

# Book of Abstracts

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# Atmospheres and Hauntings

Book of Extended Abstracts for the *European Institute for Outdoor Adventure  
Education and Experiential Learning Conference #EOE2017*

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## Atmospheres and Hauntings

### Foreword

On behalf of the conference team I am delighted to bring together here the extended abstracts for the EOE conference held at Plymouth Marjon University in the UK in June 2017.

These works represent the diverse nature of the conference that was stimulated by our location; the study visits to Dartmoor National Park and Plymouth's maritime heritage waterfront provided an experiential engagement with the conference themes of *Atmospheres and Hauntings*, as well as the many stimulating presentations and workshops that are a key feature of EOE gatherings.

These abstracts demonstrate and explore some of the theoretical underpinnings of current theory and practice of experiential outdoor education throughout Europe, and beyond, and provide stimulation for new ideas, methods and theories.

The abstracts listed first are the opening keynote speeches. Firstly, Jo Trelfa considers *Atmospheres*. Secondly, Kirst Pederson Gurholt and Barbara Humberstone introduce *Narratives*. These keynotes set the scene for the presentations and discussions that followed at the conference. The remaining abstracts are then presented in alphabetical order by lead author. This collection has been edited for common style, format and grammatical error. These have not been subject to double blind peer review. The final publication reflects the diverse nature of presentations and varying levels of underpinning academic theory that conference delegates bring. Please remember in the reading of these that many participants are writing in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> language.

I trust you find these abstracts thought provoking, stimulating and a source of further reading. Enjoy our *Atmospheres and Narratives*.

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## Atmospheres and hauntings: place, feeling, and knowing

Jo Trelfa<sup>1</sup>

As Head of Academic Development, the relevance of my contribution to this publication (and as key-note speaker for the conference) is not initially obvious. When the focus of my doctoral research is clarified it becomes clear. My work is on reflective practice, in essence, professional decision making, from the micro, sub or unconscious level through to active and deliberate action. One of the areas the research has taken me is the impact of space and place on those decisions, and on which there is very little in reflective practice literature. In my wider reading, then, the concept of ‘haunting’ became relevant and it is on this I focus here. Through introducing the notion of *hauntings* this paper provides a frame for the conference and these published proceedings. I discuss hauntings through four themes; visitation, experience, power and science.

Perhaps the most immediate association with the term ‘haunting’ might be ghosts. Certainly in England one can hear tales of haunted houses and ghostly visitations. Myself and a partner moved from London to an area in the south of England and were very shocked to see the figure of a monk in the cottage we were renting. Not telling anyone about it, we were astounded when family came to stay and the youngest relative, aged three at the time, commented entirely independently about a ‘banana-man’ figure behind him that no-one else could see. Eventually we plucked up the courage to talk about these two events with the house owners and they casually explained that people see monks all the time there and directed us to a published book for further details!

The first way to consider the term ‘hauntings’, then, is as “the act of a person or thing that haunts; visitation” (dictionary definition). Even considering hauntings in this way is of surprise to me, a social scientist! *Do* ghosts exist? This is a discussion for an entirely different paper and one for which I would not be the key-note speaker! As Gordon (2008, p.7) observes, haunting is a “somewhat unusual topic of inquiry”.

However, as Bell (2008, p.813) argues, ghosts, “the sense of the presence of those who are not physically there”, are a “ubiquitous aspect of the phenomena of place”. But significantly for a number of reasons, intellectual, cultural, modernity/postmodernity, religion, we are

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“prevented from speaking” about it. Yet, it was interesting hearing from others present at the conference about their experiences of hauntings in specific spaces and places. We also know that stories of hauntings can become associated with places, passed down through generations, that serve a range of purposes from control and discipline to asserting identity of the current living community. With this in mind, and rather than troubling over and getting stonewalled with debate about whether ghosts exist, perhaps we should draw on post humanism’s challenge to not put ourselves in the centre of things, and consider instead ‘haunting’ as places telling *their* stories to us.

For example, Jay’s Grave on Dartmoor is the grave of a young woman called Kitty Jay who, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, committed suicide, a grave where people report seeing an apparition of a dark figure kneeling with bowed head and face buried in hands, as well as the daily appearance of fresh flowers. It could be a story about ghosts haunting this place, but it is also a place telling us about how being an apprentice on farms at that time, involving working on the land and in the house and on the fields, a very hard life, and of being treated as property by the landowners. Kitty Jay was pregnant by the landowners’ son, and knew this would mean ejection and destitution, hence her suicide. The place can also tell us a story about the perception of suicide, not as here, a response to male appropriation, but buried outside consecrated grounds at a crossroads to recognise her sin and to ensure she would not return to haunt those that were ‘god fearing mortals’. Indeed, in his paper titled *The Ghosts of the Past*, Bell (1997, p.813) emphasises that although we might not *talk* about hauntings, “we constitute a place in large measure by the ghosts we sense inhabit and possess it...ghosts of the living and dead alike, of both individual and collective spirits, of both other selves and our own selves, haunt the places of our lives”.

A second theme through which to appreciate the notion of hauntings is via Avery Gordon (2008). Her exploration is through what has been lost and its ‘seething presence’ evidenced through ghostly social life and subjectivity that makes themselves known. She writes of “singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done with comes alive” (2008, p. xvi) which has resonance with my own ghostly story. She describes how hauntings “...raises spectres, and...alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future”, and that spectres appear “when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view” (ibid), resonating with places

telling *their* stories through their hauntings. In sum she declares that a ghost “has a real presence and demands your attention” (ibid). Here, then, she is extending beyond ghostly visitations per se to analyse haunting as a language and experiential modality.

To illustrate, a coastal town that I am very familiar with in the south of England, surrounded by picturesque villages, magnificent coastal scenery and stunning beaches, has a population of approximately 2,000 that swells to 25,000 in the summer. The arrival of tourists is something that haunts the town all year round, it makes the familiar unfamiliar and connects/dissolves time given it is an experience that joins the past to the present and the future. It is a spectre that troubles, represents and symptomizes issues of territory, space, ownership, wealth, who serves and who are served. For the majority of the year it is invisible, but a ghost “has a real presence and demands attention” (Gordon, 2008, p.xvi); it dominates social and cultural life. As the summer draws closer “what has been concealed is very much alive and present” (ibid). It is a “frightening experience”, that exposes cracks and divisions (surfacing a greed, a hostility, stigmatising of incomers and incomers of host residents), and these “disturbed feelings can’t be put away” (Gordon, 2008, p.xx) easily; they haunt the town all year round.

The third way of understanding hauntings is an extension of that theme. It considers Gordon’s analysis of how “abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with...or when their oppressive nature is denied” (2008, p.xvi). Hauntings here is not about being exploited, traumatised or oppressed per se, but the way that repressed or unresolved social violence makes itself known. She writes that “ghosts hate new things” (2008, p.xix), it takes away their power; hierarchies, rich/poor divisions and the status quo are kept in place by the haunting of fear, realpolitik and enslavement (as opposed to confrontation of injustice, resistance and siding with the excluded).

To illustrate this, Geoff Bright (2015) applies this analysis to the closure of coalmines in England in the 1980’s, an act that broke the coal trade unions, the voice of and for families in coalmining communities – and in doing so, weakened the political Labour Party. It put economic classes, communities, and people within communities, against each other. Towns and villages were entirely transformed and the methods used to do this at the time continue to be debated, such as through the use of aggressive, in some circumstances, violent, policing. Bright (2015) notes how children, for example, continue not to be



attaining the national average grades and yet the closures themselves are not in *their* lived history. Here, then, he examines the way that abusive systems of power haunt lived reality, the way that they “make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with...or when their oppressive nature is denied” (Bright, 2015, p.xvi).

Similarly, Coddington (2011) explores the everyday spectral geographies of the Qutekcak tribe in Alaska through material connections between everyday activities and narratives and colonial erasure of their past. Roberts (2012) takes a ‘hauntological approach’ to geographic visual images, reflecting on their expressive authority and the ghosts left out. Edensor (2008, p.313) describes the ‘mundane hauntings’ of working class spaces of Manchester in the north of England using photography to explore the ‘ghostly effects’ of “how the past lingers in...spaces, textures and things that are not so rapidly disposed”. Frances Maddern (2008) discusses the transformation of Ellis Island Immigration Station, New York, into a national heritage site and the 16 million migrant ‘ghosts’ that circulate through the buildings and material objects that inhabit the island that cannot be sanitised through the restoration process. My own work explores how place and space ‘haunts’ professional practice.

In sum, the notion of haunting provides a unique and distinct way in which to consider the “ubiquitous aspect of the phenomena of place”

- as “the act of a person or thing that haunts; visitation” (haunting 1),
- as a “language and experiential modality” (haunting 2), and
- as “systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life” (haunting 3).

Or, of course, we can consider place, space and atmospheres solely in terms of standard understanding and scientific research (haunting 4).

This brought to mind Wilber & Walsh’s (2000) integral approach to consciousness. Carrying out an extensive review of literature and data from “Eastern and Western disciplines, as well as pre-modern, modern, and postmodern sources” (2000, p.306), Wilber & Walsh (2000, p.310) map into the four quadrants of a squared model the different “types of truth or validity claims” of consciousness:

- emotional, archaic, magical, mythical, ethereal - intersubjective, subjective consciousness and its relation to cultural practices (haunting 1);

- sensation, apprehension of/response to symbol, image, concept, – language of first person, subjective reality (haunting 2)
- where every micro event exists embedded in a corresponding macro event, a systems approach, interlocking systems, interobjective (haunting 3), and,
- atoms, molecules, cells, organisms, measurable observable phenomena, that sees space and place as is, what can be observed, facts as scientifically understood (haunting 4).

Wilber and Walsh (2000, p.301) argue that we tend to specialise or favour one quadrant over others, ignoring, perhaps denying, the existence of other ways of considering consciousness, and, as a consequence, constructing partial and reduced understanding. Instead, then, we can consider consciousness of space, places and atmosphere by ‘distributing’ our focus “across all four quadrants, anchored equally in each”. Consciousness is in the individual, cultural *and* systemic meaning and practices, in the physical, emotional, mental *and* spiritual and these approaches should not be considered hierarchically. The invitation of the conference, then, through this keynote paper, is to immerse ourselves (readers, presenters, conference participants) in whichever quadrant feels comfortable, but also to explore or consider the physical, sensation, perception, image, symbol, concept, of other and else. It is to critically reflect on conference contributions in terms of the themes/quadrants being favoured/specialised, and also what is missing or left out. It is to view the *combined* contributions holistically, between them exploring all four themes of consciousness of the hauntings and atmospheres of space and place.

‘Haunting’, then, is offered as a social science tool (for want of a better word) to consider what is otherwise marginalised and silenced, brought to bear in this paper to consider space, place and atmospheres. In doing so it enables us to more fully appreciate the “most important theoretical statement of our time”, that “life is complicated” (Gordon, 2008, p.3) and “personhood is complex”. The hauntings of space, place and atmospheres are essential components of “the stories [we] tell about [ourselves] and how society’s problems and entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what [our] imaginations reach toward” (Gordon, 2008, p.viii). It is a “travelling concept”, one that travels “between disciplines, individual scholars, historical periods, and geographically dispersed academic communities” (Bal, 2002, p.24), and opens here potentially new and unique encounters and considerations. At the very least, “While groping to define, provisionally and partly, what [haunting] may mean, we gain insight into what it *can* do’

(Bal, 2007, p.2) [*emphasis added*] and in doing this, extend appreciation of space, place and atmospheres.

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## Outdoor narratives: lived embodied experiences of natural worlds

Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt<sup>2</sup> and Barbara Humberstone<sup>3</sup>

### Introduction

Telling stories is human. We live by our stories (Bruner, 2002, p. 89). We live by the stories we tell to others and by the stories, we listen to; the stories that others tell about what happens to them—at work, at home, to their pets, children and so on. As outdoor practitioners, students, educators and academics, we constantly tell narratives about what happens in class, on journeys and in places we visit – using verbal expressions, images, videos, sounds, movements and gestures. These outdoor narratives appear as oral representations, trip-reports, travelogues or reportages, and are presented as prose, films, poems, and in research journals.

Telling stories is a taken-for-granted aspect of outdoor education. For example, the stereotype assignment that generations of Norwegian schoolchildren have had to respond to, requests *Fortell om en tur*, meaning *Tell about a hike*. The notion that hiking generates stories was regarded self-evident and trivial. It was anticipated that everyone would have personal experiences from hikes and thus could respond to such an assignment. Most Germans will be familiar with a similar expression, poetically authored in the late-1700s by Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) who was a traveller. The beginning of his famous poem states: *Wenn jemand ein Reise tut, dann kann man etwas erzählen*, which translates into English as, *Someone embarking on a journey, has something to tell*.

The notion that a chain of close connection exists between the making of a journey and the telling of a story, *and* next that journeying and storytelling connect with education, is highlighted by practices known as *The Grand Tour*, *Bildungsreisen* and *Dannelsesreiser*. Recently, these insights were guiding the development of an Erasmus funded 2-year Masters programme structured as a peregrination between three European universities and countries to study *Transcultural European Outdoor Studies* (Becker, 2007, 2008; Loynes & Pedersen Gurholt, 2017). Thus, the masters programme, which has originated from the EOE-

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network, embody anthropological approaches and ethnographic methodology of studying 'first-hand', the nature of cultures through participation.

The insight that we have wanted to emphasize in our introduction is that stories, on the one hand, are said to be trivial, whilst on the other hand, are seen as being of high(est) educational value. The stories we will address this morning are those originating in peoples lived outdoor experiences. Stories that embody 'hands-on' encounters with the natural worlds. From this perspective, we will linger on four main subjects,

- **What** is a story or a narrative?
  - (In this talk, we do not make a distinction between the two concepts.)
- Second, **why** an embodied narrative turn in the social sciences and in outdoor education?
- Third, we will give a few examples of **how** we have worked pedagogically and scientifically with lived and embodied narratives to connect (young) people to 'natural worlds'.
- Fourth, **questions arising:** on narratives, atmospheres and places

### **What is a story or a narrative?**

"Narrative is profoundly a folk art, trading in common beliefs about what people are like and what their world is like" argues Jerome Bruner (2002, pp. 89-90) and continues, stories are;

For better or worse ... [human's] preferred, perhaps even obligatory medium for expressing human aspirations and their vicissitudes ... stories also impose a structure, a compelling reality on what we experience, ... (Bruner, 2002, p. 89).

Consequently, story-making is the medium humans have "for coming to terms with the surprises and oddities of human condition and for coming to terms with our imperfect grasp of that condition" (Bruner, 2002, p. 90).

Embarking on hikes in and across landscapes by using the powers of our bodies, maybe in combination with the power of an animal, some kind of technology or nature (such as the wind, the flow of water, snow and ice, gravity etc.), generate not only (series of) events, but aesthetic embodied experiences.

Every narrative has a structure of dramaturgy. For there to be a narrative, there needs to be a beginning, an intrigue or something surprising happening, and a significant ending (for example, a key insight of any kind). The strong emotions invoked by close to nature

sensations and unexpected events engender a deep-felt inner need to tell about and make sense of what happen to us, and what we have accomplished.

The old wisdom of how journeying, storytelling, and education intertwine connects individual storytellers with social structure, discourse and power relations of which they relate or are a part (Riesman, 2004; Gurholt & Broch, 2017). For there to be a story, there also needs to be a listener. Some stories and voices count and are heard more than others.

For a long time, stories told by women and girls, and by some groups of males and people of ethnicities were regarded as ‘others’ to the middle-class, well-educated, western male adventurers’ stories. Thus, these ‘others’ have tended to be kept silenced or not taken into account in outdoor education contexts (Humberstone, 2000a, b; Pedersen Gurholt, 1998, p. 398; 2017; Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001; Gray & Mitten, 2018). Researching and working educationally with lived narratives open up for a diversity of voices, perspectives and contexts.

Some time ago, nearly 200 young Norwegians, (born in the 1980s), responded to an invitation to write essays on *what nature meant to them* (Pedersen Gurholt, 2003, 2014). Most informants choose an autobiographical but anecdotal and narrative style, paying attention to “personal emotions and first-hand knowledge of [natural] places, [activities] and social settings”, to the forming experiences of powerful childhood experiences, and nuanced views of ‘nature’ as a concept (Pedersen Gurholt, 2014, p. 237). A 15-year-old boy writing about his relationship with a local coastal path expressed his encounters with nature in an embodied, poetic and sensuous style; I quote:

This is what I remember, that [the path] twists between trees and tiny area of wet woodland, towards a nice little beach, between bushes and rocks. It exists in my mind. I have walked it since I was little. At that time, it was large. Today it is small. In all kinds of weather my mother took me on hikes ... We cross the salty bare rock-face, breathe the fresh salt air of the sea and find exciting sticks to play with. The adults pick flowers and collect interesting rocks. Every time, my mother brings garbage home (Pedersen Gurholt, 2014, p. 237).

This kind of research highlights how *lived or embodied* narratives integrate various aspects of human condition. They connect body and mind, incorporating and inscribing processes (Connerton, 1989), sensuous experiences and emotions with critical reflection.

Furthermore, the individual connects with the sociocultural and geographical context of which they are a part.

Careful listening to narratives told by others, whilst critically reflecting on those we tell others, opens for insights into culturally distinct ways of how people connect with the 'outdoor worlds'. For example, we have had to struggle with cultural distinctions between Norwegian and UK perspectives when preparing our joint talk.

### **Why an embodied narrative turn in the social sciences and in outdoor education?**

Narratives, as we approach them in this talk, are the expressions and (re) presentations of lived experiences, they may be factual or representative of fact. They can be vocal, textual, visual, auditory, or combinations of modalities, but the dominant form academically is textual. Recently, (auto)ethnography underpinned by phenomenological perspectives is, the preferred methodology for researching embodiment within scholarly work in English language publications. Autoethnography enables a critical understanding of 'how the body learns to be in the world' in nature through exploring the nexus of the senses. The empathetic ethnographic researcher may also explore not only how their body relates to the environment through their senses but also their relations with other participants and potentially how these other participants are engaged through their bodies with nature. The recent turn to seeking the senses in scholarly work (Pink, 2009; Sparkes, 2017) is very pertinent for outdoor experience as it is through our senses that we make sense of our relations with human and non-human, with nature, place and people. Embodied narrative is one form of (auto)ethnography in which we explore and try to make sense of these relationships.

The corporeal, material, sentient body is now recognised as of particular significance in many areas of social analysis, and currently is emerging in geographies of land and sea, place-based work (Brown & Humberstone, 2015; Pedersen, 2003, in particular pp. 142-146) and pedagogies (Evans, Davies & Rich, 2009; Pedersen Gurholt & Sanderud, 2016). This bodily turn in the social sciences came largely with the emergence of critiques of disembodied social theory. Feminist commentaries since Grosz (1994) argued that even feminist theorising was 'abstracted' and ignored the 'messy' body. Outdoor experiences are

nothing if they are not about the bodily experience of being and becoming in the natural environment. The experience is mediated and enhanced through our multiple senses.

Often not made explicit in many narratives, reflexive-narratives or (auto)ethnographic tales is how the body is implicated in these stories. Yet the body being in place, through practice and performance of lived experiences, such as journeying through landscape or seascapes, through snow or water and so forth directs attention to sensuous, embodied knowledge by which the sentient person learns what it means to sense, feel and understand the place and relations with that place and the natural environment. For example, in relation to seascapes “Being in or on the sea attends to the whole body, not the (un)-consciousness in isolation but the whole of the corporeal body: mind, senses, their inter-relatedness and particular embodied relationship with the sea” (Humberstone, 2015, p. 28-29). The sensuous embodied engagement with the seascapes involves all the dominant senses but the senses of balance become crucial. We see hear, smell, feel, taste, sense and intuit watery spaces. Balance senses are central to physical practices /learning on the sea and journeys across the sea in which equipment and body move on or through the sea, the body intuitively moving to maintain equilibrium. Balance is what we do to maintain our combined movement in synchrony with the oceans’ movements (Humberstone, 2018).

