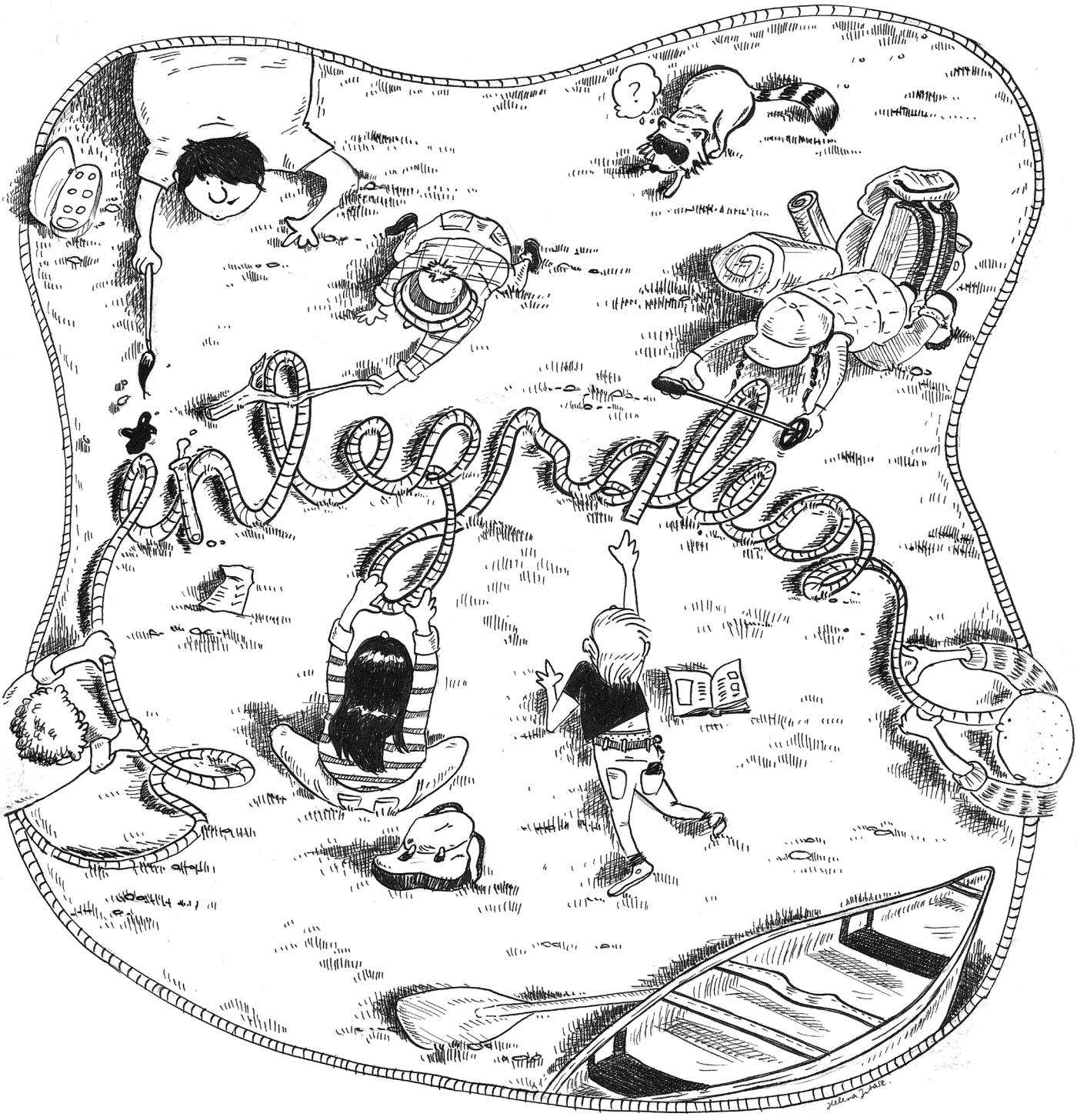
Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Fall 2011, 24(1)



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COEO

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

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Pathways is always looking for contributions. Please refer to page 36 for submission guidelines.

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Features

Columns

Editor's Log

Integrated curriculum programs (ICPs) are ready to explode! Ontario, the Yukon and BC have many. The Yukon wins the day for the number of ICPs in relation to population. Saskatchewan has a long tradition with two solid programs. And not to appear a monomaniac (obsessive about one idea), in Nova Scotia, and undoubtedly somewhere in all provinces, non-ICP initiatives like MindShift (see Alan Warner) are wisely integrating school subjects to inspire engaged student-centred learning in real world inquiry and action. Yes, there is much to inspire and celebrate. BUT, there are so many more youth and teachers (see Bruce Murphy and Andy Kerr Wilson), parents (see Grant Linney and Sean Blenkinsop) and administrators (see Robert Sharp and … well, really all submissions) who could benefit from a healthy dose of EE—experiential and environmental and effective and energizing and engaging and essential and expressive and enduring education.

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) has been a supporter of ICPs from the beginning. For example, through COEO, I, for one, learned of Paul Tamblyn's late 1970s teaching of English and outdoor education (not to mention drama) with voyageur re-enactments on Fanshaw Lake. Then there were the 1980s Bronte Creek Projects and a proliferation of offerings in the 1990s, then a slow growth to the present. COEO has hosted or helped sponsor many events and initiatives to promote ICPs, and produced the first inventory of ICPs in Ontario. Yet, I'm sure so many of us feel we should do more, ever more, to promote ICPs as EE. *Pathways* has done its part in the past with articles aplenty, but here for the first time, we publish an issue dedicated to ICPs in Canada.

In Ontario we know little about the past and present of ICPs in other provinces. We begin a process to rectify this here and hope to re-energize a column on ICPs with out-of-province— "Beyond our COEO Borders"— content because there is so much happening throughout Canada to share.

ICPs are ready to explode! Let's all help make that happen for the good of students, schooling and the planet.

Bob Henderson

President's View

Has it been a year already? Gosh, time sure does fly when you're having fun. This year was a busy one: not only did I decide to accept the position of President on the Board of Directors this past year, but I also chose to take on the challenge of organizing the 2011 Conference. Looking back, I now have to say it was certainly worth the extra time and effort, as I met so many great people, learned many new things and also had a lot of fun.

As President, I had the opportunity to work with a brilliant team of directors and we were able to finish several initiatives that previous boards had begun, including the launch of the new COEO website. The Board first met face-to-face last December to decide on an approach for celebrating COEO's upcoming 40th anniversary and generated many terrific ideas. During our meetings throughout the year we were also successful in working through many of the tasks and decisions required of an organization of our size.

In my role as the 2011 Conference Chair, I was afforded the opportunity to handpick an amazing Conference Committee and bring forward a conference theme that was near and dear to my heart. *Harnessing the Power of Adventure* was a great success, due mostly to committee members Shane Kramer, Kristin Brooks, Erin Farrow, Kyla Ciszek and Jim Little. This group did an outstanding job organizing a fun and informative weekend that I'm certain people won't soon forget. I would also like to thank the staff of YMCA Camp Kitchikewana, our host site, on behalf of our membership for a job well done.

As I enter my second term as President, I am very excited about the many project proposals and ideas that have been put forth already to help celebrate COEO's 40th anniversary. Amazing things will be happening within our organization throughout the next two years and they are due in large part to the extended efforts of many enthusiastic and active COEO members. Members have already stepped forward to form conference committees for both our 40th Anniversary Conference and Make Peace with Winter Gathering.

As always, I would like to thank the *Pathways* editorial team, guest editors and managing editor who have all done an excellent job again this year producing quality issues and contributing to the journal's terrific reputation.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the board members from the past year who have taken time out of their busy schedules to help support and grow our organization. These folks need to be commended, as they are the ones who put your ideas into action and have contributed a great deal of their own time in the process of doing so. We are excited to welcome a couple of new individuals onto the Board of Directors this year, but this also means we need to say good bye to two as well. Kate Humphrys and Laura Edmonstone will be leaving the board and their contributions will be missed: Thank you both.

Kyle Clarke

Sketch Pad – The art for this issue of *Pathways* was generously contributed by Helena Juhasz (helena.juhasz@gmail.com, helenajuhaszillustration.blogspot.com) (cover and pages 2, 10, 14, 19, 21, 27) and Sarah Horsely (pages 16–17).

Curriculum Integration in Ontario High Schools

By James Grice

At the outset of my undergraduate thesis, a friend challenged me to explain my reasons for choosing "integrated curricula" as my topic of interest. "OK," he said as I finished explaining, "but what's *really* in it for you?" The question took me aback. What, indeed, makes the pursuit of curriculum integration worthwhile? After 18 months of reflection and refinement, my response, I think, boils down to this: Work, when personalized and truly enjoyed, seems not like work at all. The same holds true in schools throughout North America. When we tailor a student's *education* to his/her specific student needs, root it in reality and make it engaging for students and teachers alike, education is not something passively received—something tedious or boring—but an entity that is grasped. It is personal and it is real. And this is possible, I think, through curriculum integration.

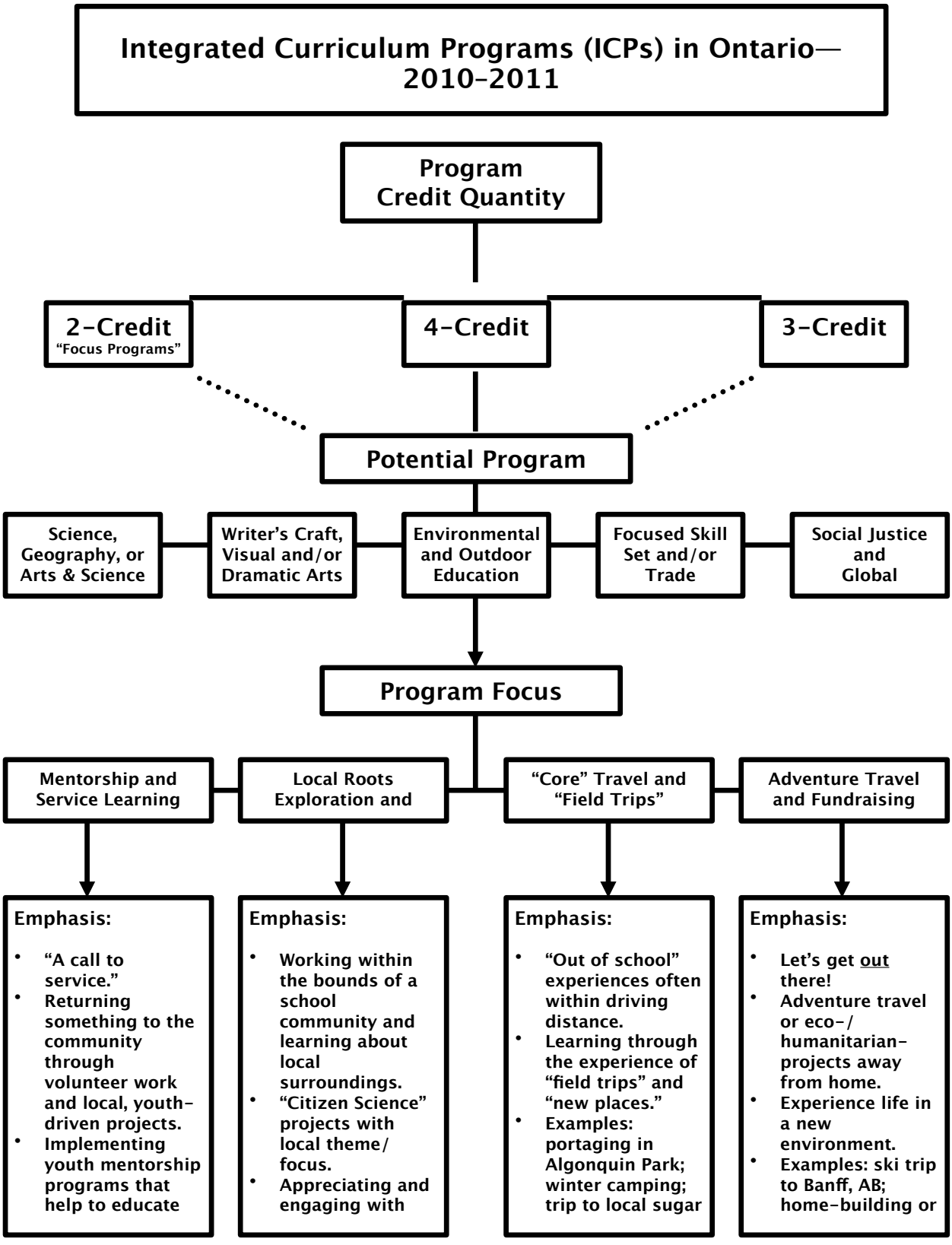
In many North American schools, the acquirement of knowledge is encouraged in the most fractious of ways. At the high-school level, knowledge is often channelled into separate, specialized units of study. Rarely is an effort made to develop cross-subject, unifying themes that can help students recognize important points of curricular overlap. Worse still, the knowledge that we so aptly compartmentalize is frequently *inert* in nature—the kind that students learn only to regurgitate at the unit's end. Strange as it may sound, students today are expected (and encouraged!) to *memorize*—not connect—the many and varied dots placed before them.

