Education Outdoors New Zealand

# Te Whakatika

This Issue

Outdoor Education: What Are We Educating For?

What does OE stand for?

The Matrix

Learning happens everywhere

Outdoor Philosophy

Resetting, recalibrating and reconfiguring

What is Nature Education?

Issue 38 ▲ Spring 2019

# Education Outdoors New Zealand

Commitment to fostering and advocating for quality outdoor learning experiences which can educate for a sustainable future

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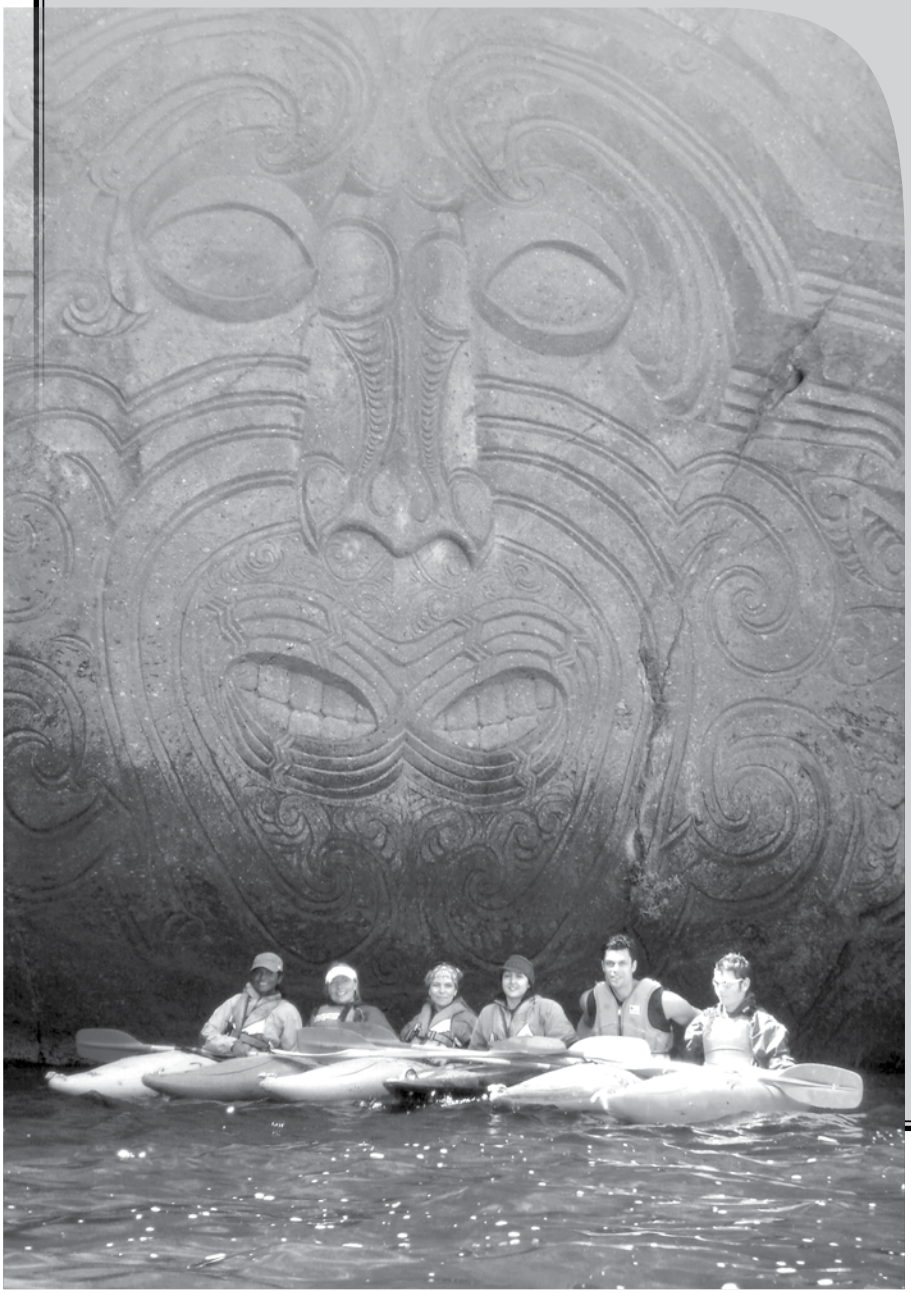
*To increase participation in quality outdoor learning experiences.*

## Our goals

*Engagement in advocacy to advance education outdoors*

*Education to build capability and improve practice*



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*Te Whakatika*

(formerly known as Out and About) describes the start of a journey (to set out), but also means to make correct (to amend and prepare).
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# Editorial Spring 2019

*by David Irwin*

Kia ora and welcome to this spring edition of *Te Whakatika*, published by Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ). I hope you enjoy the reading, and if this is your first encounter with EONZ, I encourage you and/or your school to become a member of our community and to contribute to discussions about education outside the classroom into the future. As always, letters to the editor and both feature and minor articles are welcomed and can be sent to me via email.

In a previous issue of *Te Whakatika*, Campbell-Price and Cosgriff (2017) explored how schools all over the country require donations from parents in order to afford EOTC. Although their article had a focus on outdoor education, they also discussed the well-established value of EOTC that is recognised in the existing policy frameworks. The authors also highlighted some of the conflicting

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statements, particularly regarding utilisation of local communities and environments versus those places further afield including taking students overseas. Their scrutiny of practice in several different schools revealed significant issues, prompting the conclusion that "fundamental questions of equity related to access still persist" (Campbell-Price & Cosgriff, 2017, p.10). They encouraged readers to consider what learning opportunities are possible if outdoor experiences are a *right* for all students, not just those who can pay.

I am currently part of a team of researchers investigating the nature of EOTC in Aotearoa NZ, and we have immersed ourselves in the huge amounts of data collected from teachers and principals over several years of study. One of the common themes to emerge is the constant battle for schools to meet the costs of out-of-classroom curriculum related activities. This shortfall of funding creates many issues including equity that Campbell-Price and Cosgriff (2017) identify. I must admit I felt heart broken when I read about a teacher standing at the door of a bus before the departure of a secondary school curriculum related field trip and turning students away because they had not paid (or not been able to pay) their donation for the trip. Such inequities are an anathema in our education system that is based on the egalitarian notion of free access for all. The root of the problem is that schools are under-funded to deliver quality education, and the research overwhelmingly argues that quality education includes EOTC.

To address confusion around donations and inadequate funding for EOTC, the current government has drafted the *Education (school donations) Amendment Bill* which will remove the inequities inherent in EOTC that relies on donations from parents. As part of the *Budget 2019*, the bill proposes a subsidy of $150 per student with a total cost estimated at $265.6 million (Cheng, 2019) and will be available to all decile 1 to 7 schools. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), in order to qualify for the subsidy, schools must cease to ask for donations for EOTC, although they can still request donations for overnight school camps linked to curriculum if those donations are voluntary and students can still attend if they do not pay (2019). It should be noted that schools will still be able to request that parents purchase items such as uniforms and stationery for students.

The media has described a wide range of responses to the bill; in my opinion some reporting has presented insightful analysis of the impacts that the new policies will have, while other reporting misrepresented the intent and application of the bill (for example see Kenny, 2019). Some alarmist reporting even forecasts the end of school camps (for example see Cooke, 2019). The bill applies to all curriculum related activities outside of the classroom, but not co-curricular activities such as school sports. There are several key points to consider:

Firstly, will schools opting for the subsidy be better off? This will obviously depend on the current level of donations received by the school in relation to the subsidy that the school would receive in place of the donations, and this will obviously vary between schools. Judging by responses from principals cited in the media, it seems likely lower decile schools will be better off while higher decile schools not so (for example see Cooke, 2019). Opting for the subsidy will limit the amount of funding the schools receive, and they will lose flexibility as a result, which will likely result in pragmatic decisions being made about which EOTC experiences will happen. However, what is not mentioned is that it is difficult to forecast how the new policy landscape will impact on attitudes to donations in the future. It may result in parents who will be less forthcoming with donations than they have been in the past, if the public perception to donations shifts. For example, parents may see EOTC funding as solely the responsibility of schools and the Ministry of Education.

Secondly, the decision to exclude schools at decile 8 to 10 perpetuates the problem of donations needed to maintain EOTC amongst wealthier communities (although schools in these deciles can apply to have their decile reviewed if they want to apply for the subsidy). The targeting of subsidies inconsistently across deciles would seem problematic in the long term. This is because all schools, regardless of decile, should be funded to a level where EOTC can be delivered to all students regardless of wealth. All parents and all students have a right to free education under current law. It should be noted that the MOE

(2019) has reinforced that students cannot be excluded from EOTC for non-payment of donations and this will continue to be challenging for all schools not opting to receive the subsidy.

Third, although the subsidy of $150 per student may be more than low decile schools are currently receiving from donations, the fact that it is less than middle and upper decile schools are receiving suggests that it may not be enough to provide quality EOTC. It is imperative that this subsidy is enough to allow for quality teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom to continue to be a foundation of free education system. One teacher I spoke to suggested that a measure of whether the subsidy will be enough is assessment in senior school. Inadequate funding may restrict choices of achievement standards and unit standards available to students based on the cost of their delivery to the school.

The MOE have established a very useful website for schools and parents that clearly describes donations within the context of the bill. For official advice on the donations scheme, visit the Ministry of Education web site at https://www.education.govt.nz/school/funding-and-financials/fees-charges-and-donations/

This issue focuses on outdoor education. The first article, written (a decade ago) by Dr Allen Hill, asks the question "what is education for?" and challenges us to consider how outdoor education has responded to the big challenges of our time. The next two articles by Dr Chris North and then Dr Jo Straker explore the current debate about assessment in senior high school, particularly the rationale for dedicated outdoor education achievement standards to be created. In the fourth article, Shannon McNatty describes research that explores intermediate school students undertaking journeys in local environments and finds a range of benefits to learners. In the fifth article, Abby Franklin explores the philosophy of outdoor education and makes links to her own experiences. In the next article, Andrew Mount reflects on his experiences and challenges encountered in his career as an outdoor educator. He describes wonderful relationships he has developed with local communities using large waka tangata. In the final article, Celia Hogan discusses the place of Nature Education in Aotearoa New Zealand schools and describes the benefits of unrestricted play in wild places.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Te Whakatika* and wish you well for the coming summer months. Please consider sharing your own reflections on the issues facing EOTC through this forum.

In the next issue I will be focussing on the voice of the *Climate Strike* youth. If you have students engaging with climate change in your school and they have written something special, please ask them to contribute to this special edition.

Noho ora mai rā, nā Dave

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**Editor's note:**
In 2009, Dr. Allen Hill wrote the following article for Ki Waho, the magazine published by Outdoors New Zealand (published below with minor changes). In the title to the article he asks: What are we educating for? He argues that outdoor education (and in fact all formal education) has failed to deliver on the big issues of our time including climate change, habitat destruction, over consumption, pollution, and inequitable distribution of wealth. A decade after he wrote the article, I asked Allen to reflect on what he wrote, and his responses to my questions follow the article.

**Acknowledgement:**
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# Outdoor Education:
# What Are We Educating For?

