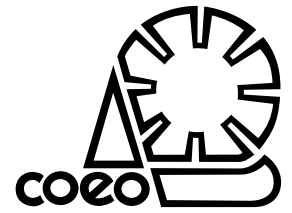


# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION  
Spring 2013, 25(3)



# 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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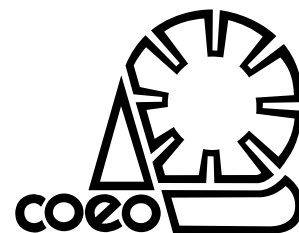
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These are exciting times for *Pathways*. We are receiving submissions widely from Ontario and beyond; some we seek out, some evolve from conferences, some just arrive. Open (non-themed) *Pathways* issues (generally two out of four published per year) tend to showcase this diversity in topics and geography. In this current issue it is a treat to re-introduce the “Wild Words” column. Thanks to our editorial board member Connie Kavanagh for taking this on. We also have two items that date back to COEO’s 2012 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference celebration; thanks to Stephen Ritchie and colleagues and to Lisa Nisbet for these post-conference submissions. New contributors to *Pathways* include Paul Stonehouse, Mitch McLarnon and Anuradha Rao—outdoor educators all, we hope to

hear from them again in the future. It is also a pleasure to receive a submission from the ECO-Mentorship Team at Trent University. Finally, it is always special to report on outdoor education initiatives and activities with our readers in Europe. I am pleased to report that *Pathways* continues to maintain a regular relationship with many northern European educators and programs.

Our upcoming issues will include a summer theme issue organized by Indira Dutt concerning re-designing schools; Erin Cameron will co-ordinate a fall issue focusing on nature and health issues. Both Indira and Erin serve on the *Pathways* Editorial Board.

Bob Henderson

The following references were missing from Clifford Knapp’s article, *Place-Based Education: Listening to the Language of the Land and People*, that appeared in *Pathways*, 25(1) published in the fall of 2012.

Orr, D. W. (1992). *Ecological literacy: Education and the transition to a postmodern world*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. M. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.

Sheldrake, P. (2001). *Spaces for the sacred: Place, memory, and identity*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Sobel, D. (2004). *Place-based education: Connecting classrooms & communities*. Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society

Squire, J. R. (Ed.). (1972). *A new look at progressive education*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Sketch Pad** – Helena Juhasz has contributed to *Pathways* on several occasions over the years. Helena lives with her family in North Vancouver balancing physiotherapy, art and west coast recreation. She is originally from Ontario where she completed a degree in Kinesiology from McMaster University. Visit Helena’s blog at <http://helenajuhaszillustration.blogspot.ca>. Her art appears on the cover and pages 6, 11, 16, 18, 21, 27 and 32.

Katie Sweet has been a regular contributor to *Pathways*. Her art appears on pages 13, 30, 33 and 34.

Joan Crawford works as a freelance graphic artist/illustrator in Niagara Falls, Ontario. She spends as much time as she can in the out of doors, but, wishes more of that could be spent with her brother. Her art appears on pages 22, 23, 25 and 31.

Having reached the midpoint of our membership year, I would like to take this opportunity to report on some of the fruitful discussions the Board of Directors has had over the past few months. During the first two board meetings, much of our conversation focused on ways to ensure the continuance and sustainability of both our annual fall conference and Make Peace with Winter gathering. Given the rise in popularity of both events over the past three years, members of the board felt a specific plan should be put in place to ensure the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) can continue to offer these high-quality professional development opportunities to its members.

The board determined one obstacle to conference organization was the recruitment of members to take on leadership positions within planning committees. It was suggested the board provide members with more advance notice of potential conference themes, communicate these ideas more effectively to generate greater interest amongst members, and then do more to actively engage members who show interest in becoming involved. To this end, a new page has been added to the COEO website to communicate future conference plans up to three years in advance—including details regarding conference location, theme and committee members already involved. In addition, conference committee recruitment notices will be posted periodically in the monthly electronic newsletter, and future conference plans will also be shared in the President's View column in *Pathways*. I'll get started by sharing a few ideas here.

The years 2015 and 2016 will mark the ten-year anniversaries of the Creating Ripples and Urban Communities conferences respectively. Many COEO members have suggested it would be valuable for the organization to revisit both of these conference concepts again. For those unfamiliar, Creating Ripples was a joint conference organized by Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM), Ontario Society for Environmental Educators

(OSEE) and COEO. It was a large event that brought together members from all three organizations to share ideas, resources and learn from one another. Members have suggested COEO is in an excellent position to initiate and host another conference that would bring together multiple organizations from across Ontario and Canada in 2015. Expanding on the Creating Ripples concept, perhaps COEO could organize a national event bringing together outdoor educators from Canada's various provincial and national outdoor and environmental education organizations.

Revisiting the Urban Communities conference is another idea recently passed along to the board of directors. The first urban-focused outdoor education conference took place in 2006 in Toronto and explored the many diverse and unique ways outdoor and place-based education was happening in Ontario's large urban communities. With so many new and exciting programs having taken root in the GTA in just the past five years (e.g., Outward Bound Canada Urban Programs, the P.I.N.E. Project, Rouge National Urban Park Initiative, and so on), exploring the work of outdoor education (OE) in urban centres is probably long overdue.

While September 2015 and 2016 are still a long way off, the hope is that, if members receive advance notice of conference concepts or themes, they will have time to plan and are more likely to become involved and contribute. Organizing successful conferences is important to the functioning of our organization; they attract new members to COEO while providing existing members with opportunities to reflect, reconnect and recharge. As was clearly witnessed at last fall's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference, many members of the baby-boomer generation have retired (or will be shortly), but continue to be key active members of our community. These individuals have so much to share with emerging OE practitioners and our conferences provide the perfect opportunity for this transfer of knowledge.

*Kyle Clarke*

## Character Development and Outdoor Adventure Education: Critique and Hope

By Paul Stonehouse

Outdoor adventure education (OAE) develops character! This claim is central to the mission of many outdoor adventure programs. In fact, education for character is one of the four values of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO). Yet, the long-held assumption that outdoor adventure programs do develop character is increasingly being questioned. What are we to make of these conflicting views? Do our outdoor adventure programs have moral worth?

In this article, I first note the influences that have lead to this assumption of character development through OAE. Then, I discuss the criticisms that have been lodged against the assumption. Finally, in an effort to resolve this tension, I propose that outdoor adventure educators adopt a virtue ethical understanding of character. A virtue ethical perspective on character highlights the moral potential of OAE, but also recognizes the often-limited influence of any single educational experience.

### The Assumption of Character Development Through OAE

Historically, there have been a number of influences contributing to the assumption that OAE develops character.<sup>1</sup> Classical Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle (trans. 1999, II 3§1–2<sup>2</sup>) and Plato (*Republic*, Book V), believed the central function of education was the cultivation of virtue, the building block of character. In the *Republic* (411e–412a) for example, Plato speaks of physical education's importance for character development. OAE scholars have cited these philosophers as justification for the moral nature of our programs.

Sports are another influence contributing to the assumption of character and its development through OAE. As noted by Rosenthal, "Organized sport was perceived

to be the single most important factor in the moral education of the boy, and by the 1870s had come to dominate the ethos of the public schools" (1986, p. 95). This association between sporting activities and character development was naturally extended to OAE.

The camping movement is the next influence on the assumption. Ron Kinnamon, chair of the Character Counts Coalition ([www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)), claims that character education has been central to camps for over a hundred years (2003, para. 4, 13). Due to the similarities between camp and OAE activities, the assumption of character development carried over.

Comparably, the Scouting movement, and its identity as a "character factory" (Rosenthal, 1986), gave outdoor activities a nearly moral standing. Since OAE utilized many of the same activities, extending the same moral worth to them was natural.

Another influence on the assumption of character development through OAE comes through Kurt Hahn. As early as the 1920s, Hahn recognized the value of expeditions for character development (Veevers & Allison, 2011, p. 9). This long-time association between character and expeditions was adopted by what has become OAE.

Perhaps, however, the greatest influence on the assumption of character development within OAE is James' essay published in 1910 and based on a speech he delivered in 1906, *The Moral Equivalent of War* (1949). There, James observed that war appeared to have a refining effect on soldiers' character (e.g., increased bravery and selflessness). Yet as a pacifist, he lamented the destruction and violence that accompanied such moral development. As a moral equivalent, he proposed a "war" or struggle against the

challenges of nature. Educators such as Hahn (1965a, p. 7) readily gave moral status to adventures by foot and sea.

The assumption of character development through OAE continues to the present, as a glance through any number of contemporary OAE texts reveals (Martin et al., 2006, p. 92; Prouty et al., 2007, p. 10). Although the above influences are diverse, a common aspect to all is their anecdotal nature. Scholars have raised this concern, and it is to their dissent that I now turn.

### Criticisms of Character Development Through OAE

One needs look no further than Hahn for the first vein of dissent. As a co-founder of Outdoor Bound, Hahn believed in expeditionary education, but saw that its effects were often fleeting: “To put it bluntly: the Outward Bound experience by itself does not go deep enough. It is the beginning of a great promise—but this promise will not be fulfilled unless the follow-up problem is solved. It is not solved today.” (Hahn, 1960b, p. 10). With a seeming air of resignation, he admitted: “Outward Bound can ignite—that is all—it is for others to keep the flame alive” (1965b, p. 9). For some time scholars have noted the temporary influence of OAE outcomes on participants (e.g., Brookes, 2003b; Durgin & McEwen, 1991). These short-lived effects suggest that any development of character may also be temporary, until post-course support is ensured.

The association between character development and militarism is the next line of dissent. Several factors have contributed to a militaristic residue that still exists within OAE: James’ Moral Equivalent of War, WWII veterans serving as outdoor adventure education instructors, and a language of conquest over nature (Hogan, 1992, p. 27; Nicol, 2002a, pp. 34–35). This militaristic influence favours rugged physical activities meant to build discipline, and it has therefore become associated with character development (Barrett & Greenaway, 1995, p. 35). Thus,

when scholars became critical of this—hierarchical, masculine, performance-driven—militaristic influence on OAE (see Loynes, 2002, p. 115), they similarly became critical of character training (Freeman, 2011, pp. 32–33). This points to a need for a theory of character development stripped of all militaristic innuendo.

