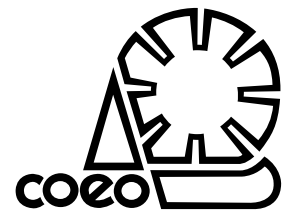


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF
Winter 2015, 27(2)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



Pathways

COEO

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

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Pathways

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Pathways is always looking for contributions. Please contact the Interim Chair for submission guidelines.

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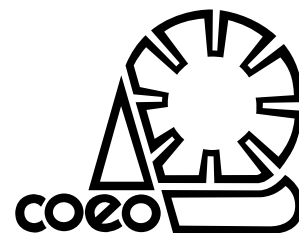
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First off, it is an honour to receive a tribute from colleagues and students of Brent Cuthbertson. Brent died suddenly in October of 2014. While Brent was not active within the COEO organization directly, he did have a major influence through the many Lakehead University students that he directed to COEO for professional development and more generally those he inspired to work in the field of outdoor education. He will be missed but he is a man with a legacy as experienced through so many who considered him a role model for ethical, dedicated practice of outdoor environmental education. Brent led a life intentionally directed towards cultivating ecological consciousness. I like to think (and hope the students who submitted the tribute would agree) Brent would be pleased to have his guiding principles stand in print here alongside the quality contributions of this open topic issue of *Pathways*.

Pathways is pleased in this issue to introduce many new writers to our pages. Chris

Peters from Newfoundland is hoping to attend a future COEO conference. He has much to contribute here and in the future. Lisa Weitendorf is a young writer who offers such sage advice and reflects such inner wisdom it sounds more like she is in the twilight of her career. Speaking of wisdom, Bethany Klapwyk contributes a reminder of the inspiration Mike Elrick instilled in others. Again Brent and Mike stand well together here. We have a well-attended COEO conference session (2013) brought forth for more to learn from (thanks to Maria Legault and colleagues). Mark Leather writes about Forest Schools, perhaps anticipating the Ontario interest in this initiative. And these are just a few of the items within. Yes, there is a wealth of learning to be had within that speaks to the health and evolution of outdoor education these days.

Bob Henderson

Sketch Pad – Sibylle Roth of Germany provided the illustrations that appear on the cover and pages 12, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 29, 30 and 33. Sibylle has a master's degree in outdoor education and a diploma in social work. She is excited to have the opportunity to create artwork focused on current issues within outdoor education. For more information on Sibylle and her work, which is available on request, send an email to sibylle.roth54@gmail.com.

Michelle Gordon is an environment and resource studies co-op student at the University of Waterloo. She is fascinated with ecological restoration and loves getting kids inspired about nature. Her art appears on pages 27 and 31.

Les Luxemburger is a visual artist, art educator and facilitator who uses art to inspire people to take actions on environmental conservation and sustainability. Les is the owner and creative director of an art education business called ART on the Go, and runs workshops and classes in acrylic painting, eco-art, drawing, mixed media, animation and graphic novel making. His art appears on pages 3, 22 and 35.

Chris Peters is moved by experiences in and of the outdoors. He is always looking to capture moments that demonstrate a continuity of human interactions with Nature where we are framed by our surroundings—forests, the sea, the drama of the skies, the startle of a hare or the glide of an eagle. Chris' art appears on pages 4 and 9.

Many students around the province have been learning from outdoor educators that it is still possible to learn and play outside, even with record breaking cold temperatures! While it is easy for many to curse the cold, others are rejoicing in the snow and excellent ski, snowshoe, dogsledding and animal tracking conditions. Thank you to everyone who has ensured that students are well prepared for the temperatures by teaching them to dress properly, and providing them with warmth through your smiles and encouragement!

Mono Cliffs Outdoor Education Centre witnessed many of these winter loving folks while reaching capacity at COEO's Make Peace with Winter conference in January. The presence of so many students, those who have been in the industry a while, and those who have been in the industry a while longer, is a great testament to the health of the organization, strengthened further by the wonderful ideas, activities, resources and positive energy shared over the weekend. Thank you to Karen O'Krafka for once again chairing another successful conference, and many thanks go out to the rest of the organizing committee and all of the presenters who shared their experience. If you are interested in being part of the team that will organize Make Peace with Winter 2016 and/or would like to suggest a possible conference location, please send a note of interest to conference@coeo.org.



If you are an emerging wilderness trip leader, or someone with experience to offer, OWLS '15 is for you as a participant or presenter! The Ontario Wilderness Leadership Symposium (aka OWLS) is a new annual event organized to support the development of emerging wilderness trip leaders in Ontario. OWLS will be taking place May 1–3, 2015 at Hart House Farm in Caledon. This low-cost, three-day symposium will offer attendees opportunities for relevant leadership and skills-based training, to network with others employed in this unique field, and to explore a variety of potential avenues for future career development. Program details will be available on the COEO website and Facebook page. OWLS 2015 has been made possible by the generous support of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario and several partner organizations. If you or your organization would like to be part of supporting this event, please send a note of interest to owls@coeo.org.

This just in! The 2015 Annual Fall COEO conference will take place at Camp Kandalore September 25–27, 2015. Interested in becoming an organizer? Please email conference@coeo.org. Interested in presenting? Please check the website for the call for presenters.

If you are keen to become involved in any of the projects, conferences and workshops organized through COEO, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Karen O'Krafka at karenokrafka@yahoo.ca. If you are not sure how you would like to become involved, she can provide you with more information about the various opportunities and help you determine the best fit for you! Conferences and regional events could not happen without the volunteer efforts of members like you, and your time and effort is greatly appreciated!

Happy trails,

Allyson Brown
COEO President

Friluftsliv in 21st Century Newfoundland: The Crossroads of the Past, Present and Future

By Chris Peters

The air seethed with wet sheets that draped across the sea and forests. The last of summer's warmth had been blown away, the deep greens giving way to the yellows, oranges and reds of fall. We would discover when we arrived in Freshwater Bay two gnarled apple trees overflowing with sweet fruit—testament to the planning families used to undertake to survive outpost life. Otherwise, the remnants of human life here have largely been swallowed by the boreal forest, save a rock foundation wall that speaks to a community once a hundred souls strong. The path into Freshwater Bay, a sheltered harbour snug along the Avalon Peninsula's eastern facade which endures the might of the North Atlantic Ocean, was rocky and slippery. Great roots lifted up the trail in

places, bog submerging it in dark black pools in others.

We were going to explore the cultural and historical roots of the people who once lived here. We also aimed to look at the connections people used to have with this place, and their reliance on nature not only for the fishery, but also the built infrastructure—spruce drying flakes, finger wharves and stores, boats hewn from local dogberry, juniper, spruce and birch—with which to prosecute the fishery. By understanding this localized past I hoped to galvanize students to explore *their* connections with nature; to help see our societies' connections to, and fissures from, the natural world.



I had introduced to the class the Norwegian philosophy-lifestyle *friluftsliv*, meaning “free-air nature” (Faarlund, 2007), as a means to understand the historical connections with place as well as our current understandings of nature. I had the feeling my efforts were in vain, and that the concept, including its philosophical underpinnings and practical applications, was not being understood.

Upon arriving at Freshwater Bay a couple of students clambered awkwardly up a great granite boulder overlooking the rocky breakwater that demarcates the freshwater pond and sea, giving the place its name. Other students foraged for wild apples, or crossed the breakwater in search of treasures from the sea. It was a powerful sight, this meeting place of sea and land that rose dramatically, rocky buttresses jutting from the blue-grew maw of the ocean supporting wind-slewed spruce and larch that slunk back towards the west, desperately avoiding the scouring salt and howling westerlies. The wet condensed in a low cloud that caught and separated among the tree tops, slowly unraveling out into the grey-blue beyond.

Surprising me, a lanky student, her hair plastered across her brow, leaned precariously from her boulder perch and, with a dramatic flourish, said, “Sir! This is *friluftsliv*!”

Newfoundland Past and Present: A Place Adrift

*“When you abreast of Round Head be,
Then Joe Batt’s Point you’ll plainly see;
To starboard then three or four miles,
You’ll see a parcel of damned rugged isles”*
— Wadham’s Song, 1756

If Wadham’s Song resonates today it is as a piece of folklore, harking back to a time when communities depended upon what people could hack and hew from the ground and trees, what they could pull forth from the sea. A closer examination would note that within the directions embedded in the song’s lyrics

lies a sea road so important that the British Admiralty had it officially recognized as a way finder—a map song. Robert MacFarlane notes that, “sea roads are dissolving paths whose passage leave no trace beyond a wake, a brief turbulence astern. They survive as convention, tradition, as a sequence of coordinates, as a series of waymarks, as dotted lines on charts, and as stories and songs” (2012).

It is in this guise that Wadham’s Song holds true power, as a story separate from the one our society follows today. It speaks to communities, outports as they are known, that looked to the sea for sustenance and economic prosperity. The sea roads to Fogo Town, Harbour Breton, Bay Roberts and St. John’s were used to trade their seasonal catch of fish and furs for those necessities they could not catch, hunt or fashion from their surroundings.

Wadham’s Song is also a lament of a way of life all but lost. Newfoundland outports are dying. This is hardly the first lament for their passing. Farley Mowat’s 1972 book *A Whale for the Killing* was a desperate call for humanity’s connection to a world larger than oneself, to protect nature and respect our fellow life forms. In it Mowat outlines, starkly, the differences between the Old People who lived and worked within the physical and resource limits of their outport communities and those who had, because of economic plight or necessity or ignorance, taken up the banner of Progress and forgotten the lessons of place (1972).

The cost of progress in Newfoundland is well established. Bill McKibben speaks of Newfoundland in the aftermath of the 1992 cod fishing moratorium as an example of what will happen to the world as we deplete our resources: economies bottoming out, citizens dispersed by the economic winds of chance (2011).

But that’s only part of the story. If McKibben had followed the story of Newfoundland from 1992 through to today, he would recognize a dramatic change.

Today the province is enjoying relatively good times, buoyed by offshore oil drilling. The good times will last for at least another decade, perhaps as many as six. Beyond that no one speaks for sure.

But for the duration there's an oil-driven boom in St. John's. Great tracts of boreal have been leveled to make way for subdivisions and industrial parks. The roads are cluttered with flashy demonstrations of material well-being, trucks and SUVs, and industrial vigor.

The outports are dying, the lessons they gleaned from generations living close to their surroundings are being lost. But for a change Newfoundland is no longer at the butt end of jokes about its economic woes. And for many this is enough.

Ursula Kelly notes that Newfoundlanders have been unwilling to be challenged in their stories (2009). Ours is a story of pluck and courage, of human against the elements. It encompasses families who were literally perched atop the cold swirl of the North Atlantic, their hopes and dreams tied to the codfishery. It was a brutal life, a constant struggle.

But this is only one version of the story. Those who challenge it, who seek out connections between the natural and human ecologies like Mowat, Greenpeace or Sea Shepherds, but also a host of fishermen, concerned citizens and outdoors enthusiasts, are largely decried as *environmentalists*, the word spat out like a maggoty fish. You cannot oppose progress, because everyone remembers the spectre of 1992.

