel that we have been seduced over the last

couple of decades by the No Trace camping movement — which is probably more of a mountain-based practice anyway — to stay hands-off. When I take students on the land, the real connections seem to come from the exact opposite — from gathering wood, fetching water, cooking from scratch, making shelter, and leaving our intestinal waste. I agree that we need to define a “proper level of impact” so we may have opportunities for this connection. Each area will dictate a different and appropriate level for place-based, sustainable wilderness travel.

In “Divorced from Nature,” the author worried that leaders were over-leading and over-controlling the experience. In today’s world of risk management, trip forms, large teacher-to-student ratios, and the full-time drug watch, I empathize with this observation. In other words, are we as leaders coming home without getting our own “fix,” and how does this role model itself on the trail? The reality is that this isn’t going to change. The paperwork, attention to risk, and student discipline issues will continue to grow. We are going to have to be proactive in proving to our administrators and parents that we are providing a high-quality educational experience that is well organized and safe. Otherwise, they will outlaw these trips faster than we can strike a match. Perhaps scheduling a layover day would allow leaders to have some restorative and connective time. This would also fit with the author’s concluding argument that we need a “slower, more comfortable pace” on the trail to connect with the natural world.

“Giving Something Back” is a section that I feel I have read many times, yet generally turned a blind eye to. It is because, yes, we are using that word “spiritual.” But as I read the words of the interviewed leaders, I

know they are right. The idea of weaving ceremony into our experiences has great potential for making those deeper connections with the land and self. I have recently faced challenges in my teachings from the Christian Right and have become super-sensitive. I love the idea, though, of giving back and saying thanks, and the times I have used this approach, both professionally and personally, it has made the experience richer, more whole. We need to go in with our eyes open and plan these ceremonies to have purpose, meaning, and inclusiveness. Though the actual act of giving something back may be physically simple, the spiritual domain we are asking our students to dip into is extremely complex.

In his conclusion, the author says that as recreation leaders we need to shift our focus in order to develop deep ecological ties to this earth. “Conquering nature is out,” he states. Yes, this is a reoccurring theme we are seeing in COEO. The “hero” needs to grow up, as our fall 2004 conference keynote speaker Chris Loynes announced. The next step is to become a “warrior” who returns to the home community with a sense of purpose. To solve this problem, I propose that we drop the word “recreation” from our profession. I had trouble with the identification of these people as “wilderness recreation leaders.” None of them was taking kids to the land without purpose. Let’s grow up and be proud that this is “education.” There are defined goals with tangible and measurable outcomes — including healthier communities and a healthier planet.

Michael Elrick teaches an integrated curriculum program, CELP, with the Wellington Board of Education.

Strategies for Sustainability: A Case Study of Outdoor Environmental Education in an Integrated Curriculum Program

by Laura Kittle and Erin Sharpe

When we have a good thing, how do we make sure that it lasts? This is the question we looked at, focusing on one thing that we know to be good in outdoor education: integrated curriculum programs (ICPs). Research by Bert Horwood (1994) and Connie Russell and John Burton (2000) has given us evidence that these programs are good; that, among other things, they foster holistic thinking and connections to human and natural communities. However, we also know that these programs face significant challenges to remaining sustainable over the long term, including changes in financial and curricular support, teacher turnover, and changing student interests. For an ICP to remain sustainable, it must develop strategies to manage, overcome, and navigate through this changing educational climate. Our goal was to learn from programs that had successfully done this — in other words, their good thing was lasting, and actually it was thriving!

In total, we went to three ICPs across Ontario, each of which had been in existence for more than 10 years, had an outdoor experiential component, included an environmental focus in the curriculum, involved community service, and was within the public (versus private) education system. These ICPs were chosen as examples of a “best practice” in integrated curriculum programs. For our research method, we followed a case study format. We spoke to different stakeholders (teachers, students, and administrators) in interviews and focus groups, observed the program for one week, and collected any

documents that were available. We have not yet completed our comparative analysis, so our report will mainly focus on the strategies of one of the programs, which we have named “ECAP” (Environmental Citizenship Action Program) to maintain its anonymity. We hope that the findings from this study will offer some useful insights for educators who are interested in developing a sustainable ICP that has an outdoor and environmental focus.

Welcome to ECAP!

Starting out as a high school physical education teacher, Brad Stevenson (not his real name) quickly found that there was something missing from gym — namely, windows with a view of the outside world. So, in 1995, out of his love for both education and the outdoors, Brad developed ECAP. ECAP is a unique four-credit package that allows Grade 10 students to take part in learning that is innovative and relevant to their lives. Students receive credits in English, Outdoor Activities, and Interdisciplinary Studies, and one-half credit each in Careers and Civics. All of these subjects are integrated to create an experience for students that is far different from the traditional way these courses are taught. The students participate in a classic wilderness trip and help with the delivery of the Earthkeepers program for local elementary school students — but ECAP’s backbone lies in Brad’s own philosophies and the focus he places on active citizenship. The students learn about the role they play in their own community and the way that this community interacts with

the environment. ECAP's course offerings aid in the cultivation of students as citizens by including field trips to community government offices, as well as to local businesses that operate in an environmentally sustainable way. ECAP's philosophy of community and ecological awareness is further exemplified by its location. ECAP classes take place at Camp Riverside, at the end of a 30-minute bus ride down a bumpy road on the outskirts of a nearby town. Here, students can spend their lunch hour walking the trails through the trees or around the pond, their lessons can take place in the fields or forests, and they can learn about their connection to the natural environment.

ECAP is a teacher-driven program, and many people have even gone so far as to say that "Brad Stevenson is ECAP!" This statement stems from the intensity of Brad's dedication to the program. Brad has created a program that engages students to learn more about their unique place within the local community and environment, and attracts students from throughout the region. In the most recent ECAP class, students from four different schools came together each morning on the bus to make the trip out to Camp Riverside. The students spend the whole day with their teachers: English class with Kathryn Richmond in the morning, and the rest of the day with Brad. Brad has arranged for Kathryn to come in once a day to teach the required English curriculum for the program. Although she still has to teach Julius Caesar, Kathryn makes a special effort to bring in readings that relate closely to ECAP's philosophy on environmental awareness. Brad uses the rest of the day with the students to cover the rest of the curriculum. In many cases, it is not possible to distinguish any separation between the different subjects, as Brad blends material from the different courses into the lessons for the day.

Findings

As mentioned before, the three stakeholder groups that have the most influence on an ICP are the students, the administration, and the teacher. These stakeholders present a number of challenges to the sustainability of a program. In the case of ECAP, both obstacles to sustainability and strategies used to overcome them were identified for each stakeholder group.

The Students: Although ECAP is exciting for most students, many are deterred from enrolling because of the ambiguity that surrounds the program. In many cases, students are hesitant to sign up because they aren't quite sure what they are getting into. Students are further discouraged by the "tree hugger" stereotypes that are commonly associated with ECAP. Even adventurous students who may be unfazed by these challenges are wary about the way a semester of ECAP will impact their future educational plans. These are serious obstacles because if there are no students to enroll in the program, ECAP ceases to exist. ECAP addresses these obstacles by appealing to students' desires to experience "something different" and adventurous within the education system. Brad truly believes that "young people are looking for adventure, looking for ... something more than what is being offered by traditional education." Also, by promoting the unique formation of a strong community in the classroom setting, ECAP helps students overcome the stereotypes that are being spread about them. ECAP does a great job of minimizing student concerns about future educational plans by incorporating compulsory credits into the program. The English, Careers, and Civics credits mean that ECAP does not interrupt a student's plans for the future.

“ECAP’s course offerings aid in the cultivation of students as citizens by including field trips to community government offices, as well as to local businesses that operate in an environmentally sustainable way.”

