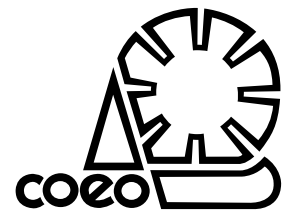


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF
Spring 2015, 27(3)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



Pathways

COEO

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

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Pathways

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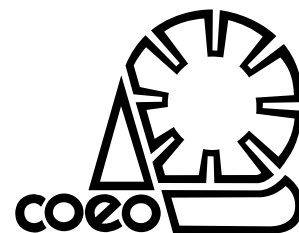
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Adam Cheeseman

It has been an honour to be involved with *Pathways* over the last few years, and a privilege to be asked to guest edit this issue on “teacher training.” The theme reflects insights from my recent personal experience in the Master of Teaching program at the University of Toronto. Working as an environmental educational consultant, conducting qualitative research involving connecting youth with nature, and having experience working outdoors in both camps and outdoor education facilities, I was keenly aware of a new movement to get students more in touch with nature through school. It surprised me how little was being done to recognize the importance of this movement across the pre-service teacher education program, excepting initiatives created by a few stalwart environmental champions (including my professor, Hilary Inwood, a contributing author featured on pages 7 to 10). I chose to look inwards critically for my thesis topic, eventually settling on investigating the integration of nature in the Master of Teaching program from the perspective of teacher candidates and faculty. I intend to write this up for a future issue.

I am currently working as a teacher / researcher at Montcrest school in Toronto supplying classes, working with teachers to integrate outdoor and environmental education (O/EE) into their programming, and doing a qualitative research report on the current state of O/EE in the school. We are looking to identify supports and barriers to such curricular programming from staff perspectives, in the aims of improving our own receptivity to O/EE as well as reproducing insights for other schools to

learn from our work. None of this would be possible without the wise guidance of our head of school, David Thompson, along with the board of directors and administrative team.

A huge thank you is in order to both Bob Henderson and Mitch McLarnon, both of whom were vital in helping put this issue together and editing articles.

The articles featured in this issue lend to the discussion on ways to more successfully integrate O/EE into teacher training. *Pathways* welcomes Bill Kilburn from the Back to Nature Network whose writing focuses on taking students outdoors for class. Hilary Inwood’s writing contributes to the discussion on teacher education by introducing the DEEPER project. Ellen Lyle writes on place-based education and its interactions in forming teachers’ identities. Grant Linney offers insights into the creation and ongoing implementation of the Schedule C Outdoor Experiential Education teaching AQ course. Hartley Banack’s article involves insights from James Raffan into teacher education. Marlene Powers’ writing focuses on Forest Schools in Canada. Mitch McLarnon brings renewed enthusiasm to the Explorations column, with the promise of more such writing to come. Bryana Perreux’s Beyond Our Borders column submission is a worthy read. Finally Adam Cheeseman’s article deals with environmental attitudes developed through outdoor experiences.

Ben Blakey
Guest Editor

Sketch Pad – All the artwork for this issue is provided by students at Montcrest school, a kindergarten to grade 8 independent school in Toronto. The cover page was done as a special project by Lucy Anderson in grade 8. The artwork inside the journal was supplied as part of a collaborative grade 6 project with our science teachers, Mr. Dan Bailey and Ms Yvonne Boyd, as well as our art teacher, Ms Catherine Ionno-Dias. The project was to build a “naturalist notebook” for the students’ biodiversity unit, which involved researching local species, adding naturalist sketches, and combining their work across the grade. The artwork in this issue of *Pathways* represents their raw talent; students submitted sketches that were done during their science unit in preparation for the final product. Many sketches are of the tree saplings that they planted in our community garden, intended to be harvested during their final grade 8 year at the school fall fair.

Spring is here! The ice was slow to come out of lakes in Algonquin Park and lakes further north, so here's hoping that happened in time for early spring canoe trips to take place.

During the 2014 Visioning for COEO, the Board of Directors recognized a need to better serve the portion of the membership comprising recent graduates and emerging trippers looking to gain experience. As a result, before the wilderness guiding season was underway COEO reached out to organisations and companies including Outward Bound, Alive Outdoors, Leaders of the Day and Adventureworks! to discover what their staff would benefit from in terms of professional development and training. As a result, the inaugural **Ontario Wilderness Leadership Symposium** (aka OWLS) took place May 1–3, 2015 at Hart House Farm in Caledon. This event brought together 30 emerging wilderness trip leaders from across the province to participate in a dynamic program filled with fun and informative workshops. COEO's Board of Directors would like to thank Liz Kirk for her organization and leadership of this event. We would also like to thank the many volunteer presenters who participated in the weekend, as well as the event's many supporters who contributed bursary donations and door prizes.

COEO was recently represented at the 2015 Ministry of Education Faculty and Subject Association Forum, **Learning out Loud: Opening Conversations** at OISE on May 13. This forum brought together representatives from many faculties of education and subject associations. I was excited to learn how institutions such as Trent University, Brock University, and Lakehead University are taking advantage of the new two-year teacher education program by incorporating curricula or elective courses pertaining to environmental and outdoor education. It is my understanding that pushback still exists within faculties and that there is progress to be made to incorporate OEE in a more widespread manner, however we can also

celebrate the progress that is occurring in the province.

Save the date! The 2015 Annual Fall COEO Conference will take place at Camp Kandalore, September 25–27, 2015. If you would like to assist with the planning and organization of the fall conference, the Conference Committee is still looking for a few extra members. Please send a note of interest to conference@coeo.org.

As always, conferences and regional events do not happen without the volunteer efforts of members like you! In addition to assisting with conference organization, there are many other ways to support COEO. We welcome you to contact COEO's volunteer coordinator, Karen O'Krafka, at volunteercoordinator@coeo.org with ideas or to learn how!

Happy trails and spring paddles!

Allyson Brown
COEO President



Maddy Daniels

Come Forth into the Light of Things

By Bill Kilburn

Envision yourself in a cave. It is pitch black, there is no way out, and you are not alone. Suddenly you hear breathing from the darkness. As you strain your eyes and ears to form a picture of the unknown, you come to the chilling conclusion that you're surrounded by a mass of creatures. Worse still, they know you're there and they are closing in! As you're tugged and pulled in all directions, you sense that the creatures are ravenously hungry, and you're the target of their appetite—for learning! You are their educator! Quickly you switch on your headlamp (nobody said you didn't have a light), pull out a book, clear your throat for attention, and begin to read aloud . . .

Good educators do that: No matter where they are, what tools they have, and what barriers they face, they teach well. Such remarkable ability doesn't just arise in an educator; it is the result of endless hours of reflection and training with which the best educators constantly seek to empower themselves to teach under any conditions.

Adopting new approaches to teaching can be a particular challenge to educators, especially during the school year. Training must satisfy several criteria to be useful: It must be relevant, digestible and practical, carrying a promise of making the life of an educator more satisfying and easy, while delivering a better educational experience for all students. That's a tall order, but one that any genuinely transformative training opportunity should be able to answer. Teaching in nature is just such a transformative opportunity in education. The question that trainers of outdoor teaching need to answer is this: What aspect of teaching practice will most have to change?

Teaching practice has many components. When the topic turns to changes in the delivery of curriculum, however, pedagogy grabs most of the discussion time, as it

should. Teaching methods and the ideas that underlie them are fundamental to a larger belief system of how learners *should* be engaged for their own growth and development. They are the strongest statement on what values an education system, or more accurately a society, places on the outcomes of formalized learning.

The problem with pedagogy is related to its central importance: Discussion of pedagogy can overwhelm all else in dialogues on best practices of teaching. Educators can become overwhelmed by the idea that change is not possible without first becoming deeply engaged in considerations of pedagogy. Sometimes it's true, such as in the case of "new math." Sometimes it couldn't be further from the truth, such as in the case of teaching outdoors in nature. To qualify this statement, it is important to state that teaching outdoors certainly benefits from a thorough framing in pedagogy; for example, inquiry-based methods are much more effective than alternatives in facilitating relevant learning outdoors. Such methods are similarly successful, however, in realizing the same ends by use of the indoor classroom.

The bottom line is that the outdoors is a teaching space, not a methodology. The most important point to deliver in introducing outdoor teaching to educators is that the outdoor space is just that: a space. Educators practice the skills and methods of teaching every day wherever they are, and those talents are transferable between spaces, including between indoors and outdoors. To teach outdoors, an educator need do just one simple thing: take students outdoors. This is a resounding point and must be repeated. To teach outdoors, the educator needs to be prepared to do just one thing: take students outdoors.

Every educator can simply start there. Do you include read-alouds, journaling

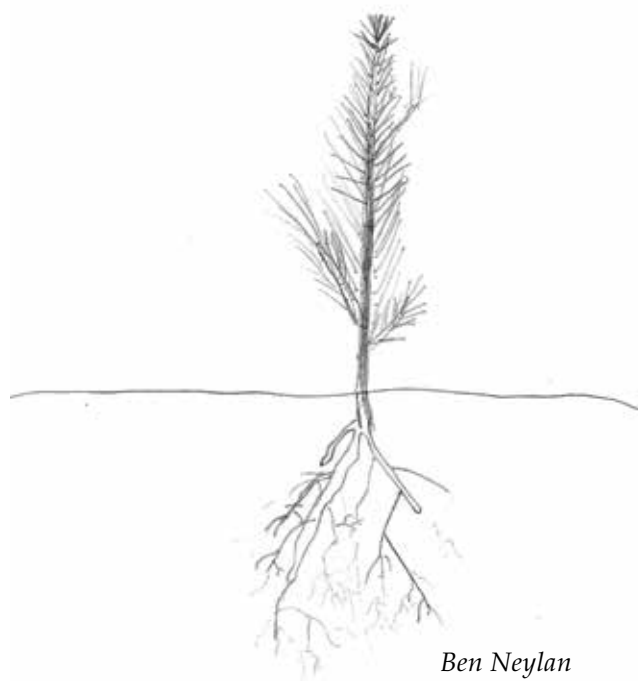
and group discussions in the school classroom? Take these outside! Are measurement, problem-solving and number-sense going on indoors? Take these outside! Are drawing, painting, music and oral presentations being accomplished within the bounds of four walls and a ceiling? Take these outside!