*By Allen Hill*

## Introduction

Recently Dr Pita Sharples – Minister of Māori Affairs and Associate Minister of Education – called for Māori students to be given direct entry to university education. His rationale for this controversial statement was that the secondary education system was failing Māori. I empathise with Dr Sharples concerns and share his view that our current secondary education system is inadequately meeting the needs of young Māori. At this point, however, I must extend Dr Sharples critique. I believe that our current secondary education is failing all students through promoting a view of educational success based on individualistic self-improvement, materialistic acquisition, and economic productivity. These narrow measures of success merely seek to replicate the status quo, entrenching unjust social systems, and perpetuating damaging attitudes to our natural environments.

We live in difficult times. Our economic edifices, built on greed and debt, are crumbling around us. Ecological crisis through climate change, loss of biodiversity, and a host of other issues confronts us daily. World-wide, millions of people live in poverty, faced with the daily reality of starvation and disease, while in the over-consuming West people are literally eating themselves to death. In New Zealand our food-banks are under increasing pressure, children are going to school hungry and we are polluting our natural resources at alarming rates.

How is education contributing to these crises? Is it seeking to confront the issues we face and make change, or is it perpetuating to the status quo? This article asks these questions and considers the role that outdoor education is playing in this arena. It initially challenges that idea that all education is good and looks at how outdoor education acts as a contributor to damaging social and ecological practices and ways of thinking. It then advocates for a view of outdoor education based on principles of sustainability and ecological literacy.

## The Assumption that Education = Good

Inherent in Dr Sharples' position is the assumption that education is good and that through education young Māori can improve themselves and become more successful. This assumption applies more broadly and underpins the belief that education is essential for human improvement and success. David Orr (2004) summarises this position stating, "conventional wisdom holds that all education is good, and the more of it one has the better... [but] the truth is that without significant precautions, education can equip people merely to be more effective vandals of the earth". Orr goes on to suggest that many of the things upon which the human species rely for our survival, such as stable climate, productivity of natural systems, and biodiversity, are in 'dire jeopardy'. He notes that these issues are largely the results of work by 'educated people'. In support of Orr's position well known critical pedagogy academic Henry Giroux (2003) argues that the goals of Western education are defined by a neo-liberal free market economy and corporate culture that offer consumerism as the only alternative. He suggests that this contributes to students forming "identities steeped in forms of competitive, self-interested individualism that celebrates selfishness, profit- making and greed" (p.10).

This must bring us to question the role of education in our society and whether it can be generalised as something inherently good. This is accompanied by the seldom asked question; 'what are we educating for?' Whilst it is accepted that education is important for people to function in our over-consuming society, the question of how it is contributing to a more sustainable and just future is often overlooked. Steven Sterling (2001), in his book Sustainable Education: Re-visioning Learning and Change, suggests that current education systems are fulfilling socialisation, vocational, and liberal functions. These functions serve to replicate society and culture, train people for employment, and develop individuals' potential. What is missing from this educational paradigm, according to Sterling, is a transformative function which encourages change towards a fairer society and better world.

If the answer to the question, 'what are we educating for?' is answered only by socialisation, vocational and liberal functions, then our education system is failing all our students. It is preparing only for the world which we know, one of social disparity and ecological degradation, rather than for a sustainable future. It is therefore imperative that we embrace a transformative function which is based on a paradigm of sustainability and eco-justice. How then does this affect outdoor education and educators who engage students in natural outdoor environments?

## Outdoor Education Contributing to the Status Quo

Traditional discourses in outdoor education have strongly embraced liberal and vocational functions of education while contributing to a socialisation function. Historically outdoor education in New Zealand has developed from curriculum enrichment ideals based on cross-curricular school camps and outdoor environmental learning experiences. More recently it has moved towards a focus on teaching outdoor pursuits and associated skills (see Lynch, 2006). This has led to a dominant view of outdoor education in this country which is summarised by Payne and Wattchow (2008, p. 25) who state, Traditionally, mainstream or modern outdoor education has focused on certain outdoor activities and pursuits, preoccupied itself with notions of adventure and challenge, touched on the paradox of risk and safety, and emphasised the human, or anthropocentric, benefits of personal and social development by being immersed in the outdoors.

As these traditional outdoor education discourses have been critically examined, there have been increasing calls for incorporation of sustainability and socio-ecological concepts into outdoor education thinking and practice (Nicol, 2003). This shift, according to Payne and Wattchow (2008, p. 36) does not mean that "we dismiss the pedagogic potential of outdoor journeys that rely upon particular outdoor activities and technologies". It does mean questioning the educational value of outdoor learning experiences and asking, what are we educating for? It is clear that teaching outdoor pursuit skills purely for vocational purposes is a flimsy and suspect educational rationale.

Consequently many outdoor educators in this country believe strongly in the liberal functions of personal and social development in

outdoor education (Hill, 2007; Zink & Boyes, 2006). Outcomes such as raising self-esteem, overcoming fear and challenge, and building character have often dominated education discourse. Whilst outdoor education programmes based on these objectives may appear admirable they are grounded in an assumption that all education is good, and seldom consider how personal and social development are contributing to a sustainable future. From a sustainability perspective, if personal development is merely improving student's ability to participate in a society which perpetuates social inequality and environmental damage, then the value of this development must be questioned. Outdoor education based on these objectives must have a transformative function if it is to educate students for a sustainable future.

## Educating for a Sustainable Future

According to Steven Sterling (2001) sustainable education needs to build on the traditions of liberal education, looking to build the potential of individuals within the context of educating for sustainability, community, justice, and peace. Prominent New Zealand educator and sustainability advocate Barry Law (2005) argues it is critically important to redesign education across all sector groups to bring about fundamental shifts that achieve a sustainable future. In a call to challenge the status quo he suggests "education requires a deeper critique and a broader vision to ensure a sustainable future. Thus, a whole system redesign needs to be considered to challenge existing frameworks and shift our thinking beyond current practice and towards a sustainable future" (p.280).

So what does this mean for outdoor education? Educating for a sustainable future is more than simply incorporating zero-waste, recycling, and planting trees into outdoor education programmes. It means rethinking outdoor learning experiences so that they build a critical awareness for students and a sense of ecological literacy. David Orr (1992) suggests that "real ecological literacy is radicalizing ... it leads to a revitalization and broadening of the concept of citizenship to include membership in a planet-wide community of humans and living things" (p.87).

So what might this look like? Australian outdoor educator and academic Peter Martin (2008, p. 37) suggests an ecologically literate student:

- Is comfortable outdoors and seeks encounters with nature for recreation and health
- Has the knowledge and skills to safety and enjoyably explore nature while minimising impact
- Has a well-developed understanding and sense of place from both personal experience and academic investigation
- Understands and values interrelatedness between humans and nature (systems thinking);
- Nourishes community and connections to place
- Has a deeply felt concern, even love, for the well-being of the Earth and all living things (Stewardship)
- Maintains sustainable environmental beliefs and practices informed by principles of ecology, critical thought, judgement and action.

For outdoor education to embrace concepts of sustainability and ecological literacy it means that these outcomes must be made explicit within learning programmes. Fundamental to this is the concept of connectedness to both place and community. This involves more explicitly engaging students in their knowledge of a place through understanding its local history, geography, flora, fauna, and geology. It also involves developing an attachment to a place through taking action such as, habitat restoration, predator control, waste management, or other conservation projects. Australian outdoor educator Alison Lugg (2007, p. 106) argues that outdoor education is ideally placed to educate students towards sustainable relationships and the connectedness that comes with them, stating:

"This notion of 'connectedness' is critical to understanding ecological perspectives of the world and of sustainable ways of living in and with the world. Outdoor education, unlike many other forms of 'indoor education' is in a unique position to offer experiences to that may engender awareness and understanding of human connectedness to other forms of 'nature.'"

## Conclusion

Generally outdoor educators believe that what they do is good and this applies to contexts of adventure based pursuits, personal and social development, and often environmental care and awareness. Underpinned by the assumption that 'all education is good and the more of it the better' seldom do educators ask the question; what are we educating for? If this question remains anonymous we are at grave risk of perpetuating the status quo and educating students to compete and consume rather than to care and conserve. I have not met an outdoor educator who does not have a love for the natural environment and a sense of guardianship towards it. I have also met few outdoor educators who have a deep understanding of issues of sustainability and what this might practically mean. The time has come for our small sector to seriously consider how we are educating for transformation towards a sustainable and just future. In the current educational climate if we don't then who else will?

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## About the author:


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Editor: *Has anything changed in outdoor education since you wrote the article?*

**Allen:** I would really like to say yes but unfortunately my sense is that too much is still the same. In terms of education generally, environmental and sustainability education continues to sit at the margins of education and there seems little appetite for the sort of transformative work required to enable all students to become sustainability change agents. In terms of outdoor education, I think there are still many people focused on adventure pursuit activities and the traditional discourses of personal and interpersonal development. At one level I am less critical of this approach. There is definitely a place for 'developing people'. We need, more than ever, active, informed, capable citizens who can contribute positively to a rapidly changing and degrading world. I do think learning experiences in the outdoors can help to foster many skills important to this. The trick is how those experiences are connected to that vision of 'what we are educating for'. Those experiences also need to be connected to culture and place more strongly. I am heartened there are definitely pockets of innovative practice in outdoor education and examples of some educators including more place-based and culturally responsive content and approaches into their programmes. I am not so sure this is happening more broadly though.

To sum up – One thing that has definitely changed is the urgency with which we need to make substantial shifts in the way we live

on a massive scale. The science is very clear. Business as usual is just not an option!

Editor: *What leads you to draw this conclusion?*

**Allen:** There are several reasons for remaining somewhat pessimistic about the potential for education to contribute meaning fully to transformative change. Internationally education remains strongly influenced by neoliberal ideologies (Hursh, Henderson & Greenwood, 2015) and industrialised systems. This can be seen in a continuing focus on national testing systems, de-professionalization of teachers, and viewing education as a 'product' subject to the free market.

In Aotearoa New Zealand there has been considerable recent interest in re-thinking the role of education in our society and what our education systems looks like. The national Education Summits in May 2018 and ongoing 'Education Conversation' seemed to hold much promise for a new future focused vision of education, perhaps even with more attention given to environmental and sustainability education. Apart from obvious changes to NCEA, school donations, and potentially to school governance (Boards of Trustees), it remains to be seen what real changes will occur in schools as a result.

Unfortunately, there still seems to be considerable apathy from schools and school students towards the major issues facing our world despite the impact of Greta Thunberg. At the recent Climate Strike in Christchurch, only 4-5000 people turned out (many of these adults and university students). By far the majority of school students stayed in their classes. The message from the school that my daughter attends was that students would receive an 'unjustified' absence and that they should find ways to express their support for the cause without disrupting their schooling. I am proud that my daughter attended, although she was one of only a handful from her class. I realise that Wellington and Auckland had much more significant turnout, yet my sense is this – the majority of students in Aotearoa New Zealand are still disengaged from the defining issue of our time, despite the science pointing to the reality of a very real 'climate emergency'.

