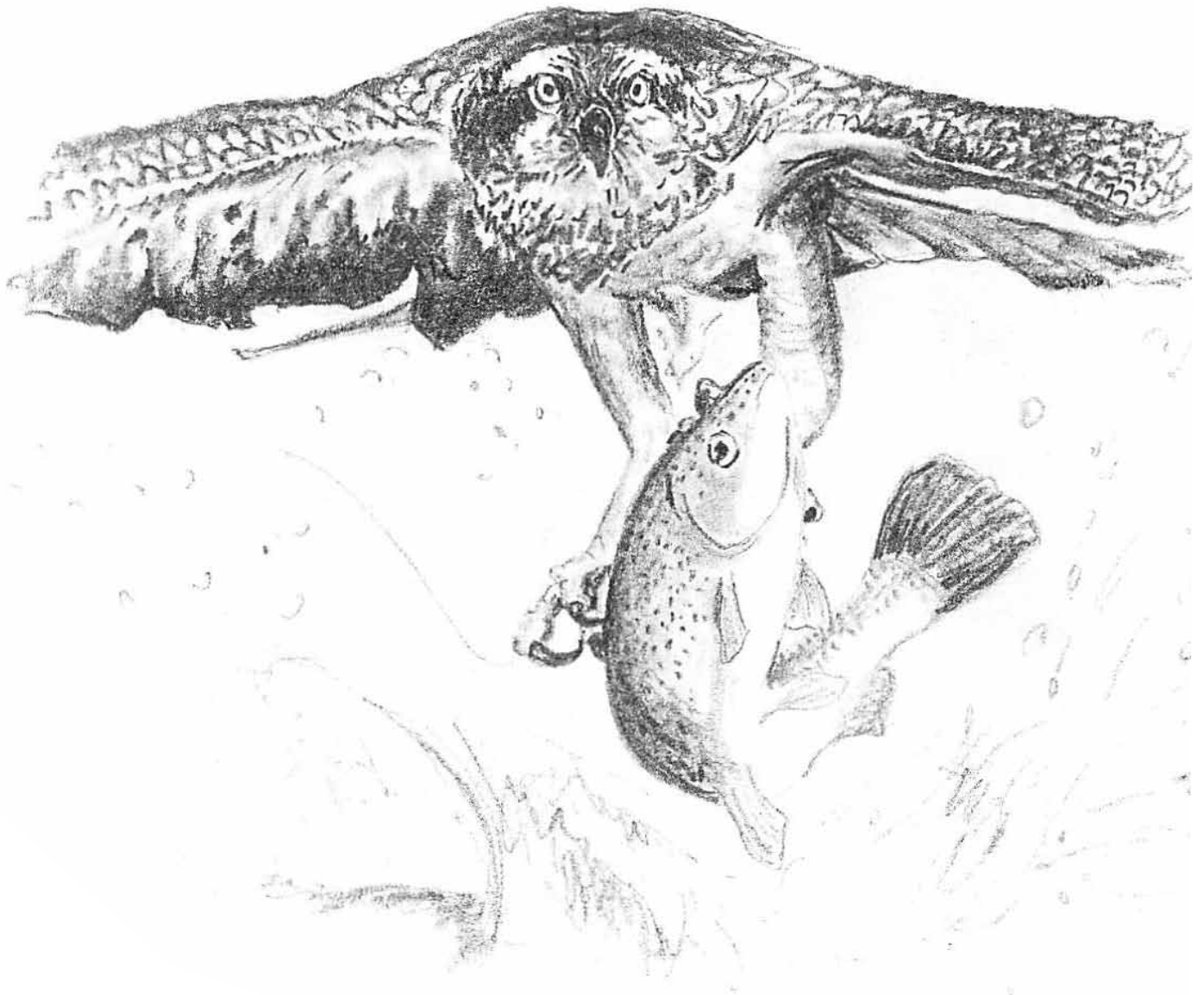
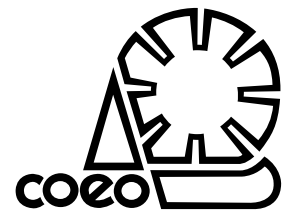


# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF  
Fall 2012, 25(1)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



# Pathways

## COEO

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

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## Pathways

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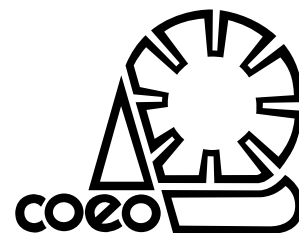
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# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Fall 2012, 25(1)



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From the north shore of Lake Superior in Thunder Bay, it is a pleasure to present you with this theme issue on place-based education. Cliff Knapp provides a strong foundation for this issue with an excellent overview of the field of place-based education. Inspired by Knapp's article, I asked friends and colleagues why place-based education is important, and their answers were profound:

- We shape our places and our places shape us.
- Places help us gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and how we can contribute positively to the world. The more we understand and know ourselves and the places around us, the more likely we are to care for and love them—thus creating healthier ecosystems, communities and human beings.
- Place-based education has the power to provoke change.
- Languages, cultures and stories grow out of particular places. Place-based education is engaging and empowers us to construct our personal, social and cultural identities based on lived experience and connection with place.
- Place-based education develops meaningful, authentic connections with the world and creates spaces for us to journey both outwards and inwards, evolving as creative place makers and agents of intentional change.

What has been your experience? Is a place-based approach to teaching and learning important to you? How do you integrate various aspects of place (e.g., culture, history, ecology, politics) into your work? What aspects of your socio-ecological communities

do you privilege or neglect as you teach? Does place-based theory inform your practice, as it does for Pat Maher and the field school on Haida Gwaii that he coordinated and writes about in this issue?

How might our personal and professional relationships benefit if we were to cultivate a practice of self-inquiry as Jocelyn Burkhart proposes? Would our relationships with people and places change if we had the opportunity to have a transformative wilderness experience as Philip Liwei and Bella Itenscott describe in their piece?

What questions or thoughts does this issue of *Pathways* raise for you? As this issue goes to print, I am left pondering along with David Greenwood, "How might a consideration of place transform outdoor education?"

---

Scott Caspell

*Editor's Note: A special thank you to Jocelyn Dockerty for her insightful comments and editorial work on this issue.*

Scott Caspell is currently completing an MEd and co-teaching the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education (OE3) Program at Lakehead University. Scott also works with Outward Bound Canada as an Instructor Trainer and as the Nunavut Youth Leadership Program Coordinator.

Jocelyn Dockerty is currently a BEd candidate at Lakehead University. She is excited to be expanding her idea of what an educator can/should be through the Outdoor Ecological and Experiential Education Program within the Faculty of Education.

**Sketch Pad** – Charlotte Jacklein is a teacher and wilderness guide currently based between the beautiful Niagara Escarpment and shores of Lake Ontario. Her art appears on pages 25 and 26.

Erin Cameron (nee Carter) grew up in a small French farming community in southeastern Manitoba. From incubating chicken eggs in her room to collecting maple syrup in the spring, Erin developed a strong sense of wonder and curiosity for the natural world. Erin is currently pursuing a PhD in Education at Lakehead University exploring ideas of health and well-being. Erin's art appears on the cover and on pages 3, 7, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 29.

Well, if you weren't at our 40th Anniversary Conference this September, let me tell you—you should've been there, 'cause you missed a good one! This conference was a huge success thanks in large part to the thoughtful planning of co-chairs Ron Williamson and Bob Henderson and the efforts of their amazing conference organizing committee. It was an inspirational weekend for many, but for me personally, it was especially impactful as I had the opportunity to meet with many of our organization's founders and long-time contributors. As someone who is truly passionate about COEO, its goals and the future of outdoor education, having had this chance to interact and learn from many of COEO's elders was both an enriching and motivating experience. Since the fall conference I have had many conversations with members who shared a similar conference experience and who are now stepping forward to lend their hand to a variety of projects within COEO—and so the ripples have begun.

Now that our 40th anniversary year has gotten off to such a great start, I feel it is necessary to mention some of the other COEO-sponsored events that will be taking place during the next few months.

Planning for Make Peace with Winter 2013 is already well underway. Our host site this year is the Ganaraska Forest Centre, which is located along the Oak Ridges Moraine just north of Port Hope. It is sure to be another amazing weekend packed full of professional development, experiential learning and winter fun. The call for workshop proposals has now been sent out and the conference committee is hoping to see many members register for this great event.

I, along with a group of six other students from Queen's University, am hard at work putting together the Canadian Student Outdoor Education Conference (first annual!). This new event is student led and organized and has been made possible by funding received from the COEO 40th Anniversary Special Project Grants. Graduate, undergraduate, BEd and college students from across Canada will meet to present oral

or poster contributions on various research topics related to outdoor education, lead a variety of workshops, share games and learning activities, and attend special invited lectures. The Canadian Student Outdoor Education Conference will be named in honour of Bert Horwood, Honourary Life Member of COEO and retired Queen's University Professor.

Finally, it is time once again to thank all of the board members from the past year for everything they have done to support COEO. These individuals have taken time out of their busy schedules to insure the smooth running of our organization and it must be stated that everyone did a superb job! Specifically, the efforts of Deborah Diebel and Bill Schoenhardt should be recognized. Both Deb and Bill have done amazing work these past two years in the roles of Membership Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, and have also agreed to stay on with the board for at least one more year. The Board of Directors is also happy to be welcoming some fresh faces into the fold including Ruthie Annis, COEO's new Volunteer Coordinator. Ruthie is excited to be taking over this role and is ready to assist interested members with finding the right type of task or job to take on within our organization. Members interested in volunteering can send an email to [volunteercoordinator@coeo.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@coeo.org).

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Kyle Clarke



## Place-based Education: Listening to the Language of the Land and People

By Clifford E. Knapp

The intersection of place and education has occupied much of my teaching even though the field has not always been called place-based education. I began my career in 1961 as a high school science teacher. When I took my students outside to plant and identify trees, build nature trails and predict weather, I described what we did as outdoor education. In 1972 when I taught seventh grade science we took field trips to the local water and sewage treatment plant, a geology museum and a forest to study tree management practices. I described this as environmental education. Before I retired from teaching in 2001 as a professor in the Teaching and Learning Department of Northern Illinois University, I took my graduate students to a local bookstore to learn about its role in the community, on a walk in the business district to study architectural styles, and to an arboretum to observe tree damage from pollution. Only then, did I describe this way of teaching as place-based education.

