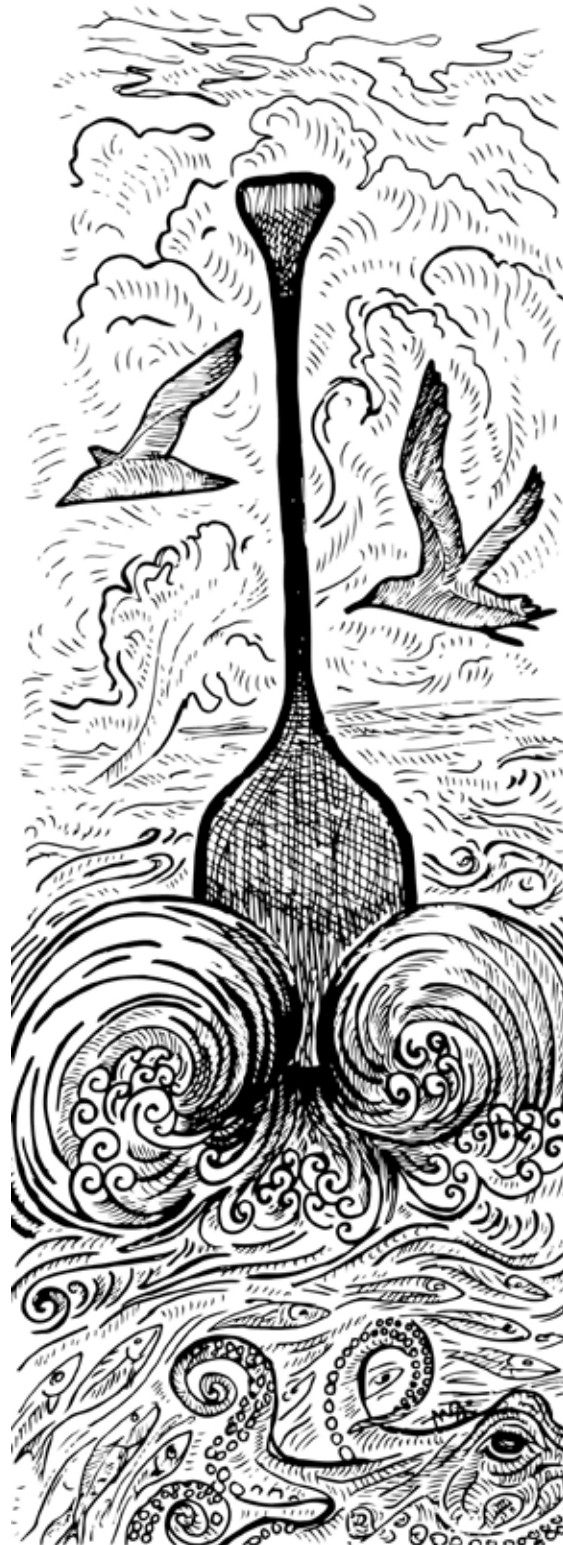
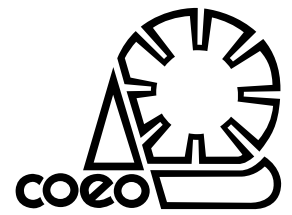


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION
Summer 2015, 27(4)



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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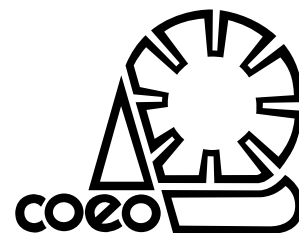
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What a pleasure it is to travel to conferences (nearby or faraway) and meet people whose work would interest outdoor educators/*Pathways* readers. This experience provides an opportunity for *Pathways* to make new friends with such people as Ian Blackwell and Martin Gilchrist. Of course, it is also a pleasure to have old friends of *Pathways* who have regularly contributed to the journal throughout the years—people such as Nils Vikander and Simon Beames, among others. Finally, *Pathways* continues to have regular column contributors, new voices and requested material.

Serving as the chair of the editorial board means I have a good reason to approach folks (after a conference talk or reading an article) and promote *Pathways*. Almost universally, these interesting individuals are eager to learn more, much like many of the *Pathways* contributors. But it is time

for a change, and for *Pathways* this means that, following the release of the fall 2015 issue, I will shift roles from serving

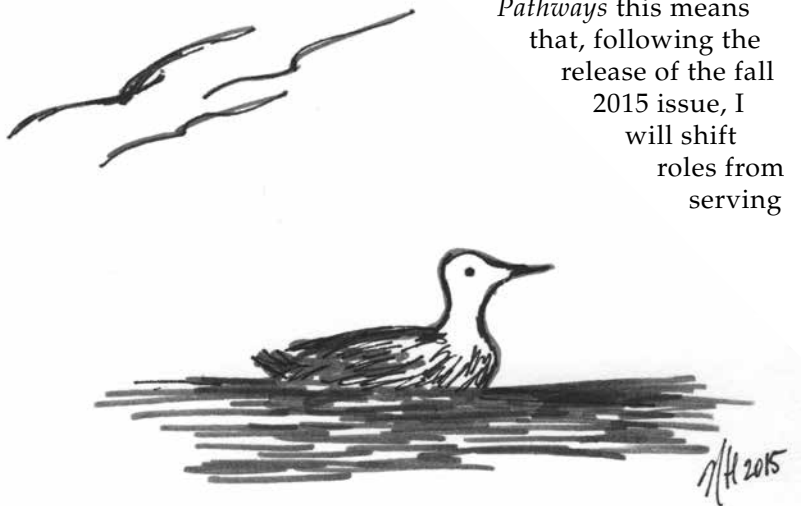
as the journal editor—coordinating the issues (many of which have guest editors)—to serving as the resource editor—gathering material as described above.

Pathways is generally praised for printing informative, readable articles for practitioners and academics. Folks can get tired of reading dense, “jargonesque” academic material, like the following example:

Put simply, as unusual as it might seem, this researcher believes that the politics of the ontology of time, in relation to space, through bodies emplaced in different natures, lies most earnestly at the very heart of a renewed post-critical “educative” quest for social and environmental justices.

And this starts with “Put simply”! We think clear, concise writing is a *Pathways* trademark, and to achieve this goal our editorial board is called into action. Our managing editor, Randee Holmes, is a “stickler for detail,” the perfect person to copy edit and troubleshoot each issue. With new and regular contributors, columnists, editorial board staff and the editing/layout team of Randee Holmes and Karen Labern, *Pathways* is a true collective effort we believe the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario can continue to be proud of.

Bob Henderson
Editor



Sketch Pad – Michelle Gordon is an undergraduate student at the University of Waterloo. She has presented at COEO conferences and has provided art for a number of *Pathways* issues. Her art appears on the cover, and pages 6 and 7.

Natalka Haras is a lawyer and fundraiser living in Montreal. Enjoying the outdoors and making things—whether in the kitchen or at her desk—inspires and refreshes Nat for her complex and exhilarating work in the world of philanthropy. Nat completed the sketches included here sketches while hiking in the Maritimes in May 2015. Her art appears on pages 2, 10, 17, 19, 22, 24, and 29–32.

Speaking to other outdoor educators, I know I am not alone when saying it can be difficult to plan personal trips when many weekends are booked up with student trips. By no means is this a complaint, as we count our blessings that we can have this wonderful opportunity to help facilitate others in becoming (more) in touch with nature. This summer has been an excellent opportunity to catch up on personal trips and excursions with family and friends, and I have just returned from taking my father on his very first canoe trip. My father was instrumental in encouraging my love for the outdoors by taking my brothers and I car camping at Silent Lake Provincial Park, as well as day trips fishing and hiking. For this reason, it was an amazing experience to show him a different type of camping, and explore the beauty that Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park has to offer. I hope it was the first of many canoe trips with him!

Here's to hoping that you are able to find the time to take in much needed outdoor time for personal rejuvenation, assist others to be in touch with nature and reconnect yourself with your favourite places.

Do you know anyone who has been positively impacting children, youth and adults by connecting them to each other and to nature or who has been contributing to the larger community of outdoor education through their participation on the COEO Board of Directors or sub-committees? A great way to recognize their passion and dedication is to nominate them for one of COEO's annual awards.

The Honourary Life Membership Award recognizes the substantial and lasting contributions of long-time and esteemed members of COEO who are a vital part of its traditions and successes. *The Dorothy Walter Award for Leadership* was created in 1986 to give recognition to an individual who, like Dorothy Walter herself, has shown an outstanding commitment to the development of leadership qualities in Ontario youth and through outdoor education. *The Robin Dennis Award* was created in tribute to Robin Dennis, one of the founders of Ontario outdoor education in the 1950s and 1960s. It is presented to an individual, outdoor education program or facility that has made an outstanding contribution to the promotion

and development of outdoor education in the province. This award is open to non-members of COEO and the person making the nomination can also be a non-member of COEO. *The Amethyst Award, in memory of Brent Dysart* is presented to an emerging professional new to the field of outdoor education. This award recognizes individual potential in those beginning a career. The recipient of the Amethyst Award receives a complimentary one-year membership to COEO and free admittance to the annual fall conference.

You can find out more about these awards and how to nominate a deserving colleague or organisation at <http://www.coeo.org/recognition.html>. Nominations are to be received by the current COEO Past President (see the inside cover of Pathways for the contact information for Kyle Clarke) no later than September 10, 2015.

I am very much looking forward to the learning that will be happening at the fall conference! The idea behind this year's theme, *Action for Change: Exploring Innovative Practices that Inspire, Engage and Activate* is to encourage practitioners to share projects, programs and strategies they have developed and/or utilized to nurture caring attitudes and encourage involvement and activism amongst OE participants. This conference will provide an opportunity to share best practices around outdoor education and explore new ideas and perspectives about engaging children and youth in action-based environmental, civic and social projects. The conference will take place at Camp Kandalore this fall, September 25-27, 2015.

Interested in becoming involved on the COEO Board of Directors? We would love to have you on board! Information regarding nominations and applications, to submit by email prior to the conference, are available on the website. The deadline for a Student Representative submission is September 11, 2015.

Happy trails!

Allyson Brown
COEO President

“Is That Any Good, That One There?”

Ollie and Gerrie on the Perplexity of Sea Canoeing

By Nils Olof Vikander

“Good heavens, Ollie, what are you doing back in these parts?”

“Hi Gerrie, great to see you again! Why don’t we head out for a hike, and along the way I’ll bring you *in the loop*, and then we can bounce ideas off each other, like in the old days?”

“So Gerrie, I did a presentation on the canoe and the kayak in ocean and large lake paddling. As I expected, the waves went high; of all the tools of outdoor pursuits, vessels on water generate the most emotion.”

“But of course, Ollie, we emerged from the sea, and most of our planetary home is still water, so it’s no wonder that it has been wisely said that *nothing is quite so satisfying as messing around with boats*.”

“You hit the nail on the head again, Gerrie. I often feel I am somehow moving into religious territory when conversations move in the watery direction.

“I did a lot of kayaking, not only here in the east off the Atlantic coast, but also on the west coast in the Pacific, and then in the Nordic countries as well. The north of Europe has much in common geographically with Canada: immense amounts of island-studded waters off sea shorelines and in lakes and rivers—paradise for paddlers. Sweden, for example has over 60,000 islands in its salty archipelagos, not to speak of those in its 95,000 lakes. For canal-lovers there are 1,000 km to play in. But, you may not have heard from me that I have also canoed a great deal, not just on rivers and lakes but also at sea, meaning that I have, over the years, amassed a considerable comparative vessel data base. Recently going back in my paddling memories, I suddenly realized my very first paddling experience of any type happened when I was as an

11-year-old at a Scout summer camp out on an island in the Stockholm archipelago. Indeed, I actually did begin my paddling life in *salt* water—in the Baltic Sea and in a *canoe* at that! Little did I know then what lay ahead. After our family’s move to Canada the following year, I continued my canoeing sporadically, at places such as Camp Kanawana in the Laurentians, north of Montreal.

