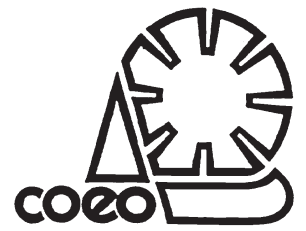


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Winter 2005, 18(1)



Pathways

Our mailing address:

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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.

Contributions Welcome

Pathways is always looking for contributions. If you are interested in making a submission, of either a written or illustrative nature, we would be happy to hear from you. For a copy of our submission guidelines, please contact Randee Holmes, Managing Editor.

If you are interested in being a guest editor of an issue of *Pathways*, please request a copy of our guidelines for guest editors from Randee Holmes, Managing Editor.

If you have any questions regarding *Pathways*, please direct them to Bob Henderson, Chair of the *Pathways* Editorial Board. If you'd like more information about COEO and joining the organization, please refer to the inside back cover of this issue or contact a Board of Directors member.

Our advertising policy:

Pathways accepts advertisements for products and services that may be of interest to our readers. To receive an advertising information package, please contact Bob Henderson, Chair of the *Pathways* Editorial Board. We maintain the right to refuse any advertisement we feel is not in keeping with our mandate and our readers' interests.

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Pathways is published four times a year for The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) and distributed to COEO members. Membership fees include a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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It is always a pleasure for the Editorial Board of *Pathways* to put together an open issue with a mix of features from a wide array of contributors in terms of location and interests. We have been well supplied with submissions through 2004/2005. *Pathways* will continue to accept all submissions on general themes while we move to a new structure of four issues per year. Teams within the Editorial Board will take on one issue per year, thus spreading the work around. A new Editorial Board meets in the late Fall of 2005 to plan theme issues that will still reserve space for general submissions. Given the COEO executive encouragement to bridge research reports and practitioner interests, *Pathways* hopes to maintain a research report focus through 2006, with practitioner responses as evident in our Fall 2005 (17)3 issue.

If you have ideas for these issues or comments on the recent attention to research reports please send them along via e-mail or letter.

Pathways would like to congratulate the COEO, OSEE and EECOM organizers of the dynamic "Creating Ripples" conference. On a personal note, I would like to thank Milic Elaick, Zabe MacEachren, Grant Linney, Linda Leckie and all others involved in creating a tribute *Pathways* issue to mark my passing as the Chair of the Editorial Board. It was a great surprise and true honour. Thanks to all. I will step down as Chair of the Editorial Board in 2005 but remain keen to stay on the board with interests to handle one issue per year.

Bob Henderson

Letter to the Editor

Bob:

I have wanted to write you already for couple of weeks. I am still reading the last issue of *Pathways* 17(3) Research Theme Issue. I have almost absolutely no time so it only happens when I am in tram or metro, but it is a great issue! I really must give you all a compliment for it. Keep on producing issues like this.

Best

Ondrej Pohanka
Editor
Variety: Young Naturefriends' Magazine
Czech Republic

Sketch Pad — Art for this issue of *Pathways* was generously provided by Heather Read (cover and pages 4, 14 and 21), Josh Gordon (pages 8, 18, 20, 25 and 35) and unknown artist (page 16).

President's View

What a great conference we just had! Especially enjoyable for me were the interactions I had with folks—not only my COEO friends, but also members of EECOM, OSEE and people who came from far and wide to be part of this event. It was wonderful to see so many people who, though taking differing actions, are committed to similar dreams, beliefs and ideas for outdoor education in all of its forms. These connections must continue and the “ripples” must not fade. Congratulations to all COEO members who helped in putting this event on, especially Mary Gyemi-Schulze who acted as co-chair. Thanks also to Tim Grant for EECOM and Dave Arthur for OSEE. A special welcome is extended to those new members of COEO who joined us through the conference.

Of course a high point for me was being elected President of COEO. As I am only a recent addition to COEO, I am sure a number of people are asking, “Who is this guy, anyway?” I grew up in Kemptville, just outside of Ottawa. After attending Carleton University, I attended the Outdoor Recreation program at Seneca College. Since then I have worked around the province for various centres and programs. Currently I am with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority at Scanlon Creek, north of Bradford. I also work for Mountain Equipment Co-op in Toronto. Feel free to see if I am at the member services desk on weekends if you are in the store. I also spend as much time as possible with my favourite outdoor partners—my sons.

After first serving as Central Region co-rep, then Vice-President last year, someone thought I should be President. So now that I am here, what do I hope to do? I plan to help facilitate COEO’s continued efforts promoting outdoor education as meaningful to all citizens of our province. I hope to solidify COEO as a lead voice in our field and encourage others to rally to our cause and join us. I hope to engage as many current members to become involved in our organization as possible. We stand, as an organization, ready for a revival and I wish to help. These may sound like lofty statements, but hopefully we will all change these words into actions and into positive results.

While we appreciate and will miss those board members not returning, thanks to those who are remaining. Your continued dedication is appreciated. Welcome to the new members of the board; I hope your experience will be all you want it to be. We still have an open chair at the table. COEO still needs a treasurer. Though some discussion of changing the role has occurred, if there’s a member who has some strong budgeting and financial skills, they could take this role now and have our past treasurer, Daena Grieg, as a mentor. Please contact me if this interests you.

As always, COEO members may attend any regular board meeting. The current schedule for this year is below.

Shane Kramer

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
November 5, 2005	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	Scanlon Creek, Bradford
February 11, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	Scanlon Creek, Bradford
March 29, 2006	7:30 pm – 8:30 pm	Teleconference
June 3, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	TBA
September 16, 2006	9:30 am – 4:30 pm	TBA

Point Release: Strategies for Successful Journal Writing

by Reid Cross, Nathaniel Miles Millard and Mike Dent

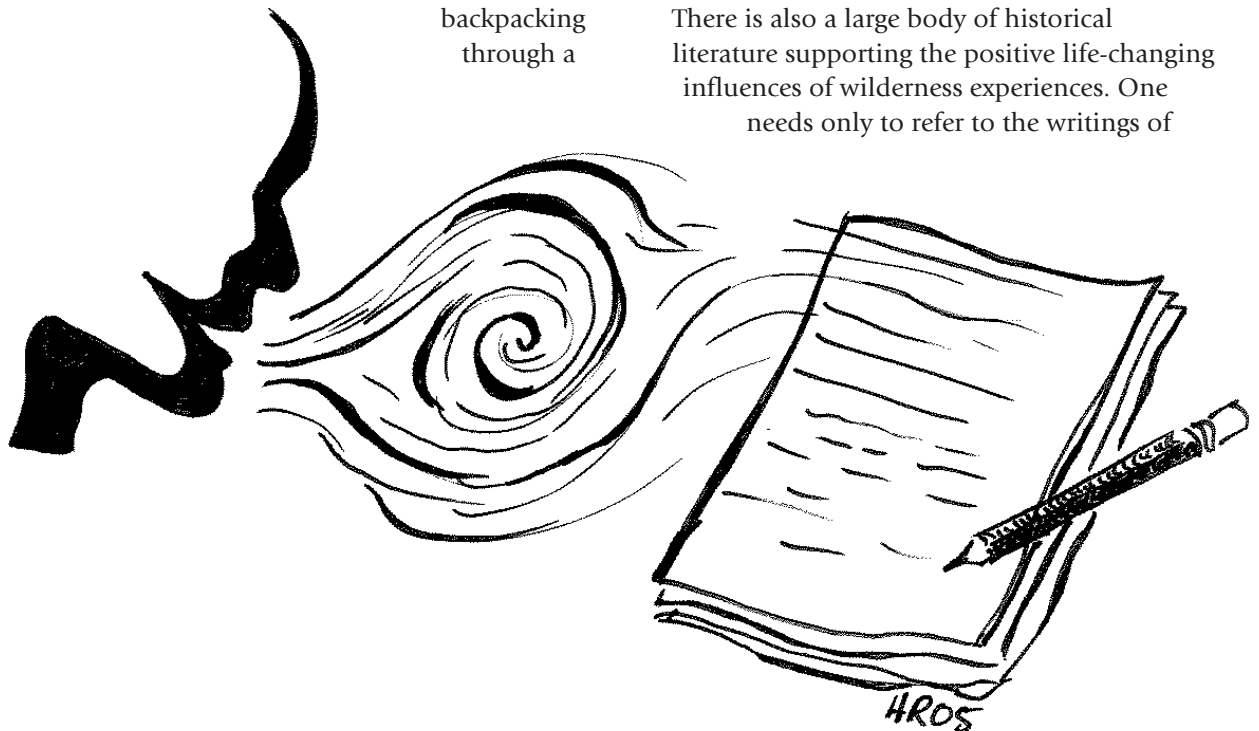
One of the biggest challenges of teaching outdoor education is learning transfer. How does the knowledge gained in wilderness-based learning transfer in a usable way to our daily life? As in all forms of education, the evaluation of educational effectiveness is how well the learning will serve the student in the future. Teachers continually strive to get classroom learning to make sense in a practical way in the student's life, whether it is using math to balance a chequebook, geometry to build a square birdhouse, or basic mathematics as the foundation for higher mathematics, and perhaps aiding the student in their life profession. However, the dichotomy between wilderness learning in a natural setting and living in a daily urban environment magnifies the problem of effectiveness, because the worlds we teach in and the worlds we live in are so different.

How does
backpacking
through a

slot canyon in Utah teach us to lead more productive lives in our daily world? How can we, as educators, enhance the transfer of learning from the backcountry to the front country?

Wilderness experiences are among the most powerful experiences in a person's life. The research literature in outdoor education is resplendent with data pertaining to the life changing impact that wilderness experiences have on the participants. Arnold and Price (1993) describe the experience as an extraordinary sense of belonging. Bannister (1996) describes a powerful sense of community. In terms of personal growth, research data supports positive changes in self-concept and self-efficacy, a strengthened internal locus of control and stronger spiritual values (Cross, 2002; Paxton & McAvoy 1998; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992).