Dominant Western Cartesian thinking promoted through traditional philosophical thinking, has judged consciousness to be ontologically distinct from the outer physical world. This runs counter to traditional Indigenous beliefs and values about human and non-human relations<sup>2</sup> This turn to embodying narratives respects indigenous philosophy which sees embodied activity, interrelated to ‘intuitiveness’, built through our ‘lived’ sensuous encounters with our material environment; the sea, the land, snow, wind, rain and non-human beings.

Thus embodied narratives represent a challenge to dualistic ways of thinking has come to inform notions of space or landscape being known through bodily, sensual engagement with the land (Wylie, 2005). For Ingold (2000, p. 207):

The landscape, in short, is not a totality that you or anyone else can look at, it is rather the world in which we stand in taking up a point of view on our surroundings. And it is within the context of this attentive involvement in the landscape that the human imagination gets to work in fashioning ideas about it.



Sparkes and Smith (2008, p. 301) suggestion that: “Stories are felt in and through the body. They come out of the body, profoundly shaping our senses of self and identity” and we would suggest how we experience and connect with places, people and nature.

The ‘poetic’ narrative Mike Brown and Barbara Humberstone co-constructed in “Sensing our way through ocean sailing, windsurfing and kayaking” represents “tales of emplaced sensual kinaesthesia” is an attempt to evoke embodied sentient and our sensuous experiences of being on, in and by the sea.

Seascapes, the sea, the horizon

Rhythm and movement, waves and wind,

Salty lips, cresting waves, blue sky,

    feel the movement, side to side, up and down

    forwards and backwards

Reflected sun on sea - glistening, sparkling –beauty in harmony

Seascapes, the smells, the motions

Dysrhythmia, jerky movements, waves and wind

Taste the bile, sloshing waves, blue sky,

    feel the movement, side to side, up and down

forwards and backwards

Reflected sea on boat-banging, slopping-beauty in disharmony

    (Humberstone, Fox and Brown, 2017, p. 82)

The kinaesthetic experience on the sea speaks to the flow and balance of the body on the fluid and ever changing seascape. The ‘poem’ is an autoethnographic representation of our (Humberstone, Fox & Brown, 2017) long-term engagements with the sea. The first paragraph represents our bodies in harmony with the seas’ movement. The second evokes something of the disharmony that bodies may experience at sea. This narrative ‘poem’ represents our embodied diverse experiences of being on and in the sea. Here the power of narrative is in the evoking of the embodied relations with the sea from largely a woman’s perspective of windsurfing in the first section and a male’s of ocean sailing in the second. However, these engagements with nature are not specific to or contingent upon gender but

rather to the situated context of the sensoria. Common to both is the embodied experience, the significance of the senses, in particular the ‘interception or internal sensory modes’- balance senses. We were concerned not with exposing here cultural relations but our sensuous relations with nature, specifically here the sea.

### **How narratives work?**

We will now turn to our third question, asking how we can use narratives to connect young people with ‘outdoor worlds’. We will share a ‘digital story’ created by one of the international master students while attending a course run by Pedersen Gurholt (2016), who has agreed on sharing her story, of the already mentioned Erasmus Mundus masters programme.

In this story of about three minutes, the student expresses and reflects on her bodily sensed impressions from having participated on a four-day experiential fieldwork into a somehow ‘unkind’ mountain winter landscape. The location, Finse, is easily approachable from the railway connecting Norway's capitol Oslo with the city of Bergen on the west coast. The altitude is not impressive, ‘only’ 1222 meter above sea level, however the place is the southernmost location in Europe holding an Arctic climate. The students were asked to transform their powerful first-hand experiences of their field-explorations into a reflective and analytic story, combing about 300 words with visual images, soundtracks, and their personal voice.

The power of the digital storytelling approach rests in the process and in the way in which the making of this story actualises the “self-making” of the individual (Bruner, 2002). The making of the digital story is a creative choreography transforming embodied and sensuous impressions into an aesthetic expression. The educational aspects also include the sharing of the stories with classmates and teachers. Thus, the process allows students to make implicit assumptions becoming explicit and available for reflection.

When reflecting on the guided process in retrospect, the students emphasised, among other things that hearing their own voice was particularly powerful. So was the listening to their classmates and the discovery of several paradoxes.

For example, the great variety of stories told from having participated in the ‘very same’ hike and events was astonishing. How ‘life as told’ may differ from ‘life as lived’ (Freeman, 2004, p. 71), and still hold a ‘truth’ was another surprise. Critical reflections on ‘truth’, and on how narrative structure (or dramaturgy) and narrative time work (Ricoeur, 1984), made us become aware of how our memories and minds work to connect, condense and make sense of sensuous experiences and events that in ‘real time’ are separated.

One aim of introducing digital narrative as method for educational was to enhance the students' awareness of their sensations, explorations and expressions. Next, Pedersen Gurholt aimed to discuss whether and how everyday-life technologies could be powerful tools in strengthening young people’s creativity, concepts of self and ways of expressing and reflecting.

The strength of this multimodal approach, compared with the priority given to the traditional oral method – which for a long time has had the hegemony in outdoor education (the Kolb’s oral reflection circle), is that it allows space combining verbal and non-verbal forms of expression.

### **Closing**

When brainstorming over the theme given to us as keynotes, we came up with the idea of engaging you in story making. And we will do so, inspired by a challenge once given to Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway was asked whether he could write a full narrative, with a beginning, a raising intrigue, a turning point and an end using only six words. Hemingway came up with the following, *Baby shoes for sale. Never worn.*

Pedersen Gurholt often includes Short Stories as one of several in-class-writing-assignments to enhance reflective and academic writing. From the condensed stories made by students and myself—exemplified here by a story she made after an early February morning ski touring before teaching; *Swiisj, swiisj—skiing. Frostbitten red nose!* —the students are asked to explicate key-dimensions that characterise ‘powerful’ outdoor moments, memories and meaning.

This year the students came up with a list spanning from childhood memories of particular places, smells, feelings of the 'texture' or temperature of water, sand and snow, but also sunsets, moments of having encountered a wild animal, and sensations of embodying new skills.

We invite you to create your own short stories of a powerful outdoor moment, throughout the day and to share it on the board we have put up at the entrance!

We are also looking forward to hearing your views on the questions we have raised in our talk:

- 1) What are *the powers* of outdoor narratives?
- 2) How can narratives be powerful tools in pedagogical work and research to connect (young) people with outdoor worlds and atmospheres?

In addition to the methodologies that Pedersen Gurholt has discussed, Humberstone has highlighted the recent turn in Anglo-centric/English speaking social sciences, which takes a shift to the senses. This genre is concerned to develop sensory scholarship through seeking the senses and developing embodied narrative. This allows and encourages the researcher/ writer to speak through the narrative of the experience and respects the narrative for its purpose to give evocative (re)- presentation of the embodied sensory experience. It is frequently represented in 'poetic' form, as an example of embodied sensory autoethnography, which we exemplified as the seascape 'poem' above (Chang 2008; Brown & Humberstone, 2015; Muncey, 2010; Pink, 2009; Sparkes, 2017).

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## “Pig Earth”: Art and Activism as a Way to Reconnect Rural Areas with their Inhabitants

Vicente Blanco Mosquera<sup>4</sup>, Salvador Cidrás Robles and Eugenio Otero Urtaza

This article focuses on two ongoing projects made for the Master’s Degree in Management of Outdoor Educational Activities (Master DAEN) from the Santiago de Compostela University, Lugo Campus (Galicia, Spain), within the subject “Art and Nature”, conducted by the artists and professors Salvador Cidrás and Vicente Blanco. These two projects are a statement of intentions about our role as art teachers in a Master’s programme located in a natural area with very specific problems. Therefore, it is relevant to expose first the perspectives of art we will work on referring to this subject.

### 1. Art and Nature: three approaches

When in 2011, Professor Eugenio Otero asked us if we wanted to teach in the DAEN Master’s programme, in a subject called "Art and Nature", we discussed about the kind of artistic projects we could develop with our students in relation to the concepts of Art and Nature and we singled out three perspectives:

The **first** and most common approach is “land art”, an art movement in which landscape and art are linked. Land art implies an art form that is created in nature using natural materials such as soil, rocks, stones, organic media (branches, leaves), water, etc.

The **second** perspective is related with feminism. Although land art was undoubtedly an interesting movement, however, most land art artists were men so we also explored the work of women artists on the subject to point out the differences. From a feminist perspective, the relationship between art and nature is not about colonizing a natural space; rather, it is about connecting, spiritually and physically, with it. The work of Ana Mendieta is an example that includes autobiographical themes based on violence, life, death, identity, place and belonging.

The **third** perspective is called “art and activism”. In the last years, many artists are working on projects that reflect our reality, developing initiatives to modify it. Artists,

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architects and designers from different countries focus on activism as a contribution to solve the situations of social injustice and to improve the living conditions of the people in their own environment.

For the projects developed with our students we have taken as reference the second and third perspectives: connecting with our environment in the belief that art can help to change and to improve it.

## 2. Art and Activism: reference projects

In this section we briefly outline a series of artistic projects that maintain the idea of commitment to society, shaping or exposing some aspect of their environment to create benefits to the community. These projects are structured in disciplines such as art, design and architecture and have been the starting point of the actions performed by our students and explained later.

### 2.1 Art

The projects of Marjetica Potrč are based on participatory design and a concern with sustainability issues, usually in relation to energy and water infrastructures. As an example we name her project *Dry Toilet* developed in 2003 in La Vega Barrio, Caracas. There, in collaboration with an architect and the local residents she developed an ecological, waterless toilet installed in the upper part of the La Vega barrio, a district that has no access to the municipal water (Scotini, 2006).

Mujeres Creando is a group of women artists in Bolivia. Their actions and performances expose the social injustices of the most marginal sectors - poor, indigenous, prostitutes, lesbians - while claiming the right to be different. They use all kinds of media, pamphlets, posters, graffiti, street theatre, actions against poverty. They also publish books and videos and have a radio program (Radio Deseo). They have a self-managed house, where they develop political and cultural activities, and also provide lodging and food.

### 2.2 Design

Artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen created a solar lamp called "[Little Sun](#)" for people living without access to electricity. They also created an educational project to educate people about the benefits of solar energy and sustainable energy sources

Another example is [Hippo Water Roller](#), created by two South African designers. Both grew up in rural farms and knew the effect of the water crisis in many rural communities where

access to water is a daily struggle for millions of women and children. This project had a great impact on these communities.

### **2.3 Architecture**

According to Rosa and Weiland (2013), “Handmade Urbanism” is a way to provide urban change carried out by local residents in their neighbourhoods and communities. It begins with the residents recognizing a problem and then developing an idea to solve it.

The Biourban initiative by Jeff Anderson intends to improve life in slums through social actions, in which members of the community are involved. The Project engaged in a series of aesthetic actions to transform the quality of the neighbourhood within a short period of time: Cleaning up of small spaces and areas, creating flower beds, public artworks, and staging of collective activities such as painting sessions.

Mothers United, founded in 2007 in Cape Town, is a small village built with donated shipping containers. Three afternoons a week, 120 children between the ages of 3 and 15 are exposed to storytelling, computer literacy, food garden training, art therapy, sports and play. Mother united is an alternative to the gangsterism, drugs and violence they’re witness to on the streets.

Favelas Painting is a project of two Dutch artists, who are involved in the education of youth living in the favelas to prevent their entry into the world of drugs. The project gives a salary to young people to create their own murals or to paint the facades of the favelas with bright and optimistic colours.

These projects explain the main idea about art and activism; they reflect on our context and act on social and environmental issues to foster coexistence.

### **3. Social and environmental issues in our context: Galicia**

Galicia is a historical and rural region in the north of Spain known for its old forests and trees, its wild coast and the routes of the pilgrims to Santiago. If we visit the institutional websites we can find beautiful images of nature. Nevertheless, working on projects of art and commitment implies to know better our area and discriminate the tourism image used to publicize the region and the reality of the inhabitants who live in it.

Galicia is a rural area which identity, traditions, architecture, landscape and language are fading away, absorbed by the new economic models. Living in these rural villages implies being poor, which translates into a loss of identity, self-esteem and a lack of feeling for



everything people consider their own. These characteristics are used for different pressure groups to create situations of social and environmental injustice. So most of the rural heritage is being destroyed by its inhabitants, and replaced by new models that they understand as progress. As two recent examples we list the fast and wide-scale felling of autochthonous forest to plant invasive species like eucalyptus and the destruction of historical and natural heritage - traditional houses are destroyed to build new ones with foreign typologies or the massive construction of urbanizations in littoral and protected lands.

#### **4. Two Projects: Coeses' Lagoon and Barrio do Carme**

When we were offered to teach the subject Art and Nature in the Master's programme, we made it clear that we wanted to make the problems of our rural environment visible in order to offer resistance and reconnect it with its inhabitants again. The projects we present, still in progress, are based on the enhancement of historical, natural and social heritage:

##### **4.1 Coeses' Lagoon**

The first one is the recovery of a lagoon in the village of Coeses, which was filled years ago with the residues from the construction of a road. Coeses is a small town with less than 100 people near the city of Lugo. Young families have gone to live to the city and there are no children. This happens in most of the towns in Galicia. Coeses is a natural area declared a biosphere reserve by the UNESCO, with an important traditional architecture such as stonewalls. Nevertheless, being a biosphere reserve does not imply an amount of environmental protection. Most of the old traditional walls are collapsed and if they fall they are replaced by concrete blocks.

We visit Coeses with our students to document the landscape and put it in value. We informed the neighbours of our visit and met them in the old school, now a social centre, so they could tell us about their experiences in the village, how they lived, what kind of crafts they make, etc.

At the meeting an older man told us about a lagoon nearby, in a field which had been filled years ago when the road was built. The lagoon was a stationary lagoon and an important centre for biodiversity in the area, but the younger people no longer remembered it. The man spoke fondly of the lagoon, because he had memories there. When he played as a child it was an important place for the historical memory of the community.



Figure 1: Coeses' Lagoon

We decided that recovering the lagoon could be a project that we could try to develop. The first step was to go to the lagoon and take pictures of the place. Then, we showed the pictures to an expert biologist so that she could tell us if it would be possible to recover the lagoon. The next step was to talk to the Councillor for the Environment. He gave the approval to the proposal and promised to send a crane to remove the big residues. We had to find out who was the owner of the land in which the lagoon was located. As it was a community property we had to go with our proposal to the rural community again so they could vote and approve the project. Now we find ourselves in that moment in which we are waiting for the authorization, which we believe will be positive and adjusting the dates to clean the lake.

#### 4.1 Barrio do Carme

The second project is a cleaning project in the neighbourhood of Carmen, a historical neighbourhood of the city of Lugo that was abandoned by speculative pressure and now, after the crisis, has remained in no-man's territory in the middle of the city.

The “Barrio do Carme” is located near the historical centre of the city of Lugo and through which the “Camino Primitivo de Santiago” runs. After a visit, the students observed certain elements and aspects of the abandoned and neglected area. After analysing the situation we considered several ideas to improve this situation.



Figure 2: Barrio do Carme



### Action 1: The documentary

The “Barrio do Carme” is hardly known by the citizens of Lugo and it needs to be valued. To make the neighbourhood known, a student shot a documentary to spread through the social networks. She contacted people with different professional backgrounds: biology, architecture, environment, and also residents to learn about the value of the place from different perspectives.



### Action 2: Cleaning and Memory

The artist Mark Dion in his project *DIG* excavated the banks of the river Thames and collected objects that were thrown to the river. These objects work as a memory of a past time. Then they were displayed in showcases as *museistic* objects. With this same idea, next year, we will clean the neighbourhood and collect objects that have been forgotten to expose them *in situ* in a kind of showcase as historical memory of the place and its inhabitants.

### Action 3: Pressure to restore facilities

The objective of these actions would be to put in value a degraded neighbourhood that is part of the historical memory of a city, so that it continues being so in the future.

Finally, Art and Activism tries to solve different issues by questioning our way of life and providing different perspectives of commitment to the environment.

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## Telling tales or talking truth? Gender identity performance in adventuring narratives

Carmen Byrne<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

By exploring the interplay between ideas of the adventuring hero, gender and society, this paper examines gender identity in contemporary adventuring narratives. Examining adventuring discourses produced by expeditions, the media and participants, helps position gender identity in a context which has an historic gender bias, whilst usually physically distant from social expectations of gendered behaviour. Findings, from a qualitative methodology, suggest there is a complexity to the framing of gender identity in adventuring narratives, which both conforms to, and challenges gender stereotypes. This paper, therefore, discusses whether contemporary adventuring narratives reflect an equitable future, or reinforce longstanding gender norms.

### Introduction

That gender identity is usually agreed to be socially constructed, rather than biologically determinant (Baxter, 2007; Speer, 2007), creates an interesting dichotomy with adventuring narratives. Despite the typical physical remoteness of adventure from society, historical adventuring narratives appear gender normative: male risk-taking and death have often been positioned as acceptable<sup>6</sup> and in some cases celebrated<sup>7</sup>. By reverse, 'bad death' appears largely associated with the feminine<sup>8</sup> and achievements are often softened<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the demise of Scott, Wilson and Bowers from starvation, dehydration, and exposure in 1912, on their return from the South Pole, became a benchmark of ideal British heroic behaviour. This notion of heroism in death, despite their failure to win the race to the Pole, featured in the public consciousness via the propagandisation of their story during the First and Second World Wars: their 'good death' positioned as the epitome of how to face death 'well' when fighting for your country (Fiennes, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Narratives often associate male success with notions of the hero. Whilst the Time Magazine listed Hillary and Norgay in the top 100 most influential people of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the heroes and icons edition- for their Everest ascent in the 1950's (Time Magazine, 1999), there seems to have been a general narrative trend to soften female achievements.

<sup>8</sup> Towards the close of the twentieth century, the death of Alison Hargreaves on K2 in 1995 was heavily criticised, due to her challenge to social expectations of motherly behaviour by continuing to navigate the risks of high altitude mountaineering whilst her two children stayed with their father. Key words such as ambitious, heartless, and summit fever dominated the narratives shared by the media (Gilchrist, 2007; Child, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Daisy Voog's first female ascent of the Eiger North Face in 1964 was framed as being achieved by a "Munich secretary with her experienced male companion" (Harrer, 2005, p.302). With the White Spider positioned as a deadly combination of avalanching snow and ice, and a low summit success rate, the heteronormative positioning of Voog as an appendage to her summit attempt, is perhaps a tad misleading of the skill involved



Consequently, due to the influence of societal expectations upon identity, the reinforcement of hegemonic gender norms does not necessarily support the development of positive individual adventuring identities<sup>10</sup>. This paper shares early findings from an examination of gender identity performance<sup>11</sup> in contemporary adventuring narratives. This is valuable because the stories we hear, and share are influential in our ability to understand our environments, negotiate our behaviours, and reinforce our identity (Teske, 2006). Thus, by reviewing gender identity in contemporary adventuring narratives, there is scope to review current societal gender expectations in relation to participant gender identities.

## Method

This qualitative research methodology involved the critical analysis of adventuring narratives produced from multiple perspectives: discourses (book, web, film and media narratives) associated with two, 21st century case study expeditions (one all-male, and one all-female expedition) were analysed<sup>12</sup>. Semi-structured interviews with two ‘experts by experience’, one female and one male, provided insider perspectives of the key themes identified<sup>13</sup> from the case studies. Ten female adventure participants shared written narratives about their adventures, and future outdoor adventure leaders (f=9 m=14) visually narrated (doodled) their ideas of the adventure hero<sup>14</sup>. Eight future leaders, participated<sup>15</sup> in a focus group (all-male group= 4, all-female group= 4), to discuss ideas around adventure, leadership, and their experiences in the outdoors.

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(Harrer, 2005). More recently, ‘To the Pole without a beard’ (Hartley, 2002) charts the journey of the first British woman to ski to the North and South Poles, using a self-deprecating narrative which positions her as a kind of adventuring Bridget Jones – hapless and a bit helpless.