Another form of dissent, within the OAE literature, centres on the word “character” itself. Price (1970, p. 84), for example, thinks it suggests an indoctrination of values. MacLeod (1983, p. 29) complains of the term’s vagueness, suggesting that anyone can claim character development and then take refuge in its ambiguity. What then appears to be needed is a more detailed account of just what character is.

A lack of empirical evidence represents a further domain of dissent. By way of example, Roberts, White and Parker (1974) conducted research into the effectiveness of alleged character-training OAE programs in Britain. Their conclusion: “Whilst personalities may be affected, young lives are rarely re-shaped by the schemes under scrutiny” (p. 150). Similarly, Brookes (2003b; 2003c) offered two punishing critiques of the “character development myth.” The title of a presentation, given by Brookes (2003a), nicely summarizes these articles’ content: *Character Building: Why It Doesn’t Happen, Why It Can’t Be Made to Happen, and Why the Myth of Character Building Is Hurting the Field of Outdoor Education*. Brookes (2003b) appeals to the social psychological literature, which questions a (character) trait-based theory of behaviour, and instead claims that all behaviour is situationally determined. To explain why participants sometimes assert that their character has been developed, Brookes (2003c) introduces the “fundamental attribution error.” This error maintains that participants confuse situational behaviour change with a *belief* in trait development. Given these research studies, a viable account of character would have to explain their negative findings.

The last category of dissent highlights philosophical challenges with the notion

of character. Presumably by “character” we mean “good” character. “Good,” however, is a value, and values are the remit of moral philosophy. Thus, any account of character must be philosophically grounded.

Between the above assumptions and dissents of character development, OAE appears to be at an impasse. On the one hand, a way forward will need to recognize the moral potential of OAE as highlighted under the different influences leading to the assumption of character development. On the other hand, a way forward will need to adequately cope with the dissents.

### Virtue Ethical Character Development Through OAE

A virtue ethical understanding of character provides a way through this impasse (Stonehouse, 2011). Why virtue ethics? As noted, “character” is ultimately an ethical term.

Therefore, any explanation of it will necessarily be moral philosophical in nature. Although philosophical inquiry is both difficult and onerous, if OAE wishes to defend its moral worth, such inquiry is inevitable.

Virtue ethics is a theory of morality most clearly articulated in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. 1999). Unlike other ethical theories (e.g., utilitarianism and deontology), which aim to resolve moral quandaries, virtue ethics concerns itself principally with how one can live a good life. It emphasizes the kinds of thoughts, behaviours and actions that lead to a noble and honourable way of being. For these reasons, virtue ethics is often referred to as “character ethics.”

Recognizing the ethical difficulties involved in calling something “good,” Aristotle’s

virtue theory attempts to provide a rationale for making somewhat objective value claims. He achieves this aim by making biologically based observations about a species and then inferring values from his findings. For example, he asks towards what ultimate end most humans strive. He suggests that most of us are ultimately looking for a deep sense of happiness, flourishing and well-being (I 7§8). Aristotle believes that all species have such ends, and that they attain these ends by being in harmony with the unique activities that are characteristic to them (I 7§9). For instance, a

“good” example of a tulip absorbs light and nutrients in order to bloom, and a “good” black bear capably forages to survive hibernation.

Similarly, Aristotle asks what the characteristic function of a human might be. Like Socrates and Plato before him, Aristotle



recognizes our capacity to reason as our distinctive characteristic (I 7§13). That is, well-being typically comes to those who have established a habit of critically examining their beliefs, thoughts and actions. However, Aristotle recognizes that not all reasoning is of the same quality. He believes that our aim should be to reason “excellently,” which through Greek and then Latin translates to “virtuously” (I 7§15). Once a person develops this ability to reason with excellence, he or she will typically begin to embody certain traits and dispositions, which Aristotle calls “the virtues.”

Aristotle identifies some of the virtues to be intellectual (e.g., being practically wise in our situational decision making). Other virtues, however, are more physically expressed (e.g., courage or self-control). For Aristotle, it is the sum of these virtues,



over the course of a lifetime, that creates a person's character (I 10§11). In other words, character, for Aristotle, is a lifetime effort, not something to be formed in a relatively brief period. This, then, helps to explain why participants might claim some moral growth on even a short OAE course, and why researchers often find that such growth degenerates without post-course reinforcement.

Understanding Aristotle's criteria for a virtue will further explain why character is built so gradually. He lists three criteria (II 4§3): For a thought or action to be considered virtuous, its motivation must come from a moral desire to do what is right and noble. Further, for an individual thought or action to be virtuous, there must already be a fixed habit or disposition to think or act virtuously with regard to the type of thought or action under consideration. It is only once a person has cultivated a pattern of thinking and acting honestly, in a variety of contexts, that he or she could be said to have developed the character trait, or virtue, of honesty.

Having described what virtues are, one might then inquire as to how they are formed. Aristotle identifies three main means for developing virtue: moral reflection, moral practice and sharing in the moral life with others (see Sherman, 1991 for similar categories). Through reflection, we are able to draw moral insights from our experience, which in turn allow us to apply these insights to situationally relevant contexts in the future (see VI 8§8–9 and VI 11§3–5). Moral practice provides the experience on which we reflect. That is, reflection on our practice refines our capacity to think and act morally. Thus, it is through this reflection–practice cycle that we gradually build the traits and dispositions that eventually become our virtues (II 4§1), which ultimately make up our character. Since our moral practice is often conducted within relationships with others, Aristotle emphasizes that the development of virtue requires a social context (X 7§4). The positive and negative examples of others inform

our sense of the moral life. Similarly, as we explore the moral life together, friends and acquaintances become what Aristotle calls “partners in deliberation” (III 3§19).

Outdoor adventure educators will immediately recognize OAE's potential to provide these means for virtue: moral reflection, moral practice, sharing in the moral lives of others. Formal moral reflection, for example, can occur through the use of journal prompts (Hammond, 2005, p. 59), the solo (Richards, 1981, p. 126), and group reviews (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2000, p. 47). However, moral reflection can also occur informally, whether in silent contemplation on the trail, or through late-night discussions in the tent (Drury et al., 2005, p. 248). Similarly, moral practice can occur through the physical challenges encountered and overcome by OAE course participants (Ewert & Yoshino, 2011, p. 41). Yet moral practice within OAE extends far beyond endurance and hardihood, to care and compassion for one another (McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006). Opportunities “to practice courtesy on an expedition can be found at every turn in the trail and at every camp” (Harvey & Simer, 1999, p. 168). Finally, through the community so often developed (Andrews, 1999, pp. 37–38), OAE can allow participants to share in the moral lives of others (Quay, Dickinson and Nettleton, 2000, pp. 9–10). For, “the most powerful means of developing moral standards is observing them amongst others” (Kennedy, 1992, p. 36).

Such moral promise should inspire outdoor adventure educators to more deliberately consider their curricula, so as to maximize the moral potential of their programs.

## Conclusion

Can, then, OAE develop character? From a virtue ethical perspective, the answer seems to be both yes and no. Certainly, in the ways noted above, good moral work occurs within our courses. However, the sustained effort required to develop a virtue (and thus one's character) requires significant post-course follow-up. Since such support is rarely given,

the moral contribution of OAE is inevitably diminished. If OAE truly wishes to develop character, then it must rethink its often one-off, increasingly brief courses, and envision an educational model more compatible with the cultivation of virtue.

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## Frameworks for Adventure: The Outward Bound Process and the Medicine Wheel

*By Stephen Ritchie, Lawrence Enosse and Jesse Peltier*

With a population of 2,592 living on a swath of land encompassing 413 kilometres in the Georgian Bay area of Lake Huron, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve is one of the largest First Nations reserves in Ontario. The people of Wikwemikong self-identify as Anishinaabe, although they trace their citizenship to the Three Fires Confederacy—an alliance between the Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi nations (for an overview see <http://www.wikwemikong.ca>).

Over the past four summers, over 170 youth from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve aged 12–18 years have participated in a ten-day Outdoor Adventure Leadership Experience (OALE). Given there are approximately 450 youth in this age range living on the reserve, the program participation rates each year (approaching 40%) have been remarkable. Intentionally designed to promote resilience and well-being for the youth, the OALE is now well established in the community. The program involved a wilderness canoe expedition homeward in the traditional territory of Wikwemikong. The travel route followed the French River, continued northwest along the north shore of Lake Huron, and then crossed the north channel to Wikwemikong village on Manitoulin Island. The youth and staff travelled together in small groups (approximately five canoes for every ten people) for the entire ten-day experience.

Participants encountered numerous challenges along the way including rapids, portages, difficult terrain, bad weather and large waves on the open waters of Georgian Bay. Programming included day leadership responsibilities, discussion themes, evening talking circles, Elder teachings, traditional ceremonies, and a half-day reflective solo experience in a sacred area of the route. One of the highlights of the experience was the homecoming celebration when each travel

group arrived at Wikwemikong on the last day. The youth were welcomed by a large group of friends, family and community members. They were then recognized individually for their accomplishment and honoured with a community feast. Many of the youth described the OALE as a positive transformational experience.

The OALE was developed collaboratively by community leaders in Wikwemikong and researchers from Laurentian University. Program development was guided by two theoretical frameworks: (1) The Outward Bound Process Model and (2) The Medicine Wheel. Outdoor programs are as diverse as the people and organizations that develop them; they often have unique characteristics, policies, practices and traditions. However, it is often helpful to examine the theoretical frameworks or philosophies upon which the programs are based. In fact, it is likely that an understanding of the theoretical foundations of a program is more interesting and useful to other outdoor educators than the details of the program itself. The purpose of this paper is to briefly present the two frameworks used to guide the development of the OALE in Wikwemikong.

### The Outward Bound Process Model

The Outward Bound Process Model (OBPM) was first presented by Victor Walsh and Gerald Golins in 1976. These authors described the principles of the process governing the delivery of Outward Bound (OB) courses in the United States at the time. They clearly delineated the difference between an OB program and process. They were not trying to describe the details of a typical OB course, but were trying to present the OB process as a philosophy or theory governing these types of courses. The OBPM presents “the structures, components, and conditions whose presence and interaction ensure that an experience is educative along the lines of Outward Bound” (Walsh & Golins, 1976, p ii). According to Walsh and Golins

(1976), there are eight interactive process elements that represent the OBPM:

1. A motivated and ready learner is placed into ...
2. Prescribed physical environments, and into ...
3. Prescribed social environments, then given a ...
4. Characteristic set of problem-solving tasks, creating a ...
5. State of adaptive dissonance, leading to ...
6. Mastery or competence, leading to ...
7. Reorganization of the meaning and direction of the experience.
8. Outcome: The learner continues to be oriented toward living and learning.