So the outports empty out as people move into town, where the jobs are. A way of life lived in partnership with their natural environment is lost. But this loss is much more than romancing a way of life now past. There are tangible effects that will trickle out as Newfoundlanders negotiate the murky waters of the 21st century.

While living on Fogo Island I had the

opportunity to attend an annual celebration held on Little Fogo Island, separated by six nautical miles from Fogo Island. Dozens of boats, from fishing trawlers to speedboats to the newly made trapskiff we traveled in—a wooden throwback to an earlier way of life powered by a fickle Arcadia engine (affectionately known as putt-putts for their ominous start-stop-start-stop)—made the journey over. It was a beautiful summer day, the sky washed clean of clouds and the waters calm. I was looking forward to exploring the islands' crevices after the ceremony.

However, just as we were finishing up the packed lunches we'd brought, I noticed the men, nearly all of them ex-fishermen, conferring. There was a sudden lurch of movement as the meeting broke, and I felt that I'd missed something as everyone hurriedly packed up lunches and corralled children back towards the rickety, greying spruce shores that supported wharves descending from steep cliffs where the boats were tied up.

What was going on? I enquired of a local man. Storms coming, he replied, nodding in the direction of some innocent white clouds strung across the far horizon.

The journey back to Joe Batt's Arm was relatively easy, though the afternoon winds had picked up and the bow crested up and crashed down satisfactorily, a large wooden slap against the water that marked our choppy progress. But as we breasted the shoals at the harbour mouth I chanced a glance back at Little Fogo Island. It was gone. In its stead a scene of apocalyptic proportions met me. Dark clouds surrounded the island, the horizontal slant of rain visible. White caps ran out and around the storm. The whole scene was punctuated by the sudden flash of lightning.

This is what is being lost; knowledge of place so complete that a storm can be read in the clouds themselves, in the direction of the wind. As the outports empty fewer and fewer people are learning these lessons.

We have, to borrow from Wendell Berry, come to value this place only insofar as it provides us profit (2012). Yet, in doing so, we bankrupt our relationship to place: physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Immersed in Place: A Winter Sketch

It was a cold, sunny afternoon. The air was still, crisp. The snow crunched and squeaked underneath our snowshoes. From time to time we crashed into the spruce trees that overhung the trail, sending a cascading avalanche of accumulated snow down upon us.

The students chatted quietly, or walked in awed silence.

We walked past a frozen pond, the landscape warped into weirdness by great snow drifts that glowed nearly yellow in the afternoon sun but cast midnight blue shadows in their recessed lee. The sky was dotted with cotton ball clouds that scuttled along before Arctic thermals.

Halfway through our trek we stopped for hot chocolate, warmed our hands before a fire. There's something elemental in fire. It sparks a feeling of warmth beyond just the mere flames, as though through it we can peer down the millennia of humans huddled round a campfire sharing each other's company. The smoke curled lazily up through the trees before being born off by the prevailing winds.

This was a moment many Newfoundlanders had enjoyed—a mug up in the woods, a chance to spin a bit of a yarn, to give the muscles a break, to muse upon the work that lay ahead. And though we weren't following a trapline or cutting firewood or following a late season caribou trail we were following in their wake. There was recognition that this was something they used to do. Such experiences tied us to this place such that we could see even the Divine in the towering cliffs and rocky soil. Why else would we have 11 communities called Paradise?

Finding Connections Through Friluftsliv

"We must apprentice ourselves to an experience of place if place is to become our teacher."

—Brian Wattchow, 2008

In countering the story of profit and materialism, we need to relearn some lessons from the past. But at the same time we have to strike out on a new path, find a new story (Berry, 1988).

It is my contention that Newfoundland outport culture and society, tied as it was to the land and particularly the sea, was in many ways practicing what we call friluftsliv. David Gilligan notes that, "friluftsliv encourages us to develop a sense of home in our own place, to live in a participatory relationship with the land, to recognize nature as the home of culture..." (2007). Families had to come together to work the codfishery. There were spruce flakes to build, stores, rough tilts to keep out the driving cold and wet, firewood to lie in. During the long winter months they followed traplines on handmade rackets, walking long miles in cold silence. During the height of summer they balanced the garden, haying fields, and near continuous loop of fishing, gutting, salting and drying in clouds of blackflies that gave way to nippers and then horseflies until the sharp chill of the approaching winter drove them away. This was not the friluftsliv of the romantic movement in Norway where "nature was seen as liberation, uplifting and a way to a decent life—physically, spiritually and socially" (Tordsson, 2007). Nor was the experience necessarily joyful.

But it would be hard to argue against the idea that the unique features of Newfoundland culture—the stubborn independence, the love of place, even the music and literature—is born from nature itself.

Robert MacFarlane notes in *The Wild Places* that we are no longer capable of seeing the world beyond that which we have created (2008). This sentiment is echoed often in

modern nature writing, from writers and speakers like Barry Lopez, Annie Dillard, Roger Deakin, David Orr, David Suzuki, and many more besides. We cannot imagine a place and culture we have not hewn by our own hands. But in fracturing our relationship, in blinding ourselves to our dependence on nature, we feel the lack. We want for little materially, yet as a society we speak often of how empty we feel.

This directly and indirectly feeds into our school curriculums. David Sobel notes in *Place-Based Education*, “the fragmentation of the school from the community is mirrored in the fragmented curriculum....Place-based educators advocate for an integrated curriculum that emphasizes extensive use of community resources...” (2004).

As a teacher, this is what made friluftsliv so appealing. It speaks to the possibilities of nature being the curriculum, of allowing us to rediscover our connections to the natural world. It allows us, in the words of Hans Gelter, to “link natural history and philosophy and connect the knowledge of oneself and one’s surroundings with an understanding of the world.” Further, friluftsliv allows us to “appreciate our cultural heritage as a genuine part of the modern world, without being lost in nostalgia” (Tordsson, 2008).

As recent reports like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) note, climate change is upon us. The debate is over. Yet as we move away from an intimate relationship with nature, such as the one found in outposts, we hinder our ability to meet the coming challenges.

A friend who works as a carpenter to support his passion for making traditional wooden boats told me that the island’s spruce is no longer suitable for planking boats. The heartwood rots out so that the woodworker is left trying to salvage the outer wood. Akin roughly to eating an orange that’s gone rotten in the middle, all indicators point to a warming climate. There is no romantic story that we can jump back into.

As an educator, I at once strive to bring this reality to my students while simultaneously trying to open them to the possibilities a closer connection to this place through friluftsliv could bring. Nils Faarlund (2007) notes that, “with friluftsliv, the game of nature meeting can continue as a lifelong experience.” Nature has been, and continues to be, central to the human experience. Faarlund goes on to say, “Humankind grew up on a planet with free natural rhythms, which obviously left deeply rooted patterns in us” (2007). Nature allows us to experience life as it should be “and these experiences should be guidelines for the building of society” (Tordsson, 2007).

Friluftsliv, in 21st century Newfoundland, would help us better understand the importance we have to place in our natural surroundings. It underscores Dave Foreman’s contention that, “the idea of wilderness is the most radical human thought....Wilderness says: Human beings are not paramount.” Friluftsliv “requires an intentional exploration of our own interactions with, and relationship to, the land” (Baker, 2007). Friluftsliv allows us to understand the importance of Stephen Graham’s 1926 treatise: “As you sit on the hillside, or lie prone under the trees of the forest, or sprawl wet-legged by a mountain stream, the great door, that does not look like a door, opens.”

I find in that quote the ghost of my student, perched atop a great granite boulder before the grey maw of the North Atlantic, shouting out, “Sir! This *is* friluftsliv!”

The only bright side to the dense wet explosion of green plant life that saturated even water-proof hiking boots was the profusion of blueberries that offered themselves. This, however, seemed to be enough to buoy student spirits.

The plan had been to do a two-day, one-night exploration of the local forest ecology and history, natural and human, to better understand our connections to nature. It had begun well-enough. But now, on the



morning after a wind storm had knocked down a number of tents, when rains had found hitherto unknown holes, when breakfast was a black cloud affair and a number of students expressed concern about pressing forward, that plan was in danger. I had forced the issue, feeling that, once moving, students would find purpose in action.

But the blueberries, of all things, seemed to galvanize students. They bent over double, filling waterbottles, stuffing handfuls into their mouths. We pressed on, the trail scant, overgrown, dripping wet. Our goal was to find Three-Pond Barrens, from which the Rennies River comes and flows downhill into Long Pond, then onto Quidi Vidi before exiting into the Atlantic. It supports a teeming ecosystem, including the densest concentration of brown trout to be found anywhere in North America.

When at last we arrived, the rains had not abated. A cold wind howled over the pond, which reflected the dull wet slate grey of the sky. Nevertheless, it didn't take the students long to get into swimsuits and fling themselves into the water. Despite the cold they immersed themselves in the moment and in the elemental.

"The only education aid is being in nature itself" (Gelter, 2007). I find resonance in such experiences with students in nature because we can, and do, find joy and solace in the natural world in spite of what we are told is miserable weather.

My feeling is that Newfoundland just now is at a crossroads. We know that we used to live in a manner that better fit the limits nature imposed upon people. There is a recognition that the material wealth and newfound riches brought to us by oil still leaves us wanting. We know as educators

that we cannot bankrupt this place indefinitely of its natural resources and beauty without repercussions. In friluftsliv we find a means to bring together the past and the present, and to work towards a better future, in partnership with nature. In the words of Dahle (2007), "Because I recognize that humans are a part of nature ... I remain committed to using education as a means for bringing friluftsliv centrally into people's lives."

Let this too be my commitment as a Newfoundland educator.

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Lost in Translation: A Critique of “Forest School” from a UK Perspective

By Mark Leather

In this article I critique the Forest School approach to outdoor education in the UK. This is a brand of educating children outdoors in forest or woodland environments and is marketed as a commodity, a package of training and assessment that qualifies you to deliver a forest school experience. It is particularly associated with Early Years education, and was brought to the UK in 1993 and been developing since that time. It owes its heritage to Scandinavian *Friluftsliv* and Danish *Udeskole* where young children visit forests or woodlands and learn personal and social group skills. Sara Knight (2009) defines this as

one where the experience is regular, repeated and in an unfamiliar setting, it is made as safe as reasonably possible, it happens over time, there is no such thing as bad weather—only bad clothing, trust is central and the learning is play based and, as far as possible, child-initiated and child-led (p.16–17).

Typical activities include lighting, managing and cooking on fires; building dens and shelters; engaging in imaginative and fantasy play including storytelling; climbing trees and using rope swings; using full size tools to cut, carve and create using natural materials; and playing environmental games.

Forest School: The New Kid in the Woods

The reason to critique Forest School is because of its proliferation in the UK and recent introduction into Canada. This is exemplified by the numerous books by Sara Knight¹ as well as the commercialisation of training provision of Forest Schools.² In the words of Knight herself, “If we are to develop a shared national model for Forest School in the UK there must be robust discussion and debate” (2009, p.14). To this very end,

as an experienced outdoor educator and academic researcher, in this article I critique Forest School from a philosophical perspective as a “methodical practice of doubt” (Gasché, 2007).