In his book entitled *Shop Class for Soulcraft*, Matthew Crawford suggests that if thinking truly is bound up with action, then the task of getting an adequate grasp of the world, intellectually, depends on our doing stuff in it (p. 164). And in fact this is the case: "to really know shoelaces, you have to tie shoes" (p. 164). Students need to be shown that what they learn *inside* the classroom is relevant to the world around them. They need to see that their efforts can influence community decision making and lead to real solutions and real improvements. Most of all, they need to be encouraged to think *divergently*—to see many possible answers through a sometimes unlimited variety of lenses. Reality is integrated, and so too must learning be.

In Canada, and particularly in Ontario, a growing number of educators have embraced an approach to learning that employs "real-life" contexts as platforms for exploring "traditional" classroom work in more meaningful ways. The "integrated model" operates in a healthy number of Ontario high schools, and takes the form of *integrated curriculum programs* (ICPs)—programs that blend knowledge and skills from "conventional subjects" with learning opportunities that are experiential and interdisciplinary in nature. ICPs are essentially packages of two to four classes that students can take during one semester of high school. They have an integrating theme (e.g., environmental leadership, global citizenship, Catholic leadership or some kind of trade) that unifies the program's courses. They also maintain a program focus (or combination of focuses) that might include service learning, community initiatives and local issues or some kind of travel component. The flow chart on page 5 is a condensed, visual representation of what ICPs look like in Ontario today.

Unlike those of a conventional high-school timetable, ICP courses are taught by the same teacher (or in some cases, two teachers) each and every day. But successful integration requires a lot more than throwing together curricular expectations from individual courses and expecting magic to occur.

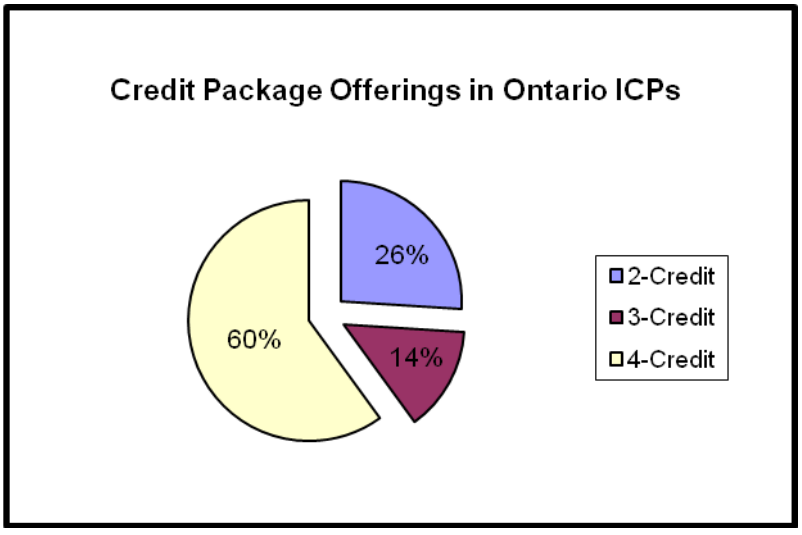
Renowned Ontario researcher Bert Horwood (1994) suggests that *real* integration happens "not so much from putting school subjects together into a shared time and place, but from certain types of general experiences which transcend disciplines" (p. 91). Susan Drake 2000 adds that curricula can be


Integrated Curriculum Programs (ICPs) in Ontario—2010–2011
Program Credit Quantity
2-Credit
"Focus Programs"
4-Credit
3-Credit
Potential Program
Science, Geography, or Arts & Science
Writer's Craft, Visual and/or Dramatic Arts
Environmental and Outdoor Education
Focused Skill Set and/or Trade
Social Justice and Global
Program Focus
Mentorship and Service Learning
Local Roots Exploration and
"Core" Travel and "Field Trips"
Adventure Travel and Fundraising
Emphasis:
• "A call to service."
• Returning something to the community through volunteer work and local, youth-driven projects.
• Implementing youth mentorship programs that help to educate
Emphasis:
• Working within the bounds of a school community and learning about local surroundings.
• "Citizen Science" projects with local theme/ focus.
• Appreciating and engaging with
Emphasis:
• "Out of school" experiences often within driving distance.
• Learning through the experience of "field trips" and "new places."
• Examples: portaging in Algonquin Park; winter camping; trip to local sugar
Emphasis:
• Let's get out there!
• Adventure travel or eco-/ humanitarian-projects away from home.
• Experience life in a new environment.
• Examples: ski trip to Banff, AB; home-building or

completely integrated in content and still leave learners disinterested when delivered lifelessly. What truly "makes or breaks" an attempt at curriculum integration is not ultimately *what* is taught, but *how* it is taught (Drake, 2000). Successful ICPs provide students with a genuine sense of ownership and pride because students are prompted to make connections between classroom content and the world around them. They offer *real* challenges that make students better problem solvers, stronger critical thinkers and more adept at identifying links between the real and the abstract.

Exciting things are taking place at more than 150 Ontario ICPs, with many more programs yet to be identified and documented. In 2009–2010, Stan Kozak and the *Gosling Foundation* administered a survey of Ontario ICPs that yielded a bevy of important data and trends that educators and administrators will surely find interesting. Of the 50 programs that responded, for instance, an incredible 72 percent indicated a program start-date of 2000 or later, which signals a decade of strong program growth that we can feel optimistic (though not complacent) about.

At present, the majority of Ontario ICPs are geared toward Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, though an increasing number of schools are beginning to offer Grade 9 and 10 programs. Four-credit programs, particularly those rooted in *environmental leadership and/or outdoor education*, continue to be the most prevalent across the province. They remain the "tested and true" ICP model in Ontario, although two-credit programs (dubbed "focus programs") have become increasingly popular in urban centres throughout Ontario. Shown below is a visual representation of ICP credit allocation in Ontario's high schools, based on data collected in Kozak's survey.



In the last ten years, methods of Ontario ICP implementation have changed dramatically. Teachers today who are interested in developing an ICP must choose one of three options for program design and implementation:

1. straight credit combination/integration
2. adopting an *Interdisciplinary Studies* curricular focus
3. tapping into the Ministry of Education's *Specialist High Skills Major* initiative

The first method is the most basic in scope. It involves straight combination/integration of two to four courses by connecting them with a program theme like environmental leadership, journalism, biotechnology, social justice or global citizenship. Susan Hubner, lead teacher of John F. Ross CVI's *da Vinci Arts & Science Environmental Leadership* program, uses "arts and science" as her program's integrating theme. The four-credit *da Vinci* program offers English (ENG 3U), Biology (SBI 3U), Visual Arts (AVI 3M) and Anthropology/Sociology/Psychology (HSP 3M), and is open to all Grade 11 students in the Upper Grand District School Board who are keen to explore the environment through a unique combination of the arts and sciences.

The second method of ICP implementation involves a 2002 Ministry curriculum document entitled *Interdisciplinary Studies.* Interdisciplinary Studies was introduced as part

of Ontario's Grades 11 and 12 curricula in response to the "unprecedented range of social, scientific, economic, cultural, environmental, political, and technological issues" that students are faced with (Interdisciplinary Studies 3). At the time, the Government of Ontario proposed the coupling of discrete, knowledge-based skills with "interdisciplinary skills" that are closely related to research work, information management, group collaboration, critical and creative thinking and technological applications (p. 4). As part of the interdisciplinary studies curriculum, students apply the concepts, methods and language of more than one discipline to explore topics, develop skills and solve problems (p. 5). Courses in interdisciplinary studies packages are meant to be explored in a way that reflects the linkages and interdependencies among subjects, disciplines and the courses themselves (p. 5). Using this model, educators can build an ICP in accordance with Ministry guidelines, while also catering to students who have diverse abilities, interests and learning styles. More information about the interdisciplinary studies curriculum can be found online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/interdisciplinary1112curr.pdf.

The third and final way to build an ICP involves tapping into Ontario's *Specialist High Skills Major* (SHSM) initiative—a relatively new, Ministry-approved opportunity that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements for graduation. Students gain important skills on the job with employers, at skills training centres and at school. They also earn valuable industry certifications. Each "major" (shown below) is a bundle of eight to ten Grades 11 and 12 courses in the student's selected field.

SHSM experiential learning and "career exploration" activities involve planned learning activities that take place outside of the traditional classroom setting and are

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Aviation/Aerospace
- Business
- Construction
- Energy
- Environment Justice
- Forestry
- Health and Wellness
- Horticulture and Landscaping
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Info./Comm. Technology
- Justice/Community/Safety & Emergency Services
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Non-profit
- Sports
- Transportation

All SHSMs include the following five mandatory program components:

1. **a bundle of eight to ten Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits including**
   i. four "major" credits that provide sector-specific knowledge and skills
   ii. two to four other required credits
   iii. two co-operative education credits
2. **sector-recognized certifications and/or training courses and programs**
3. **experiential learning and career exploration activities within the sector**
4. **"reach ahead" experiences connected to the student's post-secondary pathway**

related to the sector of the SHSM. To a large extent, they represent the type of learning experience that has long been a flagship component of Ontario ICPs. Career-related experiences might include job shadowing, job twinning, worksite tours or attendance at career conferences and competitions—all of which allow students to explore careers in a specific sector and reflect on the activity afterwards (often through a discussion or an assignment). "Reach-ahead" experiences, which allow students to experience the "next step" in their chosen post-secondary pathway (college, university, workplace, etc.), take place outside the classroom and can vary in length.

Most of the experiential and training components of SHSMs depend on the local circumstances of the school and school community (e.g., facilities and equipment, staff qualifications, partnerships and agreements). Careful consideration of all of these elements will help to determine how an SHSM's required components can be effectively delivered to students. Depending on circumstances, some components can be delivered in a secondary school, college, training centre, other approved site or a combination of settings.

SHSMs are currently funded by the Government of Ontario through various existing sources (like *Student Success*) and other types of foundation funding (such as GSN—"grants for student needs"). As of 2010–2011, at least one major is offered in every Ontario school board. This is positive news for ICPs, which have plenty to gain by "tapping into" successful SHSMs. An existing four-credit ICP, for example, could consider offering its credits as part of an SHSM. Students would complete a selection of SHSM components by completing one semester in the ICP. The remaining SHSM components would be administered or "covered" by other SHSM teachers in the school. As of 2009–2010, roughly 35 percent of Kozak's ICP respondents indicated that they operate under the umbrella of their school or board's SHSM(s). This arrangement provides ICPs with greater stability and a more prominent identity within their local school and board, and increases the always-important possibility of additional program funding.

In conclusion, regardless of *how* an ICP is designed and/or implemented, it's worth noting that the most successful programs are the ones that strike a healthy balance of support between teachers, students, parents, administrators, community members and, in some cases, the Ministry of Education.

With three possible gateways that can lead to the development of an ICP, Ontario educators have more opportunity than ever to capture the "magic" of integrated curricula and establish a program of their own.