Over the years, scholars have examined and critiqued the OBPM (Bacon, 1987; McKenzie, 2003; Nold, 1978; Sibthorp, 2003). Early on Nold (1978) suggested that the model should be circular and focus more on transference; later Bacon (1983; 1987) offered a very influential perspective on the evolution of OB towards a metaphoric model of processing. Sibthorp (2003) examined the OBPM empirically and confirmed the importance of the initial readiness of the learner (motives and expectations) with characteristics of the experience, but did not demonstrate a significant link between initial readiness and the outcome variable of self-efficacy. McKenzie (2003) also

completed an empirical study and proposed a revised non-linear version of the model that included three additional components: service, instructors and reflection. Despite these critiques, however, the OBPM is still well established in the literature in its original form. Sibthorp stated that “it is difficult to find a text on adventure-based programs without the Walsh and Golins citation” (2003, p. 81). Recently, Gass, Gillis and Russell (2012) endorsed the OBPM, using it as the theoretical foundation for adventure therapy. They summarized 30 empirically grounded factors that strengthened the OBPM as a theoretical framework. Most of these factors also apply to outdoor education.

*The Outward Bound process offers one of the most flexible and multifaceted paradigms existent in education and mental health. It has the ability to involve every aspect of the participant, to be truly holistic, to cut quickly to the heart of problems, and to do all this in a context—wilderness—that is simultaneously pragmatic and sublime. (Bacon, 1983, p. 1)*



### The Medicine Wheel

The sacred circle, circle of life, wheel of life, and Medicine Wheel (MW) are all related terms that represent the preferred frameworks of health in most Aboriginal communities across Canada (Waldrum, Herring, & Young, 2006). The MW also represents and encompasses an entire Indigenous worldview (Hart, 2000; Rheault, 1998). In Wikwemikong, the MW is the preferred framework to guide the development of mental health promotion programs such as the OALE. It encompasses the concept of well-being, which includes the four dimensions of health: body or physical, mind or mental, heart or emotional, and spirit or spiritual. It is also relational or communal and includes self, others and nature (or Creation). The MW reflects the life of an individual that is integrated within a community and culture (Hart, 2000; Hill, 2006; Hunter, Logan, Goulet, & Barton, 2006). The MW does not separate mental health from other aspects of health and includes a comprehensive and interconnected perspective of a state of balance and harmony within the individual as well as within the family, the community and the larger environment (Government of Canada, 2006; Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000; Wilson, 2003). There are different versions of the MW depending on the traditions and teachings of a particular community. Figure 1 illustrates one simple version of the MW used in Wikwemikong.

The MW conceptually divides what is interconnected in Creation. It allows a person the ability to grasp the utter complexity of Creation in small, manageable pieces so that they can begin to reflect on various aspects, and then move on to the next. (Rheault, 1999, p. 147)



Figure 1: The Medicine Wheel Framework

### Conclusion

Both the OBPM and the MW were important frameworks for the development of the OALE in Wikwemikong. It is clear that the OBPM has stood the test of time; it is simple yet comprehensive, and theoretical yet practical. The MW is a culturally appropriate framework in Wikwemikong, yet it is remarkably versatile and seems to implicitly reflect the OALE experience for the youth involved. The MW also seems to complement the interactive elements of the OBPM. Research findings from the OALE (Ritchie, Brinkman, Wabano, & Young, 2011) confirmed the importance of the MW since it symbolized the path to Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin (the good life). There are many theories, philosophies and frameworks in the outdoor literature. It is less important to select the perfect theory for a particular outdoor program. It is far more important to ensure that there simply is a theoretical framework that forms a solid foundation and supports the development and implementation of a particular program. This will bring increasing credibility to the field of outdoor education.

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## Eco-Mentorship: A Pre-Service Outdoor Experiential Teacher Education Initiative at Trent University

By Nicole Bell, Paul Elliott, Jacob Rodenburg and Kelly Young

*"All education is environmental education."  
(Orr, 1992, p. 81)*

The School of Education and Professional Learning at Trent University offers teacher candidates an eco-mentoring program designed to help them become leaders of environmental initiatives in schools. The program was devised and is delivered in collaboration with Camp Kawartha, a nearby outdoor education centre. The program was delivered for the first time in the autumn of 2011 and represents the latest development in an ongoing effort to infuse environmental education into Trent's one-year consecutive Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program.

In keeping with the traditions and mission statement of Trent University, faculty have worked for some years to ensure that all teacher candidates in Primary/Junior (PJ) and Intermediate/Senior (IS) streams are introduced to at least some basic ideas and resources for use in environmental education. This is something faculty members are committed to and that many teacher candidates seek. The developments have occurred concurrently with the publication of the Ministry of Education's framework document *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*—a happy coincidence that has helped to officially validate the effort.

The developments have also been concurrent with our work to infuse ideas supportive of the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. Several faculties are actively engaged in both areas and mindful that there are strong complementary aspects.

### Timeline

Since the launch of the B.Ed. program in 2003, environmental education has been a component in some PJ curriculum course and some IS teachables. For many years

Project Wild and Below Zero (Canadian Wildlife Federation) workshops were components of the PJ science and social studies curriculum course and the IS biology curriculum course. However, many teacher candidates' exposure to environmental education was patchy, especially for those intending to teach high school subjects not traditionally associated with environmental themes.

In September 2009 the B.Ed. program committee struck an Environmental Education Working Group to examine ways of responding to *Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (the "Bondar Report") and, subsequently the Ministry of Education 2009 Framework document, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*. The aims of the working group were to examine ways in which environmental education could be more effectively integrated and strengthened in the program. The committee included members drawn from the tenured faculty, temporary faculty, part-time faculty and student body.

### Working Group Initiatives

All teacher candidates PJ and IS participate in the Project Wild/Below Zero workshops run by the Canadian Wildlife Federation. In addition, we sent out a faculty survey to identify environmental education components in the courses they teach. We used this as an opportunity to draw the attention of all instructors to the expectations in *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* and to raise awareness of environmental education as a cross-curricular theme. It also worked well as a stimulus to discussion and sharing of good practice. Finally, environmental education was included as a strand in a series of workshops offered in the final week of the program. From 2011–12 the extra-curricular eco-mentoring program was introduced.



This evolved from the developments of the workshops in the final week.

### The Eco-Mentoring Program

The program was devised to support new teachers already passionate about the natural world and looking for guidance on how to engage and inspire people. As David Sobel (1996) said: “If we want children to flourish, to *become truly empowered*, let us allow them to love the Earth before we ask them to save it” (p. 39).

The program starts with four three-hour workshops held on Saturdays from October to December. To gain a certificate in eco-mentoring the teacher candidates have to then enact their learning either during the main school placement or the alternative placement. They are required to submit a report on this explaining what they have done.

The program is hosted by our partners at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre. The centre is a remarkable learning environment that is an educational resource in its own right. It is located close to the university campus on land owned by the university and designated as a wildlife area. The building was designed and built by faculty and students of the Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program at Sir Sandford Fleming College in Peterborough and incorporates many design features that demonstrate eco-friendly techniques. It is regarded as one of the greenest buildings in Canada. Information panels help visitors to understand the many sustainable building methods that have been employed in the centre.

In his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv expressed what many had been thinking about the emergence of a generation that had lacked opportunities to play in nature and the undesirable consequences that resulted from this. The team of facilitators who deliver the program are committed to addressing this imbalance by providing young people with learning opportunities that are inspired by, and often

set in, the outdoors. As well as a number of School of Education faculty and Camp Kawartha staff, the workshops feature guest contributors including local teachers who exemplify good practice, the coordinator of a local community gardens project and the director of the Evergreen project in Toronto.

All teacher candidates in the school were invited to apply for a place in the extra-curricular eco-mentoring program. They were asked the following questions:

1. Do you want to learn how to integrate outdoor activities and nearby green spaces into your teaching practice safely and with purpose?
2. Would you like to develop strategies for integrating environmental education across the curriculum in positive and hopeful ways?
3. Do you have skills and experiences in environmental education that you would like to share with other teacher candidates and environmental educators?
4. Would you like to learn more about the indigenous roots of environmental education?

Each workshop has a theme, presented here, as they were explained to the teacher candidates:

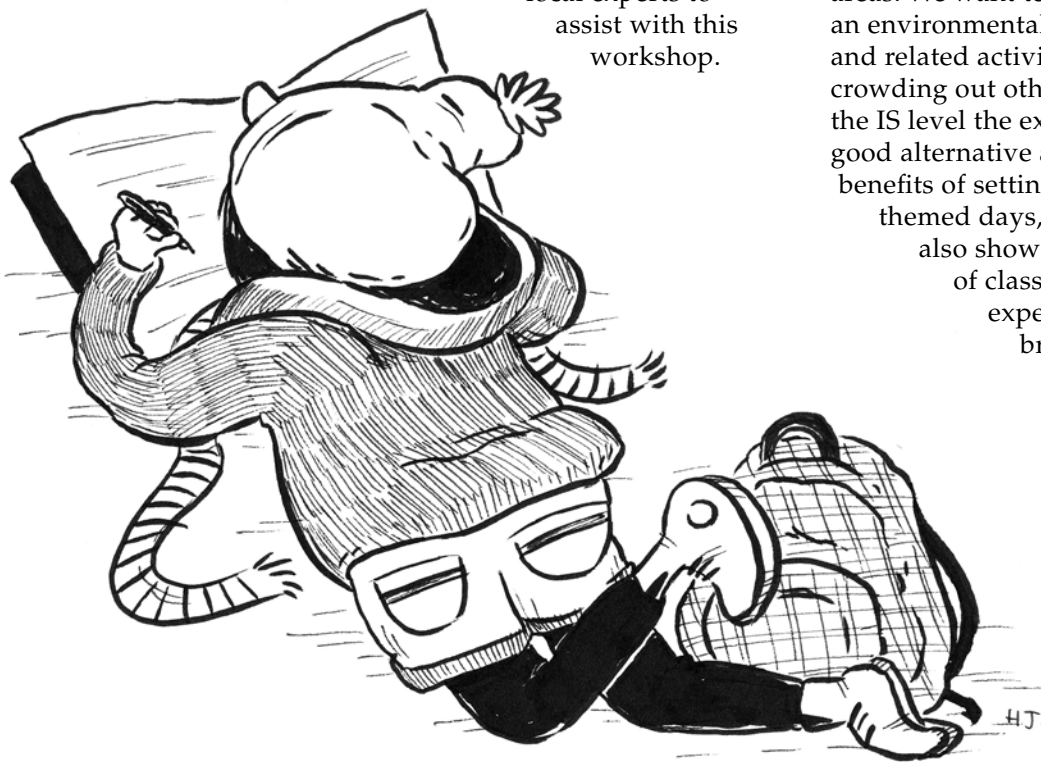
### Drawing on Nearby Nature

Environmental sensitivity research (Tanner, 1980; Palmer, 1988) has revealed that one of the most important ways to help students develop a sense of advocacy for the environment is to provide them with rich encounters with the natural world during childhood. In this workshop, we'll review a variety of hands-on strategies and techniques for using nearby nature areas as a venue for environmental education. We'll present a cross section of environmental games, activities and resources relating to science, social studies, physical education and the arts. The intent of this workshop is to inspire students to adopt an ethic of care and stewardship for their local environment.