Many recognise the activities of shelter building, making fires and using tools (e.g., knives and axes) in the outdoors as nothing new. These activities have been enjoyed educationally in Western imperialistic nations since at least the writing of Baden Powell and the formation of the Scout movement in 1908. Additionally, the personal and social development ethos of Forest School has been at the core of adventure education as seen since 1941 with the practice of Outward BoundTM. Along with traditional adventure education, the area of environmental and Earth education is also an influence; for example, Cornell’s (1978) *Sharing Nature with Children* is a classic book in which the game “meet a tree” sees participants blindfolded and using their other senses to explore a tree. This is found in many outdoor programs, including Forest School; fundamental to all of these approaches is they have an experiential approach to learning.

Forest School brings a fresh approach to outdoor education with younger participants and utilises a child-centred, child-initiated and play-based approach to learning. This approach is not new for Early Years practitioners who have the rich history of, amongst others, the likes of Froebel, Montessori, and Steiner, as well as Margaret Macmillan who founded an open air nursery in the slums of London in 1911. However, this approach is potentially new and exciting for traditional outdoor educators. It also challenges some of the current orthodoxy; e.g., fires and tools with 3–5-year-olds tests the traditional age of participation of the Scout Movement. However, absent from the Forest School

literature is the theoretical foundations upon which Forest School is based. What I wish to highlight is how Forest School has taken a foreign concept that is grounded in the philosophy and culture of Scandinavian *Friluftsliv* and imported it into a UK context and educational culture without an understanding of what may become “lost in translation.” The point is that experiential outdoor activities in woodland, with a focus on personal and social development, are nothing new. For experienced outdoor educators these historical reference points influence how we conceive a Forest School; for new Forest School leaders there is much to be gained from understanding the history, structure and culture of outdoor education as they are all precursors of the Forest School badge.

method and practice of teaching) becomes lost in translation.

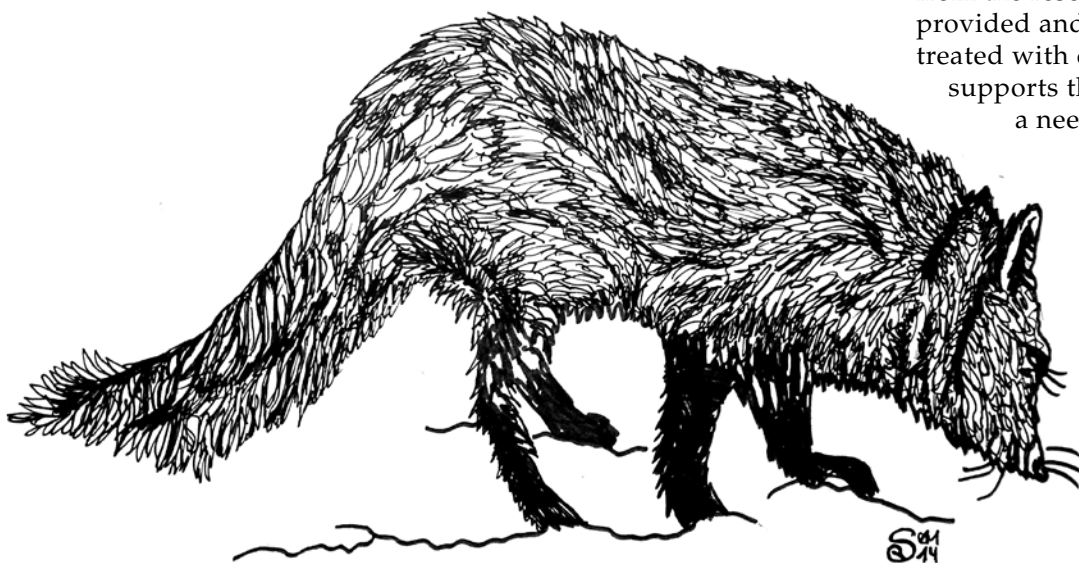
The unsubstantiated claim regarding self-esteem is striking and often repeated. For example, Knight (2009) states

Confidence and self-esteem are improved as skills develop and no one fails. This has a snowball effect, because as confidence grows so the children find more exciting things to do, which they will succeed at, thus improving their sense of self-esteem even more (p. 39).

There is no evidence to support this claim. I have discussed elsewhere³ how outdoor educators need to be more aware of the self-esteem label, how it is measured (i.e., not from adult observation), and how the evidence base regarding self-esteem from the research on Forest Schools is not provided and as such the claims need to be treated with doubt. Maynard (2007, p. 328)

supports this when she states, “there is a need for caution when making claims about the impact of—and on—children’s self-esteem.” From a Canadian perspective, the importing of the British Forest School approach sees these claims repeated on the Forest School Canada website.⁴

Secondly, the theoretical base of the Forest School approach, specifically our grasp of play as an approach to learning, is poorly covered in the texts, in the training syllabuses⁵ and on the commercial websites. Our educational grasp of play and child-initiated activity is culturally and socially mediated; i.e., being British influences how we teach and play outdoors in a given context. I suggest that much could be understood from the literature and research on play and learning in the early years. The work of Maynard and Thomas (2009), Bruce (2011) and Wood (2009, 2010) would be useful in helping to translate Forest School for



The Negative Aspects of This Critique

Firstly there are unsubstantiated claims about the outcomes of Forest School on individuals; secondly, there is a poorly explored theoretical base; and thirdly, the commercialisation of training to become a Forest School leader leads to a commodification and oversimplification of the learning experience. As such the original philosophy and pedagogy (the

learning outdoors in the UK and beyond.⁶

Thirdly I argue that the training of a leader “McDonaldizes” the learning experience; i.e., the approach to learning becomes a standardised product, a thing, a commodity to be consumed in a specific manner. Level 3 practitioners may “deliver” Forest School, however the original ethos becomes “lost in translation” in Britain because the ability to facilitate child initiated play is culturally influenced. As Wood and Attfield (2005) discuss, the concept of play (as “real” learning) remains highly problematic in the UK in both theory and practice. My initial research⁷ indicates that the ability of the leader to facilitate play is influenced by their educational background. Additionally, I suggest that a market dominance of training provision narrows the opportunities for outdoor learning when Forest School is perceived (by managers and funders) as the only acceptable badge and qualification to take children to the woods. This I believe becomes a form of cultural imperialism, whereby existing practices and historical perspectives and traditions become disregarded. It appears that in Canada there is much to be learned from the indigenous culture and that to embrace the British import and version of Forest School may well be just another act of cultural imperialism.

The Positive Aspects of the Critique Of Forest School

Forest School has much for outdoor educators to consider that could be useful especially the play based and child (participant) initiated approach. For example the thrill of jumping in water, whilst not featuring in the syllabus of skill acquisition for sailing or canoeing (except as rescues), can provide opportunities for fun, excitement, group development, personal expression and a sensate connection with nature. The move away from traditional instruction, of skills and formal learning outcomes, to a more creative and spontaneous use of the outdoors could provide additional opportunities for participants to learn

and develop. Whilst this may challenge conventional thinking, I find this an exciting opportunity to develop pedagogy of play for outdoor education – so that we may better grasp the construct of ‘play’ and how as teachers and leaders we may integrate this approach to our practice.

The positive aspect of taking young children outdoors has two components. Firstly, they become exposed to learning in natural environments from a young age, and conceivably this becomes more normal for them, their parents and their teachers. These early experiences may well seed the future and engender a desire for more. Studies of *significant life experiences* of environmental educators suggest that these early experiences are crucial for positive attitudes and behaviours later in life. Secondly, this age group challenges the pre-conceptions of traditional approaches e.g. adventurous expeditions of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme start at fourteen and traditional sports, e.g. sailing, may commence independently from eight years. These societal shifts need to be considered against the bigger picture of how childhood is culturally and socially constructed and understood, including what young children are capable of physically, cognitively and emotionally. The Forest School approach of regular and repeated outdoor education is useful since it highlights that outdoor education can be local, low cost and progressive. There will still be a place for high adventure with extended residential expeditions and activities in locations remote from home, but perhaps there will be more keen participants if they have experienced the forest at an early age.

To conclude: for me this is about educating all outdoor educators including the Forest School practitioners and trainers. My concern is that without a fuller understanding of the construct and brand of ‘Forest School’ outlined here, the cultural context within which it is practised, and some thorough evaluative research to explore its impact, we will see an overly simplified and constricted

version of outdoor education, the child's experience within it and the benefits to the wider outdoor education community may become somewhat 'lost in translation'.

Endnotes

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4. <http://www.forestschoollcanada.ca/home/about-forest-school/benefits-of-forest-school>
5. See the NOCN Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) Qualification No: 600/8874/6
6. This is the continuing tension between education and training for outdoor learning—do we only need level three practitioners to be trained to “deliver” packages of experiences or would we really like our outdoor practitioners to be educated in order to teach, lead, facilitate and so on.
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Narratives of Communal and Contested Natures

By Maria Legault, Michelle Gordon and Bryan Grimwood

For some time now, outdoor education practitioners and researchers have acknowledged “nature” to be a contested concept and contested terrain. We recognize, for example, that nature has multiple meanings, can be experienced in various ways, possesses both intrinsic and instrumental value, and is shaped by diverse social and cultural forces. Such understanding, not new to those engaged in the field of outdoor education, has not deterred the field’s widespread respect for nature as a space that nurtures deep place-based relationships, learning, and individual and community well-being. We need look no further than our frequent reference to Richard Louv (2005) and his persuasive claims about “nature deficit disorder” as contemporary justification for doing what we do.

This paper highlights the process and outcomes of an interactive workshop we facilitated at the 2013 COEO conference at Glen Bernard Camp. The purpose of the workshop was to share, unpack and deliberate over the stories we tell ourselves as outdoor educators about nature. In other words, we sought to engage with COEO delegates in collaborative and critical dialogue about the places of nature, and the role they play, in outdoor education. As Stewart, Glover and Barkley (2013) suggest, “sharing stories about place is not about reaching consensus or resolving differences; rather it is about understanding place meanings of oneself and others, and opening opportunities for new meanings to emerge” (p. 236). We sought to achieve these aims by balancing highlights from our various research projects and small group breakout sessions. More specifically, narratives and photographs derived from research spanning urban, rural and Arctic natures, and comprising the diverse perspectives of children, Inuit, canoeists and hikers, were used to prompt ideas, images, feelings, experiences, representations and so forth expressed by workshop delegates

in an arts-based group exercise. In what follows, we present a snapshot of the ways a dedicated group of COEO members were engaged in, and made sense of, the communal and contested narratives of nature.