There is also a large body of historical literature supporting the positive life-changing influences of wilderness experiences. One needs only to refer to the writings of



Henry David Thoreau, William James, John Muir, John Burroughs, Edward Abbey, and Wendell Berry, among many others. The fact that wilderness experiences are unique and take place in spectacular surroundings alone can be a powerful learning tool (Lukner & Nadler, 1997).

However, there is also research that leads us to believe that the wilderness experience does not have a lasting effect and that the effects diminish as time passes. As outdoor educators, we continue to work towards a stronger and longer lasting learning transfer. Willie Unsoeld said “. . . the final test for me of the legitimacy of the experience is, how well does your experience of the sacred in nature enable you to cope more effectively with the problems of mankind [sic] when you come back to the city” (1990 p. 130). As outdoor educators we gauge the success of the experiences by the strength of learning transfer (Luckner & Nadler 1992; Gass, 1999). Gass identified three types of learning transfer: specific, nonspecific, and metaphoric (1999).

Specific transfer is the transfer of knowledge that relates closely to the learning situation. Specific transfer refers to learning primarily in the psychomotor domain. A common example is learning to use a brake hand in belaying on a rock climb or challenge course and transferring that knowledge to using a brake hand in rappelling.

Nonspecific transfer is primarily in the affective domain, transferring feelings and emotions from one situation to another. An example would be learning patience while waiting out a storm in a tent and carrying the practice of patience back to one’s normal working environment with family, friends, and colleagues.

Metaphors liken one thing to another in a way that allows the learner to see each thing in a new perspective. Metaphoric transfer is learning through skills and experiences. The experience becomes a metaphor for the

underlying goal of personal growth and development (Bacon, 1983). According to Bacon, the key to making the transfer powerful and getting the learning to transfer is the degree of isomorphism between the metaphoric situation and the real life situation. In biology, isomorphism means there is a similarity in form; in mathematics, it means a one-to-one correspondence. When we teach using isomorphic metaphors we strive to get the elements in one situation as close as possible to those of another situation. Therefore, as teachers in this field, we are striving to create and facilitate learning situations that have parallels to the student’s life away from the learning experience. This is the ultimate goal of wilderness-based education: aiding students in evaluating the experience, reflecting upon that experience, and then incorporating the learning into future use (Sugarman, 2003).

There are many ways to augment one’s reflection and learning experience. One method used commonly in outdoor education is journal writing. Journal writing increases participants’ involvement in their own growth as learners (Tillman, 2003; Cutforth & Parker, 1996). However, in conversation with colleagues, it becomes apparent that success of journal writing experiences with students is inconsistent at best. One of the author’s of this article had a student state at the end of a 30-day course where journal writing was encouraged that it was the only piece of equipment she brought that she did not really understand how to use. This can be disheartening from an educator’s point of view. O’Connell and Dymont’s research points to insufficient direction or training when it comes to the task of journal writing (2003).

As outdoor educators, we would not think about giving our students a stove and telling them they have to cook their own meals without any instruction on lighting the stove or cooking. In a climbing class, it would be negligent to give students a rope, tell them we want them to tie into it so we can climb, and

not give any instruction on how to tie a correct figure-eight-follow-through. Why then do we assign journal writing without any instruction on how or what to write? Granted, not giving instruction in journal writing would not be legally negligent, but it is a core educational issue that borders on educational negligence. We are derelict in our duties as teachers if we expect our students to gain reflection from journal writing without aiding them in understanding how to do it.

After struggling with this issue for a few years, we have come up with some exercises that have aided our students and us in journal writing. In order to help us be more effective at using journals we are offering the following as examples of exercises we have used in our courses. These examples have come about through trial and error, sweat and tears, divine inspiration, and pirating other educator's materials.

This is our model for teaching journal writing. We are presenting it here as seven exercises. We have used them in succession but they can also be used independently depending on factors such as the length of the program, the students, or the purpose of the program. The exercises are not intended to be the only journal writing done, instead they are meant to aid the student in getting started with writing in the journal and to help them expand their writing so that they may create their own metaphors and we may create an isomorphic way of thinking about learning. We have also had success with these exercises on longer trips. On these trips, we do not present the exercises daily; instead, we allow time between the exercises for the continued exploration of the themes.

We intend this article to be user-friendly so someone may run to a copy machine, print this off, and take it into the field. However, we also hope that it sparks ideas for one's own exercises. We welcome the sharing of ideas and authors can be contacted via e-mail to facilitate the sharing.

The following exercises are separated for ease of use. The section titled "Set-up" is a quick version of hints and instructions to help facilitate the exercise. These are not intended as rules, but rather guidelines, and our hope is that you adapt them and make them your own. They are in the most basic form to empower maximum freedom when facilitating.

The "Frontload" is a set of instructions given to the students. It could initially be used as a script to read to students, but reading the script is not the intent. The intent is to tailor the words to your course or activity.

Facilitating Journal Writing

Exercise One: Point Release

Set-up: This is a stream of consciousness type of writing designed to get students writing. With the students in a position of comfort and journals ready, give them a word and allow them to write from that word for five minutes. After five minutes give them another word to write from.

This exercise works well when you alternate between concrete words (such as tree, water, rock) and abstract words (such as integrity, trust, respect). It is also helpful if the words you choose have some meaning to the group. The concrete words might come from the type of course you are teaching, such as "water" for a canoeing course. The abstract words might come from group dialogue, debriefs, group contracts, or course objectives.

Frontload: Point release is a loose snow avalanche that starts when a single tiny snowflake breaks and falls into another one, then the combined weight of the two fall into a third, then those three into a fourth until there is enough weight to cause the unconsolidated snow to slide picking up more snow as it descends. From a distance, they appear to start at a point and fan out into a triangle. This journaling exercise works the

same way. The trigger snowflake is the sound of a word. As I read the words let them slide into your minds, and free write about each of these words. From your pencils grow an avalanche of thoughts, images, experiences, and feelings about the past, present, and future. If you get stuck just keep writing something; write anything even if you just write "I am stuck" over and over until the critical mass of your snowflake words causes the avalanche to continue. Your thoughts drift out, slide down, gain speed and collect the debris from the past and roll through the present to the future.

Exercise Two: Dreams and Dragons

Set-up: Start this exercise by reading the quote from Thoreau, and then talking about dreams a little. This is a great exercise to encourage the group to share and get to know each other. If a person can't think of effective ways to slay their dragons, then perhaps the group can throw out suggestions to help. We have seen this exercise help the group find commonalities and pull them closer together. A lot of us share the same dreams in common, even if nothing else appears to be the same.

Frontload:

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

Henry David Thoreau

What dreams did you have when younger? Did you want to be a president, firefighter, actor/actress, musician, or professional athlete? Where did those dreams go? Do you remember them? What are your dreams now? Why did they change? When did they change? Are they still inside of you? Can you still feel those dreams inside your being in times of reflection? Dreams are essential to life; they are there in your mind every time you make a decision to advance towards them. Success

might come unexpected, and it might come as something you didn't dream about. It is not the act of attaining the dream, so much as it is the thoughts of having them that is important. I would like for each of you to write down three dreams. The first one is a short-term dream: this trip, a few weeks, or around there. The second dream is a mid-term dream: a few months to a year. The last dream is a life-long dream. Remember, this is not a goal, but a dream; a dream is grandiose. Think hard about the dream for your life, it may seem impossible, but that is what dreams are all about. If you remember to advance confidently towards these dreams, you just might surprise yourself. Don't sell yourself short when it comes to your dreams. Dream as high as your heart will allow you to.

Now write down the dragons. Dragons are the obstacles in the way of the path toward your dreams. What are the obstacles that might keep you from your dreams?

Finally, write down the swords you can use to help slay the dragons. Swords are the tools and support you have to reach your dreams.

Exercise Three: The Expedition

Set-up: This exercise should be organized around your current surroundings. If you were in the snow, you might model it off an Everest expedition. If you were rafting maybe you would use John Wesley Powell exploring the Grand Canyon. Make this exercise the best you can according to the current trip and the expertise you have to share about that method of exploration. Talk about the size and immensity of different expeditions; tell participants about how many resources go into one person reaching the summit of Everest, or charting an unknown bay, or putting a 30-day course in the field. Brainstorm with the students all the possible roles and write them down for everyone to see, or read each role out loud slowly and have the participants copy them into their journals. List the possible people involved in their

expedition, from those who named the expedition to those who built your equipment. Allow for people to come up with some of their own roles if they want, but stress the metaphor as much as possible. The purpose is to get the journaling to move deeper, and to have people begin to relate the outdoor activities to things in their own lives. This can be a very emotional exercise and plenty of time should be allowed for the dialogue that follows.

Frontload: On the expedition of your life people have filled many roles for you. Some roles include the leaders, navigators, cooks, porters, sponsors, tent mates, hiking mates, the people you shared meals with, people you will name your new land after, summit teams, doctors, and anything else you can think of. We have listed many possibilities; now in your journals write who in your life has fulfilled each of these roles. The cook is not your mom because she cooks well, but she might be your cook because she gives you strength and nourishes your body. This one takes some time and creativity,



but think about all the people that go into your life to make it possible. Remember, think metaphorically.

Exercise Four: Then and Now

Set-up: For this exercise allow at least 30 minutes for each part. Encourage students to get up and walk around, and find a good writing place. You can blow a whistle to signify how much time, when to switch, and when to return as a group. This exercise works at getting people to think about the effects of nature on their lives, but also focuses on the changing past, and how perceptions have changed over the years. This exercise can be difficult, but we are beginning to use nature as a metaphor. The participant is beginning to see nature through different eyes, and seeing connections from the past and present.

Frontload:

Out there is a different world, older and greater and deeper by far than ours, a world which surrounds and sustains the little world of men [sic] as sea and sky surround and sustain a ship. The shock of the real. For a little while we are again able to see, as the child sees, a world of marvels. For a few moments we discover that nothing can be taken for granted, for if this ring of stone is marvelous then all which shaped it is marvelous, and our journey here on earth, able to see and touch and hear in the midst of tangible and mysterious thing-in-themselves, is the most strange and daring of all adventures.