“You can often meet people with the ideology that canoes at sea are not appropriate and that reminds me of some years ago when Margarita and I went to rent a canoe in Stockholm at Svima Sport, the oldest and largest paddling shop in Sweden. The shop refused to do business with us because we were heading east into the Baltic, instead of west into Lake Mälaren! Clearly their memories were short since their business was founded in 1974 when canoeing enjoyed a boom in Sweden lasting for another two decades. At that time the Scouts were by no means the only people taking canoes into the Baltic.”

“Ollie, that confrontation must have galvanized you into battle: Justice for the canoe!”

“You can say that again!

“Of course, canoes are functional, not only in rivers and on smaller lakes but also on the big waters. How else would the First Nations cultures have survived on this continent?”

“Right on the mark, Ollie. Look at Canada: Isn’t its main feature an enormous landmass, criss-crossed by rivers, as if made for canoe travel?”

“You are correct, up to a point, but then there are the vast numbers of lakes too, and many big ones at that. Did you know

that Canada alone has 13 of the world's 33 largest lakes and, maybe even more impressively, seven of the largest 12 lakes, if we include the four Great Lakes shared with the US? Did the First Nations people turn around when they came down the rivers to these lakes? Did they stop and build new types of vessels before proceeding? Is the Pope Protestant?"

"Ha, ha, ha! You are right, Ollie. Now you are waxing religious!"

"Absolutely, Gerrie—no, I am quite offended when I see the canoe denigrated today, even more so when I am in Canada, as I will explain later. The big problem faced can be delineated in the W.I. Thomas Dictum: 'If we define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.' Thus, if the canoe is defined as unseaworthy and the kayak as seaworthy, then people will go to sea in kayaks. In Scandinavia, this false picture of the canoe could be more understood and perhaps somewhat tolerated, such as the time Margarita and I had rented a canoe for an archipelago trip south of Stockholm from the seaside town of Trosa. As we were stowing it ready in the harbour area, a man came by, stopped for a look, and then skeptically queried: 'Is it any good, that one there?' He pointed at our canoe. We assured him it was and set out. After a minute or so, we spotted a kayak coming in, fluttering a small Union Jack. The paddler paused, reached under his spray-skirt and came out pointing a camera at us. I do think he had some vivid discussions around that photo, with his kayaking mates back home.

"These are illustrations of that earthy saying by an old American philosopher from the Deep South: It ain't what you don't know that make you stupid; it what you do know that ain't so. Or as paddler Saul Kinderis expressed it in George Gronseth's tale of survival in a harrowing kayak capsizes in Washington's San Juan Islands, 'You end up making decisions based on what you know or don't know.' So, you better pay attention to Gronseth's conclusion: If your answers to questions

on basic paddling safety are 'I don't know' or 'I'm not sure,' then 'you should not go farther than a short swimming distance from a safe beach.'"

"But surely, Ollie, isn't it more reasonable and safe to paddle a decked kayak at sea than it is an open canoe?"

"Here we have the gist for many an animated conversation, Gerrie! It is not as cut-and-dried as it seems. Let us return to the geographic character of Canada again. Clearly the First Nations people learned to build and paddle open canoes that enabled them to navigate both rivers and lakes of all sizes, including the mother of all lakes, Lake Superior. And are these large lakes much different than the sea? Not much—if anything they can be more challenging. Look at Lake Winnipeg, which from time to time demanded the utmost from the voyageurs. Even Georgian Bay on Lake Huron could test the voyageurs severely. Margarita and I understood this well when we rounded Portage Point in conditions where the voyageurs would surely have portaged. Two paddling groups on land, waiting out the weather, watched our travails skeptically. We had, however, considerable experience in difficult conditions on, among other waters, Vänern, the Swedish lake ranking third in size in Europe, after Ladoga and Onega in Russia. On Vänern, Margarita and I had to marshal resources at the very edge of our capacities, more so than in 95 per cent of our sea canoeing."

"OK, Ollie, but looking at Canada, and at the Nordic countries too for that matter, there are huge sea-shore areas—east, west and north. This must be where most of today's sea paddling would take place, excepting the far north where few people live."

"Good point, Gerrie, but looking at Canada, the First Nations paddled open canoes at sea, both east and west for thousands of years. How is it then that an individual today, like Boudi van Oldenborgh from the Vancouver area,

says in a newspaper interview that some people tell him he must be a raving lunatic to take a canoe out on the ocean? Were the west coast cultures also insane throughout history? If so, how did they survive? And coming back to the east coast, Gerrie, where we are now, how did the Beothuk natives of Newfoundland manage routine canoe trips out to Funk Island, 60 km off the northeast coast, to harvest eggs? No sheltering archipelagos whatsoever along the way!"

"Now that you put it in those terms, Ollie, maybe we should, in humility, crawl to the cross begging forgiveness for our bowing to the present forces of political correctness."

"I couldn't agree more, but hold on, it doesn't stop there.

"As you know, in addition to the Portage

Point area, Margarita and I have paddled most of the island-studded shores of Georgian Bay, truly a marvelous work of the Creator's art. We did see some canoes there, but far more kayaks. In Sweden and Finland, where we do most of our paddling in Europe, it is even more extreme; over the 18 summers we have paddled there, we have used many kayaks but only one canoe and that vessel had a spray deck, something we have never felt the need for. Concerning spray decks, the inveterate van Oldenborgh once wrote me and said 'I don't favour spray covers for open canoes—if it is that rough, you should be ashore reading a book.' Boudi was right: Never embark on a canoe trip without bringing something good to read."

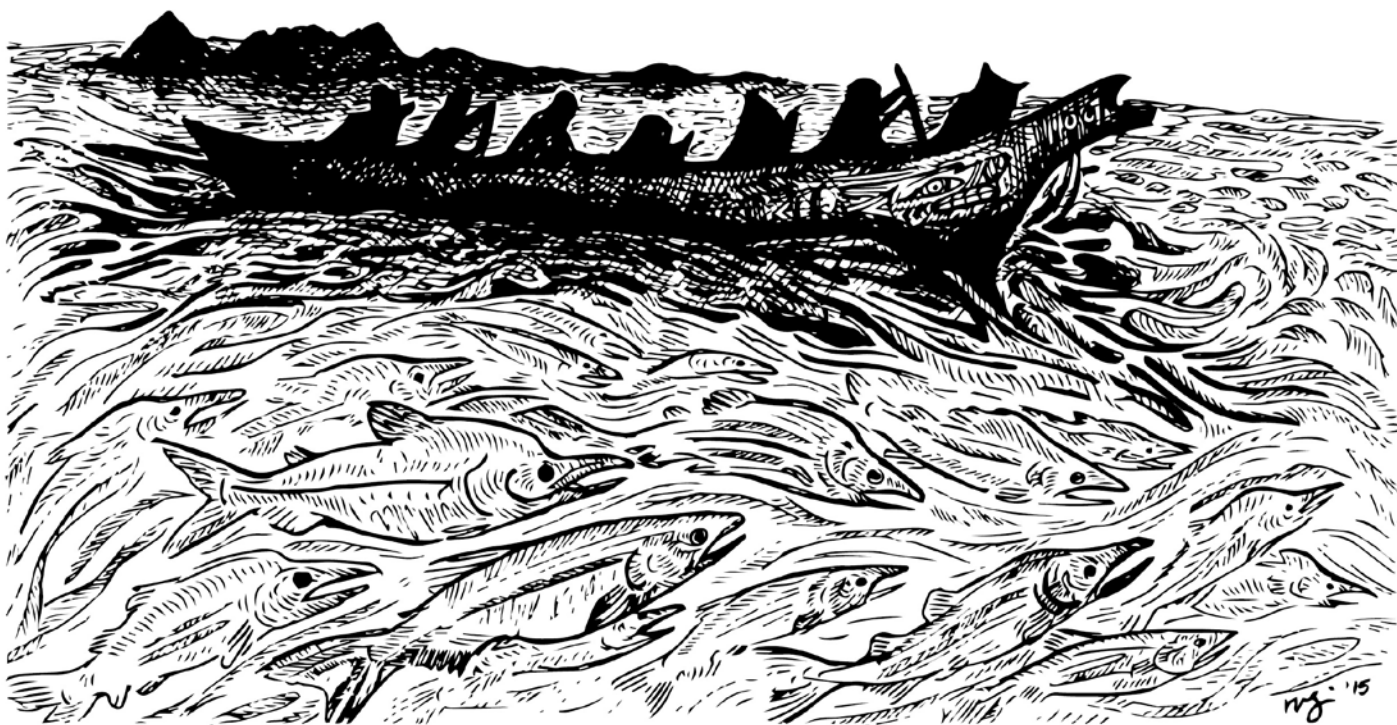
"Ollie, tell me a bit about the paddling in Scandinavia! Paddling is so Canadian that I have a hard time visualizing it elsewhere."



"Again, you have put your finger on something essential. A canoe, in fact, is called a Canadian in Sweden. Remarkable, isn't it? Moreover, the canoe here in Canada is even more Canadian than the maple leaf; after all, the red maple leaf is largely an eastern phenomenon. As many writers have pointed out, James Raffan among them, Canada as we know it would be inconceivable without the canoe. Imagine, a consummate creation for wilderness travel being the icon of a nation! This must be unique on our planet! It is so much more remarkable, then, that its versatility as a vessel for big water journeys has faded away. Yes, the voyageurs of the fur-trade era made their legends mainly on rivers, but their routes also included Lake Huron, Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg. And what about the vast explorations in Canadian history? The early Franklin expeditions, Peter Dease and Thomas Simpson, John Rae

and others, certainly paddled Great Slave Lake, Great Bear Lake and other great waters on their way to the arctic coast, where they continued their expeditions by canoe. Dease and Simpson, noted McGoogan, 'had set an Arctic standard for small-boat travel' in their 1838-39 voyage. Rae, that sadly unrecognized genius of northern exploration, once remarkably paddled solo in a canoe from Sault Ste. Marie to present day Winnipeg in just over a month! Robert Ballantyne and his men, paddling the Winnipeg River at that time, were astonished to see the solitary Rae approaching and speculated out loud: 'Who could this be?' And Craig Zimmerman, let me remind you, warns us: 'Are you sure?...Remember, Lake Superior kills quickly.' Imagine if Rae had listened to that! But, I digress, again, Gerrie!"

"I have a hard time myself, Ollie, keeping my thoughts reined in when listening



to you, accompanied as you are by the symphony of the waves rolling in.”

“So, back to Scandinavia! The Baltic is also a marvel of nature, a sea more than four or five times the size of Lake Superior, depending on which definition of the Baltic one chooses. Its immense Swedish and Finnish archipelagos may well be without parallels anywhere. Together with the coasts of Denmark and the fjord and island realms of Norway, there are thousands of kilometres of seashores. Inland there are countless rivers, and lakes in the hundreds of thousands. And the human population? Small and sparse enough to make you think of Canada. And what about landing and setting up camp during paddling voyages in these northern lands? With the Right of Common Access you may camp just about anywhere.”

“But, Ollie, this sounds like the freedom European emigrants in centuries past hoped to find in North America!”

“Yes, a paradox, isn’t it—finding no end of ‘Private, No Trespassing’ signs over here, such as stared me in the face as I paddled the San Juan Islands one summer? No wonder paddling is flowering in the Nordic region, though like in Canada, not so much anymore of the sea canoeing persuasion. And the reasons are much the same.”

“And what are they, Ollie?”

“The interweaving of geography, marketing and mythology. The first one we cannot do much about and why should we, but the last two we can.”

“Go on, Ollie, I am all ears!”

“For my two-pronged conference and article work, I dipped my paddle deeply into my canoe and kayak library, both North American and Scandinavian, and used books and journals. Then I asked 18 individuals and six organizations on both sides of the Atlantic, selected for their expertise, to provide me with information

and insights into sea canoeing; on the juxtaposition of the canoe and the kayak; and, finally, on paddling safety issues. And lastly, I surfed the web to fish for more knowledge. The response: I think I hit a sensitive nerve, both among the individuals, where 15 responded quickly, and in a few of the organizations, some of which still have not responded, despite several diplomatic additional requests. Perhaps the latter feel their professionalism is being questioned.”