Editor: *How does outdoor education ensure it remains relevant in the third decade of the 21st century?*

**Allen:** Last year I gave two key-note addresses on an idea I call *post-activity outdoor education*, one at the Australian National Outdoor Education Conference in Hobart and the other at the Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ) Conference in Dunedin. In short my message is that we need to move 'beyond' talking about activities (like tramping, kayaking or climbing) as the 'centre' of outdoor education. Rather we would be better served by focusing the 'centre' of outdoor education on the places we educate in, and by necessity our interaction with Te Ao Māori, along with the multiple educational benefits of learning in the outdoors. Schools are increasingly interested in student engagement, authentic real-world learning, curriculum enrichment and helping students to develop 21st century capabilities such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and citizenship. What better way to do that than through post activity outdoor education.

It is also important to help students reclaim how they are inescapably connected to society, culture and the more-than-human world, so that they might better understand how we are dramatically damaging our world and how we might better care for it. For the well-known Australian environmental activist, senator and former leader of the Green Party, Bob Brown, it was a rafting trip down the remote Franklin River in Tasmania that made him realise how important it was to protect the river from impending hydro-power development. As I wrote about in 2013, the place of first-hand experience of the world is still important for both outdoor education and environmental and sustainability education. The key is to shape those experiences in ways which build capable students who can make a positive difference to the world, rather than, becoming "more effective vandals of the earth" (Orr, 2004).

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# What does OE stand for?

## Discussing an NCEA matrix for OE

*By Chris North*

The recent initiative to review NCEA achievement standards has presented an opportunity for outdoor education (OE) to develop an achievement standards matrix (four standards at each of the levels 1-3). While OE programmes currently use unit standards and borrow achievement standards from a range of subject areas (often enthusiastically –contact Jonathan Taylor at Kristin College for more on this), it looks as if the review will reduce the number of achievement standards across subject areas and result in far fewer being available to OE courses. Therefore it seems important that OE at least engages in the process of proposing an achievement standards matrix. Some teachers I have spoken to are excited about having achievement standards that are focused on OE and don't require the same level of adaptation to make them relevant to our programmes.

As part of the discussion, the review process asks educators to identify the 'Big Idea' behind each subject area and then to consider how a matrix could support this Big Idea. This means that OE must be more than a methodology with which to teach any subject (e.g. EOTC), it must identify the OE subject as having content, and what that content is. I see this as both a great opportunity, and a challenge as we attempt to bring together the different ideas about what constitutes OE. The purpose of this article is to present some of the ideas circulating historically and currently in the literature to highlight some commonalities and some differences and inform our discussions. I start by asking if OE is really a subject (discipline) and then look within the Aotearoa/New Zealand context before moving to some other countries to identify how they have developed the subject of OE.

### Is OE a subject or is it just a way to design teaching and learning?

Work from a collaboration between Janet Dyment (living in Tasmania at the time) and Tom Potter, (Canada) asks whether OE could be considered as a discipline (subject). They use John Loughran's questions about teacher education as a framework (which may resonate with many of us in OE):

> *Like Loughran's view of teaching, we believe that OE is undervalued. Like Loughran's outlook on teaching, we believe strongly that the complexities of OE are 'easily overlooked by the casual observer' (2009, p. 191) and that, 'it is rarely afforded a status commensurate with the more scientifically based disciplines or sub-disciplines. It is seen as an activity, not an academic endeavour' (2009, pp.192–193). Loughran asks: 'Why is it so hard to shift the weight of opinion about what teaching really involves? Why does teaching continue to be undervalued [by general society]?' (2009, p. 189). We ask similar questions of OE. (Dyment & Potter, 2015, p. 193).*

Janet and Tom argue that OE can be considered a discipline because it meets key criteria like having content (a focus of study), academic programmes, journals, textbooks and curriculum, and a body of research underpinning it. They define the content of OE as developing:

- technical skills;
- social and interpersonal competencies;
- a connection to nature;
- risk management;
- and an increasing focus on environmental sustainability, place attachment, and social justice

(Dyment & Potter, 2015; Potter & Dyment, 2016).

If we accept these arguments, then OE is a discipline or subject area with specific content. This is supported in some ways by curriculum documents.

## Aotearoa New Zealand

In the past, the OE has been seen as an extra-curricular activity with a recreation focus because it was not in any curriculum documents (Boyes, 2000). The Health and Physical Education (HPE) document (1999) was a landmark for OE because with the inclusion of OE, it allowed educators to move on from justifying the existence of OE to questions about the "what, why and how of practice in schools" (Cosgriff, 2008, p.17). Within the HPE curriculum, OE is defined as providing students "with opportunities to develop personal and social skills, to become active, safe, and skilled in the outdoors, and to protect and care for the environment" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 46) and importantly, the framework in the HPE based on socio-ecological perspectives, hauora and attitudes and values was an opportunity to think about wider goals including well-being, bicultural approaches, environmental education and social justice.

With the release of the NZC in 2007, there was no description of the scope or area of OE except a mention as an area of learning within health and physical education and a reminder that OE needs to"follow safe practice and meet legal requirements" (p. 22). The front end of the NZC strongly supported outdoor learning more generally and some of the broader goals of OE but this provided little guidance and left a great deal to the imagination and expertise of educators. Due to this, many OE teachers have been still referring to the HPE document. Since those times there has been critiques that OE when defined within the HPE tends to focus on skills and social development with environmental education taking a back seat (Cosgriff , 2008, 2011; Cosgriff & Gillespie, 2011; North , 2011).

It is now 20 years since the HPE came out with this definition of OE and our context has changed significantly socially, politically and environmentally. Many now argue that education needs to equip our young people for a future that will be very different to our past including the consequences of climate change and societal and technological changes. The next fifty years will require people with the skills to make complex and values-based decisions and enact them. Does our current vision of OE support this future?

Another aspect that is silent in the international literature is the influence of the Treaty of Waitangi and OE which is informed by our bicultural heritage. There is a growing body of work on this area (see for example Washbourne (2018)) but if we look to the international literature, we miss this important aspect of our nationhood.

Given these limitations, I now look at some other exploration of the scope and nature of OE internationally. While New Zealand has a different cultural and ecological background to many countries (particularly the bicultural nature of society), I believe there are still some valuable insights we can get by looking at writing on OE. Much of the work I reference here I have accessed through academic literature searches which does have a Western and Anglo focus.

## Ideas from Overseas

The curriculum in Australia is similar to Aotearoa/ New Zealand in that OE and PE are grouped under the umbrella of HPE. Also similar to New Zealand there are concerns about OE when aligned with HPE. For example, some argue that PE has a focus on movement and interpersonal skills, while human to non-human nature relationships lie at the heart of OE. The implications are that OE teachers require a distinctive set of pedagogies and bodies of knowledge (Martin & McCullagh, 2011). Some of the emphasis on human to non-human relationships is visible in the Fremantle Declaration which

attempted to clarify the contribution that OE can make:

"Outdoor education provides unique opportunities to develop positive relationships with the environment, others and ourselves. These relationships are essential for the wellbeing and sustainability of individuals, society and our environment" (Polley & Thomas, 2017). Approaching the simplicity of a 'Big Idea', this statement is similar to our HPE curriculum, but lacks the emphasis on becoming 'active, safe and skilled' in the outdoors.

While not directly falling out of the 'Big Idea', the combination of outdoor education and environmental education in the State of Victoria helped develop the aims of Outdoor and Environmental Studies as:

- develop experiential relationships with, and knowledge of, outdoor environments
- develop an understanding of the ecological, historical, economic and social factors that have affected and will continue to affect outdoor environments over time
- develop skills, knowledge and behaviours that promote safe and sustainable interaction with outdoor environments
- identify and analyse the strategies used to protect, conserve and manage outdoor environments in a sustainable manner
- understand the implications of increasing awareness of sustainable environmental relationships
- critically analyse interactions with outdoor environments in shaping Australian cultural practices(Victoria Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2018, pp. 5-6)

The State of Victoria has a contemporary set of standards and has gone through a similar process to the one we are going through at the moment. I recommend a look at the link to documents on their website in the reference list.

Looking overseas for ideas or bringing in our inherited cultural ideas has been part of the history of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, as has adapting them for our cultural and environmental

context here. David Irwin has 'long lamented the widespread adoption of particularly United States based models of adventure-based learning that are for the most part irrelevant to different cultural contexts" (Irwin, 2017, p. 33). By contrast, Sutherland and Legge (2016) argue that "ABL is grounded in experiential learning and provides a framework for a pedagogical model where the content, location, cultural context, and people (both teachers and students) can be interchangeable making it applicable within physical education/teacher education internationally"(p.309). In teacher education, I have found an ABL framework helpful but agree that we should be integrating games and activities that highlight the cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. I am still on this journey. Received ideas such as ABL or looking at the way other countries have responded to similar questions are not without their flaws, but they do give us some insights when treated with a bit of caution.

## Summary

The purpose of this article was to promote thinking about whether OE can be considered a subject and if so, what it could claim as content. OE is often responsive to local settings and community needs: some are using OE for engaging with students who are at risk of dropping out of school; others for academic high achievers; others for students who thrive in adventurous learning in outdoor settings; others for cultural learning and sustainability. If an achievement standards matrix is developed, OE could support some of these diverse outcomes but will certainly leave some areas either absent or marginalised. The process of defining a subject area will inevitably mean that some things are included and also that some things are excluded.

What resonates for you? Get involved and have your voice heard. Regardless of the outcome (or whether a matrix for OE eventuates at all), the discussion will help us better understand and articulate to others the contribution that OE can make to education more generally.

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# The Matrix

*By Jo Straker*

For those too young to remember, The Matrix is a 1999 science fiction action film, which describes a simulated reality created by sentient machines in order to pacify and subdue the human population. The hero Neo rebels against the machines when he accepts a red pill. The red pill supposedly reveals the challenging and uncomfortable truths of the 'real world', while the blue pill allows the individual to continue life in the comfortable simulated reality of the Matrix. With underpinning concepts of free will, destiny, and control, it has potential for analysing some educational principles…. do we want students to challenge the way we live our lives or contently accept it? Maybe that is something we need to ask ourselves too!

When Chris North first told me that there was an opportunity to develop a matrix for outdoor education achievement standards my initial reaction was that putting outdoor education ideas into small boxes was incongruous. Many educators are pressured to accept the status quo and teach what others deem important, so the students can move along in the 'real world'. In outdoor education, there has been a constant tension between fitting in to that system or being disregarded as irrelevant because of the lack of accountable standards. As outdoor educators then - should we take the blue pill and fit into the system of setting and assessing standards or the red pill?

My research (Straker, 2014)noted that many successful teaching strategies involved bringing together ideas and activities into a holistic web of practices, a gestalt styleof practice where the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Critical thinking, emotional responses, personal development, physical activity, and fun experiences were frequently interlinked to create engaging sessions. The outcomes were sometimes emergent as students would respond and learn differently to what had been planned. Why we expect students to learn the same things from experiencing the same lesson is beyond me.

I am not suggesting that everything has the same value or requires the same attention, only that looking for points of connection offers more potential for learning than fragmenting knowledge into boxes. Currently, outdoor educators intuitively juggle many meanings, components, and activities, as they respond to the environment and needs of the students. Maintaining this degree of flexibility bodes well for dealing with students who are at different stages of readiness to learn, but requires educators to acquire a set of attributes and skills which are not always easy to quantify. It also puts pressure on traditional assessment techniques.