<sup>10</sup> The effect of this legacy appears evident at the beginning of the twenty first century through the seeming disassociation between gender and adventure identity by women who regularly participate in adventuring activities. The description of an ‘adventurer’ as being “hard, bearded men” (p.65), by these active women, may be considered to reflect a disconnection between adventure and their self-identity, which due to their adventure participation *could* identify them as adventurers (Little, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Gender identity performance is how an individual performs their identity through physical and psychological behaviours.

<sup>12</sup> The all-male expedition featured wounded soldiers trekking to the North Pole (McCrum, 2012) and the all-female expedition featured women from around the Commonwealth skiing to the South Pole (Ashton, 2011)

<sup>13</sup> Themes included values, motivations, body-mind interplay, team dynamics, gendered behaviours.

<sup>14</sup> As heroes both influence and reflect societal values and norms (Gammon, 2014) this visual narrative task gave scope to review contemporary, and possible future perspectives of the role of gender in the outdoors

<sup>15</sup> Participants had the opportunity to register their interest for an all-male, all-female or gender-neutral group. No participants registered for the gender-neutral focus group.

## Findings

Although early findings suggest there are multiple complexities around gender identity in contemporary adventuring narratives, this paper focusses on one emergent theme of *authenticity*.

Ideas of authenticity are multi layered across all narratives. For female adventure participants (including the high-altitude mountaineer), the act of adventuring is often underpinned by an awareness of mortality and is usually aligned with feeling most like one's self. By providing a context to build confidence, manage mental health, and to explore one's limits, adventure provides an escape from everyday life. However, a complexity in fulfilling a personal authenticity arises in narratives shared by female future leaders. Unlike the established high-altitude mountaineer, or the narratives shared by females who enjoy adventures as a form of personal identity, these female future leaders bridge, both a personal, and early stage professional relationship with the outdoors. Although future leaders frame gender as being inconsequential to adventure participation, they both perform, and report, several gendered behaviours that challenge their ability to be authentic selves. For example, their problematic bodies move between being invisible and hyper-visible. The female form is either ignored when part of a male training group (unless proven to be more capable than the males), or too unruly, for example when wearing wetsuits. This transition between invisibility and hyper-visibility leaves little room for the 'being' of oneself featured in other female (non-famous) adventuring narratives, and therefore compounds identity complexities. The female future leaders shift between aspiring to 'man up', as per hyper-masculine body-mind control, when in mixed groups, to wanting to talk through fears and have more emotional support when in all female groups. These identity complexities also feature when future leaders discuss and visually narrate their notions of the adventuring hero. Most adventuring heroes referenced were male<sup>16</sup>, and although female instructors/ leaders were inspirational, when mentioned in a hero context, they were also sometimes intimidating. There is a similar complexity to the

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<sup>16</sup> Of the total 42 adventuring heroes named by 14 male future leaders- only 7 were women (17%). Of the total 16 adventuring heroes named by 9 female future leaders- 6 were women (38%).

authenticity of the all-female high-profile adventuring narratives, as narratives refer to notions of the 'ordinary woman'- perhaps to demonstrate team members are 'ordinary' and to be aspirational to 'ordinary women'. Consequently, through positioning the ordinary woman as *not* being regularly active in the outdoors, it by reverse positions women who are, as '*not* ordinary'- creating a gender paradox, which appears to reinforce stereotypical feminine behaviours. In brief, the weight of societal gender expectations seems ever-present and as such being a female authentic self in adventure contexts is not straightforward.

Similar intricacies to gender identity are evident in male adventuring narratives, however, in contrast to female narratives, there appears, in some contexts, to be a greater flexibility in maintaining a single identity. Masculine outdoor identities seem predominantly managed through the establishment of a hierarchical framework, which incorporates everything from team hierarchies (by fitness, age, skill), to appropriate emotional responses (depending on context and emotion, for example talking about love was occasionally acceptable). In some ways, by having a hierarchical identity structure in place, things that may challenge masculine identity stereotypes, such as showing emotions, can be managed. Throughout the expedition narratives the kind of emotional behaviours, which would traditionally reflect unruly femininity – such as crying, become acceptable, **but** only briefly. Humour acts as a narrative device to gain control and help the team member move on from a position of vulnerability. However, there does appear to be some limitations to the success of implementing this identity framework, as the male future leaders report feeling expected to conceal their fear or pain. Adding to this, the future leaders voiced how they felt expected to test their skill limits, and as a result, introduced pre, and during, activity rituals to help manage their anxiety: fear management was reliant on the successful completion of these rituals.

As with the female future leaders, ideas of the adventuring hero appear limited by longstanding representations of white males. A lack of colour and cultural diversity seems as significant as a lack of gender diversity and creates a barrier to feeling authentic in the role of adventurer. Generally, male narratives about the adventuring hero seem to associate being 'humble' with being authentic, and there appears to be a negative correlation

between fame and authenticity. For example, the portrayal of the all-male expedition team as heroes by the expedition organisers and the media, created a tension between the self-identity of the team, and the identity placed upon them. Overall, there appears some tension between the aspirational identities of female and male adventuring participants, and those shared by high profile expeditions.

## TELLING TALES OR TALKING TRUTH?

Do contemporary adventuring narratives reflect an equitable future or reinforce longstanding gender identity norms?

Examining contemporary adventuring narratives helps explore current notions of gender identity in a context which has a historic bias, whilst often physically remote from societal expectations of gendered behaviour. As heroes both influence and reflect social values and norms, this analysis included a critique of the interplay between ideas of the adventuring hero, and gender identity.

## FINDINGS

A review of adventuring narratives, created by participants, future leaders, expeditions and the media, suggests there are multiple complexities to how gender identity features in the stories we share and encounter.

It's complicated!

## AUTHENTICITY

Is a key theme across all narratives. Participants and future leaders aspire to be authentic in the outdoors, but there are contradictions and challenges. Challenges include the reinforcement of longstanding acceptable gender identities by self, team mates, leaders, expeditions and the media.

My female body is problematic.

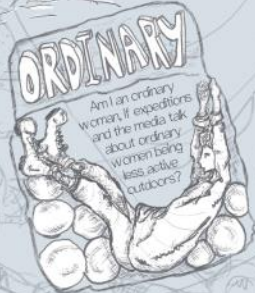
Even when I'm wearing outdoor uniforms, I remember the time the teenage boys in the group I was leading were VERY inappropriate about the wetsuit I was wearing.

## HYPER VISIBLE



## INVISIBLE

Often my female body is invisible. When I was younger I learnt that to be seen in the outdoors, I must never fall behind and NEVER let anyone carry my rucksack. To be visible in a mixed gender group I have to be better than the males.



## RITUAL

I develop OCD tendencies, if I'm really scared, if I can't tie in right and it takes two or three attempts then I won't climb.

I don't have a choice.

I feel expected to behave in a certain masculine way. I can't show fear, or pain, and there's pressure to try something new even if I'm terrified. Females don't seem to have this pressure, they can do a lower grade river run without being judged.

I deal with things very internally. I just try to grin and get on with it. I know it's about protecting a non-existent image.

## SHOW NO FEAR!

To be an adventuring hero you have to be humble, genuine, have good values, and be a good role model. Yeah, you have great skills, but it's not about being famous.

But, it's not always easy to imagine yourself in their hero shoes.

If I'm not a white male, I can't see myself in mainstream adventuring hero stories.

Most of my adventuring heroes are men. That's because of what they've already achieved, and I hear more about them.

I have a few female heroes and they can give you confidence you can do it too.

Sometimes they make everyone else look pathetic.

Maybe I don't notice others criticising or judging that I am a woman in the outdoors?

I have a lot of controls in place to help manage my masculine identity in the outdoors.

I use humour to deal with emotions.

FREEDOM  
CONFIDENCE  
STRENGTH  
IDENTITY  
ME!

Created by Carmen Byrne

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- TEAM
- ROLE
- SKILL
- AGE
- FITNESS
- FEAR
- ADVENTURE
- TRIPS
- ENERGY
- LOVE
- COMPACT

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- It is generally agreed that the hero influences and reflects societal values. One example: Carmen, S. (2015). Heroes as heritage: the commodification of sporting achievement. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 9(3), 246-256. Retrieved 01/11/2016, from <http://mhj.sagepub.com/hic/article/9/3/246>
- Research included critical analysis of discourses (book, website, film) produced by two 21st century expeditions, one all male, one all female, as well as associated media discourses. Two (experts by experience) were interviewed to discuss key themes from the expedition and media narratives. Ten female outdoor participants created written narratives about their adventures. Twenty three future outdoor leaders (15-24 m/f) visually narrated their ideas of the adventuring hero. Two focus groups with future leaders (1-4, m/f) discussed ideas around adventure, leadership, gender, and the hero.

WITH THANKS to Dr Mark Holman and Dr Ove Palmer for their encouragement.

Contemporary adventuring narratives do not necessarily reflect an equitable future. From an outdoor education perspective, the formative experiences and training of future outdoor leaders sometimes perpetuates longstanding societal gender identity norms. Readdressing the variety of narratives shared is fundamental in encouraging great identity flexibility and diversity.



## Discussion

Mindful that these are early stage findings, it appears contemporary adventuring narratives do not necessarily reflect an equitable future, and there is a complexity to gender identity performance in the outdoors. The interplay between having an authentic identity in the outdoors and hegemonic gender norms seems significant. That the act of adventuring creates a climate, which appears to support being an authentic self, is positive, but it is challenged by implicit and explicit reinforcements of acceptable gender identities by self, team-mates, leaders, expeditions and the media. From an outdoor education perspective, the formative experiences and training of future outdoor leaders may be posited as perpetuating some longstanding societal identity norms. Just as the female body should not be problematic in the outdoors, male participants should not be expected to negotiate their terror in silence and without choice. Readdressing the variety of narratives shared across the adventure and outdoor industry, is also fundamental in encouraging great identity diversity. This in turn, may encourage the evolution of mass media, including high profile expedition narratives.

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## The case for a more relevant outdoor education

Geoff Cooper<sup>17</sup>

### Where is outdoor education going?

The nature of outdoor education has undergone considerable change in the UK since the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century. Traditionally outdoor education was divided into two strands; field studies and outdoor pursuits or activities. The early development of field studies was linked to science education, particularly biology, geography and geology. Fieldwork was closely related to the school curriculum and in the case of older students to their examinations. The Field Studies Council was founded in 1943 and established a network of Field Study Centres throughout the UK. From the 1960s many local education authorities opened their own field study centres where school children could learn about and through the environment. Urban studies, involving young people exploring and learning about their local urban environment, arose as an offshoot of this tradition.

Drasdo (1972) distinguished two approaches in the teaching of outdoor pursuits. The first concentrated on the development of physical skills and technical knowledge and was promoted by the centres run by the Councils of Physical Recreation. The second approach used challenging situations in the outdoors to develop personal qualities such as self-reliance and leadership. This latter approach was influenced by the Outward Bound movement which established its first centre in Britain during the 1940s. There was later a third approach which was represented by local authority and voluntary outdoor centres established from the 1960s onwards. Their programmes were designed primarily to encourage both personal and social development. Many outdoor leaders today consider the development of these personal and social skills to be the focus of their work.

A current issue for outdoor educators has been the need to distinguish the aims and practice of outdoor education from those of outdoor recreation and sport. This has not been a straightforward task as many outdoor practitioners operate in both sectors.

Increasingly the outdoor recreation and sports sector have been influenced and have accepted a commercial model in tune with the dominant Western neo-liberal values. Many outdoor educators have questioned this trend which has led to standardisation,

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programming and commodification and its increasing impact on outdoor learning (Loynes, 2007; Becker 2008; Beames and Brown 2014). Outdoor clothing, equipment and high adrenalin adventures are marketed by the leisure industry and the growth of private operators has, for the most part, led to the packaging of activities where the emphasis is on fun, thrills and physical experiences (Cooper 2016).

Some writers have argued that since outdoor education engages in real world situations it is well placed to promote critical reflection on a wide range of social, political and environmental issues (Martin, 1999; Humberstone, Brown and Richards 2003). The International Handbook of Outdoor Studies (Humberstone, Prince and Henderson, 2016) has a significant section devoted to outdoor education and social and environmental justice. The free market has led to increasing social and economic inequality and unsustainable use of resources. Should we as outdoor educators passively accept this or should we question and challenge this dominant culture? At the very least outdoor experiences provide opportunities to raise awareness of issues and open discussions on for example, land ownership, landscape change, habitat loss, recreational conflicts and access to the countryside.

If outdoor educators wish to promote this discourse it requires a shift in emphasis away from the task-centred, physical challenging activities and the problem-solving, introspective teambuilding pursuits to a more environmental, nature and community based approach. The arguments for re-positioning outdoor education are well established. Outdoor educators such as Van Matre (1972), Cornell (1979), Henley (1989), Cooper (1998) and Knapp (1999) have stressed the value of personal connection with the environment and see this as a starting point in the process of understanding and taking action. David Orr (1992) stresses the importance of developing “ecological literacy” through outdoor experiences and Wattchow and Brown (2011) have presented strong arguments for a place responsive outdoor education.

### **Walking as counter-culture.**

In the light of these arguments for a more relevant, socially and environmentally conscious outdoor education I will consider the simple activity of walking as a means of engaging with place, community and environment and in this way subverting the dominant culture of

consumerism. Deakin (2000) argues that “walking, cycling and swimming will always be subversive activities. They allow us to regain a sense of what is old and wild in these islands, by getting off the beaten track and breaking free of the official version of things.”

The humble activity of walking is undertaken for a variety of purposes. People throughout the world walk as a basic necessity to reach their work in fields, mines and factories and in less developed countries children walk many miles to schools. Recent times have shown vast movements of refugees walking across countries fleeing from wars, famine and economic hardships. When there is a choice, the reasons given for walking may include exercise, social interaction, nature and aesthetic enjoyment, inspiration, adventure and exploration.

There is also a long history of mass walking for protest. For example, in 1932 some 400 rambblers from Manchester and Sheffield trespassed on Kinder Scout to demonstrate their right to roam over large areas of moorland. In 1936, 200 men walked from Jarrow in the north east of England to London to raise awareness of the high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. Whilst in 1981 a (mainly) women's march from Cardiff arrived at Greenham Common US Air Force base in Berkshire, where the first nuclear ‘Cruise’ missiles were to be based, where they set up a peace camp.

These protest walks can be seen as acts of subversion but we can widen the discussion to consider how humble walking by individuals or in small groups can alleviate the undue controls of western consumer society on our everyday lives. Capitalist societies influence our behaviour through controlling information and advertising and this affects our activities in both indoor and outdoor situations. Consider the way people are programmed to move through an airport via a series of consumer traps. The owners of airports and retail outlets conspire to force us on a trail where we have to negotiate aisles of duty free alcohol, extreme perfume and harsh lighting on our way to the departure gate. Likewise a popular Scandinavian furniture store captures customers in its one-way shopping maze. Similarly, we are often herded through cities following tourist trails which point the way to prominent sights and spending opportunities. Even our visits to the countryside attempt to persuade us into visitor attractions or to follow marked trails or long distance paths.

Governments and commercial interests benefit by maintaining this level of control, encouraging consumerism and keeping us compliant.

So how can we subvert this process? Walking offers many possibilities. Solnit (2000) argues that the history of walking illustrates the many facets of this simple, physical and mental activity. Walking is for pleasure and exercise but it also has political, aesthetic, and social meaning.

Walking as a counter cultural activity has its roots in social, political and artistic movements. In nineteenth century France, Charles Baudelaire was obsessed with the idea of the flâneur who had the wealth and time to observe society by wandering slowly through the city. The Dada movement of the 1920s was a reaction to western society and the horrors of the First World War and their followers staged a series of provocative, artistic outdoor events in Paris to challenge the mainstream culture. This was taken further by the Situationists in the late 1950s who railed against the excesses of consumerism which their champion, Guy Debord, claimed was impoverishing real life. They practised “dérives”, spontaneous walks around less visited parts of the city to reveal deeper meanings of urban life, highlighting issues and activities that are ignored or that go unrecorded. Debord (1958) considered that dérives are quite different from the classic notions of a journey or stroll. In a dérive one or more persons drop their relations, their work and leisure activities and all their other usual motives for movement and action and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. The aim is to question the ‘dominant’ ways that we see and make sense of environments, and to understand how consumerism distorts environments. More recently in the UK proponents of wanderings such as Ian Sinclair (1997), Will Self (2007) and Nick Papadimitriou have provided a range of literature and film which challenges our knowledge and understanding of urban environments.

Some outdoor educators may find these overtly critical approaches uncomfortable or at odds with their organisations but there are less controversial ways of walking which I believe still allow us time and space from the dominant consumer culture. The adventurous excursions of the poet, Coleridge over the Cumbria fells or the “stravaigin” of Nan Shepherd in the Cairngorms are examples of activities which succeed in opening minds and hearts to nature and alternative views of the world. The “Long View” is a recent arts and

environmental project in Cumbria led by writer, Harriet Fraser and photographer, Rob Fraser. They identified seven spectacularly located trees, all different native species, across the Lake District and made many slow journeys in all seasons and weathers to the trees. They also led a series of guided walks using stories, local history and poetry to set the scene for their journeys.

Outdoor leaders, who are inclined, can tap into this rich vein of tradition and practice and can show their groups how they might tread in more subversive ways. They can encourage slower journeys that allow for spontaneity, contact with people, enjoyment of nature and give the chance to express their feelings and discuss the issues of the day.

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## Paddle to the sea

Richard Ensoll<sup>18</sup>, Daniel Towers, Mark Lawton and Ian Convery

### Introducing 'Paddle'



Figure 1: Paddle and his maker (Ide, 2009)

"You will go with the water and you will have adventures that I would like to have. But I cannot go with you because I have to help my father with the traps" (Holling, 1941, chapter 2).

In response to the accelerated speed of hypermodernity, we too felt trapped, constrained by work ties and the constant stream of emails. With this motivation we began to plan our own 'Paddle-to-the-Sea' inspired by Hollings' (1941) children's adventure book in which a carved model canoe was created by a First Nation boy. It is notable that, despite some longing, the boy is not able to travel himself, he can't journey, but we can. As outdoor

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education practitioners we were intrigued by the concept of 'tempo giusto' (Honore, 2005); finding the 'right' speed.

There is an ethical side to our ability to journey where many do not have economic and social access. We acknowledge a degree of privilege in this and recognise the inherent contradiction associated with going on such a journey made possible through the products of hypermodernity itself. Significant though this is, to explore it further is beyond the scope of this particular study.

Despite feeling a sense of entrapment, we also felt that as animate beings with a degree of agency we might expect to have some control over both the decisions surrounding where, when and how we might journey. In contrast to 'Paddle's' four-year journey through the Great Lakes to the sea, ours would see us travel from Kirkstone Pass in the heart of the English Lake District to the Solway Firth on its northern border. As a wooden model 'Paddle' would be animated along his journey by the ebbs and flows of the river in addition to chance encounters with the human and other-than-human. In response to our ability to exercise the two key aspects of human agency "choice and discretion" (Pickering, 1995, p. 116) while doors must always be opened for Paddle we will sometimes open them for ourselves. On our journey how far might this dualist perspective hold true? To what extent might we find ourselves under or above the influence of the other-than-human in a 'dance of agency'? (Pickering, 1995) as we search for "a rhythm that allows us both to move with the ongoing flows of...sense-making" (Brummans, 2012, p. 162).

### **Methodology**

Rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 1992/2004) was adopted to explore the experience of a three-day narrative inspired canoe journey from the Kirkstone Pass in the Lake District to the Solway coast, from source to sea, along a series of rivers and two lakes. Using three modified canoes the journey involved road transportation on trolleys, lake travel under sail as well as the customary paddling. All equipment and food was carried and campsites were within a short distance of the water.

Lefebvre (1992/2004) introduced us to a tool of analysis which afforded an opportunity to “...listen to a house, a street, a town as one listens to a symphony” (Lefebvre, 1992/2004 p.xii). Accordingly, could we listen to a canoe, a river and a paddle? What might we hear if we listen to this ‘song’? Mason (1988) similarly explores the significance of hearing the ‘song’ in the context of a canoe journey, a rhythm perhaps? There is a growing movement exploring concepts around the term ‘slow’ captured by the term “tempo giusto” (Honore, 2005, p. 273) where musicians seek to find the ‘right’ speed and ‘eigenkosten’ (Perks, 2013) where every task has a minimum cost and we need to invest sufficiently to avoid a disservice.