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Secondary School Integrated Programs (IPs): Evolutionary Directions for Learning

By Stan Kozak

In the 1970s, Ontario secondary schools started to adopt the semester system, four courses over the day where there had been seven. With this change a creative outdoor educator realized one teacher could take a group of students for all four credits, eliminating the restrictions of the timetable and addressing opportunities to learn in the real world all day, every day, for the whole semester. Thus was born the secondary school Integrated Program (IP) model. Through it, the innovation that semestering provided was no doubt extended well beyond what was intended. Decades later these early steps are providing a promising avenue for secondary school reform.

Formal learning is under mounting pressures to change. The need of education to prepare a more engaged citizenry has never been greater—hence the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (www.unesco.ca/en/interdisciplinary/ESD/default.aspx). Information technology is eliminating mid-level information brokers. It even has its own term: disintermediation. Travel agents are now few. Stick to information delivery models and the same fate may fall on teachers. Finally there is mounting convergence of our understanding of how people best learn, yet there is a chasm in implementation, so great that one might ask, can the formal education system learn?

Yet a recent survey[1] of IPs in Ontario found that the model is holding its own and has expanded into areas far beyond outdoor and environmental education. The survey was directed at programs with two to four credits integrated on any theme. Over 50 responses were gathered; however, of as much interest was the indication that another 100 or so programs exist in Ontario that use the IP model, but not the traditional outdoor or environmental integration themes.

Tracking IPs is a challenge. There is no comprehensive list. Nomenclature is a problem since a number of names are used: integrated programs, environmental leadership programs, focus programs and package programs are a few.

The survey and the work that went along with it reveal the model is alive and bubbling along just below the radar. The scope of programs includes integrating two to five credits and addressing three broad areas of student need: leadership development, career exploration and at-risk student and Aboriginal student retention. A wide range of integrating themes is used including outdoor education, environmental leadership, the arts and health.

Respondents to the survey were mostly from the environmental and outdoor education theme areas, reflecting a survey bias, the result of the communication networks accessed. However, in the search process, examples of what are possible came to light. Limestone Board of Education has been supporting focus programs (http://focus.limestone.on.ca/) with mostly a career emphasis for over 20 years. Over 800 students move between 13 secondary schools each semester following their interests in over 40 programs. Meanwhile, a relatively new initiative shows what can be done at a single secondary school: Fletcher Meadows Secondary School in Brampton (www.fmss.ca/departments/departments/departments/ap2.html) has had up to 13 integrated programs with an at-risk student population focus operating during the academic year.

The IP model has evolved from the dominant form of school organization. Of note is the fact that the model has survived some challenging times in Ontario and now seems to be slowly expanding beyond its base, without much if any formal support or recognition at the Ministry of Education level. Despite some serious difficulties identified by survey respondents (funding, lack of professional development, communication), this model is a survivor. Why?

The model and those applying it use key learning strategies arising from many fields of education. Of particular relevance is the creation of communities of learners who support each other in engaging learning activities that, in turn, often take place in the communities in which they learn.

The IP model has spread far beyond its OE (outdoor education) roots and has the potential to lead secondary school reform. The original intent of that first outdoor educator was to get students learning outside. This model, however, is pointing in a direction that can take formal learning beyond our greatest expectations and help meet the challenges we face.

Note

[1] The survey is still open; see (www.surveymonkey.com/s/FT597SH). The design and research work of Jen Mason and Shanon Zachidniak are gratefully acknowledged. The survey was conducted as part of the activity of a provincial working group of the Educational Alliance for a Sustainable Ontario with the support of Learning for a Sustainable Future and the Gosling Foundation.

Stan Kozak (skozak@sentex.ca) is Project Consultant with the Gosling Foundation, and Curriculum and Policy Consultant with Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) (http://www.lsf-lst.ca/). The Gosling Foundation provides support for new and expanding secondary school integrated programs with an environmental theme (http://goslingfoundation.org/).

How to Start, Build and Sustain a Multi-Credit Integrated Curriculum Package

By Andrew Kerr Wilson

Over the last 17 years, I have been asked many times for help starting Integrated Curriculum Programs (ICPs). Visiting teachers are instantly engaged and enthused by the possibilities they see in my program. I can't tell you how often I've heard the words, "I wish this program was at my school!" Others times, a teacher or principal will call and say, "I hear you're the guy to talk to about ICPs."

Unfortunately, I have found it hard to provide good practical advice. My own program was a product of circumstance—a set of conditions that existed in 1992 and doesn't today. I have tried to provide lots of encouragement, but I always felt I couldn't give them much practical advice— a "How to … " for ICPs.

This article is an attempt to do just that: provide a step-by-step road map to a full ICP continuum. By distilling the lessons of almost 20 years of success and failure, of discussions and reflections, of forethought and hindsight, I hope to present a template on how to introduce, build and sustain an ICP program in a single school of moderate size (600–800 students). It is not a thorough discussion of all options; there isn't space for that here. Nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Consider it is a starting point for building your own plan.

It is also the product of an examination of not just my own program but also the but also the Community Environmental Leadership Program (CELP) in Guelph. The late Mike Elrick and I were to some extent fellow travellers, beginning our programs around the same time and challenged by the same changes in Ontario education. Mike was always positive and inspirational and his program was an exemplar for my own. I miss him and this article is partly a way to say good-bye.

How Do You Begin? By Building a Better Mousetrap

The place to start is in Grade 10! Senior optional credit programs are difficult to initiate from scratch in anything but the larger schools. The administration may block it because there is already too much choice or you won't reach the minimum class size threshold. There is simply too much competition for too few students. Instead, go to where the students are already (Grade 10 compulsory credits) and deliver it differently.

The models I recommend are the CELP in Guelph or our EPIC program. Both CELP and EPIC are built around a core of Grade 10 compulsory credits including science, English, civics and careers. Where EPIC and CELP differ is in the last credit. CELP includes a senior interdisciplinary credit. The interdisciplinary credit allows students to reach ahead and teachers to include unique and diverse curriculum elements. There are undoubtedly other benefits, and CELP staff would be the best source for that information. I also highly recommend the application process used at CELP. It allows a range of students to make a compelling case for inclusion in the program.

I opted for the Grade 10 physical education because, in combination with science, English and careers/civics, it represented a timetable that many of our students were already taking. Taking EPIC then meant no change in content, merely a change in method of delivery. Our school could advertise a Grade 10 program available in three different ways—academic, applied and integrated. Integration was presented as a way of providing both enrichment and accommodation. The additional programming (almost a month of extra instructional time provided by the out-trips) and diverse learning situations would be of benefit to a wide range of students. They could receive credits at either the academic

or applied level or a mix. In the interest of keeping things simple we went with academic credits. Prerequisites were an issue we solved on a case-by-case basis.

Another significant advantage of a Grade 10 program was that it was more of a draw on Parents' Night. The Grade 10 program prompted parents and students to choose our school much more readily than the senior program. Parents and their children had no trouble looking ahead to Grade 10, but a senior course that was years away was interesting but not compelling.

Building the Program: Add a "Step Up"

Plan ahead and, after two years of running the Grade 10 program, introduce a senior ICP. It should be available to students in Grades 11 and 12. Two years of students will have completed the Grade 10 program, and they will provide a core enrolment for your senior ICP. This core of veterans will help you get over that critical class size threshold and be assets to lean on in your first year delivering the senior program.

The senior ICP can be a three- or four-credit package. At Carlton Place High School (CPHS) we have done both. A four-credit package is my preference because it automatically means a second teacher involved in the program. This provided some relief for the main teacher (shoulder to cry on, coffee delivered, etc.) and for the students as well. It also provides a structure for mentoring and the evolution of staff. Turnover and/or burnout of teachers in ICPs is a problem and needs to be addressed from the beginning. The four-credit program also provides a more complete "immersion" experience for the student. Whether you opt for three or four credits, make one of them a co-op credit. This will be a key component of your community outreach.

Three-credit programs allow students to enter the program while still taking another credit they might need for their diploma. However, only certain courses are a reasonable choice for this option. Time away on extended trips (a common feature of ICPs) seriously compromises a student's ability to complete a fourth credit. Correspondence style courses work better but still require above-average dedication. Better choices are courses with significant overlap in content so that ICP activities can count for both.

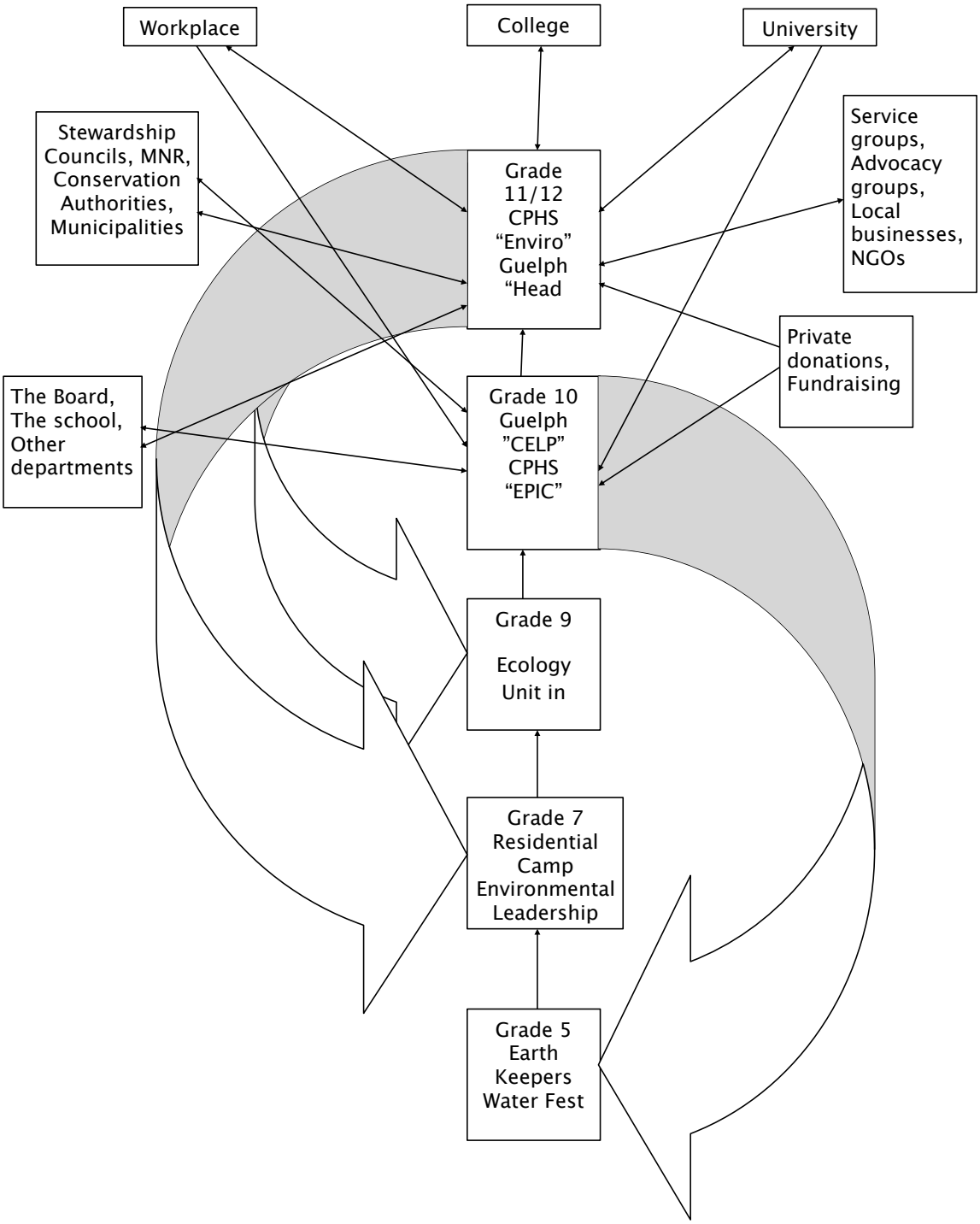
Sustaining the Program

Any ICP run within a single school has one thing going for it. Once you get it started, sustaining it is largely a matter of numbers. If enough students want the course, it should run. There is a lot you can do within the program to make this happen. I will quickly outline a few strategies. All of these have real benefits for the students enrolled by also significantly contribute to recruitment.