A few years ago, I remember Arthur Sutherland telling me that he'd been to a workshop on improving teaching practise and that most of the ideas like listening to students, using self and peer feedback, active reflection, and engaging students by using activities were what outdoor educators had been doing for years. Being outdoors with space to move around encourages a style of pedagogy that is tricky for some classroom educators to emulate. It is not that one is better than the other, but that emotional engagement, sensory experiences, embodied knowing, and physical activity need to be brought together with the ability to communicate ideas in rational and logical ways, for a well-rounded education system. Indeed, free will is sometimes seen as making a choice based on logic and reason.

My personal philosophy of education is encapsulated in this poem by D.H Lawrence

*Thought, I love thought.*
*But not the jiggling and twisting of already existent ideas*
*I despise that self-important game.*
*Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,*
*Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of the conscience,*
*Thought is gazing on to the face of life, and reading what can be read,*
*Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to a conclusion.*
*Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,*
*Thought is a man (sic) in his wholeness wholly attending.*

More pansies, thought (Lawrence, 1932, p. 31)

D.H. Lawrence encapsulates a pedagogical approach in this poem which encourages the welling up of new ways to perceive the world. In just a few lines he portrays engaged experiential creative thinking, which challenges the "self-important game" of passing on a fixed set of existent ideas (Lawrence, 1932, p. 31).

Bolden and DeLuca (2016) highlight the limitations of measuring only predetermined learning outcomes, and suggest educators should be alert for unintended (emergent) outcomes. The idea of emergence or 'yeeha' moments is something most outdoor educators have observed and these learning moments far outweigh conventional mastery of predetermined achievement standards. From my own experiences, being outdoors often stimulates important learning that was not anticipated in terms of curriculum or assessment plans, but that does not make it any less meaningful.

Critiques of achievement standards suggest too much time is spent assessing. Ideally, assessment should reflect what is valued in the curriculum. The reality, supported by a considerable body of research (Hipkins et al., 2016), is that this is often not the case. Instead, what is assessed especially in high-stakes contexts becomes the curriculum that is enacted in classrooms. When the shift moves from responding to individual learning needs to an emphasis on outcomes and credits then the curriculum becomes narrow and restricted. Not all assessment is problematic, some formative assessment helps educators and students notice progressions and respond to evidence of learning. Such assessment would need to be more about non-mastery learning; learning with and from others; and revising ideas in new ways (Bolden & DeLuca, 2016). This is already part of outdoor education and occurs when we negotiate assessments with students and encourage feedback and reflection. While this is a regular part of outdoor education, in general, high pressure and summative assessment is given more weight by society, students, and administrators.

Internationally, there is a focus on ways that technological change and associated environmental and social challenges require different ways of knowing and learning (OECD, 2018). A common theme of these commentaries is that much education which is tied to assessment does not work effectively to promote learning for a changing world as it fails to capture the deep conceptual understandings that are needed for living in sustainable ways.In addition, high-stakes assessment can exacerbate the problem by increasing stress and pressure on students undermining their health and well-being and limiting their ability to be imaginative and open-minded.

As Chris North points out in a separate article in this edition of *Te Whakatika,* many outdoor educators enthusiastically borrow standards from other disciplines. This is wonderful as curriculum integration opens up the possibility of emergent outcomes. McPhail, (2018) supports this suggesting that outcomes of integration are often different from anything that can be achieved by learning within the individual subjects as new curriculum possibilities are woven together. While it may be useful to discuss some specific achievement standards as a way of analysing our good practices, it is likely that there will be disadvantages if outdoor education is tied down and isolated from the rest of the curriculum.

The modular nature of NCEA can provide opportunities to build new types of learning experiences, but remains sensitive to accountability demands. As Hipkins et al., (2016) note, there

is a problem when accountability measures create incentives to lift achievement but actually restrict learning opportunities for students. "Big ideas" need to underpin curriculum developments and in turn assessment, but sometimes the world is changing so rapidly that we no longer know what is pertinent. It is thus essential, to remain flexible and not be tied down to pre-determined standards. There is also much to be valued in the current practice of adapting standards from other curriculum areas, as this can increase the transfer of knowledge to new contexts.

Given that we need to help students prepare for an uncertain future, outdoor educators should swallow the red pill and work outside the confines of traditional curriculum and assessment practices. They can do this by continuing to acknowledge that outcomes are frequently unpredictable and if assessment is deemed necessary it should be co-constructed as learning unfolds. Tying outdoor education to a matrix of achievement standards is surely an anathema and reduces the potential of outdoor education to offer something extra to traditional educational practices.

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***Jo** has retired from a career as an outdoor educator and now spends her time cycling preferably uphill. Her PhD looked at the way different meanings attributed to the outdoors shapes outdoor education practices. Jo can be contacted at strakerstaite@gmail.com*


Save the date

# EOTC Conference 2020

When: **28-29 September**
Where: **at 5 interconnected hubs across 5 regional venues**
Hub locations: **Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin**

EONZ are partnering with TRCC to bring this exciting and innovative conference to you. The conference will be open to all teachers (ECE to Secondary), as well as a small number of providers, EOTC organisations and tertiary students, and will focus on topics surrounding EOTC and education outdoors.

We have deliberately engaged with this regional hub style of professional development to encourage greater local networking, increase understanding of place and to reduce the carbon footprint often associated with larger conferences.

Save the dates and look out for further information. This is a significant opportunity for professional learning that supports future-focussed EOTC.We look forward to your participation and contribution.

# Learning happens everywhere

*By Shannon McNatty*

Learning happens everywhere. Students in a New Zealand intermediate school learned outside the classroom every Friday for terms one and two of 2018. Education outside the classroom(EOTC) refers to the pedagogical approach of using a range of alternate settings for student learning to take place. EOTC is recognised as an effective pedagogy in which students learn experientially (Boyes, 2012). Experiential education involves the process of a teacher facilitating learning experiences and then utilising teachable moments through questioning and reflection (Beard & Wilson, 2013). Learning experientially encompasses the acquisition of intentional, cognitive, and explicit knowledge whilst participating in a process which alters the learners' interactions and their relationship with the physical and social environment (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000).

Dunedin North Intermediate (DNI) introduced an EOTC programme in 2018 with a small group of year seven and eight students (aged 11 and 12). Students in this programme learned through 'immersive journeys'in their local environment for one day per week. A 'journey' is defined by the Oxford dictionary as 'an act of travelling from one place to another'. However, Straker (2012) elaborates by stating that journeys "emphasise the path, not the destination; allowing for deviations and detours; and the focus on being, 'so somewhere" (p. 170). The students in the DNI programme journeyed using non-motorised forms of transport, predominantly by foot, bike, and scooter through Dunedin's cycle ways, tracks, and footpaths. The students engaged in a wide range of learning experiences in the local environment, combined with opportunities to connect to the green spaces of the city.

## Description:

The DNI EOTC programme involved a group of 10 students who were a mix of genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds. The DNI senior staff team drew on classroom teachers' recommendations to decide which students could benefit or be suited

to this initiative. Two students had to leave the programme due to unrelated circumstances early in the first term and were replaced by two others in term two. (The students who completed the programme are referred to as B, C, G, J, L, K, M, N, S and T). The programme was designed and led by an experienced teacher, who specialised in outdoor learning, to link the learning experiences directly to the New Zealand curriculum and in particular related to environmental, social, and physical learning.

## Curriculum links

Five key competencies have been included by the New Zealand Ministry of Education in the national curriculum. These key competencies were initially developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). They encompass all curriculum areas and are considered to be the capabilities that individuals need to live well. The key competencies are thinking, relating to others through interacting effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts, using language, symbols and texts, managing self; which is being able to look after oneself, and participating and contributing through being fully involved in your group. The New Zealand curriculum guidelines state that EOTC programmes "provide students with a range of contexts to develop the key competencies, explore their values and the values of others, and apply learning across the curriculum' (Ministry of Education, 2009. Para. 3)

The New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (the New Zealand curriculum document for teaching in a Māori medium) encourage schools to develop learning programmes that: "reflect the learning needs of their students, build on their previous experiences and have meaning for their students because the learning relates to their lives" (Ministry of Education, 2009. Para. 2). EOTC programmes support the national curriculum by providing opportunities outdoors for students to find resources and information, explore ideas, apply experiences and think critically to solve problems, with an emphasis on environmental education and safety (Ministry of Education, 2009)

Sport New Zealand participation data shows that there is less overall participation in the outdoors by our young people (SPARC, 2007). Their research indicates that young people know less about their local places, what features are in the environment, where the walking tracks are, what beaches are safe to swim, knowledge of the flora, fauna, tides and weather patterns (Straker, 2012). A reduced knowledge and connection with place may also occur from some people being quite transient in their lives (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Undoubtedly, a reduced understanding of, and connection to, place, results in a loss of value and of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) for these places. This loss is also linked to people degrading and exploiting the environment in which they live in pursuit of economic growth and consumerism (Hill, 2010; Orr, 1994; Straker, 2012).

## The programme

The EOTC programme evolved as the DNI students undertook 18 local'immersive journeys', which created multiple situations in which learning was likely to occur. The programme began with a Waka-ama (The Māori term for outrigger canoeing) and paddleboarding journey, including learning the tikanga (Māori customs and traditional values) of Waka travel, having time in the water, exploring the beach, learning about the local sea lions, and planting native trees to restore habitat. The following weeks involved learning about beach and water safety, walking to the Otago museum through the botanical gardens, cycling to and from the ice skating rink, mountain biking to, from, and on local tracks, scootering to a local bouldering wall, following the map of a local walking track all the way back to school, scootering to the local sailing club and biking to the local scuba dive school. The school timetable which enabled a day-long programme each week, was an advantage of the intermediate school curriculum. The extended period of time in an entire Friday enabled the inclusion of non-motorised transport as part of the journey and learning experience. Many students had or could borrow a scooter and the nearby Logan Park High school had bikes that students were able to loan. From this EOTC journey programme the key lessons learned were: 1) Self-management and developing connections; 2) Environmental awareness; 3) How the outdoor context made it easier for students to learn; 4) The empowerment of active non-motorised forms of

transport; and 5) The role of the educator.

## Lessons Learned:

**1. Self-management and developing connections**

Consistently reinforcing the importance of positive interpersonal skills, learning to treat each other positively and with respect, were on ongoing learning objectives. Over the duration of the programme a positive change in the group's dynamics was noticeable. The students' initial negativity about themselves revealed fears and negative self-talk, reflected in their put downs; 'I can't do this…I'm thick… I'm useless', to themselves and to each other.

As the students formed friendships and strengthened their self-management skills, they began supporting and empathising with each other, waiting for and journeying alongside anyone who was struggling. This had a positive effect on individual student's levels of self-confidence, as J's teacher commented:

> *"J has developed some 'mana' and I think is feeling really good about himself. He used to be fairly invisible and needed to be checked on that he had what he needed and knew what to do... I feel that he is more independent in his self-management for learning" (J's teacher).*

Another example of this support was at the beginning of a journey to scooter to the sailing club, K turned up with no change of clothes, no scooter, no lunch, and had not eaten. However, the students made a plan so that she could participate; borrowing a wetsuit, sharing a scooter to take turns alternating running and scootering, and took camp cookers and pancake mix to cook at a picnic spot on the journey.

On another journey, the group was scootering to a local bouldering wall, when N saw his local 'All Black' hero walking through town. With the group's encouragement N stopped and talked to his hero, making a connection that N spoke about as both exciting and motivating.