The Administration: ECAP definitely sits outside the box compared to other, more traditional high school programs, and Brad is certain that ECAP doesn’t “exist in the way that education is lined up to be.” ECAP’s image as something different and the rigidity of the education system create apprehension on the part of the administrative staff required to support an ICP like ECAP. It is difficult for the administration to support something that appears to be a teacher and his students “just running in the woods.” ECAP has to work hard to maintain its professionalism and credibility in an education system that is geared towards students sitting in quiet rows of desks inside the classroom. ECAP takes on these administrative challenges by attempting to remain financially self-sufficient. As Brad stated, ECAP reduces its vulnerability in changing economic times by creating a context where “they can’t cut our budget because there’s nothing to cut.” ECAP is run entirely from student fees and funds generated via an Earthkeepers program that ECAP students run for younger students in Brad’s school board.

And although remaining financially independent is important, ECAP could not exist without some connection to its home school. Brad and his students maintain contact with their home schools by returning there every day and participating in extracurricular activities and sports. This not only enhances the students’ overall education experience, but it also promotes the program and the school board, all the while keeping the administration happy.

The Teacher: As ECAP’s primary teacher, Brad is so involved with the program that he’s not sure where his job ends and his hobbies begin. ECAP creates a situation where Brad must be so professional and personally involved in the program that teacher burnout is a huge concern. Professionally, Brad is ECAP’s teacher, PR representative, accountant, planner, handyman, and outdoor expert all at once. And much of his personal life is sacrificed to field trips, planning sessions, and just plain energy loss. Brad has to use every resource and person available to ensure that he can get the job done without wearing himself out in the process. The relationships that Brad forms with parents, students, other teachers, and community members (including researchers) create opportunities for support and help. Brad has also created his own niche in ECAP by building a program that is based on his own personal philosophies about community and environmental involvement. ECAP is like home to Brad. He is both professionally and personally sustained by the success and acceptance of the program. Just being able to look out the window and watch the snow falling through the trees makes all the time and energy he puts into ECAP worth it.

Recommendations for Teachers

For teachers who would like to start up their own ICP — or who are perhaps struggling to sustain a program — we have some recommendations, based on what we learned from ECAP and the other programs in the study.

Do what works for you, but keep your target demographic in mind. Part of what made the ICPs we studied work is that they offered a set of courses that related to the teacher’s strengths and interests. Brad, for example, was driven by a philosophy of environmental citizenship, and saw a Civics class as a good fit in his program. The teachers at the other ICPs focused more heavily on incorporating their own passions, namely environmental sciences and leadership. That said, all ICP teachers must keep in mind the needs and motivations of the students who will enroll in their program, and find a niche where they can fit within a student’s educational plan. In Brad’s case, he targeted Grade 10 students and incorporated three compulsory credits into the program. In the case of another ICP we studied, the program targeted students who returned to high school for a fifth year and was more focused on serving as a transition from high school to university or college. Related to this, all of the ICPs promoted their unique features, emphasized how the program differed from traditional forms of education, and advertised the benefits that came from these differences.

Strive for independence, yet maintain school connections. Independence, particularly in the form of financial independence, helps ICPs ride the waves of fluctuating budgets and administrative missions. All three of these programs achieved this by incorporating some kind

of fee-based service into their semester, as Brad did with Earthkeepers. Brad also benefited from his location off school grounds, both in terms of the holistic learning experience and also for how this physical separation allowed for more freedom and space to teach. However, teachers also benefit from maintaining a strong relationship with the home school, as it lends visibility and support to the program and its teachers. This was particularly important for Brad because he taught both semesters off-site. The other teachers in the study taught their integrated curriculum program only one semester a year and had a classroom in the school.

Cultivate relationships and bring people in. It is the rare ICP that does not involve a larger than normal workload, particularly because the role of the teacher encompasses much more than instruction. Through the cultivation of relationships within the context of the program, teachers can develop a network of supporters that will help them manage this load. Supporters can include other teachers, former students, parents, administrators, community members, and more — even researchers! These folks can be brought in to help complete tasks, teach students in an area of expertise, mentor field experiences, and serve as community liaisons. As with the previous recommendation, this network helps add visibility and credibility to the program. But be prepared, as the line separating personal life and professional life can become quite faint, and all teachers will need to decide how best to blend the personal and the professional. One teacher managed this by turning his house into a “home base” for the program, with a classroom built into his basement. It didn’t hurt that he lived on 27 acres on the banks of a river!

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Laura Kittle recently graduated with an Honours Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University. She is heading to the Canadian Outdoor Leadership Training school in the fall. Erin Sharpe teaches outdoor education within the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University. Both Laura and Erin would like to thank “Brad” for his generosity with this project.

Response to Strategies for Sustainability: A Case Study of Outdoor Environmental Education in an Integrated Curriculum Program

by Patti Huber

I nodded my head in agreement with the comments made by these authors on the ECAP program. However, I believe there are a few other issues to consider when it comes to sustainability. One must consider staff sustainability as well as program sustainability. One way to manage this is to do a fully team-taught program with two teachers offering five credits. A second issue is the danger that the teacher is the program. What happens to the program in the event that the teacher retires, moves schools, or steps away from the program? This became a major issue with our new principal in that he did not want a program that could only be taught by Patti Huber and Chris Aldworth. As teachers of integrated curriculum programs, we must

reach out and groom people to share our passion. We need to let administrators understand that *anyone* can teach an interdisciplinary package if that teacher has a dream, passion, and willingness to spend his/her own money to get the required training.

Patti Huber is a long-time teacher of integrated programs at Resurrection Catholic Secondary School in Kitchener, Ontario. Presently, she is interviewing students for BTW (Beyond The Walls), an integrated curriculum program she co-teaches with Chris Aldworth. The theme of BTW is “A Sense of Community, A Sense of Place.”

Quite Contrary in How Their Garden Grows: A Photonovella Research Project

by Cynthia Soullière

Abstract

The Children's Gardening Club, run by the North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC), provides children with the opportunity to connect to their local environment through the design and maintenance of a children's community garden. This study uses a photonovella technique to examine the ways children perceive and relate to their local environment and surroundings. Children were asked to take pictures of "places that are important to you or places where you are happy." The children in this study identified important places that allowed them to be responsible for adult activities such as taking care of plants and animals. They also identified the importance of controlling the design of spaces, creating places to express themselves and their identity in positive ways. Their ability to lay claim to these adult spaces and activities was contradictory and contested, as adults still controlled the rules by which they could claim these spaces.

Conclusions were drawn through participant observation, analysis of the photographs, informal interviews with the children in the study, and a literature review of community gardening and children's geographies. By taking care of and affecting the design of public space at the children's community garden, children are enabled to lay claim to ownership and develop a sense of belonging to this public space. It is through this act that children can develop positive attachments to their local community and environment in ways that ultimately lay the foundations for early stewardship and citizenship skills.

Introduction: Children and Gardens

By participating in the NHCHC's Children's Gardening Club, I originally wanted to examine the way children connect to places and become rooted in a community. What I discovered was a breadth of experience of children's relations to public and private places through (1) connections to family and friends, and finding spaces to be alone (social/spatial interactions), (2) expression of identity through significant objects (markers of identity), (3) developing a sense of self and self-expression, dreaming and taking care of their surroundings (autonomy/opportunity), and (4) the contradictory nature of children's claim to belong in adult spaces (contested spaces of childhood). Enabling and empowering children to take care of their environment and surroundings, to construct spaces for self-expression, to dream, and to create spaces for themselves within this world dominated by adults will ultimately form the basis for their development of early citizenship and stewardship skills.