1. Reach back
   A major component of the CELP program is the delivery of the Earth Keepers program to elementary students. Similarly, my Grade 12s delivered an environmental leadership program for Grade 7s and ran ecology field studies for Grade 9 science classes. I am sure that CELP teachers and students will tell you just how important Earth Keepers is to the student experience within CELP, but it also sells CELP to the elementary students and staff. Former participants in Earth Keepers will show up at high school with CELP in mind. Students in my senior program were quite clear about this. They took the "Enviro" program because they participated in the environmental leadership camp in Grade 7. There is real magic in reaching back to the earlier grades. Don't miss an opportunity to tap into it. It is also the key to creating a core of students that will track through your ICP program.

2. Reach out
   All of the ICP programs I have visited are connected and supported by the communities around them. In my case, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), conservation authorities, stewardship councils, provincial parks and municipal councils all support and contribute to the delivery of the program. They provide

ICP "Tree of Life"



in-kind services, expertise, co-op placements, programming, mapping services and sometimes even money! Other sources of support are service clubs, local businesses, field naturalist groups, user and advocacy groups, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) and River Keepers. Whatever the focus of your program, you are not alone and must connect with as many of these sources of support as you can.

Other major support groups are the community colleges and universities—particularly the ones your school normally graduates to. Apart from expertise, they can provide additional staffing through teacher placements or co-op requirements. Many former students have come back to help out in the CPHS "Enviro" program as part of their own studies.

3. Build traditions

Each course must have some things that never completely change and are unique to it. At CPHS we are careful to keep our Grade 12 physical education canoe trip different from the canoe trip in the ICP course, from the route right down to the design on the souvenir T-shirt. It can be as simple as the room the course occupies and mementoes that adorn the walls. Have competitions (in class and interscholastic) and keep the results from year to year. Keep a photo archive that students can access. Indeed, implement anything that establishes a strong sense of history and a unique community. Consciously build and manage traditions.

If you are running both a Grade 10 and a senior program, maintain some distinction between the two. This will flow naturally from a different curriculum, but carry it over into the traditions of both programs. The senior program should be a "step up," not just "more of the same."

The most important thing to maintain is the out-trips. These will be the most memorable elements of your program. Modify, tune, improve, but avoid changing the basic concept if possible. Circumstances may force you to eliminate a specific out-trip or you may decide that it no longer meets your needs. Replace it with something as memorable.

4. Consider money

Students pay for the trips. My students pay $250 up front to take the senior "Enviro" course. The money collected for EPIC goes entirely to cover the cost of the out-trips— food, fuel, transportation, rentals, etc.—not to equipment, class supplies or normal maintenance. This is consistent with existing policy on all field trips, whether in history or art or physical education—students pay the cost of the trip. Your ICP program should not be held to a different standard simply because you do more and collect it all in one payment.

Your community pays for equipment and resources. Expect the school to provide in-kind services (accounting, payment processes, etc.) and possibly a core budget. Our senior program has never had a budget from the school, partly because we are not a department. Traditionally, that is how monies are dispersed in schools and not by program or course. Instead, on a purchase-by-purchase basis, we partner with several departments on materials and equipment we share. The money the ICP puts in the pot comes from various sources outside the school. These can include direct donations by private individuals or businesses, board initiatives, non-governmental organization (NGO) projects and student fundraising. I have avoided student fundraising at CPHS because I feel the time spent does not match the funds raised and they learn as much planning the trips and working on community projects. This is a personal choice. If fundraising works for you, go for it.

Bottom line: They can't cut a budget that doesn't exist—be as independent as possible.

5. Mentor staff

I believe that, over the last 20 years, burnout and promotions have killed more ICPs than education reform or curriculum change. Most ICPs begin in the heart of one teacher who finds a way to make it happen. The program is very much a product of this teacher's talents and energy. They are probably the program's greatest asset. They are also its greatest liability. Running an ICP takes more time out of a teacher's life than regular classroom teaching— mostly because we are away from our families while on out-trips. Families and marriages can pay a price for this. Added to the time is the intensity of student interaction. Done right, ICPs build a real community, and everyone, students and teacher, is emotionally attached. Outcomes matter more. Character shows. I love June because of the canoe trip. I hate it because it is the month of good-byes. After a few years, ICP teachers can burn out and just walk away from the program.

ICPs can also be a victim of their success. Really good programs attract attention. Good teachers get noticed and then streamed into other duties. Many former ICP teachers are now in board support positions or administration. Try not to let an ICP course become too closely identified with a single teacher.

Use the fourth credit as a way of introducing a new teacher to the program, to its workload and its traditions. This person will make the course his or her own eventually, but it must be a gradual transition. Having two ICPs, one at the Grade 10 level and another at Grade 12, allows teacher transition much the same way coaches of junior and senior athletic teams move up with their players. Anticipate the need for some kind of break by the main teacher every three to four years.

So, you want to run an ICP in your school! It is a noble aspiration. It can be the most powerful educational experience available in a conventional high school, for both the teacher and the student. It comes with a price tag. Not just your money, but also your time and your heart will be used up. After almost 20 years, I feel it's been worth every penny, second and tear. I think Mike did, too.

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Integrated Programs: Curriculum or Pedagogy?

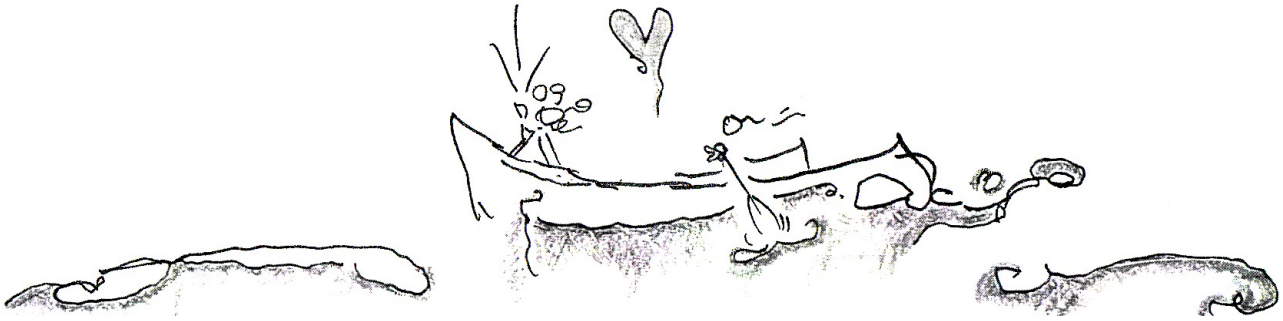
By Michael Bowdridge

Over the years, the relationship between outdoor education and public schools has been a rocky one, and as a result it can be argued that outdoor education has never gained a significant foothold in the Canadian educational system. With outdoor education providing such an effective learning environment, this naturally begs the question: What has prevented a greater degree of inclusion of outdoor education in our public school system? Though some believe that a potential incompatibility exists between outdoor education and schools (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999), it is interesting to note outdoor education has its roots in that very system of education (Miner, 1990).

In a recent work (Bowdridge, 2010), which I will very briefly summarize here, I laid out an argument demonstrating how outdoor education can be thought of separately as both a method and as content in the context of public education. Furthermore, I proposed that this relationship between pedagogy and curriculum, and the corresponding failure to recognize that they are potentially separable, creates difficulty in the incorporation of outdoor education into public schools. For example, individual teachers have more direct control over outdoor education as pedagogy, such as in integrated outdoor programs, rather than as school–board–level designed curriculum, and this creates a natural chronology of staged implementation to consider.

If we are to critically examine *how* outdoor education operates in public schools, then a distinction needs to be made as to the purpose of utilizing this field of education: Is it methodological or is it centred on content? The reason suggested for this clarification is that by each approach, the use (and limitation) of outdoor education can be framed differently based on the program objectives. Programs may attempt to blend both uses of outdoor education in practice, but it is important to identify *when* the *how* of practice is changing.

In this work I presented research data profiling seven Canadian outdoor integrated programs operating in public schools through a qualitative study of 11 veteran teachers. These programs represent some of the longest and most successful integrated programs currently operating in Canada. From this study, key points are drawn out and collated from the various research participants. A review of the responses found that teachers viewed the success of their programs as contributing to many aspects of a student's school experience. The idea that programs reinforced academics articulated a belief that such outdoor education programs provide students with more than simply a wilderness experience, and that significant growth in school-based performance abilities was possible to achieve in such a setting. This coincided with statements that demonstrated the methodological success of their programs being founded in



experiential learning opportunities. As such, most viewed their programs as providing more than just academics. The importance of developing personal growth in their students was apparent.

It was interesting to note how often these teachers spoke of personal growth, considering the context of most high schools being largely academic. This shift to a holistic understanding of student performance allows integrated outdoor programs to bring something greater to the traditional and established high-school system. Yet at the same time it is very important to consider that it may provide a barrier for implementation if such holistic learning and growth is not valued by a school system focusing on content assimilation.

A key point that did arise from the teachers' feedback was how they viewed outdoor education as an approach to teaching, that is to say as pedagogy, rather than a specific and defined curriculum with its own set of outcomes. Here, the emphasis on personal growth and the teaching approach were considered paramount for such programs, and reinforces the notion that those operating such programs do indeed have this tacit understanding of outdoor education as pedagogy.

However, this is not to suggest that these teachers did not see the potential for outdoor education to serve as curriculum. All the participating teachers in this study spoke in terms of curriculum outcomes and linkages to their programs—the very nature of being able to provide an integrated program that utilizes outdoor education as a thematic learning style. Here we can start to see how these teachers transform the educational medium of outdoor education to provide a context for existing school-based curriculum, while utilizing experiential education to provide retention and transference of such learned moments.

Yet, by using outdoor education in such a thematic way, the teachers also indicated that additional core topics to their programs did develop that were outside the required course outcomes they that modeled their programs to cover. It is interesting to note that a generalized *body of knowledge* has been suggested for outdoor education (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006), and includes the topics of knowledge construction, outdoor environments, living and travelling in outdoor environments and ecological sustainability. However, again the emphasis of outdoor education as method over content for these teachers became clear in most conversations.

The data collected and analyzed for this research correlated well with the existing literature, particularly pertaining to the inclusion of outdoor education in the realm of public schooling (Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Coleman, 1995). Similarities existed with other integrated programs, examined in additional studies (Comishin et al., 2004; Horwood, 2002; Russell & Burton, 2000), which critically placed the role of outdoor education as pedagogy, even if not explicitly stated as such. The role of outdoor education as a holistic approach for the development of personal and group skills became apparent, and perhaps differs in emphasis from a school-board content-based environmental education program (that may or may not utilize experiential education practices).

This also suggested a fundamental difference between public school programs and that of the outdoor industry, which relies on the profession simultaneously as both method and content. This primary research benefits such an argument in that it critically examines where public school teachers place their emphasis for such an approach. Although specific outdoor curricular outcomes can be present in even integrated outdoor programs, through the use of specialty courses such as co-op or interdisciplinary studies, the lack of emphasis placed on this throughout the teachers' discussion in this research provides a solid indication of how they place outdoor content beneath that of outdoor practice.