In all three of these examples, I used the place and people in the community as living textbooks to teach parts of the curriculum best learned in context through direct experiences. I did this because I believed in experiential education and knew these people and places were the best teachers. The places in these communities were strong factors in my choices of what and how to teach. I viewed the curriculum through a lens that magnified opportunities to involve my students in authentic and engaging interactions with a more expansive classroom. Place-based education is an old idea and at the same time it is a new term and movement that evolved from its predecessors. This modern approach to teaching incorporates the best of the best practices, as educators understand them today.

David Sobel (2004), a pioneer in the field, described place-based education as “the pedagogy of community, the reintegration of the individual into her homeground and the restoration of the essential links between a person and her place” (p. ii). The first time the term was used in the United States was by Sobel in his book and on a cover designed by The Orion Society (1998). Over time, place/education approaches have sported different names. This idea of teaching about the local environment has been called nature study (Wilson, 1916), bioregional education (Traina & Darley-Hill, 1995), ecological education (Smith & Williams, 1999), environment as an integrating context for learning (EIC) (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998), a pedagogy of place (Hutchison, 2004) and community-based education (Smith & Sobel, 2010). More recent names include contextual teaching and learning (Sears, 2002), watershed education (Michael, 2003) and life-place education (Berg, 2004). Another emerging synonym is environment-based learning.

All of these terms describe programs demonstrating how local places contribute to curriculum and instruction in schools and other educational institutions. Sometimes other descriptors are used to explain why extending education into the community is simply a good teaching technique. For example, in an article appearing in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1967 the authors labeled their plan for school reform “a proposal for education in community” (Newmann & Oliver, 1967). The school building was where teachers planned, set objectives and taught basic literacy skills to students. They went into the community to visit factories, art studios, hospitals, libraries and other laboratories to generate learning. The third part of their proposal was the in-school seminar where local “experts” helped students reflect on and apply what they learned in the community

laboratories. In that same year the National Council for the Social Studies (Collings, 1967) reissued a 1955 publication titled, *How to Utilize Community Resources*. It was designed to help teachers learn from their communities. In 1970 the National Science Foundation funded a curriculum project titled, Environmental Studies for Urban Youth (ES). Commenting on that project, Romey stated, “The student determines and investigates whatever is of interest to him [sic] within the available learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom” (1972, p. 322).

Naming or labeling a teaching method or philosophy may make the idea easier to communicate to others, although it sometimes creates confusion about what the term being defined really means. Jonathan Sime cautions: “The concept of place is reaching the early stages of academic maturity. Undoubtedly, there are confusions in the way the concept is used at present” (as cited in Hutchinson, 2004, p. 12). This article defines place-based education, pedagogy of place and sense of place. It gives examples of different types of educational programs having common characteristics at their core and explains why place-based education is an important educational reform. To provide historical perspective, I describe the progressive education reform movement that took place in the United States, Great Britain and other countries about 100 years ago. Finally, I compare that movement with the place-based education movement of today. My hope is to provide useful information, but mostly I want to stimulate the reader’s curiosity by raising questions. Niels Bohr, atomic physicist, told his students: “Every sentence that I utter should be regarded by you not as an assertion but as a question” (as cited in Klose, 2009, p. 768). My hope is that my words will help you connect to places through a greater understanding of their educational potential.

### Looking Back at Place-based Learning

Long ago, before schools were invented to educate the young, children learned

from their families and from others in their communities. If they wanted to learn a trade, they apprenticed and were taught by a skilled master. If they wanted to cook, sew and clean, they gained these skills from their parents. Comenius (1592–1670), an educational reformer, wrote: “We should learn as much as possible, not from books, but from the great book of Nature, from heaven and earth, from oaks and beeches” (as cited in Quick, 1890, p. 77). Rousseau (1712–1778), a Swiss/French philosopher, believed: “[The ideal boy’s] ideas are confined, but clear; he knows nothing by rote, but a great deal by experience. If he reads less well than another child in our books, he reads better in the book of nature” (as cited in Quick, 1890, p. 118). Pestalozzi (1746–1827), a teacher from Zurich, Switzerland stated, “nature offers the succession of impressions to the child’s senses without any regular order” (as cited in Quick, 1890, p. 184). Throughout the history of schooling many educational reformers advocated for direct experiences in the community as a way to improve how students learned important knowledge. Later, when schools were established, instruction became more separated from the community and less experiential; practical educators today continue to offer school reform proposals in hopes of finding better ways to teach and learn.

### The Progressive Education Movement

Public education has long been a contested arena in societies around the world. People continue to hold different views about how to educate students and what is important for them to know. When people become discontented with how schooling is conducted, they suggest educational reform. In the United States, beginning as early as the 1870s (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995), a new progressive movement challenged the way students were educated. Critics did not like the way meaningless routines, rote memory, long recitations, regimentation and passive learning characterized traditional education. There is no agreement on the exact dates of the progressive reform movement in the

United States, but most historians agree that it flourished from the 1890s to the 1930s (Hines, as cited in Squire, 1972). The Progressive Education Association was founded in 1919 and disbanded in 1955. Progressive education was not a unified movement. At least three streams were identified: 1) “child-centered, or children’s interest and needs approach”, 2) “the creative values approach”, and 3) “the social-reconstructionist approach” (Hines as cited in Squire, 1972, p. 118).

John Dewey was one of the leading proponents of the child-centered approach in the United States. He also was known outside the country through his books, articles and lectures. He promoted experiential education: “Experience [outside the school] has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it” (1915, p. 91). He also wrote, “The teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources” (1938, p. 40). Dewey outlined some common principles found in progressive schools: 1) promoting expression and cultivation of individuality (as opposed to imposition from above), 2) nurturing freedom of activity (as opposed to external discipline), 3) learning mainly through experience (as opposed to texts and teachers), 4) acquiring meaningful skills (as opposed to drill), 5) using the learning opportunities of present life (as opposed to preparation for a remote future), and 6) adapting to a changing world (as opposed to static aims and materials) (McDonald, as cited in Squire, 1972, p. 2). Progressive educators viewed the curriculum as ecological and linked to the broader community. Therefore it included what happened there as well as in the school building.

Whenever theoretical principles of a movement are briefly outlined like this, opportunities for misinterpretations are likely. This was true in the case of Dewey’s

message and in much of the progressive education movement. Advocates for this movement point out how Dewey and other progressive educators were misunderstood (Squire, 1972; Wang, 2007; Tanner, 1997; Lauderdale, 1981). Because educators interpreted progressive education in various ways, and because implementing the theory and practice took hard work, the movement eventually lost power in the mainstream and was replaced by more traditional and abstract approaches to education—mostly by transmitting knowledge through lectures and the written word. Progressivism never died out completely, however; rather it moved outside in the form of outdoor and experiential education (Knapp, 1994). In some cases, it re-emerged in schools (especially some private and charter schools) and nature centres. Some educators continue to implement progressive educational methods because they recognize that their students respond well to them. Do you know teachers and schools that could be called progressive today?

### A Crisis of Place?

Why is a pedagogy of place important for educators to understand and implement? Some believe that today’s youth, especially in Western societies, are missing important connections to their surroundings. Phillip Sheldrake (2001) refers to this problem as a crisis of place characterized by “a sense of rootlessness, dislocation or displacement” (p. 2). Bill McKibben (1993) described this alienation from nature, rapid globalization and loss of skills needed for self-sufficiency as “a moment of deep ignorance, when vital knowledge that humans have always possessed about who we are and where we live seems beyond our reach. An Unenlightenment. An age of missing information” (p. 9). Laurie Lane-Zucker (2004) calls for a “fundamental reimagining of the ethical, economic, political, and spiritual foundations upon which society is based, and ... this process needs to occur within the context of a deep local knowledge of place” (p. iii). In a study of primary school children’s knowledge of natural and non-natural objects in the United Kingdom,



researchers found that after age eight, children could recognize more Pokemon characters than common local wildlife (Senauer, 2007, p. 7). According to another study, "Few American school children can name more than a few of the plants or birds in their own neighborhoods, yet studies have shown the average American child can identify over one thousand corporate logos" (Michael, 2003, p. xii). If you believe that today's youth are in crisis by lacking connections to their local community, you may want to implement a pedagogy of place in your schools. One response to this crisis of place was the formation of the Children & Nature Network in 2006. Co-founders Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, (2008) and Cheryl Charles, former director of two leading environmental curriculum supplements (Project Learning Tree and Project WILD), led the way. Now the network is a strong force in promoting nature activities to combat "nature-deficit disorder" in the United States and Canada. I have attended the group's national gatherings and find great energy and enthusiasm there.

### A Pedagogy of Place

David Orr (1992) gives four reasons to integrate place into the educational curriculum. First, the study of a place requires teaching through "direct observation, investigation, experimentation, and application of knowledge" (p. 128). Experiential learning capitalizes on the rich content found in specific places. Problem-based learning in the context of place investigations has been shown to engage students actively and increase their understanding of required concepts. Second, "the study of place is relevant to the problems of overspecialization, which has been called a terminal disease of contemporary civilization" (Orr, 1992, p. 129). In other words, place involves the study of many interrelated disciplines. Place-based education demonstrates how knowledge from various content areas is needed to understand place at an ecological level. This is how learning originally occurred before educators divided up

knowledge into separate and often unrelated compartments. Third, the study of place gives rise to many significant projects that serves to improve policy and practice in communities. These activities leading to more sustainable community practices can promote policy change related to "food, energy, architecture, and waste" (Orr, 1992, p. 129). Fourth, some view the destruction of local community life as a "source of the instability, disintegration and restlessness which characterize the present epoch" (Orr, 1992, p. 130). The study of place can serve to reeducate people in the art of living well where they are. An inhabitant refers to a person who dwells "in an intimate, organic, and mutually nurturing relationship



with a place" (Orr, 1992, p. 130).

Do you know students who have a close relationship to where they live? Implementing a pedagogy of place enables educators to plan the instructional programs that spring from within the contexts of local areas.

### A Sense of Place

My earliest contact with the concept of a sense of place came in the early 1970s from the artist Alan Gussow speaking at a conference. He described a place as a

piece of the whole environment that was claimed by feelings (1974). This made sense because I learned best when I felt attracted to the content and saw it as meaningful to my life. I can remember special places from my childhood—the sandy beaches at the Atlantic Ocean, school athletic fields, a children’s camp, and the lakes and streams where I fished. I had feelings of excitement, joy, satisfaction, and security there. These places shaped my sense of self and eventually led to my career as a place-based educator. I agree with Hug’s (1998) definition that a “sense of place is the meaning, attachment, and affinity (conscious or unconscious) that individuals or groups create for a particular geographic space through their lived experiences associated with that space” (p. 79). Albert Camus described it this way: “Sense of place is not just something that people know and feel, it is something people do” (in Basso, 1996, p. 143). In order to have a strong sense of place a person has to have been actively engaged in those places doing something important. This “doing” needs to raise a person’s level of awareness to a point that changes a person’s view of the place. How has your personal identity been influenced by the places you’ve been?