Edward Abbey

First, think back to your past, go back as far as you possibly can to your first memory of nature. Think of your favourite tree, a trail you used to hike, or maybe a bush in your yard where you made a fort. Think of anything; try to remember that past, write as much as you can remember about how you felt, what it

looked like, and what you did. Be as descriptive as possible. Be bold. Be confident. You will write a piece that will make trees bow and flowers blush with delight at having so moved you to song.

[Allow time to write]

Second, look around you and find a similar object in your current surroundings. Leave the area and find a place that feels right. It does not have to be a perfect match; in fact, it will never be a perfect match. If you wrote about a favourite tree, find another tree now, and write about it. Sit under it, climb up high into it, and hug it if you are so inclined, then sit down and write everything you can about it.

[Allow time to write]

Lastly, bring these two things together; look at the similarities and differences between the two writings. Think about how you are the same person, and look at how much has changed.

Exercise Five: “13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD” by Wallace Stevens

Set-up: This is a complex poem and the meaning may be difficult to grasp, but that is beside the point. The idea is not exactly to comprehend the poem, but to continue looking at nature with a metaphoric lens. This one is great to assign early in the day or at a trail break, then shared later in a group dialogue.

Frontload: In this exercise the metaphor is pushed further. You may be completely baffled as to the meaning of this poem. That’s fine, maybe there never was one set meaning for the poem, but it will help you to see the same object in many different ways. First get comfortable and close your eyes and listen to the poem while I read it, then listen again but this time follow along with your copy.

13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD

1

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

2

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

3

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

4

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

5

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

6

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadows of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

7

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

8

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.

9

When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

10

At the sight of blackbirds
Flying in a green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.

11

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackbirds.

12

The river is moving.
The blackbird must be flying.

13

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs.

Wallace Stevens

Now find an object. It can be anything: a tree, a rock, a river, or even a blade of grass. After you find an object, discover thirteen ways to look at it and relate those things to your life.

For example maybe you are looking at a tree. The tree has roots; what are the roots to your life? Or how is the wind in the leaves like your past? Do you have bark to protect you? Or maybe you have an oak desk at home and want to explore how this desk relates to the tree. As you can see, there are many more than thirteen ways of looking at anything.

Exercise Six: Writing Letters

Set-up: Letters have long been used in outdoor education as a means of reflection. In this letter we want to concentrate on the imagery of the environment. Encourage the students to use excerpts from their journals to write the letter. This is not an exercise that is done on the spot; it may take a few days to a week to complete the letter. After the letters are completed some students may want to share them with the rest of the course, which makes for interesting dialogues.

Frontload: This is our sixth exercise together. First we wrote about words and thought of different ways they make you feel or think. Then we wrote about our dreams, what they were and are; then we wrote about nature in the past and present; then we thought about all the people that make up our expedition of life; then we tried to relate one object thirteen ways, and now we combine all this together to write a letter to someone, anyone, even yourself if you want to. This letter could tell someone about your dreams and goals in life, how they have changed from past to present, how they have affected your life, or what this particular trip means to you. Make a deliberate effort to use your surroundings as a metaphor to get your emotion and energy into the letter.

Everett Ruess is a great example of someone using his natural surroundings to better relate his emotions and feelings to his readers. He

was 20 years old in 1934 when he completely vanished from the Utah desert. All that remains are some prints, pictures, his journals, and some beautifully crafted letters.

In this letter Everett writes to a woman he loved and uses the natural surroundings to give the dichotic feelings of awe and loneliness in the desert and to highlight his emotions to the woman he writes. Everett used his journal writing to craft letters home to the people he loved. He wrote about events on the trail and worked them into tails of emotion and beauty.

May
Near Lukachukai, Arizona

Dear Frances,

I was surprised and pleased to receive your letter a couple of days ago. Glad too that you are getting something out of life. It shocked me slightly when you spoke of my greed for life. That is a harsh word, but I guess it is true. I am not willing to take anything but the most from life.

Then too,

"You know how little while we have to say,

And once departed may return no more."

I certainly don't like to let opportunities for living slip by ungrasped, and I never like the game of sitting back in a corner and wishing. And when people interest me and I like them, I nearly always follow up until I know them well. There are too many uninteresting people—like the trader at Lukachukai. He certainly made me feel like hitting him. He is a typical moron, only interested in food, business, and home. I was telling him about Canyon de Chelly and del Muerto, and with no provocation he remarked that he had lived here a long time and had never been to them and

never expected or intended to. Obviously his decision was right for a person like him, because wherever he might go, he would see nothing beautiful or interesting.

So the other night at twilight, unwilling to drown my consciousness in slumber, and dissatisfied with life, I packed and saddled my burros, and left my camp by a rushing stream at the edge of the desert.

The half moon had an orange glow as I rode on the trail up the mountains. Behind us, thunder boomed on the open desert, and black clouds spread. Moaning winds swept down the canyon, blending the tops of the tall pines and firs, and clouds hid the moon. Silently old Cockleburrs, my saddle burro, carried me upward through the night, and Leopard followed noiselessly with the pack. Grotesque shapes of trees reared themselves against the darkening sky, and disappeared into blackness as the trail turned.

For a while the northerly sky was clear, and stars shone brilliantly through the pine boughs. Then darkness closed upon us, only to be rent by livid flashes of lightning, and thunder that seemed to shake the earth. The wind blew no longer and we traveled in an ominous, murky calm, occasionally slashed with lightning. Finally the clouds broke, and rain spattered down as I put on my slicker. We halted under a tall pine, and my sombrero sheltered the glow of a cigarette. The burros stood motionless with heads down and water dripping off their ears.

In half an hour the rain was over and the skies cleared. By moonlight we climbed to the rim of the mountain and looked over vast silent stretches of desert. Miles away was the dim hulk of Shiprock—a ghostly galleon in a sea of sand.

We turned northward on the nearly level top of the mountain, and winding through glades of aspen we came to three peaceful lakes, gleaming silver in the moonlight. Under a clump of low sprawling oaks we stopped, and there I unpacked, turning the burros out to graze on the tall meadow grass.

In the afternoon I went for a long leisurely ride on Leopard, skirting the edge of the mountain, riding through thickets of rustling aspen, past dark, mysterious lakes, quiet and lonely in the afternoon silence.

Two friendly horses were belly deep in a pond, swishing their tails and placidly chewing rushes and swamp grass. Flowers nodded in the breeze and wild ducks honked on the lakes. No human being came to disturb the brooding silence of the mountain.

Last night I came down the mountain, and as the sunset glow faded it was weird to see the orange moon seemingly falling down, down, through the pine boughs as I descended.

Now I have accepted the hospitality of a Navajo head man, and paused at noon to rest and write you. I enjoyed your letter, and I know I did not mistake myself when first I liked you. We did have some moments of beauty together, didn't we?

It is that feeling of comradeship and sharing that I miss most out here. True, I have had many experiences with people, and some very close ones, but there was too much that could not be spoken. I had a strange experience with a young fellow at an outpost, a boy I'd known before. It seems that only in moments of desperation is the soul most truly revealed. Perhaps that's why I am so often so unrestrained, for always I sense the

brink of things. And as you say, it is impossible to grasp enough of life. There is always something that eludes one.

I've not heard the recording of the Emperor Concerto, but I heard it rendered a couple of times by the New York Philharmonic. Though there is a lot of superfluous stuff, the heart of it rings through magnificently. I have greatly enjoyed Beethoven's Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth symphonies, also Brahms' First and Third. I enjoy them here, too. The night before I left the city I went to hear the final rehearsal of Beethoven's Ninth with full chorus. (A girl I knew was singing.) Then I realized the gap still remaining between any recording and the reality of a thing like that. Oh, it was utterly sublime, enough to make the hair stand on end and to lift the soul out of the body.

Oh but the desert is glorious now, with marching clouds in the blue sky, and cool winds blowing. The smell of the sage is sweet in my nostrils, and the luring trail leads onward.

Love from Everett

Exercise Seven: Transference

Set-up: Transference does not take much set-up. Usually it is done towards the end of the course, and you should allow students several days to write in their journals on this one.

Frontload: I am going to read you an essay by Morgan Hite. He was a NOLS instructor when he wrote this and it deals specifically with what we learn out here and the impact this learning has on our life. This is the last writing exercise that we are doing together, and it is open ended—write any way you want. Maybe you want to write an essay, another letter, or even poetry, but the topic should be about what we learn in the wilderness that enables us to function more fully when we are home. Think about what you learn, how it relates,

