

**OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS:
CURRICULUM OR PEDAGOGY?
CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION
AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

by

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Abstract

Although outdoor education has a rich history of providing key transformative moments and personal growth for students, its incorporation into public school education has been weak at best. With such an established role of providing effective learning environments, this naturally raises the question: What has prevented the greater inclusion of outdoor education in our public school system? This research addresses this question by demonstrating that the role of outdoor education in public schools can be framed as either pedagogy or curriculum. The relationship between pedagogy and curriculum is revealed to create difficulties for outdoor education's incorporation into schools because the public education system has the ability to use it selectively in a piecemeal fashion. This research demonstrates that the current lack of articulation of this duality has enabled those opposed to its inclusion in schools to create false arguments against its use, while those in favor of incorporation face challenges by not understanding outdoor education in this way. The importance of framing outdoor education's role for schools in this manner is shown to affect two areas: developing integrated school programs and its incorporation into teacher training programs. In order to adequately explore the above problem this dissertation divides and separately considers three frames of reference for outdoor education programming relative to schools: supplementary, curricula-based, and integrated. Curricula-based outdoor programs are shown to emphasize outdoor education as curriculum for schools (as a body of knowledge), while integrated outdoor programs largely focus on outdoor education as pedagogy (as experiential education). Primary research investigated Canadian integrated outdoor programs through surveys of veteran outdoor education teachers operating such programs in our schools. This research

identified two key roles for outdoor program inclusion: an experiential learning framework, and personal life skills development. By redefining the roles of outdoor education in schools in this way we now understand that previous reference to education *about* the natural heritage refers to curriculum initiatives while education *through* the natural heritage refers to pedagogical aims. In addition, the roles of the institution and the educator are examined in relation to the compatibility of outdoor education in public schools.

Keywords: outdoor education, experiential education, integrated curriculum, outdoor education in schools, outdoor pedagogy, adventure education, teacher training

Dedication

To my parents,

For raising me.

To my wife,

For supporting me.

To my son,

For motivating me.

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Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 – Experiential Education	13
1.1 Early Foundations for Experiential Education.....	13
1.2 The Influence of John Dewey	19
1.3 The Interplay between Action and Reflection	23
1.3.1 Learning Cycles	23
1.3.2 David Kolb and Experiential Learning	25
1.3.3 Donald Schön and the Reflective Practitioner	29
1.4 Experiential Re-Framing of Education	35
1.4.1 Freire and Praxis	36
1.4.2 Shor and Thematic Teaching	39
1.4.3 The Synergy between Action and Reflection	40
1.5 The Role of the Teacher in Experiential Education.....	42
1.6 Application of Experiential Education.....	47
Chapter 2 – Outdoor Education	51
2.1 The Scope of Outdoor Education.....	51
2.2 Early Foundations of Outdoor Education	55
2.2.1 The Moral Equivalent to War	55
2.2.2 Kurt Hahn and the creation of Outward Bound.....	57
2.2.3 The Growth of Outdoor Education Programs	59
2.3 The Relation between Experiential Learning and Outdoor Education	62
2.4 Critical Elements for Outdoor Education	64
2.4.1 The Socially and Physically Unfamiliar Environment	64
2.4.2 Flow State	68

2.4.3 Perceived Versus Actual Risk.....	72
2.5 Ethics in Outdoor Education.....	74
2.5.1 Informed Consent.....	75
2.6 Integration of Outdoor Education Experiences into General Society.....	77
2.6.1 Dressing the Metaphor.....	79
2.6.2 Rites of Passage.....	81
Chapter 3 – Contextualizing Outdoor Education Programming.....	85
3.1 Structural Relations between Outdoor Education and Public Schooling.....	85
3.2 Foucault – Discipline and Power.....	87
3.2.1 The Docile Body.....	88
3.2.2 Means of Correct Training.....	91
Hierarchical Observation.....	92
Normalizing Judgments.....	94
The Examination.....	96
3.2.3 Institutional Frameworks and the Panopticon.....	99
3.2.4 Foucault and Outdoor Education.....	103
3.3 Schön – The Reflective Practitioner.....	108
3.3.1 Artistry and Learning Loops.....	109
3.3.2 Modeling Group Dynamics.....	112
Model I.....	112
Model II.....	116
3.3.3 Frames of Reference.....	120
3.3.4 The Interplay Between Student and Instructor.....	122
3.4 Implications for Outdoor Education in Public Schooling.....	125
Chapter 4 – Outdoor Education as Praxis for Schools.....	129
4.1 Potential Interplay of Outdoor Education in the Classroom.....	129
4.1.1 Opposition to Integration.....	133
4.1.2 Schooling Roles in Society.....	137
4.2 Barriers to Integration.....	141
4.2.1 Assessment Dynamics.....	142
4.2.2 The Political Landscape.....	147

4.2.3 Certification versus Qualification	149
4.2.4 Teacher Preparation and Training.....	155
4.3 Educational Frameworks for Modeling Outdoor Education in Schools.....	161
Chapter 5 – Curricula-Based Programming: Outdoor Education as Curriculum	166
5.1 Outdoor Education Curricula for Schools.....	166
5.2 Australian and New Zealand Initiatives.....	167
5.3 Outdoor Education as Curriculum	172
5.3.1 Shifts in Outdoor Education Curriculum	174
5.3.2 An Outdoor Education Body of Knowledge.....	178
5.4 Logistical Barriers.....	181
5.5 Subject or Method?.....	187
Chapter 6 – Integrated Programming: Outdoor Education as Pedagogy	192
6.1 Integrated Curriculum.....	192
6.1.1 Thematic Approach to Teaching.....	194
6.1.2 Structuring of Integrated Programs.....	196
6.1.3 Central Features	200
6.2 Program Benefits for Students	202
Authentic Learning	204
Personal Growth.....	206
6.3 Barriers for Implementation.....	211
6.4 The Blending of Curriculum and Pedagogy	217
Chapter 7 – Qualitative Analysis of Canadian Integrated Outdoor Programs	219
7.1 Articulating the Position of Outdoor Education in Schools.....	219
7.1.1 Purpose and Role of Primary Research Study	221
7.2 Research Methodology	224
7.2.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Analysis	224
7.2.2 Participant Recruitment	225
7.2.3 Ethics Review and University Requirements	227
7.2.4 Structure and Analysis of Research Survey.....	228
7.3 Overview of Participating Integrated Programs	232
7.4 Teacher Feedback of Research Survey	235

7.4.1 Outdoor Education as Pedagogy	235
7.4.2 Outdoor Education as Curriculum	238
7.4.3 Formal Teacher Training	244
7.4.4 Alternate Teacher Training	249
7.4.5 Formal Relation of Outdoor Education in Schools.....	254
7.5 Trends in Teacher Approach and Critical Issues	261
7.6 Summary of General Findings	270
Chapter 8 – Implementation Design for Outdoor Education in Schools.....	271
8.1 Defining the Role of Outdoor Education in Schools	271
8.1.1 Dimensions of Outdoor Learning	273
8.1.2 Integration into Existing Public School Structure	278
8.1.3 Struggles between Adventure and Environmental Education	283
8.2 Design and Structure of a Balanced Outdoor Education Training Program.....	287
8.2.1 Case Study: The Moray House School of Education.....	289
8.2.2 The Needs within a Teacher-Training Program.....	292
8.2.3 The Needs for a Teacher-Training Program	296
8.3 Enhancing Outdoor Education in Schools through Integrated Programming	301
Chapter 9 – Conclusions and Future Work	305
9.1 Conclusions.....	305
9.1.1 The Relation of Curriculum and Pedagogy for Outdoor Education	306
9.1.2 The Integration of Outdoor Education in Public Schools	310
9.2 Future Work	314
Reference List.....	317
Appendices.....	333
Appendix A: Research Participant Requests	333
Appendix B: Research Informed Consent Waiver.....	335
Appendix C: Research Participant Survey Form	337

Introduction

Throughout the last few decades, outdoor education, as an activity and as a field of study, has grown to span many social uses including recreational organizations, at-risk adolescent programs, rehabilitation initiatives, corporate leadership retreats, and group-focused environmental workshops (Priest & Gass, 2005). Interestingly enough, the origins of our current view and practice in this field rests within the realm of schools, with Kurt Hahn being recognized as one of the founding fathers (Richards, 1990; James, 1995a, 1995b). What makes this point particularly poignant is that this relationship between outdoor education and public schools has had such stress and difficulty throughout the years, and as a result it can be argued that outdoor education has never gained a significant foothold in the Canadian educational system. With outdoor education providing such an effective learning environment, this naturally begs the question: What has prevented a greater degree of inclusion of outdoor education in our public school system? It is the search for understanding behind this synergy of outdoor education and public schooling that prompted the work presented in this thesis. In this dissertation I have laid out an argument that demonstrates how outdoor education in the context of public education can be thought of separately as both a method, or pedagogy, and as content, or curriculum. Furthermore, I propose that this relationship between pedagogy and curriculum and the corresponding failure to recognize that they are potentially separable creates difficulty in the incorporation of outdoor education into public schools.

Outdoor education has been recognized as a practice that potentially allows for individual participants to reflect and restructure their existing social constructs and provides an influential avenue to develop an empowering attitude and transformative

moments in the individual's lives (Itin, 1999). Central to its practice, perhaps even the most significant cornerstone, is the notion of experiential education as a means of structuring the medium of outdoor education. Experiential education focuses on learning through a cycle of action and reflection, where the participant engages (ideally with personal investment) in an activity which is then followed by a reflective stage, where the individual attempts to understand both action and reason and also how they relate to their existing perceptions of themselves, their social group, or their particular area of study (Joplin, 1995).

Despite the fact that such a framework is sought after for many initiatives in public education, outdoor education has continuously suffered a position of limited exposure in schools. Though some believe that a potential incompatibility exists between outdoor education and schools (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999), it is again interesting to note that through the endeavors of Kurt Hahn the field of outdoor education has its roots in that very system of education (Miner, 1990). Here, Hahn established Salem Schule (Peace School), in Germany, and later Gordonstoun School, in the UK, with the focus on impelling excellence in moral character of youth through arduous adventure and challenge, thus essentially not only incorporating outdoor education into the school system but making it a fundamental pillar of learning.

From this origin and current lack of integration, the key question then naturally arises: Why do such difficulties persist for the inclusion of outdoor education in public schools and what elements or conditions continue to exasperate this relationship? Where other areas of outdoor education, such as recreational organizations and other development programs, require the use of outdoor education as a driving force for both

pedagogy and curriculum, public schools over the years and in different initiatives have the ability to select piecemeal outdoor education as either the pedagogy or curriculum of a project, based on the designer's particular interest. In this thesis, I demonstrate how the lack of articulation of this duality of outdoor education has not only enabled those opposed to its use to create false arguments against its implementation, but also poses challenges for those in favor of incorporating outdoor education in schools. Derived from this, I frame this argument in terms of its incorporation into integrated school programs and teacher training programs as key facets to strengthen this field and its utilization within public schools.

In order to achieve this, first I provide a detailed examination of the theory of experiential education in Chapter One. I profile the early contributors who initiated the discussion on the importance of experience for the construction of knowledge, notably John Dewey, whose work in this area has had significant influence over public schooling in recent years (Dewey, 1938, 1916). From this, the importance of experience for learning is further refined to include the critical element of reflection; that is to say, an experience by itself is not enough to be valued as an educative moment unless the participant restructures their understanding based upon it (Itin, 1999). This framework defines the essence of experiential education as the process of *learning by doing with reflection* (Priest & Gass, 2005). To further reinforce the theory of experiential education, I examine David Kolb's work on experiential learning and learning cycles (1984) and Donald Schön's work on reflective professional practice, including reflection-in-action (1991, 1987, 1983). The works of Paulo Freire (1992, 1970) and Ira Shor (1992, 1987) emphasize the relation between the individual viewpoint of experiential education and the

value of a social context in terms of providing an avenue for the conception of a liberating education. Here the notion of praxis is explored in relation to experiential education as the means of generating *reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it* (Freire, 1970). Finally, the value of the teacher, or facilitator, is addressed as being of critical importance to the effective use of experiential education.

Following this overview of experiential education, in Chapter Two I reintegrate this theory with the practice of outdoor education. I establish a clear definition of outdoor education and outline the origin of this field, including the influential works of William James (1910), particularly his theory on a moral equivalent to war as a means to developing excellence in youth, and Kurt Hahn's school programs and his establishment of Outward Bound (Richards, 1990; James, 1995a, 1995b). From this, the critical elements of outdoor education are discussed: the notions of a socially and physically unfamiliar learning environment as a means of re-framing and understanding existing social constructs for individuals (Priest & Gass, 2005), flow state as a means of defining peak performance in such a learning environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990), the concept of risk in relation to developing peak performance (Hunt, 1990b; Priest & Baillie, 1995), and the ethical considerations of informed consent and its relation to these elements (Hunt, 1991, 1990b). From all this, the value of outdoor education is critically examined in terms of its relevance and influence on general society. Here, the idea of *transference* is articulated as a means of developing skills and understanding in the realm of outdoor education that can be applied to the overall scope of an individual's life and social interactions (Hatch & McCarthy, 2005; Gass, 1995). This discussion includes Stephen Bacon's theory for the *conscious use of metaphor* (1983) as a bridge between

outdoor education and everyday life, as well as other works on the notion of *rites of passage* and how outdoor education can provide transformative moments for individuals and their understanding (Bell, 2003; Beames, 2004).

In order to situate outdoor education within the context of public schooling a careful examination of the structural compatibility between the two is offered in Chapter Three. Here, two critical elements are discussed: the role of the institution and the role of the teacher or educator. To frame our understanding of the role of the public school and that of outdoor education as an institution, the work of Michel Foucault and his theory of discipline and power is explored, particularly his idea of relations of power (1975). By examining his views on the docile body, the means of correct training (defined as hierarchical observation, normalizing judgments, and the examination), and institutional frameworks (in terms of the panopticon) comparisons will be made between the two systems of education. Here I will demonstrate how outdoor education, although typically thought of as emancipatory in nature, does indeed use similar control mechanisms as traditional or mainstream schools, but generally has moved focus away from the individual towards a group control model. In the second half of this chapter, the work of Donald Schön and his theories on the reflective practitioner (1991, 1987 & 1983) are discussed in order to examine the relation, and similarity, of the educator in both outdoor education and public education. Here comparisons are made between the roles that a proficient school teacher and an outdoor education facilitator utilize and model in order to provide an effective learning environment. Learning loops set the stage for an important consideration of group dynamics that Schön and Chris Argyris have categorized simply as model I and model II interactions (Argyris & Schön, 1974). From

this viewpoint what I propose is that typically when individuals address an incompatibility in teaching methodology between outdoor education and public schools they are wrongfully doing so by placing public schools in a model I situation while understanding outdoor education strictly as a model II interaction, when in fact both systems have the potential to be either.

In Chapter Four, I consider outdoor education's potentially transformative role in public education as a means of praxis and re-framing our understanding in terms of what benefit it can bring to students through its inclusion in schools. It will be shown that many of the concepts and roles that outdoor education has for students, teachers, and learning are often sought after in the realm of public schools. As such, outdoor education offers at the very least a solid case study of effective practice, and this includes areas of student engagement, cooperative environments, problem solving, and transfer of life skills. By critically examining the relationship between outdoor education and schools, I address possible points of opposition to integration of the two systems (through the work of Lindsay & Ewert, 1999) as well as favorable points to integration (through the work of Coleman, 1995). Of particular interest for the synergy between the two systems is the notion that outdoor education can provide a solid experience base that is arguably lacking for today's youth, and that this actually allows for the enhancement and retention of knowledge which bypasses experience that is typically presented in schools. Barriers to integration are discussed, including issues of assessment dynamics (Horwood, 1995a; Ives & Obenchain, 2006), political influences (Miner, 1993), the debate of certification versus qualification (Plaut, 2001; Cockrell, 1990), and some initial considerations on teacher training and preparation (Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Raffan, 1995; Sakofs, *et al*,

1995). I then suggest a framework for such interactions that defines outdoor education for schools in three possible frames of reference: 1) supplementary outdoor programming, 2) curricula-based outdoor programming, and 3) integrated outdoor programming, of which curricula-based and integrated programming become key models in understanding outdoor education in terms of its role as pedagogy and curriculum.