“Ollie, this is a bit of a project, isn’t it?”

“Absolutely, Gerrie. *Hell hath no fury like a canoeing researcher scorned!* I would very much like to set the record straight. Clearly the kayak is not an ‘enemy of the people’, to allude to Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian playwright *extraordinaire*, but somehow the canoe has been unjustly relegated into an illusionary backwater. In Sweden, two examples can illustrate this. In 1982, in his work on canoeing history, Billy Joelsson noted that at the 1938 World Championships, which Sweden hosted, the racing canoe was seen in northern Europe for the first time, although it had been on the international program since 1924. The national kayak humour immediately christened the canoe paddling technique as *woodchopping*! Later, in 2002, the long distance tripping committee of the Swedish Canoe Association published its influential guidelines. Here it should be mentioned that canoe in Sweden, in contrast to the other Nordic countries, is an omnibus concept, in that it refers to both canoes and kayaks. The committee proclaimed that *our canoe becomes uncomfortable and dangerous on large open waters*. Other writings have taken a similar stance, and it could be argued that collectively they formed an orchestrated vendetta of bullying and harassment.”

“But Ollie, now you must tell me more about the kayak. Isn’t it so that in more modern times the kayak moved into what was, more or less, a paddling vacuum on the Canadian coasts? After historical times, has not the canoe been quite absent there?”

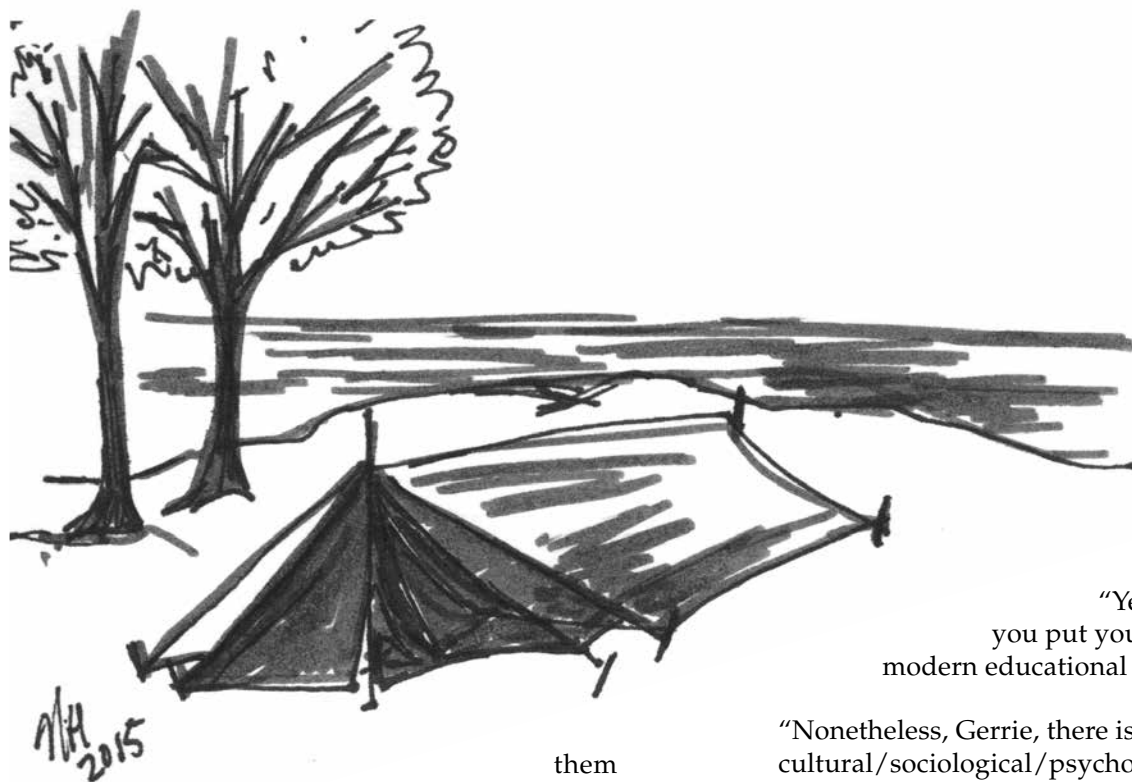
"Gerrie, I knew you would challenge me with provocative questions! Thank goodness for that! Now you know why I seek your company! You are right, of course. The kayak in southern waters is a result of cultural diffusion from Greenland, Arctic Canada, Alaska, and to some degree, from the *baidarkas* of Arctic Russia. In these northern reaches, the kayak was primarily a hunting and fishing vessel, while in our southern latitudes it has been the inspiration for recreational travel purposes largely in two core geographical areas from which it has then diffused further into many other parts of the world. The two 'modification' centres were the British Isles and the Seattle to Vancouver region. Internal diffusion between the two also took place through British emigration to the North American West Coast. In the '70s and '80s a virtual tsunami of sea kayak development took place there, on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The original decisive diffusion was from Greenland to the British Isles, and the narrow kayaks we mainly see today have their heritage from Inuit hunting and fishing on the relatively protected Greenland fjords. However, it should be noted that another form of kayak, shaped from Inuit life on the more unprotected coasts of Alaska, was diffused south to the Pacific Northwest, where it unfortunately was not able to effectively counteract the marketing of the narrower Greenland designs. Today we still feel the reverberations of the Greenland diffusion to the North American West. The canoe could not compete; it simply was not visible enough to be noticed by anyone, except some 'eccentrics'. This tsunami of cultural diffusion took some time to reach Scandinavia.

"Being a Swede by birth, I have maintained contact over the years with the old country through membership in various national bodies. I went through my collection of issues of *Turist*, the journal of the non-profit Swedish Touring Club, the largest outdoor-oriented organization in the country, and *Friluftsliv*, the journal of the second largest, Friluftsrämjandet,

also a non-profit organization. I calculated the canoe versus kayak appearances, in articles and advertisements combined, from 1994 to 2013, inclusive. In the first decade, from 1994 to 2003, the canoe to kayak ratio was 36:64. However, in the first half of that period, from 1994 to 1998, the canoe to kayak ratio was a more even 45:55. Clearly the canoe was given a stronger position earlier in these influential journals. The 2004 to 2013 figures show a dramatic exacerbation of the canoe to kayak ratio trend: 16:84! These were all the result of simple frequency calculations; had I mapped out the page area taken by paddling presentations, the dominance of the kayak would have been yet more striking as the years went by. To further underline this remarkable pattern, I examined the two journals separately and found that the driving media-force for this marine change of travel from the mid-1990s onward lay mainly at the hands of the more outdoor-specialized Friluftsrämjandet. To illustrate this, *Turist*, from 1994 through 1998, showed a 76:24 ratio in favour of the canoe! Clearly, however, a marine culture-battle was fought in Sweden in the 1990s, with the more conservative canoe-forces, represented in the media by the Swedish Touring Club's *Turist*, eventually being out-manoeuvred by the kayak-supportive Friluftsrämjandet's journal's two-pronged approach of an editorial policy featuring wide-ranging exposure of the kayak, in conjunction with opening its pages to very extensive advertising from the kayak industry. Of course private commercial media was also active in the fray, but the two organizations with their history dating back to the 19th century have set the national tone. My apologies, though, Gerrie, for burdening you with these numbers and details, but sometimes they can help to clear the air!"

"Ollie, though not so mathematically persuaded I am, I can feel the impact of these figures!"

"Here are some final numbers, Gerrie, which astonished me even more. I found



"Yes, there, Ollie,
you put your nose into a
modern educational vacuum!"

them
when I studied
Friluftsrämjandet's summer
program for 2007, the last year they
provided such data. They organized,
nationwide that year, in the vicinity of 500
kayak events, all of them sea-kayaking,
while for the canoe, the number of events
was approximately a very modest 30, all
inland!"

"This is spectacular, indeed, Ollie, but
does not this indicate a huge receptivity
and satisfaction in the population for this
form of water travel?"

"Well, that could be, but in documented
comparison with what other kinds of
crafts, and as the result of what kinds of
forces? This is an outstanding example
of the classic chicken-and-egg challenge:
Which came first? Was this a 'bottom-up'
folk movement, or a 'top-down' industry/
media intervention? Intriguingly, the same
process appears to have simultaneously
taken place in Canada and the United
States, even though deeper historical
canoeing traditions existed in those parts
of the world. Perhaps this process occurred
here partly because of modern history-free
education."

"Nonetheless, Gerrie, there is also a
cultural/sociological/psychological
background to the Swedes' receptivity to
the kayak tsunami from the west. Timothy
Hebb has written about the 'early adopter'
syndrome in Swedish society, particularly
as it relates to hardware technology. As a
result of this phenomenon, Sweden has
become a testing arena for international
industry. Susanne Hoffman of the Swedish
Touring Club has suggested that this
syndrome can also be found in the Swedes'
sensitivity to outdoor trends among high
profile international adventurers: collective
behaviour à la jumping-on-the-bandwagon!"

"Ha, Ollie, so the self-reliant Viking is a
notion of the past?"

"Maybe too many, like me, 'Vikinged' west
across the great waters."

"But, Ollie, surely it is an advantage to have
gear protected from the elements under deck."

"Not really, Gerrie. Waterproof bags have
been around for ages, and they are as
necessary in kayaks as in canoes due to the
risk of leakage, from hatches and bulkheads,
as well as the need to have equipment
protected from rain and spray during the
loading/unloading process and while at

lunch-sites and campsites. A further issue, Gerrie, is that because of the limited cargo space in kayaks, for anything beyond day trips, many paddlers strap items on the deck, using adaptations of the Inuit systems for tying down their implements, but now for an entirely different purpose. This difference, of course, negates the oft-promoted gear protection function of the deck, not to mention the commonly voiced notion that the kayak is less susceptible to wind than the canoe.

"Now that we are into the load carrying issue, it should be said that the canoe wins this contest, hands down, as Eric Morse convincingly demonstrated on his long journeys in Canada's far north. Morse, who in the words of James Raffan was the acknowledged 'father' of modern-day canoe tripping, wrote in 1970 that 'capable of carrying sufficient supplies...the canoe permits the **deepest penetration** of wilderness.' It is, indeed, the consummate cultural artifact for those wishing to pursue the quest of long-term severing of ties to civilization. In a critique of the kayak in this regard, Hilding Svartengren, back in 1927 in Sweden, made this conclusion: 'And to in such an Eskimonika, or what the type now must be called, get with you tent, clothes and food for a multi-week trip is fairly cumbersome.' Bengt Bengtsson concurred in his report on a lengthy river, lake and Baltic Sea trip in 1945, an instructive event in its rare use of both kayak and canoe. He noted humorously that 'the kayak did not load very much, and the canoe in this regard could compete with an Italian donkey.' But, Gerrie, another element here is that, not only can the canoe carry more, it is also superior in the diversity of items it can take into aquatic nature. With them, canoeists have taken children, dogs and musical instruments, such as guitars—and that's just for starters. In Sweden, the kayak fraternity has done what it can to make kayaking appear more diverse and inclusive in articles and photographs, even featuring children in parental lap on journal covers, but it is doubtful if this can be convincing, except for inspiring short excursions."

"Look, Ollie, are there not two kayaks over there, across the bay?"

"I don't have my glasses with me, but I think you're right! How about that! As is said in Zen, *When the student is ready, the master appears!* This reminds me of another important, though often overlooked, point in the discussion of canoes and kayaks. The canoe is, in the vast majority of situations, paddled by two—the sea kayak by one."

"Isn't that close to comparing apples and oranges, Ollie? Why this difference? What about the Inuit, did they always travel in solo crafts?"

"Both are key questions, Gerrie, but let's look at the latter one first. No, when the Inuit transported gear and people from place to place, they used *umiaks*, which were not decked and look suspiciously like canoes. If anything, the Inuit are superbly practical: a cultural heritage honed by centuries of living in supremely challenging settings. I noted this, time and time again, when I worked with them in my years in the North. And when the white explorers came to the North with canoes, the Inuit adopted the southern variation of the craft with no hesitation."