What else do educators need to teach effectively outdoors in nature? They require the same things needed to teach in any space: abundant classroom management skills, acute powers of listening, and a thorough grasp of curriculum. Do these look different when applied to the outdoor space? “No” for the most part, and “yes” to some degree when considering classroom management. Fortunately this can easily be addressed. Just as the indoor classroom contract might be revisited and modified in preparing for a field trip to a local museum, a “nature contract” can be created with the class for the outdoor sessions.

Co-created Nature Contract¹

1. *Brainstorm* guidelines for behaviour, group signals, safety and so on and write them down.
2. *Include logical consequences* developed with the class. For example, “What should the consequence be if two students go beyond the boundaries we agree to and ignore the gathering signal?” Share your opinions, whatever they are: “I’m responsible for making sure you’re safe, and if that happened I wouldn’t feel I was able to keep the class safe at that time. My thought is that the outdoor lesson would be over immediately for that day.”
3. *Offer the intention of following failure with second chances:* “On another day, when I think you’re ready, we will review the Nature Contract and try again.”

What about “nature knowledge” or natural history expertise? Doesn’t an educator who



Ben Neylan

regularly teaches outdoors need to have it, and in spades? The answer is a forceful “no!” Firstly, when nature exploration is used to stimulate inquiry into different subject matter, nothing ruins inquiry as effectively as providing immediate labels to every discovery. It is soundly true that the educator who knows less about nature, or expertly limits the information shared, can more ably explore alongside students. Probing with questions and guiding gently, they can create rich opportunities for relevant, student-centred learning. Secondly, all curriculum can be taught outdoors, and although nature can be used and embedded in much of it, it doesn’t have to be.

Competent educators who confine themselves to the indoor classroom are already largely capable of teaching outdoors, but should they? Why should educators teach outdoors in nature on a regular basis?

To begin, there is a growing body of scientific research strongly suggesting that children realize greater health, well-being and intellectual development when connected with nature on a regular basis.

Unfortunately today's children spend more time indoors than at any time in human history and are increasingly disconnected from nature. The consequences are distressing. Ten years ago author Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" to describe "the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses" (Louv, 2005). By teaching outdoors in nature educators can make a large and important contribution to reversing a trend that has wide-reaching negative societal implications. Students who receive regular opportunities to learn in nature are more independent, focused and engaged learners, and are more likely to become tomorrow's leading conservationists.

Secondly, any tool that enhances both teaching for the educator and learning for the student should be part of every educator's toolkit. As a tool, when and how nature is used is the decision of the educator, who must be comfortable using it as the first condition of its use., Teaching in nature is a tool that should be used regularly in all seasons if possible.

Thirdly, and of the most importance, teaching outdoors in nature will improve the life of the educator. Educators who use outdoor natural areas as teaching spaces routinely report improvements in classroom management (particularly involving the most demanding students), better student engagement, increases in students' self-regulation, and easier coverage of necessary curriculum. While creating a richer learning environment for students, the educator will

be happier as well as more satisfied, and the difficult job of teaching will be easier.

Teaching outdoors in nature is a powerful tool that enriches the profession of teaching and enhances the delivery of learning opportunities. In combination with indoor classrooms, outdoor natural areas should be used regularly as teaching spaces by every educator. To modify the words of William Wordsworth, "Come forth into the light of things, let teachers be in nature."

Note

¹ For a complete description see, Back to Nature Network. (2102). *Into nature: A guide to teaching in nearby nature*. p. 16. Available at <http://www.back2nature.ca/uncategorized/teachers-guide-into-nature-english>

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Bill Kilburn is the project manager of the Back to Nature Network, as well as the writer and editor of the Into Nature guide, which was developed in partnership with a group of leading Ontario educators. He is currently working to train teachers across Ontario in getting their classes outdoors.



Nicholas Ruus

Going Deeper: Outdoor Education and Experiential Learning in Initial Teacher Education

Dr. Hilary Inwood and Darren Hoeg

The way we connect with places can be a mystery. The shore of big water is my healing place—my place where I come to think, to discard the stuff that isn't important, to find out my true feelings. Water is my sense of place and being.

— Brock University teacher candidate

Spoken by a teacher candidate in an outdoor education course at Brock University, these words reflect the way many feel when engaged in outdoor education. Such experiences provide a much needed complement to more traditional teacher education methods courses, allowing for a more experiential, holistic and inclusive approach to teaching and learning. Taught by Douglas Karrow, this course involves a field trip to Spencer Falls, one of many waterfalls on the Niagara Escarpment. An hour-long hike along the Bruce Trail helps teacher candidates experience some of its geological, biological and ecological features. They are surprised and amazed such beauty can be found so close to the industrial heartland of Canada. Invited to focus on a natural entity such as a tree, insect or river, they are asked to describe it in a sensory way. Shared through narratives, poems, artworks and even dances, students are encouraged to interpret and reflect deeply about their encounter with nature.

Many educators believe outdoor experiences like this are an essential part of school curriculum, yet what training is being provided to student teachers in this area? Decades of educational policy in Canada and the US have sidelined outdoor education as an integral part of initial teacher education (often referred to as pre-service) programs. As a result, few resources have been available to support the faculty of teacher education programs who want to design and implement

outdoor learning experiences for their teacher candidates. Lately, however, the tide may be turning as interest in environmental education in Ontario is creating opportunities to better integrate nature-based experiences into some pre-service programs, taking the lead from courses like the one described at Brock, as well as long-standing programs at Queen's and Lakehead Universities.

Deepening Environmental Education in Pre-service Education Resource

A recently released resource guide, *DEEPER: Deepening Environmental Education in Pre-service Education Resource*, encourages pre-service faculty to put a greater emphasis on outdoor and environmental education (Inwood & Jagger, 2014). DEEPER was developed to share success stories about outdoor and environmental education occurring in Ontario pre-service programs, as well as to support faculty who want to develop these experiences in their courses. DEEPER articulates a new vision for this work by defining core competencies for Ontario teacher candidates in these areas, as well as identifying a range of strategies for better integration of outdoor and environmental education into pre-service programs. In addition to providing course syllabi from outdoor and environmental education courses among faculties of education, it provides a number of short case studies describing successful outdoor educational learning experiences taking place at teacher education programs in Ontario.

DEEPER was written as a response to the Ontario Ministry of Education's policy framework for environmental education, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). This policy framework requires all stakeholders in the public education system, including

faculties of education, to integrate aspects of outdoor and environmental education into every subject in the Ontario curriculum, from kindergarten to grade 12. The resource provides faculty who understand the value of nature-based and experiential learning with the policy support they need to justify bringing outdoor educational experiences into their courses and programs. By working to initiate and deepen teacher candidates' connection to nature in both urban and rural environments, faculty can help adult students learn to care for nature, act responsibly and live more sustainably with the natural world.

Exemplars in Pre-service Outdoor Education

One of the case studies described in DEEPER focuses on the Outdoor and Experiential Education (OEE) Program at Queen's University, which has been running since the late 1960s. It is one of the few faculties of education that has been able to implement a framework to support outdoor education in pre-service teacher programs. The OEE program selects teacher candidates interested in pursuing some avenue of outdoor or environmental education in their future teaching career. It includes three mandatory courses: *EDST 417* (consisting of a field camp and two related practicum experiences); *EDST 442* (exploring the various approaches that can be used to introduce outdoor, environmental and experiential education); and *FOCI 260* (including visiting various experiential education centres and programs such as water and waste treatment facilities, organic farms, heritage seed sanctuaries and Native sweat lodges). The program also has a practicum component as well as extra-curricular activities that focus on providing first-hand experiences with nature and teaching in outdoor settings. As a highly developed program in outdoor education, it has much to offer pre-service programs still in their early stages of integrating outdoor and environmental education.

Another case study describes a 75-hour teaching practicum at Trent University offered in their learning garden. This outdoor learning experience is aimed at supporting teacher candidates with a passion for the natural world and who are looking for guidance as to how to engage and inspire students. A growing sense of the value of outdoor education is a typical result of the learning garden practicum, evident in one student teacher's comments: "I now understand how important it is to teach children where the food they eat comes from, and how we can contribute to what we eat, how we eat and how we grow our own food." Another student described the emerging role of teachers in relation to gardening and food production: "It's important that students know where their food comes from and the role it should play in their everyday lives. They also need to learn how gardening can enhance their lives—both at school and at home" (Inwood & Jagger, 2014, p. 40).

While other pre-service programs may not have this length of class time dedicated to outdoor and environmental education, some offer learning experiences that make it available to their teacher candidates. Lakehead is well-known for its range of courses in outdoor and experiential learning, and includes a new climate change course starting in 2015. In addition to their garden-based practicum, Trent University offers an alternative practicum called *Learning from the Land and Indigenous People* under the guidance of faculty member Nicole Bell. Student teachers spend two weeks on site in her First Nations community developing their knowledge about indigenous people and deepening their ecological consciousness. Many define it as the highlight of their teacher education program. Even in the heart of Toronto, OISE's (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) pre-service program has set up a community learning garden on one of the city's busiest streets. The program also provides opportunities for teacher candidates to go on urban hikes to Evergreen Brick Works site and sets up internships with outdoor education centres in the Toronto District School Board.