**2. Environmental awareness**

Students and their parents spoke of the students' growing awareness of the environment, and kaitiakitanga (sense of guardianship) for the places they had visited. On a journey walking in the Mt Cargill bush area, the students learnt how to make a cup of pine-needle tea, under the guidance of a local herbalist. Another walking journey through the botanical gardens involved a task of collecting and identifying the living creatures in the pond and matching these with a chart that indicated how the presence of certain creatures in the pond determined its water quality. Straker (2012) states that "Outdoor education journeys … can provide opportunities to advocate for different ways of valuing where we live and how we live" (p. 170). Journeying through a place can impact emotional and sensory responses to places, as the natural environment becomes a co-teacher. Some of the student's perceptions became uncluttered in the outdoors, G spoke about how kayaking in the Purakanui inlet inspired him to relax as he could just lie back in the kayak and look up at the sky.

**3. How the outdoor context made it easier for students to learn**

The students felt that it was easier to learn through being active for much of the day, with the activities being an alternative and more effective learning forum to being inside the classroom. K spoke about being teased and told off for being loud and non-stop talking/singing in a school classroom setting, which transposed to being enthusiastic and encouraging to everyone outdoors, where noise doesn't matter. Throughout the journeys reflective discussions occurred with questions that made the students think about what they were doing. Having a day unstructured by bells allowed the students time and space to think.

On one journey a game of sardines up high in the tussocks, morphed into solo time experiences in an environment, that some thought was captivating. On another journey, we used storytelling and goal setting involving recognition of their dreams and life goals and writing stepping stones to achieving these. Each week there were challenges that they could master; challenges that were not too easy, but not too hard. Challenges were differentiated, so there were always next steps for students that needed them and real group problem solving, such as how to navigate using a map and look after each other, how to fix a puncture, treasure hunts, and outdoor cooking. Providing time in unique outdoor places usually means there are situations in which people are stimulated and intrigued by something, these opportunities allowed the students to find some real strengths. As parents and staff members commented:

*'Great to have identified a real strength in biking and bike maintenance for T, that has been a real positive' (T's mum).*

*'…I think he has been surprised by his ability in certain areas…' (J's teacher).*

*'L has really enjoyed and looked forward to Fridays - she has had so many different learning opportunities that she couldn't have had in the classroom' (L's mum).*

The outdoors presents unique challenges to overcome. L discovered how capable she was at biking; J discovered he could climb skilfully and with little fear. J also didn't like water in his face, yet accomplished scuba diving until he was so blue from the cold water, we had to make him get out of the water. G came to school every Friday, not wanting to miss an opportunity, as his teacher noted:

*'G has had full attendance on Fridays, but very sporadic attendance otherwise' (G Teacher)*

**4. The empowerment of active non-motorised forms of transport**

The students' experiences of journeying in their local environment by non-motorised form allowed them to become familiar with the cycle ways and tracks and understand what was accessible in their community. From an educator's perspective, the active transport was an important part of the day. This active beginning of the journey was a time for the students to 'breathe' and choose to skate alone or with a friend, be quiet or have a chat, unwind or ramp up. The return home was an equally important debrief and thinking time and space. The students using their own methods of transport was an empowering concept that led to conversations regarding future access and repeating the experiences in their leisure time. On a scooter journey to the local sailing club, B expressed how easy it was to travel along the bike path to the sailing club and how she would now be able to access the sailing club's 'learn to sail' day. The outdoor learning environment also provided a medium for students to be physically active for extended periods on a regular basis and whilst no physical assessments were taken of the students, there was anecdotal evidence of physical improvements, for example C would use her inhaler extensively during the first weeks of journeys, but used it less in the final weeks when biking. By utilising non-motorised forms of transport, not only were the students active, empowered, and learning how to navigate the local tracks, paths and cycleways, but the values inherent in environmental education became interwoven with the journeys. This environmentally-friendly transport method for school based EOTC programmes could become the default norm if we are to teach students how to prevent further environmental degradation.

**5. The role of the educator**

The educator's role of modelling the active transport methods, participating alongside the students, enhanced the social relationships of the group. Conversing alongside each other whilst journeying was easier and considered to be more acceptable than conversing when indoors. High behavioural expectations had to be reinforced to develop a strong group ethos and sense of manaakitanga (caring for each other). Students didn't often arrive at school happy, but often finished their journey singing and chatting excitedly, with lots of smiles, laughter and thanks.

## Future directions:

As a new educational initiative, the DNI EOTC programme was exciting to be part of. Staff and parents of the students involved were positive about the contribution

of the programme to the students learning and self-confidence;

*'She is more confident in sharing her ideas and taking part in all our learning experiences' (C's Teacher).*

*'Loving the Fridays, really positive, excited about everything they do. K has become really positive and a much more confident kid' (K's mum)*

*'L has gained confidence to try new activities she has come home proud of what she has tried and enjoyed'. (L›s mum)*

*'B has been more confident and she loves nature. She is just a better person and cheerful. Feeling good about herself' (B's mum)*

An important future focus for the programme, would be to integrate and communicate the learning outside the classroom with the in-classroom learning, to reflect on how the experiences are intellectually expanding and to ensure the learning is relevant and the cultural context of the journeys are meaningful and enriching. Connecting back with the students during the week and connecting with the classroom teachers to share the learning was patchy and sporadic. Staff and students agreed there were lots of special moments that made the journeys enjoyable and fun, acknowledging the student's excitement and ability to express themselves coherently while they were outdoors. However, an important aspect of experiential learning through EOTC is to provide students' with opportunities for deeper reflections on their learning (Straker, 2012). In this way supporting the students' stories of their values, awareness, and life skills that progressed from these initial journeys.

## Conclusion:

The DNI EOTC programme was an innovative, alternative approach to learning for a small group of students. They engaged in a place responsive pedagogy connecting to the city and its green spaces. Learning whilst developing friendships, being active, and feeling revitalised were all voiced as having a positive impact on the students' attitudes to learning. The programme also enhanced the students' self-management and learning experientially made it easier to learn in a broad range of curriculum areas. The pedagogical power of experiential learning outside the classroom, incorporating journeying using non-motorised transport was a unique innovation worth further consideration.

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## About the author:


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# Outdoor Philosophy

*By Abbey Franklin*

The outdoors is all about connection. Connection to others, connection to place and connection to self. I believe experiential learning and slow pedagogy are at the core of authentic outdoor education. Meaning can be enhanced through incorporating criticality and Kaupapa Māori into practice. We take for granted how lucky we are to have a native culture with such a strong sense of identity. Drawing on this, while adding in an element of risk, allows for unparalleled growth in confidence.

Experiential learning is central to outdoor learning, aligning pragmatically. By placing the learner at the centre of the experience, this allows for adaption to changing environments. The lesson is learner specific and hence so much more profound. Outdoor education is unlike any other any other subject, with outdoor facilitators being incomparable to classroom teachers. The role of an outdoor facilitator is less structured,yet extremely significant. It becomes a balance of when to prompt and communicate and when to sit back and let experiential learning occur.

The Spirit of Adventure has been a huge part of my life, both as a trainee and now as volunteer crew. As a learner, it instilled a deep sense of confidence in who I was, at a time in my life when I really needed it. As a facilitator, it is the gift that keeps on giving. Inclusivity is a big one promoted on-board, embracing people's differences and adjusting teaching style to accommodate this. In doing so, peoples' strengths are highlighted and the cohesiveness on-board is unlike any thing I have ever witnessed. Something can be learned from everyone in your life, a belief for me that is reaffirmed every time I return to that organisation.

Slow pedagogy is also critical to authentic outdoor experience. The Scandinavian concept of Friluftsliv is fascinating; a way of life in relation to nature. Gelter argues that outdoor experience has become motorized, with people racing through outdoor experiences to more effectively use time (2007). Slow pedagogy is now sought as an alternative to urban life, allowing for flow, the ability to be present and a sense of peace in nature.

I was privileged to be part of a 17-day trip down the Colorado river last year, that embodied slow pedagogy. While we learnt practical river skills like reading water and paddling, the more profound learnings had to do with time, relationships and reflection. Kurt

Hahn, pioneer of Outward Bound is an incredible leader to look to on this. He stood by the belief that physical components of outdoor experiences were always secondary to the thinking, serving and spiritual parts (James, 1980). On this trip, I was reminded daily that time is merely a social construct. We rose with the sun, journeyed down river during the day, before setting up camp on the river bank in the evening. Living in this way, you are fully present. I truly believe environments like this bring out the best in people, resultantly the relationships formed across the 17 days were remarkable and lifelong. There was something to be learned from everyone, from the energy and spirit of young Ollie, to river vet Jill, who radiated wisdom and love for this incredible natural landscape. Valuing people on their strengths and compromising on differences is an invaluable skill born out of group outdoor experience. Finally, distraction free outdoor environments provide the opportunity to understand self, others and nature in a different way. Critical reflection on society is often accompanied by a shift in perspective, which is extremely important for incorporating learnings back into everyday life.

So where does slow pedagogy and experiential learning fit into outdoor education moving forward? In modern outdoor education, there appears to be a movement toward undertaking outdoor pursuits over a holistic outdoor experience, encouraging the pursuit of skill mastery. A key reason for this is the educational need to quantify success. Knowledge and understanding always must be measurable and comparable. Whilst outdoor pursuits are incredibly enjoyable, adventure is commodified, promoting anthropocentrism and consumerism. The natural resource is used and conquered.By educating in this way, superficial skill learning is prioritised over more meaningful learning, fuelling a disconnect between outdoor experiences and everyday life. Therefore, integrated holistic learning, with slow pedagogy and experiential learning at the core is fundamental. Opportunities for these experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand are out there. Phys-Ed camp is a great example, as are school camps, Outward Bound and The Spirit of Adventure. The challenge becomes ensuring these opportunities are promoted and available to all learners, regardless of experience and regardless of economic status.

Outdoor education is incredibly well situated within the education sector to incorporate critical theory into its teachings. In a society enraptured with the convenience of 'disposability', a challenge for outdoor providers becomes teaching the younger generations about the value and worth of conservation in the outdoors. Without thriving outdoor environments and ecosystems there can be no adventure education. One cannot exist without the other therefore the interdependence of wilderness and sustainability cannot be ignored. Hence local sourcing, sustainable living and conservation needs to become integrated into our practice, providing methods of implementing the wilderness ethos into people's everyday lives. This was a concept we endeavoured to include in our 328-course teaching session.Through planting, we could give back to a local ecosystem, incorporating sustainability and environmental protection. By providing a context and connecting to place, the session took on meaning. Meaningful experiences and environmental protection are two huge benefits of holistic, sustainable outdoor education, that would be lost with a focus on skill mastery through outdoor pursuits. Environmental protection is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity.