"Well this I didn't know, Ollie, and that certainly puts a new complexion on things. So, we southerners, in a way, are guilty of distortions and sins of omission!"

"You could say that, Gerrie, but the kayakers would not be amused!"

Editor's Note: *This is the beginning of an extensive Ollie and Gerrie dialogue. The dialogue will continue in a future issue.*

Nils Vikander is recently retired from a career that has seen him work on both sides of the Atlantic, including Brock University and most recently the University of Nord-Trøndalag Levanger, Norway. He is a Swede who lives in Norway and has worked extensively in Canada. COEO folk will remember him from attending past conferences. Nils can be reached at nils.vikander@ntebb.no

The Natural Connections Demonstration Project, 2012–2016

By Ian Blackwell and Martin Gilchrist

The UK government white paper *The Natural Choice* (2011) pledged to “remove barriers to learning outdoors and increase schools’ abilities to teach outdoors when they wish to do so.” In response, the Natural Connections Demonstration Project (NCDP) was created to test models to help schools move outside of the classroom. This short paper will explain how the project operates and what it has achieved as it enters its third and final year.

NCDP is funded by Natural England, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and English Heritage and is delivered by Plymouth University. It is a demonstration project, so there are no preconceived notions of what will work in each of its various localities. Our aim is to increase the number of school-aged children (aged 5–16) who benefit from all the amazing opportunities offered by Learning in the Local Natural Environments (LINE). Our approach is to tackle the real and perceived barriers faced by the schools’ gatekeepers (i.e., teachers, managers, governors or inspectors). The program is currently located across the South West of England in areas of high multiple deprivation, but it has always been our intention to enable *replication* and *amplification* of it in other parts of the country and internationally.

The aims of the project are to

- stimulate the demand from schools and teachers for LINE in areas of high deprivation;
- support schools in building LINE into their planning and practices; and
- stimulate the supply of LINE services for schools and teachers.

The project operates at a local, school-led level in seven areas across South West England. It involves 130 primary, secondary and special schools and between 200 and 300 volunteers.

Independent Brokerage and Professional Support

The project model is one of cascaded responsibility with a central coordinating team in Plymouth University employing local hub leaders. Hub leaders coordinate activity in seven (originally five) target areas in South West England where the project is working. The hub leaders’ first step is to select “beacon schools”—schools that are already successfully engaged in outdoor learning. Beacon schools then select someone we call a Local LINE Facilitator (LLF), who is usually an existing member of school staff. The team then works closely with the beacon school to ready them for their role in supporting other schools in their area. When ready, the beacon LLF recruits and supports a local group of cluster schools to develop outdoor learning activities. “Cluster” schools are targeted as ones looking to develop outdoor learning but that have limited capacity, knowledge or ideas. At present there are 33 beacon schools, from Cornwall to Bristol, supporting a further 100 schools.

In addition, Plymouth University, the hub leaders and other partners create links between schools and outdoor activity providers who are already experienced in teaching and learning outside the classroom. This partnership develops and offers resources and continuing professional development for teachers and providers.

With the increase in school academies and federations in England, the opportunities for teachers to network with other schools and to share ideas and inspiration are varied. In some areas, Natural Connections has successfully filled a need for this in schools that have become isolated. Such success is illustrated in this quote from a primary school teacher: “Thinking back

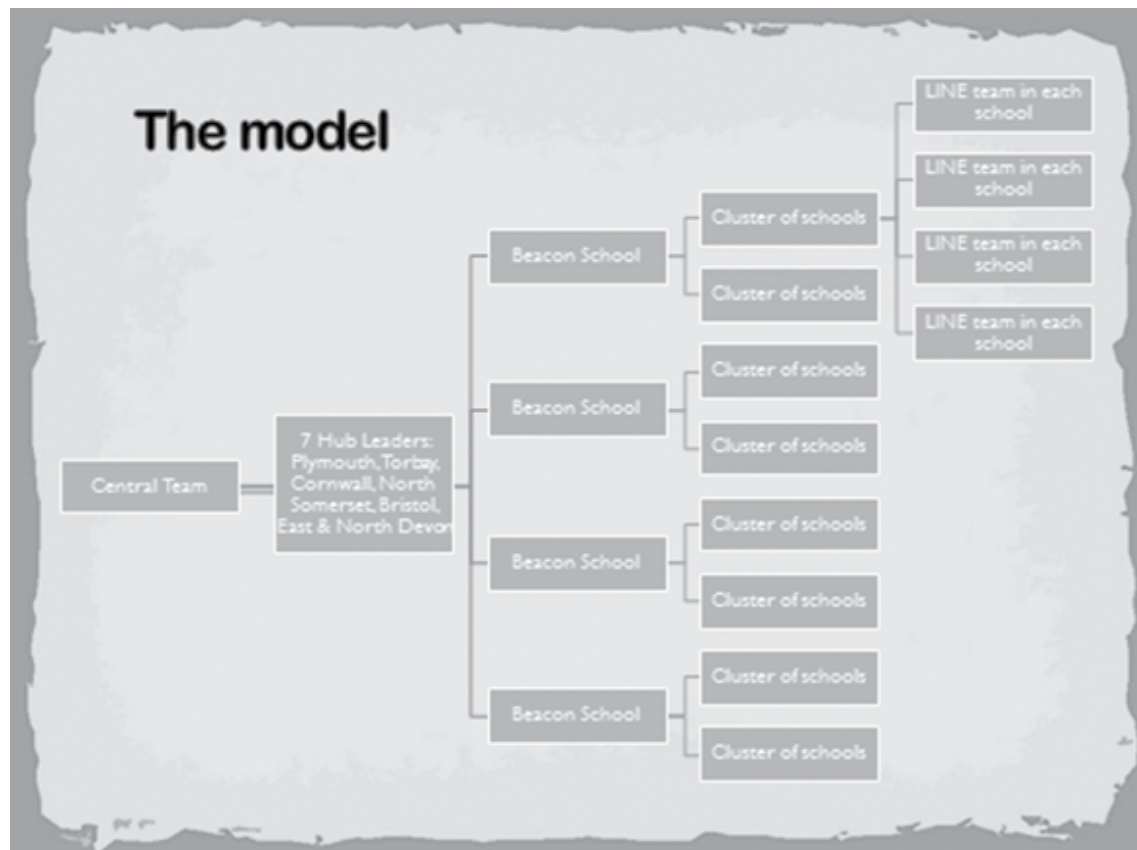


Fig 1. The Natural Connections Demonstration Project—Model showing the relationship between the Central Team at Plymouth University, the hub leaders, beacon schools and cluster schools.

to when I started here, I think there is a bit of apprehension about taking lessons outside because there are things that are not necessarily in your control...but I feel I have had so much support here and enthusiasm and encouragement from like-minded people."

Volunteer Development Program

It is believed that outdoor learning in schools can be enhanced by a diverse range of community volunteers, beyond the usual parent or school governor base. Natural Connections is attempting to support volunteering in schools, for both existing and new school volunteers, and to develop schools' understanding of the potential benefits of volunteering. Natural Connections offers training for volunteers of all backgrounds and develops new

partnerships with local volunteer agencies that can signpost volunteers into schools. A "LINE Volunteering in Schools Handbook" has been produced to support schools, most of which have a very *ad hoc* approach to volunteering. It is worth noting, however, that expanding volunteering remains a significant challenge across project schools, even with carefully tailored support and small-scale interventions that aim to move schools onto the next stages of volunteer management, mainly because teachers have other commitments and priorities and a lack of time.

Dynamic and Responsive Online Solutions

Web-based solutions should give schools easy access to suitable local green spaces and activities, encourage the sharing of

ideas and resources with other schools, link to other guidance to help learning outside the classroom and point towards both free and paid-for resources in a range of ways. NCDP originally sought a one-stop-shop online solution, which would host hundreds of curriculum resources to help teachers take their lessons outdoors, as well as provide signposting to outdoor learning practitioners who could support outdoor lessons. However, with the rapid development of digital media, a single site is no longer relevant nor manageable in an ever-changing digital environment. Natural Connections is now exploring how best to promote and communicate the project using a variety of online tools, social media platforms and technologies. The project is also exploring who our key partners might be to maximize our online presence, and to create a buzz and online community of supporters.

Robust Evaluation

Natural Connections is a demonstration project and evaluation is a key part of delivery. The evaluation is looking at project **process, scale and scope**, as well as the **impact** of LINE. It is intended to inform project development during the project lifetime and reporting to funders, and to provide recommendations for any future rollout of the project if funding becomes available.

Data collected is a mix of qualitative and quantitative and will contribute to filling a gap identified by the outdoor learning research community in the UK, the gap being the need for more quantitative evidence around the impacts of outdoor learning to complement the existing qualitative literature available. Collecting data from already very busy schools is a challenge. School capacity

affects survey returns, as does the fact that schools do not always understand the evaluation aims in detail or see the benefits for themselves in the timescales available. Relationships with teachers are, therefore, crucial to the success of the evaluation. While the project team currently has good relations with many of them, there is not enough time to get to know all the teachers in all schools.

Scale and Scope

Recruitment of schools to the project has not been as quick as expected. There are currently 130 schools engaged, rather than the anticipated 200; nonetheless, this will be sufficient to enable the project to return robust evaluation of the success of the project model. The need to ensure beacon schools are in a position to support cluster schools for the long term is one reason for slower recruitment, as is the time required to develop demand for outdoor learning by advocating the program benefits that are directly linked to school priorities.

For 28 schools, baseline data (early 2013, when the schools joined the project) was compared with the end of the academic year survey data (July 2014). The results were promising. Initial analysis of project school staff engagement in LINE showed a clear increase in both teacher participation (44% to 66%) and teaching assistant participation (45% to 62%) in outdoor learning.

Ambition also seems to be increasing within schools, starting with enrichment activities and then moving towards linking the core curriculum with LINE. This is facilitated most effectively in those schools where the head teacher sets targets for the number of hours/lessons that must be taken outdoors and LINE is actively



promoted by the senior leadership team. The use of enrichment activities to build both pupil and teacher confidence in working outside is a recurring aim in schools.

The majority of outdoor learning has taken place on the school grounds. This has seen significant added-value and investment in outdoor learning, including large-scale contractor-led works but also many smaller works, often stemming from pupils' ideas, providing ownership and purposeful, affordable real-life learning opportunities within tight school budgets. Examples of changes include the establishment of fruit trees, nesting boxes, fire pits, ponds, food growing areas, bird-hides, paths and seating. The grounds are used for all areas of the curriculum but mostly for physical education/sport, primary science, English and mathematics. This use of outdoor learning in core subjects is encouraging as this will be important for long-term sustainability of increased LINE activity.

Challenges to LINE

We have seen some changes in the challenges reported to LINE by schools. Those challenges that could be grouped as intellectual, such as confidence teaching outdoors and making links to the curriculum (which featured highly in the pre-project studies), are decreasing as teachers have more continuing professional development opportunities, and experience LINE and see its impact. Practical challenges are increasing slightly as students go outside more often and find a real need for suitable clothing and other equipment. However, the systemic challenge of time is increasing significantly and may reflect a number of factors, including the new curriculum and the additional pressures for teachers that it creates. Most other challenges are decreasing, including health and safety concerns, the need for funding (as schools find solutions) and unsuitable condition of school grounds and greenspace. This is not to say that these challenges have been overcome lightly. As one teacher put

it, "The process of embedding something that is really quite radically different from the normal practice is obviously the key development issue in terms of outdoor learning."

Impact

Understanding the impact of LINE is a key part of the project as this will be important to engage and enthuse those teachers not currently doing outdoor learning with their classes, as well as policy makers at local and national levels. This is done through end of academic year surveys and interviews as part of school case studies.

Within NCDP, a number of schools started their work on LINE to provide opportunities for socially disadvantaged children, but, as one head teacher put it, LINE benefits "their leadership skills, their creative skills and their teamwork skills and that is too good to keep to a group of children just because they might be vulnerable to underachieving."