The analysis and design of this research draws heavily on the field of feminist emancipatory research and the study of children's geographies. Stuart Aitken (2001) considers the position of children and their claims to space as demanding a critical focus on "a space for play, children's rights and a new concept of justice" (p. 170). His concept of children's rights and justice necessitates a focus on including children, and children's voices, within political spheres and geographies of daily life. Children are disproportionately affected by crime in their communities, environmental illness, and violence in homes, yet they are

not included in the discussions of how to improve these conditions. By taking ownership of a public space, such as a children's community garden, children are given the opportunity to make some changes in the way public space is arranged.

Hilda Kurtz (2001) considers community gardens to be "tangible areas in which urban residents can establish and sustain relationships with one another, with elements of nature, and with their neighbourhood" (p. 656). Community gardens are intriguing spaces, sites of production of landscape and foods, individual entertainment, and social interaction. The way the terms "community" and "garden" are negotiated and interpreted reflects and produces variation among different community gardens. Some gardens focus on producing or promoting one or more of the following community spaces: children's spaces, neighbourhood revival, individual autonomy, environmental consciousness, and public health. A community garden has the potential to foster autonomy for participants, and a sense of their responsibility to and for the local environment. The creativity involved in managing and planning garden spaces also produces and represents the identity of participants.

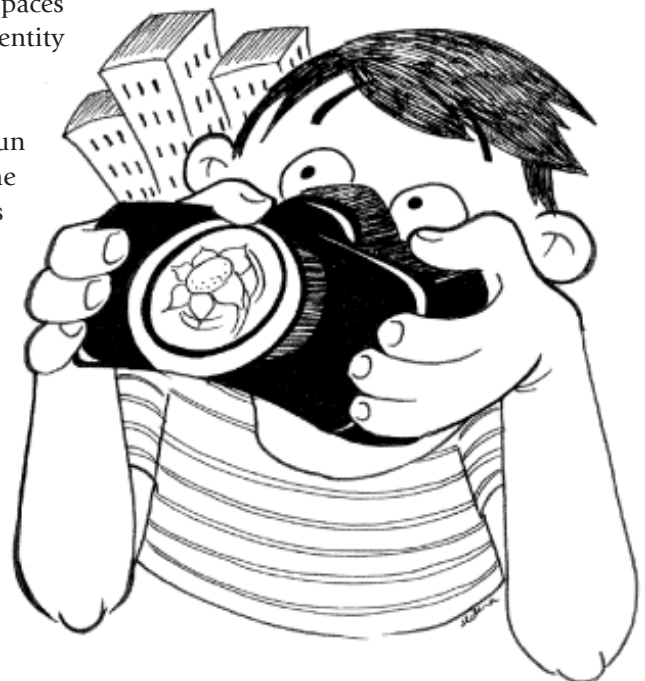
The Children's Gardening Club is run out of the NHCHC and is part of the Community Garden. The program's goals are to "provide North End children with a positive learning environment, with a focus on creating self-esteem and team-building skills through organic gardening" (Rushton, 2001). It is open to "children of any age who reside in the North End of Hamilton," but specifically targets "children who do not have the means to garden at home, or who are faced with food security issues" (Rushton,

1999). The program is promoted by the NHCHC through outreach to its patient population, specifically to single parent and immigrant/refugee families.

The Hidden Reality Behind the Camera — Photonovella

The technique of photonovella is unique in its approach to studying the hidden reality of the photographer behind the camera. Research participants are asked to create a visual diary or story of their experienced reality. Their production of that reality may seek to describe a situation, visually represent emotions, or define a problem identified by the participant or researcher. Participants may be asked to create a visual diary of drawn images or photographs. By enabling participants to produce images, theories of subjectivity and perception are redefined by reconstructing who "produces" research.

Photonovella has been identified as a way to create an emancipatory framework for research. Here I use Patti Lather's (1991)



definition of emancipatory research as a “reciprocally educative process [that] is more important than product as empowering methods contribute to consciousness-raising and transformative social action” (p. 72). By studying a specific problem that is an experienced reality of their lives, participants explore the meaning of their personal situation and its larger social significance.

Many research studies using photovoice work with communities that do not often have a voice in society, or in the conditions that affect their lives. Melanie Percy’s (1995) study of homeless children, Hedy Bach’s (1998) study of the evaded discourse and meaning of teenage girls’ lives, and Kathleen Hanna et al.’s (1995) study of adolescents living with diabetes all seek to provide insight into the lives of children whose voices have been marginalized. Studies using photovoice often attempt to answer questions that are not easily addressed with other research techniques. Photovoice, like other forms of qualitative research, explores the lived experience of a group of people and may provide insight for both researcher and participants.

The use of photovoice to create images of places provides a window into participant perceptions of, and interactions with, their surroundings and environment. Stuart Aitken and Joan Wingate (1993) used a photovoice approach to conduct a study of children’s personal geographies. “Auto-photography or self-directed photography” was used as a “way to empower children’s fascination with images and photographs so that they may document ways in which they transact with their environment” (p. 66). The study involved some comparison of the types of images taken by middle-class, homeless, and mobility-impaired children. The children later made a photo-collage that was kept by the researcher. This research approach offered insight into children’s

perceptions of their local environment and the ways children from different social locations interact with their local environment in different ways.

Jacqueline Goodnow, cited in Hanna et al. (1995), states that children “have been noted to think and communicate visually” (p. 322). For many children, creating and using photographs to describe a situation is more concrete than talking about the experience. When interviewing children, having photographs also helps to initiate dialogue. Children may be able to communicate something visually that they are afraid or uncomfortable to speak about, such as abuse. Having photographs that they have produced gives a focal point to interviews and allows the researcher to ask more specific questions about the child’s experience. It also gives children a sense of importance and “ownership” of the interview materials in their interactions with an adult researcher. Using visual techniques to describe a situation allows children to communicate in two separate ways: visually through their photographs and orally during an interview about the pictures.

Participants

The seven children who participated in my study are not necessarily a representative sample of the children who use the two garden sites. The children ranged in age from five to fourteen. There were six female participants and one male. Five of the children were Portuguese. These five were all born in Canada. All of their parents were originally from Portugal and had immigrated between twelve and sixteen years previously. Some of the children spoke both English and Portuguese, but all of them used English at school and at the Children’s Gardening Club. The two other participants identified themselves as Native Canadian. Their first language was English. Six of the participants lived within a one-

to two-minute walk of the Children's Gardening Club site. The other child lived in Burlington, a 20-minute drive to the site, but made the trip to Hamilton to participate with her cousins.

Analysis: Reflecting on the Children's Photographs

Over a study period of three weeks, using disposable 35 mm cameras, the children produced a photographic "journal" of "places that are important to you or places where you are happy." The aim of this project was to gain insight into the ways children in the North End of Hamilton perceive and interact with their local surroundings and environment.

I developed two copies of the photographs. The children were given one set, while I retained the second and the negatives. I asked the children to take the photographs home and give me verbal permission from their parents and themselves to use their photographs. If they did not want a photograph included in my study for any reason, I excluded the photo and destroyed my copy. Only one photograph was excluded. The flash hadn't worked, distorting people's faces, and the child did not want anyone to see it.

I gave each child his/her photographs and asked him/her to choose five to talk about with me. Some chose more because they specifically liked a group of photographs. I asked them why they chose each image and recorded their responses in my notebook. These interviews were done informally. I considered the use of a tape recorder invasive, and did not want to stop the flow of conversation to have the children repeat things. The children talked to me while the other children were working on a craft project at the same picnic table. Sometimes parents listened in as well. I did not feel that having parents at the interview changed the

way the children were interacting with me. However, the parents often wanted to talk about their child's photographs as well. Those conversations were not recorded. Some parents' comments influenced my analysis. For example, one child was talking about a photograph of her bedroom. Her mother explained how she had decorated the room. This had a major influence on how I looked at who claimed ownership of this space.