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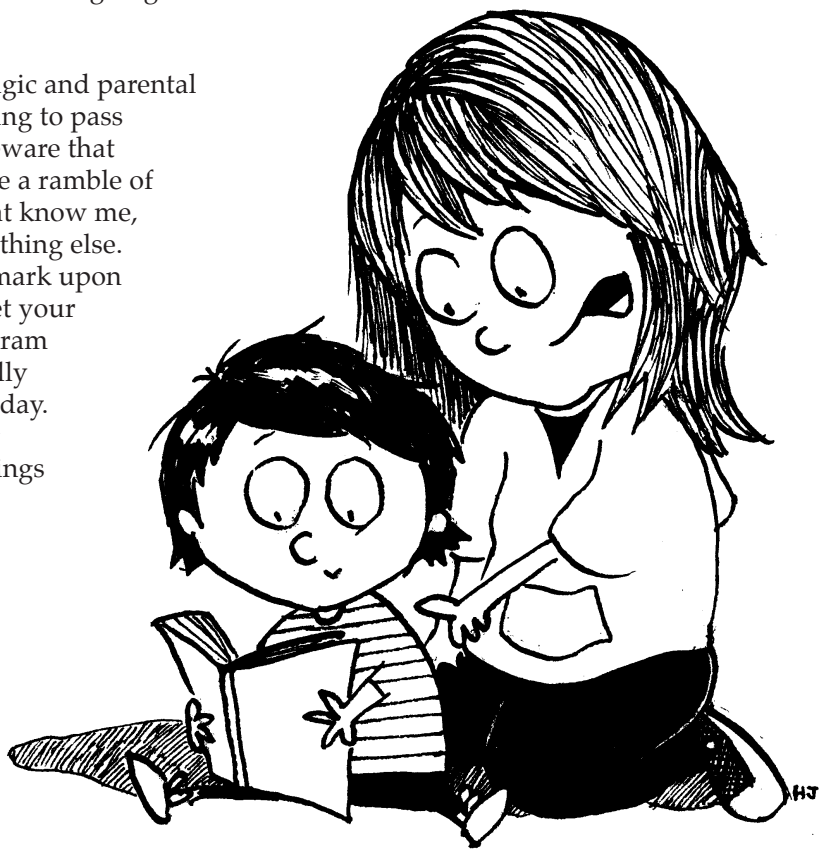
Michael Bowdridge completed his PhD studies in Outdoor Education at Simon Fraser University and continues to teach in the high-school classroom in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Terra: The Evolution Solution

By Bruce Murphy

A long time ago in an outdoor education wetland far, far away, I used to write for *Pathways*. I was short on experience but long on ideas. Now some 17 years later, as a teacher of an integrated program, I feel like I am long on experience but short on ideas. Much of what I teach was influenced by an integrated gathering at Bark Lake, back when Bark Lake was still a provincial leadership camp. With so many integrated teachers all in one place and just having finished my first year as a teacher of an integrated multi-credit program, I went in as a sponge ready to soak up as much as I could. The result of that gathering was huge and influential in the development of my ideas and my teaching. It is my fondest hope that this issue of *Pathways* and some of the ideas written here may prove helpful. If you are considering developing a program, prepare yourself for the most enriching experience of your life. My first piece of advice is "hang on!" because it is going to be an incredible ride.

In many ways I feel nostalgic and parental as I am writing this, wanting to pass advice along. So reader beware that what follows is going to be a ramble of opinions, but for those that know me, you would not expect anything else. The first thing I would remark upon is how important it is to let your program evolve. The program I first started was drastically different than what it is today. It started out as a tripping program with lots of readings on the likes of Sigurd Olson and Grey Owl, a mixture of what we called environmental English, outdoor education, physical education and biology. Now I am teaching what my friends like to call a "*bird course*." I teach my students about birds and bird banding, and they, in turn, teach visiting Grade 4 and Grade 7 students about birds and bird banding at a place called the Hilliardton Marsh. It is a mentor program that makes administrators, parents and students all happy. Win, Win, Win! When I started the program I had no idea that I would become so involved with bird banding at a local marsh developed by Ducks Unlimited Canada, nor did I have any idea of developing all the partnerships that have contributed to our success, and yet it happened without a plan. So let your program evolve. Some of my program's evolution came about because of the advice from school administration as we have worked toward finding better matches for what "we do" with curriculum expectations. As a result, the courses I teach now are all different from the courses I started



with. My current principal tells me when I finally get it right it will be time for me to retire!

Another emphasis for me was to bring skills, passion and experience to what a program becomes. The biggest influences in my program came from working at Project DARE, working in the Junior Ranger program with the Ministry of Natural Resources and taking outdoor education with Bob Henderson at McMaster University. All of these influences have shaped my program. When I see successful integrated programs, I can see how all the influences of people's passion come to the forefront time and time again. The key is to find the right curriculum connections that allow these programs to evolve. The students will reap the benefits. The beautiful thing about multi-credit courses is that no two are alike, and each one reflects the strengths of the teachers, the local geography and circumstances. For example, because Ducks Unlimited built a marsh 20 minutes from us, we could see the potential it would have for visiting classes. I know of a school in New Brunswick that has a marsh right beside the football field—it was a perfect opportunity to develop a program. You will make the links to allow your program to flourish.

This moves us to perhaps the most complicated and perhaps most challenging part of many integrated programs—partnerships. In my case we have partnerships with at least ten different organizations. Each partnership is unique. Some help with funding, some help with expertise and training. Each partnership evolved as the program did. We have been very fortunate to have had great support from our local Ministry of Natural Resources and Ducks Unlimited Canada. Some partnerships are very formal with lots of documentation, and others are less formal. Naturally, liability is a big concern, so as you develop partnerships you will need to be very clear about this. In fact, I would say that if anything has changed in the years that I have been teaching, it is liability concerns. But some partnerships can help with this. We have developed an organization that is like "a friends of the marsh." This organization has taken on the responsibility of liability for all of the activities at our marsh that involve students and the general public outside of school times. Activities such as banding owls in the evening with my students and the general public would be an example of this.

Even though my attempt at describing the wonders of teaching an integrated program is in no way complete, I thought I would save the best for last—the students. I feel the program we have developed over the years has a formula that allows the students to be the best they can be. Over the years I have enjoyed fires with some incredible young people, and they constantly inspire and elate me. When my program really works it is because of the influence the students have on one another. I would suggest the book called *Islands of Healing*, with a chapter on "the no discount contract." I have discovered that when a group buys into the notion of no put-downs, there is a shift in thinking. When the culture of "burning" one another turns into a culture of support, the things a group of high-school students can do is incredible.

For me now the last part of the evolution of a program that has lasted 17 years is looking for the next teacher of the program. The exciting part about this is that I know the program will, of course, evolve with the strengths and passion of that teacher. In a world where we like to see things move in full circles, it would be wonderful to see one of my past students take over the program. If I am really lucky the new teacher will allow me to form a partnership and volunteer as long as I promise not to be a liability issue. Good luck with your program, and if you are looking for any partnerships, do not hesitate to give me a call. We are always looking forward to the next bold step in our evolution.

Bruce Murphy can be found regularly with students and the public in "the marsh." Murph has been teaching in the New Liskeard tri-town region for over 25 years.

Integrated Curricula and Cultural Change: A Question of Why?

By Sean Blenkinsop

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to describe a large research project, which has integrated curricula and is currently emerging as a publicly funded K–7 place-based, imaginative and ecological learning centre in Maple Ridge, BC; second, to spend some time exploring more deeply the theoretical implications of the project and why integrated curricula are necessary. So, to begin. . . .

Situating This Research Project

In February of 2010 the Community University Research Alliance (special Environmental Call), a branch of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, agreed to fund our research project:[i] Aligning Education and Sustainability in Maple Ridge, BC: A Study of Place-Based Ecological Schooling. In November the board of trustees of School District 42 voted unanimously to go ahead with the project. To date we have just completed our initial registration,[ii] and the "school" will open in September of 2011 with two or three "classes".[iii] To provide a context for the later discussion, I include here two passages from our original submission.

From the Summary of Proposed Research

Public education systems, across the industrialized world, tend to be isolated from local processes of knowledge-building, planning and decision-making for sustainability. . . . Environmental education programs are rarely integrated with the mainstream curriculum, are typically of short duration, often lack theoretical or methodological sophistication and show little compelling evidence of having long-term effects on most students' thinking about or engagement with diverse others including the natural world. . . . Taking this local vision as a starting point, the local school district and researchers in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU) will work together with the municipality to develop an environmental school and learning centre in which learning across the curriculum is tied to the growth of environmental awareness, engagement with the natural world and community sustainability (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2009).

And, Further, from the Statement of Relevance

Many of the practices of schools (and other learning institutions) reduce learners'

contact with the natural world, focus their awareness away from the local and particular and place them in an essentially passive relationship with knowledge. A sustainability mandate, on the other hand, might emphasize developing direct knowledge of the environment, focusing on the specifics of place and community and linking understanding to action.

These contrasts hint at the extent of the transformation that may be required to align public schooling with our developing understanding of sustainability at the local and regional levels. Environmental education in schools is currently limited in all kinds of ways—by the curriculum, by the nature of teacher preparation, by the expectations of parents and, most of all, by a culture of schooling that has always been closely tied to the beliefs and values of the industrial era.

One potentially fruitful approach to developing a deeper understanding of this problem, and of what might be needed to resolve it, is, therefore, to study the development of a public school expressly aligned with local environmental management and planning for sustainability. Such research, as outlined in this proposal, will be long term and collaborative, and address not only issues of curriculum and pedagogy but also school administration, school–community relationships, teacher development, learning outcomes and social impact (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2009).

As seen in these descriptions, this project, at its depth, is interested in the process of cultural change and the role education can potentially play therein. How might public education change if generated through an ecological rather than modernist lens? Can education be the impetus for cultural change? And, by focusing our energies on the smallest single unit of culture, the school, what possibilities does this new lens generate/require/reveal, especially if we allow ourselves to question everything: axiology, epistemology, ontology, certainly, but also pedagogy, governance, assessment, teacher role, parental and community involvement, timetables, location and, of course, curricula?

Why Integrated Curricula?

The challenges for the project have consistently been multi-faceted and multi-layered. For example, there is an onus upon the project to have theory and practice align and yet, given the complexity of the project and the incompleteness of both theory and practice, this is a noticeably organic and messy process. What is an ecological worldview? What, then, would be the practices that best map onto that view? It is in response to these questions that we think integrated curricula begin to make sense.

Picture this. It is October, the fall salmon migration has yet to begin because everything is waiting for the West Coast rains to begin in earnest. However, students are preparing for the fish frenzy that is about to begin. Working with various community partners the students are adding to the last ten years of data collection. Some are working in boats alongside First Nations fishermen to catch, count, sample and help prepare; some are working with the fish hatcheries located in the two key watersheds of the community to gather and fertilize eggs and use the laboratory facilities to analyze the samples being gathered in hopes of getting a clearer picture with regard to the health of the fish and the watersheds themselves. Other students are preparing for the annual presentation on the state of fish health in the municipal chambers, while still others are gathering carcasses, that vital source of nitrogen, to be dug into the gardens before the cover crop is planted, and then putting the finishing touches on their seasonal gardening and cooking book that they have prepared for sale at the farmers' market. This could continue. But the point is to recognize the integrated curricula and, more importantly for our work, ways the curricula have been aligned with the complexity, interdependence, interconnection and diversity that are part of how we are making sense of an ecological worldview. If we are claiming an ecological worldview, then how can we justify curricula that are

linear, fragmented, alienated from place and hierarchized?

Although still in its emergent phase we have begun, as a project, to talk of the "12 keys" to an ecological worldview, and these, in turn, become a kind of lens through which we can look in order to make decisions with regard to practice. These 12 keys—complexity, diversity, flourishing, interdependence, lack of hierarchy, change in notion of competition (towards co-operation as some ecologists suggest, but also counter to the dangers of Social Darwinism), dynamic equilibrium, flexibility, capacity, nesting, spontaneity/mutation and humility—have been gathered from various sources: Capra (2002), Naess (1986), Bowers (2001) and ecological science itself.[iv] It has been through this lens that the reasons for integrated curricula have become crystal clear.

Conclusion

Can a "school" be the focus for cultural change? And what does it take to move towards a more ecological worldview? The answers to these questions are still likely five or ten years away; however, as of now it is at least possible to say that in order to even have a shot we must, at the very least

- be willing to question everything—some components might be all right as they are and fit the framework, but the question still needs to be asked;
- be prepared for pain—I have come to decide that genuine transformation, although wondrous, freeing, magical, and so on, never comes without pain;
- never assume—assumptions tend to rise from the previous and problematic worldview; and
- do it together—allies, supports and fellow questioners are necessary.

Notes

[i]For a more complete sense of this project, please see our website at http://schools.sd42.ca/es/.

[ii]To date, more than 70 children and their families have applied for 60 spaces. "School" begins in September 2011.

[iii]The quotation marks around school and class remind us that these words carry metaphorical weight, assumptions and cultural baggage, some of which is troublesome for this project. We use them advisedly. We will be community based, without a building and likely working in multi-age groupings.