There is a recognition too that LINE gives children with learning styles not always accommodated in classrooms the opportunity to show their strengths. Further, teachers value the different perspective and relationships that can be developed between pupils and teachers when learning outside. In the words of one primary teacher, "I think the children actually look at teachers differently after they have been on these sessions because they are no longer the person at the front just pointing and telling them, they are actually doing things with them and...so it becomes a different relationship."

Positive Impacts of LINE on Children

A primary school teacher stated that, "LINE has a huge impact on confidence, self-esteem and language...massive! We do see other things but those are the things that are most obvious. We do think of it as a magic wand."

Our research shows that

- 100% of schools reported LINE makes lessons more enjoyable;
- 96% of schools report that LINE engages pupils in learning;
- 96% of schools report LINE improves children's health and well-being;
- 93% of schools report LINE improves pupils' social skills;
- 82% of schools report LINE has a positive impact on behaviour; and
- 64% of schools report that LINE supports attainment.

Enjoyment of LINE appears to be universal and is reflected by comments from teachers and pupils. One primary student noted: "[It is]...fun when you are just sitting there doing a piece of work and you get this random bug on your clipboard or a butterfly comes and lands on you, and it just feels really special that we have got all the opportunity to do all this."

Engagement is frequently mentioned by teachers as a key impact of LINE in interviews:

- "I believe I will see good progress [from LINE] with the children because already I am seeing better engagement, and better engagement means they are doing more, so there is going to be better progress" (special school teacher).
- Mathematics is one area of the curriculum where "we've been able to see children who have been disengaged in particular subjects having another perspective [through LINE] and beginning to really embrace their learning" (primary teacher).
- "One of the key bits of the science curriculum is the wonderment of science. I think it is hard to bring in the wonderment of science stuck in a science lab for the whole year, whereas if you get outside you can give some people a real 'Oh my gosh!'" (secondary teacher).

Pupils' health and well-being also benefit from LINE and LINE activities are teaching the pupils to be more independent, to assess risk and to be open to challenge: "I think, from talking to parents and teachers, that there has been a huge change in some of the children's self-esteem and their confidence...and their willingness to explore different things" (primary teacher). LINE's contribution to children's well-being was summed up brilliantly by one child: "You go home feeling quite good about yourself."

Social skills benefit from LINE as working outdoors encourages social interaction and increases mixing between different groups in schools. This had positive implications for cooperation and team work: "Children who wouldn't necessarily be seen as leaders here [in school] become leaders there [outdoors], because they are a bit more daring than other children. They [the more daring children] might not be as academic, but they are prepared to do things; and so, therefore, people are more likely to follow them" (primary teacher).

These benefits can be lasting too and taken back into the classroom: "I have noticed with some of the children who are perhaps a bit more reserved and not team players are really, really keen and chat to each other and it has expanded into their working day" (primary teacher).

The positive impact of LINE on pupil behaviour is also apparent. One child "indoors, found it very difficult, was very angry, and outside it was almost as if he actually felt a little bit freer and he was a lot more relaxed" (primary teacher). Another primary teacher stated that "The children...seem to be a lot more patient with each other and maybe it's because I have stepped back and I let them deal with those situations themselves and they are learning from that."

Attainment was the one area of the survey where the picture around any impact of outdoor learning was less clear. Some teachers were unwilling to commit an

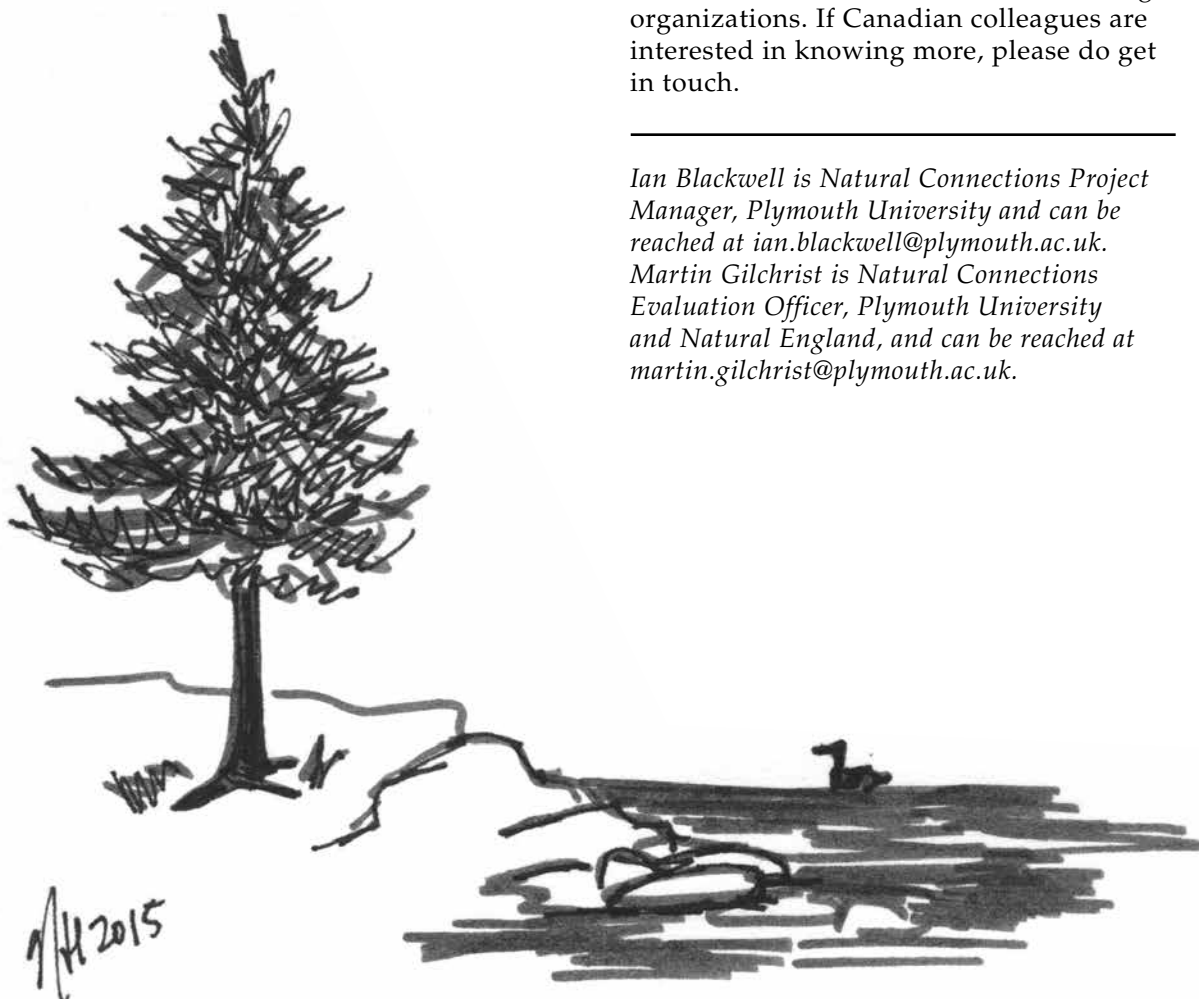
opinion but others felt that attainment would follow naturally: "With LINE... you get a real purpose and therefore you get a higher quality literacy and numeracy out of the work that you are doing" (primary teacher), while another reported "In September one child...couldn't write a sentence without a significant amount of support, whereas now he is writing paragraphs. And the class teacher is saying that is because he is incredibly motivated because he is writing about things that have been a real life experience" (primary LINE lead).

Natural Connections—Next Phase

The project in its current phase continues until the end of March 2016. There is already a good deal of interest in the

model being replicated; in fact, the original project had five hub areas and, through new funding and partnerships, this was extended early in 2015 to two further areas of the region. Our ambition is to consolidate the work in the existing Natural Connections hub areas, while also looking to develop new opportunities through partners within the South West region and UK-wide. In addition, Plymouth University has an international reputation for outdoor learning research and teaching, and we have received interest from many parts of the world; for example, Denmark has embarked on a major schools program www.skoven-i-skolen.dk. We are now looking to work with partners overseas to offer support and advice on establishing similar program with government agencies, higher education institutes and outdoor learning organizations. If Canadian colleagues are interested in knowing more, please do get in touch.

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Cultivating Cycling Habits in Children: Takeaways for Experiential Educators

By Alessandra Gage

Choosing to Cycle

We often refer to *choosing* a method of transportation—active or otherwise—because we consider the process to be just that: a decision and a choice. This choice can be limited based on personal ability, cultural norms, infrastructure or having access to the required equipment, but it is important to recognize that even when a person is fully capable of using different modes of transport, the mode chosen is usually not something thought about actively. In fact, more often than not, we base our daily travel options on habit. The most familiar or frequent method used becomes our predominant mode of travel. These habits can develop through prolonged deference to a particular personal choice (e.g., making the active decision to cycle everywhere until it no longer becomes a question), or through societal norms (e.g., children with families that drive everywhere will be more familiar with taking a car than with walking) and, once set in motion, habits can be very difficult to break. Given this difficulty and the importance of shifting towards healthier and more eco-friendly active forms of transportation, how does one create a habit of cycling in instances where people already have everything required to cycle? And what role can experiential education play in the creation of this habit?

In the summer of 2013, I led a research project to consider this question in reference to the development of cycling skills and “cycling as a habit” in children aged 7–11 in Oxford, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom (UK). The study was conducted within the context of a national movement in the UK towards cycling and low-carbon mobility. The UK had just committed to reducing carbon emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by the year 2050, 20% of which should

be coming from the transportation sector (DECC, 2011; HM Government, 2009a; HM Government, 2009b). The carbon cuts for the Department for Transport (DfT) amounted to the equivalent of “around 4 million people choosing to cycle five miles to work instead of taking the car” (HM Government, 2009b: 2). The government set a lofty goal of starting “a cycling revolution which [would] remove the barriers for a new generation of cyclists” and place Britain “on a level-footing with countries known for higher levels of cycling like Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands” (DfT, 2013). The policy commitment to a low-carbon future and “new generation of cyclists” made the research study on children’s cycling particularly relevant, as the policy commitments raised some important questions about what this new generation of cyclists would look like and how they would develop a habit of cycling once infrastructural barriers were addressed.

Commitments to long-term goals require long-lasting changes, including long-lasting behavioural changes. Short-term behavioural changes are possible through programs like “Cycle to Work” days or “Walk to School” weeks, but these types of programs rarely result in the scale of emission reductions required. The key here is to change people’s behaviours and then sustain their new behaviours so that there is little to no reversion to previous actions. In simple terms, we need those “4 million people choosing to cycle five miles to work instead of taking the car” to *continue* cycling (HM Government, 2009b: 2). We need them to develop a *habit* of cycling. It is true that infrastructure helps enable those wanting to cycle to do so (assuming they were previously constrained due to poor infrastructural provisions), but purchasing the equipment for those who have yet to desire cycling—or who actively avoid it—will be of minimal use

unless complemented with other efforts. In fact, recent research has shown that infrastructure alone does not always result in behavioural change with respect to cycling (Ducheyne, De Bourdeaudhuij, Spittaels, & Cardon, 2012; Banister, 2011; McMillan, 2007).

Once the UK government focused on increasing its cycling ridership, they granted funds for road safety improvements and cycling networks and began refocusing on some child-centred cycling programs. They created “a new national School Awards Scheme to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling and walking” (DfT, 2013) and also extended “its commitment to support Bikeability cycle training into 2015 to 2016” (DfT, 2013). These programs provided incentives (School Awards Scheme), information and skills (Bikeability cycle training) that the government hoped would foster cycling-positive behavioural changes and increase cycling ridership overall. Although attention to the home-to-school journey is not new (Travel To School initiatives and School Travel Plans date back to 2001), funding for the cycle-to-school programs had all but completely evaporated by the end of the decade, and so the renewed policy commitments gave a good opportunity to re-evaluate the children’s cycling programs.