The idea of a sense of place is difficult to quantify, just like a sense of joy, sense of community, or sense of wonder are. However, this does not mean that the concept is not important. My sense of place is strong if I experience many positive feelings somewhere and it is weak if I feel disconnected from that place. However, there is a downside to being closely attuned to a place. If you move away or that place is harmed or destroyed you might feel sad or angry. When I was a child, I walked to school on a familiar path through a vacant lot of trees. I came to love some of the plants growing there, especially a plant called skunk cabbage. When that land was sold and a house built there, I felt a deep sense of loss and sadness. My special plant and path were gone. Losing a special place happened to me again as an adult. I live along a tree-lined river in my town. For years, I walked there to find peace and

relaxation. I even built a trail and invited the community to share nature with me. I had fallen in love with that place because of the good feelings I found there. When the park district bulldozed the trees, leveled the land, and placed stone riprap on the shore, I felt another sense of loss of landscape. Whenever I go there I know my sense of place is violated. Have you ever lost a special place that had claimed your feelings?

### Place and the Disciplines of Study

Disciplinary content in the study of place extends beyond art and education. According to Philip Sheldrake (2001) “place has become a significant theme in a wide range of writing including philosophy, cultural history, anthropology, human geography, architectural theory and contemporary literature” (p. 2). To this list Hutchinson (2004) added psychology and urban planning. Because place-based education includes many disciplines, it is well suited to being incorporated into much of the school curriculum. Gregory Smith (2002) described five different thematic patterns or models of place-based education in American schools. The first model, Cultural Studies, focuses on collecting information about the people living in an area. Students can interview these people and then write about their lives. The Foxfire program, begun in Georgia in 1966 by a high school English teacher, is one example of this model (Hatton, 2005). Many of these interviews and photographs became part of the Foxfire book series published by a major New York publishing company.

The second model, Nature Studies, emphasizes investigations of local natural phenomena. These studies lead to conservation and restoration projects to improve the local environment. Whenever one or more teachers in a school plan to teach students about their ecological addresses as well as their home addresses, they create a more knowledgeable citizenry. One example of this model is River of Words in Moraga, California (Michael, 2003). One project of this non-profit organization is promoting an international poetry and art

contest for youth each year.

The third model, Real-world Problem Solving, involves the identification of community problems and issues. These problems and issues result from the clash between culture and nature. The student projects include learning about biology, physics, psychology, mathematics, economics, politics, and other subjects. One example of this model is promoted by Harold Hungerford and his colleagues at Southern Illinois University (Hungerford, Litherland, Peyton, Ramsey, & Volk 1996). Designed for middle school students (ages 10–14), this program helps students learn the steps for dealing with controversial place-based topics in the region.

The fourth model, Internships and Entrepreneurial Opportunities, explores the economic options available to students. Students examine various vocational possibilities by shadowing employees in local businesses or by taking on service learning assignments.

The fifth model, Induction into Community Processes, allows students to become more involved in the life of the community's decision-making processes by learning how local government works. By partnering with those agencies responsible for the day-to-day operations of a community, students become more engaged and responsible citizens.

Smith's five models show that place-based curricular reform takes several different forms. He identified some common elements in all models: 1) surrounding phenomena are the foundation for developing the curriculum; 2) students become creators of knowledge more than consumers of knowledge created by others; 3) students' questions and concerns play a central role in what is studied; 4) teachers act primarily as "brokers" for connecting students to learning possibilities in the community; 5) separation between the community and school is minimized; and 6) assessment is based on how student work contributes to the well-being and sustainability of the community.

### Implementing Place-based Education

It may be useful to envision what might happen if teachers or entire school staffs decide to implement place-based education. What might that look like in the lives of students, teachers and administrators? All of these projections are based on some empirical studies, anecdotal evidence and my experience, but clearly more research is needed. For more information about the benefits of place-based education, I recommend reading Andrew Kemp's (2006) chapter, "Engaging the Environment: A Case for a Place-based Curriculum" (pp. 125–142). Another reference is fact sheet #2 available from the University of Colorado at Denver ([www.cudenver.edu/cye](http://www.cudenver.edu/cye)). Smith and Sobel's book, *Place- and Community-based Education in Schools* (2010) gives a powerful rationale for implementing this approach in schools. The most obvious outcome of a well-taught place-based curriculum is that students develop a strong sense of place for where they live. They feel rooted and connected there. They know the history of their place and discover where to find beauty as well as blight. They have a better sense of their personal identities because there is a positive relationship between knowing your place and knowing yourself. Students grasp how community officials make decisions affecting their daily lives. They also know more about the critical issues facing local governments and may get involved in some of them. Students become aware of their own ecological ethic and want to take steps to maintain the community's sustainability into the future. They demonstrate a reverence for life and a love of nature and are motivated to care for local ecosystems. They want to learn more about their place because they experience the joy and satisfaction of learning relevant concepts, skills and values. They find many opportunities to apply the concepts, skills and values learned at school. Students improve as team members as more and more community projects are completed cooperatively. They are able to move between the school building and the rest of the community with greater ease and confidence.

Because of the students' enthusiastic responses to learning, teachers look forward to going to school each day. Teachers notice that their classroom climate has improved as a result of a curriculum that engages students. Teachers realize that the students are retaining information learned in meaningful contexts and scores on certain tests and other indicators are slowly rising. Teachers look better in the eyes of their administrators and receive more acknowledgements. They realize that students are learning about their place through a variety of disciplines, including mathematics, science, history, government, language, art, music and physical education. Teachers are able to teach their students about higher order executive functions (habits of mind) such as asking better questions, critically analyzing, problem solving and evaluating their own thinking processes through lessons about place. They set textbooks aside in favour of learning through direct experiences and new information found in the community. They lecture less and let the places and the residents do more of the teaching. Their main role is to facilitate learning more than transmit knowledge. Teachers gain confidence in their ability to build challenging curriculum from the rich contexts in their community and surrounding region. They feel like creative and innovative educators and not mere technicians of a scripted curriculum.

If all of these transformations become visible in students and teachers, school administrators will be deeply satisfied. They will receive frequent praise from parents and other members of the community for running a successful school. They will boast to their fellow administrators about a school reform that works. The positive school climate will reflect a healthy place to be. Place-based education will have contributed to helping the school fulfill its critical role in the community.

Theologian and geologist, Thomas Berry (2006) wrote: "Two things are needed to guide our judgment and sustain our psychic energies for the challenges ahead: a certain

alarm at what is happening at present and a fascination with the future available to us if only we respond creatively to the urgencies of the present" (p. 17). I hope that you share some of the alarm I feel about today's youth becoming alienated from their local natural and cultural worlds and will respond to the urgencies of the present with plans to teach more about your local places.

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## A Place-based Pedagogy: Putting Theory into Practice on Haida Gwaii

By Pat Maher

Place-based education has gained a lot of positive momentum in the past decade, especially amongst outdoor and environmental educators working to create more sustainable ways of living. Education that attends to “place” is linked to a variety of inter-related pedagogies, including those that are outdoor, environmental, ecological, experiential, community-minded and so on. A leader in this broad area, Cliff Knapp, chooses to use the following definition of place-based education: “the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts [in a variety of subjects] across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences...” (Sobel, 2004, p. 7, as cited in Knapp, 2008).

David Greenwood (formerly Gruenewald) and Gregory Smith explain that “place-based education locates itself in the broader traditions of experiential and contextual education...[but that] places and our relationship with them are worthy of our attention because places are powerfully pedagogical” (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. 143). More recently the term “place-responsive” has become used as a continuation of this rhetoric. David Greenwood now uses place-responsive terminology on his web profile for the Canada Research Chair program (search Greenwood at [www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca](http://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca))—“an approach to education that makes sense of local experiences and the study of local community issues, within the broad perspective of global change.” Wattchow and Brown (2011) also propose place responsiveness, arguing that educators assist learners with transitions between schools and their larger socio-ecological communities, and that those learners and educators are indeed responding to places that change over time.

### Theory to Practice

Many recent studies have looked at how the theory and philosophy behind place-based education (and similar fields) can be translated into practice. Most notably, Mullins (2011) and Harrison (2011) have done so using different critical lenses in very different geographical places. A comprehensive overview of place-based education theory is beyond the scope of this article, but many of the references cited expand on theory and are well worth a read. Instead, this article considers place-based *praxis*—how the theory of place-based education extends to shape practice. How do educators use “place” to educate? How do practitioners consider place when designing programs? What are key activities, concerns, issues that occur on the ground?

### Case Study: 2011 ORTM field school on Haida Gwaii

At the same time as I first read Wattchow and Brown’s (2011) book, *A Pedagogy of Place: Outdoor Education for a Changing World*, I was coordinating a field school to Haida Gwaii on British Columbia’s north coast for the University of Northern British Columbia’s (UNBC) Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management (ORTM) Program. This book seemed to offer an ideal combination of theory and practice, with fine examples from Australia and New Zealand. Many of the ideas presented in that book resonated with my own experiences designing the field course and paralleled themes that were arising as students and I engaged with place during our time on Haida Gwaii.

In any case, Wattchow and Brown’s book prompted me to more deeply consider the context within which the development and set up for the 2011 field school took place.

A number of factors helped to explain the wider context of this course. These factors that follow are probably not unique to ORTM or UNBC, but they are the challenges faced within conventional higher education and across disciplines:

1. UNBC is purported to be a university very connected to its region. It is designed to meet the needs of a very specific demographic—northern British Columbia (BC) students and residents. Initially it was marketed as “in the North for the North” and was built when 16,000 citizens across the region (53% of the province’s area) paid their own money (\$5 each) in order to petition the BC government for a university.
2. Personally I believe that we, as UNBC faculty, staff and the student body, could do more to forge even stronger connections to our local place. The main campus is situated in Prince George, on a hill somewhat separate from the rest of town. Prince George is where we tend to focus most of our attention even though we have courses, campuses and students spread all over Northern BC.
3. As a faculty member in the ORTM program, my interest in creating this particular field school was to encourage students to examine our connections with each other and our social and natural communities.
4. UNBC’s overall University Plan (2010) specifically supports community linkages and experiential learning—two key facets of place-based education. Consequently, field schools are well regarded and supported by administrative leaders.