The spaces children identify as important are incredibly varied in their focus, intent, and vision. The major themes that emerged in this study were (1) intersections of spatial and social interactions, (2) representing identity, (3) the importance of spaces of opportunity in building autonomy, and (4) the ways children's spaces are contested and contradictory.

Conclusion

The methodology of photonovella was used as a mechanism to gain insight into children's perspectives on their environments. Aitken and Wingate (1993) argue that "children's personal geographies are different from those of adults to the extent that we, as adults, rarely discern the nuances that comprise the worlds of children" (p. 65). The medium of photography, even in the hands of research participants, does not produce objective images of children's perspectives. These images, like interview or other research techniques, are influenced by others. Specifically, the children's photographs were influenced by myself, the researcher, people the child perceives will later view their images, such as parents, and the observers who are with the child when he/she takes a photograph. Yet this does not negate their value for gaining insight into the perspectives of children or their demonstrated importance in conducting and focusing interviews with the children.

One of the principal reasons that photonovella was appropriate for this study was the enthusiasm children felt and expressed for this project. I was surprised and inspired by the commitment they demonstrated for the project. One of the elements of research with children that is rarely, if ever, discussed is the relevance of fun in research methodology. It is not particularly fun to sit in focus groups or interviews (although these methods could be constructed in fun ways). But the children saw having a camera of their own as a fun opportunity. Although some children's parents/guardians obviously helped their child take particular photographs (e.g., driving them to a specific location), the conversations I had with the children suggested that most of the images were taken autonomously by the children.

As a research technique, photonovella can be used to reorient the research experience so that agency is given to participants to produce research, rather than this task being restricted to the researcher. It also has the potential to give voice to people whose lived experience is often marginalized in social discourse and political decision-making. It is a particularly relevant methodology in working with children, because a camera is a flexible medium. Its use is not dependent on language, age (although this may not apply to very young children), or strong technical expertise. As well, photographs provided an incredibly rich text to study, as evidenced by the many overlapping themes in each photograph that my analysis uncovered.

Drawing from my literature review of community gardening, children's geographies, and photonovella, as well as emergent themes from the photonovella project conducted with seven children in the Children's Gardening Club program, I strongly believe that a children's community

garden has the potential to be a space that empowers and enables children to make positive changes in their local environment and surroundings. By building on children's desire to take responsibility for parts of their environment by taking care of objects (e.g., plants, animals, and dolls) and designing spaces to express themselves, a children's community garden can create a space for children to form a sense of belonging to and ownership of shared, public space.

The methodology of photonovella produced a rich text of children's experiences and relations to place, and also allowed children to produce research about their lived experience of childhood and adolescence in the North End of Hamilton, Ontario. Research about children should value children's capacity to produce valuable contributions to a research project. Given the marginalized voice children have in discussions about their lived experiences and geographies of daily life in both political and private spheres, research about children must include children's voices in the discussion.

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Editors' Note: The decision was made to focus this research report on photonovella as a research method. If readers would like to learn more about Cynthia's analysis of this research data, please write to this issue's editors, Erin Sharpe and Bob Henderson (see address on page one). *Pathways* can print a "part two" of this research project.

Cynthia Soullière is currently completing her final year in the midwifery program at McMaster University. This research project was conducted as Cynthia's honours thesis in the Arts and Science Program at McMaster University. Thanks to honours thesis supervisors Vera Choimnard and Bob Henderson.

Response to Quite Contrary in How Their Garden Grows: A Photonovella Research Project by Barb Imrie

After reading this article, I am curious to find out more about the analysis of this research data. I agree that research methodology must strive to include methods that do not bias or restrict the results.

Fun, too! Now there's a concept. What if our natural environment were the setting from which children could voice their connections through a photo journal? What matters to them could be the research focus, but the hypothesis would not be restricted to that of the researcher. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then such photo memories might tell us more about the value of the experience than the learner could articulate. And if most young learners are visual learners, why do evaluation techniques include so many words (or formulas or anecdotal responses)?

I appreciated the reminder that being outdoors can exceed boundaries of culture, language, economics, and academics. I also think that informal interviews might provide a lot more than written surveys. I am reminded how necessary it is to think about the learner's perspective when gaining insight into what is important to younger audiences. I am also reminded that there is very little research into the value of outdoor experiences. What if all experiences (not just research) were reoriented so participants produced the experience, rather than this being the exclusive domain of the provider of the experience?

Barb Imrie teaches at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre with the Toronto District School Board.

Lessons from the Great White South: Experiential Education and Antarctica

by Pat Maher

Antarctica is often seen as a continent of superlatives: the highest, the driest, the windiest, the coldest — and the list could go on. The Antarctic is a landscape as potentially different from most people's everyday life as we are able to find. Thus, Antarctica's ability to provide an experience that encourages personal growth should not be overly surprising.

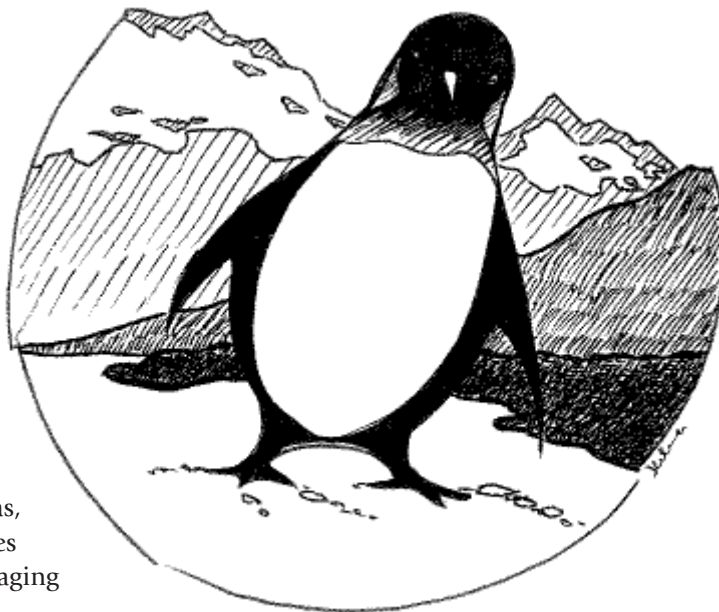
Over the past three years of working on my Ph.D., I have often thought these words from Tennyson's classic tale *Ulysses* ring true:

*I am a part of all that I have met; yet
all experience is an arch wherethro'
gleams that untravell'd world whose
margin fades.*

The final verse also links the frozen continent with some important components of outdoor/experiential education. *Ulysses* ends with the words, "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield" — words that now adorn the memorial cross on Observation Hill, Ross Island, as a tribute to a lost hero. Robert Falcon Scott followed this doctrine, and from it has grown the myth and awe we still have for the continent. This theme, adapted, also forms the Outward Bound motto: "To serve, to strive and not to yield." Outward Bound has, of course, provided challenges to youth for decades, encouraging

growth, and was co-founded by one of the revered figures of outdoor/experiential education, Kurt Hahn. In quoting adventurer Mike Stroud at the 2003 Symposium on Experiential Education Research, Pete Allison suggested that the poles are unusual places, away from normal existence, that offer powerful perspective (Allison, 2004).

A friend and I once discussed how fascinating experiences are. How do you leave your everyday life and transform for a trip overseas or a voyage into the wilderness? Equally interesting is how you do the same thing when you return. There are unique transitions between "real life" and being away, between being away and "real life," but in both instances you have an excitement for the other place and time. You are excited to go, experience, and come back. How does this work? As an instructor



with *Outward Bound*, I had often seen this take place in my students, whether on a paddling trip or running behind a sled full of equipment pulled by a rowdy team of huskies. It was a passing interest of mine, but one I had not given a great deal of academic thought to.