Given this backdrop, my 2013 study set out to explore the various factors (positive and negative) influencing the development of cycling skills and cycling as a habit in children between the ages of 7 and 11, including how these factors were addressed or internalized by various groups within society. I approached the study from a sociological perspective, where personal habits are considered to be linked to society, so it was important to understand how children’s cycling was experienced and approached from a societal perspective—something that is often ignored in literature on cycling and on children. This meant incorporating diverse groups that had sway in the

cycling programs. The ultimate goal of the study was to help inform and improve current education-based transport policy and programs focused on improving cycling ridership within the UK in the long-term.



Why Study Children?

I chose to focus my research on children because they are a particularly important group when looking to develop long-lasting habits. They are the most malleable and impressionable of learners because they have higher functional and structural brain plasticity than adults (Green & Bevalier, 2008; Moreno, Marques, Santos, Santos, Castro, & Besson, 2009; Maccoby, 1992) and are more open to developing skills and tendencies or habits. Primary-school aged children can be viewed as ideal targets of behavioural change policies because this is a group of relatively impressionable learners that

have yet to become car-dependent or fully independent in their mobility. Children are new generations just beginning to find their way; their openness offers the perfect opportunity to cultivate environmentally friendly travel habits. Children also happen to be understudied in the area of active transport.

With the exception of a few articles, studies concerning children's cycling are notably absent (Heinen, van Wee, & Maat, 2010). Moreover, articles that do address children's cycling often combine both cycling and walking together in the same research, despite the amalgamation being problematic: factors influencing cycling as a practice can be quite different than those influencing walking (Ducheyne et al., 2012). My study focused solely on cycling because I wanted to avoid conflating the two modes of transport—both of which are unique and require independent study.

Study Methodology

To gain a more in-depth, holistic understanding of the ways children's cycling habits were being influenced, I took a sociological approach using a case-study methodology guided largely by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work on capital, external influences and personal habits. This meant considering how capital possession and external influences could affect personal habits and tendencies. I controlled for personal capital (which can include social and economic capital), as well as for potential external influences (e.g., infrastructure, availability of cycling programs), by choosing a very specific high school catchment area within Oxford, UK. An age band of children between the ages of 7 and 11 was chosen due to the level of development a child has reached and the flexibility with which they can still be taught during those ages. I considered how groups involved with children's cycling (e.g., parents, head teachers from schools, policy officials and cycle trainer practitioners) related and interacted with one another to influence children's cycling. This

consideration involved identifying similarities and differences in the ways each group perceived and approached children's cycling, which was discerned through qualitative research interviews. More importantly, I conducted art workshops with children to determine how children experience cycling and how this experience related to cycling opportunities (e.g., policies, programs and playtime) available (or unavailable) to the children. In total, 43 participants took part in the study over the course of three months: 22 children, 11 parents, four head teachers from local schools and eight key informants (policy writers, practitioners and cycle trainers).

Key Findings

One of the most important findings from my study was that the experience of cycling for a child is incredibly different than the experience of cycling for an adult. While this may seem obvious, it is surprisingly underused as a tool for developing children's cycling programs. We find ourselves at an impasse: adults are trying to teach children the same way they would teach other adults. The fun, play and general messiness of experiential education were avoided as much as possible in these cycling programs for numerous reasons (concerns about safety, fear over the ability to audit and evaluate such programs and inability of some trainers to connect with the children on an experiential level).

Adults had difficulty connecting to and experiencing cycling in the same way that children did. They would discuss cycling in terms of safety and, if referring to their own cycling practices, would describe the experience with little or no reference to the physical feelings of cycling. For instance, adults would focus mostly on what they saw around them, how they would watch for their kids (or students) and, for cars or other obstacles, how they might occasionally be nervous in high-traffic areas. In contrast, children were preoccupied with the bodily sensations

of cycling—not with what they saw, but with what they felt in a given moment. When asked to describe their favourite and least favourite things about cycling, the children always chose physical feelings. Feeling the gears change (“it’s kind of like a click or a flick, and then it can be really smooth, it’s really neat”), sprinting and moving quickly downhill were all positive sensations described as “favourite things.” Asking about least favourite things generated a list of negative sensations and included the dislike for high winds, moving uphill or having the wheels spin in the mud (“it wastes your energy because you’re cycling coming out of mud, and you get really tired and then you’re not even halfway through and you’ve wasted up all your energy”).

In addition to the differences between children and adults in their respective ways of connecting to cycling, some schools were afraid to commit fully to cycling programs due to safety concerns and liability (“who is responsible if the kid gets injured?”). Even key informants interviewed for their involvement with spearheading cycle training policy in the county agreed that “there has been, in the past, a not always useful focus on safety.” One informant explained that the emphasis on safety detracted from “cycling [as] a very healthy activity” stating that “it’s better to cycle without

the cycle helmet than not to cycle at all.” Two key informants were concerned about the effect such safety schemes would have on people’s perceptions, and one of them explained that the focus on cycling was detracting from “making cycling fun.”

Schools that did hold programs lacked financial supports from government to run the programs effectively and consistently—many were led by volunteers pending availability. Financial constraints also meant that school often focused on other things directly in the classroom, and this was compounded by the fact that UK school rankings were based on performance audits that looked at grades rather than experiential education. Each head teacher seemed to internalize the “audit culture” so much so that it would influence the school’s goals and actions. Despite all schools mentioning that they focus on “whole child” and “child-centered” learning that takes place both within and outside the classroom, there was discrepancy in how this was realized—particularly if it could not be measured and evaluated. Some schools were more proactive in engaging with and facilitating unconventional learning initiatives, while others were slightly more hesitant. As mentioned in literature on children’s play, how does one measure the value of play to prove its importance in the policy and audit realms (Aldridge, Kohler,



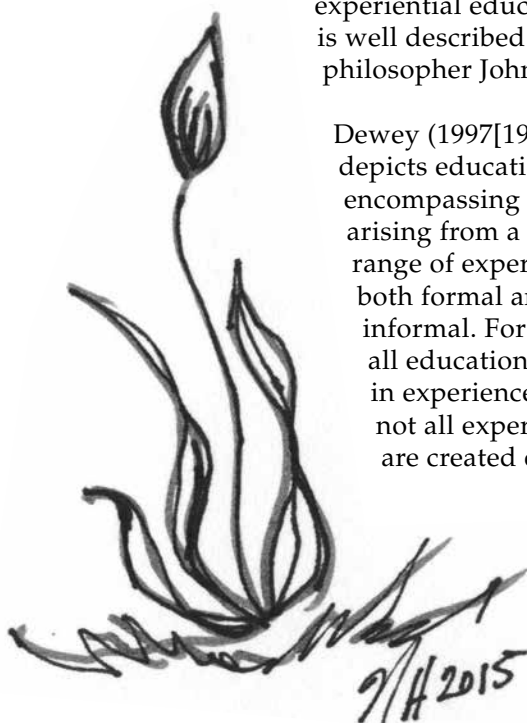
Kilgo, & Christensen, 2012)? This question could be extrapolated to cycle training by considering how it is administered and evaluated; perhaps there are more effective ways of conveying road safety while still enabling children to engage in playful ways that foster a desire to continue having cycling experiences.

The Role of Experiential Education, Emotion and Play in Cycling Programs

One of the key takeaways of this study, based on the differences in adult/child perspectives on cycling, is that the way we plan and envision children's cycling programs (forms of experiential education in their own right) needs to be updated to better reflect the importance of children loving the activity first. Children love the feelings and physical sensations of cycling, yet UK programs have been so heavily focused on teaching safety that they have neglected the importance of letting the children love the activity first. This emotional connection is important for creating habits, because positive, intense experiences can create long-lasting behaviours. The importance of intense

and positive emotional experiences in effective experiential education is well described by the philosopher John Dewey.

Dewey (1997[1938]) depicts education as encompassing and arising from a whole range of experiences both formal and informal. For Dewey, all education is based in experience but not all experiences are created equal.



Ideally, an educative experience is one that “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes *that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future*” (Dewey, 1997[1938]: 38, emphasis added). The notion of intensity is important, because it connotes an emotional response and, as such, the role of emotion should not be sidelined in educative experiences. Emotion can offer continuity and longevity to the practices or knowledge acquired and learned through experience. This has implications for the educator:

Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the group of what it moves toward and into. The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way which the one having the less mature experiences cannot do. (Dewey, 1997[1938]: 38)

In the case of creating a new generation of cyclists, this would mean that cycling education (formal and informal) should promote educative cycling experiences that allow for emotion, emotional connections to cycling and an openness to move “toward and into” continuing cycling as a practice in future (Dewey, 1997[1938]: 38). Dewey’s work also emphasizes the importance of working with children because impressionable experiences at a young age can foster or hinder educative experiences at later ages. Education is viewed as a lifelong process and “everything depends upon the quality of experience which is had” (Dewey, 1997[1938]: 97, emphasis retained as in original).

Despite being a form of children’s education, the UK cycle training programs are not developed from a distinct body of educational literature but, rather, are based on decisions about what children should know in order to safely navigate cycling on the road. While attempts to ensure that children engage positively during cycle training are surely not entirely absent, the quality of the experience is not necessarily

at the forefront of the conversation. This was evident when reviewing program documents for cycle training, national cycling standards and Bikeability programs; emphasis was on the information provided to cultivate safe-cycling knowledge, rather than on the longevity of such knowledge or the *quality* of embodied physical/emotional experience.

Part of this can also be related to the lack of acknowledgement emotion is given in education. Despite the important role of emotion in education, there is often a reluctance to acknowledge or address it in formal literature (Kenway & Youdell, 2011; Dunn & Stinson, 2012)—even though one positive emotional experience can have a lasting effect on the continuation of such an experience (a sort of positive reinforcement). The following quote perhaps best explains this avoidance of emotion in education:

Education is almost always positioned as rational—as a social and epistemological endeavor, as an abstract process, as a set of reasoned and logical practices...which is as “uncontaminated” by emotion as possible. Emotion is not formally part of education, its philosophical underpinnings, its policy and curriculum imperatives or, often, even its day-to-day enactments (Kenway & Youdell, 2011: 132, emphasis retained as in original).

One realm of educational literature in which emotion does manage to enter, albeit under a slightly different name, is in literature on the value of play—an area of study particularly important for experiential educators and children’s cycling programs. The plethora of articles on children’s play unanimously advocates for the role and use of play in educative experiences, despite play being a difficult thing to advocate for in formal policies based on national standards and testing (Aldridge et al., 2012; Burriss & Tsao, 2002; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002; McEntire, 2009; Parsons, 2011; Riley & Jones, 2007; Riley & Jones, 2010; Zeece & Graul, 1990). The importance of play is especially recognized in young children of primary-

school age. Limitations to incorporating play—particularly outdoor play—in education extend from difficulties in the more formalized, scholastic education, where justifying the value of play for childhood development in the policy realm is difficult if not near impossible, to the informal realm of education, where recognition of the value of outdoor play is often placed second to concerns about child safety (Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). Both of these troubles were evident in the cycling study I conducted.

So what does all of this say about cultivating cycling habits in children, and how can we learn from this to better develop experiential, educational programs for children that promote cycling?

Key Takeaways for Environmental Educators and Practitioners

Overall, the 2013 study on children’s cycling habits demonstrated the following:

1. A discourse of health and safety tends to pervade educational programs for cycling skills and is also common in the homes of cycling-oriented families.
2. The adults’ think-first-act-later approach contrasts greatly to children’s lived experiences and recollections of cycling, influencing the ability of adults to connect effectively with children when teaching (both at home and in school).
3. The UK’s audit culture places great stress upon schools, which limits their ability to engage children in initiatives focused on learning-through-play and learning-by-doing, and funding is difficult to obtain for these experiential education programs.

So what does this mean for developing cycling habits in children and for experiential educators? Pushing for a new generation of cyclists may seem worthwhile, but when placed in the context of today’s audit culture, it seems that

children's cycling programs are in need of systemic, large-scale policy support if they are to succeed. Having a few children's cycling programs and pro-cycling policies will do little to encourage behavioural change if they are constantly at odds with stronger discourses of auditing, and managing only what we can quantitatively measure. For schools, pressures to conform to particular standards and regulations often push aside educational programs and efforts that are less measurable, like experiential education and cycling programs. Such school conformity can be seen as a negative factor influencing the development of cycling as a habit in children.