## Location, Location, Location

In setting up the field school I had very specific intentions and connections I hoped to make. I had run two previous field schools to Haida Gwaii in 2008 and 2009, but also saw Haida Gwaii as a relatively

local, yet exotic, destination. I believe that students should explore their backyard before they go off on other UNBC field schools to Guatemala or Russia. All the students on the field school were enrolled at UNBC, and, apart from one exchange student from Tasmania, they came from all over Canada. Most students had visited parts of northern BC before; however, only one had visited Haida Gwaii previously. For the students, Haida Gwaii came with the mystique to be expected of a location frequently showcased in *National Geographic*-type publications. Yet the place also came with expectations of a group experience that would be special—for many it was a capstone experience to their years at UNBC.

Why Haida Gwaii? Why not Prince George and surrounding area? Indeed this choice posed a dilemma I grappled with. While I believe in the importance of helping students connect to their immediate surroundings—the places where they live—the reality is that I do need to “sell” my programs to enough students to make them run. Although I have not yet been able to convince students of the appeal of a comparable course run locally from the main UNBC campus, I was able to invite them on a trip where we could consider *how* to learn in, from and with “place.” Haida Gwaii was the hook—a well-known jewel of BC that people across the world wait their entire life to visit. My hope was that, once there, students would experience the extraordinary and the exotic, but would also learn to see and engage with the subtle magic of more simple, ordinary places, objects and moments. My goal was for them to develop a new way of observing and interacting with places so that upon return to Prince George and their own communities they would be able to see and experience their own places in a new and deeper way.

## Program Specifics

Beginning and ending in Prince Rupert, the program ran for 20 days in late April and early May of 2011. Students could complete



two three-credit courses through the field school: ORTM 332 – Outdoor Education and Leadership, and ORTM 333 – Field Experience. Both of these courses, although generic offerings by the ORTM program, had a combined unique sub-theme: students would “learn about the outdoor living skills related to sea kayaking, the manner in which service learning and conservation intertwine with outdoor education, and the basics of place-based pedagogies.” The field school included skill building, service and conservation, as well as connections to self, community, culture/history and the environment. Here is a brief overview of the field school activities:

- a. Discussions with Parks Canada
- b. Building a deer fence for Mount Moresby Adventure Camp
- c. Removing invasive species with community volunteers from the NW Invasive Plants Council
- d. Visiting the Skedans village site and parts of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site with Moresby Explorers
- e. Having a guided tour of the Haida Heritage Centre
- f. Meeting with many local municipal politicians
- g. Sea kayaking around Louise Island with Green Coast Kayaking
- h. Canoeing on Mosquito Lake

### How and Why Does this Connect to Theory?

The actual field school took the students into the location of Haida Gwaii and introduced them to ecosystems, community members, political and environmental concerns, developments, Haida culture, and even themselves and their peers. However, there were curriculum aspects and assessments that strove to challenge their thinking and compel them to engage—practical components to connect to place.

I will mention only a few examples in this section, but will attempt to also link them to theory. For both courses there was an “active participation” mark, which

promoted student engagement. They had to interact with the place, and they really did through heavy rain storms while camping, through rough seas on a zodiac, ferry and kayak, and through intense living and learning co-existence. The students were obviously engaged because of a mark—unfortunately the norm for much higher education—but there was also an inspiration from the relevance of real-world learning.



In ORTM 332 the major assignment was a 12-page position paper, where students critiqued place-related concepts from two lists. One list contained the three key themes: outdoor education, service-learning and conservation. The second list challenged students to relate to a variety of philosophies from the place-based arena: deep ecology, *friluftsliv*, social ecology, the dwelling perspective, the land ethic and Indigenous approaches to education (Haida specific—the nation of Haida Gwaii, or more general). Each of these arenas has distinct place-based connections and a broad history of literature (see Reed & Rothenberg, 1993; Henderson & Vikander, 2007; Horwood, 1991; Bookchin, 1995; Ingold, 2000; Leopold, 1949; Henley, 1996).

Students submitted these papers before the field school, which helped set the stage for their thinking throughout our time on Haida Gwaii. These papers were to be

written to a standard whereby students could perhaps submit them to a journal such as *Pathways* and hence they had to be concise, accurate and readable. Students also facilitated a 45-minute activity that showcased the combination and exploration of place-related concepts from their papers. Each paper, then, also had to have practical applicability. The paper and the activity combined for more than 50% of their final grade. I highlight these assignments not because they are particularly innovative, but rather to illustrate how the expected conventions of academia can effectively and meaningfully be woven into a more experiential class. Writing the papers served as a form of tone-setting.

The process prepared the students for the field school experience as



it helped them to focus their pre-course knowledge, experience and curiosity. By the time they arrived for the field-school they were already engaged.

In ORTM 333 the key assignments all related to place. For one assignment, students needed to prepare and deliver an engaging 15-minute presentation on a place once our group was physically in that location. Students had to research beforehand, perhaps try to chat with locals “on island,” but when we got to place X they had to be ready to present. There was no limit on the use of the term place, so it could have been a specific landmark such as Tow Hill or the fallen Golden Spruce, simply a beach that their father-in-law had visited in the past, or even just a broad expectation of place, such as the national park. This was the start of an ongoing link to place, whereby each student also had to journal about places they visited and their relationship to course themes (outdoor education, service learning and conservation). A group journal allowed the student community to flourish and create their own identity, but then external community members (e.g. teaching assistants, sea kayak guides, and so on) were invited to also add their thoughts to the journal. Finally, for ORTM 333, there was also a legacy project implemented by each student individually or in small groups, which has served to help with the transition back to school and to encourage students to make linkages to wider issues (one group ran a film festival, another ran a camping weekend for first year ORTM students).

## Conclusion

This is an example of one field school that was striving to shift post-secondary education away from lecture theatres and into communities. It is an example of practice that attempts to connect participants to place: a *particular* place that is dynamic and includes space and time, but also places in general, spaces, moments, interactions where students will find themselves throughout the rest of their lives. The time-place of the 2011 Haida

Gwaii field school cannot be duplicated, but it has sent off some community-minded graduates into the world to contemplate and act in, on, and with places of their own. For me, the field school has prompted further contemplation about the connections between place-based education theory and practice.

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## Pathways to True Nature: Practices and Tools for Self-inquiry in Outdoor Education

*By Jocelyn Burkhart*

This past season, I've had several opportunities to reflect on a most basic and central question: "Who am I?" Each time, the gifted educators facilitating the course in which I was a participant instructed the group to go to the natural world to seek the answer. Whether forest, field, mountain, canyon or water, the place needed to be one that beckoned me uniquely, and where I could sit quietly and receptively, free from the influence of media, cultural institutions, family or friends. In the silence, it became possible to observe the rhythms of the natural world, to find myself mirrored by the beings and systems around me, and, through this, come to understand myself more intimately as a creature embedded within, and sustained by, relationships of Life. Face to face with myself and with nowhere to go or hide, recognition, acceptance and celebration showed themselves experientially as the ways forward, and I returned with an expanded awareness and deeper appreciation for life and my place in it.

In my experience as an outdoor, environmental and experiential educator (most recently with Outward Bound Canada and Lakehead University), I've seen that exercises such as "solo" and "sit spots" are widely known about and sporadically used as teaching tools. In traditional societies, the solo time (or vision quest) and/or walkabout were coming of age rituals for which the youth took considerable time to prepare; these rituals were then facilitated by the Elders of the community. One of the purposes was to help the young person make the transition from adolescence to adulthood by asking the question "Who am I?" and uncovering the unique gift that they alone could offer back to their community (Davis, 2003). Bill Plotkin (2003) laments the loss in our culture of a similar practice, and observes that, while we may "grow up" physically, legally, and even intellectually,

many have not taken the steps needed to mature emotionally or spiritually, or find our own unique place and contribution in the world.

While the intensity, duration, and power of a vision quest or walkabout are preferable for practicing deep and intentional self-inquiry, shorter solo experiences are a valuable reflective tool for any group, at any time. The more time and space we can give to students to enable them to "face themselves," the better they will come to understand who they are as they connect with their own spiritual source and inner knowing, and thus the better able they will be to make decisions about their speech and actions in the world. What I would like to offer in this article are a few practices I have experienced as both a participant and facilitator that help to create and enrich emotionally and spiritually safe spaces for an authentic solo experience. Some of these are drawn from the work of Bill Plotkin, while others come from the yogic teachings of Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram, where I have spent significant time.

While physical, and perhaps also intellectual and interpersonal (or social) safety are also important considerations, I will not address them here, as I think that our field does this quite well already. In fact, when it comes to education in our culture in general, and even in experiential and outdoor education, it is clear that the intellectual, physical and social are privileged over the emotional and spiritual. We tend to learn "about" something else—whether it is a new species, a particular skill, or the group process itself. In this article, I will assume a holistic approach, which is one that welcomes the wholeness of our being and acknowledges, invites and celebrates the emotional, intellectual, physical, interpersonal, ecological and spiritual aspects of our humanness.

So how do we create the spaces that enable inquiry into our whole being—for ourselves and for our students? I have noticed the importance of several key things in particular: trust; an embodied experience through attentive observation of breath and body; a silence that enables deep listening; and a commitment to personal practice.

An authentic solo experience requires complete trust in the process, and a willingness to both surrender to that process and welcome whatever might arise. It requires trust in the beauty, complexity and intelligence of the natural world and its ability to reveal itself to us and ourselves to us through it. It requires trust in the reality of the inner teacher—that it will emerge if simply given the space and time to do so, and trust that the time is well spent, even when no clear or simple answer emerges in the moment. Sometimes, the answers will only unfold with time. And it requires trust that each student is having exactly the experience needed for their own unique learning process; all we can do is our best, and then we need to let go of attachment to a particular outcome.

An embodied experience becomes possible when we turn our attention away from the stories and dialogue that are ever present in the mind, and focus instead on awareness of breath, movement and body sensations. This is something that must be learned. Just as it takes time to learn the art of tracking animals, so too it takes time and practice to learn how to “track” our own experiences, without getting drawn into the drama of the stories that may accompany them. Where are you now? What is happening? What are you experiencing in your body? What are you feeling? What do you notice? What has changed?

Silence and stillness are also important to cultivate. It is in the stillness that we become able to clearly observe the world around us, and in the silence that we become able to listen deeply—to the sounds around us and to the inner wisdom within us. In Western culture, neither silence nor stillness are common nor encouraged, yet cultivating

them can be easily learned when we make a sincere and earnest effort, and when we create the space for our students to do so as well. It is worth noting that stillness can be invited while walking as well, as it more a state of mind than a physical necessity; indeed, some people find that a silent walk through the forest better suits their temperament than a sit spot.

Regardless of how we engage, personal practice of silence and awareness is important in part because we can only teach from our own experience, and in part because it is hard to trust the practices and processes (and thus be able to present them genuinely to our students) unless we’ve experienced them directly. It can be a challenge to make the time to sit in silence and stillness in the natural world, but the grounding, centering and developing of a relationship with oneself and the land that become possible through this process will enrich not only our skill as facilitators and teachers, but also our experience of our own lives.