In 1999, I first travelled to Antarctica, specifically the Antarctic Peninsula, aboard a little red ship, the *M/S Explorer*. This was part of a field expedition offered through Lakehead University, and Antarctica blew me away as I knew it would. I had done tremendous reading and spent the better part of a semester learning about the place and its history, yet I was still not prepared for what I saw once I got there. Twelve days later, I felt as if I truly knew Antarctica, but was excited to go home. I was anticipating situations and people back in Canada, and looking forward to getting off the plane in Halifax and sharing what I had seen and felt. Where had my perceived “trip of a lifetime” gone?

Obviously, the experience of Antarctica affected me enough to want to dedicate years of my doctoral study to it, but what was it about this extraordinary experience and its interlocking pieces that triggered transitions? This is where my thinking began, prior to arriving in New Zealand and before I knew where my Ph.D. would take me. The study described here is an exploration of experience in Antarctica and how the pieces and transitions come together. It may not fill all the holes, but hopefully it provides insight into areas for further research.

What is the impact of the ice on visitors? How do they envision and/or process their hands-on experience? These are the types of questions this research has sought to explore and understand. Applicable to the field of outdoor/experiential education could be a focus on questions such as, where did these

visitors begin their voyage? How does an operator or facilitator affect onsite behaviour? In terms of education, has their experience promoted a greater awareness or taught a sense of advocacy? In examining the concept and context of experience in a trying environment such as Antarctica, the geographic scope of the research was narrowed down to only the Ross Sea Region: New Zealand’s Ross Dependency and the area explored by the likes of Scott and Amundsen in the early 20th century.

Experience is difficult to fully define. However, the research included a six- to eight-month longitudinal period looking at visitors well in advance of their visit, through their time onsite, and after they were back at home. The examination of experience in a manner that encompasses many phases is derived from work across disciplines (see Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001). As outlined by Henderson (2004), experiential education must borrow from other disciplines, while researchers must present data through evidence-based approaches, examining both cause and effect. Cause and effect, or rather examining the experience before, after, and during is what this research presents as a contribution to outdoor/experiential education research culture as a whole. Henderson’s statements are echoed by Galloway (2004, p. 201), who writes, “Experiential education cannot be explained in terms of outcomes without understanding the inputs of the experience, not to mention the experience itself. This complexity brings about... increasing interplay of theory and evidence.”

Methodologically, this research focused on particular phases of the experience: 1) anticipation of the visit; 2) onsite during the visit; and 3) upon return home after the visit. The research examined experience as a cycle, comparing groups of visitors through this cycle, and analyzing for change or

transition as a result. With the aim of providing a comprehensive outlook on experience, a mixed-methods approach was undertaken using a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures. This approach, to triangulate methods and draw from different fields, has been suggested in many arenas, and for outdoor/experiential education is echoed by Galloway and Goldenberg (2004).

“Visitors,” in this research, were defined as those who came into direct contact with the ice. This included commercial tourists, as well as media, artists, and writers, distinguished government and industry leaders, and those visiting through educational programs. Four organizations (two ship-based tour operators, one national Antarctic program, and one tertiary education provider) facilitated their visitors’ voluntarily participation and assisted with a number of data gathering methods during the 2002/2003 season. Methods included the following: self-administered surveys sent to the respondent’s home (up to three months in advance of the trip); personal narratives or journals written while on the trip (regardless of trip length — four to 28 days); interviews held directly before and/or after the trip when possible; and e-mail surveys post-visit (two to three months after the trip). In the 2003/2004 season, supplemental data was also collected, including a familiarization trip to New Zealand’s Scott Base and subsequent participant observation and informal interviews completed there.

Findings indicate that features of the experience seem to be highly weighted towards personal growth, a reflection on home, and a “Gee, if I can get to Antarctica then I can do anything” mentality. Although in complete awe of Antarctica’s landscape and wildlife, visitor advocacy appears to be focused on letting Antarctica

be — not necessarily closing it off for conservation. Rather than thoroughly discussing results through all phases and profiling the visitors, this article presents some of the responses describing the experience and reflections on the experience at a later stage in the project:

Reassessment of current work/career options... my Antarctic experience makes me think more broadly about future work/life options.

It has already given me a new lease on life, sparked some ideas for new dreams. The long-term benefits to me personally are incalculable.

I have many new experiences to draw on over the rest of my life for inspiration in my art. The time out from normal life has allowed me to be more continuously creative.

The whole experience was just one huge fabulous perfect reward for the rest of my life. I’ll be able to cast my mind back to a thousand tiny incidents and smile and feel completely happy.

How do I feel about the whole experience!!!...It has been a wonderful four weeks. Experiences that are not captured on film and will be hard to describe.

The trip has been the fulfilment of a long and dearly held dream. I chose this trip because I wanted the complete experience and adventure of crossing the southern ocean...The reality was all I had hoped for and much, much more. It was packed with excitement, beauty, and wonderful wildlife experiences.

Overall, though, I have felt pretty humble over the past few days as I realize just how lucky I am to be here and see this continent...Now that I am here, I want to see everything that I have seen photos of before coming.

A bit tired and emotional. The whole experience... seems surreal.

Feel like this visit is a unique chunk out of/not part of my usual life — a little unreal/bizarre...Scale of the place...

Stepping out of the Hercules onto the ice runway was unforgettable. One could spend the rest of my life trying to reproduce that feeling. The vastness was astonishing...I had an immediate feeling of elation and delight...This is why people return — to get that feeling I had when I stepped onto the ice and looked around — to get another fix of that.

While many respondents initially talked about the adventure and the landscape prior to their visit, obviously much more was gained in follow-up. It is important also to realize that respondents quoted here span the four groups of visitors, and have varying professional expectations of the trip and different amounts of time on the ice. In her article on auto-ethnography as a research tool, Jo Straker reflects on her Antarctic journeys:

“My journeys to Antarctica have been an adventure, not just because of its special nature but because of the reflections and dreams it has stimulated. It heightens emotions, widens horizons, and even sitting here writing about the place I feel a glow, a tingling in the cheeks, and inner smile” (2004, p. 57). Straker’s discussion also relates her own experience, its true importance coming only after reflection, to one of a few theoretical models used throughout outdoor/experiential education: Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle.

In an outdoor/experiential sense that could relate to many programs in Ontario, Project K is a program designed “to inspire young New Zealanders to reach their full potential”



("Kids head to the ice," 2004, p. 9). Despite the New Zealand government's stance of generally opposing tourism to Antarctica, Helen Clark, the Prime Minister, recently endorsed this program for the students to have "an opportunity...few will ever enjoy." Additionally, the CEO of Antarctica New Zealand, New Zealand's research institute and logistical support on the ice, says that this "offers [Project K] graduates an exceptional educational opportunity...it's also a chance for young people from different backgrounds to experience the magic of Antarctica" ("Kids head to the ice," 2004, p. 9). Jo-Anne Wilkinson of Project K adds, "This trip confirms for our students that anything is possible. It also builds on what the students have learnt through Project K: goal setting, team work, perseverance, and self reliance" ("Kids head to the ice," 2004, p. 9).

An extraordinary experience awaits visitors to the Ross Sea Region, one that encompasses multiple phases and transitions no matter how the visit is operated. Aspects of the experience appear to have created an ebb and flow over the course of the eight-month study. Comprehensive results can be obtained from the author — both a cause/effect perspective and further personal narratives shared by the respondents. Implications from this research bear on the multi-phasic manner in which we should perhaps examine experience within our programs, and, in the Ross Sea Region, relate to the use of well-thought-out education to produce a focused experience, important to the evolution of management and regulation in Antarctica.