## Removing Barriers to Environmental Education

Educators are often full of good intentions. Yet the idea of teaching environmental education as well as all those other subject areas is a bit overwhelming for many teachers. In this workshop, we'll help to reduce/remove some of the barriers to delivering effective environmental education. We'll also discuss how to obtain administrative support for outdoor excursions, where to access funding and what local resources may be available to help you deliver environmental education in your own community. We hope to

bring in several local experts to assist with this workshop.



## Inspiring Hope

By its very nature teaching environmental education can be both frightening and daunting to children. How can we teach students in ways that are both age appropriate and inspire hope for action? We need to, as David Sobel (environmental educator and writer) suggests, find ways to go beyond "ecophobia"—or the fear of

facing an uncertain future and impending environmental disaster. In this workshop, we explore ways in which we can most productively teach environmental issues to children of all ages.

## Environmental Education Across the Curriculum

With a jam-packed curriculum, it is not surprising that teachers often say: "I'd love to do environmental education but I just don't have the time." We'll explore how an integrated approach to environmental learning at the elementary level can effectively cover off a number of expectations in a variety of subject areas. We want teachers to recognize that an environmental education perspective and related activities does not mean crowding out other subject learning. At the IS level the extra-curricular option is a good alternative and we will explore the benefits of setting up eco-activities (clubs, themed days, blogs, competitions). We'll also showcase successful models of classroom practice that are experiential in nature and bring together meaningful learning in a variety of domains (especially integrating arts and science).

The first time we ran the program, we hoped we might recruit 25 teacher candidates. It proved to be more popular, with 49 teacher candidates taking part in the first year and 60 signed up for the most

recent program. In response to this level of demand, we run the workshops twice to maintain reasonable class sizes. Teacher candidates were asked to complete program evaluations at the end of the final workshop in 2011/12. They were overwhelming enthusiastic about the experience and we were greatly encouraged to repeat the program for our next cohort of teacher candidates. As we gain experience we hope

to further develop the program. Eventually we hope that opportunities to revise the B.Ed. program will enable us to embed the eco-mentoring program into the mainstream teacher candidate experience.

### Further Developments

The innovative features of the program have been reported at two conferences so far:

Elliott, P. and Rodenburg, J. (2012) *An eco-mentoring program for student teachers: A collaboration between Camp Kawartha and the School of Education and Professional Learning, Trent University*. Eco-Links 2012, Ontario Society for Environmental Education, Trent University 4 May.

Following the second of these presentations we were contacted by faculty from Nipissing University for advice on how to replicate the program there.

Several faculty members also have plans to use the eco-mentoring program as a subject for research. Approval to use the participating students as research subjects has been sought from the university's ethics committee and funding has been sought in the form of a SSHRC grant. Through this work we hope to better understand the motivations and expectations of participants and the choices they make and challenges they face when trying to implement the learning they have gained from the workshops. This should help us to not only generate publishable findings but also better understand ways to refine the program.

Sponsorship for the program in 2012–13 has been received in the form of a grant for \$2,000 from the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN) and internally from the School of Education and Professional Learning.

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## Inclusive Outdoor Education: Bridging the Gap

By Mitch McLarnon

I recently conducted empirical research on outdoor learning uptake and engagement in Scotland with a specific focus on gender, ethnic minorities and low socioeconomic status. The present article summarizes that recent study and addresses ways outdoor learning and inclusive education might be synthesized and subsequently incorporated into outdoor learning in Ontario—Canada’s most diverse province. I review the pertinent outdoor education (OE) literature on social justice and equality and offer theoretical frameworks to lend credibility to my arguments. It is worth noting that during one phase of my research I examined Scotland’s national curriculum (the Curriculum for Excellence) and for the purpose of this article have done the same for Ontario’s curriculum.



### Context

Outdoor learning has been a prominent form of education in Ontario for several decades (Horwood, 1994). The province recently revised its curriculum, including developing policy documents that support the integration of outdoor learning, experiential education and environment education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). Furthermore, the Ontario government has developed a noteworthy “Inclusive Education and Equity” manuscript that highlights the importance of an inclusive curriculum, multicultural pedagogy and equitable distribution of education to all

students regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual preference or ability (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). While it is necessary to outline the importance of outdoor learning and inclusive education, the question then becomes: Can these two concepts be effectively united in theory and practice?

### Lack of Theory?

I have recently used the term “inclusive outdoor education,” inspired by Nicol’s (2003b) commentary on OE (p. 24). He argues that the field of OE is built on assumptions and assertions that lack theoretical underpinning; that practice is rarely informed by theory. This is a very interesting point and one that should be considered for debate. I often hear outdoor educators say things like, “We’re changing these kids’ lives.” While it is not my intention to elaborate on how much I disagree with huge statements like that, I do believe in OE’s potential to contest social norms (Nicol, 2003b), provide opportunities for personal and social development (Brookes, 2003), and interrelate the complexities of modern education (Higgins, 2009). Therefore, given the conceivable effects of OE, I contend based on thorough exploration of OE literature and my own anecdotes that there are constructive benefits to said experiences. Thus, if the benefits of OE are overwhelmingly positive, shouldn’t the reach of OE, in terms of its accessibility, availability, and appeal, go beyond privileged communities?

### What the Literature Doesn’t Say

While there is an abundance of OE literature that analyzes personal and social development (Beames, 2006; Brookes, 2003; Brown, 2008), gender issues and the female perspective (Humberstone, 2000; Warren, 2005), environmental education and sustainable development (Beames, Higgins & Nicol, 2011), and inclusion for the disabled (Brodin, 2010), there

is little discourse on social justice and inclusive education within an OE context. Given that OE can contribute to all of the above-mentioned themes, I argue that OE needs to be accessible, affordable and distributed with equity. Therefore, just as Horwood (1991) required a theoretical foundation to incorporate principles of deep ecology into OE, and Nicol (2003b) advocated for concept-based practice in outdoor environmental education (p. 24), I argue that social justice and inclusive education requires a relevant framework for substantiation and to promote change.

### **What DOES the Literature Say?**

Within the limited amount of social justice literature in OE, there are a few dominant themes that emerge. Warren (2002, 2005) remarks that most OE programs are male governed, white and exclusive. She argues that OE programs need to “set a place at the table” (p. 31) for the marginalized groups of the populace. Conversely, Rose and Paisley (2009) contend that educators should “focus on shifting the paradigms of the existing participants to justly reflect the world in which we all live” (p. 2). Root (2010) calls for the “decolonization” (p. 108) of OE in Canada and recommends that equal emphasis be placed on indigenous perspectives while respecting social and land justice issues. Rose and Paisley (2012) wonder if ethnic minorities are even interested in OE and suggest that the notion of “whiteness” is now pervasive within OE culture. Interestingly, Aitchison (2003) found similar themes and determined that so few ethnic minorities involve themselves in OE due to this inherent whiteness.

Despite the different approaches to the current situation in OE, most authors acknowledge that OE is mainly a “white” pursuit and a privileged pedagogy that is exclusive (Aitchison, 2003; Rose & Paisley, 2012; Root, 2010; Warren 2005). Furthermore, they concur that more collaboration with different communities and social groups will help bridge this elusive gap. While these authors offer interesting approaches to social justice and

inclusion issues in OE, their work is mainly theoretical. Much like Beames et al. (2011), I argue that, to contribute to global issues, OE must be both philosophical and pragmatic. The next section will introduce applicable concepts to the current situation in OE.

### **Relevant Theories**

Throughout my review of OE literature on social justice, I found myself becoming increasingly interested in finding relevant theories to lend credibility to many of the practical solutions offered by the authors. Since I am committed to both OE and social justice, I looked to Paulo Freire and John Rawls for clarity.

### **Freire and the Privileged Nature of Outdoor Education**

Freire (1972) writes to inform about ways the political agenda of the state can have an oppressive effect on learners. Moreover, he argued that the ruling class structures an educational system to impose its own exclusive political agenda on the oppressed. Freire (1972) recommends that with “dialogue” and “praxis,” this flawed system can be overturned. The Freirian (1972) notion of dialogue, which can be defined as informal education built on mutual respect, can only be achieved if there is equality, cooperation and a collaborative understanding between the learner and educator. “Praxis” refers to the action of practice and reflection. This action is to be informed by theory and values, and the reflection is meant to be critical. I argue that these Freirian (1972) concepts are both applicable and underused in OE. Although academics argue that OE is well suited to address issues of social justice (Warren, 2005), there is little written on the dialogue between educators and participants (Brown, 2002). Additionally, action and reflection alike are often used in OE to maximize student experience within outdoor activities and education (Loynes, 1998), but not many OE programs appear to critically reflect on their own actions. Beames et al. (2011) remark upon this paradox and argue that if OE is to be considered a legitimate form of

learning, the lessons need to be theorized and critical reflection on current practices must take place frequently.

### Rawls and the Injustices of Outdoor Education

Modern debates on social justice have been heavily influenced by Rawls (1972), and his “difference principle” (p. 47). The difference principle suggests that a just society would only permit inequalities if they favour and subsidise those in greatest need. For OE, this could translate too many different interpretations. Applying the difference principle to OE could mean offering exclusive access to outdoor learning opportunities to groups usually excluded. Rawls (1972) might suggest that different genders and members of ethnic minority and lower socioeconomic groups ought to have priority access, as they would be the ones to benefit most from such experiences. Also, this may allow participants from different cultural backgrounds to form their own understanding of OE. Moreover, this leads into “justice as fairness” (Rawls, 1972, p. 68), which intends “to make the equal basic liberties substantively available to all” (Satz, 2012, p. 156). Once again, this has resonance with issues of equality within an OE context.