Strategies for Faculties of Education

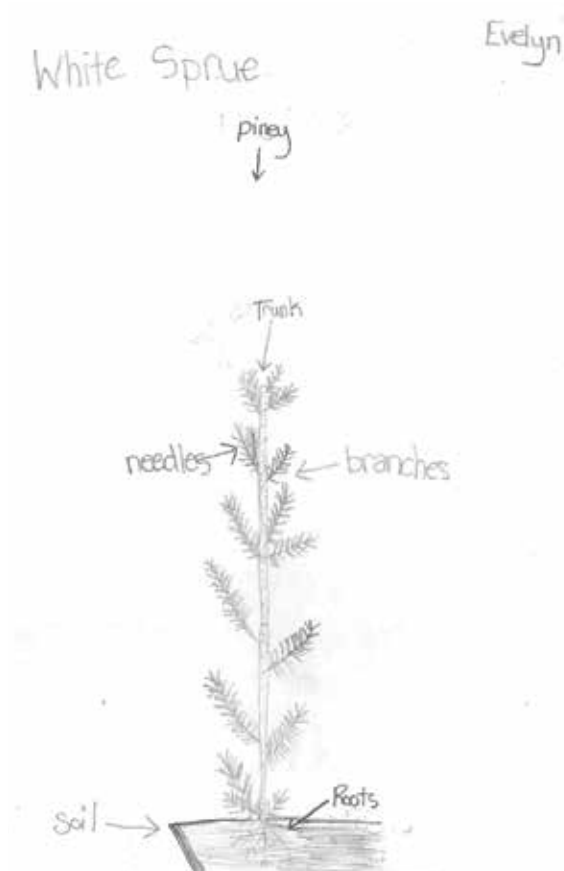
In addition to the case studies describing outdoor and environmental education experiences for pre-service teachers, DEEPER also recommends a set of core competencies that can be used to guide the creation of pre-service programs and courses. These core competencies are not provided in a vacuum; rather they describe a wide range of ways that faculty, staff and students in pre-service programs can work together to implement such initiatives in the curriculum, physical infrastructure and culture of their initial teacher education program. From infusing outdoor and environmental education into existing courses and practicums, to developing special certificate programs, or growing partnerships with community organizations, school boards and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), DEEPER provides

examples of how these initiatives have been manifested in Ontario programs in recent years. The resource also includes recommendations on potential partners, the establishment of networks and funding opportunities for programs and initiatives.

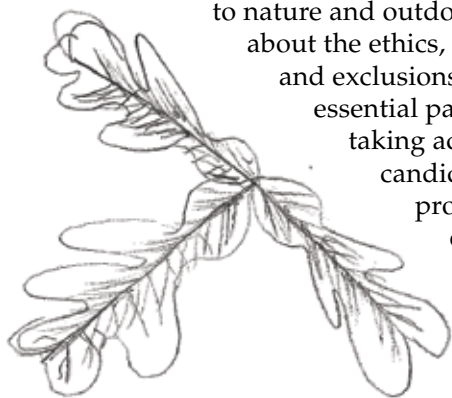
Initial teacher education faculty and student teachers often have difficulty envisioning how outdoor and environmental education might be integrated into pre-service programs. To this end the guide includes discussion about specific outdoor and environmental education strategies such as experiential learning, inquiry-based learning and nature-based learning. Combined with reflective practice, these strategies help faculty and teacher candidates alike work towards a powerful pedagogical approach that makes outdoor education, and in fact all learning, come alive. In this it promotes a holistic approach to pre-service education (along with outdoor and environmental education in general) that involves “the heart, the hands, the head and the spirit (elements identified by the Center for Ecoliteracy as the competencies for sustainable living).

An inquiry-based approach is recommended in DEEPER, as some faculty have found it just as effective with student teachers as it is with children. Teacher candidates in the Intermediate/Senior Biology course at Trent University take time to observe nature, which leads to questions that become the basis of inquiry. Their observations are manifested in both text and images, resulting in comments as well as more questions. This process drives individual research on the natural world, ultimately informing the basis for a unit plan. Active and student-centred, inquiry-based learning engages learners through both creative and critical thinking, contributing to a reflective approach to teaching and learning.

Activism is another aspect of outdoor and environmental education advocated in the DEEPER guide, which requires an awareness of the relationship between education and advocacy as described by Jickling (2005).



Evelyn Rogan



Lily Venier

Activism in outdoor and environmental education includes understanding social issues in relation to common outdoor spaces, making decisions about these issues and changing behaviours that are detrimental to nature and outdoor spaces. Discussions about the ethics, values, inclusions and exclusions in our society are an essential part of the process of taking action. Involving teacher candidates in culminating projects related to environmental advocacy can be one way of introducing the challenges of an activist praxis; these projects could involve raising awareness

about a local or global environmental issue, ameliorating environmental degradation in the local community or being involved in a nature-based service learning project with community partners.

Outdoor and environmental education are essential parts of a 21st century education, yet few resources exist to help university faculty better utilize these educational experiences in teacher education programs. The DEEPER guide aims to fill this gap by stimulating discussion, articulating standards and competencies and sharing exemplars of best practices to facilitate the improved implementation of outdoor and environmental education throughout initial teacher education programs in Ontario.

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Darren Hoeg is a PhD Candidate at OISE, University of Toronto and a science and outdoor education course instructor at Brock University. His research interests include understanding how nature is constituted in school science education, and neoliberal influences and discourse in science and environmental education.



Lily Venier

Pedagogies of Place/Geographies of Experience

By Ellyn Lyle

I am a creature of the land. I know neither why nor how I remain soulfully connected to it, but I often wonder if such connection is born of the same irreducible chemistry that leads people to fall in love. I do not fancy myself a romantic, but every once in a while I run headlong into my naïveté and remind myself that, underneath my garments of realism, there resides an idealist.

Ideals are easier to maintain in a world that continuously struggles to renew itself than they are in a classroom. Maybe that's why I am drawn to the study of place: it reminds me of our ability to heal, it restores hope. Baldwin et al. (2013) say that "place matters because it encourages new ways of questioning and being in the world" (p. 2). They extend its import by explaining that places are "mirrored reflections of history, values, interests, power relations, and meanings...those real and imagined spaces...densely occupied...[and] personally felt" (p. 9). With such deep implications for informing our perspectives, we are called to consider how the places we inhabit affect the ways we engage with teaching and learning (Gruenewald, 2008).

Acknowledging the fundamental role of place and the multiple ways it informs how we come to knowledge, place-based educators understand the spaces in which we live as the looms on which our inner fibres are woven. These same scholars extend this notion to include the potential of place-based approaches to overcome the sense of rootlessness and displacement becoming pervasive in environments increasingly characterized by mobility as well as globality (Gruenewald, 2008; Sheldrake, 2001; Wilhelm, 2007). Place-based educators argue that integrating studies of place within the curriculum has the potential to maximize student learning experiences through "multidisciplinary, experiential, and intergenerational

learning" that is not only relevant (Gruenewald, 2008, p. 315) but also provides a more effective framework for content learning to occur (Ball & Lai, 2006; Bartholomaeus, 2013). Akinbola (2005) and Israel (2012) maintain that this same framework can be extended to promote cultural understanding and the pursuit of social justice. In this way, place-based education uniquely encourages multiple perspectives while embracing the humanity of self and other.

As a perspective, place-based education aims to overcome the often hegemonic and ubiquitous educational agendas developed *elsewhere* in favour of an approach that uses the *local* as a starting point (Bartholomaeus, 2013). The approach emphasizes lived experience as a vehicle to transport students to deeper understandings of both regional and global affairs while encouraging them to imagine possibilities for change (Israel, 2012; Sobel, 2004). According to advocates of place-based education, these possibilities for change are born of agency, a central investment of the approach (McInerney, 2011). Specifically, place-based approaches encourage teachers and students to be active participants in meaning making, by seeing them as producers of knowledge, rather than mere consumers. Hearing echoes of critical pedagogues like Freire, Kincheloe, Shor and Lewis in this philosophical undergirding, I was not surprised to uncover literature that stands "against policies and practices that disregard place and leave the assumptions about the relationship between education and the politics of economic development unexamined" (Gruenewald, 2008, p. 309). Thus a critical pedagogy of place challenges us to consider the connection between the kind of education available and the places we populate. Ultimately, critical place-based education seeks the dual objectives of "decolonization and reinhabitation" (Gruenewald, p. 308).

Connecting perspectives to practice, Lane-Zucker (2004) calls for a “fundamental reimagining of the ethical, economic, political, and spiritual foundations upon which society is based and...[argues that] this process needs to occur within the context of a deep local knowledge” (p. iii). In this way, perspectives and practices synergistically reside in personal examinations of relationships with the geographical contexts in which we live.

While I’ve had the pleasure of living in many locations, my sense of place remains on the small island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence where I spent my childhood. Islands are unique in that they give us the opportunity to know our boundaries without being limited by them, and challenge us to accept change, even as we resist it. Islands pretend certainty while embracing ambiguity. They offer the illusion of constancy and the reality of transience. Islands are special kinds of contradictions, but they endure.

I’ve thought deeply about my relationship with the island—how it has written on my soul. I have come to recognize that outer landscapes shape our inner ones. In that way I too am an island—my form and my way of being in the world are shaped by my experiences. Conkling (2007) refers to this as the tendency of “islandness” to become “a part of your being, a part as deep as marrow, and as natural and unselfconscious as breathing” (p. 198). This connection has deep implications for the development of identity. Tran and Nguyen (2013) discuss identity as being “anchored in the intersection of the individual teacher’s educational beliefs and practices, institutional policies, sectoral boundaries, and the socio-cultural, economic and political context in which their profession is embedded” (p. 199). They argue that “the process of being and becoming” teachers involves knowing ourselves inwardly as much as engaging with the professional world (p. 201). McNerney, Smith and Down (2011) and Walkington (2005) also discuss the development of teacher identity

as beginning with an exploration of the personal and taking shape in the professional.

Because teaching emerges from who we are, it’s imperative that I am mindful of the ways in which my personal values manifest in my teaching. I understand these tendencies as falling loosely under four themes: communication, responsiveness, integrity and critical consciousness.