Only since coming to Phys-Ed school have I been exposed to Kaupapa Māori educational principles. The more I learn the more I am amazed by its educational worth.We are lucky in Aotearoa New Zealand to have an indigenous culture so in touch with the importance of relationships, both interpersonal and between human and nature. Tukana-taina is an awesome concept, a student-teacher relationship built on Mana (mutual respect) and whanaungatanga (a sense of belonging). Akō is also incorporated, which means to learn as well as to teach (Munford & Sanders, 2011). Respecting the learner and what they bring to the experience is a huge part of successful outdoor facilitation. The teacher-learner relationship is then that much stronger. Māori world view also views nature differently, sympathizing more readily with non-human beings. Through an understanding of whanaungatanga, fostering and care is reciprocal. If the land cares for you by providing food and shelter, in turn, you

have a duty to care for the land (Patterson, 2000). It is a simple concept fast becoming lost in a society centered around consuming. The concept of mutual support is deeply ingrained in Māori appreciation of wilderness. It is an understanding all people and outdoor providers can learn from, and an area of huge untapped potential in mainstream outdoor education moving forward.

Finally, I would like to touch on risk, inherent to all meaningful adventure. Risk puts people outside their comfort zones, in a setting where they can succeed and thrive. This allows for unparalleled confidence growth and an extended vision for what can be achieved. For our increasingly urban young people, most outdoor adventures are way out of their comfort zones. The real risk is often low, but for unexperienced students it is new and perceived to be terrifying. Modern health and safety regulations are putting immense pressure on our facilitators, asking them to take responsibility for what could go wrong. As a result, some facilitators are subcontracting, some are restraining what they do, and some are cutting outdoor education all together. On the contrary, what we should be worried about is the risk to young people and future generations if we don't educate outdoors. The beauty of the outdoors is it incorporates some sense of risk for everyone, be it physical, social, emotional or in leadership. There is a deep sense of belief and confidence borne out of overcoming challenge in any of these domains. Risk is a reality of educating outdoors. In modern society, risk is often feared. Outdoor education shows people how to embrace it.

Outdoor education is unconventional. It doesn't fit a mould. It is inclusive, it is freeing, and it is needed now more than ever. Personally, it allows for unparalleled growth and the emergence of some of life's greatest lessons. At no age do you ever stop discovering and learning from the outdoors. That is the beauty of it, it keeps on giving. Within society, it can become the ripple of change. It needs to become the ripple of change. As a teacher, a quote in my Dad's office simplifies it perfectly;

*"Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care"*

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## About the author


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## Resetting, recalibrating and reconfiguring;

# What is really important?

*By Andrew Mount*

Perhaps there are reflective moments in any given life when one recognises they are in the second half. Maybe it's an accumulation of thoughts and experiences formulating into a collection of deeply rooted values and principles, or perhaps it's a recalibration of thinking regarding what the most important things for people and the planet are. Regardless of the reason, I have been reminded recently that there are some very simple and very important things that sometimes slip in the order of priority.

What is more important than healthy oceans that provide us with the primary source of water, an atmosphere that enables us to replenish our existence, unencumbered, with every breath, sources of food that are genuinely sustainable and quality relationships exhibiting genuine tolerance and embrace diversity?

It would be fair if I was to be accused of being a consumer of the gifts of nature, with marginal contribution in return in both personal and professional contexts. I drive a car, I drive on roads that have had a vast impact on nature, I utilise commercial air travel, I live in a house that has a physical footprint and environmental impact that is well beyond my needs. My practice as an educator has involved significant travel and the utilisation of equipment that is inherently founded in materials deriving from oil-based products and engaging in the natural environment with modest return from myself or the people who have engaged in the experiences I have enabled.

What I find now however is the habits and levels of contribution and comfort all these things provide is part of a wider societal pattern that I have grown to believe is not at all sustainable and in many instances inherently harmful.

So why the shift in thinking and why would I care to change? I am of a generation who may well escape the full impact of my actions. I care because I can no longer fully reconcile these factors as I consider the likely environmental reality my children are likely to encounter, and subsequently their children and so on and so on. If I bother to care for just a moment about the scale of the impact beyond just my own family, the scale of possibility very quickly becomes overwhelming.

So where does opportunity exist to continue to engage with people and nature in a way that has mutual benefit to all the important stake holders, in which the potential for important things to not only be rendered sustainable but perhaps more importantly to be restored? I think it may commence with the

courage to acknowledge that not all is well and that there is a duty to respond. I subsequently think that the modification of behaviour, which requires a proceeding change of thought, which is influenced by values that proceed the thoughts is contentious although feasible if 'we' collectively identify and strategically address important issues with a united willingness to act. In doing so I believe there is hope for humans and for nature. I do not care to consider the alternative.

I have had the privilege during my time to date, as an educator who believes that the natural environment is the most pure 'classroom' and one in which the least bias exists, to share experiences with some extraordinary educators from who I have learnt a great deal. What I have learnt or been reminded of lately, is that there is virtually no need to travel great distances, there is no need to utilise complex equipment or to even compile complex lessons or systems to produce quality learning opportunities. That exploring areas close to home, focusing on ways to utilise materials that are readily available to create shelter, to manufacture tools to produce fire as a means of purifying water, cooking food and staying warm are mechanisms of bountiful learning.

There is an element of irony in this, in that what I have been reminded is that there are simple and powerful lessons, that span cultures and time, and inherently engulf the values, principles and key competencies and learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. The tragedy is that in my view, much of the value in these types of experiences is featuring less and less in the reality of most people.

The most significant influences of my thinking and subsequent endeavours have come firstly from the contributions of the founder of 'craftlab', Omine Ivatt, who I was able to work with during my tenure at AUT. He has reminded me that engagement and non-exclusivity are extremely important principles upon which to build meaningful learning experiences. With extraordinary enthusiasm and commitment to providing experiences that anyone can participate in, and benefit greatly from, Omine has challenged educators to rethink their practice as well as graciously providing the opportunity for them to reconfigure and restock, their 'educators tool kit', to enable the revitalisation of learning.

The most recent opportunity that I have had to further re-ignite my belief in nature as the most ideal classroom, has involved working with the Tamaki Herenga Waka Trust and the Rawiri whanau. I have had the privilege through my role at the Sir Peter Blake Marine Education and Recreation Centre (MERC) and the willingness and enthusiasm of Yin Khai Foong, the General Manager, to help bring together a series of genuinely collaborative endeavours. These have included experiences for; new immigrant families, a primary schools entire cohort of year 5 and 6 students, and all the second-year undergraduate students working towards a Degree in Sport and Recreation at AUT university.The experiences have fundamentally involved getting into boats that can accommodate 14 people each and exploring local places, considering who has gone before, how people impact on each other and nature and ways in which we can achieve collective and individual objectives and success. These experiences have been similar for the various groups. The difference however from more conventional experiences, is that the craft involved are waka tangata, and the nature of the experience is embedded in the kaupapa of the first people to inhabit Aotearoa, and the manner in which the experiences have been facilitated is done so by people who have the mana to do so. The outcomes have been remarkable and enlightening.

The trust have a number of waka tangata that enable all people, the opportunity to combine with others and share experiences that are rooted deeply in that of the people who dared to venture from distant homelands and risk much for the sake of finding things unknown many centuries ago.The authentic context of delivery, in which the experiences are conducted add value to an extent that I have never experienced before. Participants are inherently engulfed in graciousness, tolerance, richness and dignity that manifests from the people leading the experiences. The experiences also present adventure and scope to learn about people and places, flora and fauna, technology and creativity, the essence and value of quality relationships, collaboration and the impact of ones behaviour on others and oneself, the results that occur when uniformity is present and not present, the patterns and algorithms associated with effective manoeuvring, the manner in which one performance is more effective

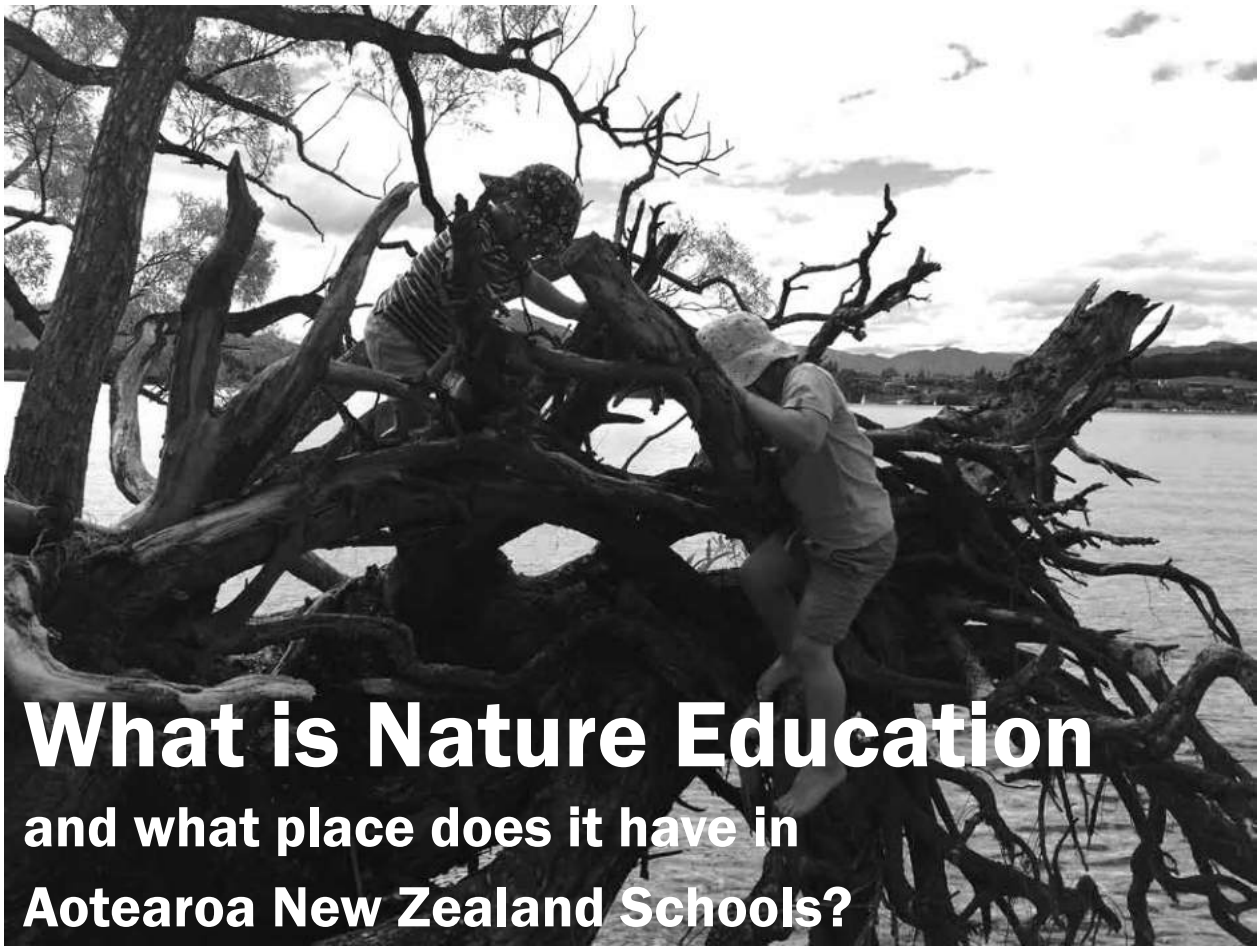
than another, the aesthetic beauty as well as the power and great influence of nature, the ways in which information is conveyed in multisensory ways, all within in a context of support and inclusion. It appears upon reflection that nature may well be confirmed as the best context in which to address the intent of the entire New Zealand Curriculum in a manner that is genuinely engaging and inclusive?