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The Value of Serendipitous Learning

Part 1 — A Dawning Critique of Frontloading and Metaphor in Adventure Education

by Willem Krouwel

It's Only Words

To start, a short excursion into lexicography. The *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "serendipity" as follows: "serendipity — /serrndippiti/ — noun: the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way." The *American Heritage Dictionary* fundamentally agrees: "ser-en-dip-i-ty n. (1) The faculty of making fortunate discoveries by accident (2) The fact or occurrence of such discoveries (3) An instance of making such a discovery."

You may wonder what this charming-sounding word has to do with outdoor education. The answer, in my view, is "not enough."

Every Picture Tells a Story

Let me illustrate. Back in 1979, as a company's training manager, I was invited to attend an outdoor management program. With thoughts of a strenuous-but-paid vacation in the hills, I happily agreed. The reality exceeded my expectations. We carried out a series of absorbing and creative tasks, and physicality was a welcome incidental that added fun rather than exhaustion. The emphasis on process and review was high. The exercises became more complex, culminating in one lasting 24 hours in which we were able to explore layers of task complexity, choosing to adopt a managerial approach that emphasized flexibility, communication, and the need to make decisions based on incomplete information.

The experience was deeply absorbing, and as time progressed I became more and more engaged. Even now, I can recall specific moments from the program in graphic detail. Ask me *if* I learned, and the answer is a resounding "yes!" Ask me *what* I learned and I'd be hard put to articulate it for you. My learning could not — and still cannot — be summed up in an easy list of competencies or tick-the-box skills. I had experienced, for one of only three times in my life, "a profound kind of learning which is readily sensed, but can be difficult to articulate ... learning which is fundamental, which is holistic, which is closely linked to personality ... 'Development' is typically less specific but more substantial and more central to a person's make-up than 'learning.' [It is] a change in a person's core construct system" (Greenaway, 1995).

The point is, this very valuable and powerful learning experience was unplanned and unexpected. And it literally changed my life, knocking me off the rails of a predictable, secure, and financially comfortable career into a life spent wrestling with the challenge of providing development opportunities for others in an unpredictable, insecure, and financially mercurial milieu.

What happened to me during the course was that I had an intense period of reflection (informed by action and interaction) that led to a feelings/values-based decision to take my career in a different direction. For others (on this and a series of similar programs), the outcomes were varied but appropriate to their situation at the time. In some cases, people

initiated a process of moving on in their personal lives. In others, they simply began to work at managing their relationships with colleagues and friends. The process could be uncharitably described as indeterminate, but is seen as remarkably valuable by those who have experienced it.

Chimes of Freedom

In my early innocence as an outdoor facilitator, I assumed that everyone wanted this serendipitous-but-powerful type of development, and designed programs intended to promote whatever learning would meet the needs of people in the situations in which they found themselves — what Mossman (1983) termed “self-development.” I happily combined this with courses with widely framed — but focused — outcomes around leadership and teamwork.

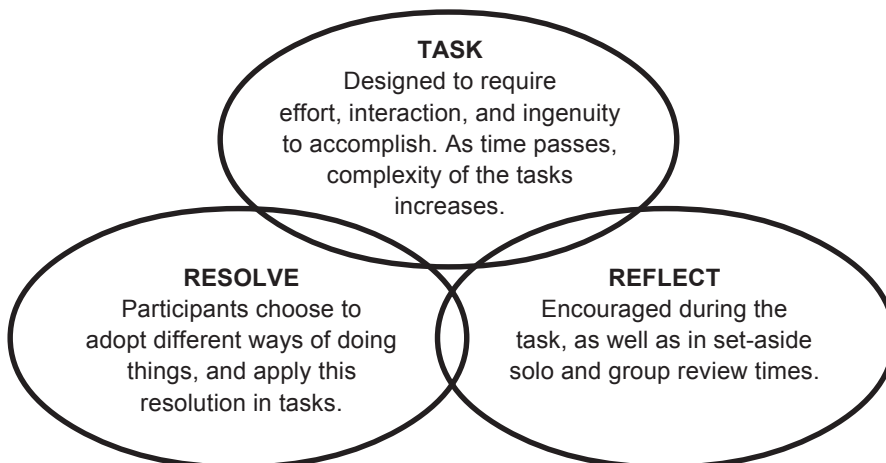
Over the years, I have evolved a methodology for doing this, which, for good reasons, I present as a Venn diagram (see Figure 1). Development is an untidy — even messy — process that doesn’t often conform to the tidy step-models with which we sometimes

attempt to corral it. People reflect and even resolve during tasks; they break into their reflections to get on with other things; they notice that they’ve made resolutions some time after they’ve started acting on them. Although far from perfect, a Venn diagram at least acknowledges the chaotic nature of the experiential learning process.

Making Plans for Nigel

Exploratory self-development isn’t the only option for educators and trainers. There is another way, and this is to tightly focus the training on an agenda set by the educator, trainer, or sponsor. Across the outdoor education spectrum, there is pressure to tailor exercises and programs in this way to meet sponsors’ pre-set requirements. In Britain, a number of reasons exist for this: First, the national educational curriculum is a tightly focused piece of work. This focus may affect the way outdoor education perceives its job. As the Web site of one outdoor centre — located in breathtakingly beautiful country — puts it: “Opportunities abound for Primary School National Curriculum projects in many core and foundation subjects, in addition to

Figure 1: An Experiential Learning Process



Secondary School and College geography and more advanced geology study" (www.ingleboro.co.uk). That is just about as clinically focused a use of the outdoors as could be imagined, with no room for hard-to-assess things such as awe and wonder.

This tight focus extends to personal and group development programs, where an emphasis on shorter course durations has led to a desire to ensure that the sponsors' messages are effectively conveyed by the training. Again, this is reflected in centre rhetoric. "What will your organisation get out of the day?" asks one brochure, and rhetorically responds, "Improved — Teamwork — Planning — Communication; Help employees manage change within an organisation more effectively; A neutral base for learning and team building; Cost effective and flexible training programme; Help staff work towards a common goal; Course participants will learn to think on a more lateral basis; Progress from working as individuals in an organisation to working as a team" (Ackers Trust, 2000). Not bad for a day's worth of training.

While most centres aren't as ludicrously optimistic as this, many do work to ambitious and tight objectives, and find it necessary to adopt special methods. According to Priest and Gass (1993), these include

- **Frontloading:** Wherein the instructor or teacher "(before the briefing, possibly during, or just after it) ... explains several key learning points. These points may include, but are not necessarily limited to: sharing the learning objectives for the activity and any related motivational benefits, stressing the desired positive behaviours in advance, warning learners of the consequences of negative behaviours and asking learners to review or revisit

earlier commitments to change before beginning an activity."

- **Isomorphically framing the experience:** This makes the experience into a metaphor for a work or life situation, for example by reframing a "spider's web" exercise as a distribution network.