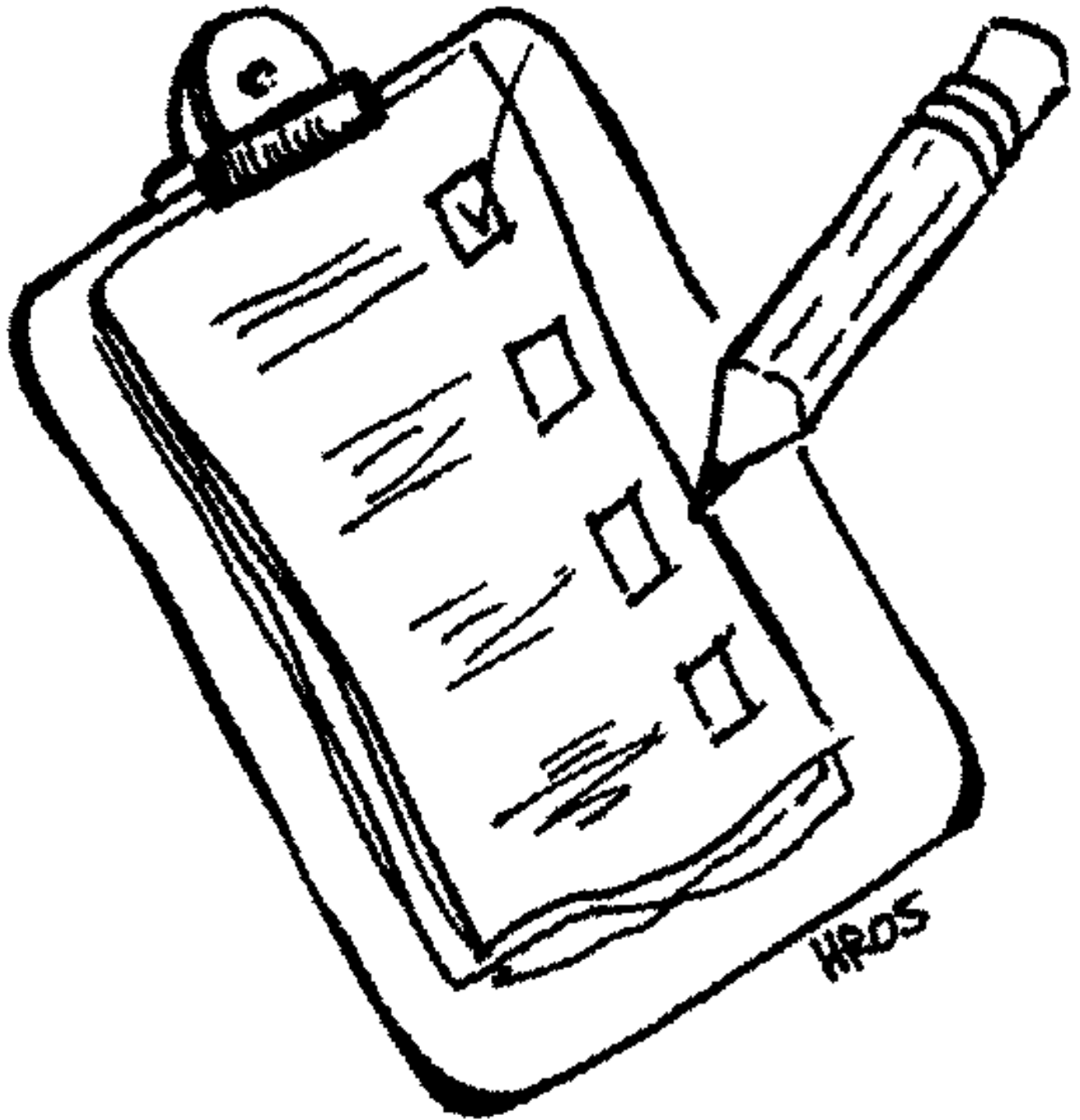
what it changes, what might be difficult, what will be easier, and any other differences or similarities.

Briefing for Entry into a More Harsh Environment **By Morgan Hite**

People always talk about what you can't take home with you after a NOLS course. You can't take home the backpack, or at least it has no place in your daily life. You can't take home the rations, and if you did, your friends wouldn't eat them. You can't take home the mountains. We seem to have to get rid of all of our connections to this place and our experiences here. It's frustrating and can be depressing.

This essay is about what you can take home: what you can take home, and what, if you work at it, can be more important than any of those things you have to leave behind. Let's look at what we've really been doing out here. We've been organized. We lived out of backpacks the whole time, and mostly we knew where everything was. We've been prepared: at this moment, every one of us knows where his or her raingear is. We've taken care of ourselves. We've been in touch with basic survival tasks. We've taken chances with other people, entrusted them with our lives and seen no reason not to grow close to them. We've persevered and put our minds to things that never seemed to end. We've learned to use new tools and new techniques. We've taken care of the things we have with us. We've lived simply. These are the things you can really take home. Together they comprise the set I call "mental hygiene," as if we needed to take care of our minds the way we take care of our bodies. Here they are again, one by one.

1. Organization. The mountains are harsh, so you need to be organized. But that other world is much more complex, and even harsher in ways that aren't always as tangible as cold, wind and rain. Being organized can help you weather its storms.



2. Thoroughness. Here, it is easy to see the consequences of leaving things only half-done. That other world has so many interruptions, distractions and stimuli that it is easy to leave things half-done, until you find yourself buried under a pile of on-going projects with no direction.

3. Preparedness. Out here, you've only had to be prepared for every eventuality of weather; but in that other world you have to be prepared for every eventuality period. There are no rules, shit happens, and only the prepared are not caught off balance.

4. Take care of yourself. And do it even more aggressively than you do it out here. The environmental hazards are even greater: crowding, noise, schedules. Take time to be alone and think. Never underestimate the healing power of being near beauty, be it a flower, music, a person, or just dinner well-prepared.

5. Stay in touch with basics. Continue to cook your own food and consciously select the place where you sleep at night. Take care of your own minor injuries and those of your friends. Learn about how the complex vehicles and tools you use work. The other world is far more distracting and seeks to draw you away from the basics.

6. Keep taking risks with people. Your own aliveness is measured by the aliveness of your relationships with others. There are so many more people to choose from in that other world, and yet somehow we get less close. Remember that the dangers are still present; at any time that you get in a car with someone, you are entrusting that person with your life. Any reasons that seem to crop up not to get close, examine very carefully.

7. Remember, you can let go and do without seemingly critical things. Here, it has only been hot showers, forks and a roof overhead. But anything can be done without; eventually, for us all, it is a person that we have to do without, and then especially it is important to remember that having to do without does not rule out joy.

8. Persevere at difficult things. It may not be as concrete as a mountain or as immediately rewarding as cinnamon rolls, but the world is given to those who persevere. Often you will receive no support for your perseverance because everyone else is too busy being confused.

9. Continue to learn to use new tools and techniques. Whether it is a computer or an ice cream maker, you know now that simply because you haven't seen it before doesn't mean you can't soon be a pro. Remember that the only truly old people are the ones who've stopped learning.

10. Take care of things. In that other world, it's easy to replace anything that wears out or breaks, and the seemingly endless supply suggests that individual objects have little value. Be what the philosopher Wendell Berry calls "a true materialist." Build things of quality, mend what you have, and throw away as little as possible.

11. Live simply. There is no substitute for sanity.

These eleven things are the skills you've really learned out here, and they will serve you in good stead in any environment in the world. They are habits to live by. If anyone asks what your course was like, you can tell them. "We were organized, thorough and prepared. We took care of ourselves in basic ways. We entrusted people with our lives, learned to do without and persevered at difficult things. We learned to use new tools and we took care of what we had with us. We lived simply." And if they are perceptive, they will say, "You don't need the mountains to do that."

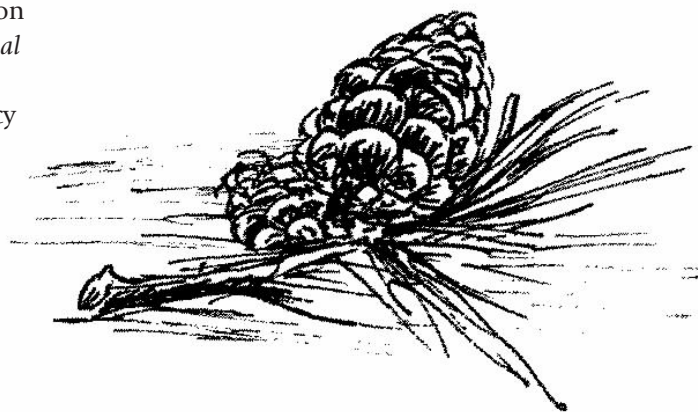
Europa Canyon
Bridger Wilderness, Wyoming
August 1989

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Considering Recreation: A Supportive Cheer

by Bryan Grimwood

Introduction

In the introduction to a recent issue of *Pathways*, Henderson and Sharpe (2005) pose the challenge of bridging the gap between outdoor education research and practice. To share knowledge with practice, and practice with knowledge, among the academics and those working directly in the outdoor education field is of vital importance to the achievement of our common goals (addressing the nature of these common goals should be one your next assignments!). One of the most basic tasks in bridging the gap between academia and practice is to consider and attempt to define—as a field of study and practice—the terms that often float about within outdoor education.

In the same *Pathways* issue, Elrick (2005) refers to the idea that outdoor educators must nurture warriors, those that will return “to the home community with a sense of purpose” (p. 11). I champion this comment (when you prepare that next assignment on the common goals of outdoor education, consider this aim completely). However, I do not agree with Elrick’s suggestion that we need to drop the word *recreation* from our profession in order to succeed in developing warriors of purpose. A more grown-up term, according to Elrick, is *education*, which has “defined goals with tangible outcomes—including healthier communities and a healthier planet” (p. 11).

My intention here is certainly not to be critical of education; that is what we are in the service of providing. The purpose of this paper is to make a case for recreation as an essential and valuable component of outdoor education. More specifically, this paper will initiate the discussion and clarification of terminology used among outdoor educators by addressing

the purposefulness of recreation and conceptualizing recreation in relation to education.

On the Purpose in Recreation

Elrick’s (2005) statements in favour of education are sound and certainly important to outdoor educators. But they aim to sink the boat of recreation benefits and, in fact, suggest that the tangible, purposeful outcomes of education (e.g., healthier communities and a healthier planet) are not achievable through recreation. In their philosophical and conceptual discussion, however, Searle and Brayley (1993) highlight recreation as a social instrument that is “organized and programmed in order to achieve certain purposes” (p. 38). Recreation is often considered a voluntary activity, motivated by the derived satisfaction of the experience, which can produce opportunities for learning, health promotion, or prevention of delinquency. Conservation is also a related outcome of recreation (Swinnerton, 1999). Furthermore, Phipps’ (1991) notion of wilderness recreation is one that encourages participants to experience the wilderness values of naturalness, freedom, solitude, primitiveness, and challenge. The point of appeal here is that recreation is indeed purposeful.