[iv]Important note: Nature has long been interpreted through our own particular human and cultural lens. The standard current Western story is of a violent, unforgiving, red in tooth and claw, survival-of-the-fittest hierarchy. Our hope is to push back on that conceptualization noting the fecundity, the diversity, the compromise vs. competition and even the sense of belonging that appears to be offered. Climber Chris Bonnington once noted that accidents in mountaineering tended to let climbers know what they have been getting away with in the past, which suggests a much more forgiving presence than many common myths of the natural world offer. This is the edge of a much larger conversation better left to another paper. The point—we are indeed trying to think differently about nature, but through shaping a narrative not without justification and substantial evidence.

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Integrated Curriculum Programs in British Columbia

By Julie Johnston

Although I grew up and trained to be a teacher in Ontario, most of my teaching career has been in Western Canada. So when this opportunity came up to talk about British Columbia's intergrated curriculum programs (ICPs), I jumped at the chance to show them off.

In this province of sea and mountains, can you guess what figures prominently in our ICPs? You guessed it: outdoor adventures—with a healthy dose of environmental and sustainability education mixed in. Here are five examples from BC.

Earthquest Outdoor School, Vernon
(www.earthquest.ca)

Earthquest (EQ) is known as BC's longest-running ICP. It was established in 1981 as a five-month outdoor immersion program offered to 20 Grade 11 students per semester in School District 22 in Vernon (in the Okanagan area). Founders of the program, Moe and Barrie Reid (a wife and husband team), believed that "relevant and meaningful learning takes place in the best possible classroom: the outdoors." A main objective of the program is "to make learning enjoyable and engaging by removing students from the confines of the traditional classroom and integrating outdoor activities as tools for learning."

These days, EQ gives credit for English 11, Biology 11 and Physical education 11 and 12. Because of its collaboration with the school district's online learning program (called Vlearn), EQ is now able to accept Grade 12 students, who can take other courses as well or instead (Digital Media 12, First Nations Studies 12, Geography 12, English 12, Foods 12 and Independent Directed Studies 12). Students study online (when and where they want), fitting their studies around 9–10 weeks with EQ, in pre-expedition learning and then expeditions spread throughout the semester.

EQ students get credit for a variety of expeditions that take them "from the greatest of heights on untouched mountains to the serene beaches of the Pacific coast:"

- surfing
- telemark skiing in the backcountry
- lake, river and ocean kayaking
- low-impact camping
- hiking
- rock climbing
- cycling
- cross-country running
- orienteering
- yoga

The program is taught with the environment in mind, allowing students to develop a sense of kinship with the rest of nature. Early on, Moe and Barrie established trusting relationships with local First Peoples, so an environmental consciousness is established by weaving First Nations technologies, philosophies, stewardship and lifestyles into outdoor adventures.

Diversity is a motif running throughout the EQ program; students are exposed to a variety of stimulating learning environments, landscapes, physical settings, social situations and challenges. Teamwork, responsibility and group accountability are promoted at every turn: adopting a group mentality while hiking and skiing, working together as a group practising kayak or beacon rescues, packing a doubles kayak, teaming up with a partner to perform a wet exit, belaying a classmate as they rock climb and preparing a nutritious meal together for the rest of the group are examples of the Outward Bound-like nature of EQ.

Saturna Ecological Education Centre (SEEC), Saturna Island
(www.seec64.ca)

The SEEC Semester for senior secondary students is the ICP I know best. That's because I've taken my own Pender Island students camping at the Saturna Ecological Education Centre many times, and because in 2010–2011 I helped expand the program by

recruiting students beyond our small school district's borders.

The SEEC Semester began in 2006 when Steve Dunsmuir, the principal/teacher of Saturna Island's tiny school, recognized that an alternative high-school program would keep the elementary school from closing. (Enrolment has gone as low as four children in this community of 300 people!)

Perhaps the niftiest thing about the SEEC Semester is that its Grade 11 and 12 participants, who come from several surrounding school districts, only spend three days (and three nights) on Saturna, but they take five courses and earn 20 credits:

- English 11 or 12 (Environmental Communication)
- Science and Technology 11 (Ecological Citizenship)
- Physical Education 11 or 12 (Outdoor Adventures)
- Teaching and Learning 11 or 12 (a locally developed elective course; students mentor the younger children at the school, and learn how to lead eco-adventures when groups visit from off-island)
- Independent Directed Study (IDS; Community Connections)

It is the IDS that sits at the centre of the students' integrated coursework. They can follow a passion or choose a new skill or area of knowledge (related somehow to any Grade 11 or 12 course offered by the Ministry of Education) to study with the help of a community mentor. Local folks love the program for the youthful energy it brings to their island, so they are happy to lend their mentoring time and wisdom. Past examples of IDS projects include

- designing and building a shed for the school
- writing and directing a play at the community level
- creating a field guide for a local beach
- learning and teaching about sheep farming
- taking command as coxswain of a Spanish longboat
- designing and sewing a dress for prom

The SEEC Semester is an excellent example of 21st-century learning: personalized, self-directed, co-created and integrated; place-based and sustainability-focused; challenging students to develop creative and critical thinking skills. Students (8 to 12 each semester) stay in rustic but funky off-grid cabins in a valley behind a working farm and use the whole island as their classroom. Dunsmuir admits, "It's kind of exciting because they come off the ferry and it's so different—it rocks their world a little bit."

The TREK Program, Vancouver
(www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/trek-program-prince-wales)

The Vancouver School Board's best-known and best-loved ICP is TREK, a year-long program for Grade 10 students. It began in 1987 to provide students with opportunities to learn outdoor skills, study environmental issues and develop personal and leadership skills. Even before the term "sustainability education" was coined, the TREK program was founded "on the belief that outdoor adventure and experiential education, combined with academic work and a bioregional overview, will allow students to develop their skills, confidence and leadership, connect them to the landscape they live in and educate them about what they can do to move towards living sustainably."

TREK's 100+ students are divided into two groups. For half the year, one group is "on-TREK" while the other group is "off-TREK," and then they switch for the second semester. By the end of the year, all students have met all Grade 10 requirements. Here's how it works:

During the on-TREK term, students are involved in a combination of outdoor activities, field studies, trips and classroom-based academics including

- English 10 (half the course)
- Social Studies 10 (half the course)

- Planning 10 (half the course)
- Physical Education 10 (complete course)
- Outdoor Education (complete course)

During this semester, about half the time is spent on field trips of up to a full week, and half the time is based at Prince of Wales Secondary School.

In the off-TREK term, students complete their academic curriculum including

- English 10 (half the course)
- Social Studies 10 (half the course)
- Planning 10 (half the course)
- Math 10 (complete course)
- Science 10 (complete course)
- a second language (French or Spanish)

Can you imagine the logistics? According to TREK's Antony Blaikie, due to the depth and breadth of the program, there are logistical challenges to be met nearly every day by the program's four teachers. But, he adds that the rewards must continue to outweigh the costs, because TREK teachers remain in the position for an average of seven to eight years. And hundreds of students apply to TREK every year, so the program must be meeting its goal of providing a rich source of learning, adventure and rewarding relationships for young people.

Coast Mountain Academy, Powell River
(www.outdoors.sd47.bc.ca)

Coast Mountain Academy (CMA) is an enriched outdoor education program ("a five-month rite of passage") that focuses on action education, service learning and character and career development through "Leadership, Citizenship and Outdoor Adventure." The program accepts Grade 11 and 12 students from across British Columbia for a unique semester-long program that includes an emphasis on outdoor certifications and community service, along with academic credits and hard skills.

The CMA, which runs during the second semester from Monday to Thursday, gives students opportunities to combine practical and theoretical learning while immersed in the natural beauty of the Sunshine Coast and Desolation Sound areas. As coordinator Ryan Barfoot explains, "We are located in a beautiful area where the snow-capped mountains meet the ocean. This is the canvas we paint our semester on." Cohorts of 14 students experience paddling, climbing, hiking, biking, boating and working with younger students. The final project requires students to design, plan and implement a month of residential camp programs for all of the Grade 7 students in the school district.

The CMA started as a local tourism-training program with a strong focus on hard skills, and now also incorporates a stronger leadership component as well as citizenship. Taught by a team of teachers, industry leaders and experts, students get senior secondary elective credits in Physical Education 11 or 12, Work Experience 11 or 12, Adventure Tourism 11 and 12, and Leadership Studies 11 or 12. The CMA may also offer the following certifications:

- Outdoor Leadership Skills
- Flat Water Sea Kayak, Paddle Canada
- Level 1 Sea Kayak, Paddle Canada
- Wilderness First Aid (40 hours)
- Occupational First Aid
- Foodsafe
- Avalanche Safety Training Level 1
- VHF Radio Operator, Industry Canada
- Small Craft Operator, Coast Guard
- Toastmasters
- Streamkeepers, Counsellor in Training

The CMA has become something of a gift to the community of Powell River. Other organizations in town often make requests for assistance with various projects, which keeps the curriculum dynamic. The program resides where theory and application meet, and students learn that knowledge in and of itself is valuable, but it is in the application of knowledge—in this case, through community-building experiences—that it comes to life.

The Valhalla Wilderness Program, Slocan
(www2.sd8.bc.ca/schools/weg/default.htm)

W.E. Graham Community School in School District 8's Slocan Valley in the Kootenays

offers two "district choice programs" that focus on health and physical fitness while utilizing the outdoor area around the school to promote practical application of the skills and concepts taught. Over the last few years, the school has developed the Outdoor Environmental Leadership Program (OELP) for students in Grades 7 and 8, which is designed to complement the Valhalla Wilderness Program (VWP) for Grade 9 and 10 students, a program that has been in operation for more than a decade.

The OELP is a full-year, enriched educational program that offers students the opportunity to learn in many environments. In the mornings, students are involved in regular academic classes. In the afternoons, students participate in a combination of outdoor activities, physical education, applied skills (woodworking, textiles, home economics) and fine arts. The students also participate in six three- to five-day outdoor trips, each focusing on a specific outdoor activity, such as hiking and backpacking, canoeing, cycle touring, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, mountain biking and essential outdoor skills. The OELP enables students to meet curricular outcomes while allowing them to apply the concepts in a variety of environments. By the end of the year, OELP students have completed all necessary Grade 7 or 8 courses, plus outdoor education.

The VWP describes itself as "a self-propelled wilderness experience that offers a high level of personal challenge." It is a full-year eight-credit program during which, like TREK, students spend about 40 percent of their time outdoors and 60 percent in the classroom, with a portion of the academic curriculum integrated with wilderness studies and outdoor living skills. Science, math, English and social studies are taught primarily in the mornings, and students participate in weekly day trips plus six week-long out-trips involving hiking, backcountry skiing/snowboarding and winter camping, mountain biking and canoeing.

During the course of the year, students take their St. John's Ambulance Level One First Aid and CPR-C course in addition to the Avalanche Skills Level One course to enable them to participate more safely in backcountry activities (a big part of living in the Kootenays!). The program introduces technical skills, safety and decision-making strategies and knowledge of the natural world to provide an entry for students interested in a career in the field of wilderness/adventure tourism management and outdoor recreation.

VWP was designed to be challenging, both physically and interpersonally. The record shows that VWP students, as with most, if not all, graduates of integrated curriculum programs, I'm guessing, go on to high levels of achievement academically, with increased self-confidence and a heightened sense of their place in the world. Indeed, each of these programs epitomizes the transformative power of outdoor education and experiential learning!

Julie Johnston is with Green Heart Education, an integrated curriculum program in BC.

Changing the Organizational Paradigm: The Yukon Experience

By Robert Sharp

About 20 years ago, a number of Yukon schools took a different approach to outdoor education and outdoor pursuits. During the 1970s and 1980s, most Yukon high schools and junior high schools offered a course called Outdoor Education. These courses fit into the conventional blocks in a school timetable. Outdoor activities longer than these blocks of time typically took time from other teachers. This created a constant source of school tension in which students often fell behind in the other subjects and were required to play "catch-up" on their own time. This approach did little to link the outdoor activity with other subjects or to gain support from the larger school staff.