Rhythm (Lefebvre, 1992/2004) emphasises both the biological and philosophical relationships between the senses, society and the environment – our ‘sense world’. We were interested in our personal rhythms and their interaction with one another’s and the rhythms of our wider environment, an assemblage (Deleuz & Guattari, 1987 in Yu, 2013) if you will. Lefebvre’s (1992/2004) work accordingly offered the suggestion that these rhythms can be used as a method of Rhythmanalysis for both ‘Paddle’s’ and our own journey.

Data collection involved personal note taking, regular reflective discussions, video and still photography. Additional discussions involved a local poet who met the canoeists before, during and after the journey to share our reflections. The poet synthesised these reflections to produce a poem which was adopted by a filmmaker as the theme for a short film which included video content and supplementary footage.

## Findings

### Table 1: Paddle-to-the-Sea

<p>Her</p> <p><a href="https://vimeo.com/223439792">https://vimeo.com/223439792</a></p>
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(Gilson, 2017)

We became more aware of a multiplicity of rhythms that shape or ‘haunt’ (Trelfa, 2017) experience. Lefebvre refers to this as polyrhythmia, in which “...there is interaction

between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy...” (Lefebvre, 1992/2004 p. xv) and exists in assemblages where distinctions blur such as the horse and rider becoming a rhythmic assemblage that might be described as a ‘horse-person-thing’ (Evans & Franklin, 2010 in Ingold, 2011). In our context this concept was usefully extended to include more of the animating assemblage. As presented in Gilson’s (Table 1) short film a solo canoe and paddler was better understood as a ‘canoe-person-paddle-water-wind thing’ where the interactions between wind against the canoe, river flowing past the paddle, canoeists’ grip on the paddle and pressure against the canoe self-organise into a constellation of fluid, topological rhythms.

**Table 2: Poems for ‘Paddle to the Sea’**

**Trolleying**

Carrying three canoes, a clunking beginning, middle and end. The pantomime horse is shuttling along a bank by a beck which is still too shallow after a dry spring. Low water crosses the bed-stones in reels of white bubbles that gain voice in the falling rain.

**Setting off**

Into the squiggles of a downpour. You check the dry suits around your necks. There is a short scraping of canoes, a wobble, then off.

**Afloat**

Everything the canoe is, takes form: tail, fin, and bow. Meeting this with arms and hands the paddler dips and draws. The separation between them dissolves into being afloat, into moving on water.

**Ullswater**

Heavy drops open into saucepans of rings on the lake. Splatters bounce on the water’s black film. At a lower acoustic, the paddles follow the lead of the rain. Call and response settles into playful riddles, the pull of the cross-wind, a part of the puzzle. Paddle-rhythms form by breaking the surface, creating a space, the swirl left behind, the re-filling, then a push forward.

**Gorge**

Inside, it is its own world. Walls of ridged sandstone stand silent as the passage

deepens. The rage of a desert storm, now static has become a Dipper's favoured rock. Scoops of water fall from the vegetation above and land on the canoes with a primal 'plop'.

### **Through town**

Overgrown, the willows buffer the city sounds. Trees welcome us with bows that scrape the surface. On this wide brown stretch of the Eden, gurgles of water rise suggesting the breath of beasts below. Reeds travel as if parting for eels and back currents swirl. It is a passage of the unseen, a broad slowing down of mud and tangle, a call to attention. In urban waters, the stories will be told underneath.

### **Estuary**

Flicked from the edge of a paddle, droplets touch your lips and announce the first taste of salt. Dipping into the brackish film of river and sea, tidal voices enter the interface. Pock-marked folds of red mud warn of changing flows, the dens of sea trout. A village church moves past, tucked in on its wedge of sandstone, slowly being eaten by tributaries. The head wind empties your arms and tells of the line where journeys become voyages. The land recedes and the blank horizon expands.

As a wooden model canoe 'Paddle's' path is determined by the current lines, flows of water and wind but, as an inanimate object he does not appear to actively choose which to follow and as a result sometimes spends weeks washed on a beach and days circling in eddies. As canoeists we took pride in our ability to choose pathways but can our underlying habits, bias and preference cause us to miss out? By the very nature of the title 'Paddle to the Sea' we found we had inadvertently determined our rhythm for the trip. We were tied to a destination, to transport home and work the next day. In response we found ourselves choosing progression onward over circling in an eddy. This was evidenced when we became conscious of inadvertently 'herding' wildlife down the river before us and that although there were large mammals around we did not see any. Had we circled in an eddy for a few hours might we have found a more harmonious alliance or eurhythmia (Lefebvre, 1992/2004) with our surroundings allowing nature to come to us and enriching our experience?



Exploring the concept of Naming Noorani (2013) argues that the process of naming leads to objectification, endowing an object with the power to ‘object’ (p.1) or push back. How far might our earlier perception of ‘herding’ wildlife before us have been an example of the birds ‘objecting’ in a double dance of agency (Pickering 1995 in Noorani, 2013)? While we acted on the birds they acted back, driving us across the river and onward in a bid to outpace them so, in our minds at least, we might allow *them* to rest.

Paddle (Hollins, 1941) is not constrained by concerns about ‘what might be’ but by simply ‘being there’ he becomes a resting place for a snake, a child’s play thing and an object of popular fascination. In contrast during the final few miles of the journey passing through the lower reaches of the River Eden ‘when the head wind had emptied our arms’ (Fossey, 2017); Lefebvre’s (1992/2004) concept of arrhythmia, the dissonance experienced when rhythms conflict, was in stark evidence and one of the group experimented with what it might be like to journey with the flow (Table 3).

**Table 3: Diary Extract A**

*How long can you keep pulling with ALL your effort? Each paddle pull involved an immense exertion and yet I still fell behind the other canoes. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a two-foot long log floating past, with no apparent effort this log had kept up with us all day and now it was overtaking me. I wanted to journey with ‘Paddle’ so I lay in the bow of the canoe with my paddle dug deeply into the river flow. With little effort I began to move with the log and found I was nearly keeping up with the other canoeists. Now I felt in harmony with the river but the slight difference in boat speed meant that I gradually fell behind the other paddlers. Why don’t you do this! I called but my voice was lost in wind.*

The dissonance associated with arrhythmia can create decision-making space where issues might become problematised or clarified and solutions explored (Pollard, 2015). Disruption to the linear rhythm associated with the dip and swing of paddling a canoe was provided by rapids, portages and deciding where to camp which put us through ‘alliance, conflict and back again’. We experienced an attraction to the challenge associated with finding the most elegant journey solutions where the disruptive influence of arrhythmia problematized the

mundane causing the mind to become more focused on the here and now. In this way arrhythmia is not to be avoided but perhaps sought after as a catalyst for growth.

## **Conclusions**

A source of arrhythmia arose in our case from the title of our journey, Paddle to the Sea creating a strong destination focus perhaps leading to 'summit fever' (Fader, 2013) which may have become detrimental to group cohesion or lead to taking ill-judged risks. Each journey will have its own rhythms as a result of the unique combination of people, places and tasks involved. Watts (2016) argues that life is best understood as a dance, how could we have framed our journey as a dance? How could we as outdoor practitioners who facilitate the journeys we lead to allow space to 'dance' in eddy circles alongside Paddle? At the same time, we were surprised to find ourselves attracted to arrhythmia where a desire to resolve areas of discomfort created by arrhythmia acted to push us while we were, at once, also drawn forward to find new rhythmic patterns with their potential for Eurhythmia. In this way disruptions to existing norms may be seen as offering opportunities to explore new norms, an insight that may help us, as practitioners, reframe the way we facilitate outdoor journeys.

It may be suggested that Hollings' (1941) naming and the consequential objectification (Noorani, 2013) of 'Paddle' also empowered him to push back, disrupting our work patterns stimulating a journey and along the way directing our gaze toward logs floating in the water and causing us to wonder. Extending the 'canoe-person-paddle-water-wind thing' assemblage to include 'Paddle' himself dancing together in one continuous flow acting and being acted upon. This causes us to wonder to what extent our actions were under or above (Brummans, 2012) each element in the assemblage or perhaps a less hierarchical view would offer a fresh perspective. Instead of seeking to understand which elements were under or above we could consider how far each aspect of the assemblage might have been trying to understand the other in a topological dance of agency and sense-making (Brummans, 2012, p. 164)?

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## Get out of the way and let the outdoors be the teacher

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### Abstract

The ubiquitous phenomenon of ‘impact’ is one of the hauntings of outdoor education, especially when assessing impact within the school curriculum. A specialist school for students with behavioural and emotional needs in Australia has implemented Outdoor Learning (OL) to engage at-risk students. This research project examined the impact of the twinned disciplines of Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) when innovatively applied to complement OL. ACT is a behavioural change approach founded on the principles of positive psychology. Our research investigated whether an eight-week ACT intervention specifically designed and delivered within OL program can enhance the emotional, social and behavioural wellbeing of Year 5 and 6 students. Impact was determined by pre/post-test standardised scales, observations, and interviews. Additionally, post interviews were conducted with students and teachers to triangulate the data. The study culminated with the students’ narratives being co-generated into a creative artwork with an Indigenous Elder three months post-intervention. The results highlight new synergies between targeted behavioural change programs and OL for at-risk student groups, and inform how ACT and OL can be delivered in a collaborative and complementary fashion to effect positive change for students with challenging behaviours. Our paper specifically examines students’ narratives and the collaborative artmaking process where they visually represented their experiences in the outdoor ACT intervention and by creating an enduring artefact for their school.

### Background

Engaging at-risk students into the school system continues to be a universal educational dilemma (Truong, Gray & Ward, 2016). To this end, an Australian behavioural school

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successfully devised and implemented an outdoor learning approach to re-engage students. Our research specifically examined the impact of Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) when integrated to complement this approach. The affordances of ACT to assist and promote behavioural change have been documented in various studies (Murrell & Scherbarth, 2006; Ruiz, 2010), and show that ACT can support positive long term effects two years following completion (Livheim et al., 2015). For this reason, the twinned disciplines of ACT and Outdoor Learning (OL) became the focus of our study.

Founded on the principles of positive psychology and Eastern philosophies, the goal of ACT is to facilitate change through six core principles: acceptance, defusion, being present, self as context, valued living and commitment to action (Bach & Moran, 2008; Hayes et al., 1999). The underlying goal of ACT is “to catalyse a change in focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities” (Hayes et al., 1999, p. 5).

The ACT project was specifically designed and delivered by the research team to enhance the emotional, social and behavioural wellbeing of students aged 10-12 years ( $n = 9$ ). Over eight-weeks students received a 60-minute group session developed on the brief intervention model pioneered by Kirk Strosahl (2004). Sessions were crafted around outdoor experiential activities such as creating structures with natural materials, walks in natural spaces, sand drawing and rock skimming, and overlaid with therapeutic opportunities including sharing circles, breath and body awareness exercises, story-telling, and values reflections. Sequencing of the sessions evolved in an organic fashion week-by-week in consideration to the participants’ therapeutic journeys. As facilitators, we focussed on identifying existing levels of wellbeing, introducing contact with the present moment and place, recognising and engaging with difficult thoughts, releasing discordant emotion, living a valued life, developing resilience, and identify skills to help face future challenges. For a weekly breakdown and overview of the outdoor experiential activities included in the program please refer to *ACT in the Outdoors* by Gray, Tracey, Truong, and Ward (2017, pp. 14-15).

The impact was measured utilizing mixed methods that included pre/post-test measure, observations throughout, and interviews at the end of the program. In an attempt to

triangulate the data, post interviews were conducted with students and teachers. The study culminated with the students' narratives being co-generated into a creative artwork in collaboration with an Indigenous Elder as a result of the students being asked:

*In 100 years how would you like your grandkids or kids to be looked after? What would you like to see happening? What things would you see if kids were being looked after well?*

Our ACT/OL approach embedded a tangible commitment to their future lives and values. Most importantly, this does not deny the negative in their life, but creatively commits to a new narrative they can adopt in the present moment into the future (Hayes, et al, 2010; Westrup, 2014). As an experiential activity, the creation of the mural served to achieve multiple research goals, including: process and impact evaluation with students; identification of future valued living, and a lasting artefact representing the shared lived experience of the intervention. This innovative evaluation offered a powerful alternative to traditional academic modalities.

### **Research Aims**

The specific aims of the project were:

**Aim 1:** To ascertain the impact of ACT and OL upon the social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing of participants.

**Aim 2:** To assess the impact of ACT and OL upon the life skill development and coping strategies of participants.

**Aim 3:** To determine what aspects of the program were the most valuable for participants, and in turn, what are the suggested areas of improvement.

### **Methodology**

This mixed-method study included the administration of quantitative pre and post- surveys to nine students; and post interviews with students and teachers. As many students identified as aboriginal, the capstone event was Indigenous storytelling and artwork to concretize the learning (Gray & Stuart, 2015). The survey instruments included: 1)



Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth; 2) Kessler10; 3) Children's Anxiety Life Interference Scale; 4) Child Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure; and 5) Self-Description Questionnaire 1 – General School. This paper highlights the synergies between learning in the outdoors, through an outdoor classroom model and arts-based pedagogies. Multiple arts experiences were adapted and implemented within the intervention in order to engage students in developing psychological flexibility. Student participation was uniquely enhanced through the outdoor learning approach and the creative arts-based experiences designed to assist the participants to explore values, commitment to action, and ways of connecting to self, place, and others.

### **Related Literature**

There are two components to this research project's literature review; outlining the role of outdoor learning and adventure therapy with youth with behavioural issues; and investigating acceptance and commitment therapy's (ACT) implementation and efficacy for youth in a variety of contexts.

### **Outdoor Learning and Young People**

The philosophical and theoretical roots of Outdoor Learning (OL) and Adventure Therapy (AT) can be located within experiential education (Bowen, 2016; Gass, 1993; Norton, Tucker, Russell, Bettmann, Gass, Gillis, & Behrens, 2014). According to the definition provided by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE, 2013), experiential education is “a philosophy of education that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities” (para. 2). These concepts originated in the work of philosopher and educator John Dewey (Warren, Sakofs, & Hunt, 1995) and have pertinent application to OL/AT; they have been reiterated most commonly in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, which incorporates action, reflection, and integration as key elements of the learning

(or therapeutic) process. Experiential education serves as the link between OL, AT and our implementation of the ACT program.

### **Acceptance Commitment Therapy**

As mentioned earlier, ACT originated from the intersection of positive psychology and Eastern philosophies (Bach & Moran, 2008; Hayes et al., 1999). According to Hancock et al., (2016):

“Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is considered to be part of the “thirdwave” of behavioral and cognitive therapies, incorporating elements of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with processes of mindfulness and acceptance” (p. 1).

**The benefits of ACT to support behavioural change in managing a range of issues from depression, anxiety and disengagement from school have widely demonstrated (Murrell & Scherbarth, 2006; Ruiz, 2010). This project examines the intersection of the twinned disciplines of ACT and OL, and bridges these fields through the development of an innovative and tailored outdoor intervention.**

### **ACT and Youth**

**While there is significant research to support the assessment of ACT-based constructs (e.g. experiential avoidance, fusion and mindfulness) in adults, work with children and adolescents has also been gradually growing (Coyne, McHugh, & Martinez, 2011). ACT is increasingly being regarded as a highly suitable approach for children (Coyne, McHugh, & Martinez, 2011; Epkins, 2016; Simon & Verboon, 2016).**

Acceptance and mindfulness techniques are particularly suited for children and adolescents given the emphasis on metaphor and experiential exercises. By grounding these practices in concrete exercises, such as eating or walking meditation, the concept of mindfulness becomes practical and accessible through experience (Zack, Saekow, Kelly, & Radke, 2014).

For those interested in a more comprehensive overview of the related literature, an expanded version can be found in our research report (Gray et al., 2017).

## Findings

The results of the students' responses to the pre and post surveys indicated small but positive changes with regard to the students': anxiety; impairment as a result of anxiety; depression; school self-concept; and development of psychological flexibility; and mindfulness capabilities.

Both students and teachers provided a subjective analysis of the OL and ACT experience. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, research activities and artefacts were utilised to measure impact of the intervention. Outcomes emerged as four interrelated themes representing the students' experiences, corresponding with the three aims of the research.

Consistent with **Aim One: *Envisioning Positive Futures*** was a result of values clarification work that was implemented throughout the intervention, with students identifying health and self-care, positive relationships, child-friendly spaces and communities, and opportunities to learn, as important for living a meaningful life.

In accord with **Aim Two: *Exploring Mindfulness*** refers to the impact of the mindfulness and breathing exercises introduced, which students noted aided them in 'taking time out' and calming themselves. *Committing to Action* represents the individual students' intention to work towards positive changes.

Consistent with **Aim Three: *Connecting to Nature and Movement*** reflects the educational and therapeutic value of the experiential activities in nature for students. Lastly, the students offered suggestions for improvement, where they identified the challenges of the slower-paced activities.

Three teachers were participant-observers throughout the 8-week program and were interviewed at the conclusion of the intervention. There was a high level of support from staff for the use of ACT and OL for the program and overall consensus that it was tailored and effective.

With regard to **Aim One**, interviewed staff found the most predominant areas of change for students included *enhanced teamwork* and *ability to trust others*, and *showing support and respect for others*.

In terms of the objectives of **Aim Two**, staff observed the most prominent impact was *self-management and engagement*, which is generally challenging for this particular population group of students. Staff identified *self-calming* through breathing exercises as the most prominent coping skill developed through the program.

With respect to **Aim Three**: the most valued aspects of the program were identified as: *responsive facilitation* and *trusting relationships*; *the power of storytelling*; *mindfulness*; and *movement and embodied learning*. Areas for improvement included developing *additional strategies for engaging students* while in natural environments, as well as in group settings.

## Discussion

In keeping with the theme of the EOE2017 conference, the ubiquitous phenomenon of ‘impact’ is one of the *enduring hauntings* of outdoor education. This begs the question: *How do we effectively and accurately assess participant change as a result of exposure to outdoor and experiential education?* This project attempted to generate a new body of knowledge about the twinned disciplines of OL and ACT and how they can be delivered in a collaborative and complementary fashion to effect positive change for students with challenging behaviours and/or emotional needs.

Collectively, the pre and post survey data trends and the student/teacher interviews offered an interpretation of the value and utility of the intervention for supporting the emotional and social wellbeing of the participating students as well as the acquisition of vital skills. An examination of the students’ narratives and the collaborative artmaking process (see Figure 1) provides a visual representation of their experiences in the outdoor ACT intervention by creating an enduring artefact for their school. In response to the question:

*In 100 years how would you like your grandkids or kids to be looked after? What would you like to see happening? What things would you see if kids were being looked after well?*

Many indicated that they wanted 'to be heard' or would like to have 'better relationships' with their families or school. The symbolism contained within the Indigenous-inspired mural conveys these messages. Our innovative approach embedded a tangible commitment to their future values and most importantly does not deny the negative in their life but creatively commits to a new narrative they can adopt in the present moment into the future



Figure 1: Drawing the mural from their responses to the question: In 100 years how would you like your grandkids or kids to be looked after?

More importantly, the research adds gravitas to the ever-expanding pool of evidence-based research in the OE field. The research team are mindful of the importance to emphasise that the gains are small and the design was not a randomised controlled trial. In this regard, we are unable to make grandiose claims about the impact of the program. Nonetheless the trends are in the right direction with a group of students who experience entrenched

difficulties that may be hard to shift – so it is promising and should be further implemented/studied further.