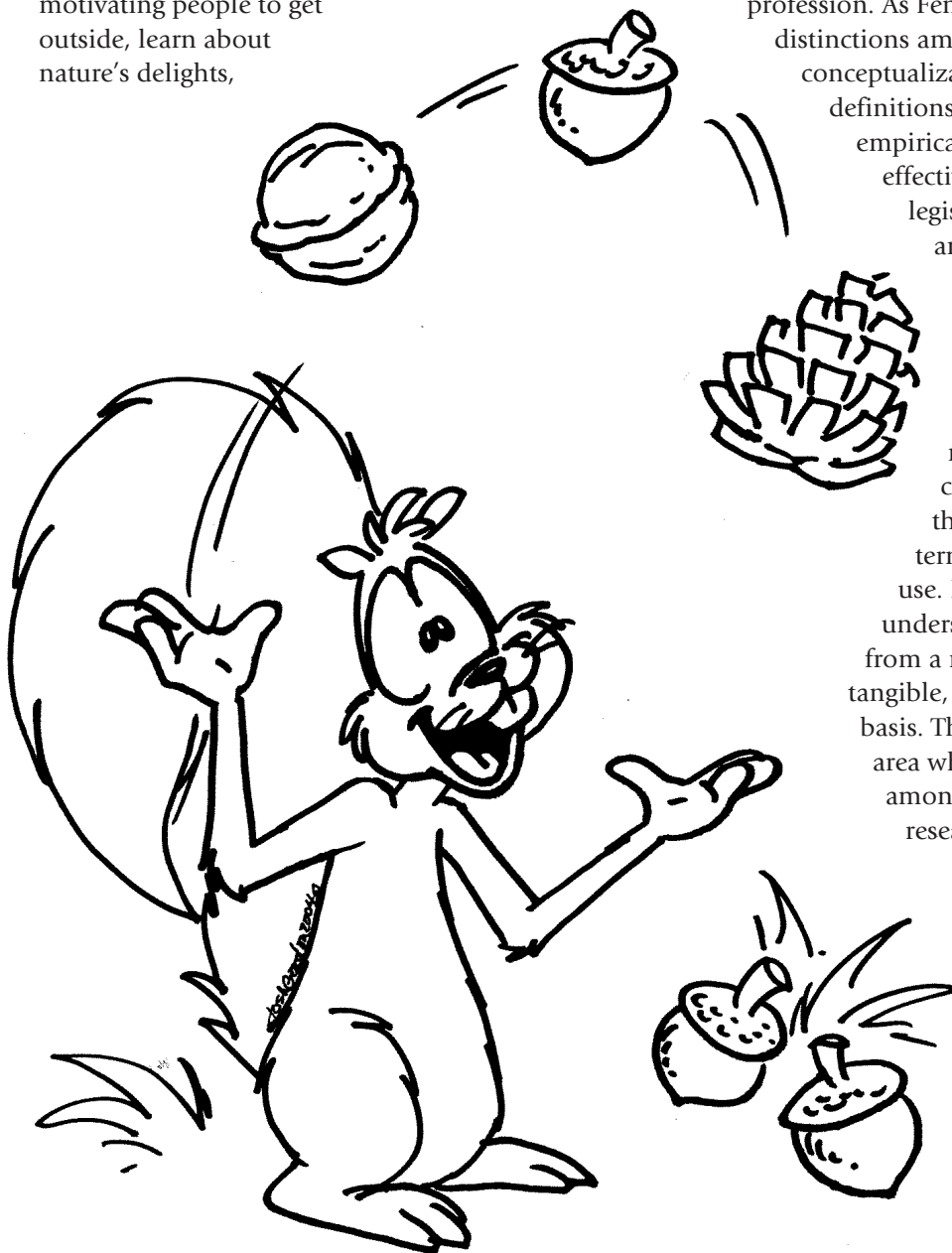
Another interesting consideration related to the purpose in recreation lies in the Latin root of the word recreation, *recreatio*, which means “recovery or restoration from something” (Seale & Brayley, 1993). In light of our current environmental predicaments, recreation can offer assistance in a recovery from our displaced values and in restoring our human connections to the Earth (Grimwood, 2005). In an introductory canoe lesson, for example,

outdoor educators may aim to share principles of canoe and water safety, encourage paddling stroke development, or offer tips on maneuvering the canoe effectively. These introductory lessons provide participants with a basic knowledge and understanding of the recreation activity about which they may grow more passionate and develop more advanced skills. From that point on, the canoeist's boundaries are vast. Recreation is the catch; it is a vehicle for inspiring and motivating people to get outside, learn about nature's delights,

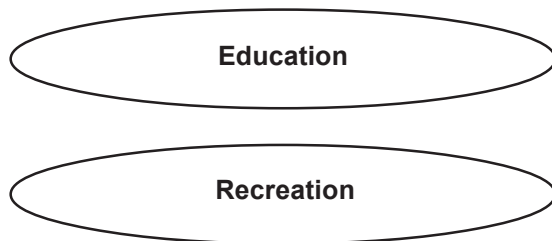
and share these experiences with others. Through "re-creation," we can rebuild. I believe this is the intent of the warrior.

Conceptualizing Recreation in Education/ Education in Recreation

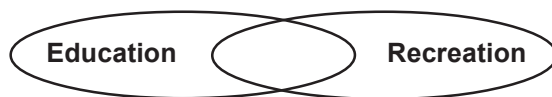
Conceptualizing, defining, and understanding applicable terminology is fundamental to any body of knowledge and, specifically, to the growth of the outdoor education profession. As Fennell (2000) notes, distinctions among conceptualizations and definitions allow for empirical research, effective marketing and legislative strategies, and advanced understanding of the phenomenon being considered. As a profession, we must give proper consideration to the definitions and terminology that we use. Let us be sure to understand *our* language from a measurable, tangible, but also sensible, basis. This is one specific area where collaboration among practitioners and researchers is needed.



And to initiate such collaboration, I offer the following: Education, according to Elrick (2005), lies in a higher, independent, and much different realm than recreation. Recreation and education can not work together or exist simultaneously. We must “grow up” from recreation, eliminate the use of the word from our profession, and become educators. This perspective is represented in the simple diagram:



However, a sensible view of our practices, and a grounded view from the academic perspective suggests that the following conceptualization is more accurate:



From a practice perspective, differentiating between recreation and education can be difficult. Where does education begin and recreation end? For a young lad who has chosen to spend his summer camp experience on an extended canoe trip, where is the line between what is educational and what is recreational? Arguably, the various experiences lived during a canoe trip can be considered both. Also, we can certainly recognize that recreation can be viewed as a means to education and vice versa. A student that has a positive experience learning how to canoe may chose to venture out on a multi-day canoe trip with her friends. This recreation experience can lead to a vast number of other educational experiences. “Education through recreation” is the motto of Village Camps (see

www.villagecamps.com), a European-based camping and outdoor education program. Certainly this motto emphasizes the overlap of education and recreation.

The academic view of education and recreation supports the shared space between the two phenomena. For instance, Haluza-Delay (2001) indicates that wilderness recreation and adventure programming are often cited as components of experiential education. Outdoor education is frequently, albeit simplistically, coined as “education in, about and for the outdoors” (Ford, 1981). This definition promotes the wise use of the outdoors for recreational purposes (Phipps, 1991). Priest (1986) offers a more thorough conceptualization of outdoor education in his tree metaphor. Priest describes outdoor education as a method of learning, experiential, taking place primarily in the outdoors, using all of the senses, and incorporating interdisciplinary curriculum matter and relationships among people and natural resources. As a blend of both environmental education and adventure programming, Priest’s conception of outdoor education provides a suitable example to follow in identifying the interconnected nature of recreation and education.

Conceptualizing education and recreation in the straightforward fashion viewed in the latter diagram, above, suggests that our profession should not be interested in dropping the word recreation from our vocabulary. Eliminating recreation would purge an important element of what we do as outdoor educators and would reject the learning efforts of students in university or college recreation programs who so often work directly with our own students and clients. As well, dropping recreation would essentially abandon the self-motivating and self-satisfying experiences that may be a precursor to an individual’s re-creation of their relationship to the Earth.

Conclusion

I agree completely with Elrick's (2005) push for going to wild and natural places with purpose and meaning, and returning from these experiences with a message to share with others and a continued sense of purpose. But Elrick indicates that recreation plays no role in this challenge and, on this, Elrick's argument is off. Recreation is about finding purpose and meaning in our lives. Recreation is often considered those activities that we do when we are not at work and, as those who have studied recreation will contend, the force that balances the routines, stressors, and frustrations of our occupations. For our profession to educate for healthier communities and a healthier planet, we must first aim at educating for healthier individuals. Part of this focus involves educating people about recreation and encouraging individuals to grant more importance to the recreation choices and passions in their lives.

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The Value of Serendipitous Learning Part 2 — A Way Forward Through Self-development

by Willem Krouwel

In the last issue of *Pathways* I offered a critique of the idea of using the outdoors merely as an arena for the enactment of illustrative experiential metaphors and frontloaded “learning.” I described the outdoors as (for all but the professional) a *different but real* place. I inferred that it has truly great potential as an arena for developmental learning, not least because its unpredictability and “difference” enables people to more than routinely exercise all their senses, to become fully engaged with surroundings and compatriots in a more thorough and intense way than is the case in day-to-day interaction.