In the early 1990s, the Yukon Department of Education proposed an alternative model. This model changed the organizational paradigm for secondary schools. The proposed organizational model more closely followed the organizational plan used in kindergarten. This involved a cohort of secondary students together for a semester addressing a wide range of subjects with the same teacher, focused on an overriding theme. A wide variety of instructional styles was incorporated, including activities that integrate learning outcomes of the subjects. There are presently more than a dozen of these programs offered in Yukon schools.

For the programs that include an outdoor education component, the "school-within-a-school" model addressed the problems related to the classes missed by outdoor trips and provided necessary flexibility in timetabling since the teachers could shift their own time allocations based on studies, activities, student abilities and program needs. This approach raised other instructional time and methods concerns. These concerns were addressed by developing a range of "field studies" that took students into outdoor activities that required application of specific skills, knowledge and attitudes central to the other subjects offered in the "school-within-a-school" program.

The field studies approach often takes on the mantel of place-based education since many of the field studies are centred on responding to community concerns, studying and collecting data and proposing possible remedies to the community-defined problem. Addressing "real" topics and finding ways to apply the prescribed learning outcomes to these studies have proven to engage students in ways that secure knowledge and strengthen positive community attitudes. In this respect, including field studies with outdoor pursuits has been proven to be a successful educational approach.

The ability to fuse an outdoor activity with related field studies benefits the whole educational enterprise. The linking of field studies with an outdoor pursuit gives both the study and the activity additional meaning. In addition, field studies reinforce both labs and lectures in specific subjects. Courses such as geography, survey biology, quantitative chemistry, ecology and environmental studies lend themselves to field studies that link with outdoor pursuits. The balance of this paper will describe one such program, describe a number of field studies employed in this program and highlight some of the long-term benefits of this program.

Experiential Science is a Yukon public-school program of studies for Grade 11 students. The program integrates Biology 11, Geography 12, Chemistry 11, Art 11, Field Methods 11 and Physical Education 11. The program features 35 to 40 days of field studies each semester and two days each week in Yukon College science labs. Field studies expose students to a wide variety of people associated with a range of resource management issues. Rigorous field methods, well-kept data and sound scientific methodology are the foundation

of the program. Students collect field data and analyze various aspects of study issues before developing strategies for addressing the topics. Students are excited and motivated by the range of challenging and often adventurous studies, the importance of their studies, and co-operative work relationships that develop during their semester in Experiential Science. Field studies resonate with those students who learn best experientially and in social contexts. Over the 18 years the Experiential Science program has been offered, students have consistently reported the short- and long-term benefits of the program. Many who struggled with conventional classes report on the success and enjoyment they found in the field studies approach to courses. In terms of conventional academic scores, students in Experiential Science consistently outscored all other classes taking similar courses.

The list of the field studies is extensive. Many have been ongoing studies spanning a number of years. The Experiential Science website outlines many of these field studies: www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/woodst/experiential/field%20studies.htm. For example, included are an International Polar Year project monitoring a local lake that has undergone recent changes in water levels and water quality, sets of field studies related to salmon enhancement and habitat restoration projects, forestry studies on beetle infestations and regeneration rates, marine and stream monitoring projects, caribou habitat studies and many others. Students who were in the program more than 12 years ago are able to vividly describe the activities and studies they took part in. They report that their involvement in these studies had a significant influence on their subsequent studies and on the careers that followed.

Including field studies that complement academic studies with a variety of outdoor pursuits has proven to be a most successful model of education. It is a model that required moving away from conventional secondary school organizational patterns and developing organizational models that better reflect student engagement and how students learn. Many Yukon educators and parents believe that these models should be expanded and be accessible to many more students.

The Experiential Science 11 program is one of 12 similar programs offered in Yukon schools. Each has a different focus but follows a similar organizational plan: a cohort of students for a semester taking four to six courses within the semester. The programs include course offerings ranging from Grade 9 to Grade 12. The first of these programs, ACES 10, was developed in the late 1980s and proved to be so successful that the Ministry encouraged expansion in other subject areas. MAD 11–12 (music, art and drama), FEAST 11–12 and Experiential Science 11 followed within a two-year period. Over the past 17 years, eight more courses have been developed. All follow a similar organizational plan. They include OPES (Outdoor Pursuits and Experiential Studies 9), PASE (OPES in French), MAD 9–10, GLOBE 11, SASE 9, CHAOS (First Nations excellence program), Fabrics 11–12 and Haines Junction Experiential Science 11. Most of these programs have seen changes in teachers and course offerings but the central organizing themes have remained.

Bob Sharp has held various education positions in the Yukon over the past 43 years. He developed and taught the Experiential Science 11 program for seven years prior to retirement in 2001. During this period he was typically involved for 90 days a year in outdoor activities and field studies. He now works part-time with the Yukon Department of Education and Yukon College.

Saskatchewan's Trek School and the Greenall Outdoor School

By Rob Notenboom and Jeff Moore

Trek School is an outdoor school program for any Grade 11 students in Regina. During the program students engage in a series of classroom, outdoor and experiential activities. The various courses are taught through these experiences.

How Does Trek School Work?

Students spend one entire semester in the program. During that semester they take Biology 20, Social Studies 30, Geography 20, Physical education 20, CPT 20 and Math B30 (optional). Two teachers instruct the students in these subjects and also coordinate the various outdoor and other learning experiences.

Where do students go during the semester? The program takes students many places around Saskatchewan to learn from their unique biological, geographical and historical characteristics. During a semester students will travel to many areas around Regina and Qu'Appelle regions as well as Moose Mountain, Grasslands National Park, Cypress Hills and the Churchill River.

Philosophy/Theory: Originally when my first Trek School teaching partner and I began planning Trek School, we saw it as a direct reaction to our teaching experience. My teaching partner characterized this as "pushing a rope" and asked the question, "Why can't I get a student to care about 'x'?" We felt that school presented several barriers to student engagement and that we could change this. We felt that this could be done primarily through structural changes. We would integrate curriculum through place-based, outdoor activities, we would use student interest to drive some of their projects and we would get out of the stuffy environment of the school to get some "real experience."

Type of Student: We look for students who are willing to try something different so that they will accept the difficulties that they ultimately have to face. Besides being challenging academically, the program is busy and it is difficult to balance all of the activities, and the changes that students experience can be disorienting … charting your own course is not something that most students are asked to do. We have taken on many students who would be considered "at risk," but usually we get students who are just a bit more mature than the average and can see the potential merits of doing our program for a semester.

Politics/Barriers: I think it goes without saying that any time you are trying to do something different, there are going to be some difficulties. We have experienced some push-back from other staff, we have had to argue our case for funding/staffing with admin and yearly we must do the job of convincing students and parents of what we are offering. (I had no idea how much misinformation abounds before I started doing Trek School.) We have dealt with many of these issues by being a little isolationist. Since we are already on the periphery of what happens in our school division, we quietly go about doing our own thing and try to stay away from those issues that might negatively affect us. In part this has allowed us to survive for as long as we have, but the downside is that we don't have a lot of renown.

Goals of Trek School

The main goal of Trek School is to deliver an educational experience to students superior to anything else they can find in high school. The program is designed to help students experience greater levels of academic achievement, but it is also designed to help students develop in the areas of independent learning, critical and creative thinking, and personal and social growth. It is a goal of the program for students to not only learn more but to find greater meaning in what they learn. The methods used to accomplish these goals include the following:

Experiential Learning: In Trek School we try to go to the places that we are talking about. We believe place-based learning to be especially academically enriching.

Inquiry-based Learning: In Trek School students experience many activities where they ask questions about the locations that we see and then investigate those questions. We believe that this helps students develop critical and creative thinking skills.

Alternative Structure: We focus more on project work, have a more open classroom structure and often give students the opportunity to direct their learning. We coach students on how to adapt to these new learning situations, and we believe that this helps students develop more autonomy, more agencies in their learning, better time management skills and a deeper level of investment in their learning.

Academic, Physical and Emotional Challenges: Although much of high school is already demanding, we are very attentive to the kinds of challenges that students in Trek School are faced with and what they get out of these challenges. Not only do we deliver a challenging academic program but also students are physically and emotionally challenged by the activities on our various trips. Although this sounds daunting, by the end of the program most students are thriving on these challenges rather than being intimidated or avoiding them.

The Greenall Outdoor School

Who: Jeff Moore and Brenda Werner are the Greenall Outdoor School advisors

Where: Our home base is in Greenall High School in Balgonie, SK, but we can usually be found wandering the province of Saskatchewan.

When: The Greenall Outdoor School (know by students as ODS) was formed by Caren Gilroy and Jeff Moore in 2008. We run the program in the second semester every year and will be working with our fourth group of students this year.

What: Students in ODS (Outdoor School) receive credit for ELA (English Language Arts) 20, Bio 20, Native Studies 20, Wildlife Management 30 and PE 20. Classes are truly integrated as students complete their work in this project-based, holistic program. At the end of the semester students receive one mark for their classes. Students spend approximately one-third of their time in their regular classroom, one-third of the time in their community and one-third of the time travelling throughout the beautiful province of Saskatchewan. In ODS students are immersed in hands-on learning as they travel throughout Saskatchewan learning from the amazing people and professionals who take the time to share their knowledge.

Why: Jeff Moore has been interested in outdoor education throughout his career and was inspired by the amazing work that Kim Archibald and Rob Notenboom have been doing in Saskatchewan for years. Jeff attended a professional development seminar held on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River in 2001 by Kim Archibald. Ever since, he has dreamt of starting his own program. It wasn't until one fateful day in Cuba when Jeff happened across Bruce Murphy of the TERRA program in Ontario that he decided to do something about his dream. Through consultation with Bruce, Kim and Rob, through a lot of hard work by Jeff and Caren Gilroy and with support from administrators like Ron Reinhart, Dion Hrynewich and Gloria Antifaiff, to name a few, the Greenall Outdoor School was born.

Editor's Note

Both Rob and Jeff acknowledge the importance of Kim Archibald in getting the ICP ball rolling in Saskatchewan. Kim's program will be featured in a future issue.

Rob Notenboom and Jeff Moore teach integrated curriculum programs in Saskatchewan.

Creative Curriculum Integration in Atlantic Canada: A "MindShift"

By Alan Warner and Cate de Vreede

Curriculum integration through block programs has not taken hold in Atlantic Canada, but another approach has blossomed in Nova Scotia that is achieving some of the key benefits—interdisciplinary, holistic and problem-based learning, student engagement, community building, collaborative relationships and real-world experiences. If block programs are not the best or viable choice for a school or community, consider a "MindShift." This is the name of a high-school sustainability education program operating in a half-dozen high schools in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It utilizes a youth team model to achieve similar benefits.

In the youth team approach, a volunteer team of high-school students, with a supporting teacher/coach, delivers a peer education program as part of relevant high-school courses, in this case science or global geography. Whereas a block program integrates a number of courses under a theme within the curriculum, the youth team model combines and connects extracurricular experience with curriculum learning. It provides the intense experience for the students on the leadership team while also involving a broader and larger group of students in the educational experience. MindShift was designed by a team of young people with support from the Halifax Regional Adventure Earth Centre and won the 2009 Nova Scotia Youth Environmental award. In 2011, a Halifax youth team visited Quebec and Ontario, presenting the program and doing workshops on implementation in high schools, which, in turn, are sprouting new MindShift programs. This article describes the program as an example of the youth team model, presents brief research findings from student interviews and considers ways the model could be developed further within the curriculum.

MindShift and the Youth Team Model

In the fall of 2007, a group of seven high-school environmental leaders and several supportive adults associated with the Halifax Regional Adventure Earth Centre, a community youth leadership and environmental education centre, sat down to consider how they could facilitate integrated environmental learning, awareness and action with high-school youth. The goal was to engage a broad spectrum of high-school students in curriculum-based experiences using experiential programming. As high-school students, the youth deeply understood that learning in their standard high-school curriculum paled in comparison to the benefits of their previous outdoor program participation and leadership. Appreciating the apathy prevalent in many high-school classes, the youth team recognized the need to work "outside the box" to achieve a substantial impact. A year of working together, writing and piloting in their high schools, resulted in MindShift.