As teachers, we are generally pretty good at articulating our expectations and providing feedback. Perhaps more subtle, though equally central, is careful listening. I often wonder if we apply the same standards of clarity when listening to our students as we do when speaking to them. Although we often have outcomes that must be met, multiple pathways will lead us to these outcomes. A commitment to deep and continuous communication helps us to create engaging and successful learning experiences, something that became particularly evident to me in my relationship with horses. In partnership with horses, I’ve learned that I must communicate across a language barrier. I need to invest deeply in understanding the needs and fears of the other in order to quell these fears so that we may be allowed to move together. Each of us needs the other to listen deeply, be attentive to body language and have a calm, focussed assurance. We each need the other to be consistently strong and considerate. In short, we need to be our best selves if we are to learn together (Irwin, 2007).

Responsiveness is born of a commitment to communication. Responsiveness is validating for learners as it fosters voice and agency, framing their experiences in a way that encourages them to seek meaning in their learning while also informing its development. In doing so responsiveness also encourages accountability by co-authoring students’ experiences, allowing them an opportunity to take ownership of their learning.

At the heart of integrity in learning is a commitment to honesty, fairness and respect. Teachers and students are learners at heart, approaching scholarship with unique experiences and knowledge that can enrich each other and augment learning. I acknowledge the power inherent in my role as teacher, but I remain mindful that it does not overshadow the opportunity to learn with my students. Weale (1991) warns that any repudiation of who we are can be “a serious and soul-destroying failure” (p. 81). I felt this keenly as a high school student, though it was a quiet struggle—the kind that goes unnoticed by the outside world and in doing so increases the sense of alienation.

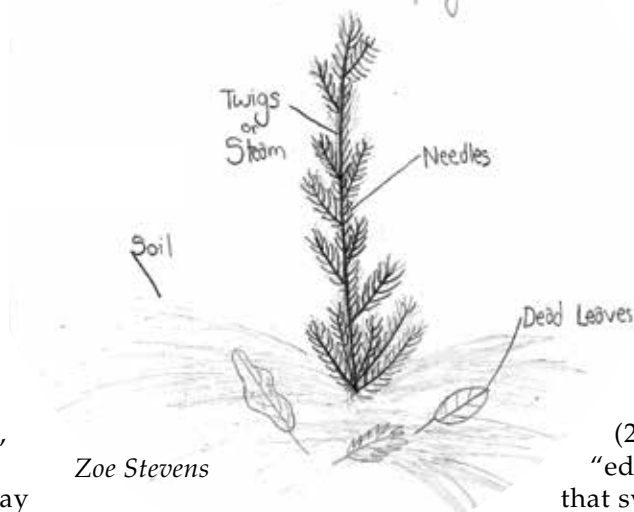
I was an excellent student, knowing exactly what I had to do to excel and then complying, even as, piece by piece, it chipped away at who I was. I remember one incident in particular where I opted to enrol in an elective agriculture course as I had enough credits to graduate. The same day I submitted my course selections I was called to the office where I was told that such a class was beneath me and would appear as a blemish on an otherwise exemplary transcript. I agreed to take another course in lieu of the agricultural elective but felt something bruise inside me. I am the daughter of a farmer and a teacher, which is perhaps why I am drawn to both land and learning. How could one calling marginalize the legitimacy of the other? What left me unable to evoke the agency to resist practices that oppress? I recall that experience as fundamental in the

development of my teacher identity and my scholarship—both of which make lived experience central.

Place has also taught me the importance of critical consciousness. Growing up on the land demands an awareness of the ways our actions impact others and the future. On the land, this consciousness was ecological. Evident in crop rotation, minimal use of pesticides, buffer zones and soil conservation, we learned that we must preserve resources for future generations. As a teacher, this critical consciousness manifests in untangling positions of power and advocating for equitable practices. While Bartholomaeus (2013) maintains that place as social and ecological consciousness is an important vehicle for change, Gruenewald (2008) cautions, “educational theory that synthesizes ecological and social justice concerns is still in an early

stage of development” (p. 314) and that the tensions between ecologically critical positions and socially critical ones remain unresolved. Despite their residual tensions, socially critical and ecologically critical positions come together to encourage students to be more active in promoting a socially just and sustainable world (Ball & Lai, 2006; Delind & Link, 2004). Several scholars extend this notion to point to the apathy, particularly evident in Western societies, of students who are unconnected to their surroundings (Wilhelm, 2007). Not only does this dividedness have implications for engagement and motivation in learning, it also results in a sense of rootlessness

Zoe's White Spruce Sapling



Zoe Stevens

and dislocation in our future citizens (Sheldrake, 2001).

Palmer (2004) discusses this type of dividedness as “a personal pathology” that emerges when we are young and first able to discern the incongruence between “life’s bright promises and its shadowy realities” (p. 14). By adulthood, we learn to create portals to move “between the public world of role and the hidden world of soul” (p. 15). This wilful acceptance of incongruence deepens the dividedness so that we are apart, even from our sense of self. Palmer implores us to listen to our “inner teacher whose guidance is more reliable than anything we can get from a doctrine, ideology, collective belief system, institution, or leader” (p. 25). He assures us that we can dispense of living half lives and “thrive amid the complexities of adulthood by deepening our awareness of the endless inner–outer exchanges that shape us and our world and the power we have to make choices about them” (p. 49).



Like several scholars, I maintain that our lived experiences deeply inform our practices. As a child, I spent every free moment soul-deep in the land. While my sisters sought the company of friends or the excitement of town, I wanted only to be closer to the mingling scents of iron-clad soil and salt air. Each of us inhabits place, and in that inhabitation we change each other. Being attentive to why we behave in certain ways and make particular decisions helps us to be more critically conscious. From this wide-awake space, we are better able to understand ourselves in the teaching and learning experience.

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Ellyn Lyle's deep connections to the land and animals have taught her to embrace metaphor to untangle lived experience as a way to inform teaching and learning. She began her career in secondary English classrooms before moving toward adult education and organizational contexts and now teaches at university. Holding a PhD in Education, her research interests include the following: the role of reflexive inquiry in practitioner development; narrative; education for social justice; pedagogies of place; adult education; and organizational learning.

The Additional Qualifications Course in Outdoor Experiential Education (OEE AQ): Origins, Intent and Content

By Grant Linney

In September 2007 I was serving as both the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) past president and webmaster. The latter role included monitoring COEO's info@coeo.org mailbox, and I remember just about falling out of my chair when I read an e-mail from Michael Saver, a program officer in the Professional Affairs Department of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). The OCT had decided to develop a guideline for a Schedule C (one part) Additional Qualifications course entitled "Outdoor Experiential Education," and they were looking to COEO for help.

Good grief. Where on earth did this come from? Hindsight suggests that I should not have been quite so surprised:

- During 2005 and 2006, the OCT conducted a Teacher Qualification Review in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders from across the province. The organizations consulted included teacher federations, faculties of education, school boards, the Ontario Ministry of Education and a number of subject associations. Part of this review included looking at gaps in existing professional development opportunities.
- In September 2006, Kathleen Wynne became the Ontario Minister of Education. Her previous support for outdoor experiential education (OEE) as a Toronto District School Board trustee and chair was well known.
- In March 2007, COEO published *Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education: A Research Summary* (Foster & Linney). This 80-page document summarized recent research findings in regards to the four values of OEE, as well as describing formats and venues in which OEE existed. Its first

of four major recommendations to the Ontario government was for formal recognition of OEE as a unique and powerful learning methodology that particularly addresses the pressing need of education for environment as well as education for curriculum and community, wellbeing and character (Foster & Linney, 2007). (This document can be viewed online by going to the publications tab of the COEO website at www.coeo.org.)

- In April 2007, COEO submitted a 3,100-word document on the value of OEE to the Ontario Curriculum Council's Working Group on Environmental Education. In its reiteration of the recommendations made in the COEO Research Summary, this piece also noted the need for properly qualified teachers who could provide school and local neighbourhood outdoor activities. It stated it is crucial for our students to recognize that nature and the life support systems of this planet are all around them, not just in remote "wilderness" locations (Linney, 2007). (This document can be viewed online by going to the advocacy tab of the COEO website at www.coeo.org.)

Michael Saver was wondering if COEO might be willing to provide expertise as the OCT created guidelines for this new AQ course. The end result was a writing team stacked with COEO talent: Mary Breunig (Brock University), Pam Miller (Toronto District School Board), Connie Russell (Lakehead University), Grant Linney (Upper Canada College) and Michael Saver, the OCT representative. As a newcomer to OEE, Michael spent an entire day with me that October at the Norval Outdoor School. His facilitation skills as well as his knowledge of the AQ framework turned out to be considerable

assets when we convened as a writing team.

Our task initially appeared to be quite daunting, as schedule C courses are stand-alone offerings. There is no part two, no specialist, and schedule C courses are intended to cover all grade levels in each offering. They are intended as an introduction to deepen one's knowledge of a subject, division or professional topic. In the case of the proposed OEE AQ course, it was not to be a certification for becoming a full-time outdoor educator. Instead, it was designed to both introduce and motivate interested classroom teachers as to the possibilities of taking their classes outdoors on a regular basis, within walking distance of their home school.

Our newly assembled team was genuinely excited. We spent a full day at the Etobicoke Field Studies Centre in early February 2008, with prodigious e-mail correspondence both before and after this date. By July 2008, a draft guideline of the OEE AQ in both official languages was published on the OCT website. It was finalized by January 2009 and became one of the first schedule C guidelines to be produced.

At this point, it is best to examine the features of the OEE AQ course as it is expressed by one of its providers, the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University. I have had the great fortune to develop the course for Lakehead and have taught it for four of the past five summers, with the very capable assistance of Mark Whitcombe, who served as the former District-wide Co-ordinator of Outdoor Education for the Toronto District School Board.