In Chapter Five, I demonstrate and frame outdoor education in terms of curriculum by examining school board program initiatives for the development of curriculum-specific outcomes for courses in New Zealand and the Australian states of Victoria and South Australia. Typical outcomes were initially based on personal development and health education courses, where the Australian states developed specific outdoor education courses (Polley & Pickett, 2003; Lugg & Martin, 2001) while New Zealand created outdoor education modules for their existing physical education classes (Zink & Boyes, 2006). It has also been observed how a curricular ‘swing’ has occurred in these established programs that have shifted from an emphasis on personal development towards more specific curricular topics such as environmental science (Lugg, 1999). From this cumulative work on outdoor education as curriculum, and the difficulties associated with attempting to understand and frame its breadth and scope, a required generalized *body of knowledge* has been suggested (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006), and includes the topics of knowledge construction, outdoor environments, living and traveling in outdoor environments, and ecological sustainability. In further examination of curricula-based programming, I detail significant logistical barriers that hinder such initiatives, and these include clear articulation of the content scope and proper qualified staffing, as well as practical and resource limitations (also some support measures to

assist are profiled). I then propose how curricula-based programming in outdoor education overlaps content with method in some cases, thus creating situations where clear distinctions between the two systems of curriculum and pedagogy are not as obvious and that a ‘sharing’ of programming styles can occur.

To contrast the work done on curricula-based programming, in Chapter Six I explore the concepts and issues surrounding integrated programming with its emphasis for outdoor education as pedagogy. Instead of relying on school board based curriculum, teachers design and develop a thematic teaching model for outdoor education, where existing course curricula are used and thus outdoor education becomes the method or theme of the instruction and learning (Comishin & Potter, 2000). The framework for how integrated programs are constructed is explored with emphasis on how such an approach differs from traditional classroom environments and course scheduling by means of developing a cohort structure (Horwood, 2002a, 1995; Russell & Burton, 2000), along with the advantages of such a system (Henderson, 2002; Jupp, 1995). From this, I summarize the research done on the impact of student performance and engagement noting significant improvement in student ownership of learning and personal development skills, and the authenticity of re-framed school content (thought of as authentic learning). Here student input gives relevancy to school curriculum as ‘real-world learning’ by acknowledging that content taught in class has immediate and practical value to hands-on activities and explorations that are undertaken. In addition, the personal growth aspect of these integrated programs is articulated by students to include both intrapersonal (such as self-awareness and patience) and interpersonal (such as trust and team-work), and it is seen to be of considerable value to how they approach

their learning environment. Again, barriers to implementation of such integrated programs (Comishin, *et al*, 2004; Horwood, 2002a) are explored in a similar manner as was done for curricula-based programs in the previous chapter. A noticeable change in these barriers occurred in terms of the rise of more logistical difficulties, such as time constraints and assessment strategies, and less on program design and scope of learning (i.e. using existing school curriculum helped better define the role of outdoor education for these programs).

After exploring these two key program styles of curricula-based and integrated programming and establishing their relation to outdoor education as either curriculum and/or pedagogy, in Chapter Seven I present primary research data profiling seven Canadian outdoor integrated programs operating in public schools through a qualitative study of eleven veteran teachers of outdoor education. This research was undertaken to assist in understanding the dichotomy between outdoor education as pedagogy and as curriculum, and identifying the importance in teacher training and preparation in the field of outdoor education for its inclusion in public schools. An overview of each of the programs is given to contextualize the scope and level of engagement that these programs represent for student learning. From this study key points and issues are drawn out and collated from the various research participants; including the fact that they defined the role for their programs in school systems as largely providing 1) an experiential framework for learning and 2) the development of personal skills (and how this can extend beyond the context of applied academics). Other key findings included: that outdoor education programs provide students with more than simply a wilderness experience; their programs are founded in experiential or 'hands-on' learning

opportunities; their programs provide more than just academics, and the importance of developing personal growth in their students was apparent; a shift to a holistic understanding of student performance allows outdoor integrated programs to bring something greater to the traditional and established high school system; personal growth and the teaching approach was considered paramount for such programs; that additional core topics to their programs did develop that were outside the required course outcomes that they modeled their programs to cover; and they collectively saw teacher training to be imperative for the continued success of all areas of outdoor education programs in public schools. Much of the teacher participant feedback certainly framed their integrated outdoor programs in terms of an emphasis on the importance of outdoor education as pedagogy, but did not rule out outdoor education as curriculum entirely.

In Chapter Eight I connect my argument that we consider outdoor education as being able to operate independently as either curriculum or pedagogy in public schools to the context of teacher training programs. The work of Peter Higgins and other contributors to teacher training in outdoor education is explored (Higgins, 2008; Nicol, *et al*, 2006, 2007; Kendall, *et al*, 2006; Higgins & Morgan, 1999), as well as a detailed case study of The Moray House School of Education in Scotland, with its established and influential teacher preparation programs in this field of study (Higgins & Morgan, 1999; Higgins, 1995). It has been suggested that outdoor education consists of the three major themes of environmental, residential and adventure activities (Loynes, Michie & Smith, 1997), and I further propose that we can better understand these roles by their relation to outdoor education as either curriculum or pedagogy. Additionally, as practitioners think of outdoor education as education *in, through, about, and for* the natural heritage

(Higgins, 2008) I suggest this can be thought of again in terms of how we understand this field of study as either content or method. Here I suggest education ‘in’ the natural heritage simply becomes the base framework for the physical environment, ‘through’ the natural heritage lends well to the idea of outdoor education as pedagogy, ‘about’ the natural heritage speaks directly to outdoor education as curriculum, and that ‘for’ the natural heritage represents Freire’s idea of praxis and becomes *meta* to the ‘through’ and ‘about’ elements of outdoor education. The importance of understanding outdoor education in these terms, and as such becoming an important factor in teacher training programs, lies in the fact that in this dissertation I have demonstrated how the public school system can potentially incorporate these elements piecemeal into its practice. To emphasize this point, an initial comparison of outdoor adventure education and that of environmental education is explored. From all this, what I propose is that without a clear understanding of this field the differences between outdoor education as curriculum versus pedagogy can potentially work against each other to hinder its establishment in public schools. Therefore, of critical importance is to design teacher training programs that can articulate and address this issue in its development of future practitioners. This point is refined by examining the potential benefits to both the individual teacher and also the training program itself by addressing this issue. Finally, I consider the benefits of using integrated programs as a preferred structure of introducing outdoor education into the school system.

From the literature reviews, developed arguments, and primary research data presented in this thesis I will conclude with two important aspects to the inclusion of outdoor education in public schools. First is the point that outdoor education can be

thought of as operating as curriculum and/or pedagogy and that this point is important for teacher training programs to address. Second is the fact that since individual teachers have more direct control over outdoor education as pedagogy, through the means of integrated outdoor programs rather than as curriculum, through the means of school board designed curricula-based programs, that a natural chronology of implementation exists. Finally, I will suggest where this dissertation can potentially direct future work in this area, and this includes examining the relation of outdoor education to place-based education, taking a deeper look at environmental education and its relation to outdoor adventure education, an extended student-based research inquiry to examine how the youth view such distinctions of outdoor education as curriculum and pedagogy, and possibly examining how supplemental outdoor programming might actually be a detriment to the rise of outdoor education in schools.

Chapter 1 – Experiential Education

In order to understand the potential interrelation between outdoor education and the public education system, it is important to scrutinize critical elements in the epistemology, pedagogy, and practice relating to outdoor education. To properly setup this discussion it is vital to examine the notion of experiential education, from which outdoor education relies so heavily upon. This chapter will look at some key aspects relating to experiential education that will then be re-examined within the context of outdoor education as presented in Chapter Two. The intention of this chapter is to examine the mechanisms and theory of experiential education that allows it to be situated as a key pillar in outdoor education.

In later chapters of this thesis, many points presented here on the approach and mechanisms of experiential education will be noted and re-examined as critical elements in the consideration of outdoor education as pedagogy within public schools. That is to say, through the medium of outdoor education, it becomes this relation of experience and learning that has sound pedagogical value.

1.1 Early Foundations for Experiential Education

To set the stage for experiential education, although John Dewey can be given a great deal of credit for expanding on how experience shapes and influences education, he was by no means the first philosopher to suggest such an idea. Even before John Locke (1693) or Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) wrote on the critical role of experience in a child's cognitive development, the notion of structuring experience was discussed by Jan

Amos Comenius. Comenius has been considered ‘The Father of Modern Education’ by many scholars and historians and may be one of the first to tackle this issue of experience and how it relates to education. He published 154 books, many of which were banned by the Roman Catholic Church; some of his greatest works included *The Great Didactic* (1657), *The Labyrinth of the World & Paradise of the Heart* (1663), and *Orbis Pictus* (World in Pictures, 1658) – the first picture book for children.

Possibly his greatest idea focused on what he called *pansophy* – a universal system of education; the teaching of all things to all men and from all points of view (pansophism, meaning “all knowledge”). This was to incorporate theology, philosophy, metaphysics, and education into one, as he believed that learning, spiritual, and emotional growth were interconnected. From this, Comenius derived his belief in spontaneous development: a child’s mental cognition could be attributed to the maturation of preformed structures. In other words, he was one of the first to suggest a genetic stage-development theory for education. Based on this, it was his view that education needed to be tailored to the cognitive needs of the learner in order to facilitate true learning. Comenius’ view on stage development is significant because it placed the child or learner at the center of educational theory. That is to say, the practice of teaching students must take into account the realm of understanding and their mental development.

All things which can make men truly men, and the learned truly learned; they should be taught in consideration of the pupil’s age and the standard of his prior preparation, which should always tend gradually upward. (Comenius, 1657)

By this approach, Comenius believed that to teach, one had to fully engage the learner. He felt that there was a natural desire in people to learn, and that the teacher needed to exploit this interest in order to engage the student in the curriculum. He

believed in a hands-on approach that placed understanding in front of content knowledge, and bringing the subject to the level of the learner and not that of the teacher; or in his words: “Do not undertake any teaching without first arousing the interest of the pupil... Always offer something which will be both agreeable and useful; the pupils’ minds will thus be primed and they will come forward eagerly, with ever-ready attention.”

The argument that spontaneous development would occur in children if they were properly nurtured meant that Comenius did not hold to the tradition of ‘teaching by the cane’. His view was that education needed to draw out the natural and inherent desires of a person to want to learn:

... the fault lies, not with the pupil, but with the master, and, if our skill is unable to make an impression on the understanding, our blows will have no effect. Indeed, by any application of force we are far more likely to produce a distaste for letters than a love for them. (Comenius, 1657)

These views of educational psychology are still applicable today.

In addition, Comenius held to the notion of what we today call the ‘life-long learner’. He viewed four distinct stages or schoolings for education – infancy, childhood, adolescence, and youth (now associated with pre-school, elementary, high school, and university). It was his belief that each stage of development required a different approach to teaching (stage theory) but that the basic structure of the material remained the same (pansophy). Even today, we follow a similar approach where language arts, science, mathematics, and history are taught to all grade levels, but in accordance with children’s age and associated cognitive development.

In *The Great Didactic*, he wrote that content knowledge (examples) must come before hierarchical structure (rules): “examples cannot be deduced from a rule unless the rule is understood, but understanding of the rule derives from the retroactive organization

of examples already utilized in spontaneous practice.” Comenius saw that experience must precede understanding: in order for a generalized rule to hold meaning, a student must be able to construct understanding from previous active experience, otherwise, the student will develop isolated knowledge and will not be able to bridge to other concepts learned. Or in other words, a student must have something to work with first in order to understand. Once the student is able to construct a rule based on previous experiences, he or she is then able to deduce new relevant examples from it, thus generalizing outside of his/her realm of experience and therefore building understanding. For example, if a child picks and examines various fruit from trees, he or she may come to the conclusion (rule) that all fruit have a tougher outer surface, a pulpy interior, and a pit, yet these ‘rules’ were never explicitly defined. Although Comenius never used the phrase ‘experiential education’, his ideas about student learning were similar to many of today’s ‘modern’ leaders are in this field, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Where Comenius considered the child’s cognitive development as the center for learning, John Locke took an even greater step by considering the child itself to be the center for the entire learning environment, by not only considering the child’s learning pattern to be key but the entire social construct that the child develops and interacts within. This notion of student-centered learning is still prized in our current education system, but unfortunately often difficult to implement with any great success. Locke believed in an educational system that enhanced learning by engaging students through natural habits and practices. “Curiosity in children is but an appetite after knowledge and therefore ought to be encouraged in them” (Locke, 1693: 93). Locke’s entire framework

of education was modeled on such a structural approach and can be seen by one of his examples of using letter blocks for the development of written languages. This idea of student engagement contrasted significantly with the practice of his peers, who saw education as an instructor-lead dissemination of knowledge where the students were regarded as mere vessels to be filled with content. Countering this point, Locke put forward the idea that a child would learn significantly more when they take possession of their learning and become an active participant in dialogue. “He will better comprehend the foundations and measures of decency and justice and have livelier and more lasting impressions of what he ought to do, by giving his opinion on cases proposed and reasoning with his tutor on fit instances than by giving silent, negligent, sleepy audience to his tutor’s lectures” (Locke, 1693: 74).

Yet few modern classrooms are arranged in such a way as to provide a student-centered learning environment. The majority of students still face the teacher’s desk at the head of the class, waiting (far from eagerly) to be told what they need to learn, or more critically, to regurgitate the teacher’s information as a false indicator of reflection and comprehension. Locke opposed this style of learning and was able to articulately defend his position and the needs of the student as paramount. His success and influence has been demonstrated by countless systems, curricula, and teachers attempting their best at modeling such an effective approach to teaching, despite the stronghold of the traditional classroom.

Like Comenius and Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau envisioned the success of education as being student-centered. Although elements of Rousseau’s work can be seen in our modern system of education, his theories were so far reaching and generated such

complex controlled conditions of learning that they are often difficult to apply. Rousseau's fundamental argument is that education needs to focus on nature and man rather than the artificial and damaging constructs of society. He devised a theoretical learning environment to allow intellectual growth that would produce a virtuous and wise mind through its own applications of sensory experience and this would eventually be followed by reason. "The truly free man wants only what he can do and does what he pleases. That is my fundamental maxim. It need only be applied to childhood for all the rules of education to flow from it" (Rousseau, 1762: 84).

This theory derived from Rousseau's ideas that society was simply a corrupting force that could only harm the student's development. With this extreme view of antisocial development, Rousseau placed value on the isolation of the education environment and thus allowing his student to develop as a product of nature. This could be argued to be a reactionary stance based on the failings of education that he perceived as unable to produce individuals who could see beyond their own social bias.