I find myself wondering how it is, having grown up and attended school in this country that I am only now beginning to learn from and about the people that where here well before my courageous ancestors struck out from Nova Scotia in 1886. It is also sobering that it is only in more recent years that I have begun to learn and appreciate the impact and influence of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi. What I find encouraging however is, I immediately recognise there are things people have in common. One being the connection that we all, in Aotearoa, have with the ocean. The sea has been the means by which ancestors have navigated their way on or over to be here, as well as a source of nourishment, whether it be physical, behavioural or spiritual. It just so happens though, that the latter is more evident in my view, in these waka experiences compared to kayaking experiences that I have delivered on numerous occasions. Matauranga Māori, and the overt inclusion and acknowledgment of wairua, permeates the waka experience in such a genuine and authentic way, that I am inclined to believe this may be one of the primary reasons for the overall quality of experience that I have witnessed. The experiences have demonstrated the meaning and relevance of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga as well as whakatauki, including "e waka he noa" and "He aha temeanui o tea o. He tangata, he tangata, he tanagata". I also now recognise the principles inherent in the Te Tiriti o Waitangi are reflected so closely in so many educational programmes, experiences and initiatives. It is ironic that this connection has taken an educator of many years to realise.

Mahatma Ghandi suggested that "The ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and test of our civilisation". If this is the case, then I think I have seen the building of unity in action. The waka experience has demonstrated to me, perhaps, one of the most simple, productive and non-threatening ways, for people of differing cultural origins to benefit, mutually. The engagement of people and nature provides such powerful and meaningful opportunity. I find myself reminded as to why I bother to seek experiences and share with others in the things that intimately connects us all, fellowship and nature.When adding the perspectives, methods and rational of the people who first encountered the place in which we currently exist, to the dynamics of being near and on the sea in vessels that accommodate and require many people to consider themselves, each other, those who have gone before and those yet to come, there is possibly one of the most powerful opportunities for people to learn and develop that I have ever witnessed and experienced.

## About the author:

***Andrew Mount*** *has spent quite a lot of time sharing experiences with others in the context of learning and nature and has recently returned to the place where he cut his teeth to be more closely connected to young people, the sea and all the opportunity that exits for both. The time in between has been spent primarily in the tertiary domain and participating and contributing in the growth and development of people in the outdoors. Andrew can be contacted at andrew@merc.org.nz*



# What is Nature Education

## and what place does it have in Aotearoa New Zealand Schools?

*By Celia Hogan*

Some people say that "Nature is the best medicine". The saying is an oldie but a goodie and seems to have stood the test of time. I would even say it's coming back into fashion. But what does nature have to do with education? Where does it fit in?

Nature education is a relatively new concept compared to outdoor education. Outdoor education came about in the 1940's and can be defined as experiential learning or organised learning that takes place in the outdoors (Knapp, n.d.). Whereas nature education is so new it doesn't really have an official definition so I will do my best to explain from my perspective what it is, how it is different and why a term like this could be useful for New Zealand.

A big part of nature education is about connecting children with nature through spending regular time in nature. This mainly happens in an unstructured way and through play, curiosity and exploration. It can also happen with a mix of play and activities in nature. It has possibly come about for our youngest tamariki as that step before outdoor education but is beneficial all the way through to adulthood…yes adults like to play too!

Place based education is part of the ethos too. When children spend regular time in their local environment, they get to know it deeply through seasonal observations, having special places, giving names to local animals or areas of their local environment. Through their place they connect with nature, start to care for nature and love nature which can lead to kaitiakitanga or guardianship.

The other major part to nature education is the developmental benefits for both children, and adults. Play, particularly free, unstructured and outdoors is essential for healthy brain and socio-emotional development and in the early years of life is far more important than direct instruction (Frost, 1998; Szalavitz & Perry, 2010). Some of these types of play also provide opportunities for children to engage in age-appropriate risky play. Risky play helps children to learn to manage their own safety and move around comfortably (Knight, 2009). Being outside in adverse conditions can teach a child a lot about having tolerance toward challenging

situations, how to manage themselves and understand their own capabilities.

The natural environment is fundamentally important to both our physical and psychological wellbeing, so actions that promote and protect our natural environment help to increase our ability to flourish in life. In turn, people and communities that are flourishing, that is have high levels of wellbeing, tend to be environmentally responsible in their behaviour and can therefore contribute to environmental sustainability (Auckland Mental Health Foundation, 2011).

In the early years, free unstructured play in nature is a big focus of nature education. It means children get to choose what they play and how they play without adults leading them. This could be looking for bugs, making huts, climbing a tree, making mud pies, collecting taonga or rolling down a hill. All these different experiences not only help our tamariki to build a relationship with nature, they help to connect neural pathways in their brains, developing resilience, building emotional regulation and strengthening social skills.

Observation becomes a key role for the educators at this stage, but we also want to acknowledge there is always a continuum. Some children don't know how to play so we may be required to scaffold them into their free play.

For older children the role of the teachers is much the same but there can be opportunities to extend learning. This is where putting on a facilitators hat comes in. Asking the right questions, making observations on what is happening, providing support to a group trying to make a decision, but not doing it for them. It can also be teaching through nature, with nature and for nature. This could be doing a maths measuring lesson outside or a science water quality test for your local awa. Naturally some play will occur during these sessions.

Another great thing about play is it can lead to deeper understandings about how things work in a real-world way and can link back to curriculum areas. For example, a teacher in Dunedin was telling me about a ditch that flowed through the bush area they go to and play in for one day a week (nature school day). One day she recalled it had been raining and the children were floating sticks down the creek. They then noticed there was rubbish floating down the creek too. There was discussion about how it got there, and the teacher asked them if they would like to find out. They went for an exploration up the creek to find the starting point and they realised that it was a main road and all the rubbish that was in the gutter was then floating down into the creek. There were then discussions on where the rubbish was going to end up and what they could do about it. So, there is potential for projects to come out of play that link directly to the curriculum.

In this example, the tamariki were THINKING about where the rubbish came from and went to, they were PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING their ideas during the discussion, MANAGING THEMSELVES to stay safe and stick together when they were walking, USING LANGUAGE to express their feelings, sharing ideas and RELATING TO OTHERS and UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS of what happens if we just throw our rubbish on the ground rather than putting it in

a bin.These are all links to key competencies in the curriculum. In this way, nature education can be woven into everyday teaching or become a mix of nature education and EOTC.

Many schools are starting or have already started, on the journey of play-based learning (PBL) and there are two points I want to raise as I feel PBL seems to be focused on the indoors:

1. play-based learning needs to be outdoors more and preferably time in natural environments. Playing outdoors gives different results compared to playing indoors. They can't bounce off the walls if there are none!

2. Play shouldn't stop straight after new entrant class; in fact, it shouldn't stop at high school either. Some of my best memories of school camps were the evening free play time where we got to climb trees, play spotlight and make huts. This play needs to be happening for every age and stage in school.

**Access to play improves classroom behaviour and academic performance (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998) and enhances children's readiness to learn, their learning behaviours and their ability to problem solve (Ginsburg, 2007).**

Currently, we are seeing children who live 1km from the beach having never visited it. In *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv, the term nature-deficit disorder was coined to describe the phenomenon of children's disconnection from the natural world (Louv, 2005). Things are different for this generation of children. Since the introduction of modern technology and especially smart phones, we have seen a dramatic decrease in outdoor play. It's not only technology that has had an impact. We also need to consider urbanisation, parents fears, media and the costs of living requiring the home-based parent to find work. If children aren't spending regular time outdoors in nature, they aren't connecting with nature which means they aren't caring for nature. The other side is we see children with less resilience, higher anxiety, obesity, poor social skills, and other mental

health problems like we have never seen before.

Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health. Today, kids are aware of the global threats to the environment, but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature, is fading (Louv, 2005). For children, green spaces are an important environmental influence on emotional wellbeing *(Ward, Duncan, et al., 2016)*

Some people will be asking why do we need another term? Great question! Here is some background to why this term has come about in Aotearoa New Zealand. In early childhood centres over the last 5-10 years a growing number of centres have started running 1-2 day per week nature play sessions, sometimes called Bush Kindy, Forest Kindergarten or Nature Discovery programmes. Internationally, Forest Schools, as they are also known, have grown in popularity too and teachers around the country have been looking into this model for their own schools.

A couple of years ago a network for nature educators was set up in New Zealand via Facebook and discussions were had around what Forest Schools would look like in New Zealand. It was recognised that in Aotearoa New Zealand we didn't just run programmes in the forest. Bush was probably the term we aligned with more, but it wasn't just bush that was used. Groups were going to beaches, wetlands, parks, reserves and farms. So, the name forest schools didn't seem to fit what was happening here. Nature education became a term that educators started to use naturally as it seemed to encompass all those types of spaces but can also be linked to nature connection and the learning, growth and development that happens in nature.

Alongside these discussions, we also observed a number of international Forest School Training organisations coming to New Zealand to run their courses and provide qualifications for people to become Forest School Leaders.These providers have been promoting and providing their courses in New Zealand without consideration of our cultural narrative, our environmental differences, our curriculums and te ao Māori. While their courses work well in their country of origin and should be respected for the wonderful work they had been doing, they didn't fit the same here as our needs weren't being met.

The term nature education became two-fold. It recognised the importance of connecting children to nature and the other associated benefits of regular time in nature. But it is also a term that can be used for New Zealand's version of Forest Schools, unique to us, created by us and taking inspiration from overseas. Nature education shouldn't be too prescriptive as there is never one way of doing things. Nature education could fit into schools in different ways than I talk about above and what it comes down to is considering your community, your iwi, your school, your environment and your tamariki. It will look different wherever you go in New Zealand and that would be beautiful to see. Keeping the core value of connecting children to nature is key and everything else will happen. There is work still to be done for nature education in Aotearoa New Zealand. It's a work in progress. Please watch this space as we develop nature education in this country in a way that is informed by this place.