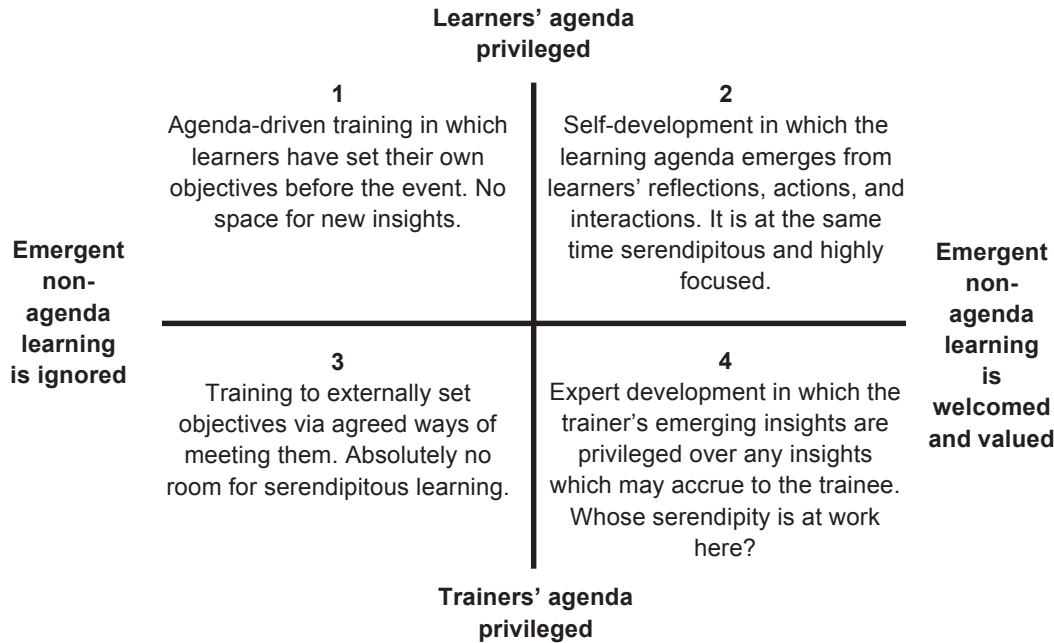
Such devices are made necessary by the current fashion in education and human resources development for competence-based theories of learning which, rightly or wrongly, are often used to emphasize the importance of what you can *do*, not who you *are*, and of training rather than development. Outdoor practitioners once had a choice of approaches, as outlined in Figure 2.

In the last decade, we have seen many outdoor practitioners privileging training (Quadrants 1 and 3) over development (Quadrants 2 and 4). Why this might be is worthy of exploration, but may be rooted in a lack of self-confidence on the part of educators and trainers, or perhaps an acknowledgement of financial realities in what, in Britain at least, is a very crowded marketplace. It may also be rooted in the spurious idea of outdoor education as metaphor.

Rehearsal for Reality?

Metaphoric transfer is defined by Priest and Gass (1993) as "an attempt to narrow the gap between apparently different learning environments through client realized metaphors. A metaphor is an idea, object, or description used in place of another different idea, object, or description, in order to denote comparative likeness or similarity between the two. By finding metaphors, clients can bring seemingly different learning environments much closer together."

Figure 2: Choices for Trainers



It seems to me that the notion of metaphoric transfer is something of a worm in the experiential apple. What this definition seems to be saying is that outdoor activities have no inherent process learning value of their own, and so must be portrayed in review and elsewhere as being instructive parallels of reality rather than reality itself. And yet, to me, what happens to people on outdoor development programs is just as real as (but different from) what happens to them at work, home, school, or wherever. It's real, but not *realistic* — which makes it dramatically different from things like business games, which are realistic, but not *real*.

I believe that in outdoor developmental programs we can often discover more of ourselves and of each other than in the indoor alternatives. This is through exercise of all the senses in interaction with one another and the outdoors — that different-but-real place where trappings of rank and

status aren't relevant. To attempt to make it "realistic" by, for example, verbally redefining a rope spider's web as a distribution network demeans and undermines that marvellous medium. It replaces real experience with a realistic-but-false simulation of another reality. In the final analysis, this may be helpful to given businesses and societies at given times, but is not helpful to a wider, deeper version of human development. There is another way. In the next issue, we will explore it.

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Willem Krouwel works for the outdoor charity dare2 and is undertaking a Ph.D. at the University of the West of England. He also maintains a practice in outdoor management development.

Response to The Value of Serendipitous Learning by Barb Imrie

As I read Part 1 by Willem Krouwel, I appreciated the reminder of the assumption that when we are taught, we learn. In reality, often we are taught, but few times we learn!

As an outdoor educator, I often wonder if students (participants) actually spend the necessary time to experience, then analyze, and finally apply what they have learned. What I found most provocative about this article was the celebration of having a “wow” experience. How often I see educators trying to link learning to something else (i.e., curriculum, social experiences, conflict resolution, etc.).

Wouldn't it be neat if the “experiential experience” could be the connection? What if the “wow” experience became the metaphor and everything after was linked back to it? After reading this article, I feel that learners would be more engaged if the

process were as important as the product. I definitely agree that the outdoors provides a valuable setting for learning that involves all the senses and allows all participants to be at an equal playing level. Socially challenged and academically challenged? No — inclusion.

What if our experiences were frontloaded (not metaphorically) to ensure that participants had the serendipitous experience of saying “Wow! That was cool! I've never done that before! I did it myself! I discovered something new on my own!” Now how to go about facilitating this real world reality?

Barb Imrie teaches at the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre with the Toronto District School Board.

An Outdoor Educator Researches His Practice

by Stephen Fine, Ph.D.

The Research Setting

My academic interests and research explorations stem from my experience of many years as a summer camp director and outdoor educator. My research story is an example of how one might develop a theory drawing from the experiences of one's own personal practice.

My graduate work was in the field of environmental studies, and for many years my interests were concentrated in this area of education. Environmental studies are now, more than ever, a critically important element to any comprehensive curriculum. Sadly, environmental education has been diminished by the growing absence of outdoor programs in Ontario. However, I entered my doctoral studies with an understanding that the learning that takes place within my favourite teaching venue, the residential summer camp, is diverse and goes beyond the purview of environmental studies alone.

Learning that takes place within residential outdoor experiences (ROE) encompasses cognitive, emotive, communal, and tactile domains. The summer camp is at the centre of these ROE, and many of the lessons learned within the setting of the summer camp can be significant and/or life shaping. My research has identified life partnerships, career choices, enduring attitudinal behaviour, and personal convictions that have all had their origins at the summer camp.

I understood that residential outdoor experiences were personally, socially, and environmentally educative, that they built both independence and interdependence, allowed time and space for personal thought and reflection, alleviated stressors

associated with urban habitats and urban lifestyles, and embodied lessons that transfer to later life situations. But how to validate these understandings?

As such, my research question considered how learning is enhanced through regular participation in residential outdoor experiences. It was an inquiry into the possibilities for learning in context, with the contextual learning setting being the summer camp, and the research participants its extended community, past and present.

The Research Method

Why a residential camp? Because it is the locus of my pedagogical practice. As well, the residential camp is an exemplary setting and population for social or scientific research. The setting offers diverse experiential learning options, social interaction through residency, opportunities for reflection, historical continuity, and a corresponding community. However, the various influences exerted by the context of the camp itself are phenomena that are infrequently acknowledged within the literature.

I have found that the setting of the residential summer camp is holistic. It is a setting where learning occurs within the personal realm through various aspects of self-realization; within the social sphere of influence through interaction within a community; and within physical surroundings where the natural environment is predominant. As contexts for learning, each of these domains is in constant interplay and supports the others.

My research involved three sources for data collection and analysis: 1) myself as a participant observer, 2) past participants, and 3) current participants. The data of the

participant observer is qualitative, grounded in personal journaling, photography, plenary sessions, discussions with parents, and experiential episodes. These are presented within my study as personal stories — what I refer to as heuristic narratives — which are both instructive and personally insightful.

My participant observation is based on inductive reasoning, whereby a theoretical proposition is inferred, drawn from my prior knowledge and direct experience — this theoretical proposition is that *significant learning takes place particular to the residential outdoor experience and continues in future learning patterns for those who have been part of the phenomenon.*

Participants and Data Collection

Based on my background as a long-term participant observer, I was able to inform the design of interview questions for the past participants in the areas of the personal, social, and physical domains. In this way, participant observation as a research methodology serves to both inform the discourse and support the claims of the past participants. In turn, the responses of the past participants lend trustworthiness to my claims of prior knowledge through their mutual corroboration expressed in the quality and frequency of responses to specific issues during the interview process.