Each advances more or less according to his genius, his taste, his needs, his talents, his zeal, and the occasions he has to devote himself to them. I know of no philosopher who has yet been so bold as to say: this is the limit of what man can attain and beyond which he cannot go. We do not know what are nature permits us to be. (Rousseau, 1762: 62)

Though modern education attempts to utilize some of Rousseau's goals of focusing on the nature of children and their education, this is often done without success as society's construct and influence permeates through every aspect of the classroom. It can be argued that Rousseau's educational construct can not even be achieved in "mass education" because it was designed for the isolation of a single student and tutor from society (as Rousseau saw society as a corrupting force in the education of the child).

1.2 The Influence of John Dewey

Such a view for the value of experience as perceived by Comenius, Locke, Rousseau and others is certainly a precedent for much of the work of John Dewey. Considered by many as ‘the father of progressivism’, Dewey’s emphasis on education centered on the student-as-learner rather than the teacher as the provider of knowledge (and that the teacher now needs to become facilitator or guide). As such, he saw the role of education in society being of greater fundamental purpose than simply ‘vocational training’:

Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life. Translated into its educational equivalents, that means (i) that the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end; and that (ii) the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming. (Dewey, 1916: 50)

This view does not provide for or support a static concept of knowledge assimilation; instead, it focuses on the construction of knowledge as a process, and one that is intimately linked with the role and function of the learner.

The trouble with traditional education was not that educators took upon themselves the responsibility for providing an environment. The trouble was that they did not consider the other factor in creating an experience; namely, the powers and purposes of those taught. It was assumed that a certain set of conditions was intrinsically desirable, apart from its ability to evoke a certain quality of response in individuals. This lack of mutual adaptation made the process of teaching and learning accidental. (Dewey, 1938: 44)

For Dewey, true authentic learning, not rote memorization, required the active participation of the student in his/her learning, and the learning environment was one that could shape experience into an educational form. This focus on ‘student-centered’ learning brought the importance of experience to the forefront of his educational theories.

To best understand Dewey's approach, it is useful to examine some criticisms of his work and his responses. As with any popular theory in education, Dewey's was not without opposition. Some authors (for example, Knapp, 1994) believe that many elements of experiential education are simply a reinvention of progressivism, which could have possibly evolved in order to avoid potential bad connotations of the theory in modern practice. One of Dewey's latter works, *Experience and Education* (1938), was written largely in response to demands to refine some of his positions 'against' traditional education and to address how his work was already being used incorrectly within education. When speaking of experiential education or progressivism, one must understand Dewey's 'either/or' dilemma (Dewey, 1938: 1). It was his belief that no theory or approach had significant value if it was derived simply as a counterattack to existing practices:

There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clew [evidence] in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy. (Dewey, 1938: 6)

In considering progressivism as a reactionary opposition to traditional practice, Dewey was concerned that the development of its proper pedagogical aims would be stymied. He commented that "the problem for progressive education is: What is the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization *within* experience? How does subject-matter function?... A philosophy which proceeds on the basis of rejection, of sheer opposition, will neglect these questions" (Dewey, 1938: 7). These statements of Dewey's may surprise many who consider themselves followers of his practice. But his point is important to consider: as educators we cannot view the ideals of progressivism as always

being in opposition to traditionalism if progressivism is to gain any ground other than being simply reactionary to current practices.

Dewey believed that considering *either* progressivism *or* traditionalism was a mistake, and that there should be a dialogue that focused simply on the best practices and theories out there. For experiential education, this has significance in that it should not be considered necessary to reject the standard public schooling practices in order to embrace experiential education. As such, it could then be argued that standard schooling practices may have value in terms of how they shape and construct the framework under which experiential education operates. However, of the interplay between traditional and progressivist education Dewey did say that “we may reject knowledge of the past as the *end* of education and thereby emphasize its importance as a *means*” (Dewey, 1938: 11). That is to say, even though he may have believed in avoiding an ‘either/or’ position, this could be done without sacrificing the belief that knowledge must be a medium for understanding and not the sole purpose. In other words, understanding (thinking skills) is not a product of knowledge or content but rather how one can reflect and construct this knowledge to gain meaning. Later in this chapter I will explore the concepts that evolved from this critical notion by reflecting on the ways in which experiential education does (or can) enhance and contribute to the existing practice of education, but first I will discuss other associating theories to properly frame the discussion.

This brings us to perhaps the most important contribution that Dewey’s theories have had on experience in education. As previously mentioned, Dewey saw to shape experience into an educational form. Many who countered his ideas wrongly did so when they argued that simply having a ‘hands-on’ experience did not contribute to, or enhance,

a student's learning potential. The argument, used in various forms many times over the years, has been to the effect that:

We can all recognize the difference between learning something profoundly important in our everyday environment and the drone of a dull pedagogy. We can also recognize the difference between a dreary day in our too-familiar local environment and a teacher who opens our eyes to exciting new worlds simply by talking... we have all those 'hands-on' activities while [the student's] intellectual energy is hardly engaged with anything significant in the wider cultural world. (Egan, 2002: 110)

Not only had Dewey addressed the concern for such an either/or approach, but he also addressed the most fundamental point about experience: not all experience is educative.

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. (Dewey, 1938: 13)

Hence, as educators, we must look at experiences that have educative value by providing a pathway to the next potential learning moment, thus the essence of progressivism, and not simply look to 'activities' that engage students in active, but potentially meaningless, work. Through the work of Dewey we can understand the fundamental difference between authentic experience used to build upon the education of a learner and the potential for mis-education – experiences that do not contribute to one's learning environment. For example, based on Dewey's understanding of mis-educative experiences it can be argued that religious beliefs, under this model, would fall into the category of mis-educative because they frame the knowledge as an *end* to the education rather than a *means*. That is to say, religious doctrine, by being unchallenged truisms, has the potential to distort the growth of further experience.

1.3 The Interplay between Action and Reflection

Dewey's work established the need for experience in education and laid the foundations for the field of experiential education (Itin, 1999). However, this field has drawn from the theories of a number of other educational philosophers and psychology researchers who have examined *how* learners construct authentic experiences into valuable educative moments: the interplay between action, or direct experience, and reflection. Experiential education has been defined in many ways, including "a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experience" (Association for Experiential Education, 1994) and "learning by doing with reflection" (Priest & Gass, 2005: 16), and it has been stated that "experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education" (Joplin, 1995: 15). Thus, *learning by doing with reflection* eloquently summarizes the fundamental nature of experiential education. However, much work has been done and needs to be discussed in order to fully understand the implications of such simple words as 'doing' and 'reflection'. Does 'doing' need to be constructed as hands-on? How does 'reflection' manifest itself, and when it does how can educators determine if authentic reflection and engagement is occurring?

1.3.1 Learning Cycles

From these questions asked, it becomes clear that simply having a definition of experiential education still leaves us trying to understand the mechanism of how experience, and reflection, is used actively to construct knowledge. Although David Kolb (1984) has proposed a detailed and sound model for experiential learning, I will first

present a few other examples in order to demonstrate a similar convergence of ideas on this issue. Christian Itin reviewed seven different models of experiential learning, stating that “each includes: 1) action that creates an experience, 2) reflection on the action and experience, 3) abstractions drawn from reflection, and 4) application of the abstraction to a new experience or action” (1999: 91). Likewise, Laura Joplin (1995) defined a five-stage model of experiential education that she referred to as an ‘action-reflection’ cycle comprising of 1) focus, 2) action, 3) support, 4) feedback, and 5) debrief. This uses the central premise of knowledge constructed through both experience and reflection, but she also considered the roles of the group (community) and instructor/evaluator. Thus, elements such as reflection can be framed in the context of instructor-led group debrief sessions.

It is important to note here that the schema of these authors have now made the distinction between experiential education and experiential learning:

Debrief helps the student learn from experience. Debrief is a sorting and ordering of information, often involving personal perceptions and beliefs. In experiential learning – as opposed to experiential education – debrief may occur within the individual. However, in experiential education, debrief needs to be made public... It is the publicly verifiable articulation which makes experience and experiential learning capable of inclusion and acceptance by the educational institutions. The public nature of debrief also ensures that the learner’s conclusions are verified and mirrored against a greater body of perception than his alone. (Joplin, 1995: 19)

Thus when examining the reflection / debrief stage one can consider that experiential education has a social context that is not only present, but actually enhances the entire process and provides more to the learner, by having the learner’s conclusions weighed by more than just their own perception. This social role existing in experiential education, thus differing it from experiential learning, will be further framed in Chapter Two once

we have examined the context of outdoor education (and will become important once we consider the role of outdoor education in public schools in later chapters). In addition, it should be noted that once we move away from individual (isolated) learning towards instructor-led group debrief sessions there is always the potential for distortion. The exact nature of how an instructor facilitates a learning moment can alter the understanding or role of the learner in that process. Further insight into this issue will be examined in Chapter Three where the exact role of the instructor, both in schools and outdoor education, will be critiqued, and also a preliminary examination of the role of the teacher in experiential education will be discussed in section 1.5 of this chapter.

1.3.2 David Kolb and Experiential Learning

An insightful, complex, and detailed mechanism of experiential learning was developed by David Kolb. In his book, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, he defined learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984: 38). Kolb saw learning as an active process that required the learners to manipulate and interact with their medium/environment in order to construct knowledge. As such, he believed experiential learning was closer to ‘authentic learning’ – the natural unobstructed way in which people construct understanding in their lives – than traditional forms of outcome-based education, such as information assimilation or rote memorization.

When viewed from the perspective of experiential learning, the tendency to define learning in terms of outcomes can become a definition of nonlearning, in the process sense that the failure to modify ideas and habits as a result of experience is maladaptive... The fact that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience has important educational implications. Put simply, it implies that all learning is *relearning*... Thus,

one's job as an educator is not only to implant new ideas but also to dispose of or modify old ones. In many cases, resistance to new ideas stems from their conflict with old beliefs that are inconsistent with them. If the education process begins by bringing out the learner's beliefs and theories, examining and testing them, and then integrating the new, more refined ideas into a person's belief system, the learning process will be facilitated. (Kolb, 1984: 26-28)

From this, Kolb proposed and outlined four stages or learning modes as a model for experiential education:

New knowledge, skills, or attitudes are achieved through confrontation among four modes of experiential learning. Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities – *concrete experience* abilities (CE), *reflective observation* abilities (RO), *abstract conceptualization* abilities (AC), and *active experimentation* (AE) abilities. That is, they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (RO). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC), and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE). (Kolb, 1984: 30)

The four adaptive learning modes – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation – share many similarities with the process of experiential learning described later by Itin. Yet, many elements of Kolb's theories have been glossed over in reviews, which have also simplified his proposed learning modes, and this needs to be addressed here in order to fully appreciate his view of experiential learning. For example, one researcher claimed Kolb's "four [learning] modes are *not* required for learning to take place, and demonstrates that this component of the theory is rife with inherent contradiction and inconsistency" (Webb, 2003).

First, Kolb saw these four learning modes as having the potential of being separate and isolated; it was not necessary for them to follow in a progressive and integrated cycle. Kolb even linked these learning modes to the different Jungian

personality types (Kolb, 1984: 79), indicating that individuals may have particular strengths or weaknesses amongst these modes. It could be argued that extroverted personality types have better cognitive mechanisms for dealing with the learning modes of concrete experience and active experimentation, while the introvert would excel at reflective observation and abstract conceptualization.

There is a correspondence between the Jungian concepts of introversion and the experiential learning mode of reflective observation via intentional transformation, and between extraversion and active experimentation via extension. In addition, concrete experience and the apprehension process are clearly associated with both the sensing approach to perception and the feeling approach to judging. Abstract conceptualization and the comprehension process, on the other hand, are related to the intuition approach to perceiving and the thinking approach to judging. (Kolb, 1984: 79)

Thus, before proceeding to implement such a process, educators must consider and critically examine whether their students will struggle through, and succeed with, this process of experiential learning. One might even consider that innate differences in personality types may hinder the full development of an integrated experiential learning schema.

Kolb elaborated on this critical issue when he developed a three dimensional model for experiential learning. The central premise of his work was that the four learning modes previously discussed comprised the base, or circle, of a cone, where each would be used independently of one another in the learning process. However, he envisioned that, as one moved up the cone, these four modes would become integrated, eventually leading to an experiential learning theory similar to others already presented here (Kolb, 1984: 141). He saw this process as cognitive development on the part of the learner (Kolb, 1984: 98); the refining of skills necessary in order for a learner to fully and

effectively utilize experiential learning. From this, Kolb derived three general 'levels' of development: acquisition, specialization, and integration (Kolb, 1984: 141). For example, at the acquisition level an individual may have a particular aptitude for reflective observation (RO) but not be able to take their learning potential to the fullest due to not linking these ideas with active experimentation (AE); they may be potentially able to notice a discrepancy of some form in an action but not be able to design an experiment to test their insight into the situation. Therefore, working up the three general levels implies greater cognitive learning as all four learning abilities compliment and strengthen one another.

Ideally, at the peak of the cone (moving from specialization to integration), a learner would fully integrate the four modes of learning into an experiential learning cycle. Yet, from this notion comes a disturbing point about how Kolb views experiential education: as a developmental process, there would be times, or ages, where one may not be capable of such a model of learning. Although certainly a notion similar to Piaget's stage theory of development (Piaget, 1964), he states without any reference or evidence that stage one, acquisition, "extends from birth to adolescence and marks the acquisition of basic learning abilities and cognitive structures" (Kolb, 1984: 142). Therefore, even though educators have used his work to justify the use of experiential education for youth, they have missed the point that Kolb may have believed this to be a premature act. However, as he does not outline any reason or explanation for this view, and in light of others that have examined experiential education both in terms of practice and research, such a model still holds validity for consideration.

However, it is important to acknowledge and reflect on possible limitations of such a theory, even if they have not been fully proven. Since Kolb sees the acquisition stage as a necessary development towards an integrated experiential learning schema, and one that may be limiting based on age, as educators we must consider if students may be too young to be successful with such pedagogies. Have there not been those students that teachers often say did all the work but were unable to make the ‘correct’ connections? The other aspect that Kolb did not explore further was whether or not his notion of experiential learning could be improved through conditioning. Might it be possible for educators to increase students’ thinking schemes from acquisition to integration by exposing them, in stages, to material requiring such connections to be made? However, regardless of these possible points what does come out of his work is Kolb’s belief that experiential learning represents a more authentic way for individuals to construct knowledge.

1.3.3 Donald Schön and the Reflective Practitioner

Many writers on the topic of experiential education have demonstrated that its significance in the learning potential for the individual is in the fact that action is followed, in some form, by reflection, and it is this reflection aspect that differentiates an educative moment from a non- or mis-educative moment. By including the element of reflection in the process of experiential education, it is necessary to discuss Donald Schön. Although Schön never wrote directly about experiential education, his research and argument on this issue of reflection (particularly among the professions) may be considered to be the most in-depth and articulated among the writers presented here. In

Chapter Three, I will discuss more of Schön's work, but for now I would like to focus and discuss a number of points that he has made about the concept of reflection, in order to understand its significance within experiential education.

First and foremost, Schön considered an element of reflection as what he called 'reflection-in-action'. Such an understanding, when used in terms of experiential education, allows us to consider that the learning process, in practice, is not as defined or as rigid as our proposed mechanisms of experiential learning cycles may suggest. This position also allowed him to address the criticism that reflection may interfere with action:

The fear that reflection-in-action will trigger an infinite regress of reflection derives from an unexamined dichotomy of thought and action. If we separate thinking from doing, seeing thought only as a preparation for action and action only as an implementation of thought, then it is easy to believe that when we step into the separate domain of thought we will become lost in an infinite regress of thinking about thinking. But in actual reflection-in-action, as we have seen, doing and thinking are complementary. Doing extends thinking in the tests, moves, and probes of experimental action, and reflection feeds on doing and its results. (Schön, 1983: 280)

Thus, the potentially smooth integration between action and reflection can be seen as a synergy of events rather than a formal process. This also allows one to understand how a learner can still reflect on tacit knowledge within the moment while not necessarily being able to articulate the construction of such knowledge, where tacit knowledge can be defined as the knowledge that individuals have without understanding the reasons, causes or explanations behind it (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 10). Thus if one considers experiential education as a formal process of action proceeding reflection, they may miss the 'backtalk' of the learning moment and how learners construct understanding from tacit knowledge (either within a group setting or in the mind of the learner).