While family support and the cycling programs themselves seemed positive influences in getting children cycling, audit culture and discourses on health and safety directed the cycling programs in such a way that they were less accessible to children due to their prioritization of information giving, rather than loving the activity through doing and playing. This is made more problematic when considering the lack of flexibility in audit organizations to account for less-conventional methods of learning. Children's cycling habits can be cultivated over time, but our programs need to support children and appreciate their methods of learning through play and physical sensations and emotion. Making a place for these methods of learning in policy must be a priority.



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A/r/tography in Outdoor Environmental Education

By Mitchell McLarnon

In the latest issue of *Pathways* (Spring 2015, Volume 27(3)), the “Explorations” column focused on ways arts-based educational research (ABER) might be infused into outdoor environmental education (OEE). Building on the last column, this summer issue will provide an overview of the ABER methodology titled a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) and how it might be used in an OEE context.

What Is A/r/tography?

A/r/tography is a form of educational action research that equalizes roles as teacher participants are also researchers (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). Action research is research undertaken by practitioners (e.g., teachers) for the purpose of helping them develop their own practice. In a/r/tography action research this is usually done in conjunction with creatively advancing artistic practices. Additionally, a/r/tography emphasizes living inquiry (Meyer, 2010) and the interplay of spaces between artmaking/researching/teaching (a/r/t). Artmaking is understood as research and these processes are in relation to one another in terms of analysis. While a/r/tography was originally developed in Canada (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) it has now been recognized globally. Due to international endorsement and interest, UNESCO recently published a special double issue journal dedicated to a/r/tography.

Why Are there Slashes Between A/r/t?

The forward slashes between the “a,” the “r” and the “t” of a/r/tography suggest fluid and thoughtful movement between the terms. Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Gruaer, Xiong and Bickel (2006) state, “the slashes purposefully illustrate a doubling of identities and concepts rather than a separation/bifurcation of ideas” (p. 70). Implicitly, the slash generates activity and

relationships while highlighting the spaces and places in-between the roles of artist/researcher/teacher.

Background

In 2004, a/r/tography was created in an artistic community of practice using different philosophical frameworks. Irwin and de Cosson (2004) explain that a/r/tography is based on Aristotle’s three realms of knowledge: *theoria* (knowing), *praxis* (doing) and *poesis* (making). In becoming familiar with a/r/tography, it is clear that Ted Aoki’s rethinking of curriculum-as-planned to curriculum-as-lived is present throughout the a/r/tographic methodology. Furthermore, a/r/tography is informed by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s (1987) notion of rhizomes whereby a/r/tography is metaphorically described as rhizomatic. To clarify this metaphor, rhizomes are horizontal stems of a plant that grow large roots underground. These roots soon grow their own smaller roots creating new stems. In turn, new plants eventually grow aboveground. Given that roots grow in all directions, this concept proposes that a rhizome has no beginning or end allowing for multiple, nonhierarchical entry and exit points. Relating this to idea to a/r/tography, the methodology proposes a holistic approach to integrating “multiple points of view that seem in opposition” (Wiebe, Sashima, Irwin, Leggo, Gouzouasis & Grauer, 2007, p. 265).

The Six Renderings of A/r/tography

A/r/tography as a methodology is often understood as having six renderings (see Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005). These renderings “are theoretical spaces through which to explore artistic ways of knowing and being research” (p. 897). I will briefly elaborate on each of the six renderings below.

1. **Contiguity:** This rendering brings clarity to ideas and concepts that lie on the borders of one another (Springgay, 2008). For example, contiguity addresses the subjectivities inherent within the equalized roles of artist, researcher and teacher and the spaces and places in-between. It is important to note that the in-between is not necessarily a physical location or an object but a process of invention.
2. **Living inquiry:** Moving theory from an abstract concept that is isolated from practice, living inquiry interrelates our self-perceptions and our worldview to understand “theory as a critical exchange that is responsive, reflective, and relational” (Springgay, 2008, p. 39).
3. **Metaphor/metonymy:** As part of the research process, metaphors can help with highlighting similarities. On the other hand, metonymy seeks to transfer qualities from one word to another to find hidden meanings. In a/r/tography these two concepts are used to invoke realizations in researchers (or a/r/tographers) that may reveal new knowledge while extending boundaries and creating an awareness of different perspectives.
4. **Openings:** According to Springgay, Irwin and Kind (2008), openings are described as potential cuts, slits, cracks and tears that disrupt and contest pre-conceived beliefs and predictability. Openings are also invitations that create space for interactions between artist/researcher/teacher where meanings are co-constructed.
5. **Reverberations:** In a/r/tography, reverberations portray the dynamic movement of the research process demonstrating resonance between artmaking, researching and teaching. Reverberations allow for openings to present themselves allowing for new understandings.
6. **Excess:** For the purpose of a/r/tographic research, excess is defined “as a way to re-imagine ourselves into being” (Springgay, Irwin & Kirk, 2008, p. 907). In sum, this re-imagining is a way to deeper understand ourselves within our research embracing the complexity that comes along with it.

It should be noted that the renderings are not meant to be separate from one another. Each rendering shifts in-between and amongst the others. In summary, the renderings provoke meaning making allowing for many different forms of knowledge creation through texts, images, dances and other aesthetic interpretations.

A/r/tographic Research in OEE

A/r/tography as a research methodology has been used effectively in many research contexts such as higher education, music education and drama education, and is now entering into K–12 education. Recent literature suggests that because action research established through a/r/tography empowers teachers to produce art, teachers can improve their pedagogy by developing themselves as creators (Carter & Irwin, 2014). With regard to OEE, the a/r/tographic methodology could prove very useful for the field of OEE. Given how much art is now instilled in OEE practices, a/r/tography offers a flexible and holistic mode of inquiry that includes the personal, social and political (Springgay, 2008).

As ABER and OEE research continues to find common ground, a/r/tography is positioned to address many emerging OEE initiatives (e.g., eco-art, community gardens, forest education, etc.), as outdoor learning is becoming more and more present in the K–12 school curriculum. For those who do not claim to have an artistic practice but do have an outdoor practice, a/r/tography as a framework can guide the process of having multiple identities as many OEE professionals are outdoorsy and are teachers. Moreover, the six

renderings of a/r/tography can lend theory to what is already taking place in OEE programming. For example, many OEE programs teach learners through metaphor (e.g., if you can overcome your fear on this rock climb, you can overcome your fear of public speaking). While I'm not completely sold on this idea, if the notion of metaphor can be incorporated with a research perspective, it may create additional and different meanings than have been previously reported in OEE practices. Providing that research can be incorporated in the outdoor pedagogical process then I argue that a/r/tography can draw a greater link between OEE professionals who are creators of content. This realization could lead to a reconceptualization of the role of OEE professionals where research could inform theory.

Closing

In closing, a/r/tography as a research methodology shares a similar ethos with OEE, which can present a major opportunity for collaboration between OEE and the arts. As sustainability and the arts continue to push boundaries and find overlapping ground, it is my hope that a/r/tography emerges more often in OEE research initiatives. For more information about a/r/tography, please visit <http://artography.edcp.educ.ubc.ca>.

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An Investigation into Outdoor Practitioners with Dyslexia Within Outdoor Pedagogies

By Charlotte Almekinders

My master's dissertation explored how people's lived experiences with dyslexia influenced their career choices as outdoor educators. This topic is ripe for examination, as no studies have been undertaken about outdoor educators who have dyslexia; this study was the first to do so. There is no universal agreed upon definition of dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning condition known to affect reading and language related skills and "can affect other cognitive areas such as memory, speed of processing, co-ordination and directional aspects" (Reid, 2003, p. 4).

A review of literature clearly showed that there is more written about people with learning disabilities in general, than there is written about people with dyslexia in particular. There is, however, evidence to suggest that having dyslexia can influence university/college degree and career choice. Although research shows that dyslexia can influence people's decision to study art, there are no empirical studies that have examined why people with dyslexia work in the outdoor sector.

My study looked specifically at the motivations of people who have dyslexia and who work in the outdoor sector. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 outdoor educators. In this sample, a mix of age, gender and experience provided data for interpretive phenomenological analyses. The data were marked with codes and from these codes the following three themes emerged: Dyslexia, a strength or weakness?; having a passion for the outdoors; coping strategies.

The findings from this research indicate that most of the participants viewed their dyslexia as a positive feature that could help them in their outdoor education practice. For example, they viewed themselves as effective in visualizing,



analyzing, creativity, storytelling and using different teaching styles. An underlying reason people with dyslexia choose to study and work in outdoor education is that this occupation is in line with their qualities. The data revealed how participants were strongly influenced by family, hobbies and childhood experiences and that being outdoors was a place where they were happy and motivated to work with others. The data also showed that it is difficult to conclude if dyslexia played a part in the choice to study or work in the outdoor sector: for six of the ten participants, dyslexia had consciously or unconsciously affected their career choice to work in the outdoor sector. For instance, some participants mentioned that dyslexia played no part in their decision making to work in the outdoor sector, but somewhere else in the interview it appeared that it did. Respondent E said, "I think that it has had an influence in selecting a creative job with less writing and more verbal communication. It has not been a conscious decision; I think it's just been something that has been in the decision-

making process subtly." Respondent I said, "I think it probably has, but not consciously."

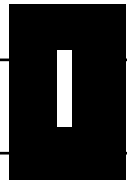
In general, those with dyslexia are known to have the following qualities: they are hands-on, practical and creative; they have the ability to visualize, analyze, problem solve, communicate, listen to and tell stories, work well with people, have empathy for people with learning difficulties and, therefore, use different teaching styles (Bacon & Bennett, 2012; Duranovic, Dedeic, & Gavrić, 2014; Exley, 2003; Stampoltzis, Antonopoulou, Zenakou, & Kouvava, 2010). My research suggests that careers in outdoor education can be very suitable for people with dyslexia when you look at their qualities. Communication and problem-solving are important qualities for people who work in outdoor education (Raiola, 2003). An area for further research could focus on how employers in the outdoor education sector can improve the working conditions for their staff members with dyslexia.

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Originally from the Netherlands, Charlotte Almekinders completed her Master of Science at the University of Edinburgh in the fall of 2014. She is dyslexic and works in the outdoor sector in the United Kingdom.





Asking for Answers: How to Get More Youth Outdoors

By Kyle Horvath

As I begin to age out of the “youth” demographic, I am afforded one more chance to publicly reflect on what it meant for me to grow up in the outdoor splendour of Welland, Ontario. It was an experience, I have grown to understand, that not every young Canadian has had the opportunity to enjoy.

My memories flicker between frigid nights of snowstorms and cross-country skiing, warm winds blowing the changing leaves of autumn from their summer homes and sweltering hot summer days on the shores of Lake Erie—a Great Lake I could have sworn was an ocean. I ran wild and free in the fields and wooded areas by my house, exploring the ponds and following deer trails until the sun set behind the treeline. With the sunlight dwindling, I heard my mother calling me for dinner; then I imagined there were shadows chasing me through the thickets, following me home across the open expanse of land that was given new life as the day turned to night.

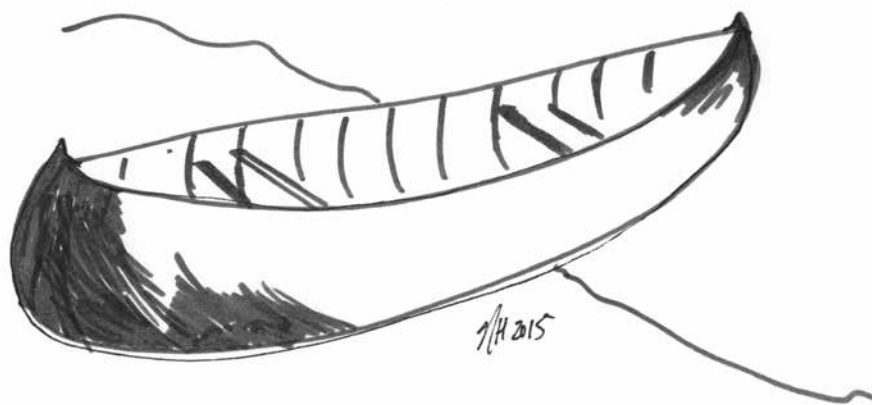
It is the very land I called home for 18 years, and the place I have a deeply meaningful connection to. Even though I am writing from a coffee shop in Victoria, British Columbia, where I now live, my connection to that place seems to strengthen more and more every day.