The following exercises can be helpful in preparing for solo experiences:

Five Senses Awareness: Invite students to notice their experience with all five senses, focusing on each one in turn. This can be a short guided activity, a trust exercise with a partner, or a full-length workshop. Sight can be explored by paying attention to pattern, variation and perspective, and especially symbolism. What are your eyes particularly attracted to? How does this represent some aspect of your life or experience right now? Wild edibles, seasonal berries or dried fruit can be a wonderful way to explore taste, especially if blindfolded or with eyes closed. The earth and foliage provide wonderful variations in smell. Sounds can be explored far away in the distance, in the general area close by, very near to the body and inside the body; this progression can be helpful in drawing focus in to prepare for noticing the touch sense and felt sensations inside the body, as described in the next exercise.

**Breath and Body Awareness:** Invite students to close their eyes, and notice what it feels like to sit or stand where they are. Beginning with the feet, turn attention to each part of the body, noticing sensation and observing without judgment. Take a deep breath, relax the shoulders, neck and face. Notice the breath—the incoming and outgoing breath. Let the breath become deep and even. With each inhale, notice sensation in the body, and with each exhale, relax more fully.

**Identifying Personal Questions:** Having a facilitator offer reflective questions for a solo experience can work very well. However, it can be very powerful for students to identify their own questions as well. Following a time of quiet relaxation, such as the progression of exercises described above, invite students to keep their eyes closed and to imagine a mountain or a path—simply noticing what comes to mind. Suggest that this mountain or path represents their life. Ask, “Where are you now? Where have you been? Where do you want to go? What are the obstacles? What do you need to know or understand?” Then give students time to record their observations, and to write down the questions they have identified for themselves.

The following exercises can be helpful while out on solo:

**Threshold:** To mark the beginning and end of solo time on the land, invite students to find some thing or feature that can function as a “threshold” or “gate” through which they pass as they enter their own personal solo space, and through which they will leave the space as well. Explain that on the other side of the threshold, there will be no other human interaction—that it is a time for them to be with themselves and in the natural world. This technique helps to focus the intention of creating a special, quiet, sacred space. It also helps students to feel safe and to engage more earnestly with their surroundings.

**Quiet Sitting and Noticing:** Encourage students to spend time sitting quietly and noticing their experience. If there is an urge to speak, sing or move, instead of fulfilling that urge immediately, inquire into it: What part of me wants to move? And why? If hunger or thirst arises, ask first: What am I really hungry or thirsty for? Each moment or encounter—whether with an external sensory input or internal sensation or thought—is an opportunity



to use symbolism to inquire more deeply into oneself. This ability to “face oneself” is an incredibly beneficial skill to cultivate. When this level of awareness is brought to our everyday impulses and urges, we become able to respond truly, wisely and intentionally, rather than to simply react to the unexpected situations that arise in life.

Conversations with an Other: Encourage students to enter into a conversation with trees, creatures, places or things they find particularly intriguing or special. Suggest that they do this by first observing the other. For example: “I see you pine...I see you long needled, red barked. I see you windswept, cone laden, fire scarred...” Suggest that after a bit of time spent observing the Other, students begin to enter into conversation with it. Suggestions can include: tell your life story or the story of some aspect of your life; tell that place or being about something that is challenging, sad or scary for you, or share something you would like help with; ask your personally identified solo questions. Take along a journal or notebook to record any insights that emerge.

With all of these exercises your attitude as the facilitator will influence the students’ experience and willingness to engage with the activity. If you feel skeptical, try it yourself first, so that your instructions can be based on your own experience. Your earnest and matter-of-fact tone will invite them into the exercise in a way that feels safe, legitimate and fun.

Upon returning to the group, it is important to create space for students to share and reflect. Encourage each person to “tell the story” of their experience and create a structure where no one will interrupt or comment on each other’s stories, but simply listen and notice their own response. What happened? What was your experience? What do you want to remember? Again, silence is important and powerful here. By allowing the storyteller to speak their truth without interruption, they will hear in their own words exactly what they need to hear. And in listening to each other, we learn more about

ourselves, through noticing what stands out to us in the speaker’s story, or what generates an unexpected emotional response.

If questions are asked, take pause to reflect on and evaluate the question: Is the question being asked for the benefit of the storyteller, or is it rather to satisfy the curiosity of the person asking the question? Bringing awareness to the motivation and intention underlying our questions can help to discern whom they are serving, and whether they should be vocalized or perhaps just noticed.

The solo experience is a unique experience for each person. It is a chance to be alone with oneself in the natural world, and have an opportunity to listen deeply and honestly without distraction or influence. It is important for everyone, and especially young people, to engage regularly in the process of self-inquiry that becomes possible in this environment. The more we know ourselves, the more truthfully, honestly and authentically we can speak and act in the world, and the greater chance we will have of finding and following a life path that is satisfying and fulfilling. So give yourself and your students the gift of silence and stillness in the natural world, and enjoy the blessings that come from discovering your own true nature.

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## Company the Earth Provides

By Philip Liwei and Bella Itenscott

I yell louder. “What? I can’t hear anything!”

Mr. Liwei turns off his rumbling snowmobile. Silence falls over winter in Temagami.

“Experience the land,” Mr. Liwei repeats as he turns me around to adjust my backpack. “Got your tarp; looks good.” He spins me back around to see that I am holding a map, a compass and a small piece of paper with instructions—seven steps to using the map and compass.

“Could we please go through this just once more?”

- 1) Find where you are (A); find where you are going (B)
- 2) Put compass on map
- 3) Line up compass lines with map lines
- 4) Put north in right direction on map
- 5) Add 12 degrees for declination
- 6) Align red arrow with north
- 7) Walk toward direction of travel arrow

“So following these steps, if it is 45 degrees it now becomes 57 degrees, and the direction of travel would be...”

I am calculating—holding the compass in hand while turning my body and trying to figure out which way to go. Mr. Liwei gives me a hug and says with a firm nod, “You’re good.” He then jumps on his machine, pulls to start the engine and off he goes. I am still. I stand alone.

Today, each senior outdoor leader (SOL) of Northward Bound outdoor education will trek through a part of the great Temagami forest on his or her own and all will eventually meet in the middle of a mountain northeast of base camp. There sits a beaver-dammed lake called Moose Pond.

The instructions for the day are simple: get from point A to point B. Each SOL will start from somewhere different on the map. We

will travel inward for kilometres, aiming for Moose Pond. It is a big deal. No one wants to get lost. Though, it’s impossible to get lost in the deep snow. Simply retrace your steps back to the beginning of the journey and there will be help. I know that much.

We will build self-awareness. We will build confidence and a lot of other skills as outdoor leaders relying only on a map and compass, a backpack and a few other key items—tarp, small first aid kit, fire tools, a bag of trail mix, trip journal, a water bottle, a couple of pens and some extra wool socks and layers. I make sure I have everything.

*“It is the collapse of one’s confidence that gets people lost.”*

I turn around and the ground beneath me rotates. My view shifts from the open, frozen lake to a now completely white birch forest. I check my compass and narrow my direction; to get to Moose Pond I must travel 57 degrees northeast for two kilometres. I am capable of this. I am a senior outdoor leader. I step into the birch forest—the ancient maze. After a few more steps I check my compass again—57 degrees. I take a couple more steps. I am leaving a trail of footprints that mark my journey through the forest. Soon, I will disappear into a world of white.

The map tells me that I am to pass a small body of water somewhere along the way. Looking around and taking a moment to gather myself, I remember to always trust my compass and to never doubt it. It is sometimes not the technical skills that get people lost in the ancient maze. It’s the doubt, and the feeling of being alone. It is the collapse of one’s confidence that gets people lost.

I check my compass again—57 degrees. I focus on the compass, making sure it doesn’t



attempt to trick me. I put away the map, adjust my backpack and on I walk. I pick objects for the compass arrow, moving from tree to tree to rock to tree. Whatever this arrow points to is the object I move toward and direction I travel; in complete whiteness, I cannot afford to take my eyes off the target. I must focus, for only two kilometres.

My eyes are chained to these target objects so that I can navigate linearly at 57 degrees through the forest. I am so focused that I don't see anything else around me. I miss a step, tripping forward to hit my shin. Holding my eyes shut in pain, I press my forehead into one knee while massaging my injured shin. A deep breath enters my lungs to stem the pain. Something else enters with the breath. Sweet pine. I detect this rich perfume filling up my body and gradually the ache seems to retreat. I open my eyes.

In front of me is a stand of pines under the blue-grey sky, hugging the very small body of water that, according to the map, I am supposed to hit along the way. I am relieved to know that my destination is near.

I hear many stories coming from the water. I poke my head through towering pines, searching for them. I find, instead, a beaver lodge just a couple of yards ahead. This body of water is so small I can barely move without bumping the back of my head on the pines behind, and the tip of my nose on the beaver lodge in front. I feel this distance between myself and the beaver's makeshift floor.

Many stories continue to grow—they come from all around. There is rhythm. There is a pulse spreading from the land up and around my legs. I put my compass away and adjust—my posture this time, not my backpack. I close my eyes and listen to stories waft back and forth through the forest, massaging my hair. There is no other place that feels so right and so full of life. This is a whole new way of listening to the land. This move across landscape demands that I collect stories.

Way high up on a white pine, a woodpecker wearing a red helmet bangs away, hammering out planks of wood and scattering them in a pile on the snow beneath. The woodpecker slides down an inch, and wood planks scatter some more. Soon, gossiping red cardinals moving from tree to tree will ask every animal in the forest if they have seen the rise of a wood plank cabin, built with white pine timber. The birds will post updates until more recent news of a hungry raven clawing a bloody bunny stops their tweeting. The account of this gruesome feast is the red table cloth over lichen rock.

I have a better sense of myself and my body, location and environment now that the compass is in my pocket. Always chewing my mantric verse: Experience the land, let my body be the guide. I was in the lodge the other day and I read an old quote by Marcel Proust that had been hanging on the wall for years: "The real act of discovery consists not in finding new land but in seeing with new eyes." I hadn't noticed this quote in all my four years coming to Temagami. I believe that the quote sums up a lot of what Mr. Liwei had been discussing with us over the past week in our training as outdoor leaders. I have journeyed through Temagami countless times and I have seen the same trees, the same lake, the same Milky Way reflected over black, still water. But the same things seem different now. I am discovering with new eyes.

When I go back to school in a few days, after this SOL winter training week, I expect a really big change. I will catch myself just standing and looking at the sky or the trees or the lake. I will get this feeling in my chest that I will not be able to describe. In a few weeks, when I lead my own winter trip, I will try to help my younger students see all this. I know that it won't be easy and I know that it will take a while. After all, it took me four years to really discover that I was never alone in Temagami.