A second important point that Schön brings to this discussion is *when* reflection-in-action, as used in experiential education, will lead to an active, conscious and educative reconstruction of knowledge, rather than an un-educative or mis-educative experience. It is important that we consider how reflection can re-frame our experience or previous understanding of our environment.

Much reflection-in-action hinges on the experience of surprise. When intuitive, spontaneous performance yields nothing more than the results expected for it, then we tend not to think about it. But when intuitive performance leads to surprises, pleasing and promising or unwanted, we may respond by reflecting-in-action. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 56)

Often, this point may be missed by educators in practice in any field, and the result is that learners do not appear 'engaged' in their learning; without a moment or situation to create a discrepant event, little reflection on existing already-confirmed suppositions will occur. This critical point will surface again in the second chapter of this thesis when I explore outdoor education and its relatively distinctive learning environment. For now, it is important to remember the implications of this means that experiential education is the re-framing and reconstruction of knowledge for the individual, in order for such a pedagogy to be deemed effective. As such, Schön suggests that reflection-in-action follows the key 'moments' of 1) a situation of action, 2) resulting in a surprise, which 3) gives rise to reflection-in-action, and resulting in 4) on-the-spot experiment (Schön, 1987: 28). Although his writings dealt with the reflective practitioner and were not directly constructed within the research area of experiential education, Schön's learning cycle is similar to others in this field. Such a view was also supported by Dewey when he states:

Mere activity does not constitute experience. It is dispersive, centrifugal, dissipating. Experience as trying involves change, but change is

meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it. When an activity is continued *into* the undergoing of consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. (Dewey, 1916: 139)

Thus we start to see here how experiential learning, or on-the-spot reflection, requires a discrepant event or change that requires the learner to reconsider their belief structure. For example, a small child may never think about (reflect on) the fact that the sky is blue if this is all they have witnessed. Yet if the child was to see the deep red of a beautiful sunset, this may cause him/her to actively question their previous belief system, and thus an educative moment is created. This results not so much from an active experience, but an action/reflection synergy that creates the difference between passive observer and active learner. Of course to finish such a learning moment, as Schön (and Kolb) have suggested there must be on-the-spot experimentation. How this stage plays out would mark the difference between an educative experience and un-educative one. Thus, the importance of experiential education is not simply in an action/reflection stage approach, but rather in reflection-in-action that allows the learner to re-frame experiences derived from discrepant events that brings tacit understanding into question through on-the-spot experimentation.

From this, an important point that can be derived from Schön's work is the ways in which a learner uses reflection-in-action to transform, re-frame, or actively interact with their environment. Schön has suggested methods that we use action and reflection to generate on-the-spot experiments for the purposes of either further understanding or transforming our environment:

The inquirer who reflects-in-action plays a game with the situation in which he is bound by considerations relevant to the three levels of

experiment – exploration, move testing, and hypothesis testing. His primary interest is in changing the situation. But if he ignores its resistances to change, he falls into mere self-fulfilling prophecy. He experiments rigorously when he strives to make the situation conform to his view of it, while at the same time he remains open to the evidence of his failure to do so. He must learn by reflection on the situation's resistance that his hypothesis is inadequate, and in what way, or that his framing of the problem is inadequate, and in what way. Moreover, he plays his game in relation to a moving target, changing the phenomena as he experiments. (Schön, 1983: 152)

In other words, the reflection on on-the-spot experimentation can re-frame an understanding of an event but at the same time is defined by such an event. For example, in the case of the red sunset it is insufficient to assume the color change is due to the time of day, since the situation's resistance to such a hypothesis testing is in the fact that the time of sunset changes throughout the year. Observing such backtalk to the situations could allow one to then question the location of the sun in relation to color, an exploration that might not have occurred in the experimenter was not opened in his or her reflection.

The last point from Schön's work that I wish to discuss here is his notion of virtual worlds. Here, he sees the value of sometimes conducting all three levels of testing in a virtual, or imaginary, world within the mind of the learner in order to experiment with elements derived from reflection-in-action. The importance is that "virtual worlds are contexts for experiment within which practitioners can suspend or control some of everyday impediments to rigorous reflection-in-action" (Schön, 1987: 77). When many individuals are presented with a problem, for example scrambling over a vertical wall in a team effort, they will often first engage their actions in a virtual world. Even before the first person has approached the wall, many have envisioned the successes or failures of different attempts although none were actually made. Here they are able to anticipate how

particular actions may or may not go based on their tacit knowledge of perceived outcomes; they might have a ‘feeling’ that it would take more than three people to lift another over the wall even though they have yet to attempt it. This active reflection of a virtual world allows for a similar learning mechanism of a real world experience.

This becomes important when we consider that effective experiential education involves action/environment, reflection, and experimentation, but, as can be seen in Schön’s idea, this may *not* necessarily mean an ‘active hands-on’ approach to learning. The validity of this approach means that the standard criticism of ‘hands-on’ progressivism, or experiential education, as ‘busy work’ may not actually be the case. Therefore, we may need to think of experiential education in terms of a ‘hands-on/minds-on’ equilibrium, and as such, educators need to consider that the quiet, shy student in the corner of the group may be having an even greater experiential learning moment than that of an unreflective and energetic ‘doer’ within the group. Of course, this does lead to an even greater issue of how as educators we are able to tell the difference. Perhaps this point reinforces the idea that experiential education, rather than experiential learning, needs a social context to promote greater learning in the form of a public debrief (Joplin, 1995), and to ensure such interactions can differentiate these different learning styles.

1.4 Experiential Re-Framing of Education

Now that I have examined the value of experience, the ways in which experiential education uses an action/reflection process for knowledge construction, and the significance of reflection-in-action, I will consider the potential goals for the theory of experiential education. Such an approach will be seen as critical in later chapters in which the value of outdoor education is placed on it as a pedagogical method. Since the construction of knowledge through experience suggests a transformation or re-framing of pre-existing knowledge, it naturally creates a potential discrepancy between experiential education and typical 'traditional' education that focuses on ends-objectives of existing canons of thought and fact. If fact or truth is not given any room for reflection and potential re-framing, by the definitions of experiential learning the cycle could not be complete. That is not to say that pre-existing canons of thoughts do not have their place within experiential education, it does mean, however, that its use must be as a means rather than an ends. For example, in the sciences one may study the different physical laws, but in doing so we discover the 'scientific method' as one moves from Newtonian physics to Relativity to Quantum chemistry. Each theory of knowledge requires an understanding of the previous, not as undeniable facts but rather a process of comprehension. By doing so, scientists have been able to move further along their theories based on this experiential re-framing of knowledge. Thus we come to Newton's famous phrase "standing on the shoulders of giants", referring to one's research becoming a continuation and constant re-framing of the work of previous researchers. Here we start to see that the basis for experiential education necessitates the existence of a community of learners; that is to say, as Dewey would support, education is a social

process in which its means is the re-framing and transformation of the very community. As will now be discussed, this leads in to an examination of the work of Paulo Freire and Ira Shor and their ideas about the power and potential influence of experiential education within a social context.

1.4.1 Freire and Praxis

Based on the discussion so far of experiential education, Paulo Freire's concept of *praxis* fits well with its epistemology and pedagogy because he defines praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970: 51). He perceives that "in dialectical thought, world and action are intimately interdependent. But action is human only when it is not merely an occupation but also a preoccupation, that is, when it is not dichotomized from reflection" (Freire, 1970: 53). Freire frames this notion within the greater role of education as a liberating power opposed to standard forms of oppression. As such, he believes that in order for people to shape their reality they must engage in transformative education, which is based on the very same principles used in experiential education: action and reflection. Where Freire sees this being different from 'traditional' education is that such a standard or typical system is used to maintain the status quo in an unequal society, and does so by denying the masses a reflective education. For him, the reflection in education is the liberating power. From this, he criticizes institutional schooling as being, in his famous words, a *banking concept of education*.

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and

knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. (Freire, 1970: 72)

This notion of banking education, or the depositing of knowledge in passive learners is very similar to Dewey's view on traditional education as a 'pouring-in' of knowledge into 'empty vessels' of the students' minds (Dewey, 1916: 38). Neither scholar believed that such a system has an empowering element that allows learners to reconstruct and transform their reality through education. From such a notion, others saw how the banking concept was/is being used as a form of social control, by denying certain groups access to the dialogue of reflective thought used by those in power (Macedo, 1994: 16).

Instead of relying on a banking concept, Freire's lifelong project, along with his occasional collaborator Ira Shor, was developing a pedagogy that allowed learners to actively question and inquire about the content and understanding of their reality/knowledge-base. "Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very condition of existence: critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be 'in a situation'" (Freire, 1970: 109). Where this work offers new insight is in terms of the exact role of the teacher/educator. Two points come out of this: the first is that Freire believes that the educator must construct knowledge and the curriculum *with* the learner and not *for* the learner (Freire, 1970: 48).

Liberating education is fundamentally a situation where the teacher and the students *both* have to be learners, *both* have to be cognitive subjects, in spite of being different. This for me is the first test of liberating education, for teachers and students both to be critical agents in the act of knowing. (Shor & Freire, 1987: 33)

Thus, arises a co-dependency between teacher and learner that is not present in traditional forms of education. This also links well with Schön's concept of a reflective practitioner,

such as he demonstrates with his example of the architecture studio, where educator and student co-create their design strategy (Schön, 1987: 41). In the context of experiential education, this means it has the ability to transform and re-frame the knowledge of not only the learner, but also that of the educator. However, as Shor has pointed out, this co-dependency does not invalidate the knowledge that an educator can bring to such a learning environment:

Formal bodies of knowledge, standard usage, and the teacher's academic background all belong in critical classrooms. As long as existing knowledge is not presented as facts and doctrines to be absorbed without question, as long as existing bodies of knowledge are critiqued and balanced from a multicultural perspective, and as long as the students' own themes and idioms are valued along with standard usage, existing canons are part of critical education. (Shor, 1992: 35)

The second point derived from Freire's work is that it is necessary for the educator to truthfully believe in the learner's ability to construct knowledge through a process of action and reflection, and not simply fall back on a banking concept of education; that is to say, an educator must trust in the ability of the student.

To achieve this praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues, and instructions. Superficial conversions to the cause of liberation carry this danger. (Freire, 1970: 66)

Thus, for an educator to successfully use the theory of experiential education as pedagogy in a social context as Freire defines, they must consider and respect the values and reasoning that learners bring to the conversation and teaching environment. This leads to what Shor calls 'empowering education', where "empowered students make meaning and act from reflection, instead of memorizing facts and values handed to them" (Shor, 1992: 12). Thus, for Shor empowering education "is a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and

social change” (Shor, 1992: 15). From this discussion, it is now possible to understand experiential education not only as a construct of the learner’s physical environment and task, but also in terms of its potential to re-frame social interactions for that learner. This helps us define a key difference between experiential learning, which is done through an individual and their relation to their environment, and that of experiential education, which involves a social context that places the need to define the roles of both the learner and the teacher. Before I do this, however, further examination of the learning environment / teaching themes will be needed to complete this discussion.

1.4.2 Shor and Thematic Teaching

What results from Shor’s previous arguments is that pre-existing knowledge of the instructor has its place, but that it must provide an empowering education through reflective practices that incorporate the learner in the total process. From this, Shor outlines three ‘themes’ that may be used to do so, and as a result has a similar reasoning to how they contribute to experiential education. He describes these themes (Shor, 1992: 55) as: *generative*, or curriculum created by the interests of the learners; *topical*, or curriculum created by the instructor that has embedded social questions important to the learners; and *academic*, or curriculum that must be carefully constructed by the instructor because it is not generated by student-speech or living conditions but still has the ability to contribute to their learning environment. Shor distinguishes these three themes as a means to ensure that the educator is aware of how pre-existing canons of thought are brought into a learning environment. That is to say, caution must be taken if content is

brought in that is not generated by the student's reality, but that such 'academic' discussions still hold importance and should not be abandoned.

Once again, the emphasis for Shor is on how the educator can shape experience into an educational form relevant to the learner. It is not the fact that, by way of an example, educators attempt to teach students about chemistry, as this would fall under Shor's academic theme or possible topical theme, but the *manner* in which it is done. If the topic of chemistry is not taught in a way to give 'backtalk' to the students' living environments then we risk teaching an ends-objective curriculum focused on the banking concept of knowledge. However, if the educator is open-minded and reflective to the living dialogue generated by the students that brings into question the value of chemistry then an experiential framework may evolve. Perhaps this may be why some teachers often find public-school students so interested in environmental chemistry, where they can reflect on the academic concepts of the science but then apply them to their own living circumstances. This empowering of student action for the environment allows them to generate their own backtalk to 'established' scientific theories.

1.4.3 The Synergy between Action and Reflection

One final aspect of Freire's work needs to be discussed to frame this dialogue of empowering education and social reform within the realm of experiential education. While discussing 'the word', Freire examines how both dialogue (the word) and education have the power to transform reality. Once again we see the critical emphasis between action and reflection:

Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other

immediately suffers... When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism*, into an alienated and alienating 'blah'... On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism*. The latter – action for action's sake – negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible. (Freire, 1970: 87)

From this, not only do we need to consider the relation between action and reflection, but also the implications when either one is absent (as Freire suggests) in experiential education. For example, here we can now consider the primary difference between various protest groups or individuals; are they actively attempting to create a dialogue of social change for their cause, or are they simply 'raging against the machine' to oppose the dominant power structure and therefore not effectively use action. In Freire's view, these individuals must be willing to reflect on the backtalk generated by their own social position if they wish their actions to become anything more than unproductive activism.

It may be plausible that this is what has occurred when individuals have criticized various practices of experiential education as being only 'fun hands-on activities' lacking academic rigor (an issue also addressed in section 1.2 with Dewey's notion of some experiences being mis-educative). This may be a perfect example of what happens when action and reflection are not properly balanced in the practice of experiential education; what individuals may believe is experiential education, may be nothing more than activism. Again, here we see the need of reflection being integrated with action as being a critical element in order to avoid, as Freire states, activism. Thus, true experiential education must involve a theory such as Kolb's integrated loop of experiential learning in order to achieve Freire's notion of a liberating education.

1.5 The Role of the Teacher in Experiential Education

Following on this careful examination of the key ideologies that have shaped the evolution of the theory of experiential education, I want to further discuss in more detail one last point that could be considered of greatest importance to this discussion: the role of the teacher. Before linking this issue to the theories of the previously discussed philosophers and educators, I will first describe a ‘typical’ perspective of experiential education used by its critics to attempt to dismantle its arguments. More importantly, this view is often truthfully based on observations of practicing experiential, or even progressive, educators who are incorrectly modeling such pedagogy according to how it has been defined through the previous discussions. These teachers see and acknowledge the importance of the learner constructing their knowledge through experience, typically being in the form of active, engaging action, and presumably reflection. From this, a conclusion may start to develop that if a teacher interferes or attempts to guide the educative experience that they are naturally invalidating the student’s authentic experiential learning cycle. It can be argued that this event has led to many educators eventually abandoning experiential education, because they set up an experience, students ‘construct’ their own conclusions through action and (possibly) reflection, and then the teacher is disappointed that many students ‘got it wrong’. Here, the teacher has assumed that experiential education is exclusively constructed in a social group, void of any existing expertise (in the form of teacher knowledge) and yet somehow all students would ‘magically’ discover an ends-objective through a means-approach pedagogy.