The OEE course is not taught in Thunder Bay, nor at Lakehead's Orillia campus. Instead it is offered each July in a blended format. Teachers love the flexibility of an online course in that it can be completed at home, at the cottage or even on the road. Since this course is about OEE, it was also decided that a face-to-face component near

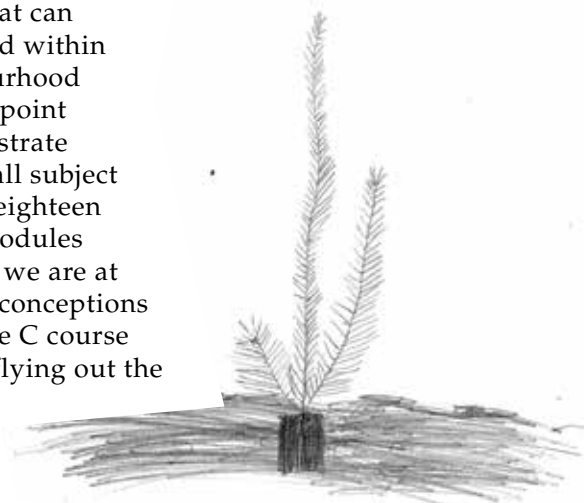
the start is essential. The in-person portion of the course is offered at the Upper Canada College Norval Outdoor School near Georgetown, within an hour's drive of Toronto Pearson Airport. Our students come from all over the province and as far away as BC to participate.

The Norval component is an intense three days and two nights. It offers an exhilarating cross-section of hands-on OEE activities relating to education for character, curriculum, environment and well-being. Most activities involve lessons that can easily be replicated within the local neighbourhood of a school, and a point is made to demonstrate links to virtually all subject areas. Five of the eighteen course learning modules are covered while we are at Norval. Most pre-conceptions of what a Schedule C course is (and is not) go flying out the window during this time, and the Norval component also impacts the duration of the course.

Students and teachers get to know each other quite well, which informs the depth, tone and sincerity of the module-by-module online discussions and work that follows.

Students quickly learn that this particular OEE AQ course is not an easy one. The readings are extensive and varied, making heavy use of the theoretical and practical articles found in COEO's own flagship *Pathways* journal, as well as other sources. Lakehead also places additional academic emphasis on its AQ course offerings by making each one a full undergraduate course credit. Evaluation is not a simple pass or fail but a percentage based on a number of assignments.

Thirty percent of the final mark depends on thoughtful answers to module



Finn Steube

questions, as well as to each other's answers within a group, where the teacher as reflective practitioner is actively encouraged. Another 15 percent comes from a "sense of place" assignment where students are encouraged to develop a sense of connection to a particular piece of land, hopefully the place where they will be taking their students. The balance of the course mark comes from a three-part independent project that is ideally tailored to the students the teachers will have, and the location(s) in which their teaching will occur. The intent here is for each teacher to have something they can immediately make use of during the following school year.



Nicholas Ruus

I believe strongly that the OEE AQ course is a welcome addition to the great variety of professional development opportunities offered by the OCT. Participants quickly realize that the practice of OEE is a huge and varied endeavour. It is a teaching and learning process that can be effectively utilized at any grade level, in virtually

any subject area and for fundamentally different, though frequently interconnected, learning outcomes.

This course recognizes that the ultimate power of OEE within our schools rests upon classroom teachers who can effectively establish the context for such learning both prior to and following well-designed outdoor experiences. It focuses upon what is doable by front-line teachers, as well as pointing to possibilities for further training if more specialized skills are required. The course will also be of interest to full-time outdoor educators, consultants and others who are able to support the classroom teacher in such endeavours.

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Grant Linney is a career outdoor and environmental educator who was part of the writing team that created the AQ Schedule C guidelines for OEE. He also developed the course for the Lakehead University Faculty of Education and has taught it for four of the past five summers.



Twig of Butternut

Zoe Stevens

Bringing Methods to the Madness

By Mitchell McLarnon

This new research column entitled “Explorations” will appear quarterly in *Pathways*. Explorations aims to provide *Pathways* readers with practical and relevant research concepts that are applicable to everyday outdoor learning situations.

Introducing different research methodologies and methods, this research column aims to encourage students, teachers, practitioners and academics in the field of outdoor environmental education (OEE) to critically engage with different modes of inquiry. Each column installment will contain a brief description of the methodologies/research methods applicable to OEE, and opportunities to use the introduced mode of inquiry within an OEE context.

For this column to be effective (and interesting), it needs to be realistic. Students, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers (teachers in training) and other OEE professionals have little time to review current research and find ways to implement it into their practice. The impact of this is increasingly exacerbated by overall lack of funding in education and educational research. *Explorations* seeks to facilitate increased application of research in OEE.

Connecting Outdoor Environmental Education to the Arts

Teacher training is the focus of this issue. For this column, I have chosen to write about infusing arts-based educational research (ABER) methods within OEE.

One of the first articles I read during my master’s degree was *The Three Curricula* written by influential artist, teacher, researcher and educational theorist, Elliot Eisner. Eisner (1985) demonstrated that schools have three curricula: the explicit, the implicit and the null. The

explicit curriculum is what is presented in express, tangible forms. It is what is written in educational policy documents and dictates official learning outcomes. The implicit curriculum refers to the type of learning that students will grasp from the way school is structured. For example, if specific courses (e.g., arts, music, dance, physical education, outdoor learning) are allocated limited teaching time (such as Friday afternoon) or are programmed alongside another option, students may perceive such courses as less important than the ones normally viewed as core subjects (e.g., math, science, English language arts). Eisner (1985) describes the null curriculum as subjects, locations and approaches (pedagogy) that are not employed at all. The unemployed areas are often forgotten, as they are neither noticed nor recognized by students, teachers, administrators, policymakers and the general public. Much like the arts and art education, it can be argued that OEE often falls into the null curriculum.

Considering Eisner’s (1985) argument and developments in ABER, I argue that OEE proponents are well situated to learn about, apply and contribute to ABER.

What is Arts-based Educational Research?

The basis of ABER is the combination of artistic processes with qualitative inquiry. Used as an umbrella term, ABER does not prescribe any specific methods or techniques to produce a particular research product. According to Barone and Eisner (1997) two criteria need apply in ABER. The first is that ABER be espoused with an artistic activity. This aspect is not limited to any specific artistic practice and, as such, ABER research projects involving photography, creative writing, painting, poetry, music, dance, theatre, film and collage are not uncommon. The second criteria is that the artistic properties be

infused with the inquiry process, which in the case of research is usually text based. Often ABER practitioners will connect and analyze their artistic practice with a research lens such as phenomenology, autoethnography and ethnography (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006).

To clarify, the pieces of art, artwork or artifacts combined with the process of creation are used to understand a particular subject. Rather than art playing a role in traditional data investigations, where data is normally quantified and presented verbally or numerically, ABER researchers are encouraged to use art creation as components of and for analysis.



Jonah Greenhut

There is already much happening in OEE that can be easily analyzed for the purpose of research using ABER. For example, productions of eco-art could be used as research projects for creative analysis. A photograph taken in an outdoor setting and its inspiration could have equal value as a research opportunity, and a reflective journal could also be used for artistic and research inquiry. Given that art can be kinesthetic (dance, theatre, and so on), perhaps paddling a complex set of rapids can also be analyzed for research? While it is not the purpose of this column to discuss if outdoor practices like paddling and climbing can

be compared to the performing arts, ABER offers OEE professionals applicable theories that can be related to complementary and already existing practices in the field.

Research is essential to innovation and growth in a field. Much of pre-service teacher training is focusing on using research to inform practice (Armstrong, 2001; Price, 2006). If OEE professionals can see the opportunities for artistic research in their own outdoor practices, ABER could be a very promising research methodology. With greater use of ABER methods in OEE, and in OEE teacher training in particular, I see the following potential benefits:

- Advancing the knowledge base and innovation in OEE;
- Drawing a greater link between OEE professionals who are creators of content in their respective expertise (e.g., photographers, eco-artists, poets) and their teaching;
- Increasing teacher awareness that ongoing professional development (not only in paddling and climbing but also in art and research) will help improve and strengthen their pedagogy;
- Conceiving pedagogy into an applicable research model;
- Placing the onus on pre-service teachers to understand how knowledge is generated and what makes it valuable;
- Becoming more familiar with the processes of knowledge creation; and
- Enabling future teachers and OEE professionals to implement emerging theories in their practice.

If OEE professionals can understand that their outdoor practice is creative, artistic and worthy of analysis, perhaps they may recognize that this practice is worthy of research and self-exploration. Given that much of pre-service teacher training is focusing on using research to inform practice (Armstrong, 2001; Price, 2006), I argue that if teachers can understand the importance of using research, then there will be more potential for innovation in the field of OEE pre-service teacher training.

Closing Thoughts

Based on my experience working as an OEE professional and my recent academic research involving ABER methods, I have noticed that art research has strong theories supporting it (see Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). While theorizing in ABER is a necessity for recognition in the field, theorizing in OEE is still underused or even non-existent in some areas. While there have been improvements in OEE, there is still a high degree of “recycling” methods and repetition. I hope this very brief overview of ABER will inspire readers to see both its benefits and its applicability to OEE practices, and to become familiar with what is happening in arts education. Also, knowing first-hand the creativity of those in the field of OEE, I selfishly would like to see more collaboration between the arts and OEE.

As this column is brief, I welcome responses and questions through public and private channels.

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Reflections on Outdoor Experiential Learning in Teacher Education: Raffan's Words Revisited

By Hartley Banack

The development of pre-service and in-service teacher (formal and informal) training programs is suggested to increase the amount of time children spend outdoors during their learning. Through post-secondary preparation programs, foundational outdoor experiential learning (OEL) can be infused, as essential "good teaching," into the practice of all teachers, at a local level. This work draws from an interview conducted with Dr. James Raffan, appearing in the preceding volume of *Pathways*. The reader is encouraged to read the interview before continuing with this article. But really, no one shall know otherwise.

Ten Rules of the Canoe

Every stroke we take is one less we have to make.

There is to be no abuse of self or others.

Be flexible.

The gift of each enriches all.