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## About the author:


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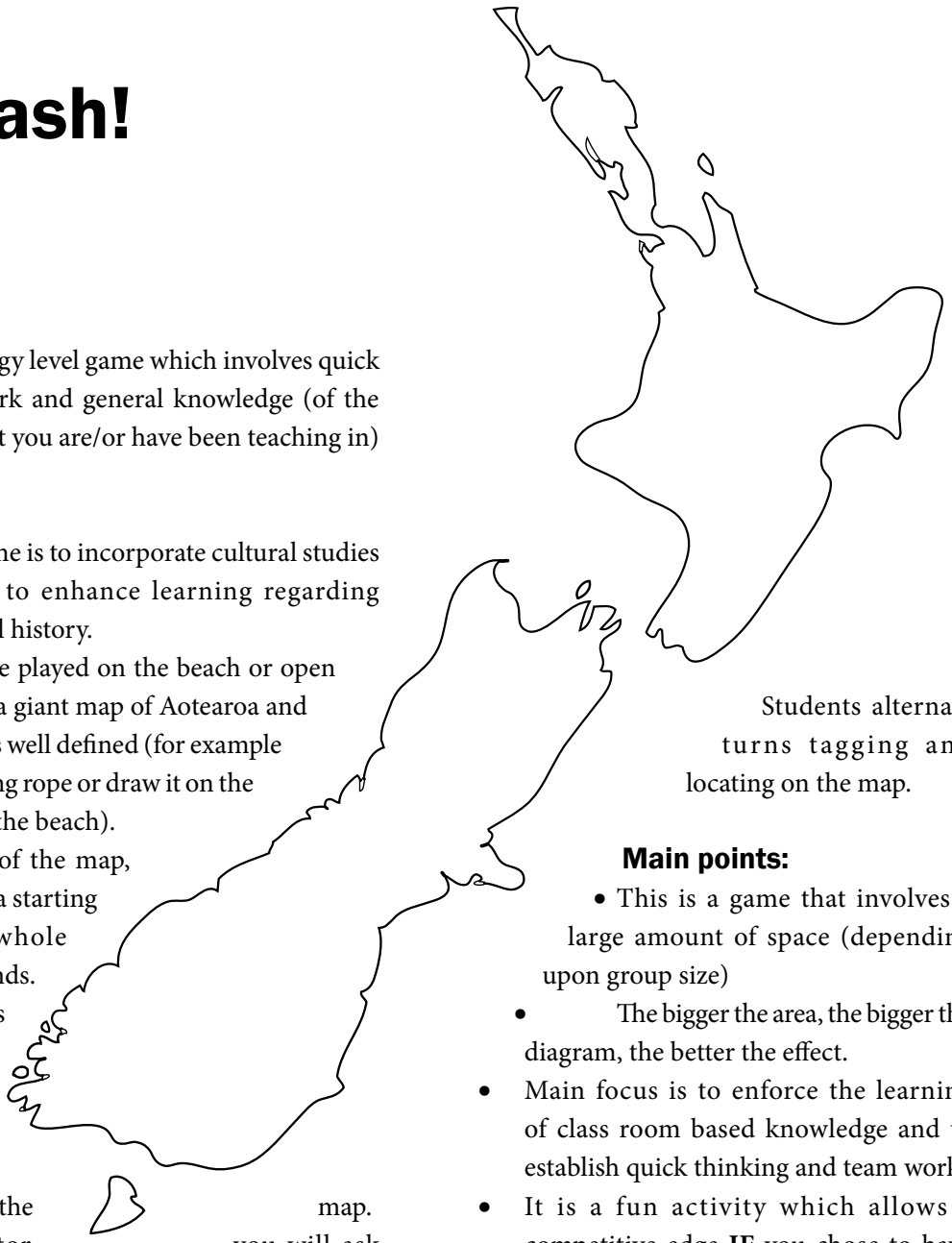
# The Dash!

*By Salli George*



This is a high energy level game which involves quick thinking, teamwork and general knowledge (of the subject matter that you are/or have been teaching in)

## Aim:

The aim of the game is to incorporate cultural studies with an activity to enhance learning regarding Aotearoa's cultural history.

The game can be played on the beach or open grass area. Draw a giant map of Aotearoa and make sure that it is well defined (for example you could use a long rope or draw it on the sand if you are at the beach).

On either side of the map, you need to draw a starting line down the whole length of the islands. Divide the class into pairs, and each pair faces each other from behind the lines on either side of the map.

As the facilitator you will ask the whole group questions about Aotearoa. These questions need to be based on places such as facts related to places on the map. An example is *where is the Okarito Brown Kiwi from? What feature of Aotearoa was gifted back to the South Island Iwi in 1991 who gifted it right back to the Crown?*

After the question has been asked, one of the students will run from one side of the islands to the other, discuss the answer, and tag their partner who will then run to the place where the answer is: Okarito on the west coast of the South Island for the first question.

The last student to the location either loses a point or is out (depending upon your objectives and how you want to tailor the learning/reflecting).

Students alternate turns tagging and locating on the map.

## Main points:

- This is a game that involves a large amount of space (depending upon group size)
- The bigger the area, the bigger the diagram, the better the effect.
- Main focus is to enforce the learning of class room based knowledge and to establish quick thinking and team work
- It is a fun activity which allows a competitive edge **IF** you chose to have one.

## Adaptations:

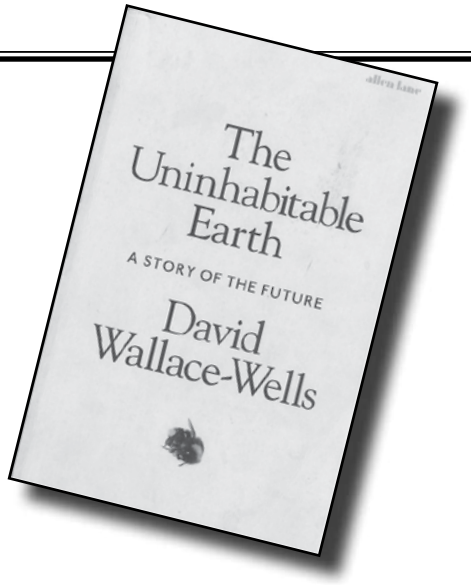
The beauty of this game is that it is SO basic that it can be adapted to fit many different contexts and knowledges. For example, an alternative for this game could be to draw a figure of a human on the ground and get the participants to run to the different parts of the body by asking questions.

## About the author:

***Salli George*** *is a graduate of the Bachelor of Sustainability and Outdoor Education at Ara institute of Canterbury. The Dash was a game she designed when she was a student.*

## Book review

# The Uninhabitable Earth – A story of the future.




*By Dave Irwin*

In 2017, author David Wallace-Wells wrote a somewhat controversial essay called *The Uninhabitable Earth* published in New York Magazine. The essay went viral, had a significant impact on many people, and generated a lot of discussion. What made the essay significant was that it discussed the science on climate change in a way that synthesised concepts and supporting data into a forecast of the impacts of these changes in terms of human experience. Re-visiting the essay now, I am shocked at the turmoil and in some cases bleakness Wallace-Wells describes. The book is an extended version of the essay and makes for very sobering yet also compulsive reading.

Compared with Rachael Carson's *Silent Spring*, Wallace-Well's work also sounds a loud warning to readers that time is running out to make meaningful changes to the way that we live in order to prevent climate catastrophe. As Carson's analysis unravelled for readers the complex nature of the impacts of pesticides on ecosystems, Wallace-Wells describes cascading interlinked catastrophes of food shortages, refugee emergencies, climate wars and economic devastation. That the severity of these cascading catastrophes is not more prominent in our thinking is beyond belief and fails to justify our inaction.

*The Uninhabitable Earth* is a stark and incredibly challenging wake-up call. In-fact Wallace-Wells has described the response that is needed to fight the climate emergency as equivalent to the call to prepare for World War Two in Britain. At this time, the British people were scared and felt a degree of inevitability, much the same as many people do today about climate change. *The Uninhabitable Earth* is a literal call to arms, a call to act with urgency and with a will to overcome what is rapidly becoming our new climate reality. What is required is that "people start thinking like a planet" and "thinking like a people, one people, whose fate is shared by all" (p.225-226).

*The Uninhabitable Earth* is incredibly well-written, with one of the strengths being the accessibility of the meticulously documented science and the incredibly engaging story that it tells. Wallace-Wells draws you in to engage with the mess we humans have made primarily within the last three decades and he instils the reader with feelings of urgency to both attend to our over-consumptive lifestyles and to prepare for change on an unprecedented scale. I highly recommend this book; it will make you panic at the lack of inaction and without a doubt encourage reflection on how we think about the futureand how we might live there… if we survive the journey.

Wallace-Wells, D. (2019). *The Uninhabitable Earth – A story of the future*. UK: Allen Lane.

**Authors note:** For those interested, the updated New York Magazine article can be located at: https://www.aleph-zero.fr/blog/Documents/The_Uninhabitable_Earth_9july2017.pdf

THE EONZ POSITION STATEMENT ON EOTC

## 1. Purpose (What we do)

EONZ maintains that the primary purpose of EOTC is to engage with the New Zealand curriculum outside the classroom in order to enrich the learning of students in early childhood centres, and primary and secondary schools.

EONZ embraces all the principles of Te Whāriki He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna O Aotearoa / Early Childhood Curriculum (2017); Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (2008); and The New Zealand Curriculum (2007); including a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and cultural diversity, inclusive communities, coherence in learning across the curriculum, and future focussed issues such as sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation.

EONZ supports the values outlined in the above documents including excellence, innovation, diversity, equity, community, cultural and ecological sustainability, integrity, and respect.

## 2. Why we do it (benefits for individuals, communities, environments)

EONZ is cognisant of research (for example see TKI website http://eotc.tki.org.nz/eotc-home) that supports well-structured EOTC experiences. Studies have shown that educationally sound EOTC experiences can enrich student learning across the curriculum. The establishment of positive relationships with teachers and peers in places of significance can foster a sense of belonging to communities and environments that is essential to on-going learning.

## 3. How we do it (Pedagogy/practice/partnerships)

EOTC programme design should be informed by sound pedagogical principles as highlighted in the New Zealand Curriculum. EONZ maintains that EOTC should at all times occur within the framework of the EOTC Guidelines: Bringing the Curriculum Alive (2016).

EONZ actively supports partnerships with and between teachers, schools and the community. EONZ seeks to work collaboratively with other sector organisations with the goal to improve EOTC in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## 4. Where we do it (Place)

EONZ supports place based and responsive approaches to EOTC that seek to: strengthen the understanding that students have of their local communities and environments (as well as those further afield), and engender a sense of obligation to care for those communities and environments. To achieve these goals, EONZ encourages action oriented experiential education that explores individual and collective relationships to places to foster vibrant communities and healthy environments.

## 5. Reducing our footprint

EONZ is committed to reducing the impact it has on the planet. This commitment includes reducing the impacts of the executive board, and all outputs of the organisation including production of resources and professional development. For example, EONZ is committed to providing resources on-line to reduce the impact on forests, and increasing the provision of local opportunities for PD to reduce the need to travel.

# MEMBERSHIP

Your membership is important to us. Our job is to enhance the capability of educators working ineducation outside the classroom.

As important, your membership supports a strong EONZ voice at decision-making levels in the outdoors sector and government, critical in progressing quality outcomes for learners.

**To join EONZ** go to **www.eonz.org.nz**. Look for the **Membership** on the main menu.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Organisation** | **$110.00** | (all organisations, and Schools with rolls above 300) |
| **Small Organisation** | **$75.00** | (Schools with rolls of less than 300) |
| **Individual** | **$50.00** | (Not carried by school/ organisation) |
| **Student** | **$30.00** | |
| **Student Affiliate** | – | see criteria at www.eonz.org.nz |

## Kaiārahi Support

The EONZ Kaiārahi is available to help members build capability and adaptive expertise through the provision of leadership, support, and guidance.

*Contact* kaiarahi@eonz.org.nz

## EOTC Management Support

A dedicated support pathway for EOTC management queries is available to all schools, nationwide. This expert advice is part of the National EOTC Coordinator Database initiative.

*Contact* eotcsupport@eonz.org.nz

## The National EOTC Coordinator Database

The EOTC Coordinator Database is identified as a critical mechanism supporting those with EOTC overview in schools to understand, implement and manage EOTC management processes. The database actively supports the role of the EOTC Coordinator and provides a direct line of communication with need-to know information.

Talk with your EOTC Coordinator and leadership team to ensure your school registers.

**For full details and registration go to www.eonz.org.nz**

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