The potential fault here lies in a falsehood that the educator has ‘no right’ or ‘no place’ contributing to the student’s experiential learning. However, if we consider that

experiential education represents a learning cycle that involves the re-framing of a social context, then it would be wrong to assume that the teacher should not be part of such a setting. It is important, however, that the educator does not attempt to control the learning through authoritative dialogue or banking concepts of information assimilation. Instead, when the educator works together with students as a co-learner, their greater knowledge base may be the key to making the experience educative rather than un- or mis-educative.

What becomes interesting to note is that this theme of the teacher's role, although still possibly incorrectly constructed by many educators, has been argued and resolved in detail by most of the experiential education founders (as will now be cited and discussed). Eliminating the crucial role of the teacher perhaps may be one of the most significant reasons that experiential education has often met with failure in the traditional education system. To reinforce the role of the teacher in experiential education, we only need to look at what Dewey, Schön, Shor and Freire have said on the issue:

Basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school, and consequently more, rather than less, guidance by others. (Dewey, 1938: 8)

Dewey goes on to state that:

Since freedom resides in the operations of intelligent observation and judgment by which a purpose is developed, guidance given by the teacher to the exercise of the pupils' intelligence is an aid to freedom, not a restriction upon it. Sometimes teachers seem to be afraid even to make suggestions to the members of a group as to what they should do... It is impossible to understand why a suggestion from one who has a larger experience and a wider horizon should not be at least as valid as a suggestion arising from some more or less accidental source. (Dewey, 1938: 84)

Schön summarized his views on the role of the teacher (coach) as follows:

Whatever the coach may choose to say, it is important that he say it, for the most part, in the context of the student's *doing*. He must talk to the student while she is in the midst of a task (and perhaps stuck in it), or is about to begin a new task, or thinks back on a task she has just completed, or rehearses in imagination a task she may perform in the future. (Schön, 1987: 102)

Likewise, Shor saw the teacher as “the person who mediates the relationship between outside authorities, formal knowledge, and individual students in the classroom” (Shor, 1992: 13). He goes on to argue that conversation between teacher and student must be mutually inclusive but directed:

Codeveloped by the teacher and the students, dialogue is neither a freewheeling conversation nor a teacher-dominated exchange. Balancing the teacher's authority and the student's input is the key to making the process both critical and democratic. (Shor, 1992: 85)

Finally, Freire argues that such an exchange may appear paradoxical but is necessary for success:

Freedom needs authority to become free. It is a paradox but it is true. The question nevertheless is for authority to know that it has its foundation in the freedom of the others. (dialogue of Freire from; Shor & Freire, 1987: 91)

Thus, in terms of experiential education being a social structure as a learning environment, it is also one where the educator must take on the role of facilitator. That is to say, the educator, with more knowledge and experience than the learners, has an active role and responsibility to construct the learning experience to meet the needs of the learners as understood by the learners. This is not done as a passive observer but rather one that shares the dialogue of the learning moment and provides a voice not of authority but of reflection for the students.

In using theories such as experiential education or progressivism, it is possible to suggest that educators have often come to ‘fear’ directing student action because they feel

that this interaction in some way would invalidate the student's intellectual growth and personal experience. Instead, experiential education can be seen to examine a student-centered approach by utilizing experience as a foundation for developing knowledge and reasoning. Therefore, we could suggest that educators who feel they should not interfere with a student's experience are practicing a student-*directed* rather than student-*centered* philosophy. For example, this can often be seen in classes that use 'free-form' lab experiments in which a teacher wishes to demonstrate a particular observation used in a science subject. The teacher creates a mini-lab experiment that is open-ended yet with a predefined outcome that he/she wishes the students to discover which is not revealed to the student for fear of 'interfering' with the student's discovery and reflection process. However, often at the completion of such an experiment, the educator is disappointed that many did not 'discover' the answer or, even worse, created false assumptions based on the experience. Without a teacher-led reflection stage of the learning, this is a student-directed scenario and does not fall under experiential education pedagogy. In this case, the teacher's guidance is required in the initial design and final reflection / conclusion stage. It is fine to have students deviate from the expected outcome, but if the educator was not willing to direct student learning and guide it through reflection, then the experience loses its educational value. Christian Itin describes how work from Paulo Freire and Ira Shor helps to understand this problem:

A critical piece that Shor brings to this discussion is an acknowledgement that the teacher shares power with the students and responsibility for the curriculum yet does not abdicate their responsibility and authority for the curriculum; the teacher remains purposeful in the process. Of importance in Shor's conceptualization is that neither the teacher nor the students dominate the process... Shor has suggested that empowerment-based education should be seen as student-centered, but not necessarily student-directed. (Itin, 1999)

Therefore, to understand effective experiential education, one must view the role of the educator as that of a facilitator that guides students' experiences through to reflection and abstraction (the re-framing of knowledge based on reflective experience). Otherwise, the value of the learning experience is lost, and can not be defined as experiential education.

1.6 Application of Experiential Education

With such a solid foundation for the epistemology (in terms of acquiring knowledge) and pedagogy of experiential education, it raises the issue of practical implementation. When one considers applying this educational approach, it is worthwhile to remember that it is often more difficult and challenging to structure experiential education in practice than traditional education (as will surface as a recurring theme throughout later chapters of this thesis). Yet, it could be argued that this is due to where the current educational system is framed predominately within a traditional mindset of curriculum delivery. If public education was successfully re-framed into a vision of experiential education than perhaps some of the limiters may no longer be present. As such with the current system, it is often limiting factors and traits of the educator as facilitator developed within the existing educational system rather than a flaw in the theory of experiential education that creates un- or mis-educative experiences. I would like to conclude this chapter with two strong examples that demonstrate how with the right conditions and proper facilitation, experiential education can offer all that it promises.

The first case is that of the Highlander Folk School (Glen, 1988; Jacobs, 2003) in Monteagle, Tennessee. Myles Horton founded Highlander in 1932 with the intent of professional development for community leaders to return to their respective communities with skills to bring about social change. As such, Highlander became very influential in the southern United States during the Labor Movement (labor union formation) and the later Civil Rights Movement. The belief at the school was that education was needed for leaders to understand the context of their social position and

struggle in order to advance beyond it. Because of this stance, workshops constructed at Highlander were conducted, in the tradition of Freire, through consultation with the target group. No pre-existing curriculum was used; instead instructors co-developed thematic conversations with the participants that held relevance to their daily issues. By doing so, not only did participants discover and reflect on the limitations of their current situations, Highlander also provided guidance for these leaders to advance their own causes for social change. As such, even as influential as the school was during the labor and civil rights movements, it was never a leader itself; instead it simply provided educational guidance so that leaders could actively re-frame and then change their social reality. No better example can be found than the fact that just months before Rosa Park's famous refusal to obey public transit segregation, she participated at a Highlander workshop discussing how to understand and transform her social context. Early on during this workshop, she was even recorded as stating that she did not feel one person alone could have the power to transform socially forced roles or to re-frame cultural expectations, yet she still willingly engaged in this praxis.

The second case is that of Foxfire (Wigginton, 1991). Eliot Wigginton started his teaching career in Rabun County, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, in 1966. Very early on, Wigg, as his students quickly came to call him, had a group of students start a local school newspaper, which they named 'Foxfire'. What was important from the outset was that Wigg engaged the students as co-creators of the project; they had complete input into the paper's content, and would be responsible for everything from interviewing to typesetting and production (with Wigg offering his support and knowledge whenever required). Through Foxfire, students took it upon themselves to re-

frame their social knowledge by their vast work of interviewing the elders of the area, and profiling their different lifestyles and crafts. Over the years, what resulted was an extremely successful project that received national recognition. Even as Foxfire grew, Wigg ensured that students maintained a leadership role even in the growth of the program. As voiced from many student accounts (Wigginton, 1991: 271), Foxfire became the most transformative experience within the public school system for them.

What is interesting to note about Foxfire was that, in later years, outreach programs were established that allowed Wigg's students to mentor other groups of students trying to establish similar experiential writing programs at their schools (Wigginton, 1991: 242). Though many were successful and lasted a number of years, none have had the same staying power as Foxfire. This point reinforces the critical aspect of what the educator brings to the educational environment in terms of personal experience and group-reflective processes, and the need to re-frame events in terms of the student's immediate social context. This also reinforces that experiential education does not have a procedural 'cookie cutter' template that can be simply superimposed over various learners in different environments. Re-framing experiential education means that educators must not only believe in what they teach, but that they must also follow the same pedagogy for themselves in developing such projects.

One additional note must be addressed for the Foxfire example: later in Wigginton's career he was found and convicted of inappropriate relations with his students. Certainly as a teacher he had abused his power relations and engaged in morally unacceptable behavior, yet this action of one man does not necessarily invalidate the success of experiential education. Instead, we need to consider that "basing education

upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school” (Dewey, 1938: 8). This can suggest, as seen in Foxfire, that experiential education can generate an environment not only of profound student success but also one in which clearly the role of the teacher must not be abused in this more open, and perhaps more vulnerable, setting. However, in terms of structure and approach Foxfire still remains an excellent case study for how experiential education can be successfully integrated into the public school system.

Chapter 2 – Outdoor Education

In Chapter One, we examined many elements of experiential education that have strong pedagogical value and, as such, a place in our public school system. In this chapter, we will now examine how outdoor education, in a broad and general way, operates. By considering the structure of outdoor education this will reveal many aspects of its field of study as curriculum. In later chapters these curricular elements will be re-examined in how they might be able to operate in a public school setting.

2.1 The Scope of Outdoor Education

In order to understand the role of outdoor education in the context of personal development, social dynamics, and general education, first we must be very clear about its definition. Of importance, outdoor education must be understood as something different than outdoor recreation, although it does incorporate the latter. When I speak of recreation, for this discussion I am referring to the practice of ‘skills training’. In particular, the skills of outdoor recreation can be defined as the training practices by which proficiency is gained through repetition. Examples include various things such as paddling strokes learnt in sea kayaking or constructing knots and belay devices in rock-climbing. Though teaching these technical skills may take a significant amount of training and time, typically they do not utilize any significant educational processes beyond the end goal of said training. Students are taught what round peg fits into what round hole. Here the emphasis is a technical mastery in order to achieve or participate in

a particular outdoor pursuit. Such a model may be used to integrate outdoor recreation into a physical education class, but this is not what is meant by outdoor education.

Outdoor education differs from outdoor recreation because of its fundamental focus on providing opportunities for students to develop reason (Crosby, 1981). Yet outdoor education also uses the same physical environment as its medium for learning, which is often associated with outdoor recreation. Therefore, at least on the surface, the two may appear similar; for instance outdoor education may use rope work from rock-climbing programs. However, unlike strictly teaching the technical skills, outdoor education will use this environment to develop reason and a growth in personal development and social relations. For instance, in the case of the rock climbing example the use of a belay spotter may not only be for the technical safety aspect of the skill but also used to nurture the sense of co-dependency among members of a team as a means to strengthen group dynamics. Another clear example can be seen in the classic use of the obstacle wall activity, frequently utilized in outdoor education programs; a group of students may be presented with one of the many challenges of moving the whole group over an eight foot high wall without breaking their human link. Here, the skills of scrambling over the wall are not the issue, but rather how students will think through and design solutions in order to overcome the challenge presented to them, and in the process how they will come to trust each other and work together. Therefore, the actual physical outdoor environment is considered important in how it can be used to develop reason in students (Leroy, 1983). By doing so, the notion of accumulated factual knowledge (i.e. the skills of scrambling over the obstacle wall) being the same faculty as reasoning (i.e. working through a problem to discover a novel solution) has been deconstructed for them

in a meaningful way (Prochazka, 1995), and provides them a concrete lived-experience that distinguishes the two. In addition, group dynamics are often, if not always, incorporated in this practice and done in a manner that differs from the traditional classroom setting (Kerr & Gass, 1987). Here, success of a particular challenge requires the combined work and efforts of all those on a team. In order for the group to successfully manage the obstacle wall, or to navigate to an end goal, all members of the team must complete the task. Therefore, we may consider outdoor education as a process of training *through* rather than *for* a specific knowledge base (Miner, 1990: 60).

With this emphasis on higher order thinking, outdoor education offers a context for practical implementation of experiential education philosophy. The field of outdoor education has also been linked with adventure education and environmental education but it is important to understand how these fields are related and distinct. Essentially, *outdoor education* involves learning through the medium of the wilderness, and as such it has been suggested that it encompasses the two separate fields of adventure and environmental education. Simon Priest (1990) defined *environmental education* as being concerned with two relationships: ecosystemic (interdependence of living organisms in an ecological microclimate) and ekistic (relation between human society and natural resources), while *adventure education* is concerned with two other relationships: interpersonal and intrapersonal. In adventure education, the wilderness setting is used as a framework for an educational environment that can allow learners to redefine their social roles and thus critically examine and understand their self and their interdependency on others. As such, this presents similarities to the social framework of experiential education presented in the first chapter of this thesis.

The term adventure education is often used interchangeably with outdoor education and it can be argued so for a number of reasons: it has had a longer history than environmental education, it was a foundation position for the overall scope of outdoor education, and it is much closer aligned with experiential education than environmental education by the nature and focus on group and personal development (all of which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter). This is not to say that environmental education does not, or cannot, use an experiential framework; but the core emphasis of adventure education centers on this epistemology of experiential education. As such, where many of the researchers and practitioners in this field may blend terminologies, when this thesis refers to outdoor education, technically it refers to adventure education; though the term outdoor education will still be used in this thesis as it is the predominate definition used within the literature even when speaking of adventure education.

Another point of interest when examining these often interrelated fields within outdoor education is that one can easily observe the current and rapid rise of environmental education within this field over the last few decades. Even though a correlation can be made with society's current emphasis on environmental awareness and sustainability, it is interesting to notice how this field aligns more closely with Schön's notion of technical rationality (Argyris & Schön, 1974), which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. Thus it could be possible to view environmental education as assisting in 'justifying' outdoor education within mainstream education by moving away from the teaching skill set of personal development often (but not always) to the technical skill set of environmental science.

2.2 Early Foundations of Outdoor Education

In order to understand the synergy between experiential and outdoor education, we will need to examine the evolution of outdoor education practices and some of the underlying principles behind this pedagogy, before considering the limitations and potential errors that have been propagated through its current approach. In this section, I will discuss how the genesis of outdoor education was not a means to regaining some form of wilderness readiness or preparation that may have been lost with the advancement of technological society but rather a conscious call to address the needs of that society. Outdoor education modeled its learning environment in a way to enhance personal and interpersonal attributes that were seen to be in a decline within ‘modern’ society. Thus, from the very start, it was thought that outdoor education was derived from needs outside its actual operation; emphasizing its importance as a collective sum of social experiences for its learners and that this could, and would, be reintegrated into their day-to-day living.

2.2.1 The Moral Equivalent to War

When establishing the origins of outdoor education it is important, if not critical, to review the work of one of the key founders of this field, Kurt Hahn. However, in order to understand his position, we first need to set the context with William James’ article, *The Moral Equivalent to War* (1910). In this article, James described a social dilemma of his time: even though there are many evils associated with war, there is an inherent character-building element that, in terms of both the individual and the group, has strong

value in our society. This has often been described as the ‘bond of brotherhood’ that war produces: the reliance and support given to your fellow comrades in times of need.