## Recommendations

The research was intended to inform educational and therapeutic change for practitioners seeking guidance for future refinement and adoption of ACT and OL. While the focus is on the Australian context, we argue that our mixed-methods study findings have international relevance. From the perspective of the research team, the key facilitation techniques which amplified the outcomes of the ACT and OL intervention are depicted in Figure 2 and included:

Promoting <b>self-reflection</b>	Promoting a <b>strength-based approach</b>
Incorporating <b>storytelling</b>	Utilising <b>relational</b> and <b>reciprocal</b> methods
Embedding <b>ritual</b>	Integrating <b>responsive facilitation</b>
Integrating <b>mindfulness</b>	Adopting a <b>challenge by choice</b> philosophy
Combining <b>creative and arts-based practice</b>	Maximising <b>self determination</b>
Maximising <b>embodied learning</b>	Embedding <b>safety</b> and <b>trust</b> into all aspects of the course



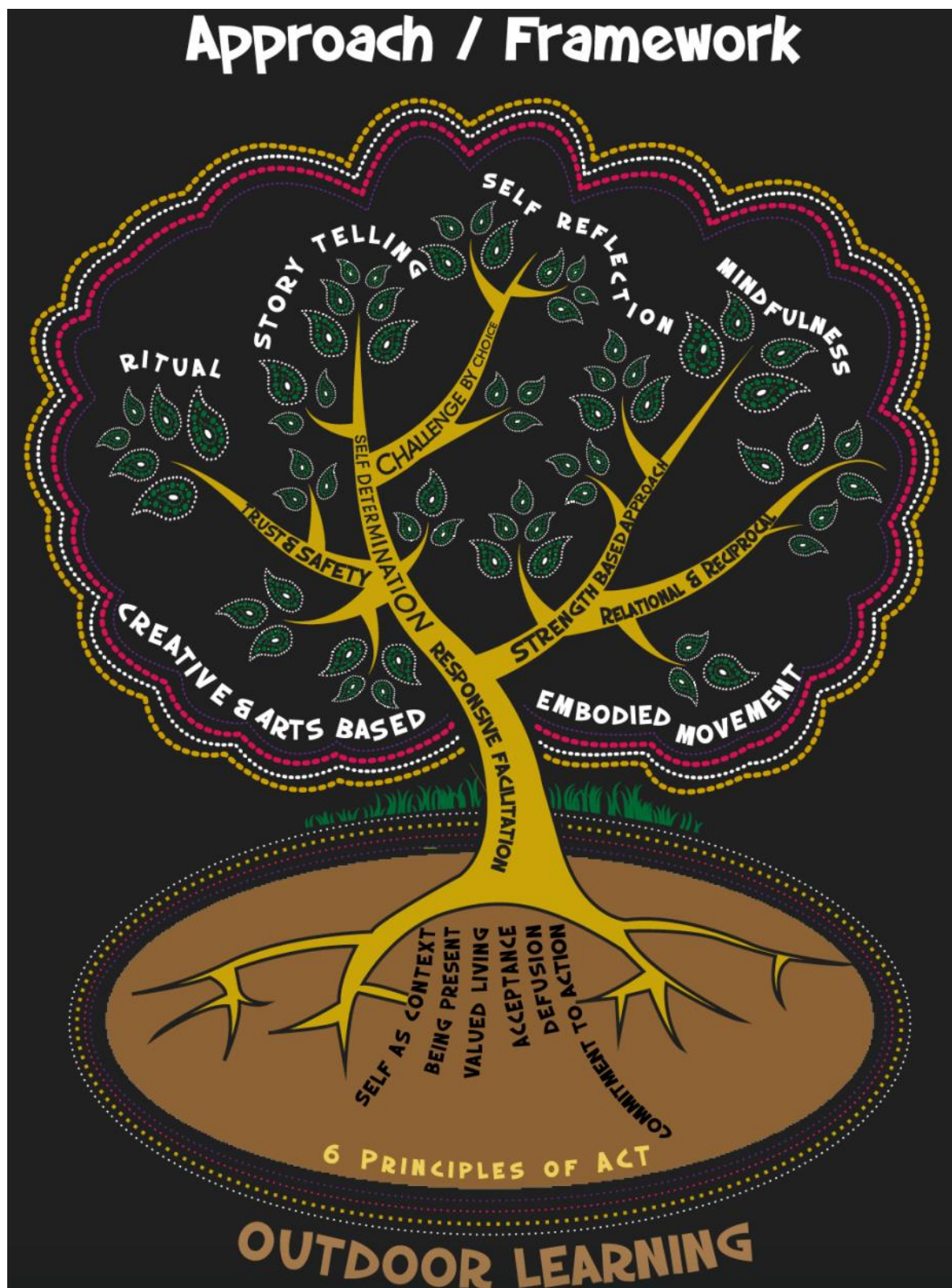


Figure 2 – Key findings of the ACT in the Outdoor study (Gray, Truong, Tracey & Ward, 2017, p. 13)

Finally, regardless of age group or context, facilitator ‘attunement’ to the needs and interests of the group was the underlying ingredient to the effective integration of ACT and OL. Whilst some students did exhibit improvement on the metrics and indexes, the low participant numbers (n=9) make the researchers prudent about overstating the definitive applicability of the findings. Consequently, the qualitative data from the study provides valuable insight into perceived benefits and attributes of the program. Therapeutic intervention attempts to ‘plant seeds’ which may not come to fruition until several years—if not decades—into the future. For this reason, the immediacy of the benefits of the ACT and OL program may not be witnessed until some forthcoming period of time. Nonetheless, the initial feedback on the unique combination of ACT and OL is promising and worthy of further application and investigation. In conclusion, our research has eluded to the importance of our conference paper title:

*Get out of the way and let the outdoors be the teacher.*

As facilitators, we need to ‘get out of the way’ to enhance the power and healing of nature and our approach is also built on an active and responsive facilitation to the process. Recognising the potential of nature and working alongside nature are the hallmarks of a successful program. We were mindful to work *with/alongside* nature, providing time and space within each session for students to sit in nature, practice mindfulness, and explore movement through breathing exercises and games. While recognising the outdoor environment at times created challenges, such as distractions for the students, it also enhanced our reflection and discussion activities. Collectively, we created *space* where students felt safe to share their personal stories, challenges, and struggles (e.g. when sharing the meaning of their beeswax or clay sculptures), and share their trust, support, and encouragement with each other (e.g. during the final bushwalk). The tree trunk in Figure 2 indicates the importance of “responsive facilitation” in our approach. This may refer to responsiveness to participants and their needs, but also responsiveness to working with nature/the outdoors, and knowing when to get out of the way.

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## Media Narrative of Young Adventure Girls

Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt<sup>20</sup>

*Adventure* was once an extremely narrow male phenomenon, available only for a few equipped with certain cultural, economic, and social capitals. Today, *adventures* into remote natural environments have become a popular cultural phenomenon influencing the lives also of children, even at a very young age. Young adventurers are today portrayed in visual media, magazines and books, frequently by their adventurous parents. During the last decade, Norway's national TV-channel NRK1 has contributed to this trend by producing shows that present a remarkably number of young girls, and a few young boys, as protagonists embarking on adventures in rather extreme natures, on long-term solos in remote Arctic contexts, and on explorations in the 'wilderness' surrounding their home-places. These shows are titled *Eventyrjenter* [Adventure Girls] (2014), *Oppdrag Nansen* [Project Nansen] (2016), and *Villmarksbarna* [the Children of the Wilderness]. In my paper I asked: what are the notions of femininity and nature that these series present and represent?

### Methodology

In 2015, the Norwegian NRK television documentary *Villmarksbarna - The Wilderness Children*, shown annually since 2013, was awarded the country's most popular children's series. While watching the series, the viewers are following three young sisters, their little brother and sled-dogs on year-round adventures. One sister, aged ten, acts as the programme-leader, another, aged thirteen, exposes herself as an experienced polar adventurer, having participated in several multi-week skiing-expeditions, including crossing the North West Passage—facing minus fifty-five degrees Celsius. Their parents, professional nature-photographers and teachers in friluftsliv and nature management have the reign. Based on publicly available sources—the TV-series, internet articles, blogs, and newspaper articles, this paper presented a preliminary analysis of the narratives told by and of these young girls. Thus, the presentation focused on aspects of motivation, endeavours and experiences, gender relations, and on the meanings that could be extracted from these

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narratives, portraying rather challenging and demanding adventures in remote natural environments and harsh climate. The concept 'Adventure Girls', which directly translates from one of the television shows, inspired the analysis and was elaborated and discussed by relating it to a developing trend, which Azzarito (2010, p. 261) identified as 'Future Girls', expressing ideals of 'powerful sporty, fit, and healthy femininities'. However, these images contradict with other complex and ambiguous ideals of femininity, besides with being unachievable for most viewers.

In my presentation, I tentatively examined the multifaceted ways in which the show narrates and conceptualises the ways in which the girls on the show explore the 'wilderness' surrounding their Arctic home. Applying gendered eco-cultural and eco-critical narrative and discourse methodology (Fairclough 2003; Pedersen Gurholt 2003; 2014), an initial analysis was presented that intended to explore how this series portrays Arctic adventures as a site that transforms notions of wilderness and children/gender.

One aspect of the gender analysis concerns the girls' perspectives and lived experiences, whilst another focuses on the contemporary trend of 'Adventure Girls' and female adventurers (Lindelöf & Gurholt 2016). The eco-cultural analysis focuses on how the series conceptualises the transformative complexities of gender/nature relations and identities across time and generations (Pedersen 2003; Bloom 1993).

### **Context: The lure of the 'wild'**

NRK promotes the series with the description: "Runa and her family live in Alta in Finnmark. They are truly happy when they go on adventures in the natural environment" (NRK 2017). Finnmark is the northernmost province in Norway, located far above the Arctic Circle. Its sparsely populated terrain is comprised of mountains, highlands, rivers, lakes and a rugged coastline bounded by the Barents Sea. Placing the series in 'Arctic wilderness' evokes images of Europe's Last Wilderness, Midnight Sun, Northern Lights, and the indigenous Sami population that have attracted adventurers from many countries for the past two centuries (Pedersen & Viken 1996). Thus, notions of a nomadic and archaic past are intertwined with narratives of (re)discovery of infinite unknown lands in what Ørjasæter (2013, p. 39) calls "a cluster of metaphors". In Norway, this cluster of metaphors associate 'living in the wild' with skiing, masculinity, and national pride (Slettan 2013; Gurholt 2008).



Furthermore, *The Wilderness Children* connects conceptually with metaphors of the Arctic as a wholesome, though complex, romanticised and idyllic way of life grounded in an apparently innocent and *pure natural* intimacy between children and nature. This conception may embrace, what AbdelRahim (2015, p. 3) has called both the “wild child inside” and “wild nature outside” as qualities of “simply to be and enjoy being” and the ‘good life’. However, in the TV series, the term ‘wilderness children’ generates multiple associations, including innovative and ambiguous gendered narratives.

The youngest sister, who acts as the narrator, is seemingly providing a girl’s perspective on the siblings’ Arctic adventures. The eldest sister, who has participated in several multi-week expeditions nurtures dreams of confronting and conquering nature, including the social value of becoming the first or youngest person to set foot in pristine environments. In sum, the presence of the young narrator, the siblings undertakings and their always smiling attitude, draw attention away from in-built ambiguities; for example, the roles played by adults—parents, professional nature-photographers, outdoor-teachers, authors, *and* the directors of the series promoting certain values, though without making their values and interests explicitly.

### **‘Ordinary kids’ – Extraordinary Experiences, Transformative Femininities?**

In contemporary society, children are more likely to learn about nature and wildlife from television, books and the internet than from direct sensuous experiences. Professionals in the Nordic countries are concerned that free, unsupervised outdoor play, perhaps the most characteristic feature of Nordic childhood, is about to be replaced by activities dominated by adults or electronic screens (Skår et al. 2016).

*The Wilderness Children* offers a paradoxical real-life approach that ‘speaks’ directly to viewers’ multimodal senses. The presence of a young female storyteller triggers the viewers’ feelings and dreams through alluring images of authenticity and a fresh message that everyone can embark on Arctic adventures. Thus, the series seems to defy the negative societal trend ‘forcing’ people into a physically inactive lifestyle, disconnected from nature. Seemingly, the series provides a prime example of a romanticised ‘pristine idyll’ not yet destroyed by human culture, and thus represent a perfect environment for the ‘natural unity’ of children and nature to enfold. The implicit message is that the children are raised in

a free and healthy natural environment. Thus they can just play freely and fulfil their innate potential and become curious, active and self-motivated citizens.

The popularity of the series mirrors the high value attached to notions of 'nature and child', and to *friluftsliv* as unifying and equalising features of Norwegian and Nordic childhood and ways of living. On closer examination, however, it is readily apparent that The Wilderness Children family is far more active outdoors and better equipped with appropriate resources than the average family. Although most Norwegian parents report living within walking or biking distance of a green area and consider unsupervised play in nature important to their children's daily life, national statistics show that multi-day hikes and challenging outdoor activities are relatively rare (Skår et al. 2014). Today's children typically play outside under adult supervision. And so is the case also for The Wilderness Children. However, young adults of both genders associate nature with childhood and unsupervised play (Gurholt 2014). Social and gender inequality both have a strong influence: Children growing up in high-income families with access to a country home and parents with higher education are most active outdoors, and the boys in those families are more active than the girls (SSB 2012). Hence, one may conclude that the edited reality of the Wilderness Children series is far from the daily experience of most viewers.

The Wilderness Children connect intimately with the Arctic landscape through practical engagement, whereas the viewers observe it on a screen. Despite this dissonance, the viewers may recognise related dreams and feelings, just by watching. Buckley (2004, as cited in Gyimóty and Mykletun 2004, p. 215) refers to visual experiences of extreme sports as "drive-in adventure", and claims that passively watching sequences of "real adventures" prompts psychological responses similar to the excitement and playfulness provoked by actual participation. If this is true, watching the Wilderness Children and their familiarity with Arctic 'white infinity' and wildlife may trigger the emotional engagement, romanticised dreams and identification viewers would derive from the actual experience.

Most activities *performed* by The Wilderness Children require specialised training, advanced equipment and professional guidance. An extreme example of this appears in one of the final episodes, when the children take an ocean sailboat to a remote cliff. After top-rope climbing up, with guidance from their father and male experts they sleep overnight while dangling in a climbing-bivouac. This episode illustrates five significant aspects of the series. First, few scenes depict the Wilderness Children engaged in unsupervised play, or just

letting their curiosity guide them while roaming freely in nature. Rather, they behave more like students in an outdoor specialist or adventure tourism programme. Though they do not get degrees or certificates, they express an attitude of “we’ve been there, seen this and done that”, as if collecting trophies.

Second, the activities the Wilderness Children engage in are not available to most young girls or families with children. Third, as their deployment of specialised technology and extreme skills increases, the mother gradually disappears from the narratives. A similar pattern has been documented in feminist analysis worldwide (Pedersen 2003). A fourth implicit discourse concerns the absence of explicit environmental ethics and critiques. The environmental ethics that underlies the series celebrates Arctic wilderness as human-friendly, clean, healthy, and challenging; both pristine and beautiful. This perspective is balanced by comprehensive knowledge and deep respect for wildlife, along with recognition of the complex dialectical co-existence and co-dependency that makes it possible for humans, wildlife, and ‘wilderness’ to share the same environment.

Finally, the series presents a mediated dual perspective that is never made explicit: the apparently subjective life-worlds of the girls, and the complex eco-cultural discourses and structures underpinning the choices made by their parents. As outlined above, the most potent of the eco-cultural discourses are the construction of Arctic wilderness as a family idyll and the reconceptualization of that wilderness into a terrain in which *new adventurous femininities* can evolve.

### **Acknowledgement**

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## Research Adventures with my Bear

Tracy Hayes<sup>21</sup>

Can you imagine a world where no-one goes outside? Our world is under threat from human activities, from what we do, and the way we do it. Whilst there is a widely-recognised need to address this threat, there is a specific focus on how we can involve young people in this process, and additional concern about how little time children and young people spend outside (see, for example Kellert, 2012; Louv, 2001; 2005; 2009; 2013; Ridgers et al., 2012; White and Stoecklin, 2008).

My study responded to these concerns by exploring young people's relationship with nature, considering how this may be nurtured through the projects we offer them. The young people (11 – 25) were from diverse backgrounds, with a wide range of individual needs. The key themes that emerged from my research included: Inclusiveness; Responsiveness; Playfulness; Creativeness; Kindness; Comfort and Belonging. I have captured the essence of these in storied form, which is useful for generating discussions and represents a lexicon of practice. My research resulted in a commission to develop a practitioners' toolkit providing guidance on how to work effectively outdoors, with young people identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A less traditional, unexpected outcome from my research has been a range of teddy bears. It started with the making of one bear - called 'Aporia' because he is easily confused, tends to walk around in circles and become lost. He has accompanied me on my research adventures for over four years now. In the early days he was rather shy and did not make



Figure 1: Aporia the Adventure Bear, Author's Garden. June 7, 2017.

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his presence known. However, he has become more visible in my research and has been joined by more than 200 other Adventure Bears across the World.

As shown in the image (Figure 1) and with the story that follows (this forms one of the chapters in my PhD thesis, Hayes, 2017), my work is creatively presented, so that the presentation reflects my findings.

### **Responsiveness - Lexi's story: being, not doing**

We meet at her local coffee shop, along with a practitioner from the project she attends. Once we've chosen our drinks we sit on the comfy sofas, at the far end of the room, furthest from the door. I explain more about my project, that I'm trying to find out what young people like to do outside. Lexi knows a bit about my work, the practitioner had told her which is why she asked to meet me. She tells me she likes walking, around the town, by the river: *"I try to get home early, because he doesn't like me out at night, he thinks I'm doing something. He's my ex, but he still lives with me. He's very controlling – where I go. And if I go out late at night, he's always wondering, where's she going, what's she doing. I like walking on my own, I can think then..."* We sip our drinks as she explains that she prefers walking by the river, it's nicer than the town, she likes water, the sound of it, especially after it's been raining. I ask her what birds she sees, but she doesn't see any. She watches the swans, which she says are like ducks, with webbed feet so they're not birds. She laughs at me as I attempt to explain that swans and ducks are birds, and that birds can have webbed feet. I ask, *"What makes a bird a bird?"* She laughs again and replies, *"Feathers. But a duck doesn't have feathers."* *"Well, they don't have fur, do they? What do you think they have?"* I respond. We both laugh at the thought of a furry bird – what a funny sight that would be. I gently describe how birds that live near water have special feathers that are waterproof, and some of them have webbed feet. She admits she's not really stopped to think about this before. I ask what else she likes about the river, and she says, *"It's just interesting – people go swimming, but I wouldn't even paddle there."* She paddled at the seaside with her friend, but the river is

rocky, has stones on the bottom, and people throw stuff in there. There's a strong current, you could get swept away. We move on to chat about a few other things she's done recently, ice skating, meeting up with friends, having an operation from which she's still recovering. She wanted to walk up a mountain, she was planning on doing it – I'd seen the planning and evaluation forms which confirmed this intention. But then she stayed on a residential, and they went for a walk to a view point, over the lake. She was sick, everywhere. She didn't get chance to look at the view, because by the time she got there everyone else was ready to move on. She'd still like to walk up a mountain, but asks us, *"If I can't make it up the first bit, how am I going to walk up a mountain? My mum said I should walk up Scafell! I don't think I could do that, when even a little bit of walking made me sick. I need a very small mountain, like a hill or something."* I know some really nice hills, that I think she may like, which I'd like to share with her, however that's not why I'm here, that's not my role. We move on to talk about other ways of being outside. She's recently helped with a gardening project which she enjoyed. After a lovely chat about gardening, I return to the subject of walking by the river. How is this different from being in the garden? From being on the residential? What other activities has she tried? What does she like doing? Is it important to go outside? She tells me it is, that she feels more energized - being cooped up inside she starts to think about bad things, outside she can think about good things. The doctor gave her some pills to help with anxiety, because she gets panic attacks. When she's walking, she can sort things out in her head. The fresh air helps: *"It can be very lonely inside, when you're there on your own."* She likes walking on her own and feels less lonely outside, but she doesn't know why. I agree, it is difficult to know why, which is why I've been studying it. I ask her if she thinks other young people should go outside, and she replies, *"Yes, but only if they want to, it's everyone's choice."* She explains it is more difficult when you have health issues like anxiety. I gently question if it matters what activities we offer, and she asserts, *"You should think about people's abilities when planning activities, when I can't do something that others can, I think they're going to laugh at me, it makes me*



*upset and not want to go out...” To bring the interview to a close, I explain how my project started, from my experiences as an environmental youth worker – which is how I know about birds. I ask her if being outside may make people want to look after outdoor places, “Does being in a garden make you want to look after that garden?” She replies, “For me it does. When I sit in a garden, then I want to look after that garden, that’s me, I don’t know if other people feel like that. The school I went to had a garden just outside the school grounds, but all the druggies went there, wasn’t safe. I wanted to look after that garden, but they said we didn’t have the budget, and the teachers didn’t want to do it”. At that school, she only went outside for P.E. and a little bit of science: “We even had nature class inside, never went out. We learned about plants’ names, but not what they do. We looked at them in books, it was so boring, can’t remember anything from that class, there wasn’t even one plant in the room. They could do more at school to teach people about this stuff...” She tells me again she really likes swans, they have big wings and can fly, then questions if I’m sure a swan is a bird? She still thinks it’s more of a duck. We agreed this is the end of the interview. However, we continued to chat, and I explained how I used to teach ‘nature class’ (Hayes, 2013). The recorder was still running, and listening to it again, I was struck by the words I used, and how the picture they describe could be perceived to be a metaphor for the way I have conducted my research. I have transcribed the spoken words and present them in the form of a short poem:*

### **See this flower...**

We look at it first, we get up really close and look at it,  
And then, if it’s not too fragile, we can touch it, see what it feels like,  
And then we can smell it, to see what it smells like,  
And if it’s edible, and there’s lots of it, we will pick it,  
And we can taste it, to see what it tastes like,  
And if it’s windy, we’ll get our ears down low,  
And we’ll see what it sounds like when the wind is blowing,

And we'll use all our senses, we'll do all that,  
And then we might go and look at a book,  
And see what someone else has thought about it,  
But we'll get to know it ourselves first,  
Is that the kind of nature class you'd like?