Celebratory/Communal Nature Spaces

After making introductions and explaining workshop objectives, we used examples from our research to illustrate ways that nature is coded as a celebratory communal space. In these circumstances, encountering and experiencing nature is associated with resilience, community, environmental connection and deep learning. For example, as one parent of a child participant in an urban nature-based education program delivered by the P.I.N.E. Project described, being in nature enhances her child’s awareness and leadership potential:

We have a little bit of woods on our property and we took him out and we saw some poop. He said, “That looks like rabbit poop, but it’s really big.” And he said that it must be eating a lot of fibre ... and he goes this is how I know it’s bunny poop, because look at what happens when I smush it, and I can see what’s in it. And look over here, this is where the rabbit has scratched the tree That was [my son]. Leading me. He calls it his “eagle eye.” It’s seeing the part of the whole picture. (P.I.N.E. Project Parent, March 2013).

In research exploring the cultural livelihoods associated with the Thelon River in Arctic Canada, the human senses were identified as integral to people’s connection with nature. Wayfaring, wandering and social learning were three mechanisms through which those living and recreating within the riverscape perceived and valued their environment. Anautalik, an Inuk Elder from Baker Lake, illustrated aspects of this when describing

a photograph of her recent encounter with black spruce, trees that she associated with her childhood:

I was really happy, so happy to see the trees. Smell the trees, the plants It made me feel like at home where I came from with my parents. And when we burned the wood, I told my husband and my mother-in-law come and smell the trees! Smell the smoke! Oh that was home! Like way back from where I came from My goodness I was a little girl again It was good to be back home. In this picture I'm old. In my heart I was young." (Anautalik, May 2010).

Canoeists using the Thelon River for recreational purposes identified that wandering on foot, either individually or in small groups with a guide, was essential to their Arctic nature experience. With a guide, there were sightings of wolf dens, waterfalls, lithic scatters, Inuit tent rings and old caribou caches and fox traps. Unguided exploration exposed canoeists to eskers, panoramic views of the river valley and views from the river's edge.

Research on volunteer trail management in Southwestern Ontario found that celebratory aspects of nature were embedded in "teachable" moments in which hikers share information about the environment with each other. One trail manager identified his experience of guiding a hike for children as personally inspiring and educational:

With the young kids that one day when I was out, I was wondering what is it about the aspect of nature that makes it so fantastic? We found damselflies, and they were all excited Do you know what a damselfly is? They've jet-black wings and the rest of the torso is a turquoise/iridescent blue. But they're small, and they were in abundance in this area. The kids just found this so exciting. And, anyway, I got home from that day and thought what a wonderful experience it was. But it was hard to put into words—there was the element

of people, the element of introducing kids to stuff they don't know about, I'm opening up a whole new world to them." (Joseph, July 2012).

Other narratives from our research illuminated similar themes: that is, how nature is understood as a place of enhanced learning opportunities, a place that creates multiple and nuanced connections to self and others, and a place giving rise to self-reflexive understandings of nature.

Breakout Session #1

We began the first breakout session by inviting delegates to represent in their own words the positive, celebratory or communal aspects of nature observed in their personal and professional lives. To facilitate this process, delegates were given cue cards to write single-word or short phrase responses for a period of one minute. Subsequently, delegates were asked to assign themselves to one of three workstations (for the purposes of this paper we identify the workstations as A, B and C). These stations were each equipped with a long roll of brown paper, permanent coloured markers and glue sticks. Each workstation group was instructed to work together to develop a visual "map" on which all of the words generated on their cue cards could be placed. The glue sticks were used to attach their cue cards to the map, and adding illustrative lines with markers or attaching pieces of natural debris from outside the conference room was encouraged.

Groups were allocated 15 minutes to sort, discuss and present their cue cards on the brown paper. Groups A and B used the following steps to create their map:

1. They discussed and sorted cue cards into similar words groups.
2. They debated how best to arrange these words on to the paper (e.g., presenting the words on an outline of a human body or within a landscape setting).



3. They eventually settled on the idea of creating a collage of words associated with specific images (e.g., nature as healthy/clean translated into including illustrations of bright blue air and vibrant green trees).

Group C's approach was slightly different. Words on the cue cards formed a base, upon which props discovered both within and outside the conference room were attached. This created a three-dimensional, visual montage involving the likes of crumbled brown leaves, or a glass jar with a stick, as representative of key word statements.

During this initial hands-on activity, delegates focused largely on the artistic aspects of their project. The 15-minute time limit translated into little depth to discussions of personal or professional stories about nature. We then requested

that everyone return to their seats for a second discussion of our research projects.

Contested Nature Spaces

In this second discussion, we highlighted contested views of nature within our research projects. Issues of privilege, rights and limited access to nature were raised in relation to cultural, educational and recreational nature-based experiences. We also analyzed how these problematic issues might impact outdoor education.

Using a P.I.N.E. Project example, we demonstrated the association of nature experience with particular social categories, in this case whiteness and financial wealth. One parent reflected:

What do you think about the fact that almost everybody in P.I.N.E. is white? ... My husband ... his background is really

more working class When he first took [our son] to the P.I.N.E. program, he's like—it's not to his taste "This place reeks of privilege." That's what he feels ... you have a lot of money so you can afford to go and play in the woods. ... He likes nature but when he was a kid ... he'd go off and walk in the woods, but it wasn't like he was going to go to some fancy camp, you know? Or like he sees the kids with all their nice backpacks. He's like, "Well you got your nice gear" (P.I.N.E. Project Parent, April 2013).

That nature-based learning is not a universal experience seemed to create tensions around the structure and cost of the outdoor education program.

For wealthy canoeists travelling the Thelon River, the landscape tends to be regarded as devoid of human presence; the livelihoods of Aboriginal societies within the watershed often get historicized, ignored or trivialized. This vision of the Arctic landscape maintains a romanticized notion of nature as "pristine." For example, one canoeist suggested:

If you don't have people going to the Thelon, you don't have anybody to sort of put their hand up when a mining company asks for a license and say "No, you shouldn't, that place is just too special, mine your gold somewhere else." (Thelon canoeist, March 2010).

Under the spell of pristine nature, this canoeist overlooks efforts made by both Dene and Inuit communities to resist mining projects within the Thelon watershed and to self-determine land use practices within their traditional territories. Indeed, for both the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Northwest Territories, and the Inuit community of Baker Lake, Nunavut, the Thelon continues to be hunting and fishing territory, and a consistent source of drinking water, social bonding, traditional knowledge and cultural memory.

For volunteer trail managers, public use of private landscapes in Southwestern

Ontario can generate conflict around nature spaces. Private landowners are concerned about safety, liability and vandalism when opening their land to public trails. One trail manager described the situation as follows:

Basically, the Grand Valley Trail doesn't own any land so we are always on the generosity of the landowners. And sometimes you get kicked off There are other hikers who walk off-trail on the landowner's field, and a lot of time, we only have permission to walk on the edge of the field. Sometimes they might push over the corn So over the past year I've had some complaints from landowners Without them, we don't have a trail." (Damien, July 2012).



Breakout Session #2

For the second breakout session, we invited delegates to go back to their workstations to re-evaluate their maps by placing a contested lens over their images of nature.

Discussions and personal stories about nature came to the forefront during this portion of the activity. Groups struggled to reconcile beauty with conflict in their vision of and experiences with nature.

Groups A and B both expressed regret at having to deface the beauty of their initial image. Group A superimposed negative words (e.g., greed, exclusion) in a small font size over their original visual map. Group B tore violent red scars across their initial image to illustrate how nature is associated with pollution and death, as well as their internal distress at the overlay of human values on nature's canvas. Both groups expressed the impermanence of humans, but the longevity and resilience of that stuff we call nature. In general, these groups emphasized the positive work that nature can do in terms of enhancing teaching and learning.

Group C added dead flies from the glass jar to their collage of cue cards and scattered little red "No" signs over the entire visual map, illustrating exclusion (see Figure 1). They indicated that during this portion of the exercise, their spirits and energy levels dropped in response to the negative signage around their previously happy and idyllic map. Although left unstated, it is possible that these "No" signs also work their way into outdoor education when issues of privilege, rights and status come into play.

Conclusion

For the final moments of the workshop, we came together as a large group for discussion and debriefing. As per our original objectives, we emphasized the importance of place meanings with respect to nature and in outdoor education. We reiterated our hope that delegates would walk away from the exercise with a fresh take on the meanings they ascribed to nature, and recognize the importance of acknowledging, and potentially acting upon, those often unstated but all-important contested perspectives.

Overall, it was clear that delegates felt it important to evaluate the place and role of nature in outdoor education. For example, delegates emphasized that without a critical evaluation of nature, and practices that rely on certain constructions of nature (such as outdoor education), it is possible that serious issues of inequity, exclusion and injustice may be perpetuated. While delegates were challenged to talk about such emotionally raw and intellectually complex topics in such a tight time frame, we were very impressed as facilitators by their engagement and compassion throughout the workshop. Based on our experience with this group of conference delegates, it would seem that outdoor educators in Ontario are quite willing, able and keen to call into question foundational concepts (e.g., nature) and assumptions (e.g., about nature) for the betterment of the field.

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A Dedication to Brent Cuthbertson

By OUTD 3111 Class

Dr. Brent Cuthbertson was a man with a lifetime of experience in the field of outdoor education. Such experience ranged from frontline work to teaching at Lakehead University in the School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism (ORPT) for nearly 20 years. As an educator, Brent influenced generations of outdoor recreation leaders by presenting a balance of the academic and the practical. This approach came naturally to Brent, as he drew from a wealth of personal experiences and a background of scholarly study in outdoor education. Brent integrated his personal interests, such as sea-kayaking and sailing, with a grounding of complex academic topics, so that they were more easily understood by students.



Sadly, Brent passed away suddenly and unexpectedly halfway through the 2014 fall semester at the age of 54. He left behind a wife, stepdaughter and large community of friends and students.

We, as his "Topics in Leadership" class, identified a series of key concepts and ideas that Brent left us with. The six fundamental lessons listed below are dedicated to Dr. Brent Cuthbertson.

Be True to Yourself: You Have the Answers

Brent inspired people to find the answers to their own questions. Many people have scratched their heads, or given him a sideways look, after asking a question only to hear, "I don't know. What do you think the answer is?" He applied this to himself as well and was very open about his life's journey. He sparked a sense of self-reflection in us through a presentation he made about himself. He shared with us the questions he had asked himself along the way. The main questions were about what he wished to accomplish in his life. At first Brent was set on the idea of remaining a guide for the majority of his adult life. He came to realize, however, and would go on to teach others, that the things he desired in life would have to change and adapt so he could grow into the person he aspired to be. This meant transitioning from his guiding career into one of management, teaching, writing, sailing and even leading a ship-making workshop. He was brought to us here at Lakehead and the ORPT community by his desire to influence and inspire future leaders. He was always true to himself and encouraged us to do whatever wild and crazy things we wanted, because that is how we learn and grow. Through telling us his own story, we learned how to stay true to ourselves, and that following our own dreams and ambitions will help bring us to places we had never thought of. We will achieve things we never dared to hope for. Brent began his career as a guide and, through reflection and introspection, became a role model.