The virtues that prevail, it must be noted, are virtues anyhow, superiorities that count in peaceful as well as in military competition; but the strain on them, being infinitely intenser in the latter case, makes war infinitely more searching as a trial. (James, 1910: 355)

From this position, James saw the importance of a substitution, or moral equivalent, to war as a way of maintaining the positive values of strong character while eliminating the atrocities of the war-act. He believed that in some way our society must find a solution for the character-building of our youth if our society is going to remain strong in virtue.

While James applauds the military virtues, he abhors the use of war to teach these virtues. Risk-taking is admired by James, but the use of war to encourage risk-taking is not admired. What is needed, says James, is a substitute for war that will bring out the desired virtues. The substitute James proposes is impelling young people into adventurous situations, utilizing nature as the medium. (Hunt, 1990a: 121)

From this, it is possible to see how the outdoor wilderness environment could be considered a replacement for war as an arduous practice. Individuals have the potential to excel based on overcoming great obstacles, but doing so within the wilderness framework does not require the opposition of another individual in a violent conflict. Wilderness as opposition allows an individual to ‘win’ or succeed while producing no ‘loser’ within another through challenge and defeat. Therefore, one key pillar to the concept of outdoor education is its ability to provide this moral equivalent to war, and thus expose youth to more arduous character-building opportunities than what their society can typically provide.

2.2.2 Kurt Hahn and the creation of Outward Bound

The challenge proposed by James was taken up by Kurt Hahn, an important figure in the infancy stage of outdoor education. A man of relentless action and commitment, Hahn has left little in terms of personal literature, even though his role in England has been arguably as important to outdoor education as Dewey was for public schooling. Fortunately, many writers, researchers, and practitioners continue to profile his work (for examples see: Richards, 1990; James, 1995a, 1995b).

In Germany in 1920, Hahn formed a boarding school called Salem Schule (Peace School), before being imprisoned for his statements against the Nazi indoctrination of youth. After his release, he opened the Gordonstoun School in the UK in 1934 where he continued his work with youth, and later he continued his work with the United World Colleges. Through the principles of hardship and challenge, as expressed by the work of James, Hahn sought to strengthen the moral character of his students. This stemmed from observing how the urbanization of youth had left them with little room to face personal challenge and to grow from such experiences. Hahn felt urban students did not grow because there were few opportunities to make critical decisions during times of stress, thus they relied on following established means and authority rather than personal leadership. A great deal of work has examined the transformative nature of experience as ‘character-building’ (Heath, 1978). Hahn’s methodology centered on engaging youth, where the central premise was to re-frame the existing social roles of these students under his care by providing growth through challenging opportunity. From this, certain ‘all-rounder’ programs developed with his guidance, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the creation of Outward Bound.

Outward Bound was one of the first organizations to use outdoor education as a medium for the personal development of youth (Miner, 1990). Ironically, the formation of Outward Bound in 1941 had its roots in naval war (James, 1995b: 40; Miner, 1990: 59). Interestingly, not only was the name Outward Bound derived from a nautical term, but the high ropes course, now a staple for many outdoor education programs, was originally designed to mimic mast and sail work in poor seafaring conditions and the activity 'the wall' mimicked the side of a ship, even though today few make this historical connection. It was discovered during this time that when torpedoed ships went down, a disproportionately large number of the surviving sailors were sail-trained 'old timers'. The fact that there were greater fatalities among the younger sailors despite their generally better physical condition, indicated to Hahn that something was missing from the current training and education of the country's youth (James, 1995a). From this Hahn, along with his colleague Lawrence Holt, established the principles of Outward Bound:

Holt's propositional distinction – training through rather than for – was always to be the essence of the Outward Bound dynamic. Life-enhancing experience is obtained through the sea, the mountains, the wild lake country, the desert. Outward Bound has evolved since those early Aberdovey days. But it has not departed from Hahn's and Holt's essential concept of an intense experience surmounting challenges in a natural setting, through which the individual builds his sense of self-worth, the group comes to a heightened awareness of human interdependence, and all grow in concern for those in danger and in need. (Miner, 1990: 60)

Thus, even though the earliest associations were with nautical skills, Hahn saw that outdoor education could encompass many more varied learning environments to meet the needs of its youth. From this origin, Outward Bound has grown into an international program that is a key player in outdoor and experiential education in such countries as Canada, the United States, Germany, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. In this origin

of outdoor education, Hahn created a learning environment that firmly centered on intense experience and challenge enhancing personal development and growth as its cornerstone.

2.2.3 The Growth of Outdoor Education Programs

As Outward Bound continued to grow and expand, so did outdoor education in general and other organizations developed. One such organization is the non-profit National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) (Bachert, 1990). The program was founded in 1965 by Paul Petzolt, a seasoned adventurer who, among many other things, was an instructor at the Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS). Petzolt was interested in establishing a leadership training program in the realm of outdoor education that focused on three key points or criteria: 1) expose the participants to challenges inherent in a wilderness experience; 2) that quality instructors would meet his standards as outdoor leaders; and 3) the program would meet the interests of those Outward Bound graduates who wanted to progress to greater levels of outdoor skill (Bachert, 1990: 85). From this came “an explicit and unique claim of Petzolt and NOLS curriculum is that judgment is a basic element in the foundation of a competent and safe outdoor leader, and NOLS attempts to teach it” (Bachert, 1990: 87). In a NOLS course, regardless of its length or type, there are considered six key curricular components, or learning objectives, that are met: communication skills, leadership skills, small group behavior, judgment in the outdoors, outdoor skills, and environmental awareness (Paisley, *et al*, 2008).

As recognition of Outward Bound grew, so did the question of transferring its curriculum, which runs in concentrated multi-week programs, to the structure and

timetable of the public school system. To achieve this objective, an offshoot of Outward Bound developed in 1971, now called Project Adventure (Prouty, 1990). Since then, Project Adventure has expanded to include curriculum design for other institutions, particularly therapeutic counseling and corporate training.

Another organization worth mentioning is WEA, or the Wilderness Education Association (Lupton, 1990). In 1977, Petzolt assisted Frank Lupton to create the organization. Similar to other organizations, WEA's main purpose was "to improve the quality of the wilderness and wilderness experience through education of users and the certification of outdoor leaders" (Lupton, 1990: 91).

However, no discussions on outdoor organizations can be complete without mentioning AEE, or the Association of Experiential Education (Garvey, 1995). As the name suggests, even though a large portion of its membership is involved in outdoor education, its emphasis is on experiential education, and by examining its publications one can see how closely linked these two fields study actually are. Since its creation in 1977, AEE has regularly published the *Journal of Experiential Education*, in addition to numerous books on many aspects of outdoor and experiential education. Currently, AEE can be considered the strongest organization in North America for bringing together both theoreticians and practitioners in this field: for example practitioners such as Willy Unsoeld (in the past), philosophers such as Jasper Hunt, and behavioral psychologists such as Michael Gass and Simon Priest all come together to share their respective works. Just as experiential education requires the interplay of action with reflection, AEE provides its members with the much needed macro-reflection of a field based mostly in practice, thus creating an experiential learning environment for the study of experiential

education. The evolution of AEE has indicated how, as the field of outdoor education has matured, the need has increased to develop a theoretical understanding behind the practices in order to advance and enhance it as a mainstay curriculum.

2.3 *The Relation between Experiential Learning and Outdoor Education*

The organizations described in the previous section can be seen as the outward manifestations of the deeper relationship between the theory of experiential education and the practice of outdoor education. It has been argued that maintaining an emphasis on underlying theoretical positions in a practice-rich environment such as outdoor education is important in order to maintain field growth (Baldwin, *et al*, 2004). By the 1980s many were starting to question the lack of theoretical framework for outdoor education practice, as Wurdinger stated, “I began to wonder whether we, experiential educators, have taken this assumption [that traditional education is theory rich and practice poor] so much to heart that we have developed a field which is experience rich and theory poor” (Wurdinger, 1990). Philosophers in this field linked practices such as Hahn’s and Unsoeld’s in outdoor/adventure education to various writers such as Plato, Aristotle, James, and Dewey (Hunt, 1990a). More recently, others have started expanding on how this field can relate to a much broader range of educational theories, such as constructivism, social constructionism, cultural discourses, and situated learning (Quay, 2003). Richard Kraft has proposed how experiential learning draws from or is supported by behavioral, social, cognitive, and developmental learning theories as well as the theory of multiple intelligences and progressivism. For example:

Gardner’s theory [of multiple intelligence] provides a solid research rationale for the wide variety of bodily-kinesthetic activities used in adventure programs, and for the wide range of intrapersonal and interpersonal activities that form such a critical part of the pedagogy for both the therapeutic and nontherapeutic outdoor education programs. (Kraft, 1990: 178)

The connection between outdoor education and experiential education theory is important if one is to understand how the various elements of its practice come together

in order to provide an effective learning environment, while at the same time providing insight into possible elements that do not work and reasons why. I will use a simple but strong example to prove this point. Outdoor education, although struggling within the institutional setting of the public school, is continuing to grow elsewhere and includes more and more client groups. The client groups that currently comprise a large portion of outdoor educational activities can be broken down as follows: at-risk adolescents (typically within the correctional facility network); therapy groups (such as social worker projects on substance abuse); corporate executive training (for leadership management); and all-women expeditions (for confidence-building and sometimes dealing with abuse issues) (Priest & Gass, 2005: xi). This does not include the client base for outdoor recreation, which is program activity without reflective education, but rather skills-based training for the ‘weekend warrior’, such as climbing or kayaking courses. Based on the client groups outlined by Priest and Gass, it can be asked what such groups have in common that they use an outdoor education environment. In reflecting on theory already discussed, we see that each client group has a powerful need to re-frame their understanding of their existing social constructs. Experiential education, through the theories of Freire (1970) and Shor (1992), deals with empowering education and how individuals can reconstruct their realities. As we link theory to practice, both benefit – praxis in its essence.

2.4 Critical Elements for Outdoor Education

An immediate and valid argument to the above example, however, is that this might describe the importance of experiential education for these client groups, but it still does not completely link this to outdoor education. The point here is that if we are to consider this field as praxis – an action and reflection in order to transform reality – we must look at the synergy between experiential and outdoor education. In other words, at this stage we now need to consider *how* outdoor education practice contributes *to* experiential theory; as it must be a two-way dynamic. What are the factors in outdoor education that potentially make it a unique learning environment and enhances the learning retention of its students in the form of experiential education? To answer this question, we will now examine such key elements as the social and physical learning environment, flow state, and the concept of risk. This will naturally lead to the consideration of some ethical issues that rise out of outdoor education practices that are not typically of consideration in mainstream schooling. I will then consider how the idea of transference and metaphor mean that outdoor education has a substantial place in public education.

2.4.1 The Socially and Physically Unfamiliar Environment

When considering why outdoor education is perhaps one of the best mediums for the implementation of the theory of experiential education, we must consider its setting as a *physically and socially unfamiliar environment*.

Placing participants into an unfamiliar learning environment can foster a variety of beneficial dynamics. Such environments are valuable because they starkly contrast to the learners' familiar environments, allowing participants to see old behavior patterns in a new light with a richer

perspective as well as to notice behavior patterns that they may have overlooked in familiar settings. Unfamiliar physical environments may also allow participants to 'try on' new behaviors in an environment that does not encompass some of the limitations or fears of familiar settings. Such successful new behaviors may serve as first steps toward integrating behavior changes into more familiar settings. (Priest & Gass, 2005: 20)

By providing a rich, novel environment for learners, outdoor education has the potential to re-frame their social interactions because there is a basic assumption that pre-determined social interactions do not have the basis or physical needs present in this new environment in order to maintain their dependence on existing hierarchies. This concept not only reinforces Schön's notion of a surprise, or discrepant event, in order to facilitate reflection, but also supports Freire's ideas about how we must encourage individuals to understand their social position in order to transform it through praxis. Here we see that by using a socially and physically unfamiliar environment, outdoor education allows participants to 'try on' new identities in a controlled setting and allow them to take hold for the potential of true social transformation.

While considering the social impact of outdoor education, it must be noted that there is still some debate on this issue. Some researchers and practitioners see the personal development of the individual being of paramount importance (Sugerman, 1999), while others see the value in the growth of group dynamics (Garvey, 1999a). Not to oversimplify such an issue, but one might consider that such an argument only once again reinforces Dewey's notion that individual learning is a social (and he would also argue a democratic) process that cannot be separated from its immediate group. Hence it is not an either/or dilemma but rather a blend of the two. Thus the learning potential of the individual is linked and feeds back into the social group from which it originates, and enables both aspects to grow together.

Because of this unfamiliar social learning environment employed in outdoor education, Priest & Gass (2005: 66) have outlined stages of group development within this context as proposed and developed by Tuckman and Jensen (1977). Tuckman's group development theory predicts stages that a new group of individuals will transition through in an unfamiliar learning environment, and, as such, is important for the educator to understand in order to provide the best possible facilitation. These stages are: 1) forming – deals with the concerns and doubts learners feel in forming a new group, often referred to as the conforming stage, 2) storming – when learners challenge and question existing or perceived authority roles within its group, 3) norming – learners re-frame their social interaction in order to deal with the new social structure of the group, 4) performing – learners use their new re-framing of the situation to provide mutual support and interaction for group activities and learning, and finally 5) adjourning – the reflection of social interactions and anxiety of the group breaking up and how this effects the return to pre-established social groups. Throughout this process, it has been suggested that the exact role and leadership style of the facilitator becomes important for successful group dynamics (Priest & Gass, 2005: 70). In addition, this stage theory was considered to be dynamic rather than linear, and that based on particular circumstances groups might shift back in the stages rather than always progressing forward. This model of group theory is just one of many that may be considered for the examination of team dynamics when presented with an unfamiliar environment. As such, it is acknowledged that critiques may be made on the exact nature and order of various stages, and if each stage is even required prior to another, yet it is presented here only to assist in our understanding of how group dynamics may change and become interactive with a novel setting.

For example, a few years ago I participated in a Wilderness First Responders course that almost perfectly modeled these stages of group development. As strangers, we were all initially unsure of what expectations and support we would give to, and receive from, the other members of the group. Early on in the group conflicts in personalities arose as many of us attempted to fit into leadership roles we were accustomed to in our individual professional working environments. When none of these roles proved beneficial to the new learning environment of wilderness first aid, eventually the group started to work together in ways to enhance each member's strength within the group in order to achieve tasks. Finally, at the conclusion of the program after ten intensive days, many of us pondered on our newly acquired first aid skills and their effectiveness once we were no longer part of the group that knew how to work together in this medium. Final comments included being unsure of how each of us would be able to effectively use our first aid skills when presented with situations with other individuals who did not understand 'our' teamwork style.

However, as we consider the pivotal role of any novel wilderness learning environment, an important note must be made: there is an underlying assumption in outdoor education that, having been largely developed as an educational tool to 'combat' the urbanization of youth, in terms of providing arduous character-building challenges, learners do not possess a great deal of prior knowledge about this learning environment. If this was not the case, then outdoor education would not provide a novel and fresh reflective medium that allows learners to question and grow. As such, an interesting dilemma may be considered here: the more students become familiar with outdoor education, the increased likelihood that it will lose its transformative edge. However,

once we examine this issue more closely, more complexity arises. The question may now not simply become a familiarity with a particular environment but rather that of an exact setting. For example, the use of the wilderness in a first aid course still has the advantage of being a socially and physically unfamiliar environment even to a veteran hiker and paramedic provided if that individual never reflectively blended these two areas of his or her life. Another point could be made concerning the effective use of the unfamiliar environment; if the goal is to expose students to a transformative experience, the very nature and design of the activity may be one that does not empower individuals to reflect on transformative action. As such, any rote activities may actually strengthen conformity in students that hinder any transformational potential that may have been offered. To address both these issues (of familiarity and repetition hindering growth), this leads us into a discussion about flow state, as this relation will now be discussed.