I recall she silently nodded her response. The tape did not capture this. I did not record it in my field notebook. Yet in my memories, she also smiled. I have not seen her since this encounter. I hope she has continued walking by a river. I hope she has been able to find some peace in her mind. And I really hope she has walked up her small mountain.

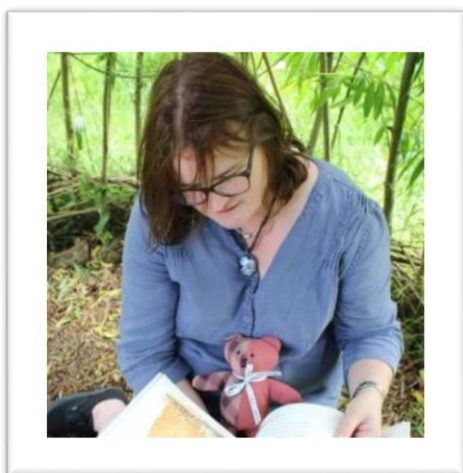


Figure 2: Author and Aporia Adventure Bear reading stories, Public Woodland in Leicestershire. June 11, 2017

The words directly attributed to Lexi are taken from the transcript of the recorded interview, used in the sequence in which they occurred. Her story shows you what I have found. This '... idea of showing is an important one. To show something to somebody is to cause it to be seen or otherwise experienced – whether by touch, taste, smell or hearing – by that other person' (Ingold, 2000, p.21). Lexi's story is typical of my research in that I have focused on small, intimate stories (see for example, Hayes, 2014a; Hayes, 2016) that tend to

get lost amongst bigger, less subjective studies. However, you may be wondering, where do the bears fit in? Like my stories, the adventure bears are useful for prompting discussions and as tools for engagement. They are everyday objects, a recognised childhood toy and a reminder to be childlike. I have found them an effective way of making connections, getting/focusing attention in a way that emphasises fun, playfulness and comfort. Also, I enjoy making them and relish the creative process from choosing the fabric to the final gifting it to someone else. I gifted one to Lexi after the interview was finished.

I gift you this story. I invite you to reflect on your own work, whatever that may be, and to consider what messages you convey, both spoken and unspoken. Do you directly address concerns about nature? How do young people respond and how do you respond to them? How can we address the diverse needs of a group so that each person feels able to participate in their own way, to not worry that they cannot do things that others can – or vice versa (Hayes, 2014b)? I urge you to remember Lexi's words: "... *think about people's abilities when planning activities, when I can't do something that others can, I think they're going to laugh at me, it makes me upset and not want to go out.*"

Reflecting on my work, it becomes apparent the research has also constructed me, the 'expert', the researcher, just as much as I have constructed meaning from the research. I found my Self.

And yet, I want to do more than simply interpret the world, I want to be more effective in taking action to conserve and protect it. That is the focus of my post-doc work – and yes, I'll be accompanied by my bear (Figure 2) who is already receiving his own recognition (Figure 3).

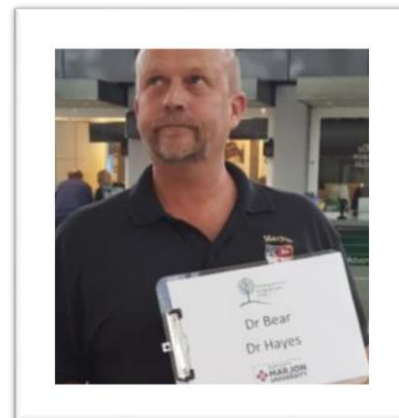


Figure 3: The author being greeted by Dr Mark Leather, Plymouth train station. June 28, 2017

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## Using Local Tales to Raise Cultural Sensitivity and Understanding of the Site in CŠOD Programmes

Irena Kokalj<sup>22</sup> and Metka Tajzel

Slovenia is a quite small country in central Europe. Some foreigners would say that Slovenia is the world's best country to live in, not just because of its natural beauty, but also because of the way of life, local food and customs. One thing that one can notice is that Slovenians are not self-confident. Maybe because of the size of the country, the history or because of the lack of opportunities for a job. Many people see foreign countries as better ones.

CŠOD is a part of the education system where the aim of education is also to raise self-confident youngsters, active citizens, who live a healthy life and are responsible for themselves, others and nature. The outdoor education in Slovenia has an important role in the system. One of the aims in CŠOD is that youngsters see and experience nature in real life, to be connected with it and to be proud that they live in Slovenia.

### Outdoor education in Slovenia

In Slovenia, outdoor education is fully integrated in the school system. It is part of the compulsory curriculum in different ways such as school in nature and activity days. Schools have to organize school in nature at least twice during elementary education; some of them organize it almost every year. Participation for pupils is not obligatory but most of them participate. Children in Slovenia participate in outdoor camp at least twice during the nine years of elementary school, some of them even every year.

CŠOD is an institution that carries out outdoor education programmes and currently comprises 24 residential centres all around the country. CŠOD offers outdoor programmes for primary and secondary schools and kindergartens. CŠOD is a part of formal education with the same working conditions and salaries as in schools. There are fully employed outdoor teachers, instructors and technical staff in every centre. The Ministry of Education provides financial funding for salaries and also for some equipment and maintenance of the buildings. Yearly there are around 110,000 participants, almost 60 % of school population, in

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Slovenia visits to CŠOD programmes every year. Most of the programmes are free of charge; parents only have to contribute for accommodation and food.

### **Diversity of the country and programmes**

The relatively small territory of Slovenia has a great geographical and biological diversity that determinates the cultural diversity of different regions. School groups that participate in school in nature in different CŠOD centres have a chance to get to know and experience different parts of Slovenia such as the Alps, Pannonia, Karst and coast. Throughout the years, the programmes in CŠOD have evolved into an interdisciplinary programme that integrate culture, nature science, social science and sport activities. Programmes must include objectives contained in the curriculum, but they also include a lot of other activities. CŠOD centres are especially aware of the importance of their surroundings. The programmes include active exploration of local nature and cultural heritage. In every CŠOD centre, we try to present the environment, the people and the way of life in connection to the local stories and legends of the region. The programmes include folk tales, games, legends, special nature spots, historical houses and events which determinate the past and the present way of life.

### **Residential centre Peca**

We would like to present one of the CŠOD centres which uses *narratives* to raise cultural sensitivity and understanding of the site. The Peca centre is situated in the shelter of Mt. Peca, covered in mysterious legends about King Matjaž, the mine dwarf Bergmandlc and the treasure of the Grauf farm. Lead and zinc mine and ironworks left their stamp on the region. In the past, miners, searching for luck, explored the surface as well as the underground. Nowadays the explorers are hikers, cyclists, natural scientists, families, ethnologists and others who explore along the cycling trails, in mine galleries, in forests, in the bark house of the forest workers, on steep peaks of the surrounding mountains. Gaily coloured meadows and forests are our classroom. With special methods we introduce the main heroes from local folk tales to the pupils.

The Peca residential centre is one of 24 CŠOD centres. It lies on the border between Slovenia and Austria, in the middle of the Karavanke geopark, which is part of the Global

Geoparks Network. It is located 4km away from the town of Mežica and surrounded by a green forest of pine, spruce, beech and larch trees. It is located within the area of unspoilt nature, where stories and legends are brought to life with the help of pupils. The centre has 13 rooms (70 beds). The rooms are interestingly named after legends and supernatural beings (King Matjaž, Bergmandelc-miners leprechaun, Ibržnik, Forest man, the Unfortunate wife...). We have around 2,800 guests per year and over 10,000 nights. We host primary and secondary school pupils, gifted children, children with special needs, pupils from schools in bordering countries (Italy, Austria and Hungary), sport and cultural clubs, as well as individual guests from different parts of Slovenia.

Schools take part in a three or five-day programme (which includes board, lodging and activities). Our programme offers over fifty activities related to the natural and social sciences and sport. We structure learning through certain methods such as thematic and project weeks. We also offer a programme for gifted children and children with special needs. We have all the necessary equipment in order to ensure a quality programme (bikes, skis for downhill and cross-country skiing, canoes, science and sports equipment, etc).

The Centre is located in a mining area, which has left its mark on the landscape. In the past, the area was explored by miners, now it is pupils who are looking to learn about nature. The meadows and forests become their classroom. During their explorations, they learn about legends and stories from the past. Stories are included in the programme in a variety of ways:

### **1. Stories and information technology**

- With the help of technology such as GPS devices, mobile phones, compasses, laptops etc, pupils search for the hidden treasure on the heritage farm Grauf .
- Using the mobile application ČŠOD mission (downloaded on to mobile phones and tablets), pupils learn about the geology of the area and complete learning tasks.
- Using infrared cameras, we film and follow animals in the forest as they forage for food.

### **2. Stories and sport**

- Pupils visit the mine on a train. They ride on the old miners' train under the Peca mountain and learn about the work of miners in the past.
- Pupils visit the disused mine by canoe. They canoe through the excavated mining channels, which have been filled with water.



- Pupils visit the disused mine on bikes and search for the mine's leprechaun Bergmandelec. They bike for 10km along narrow transportation tracks in the mines underneath the Peca mountain. They experience a unique adventure.
- In the forest pupils spend time in the adventure park, where the forest leprechaun ROK takes them on a journey to explore the treetops.
- Pupils go canoeing along the Drava river and search for the Underwater man and over 150 different types of bird.
- In the nearby forest and meadows, the Forest man plays disc golf with pupils and encourages them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

### **3. Stories and cultural heritage**

- We have a special house in the forest made from tree bark. In the past, lumberjacks used to use these bark houses as temporary places to stay whilst chopping wood. Today pupils learn how to start a fire and prepare food in them, and they make shacks from natural materials.
- Through learning trails and info points, which are equipped with interactive tables, pupils learn about the cultural heritage of the area.

### **4. Stories and nature**

- The Peca centre is named after the nearby mountain Peca. Legend has it that King Matjaž lived in the mountain. King Matjaž is a king, which once upon a time reigned bravely and wisely over Slovenia. When powerful enemies attacked him, the Peca mountain opened up and hid him. Today there is a statue of him, as he sits at the table and waits for his beard to wrap around the table nine times. Once that happens, he will come out of hiding with his army and bring new values and material welfare to the country.
- Pupils use their imagination and with the help of elements from nature, take us into the world of storytelling.

### **5. Stories and local cuisine**

- What did miners and lumberjacks used to eat? Where and how did they prepare their food? Pupils find the answers to these questions when we prepare traditional meals from the local area (»kločevi nudlni«, »mali in veliki grumpi«, ...). Whilst we cook the meals, we speak about the food and sing songs in the local dialect.

Through storytelling and using stories in various different fields, pupils successfully learn about their natural and cultural heritage and successfully take on sports challenges.

## **Conclusion**

Slovenia is increasingly connecting with the rest of the world, and consequently this increases the risk of neglecting the historical tradition and loss of cultural identity. Unlike

other areas, outdoor education emphasizes locality, which allows us to stay connected with tradition, natural and cultural heritage.

## Environmental awareness through rock climbing: connecting students to their outdoor practice

Su Porter<sup>23</sup>

The BA Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) degree at the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth (Marjon), aims to develop well rounded outdoor learning practitioners, who are academically, socially, ethically and technically capable.

The programme is shaped by

- The QAA<sup>24</sup> Benchmarks for Hospitality, Sport, Leisure and Tourism and Environmental Studies,
- The Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) – the umbrella organisation that promotes outdoor learning, lobbies on behalf of, represents and supports anyone involved in outdoor learning,
- The work of the National Governing Bodies such as the British Mountaineering Council (BMC), Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoeing (BC).

Pedagogically the degree is built on a philosophy of experiential education, and the emphasis on outdoor learning and leadership means that this largely involves reflective practice, action research, and humanistic and interpretative modes of enquiry. Therefore, we aim to develop graduates who are increasing their environmental awareness, for themselves, others and the environment in which we work.

The programme is professionally oriented, so what matters is the students' ability to act. Brown & Dilley (2012) argue that a responsible outdoor subject is response-able; a 'knowing' subject, able to anticipate human/non-human interactions and act accordingly. This suggests that *self-awareness*, in terms of *self-in-environment*, is as important as environmental awareness.

One of the ways utilised to develop the students' environmental awareness and ability to reflect upon their actions is through the production of an auto-ethnographic account of their participation in rock climbing in the outdoor environment. We believe that this exercise provokes a development of the students' self-awareness, environmental awareness and – crucially – *self-in-environment* awareness.

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To engage students in developing this idea of *self-in environment* awareness we decided to use autoethnography. We require the students to reflect on their experiences, identify themes and create a narrative that gives their voice as participant and, having read around their themes, give an outside view as a researcher. When the autoethnography was first trialled a highly apposite paper appeared in the *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, in which Robbie Nicol presented an autoethnographic account of his solo expedition by canoe and sea kayak (Nicol, 2013). Nicol presented similar discussions to the aims we were hoping to achieve – to engage students in the promotion of pro-environmental behaviour, through their own participation in a taught module of rock climbing, which would engage them in physical, emotional, intellectual, social and possibly spiritual experiences.

The *Environmental Awareness through Adventure Sport* module has a strong practical component; where the development of personal outdoor climbing skills is used as a starting point for a more holistic discussion of the environment in which we work. This includes the nature and geology, weather, the users groups and the management, if any, of these sites. Venues included Dartmoor granite and Devonian limestone, uplands, lowlands and sea cliffs. More theoretical lectures included research positionality, journaling, autoethnography, environmental ethics and professionalism. Students are asked to keep a journal throughout the module, in order to base their assessed coursework on this. Through this the learners are more at the centre of the experience, there is ownership and hopefully empowerment and greater engagement as they enquire further and make sense of their own thoughts and ideas within the journal. The journal itself is not assessed; it is submitted with the final assignment as an appendix to support their writing. What we are looking for in the students is a development of self-awareness, environmental awareness and – crucially – *self-in-environment* awareness. This was seen in the final written submission, the autoethnography, the journal and in an additional module evaluation we asked students to participate in.

All modules are evaluated; this module had an additional evaluation that asked three questions:

1. What impact did the auto-ethnography exercise have on the module for you?

2. What did you learn?
3. How might this affect you as an outdoor practitioner in the future?

These were deliberately open questions to allow the students to respond with what was uppermost in their thinking at that time. Some of the responses fit into the three areas of self-awareness, environmental awareness and – crucially – self-in-environment awareness and examples are included here.

The combination of the autoethnography, the journal accompanying the submission and the additional module evaluation resulted in us being able to see that:

### **1. Levels of self-awareness demonstrated are good;**

Martha's journal (after she's bought some climbing boots):

"It was quite a difficult climb but the grip you get from the boots was amazing. This has definitely increased my climbing ability and my confidence as I can trust in my equipment to keep myself safe and not fall/slip off the rock!"

Andy's journal

"I climb because I love it and because it is there (Mallory, 1924; Yates, 2001). My dyspraxia becomes a mere inconvenience and almost forgotten, as I improve my motor skills with every climb; my muscles remembering my climbing moves; and, most importantly, I take part on an equal basis with my peers. The challenge of rock climbing has been a spiritual epiphany for me with a strong connection with the environment and excellent partnerships being formed."

Selected comments from the additional module evaluations...

- Made me think and reflect on my emotions rather than just the good and bad aspects of a session
- Psychologically I learnt how to deal with my fears and anxiety
- Viewing others from their perspective and not mine.
- I have learnt about myself and how I cope and react with others around me, I can use this in similar situations in the future.
- The deeper meaning of reflective practice has meant that through looking at my own thoughts deeper I have identified area where I can improve further and this is apparent in my autoethnography.

### **2. Environmental Awareness**

In the students' work less was seen about the cognitive/scientific knowledge of the non-human world, much more was seen about an appreciation for the environment, which is at least a start.

“An awareness of the environment you're working in is crucial to outdoor adventure education and absolutely essential to rock climbing. It provides a three dimensional learning experience. It grounds the experience and, through all the senses, embeds the place in the memory.” Izzy.

Andy in particular, revealed a variety of different positions at different times. His autoethnography features a mythical, magical, mystical nature, highly romanticised and fantasized:

“...I became enchanted by the spirits who surrounded me in a soft blanket of every shade of green with moss and lichen and creeping plants protecting the rock and having a life of their own.” Andy

His journal ranged from the egocentric/functionalist to being 'at one with' or 'part of' nature. At one point he advocates a rule-based approach to nature:

“This was good to see that climbers were being respectful and evidence of everyone respecting and following the BMC's Guidance on correct crag etiquette of leaving no trace.” Andy

Comments from the additional Module Evaluation Forms about **environmental awareness**

- It has made me think more about the interaction between myself and the environment whilst participating in outdoor activities and the impact I can have on the environment
- Without an understanding of the environment climbing would not be so enjoyable
- I learnt that the environment is more delicate than I previously thought
- Greater appreciation of the environment we work in and how to look after it

### **3. *Self-in-environment* awareness - the relationship to environment.**

Student's auto-ethnographies and journals revealed a range of attitudes/positions towards the environment.

These mostly focused on egocentric comments about the students' enjoyment, safety or use of the environment (all of which is very necessary!), such as:

“There was so much to contend with when seconding the climb, it had just started to rain, and the rock had become slippery. Instead of feeling like I could dance on the rock and really perfect my flexibility on the rock, I felt like an animal on ice, slipping all over the place. Everything I had finally become confident and comfortable with had gone out of the window. I was clinging to the rock with dear life and hating every minute, just wanting the climb to end. After feeling like I had come so far with rock climbing it is amazing how the change in the environment can affect me.”  
Martha.

Hayden developed a critique of Western dualist notions of ‘society’/ humans as separate from ‘nature’. He also picked up on technology as a means of bridging that separation

“‘Outside of society, wilderness is something to be feared’ (Short, 1991:6). This is a deeply worrying concept that human beings are forgetting where they are from; they are disconnecting themselves from their origins”...

“...climbing technology brings us closer to nature; it serves to bring us deeper and higher into nature”. Hayden.

There were also signs of ‘care’; this is reminiscent of Heidegger’s ‘dwelling’ (dwelling, as opposed to just inhabiting a place, involves sparing, preserving, ‘safeguarding each thing in its nature’), and also Leopold’s land ethic.