This process, if not obscured by a trainer/ sponsor-driven quest for tidy outcomes, can

lead to a developmental kind of learning that may have greater value than the meeting of externally set training or learning needs. Throughout this paper I refer to this process as “development.” This isn’t quite the same as “training” and has been described as “a profound kind of learning . . . which is fundamental, which is holistic, which is closely linked to personality, and which affects how people learn. ‘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). To illustrate where that idea fits into the world of outdoor learning, I use a cruciform-continuum (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. An Outdoor Learning Typology

	Highly specific objective		
Aims for change (if at all) at a simple behavioural level	<p>Focussed training crafted to meet highly specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) objectives. Example: Courses using light “near-doors” tasks to build problem-solving skills.</p>	<p>Programs of outdoor counselling or therapy aimed at addressing and dealing with specific and pre-identified conditions. Example: wilderness programs aimed at remedying anti-social behaviour.</p>	Aims for development at a profound level
	<p>A popular approach in some areas. An example is the corporate day out, which is intended to impart fun through paintball/quad biking-type outdoor activities. Often sold and badged as a fun team-build.</p>	<p>Programs of mutual exploration, discovery and development in which the individuals in a learning community discover and address issues within themselves. Example: outdoor development programs.</p>	
	Low specificity of objective		

“Fun” Teambuilding: The phenomenon being described is typically one wherein someone decides that their team isn’t working very well and, having heard a little about the outdoors, buys whatever looks exciting. A whole industry offering outdoor corporate entertainment has grown to provoke and satisfy this demand. A sample can be found by visiting Web sites like that of the Corporate Entertainment Company Limited where we discover a variety of diversions at truly entertaining prices. Other than being labelled “teambuilding,” there’s no attempt to describe how people might learn or develop from such experiences. One is forced to conclude that, at best, one can experience the bonding that occurs through spending a pleasant day sharing enjoyable and unusual activities with colleagues. At worst, the training budget has been misspent, perhaps depriving others of more focussed and appropriate training.

Focussed Training: There are many serious efforts to harness the outdoors in the service of objective-focussed training. There is, of course, nothing intrinsically wrong with training around “SMART” objectives. Focussed training becomes a concern when it is delivered in the outdoors and is “outcome driven [because] a narrow concern with outcome leads to an inability to follow-up on significant areas of interest and learning” (Smith 2002). In other words, it’s possible to be *too* focussed, ignoring learning because it doesn’t fit the trainers’/sponsors’ plans. Often the programs are rather too short to achieve much impact. This short-termism is perhaps why trainers have come to rely on such artifices as frontloading and isomorphic framing (Priest and Gass, 1993).

Counselling and Therapy in the Outdoors: These are characterised by programs with clear objectives but pitched at a deep, attitude changing agenda. There has been growth in the provision of long-term programs aimed at, for example, changing nihilistic and hedonistic attitudes for more constructive ones. Success is reported both anecdotally

(see, for example, the follow-up on 2004 “Brat Camp” attendees (Channel 4, 2005)) and from considered research: a meta-analysis of research into therapeutic outdoor programs notes that “a 20- to 26-day adventure program can have . . . substantial effects relative to other educational experience [and] that most effects are long lasting and often increase over time is a most remarkable aspect of adventure programs” (Hattie, Marsh and Richards, 1999).

Mutual Exploration, Discovery and

Development: Although there’s much good in some of the above, I will concentrate on the fourth quadrant of the cruciform as being the place where people are most likely to experience a form of development that has the advantage of being driven by their own, rather than others’, agendas and discoveries.

This, it seems to me, is true to the philosophical roots of outdoor learning, and can be deeply developmental.

Self-development

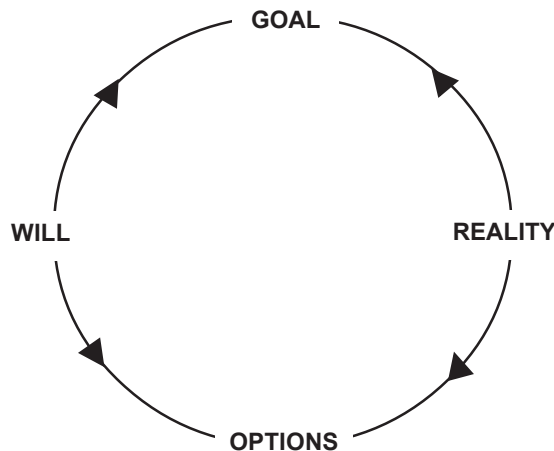
Although it’s not currently fashionable, we *can* attempt what Mossman (1983) termed “self development,” a good reason for doing so being that when we engage the whole energy of the group, powerful things can happen. One of those things has been termed “flashover” (Stuart and Binsted, 1981) and is recognisable as a phenomenon in which “the learners’ perception of the learning event will change from one of low reality to one of high reality and with it will come the prospect of increased learner-transfer” (Mossman, 1983). My experience is that such flashovers only occur when learners have (and understand that they have) a high degree of autonomy and choice about what and how they learn. Incidentally, giving people that power is a one-way street. I remember in an almost Kennedy-assassination level of detail the “T” group within which I got it and how, when the same group reconvened for a series of lecture-driven training sessions, we walked out, choosing instead to reconvene our T-group.

How might we go about giving that power to groups with whom we work in the outdoors?

I set out some suggestions below for implanting self-development into outdoor groups. These owe a great deal to Mossman and are, it should be noted, in no particular order:

1. Understand that participants know more about their own needs than others do. In the wake of Mossman’s following of Boydell and Pedler (1981), we need to ask “Who defines the learning needs?” and “Who takes responsibility for meeting those needs?” Courses where this is the province of the participants rather than the trainers or sponsors stand a chance of meeting the needs of the delegates. No matter how professional the trainer, they don’t spend 24 hours a day inside the skin of the participant. The trainer’s role is still important, though: Asking the right (often open) questions and providing a genuinely listening ear is extremely useful to trainees. A simple “GROW” model (see Figure 2) helps me to help people define their own learning needs—provided both the “growee” and I understand that it’s not a closed process; subsequent reflection and activity may change everything. There are other useful techniques for organising one’s questioning. The key is intention: if we help people to an understanding of their needs, that’s good. If we use techniques to sell someone else’s definition of their needs, any resistance we get is earned and deserved.

Figure 2. The GROW Model



2. Delegates and trainers manage the review process with equality. This is an important power issue. Many trainers wield power over group process by making themselves central to it. Self-development requires that we take a less assertive role. This also applies when observing tasks, when it’s useful to cultivate non-dramatic invisibility.

3. Individual, as well as interpersonal and inter-group, matters are reviewed, although tasks are largely group based. Restricting review to only group-based matters is an easy option. Individual learning is important too, and should be addressed. My own experience is that it takes time for personal issues to emerge in an unforced way. If that time is not available (and sadly it often isn’t), then the worst thing to do is to attempt to force the issues to emerge. One of the tragedies of Outdoor Management Development is that the time for individual development agendas to emerge simply isn’t there, forcing the management trainer to concentrate on behaviour at quite a shallow level.

4. Exercises may be designed by trainers, but should be “open books” as far as review is concerned. In discussions when writing this paper, the question arose of to what degree programs made up of tasks designed by the trainers can actually be self-development. My view is that trainers often have (and ought to use) skills in exercise design that provide opportunities to enrich the personal and interpersonal processes. This isn’t a hard-and-fast rule, although reviewing what actually happened and is happening in the group is. Programs do exist where the design and delivery of the experience is part of the participants’ role. An example is the as-yet experimental approach of the Stoneleigh Project (Loynes, 2004) in which groups of young adults and older mentors form short-term communities and take part in experiences that emerge from the group rather than being preordained by trainers. Described by Loynes as “outdoor learning, retreat style” (ibid), the Stoneleigh experience seems to display a

greater resemblance to the characteristics of self-development. It's certainly closer to Mossman's definition of self-development than anything else I know.

5. There is high program flexibility—with an openness to renegotiate content based on the direction of the learning. There are excellent examples of constantly changing programs in the courses run by Outward Bound Česká Cesta/Vacation School Lipnice in the Czech Republic (Martin, Franc and Zounková, 2004).

6. Delegates decide which needs they should work on.

7. As well as the physical, the program actively engages each person's physical, emotional, intellectual and social aspects.

This requires a strong element of continuity, so works best within a stable and caring environment. My own findings regarding setting echo those of Loynes (2004) in that somewhere that is beautiful (or at least inspiring) works well, engaging the senses and providing an uplifting environment in what may be stressful times for participants.

8. Serendipitous learning/development is encouraged, experienced and welcomed.

This simple statement hides a very difficult task. As Hovelynck (2002) points out, "Accreditation programs . . . tend to value . . . predictability . . . more than the uncertainties of 'organic program design' (Barron, 1996) regardless of the fact that the latter may be more appropriate in the light of participants' emergent experiences."



If we want the power of serendipitous learning, we may have to spend time and effort re-educating clients (and, indeed, licensing authorities) to understand that the learning that really matters on experiential programs comes from the experience, not a prescription. We also need to actively encourage people to be open in reflection and review. Many will have very limited experience of reflective programs, and will be expecting overt or, at least, embedded lessons. Our role is also to be proactively open about the discovery element, and steadfast in the openness of our questioning. The use of active reviewing techniques (Greenaway, 1996) is likely to help this "opening" process.

Concluding Thoughts

None of the eight suggestions listed above represents an easy option for trainers. Perhaps that's why they're not terribly popular at present. Nevertheless, although it's a hard way, it's also a fulfilling one for all concerned, freeing us to help people develop in a fuller way than the shortcuts and easy tricks that too often pass for competence in outdoor development.

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Web Sites

- www.channel14.com/life/microsites/B/bratcamp04
- www.corporateentertainmentco.co.uk

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

Linking Theory and Practice: Reflections on Doing School Ground Greening Research

by Janet Dymont

Introduction

I have fond childhood memories of my dad telling stories of his PhD study in physics. Although I can't even begin to tell you what his PhD was about (something about fibre optics and lasers), I do remember him questioning, at times, the practicality and usefulness of his PhD. Jokingly, he would admit that probably only two people in the world had ever read his dissertation, which was housed in the University of McGill's library. He would always tell me that, if he had put a hundred dollar bill in his bound thesis before it went to the library, it would still be there today, because no one would have ever opened his thesis to find the bill!

I suspect that story is a bit exaggerated but nevertheless the message stuck with me while I was growing up. And when it came time for me to decide if I would do my PhD, the story reemerged in my psyche with a strong force. I was unsure if I wanted to enter the world of academia and knew that, for me, the only way that I could possibly do it is if I was able to be sure that I could bridge the gap between theory and practice. I wanted my work, if possible, to make a difference on the ground. (In saying it was important that my thesis had practical applications, I do not wish to undermine those individuals who choose to do more theoretical academic studies. I know that the field of outdoor education/learning has been repeatedly criticized as being under-theorized and that much needs to be done—it just was work that I was not drawn to or particularly good at).