2.4.2 Flow State

To fully understand how an individual can potentially interact within a socially and physically unfamiliar environment that provides transformative moments for self and group, it is beneficial to consider Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow state (1975, 1990). Flow is a theory that examines how individuals come to have 'peak performance' in learning situations:

Flow describes a state of experience that is engrossing, intrinsically rewarding, and 'outside the parameters of worry and boredom'... Since what motivated the activity usually seemed not be external rewards but the activity itself, the conclusion was that it was *the quality of the subjective experience itself* that made the behavior intrinsically rewarding. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 150)

Alasdair McIntyre discussed the idea of intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards (1984), and others have applied this notion to outdoor education (Hunt, 1991). McIntyre discussed the idea of ‘goods internal to practice’ versus ‘goods external to practice’. Goods internal to practice are things of value that are only available within the practice, and are inexhaustible; for example, all participants in a particular course can come away with a new understanding and appreciation of the topic. Goods external to practice are things of value that have been attached to the practice often as motivators, and more importantly are limited and objects of competition; all participants in the above example must compete for the ‘top-grade’ of the course. As such, McIntyre perceived that goods internal to practice bring benefit to people and community, while goods external tend to corrupt and distort the internal goods. As such, this can raise the fundamental question of whether the school is a system built on internal or external goods, and thus whether students attend school to gain knowledge or to acquire jobs. In terms of outdoor education, the existence of a social and physical unfamiliar environment, at the very least, assists in hindering goods external to practice, since most participants are still trying to simply define their roles within such novel settings.

In terms of flow, this focus on goods internal to practice allows for a greater interaction between the student and the learning environment because the emphasis is placed on the actual learning environment and not external goods associated with it as an ends-product. Csikszentmihalyi has outlined some key characteristics of flow, or peak performance activities: 1) a person in flow knows what must be done and gets quick feedback; 2) the flow experience involves a merging of action and awareness (a similar notion to tacit knowledge proposed by Argyris & Schön, 1974); 3) a centering of

attention on a limited stimulus field; 4) intense concentration involves a ‘loss of ego’ or ‘self-forgetfulness’; 5) individuals in flow feel potentially in control of their actions and of the environment (a similar characteristic of empowering education proposed by Shor, 1992); and 6) flow is autotelic, meaning the desire to repeat activities increases because of intrinsic rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 150).

Although not discussed by Csikszentmihalyi, it would be interesting to consider whether a group or team could be considered to be in a state of flow. It might require more than just each individual being in a state of flow, for group dynamics would now be taken into consideration. However, as Csikszentmihalyi defines flow, with the merging of action and awareness together with a loss of ego or self-forgetfulness, this may provide a rich medium for effective team dynamics to manifest.

The concept of flow, or peak-performance activities, has implications for the learner and outdoor education through the relationship between the opportunity to act and the capacity to act (Priest & Gass, 2005: 48). Essentially, if an individual has a greater capacity to act than opportunities provided then boredom results, while if the reverse situation occurs then anxiety results. Thus if opportunity and capacity are aligned, the individual then has the potential to enter a state of flow, thus possibly being another characteristic, or perhaps a prerequisite, that Csikszentmihalyi did not directly address. This event of opportunities aligning with capacity is not limited to outdoor education as in almost every classroom educators have students that are either bored with the curriculum or confused by it. It could be argued that public education may need a greater focus on the theory of flow in order to understand how to enhance the learning environment for those students who are either lost or bored with the material. What is

interesting to note, however, is that by considering outdoor education as a character-building learning environment this suggests that this setting naturally attempts to better align the concept of flow than traditional classrooms by reducing ‘boredom’ through arduous practice, an issue that was addressed by Hahn.

Within outdoor education, such a theory as peak-performance (as defined by Priest & Gass, which although incredibly similar to Csikszentmihalyi’s flow state has never explicitly been connected) has been expanded even further in terms of the learner’s perceived versus actual abilities (Priest & Gass, 2005: 50). If a student has a lower perceived competence than actual, then that individual may engage in activities that do not push their limits, and thus do not achieve peak performance. Likewise, if competence is perceived higher than actual, then the learner might take on too much and failure results. Essentially, what is examined here is how self-perception may hinder peak performance if it does not truthfully align with ability (whether realized or not on the part of the learner). As a result, the role of the educator/facilitator is critical: some individuals must be presented with experiences that challenge, or modify, what they perceive they can do in order to achieve success and growth. Likewise, the educator must establish experiences that allow overconfident learners to re-frame their actual skill levels in order to grow from their newly realized limitations and learning opportunities. Doing so must involve the educator setting up experiences that match learner’s abilities while not necessarily matching their self-perception. As long as the student engages in such an activity, this provides a reflective learning moment that allows them to redefine their potential abilities. During this process though, the educator would have an ethical

obligation to provide a constructive learning environment that does not jeopardize self-esteem even when it teaches limits.

2.4.3 Perceived Versus Actual Risk

Since the idea of flow (aligned with peak performance), through ability versus opportunity, is linked with notions of success and failure of the learning moment, this leads to an important discussion for outdoor education: the concept of risk. Because students are brought into a physically and socially unfamiliar environment, there is an understanding that these learners are placed in a situation of risk because they would not have certainty about how to act or perform in such novel situations. Certainly, almost anyone can see how rock-climbing or canoeing has a greater risk associated with it, both in terms of personal safety and potential equipment loss, than having students sit quietly in a classroom, passively absorbing lecture material. Experience of any sort, however, involves some form of risk, whether in the case of equipment loss in canoeing or peer-judging by correctly answering a question or not in class.

Again, we may consider how Schön's concept of surprise, or a discrepant event, as a key element in generating reflective action can now potentially relate to the idea of risk. Risk inherently implies uncertainty of outcome; this uncertainty may be in terms of personal safety, but can also be in terms of the success or failure of a particular learning activity. By using risk/uncertainty, outdoor educators establish learning environments that generate reflective action with an intrinsically motivated flow state. Here, the discrepant event provides a learning moment that takes the individual out of rote behavior. More importantly, it does so by providing an uncertainty; since the individual

did not anticipate or perceive the learning moment, it is more likely that they are unsure of any possible outcome derived from taking action in such a case. Thus the uncertainty of the moment generates risk in action, or thought, for the individual.

Few would disagree with the assertion that a chief goal of education is to encourage people to think rather than go through life mindlessly. Fundamental to the application of thought to the world is the impossibility of complete certainty of outcome. For if the outcome of thought were completely known in advance, there would be no need for thought at all. Thinking implies taking a risk... Therefore, there is a vital link between education and the risk inherent in the process of thought itself. It is our duty as educators to encourage our students to take the risk of thought. (Hunt, 1990b: 40)

In this way, the use of risk now becomes both a physical and psychological tool that allows outdoor educators to construct a learning environment that maintains flow, or peak performance, for the learners. Therefore, like the idea of flow, risk has a relation to perceived competence (Priest & Baillie, 1995). Priest and Baillie describe individuals with lower perceived competence in terms of risk as being 'timid and fearful', and those with higher perceived competence as being 'fearless and arrogant'.

Balancing the amount of risk in an adventure experience is a central paradox for outdoor leaders: with too much risk the danger of the experience becomes unreasonable; with too little risk the adventure program fails to remain adventurous. (Priest & Gass, 2005: 92)

In either case, what results when a derivation from peak adventurous activities occurs is that the learning potential of the moment also suffers. By considering risk within the frame of a learning moment, the potential of the environment becoming un- or even mis-educative results, since the risk does not match the competence.

2.5 Ethics in Outdoor Education

However, in dealing with risk, this raises many ethical questions about whether educators have the right to subject students to risk (see Hunt, 1990b: chapter 2 focuses on risk benefit analysis). Derived from this argument is an important distinction between perceived versus actual risk. Perceived risk refers to the degree of potential danger that an individual feels, and may be different than the actual risk involved in a particular activity. For example, in general, society has a higher perceived risk of commercial flying, yet the actual risk of automotive driving is greater. Here, individual's perceptions of the risk of flying may be higher than that of driving perhaps because they sense a greater chance of a fatality in an aircraft accident. Yet, research and statistics clearly point to flying as being less risky, even though this logic often does not shift individual's idea of the risk. Along these lines, one widely accepted argument in outdoor education is, that in order to maintain a high state of flow, there is a need to keep perceived risk high while keeping actual risk low for practical safety and ethical reasons. Therefore, the use of risk to impel individuals in learning moments, either in action or reflection, becomes possible in their perception even though the ethical case of reducing harm is maintained.

This discussion about the ethics of risk opens the door on the wider issue of ethics in general for outdoor education, which is necessary to address in order to understand the type of dynamic learning environment that it creates. Four levels of ethical decision making have been reviewed as part of outdoor education (Gass & Wurdinger, 1993): 1) intuitive or 'gut reactions'; 2) ethical rules established by organizations; 3) ethical principles molded by society; and 4) ethical theory, in which the individual reflects and balances situations un-resolvable by the previous three levels. The level of ethical

decision making at which a particular educator operates reveals a lot about how they may, or may not, operate as a reflective practitioner in outdoor education. This also generates a problematic distinction between an individual's ethical choice and how it weighs with society's ethical (moral) view. Therefore, when discussing ethics in outdoor education, it is important at the very least to be aware of how and at which level individuals may be ethically operating.

2.5.1 Informed Consent

A significant contributor to the ethical discussions in outdoor education has been Jasper Hunt (1990b, 1991). He correlates many characteristics of outdoor education, such as risk, to the greater ethical question of informed consent:

If I am a reasonable person and I am deciding whether a given risky activity is worth the risk and I am not informed about what the risks are then I am incapable of making a truly informed decision. The less information I have, the less I am acting autonomously. The less I'm acting autonomously, the less I act from a state of liberty. Thus, my ignorance becomes a form of slavery. (Hunt, 1990b: 48)

Hunt states that when an outdoor educator creates a learning environment, it necessitates that the learner be informed about the events taking place. Initially, such a position appears contradictory to the idea of surprise that is used to maintain flow, or peak adventure. If students are completely informed about the actual risks, then their perceptions of risk match, and so we have either a dangerous learning environment or one that creates boredom. However, Hunt addresses such an issue when he includes deception and secrecy in his argument. He argues that the use of these can be ethically justified in order to maintain perceived risk, provided that learners give informed consent prior to their use.

It should be clear that the use of deception in experiential education is, at best, a controversial and ethically problematic practice. I think one of the most important distinctions to bear in mind, as a practical matter, is the difference between deception as an aspect of informed consent and deception that has not been consented to... Once again, informed consent can be useful for the discussion of secrecy. It is a rather simple matter to inform students before the fact that secrets may be kept in order to facilitate learning. If experiential education really is fundamentally different from traditional information assimilation education, and if one of these differences lies in the Socratic technique of impelling students into real perplexity, why not simply inform students what these differences are before they begin the experiential process. (Hunt, 1990b: 59, 65)

In this way, we see how educators can potentially maintain an ethically sound learning environment that is still physically and socially unfamiliar in order to promote reflective action on the part of the students in a state of flow.

Hunt also discusses many other broad-ranging and important issues such as sexuality, environmental concerns, individual versus group benefit, student's rights, social implications, and paternalism. As such, many educators and researchers consider his work to be seminal in the field of ethics in outdoor education. At this stage though, the key points of actual and perceived risk, and informed consent are the only points that are brought into the current discussion on how outdoor education is possibly the best case study for experiential education, and that this in no way diminishes any of these other important ethical issues within this field of education.

2.6 Integration of Outdoor Education Experiences into General Society

Following on this examination of the various key characteristics of outdoor education, including the effects of its unfamiliar environment, flow state, risk, and some associated ethical issues, I will now discuss the ways in which such a specialized learning environment has practical applications for society at large. It could be argued that such a learning environment, although at least temporarily effective for the reflective transformation of the student, is now so removed from their actual daily experience that no real long-term benefits may be derived from it. This is the idea of *transference*, which continues to be one of the most researched and debated areas in outdoor education (Hatch & McCarthy, 2005; Gass, 1995), with both sides still arguing if transference is long lasting (Garvey, 1999b; Puk, 1999a). Here one must consider whether or not the value of the learning experience can now be related to the daily lives of the individual, or must it become an isolated facet of knowledge accessible only in this unique setting. For example, do the social skills and thought strategies that are developed in such activities as the obstacle wall remain solely isolated to that exact context of getting everyone over the wall, or can they be extrapolated and utilized in other settings such as how groups can be better restructured in corporations to enhance teamwork? Obviously if the reflective moments of the obstacle wall can only pertain to that exact learning environment, then the fundamental value of outdoor education as an effective transformative experience, praxis, must be brought into question. Essentially, this value of outdoor education to the individual is directly related to the ability to *transfer* learned skills and behaviors into other social contexts.

In order to establish the linkage between outdoor education and the everyday life of the individual, the important concept of *metaphor* needs to be included in this discussion about transference. In *The Conscious Use of Metaphor in Outward Bound*, Stephen Bacon describes how facilitation in outdoor education is linked, or transferred, to real-life experiences through a model of metaphor, where the outdoor experience shares elements that exist within the learner's everyday life.

The key factor in determining whether experiences are metaphoric is the degree of isomorphism between the metaphoric situation and the real-life situation. Isomorphic means having the same structure. When all the major elements in one experience are represented by corresponding elements in another experience, and when the overall structure of the two experiences is highly similar, then the two experiences are metaphors for each other. This does not imply that the corresponding elements are literally identical; rather, they must be symbolically identical. (Bacon, 1983: 4)

As such, he argues that by modeling activities in the outdoors experience, individuals are able to develop new skill sets that allow them to re-frame their real-life situations:

Effective generalization essentially requires that the course experiences be highly isomorphic with students' real-life experiences. If they are, and if course activities have provided successful resolutions to formerly unproductive strategies, then there will be positive changes in real life. Isomorphism, new endings to stereotypic strategies, and success experiences are the critical requirements for generalization. (Bacon, 1983: 10)

Thus, by using metaphoric situations, outdoor education allows students a new identity in a similar related experience. This allows for them to re-frame their roles and generate reflective solutions that provide for success. This may be done even when the real-life experience has not been met with success, and thus new pathways to success are generated. Of course, this can raise the question of whether the student needs to be consciously aware of how these metaphors are playing out in these situations in order for successful transference, as will now be discussed.

2.6.1 Dressing the Metaphor

Just as Freire spoke of praxis, outdoor education has the potential to reach beyond the isolated activity to span a much greater social realm. This of course assumes an effective facilitator/educator, as there are no doubt many examples of poorly constructed outdoor education experiences that do not contribute, or transfer, to the everyday life of the student. Therefore, when structuring outdoor experiences, the educator must become a reflective practitioner and look beyond the activity to relate isomorphic elements to the student's lives. To link the isomorphic nature of the two realities, Bacon discusses 'dressing the metaphor' whereby cues and descriptions are used to enhance and bridge the concepts for the learner (Bacon, 1983: 25).

There are three main ways, or approaches, that have been proposed for the structuring of an effective learning environment using outdoor education: 'the mountains speak for themselves' (MST); the Outward Bound Process (OBP); and the Metaphoric Model (MM), which models the work of Bacon as discussed above. The MST approach incorporates the idea that the actual outdoor experience warrants its own educational value, without the direct interpretations of a facilitator/educator. In contrast, OBP facilitation is achieved by a framing of active events in the form of a debrief session. Like OBP, MM uses the debrief but also initially sets the stage for the activity with isomorphic 'dressing of the metaphor'. Research has been conducted in an attempt to determine which method is more effective (Doherty, 1995), and additional elements that go beyond these processes have been proposed (Prochazka, 1995; McKenzie, 2003).