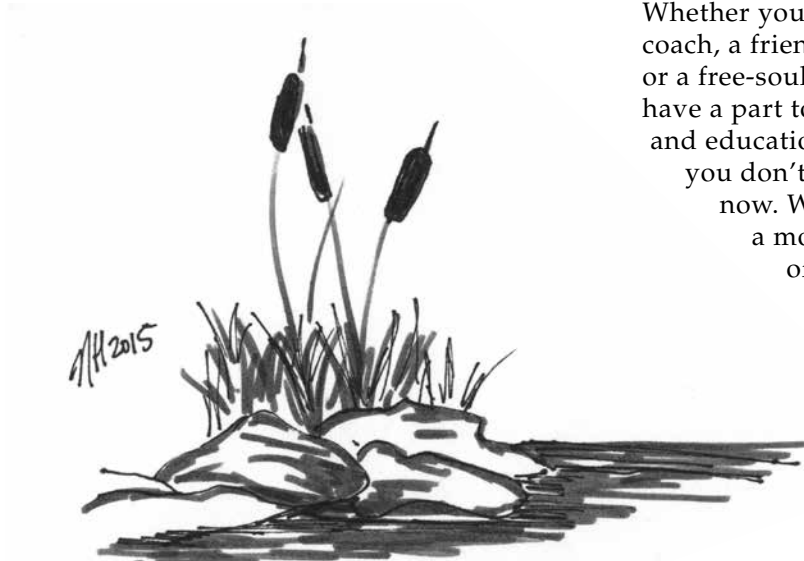
Admittedly, I could go on for another 25 years, recapitulating the moments of my fleeting childhood; however, what I am trying to demonstrate is the unforgettable connection to nature I can recall from my childhood. Unfortunately, this childhood flashback is not the reality

for all Canadians. More importantly, the desire to have such a connection to the land does not appear to be as valuable for the generation of youth growing up in our technological age.

I hear us all say, “Well, if today’s youth want to go outside they just have to go, it’s not that hard—we did it when we were younger,” right? “They just want to spend all day indoors on video games or their cell phones.” This may be true. To be fair, though, when (most of us) were younger, there weren’t any cell phones and barely any video games! We often say, “We don’t know what else to do, we have tried everything.” That’s an interesting one because perhaps we don’t have the answers. We may all be correct when *we* say that we don’t know what else to do, and that *we* have tried everything. Maybe *we* don’t have the answers. Perhaps we haven’t been asking the right questions—or maybe we haven’t asked any questions at all.

In a conversation this past January 2015, one young person from Whitehorse, Yukon, noted the importance of asking questions and taking the time to listen to what youth want: “When people tell me to enjoy the outdoors, I’m not seeing it. Don’t tell me I’m going to love this because you do. We’ll





rebel and it's gone. The opportunity for us to connect is gone—out the window. You need to respect individuality.” Think of those words and then ask yourself this question: If youth do not like doing what we do outdoors, does that mean they do not like being outdoors?

Each young person faces different barriers and has different perspectives on what it means to enjoy Canada's natural environments. The vision of the Outdoor Council of Canada (OCC) is to provide each person in Canada with the access and knowledge necessary to safely enjoy this outdoor environment we are so fortunate to call home. We are hoping to discover what work still needs to be done to fulfill our mission statement: “To promote and enable accessible education and recreation in the outdoor environment.” In saying that, it is recognizable why youth need to be included in this process.

In starting a youth advisory committee with the OCC, we have begun this process of engaging youth in the broader conversations. We hope to develop an ever-evolving dialogue between youth who are (or are not) already finding ways to get outside—as well as those who do not have the same access to the outdoors as others—and the individuals such as you who can help them get there safely.

Whether you are a parent, a teacher, a coach, a friend of people with children or a free-soul outdoor adventurer, we all have a part to play in providing access and education to Canadian youth. And if you don't think you do, well you do now. We all have a role in acquiring a more complete understanding of how to best serve one of the most influential and important parts of Canadian culture—our youth.

In early May, we released a survey for youth to tell us what they want from the outdoor environments that surround them. In the near future, we hope to have more information to share about what we can do to support youth enjoying the outdoors as much as we do.

Even if I am a bit older, and the fields and forests of my childhood are subdivisions, there are still places the youth of today can discover if given the tools to do so. I would not doubt if many of those places have already been discovered by the youth themselves. As I see it in my older-age, and thanks to conversations with younger Canadians, the way to get more youth outside is to ask them what they want to do, instead of telling them. The youth of Canada are always talking, and now the Youth Advisory Committee of the OCC is going to be listening to what they have to say.

If you are interested in sharing the survey once it is prepared please contact youth@outdoorcouncil.ca for more information and to be a part of the advisory committee.

Kyle Horvath is an outdoor adventure-based youth worker living in Victoria, British Columbia. He only writes when it is cloudy outside, otherwise he's kayaking, rock climbing or backpacking across the diverse landscapes of Vancouver Island. He can be contacted at ky.horvath@gmail.com.

Character, Calmness and Carrying-on

By Simon Beames

In the world of outdoor adventure education, the term “character” seems ubiquitous. Members of the public and media sources appear to be fixed on the idea that a set of highly demanding outdoor challenges will yield transferrable and enduring personality changes in its participants. Just last year, I was interviewed by a journalist and carefully explained how learning outside the classroom involved enhancing the delivery of conventional curriculum by teaching some of it outdoors. The piece in *The Guardian* was well-written, but the title? “Outdoor education builds character”; I was furious.

Discussions of “character building” go back to the early 20th century (think of Baden-Powell’s vision, for example), however, deep critiques of outdoor education’s capacity to elicit a change in a participant’s character are more recent. In the academic literature, the most well-known is Andrew Brookes’ Neo-Hahnian critique in 2002, and is strongly recommended. Paul Stonehouse then did his PhD on this same topic and used Aristotelian virtue ethics to make sense of it all. What these experts agree on is that change in a person’s character is not likely going to come from one stand-alone programme. A person’s character is highly durable and has been formed over many years; changing that character will almost certainly take a long, long time.

Let us return to popular notions of “character.” Besides meaning people or figures in stories, there are two other common uses of the word. The first refers to people who are somewhat odd or eccentric, as in that person who wears the duck costume to the pub is a real character. The second kind of character comprises a certain *pluck*, resilience and doggedness that is consistent with the clichéd *keep calm and carry on* rhetoric. This kind of character has a very high social value and opportunities to display it are most

commonly presented on the sports field, battleground and, of course, on a hillside in the pouring rain: the wetter, colder and hungrier the person, the higher the level of character required (and presumably developed).

At this point, I hope we can agree that character change is rather difficult to orchestrate and that articulations of what constitutes this kind of desirable character are somewhat ambiguous. This brings me to my purpose of writing this piece and to one my favourite social theorists: Erving Goffman (1922–1981). In 1967, Goffman wrote an essay called “Where the action is,” in which he deconstructed the word “character” in a way that I believe can be useful for outdoor educators who find themselves tasked with the unenviable job of developing someone else’s character.

As we have seen, changing a person’s character during a three-day residential programme is probably not going to happen. Still, there is no reason why outdoor instructors—like other kinds of educators—cannot facilitate participants’ encounters with circumstances that might offer them opportunities to demonstrate character. Following this rather wordy logic, we need to know more specifically what might be considered indicators of character. This is where Goffman comes in. He equated character with remaining “correct and steady in the face of sudden pressures” and “maintaining full self-control when the chips are down” (p. 217). He identified several aspects of character, which include gameness, courage, composure, gallantry and integrity. Let us consider how these five aspects might manifest themselves through an abseiling activity.

Gameness is most commonly displayed by people saying, “I’ll give it a go.” Gameness is heightened when people have legitimate reasons for not participating (e.g., an injury) and lowered when reasons for not

participating are not convincing to the audience. It is further shown by those who stick with their line of action when experiencing set-backs or pain—usually through high levels of determination and willpower. *Courage* can be seen when people are clearly afraid of what they are engaged in but continue despite their fears of being harmed or of losing something of value. The girl who has demonstrated gameness by accepting the challenge of abseiling off the platform may then find herself struck by a powerful fear of heights once on, clipped-in and standing over the abyss; this is when she can demonstrate courage alongside her gameness (note that one cannot be courageous without also being afraid).

Composure is perhaps the most important and visible of Goffman's five aspects of character. Is the abseiler focused and thinking clearly about the challenge or is she showing signs of irrational fear and unable to think clearly? Staying cool and keeping one's head in times of stress is particularly valued by society, in Goffman's view. *Gallantry* refers to an individual's ability to maintain normal social courtesies when facing hardships. Are the *pleases* and *thank-yous*, general politesse and grace, as evident on the abseil platform as they are in the classroom or at the dinner table? Humility and deference are other ways that gallantry can manifest itself in the outdoors.

Where composure and gallantry tend to be highly observable, integrity is perhaps the least public of Goffman's aspects of character. *Integrity* is about resisting temptations to depart from accepted moral standards—especially in private. An example of integrity would be if an abseiler showed very little composure while alone with the instructor but felt morally obliged to raise his emotional outburst with the group during the evening review. In this case, there may have been personal profit for the emotional abseiler in not sharing her lack of composure. This example demonstrates how character, according to Goffman, is multi-faceted: a person can be

low in one area (composure), but high in another (integrity). Rather than discussing whether or not people show character in a given outdoor education situation, it may be more helpful to consider the degree to which participants demonstrate each of Goffman's five aspects at different stages of the program.

These five aspects of character were outlined in an essay written almost 50 years ago and which had nothing to do with outdoor education. Still, my hope is that terms like gameness, courage, composure, gallantry and integrity will give outdoor instructors a more nuanced language with which they can discuss their important work. So, what do you say? Are you game?

Editor's Note: *This article first appeared in Horizons (Issue 68, Winter 2014), a similar practitioner-focused journal from the United Kingdom. It is reprinted here with permission.*

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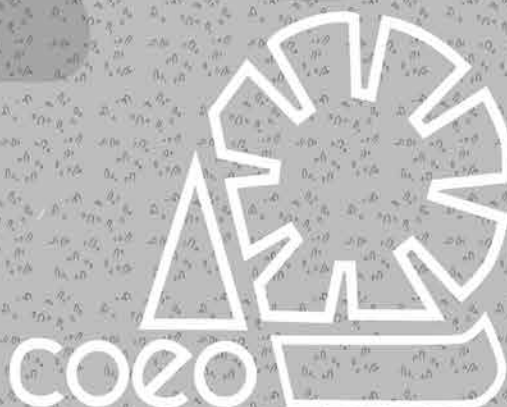
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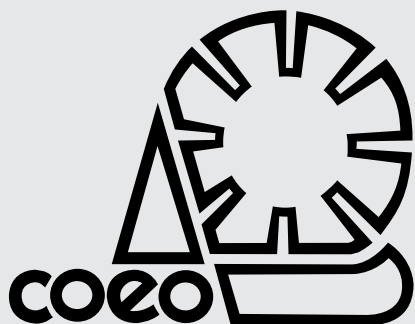
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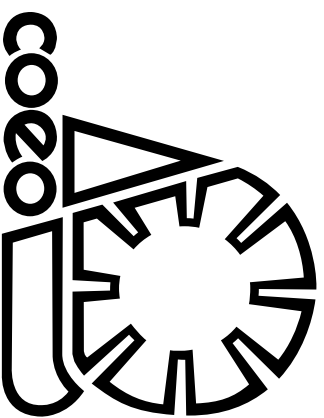
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