Use What You Love to Serve Others

One day we had to prove to Brent that our ORPT program wasn't worthless. He accused ORPT of being a selfish profession for the privileged. In typical Brent fashion, he got us pretty agitated with the way he challenged our motivations for being in the field. He left us for a few minutes to brainstorm some arguments against his, and give us the chance to think of all the ways that ORPT students can do good in the world. Of course, Brent didn't actually think ORPT was worthless. He told us to do what makes us happy, but not for our own selfish reasons. We need to use our passion to help others. We owe the world our efforts to make it a better place. Through his teachings and actions, Brent spent his life doing what he loved and was able to impact and inspire so many during the process. Ultimately, we took away that ORPT has great value, and that it is important to use our passions to help and serve others.

Brent and Taoism

Brent's teaching method was unique, to say the least. His structure allowed for each pupil to formulate his or her own ideas and theories. He modelled his own ideas and values relative to those of his students. This combination of letting students come to their own conclusions while projecting his ideas in a confrontational, yet nonthreatening way created a culture that was conducive to helping students grow as individuals and professional outdoor leaders. Brent never discussed his Taoist lifestyle with our class, but it was clear through his actions that his life was guided by a greater understanding of his surroundings and an almost super-human awareness. Brent's personality was exemplified by the Taoist metaphor of water. He had a great strength through his vulnerability. Through his ability to flow with his surroundings and his uncanny awareness, he was able to be more influential through his calm, cool and collected demeanour than he could ever have been through strength

and dominance. Brent's understanding, awareness, self reflection and deliberate communication exemplified the concepts of Taoism. His reserved, yet bubbly and welcoming personality effectively role modelled the things he desired to teach and instil in his pupils. If the world's issues and challenges are the rock, then Brent is the water that is there to break them down and help everyone move beyond.

Honour Your Curiosity

Brent was a man who could tell you about stellar dendrites. Few enough people are aware they exist, let alone have the capacity to inspire others to see that they are very interesting and beautiful snow crystals. Seeing someone giddy about something so small and unobtrusive inspired many of us to engage our curiosities. "The little things can make a big difference," we were told. "Don't be afraid to ask questions." Brent's curiosity also led us to getting out there and seeing what was happening. He was fond of, and academically studied, mapless travel. He felt it was important to "get lost" in your own adventure, as that is where true growth lies. We were taught to seek knowledge rather than grades. When told of a particularly interesting potential research topic, Brent would light up: "You won't get a good mark on that, but do it anyway—you'll learn a lot." We did learn, and will continue to follow our paths to do so, thanks to Brent.

Compassion

Compassion is something Brent taught and promoted without even acknowledging it. "People need kindness and understanding," he told us. Brent has always been able to show compassion through his kindness and understanding when anyone was facing a tough time. It came naturally to him. Giving up one of his sleeping bags in -38°C weather, helping students find a place to live, giving positive comments to his students, and paddling back to shore to save a stranded

daddy long legs on his kayak while on Lake Superior are just a few examples of how Brent demonstrated the value of compassion. He was compassionate towards those around him and his work. Whether it was through his class lessons, trips or personal conversations, he was a man who always wanted to help others.

Learning Through Your Struggles

Brent was a big believer in learning through one's struggles in order to grow as a leader. He articulated this very well on the first day of class as he spoke with a big grin on his face saying, "I absolutely love watching my students struggle." It was not a twisted pleasure in watching students fail that brought him joy, it was watching students battle through and come out stronger, as individuals and leaders. He would put us into situations that he knew we were going to struggle with to ensure we would learn and grow upon reflection. He had a talent in recognizing individual's limits and pushing everyone right to the edge, but never pushing them off. As a result of Brent's passing,

he continued to teach us as we struggled with his departure, while continuing with school. We learned to support each other and became closer as a community and a program. Brent truly helped us to grow.

Conclusion

Over the course of the semester, our class had to transition and adapt to Brent's absence. We grew closer and supported each other. Through late nights spent catching up, we realized the influence he had, and still has, on us. It is clear that his leadership and his significance to us exceeds limitations and will continue to be revealed to us over time. As it turned out, Brent's life emerged to be our "topic of leadership." Like the waters, he was always exposing new things about himself to us. We wish him smooth sailing, as he always wished for us.

"May your paddles always pull water,
May you never see strong winds,
May your footsteps never falter,
Return safely to your friends."

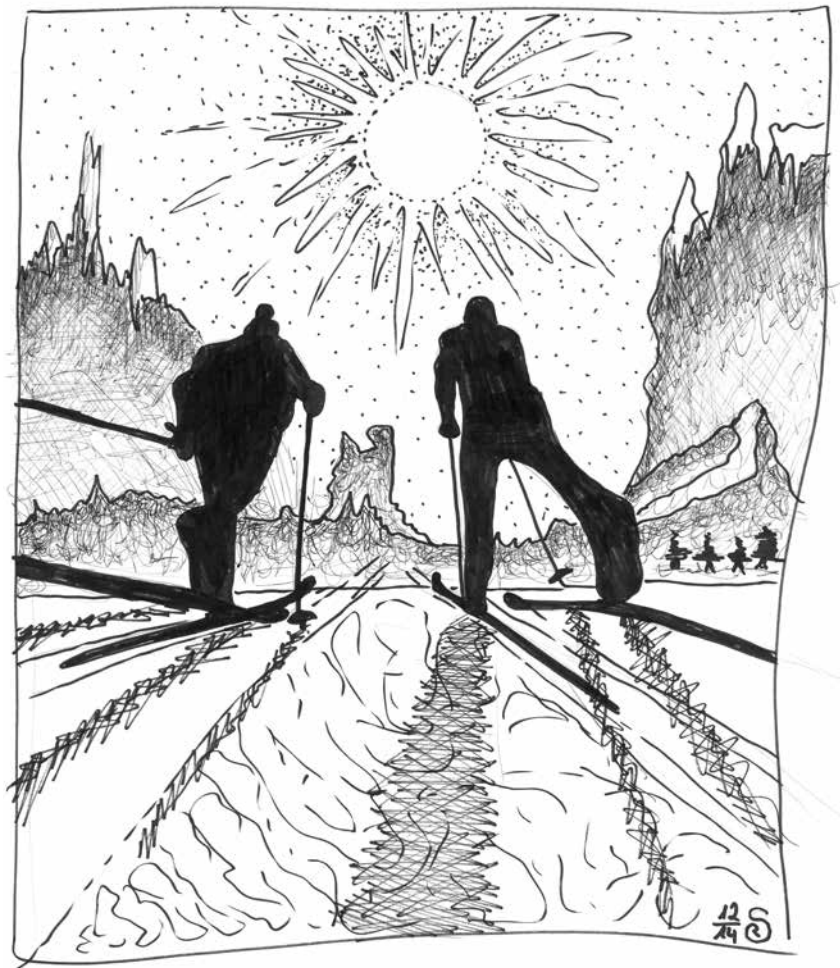


River-Running Metaphor for Thinking Through Social Justice Competency Development

By Elyse Rylander and Mary Breunig

If proper etiquette for a socially just outdoor leader is broken down into its basic components, it is very similar to informing a novice whitewater kayaker about river running. For example, a whitewater paddler should work to avoid whirlpools. An educator or program leader should avoid making assumptions about participants based on race, class, gender presentation, age or ability, for example, to avoid being swallowed up by a different but equally dangerous whirlpool. Undercuts are a dangerous river feature that have the same effect as a whirlpool in regards to potential entrapment. When a non-formal educator is leading a group, s/he must be vigilant about homophobic, transphobic, misogynistic, racist, classist and ageist jokes or comments and avoid being entrapped by group enculturation. Another common river feature that any whitewater paddler is taught to avoid are strainers. A socially just non-formal educator should avoid overly relying on one group member's experience, who may come from a marginalized population, as the sole source of social justice knowledge about that particular marginalized population, and thus work to avoid being sucked into (and under) a narrow perspective.

Simultaneous to learning about which river features to avoid, novice paddlers are also taught which river features will help them to safely navigate the waterway. Non-formal educators can be taught to navigate social justice terrain in a similar manner. Paddlers are instructed to seek out a downstream V as a safe navigational landmark; social justice proponents would identify "respect" as one key navigational landmark. Wave trains and surfing waves represent exciting facets of many rivers but can be a bit tricky to navigate as a novice. A temporary moment of trepidation can lead to a feeling of elation if deftly navigated and with the "right degree" of knowledge and expertise. Being honest about one's knowledge level on a particular social justice topic while taking risks to open



up dialogue can result in a similar feeling of elation if navigated well, even when navigating those waters may feel scary at first. Educating oneself and others on social justice topics can also be unnerving, much like paddling into a drop on the river, but those results too can be rewarding.

There are situations on the river in which a paddler must aim for the one path between two hard objects, otherwise known as a slot. A similar experience can happen in social justice advocacy when someone takes a risk to interrupt someone else's use of oppressive

Navigating the Rapids of Developing Social Justice Competency

Behaviours to avoid:

Assumptions

Limit first sight assumptions you make about participants. Consider, for example, your assumptions about:

Gender, Ability, Income Level, Sexual Orientation, Race, etc.

phobic/-ist Cultures

Deliberately manage homophobic, sexist, racist, embodiment assumptions and comments and work to create safe group culture and space.

“Outing” group members without their consent

Group members will share with you more fully if they trust and see evidence of your capacity for maintaining their confidentiality

Relying on the marginalized individual as your only source of knowledge.

While learning from your group members is encouraged, do not rely on it as your sole means of education.

Actions that Bridge the Gap:

(e.g.) gender assumption
Ask participants when they introduce themselves to also articulate their preferred gender pronoun

Develop positive group culture through the co-establishment of a Positive Learning Environment (Gookin & Leach, 2008). Gather the group together. Draw a large circle on a whiteboard identifying this as the group environment, asking people what they wish to see in the environment and write that inside the circle (i.e. laughter and positive contributions) and what people want outside the (circle) environment (i.e. put downs).

Obtain explicit consent from an individual before conveying information to the rest of the group

Educate yourself on marginalized communities and cultures different from your own so that your experience expands beyond your experiences with one or two individuals

Behaviours to embrace:

Respect

Convey respect in all your actions. Consider how your embodied responses as well as your words and actions convey respect and be consistent. If you regularly frown or gently “no shake” your head when certain individuals in a group make contributions (ones that you often disregard or disagree with), this will get noted by that individual and the group and is a form of silent oppression.

Honesty

It is critical to be honest and transparent about about what you know. It is okay to say “I don’t know.” and even better to follow-up and ask, “can you help me understand this better?”

Educate yourself and others

Learn about your own privileges and how they impact your interactions. Understand how privilege is also systemic and can lead to oppression, both individual and internalized. Engage in hard conversations.

Brand yourself as an ally

Identify yourself in visible ways and words as a person who supports marginalized communities.

Interrupt negative situations

Stop or speak out against an oppressive joke or comment. Redirect individuals if they make assumptions about an individual’s race, class, ability, gender, or sexual orientation. This will also aid in identifying you as an ally. Say, “ouch” as an ally or as the oppressed individual and then follow up with how you are feeling to further educate and open pathways of communication.

Communicate

Establish strong communication and feedback relationships with every member of the group. This will help you more safely navigate difficult situations. Receive feedback in a non-defensive manner.