### My Findings

In my own research I attempted to be pragmatic and employed a small-scale qualitative study to measure uptake and engagement of outdoor learning. Interestingly my findings fit into the body of OE literature on social justice. My data certainly supports the notion that OE is a privileged form of education. For example, I found that many low socioeconomic students do not have access to outdoor experiences; those of lower socioeconomic status who do participate are often further marginalized because they are unable to engage with the lessons. My findings suggest that ethnic minorities may not be interested in attending OE programs because much of the “learning” that takes place conflicts with their cultural values.

Unfortunately, my study was inconclusive with regard to gender issues. Many of my interviewees conflated “gender” and “sex” and I was unable to extrapolate based on the responses.

### Application

Given the brief review of my research, I raise the question: What would an inclusive OE program look like? Is it about gathering new participants and exposing them to the conventional form of OE that has been criticized for being exclusive and too “white”? Is it, as Rawls (1972) might suggest, about offering exclusive OE access to the marginalized groups of the populace? Or is it about integrating the Freirian (1972) concepts that recommend collaboration, equality and finding a collective solution that would lead to tailoring new programs to reflect the values of a multicultural society like that of Ontario?

In the opening address of Ontario’s Ministry of Education’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy document, there is a quote from George Sefa Dei: ‘Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone’ (Dei, Mazzuca, MacIsaac & Zine, 1997, p. 3). While the province should be commended for producing a progressive curriculum with many valid intersections, explicit linkages to inclusive practices in OE need to be an integral component moving forward. Therefore, additional research is necessary to assess the current situation and to identify potential barriers to outdoor learning.

If OE is to be a respected and valued form of modern education, I argue it is time to confront the obstacles of equality and build a community that is not only receptive to new participants, but is also willing to educate on issues of social justice. The fact that OE as a discipline has not yet been able to bridge the inclusion gap should not be seen as failure; it does, however, reveal a significant lack of theoretical underpinning.

Griffiths and Baillon (2010) state that social justice is a verb. This interpretation calls for action for social justice and recognises that taking such action requires a collective effort. Given that OE has been incorporated into Ontario's education curriculum, research is necessary to gauge the limitations on access, whether any groups are being excluded, and who is choosing not to participate and why. If OE has the potential to challenge conventional education (Higgins, 2009) and contest social norms (Nicol, 2003b), then it needs to reflect the values of a multicultural society.

In summary, my hope is that this article will challenge the structure currently embedded in OE culture and will encourage further research that is Ontario specific. Now that outdoor learning and environmental education are part of Ontario's provincial curriculum, there should be a higher demand on providing programming that can appeal to all students in the province, not only those who can afford such experiences.



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## How Outdoor Education Changed My Life: Stories from an Educatee

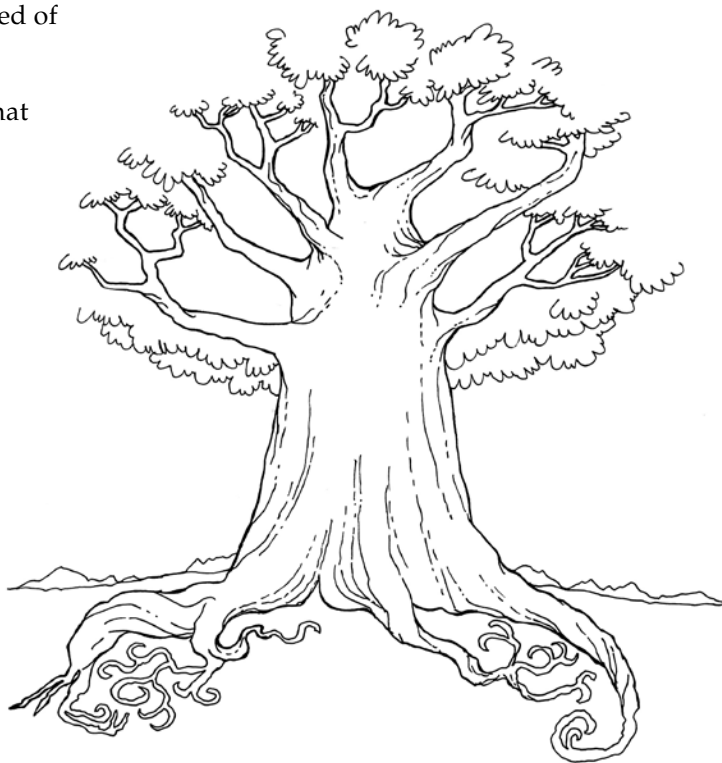
By Anuradha Rao

I wish Adrienne Blattel and her program to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for new Canadians and their families (*Pathways* 23[4]) had come to my small Ontario town when I was a kid. The things that I love to do now and wish I knew how to do better were not even part of my childhood imagination. I had not seen the ocean, never learned the words “hiking” or “snorkelling.” I didn’t even touch a boat until I was in my twenties. See, folks like me from families like mine have certain occupations that are expected of us, none of which involve the outdoors.

Nothing against my family. They did what was expected of them (well, except the emigration to Canada) and then struggled to give their children a Good Education so that they would eventually have a Good Job. With Good Jobs come financial stability and the all-coveted social status. Not to mention a Good Husband who, of course, is also expected to have a Good Job.

Thanks to my parents’ sacrifices, I was privileged to grow up in the suburbs spending my time playing around the house, doing homework and watching a lot of television. I didn’t have to worry about day-to-day survival. I didn’t have to walk for miles to school or quit school to work and support my family. Milk came from the grocery store, packaged in plastic. There was always food on the table, and I never saw where it came from. We had achieved many so-called amenities of the Western lifestyle, but not those that define Canadiana. We never had a cottage by the lake to go to in the summers, never had a canoe or went fishing or camping in the woods. My parents did not grow up with these things, nor were they inclined to invest their hard-earned dollars into them. But in their homeland, they did grow up with things that I never saw, like the

medicinal tropical herbs that grew around their houses, the organic rice paddies, vegetable gardens and coconut trees that provided their sustenance, and the tiger that busted out of the jungle one night into a shed that held the cows who were the source of household milk.



Who would have thought that the lifestyle my parents led then would be the one I long for now? One with a profound connection to one’s land, a clear understanding of where one’s food and medicine come from and a simple need for finding the courage to get the tiger out of the shed. Okay, maybe not that last one.

But with that lifestyle also came class distinctions. Only certain people did hard

labour in the outdoors—out of necessity, not aspiration. Imagine my mother's shock when I announced that I was helping on a friend's farm in exchange for food—by choice. And now that I work in conservation, she continually voices her fear when I get a new contract: "You're not going into the wilderness, right?" Lucky for her, conservation work often means managing human activities, which translates as meetings, reports and emails, so I'm usually not going into the wilderness. But how do I tell her that I wish I were?

Needless to say, I didn't choose a Good Job. People don't go into my field for the money or stability. And now that certain politicians have labelled us as radicals and enemies, we don't go into it for the status either. Besides, no one in my ethnic community speaks with pride about so-and-so's child the climate change campaigner or so-and-so's husband the wildlife technician. They would if they truly understood, but my professional circles and theirs do not intersect, and so we do not connect—neither the message nor I.

How did I become who I am today despite those influences and expectations? Through outdoor education, of course. But I didn't get that exposure until I was partway through my undergraduate degree, heading unsatisfactorily in a standard direction. I was bright in many ways, but thick in so many others. Nature and environment meant next to nothing to me. Even when I did take ecology courses they were in windowless lecture theatres. Nature was a slideshow.

Then one university course—which I had chosen only as an experiment because of its non-standard pedagogy—required me to get out, volunteer with a local environmental organization, philosophically explore my relationship with this thing called Nature and write down my thoughts. And then everything began to change. I still have that course journal that clearly tracks my journey, although I didn't fully realize at the time that I was on one.

I read it from cover to cover for the first time nine years after I'd written it and realized

what a transformation had taken place. I was reading in my Cape Town apartment under the shadow of Table Mountain after choosing to study wildlife conservation, with a personal requirement that the major component be outdoor field work. By that time I was also vegetarian, car-less by choice, acutely aware of my consumption patterns and an activist with deep ecology at the core of my being and outlook, so fundamentally that it's hard to remember when it wasn't. By then I had made the decision that conservation would be my career and life's work, whether I was paid for it or not.

My family has reluctantly accepted my choices but I face continued challenges. In the world of environmental work, I am usually both visibly and culturally different from my colleagues, which can feel isolating. Also, I tend to be surrounded by people who grew up hiking, skiing and sailing, particularly on the active and dramatic west coast of Canada where I now live. Packing for a camping trip or steering a boat is second nature to them because they learned to do these things as children, not in their late thirties. I feel as if I have a 30-year disadvantage, particularly when some of these skills are basic requirements for the types of occupations that I realized rather late in life that I prefer. In my desperation to catch up to the crowd, I feel as if I am trying to force the outdoors to educate me.

What I need and would love is accessible and financially feasible ways to learn outdoor activities as an adult. Think wilderness survival and first aid, training for a multi-day kayak trip, power boat operation, urban food gardening, backpacking and camping basics. These things that seem normal and easy for some people to figure out or fumble through on their own are not so easy for others, including me.