The youth attended three separate schools, and gained support for the development of a MindShift youth leadership team in each school under the auspices of a teacher/coach. The team has two roles:

1. *Deliver the MindShift Presentation:* This presentation powerfully engages teens in the magnitude and importance of our sustainability problems, while presenting them with the opportunities to take action and work toward solutions. It begins with the youth team bursting into a darkened classroom in costume with the support of music and multimedia, transforming it into the deck of the Starship Earth. As the ship travels through time from the year 1890 to 2030, the ship's captain and six lieutenants monitor and report on its life-support systems based on actual scientific data. Despite dire warnings, the ship stays on its destructive course and crashes dramatically

in the year 2030. The actors then awaken to their everyday world that has not reached the point of destruction. They present a series of humorous skits that translate the large environmental problems into actions applicable to the everyday lives of teens: the morning bathroom routine, chemistry class, lunchtime, shopping, and so on. In each skit a "shift" is made from less to more sustainable choices to identify how students can alter their lifestyles to achieve a more sustainable future. The presentation concludes with each leader facilitating a small group discussion with students that reflects on the presentation and its implications for their lifestyles. While the classroom teacher has curriculum follow-up materials to carry the concepts forward in subsequent classes, the youth leaders invite the participants to join or assist the MindShift team in putting on sustainability events for the school as an extracurricular process across subsequent months.

2. *Organize Sustainability Events:* The work to define, plan and put on sustainability events over time generates learning in a range of subject areas and spheres for team members and the students that join them. Events have included turning the power off in the school for a whole day (with school approval!), sustainable food lunches, film festivals and clothing swaps. For example, a sustainable food lunch discussion produces a range of interdisciplinary learning, whether it is understanding sustainable agricultural practices or basic budgeting, or developing leadership or facilitation skills. The processes are supported and monitored by the teacher/coach. The program materials include an events organization guide and 'zine to help provide structure and ideas for the team and coach.

MindShift is now in its fourth year, operating in seven high schools, and the processes and structures have evolved over time to capitalize on successes and address challenges. One key element in the support process has been a one-day training session that brings together MindShift youth leaders from multiple schools in the region. They experience the performance and then engage in workshops to organize their team process. An Adventure Earth Centre staff person works with each high school to help obtain and support the teacher/coach. A couple of schools now have strong embedded MindShift teams that have succeeded over years, others have succeeded one year and not the next, and still others have faltered in their first year. The ingredients for success can be summed up as follows: "The students make it happen, the teacher makes it continue." In two schools, an effective teacher has ensured continued success over years. Several teams have had lots of success in a given year, only to have the key student leaders graduate and little happen the next year. In other cases, some teachers have struggled to recruit and support teams.

Before examining the challenges, it is important to highlight MindShift's impact where it has been successful. In 2009–2010, questionnaires were administered at the beginning and end of the year to 23 of 25 student leaders on three teams, and in-depth taped interviews were conducted with them midway through the year and at year-end. Detailed qualitative analysis assessed student learning and self-reports.

Student Learning

The research documented leader gains across six areas: pro-environmental behaviour, leadership skills, empowerment, pro-environmental attitudes and values, sustainability knowledge and interpersonal relationships. A few examples demonstrate the depth and breadth of impacts.

All 23 leaders reported making multiple pro-environmental changes in their lifestyles over the year, averaging five per person. Rebecca explains:

> *The little things, the habits, like turning off the lights, and . . . unplugging things, . . . I feel like those started when I first joined MindShift. Ah, I need to be as MindShifty as possible! But then things like cutting back on eating meat and biking to places, . . . taking the bus . . . all the bigger*

things have developed in the past couple months. . . . [T]he more involved I got with MindShift, the more I transferred it over to a more permanent habit.

Increased awareness and knowledge of sustainability issues was expressed by 90 percent of the leaders.

[MindShift has] shown me . . . there are a lot of things happening on this Earth today . . . that most people don't really pay attention to . . . and I think that by doing this program and trying to find these things so that you can then teach them definitely opens your eyes to what's happening and what you can do to change that.

All of the leaders expressed a greater sense of empowerment as exemplified by their desire to take action and the sense that they had the skills and confidence to contribute to their team, school and communities. One student explained:

MindShift involves . . . youth showing confidence and youth showing how they actually know what's going on in the world and they actually have an opinion and that they want to do something about it . . . Adults just kind of say "oh . . . they're just taking up space," but we have an opinion, we know what's going on and we want something done about it.

The research concluded that MindShift, as an example of the youth team approach, had a powerful impact on the learning of young people on successful teams.

Enhancing the Youth Team Model within the Curriculum

One could use this approach to integrate learning relative to other social issues, e.g., social inequity and poverty, bullying and youth violence, or sex education and gender roles.

A key to success is choosing an issue youth care about and providing them with structured, integrated and holistic experiences in which they can lead others in a supportive team context. This combines the interpersonal benefits of a successful sports team or arts performance with specific subject- and curriculum-related learning. The integrated experiences parallel what is achieved in successful block programs but they occur largely as extracurricular activities outside of the formal class setting.

The key challenge has been obtaining the core teacher/coach support to enable teams to form and continue over time. Gaining teacher support is greatly complicated by having the team be extracurricular such that the work becomes a volunteer effort for the teacher instead of part of the teaching load. It would be far easier if a keen teacher could run MindShift in a course or as an integrated block of courses across a term (e.g., leadership and environmental science). This would be simpler to implement relative to a full, integrated term program in settings where departing from standard course models faces major approval or resource issues. Whatever the limitations and obstacles, when we listened to the words of the students, we recognized similar types of transformational impacts to those reported by integrated block programs. There is more than one approach to integrated experiential learning in high schools. A high-school senior sums it up:

What am I [most proud of]? . . . It is not often that you get to take an idea or concept and get to show it to everyone. I mean, . . . you can present to a class for a project . . . but with MindShift . . . you are affecting a lot more people than you would with anything else.

For more information on MindShift, visit www.earthed.ns.ca/mindshift/.

Alan Warner (alan.warner@acadiau.ca) teaches at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Cate de Vreede (catetrueman@gmail.com) is an environmental educator in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, and conducted the research as part of her master's degree. Both Alan and Cate were involved in the development of the program..

Touching Base with Parents–Neglected ICP Stakeholders

By Grant Linney

My purpose here is to introduce readers to another key and, to-date, largely neglected stakeholder in high-school integrated curriculum programs (ICPs). If we wish to have a deeper understanding of the unique, powerful and lasting impacts of these programs, we must include the perspective and input of participants' parents. My hope is that this article will encourage much more research in this area.

My caution, both to me and to future writers, concerns a delicate balancing act between enlightenment and suffocation. There is no doubt in my mind that, with the "right" combination of teachers/leaders, participants, outdoor and experiential programming, setting and parents, these programs become transformational in their permanent impacts upon life skills and attitudes. To examine these elements in a variety of ways is well worth the effort, but understand that one must also leave space for certain "real intangibles" including affect and magic; an over-scrutiny of such phenomena can lead to their demise.

Context

On a Friday afternoon last February, seven parents and one former student met with me at a Guelph cafe to discuss ICP programs. All were connected to the well-established Grade 10 Community Environmental Leadership Program (CELP) and/or Grade 12 Headwaters program. Guelph Centennial teachers Mike Elrick, Katie Gad, Janet Dalziel and Joel Barr have run these semester-length programs. I was already familiar with these particular programs due to multiple visits and conversations with teachers, parents and students over several years.

Thanks to Katie Gad for sending a notice to parents of present and former students about this gathering. Thanks also to those parents who took the time to participate. Their six families all have at least two offspring who experienced one or both of these programs.

Observations

The parents attending had a strong desire to share highly favourable impressions of the ICP experience(s) of their offspring. Words like *transformative, life altering* and *life changing* (three parents used the last descriptor) were used to describe the impact of these programs.

These parents identified the following attributes of their sons and daughters as being significantly developed thanks to the CELP and/or Headwaters programs:

- People/life skills, particularly in making and keeping friends, managing group dynamics and taking on leadership roles. One parent noted: "The relationships and bonds define the experience so much." Another spoke of how friendships formed were deeper and lasting than before the experience.
- Maturity, accountability, ownership, flexibility, integrity, respect, awareness, balance.
- Self-confidence, empowerment.
- Social conscience.
- A powerful sense of place for their community.
- Practical skills relating to sustainable living.
- An ability to see and make connections between "here and now" concerns and the bigger (in many cases, global) picture.

The parents identified the following program elements as responsible for this impact:

- The attributes of the ICP leaders: They are gifted teachers, knowing how and when to effectively frame experiences. They are practised at group dynamics, knowing when to hover in the background and allow the group to wrestle with issues and challenges, and when to draw meaning from their experiences. They really know the students. ICP leaders adopt markedly different roles with Grade 10 versus Grade 12 students. They have excellent listening skills, particularly one-on-one. They possess humour and they expect

accountability. They walk their talk. They have impeccable judgment when it comes to the physical and emotional safety of their charges.
- Particular note must be made of the great fondness and respect these parents expressed for Mike Elrick, the founder and driving force behind both of these programs. Mike lost his life to cancer in the fall of 2009. He is remembered as a low-key but high-impact person, a third parent, and also the one who taught the parents about letting go; a leader from behind; one the students never wanted to disappoint; one who also knew the importance of keeping principals and superintendents in the loop.
- Extended wilderness trips (snowshoe travel and winter camping, canoe tripping), fostering a deeper connection to the outdoors as well as to each other.
- A classroom that is away from the normal school setting and that includes ready access to both natural settings and the home community.
- The kind of learning (experiential, authentic, integrated) and the kind of conversations that follow (effectively facilitated by experienced teachers).
- A strong connection to the local community by way of teaching younger students, making presentations to parents and the public and carrying out environmental service projects.
- Opportunities to develop new and potentially lifelong skills such as canoe tripping, winter camping and sewing (e.g., moccasins), and a much-heightened awareness of food skills, including the 100-mile diet. More than one parent spoke of how sons and daughters are now proudly preparing meals for their families, while also delivering mini-lectures on healthy and sustainable eating.

When asked to discuss concerns regarding the future of ICPs, this group identified the following needs:
- Advocacy on behalf of these programs, and for utilizing parents as a powerful voice in this regard.
- Recognition that parents can help with specific aspects of the program. It was suggested that a "gifts bank" be created wherein parents can make the ICP teachers aware of particular skills they possess.
- Establishment of community partnerships.
- Deliver of effective and ongoing communication with all stakeholders, including other students and their parents in the feeder schools. This is needed to offset a variety of negative perceptions, including the program being regarded as elitist, lax and/or virtually impossible to include within the confines of a four-year high-school program.
- Significant funding, particularly in light of the recent Ontario Ministry of Education ruling regarding no extra program fees.
- Encouragement of graduates of such programs to transfer their newly developed skills and attitudes back to the home-school setting.

In Conclusion

The parents of ICP students represent a powerful and underused source of insight into and advocacy for these transformational programs. Significant research is needed to capitalize upon this potential. The voice of parents is sorely needed to move these programs from their current peripheral and precarious status in our secondary schools.

Grant Linney is a career outdoor and environmental educator who has observed and written about ICP programs for many years. He is intrigued with their similarities to other extended experiential programs for adolescents, such as those found at the Ontario Camp Leadership Centre (Bark Lake) when it was run by the Ontario government, and at the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, a United World College located on Vancouver Island. He highly recommends a timeless article by Bert Horwood (1995) entitled Energy and Knowledge: The Story of Integrated Curriculum Packages (Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education, *7(4)).*

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- ☐ Regular $50.00
- ☐ Student/Retiree $35.00
- ☐ Family $60.00
- ☐ Library $60.00 (Subscription to *Pathways* only)
- ☐ Organization $125.00

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

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

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

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

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

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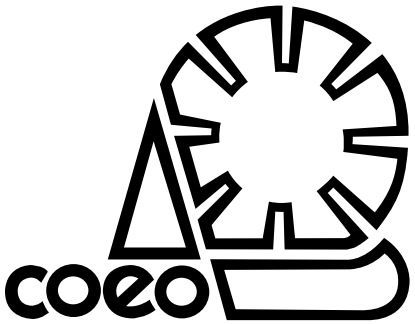

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