Take Responsibility

It is okay to say, “I screwed up, I am sorry.” and to then ask about how to engage differently if you have offended someone. Apologies involve saying “I’m sorry” and asking “how can I restore justice?”

language. The pressure from the opposing forces can sometimes seem too frightening, however the pressure of that “in-between” place may actually lead to a successful outcome. Constant communication with and awareness of all the paddlers in one’s surrounding environment, with a particular view toward your group members, is foundational to a safe and successful day on the water. Exhibiting “good expedition behaviour” by looking out for others and respecting the line they choose in navigating a rapid is paramount. Likewise, respect, establishing a “safe” environment, and maintaining open lines of communication are foundational to social justice competency.

Many judgment calls are made on the river and when advocating for social justice, requiring one to remain constantly alert, perceptive, knowledgeable and flexible to the changing terrain. Remember that, while engaging in paddling a river and advocating for social justice may feel scary for novices,

those marginalized by society because they hold less privilege established by some “other” dominant, hegemonic norm, have scarier, deeper and more complicated waters to navigate. How can I/we educate for and toward a more socially just world alongside them?

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Elyse Rylander is the co-founder and Executive Director of OUT There Adventures, a Seattle-based adventure education organization committed to fostering positive identity development, individual empowerment and improved quality of life for LGBTQ youth/young adults and their peer allies. To find out more, please go to www.outthereadventures.org



What is Outside, Anyway?

By Greg Scutt

After the members of my paddling group called it a night and snuck away to their tents I found myself alone and nestled close to a dying campfire next to the Wind River in the Yukon. I watched the late summer northern sky, through the tops of solemn black spruce trees, resist darkness with a defiant palette of orange and blue. We had made camp that night near the confluence with the Little Wind River. That evening I finished reading Dick North's account of the *Lost Patrol* all the while mere kilometres from the very river valley where, in the middle of winter in 1910, crucial decisions went wrong for the lost Mounties. It is a tragic story about the hardship the land and weather can unleash on travelers in the dead of winter in the north. I also learned that First Nations had hunted the valley for millennia, and still do. The guide book I brought along provided information about much of the geomorphology and flora and fauna in the valley. Yet, I was aware that evening that those historical, cultural and scientific contexts I used to help understand the place were in some sense all inside a human framework of understanding.

It was peculiar to me that the being of a vast wild northern river valley was in effect caught inside human contexts. True, I am human and maybe I can only ever come to understand rain drops, caribou and arctic grayling through those human contexts. But on the other hand I had spent 16 days on the Wind River, contending with and adapting to the raw wild being of it. While reflecting near the fire, I realize now I was subtly sensitive and sometimes, if only briefly, aware of that place's autonomous reality as possibly existing outside of the socio-cultural, geological and ecological discourses about it. And in an absurd way even my own sensual experiences of the place were muted by encounters with the unavoidable realism of the river valley I paddled through. While I made my way with my group down the river, azure infused water glowing beneath our canoe hulls, brooding limestone mountains, drunk black spruce trees, lichen and grayling just seemed to exist out there as

it were and not within the experiences that I was collecting and registering. It was not as though things were hidden, but rather in an uncanny way their immanent being just seemed to exist outside my human reach, yet still reach out and affect me in their own way, on their own terms.

What I want to briefly sketch here is the notion that, in addition to their sensual being that is available to experience and knowledge, things (like aspen trees, tundra, wolverines and canyon walls) have a reality that exists outside human experience and socio-cultural contexts (Harmon, 2011). This is to say that "outside" potentially refers to more than just a place where outdoor education happens. I am curious if outside defined as reality free from human access can shed some light on the meaning of encounters that take place with it.

Green Fire, Orchids and Desert-real

It's helpful to briefly recall some popular and familiar encounters of early ecological thinkers. It is possible to read Aldo Leopold's (1949) epiphany, "Thinking Like a Mountain," and wonder if his encounter with the green fire in the eyes of the dying wolf he shot was, for him, an encounter with the real wolf. Did Muir not cry with joy when he encountered the miraculous existence of the Calypso borealis? Edward Abbey (1968) wrote in *Desert Solitaire* of the raw existence of the desert that first morning in Arches National Park when he wanted "to be able to look at and into a juniper tree, a piece of quartz, a vulture, a spider, and see it as it is in itself, devoid of all humanly ascribed qualities ..." (p. 7). All three of these revered thinkers of ecological thought endured formative encounters with some intractable reality, outside their previous experiences of orchids, wolves and the desert respectively. It is no coincidence that their encounters with the real significantly influenced each of their unique ecological philosophies. This is a testament to the power of encountering the outside of things, what Bennett (2010) has called an encounter with *out-side* or *thing-power*, and is

why it needs more attention within outdoor education.

The Being of Outside

The kinds of encounters I am interested in trying to think through are those that evoke within each of us the strange allusion that the things in the natural world we often bump up against, or those that soak, stare back, carry, warm, or chill us, exist as things-in-themselves outside any connection to human knowledge or experience. For example, what makes an encounter with a lynx powerful is how the reality of the lynx affects us in the moment before we register our experience of it, at the moment we face that it is. It's an uncanny encounter. The real, or what Bennett (2010) would call the "efficacious" lynx-ness, is the source of that uncanny encounter. The reality of the lynx, encountered in this way, is not reducible to representations of it within wildlife biology or a trapper's account. Those representations are important but the unnameable reality of a lynx, the home of its being in the world, is what I am referring to as its outside. We can only ever allude to the real lynx that is outside (Harmon, 2011, p. 68).

It was the encounter with outside while I paddled down the Wind River that unsettled my understanding of the meaning of the place. For it wasn't quite right to say we simply paddled down the river, choosing river braids freely where we wished and when we desired, camping wherever, however. It was instead a place that was doing something to us, inflicting its reality onto us. The river's eddies, riffles and logjams set the tone and conditions of safe passage. Rain storms told us when to watch for rising river levels or when to make camp. Camping in grizzly country shaped our cooking habits and tenting arrangements. And I think this is one reason why we go to these wild places and how educators know learning happens with outside encounters. This is because, when encountering outside, one needs to be attentive, perceptive and humble, both skilled and decisive. Outside is a place where non-human things like rivers, wind, rain and other mammals can assert their very being and agency into the path of a human visitor. It is

where we can authentically feel we are just beings amongst other beings.

Conclusion

So while outside is, for outdoor education, a vitally important place where learning happens, I am suggesting outside is not just a place to go to learn. Outside is also the real being of a wild, remote northern river valley, shimmering night sky, glowing campfire or even school yard ravine. It is inaccessible to direct experience and knowledge, yet we nonetheless encounter the existence of outside in things. Outside can be thought of as the force or power within things (Bennett, 2010) that make them what they are and what affects us. I cannot deny or diminish the importance of our experience of being outside or outdoors; its role in outdoor learning is crucial, but it's difficult to deny the power of the being of outside in things too. It is, in the end, what the Wind River taught me.



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Greg Scutt lives and works in the sea side city of Vancouver, British Columbia. He spends most of his free time wading through coastal rain forest rivers and streams with his fly rod (re)searching the meaning of salmonology.

Bringing Winter Lessons Home: Reflections and Strategies for Short-term Outdoor Experiential Education Programs

By Lisa Weitendorf

Last winter, I found myself co-leading a group of exchange students on a day-long snowshoe in Haliburton, Ontario. After hours of trekking through deep snow, map examination, lessons in fire building and tracking, and a packed out lunch we were back on the familiar stretch to the snowshoe hut. One of the German exchange students tugged on my pack. “Miss, I either feel *completely* dead or *totally* alive!” he proclaimed—smiling, sniffing and trudging through the last steps of the hike. For me, this student—experiencing his first month of winter in Ontario—was a living reminder of the value of experiential programs.

During their time in Haliburton these students worked together to build basic wilderness skills, constructed and spent the night in a traditional snow shelter (quinzhee), took part in a snowshoe trek, and managed to try out cross-country skiing—a challenging experience even for most acclimatized Ontario students. The time I spent with this group only amounted to five days. It is mind-boggling to see what a group of newly acquainted students can accomplish in under a week, many of whom were experiencing snow for the first time!

Being fully immersed in winter programming is a physically, environmentally and socially challenging experience for students and teachers alike. Even week-long programs present opportunities for students to learn from their environment, as well as connect with each other and the outdoors. Despite the opportunity for such “completely dead or totally alive” moments, I find myself questioning the impact and transferability of such short outdoor experiential education (OEE) programs. As outdoor educators, how can we maximize

opportunities for genuine, transferable learning experiences in the outdoors?

There are undoubtedly valuable attitudes and skills that come from being fully immersed in frosty environments—persistence, patience, an understanding of cooperative living, preparedness and gratitude for everyday luxuries. (Students think that I am some sort of miracle worker when I promise “ho-cho” at the end of a quinzhee sleep out!) How can we best create opportunities for students to carry these attitudes home? Over the past two years I have been collecting and borrowing strategies for a successful and meaningful experiential program. Certainly there is no formula for creating an impactful program, but here are a few strategies I would like to share. I try my best to practice them in any outdoor classroom. My hope is that they are useful for any classroom teacher, instructor, guide, mentor or caregiver.

Get to know student names and needs.

Learning someone’s name is a small gesture that shows you care, and will pleasantly surprise students. Calling someone by name goes a long way when you need a hand, an answer or an opinion. Students of any age group are more likely to work with you if you take a genuine interest in them first—if you show them that they are worth knowing. No matter how busy your program or lesson, you will never regret taking the time to learn names and needs.