We all pull and support each other.

A hungry person has no charity.

Experiences are not enhanced through criticism.

The journey is what we enjoy.

A good teacher allows the student to learn.

When given any choice at all, be a worker bee—make honey!

Drawn from Quileute Hoh Nation

—Raffan, 1999

Yes, we are about educational enterprises that occur outdoors—we are about canoeing, orienteering, birding, skiing, snowshoeing, measuring horses, patting big dairy cows, and holding freshly laid eggs. But we are also about developing respect for the environment; we are about teaching people to live with each other, to be conscious of differences; we are about art; we are about science; we are about language arts; we are about personal growth and wholeness; we are about learning to live with available means; we are about

sustainability; we are about experiential teaching; we are about spirituality and matters of the heart; we are about helping our students construct personal meaning in an ever changing world. But are not these the concerns of all good teachers? Isn't it time to take down the terminological fence we have erected around who we are and what we do, time to unite with like-minded souls in education as a whole, so that we might have something more encouraging than the unscheduled amputation of one of our programmatic limbs to celebrate in another 25 years?

— Raffan, 1996

In the above quote Raffan asks us to contemplate "the concerns of all good teachers." What follows is a (lengthy) series of contemplations of what other educational experts have suggested "good teaching" to mean. Bruce B. Suttle (1996) listed Sirotnik's five ethical roots of teaching as being: inquiry, knowledge, competence, caring and social justice. Darling-Hammond (1990) noted that "For those routes which incorporate only brief preliminary training, the basic assumption is that subject matter preparation is the most crucial foundation for good teaching; with modest initial guidance, it is felt that teachers will learn pedagogical skills on the job". She suggested that such an approach has eroded any possibility of what "good teaching" might mean. Zeichner (2010), referring to Darling-Hammond and Valencia, commented that some believe "good teaching" can be caught, like a cold. Eisner (2002) tells us that "good teaching" is more akin to playing in a jazz band, going on to comment that "knowing when to come in and take the lead, knowing when to bow out, knowing when to improvise are all aspects of teaching that follow no rule, [all] need to be felt." A shape is emerging around "good teaching", perhaps.

The list goes on, as Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998) offer that “good teaching” exists in an ecological framework that considers patterns, and they suggest that more “traditional” approaches to propositional knowledge acquisition miss such a holistic perspective. Sund and Wickman (2008), in discussing “good teaching” with respect to Education for Sustainable Development, observed that there needs to be bridging between “objects of responsibility” and personal connections and traditions. Day and Flores (2006) stated that there is a “powerful interaction between personal histories and the contextual influences of the workplace”, implying that personal connections and connections to places are essential to “good teaching”. The point being made by this list is that *there is no definitive notion of what is “good teaching”, only shapes*. However, many are intrigued with the concept of what “good teaching” might be.

Perhaps, OEL has always been a part of “good teaching”, but not all educators are comfortable/familiar with this practice. This seems reasonable, since during post-secondary teacher training, OEL is not promoted. It does not commonly appear in Ministry of Education curricular documents, and individual schools may or may not place emphasis on OEL. Furthermore, OEL often takes the form of “adventure” education in outdoor spaces (rafting, climbing, backcountry, etc.), which may seem quite removed and daunting from the actual and perceived realities of many teachers, schools and students. Yet these descriptions are but notions of what OEL might be, just as the list above contained notions of “good teaching”. One way that the *outdoors* aspect of OEL might be reconceived is as local outdoor spaces in terms of their physical proximity to the school, its students and teachers.



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This meditation follows a causal chain of thought: If being outside is beneficial to one's health and wellbeing—the fabric of robust communities (ecologically and socially)—and to experiential learning (in a most Deweyian sense) that promotes critical thinking and problem solving, then **students need to be outside more often during instructional times while at school**, not just during recess. In order that this might happen, teachers need to take students outside regularly for learning. Yet, teachers may not be comfortable (as noted above) with outdoor pedagogy, and administrators may have concerns around outdoor risk and cost (not to mention concerns the students and parents might have). One possible shift in OEL practice is to begin to do more local outdoor learning around the school's site (school yard, neighbourhood and city). This would increase outdoor learning opportunities for all students (and thus their associated benefits), while addressing concerns around risk, cost and teacher comfort. For this to occur, professional development and training are required.

Teachers/administrators need opportunities to develop and hone their practices around local outdoor learning. In order for such a “shift” in practice to percolate (the key piece to shaping how [where] learning happens on the ground), pre-service and in-service teachers and administrators need preparation and prospects. Changes in teacher education and post-graduate certifications thus seem to be a viable recourse, to directly address needs to develop skills and competencies for local outdoor learning.

Simplistically, “good teaching” might be considered in two distinct manners: a) the exceptional teaching that a teacher does (teacher-centric) or b) teaching as a dialectic between teaching and learning (learner-centric). Raffan turns our attention to learner-centric notions of “good teaching”. Various ideas from the above definitions of “good teaching” reflect Raffan's beliefs stated in the opening quote. However, in spite of much research

evidence and theoretical considerations over many years, only a few teachers and administrators still seem to demonstrate, in practice, the primacy of Raffan's reminder that what we “do” is more significant and valuable learning than what we “know”. In the case of OEL, what is *done* is done outside. This shift is not one about content (what), but location (where). Dominant education still mainly looks at outdoor experiences, Raffan contends, as some “value-added addition” to mainstream curriculum. This is particularly true when OEL is understood as adventure education, often at a distance from the school, with logical concerns around liability, cost, et cetera. Again, this is but one aspect of an OEL implementation. Here we are reconceptualizing OEL as part of the daily practice of all teachers, in all schools, by just taking students outside more often for learning, and that this is essentially tied to a notion of “good teaching.”

So the question remains, how might OEL “good teaching” (“good teaching” that is learner-centric) be more broadly implemented? Raffan reflects on his experience in a remote wilderness that is not sustainably feasible for many students/teachers to access on a regular basis. In general, the three most commonly levied challenges against OEL have been cost (Bowdridge, 2010; Seyd & Burke, 2013), risk (Paisley et al., 2008) and leader skill level (Heshka, 2005). As a result of potentially significant outcomes from any of these three challenges, fewer children are getting outdoors and the outings are less frequent. Also, their outdoor experiences may be quite disconnected from the priorities and legitimacy of their indoor learning. Yet, we are now (more often now than in past years) being repeatedly reminded of the vital importance of being outdoors for health, social development, environmental/sustainable practices and for building connections with an “other” that merits as much respect for *being* as any other creature (Louv 2008; Gill, 2014). Thus in response to questions of implementation and the concerns listed above, a realistic

rejoinder is a conception of OEL as local (Sobel, 2014). Teachers and educators prepared and trained to access *local* outdoor spaces for learning through integrating and achieving curricular ends, have the potential to increase outdoor learning for students in real and practical ways, in a relatively short period. And such shifts are actually happening! This trend is illustrated by both the major outdoor adventure expedition organizations, such as Outward Bound and NOLS, offering urban outdoor education to schools throughout Canada and the USA and by the number of nature schools “sprouting” up across Canada.

Currently and historically, there are/ have been but a few instantiations of OEL teacher training programs across Canada (Potter & Henderson, 2004), and there are no examples that consider OEL as an essential part of the practice of teaching for all teachers during their training, and not just for a specific subset that has a prior affinity and/or skills (Kime, 2008; Potter, Socha & O’Connell, 2012). Commonly, OEL teacher training programs have been conceived of as specialized and particular for a self-selected subcategory of applicants, and not broadly mandated as integral to teacher training (Timken & McNamee, 2012; Adkins & Simmons, 2002). If benefits of OEL experiences are as significant as the literature suggests (Moseley, Reinke & Bookout, 2002; Payne & Wattchow, 2008; Martin & Fleming, 2010; Sibthorp, 2010), then OEL directly supports overarching educational aims for teachers/educators and students, as well as such analogous aims for sustainability education, environmental education and physical education (daily physical activity). If a key aim is increasing the amount of outdoor learning and time spent outdoors for students, then a possible transition in approach to OEL as local in an interdisciplinary sense seems to be reasonable, and teacher/educators need to be prepared to include OEL in their practices.

“And nobody really took a good crack at asking, ‘If OEL is not a subject, then what is it? A method? An approach to teaching and learning? An educational philosophy?’”

—Raffan, Interview 2015

“Can one learn this knowledge? Yes; some can. Not, however by taking a course in it, but through ‘experience’.—Can someone else be a man’s teacher in this? Certainly. From time to time he gives him the right tip.—This is what ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ are like here.—What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating rules. ”

(Philosophical Investigations—Wittgenstein [II 227]—Emphasis in original).

“At its best, at its most pure, OEL is about creating dynamic, durable, powerful, adaptable knowledge—knowledge that drives action.”

—Raffan

Call to Action

The Cree concept, “being alive well” (Adelson, 1998) might be instantiated directly and concretely through OEL, broadly addressing the *highly heterogeneous complexity of life and being*. This might be accomplished by practicing life’s balance in learning, by engaging learners and learning outside more often. There remains less than a decade until the 25_year marker alluded to in Raffan’s predications. Over the past 15 years, there have appeared uncanny simulacra, indicating astute insight by Raffan, but in recent years there has also been a renaissance of OEL through diverse efforts (i.e., nature kindergartens, and community-based advocacy for outdoor risky play and outdoor programming). These various instantiations of OEL illustrate that there is a demand in the populous for such learning opportunities. There are various stories now of parents overnighing outside to get a spot in an outdoor school program for their child. As outdoor learning programs spring up, there is immediate need to foster OEL



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skill development broadly during teacher education for all teacher educators and administrators. A response by faculties of education is prudent and well advised, as a necessary response to this growing trend.

Working towards real and meaningful outdoor learning experiences that youth, families, educators, schools, communities and societies may share around learning in a *non-classroomed* world requires intentional programs and training at the post-secondary level. In having teachers (pre-service, in-service, informal) engage in OEL during their professional post-secondary preparation, there is increased possibility that these educators will implement OEL in their teaching.