Among the advantages of living on the nature-soaked west coast, though, is a strong culture of adults who are eager to get outside and teach each other about the plants and animals that surround us. The local natural history society was my saviour after I arrived on these shores unable to identify

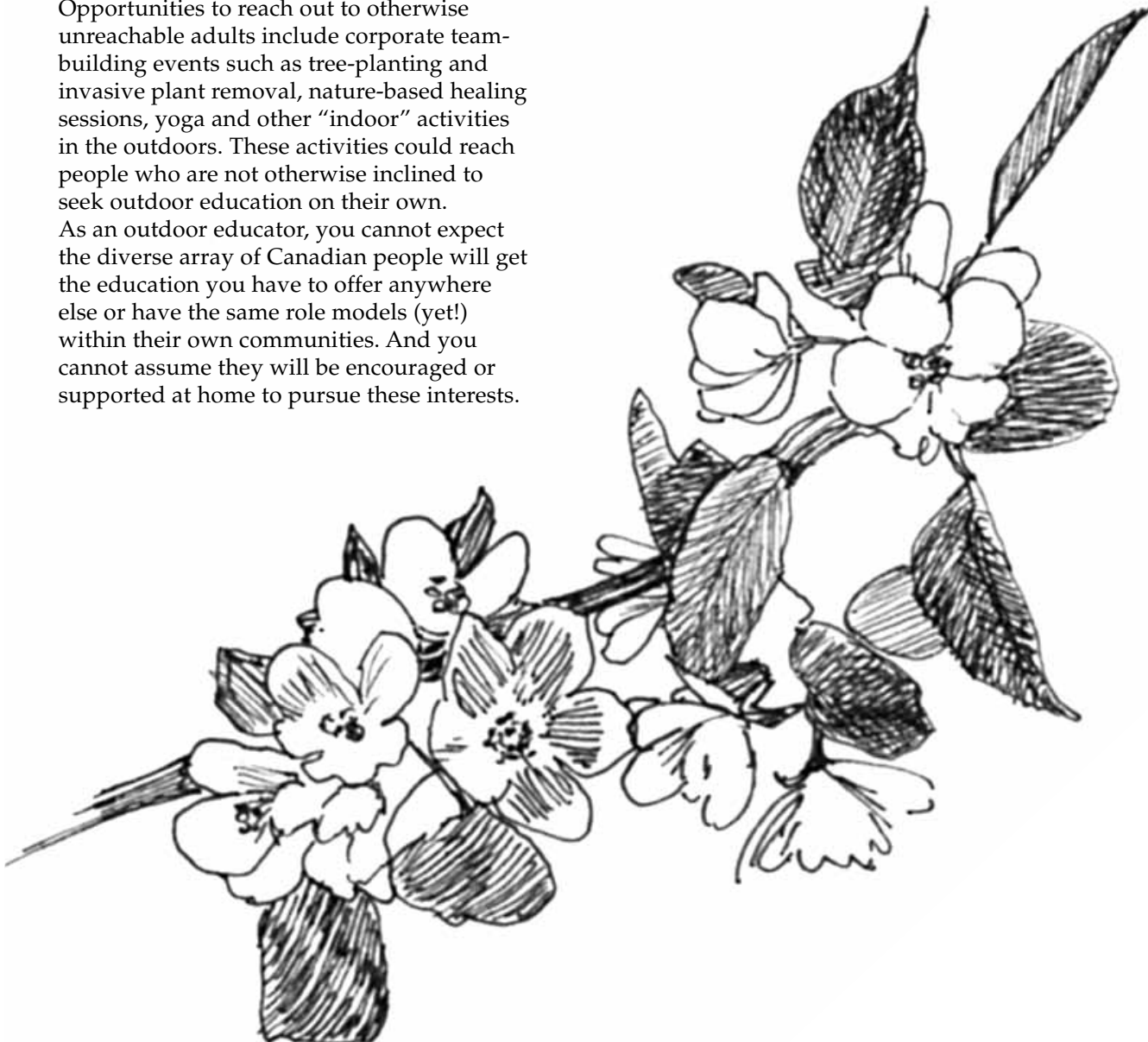
even the most common plants in the forest. Now I can present you with the rudiments of our greenery, birds, seashore and marine mammals. I get great joy from such nature walks, where the quest is not to be the first to reach the summit but to absorb what is around you, learn from and share with others, and appreciate the peace and healing power of the Great Outdoors. But again, I tend to stick out in these crowds. Not many visible minorities seem to do these things, even in their spare time.

Outdoor education has to seep into the nooks and crannies of our lives and infiltrate us at all ages and of all colours and backgrounds, in adulthood as much as in childhood. Opportunities to reach out to otherwise unreachable adults include corporate team-building events such as tree-planting and invasive plant removal, nature-based healing sessions, yoga and other “indoor” activities in the outdoors. These activities could reach people who are not otherwise inclined to seek outdoor education on their own. As an outdoor educator, you cannot expect the diverse array of Canadian people will get the education you have to offer anywhere else or have the same role models (yet!) within their own communities. And you cannot assume they will be encouraged or supported at home to pursue these interests.

They may face a number of challenges they aren't able to share with you. If you do have or build a connection to a particular community, however, you could play a very important role. The ideas, exposure and encouragement that outdoor educators provide may be the first and only such opportunity for some people. For some of us, it may change our lives. And changed lives can change our world for the better.

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## Finnish Education and Outdoor Life

By Maarit Marttila

According to the Finnish National Board of Education (2012a), the Finnish education system consists of various levels, and students usually proceed systematically from one level to the next. The objectives of education and teachers' qualification requirements are defined in legislation. Furthermore, the high quality of education is ensured through national core curricula and requirements for competence-based qualifications, as well as through external evaluation and licences issued for the organisation of education.

The Finnish education system includes nine years of general basic education (comprehensive schools), before which children are entitled to participate in pre-primary education for one year. The next level after basic education is upper secondary education, which refers either to general upper secondary education or vocational education and training. Higher/tertiary education is provided by universities and universities of applied sciences (also called polytechnics). In addition, adult education is offered at all educational levels (Finnish National Board of Education, 2012a; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012a). More detailed information on Finland's degree system is available on the National Board of Education website (2012b).

Finnish pupils have had excellent success in the international Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies (OECD PISA, 2012). The educational level of Finnish teachers is high (Finnish National Board of Education, 2012c), and the uniform basic education offered to the entire age group, together with school autonomy, supports our PISA success (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012b). Further factors contributing to the good results are specified in the Ministry of Education Publication 2009:46 (2009).

However, the PISA results do not mean that there are no pupils with learning challenges in our schools and other educational

institutions (Kalliomäki, 2006). That is why questions of learning promotion and good teaching continuously occupy the minds of teaching professionals. Good teaching consists of several factors, such as effective pedagogical methods and views and versatile learning environments. Since the 1990s, pedagogical theories in which learning is supported through outdoor adventures and experiences have slowly spread in Finland (Karppinen, 2010; Marttila 2010, p. 24). What possibilities does adventure education offer Finnish school education and learning support? How commonly is it used? Does it make schools more attractive for pupils and increase community spirit? While Finnish pupils may excel in knowledge, it is possible that this doesn't translate into an enjoyment for going to school.

### Outdoor Life in Finnish Education

Finnish legislation provides for free public access to nature (Ministry of the Environment, 2012), and Finns willingly utilise this opportunity in their free time (National Sports Survey, 2009–2010). Outdoor and nature activities are included in teaching to a varying degree, as the national core curricula provide an opportunity for outdoor experiential learning at almost all school levels.

For instance, the *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education* (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004) lists the preservation of natural diversity and environmental viability among the core values of basic education. Surrounding natural environments are mentioned among the learning environments, and experiences among the work approaches. The theme "responsibility for the environment, well-being and sustainable future" supports outdoor activities while the "individual growth" theme is linked to holistic growth and developing life skills. Subjects highly suitable for taking learning outdoors include environment and nature studies, biology and geography, and physical education. Several

other subjects can also be integrated into outdoor learning environments if the teacher so wishes.

In general upper secondary education, there are various themes and subjects in favour of learning outdoors (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools, 2003), and the National Qualification Requirements for Vocational Education and Training support the use of versatile learning environments (Finnish National Board of Education, 2012d). Learning in outdoor environments is possible also in higher education, even though it is used to varying degrees, depending on the field.

## Getting the curriculum up and out: Integrating outdoor experiential and adventure education into the curriculum

I am currently working on my dissertation, which includes an action-based case study related to the utilisation of nature recreation in compliance with experiential and adventure pedagogy in the curriculum. The theoretical framework of my qualitative, ethnographic study relies, firstly, on experiential and adventure education, which one of my dissertation supervisors, Seppo Karppinen, Ph.D., developed in his dissertation (2005)—the only Finnish dissertation dealing with this topic. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of my study is based on the tradition of experiential and adventure education explored by Matti Telemäki, encompassing the Norwegian concept of *friluftsliv*, Swedish *utomhuspedagogik*, German Kurt Hahn's philosophy, and "adventure education" used in the English-speaking world. In addition, I broaden my theoretical framework by participating in the national researcher network of adventure education, through which I take part in topical discussions within the field of adventure education, in addition to my work as a researcher-teacher. The subject of my study is a preparatory and rehabilitative training group of an upper secondary school. The group includes ten students, aged at least 16 years. Preparatory and rehabilitative training is intended for students with developmental disabilities

and other students who need particularly extensive support in their studies. The program is organised in accordance with the Core Curriculum for Preparatory and Rehabilitative Instruction and Guidance, confirmed by the National Board of Education. Studying is based on each student's individual educational plan (IEP, HOJKS in Finnish). The HOJKS is part of the student's rehabilitation plan, and each student's individual needs are considered in its objectives.

Experiential and adventure education has been integrated into the group's teaching during the 2012–2013 school year. This approach was developed by a teacher team of three people (the special education teacher providing guidance for the group, a special needs instructor and me as the researcher-teacher) based on the theoretical framework of my study. I work with the group one day a week by implementing, through a holistic learning approach, the experiential and adventurous elements we have developed, taking curricular objectives into account. The contents vary considerably. They include canoeing, trekking, skiing, snowshoeing, climbing, berry-picking, cooperative games, wilderness meals, bird-watching, fishing and more. At the same time, we integrate various other, including vocational, subjects with these outdoor and nature-based activities, and emphasize taking care of others and working together.

Through my action-based case study, I seek to answer to the following research problems:

- How do recreational activities based on experiential and adventure education in nature suit curriculum implementation?
- What changes take place over a year in the students, the group and the organisation, particularly from the perspective of community spirit?
- How does the method suit diverse learners?



- What experiences do students, parents, teachers and the principal have through this approach?

My preliminary hypothesis is that the results of this study will lead to recommendations regarding the inclusion of outdoor experiential and adventure education in curricula, paying particular attention to special education groups.

I collect data from the target group by interviewing, observing, photographing, videotaping and recording students' essays and narratives. The special education teacher providing guidance for the group assists me particularly in photographing. I also utilise data from interviews with four experts in experiential and adventure education, which I collected for my master's thesis in sport pedagogy (Marttila, 2010). Further sources include the journals and memos I have written during my dissertation process and the discussions I have had with various cooperation partners (the participating students and their families, the teacher team, the managerial staff of the school, and so on).