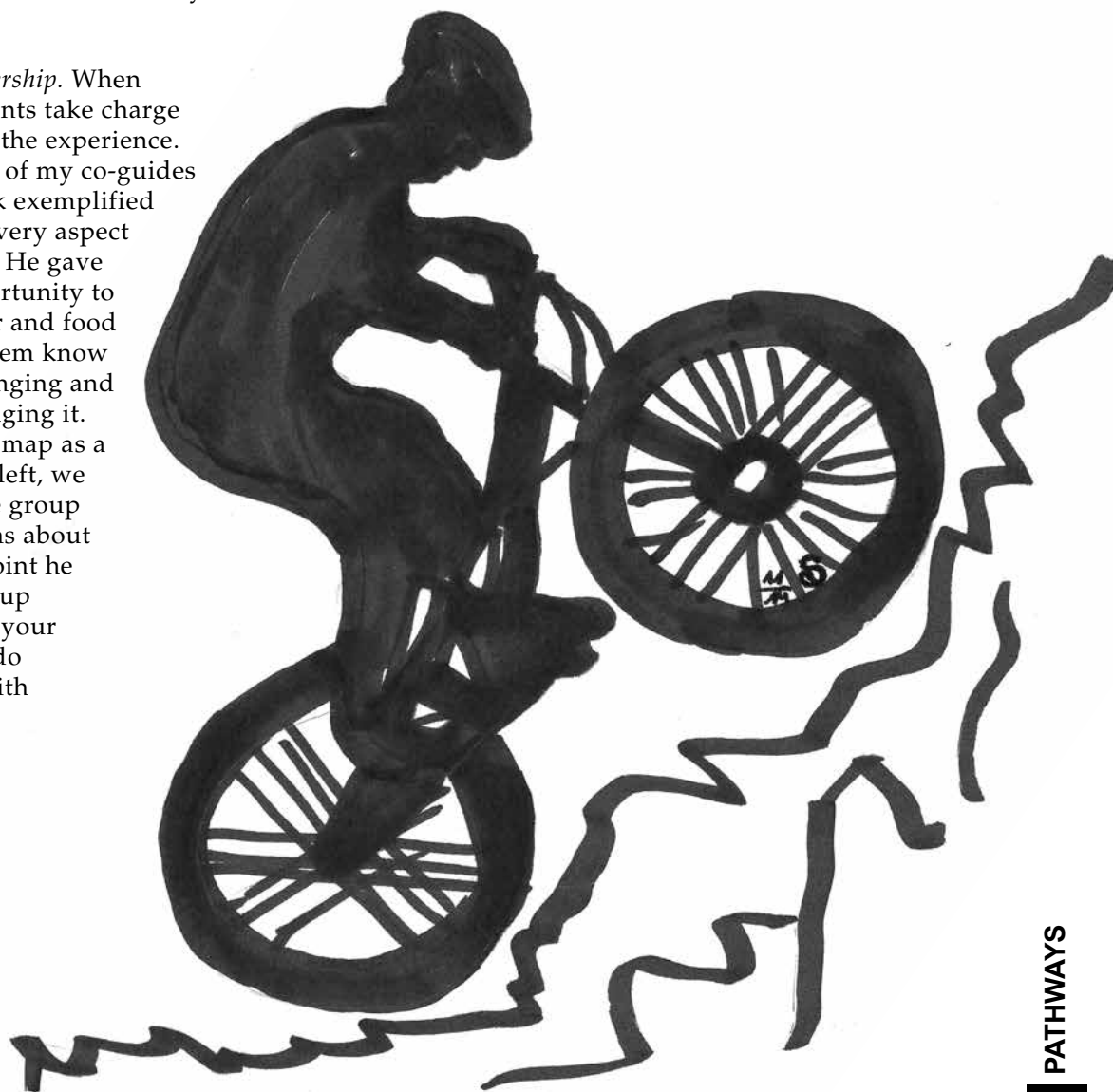
Be flexible. Let students share their knowledge and prior experiences. It is always valuable to find out what your students “geek out” about. What is their area of expertise, and how can this be used to benefit personal and group learning? Consider the positives of having a musician in the group (they probably

brought their ukulele), a Scout with eight years of camping experience, a young woman who plays curling at the national level, a grade five student who is collecting photographs for his blog about fungi, or a grade seven student who is “addicted” to birding. (<http://theaddictedbirder.blogspot.ca/>). By drawing on the expertise of their students, outdoor educators can bring more relevance and immediacy to these short-term outdoor experiences. We can use these moments to facilitate students feeling more included and integral to any experiential program; this attitude, of confidence or self-worth, is something students will absolutely take home with them.

Give students ownership. When possible, let students take charge and have a say in the experience. This past fall, one of my co-guides in Algonquin Park exemplified this perfectly in every aspect of canoe tripping. He gave students the opportunity to partake in all gear and food packing. He let them know what we were bringing and why we were bringing it. We went over the map as a group. Before we left, we sat down with the group to discuss concerns about the trip. At one point he addressed the group and said, “This is your canoe trip. What do you want to do with it? ... If you want to spend extra time perfecting your strokes, we can do that! Do you want to go for an early morning paddle to see a moose? We can do that! If you want

to learn about astronomy, we will do that! If you want to cook over the fire, you will! This is your trip and we want you to have ownership over it.” When he uttered those words, the faces of 10 hesitant students lit up; they were on board. When they began volunteering their ideas, he truly listened.

Pace is important. Take time to compare and appreciate environments. In the midst of a tightly scheduled program, I will often ask students to compare their day outdoors to a day at home in the city. It is a rarity that we give ourselves time to process and assess the value of what we have





accomplished in the past months, weeks or even days. Last winter I took a group of rowdy students for a night ski across the lake; everyone was pushing, racing and awkwardly shuffling in a tangle of poles towards the edge of the lake. When they arrived another instructor stopped, turned towards the group and waited as they settled. “Does anyone know the time?” he said casually. “It’s 8:30!” shouted a student who stealthily tucked his cellphone in his pocket. “Excellent. What would you be doing if you were back in Hamilton this evening?” After a few moments of silence, many voices piped up—Facebooking, Vine, checking my news feed, binge watching Netflix, or doing homework being the most popular responses. “Me too,” replied the instructor, “but my hope is that we can appreciate tonight’s ski as something different from our everyday. It is not often that you will get to see stars like these. How you choose to ski is up to you. You can ski alone or with a friend, race or go slow, look at the stars or down at your skis, as long as you stay between the lead and sweep. All I ask is that you are considerate

of others enjoying their ski. Sound good?” He received a few nods and hollers in response.

I’m glad he stopped them, as the ski would have been chaos otherwise. No doubt many of those students were still geared for Netflix, but a few students stopped me throughout that ski. One had never been on a lake, in any season. The second couldn’t understand where all the stars came from. The third had never considered that you could ski over a body of water during the winter. “We are so lucky. YOLO!” she exclaimed.

Debriefing is beneficial, but it takes practice to discuss group progress. Last February I attended the Horwood Conference at Queen’s University. I went to a workshop on teaching responsibility through physical and outdoor education. The workshop was built around Don Hellison’s program model, *Teaching Social and Personal Responsibility Through Physical Activity*. I would recommend this resource to anyone looking to bring an extra level of meaning

to recreation programs, youth leadership initiatives or outdoor experiential education.

This workshop highlighted gaps in my own tone setting and debriefing approaches: the importance of relational time between teachers and students, awareness talks and strategic activities before a meaningful debrief can develop. Understandably, most students aren't comfortable talking about group progress, or personal actions connected to the group, right away. If I receive blank stares when initiating group debriefs, this lets me know I have missed a key component of preparation. As a step towards a more comprehensive debrief, I ask students for their opinions (Why are they are taking part in this program? What are they looking forward to or worried about? What do they hope to accomplish?). This way, I can incorporate their motivations and goals into debriefing later. Lastly, the more successful debriefs I have participated in began with a recap of program activities and group accomplishments. Students were more willing to deconstruct group progress and provided more insightful comments when given time to reflect on what exactly they had done.

Learn from the curiosity of your students.

It is important that we take time for our own learning. Ask good questions about the outdoors, and pursue questions your students ask! My favourite response is: "I'm not sure, but we can certainly find out." It is important that we model the curiosity that we see, or hope to see, from our students. Besides, it never hurts to know more about winter birds, constellation stories, and chionophiles!

I am grateful to have worked alongside many passionate instructors and teachers. Every story here has one of my colleagues in mind. I hope that these strategies help others make the most of experiential learning in any season. Here's to professional learning and "completely dead or totally alive" moments this winter season!

Lisa Weitendorf graduated from the Bachelor of Education program at Western University in the spring of 2013. Since then she has thrown herself into outdoor classrooms around Ontario. She has spent time working and volunteering with the Wanakita Outdoor Centre, Alive Outdoors, the YMCA of Sudbury, Conservation Halton and the Toronto Outdoor Education Schools.



Seed to Sprout

By Bethany Klapwyk

In 2005 I enrolled in an alternative environmental education program for grade 10 students in the Upper Grand District School Board. The program was called the Community Environmental Leadership Program, or CELP. Two years later I participated in CELP's sister program—Headwaters—which is an interdisciplinary exploration for grade 12 students that brings in various themes: climate change, gardening, leadership, alternative energy, teachings from First Nations, Canadian literature and more.

For me the most meaningful aspect of the programs was the integration of Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey" philosophy. The Headwaters program integrates this by encouraging students through a metaphorical and physical process of self-discovery. The last two of 12 stages in the process call students to find their "source," the things they are passionate about, and then journey "home," with the lessons that have been learned throughout the entire journey.

This is enacted physically with the students hiking to the source of their local watershed (Blue Springs Creek), and then canoeing on the river that flows out of the spring to Guelph, where most of the students live.

My life, and the lives of hundreds of students who participated in these programs, was greatly transformed by this elegant and meaningful teaching around caring for the planet, and caring for each other in community.

In November 2009 cancer took the life of Mike Elrick, the founder of these two programs and my greatest teacher. His passing shook the Guelph community deeply, and former students around the world mourned his loss.

The fall of Mike's passing was when I met my life-partner, Sebastian Ramirez—a former Headwaters student who took the program in a different year than I.

Since 2009 Seb and I have been on what we call our "journey home." We have been on a deep exploration of farming and land-stewardship that has led us to running our own organic farm business for the last two years on borrowed land.

As a result of great serendipity, our persistence and our privilege we will become farm owners this June. We will be taking over an 83-acre certified organic farm and business 30 km from Guelph. In addition to growing great food, our farm will be a place where our community will gather to care for one another and the natural world—a place where the current students in the CELP and Headwaters programs can visit and learn about growing food and our journey.

In Canada farming communities are getting older and challenges relating to economics, climate change and knowledge transference prevent young farmers from starting up. However, there is a growing movement of people who, because of their environmental education, use sustainable agriculture as a powerful way of stewarding the earth. Their stories are bringing something new to Canada's rural voice, and connecting the city communities from which they migrated to rural communities.

To this day Seb and I name Mike as our greatest mentor, and as the first spark behind our farm dream. Without the incredible introduction to true stewardship and the magic of the land we may never have had the drive to face the many barriers that farmers face, and feed our community in a way that brings nourishment to both people and land.

Bethany Klapwyk can be reached at bethanyklapwyk@gmail.com. Zocalo Organics is the name of Bethany and Seb's new farm in Hillsburgh. The farm can be found on their Facebook page [Facebook.com/zocaloorganics](https://www.facebook.com/zocaloorganics), or contacted through zocaloorganics@gmail.com. For more information on the farm itself and ways to support it, visit bethanyklapwyk.wordpress.com.

Cape Breton University: Community Studies and Outdoor Leadership

By Pat Maher and Emily Root

Close your eyes and imagine. You are sitting in class at Cape Breton University (CBU), getting ready to tackle an assignment on children's engagement with nature. It's first year and the course is capped at only 18 students. You get to know your classmates and your professor very well as friends and co-learners.

Months later you are working with the local school district to initiate an island-wide outdoor learning program, or planning to assist your professor with their research on the topic. In future years you know you will be able to continue with research or action on this topic in other classes, if you choose, and interact with a diversity of community stakeholders.

This is not a dream; it is the reality in the Bachelor of Arts Community Studies (BACS) degree program at CBU. BACS is a process-oriented degree that utilizes an experiential approach, focused on problem-solving, self-directed learning, critical thinking, reflective learning, group work, action research and of course preparing students for the ever-changing job market.