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## What is Outside of Outdoor Education? Becoming Responsive to Other Places

By David A. Greenwood

A review of Wattchow, B. & Brown, M. (2011). *A pedagogy of place: Outdoor education for a changing world*. Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Press.

As someone who follows the literature around place and education, and who is always curious to see how diverse educators and learners around the planet learn from diverse places, I was very interested to read Brian Wattchow (Australia) and Mike Brown's (New Zealand) book, *A Pedagogy of Place: Outdoor Education for a Changing World* (2011). While it does not significantly address the local/global tensions inherent in contemporary place study (Heise, 2008; Nespor, 2008), this book represents a major contribution to the place-conscious educational literature. It is one of the first book-length inquiries in the genre that effectively blends theory and practice, cultural and ecological contexts, as well as personal and professional perspectives. Wattchow and Brown write with authority and affection about the places in Australia and New Zealand that they love and that they continue to learn from through their work as seasoned outdoor educators. Their stories of place should inspire people everywhere to pay attention to what nearby places have to teach. *A Pedagogy of Place* also raises significant questions about competing meanings of place, the value of adjectival educations and the complex ways in which learners might become more place-responsive in the outdoors.

The kayak on the cover of Wattchow and Brown's book is a good emblem for what one finds inside—an intellectual and embodied journey recounted in the voices of the two place-attached authors who have deep experience in outdoor learning. The journey begins with stories of how each author connected to outdoor places as children and adults and integrates these stories into descriptions of their experiences as outdoor

educators. Next, the authors provide a convincing critique of the ironic absence of place-responsiveness in the field of outdoor education and offer a very insightful review of the meanings of place, which seem especially productive for continuing to build theory in place-responsive education. In the last part of the book, the authors narrate compelling case studies of place-responsive outdoor education practice in Australia and New Zealand. The book ends with a discussion of "signposts to a place-responsive pedagogy." These signposts provide an elegant framework for considering how educators and learners might become more responsive to the teachings of places everywhere, such as

1. being present in and with a place
2. the power of place-based stories and narratives
3. apprenticing ourselves to outdoor places
4. the representation of place experiences (p. 182)

It strikes me that any outdoor or environmental education theory or practice that fails to engage with any one of these powerful signposts is neglecting an opportunity to develop multivocal and multisensory relationships between learners and the places where they live.

The narrative writing style in *A Pedagogy of Place* (with the emphasis here on a pedagogy rather than the pedagogy or pedagogies) is very accessible and engaging, and the scholarship is also deep in its examination of outdoor education and its relation (or lack of relation) to the discourse of place and place-responsive learning. I find that the book would be an excellent introduction to place-responsive education for any group of educators interested in place. In its focus on getting outside for deep experiences that involve paying attention to place, the book offers an implicit critique of all

indoor education, and also place-based experiences that are merely conceptual or too brief and disconnected to become storied place-responsive relationships that can only develop through a longer apprenticeship. This critique could be directed as well toward “cosmopolitan” views of learning that trade movement, speed or a “global” perspective for the presence and kinds of attention required to open to what places have to teach. In this regard, *A Pedagogy of Place* is a welcome reprieve from the deepening problematic trend that Aldo Leopold described over a half century ago: “[O]ur educational...system is headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land” (Leopold, 1949/1968, p. 223).

### Inside and Outside of Outdoor Education

Wattchow and Brown’s main argument in *A Pedagogy of Place* is that it is important to critically review key assumptions of outdoor education and reconceptualise the field through attention and responsiveness to place. As someone who does not identify chiefly as working in the field of outdoor education, it was somewhat surprising to read how this subfield of education has often neglected local cultural and ecological contexts as it has become professionalized. On the other hand, lack of attention to place seems to be part of the professionalization of all branches of education and a problem with (post)modern culture at large. As professional fields and subfields evolve, the local social and ecological contexts where people actually live their lives are almost entirely forgotten while attention is placed on the established frameworks and routines that give a particular educational approach its identity (Gruenewald, 2005). As a result, Wattchow and Brown (2011) write of outdoor education: “The geographical

locations where programs run can all too easily come to be seen as clinical sites, obstacle courses, testing grounds, venues or curriculum resources.” When places become clinical sites for outdoor education, activities, regimentation, standardization and even the implementation of models such as the experiential learning cycle can dominate curricula while unwittingly de-placing or de-contextualizing experience—all typical hallmarks of colonizing educational models. When this happens, according to Payne and Wattchow (2008), it is “increasingly difficult to confidently make the claim



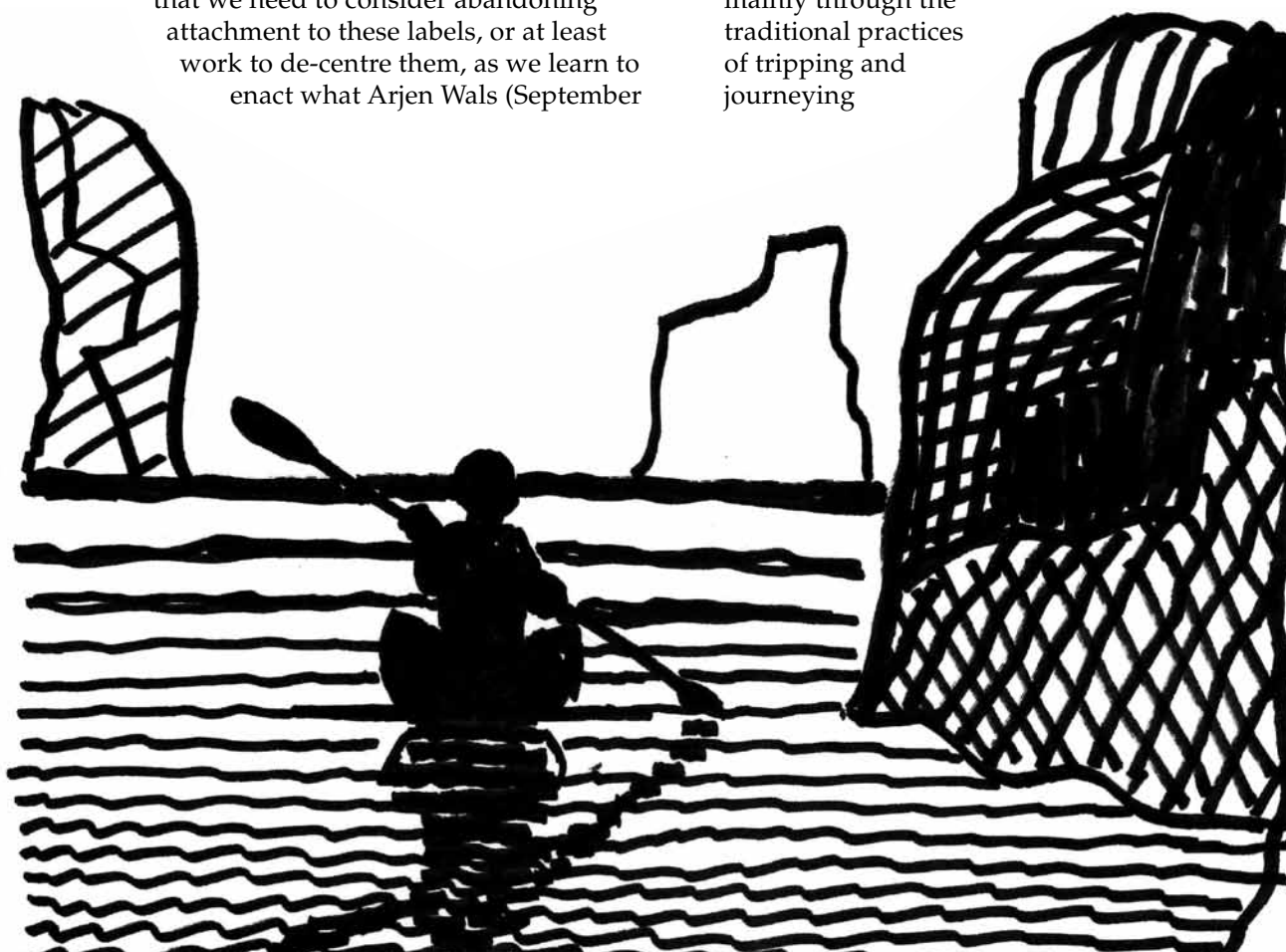
that outdoor education is an ‘alternative’ beyond the fact that some of it occurs in the outdoors” (cited in Wattchow and Brown, 2011, p. 50).

What, then, is outdoor education and what is its relation to place and to its cousin, environmental education? While reading Wattchow and Brown’s critique of outdoor education as a field, I continually found myself puzzling over the meaning of the label “outdoor.” I wonder about the limitations of any adjectival educational subfield (outdoor, environmental, place-based, land-based, culturally-responsive, experiential, Indigenous, sustainability, etc.) in relation to the larger goal of advocating

for education that is responsive to places and how they are experienced by those who inhabit them. Does the proliferation of subfields (and strands within subfields) work for or against this larger goal? Can mutual interest in place provide a meeting ground for educators with a variety of complementary commitments and forms of knowledge? Or, does professional investment in, and politicized identification with, a particular group keep us focused on defending our turf, boundaries and vocabularies while screening out possibilities for building strategic alliances? In short, can the educational subfields with interests in the outdoors, places, environments, experiences, etc., develop better political strategy in the service of people and places rather than in the service of professional subfields? If the answer is yes, what might this suggest for how we manage the labels around which our professional work currently revolves? I think it might mean that we need to consider abandoning attachment to these labels, or at least work to de-centre them, as we learn to enact what Arjen Wals (September

22, 2011, personal communication) is calling “cross-hybrid learning.”

In their focus on place as a transformative construct, Wattchow and Brown demonstrate a welcome willingness to rethink the assumptions underlying a professional field of practice—though the focus remains on outdoor education as an insular subfield. As the authors note throughout their book, place and the outdoors are not the same. In the practice of outdoor education, the outdoors can simply become another decontextualized and colonized space for scripted learning outside of buildings; a place is where meaning is made through a reciprocal relationship of coming to know. While efforts are made in *A Pedagogy of Place* to expand the meaning of the outdoors in outdoor education to include multiple perspectives toward place, it is somewhat ironic that the case studies provided describe a place-responsive pedagogy mainly through the traditional practices of tripping and journeying



through the “natural” environment (albeit often to nearby, “mundane” or culturally complex places).