My role as participant observer was also that of a narrator and a storyteller, because it is through story that we all communicate on both an informal and formal basis. It is how we make meaning of our personal life events and the events that take place around us. Stories are the medium through which we learn and how we can pass on our personal learning to others.

The past participants provided the “thick description,” grounded in their learning experiences and expressed through their

personal stories and recollections. I found there was a quality to these stories that, despite a hiatus of 10 to 20 years, expressed with clarity and emotion a freshness that was genuine.

The past participants valued their time spent at the residential camp. They speak of their various experiences as personally, socially, and spiritually enriching, attitude-setting, life-forming, and life-learning. Within their stories are expressions that attest to the successful transfer of lessons learned within the camp context to later life contexts. The holistic quality of the camp setting is overarching and offers broad latitude for learning transfer. As one past participant, now an urban firefighter, commented, “It really is only a short hop from life in the camp cabin to life in the fire hall.” In this way, the past participants supported my claims as the participant observer and informed the content of the survey that could now be compiled for the current participants.

It has been said by naturalistic researchers that you must live your life for a time immersed in your data. I managed to do this by pasting the stories of the past participants on the walls and cupboards of the central room in our home: the kitchen! I quite literally lived with my data.

Soon, common themes began to emerge from the stories, prompting associated questions. In this way, the survey for the current participants was created, the final questions based on the frequency of responses within each thematic category.

The current participants were all young people between the ages of 10 and 14 years. The survey was used to measure the value they perceived in various learning experiences at camp. These recollections are current, based on what had occurred over the previous two weeks. Their responses are attitudinal, and the resultant frequency of

responses to the various thematic questions lends credence to the recalled experiences of the past participants. The key point here is that recollections of the phenomenon “in the here and now” and recollections of the phenomenon 10 to 20 years after it occurred are similar or the same. In this way, the responses of the current participants support the responses of the past participants, and vice versa.

Findings in the Personal Domain

The majority of the participants, past and present, expressed positive outcomes in the areas of self-concept, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. Most past participants reported that many of their learning moments while at camp were significant and successfully transferred to later life situations. One former camper, now in her 30s, recalled, “I learned my own personal kind of discipline at camp because I was given responsibility. The horses had to be fed, so it changed the way I looked at having to do something.”

All participants felt that they remembered things better when they learned them experientially, and that this form of learning was very enjoyable. Significant with the past participants was their ability to recall episodes of experiential learning with exceptional levels of clarity, detail, and fondness. Finally, it was felt overall that residential outdoor experiences enhance the overall school experience.

Findings in the Social Domain

The majority of participants felt that peer teaching and learning were enhanced by the spirit of mutual cooperation at camp, that challenging tasks reinforced the benefits of team building, and that examples set by community role models encouraged individual and widespread group development. “I think being in a camp situation is very good for everyone because

you have to learn how to work with other people. You have to learn how to share,” is an example of a common theme. The acceptance of peer individuality and idiosyncrasy was seen as developed through communal living, and cultural diversity was respected and often celebrated. All participants found that learning was enhanced by social participation in a meaningful context.

Findings in the Physical Domain

Once again, the majority of the participants observed that learning by doing reinforced understanding. One telling comment by a former staff member who is now 31 was, “I remember going up to Dorset [Leslie Frost Centre — closed in 2004] ... anytime I got to learn outside of the school I learned more and I became more passionate about what I was learning.” Learning in the outdoors develops a respect and/or love for natural communities and natural processes. Living in a natural setting gave the participants time and space for reflection, and natural settings generally promoted feelings of calm, well-being, and comfort.

Conclusion

I suggest starting your own research by analyzing your efforts, experiences, and observations related to your specific practice. Then revisit and speak with former students in order to gain their perspective. Finally, canvass your present students to see how their responses fit with the information you have gathered through the two prior explorations.

My efforts in providing residential outdoor experiences to young people have been an extraordinary learning experience for me. They have also been a source of personal fulfillment. Additionally, it is not often that a teacher has the opportunity to revisit former students and see how they got on in life or come to know if a particular

contribution was in any way remembered, useful, or cherished.

My research was an attempt to better understand what I do, locate it within an epistemology, and determine if it made a difference for someone in some way. It has been a great honour and privilege to meet and speak with many of my former students and to be able to tell their stories to my present students. Yes — teaching in the outdoors makes a difference!

Stephen Fine is a Director of The Hollows Camp and Chair of Educational Research for the Ontario Camping Association. He has taught environmental studies at the elementary, middle, secondary, and university levels, and received his Ph.D. from OISE/UT in 2005. His dissertation is entitled Contextual Learning Within the Residential Outdoor Experience: A Case Study of a Camp Community in Ontario.

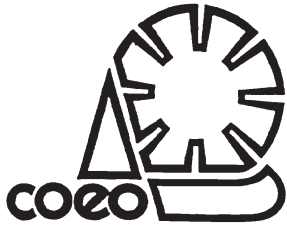
Response to An Outdoor Educator Researches His Practice *by Maranda Smith*

It was very interesting to sit down and read “An Outdoor Educator Researches His Practice” by Stephen Fine. The fact that Stephen has come full circle and could research his experiences validates and conveys an important message that outdoor educators and camp staff already know (but that many in the general public do not know): residential camp experiences can encourage a child’s social, emotional, and physical being. In other words, camp is not only for the fun of it. (That said, I will never deny that my experiences working with children, whether it be outdoor education or at camp, have not been fun!)

I think it is great that Stephen has found, and can advocate, the personal, social, and physical benefits that a residential camp experience can offer. I know that there are people outside the field who understand the importance of these experiences, as many residential camps have been founded, facilitated, or funded by social agencies motivated by the desire to place children in an environment where they can grow and learn in terms of their social and emotional well-being.

It is absolutely necessary to practitioners in the field and to children everywhere that the benefits of the residential camp experience be documented and advocated. I personally think that a residential camp experience for a child helps mould a better citizen of the world because of the personal, social, and physical elements they learn. With research such as Stephen’s, absolute value in the residential camp experience can be built upon and perhaps become better understood by the general population.

Maranda Smith is currently the Director at Stevenson Children’s Camp, a camp for underprivileged children in the London area. She was once a camper, and has spent many years since at a variety of camps, outdoor education centres, and conservation authorities instructing children and adults about the environment, personal, and social growth. She recently completed a Recreation and Leisure Studies degree from Brock University, building on her knowledge and experiences from Conestoga College (Recreation and Leisure Services) and Seneca College (Outdoor Recreation Technician).



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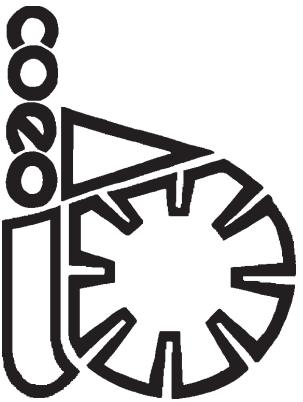
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**Each member of COEO will be assigned to a region of the province
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Central (CE)	Niagara South, Lincoln, Hamilton-Wentworth, Halton, Peel, York, Simcoe, Metro Toronto
Eastern (EA)	Victoria, Durham, Peterborough, Northumberland, Hastings, Prince Edward, Renfrew, Lennox and Addington, Frontenac, Leeds, Grenville, Ottawa-Carleton, Lanark, Prescott, Russell, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry
Far North (FN)	Patricia, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Algoma, Cochrane, Sudbury, Rainy River, Timiskaming
Northern (NO)	Parry Sound, Nipissing, Muskoka, Haliburton, North Bay
Western (WE)	Essex, Kent, Elgin, Lambton, Middlesex, Huron, Bruce, Grey, Dufferin, Wellington, Waterloo, Perth, Oxford, Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk



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