“To avoid damaging a spider’s web across one of the cracks I was going to use as a handhold, it seemed only right that I located a different crack even though this made my climb much harder. Climbing may help to blow the cobwebs of my mind away but I did not wish to do this to such an intricate and labour intensive creation. After all I was relying on a web of climbing ropes tightly strung over rock and tree roots to hold me as I scaled the rock face wishing I also had six legs for extra grip.” Andy

Comments from the additional Module Evaluation Forms about **Self in environment**:

- The impact of being outdoors on group and personal attitudes
- I began to think more about what happened, how I felt, how others felt, my interaction with the environment
- To explore my senses, what I heard, what I saw and what I smelt.
- Made me properly evaluate not only my climbing ability but the environment and other aspects around me, including my feelings in an in-depth way
- Through my research I also learned a great deal about other outdoor practitioners and about how their respect for the natural world was sculpted in similar ways



- Look around take in environment and to think about my effect on it and its' effect on me

## Conclusions

We are looking for self-awareness, environmental awareness and – crucially – self-in-environment awareness. Are we achieving our aim? Robbie Nicol posed the question: is autoethnography a useful approach for outdoor educators in promoting pro-environmental behaviour?

Certainly the level of self-awareness among the students is good, and perhaps the journal helped here as it pushed them to reflect on and articulate their experiences each week. Most of the students do not really move beyond self-awareness, choosing focal themes of fear, trust, confidence and development – though there was an awareness of their reliance on technology, and how technology enables a climb. A secure harness, shoes for grip, the hardware for placement and protection; climbers do develop close relationships and subjectivities with their equipment (Barratt, 2011, 2012).

A small number of students wrote about themselves in relation to the environment more explicitly, more consciously, than other; interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, these are generally the most competent climbers or particularly conscientious students. This accords with suggestions from Wattchow (2007, 2008) and Preston (2014) that novice participants in outdoor activities can be overwhelmed by technical demands, rendering anything beyond that immediate focus (such as ethical relations with place) unimportant. We require our students to have a good appreciation of the environment in which they work, to work sustainably and to be able to educate others with whom they come into contact. In their work here we see evidence of environmental awareness as an aesthetic appreciation of the environment, appreciation of the need to care for nature and a physical appreciation of cause and effect of climbers. The learning journal was certainly important as this led to deeper reflection, analysis, making sense of and application – all worthy graduate attributes.

This has led us to consider our range of approaches to develop environmental awareness in our programme. One example is the assessment in our module based in the mountains.

Students engage with footpath management, the more scientific reasons for, why and how. They are then asked to investigate the impact footpath management has on people and their time spent in this mountain environment; this further develops their *self-in-environment* alongside more cognitive environmental awareness.

At the end of the day we aim to equip Marjon Outdoor Adventure Education graduates with skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to an environmentally and ethically responsible society and as outdoor practitioners who seek to develop their own, and others', understanding of the environment and the behaviours that can adversely affect it.

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## Making Sense of the Sensory Outdoors

Heather Prince<sup>25</sup>

Many practitioners introduce young people to sensory activities outdoors to encourage them to make a connection with the environment. This is an inclusive approach to engaging a group of children, which is low cost, utilises little equipment, does not require technical expertise and can take place in a local environment. However, in respect of pedagogy and learning, there are questions about its justification and meaning, and whether or not young people can derive a wider understanding of sensory deprivation and disability. Furthermore, through experiencing nature, do young people actively seek a relationship or connection with it?

Educationalists following Montessori approaches promote sensory integration in young children by providing sensorial materials, usually in a 'prepared' indoor environment. More recently through such pedagogies, the potential of the outdoors for enabling sensory exploration has been recognised: '...the connection between child and nature is of critical importance' (Noddings, 2017, p.45) and should be more inclusive. i.e. not only for children with sensory challenges.

Graham (2014) provides evidence that the most important outcomes for young people of outstanding Outdoor Learning are creativity, ownership and progression. Pedagogical approaches that stimulate sensory awareness, by their very nature encourage and stimulate curiosity, exploration, inquiry, experience and communication and address these outcomes well. Klein, Moon and Hoffman (2006) use similar approaches to define the concept of sense-making as '... a motivated, continuous effort to understand connections (which can be among people, places, and events) each to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively' (ibid.p.71) and involve the concepts of creativity, curiosity, comprehension, mental modelling and situation awareness. Some formal education initiatives and schooling are founded on these outcomes and approaches to outdoor learning, such as nature kindergartens, forest school and bush kinder, and within these and other early year settings,

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outdoor play is supported and encouraged. The integration of environmental education including sensory activities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) through its application to the theoretical models of Piaget and Vygotsky has only recently been recognised in the literature (Hebe, 2017). Within outdoor settings for older children, the justification for the inclusion of sensory activities in outdoor learning or environmental education is weaker. Key early proponents of sensory activities in the outdoor environment included educators such as Joseph Cornell and Steve van Matre, 'Learning experiences in our field should include more M & M (magic and meaning) and less 'N & N's (names and numbers)' (van Matre, 1999, p.4). Van Matre included a range of sensory activities in progressive programmes such as 'Earthkeepers' and 'Sunship Earth' popular in the 1980's and 1990's. There have been re-iterations of many of these activities often used out of the intended context, wrongly appropriated or not at all. However, there is a belief that when children are using their senses in the outdoor environment, this plays a key role in knowledge retention and intellectual and cognitive development (Kalisch, 1999; Louv, 2008) although there seems to be little research evidence to support this.

A simulation of sensory deprivation, for example sight, may allow young people to understand the issues of visual impairment and supports the co-construction of narratives about equality, diversity and inclusion and an appreciation of disabilities (Prince, 1999). Conversely, viewed from the perspective of a visually impaired person, disabling the enabled in this way, albeit temporarily, is seen to affect corporeal movement and body language and promotes non-visual 'pictures' or somatic conceptions of the land and a heightened awareness of other senses.

Kellert (2012) introduces the term 'naturalistic necessity' – the role of children's direct experience in nature for growth and development. The question is whether such sensory experiences in the outdoors can develop a relationship or connection with nature. Bögeholz (2006) provides some empirical evidence for experiences in nature contributing to the individual development of attitudes and values and thus suggests that such education promotes and enhances sustainable practice (Cooper, 1999). Outdoor experiences that involve understanding and experiencing nature can change behaviour and attitudes and are key attributes of sustainability (Barnes and Sharp, 2004). Prince (2017a) provides vignettes

of outdoor experiences within formal education that promote a shift towards pro-environmental behaviour.

Are the senses equally addressed with outdoor experiences with young people? It is often the case that 'Ways of seeing' privileges sight relative to other sensory modalities' (Macpherson & Minca, 2005) recognised as 'ocularcentrism' (Jay, 1994). An example of this is asking young people to explore their environment through the lenses of a colour following a prismatic ecological approach (Cohen, 2013) 'Colour ...as a multispecies sensory process or network that generates biosemiotic material effects with their own metaphorical meaning ...' (Yates, 2013, p.85). However, touch is also important and can break the distance between subject and object, assuming a proximal and performative form of knowledge that exceeds representation (Goesser, 2014). The more recent understanding of 'haptic' (of, or pertaining to, touch) experiences, within outdoor adventure education and experiential learning, draws from haptic geographies. These encompass more than the tactile or tactile sensations towards embodiment (Paterson, 2009). In sensory activities, the feeling of an object relative to the body and a body relative to the object supports the understanding of the importance of the involvement of tactile, proprioceptor (the sense of bodily position) and kinaesthetic experiences.

Sensory activities in the outdoors enhance the interest and motivation of young people, and can support cognitive development and changes in behaviour, values and attitudes. Much evidence is anecdotal and more research is needed to substantiate this supposition. Education and learning are important for the development of knowledge and understanding of sustainability amongst young people (Christie, 2012) although the link between outdoor learning experiences and a shift towards pro-environmental behaviour is complex (Prince, *ibid*). However, in a recent survey of the provision of outdoor learning in the formal curriculum of primary schools in England (Prince, 2017b) teachers were keen to use activities in the local environment that are low cost, equipment light, required a low level of teacher expertise in the area of outdoor learning and address core curriculum areas (science, literacy and numeracy). Sensory activities are examples of pedagogical approaches meeting these criteria.

Making sense and eliciting meaning of sensory activities in the outdoors is viewed here from the perspective of the adult and of educators and facilitators of outdoor learning. The voice of the young person ('generation Z') should be heard, as illustrated here:

Note: A & E is the 'Accident and Emergency' department in UK hospitals.

**Wild is a child**

*Wild is a child who stays out until dark  
Wild is the child that lights fire with bark  
Wild is a child with mud on their knees  
Wild is the child who climbs up in the trees  
Wild is a child a long way from home  
Wild is the child with no need for a comb  
Wild is a child who wipes their bum with a leaf  
Wild is the child who uses a stick to brush their teeth.  
Wild is a child who sleeps under the stars  
Wild is the child who keeps tadpoles in jars  
Wild is a child who fell out of a tree  
Wild is the child with their own parking space at A&E  
Wild is a child that I would like to be.*

Rowan Ashworth (9), Winner of the Wordsworth Poetry Prize (2017)

The extent to which sensory experiences outdoors should be mediated and facilitated, or whether young people simply need space, place and opportunity to explore and make sense of their environments before adult intervention or interpretation, are complex and debated questions. Sensory experiences outdoors do give young people agency and ownership and undoubtedly promote creativity and enquiry. To achieve progression and promote learning, an outdoor experiential pedagogical approach utilising the senses is invaluable.

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## Evidencing atmospheres and narratives: Measuring the immeasurable?

Heather Prince<sup>26</sup> and Tracy Hayes

Most academic researchers conscious of metrics for the assessment of quality of research such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK, will be seeking impact for their work. The evaluation of academic research now extends to relevance and impact beyond the academy (Gunn and Mintrom, 2017). Some may consider evidencing the impact of research into atmospheres and narratives somewhat challenging, particularly for those who adopt a creative, interpretive approach. Thus, if we are to evidence this in our practice and to a wider audience, we should consider whether or not it is measurable, how we would want it to be used and who may read or act upon it.

The political systems in the UK, as in many other European countries, are situated in a positivist theoretical framework and capitalist paradigm built on accountability, performativity and measurability, and where scale is objectified. Policy and decision making for funding throughout Europe usually is based on evaluative evidence (E) that places the apparent fluidity and openness of research into atmospheres and narratives at an epistemological margin. Emphasis is placed on an outcome driven educational system (Prince and Exeter, 2016).

The challenges of evidencing our research are many: Atmospheres and narratives may encapsulate the sensing or feelings of a presence that is not physically present, or the interpretation of which draws on hauntings and/or aesthetics, often metaphorically (Goleman, 2008); for example, as represented by the photo of cobwebs metaphorically linking us through time and space (Figure 1, below). We are challenged in measuring the 'interpersonal dynamic' (W). There are difficulties for young people in articulating learning, which tends to be through recall of information in an exposition; they often do not have the words to express the value and meaning of an experience (FP), particularly personal and social development and growth.

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Figure 4: Cobwebs linking us through time and space, taken at the ‘Shot at Dawn’ memorial, National Memorial Arboretum, UK. June 10 2017.

It could be that research on atmospheres and narratives closely linked to practice would *influence* practitioners rather than impact them, where the term ‘influence’ provides a wider scope of selectivity and a less direct cause and effect relationship. Participants in outdoor experiences are often able to recognise intra-personal values and meanings retrospectively (H; W) through meta-analysis and reflection (Gray, 2017; Prince, 2005). For example, students on an extended solo experience (Williams, 2012) experienced dissonance or ‘stasis’ at the time but were able to analyse the effect of that intervention on their personal development and maturation much later and the analysis of developmental outcomes was the focus of the research rather than immediate outcomes.

Einstein’s epigram ‘Many of the things you can count, don’t count. Many of the things you can’t count, really count’ (O) resonates with the European Institute of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) research community striving to evidence the value of experiences that support the development of, for example, emotional connections, resilience and motivation. These outcomes might require a qualitative research approach and sometimes the development of new methods and methodological frameworks (Hayes,

2017; Pringle and Falcous, 2016) or the recognition of the need to involve a breadth of methodologies and data elicitation/collection tools in the process of 'bricolage' to build the evidence base (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Tracy, 2013). Quay and Seaman (2013) caution against innovative practices at the fringe of curricula that become centralised. In doing so they become outcomes rather than process and are thus lacking in sustainability.

One way forward of valuing the process could be to ensure that voices, particularly of young people, are listened to, captured and heard (O). Voices provide a depth of articulation to demonstrate and show the meaning of experiences, bring them to life and focus on the 'showing' rather than the 'telling' (Ingold, 2000). Tansley and Maftei (2015) support this alternative (alterative) approach in their critique of more traditional forms of reporting, as being more open to interpretation, non-directive and arguably, more respectful. 'Voices' are defined in a broad sense and may not involve speech. They can be through narrative, including stories, tales and poems, or visual and aural media, for example. These more sensory modes of expression can be used to capture and share experiences in a way that focuses on the processes involved, rather than the end-product or outcome; it also helps to make visible the meaning found by participants. We may not be able to measure influence, but we can capture its essence and make it explicit (FP; Hayes, *ibid*). Words help to make intangible issues more tangible; narrative methods enable us to describe it, make it visible, to show the influence and importance of our work.

Czarniawska (2004) explains that narrative involves two perspectives: seeing *narrative* as a mode of knowing, and seeing *narration* as a mode of communication. Hayes (2017, *ibid*) argues that there is a third perspective, seeing the *narrator* as the link between the two, following van Maanen (2011) who recognises representational styles selected to connect the observer to the observed. This developmental thinking moves towards 'showing' and sharing, reflecting the interpretation of storytelling as open and creative, through which participants can bring their own experiences and modes of understanding to the reflective process (Gray and Stuart, 2012). This should not be viewed as a nebulous process, as environmental storytelling, for example, '...is the act of using live narrative performance to teach an audience about the natural world, how it works, and how to care for it' (Strauss,

2006). Furthermore, a storied approach embracing socio-narratology (Frank, 2012) is acknowledged as a valid form of data.

The challenge for researchers is in collating and making sense of those voices in the written form:

A writer's voice is often composed of many voices, which the writer brings together in a conversation. The writer's voice emerges in the way she calls on all the voices and combines them in making an overall statement. To identify the dominant voice of any text, as readers we need to hear distinctly all the voices that the writer calls on (Bazerman, 1995, p.89).

We need to make a judgement within this multi-layered textual form (Ellis, 2004) as to how much of this type of data is needed to demonstrate evidence and authenticity, and the translation of this evidence/data to the language of funders (P). Perhaps we should leave non-textual forms of data in their original mode in order to communicate those voices whom they represent. However, these approaches to the interpretation of voices do have advantages over objective evaluations where there are questions of reliability through 'evaluation fatigue' (R) and the smoothing of large data sets to produce headline figures.

Quality research needs to be achieve representation of the voices of the participants, often young people for whom it needs to be right and truthful, and which may not be generalizable (N; A). Tracy (2013) identifies eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research as: worthy topic; rich rigour; sincerity; credibility; resonance; significant contribution; ethical; meaningful coherence. To this we would add that, in action research, it needs to be robust in theoretical and methodological terms, have value-for-use and build capacity (Elliott, 2007), and that these are benchmarks that we can examine against the evidence from interpretative practices such as narratives and stories.

The provision of evidence to substantiate our research on atmospheres and narratives in the field of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning should draw on transdisciplinarity that views knowledge-building and dissemination as a holistic process and requires innovation and flexibility (Leavy, 2016). It draws on knowledge from disciplines relevant to specific research issues or problems, while ultimately transcending disciplinary borders and building a synergistic conceptual and methodological framework which is irreducible to the sum of its constituent parts. We should acknowledge that utilising more

creative, aesthetic and interpretive practices, may result in more questions than answers, as outcomes of an enquiry (Nixon, 2014). For example, ‘what is impact?’ and ‘how is it measure’ and more to the point ‘who is impacted by it?’ We need to celebrate the process and ‘measure what you value, not value what you can measure’ (FP) to respond robustly to, and counter-balance, calls for metrics and numerical data. By doing this we will be able to find the influence of what we do as outdoor practitioners, whilst being able to respond robustly to the challenge, “You told us a great story, but...”

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## Technical narratives around ropes

Walter Siebert<sup>27</sup>

The term „modern urban legend” was first introduced to the public by [Jan Harold Brunvand](#) (Brunvand, 1981). “An urban legend, ... is a form of modern folklore usually consisting of fictional stories, often with macabre elements, deeply rooted in local popular culture” (Wikipedia, 2017).

A typical sign for a modern urban legend: You will not find a case. An example: Since years I try to find a case where a rope failed due to normal aging. I heard of several people, who know a person who had this accident – only, it was not possible to find this person.

Many rules exist around ropes. Some are described as discard criteria in various manuals and standards, (Siebert, 2016), some are taught in climbing courses. I picked 8 rules around ropes and rated them as “myths”, (“busted”) or “confirmed” by science:

1. Do not step on the rope. This is one of the first things you learn in a climbing course. In tests it was not possible to reduce the breaking strength of a rope significantly: **Busted!**
2. Do not smoke when next to ropes. The second rule in a climbing course. Again, it was not possible to weaken a rope: **Busted!**
3. Do not put 2 ropes in 1 carabiner. It may melt. We have a series of accidents due to melting and it is easy to demonstrate in an experiment: **Confirmed!**
4. After 10 years a rope must be discarded. Here I refer to my thesis **Busted!**
5. Do not leave a rope in a hot car in the sun. The working temperature of polyamide is about 100 deg. centigrade, which can not be reached in a car: **Busted!**
6. Battery acid can destroy a rope (and you can not see). This is a well known and investigated reason for rope failures: **Confirmed!**
7. A rope can break when abseiling on a rock corner. Same like before: **Confirmed!**
8. After a heavy fall a rope is damaged and must be discarded. It was not possible to weaken a rope due to heavy load: **Busted!**

From the standpoint of sustainability ropes should not be discarded based on urban legends, but based on science.

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## Fields of interest to students through their academic work

Eugenio Otero Urtaza<sup>28</sup> and Vicente Blanco Mosquera

The choice of the academic work, that culminates the student training, is a document that can reveal the personal motivations that lead him/her to choose a specific field of study, his/her values, personal ethics and their deepest convictions. It is a very valuable instrument of analysis in order to establish the educational profile that has been defining his/her academic training, not only from a technical perspective, but from the educational practice as moral duty.

When a student is trained as an educator, acquiring skills and values through the ongoing contact with outdoor life, he/she develops a group of significant capacities that are not limited to technical aspects but practical and ethical ones, both in relation with the environment as with rural communities. We try that the competences acquired at the Master's degree of Management of Outdoor Educational Activities (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain) let them study, boost and act in mixed scenarios (nature and rural) from different perspectives. We often use in the students training the nearby biosphere reserves, as well as coastal areas of Galicia and the Islas Atlánticas National Park. In these environments, our students get generally more inspired to prepare their academic papers. Between 2011 and 2016, 100 students enrolled in the Master's degree, of whom 83 presented their final dissertation. An important part of them were women (74.7%) and most of the students had previously graduated as teachers. What topics did they choose for their final dissertation? Popular literature and oral legends of the rural world were the most preferred subject by students followed by non-formal education institutions, but overall the concerns reflected a wide variety of interests, as shown in the table below.

Topics 2011-2016	N	%
Conflict with the natural environment by human action	11	13,25

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Inclusive Education and groups with functional diversity	8	9,64
Development of schooling in the natural environment	11	13,25
Literature and natural environment	19	22,90
Non-formal education and nature	17	20,48
Hiking and route mapping	10	12,05
Other topics	7	8,43
Total	83	100,00

It is not possible to describe here all the richness of these works, nor do we pretend to perform an abstruse statistical analysis. We only want to highlight some elements that show the interests and concerns of these young people in relation to the rural world and the natural environment that is close to them. The syllabus is very holistic. The training given to students is not very defined towards adventure sports, but neither towards land art, the philosophy of the environment or administrative management.

We seek to awake all their capacities related with problems, so they can be good associations and community's leaders into the natural environment, so in this way they can make decisions to face difficulties, protect nature, but also learn from it as persons, and feeling where their limits are. We have chosen some works in which we try to show the conceptual richness of these young people and draw some results on those who are learning.