Clearly the authors share an interest in diverse meanings of place and in the educative potential of a wide variety of place-responsive experiences. Yet, in their stories of practice, the authors sometimes risk limiting the meaning of place to the conventional outdoors (mountains, deserts and rivers) and risk limiting the context of place-practice to hiking, camping and boating. Is this inevitable or desired in outdoor education? Inviting relationship through experience with the local and regional physical geography, and the cultural stories held in place there, is a vital component of educating for place-responsiveness. But what about other “outdoor places” and built-over lands and mindscapes—such as the streets people drive and walk on every day or commoditized and damaged places like mines, highways, strip malls, power plants, factories, schools—through which hums the global engine of neoliberal economic growth and development? What about all the regulated places, public and private, *whereby* we are constantly told to follow the rules? KEEP OUT! NO TRESPASSING! And what of the myriad other outdoor spaces, which, depending on one’s experience, may either invite belonging or enforce exclusion? In other words, the meanings of place or the outdoors and the possibilities for place-responsive outdoor learning extend far beyond what the authors describe in their case studies, even as their work pushes on and extends conventional meanings of outdoor education.

Through their critique of outdoor education, their attention to place theory and the development of their case studies, Wattchow and Brown certainly gesture at making connections between embodied experience in outdoor, culturally significant places and the development of critical social conscience in everyday life (see Cameron, 2008). Yet the impact of these gestures seems somehow restricted by some of the more typical contexts of outdoor education they

describe (hiking, camping, boating), journeys and trips signified by the gorgeous kayak emblazoned on the cover of the book. This observation is in no way meant to critique the power of experience in the pedagogically rich places the authors lead us to. I want to be in the kayak and on the campout and learn the ecological and cultural stories there with these authors and their mentors as guides. The only way to know the power of the journey or trip is to experience it fully. No doubt many of us facing lives of increasing boredom, incarceration, shut-in, medication and screen time (Louv, 2005) would benefit from outdoor experiences that offer much less than what Wattchow and Brown provide. The point is rather to rephrase a simple question the authors themselves pose with their important book: What constitutes the outdoors in outdoor education?

In an interesting section titled “Critical Outdoor Education,” Wattchow and Brown (2011) advocate for socio-ecological or critical place-based approaches over those focused on “social justice issues (gender, sexuality, race, equality of access and so on” (pp. 86–89). They rightly argue that critical social justice perspectives are often abstracted from a larger socio-ecological framing. However, many “social justice” issues have “outdoor” characteristics that are doubtless part of a larger ecology of place. One does not have to take a very long walk in most cities, for example, to witness many varieties of power, inequality, privilege and oppression, as well as the regimes of spatial exclusion. Additionally, since the start of the resistance movement to industrial capitalism (over 150 years ago), one does not have to look far for social or ecological conditions that need to be changed, or for local people calling for it. Today, worldwide, *outside in the streets*, people—including homeless people who live outside—are marching for local change in global contexts, raising critical social conscience through embodied and emplaced experiences. Does observing and participating in a street protest constitute place-responsive outdoor education? What about working with people who are homeless to change the local conditions that

create homelessness? Or, should the meaning of place-responsiveness in the (sub)field of outdoor education remain concerned mainly with “natural environments” removed from the everyday street life of the crowd?

In other words, this book makes me wonder with the authors: What kind of places does the field of outdoor education privilege and which do they neglect? What is the potential range of places of practice for outdoor educators? Further, what is the relationship between outdoor education, geopolitical consciousness raising, and placemaking and re-making? The Occupy movement is only one example of the intersection between the outdoors and political experience and learning. In his remarkable book *Blessed Unrest*, Paul Hawken (2007) reports that there may be as many as two million organizations working to create localized change in communities all around the planet. Many efforts for local change have an outdoor dimension; the same can be said of activism around climate change. Community development and revitalization, including rural, urban and regional planning, happens *outside* in the interface between the built and natural environment. Is this mundane political process of placemaking an appropriate context of outdoor education, or does the field prefer to privilege its traditional practices of tripping and journeying for the irreplaceable experiences that these practices deliver? Is it even possible to learn what a river trip by kayak has to teach without leaving the street protest behind (and vice versa)?

Such questions probably should not be posed as either/or dichotomies. But there is certainly a tension here for me, at this juncture in the evolution of place-responsive education, between the local, regional and geo-politics of placemaking and the aesthetics of nature-based place-experience (no matter how culturally responsive), which mirrors a more general tension between politicized and depoliticized environmental education. Neither is inherently better than the other and I believe we need both, as well as a more nuanced and inquisitive stance toward the tensions between them. Reading

this book kindles my desire and my too-often denied need to connect with land and water for the experiences that only land and water can provide. Borrowing from Wattachow and Brown’s (2011) framework, I want to get outside onto the land or into the seat of the kayak. I want to become present in and with a place through deep immersion. I want to leave the street and Internet protests behind as I journey into another world—perhaps the real world—where the land is alive. I want to discover and be moved by the power of place-based stories and narratives, and learn with the people who hold these stories. I want to apprentice myself with others to outdoor places. And I want also to represent and communicate my experiences with places in meaningful, creative ways. Outdoor education that is responsive to place can be a pathway to these experiences. But they can also be a pathway away from another set of experiences, such as worldwide protests for social, economic and environmental justice—protests which may lack the outdoorsy appeal of a paddle or a hike, but also represent a distinctly unique aesthetic and an embodied politics unlikely to be found on a river trip. Again, these musings are not a critique of *A Pedagogy of Place*, but an invitation to extend the critical question that is the thesis of the book: How might a consideration of place transform outdoor education?

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## Outdoor Education and Philosophy: A Natural Friendship

*By Jamie Robertson*

This past winter, I had the pleasure of travelling to Thunder Bay to visit my cousin, a professor of Outdoor Education at Lakehead University. She offered me the opportunity to speak to one of her classes about the relationship between philosophy and outdoor education. In the view I present below, this relationship exists primarily in the shared practices of reflection, critical analysis and synthesis (Itin, 1999), in the abstraction of meaning, and its application in novel contexts.

I started the class by asking students to write something they knew or thought about philosophy on the board at the front of the class. This was a useful ice-breaking exercise as it allowed me to gauge the extent of knowledge in the room and to allow the students to start the conversation. There was a wide range of knowledge backgrounds and perceptions in the class. The chalkboard responses ranged from no knowledge ("What?" although at the time I interpreted this as a philosophical question) to some knowledge of the major historical figures, such as Plato and Socrates. They also ranged from quite negative ("Useless") to appreciative of the value of deliberate reflection.

Philosophy can be described in several ways. It can be seen as an attitude of critical examination and careful consideration (Bailey, 2011). It can be seen as a set of subjects having to do with the nature of reality, knowledge, correct action and rational argumentation (Bailey, 2011). It can also be seen as a set of tools and strategies that can be used to develop or pull apart claims about the world (Bailey, 2011). As a class we determined that all three descriptions are relevant to the role of philosophy in outdoor education.

### **Philosophy as a Set of Tools**

The ideas and assumptions underlying

educational practices and theories are important. Part of philosophical analysis involves clearly identifying the basic principles from which you are working in order to fully understand complex ideas. You might be taught to approach particular people or situations in a certain way. However, if the ideas underlying your method are misguided, then your approach will be too. This could lead you to alienate a participant, cause harm, or even perpetuate oppressive stereotypes. Using philosophical analysis of the principles and assumptions underlying outdoor education theory or culture can help avoid this.

Example: If the culture of outdoor education assumes that males should be strong and outgoing, expecting a weaker or more introverted male to conform to this image could result in his feeling inadequate for the activity or unwelcome. Obviously, this is contrary to your objectives as an educator. You need to be aware of your assumptions about what certain people will be comfortable with and willing or able to do when implementing your programs.

### **Philosophy as a Set of Subjects: The Nature of Knowledge**

As educators, you are purveyors of knowledge. Your job is to help your students learn about themselves and their environment. One branch of philosophy tries to describe the nature of knowledge. This field is called "epistemology" and asks questions like "What does it mean to know something?" and "How can/should knowledge be acquired?" Awareness of different theories of knowledge can help outdoor educators be more aware of the methods they use to share knowledge, and to be more open to alternative ways of acquiring knowledge.

Example: An enthusiastic student visiting from a tropical island may have read everything there is to know about downhill



skiing. Does this student know about downhill skiing? Does s/he know *how* to ski? The epistemological literature suggests that there are different kinds of knowledge that can be acquired in different ways. What you think it means to know about something, or how to do something, will shape how you approach that student and your relationship with them.

### Other Philosophical Subjects

While the most obvious relationship between outdoor education and philosophy as a set of subjects is through epistemology, there are many questions students might reflect on during or after their outdoor experience that are philosophical in nature.

When you question what an activity has told you about what relationships between people should be like, you are probably asking a *moral* question.

Example: My team-mates have shown me through our trust building exercise that I can trust them and that they trust me. This might prompt me to ask questions like: What kind of consideration do I owe them now that we have established mutual trust? How should I treat them? Should I treat them differently than I treat others? If yes, why, and to what extent? The answers to each of these questions have practical effects on how we behave towards others.

When you ask a question that requires you combine the knowledge gained from different experiences to make a generalization, you are probably asking a *logical* question.

Example: Yesterday, Mohinder was convinced that he could never paddle rapids. During today's trip he paddled ten rapids, though they were presented to him separately and with increasing difficulty. From this he can conclude that he is capable of the kind of skilled paddling he had ruled out the day before. In this case, the firsthand experience Mohinder gained on the river is translated into understanding through simple deductive reasoning. The learning

that results does not, however, depend on exposing him to unfamiliar or exotic surroundings. Instead, it requires creating the conditions in which he can gather information and test his assumptions. As the theory behind place-based education suggests, the process of experience and reflection might be especially effective near his home (or another place he is already connected to) as "by grounding education in the local community, students can see the relevance of what they are learning" (Powers, 2004). The work that place is doing in this context, then, is establishing an important personal link between the learner and the conclusions s/he draws.

When you are asking a question about who (or what) you essentially are, you are probably asking a *metaphysical* question.

Example: One of Jessica's core beliefs before her ten-day trek was that, as a woman, she was not suited for outdoor activities and was not capable of being physically or emotionally strong. By the end of the trek, Jessica accomplished so many things that she began to seriously question this belief. If Jessica changes her view of herself, she will be making a substantial change in her self-perception. This change will also influence how Jessica will perceive and interact with the world and other people. When Jessica makes this change, is she a different person? In what sense is she a different person? Why might we believe she is the same person? If an objective of outdoor education is to be meaningful to the future life trajectories of the participants, as suggested by Mike Brown (2008), then it is not merely having the opportunity to encounter these challenging questions that is important. Encountering these questions in one's own "locale" gives the personal changes produced by the responses enduring power in self-understanding because of the crucial role "lived experiences of the individual[s] ... interaction with their locale" play in identity formation (Brown, 2008, p. 13).