Principally, if a central shift in OEL is from *what do we know* to *what do we do*, then the role of the teacher is rather distinct from master of content (explicator) to one who creates/fosters learning experiences, and in this case, outdoor experiences. We are noting such changes in faculties of education through inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning and other currents highlighting the educator as a learning guide. However, these shifts have yet to overly turn their attention to the outdoor learning realm. It is urged that our attention turns to the particularities of where we learn (outside). Clearly, OEL and “good” teaching can be analogous, depending not only on what we do, but *where* we do it.

Aristotle suggested that there are five knowledge virtues (*episteme*, *techne*, *phronesis*, *nous* and *sophia*) and described how all five of these work together in individual/societal formation (Reed & Johnson, 1996). Presently, formal education and schooling do not seem to acknowledge and incorporate all five equally or equitably. Raffan reminds us that a principle question for OEL is around *action*—what we do (Aristotle’s *phronesis*). *Phronesis* is what actually happens (rather than thinking [*episteme*] or skill-development [*techne*], which formal education commonly focuses on), and in this case, what we do is directly

connected to the location of where: outside. Raffan suggested that we could perhaps “dispense with ‘outdoor’ as a descriptor” (Banack, 2015) to ameliorate an incorporation of OEL more broadly. I suggest that disagreement around implementing OEL might be addressed by shifting OEL from the *adventure* realm to the *local*. A local outdoor learning schema seems to offer strong potential towards getting more students (and teachers) outside more frequently and offering them increased benefits of being outside for health and wellbeing. It is time to be working bees, to get outside into the wild flowers, and make honey!

“One was earnest, intentional, teacher-centric, fleeting and more or less disconnected with the natural world. The other was informal, serendipitous, kid-centric, durable and totally connected to the real world.” —Raffan

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Lost in Translation or Still Being Translated? Reflections on the Forest and Nature School Movement in Canada

By Marlene Power with Jon Cree and Sara Knight

Since 2008, a grassroots movement has been rapidly sweeping across Canada, resulting in the launch of Forest and Nature School programs in many communities from coast to coast. Although a scoping of programs has not been done, Forest School Canada (FSC) has worked with over 90 educators and early childhood educators who have already started or are in the process of implementing Forest and Nature School programs in their own communities and educational settings. In addition to this, there are many others who have implemented their own programs, with the support of other organizations and professional learning bodies to help them get started. As a result, more and more parents, educators, administrators, school boards, early learning regulatory bodies and Ministries of Education are seeing the potential and necessity for nature-based learning. More importantly, children across Canada are playing *and* learning in woodlands, creeks, ravines, mountains and coastlines in ways that they have never done so before.

This rapid growth comes with many possibilities but is not without its challenges. As a direct response to both these opportunities and challenges, FSC formed in the spring of 2012 as a charitable endeavour and an organization under the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. With a mandate to support *quality, best practice* in the emerging Forest and Nature School field, FSC formed a team of national advisors, as well as international advisors, to inform the organization's process and to help map out formal and informal ways to support this emerging field. The question began to emerge: How do we support a national movement that reflects Canadian culture(s), geography, landscapes, history and traditions while still looking towards the history and best practices established internationally? Through this lens, we have been piloting a Forest and Nature School Practitioners' Course in Canada, working with educators and early childhood

educators to establish best practices for delivering quality Forest School programs from coast to coast.

We define "Forest and Nature School" as an ethos and practice that includes *regular and repeated access to the same natural space, which supports a pedagogical framework of place-based, play-based, emergent, inquiry-based and experiential learning*. Children in a Forest and Nature School start with place, with the natural space they are immersed in, the ecology of the land, the history that came before them, the cultural and geographical context, the shapes and colours and richness of each changing season. In this space, children are not just invited to play, nor are they lead to play through the adults' direction. Instead, they are called to play by the vastness of space and time in front of them, and it is in this vastness that ideas and curiosity emerge. Children will follow this play and their own sense of curiosity, being guided by the educator and through a process of inquiry. It is through this play, through scaffolding of learning and inquiry, that students and educators eventually make their way to the curriculum. Arriving at learning outcomes is not a recipe or equation with predetermined outcomes. Instead, it is a process that takes time and is like a hypothesis being tested by educators through experience and the testing of limits. There is a lot of depth to be explored in this pedagogical framework and a need for further clarification and research into what this pedagogy looks like in practice. As with any emerging field, this exploration and articulation takes time, although more and more researchers and writers within Canada are starting to delve into and develop this further.

As mentioned, the opportunities and interests in Forest and Nature School have been overwhelming. This has been a grassroots movement, which has been developing and growing from the passions of parents and

individual educators who have been the “early adopters” of this pedagogy of practice. It reflects a cultural appetite and critical mass that sees Forest and Nature School as an opportunity to shift education into the natural world in an accessible, meaningful and deep way. This grassroots growth is now impacting decisions at a policy level for school boards and ministries from coast to coast, who are all now trying to gauge appropriate supports and policy to properly support what is unfolding on the ground. This is a bottom-up versus top-down approach to education policy in Canada, one that is rooted in Canadian culture.



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Leather (2015) argues that Forest School “owes its heritage to Scandinavian *Friluftsliv* and Danish *Udeskole*” and fears that Forest School could become another act of cultural imperialism as Forest School models across the world take hold, leaning heavily on the UK model, instead of looking to the history and cultures of the places where they exist. He also explores the lack of indigenous knowledge contributing to the development and delivery of Forest and Nature School programs. This is a very important point, as “Aboriginal people have been offering sophisticated, land-based education to their children on this land for millennia” (Forest School Canada, 2014). Additionally, “First Nations cultures believe that human beings were a part of nature, not separate from it” (McCue, 2006, p. 33). It is a primary goal of FSC to engage Aboriginal Canadians in our process, to learn from this rich history,

to support accessibility of programs and professional learning within Aboriginal Communities and to pay homage to this history through honouring traditions in authentic and meaningful ways. This is something for all Forest and Nature School educators to explore and has been a guiding principle for the development and delivery of our Forest and Nature School Practitioners’ Course.

The view that Forest and Nature School is actually a framework for education that speaks to international principles of play is contradictory to the perspective that Forest and Nature School is an “imported” model of education that lacks cultural context and relevancy. Sobel (2008) identifies seven “play motifs” that are common among all children regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity or ecosystem when they have safe, free time in nature. These international play motifs include making forts and special places; playing hunting and gathering games; shaping small worlds; developing friendships with animals; constructing adventures; descending into fantasies; and following paths and figuring out shortcuts (Sobel, 2008, p. 20). All of these play motifs can be observed in Forest and Nature School programs in Canada, England, Ireland, Denmark, Korea and China. This is not the result of importing a model of education that lacks relevancy and context; rather it is the result of play-based learning being a theme that can both transcend and support cultural and geographical context.

There is much to be learned from the rich history in environmental and outdoor education field as the Forest and Nature School movement continues to expand across Canada, and in turn Leather (2015) is correct to say that there is something to be learned from the Forest School movement as well. Forest and Nature School is a new framework for delivering environmental and outdoor education, one that supports the holistic health and development of the child, and a pedagogical framework that differs from traditional environmental and outdoor education. But it is just that, one model, not the only model, that can be implemented

to enhance how, where and why we deliver environmental and outdoor education across Canada. It is important to note that one does not oppose or contradict the other but rather is complementary to a shared vision for how and where children learn.

Another challenge and great concern for many organizations, researchers and educators alike is the commercialization of Forest and Nature School. In the UK, many training bodies emerged with different financial interests and business models at play. It was several years later that it became clear that an overarching umbrella organization was needed to support the field that had grown so rapidly. In Canada, it also became apparent that many individuals were interested in establishing “training” programs, some before they had even delivered Forest and Nature School programs themselves, because they could see financial and professional opportunities emerging. Both Forest School Canada and the Forest School Association in the UK were formed to address some of these concerns and to ensure that the integrity of the Forest and Nature School movement was held above all other interests, including commercial and financial interests. Both organizations have been established as charitable, not-for-profit organizations that work from a collaborative leadership and governance model, committed to supporting quality, best practices in Forest and Nature School and the best interests of the child, the educator and the movement at large.



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Although there is a need for further research, specifically on Forest School, there is a relevant body of research that we can lean on to make a case for Forest and Nature School. What we do know is that youth participation in outdoor activities has declined (Children & Nature Network, 2012), with the average child spending “as few as 30 minutes of unstructured outdoor play each day,” but “more than seven hours each day in front of an electronic screen” (National Wildlife Federation, 2014).

There are well-documented benefits to spending time in nature through a play-based approach to learning. Research shows that nature can heal and strengthen children’s bodies through increased physical fitness, higher levels of vitamin D and better eyesight (Ebberling et al., 2002; Collins, 2011; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009; Children & Nature Network, 2012). Nature has been shown to heal and strengthen children’s minds and relationships: result in better performance in math, reading, writing, and listening and better critical thinking skills (Bartosh, 2003; Ernst & Monroe, 2004), and reduce ADHD symptoms (Wells, 2000). Play and exposure to green spaces can also reduce children’s stress levels, protect their emotional development and enhance their social relations (Kuo & Taylor, 2004; Ginsburg, 2007; Weinstein et al., 2009; Children & Nature Network, 2012).

To conclude, I would argue that not all is being lost in translation, as Leather (2015) would suggest, but rather it is still being translated. Forest and Nature School offers new opportunities for transformative learning and innovative practice and helps serve the shared interests of the environmental and outdoor education movement at large. There are challenges: Issues being faced include articulating how pedagogy translates into practice, building a solid research base, honouring Aboriginal culture and history, pursuing best practice rather than commercialized interests as well as translating and disseminating an evidence base. Addressing these issues will take time, as they will be explored and co-created with children, educators and communities across Canada.