Summary of Greening Research

For my study, I explored the power and potential of green school grounds in the Toronto District School Board. I examined what happens when hard, hot, unimaginative expanses of turf and asphalt are 'greened' and transformed into thoughtfully designed places that include a variety of natural features such as trees, butterfly gardens, ponds, floral gardens and vegetable patches. While much of the existing research pointed to the benefits of greening projects at individual schools, it had not yet addressed whether these benefits are broadly representative of a large number of schools. Thus, what my particular study offered is to fill, at least partially, this knowledge gap. By exploring the impacts of greening initiatives across an entire school board located in Canada's largest city, Toronto, my PhD demonstrated that the benefits of greening are being widely realized.

Early on in my PhD journey, I was particularly fortunate to form key partnerships with both the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Evergreen, a charitable organization whose mission is to bring communities and nature together for the benefit of both. Individuals in both organizations provided endless support to my project (e.g., funding, resources, time) and, while they were interested in the theory of school ground greening and outdoor learning, they were always quick to ask me about the 'on the ground' implications of my 'academic' findings. I was also blessed with a supportive PhD supervisor who helped me find an appropriate balance between the theory and practice of my work.

While the key results of my work have been recently published in a few academic journals (more theoretical articles), the ‘product’ that I am most proud of is the on-line report that is intended for decision makers and advocates of school ground greening. It is called *Gaining Ground: The Power and Potential of School Ground Greening in the Toronto District School Board* and is available at www.evergreen.ca. (Click on [Learning Grounds](#), then on [Our Resources](#), then [Research](#)).

I will now briefly summarize some of the key findings of the report.

Three main questions guided the research:

1. What are the impacts of green school grounds in the TDSB?
2. Are the impacts emerging across a range of different schools and projects?
3. What are the key challenges and opportunities to fully realizing the positive impacts of green school grounds?

The TDSB was an ideal study site to answer these questions given that so many of its schools, from widely varying contexts, had begun the process of greening. Approximately 20% of the more than 500 schools in the board have initiated greening projects. Those profiled in my study offer a diversity of circumstances and approaches to consider. For example, some schools had only 200 students, while others had more than 1500; some schools were located in Toronto’s wealthiest neighbourhoods, while others were located in its poorest; some of the greening projects were brand new, while others were more than ten years old; some had budgets of only a few hundred dollars, while others had access to hundreds of thousands of dollars; and some had very complex designs including ponds, murals, outdoor classrooms, vegetable gardens, mazes and butterfly gardens, while others were much more modest and consisted of only a few trees.

“Green school grounds . . . have the potential to enrich the quality of life, education and the environment for present and future generations of young people.”

Working with a large number of schools (45) under a single board administration, my study explored how green school grounds influence a school community. The evidence gathered indicates that the impacts of greening initiatives in the TDSB are both broad-ranging and encouraging. Particularly striking is the fact that the benefits described emerged across the board. Regardless of the differences among the schools and projects studied, participants perceived the following positive impacts of greening initiatives:

- Teachers were able to **deliver a broad range of subjects in the outdoor classroom** created through greening projects.
- Student **learning was enhanced** on green school grounds.
- Teachers had **renewed enthusiasm for teaching** and were using a wide variety of innovative instructional strategies on green school grounds.
- Students demonstrated **more positive social behaviour** when learning and playing on green school grounds.
- The **diversity of play spaces** created through greening projects suited a wider array of students than conventional turf and asphalt school grounds.
- Green school grounds promoted the **social inclusion** of all people, irrespective of gender, race, class or intellectual ability.

- Green school grounds were **safer and healthier spaces** for students.
- Green school grounds promoted **environmental awareness and stewardship**.

My study presented clear evidence that green school grounds in the TDSB are a significant asset. They have the potential to enrich the quality of life, education and the environment for present and future generations of young people. Whether greening initiatives are new or well-established, urban or suburban, located in less or more affluent neighbourhoods, their benefits are broad-ranging and encouraging. They positively influence many aspects of students' educational experiences, including their learning, their social interactions, their health and safety and their environmental awareness.

The report concluded with an exploration of the key challenges and barriers that limit the potential of greening initiatives and offered a series of recommendations to be considered by decisions makers and greening advocates.

Conclusion

It is a bit too early to tell if *Gaining Ground* is influencing the policy and practice of greening initiatives in the TDSB and elsewhere. But my hope is that, over time, it can be used by academics *and* practitioners, and that it can inform both theory *and* practice of school ground greening specifically, and outdoor learning and environmental education generally.

If you are really interested in greening theory and practice, I'd suggest you start by reading the *Gaining Ground* report, and perhaps even venture into some of the academic articles. As for my dissertation sitting in the library . . . well, it is a long and daunting document. Chances are, if you hurry, you might be able to find the hundred dollar bill in there!

Want to Know More?

My research adds to a growing body of practitioner and academic research that examines the impact and potential of green school grounds. If you are interested in learning more, I would suggest you explore the following resources that do a fine job of integrating theory and practice about school ground greening.

- Grant, T., & Littlejohn, G. (Eds.). (2001). *Greening school grounds: Creating habitats for learning*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
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I'd also suggest you visit Evergreen's Web site (www.evergreen.ca) and check out the [Learning Grounds](#) then [Our Resources](#) sections. They have many excellent resources for a range of intended audiences.

Janet Dymont is currently living in Tasmania, Australia where she is starting up a new Outdoor Education program within the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania.

Response to Linking Theory and Practice: Reflections on Doing School Ground Greening Research

by Daena Greig

My first years of teaching were spent at the Institute for Outdoor Education and Environmental Studies. It was a perfect site to deliver outdoor programs, as it provides access to lakes, hardwood forest and farm fields, and complimentary equipment. This year I entered the traditional classroom and now predominantly work with secondary students at-risk. My learning at the Institute has impacted my approach in this position, and I use outdoor education as a teaching methodology to create learning opportunities in the schoolyard or during off-site trips. Though my school's rural location provides easy access to the outdoors, the key is actively creating outdoor learning opportunities and receiving the administrative support to engage students in this manner. The benefits of this experience are clearly parallel to those stated in this report, including an enhanced enthusiasm for teaching, positive social development and enhanced learning of my students.

Currently, educators wanting to offer outdoor experiences for children seem to be faced with many barriers; school ground greening is a step to gaining support for outdoor education in the mainstream system. However, the key to the success of green schoolyards is teacher who actively use the space in their teaching. The actual process of greening the space, maintaining it and learning in it are the true authentic successes of this type of initiative.

It is hoped that this research will be a catalyst to promote the idea that outdoor education can be provided anywhere—not just at

residential outdoor centres. I have come to appreciate that outdoor education is not an isolated experience but a teaching strategy that can connect children with the outdoors and their environment. It is refreshing to think that I can do this within the mainstream system. I hope these small experiences may someday be complemented with others that are driven by the students themselves. Furthermore, these experiences may lead to more support for outdoor learning experiences at existing centres, on expeditions or within more concrete programming provided by the school itself.

In summary, greening school grounds supports outdoor learning and may also encourage traditional classroom teachers to venture outside. It provides opportunities for outdoor practioners to work within the traditional system and to receive support from their administrators. It is further hoped that they make an impact on their students, staff and community. The benefits of these initiatives, as outlined in the report, are attributable to confident, knowledgeable teachers who actively engage their students outside. In this case it is not just the space, but the actions within it, that effectively link the theory to practice.

Daena Greig teaches alternative education (EDGE II Program) and science at Warton District High School. Daena has past experience as an outdoor education specialist and guide. When not at work, you will find her running, skiing or kayaking around the Bruce Peninsula.

On Reconceiving Our School Grounds

by Darron Kelly

I wish to speak a word on our dormant Canadian school grounds. Not on the winter dormancy that settles seasonally around our schools, but on the general dormancy of school ground use. For here in a country lush with natural history and traditions of the land, our untapped school grounds are a poor reflection of our values. Our schools demonstrate little affinity with the land they occupy. School buildings are industrial in design, built for the orderly housing of students. Surrounded by concrete, asphalt, open grass, and fences, these schools regard their surrounding grounds as places of narrow utility. Moreover, the divorce of the school building and the school ground has led to a disparity in which the building has become the place of learning while the ground is seen to hold no educational potential. In short, the values that we hold in connection with land are denied a place at school, learning is disconnected from the environment in which it is situated, and school children are not encouraged to develop their affinity for the natural world. It is time, then, to reconceive our school grounds as environments of learning and to recreate these grounds so as to make them places that present our values. As much as I believe in the importance of these goals, however, I think that the root of the disparity between school building and school ground must first be understood. This paper, therefore, seeks to answer why it is that the disparity between school building and school ground continues to exist and suggests that a straightforward means of affirming school grounds as places of learning is through the academic study of teacher-driven practice.

Providing an answer to the question of disparity is not complicated: school grounds are not valued as places of learning because they are not recognized as such by most academics in education. It is my experience that school teachers either already see or can be shown the learning potential inherent in

their school ground. Where teachers recognize the potential of the environment surrounding their school building, they need only the resources to fund and a guide to focus their efforts (Bell, 2001; Evergreen Foundation of Canada, 2000; Grant & Littlejohn, 2001; Raffan, 2000). Our dormant school grounds, then, do not reflect a lack of vision or affinity for the natural world on the part of teachers (or their students). Instead, the neglect of school grounds results directly from the myopia of education researchers who cannot help teachers realize the learning potential of the school ground because they have not seen it themselves. To answer why the disparity exists is to recognize the vacuum that exists in education literature concerning school grounds. It is a plain fact that the discussion of school grounds among academics is negligible.