BACS has been CBU's well-kept secret since it began in 1975. Based on a pedagogical approach developed at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, it is rooted in the philosophies of John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead and Paolo Friere. Professors are not "single experts" at the front of the lecture theatre, but rather facilitators who assist small groups of students in creating a community of scholars and learners. Students are encouraged and supported to dive into any community-based topic they choose.

BACS is a unique liberal arts degree that has grown organically since it became the first degree offered by CBU (when the institution was the College of Cape Breton,

later the University College of Cape Breton). CBU is located on Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island), in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, which is home to roughly 100,000 people. The campus is halfway between the cities of Sydney and Glace Bay. Within a five-minute walk from the campus buildings you can be running on wilderness trails, and within a one-hour drive you can be at the historic Fortress of Louisburg, or on the world famous Cabot Trail. You are two hours' drive from mainland Nova Scotia across the Canso Causeway and six hours' drive from Halifax. Between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cape Breton Highlands, the relatively remote location also lends itself perfectly to the study of outdoor leadership within a community context.

This is the unique opportunity that BACS presents. Students enrol in a series of core Community Studies (COMS) courses, which maintain the process-oriented pedagogy. They also take majors and minors in whatever field



they are interested in. These could be conventional academic fields (such as history, anthropology or philosophy), or more applied options such as psychology, communication or sport and human kinetics (SPHK, where the outdoor leadership stream is situated).

While the BACS degree offers a wide range of flexible academic paths, below are a few showcase courses that might be of interest to the Council of Outdoor Educators (COEO) crowd:

- **COMS 1100: Introduction to Community Studies**

This course is the introductory core of the BACS degree. It is a first-year course that spans the full year and centres around group dynamics, leadership and learning how to learn in experiential and self-directed ways. Eighteen students break into two smaller groups and study the communities/community issues that surround them. They learn how to work in groups and how to interact responsively with wider organizations.

- **COMS 3100: Community Action Project**

In second year students take two core courses in research methods. Following those, the third-year course, COMS 3100, is the students' chance to put research learning into action. This course expands their group work skills from COMS 1100, takes advantage of their research skills from COMS 2103/2015, and allows them to work on creating real change. Classes are capped at 14 students, and students work in a small groups of not more than seven students.

- **SPHK 2104: Outdoor Skills and Leadership**

All SPHK students must take two introductory courses in physical activity and sport practice. These set a base for all SPHK-focused students, but those interested in the outdoors can specialize in the Outdoor Leadership

stream. SPHK 2104, for example, offers opportunities for initial skill building and leadership development. In the past, students have worked with local outdoor operators and organizations to create meaningful connections.

- **SPHK 3106: Adventure Programming and Outdoor Education**

SPHK 3106 offers students the opportunity to engage with educational theories and philosophies specific to outdoor learning, and then also put those into practice. For a number of years this course has been connected to Youth in Motion—a Cape Breton Island-wide program to get Grade 4 students active. The class designs, implements and debriefs a six-week outdoor adventure program that reaches more than 800 students across the island.

In addition, there are two other outdoor leadership courses proposed in the areas of place-based learning (a field course to put theory into practice) and critical approaches to outdoor studies. Faculty members are active in maintaining quality research and service in an eclectic grouping of related fields: outdoor and ecological education, sustainable tourism, experiential education, Indigenous education, social work, physical education and coaching. Faculty come with a wide variety of expertise, and include an editor of the *Journal of Experiential Education*, members of the provincial coaching teams for both cross-country and alpine skiing, a former YMCA executive director, a clinical social worker with 30+ years of experience, a 3M National Teaching Fellow and past Outward Bound instructors.

The department is well connected locally and nationally, with faculty members regularly presenting their work (and collaborative work with students) at conferences, and they are also connected internationally through networks such as the University of the Arctic and as a member of the TEOS consortium, which offers a transcultural masters program in

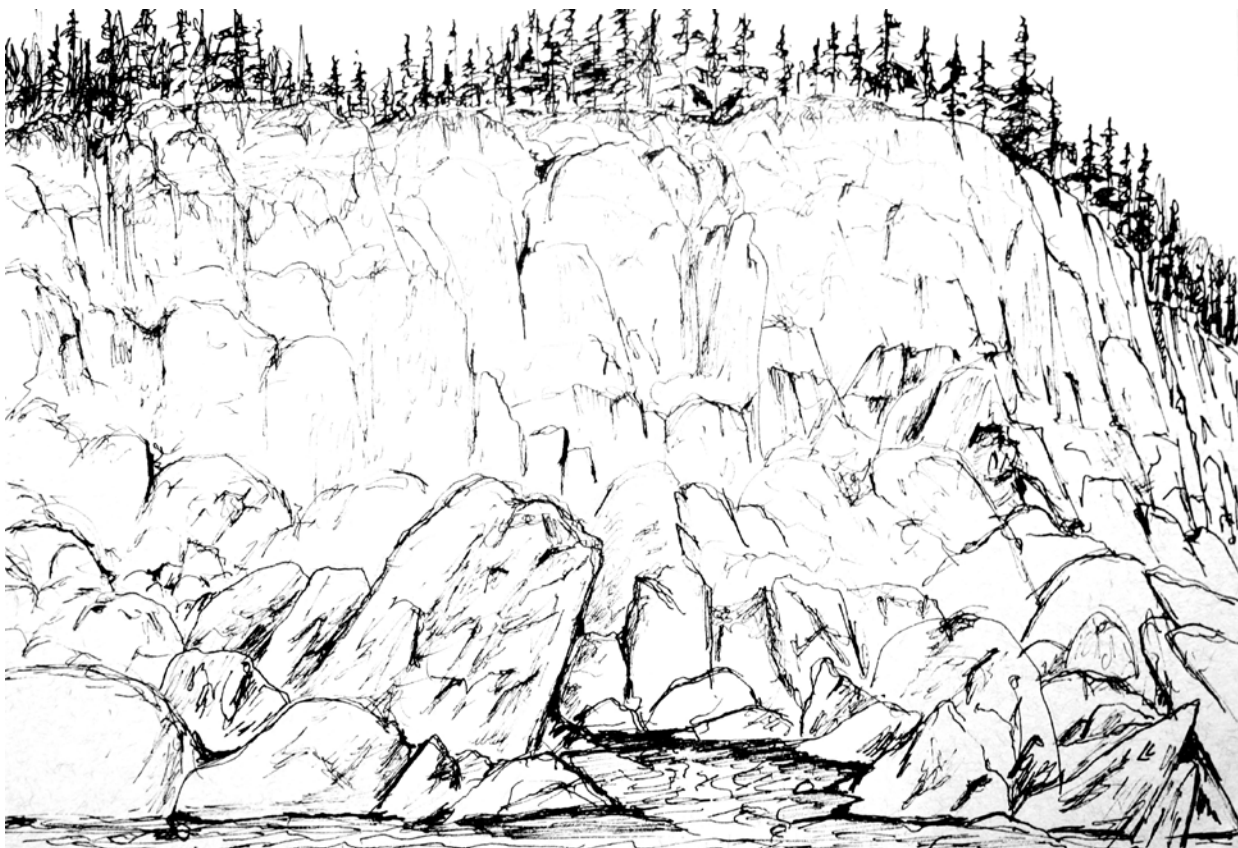
Outdoor Studies across the UK, Norway and Germany. Faculty members were involved in planning the recent 5th Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium, and will convene the upcoming 7th International Outdoor Education Research Conference at CBU in July 2016.

For more specific degree or department information, please visit: <http://www.cbu.ca/academics/bacs/>.

We would love to see COEO members and students come to visit and study with us in Cape Breton!

Pat Maher is an Associate Professor in the Department of Community Studies at Cape Breton University. He has taught outdoor recreation/education at a number of other universities in Canada, Norway, the UK and New Zealand. Prior to academia Pat worked for Outward Bound Canada and these days when he gets to be outdoors is kept busy with two young sons and two old sled dogs.

Emily Root is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Studies at Cape Breton University. With a background in Outdoor Experiential Environmental Education, she previously taught at Outward Bound Canada College. She is interested in decolonizing and Indigenous Land-based pedagogies. She also loves spending time in the open air with her young family.



Virtual/Reality: We Need to Talk About Video Games

By Sarah Wolinsky

When trying to reconcile my passions for the outdoors and gaming I often recall travelling on horseback in a game called *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*. I'd spent hours in that game ignoring the plot, travelling around, just enjoying the calm of being in a space I knew very well; slicing monsters in two, yes, but also fishing, birdwatching, discovering caves and canoeing. I was reminded of the feeling of returning to Burnt Island Lake in Algonquin Park after many years away. The manifold joys of living, breathing, exploring and returning to places are difficult to describe, but they seem to resonate particularly well with two groups in particular—us outdoorsy folk and gamers.

We talk a lot about “kids these days” not spending enough time outdoors; but perhaps those needs have not been so much quashed as replaced. Good game design offers players a myriad of experiences children may not ever find in school—the chance to learn through honest and meaningful failure, the ability to become an expert in a certain space or field, and participating in a community built around shared language. Those three things, plus the desire to see what comes next, are what make a well-designed game intrinsically motivating for a player. Can't there be a way of taking the way video games teach players to think and learn, and bringing that to our classrooms? What would such an approach even look like, sound like?

Whether or not we want to make devices a part of our pedagogy, it seems to me that we need to start accepting that video games have become a crucial part of our students' lives. About 80% of children of school age play video games somewhat regularly—and about half of gamers are women (ESAC, 2014). Kids are smart: they pick up on how we feel about the things

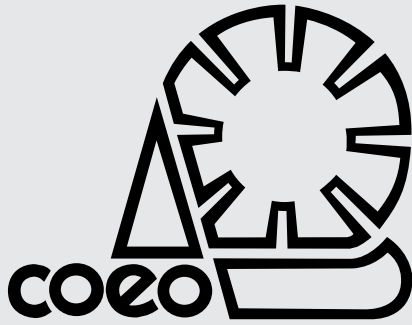
they value, and they can tell when they're being patronized.

There's a lot of buzz out there about “gamification” of our classrooms, using the language of games to inspire, motivate and teach. Those of us in outdoor and experiential education come fully prepared to be at the forefront of this movement. Not to sell an app, a game or a device, but rather to imagine ways to bridge the student–teacher gap through creating a shared language based on things we mutually value. As educators who may touch the close of the 21st century, surely we owe that to our future.

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Sarah Wolinsky (wolinsky.sarah@gmail.com) is a recent graduate of the Outdoor and Experiential Education program at Queen's University, and is currently living and working in Kingston. In her spare time she's either trying her hand at a new video game or hiking the trails in Frontenac Provincial Park.



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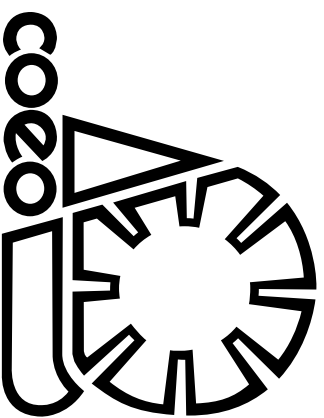
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