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New Brunswick—New Funswick

By Bryana Perreaux

Hailing from the western Prairies, I grew up around people saying that Manitoba is the “forgotten province.” Don’t hate me for saying it, because it’s truly a gorgeous spot, but there are too many people I’ve met who have been indifferent to “friendly Manitoba”. Now that I’m a Maritimer, I unfortunately have witnessed an increasing number of people saying that New Brunswick is another “drive-through province,” with even more being indifferent to the wild wonders that zoom by their car windows.

Let me just start by setting the record straight: New Brunswick has a plethora of wonders—musical, historical and geographical—parked around every corner. Sure, our provincial population is less than my Edmonton, Alberta hometown. And yes, maybe New Brunswick is that province you drive through to get to Nova Scotia, but there’s so much more for you to know about the place that I endearingly call “New Funswick.”

For starters, New Brunswick is a secret gold mine for all the teachers out there who want new experiences with a good curriculum to follow. At the high school level alone, we have a surprisingly developed selection of courses to offer to the young minds of tomorrow: outdoor pursuits, environmental studies, physical geography, construction, Canadian history, Native studies and leadership through physical education and wellness, just to name a few. Speaking from the teacher-side of me, I can say that the “smallness” of New Brunswick allows teachers to take these subjects as far as they want to go. Speaking as the new-kid-in-town, I have to say that I was very impressed by the variety of subjects available to students in New Brunswick. Another honourable mention is needed for New Brunswick’s amazing initiative on inclusivity—Promoting LGBTQ Inclusion in Education (PIE). This province provides strong leadership in the Gay–Straight Alliance (GSA) groups that are offered in high schools (and even some middle schools!).

You also need to know about the Bachelor of Education (BEd) program that the University of New Brunswick (UNB), Fredericton offers. It’s top-notch. It’s small. It has a competitive application process, but it’s all worth it to gain a well-recognized BEd in just 11 months. The small number of staff and faculty allows for close connections and meaningful dialogue. The combined world experience, positive reputation and overall “it” factor of BEd educators is superior to what you could have ever imagined. They challenge the student teachers to take it one step further, to make an impact on all their students and to be memorable. The 11-month BEd program at UNB should be written on a sticky note and posted in your kitchen, because you don’t want to forget about it.

I won’t need much pen space to convince you that the wilderness of New Brunswick is sensational. Raging spring rivers, epic hiking trails (the Fundy Footpath is breathtaking), active hunting and fishing communities, the uniquely lush Acadian forests and easy access to even more wondrous places, including the Acadian Peninsula, Gaspé, Montreal, Appalachian Mountains and Bay of Fundy.

So, if you’re considering going beyond your home borders and want to have proximity to numerous others (Bay of Fundy is 1 hour away; Maine, US is 1.5 hours away; Nova Scotia is 2 hours away; Prince Edward Island is 3 hours away), then you need to come explore the diverse landscape and “hidden gem of a place” that I like to call “New Funswick.” Consider stopping by my place in Fredericton for a tour. Don’t believe me? Just get in your car and find out for yourself. We’re not that far from where you are—just a quick drive.

Bryana Perreaux works as the outdoor recreation leader with Recreational Services at the University of New Brunswick. Originally from Alberta, she now hails from New Brunswick. As an outdoor educator, she is a fan of all things hidden and beautiful.

The Albatross Story: A Reflection on the Powerful Effect of Outdoor Experiences on Personal Environmental Ethics

By Adam Cheeseman

In the face of numerous barriers (e.g., technology, lack of access to green space, perceived risks), it has become apparent that youth are becoming disconnected from the natural environment (Louv, 2008). Why worry about this? Is a connection to the outdoors really that important? Will it really have an impact on the planet? The answer to all the above is a resounding “yes.” According to Gould (1994), “We cannot win the battle to save species and environment without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well—for we will not fight in order to save what we do not love.... We must have visceral contact in order to love” (p. 44, as cited in Cachelin, Paisley & Blanchard, 2009, p. 3). Considering this perspective, it seems as though exposure to the outdoors is incredibly important, since it is directly linked to the development of positive feelings towards the natural world. This paper examines this concept through discussions of self-reflection and argues for the importance of childhood outdoor experiences and their role in the development of a personal environmental ethic.

As a child growing up in a rural Ontario community, I commonly spent time outdoors. From wading through chocolate-coloured rivers with a fishing pole, to camping on the bluff behind the barn, I was immersed in the natural environment through countless activities. Although I did not have the capacity for self-reflection at a young age, it is clear now that these experiences directly influenced my academic, social and career interests. More specifically, this connection to the outdoors motivated me to work with environmental organizations, develop environmental education programming for young children in Ontario and New Brunswick and, more recently, pursue a master’s degree in the field of environmental studies. The

relationship between outdoor experiences and my interests seems to resemble Louise Chawla’s (1988) conclusion that the development of a concern for nature is directly “shaped through social learning [and]...opportunities for direct contact with nature” (p. 18) from a young age.

Self-reflection has also led me to conclude that outdoor experiences have unknowingly influenced my deep, permanent and unwavering disposition toward preserving and protecting the natural environment. This guiding ethic is reminiscent of Aldo Leopold’s idea of a land ethic, which suggests that “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (Leopold, 2004, p. 154).

Through self-reflection, I am beginning to understand that my early experiences with the outdoors have prompted the development of my own variation on this ecocentric ethical principle. So what is this ethic composed of? The result of participating in the outdoors has led me to believe that natural spaces cannot be viewed as simply a campsite or a snow fort. Instead, each is a space for all living and non-living entities: a place for trees to grow, deer to eat and water to rush downstream. In other words, with my environmental ethic, I view nature as interconnected and complex but, most of all, I view it as a shared space for all to live within.

So how does this come to be? Where is the epiphany? Where does self-reflection begin and how does it guide us in understanding the importance of our childhood experiences in nature? The answer may be obvious but no less powerful—greater exposure to the outdoors. As I continue to spend time in nature, memories of past experiences frequently cross my mind, and

I have come to realize that each of the many camping trips, hikes and swims are all connected.

Recently, I was asked by a friend to describe an outdoor experience that significantly influenced my interest in the environment and environmental issues. When answering this question, it became clear that this experience not only encouraged me to care about the environment but also helped me realize there is a connection between the outdoors and my environmental ethic.

In July 2008, I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands on a biology field course. During this time, I was able to observe incredible landscape and interact with individuals from many walks of life, all while learning about local biology and conservation efforts. A particular highlight was our time spent on various islands throughout the Galapagos archipelago.

On one particular expedition on Española Island, our guide was surprised to come across a nesting pair of waved albatross who were accompanied by their young chick. The sheer size of the birds (average wingspan of seven to eight feet) frightened me at first, but after watching the family communicate and preen one another, I became calm and entranced by them. After a short while, the father rose and began to move slowly down the dirt trail towards the coast of the island, which consisted of a row of steep, rocky cliffs. Following from a safe distance, our guide was surging with excitement. Frantically switching between Spanish and English, he described how the albatross pairs separate only for feeding—one of the pair may be gone at sea for weeks at a time while the other stays with their young. Arriving at the edge of the cliff, the open ocean surrounded us on all sides. After a few moments, the albatross spread its massive wings and waited. For a while, the wind shifted from one direction to another, ruffling his feathers and nearly knocking him off balance. All of sudden, the albatross leaped in the air and began to glide. Without flapping his wings, the wind

carried this mighty creature away from Española, and we watched until he reached the horizon.

The group was silent. It was in that moment I made the connection. Albatross pair with their partners for life. From ruffling his child's feathers to realizing he must leave to get food for the family, this albatross was conveying emotions, recognizing his role in his world and sharing with us this small piece of his life. Following this experience, I began to view the non-living features of the environment as a shared space. Whether it is the field at our small farm or at the cliffs of Espanola, these landscapes now feel communal, a space where all species are able to learn and grow. Sometime later, I began to reflect on human-dominated landscapes, areas where the albatross may not be able to nest or find that ideal, undisturbed column of wind to glide on. This greatly concerned me as I began to understand the terrifying ways that we can so easily displace and disrupt the daily lives of species that share the Earth's landscapes.

For me the albatross, and my time with them, resembles a moment of epiphany or realization that demonstrated the power of outdoor experiences. In this case, the outdoors has transformed my views from seeing nature as something I visit or study to experiencing it as a system I am a part of and live within. Furthermore, self-reflection has allowed me to understand and interpret my outdoor experiences and the personal effects they have had on shaping my current interests and values. Most importantly, it has encouraged me to continue educating youth about the environment in hopes of inspiring others to see the natural world as a space not held by humans but as a space shared by all forms of life. In closing, I encourage readers to reflect and think about their time in the outdoors, to recognize the value of these experiences and to understand the powerful, transformative effect these moments, both small and large, can have on our lives.

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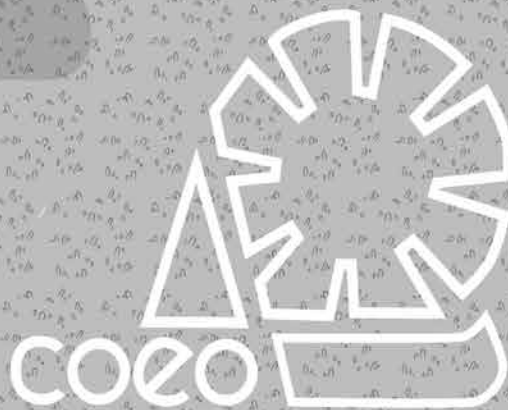
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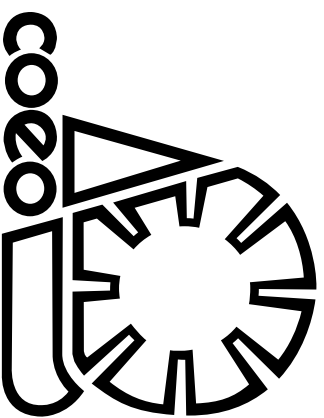


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