## Philosophy as an Attitude

In my opinion, the central relationship between philosophy and outdoor education is the emphasis placed on reflection in outdoor education and the idea of philosophy as an attitude. In my view, mastering the philosophical attitude is very important for outdoor educators. Without reflecting on your own beliefs and perspectives, you will be limited in your ability to guide someone who is engaging in this kind of reflection.

*“The pedagogical values held in outdoor education predispose them to become philosophical thinkers.”*

Example: You are leading an activity that involves heights. As an avid tree climber you don't find heights frightening at all. After the group has completed the exercise, you direct your students to reflect on their experience. If you have not probed your own relationships with heights, then you won't be able to help prompt people to ask meaningful questions about their experiences. If someone needed a question to get them started, you might be able to recite one you have been told to ask, but you won't be able to have a very deep conversation with the person about their experience or how it might relate to or differ from yours (and why that might be).

Equally, we all approach the world from different perspectives, so it is useful to be able to set aside your own conclusions about your experiences in order to try to discover how people might come to different conclusions.

Example: If you don't know what you're assuming about people's experience of the height exercise (a product of examining your own experience) you will be inclined to think that everyone assumes the same things you do. So, it is likely that you will

have difficulty understanding or relating to someone who does not come to the same conclusion about the heights exercise. S/he may not leave the experience loving heights, but this does not mean the experience is worthless. In order to help the individual explore her/his experience you need to try to see things from a different perspective.

The importance of understanding one's own perspective (and that of others), reasoning well, and asking philosophical questions during reflection is closely related to philosophical practices. While outdoor education students and practitioners may never take a full course in philosophy, the pedagogical values held in outdoor education predispose them to become philosophical thinkers. And this, I think, provides the basis for interesting further dialogue between the two fields. It would be worthwhile to explore both what deeper philosophical understanding can bring to the quality of outdoor education, and ways an experiential approach could benefit philosophy.

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## WaterCycle: Exploring Water Through Theme-based Learning

By Jason Galbraith

WaterCycle is an emerging, Canadian, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to help make the right to clean, safe water a worldwide reality. This goal can be achieved by raising the public's level of consciousness about world water issues, by eliminating private control of water resources and by supporting the pursuit of sustainable water management strategies. Education is a key component of WaterCycle's first project, which is a three-pronged learning mission designed to help us and the public better understand water issues. The three elements of this project are as follows:

1. An African cycling expedition designed to help the participants experience water adversity and to learn about privatization and sustainability in a place that faces some of the world's most pressing water issues.
2. A media campaign that will chronicle the expedition in an entertaining and accessible way, to help the general public learn about water issues through the group's experiences.
3. The creation of a water-themed database of educational resources that can be used to incorporate water issues into everyday learning. Education will empower people to make better personal water choices and to pressure corporations and governments to do the same.

These are just the first steps. Once the learning mission has been accomplished, WaterCycle will be better equipped to influence tangible changes to support the right to water at home and abroad.

The database of water-themed educational resources will include materials that will be useful to teachers of all grades and subjects who want to integrate water content into their lessons. The topic of water is broad



and extremely comprehensive in scope; it is equally relevant in a Grade 12 Biology class and in a Grade 1 Social Studies class. WaterCycle's database will contain original resources contributed by its members, but will also connect people to resources produced by other organizations. There is a plethora of existing water-related resources and WaterCycle would like to consolidate these resources into a user-friendly, online database that is accessible to the public. WaterCycle would like to invite anyone to submit educational resources that relate to water issues or sustainability.

WaterCycle members created the following activity to introduce the organization at the beginning of presentations. Its purpose is to demonstrate how water is interconnected in our lives. This activity can be modified for any age or grade level and is one example of the type of resources that will be included in the database.

### Water, Water, Everywhere!

**Purpose:** To demonstrate the interconnectedness of water within society and the environment.

**Materials needed:** Balls of coloured yarn (preferably different colours), sheets of construction paper, markers. The amounts will depend on your group size (see below).

**Participants:** This activity is most successful with groups of 12–40 participants.

**Set up:** Using the marker and large printing, write down one water-related theme on each piece of construction paper. Examples may include the economy, transportation, human rights, the environment, climate change, ethics, technology, gender, socio-economic status, food, pollution, wetlands, water wars, resource management, poverty, education, disease, energy or privatization.

### Activity:

#### Step 1: Assign tasks

The manner in which you distribute the tasks depends on the number of participants. For the purpose of this explanation, assume this activity has 25 participants that are approximately 15–16 years of age.

Assign seven students to each hold a piece of construction paper upon which is written a single theme. These students are the “sign holders.”

The remaining 18 students should separate into pairs and each pair should be given a ball of coloured wool.

#### Step 2: Activity instructions

Ask the sign holders to spread out around the edge of the space provided, holding the sign up so it can be read and creating a perimeter that the pairs may not step beyond.

Paired participants will approach an available sign holder. Pairs are required to explain in their own words how water relates to the sign holder’s theme. For example, if the theme was energy, the pair may determine that water is necessary to power hydroelectricity or that water is required to produce fossil fuels.

If the sign holder deems that the team’s ideas are realistically related, the pair will wrap a loop of yard around the sign holder’s waist and then continue on to another sign holder. The pair must travel within the perimeter created by the sign holders. If a team is struggling to make a connection, they may

ask for assistance or move on to another sign holder.

The sign holders should not accept repeated answers; this will encourage more ideas and critical thinking.

The activity should continue until the teams run out of yarn or have all visited each sign holder. As the activity progresses, a tangled web will be created among the sign holders. The participants will be forced to step over, duck under and navigate through the tangled web to get to each subsequent sign holder.

#### Step 3: Debrief

When the activity has run its course, it should end with a group discussion while the web remains intact. Sign holders will be asked to share some of the most unique or interesting ideas they heard from the pairs. Pairs will be asked to expand on or clarify the connections they made to each theme, as needed.

Once the ideas have been shared, some questions that may be used to encourage further discussion are as follows: Were any of the themes surprising? Why? How has this activity influenced your understanding of water use? What can we do with the ideas we have just shared?

#### Step 4: Clean up

Yarn and theme pages can be saved for future use.

Remember, we are all part of the cycle.

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*Jason Galbraith is a graduate of Queen’s Outdoor and Experiential Education program and has been with WaterCycle since its creation. He is currently teaching outdoor education in Yangshuo, China, while fulfilling his commitments to WaterCycle, which include fundraising, co-managing volunteers, and promoting WaterCycle’s educational program. For more information about WaterCycle, go to [www.watercycleinitiative.org](http://www.watercycleinitiative.org)*

## Poetry in Place: A Haiku Exercise

By Gwen Nickolaychuk

Writing haiku gives  
a chance to make complex stuff  
beautifully simple.

On a rainy Saturday, while interning for Outward Bound Peacebuilding in New York, I decided to attend a lecture on haiku by the distinguished scholar, Haruo Shirane. Prior to this lecture, I didn't know much about haiku poetry except that it originated in Japan and consists of three short lines that often follow a 5-7-5 syllable structure. The lecture by Dr. Shirane showed me that there is much more to this innocent little poem. Given that I was working on an environmental project at the time, I found the following elements particularly interesting.

Traditionally, haiku focused on the relationship between humans and nature and contained *kigo*, which are words that imply the season of the poem (Shirane, 2012). Haiku is a form of dialogue and communication, a sending and answering, celebrating, mourning, greeting and bidding farewell. In its most fundamental form it has been about "linking one verse to another, one person to another" (Shirane, 2000). The practice of haiku captures the essence of the moment or experience, embracing this with its simplicity. It is the place where simplicity and complexity meet." (Lederach, 2005, p. 67)

So, why involve haiku as part of an activity in an outdoor program? From the above description, we can see transferable metaphors and elements such as connection, simplicity/complexity and capturing the essence of a moment. Haiku is a dialogue anchored in a place and time, which also makes it a good match for outdoor education. Further, poetry provides participants with an alternative method of expression, a unique way to capture and contemplate their experience, and perhaps a chance to try something new. In addition, poetry is something tangible, personal and possible to share.

### Poetry in Place

**Supplies:** Small pieces of cloth (Tibetan prayer flag size), waterproof felt pens, string

**Framing possibilities:** Wrap the felt pen within the cloth and present it as a gift of solitary time during a course. Along with this gift, provide pertinent elements of haiku (basic structure, history, connection to nature, simplicity) and have the participants create a haiku and write it on the cloth. Participants can use the activity to reflect on a particular element of the course or on an experience or to honour the place they are in. Hold a poetry evening at which participants present their haikus, then attach their flags to a string, creating a string of haikus that is like a Tibetan prayer flag. Putting up the flags can be part of setting up the place or camp, furthering the connection among the participants and between the participants and the place.

Why is it that so  
often simple ideas  
are so effective?

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*Gwen Nickolaychuk is a graduate of the Master of Environmental Education and Outdoor Life program in Linköping, Sweden, and works as a guide in the west Norwegian fjords.*

## Information for Authors and Artists

### Purpose

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

### Submitting Material

The *Pathways* editorial board gladly considers a full range of materials related to outdoor experiential education. We welcome lesson outlines, drawings, articles, book reviews, poetry, fiction, student work and more. We will take your contribution in any form and will work with you to publish it. If you have an idea about a written submission, piece of artwork, or topic for a theme issue, please send an e-mail outlining your potential contribution to the Chair of the Editorial Board, Kathy Haras (kathy@adventureworks.org).

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

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

### Formatting

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

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

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

*Pathways* contains approximately 550 words per page. Article length should reflect full page multiples to avoid partially blank pages.

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

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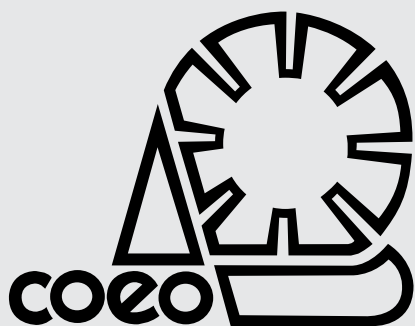
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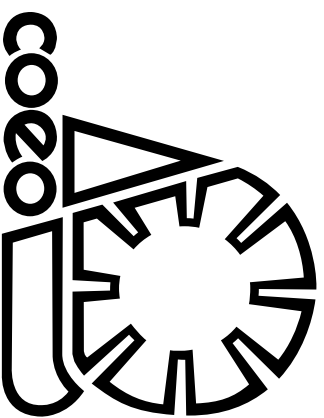
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