This can be illustrated by referring to three areas of active education research that have ignored school grounds despite the obvious implications of the school ground to each area. The three areas are "School Health," "Learning Environments," and "Environmental Education." An on-line search of the *Journal of School Health* spanning back ten years reveals not a single article that focuses on school grounds. It is as if the environment that surrounds the school, the environment that children inhabit on every school day, does not exist. The "health" of a school, it seems, has nothing to do with the nature of the surrounding grounds. The journal does, however, publish a small number of articles on health and the physical environment of the school building. So there is some recognition that the physical environment is relevant to school health, it just appears from the published research that schools do not have an outside environment. Indeed, the only available research on school health that addresses the school ground is the *School Aged Childhood Environment Rating Scale* published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety

Commission. The purpose of this scale is to rate the environment of school-aged children. While this is a good idea, in terms of the school ground this scale lists only the safety hazards, such as tripping, pinching, and crushing, of which parents and educators should be aware. The scale makes no mention of the creative, aesthetic, or ecological benefits that could be accounted for when rating a school ground. Where school health research is concerned, the potential danger of the school ground is the only relevant issue.

Learning environment research would seem to hold some possibility for developing an appreciation for school grounds given its apparent focus on environments. This, however, is not the case. Again, an on-line search over the last ten years in the journal *Learning Environments Research* reveals not a single article focused on school grounds as learning environments. As with school health, research on learning environments is concerned mainly with the observation and analysis of social dynamics. Moreover, when the physical environment is addressed, as it sometimes is, the research is limited to the physical environment within the classroom or school building (Fraser, 1998; McGonigal, 1999). As strange as it may seem, this area of education research operates as if the social and physical environment of a school can be understood and improved only within the walls of the building. Where learning environment research is concerned, the learning potential of the school ground is irrelevant.

Perhaps the best illustration of the neglect suffered by the school ground in education research can be found in the growing literature on "School Climate." School climate is a relatively new approach to education research, borrowed from organizational theory, that tries to pull together many of the issues common to both school health and learning environment research. *School Climate: Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments* is a recent publication and provides an excellent example of the concerns relevant to school climate research. As the title suggests, school climate research has a deep concern for understanding and

creating healthy learning environments. Yet, as with the research areas it attempts to knit together, school climate research generally neglects the actual environment of the school and is particularly neglectful of the environment that lies directly outside the school building—this despite acknowledging that the physical composition and internal decoration of "the building [at any rate] can create a light or dark mood in the school" (Freiberg & Stein, 1999, p.23).

A ready excuse, however, can be given for the half-empty meaning of environment found in school health, learning environment, and (if it is a distinct area) school climate research. These areas of education research may simply be understood as perpetuating the separation of humans and the natural world inherent in the academic tradition (Bowers, 2003; Evernden, 1985; Orr, 1994). It might even be argued that the failure of education researchers to even express an awareness of the environment immediately surrounding the schools they study demonstrates the degree to which society and environment remain separate in the minds of most academics. Though an excuse of nearsightedness might be offered in the case of the aforementioned areas of educational research, the field of "Environmental Education" ought not to be given such leeway. For it is from environmental educators that the ecological continuum of psyche, society, and environment can receive its best educational expression (Cobb, 1993; Naess, 2002, 1989; Orr, 2002).

True, environmental education research does an excellent job of developing ways by which teachers can connect their students with the environment (Kenney, Militana, & Donohue, 2003; Palmer & Neal, 1994; Simmons, 1998). Where school grounds are concerned, however, it seems only fair that environmental education research be reviewed in the same way as the other areas of education research that look towards environment. The *Journal of Environmental Education*, for example, has not published an article focused on school grounds over the last eight years—this despite a proliferation of literature on environmental education as well as outdoor education and

place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003; Hutchison, 1998; Palmer & Neal, 1994; Smith & Williams, 1999; Wilson, 2000). Turning to the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* produces results that are little better. In fact, Ann Bell's (2001) "Engaging spaces: On school-based habitat restoration" is the only article appearing in this journal over the last ten years that focuses specifically on the teaching possibilities inherent in the environment around schools. While environmental education has moved away from the school building and into the field, it has stepped over the school ground on its way. It seems, therefore, that even environmental educators still have little conviction that school grounds can support most of the learning that happens elsewhere in natural places, that school grounds can become places of learning.

The neglect of school grounds as places of learning, then, reflects the view of schools held by education researchers for whom "environment" refers either to the classroom or the field. A straightforward solution to this neglect would be to expose education researchers, those concerned with environment, to the value and importance of the school ground. At present, however, such an undertaking is unlikely to succeed. This is because it seems absurd to imagine that education researchers are oblivious to the fact that every school is surrounded by its own environment. The difficulty, then, is not that education researchers are incapable of seeing school grounds but that they have chosen not to look at them. To speak with them about the dormancy of our school grounds would, therefore, be a decidedly one-sided conversation.

There is, however, a path to awakening our school grounds through the direct involvement and support of teachers (and pre-service teachers). This path requires encouraging teachers to adapt current educational theory to the practices that are beginning to take place on their school grounds. In this way, teachers could develop conceptual frameworks that involve their students and themselves in a deeper understanding of schools as places of learning. While this sort of theorizing is generally taken on by academic researchers, in

this case the pedagogical, ecological, and ethical reconception of school grounds has thus far been left to teachers. This is because teachers are the only part of the education system to take a serious interest in school-ground ecology, greening, and naturalization.

That teachers are beginning to awaken our school grounds should be taken as a very positive signal. It aligns beautifully with research suggesting that, for real change to take place in education, the people closest to the change must be the most involved (Fullan, 1999; Levin, 2001). Teachers and their students are the best people to provide relevant context for educational change. They must be able to envision themselves teaching and learning better in the new situation they are creating. This point needs to be emphasized in regard to school grounds because turning school grounds into places of learning requires a shift in the current way in which we understand cognition to take place in schools. The awakening of school grounds involves more than moving what takes place in the classroom into the outdoors. It is about fundamentally changing the conditions in which learning takes place at school. To encourage teachers and students to reconceive of their school grounds as places of learning is to engage them bodily in their learning (Fry, 1992; Martin, 1996). It marks a shift from "learning by thinking" to "learning by doing." This is the "participatory and practice-based" pedagogy that has been called for particularly in environmental education, but which has yet to be given a meaningful conception within the context of schools (Environmental Education Ontario, 2004; Hart & Robottom, 1990, p. 104 as cited in Wade, 1996; Lieberman & Hoody, 1998). Academics, moreover, should move quickly to support and affirm the awakening of our school grounds if for no better reason than the real opportunity it presents for practice to inform theory in education research.

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Darron Kelly recently completed a Master's degree at Queen's University Faculty of Education. His thesis was entitled "An Ecological Conception of School-ground Education" and concentrated on helping to develop the educational value of school grounds. Darron currently lives in St. John's, NL., where he is a substitute teacher and volunteer on environmental education projects. Darron can be contacted at: darronkelly@nl.rogers.com

Response to On Reconceiving Our School Grounds *by Bob Henderson*

Darron Kelly makes two dominant points here: One, our school grounds are largely dormant; and, two, a lack of academic interest (a myopia he suggests) from educational researchers is a factor.

This paper, deemed a quality researcher's literature review and opinion piece, was well received by the *Pathways* Editorial Board and reviewed by three members. We received the paper in February 2005. Circumstances have prevented us from publishing it sooner. Perhaps Darron will think of this timing in *Pathways* as serendipitous. Since February 2005, Janet Dymont has published through the Evergreen Foundation *Gaining Ground*.

There will also be a thematic issue on "Greening School Grounds" in an upcoming issue of the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*. It appears the Canadian academic community has caught up to Darron and his misgivings of this topic. Myopia no more. His first concern of dormant school grounds, however, certainly still needs more work by teachers, school boards and researchers.

Darron sent the following along soon after we received his submission:

Certificate Program from UBC and Evergreen: UBC and Evergreen, a national environmental non-profit bringing nature and communities together, have partnered to offer the first environmental education certificate program with a focus on school grounds and outdoor classrooms. This 5-course, 15-credit program can be taken by undergraduate and post-graduate students. Focusing on experiential education, and teaching the everyday



curriculum in innovative settings, the courses offer an interesting mix of practical and theoretical teachings. Course topics range from art, agriculture and place-based learning to environmental ethics and community engagement. Check out www.oep.educ.ubc.ca/cert/cert_environmental.html or www.evergreen.ca for more information. First course runs fall 2004.

Bob Henderson teaches Outdoor Education at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Dear Colleague,

It is with pleasure that we officially launch the **2006 Risk Management Conference for Outdoor Education in Canada presented by Algonquin College**. The conference will take place **May 29–30, 2006 at Wilderness Tours in the Ottawa Valley**. Register before December 1st and take advantage of savings of up to \$150!

This year's conference will build on the success of last year's event where we had 140 participants and over 30 workshop sessions. Participants came from across Canada to share in the dialogue that will strengthen the future of outdoor education in Canada. Please check out our website for a full listing of the workshops, presenters and **resource materials** that are now available online at www.RiskManagementConference.ca.

This conference will only be as strong as the community supporting it. We need your help. Here's how you can get involved:

1. Forward this information to your contacts who would be interested in participating.
2. Send us your "Hot Topic" issues so we can post them on our website, develop workshops to address your needs, and steer you to resources that may help you continue to strengthen outdoor education in Canada!
3. Check out the wealth of material generated from last year's conference.

Registration is now open online. The early bird special is available for a limited time only.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Matt Cruchet

Conference Organizer

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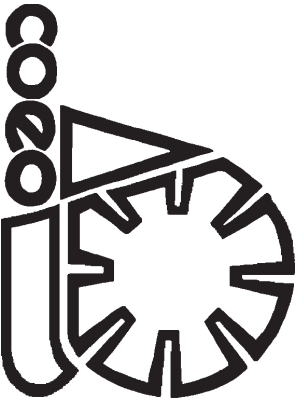
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**Each member of COEO will be assigned to a region of the province
according to the county in which he or she lives.**

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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