### Preliminary Results

I have conducted my action-based case study for six months now, so it is halfway completed. So far, the experiences have been very positive. The method has inspired and motivated the group and enhanced their community spirit in a variety of ways. The group members take good care of each other during the outings and look forward to our joint adventure days. The students have gained more confidence in social interactions and some of them have found new hobbies, such as climbing. They have suggested that these activities promote their learning.

The method, to the extent that we are implementing it, seems to optimally suit diverse learners and the implementation of the Core Curriculum for Preparatory and Rehabilitative Instruction and Guidance. Furthermore, cooperation with the special education teacher, the special needs instructor, the principal and parents has been smooth.

### Discussion

As a whole, Finland offers great possibilities for outdoor activities, but outdoor education is used to varying degrees in Finnish education. I find that there is a need to increase the use of outdoor experiential and adventure education. This approach is particularly relevant for promoting increased physical activity, taking a holistic approach to education, facilitating experiential learning, and improving school enjoyment and community spirit. However, challenges include the arrangement of schedules, a lack of equipment, insufficient university training in outdoor education, reluctance of teachers to get out in nearby nature, and a lack of effective co-teaching practices.

I believe that a broader adoption of this method in teaching will have many positive effects and will not weaken the PISA performance of Finnish students. This view is supported in Huotari (2012), which highlights the importance of outdoor activities for the wellbeing of children and adolescents. A Danish study on pupils' ability to concentrate, which was broadly reported in Finnish media (see Aamulehti, 2012), also supports an approach to outdoor education. According to this study, pupils' concentration is enhanced for up to as long as four hours if they cycle or walk to school. Earlier studies on experiential and adventure education additionally support my view (see Karppinen, 2005; Marttila, 2010).

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## No Reason to Stay Inside

By Anja Bakken

The North-Trøndelag University College (HINT) is located in the middle of Norway with the Trondheimsfjord to the west and Sweden across the mountains to the east. The University College campus is beautifully situated on the outskirts of the small town of Levanger. The region's geographical position, its natural surroundings and cultural diversity work as points of departure for this one-term course that focuses on Nordic and international perspectives on teaching and learning in pre-schools and primary and lower secondary schools. The course offers an important intercultural dimension in

terms of enabling students to develop awareness of values and traditions in their own culture and the cultures of others related to issues of childhood and education.

The title of this article, "No Reason to Stay Inside" mirrors attitudes towards weather, clothing and the natural environment that sometimes puzzle newcomers to our part of the world. For instance, a teacher from Latvia, visiting a local primary school in our region some winters ago, asked

whether children would play outside when it was snowing. Her host answered her question in the affirmative. The school's policy was to ensure a period of outside activity for the children every day, rain or snow and with no specific recommendations regarding minimum temperatures for outdoor play. This might appear as simply a matter of appropriate and available clothing, but there is more to it. Weather conditions that elsewhere give reason to stay inside

have been and still are considered not only acceptable but indeed beneficial for the child in Norwegian and Nordic schools. The above example can be seen to illustrate some important cultural differences in terms of the role of the outdoor learning arena within two different cultural contexts and educational traditions.

The course has a wider scope than attitudes to clothes and weather, though. It focuses on a range of cultural artefacts and traditions related to childhood and education: oral and written narratives and songs and music, both old and new. As mentioned above, there is an emphasis on issues such as wildlife and other environmental issues, the coastal tradition and indigenous culture and particularly on ways these conditions influence aspects of childhood and education. Moreover, the course sets out to "deconstruct" some myths about Nordic childhood and outdoor activity that are alive and well to various degrees in the minds of people both inside and outside of these countries.

The central pedagogical idea of the course is experiential learning. This implies that both local and international students will experience outdoor and alternative learning arenas themselves. They will be exploring the region's natural and cultural environment from their very first week on campus. In addition, the course comprises excursions to coastal communities and mountain areas (a mountain hike) and a wildlife park visit, with the possibility of a "Wolf Snore Sleepover." Moreover, students will be acquainted with Sami folklore in the form of food and music in traditional and new ways. The belief is that it in the encounter with "otherness" cultural awareness develops. Therefore, students will be exposed to otherness through the values and attitudes reflected in traditions, activities and cultural artefact of the foreign cultures. In addition, their mindsets might be challenged in the encounter with their own culture seen through the eyes of someone else.

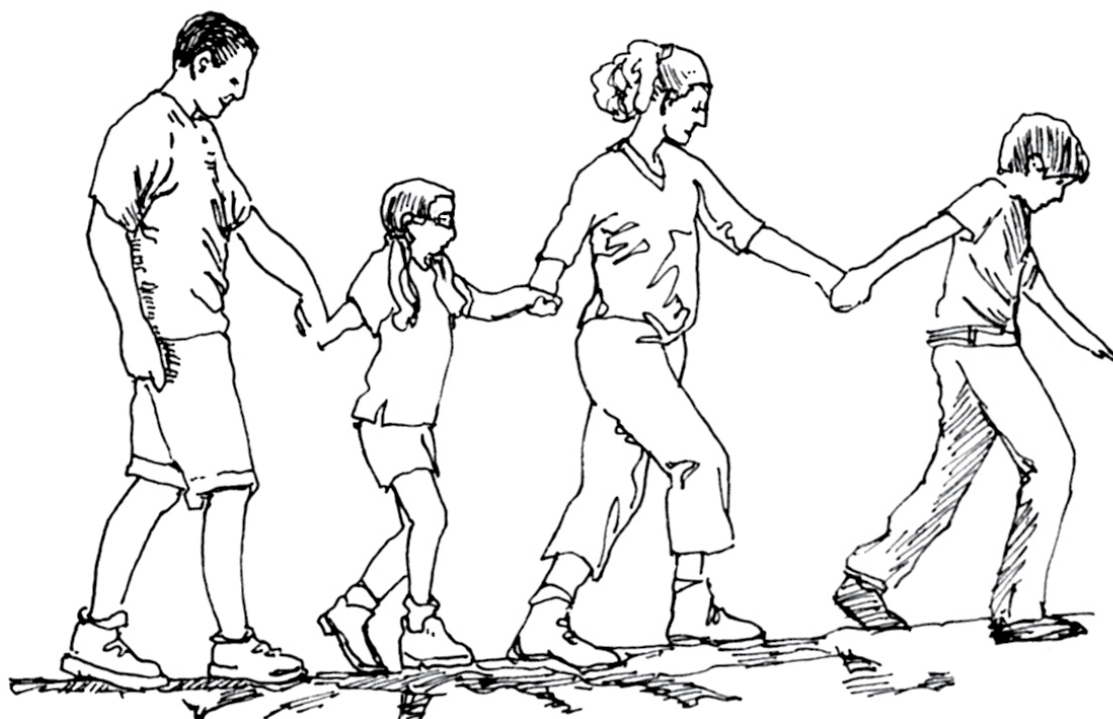


As part of the didactical and methodological development of the students, the course includes contrastive field work on aspects of outdoor education. In addition, there is a four-week teaching practice in regional pre-schools, primary or lower secondary schools for international students whereas Norwegian students go abroad for their practice placement. The learning process will be based on students' activities, using methods like "inquiry-based learning" and "cooperative learning." The students are expected to be intensively involved in the learning process and their personal knowledge and experience will be recognised and integrated in the course.

As the title "No reason to stay inside" suggests, going outside does not involve any great effort or obstacle in terms of particular skills or equipment. In that sense, this is a low threshold course. It is not designed for extreme sports adventurers but welcomes students in pre-school, primary and lower secondary teacher training who are willing to embrace personal and professional challenges and who want to experience aspects of traditional Norwegian "friluftsliv."

*Anja Bakken served for 20 years as a teacher in English and French in upper secondary education, and another three years as a lecturer in English in the field of literature and culture at Nord-Trøndelag University College, Faculty of Teacher Education. In August 2012, she started her Ph.D., working on texts, text use and literacy in the English language classroom in lower secondary education.*

For more information about HINT's international semester, visit [http://www.hint.no/english/faculty\\_of\\_teacher\\_education/no\\_reason\\_to\\_stay\\_inside](http://www.hint.no/english/faculty_of_teacher_education/no_reason_to_stay_inside)



## Mañana

By Connie Kavanagh

Mañana (man -YA -na): Spanish word meaning "morning, or tomorrow, or never"

I have travelled to the depths of the heart of Mexico, and brought you this Latin American expression, which I highly recommend as an addition to the vocabulary of anyone involved with outdoor experiential education. Technically, it means morning, or tomorrow. Practically, it means tomorrow, or never. *When will my car be fixed?* "Mañana" (said slowly, as the mechanic walks away and dismisses you with a wave.) *When will I see*

*you again?* "Mañana" (spoken by the person with whom you just spent the night under the stars.) *When will outdoor educators be paid what they deserve?* "Mañana."

To those accustomed to the instant gratification of the hectic North American lifestyle, mañana is annoying at best and infuriating at worst. To a laid-back Mexican, mañana is

a way of saying, "You worry too much, and there are more important things in life than getting what you want, when you want it." This is a message that North Americans, who would probably be less stressed and therefore healthier if they adopted it, need to hear. Think in practical terms: a healthier population means less money spent on an overburdened health care system, and more money to pay outdoor educators. This message of learning to wait *can* effectively cross cultures, and outdoor educators are perfectly poised to adopt and deliver the message, and not just because we'd like the cost savings passed on to us. We are already

in the business of learning to relax and enjoy life. Whether it's sitting quietly on a solo experience, wrapped up warm and dry with the rain falling around us, halting kids on a hike to quietly observe a Great Blue Heron that's just been spotted in the marsh, or learning to read the water while running the rapids to turn the canoe or kayak at just the right time, we know the value of slowing down to savour an experience. And for those of us who've worked in residential settings, with 16-hour workdays and too little private time, the value of delaying some activities until later and enjoying the sweetness of a siesta cannot be understated.

Try saying mañana next time your co-worker comes to you with what seems to be an urgent, but is really a trivial, matter. If you happen to have a student teacher show up who wants to know everything about your organization in three minutes, or even three days, teach them the value of mañana. When you're doing something important and you hear the phone ring, and you have an answering machine that will record the call, tell yourself "mañana."