### **1. An exhibition designed for the forest.**

A student prepared a dissertation about various characters and movements that with their attitude initiated and developed the current ethics in favour of nature. But she was dissatisfied with the discovery, she considered that she should transmit it in some way in which the population should be more aware of the existence and dignity of these people and their social movements. So for that, she designed a display of panels explaining the

tasks they had performed. The panels were prepared to be embrace to trees and to be installed in places frequented by walkers who might stop to read them. The exhibition was placed for a month on one of the most frequented suburban trekking routes of the city and then moved to other places, all with the help of the public authorities. This example shows that a dissertation can have immediate practical consequences and trigger an action that obtains the support of local institutions.



***Figure 1: Footprints for the Earth. Exhibition about diverse people and movements that with their attitude initiated an ethical-political current in favour of nature***

## **2. A natural park that is not.**

Ancares is the most important wooded region of Galicia, with great interest in its protection and very isolated until about sixty years ago. If you walk this region, you will find many landmarks that reveal that you are in a natural park, but Ancares is not a natural park! Why? Because the rural population rejects the declaration of it; the authorities believed that by making public their intention to proclaim the region a natural park was enough, so they put the landmarks, but they met with the strong opposition of the farmers, as a result the authorities did not dare to adopt the law. Many visitors believe they are in a natural park

when they see the landmarks, but although the region of Ancares has several environmental protections is not a natural park.

<b>Types of protection of Ancares</b>		<b>Date of declaration</b>	<b>Area Ha</b>	<b>Municipality</b>
<b>National Hunting Reserve</b>		02/06/1966	8.286	Cervantes
<b>Picturesque landscape</b>		23/09/1971	----	Cervantes (Piomedo and Vilarello de Donís)
<b>Special Protection Area of the Brown Bear</b>		16/06/1992	12.140	Cervantes
<b>Sites of Community Importance</b>		2004/2006	102.438,9	Cervantes, Navia de Suama Folgoso do Courel
<b>Special Protection Area for Birds (ZEPA)</b>		12/04/2004	12.564	Cervantes, Navia de Suama
<b>Special Zone Protection of Natural Values</b>	ZEPVN Os Ancares	12/04/2004	12.564	Cervantes, Navia de Suama
	ZEPVN Os Ancares - O Courel	12/04/2004	102.438,9	Cervantes, Navia de Suama, Folgoso del Courel
<b>Biosphere Reserve</b>		27/10/2006	53.664	Cervantes, Navia de Suama, Becerreá

Source: María Luisa Trabado

The municipality of Cervantes was the focus of the student’s research. This place preserves an important primary forest with some bears that look for spaces to live. A few years ago, the Capercaillie was seen in this region. In Cervantes exists a situation of confrontation with voices for and against on whether the mentioned declaration should be carried out. Being identified as the main determiners of this, total or partial opposition: the restriction of specific uses of the natural resources; the communication problems that exist between the Administration and the population; and the perception by the part of the local population that the declaration of the Natural Park itself is about an external imposition.





Figure 2: A *palloza* (hut) in the village of Piornedo (Ancares)

The rural population does not accept a park by imposition. It is not flatly opposed, but they are concerned about the limitation of use of the territory. The owners of the quarries and mines would possibly have more to lose and it would put much more pressure on the administration. The research shows that the protection of natural spaces requires dialogue with their inhabitants, and that their protection cannot only be done by decree.

### **3. Defining a route for blind people.**

In the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula there are no hiking routes designed to blind people. However, Spanish law is quite favourable to its creation, so depends more on the political will of local authorities than on special administrative obstacles. A student realized that, without great expenses, in this very municipality of Cervantes it was feasible to design a mountain route for blind people, and that this route not only would give an opportunity to widen the rights of people with functional diversity but also to strengthen the culture and economy of a declining area. We agreed with the student to suggest, both the mayor of Cervantes and the provincial administration, to carry out this idea, and they have been very receptive. We are now designing the route with the blind mountaineers of the ONCE (Spanish Organization of Blind People). The student's idea will not stay on paper; soon it will be a beautiful reality. This will be the first route adapted for blind people throughout the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

#### **4. A cement factory in a scantily degraded rural area.**

When a large, noisy and light and air polluting cement factory is installed, there is a great disturbance in the inhabitants' lives. They suddenly found drastic changes in their traditional habits. Many people come from outside and have good job opportunities that lead them to abandon traditional agricultural tasks that barely allow them to subsist. The changes produced by the installation of a large industry usually provide a great wealth to the villages who host them, but also causes discomfort, new customs that are not always well received, and of course a deterioration of the natural environment with irreversible consequences for the landscape, fauna and flora, and the inhabitants' lifestyle. As María González says:

"Despite being an economically viable idea, it was not at the environmental level".

Emissions from the factory and quarry work damaged the environment. This research converges on a proposal aimed at teaching children of primary school to learn the factory history and at the same time to know itself and become aware of the degradation that the cement and quarrying have on the environment".

She investigated how the factory had been welcomed by the inhabitants of the surrounding area, and wondered how the debate about the factory opening could be explained to schoolchildren during a quite hostile social climate to the environment defenders. "Cosmos" of Oural was the most important cement factories in the peninsular northwest. But now, the factory is closed, and the region is in population and economic decline.

#### **5. Recovering a traditional game**

Traditional children's games in the rural world have largely been lost. The emigration of many families to the cities and large towns has left the rural world of Galicia very uninhabited for more than forty years. The rural children's play material was collected from elements of nature and the seasons often marked which materials could be used, but today they have been replaced by manufactured toys. A student collected information about these play items in the surroundings of their municipality and has put them in value. He also participated in the process of recovery of the local bowling game, which currently has several championships for a population of around 1,250 inhabitants.

## **6. Enchanted lakes, literary rivers and emblematic islands.**

A significant part of the academic works that study literary subjects are related to water. A student made a study on the submerged cities legends (she found that in Galicia there are more than sixty places that have this kind of legends). She made a comparison between the Cospito lagoon mythology (in Terra Chá of Lugo), where is located the submerged city of Valverde, and the submerged city of Ys in Britain, finding many coincidences.

The literature the Miño River, the main and most important river of Galicia, has inspire several academic works. However, the most striking dissertation is located at the sea. It is a study of the stories and events that occurred on the San Simón island, in the Ria de Vigo. The San Simon island is a place with many legends that have their roots in the Middle Ages. There are many stories of corsairs, hidden treasures, templar monks, exotic travelers and English Armada attacks! Nearby, in Rande Strait, took place one of the Captain Nemo episodes of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. In the Spanish Civil War, it was the place where more than 5,000 Republicans were withheld by fascists. Some of them were killed by put them in a sack with stones and throw them into the sea! It is a very special place, full of history.

## **7. Representing a play in a cowshed**

A student presented his dissertation as a play that he performed before professors and neighbours in a cow stable. The goal was to demonstrate that theatre is a very useful tool to promote cultural activities in villages. The plot of the play was about the history of the village. It was about a man who had to flee because he killed a man by accident. A wizard made him forget that episode of his life. He was telling stories of his travels around the world. He has told what other people in the village had done that many years ago and nobody knew about them. This dissertation is leading out to a much broader investigation.



**Figure 3: Representation of Simon Piñon's play in the cowshed**

### **In conclusion**

Nature is a reality that needs the human presence. It is crucial for the education of young people the inhabitation of rural world and the preservation of the memory of natural spaces: we come from them. The natural environment is not a landscape without humanity. People, and especially the young ones, who have lived their lives in the cities need to experience the countryside for a while, not only as a visit from an urban mentality, or as an isolated adventure. Natural spaces are not only places to be visited or preserved, it is necessary to live in them and learn how they help us solve the practical problems in order to learn to be oneself.

This implies strengthening the personality with moral qualities that the outdoor life provides us. This is what we appreciate most when we examine these dissertations. We believe that returning to rural life is, paradoxically, an educational task that is becoming more and more pressing in the twenty-first century.

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## ***My Thing – Our Future: Reinforcing youths’ and immigrants’ participation through outdoor education***

Päivi Virtanen<sup>29</sup> and Paavo Heinonen<sup>30</sup>

### **Introduction**

The *My Thing – Our Future* project (2015-2017) focused on identifying and developing young people’s personal skills and potential. “My thing” is understood as a resource that supports participation in hobbies, education and work life thus enabling a young person to become a full member of sustainable society. In particular, young citizens with less educational and cultural capital need support in finding their own thing. The main target groups in the project were young people at risk and immigrants between the age of 15 and 29. The project combined inclusive methods in outdoor education, art, and entrepreneurship. The key objective of the project was to identify young people’s own hidden potential. We believe that learning takes place when leaving the familiarity behind and exploring the unknown on outdoor education courses.

In outdoor educational activities, the outdoor educator usually facilitates the practices for youth groups. Even though, there are many ways of facilitating the practices, the action is still often implemented in a behaviouristic way from adult to young. In many cases the young are not taking part on planning the activity when the professional “knows” what is the most beneficial for the young. This decreases the participation and agency of the youth as the facilitator is the responsible part of the activities. The *My Thing – Our Future* project has been grasping this issue by exploring new methods of facilitation for outdoor activities. The “Young-to-young” guidance model (Y2Y) brings together adolescents from different backgrounds to learn from each other and to open their minds for disparity.

This paper combines practical examples of educational processes organised for young immigrants and youth at risk with research findings of the impacts of the practice. The two cases of outdoor education courses where Y2Y model was put into practice were:

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1. Familiarize immigrants to Finnish culture and living through outdoor activities
2. The ABC of kayaking and camping in the Päijänne National Park

In the first case, twenty immigrants from different backgrounds joined together for three one-day activities of outdoor practices. The aim of the sessions was to facilitate integration into the Finnish society through outdoor experiences. The group was recruited from preparatory vocational school, where they already studied Finnish language. During the activity days the participants practiced new outdoor skills and language, and familiarised themselves into Finnish nature going culture. Young Finnish sport instructor students led the sessions which reached for increased interaction between the ethnic groups.

In the second case, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class with adjusted curriculum participated on a 3-day kayaking tour and several one-day activities of learning necessary skills needed on the tour. The practice days included learning about route planning, kayaking, using a camp cooker etc. The aim of the course was to support young students in transition by improving resilience, self-confidence and team working skills. The course aimed also to increase the agency and participation of the young participants aged from 15 to 18 years.

### **Young-to-young guidance model – Y2Y**

The guidance of the outdoor learning courses was arranged by using the Y2Y model, which is based on idea where young sport instructor students plan and organize activities for the young with less social capital and facing challenges in their everyday lives. The young sport instructor students are first introduced to the work with the youth at risk or immigrants. How can they support a teenager facing a challenge? How should they give instructions for immigrants with limited language skills? After familiarizing themselves with the participating group, the students start to plan the activities based on the desires of the group. By giving the participants a chance to influence on the upcoming activities it is possible to increase their participation, agency, and motivation to join the program. Finally, the students run the educational processes with support of the teachers. Y2Y cases create authentic learning situations where young people from different background meet and learn from each other. See Figure 1.



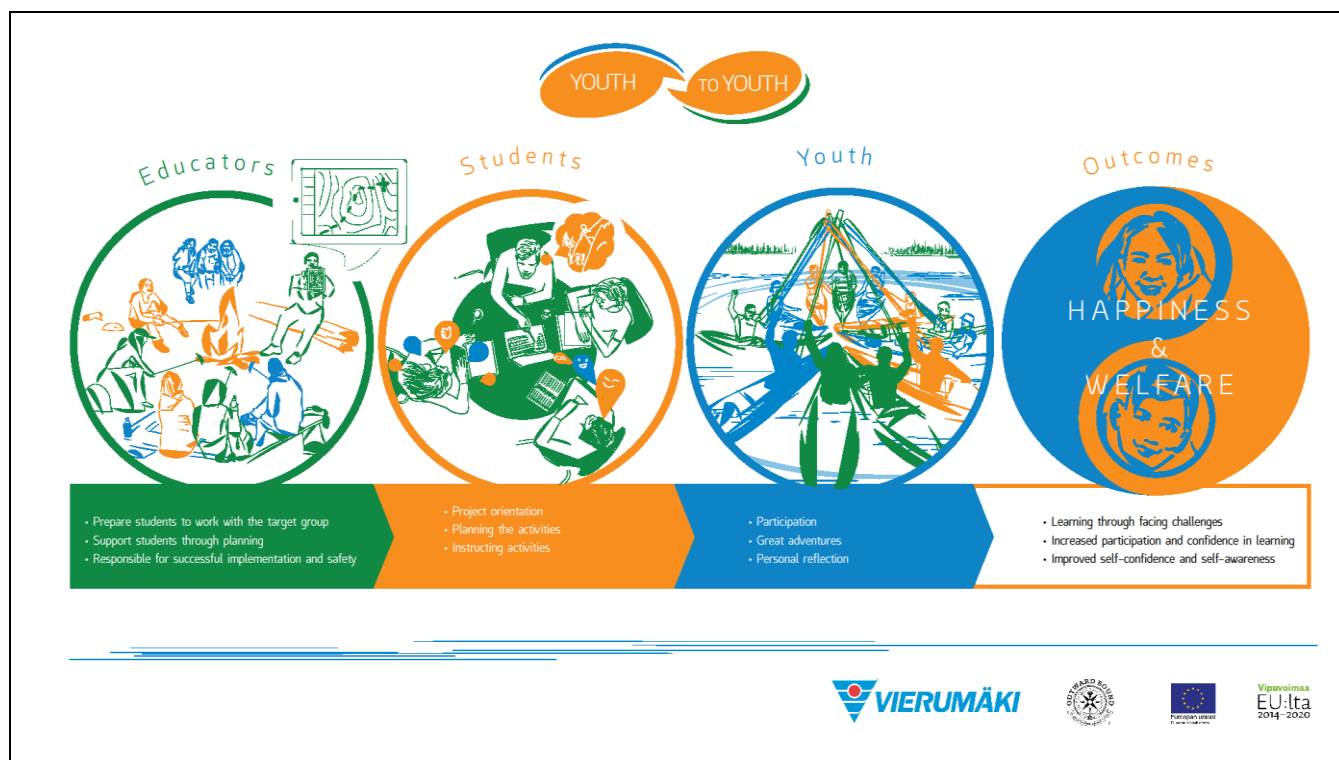


Figure 1. Young-to-young guidance model.

### The effects of outdoor activities

The effect of outdoor education was investigated using action research method. The researcher participated the activities and observed the participants during the activities. In addition, the researcher discussed and interviewed the participants and a short questionnaire with a 5 point Likert scale (1 =don't agree at all, 5 =fully agree) was used after the activities. The evaluation data was collected among 17 young immigrants and 8 pupils with special needs from 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The teachers or instructors of the participating groups and the organisers of activities were also interviewed.

According to the interviews and responses to the questionnaire, the most positive effect was related to activities carried out in groups, participants' self-knowledge and responsibility and to their wellbeing. See Table 1. According to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders, the best things during the activities were "team spirit" or "being together". The young immigrants had found that "the group activities cheered up and increased happiness" and the activities "reminded of family communion, which I miss."

Especially the youngest ones had found positive effect on their ability to make decisions and taking responsibility of themselves. A 9<sup>th</sup> grader who was afraid of water, but participated

the three day kayaking trip responded afterwards “I got a lot of self-confidence and found out that the challenges are there to overcome.”

General wellbeing also was reported to increase in outdoor activities. Participants mentioned they calm down in the nature environment and get strength for their everyday life. A young immigrant mentioned that “Activities get adrenalin going and I feel less depressed.” It became clear that many of the participating immigrants felt lonely and depressed as they were not sure how soon they will be accepted to the vocational institute to study or if they ever will work in the profession they would like to. Outside the study hours many of them stayed at home and then oppressive thoughts may appear.

Table 1. Mean scores of participants’ self-evaluation on outdoor learning effects.

Statements of the questionnaire	Mean scores	
	9th graders n=25	Young immigrants n=17
Group members encouraged and were there for each other.	4.31	4.59
Cooperation in the group was easy.	4.48	4.48
My self-knowledge increased in outdoor activities.	4.39	4.59
I learned to make decisions.	4.67	4.59
I learned to take responsibility of myself.	4.30	not asked
I learned to take responsibility of equipment.	4.50	4.29
Activities made my spirits rise.	4.25	4.47
After the activities my future looked brighter.	4.00	4.29
I realised having an effect on my life.	4.33	4.50

Note: 5 point Likert scale (1 = don’t agree at all, 5 = fully agree)

In addition to development in self-knowledge, responsibility and general wellbeing, the young immigrants reported positive effect on their integration into the Finnish society. The participating young immigrants and Finnish young people responsible for guidance got to know each other well during activities. The thoughts about the other ethnic group - which in

some cases were stereotyped - changed in both groups. Before the outdoor activities the immigrants had scarce connections to young Finnish people, and they were happy to collaborate with nice, helpful and talkative Finns during the informal outdoor activities. The immigrants reported that their general language skills developed, they learned to understand Finnish language spoken in different dialects and their vocabulary concerning words related to outdoor activities, nature etc. increased. The young immigrants also found out how important the nature and forests are for Finns, learned camping skills and what equipment are needed for camping. They learned to enjoy and operate in the wild and the nature reserves and got the knowledge what is allowed to do in different kinds of nature resorts. One young immigrant mentioned that it is important to know these things for not standing out from Finns when going to e.g. national parks. Several young immigrants mentioned the outdoor activities advanced their integration process.

All participants valued the young sport instructor students guiding the outdoor activities. It had been a unique possibility to get to contact with Finns of the same age. Although the activities led by the young students included objectives of learning outdoor skills, the participants found the learning situations relaxed, which made them enjoy the tasks as much as the more adventurous parts of the activities.

The effects of the project *My Thing – Our Future's* outdoor learning activities are in line with another Finnish project's results (Vähäsarja, 2015), which showed that the outdoor activities in the nature, for example, prevented the marginalization of the young, improved self-esteem and enhanced the young-young interaction in such a way that bullying and exclusion from the group decreased.

### **The factors affecting the results**

It became evident that the outdoor activities had more positive effects on participants' wellbeing when the duration of activities was longer, the activities were versatile and challenging and when the participants committed themselves to the project. The project for the young immigrants lasted one month and the activities took place during one day every week. The duration of the project for the 9<sup>th</sup> graders was two months. There were one day activities and the final kayaking trip lasted three days. The young in both groups mentioned

that they would like to continue with the outdoor activities with their study group after the project *My Thing – Our Future* ended.

Stronger effect was found out in situations, when the participants were highly committed to the activities. The commitment was encouraged by activating them already in the activities' planning phase. In addition, when the participants already knew each other or had similar kind of life situation (e.g. immigrants, school class) or a common goal, and the teacher or mentor of the participants was actively participating in the activities, the effects were more positive. What was also found important was to encourage the participants to actively reflect on their feelings and learning. For example, they were asked to describe what they found was the best/challenging during the activities, what they had learned, and how in the future they could utilize what they had experienced during the outdoor activities.

### **Conclusions**

Young-to-young guidance model inevitably increased both participants' and young students' motivation, commitment, and attitude towards the outdoor activities. The more the youth groups made decisions of the activities and their life in nature, the more they felt being meaningful subjects in their lives. On the other hand, the young sport instructor students reflected their learning when guiding different groups. Students mentioned that the most significant learning for them was to face the disparity, meet young people from different backgrounds and cultures, and to treat everyone equally. The students also admitted having strong preconceptions of immigrants and disadvantaged adolescents, but that the attitude changed quickly as they learned to know the individuals during the days together.

We found out that two-day outdoor activities are a good start and shows the possibilities of outdoor learning and recreation for the young and their teachers. But it also became evident that the young themselves or teachers do not necessarily continue these activities without support. Teachers should be trained to use outdoor learning as an everyday learning environment and a tool. The positive effect on wellbeing of the young would be more effective when the outdoor activities are taking place regularly as part of curriculum. As a conclusion we argue that continuous experiential activities guided by young students support self-development, life-long-learning and resilience of the young.

## Reference

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