Practice "mañana" by investing in a hammock, or hammocks, for your residential camp or backyard. Practice lying down in said hammock and looking up through the tree branches. Sit in the shade and read a good book. Think ahead and have a cold drink ready by your side. Or have a hot drink, while practising "mañana" by chilling in a snow bank.

I could write more, but hopefully you get the idea. Slow down, and teach others to do the same. *Mañana*. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go find a place to hang my hammock.

*Connie Kavanagh is an outdoor educator living and working in Hamilton, Ontario. Connie is looking forward to further developing her writing credentials.*



## Science Makes the Connections: Why a Walk in the Woods Is Good for You

By Liz Calvin

This article previously appeared in *The Woods: East Duffins Headwaters Stewardship Committee's Newsletter*, Winter 2012/13. It is reprinted here with permission.

Natural spaces protect the “essential systems of life”: water, air and biodiversity. Lately people have been talking about the relationship between human health and nature. The Latornell Symposium, a large conservation conference held yearly in Ontario, had a nature and health theme this past November. Governor General David Johnston’s New Year’s message encouraged Canadians to spend time outdoors in the fresh air and tend to their mental and emotional health. The David Suzuki Foundation prescribes a daily dose of nature to make you happier, healthier and smarter. The

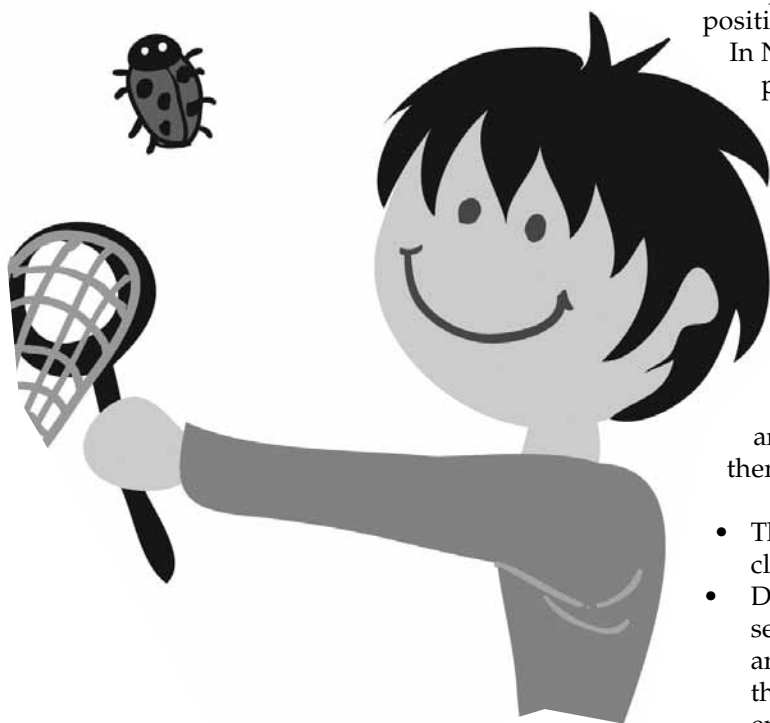
increasing pressures of development and urbanization on natural spaces mean it is important to better understand and describe the importance of nature to our health.

A review of research about health and nature leads through a maze of psychology, neuroscience, medicine, education, physiology, horticulture, psychiatry, ecology and biology. Many research findings hold significant promise: time spent in nature appears to boost creativity, happiness and immune function, and lower blood sugar, blood pressure, anxiety and depression. In Norway, Sweden, Germany and Scotland many children attend outdoor kindergartens, called “forest kindergartens” or “waldkindergarten,” as there is evidence that spending time out of doors has a positive impact on children’s development.

In New Zealand doctors write “green prescriptions” of exercise as a cost-effective way to address health issues where drugs are usually prescribed.

The relationship between the natural environment and human health is a relatively recent research topic and, so far, it is hard to tease apart what it is about nature that affects us, and exactly how it has an impact on our health. But certain themes are emerging:

- The more green space there is, and the closer we live to it, the healthier we feel.
- Doing activities outdoors in nature seems to have a more positive mental and physical impact on a person than if that same activity is done in an indoor environment such as a recreation facility.



- People are better able to pay attention after spending time in nature—a state that some researchers call a feeling of “relaxed wakefulness” or feeling “restored.”

It is too soon to say how or why this might be. Do the low sound levels in natural landscapes give relief from the stresses of city noise? Is it the wonderful smells or the shifting patterns of leaves in the sunlight? Is it the fact that being in a natural landscape uses all our senses? Is it the companionship of a good friend while walking in the woods that restores us? It is possible we may never understand the mechanisms. Most people you meet in the woods will tell you they are there because they like the quiet and the fresh air, they like the time to think, or even that the experience is spiritual. And that the more they visit the woods, the more they value the woods.

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*Liz Calvin has recently retired as a public health nurse with Durham Region. She was a keynote speaker at the Make Peace with Winter 2013 Conference at the Ganaraska Outdoor Education Centre. Liz is regularly seen walking and skiing with her dog, Roger, in the Durham Forest and Walkers Woods living out the general research finding that “the more green space there is, and the closer we live to it, the healthier we feel.”*



## The Happier Path to Sustainability?

By Lisa Nisbet

I have always been happiest when in nature, whether walking my dog through a nearby park, pulling weeds in the garden, or paddling through Algonquin Park. During my early years as a psychology student, I often wondered how others experienced their time outdoors and whether this might explain differences in how people treat the environment. This question, and the study of our relationship with the natural environment, has been the focus of my research for the past decade.

Psychology is not usually the first discipline that comes to mind when people think about ways to address global climate change. But as experts in human behaviour, psychologists can offer insight into why people do or do not behave environmentally. Most people care about nature and value a healthy environment. Unfortunately, this does not always translate into action. One reason may be that people are disconnected from nature.

This concept of nature connectedness (my colleagues and I use the term “nature relatedness”) is based partly on E. O. Wilson’s (1984) biophilia hypothesis—the idea that our evolution in nature has resulted in an innate need for all humans to connect with other living things. Wilson and Kellert (1993) have suggested that not only do we need nature to survive, but also to thrive and flourish. Modern life (and city living, in particular) often separates us from the natural world; this may be harmful for both people and the planet. It is difficult for people to feel concerned about something if they do not feel connected to it, and disconnection from nature may be detrimental to our well-being.

We can measure people’s subjective connections with nature, using a self-report scale, and then assess the effects of those connections on their happiness and behaviour. The nature relatedness scale (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009) includes emotional, cognitive and experiential elements. That is, our relationship with the natural world comprises feelings and thoughts about how we treat nature and our experiences when we interact with nature. The

nature relatedness scale is one way to assess these differences (other useful measures have also been developed to capture environmental identity, emotional connection and a sense of inclusion with nature). Differences in nature relatedness are helpful in predicting people’s environmental concern. Not surprisingly, nature relatedness is associated with self-reported environmental behaviours such as recycling, using sustainable transportation and activism. These findings, and the fact that we can measure and quantify differences in connectedness, may allow us to create more effective interventions for promoting sustainable behaviour. For example, finding ways to connect people with nature in their local communities may inspire more conservation.

One reason connecting with nature may promote protective behaviour is it makes us feel good. Contact with nature (or even viewing images of nature) has physiological and psychological health benefits including stress reduction and better cognitive functioning (see Selhub & Logan, 2012 for a thorough review of nature’s effects on human functioning). Researchers are investigating how walking in nature or even viewing nature photographs can help to reduce depression, make us more generous and boost our mood (e.g., Berman et al., 2012; Nisbet & Zelenski, 2011; Weinstein, Przybylski & Ryan, 2009). Beyond the momentary pleasant experiences we have in nature, a strong sense of connection appears to also have happiness benefits. In many studies, with diverse types of people, we find that nature relatedness is associated with more positive (and fewer negative) emotions, greater vitality, autonomy, purpose in life and personal growth. People who feel connected with nature are generally happier in many life domains (e.g., at work and leisure; Nisbet et al., 2011). Other types of connectedness (e.g., to family, friends and community) are important for our well-being, but it seems that nature has distinct happiness benefits (Zelenski & Nisbet, 2012).

Despite the many benefits for our physical and mental health, nature’s effects on mood are sometimes underestimated. People

expect nature to be restorative but may not think of time outdoors as a happiness booster. My colleagues and I tested this in a series of studies, comparing how people feel when walking outdoors and indoors at our university campus. We noticed that even on pleasant days people were using the indoor tunnel system rather than walking outside. To investigate this phenomenon, we asked people to predict how they would feel after taking a walk, either outside or inside. The predictions were consistently in favour of nature; people expected walking outdoors to be more pleasant than walking inside. When we followed up with people after their walks, actual mood was even better than predicted for the outdoor walkers (walking indoors was less pleasant than anticipated). These findings suggest we underestimate the mood benefits of contact with nature—even nearby unspectacular nature, such as an urban park. This may explain, in part, why people are not spending more time outside. By avoiding nature, we may be missing opportunities to foster our nature relatedness and to improve our personal happiness.

The good news is that research on nature's benefits demonstrates that ecological health and human well-being are complementary and not competing goals. Many environmentally friendly activities are good for our health and happiness (e.g., active or "green" commuting by bike or on foot). While we cannot (and should not) ignore environmental problems, focusing on the happiness benefits of nature may be an effective way to foster more environmental behaviour (in contrast to fear- or guilt-based messages). Finding ways to promote nature relatedness and nurture intrinsic motivation for environmental actions may help prevent environmentally destructive behaviour, and at the same time increase human psychological health—a "happy path to sustainability."

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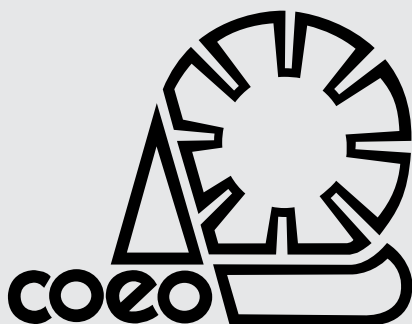
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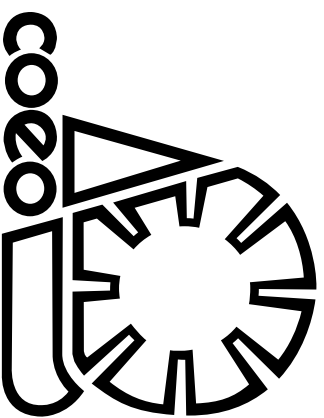
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