When dealing with the idea of MST, there is the assumption that the only element necessary for a reflective experience is the experience itself. Such a model counteracts

the relationship between action and reflection for which, as previously discussed in Kolb's learning cycle of experiential education, the summary reflective debrief is as critical as the experience itself. In Kolb's model, MST would represent a lower-order stage of cognitive development, one that the individual would ideally work beyond. However, if we assume that reflection is taking place as an internalized process and not simply structured in terms of a group debriefing, this model now challenges the valid role of the instructor. As discussed through the works of Dewey, Shor, Schön, and Freire, the educator has a critical role to guide the students, and thus brings education into the social context. Therefore, even if the MST model is valid experientially for the individual, it is inadequate in the educational process as a whole. Thus, MST helps us differentiate between experiential learning (as internalized reflection and growth) and experiential education (as externalized reflection in a social context providing a critical role for the facilitator/educator). Bacon goes so far as to argue that such a position as MST is not even possible to achieve in any outdoors course:

Instructor cues are the 'dressings' of the metaphors – students respond to them as subtle instructions for approaching each activity. As every behavior of the instructor is a cue, it is impossible to teach an un-dressed, purely natural course. The mountains never speak for themselves, nor do the course activities; they are all mediated by the verbal and nonverbal cues of the instructor. (Bacon, 1983: 25)

Similarly, many view the OBP model as not using a 'pre-dressing' of an isomorphic metaphor. However, let us for a moment consider the possibility that this is simply a misinterpretation of Bacon's work. Although he addressed that "narratives, anecdotes, examples, didactic lectures, and testimonials can be important factors in dressing the Outward Bound metaphors" (Bacon, 1983: 34), he goes on to argue that this does not necessitate an exclusive Metaphoric Model:

There is no doubt that the implicit messages of the course activities can be shaped somewhat by instructor dressing techniques. However, something of whatever is most basic and most fundamental in each activity will come through in spite of the manner in which it is presented. (Bacon, 1983: 51)

Others have noticed this discrepancy and commented on the need to view metaphor development as a process of the learner rather than descriptors derived from the instructor. “With a concept of metaphors as participant’s guiding images, experiential learning can be understood as a process of metaphor change, and the task of experiential trainers or educators consists primarily of facilitating the development of images that generate new potential, or ‘generative metaphors’” (Hovelynck, 1998: 6). This coincides nicely with Shor’s idea that true empowering education must be derived from student generated dialogue and not instructor driven discourse. Therefore, with these considerations, successful facilitation of outdoor education must utilize a Metaphoric Model of teaching in order to become effective at transference to the real-world of the learners. Based on Bacon’s idea that any instructor’s cue becomes a dressing for metaphor, arguably the Metaphoric Model becomes the theory-in-use of outdoor education facilitators even though their espoused theories may be stated as the MST or the OBP models. What is important to remember here, however, is that Bacon argues for the *conscious* use of metaphor, and thus linking experiences to real-life situations does not become merely accidental.

2.6.2 Rites of Passage

If we acknowledge that outdoor education can have the potential to influence the everyday world of its students, then we must consider if there are any practical limitations to this that prevent such a dynamic interchange of realities. Since we have

already addressed how (the potential) isomorphism of outdoor education activities bridge these two realities, the question is now whether or not the everyday world of society has mechanisms that hinder this process. It has been argued that although outdoor education may create transformative experiences for its students, our society does not tacitly accept or acknowledge these events as *rites of passage*, or as an intrinsically character-enhancing opportunity for the individual.

Although several outdoor and youth development programs use the rites of passage as coming-of-age rites with students, the students often return to an environment lacking the formal social mechanisms for maintaining change. In fact, research on the rite of passage use in contemporary outdoor programs has not demonstrated the dramatic, positive results its proponents claim. Still, advocates maintain the rite of passage provides an important solution to society's ills. What a rite of passage can provide is a useful model for teaching and facilitating transformation under specific conditions. A deeper understanding needs to exist for outdoor educators seeking to use rites of passage as a transformational model... The three stage system of social transformation begins when a person becomes ready to make a role change in the community. The initiates move through the following three stages: separation, a stage of transition or liminal phase, and a stage of reincorporation. The rite of passage is a physical and cultural process of role and responsibility change. (Bell, 2003: 42)

It has been noted that although rites of passage in outdoor education typically involve a three stage process of separation, transition, and incorporation, it is often during the reintegration stage that lead to challenges (Beames, 2004). While outdoor education creates a praxis that allows students to re-frame their social roles, this work may be undone when they return to their communities if they resume their previously established roles. Individuals within their community may still treat them the same as before, and this encourages these students to return to familiar behaviors. Take for example at-risk juvenile offenders who have just completed a successfully isomorphic adventure program. These individuals may feel that they have the skills to move beyond their pasts

to become better people, yet when they return to their communities they are still seen as 'nothing but trouble'. Continual exposure to such attitudes easily creates a self-fulfilling prophecy and defeat any positive experience gained through a single outdoors program that could possibly allow for rite of passage transformational model.

Therefore, in this context outdoor education is only truly effective if it can be maintained over a duration of time, extended and integrated throughout an individual's daily life, thus reinforcing the reincorporation stage of this model. This is not to suggest that an individual can not have a single profoundly transformative moment, but rather that such isolation makes its impact on the individual more vulnerable to the ongoing lived experience of that person. Obviously one easy solution to this is to integrate outdoor education into the public school system. But is this really easy to accomplish? A multitude of questions can arise of how, if, where, and when outdoor education can be incorporated into the public school structure. Even greater questions surface of whether this becomes a benefit to the school system or simply an avenue to promote outdoor education initiatives. Having explored the background, theories, and history of experiential and outdoor education, this thesis will now center on and tackle this important topic: the role, and potential need, of outdoor education in schools.

In Chapter Three, I will review critical discussions about public schooling by examining the structure of that institution and the reflective role of the educator, and how these relate and contrast to the field of outdoor education as a means of demonstrating potential compatibility. From this discussion, I will then in Chapter Four examine key elements that may suggest not only a medium for bridging outdoor and experiential education to public schooling, but that outdoor education can contribute to the continued

enhancement of public schooling. Once this potential relation between outdoor education and public schooling has been established, I will then further this discussion by critically examining the context of outdoor education as curriculum (Chapter Five) and as pedagogy (Chapter Six), and what this potential duality means to public schooling.

Chapter 3 – Contextualizing Outdoor Education Programming

3.1 Structural Relations between Outdoor Education and Public Schooling

Having carefully examined the theory of experiential education and its practice within the realm of outdoor education, I will now consider the functionality of how this form of learning can be connected to existing social frameworks. Since it has been established that effective outdoor education requires continued exposure to its learning environment in order to promote the transference of learned skills, social interactions, and cognitive schema (Hatch & McCarthy, 2005; Gass, 1995; Puk, 1999a), one obvious solution would be the integration of outdoor education into public school programming. Yet to make this connection is not straightforward. Though public schools could provide the structural framework to allow for continual exposure to outdoor education, and from our previous discussion it has been demonstrated that experiential and outdoor education would have much to offer the public school, we must now consider if these two educational systems are compatible with one another. In both cases of public schools and outdoor education, each has a particular role for the educator or teacher and also an established overall institutional framework. That is to say, if we wish to consider linking these two systems together we must ask the questions: Are we able to demonstrate that the outdoor educator and the public school teacher could be one and the same, and also can the public school system provide the required infrastructure and theoretical substructure to support and be compatible with an outdoor education program?

In order to advance this discussion, the works of two authors will now be discussed; Michel Foucault and Donald Schön. By examining Foucault's theories on

power structures we can begin to understand similarities and differences between outdoor education and public schooling in terms of the institutional structure and service. Then, by examining Schön's theories on the reflective practitioner we can suggest similarities and differences between the outdoor education instructor and that of the classroom teacher. What I will suggest in this chapter is that this understanding of both the role of the institution and the facilitator will enable us to consider a bridging of outdoor education practice within the scope of public schooling that makes sense for the learner, and as such it can support the idea of compatibility between these two systems.

3.2 Foucault – Discipline and Power

Rather than conduct an overview of the almost three hundred articles, interviews, and books by Foucault (Bernauer & Keenan, 1988: 119), I wish to critically examine one of his more famous theories – the use of discipline as a mechanism for societal control (Foucault, 1975). This will be done in order to demonstrate how his notions of discipline and power can be considered ‘the norm’ for most institutional settings and interactions today, including the public school system, and I will argue, in a different context but similar structure within outdoor and experiential education.

Let us begin where Foucault does with an examination of how he perceives ‘relations of power’. Written in 1975, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* focuses on the ways in which penal institutions manipulate mechanisms, or relationships, of power. However, the book also considered the issue to have wider application to any institutional setting, including the military barracks, hospitals, and schools. Although many take Foucault’s work simply to represent institutional power, for Foucault power does not simply represent something an institution has or wields; he viewed power as a fundamental and unavoidable part of any social interaction.

I hardly ever use the word ‘power’ and if I do sometimes, it is always a short cut to the expression I always use: the relationships of power. But there are ready made patterns: when one speaks of ‘power’, people think immediately of a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master facing the slave, and so on. That is not at all what I think when I speak of ‘relationships of power’. I mean that in human relations, whatever they are – whether it be a question of communicating verbally, as we are doing right now, or a question of a love relationship, an institutional or economic relationship – power is always present: I mean the relationships in which one wishes to direct the behavior of another. (Foucault, 1988: 11)

This is the way in which Foucault frames social interactions: a power dynamic where one attempts to direct or control the behavior of another. An interesting point derived from this is that Foucault sees power relations as variable and unfixed, yet based on a current situation. For example, a police officer who pulls over an individual for speeding has a strong degree of power and control over that person, but if that officer was to find out later that the speeder was his bank manager where he/she was attempting to get a loan then the power relations would be reversed. This brings forward an important point that needs to be understood: Foucault saw power as a mechanism that was independent and uncontrollable by any individual. The police officer as an individual holds no power, rather the *office* of the police force exerts the power.

For Foucault, there are no strategists to be identified behind the strategies – no one occupies the place of the Other. Nevertheless, it is in the name of the Other that identities are formed; by questioning the provenance of the forces that control an individual's life, Foucault calls into question the accepted patterns of individualization. (Racevskis, 1988: 31)

Regardless of the context or individuals involved, Foucault believed that power is always present in any relationship; therefore the key now is to understand how this power can be properly characterized.

3.2.1 The Docile Body

From this discussion, Foucault derived a second point when considering power relations: the 'docile body'. In order to have a relationship of power (or any relationship according to Foucault's ideas), a power dynamic must exist in which one individual exerts his/her influence over another in an attempt to modify the other's behavior. The success of this interaction requires that the other person be docile, i.e. obedient and

useful. In order to maintain this power structure then some measure of discipline is needed. The effect of discipline is to increase the usefulness of bodies, i.e. the ability of that individual to be productive, usually understood from the position of the influencer, while decreasing the ability of these bodies to resist. Power wants things to work with minimal challenge:

Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (Foucault, 1975: 138)

Although Foucault's work has gained popularity through its exposure of institutional disciplinary mechanisms for control and the misuse of power, we must consider both points to this argument: he believes that a decrease in the ability to resist also coincides with an increase in productivity or utility. This argument has profound repercussions on the means that individuals and institutions can, and do, use power in order to subjugate docile bodies for their own agendas and designs. However, it is important to note here that this agenda may not always be constructed as a negative. As such, Foucault saw that although relations of power had the potential to be corrupted, discipline and power were not inherently bad. This corruption can be seen in terms of a disciplinary power maintaining docility in the masses but not increasing their utility, a benefit to the individual. As such, he continues to explain that "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1975: 136). Upon closer examination, we understand that Foucault establishes a system that does two things simultaneously: *increasing utility while decreasing the ability to resist*, but ideally for the

good of the masses. Indeed, Foucault proposes that, concurrent with the use of power to increase utility and docility, there can be an accompanying sense that this will benefit those involved.

Let us take for example a ‘typical’ public school classroom. Here mechanisms of discipline obviously exist, and can be seen in many examples from the use of detentions to simply raising one’s hand to answer or ask questions. In these cases, students are responding to the rules and regulations of the school system and seen as good, in terms of educating the student and contributing to the development of the community. Although it is accepted that the rules may be derived solely by the teacher, it is not the teacher who holds the power but rather the *office* of the teacher. In Foucault’s argument, we must consider that the increase in docility means an increase in utility, and in the case of the public school system this would be determined by the effectiveness of classroom rules to increase information retention of the children. What becomes important is how the teacher utilizes the docile bodies of the students: if the teacher uses discipline in order to maintain a ‘controlled’ classroom so they can teach, this would be considered a positive use of power by Foucault; but if the teacher uses discipline measures for their own benefit, such as keeping students quiet to make their day go by easier, than he would see this as an abuse of power.

Let us also take something that has been the object of criticism, often justified: the pedagogical institution. I don’t see where evil is in the practice of someone who, in a given game of truth, knowing more than another, tells him what he must do, teaches him, transmits knowledge to him, communicates skills to him. The problem is rather to know how you are to avoid in these practices – where power cannot not play and where it is not evil in itself – the effects of domination which will make a child subject to the arbitrary and useless authority of a teacher, or put a student under the power of an abusive authoritarian professor, and so forth. (Foucault, 1988: 18)

From this argument, it is not enough to simply assume that power structures do not exist in the realm of outdoor education. Rather, what now becomes important is to understand how power can and does play out within this field. By doing so, the outdoor educator may have a better chance of not falling into the misuse of power that frequently they feel they are opposing in the public school realm. Therefore, we will now consider how Foucault perceives the formation of relations of power, and how this can apply to both the public school and outdoor education.

3.2.2 Means of Correct Training

Having examined Foucault's ideas of power and its relation to discipline, we should now consider the mechanisms he proposed that allowed for the generation of a docile body. These are what he referred to as 'means of correct training' (Foucault, 1975: 170) or the ways in which institutions, and society as a whole, conditions the masses to accept disciplinary power:

Foucault has to be concerned with both power and subject since the theoretical importance of any one of the two elements is directly related to the existence of the other. What Foucault's analyses propose is an understanding of the process through which subjects are formed. Thus, a subject is that which is amenable to the effects of power: it is the handle by which power takes a hold of/on individual human beings. (Racevskis, 1988: 23)

Thus, the 'means of correct training' can be considered an educational framework used to construct docile bodies. Foucault separated these means of correct training, as a form of disciplinary control, into three key elements or ideas: (1) Hierarchical Observation, (2) Normalizing Judgments, and (3) The Examination, and felt that the best system of control would incorporate all three elements. I will now briefly explain how each contributes to a

Foucaultian notion of disciplinary control, and how each may be illustrated by examples from our public schools. Furthermore, I shall argue, each component exists in the theory and practice of outdoor education, though they may manifest themselves in very different ways.

1. **Hierarchical Observation** – Foucault recognized that an institution must evolve a system in order to maintain proper discipline to increase the utility of a docile body while decreasing the ability to resist. This system has the basic idea that one individual in power can, and does, have the ability to simultaneously observe multiple subjugated bodies. In Foucault’s words, hierarchical observation “coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power” (Foucault, 1975: 170). He uses the example of the physical arrangement of a military camp, where tents were arranged in rows in front of the leading captain’s tent, to illustrate the implementation of a method of constant surveillance. Of course, this example is analogous to the modern classroom, where the teacher’s desk is front-and-center facing rigid rows of student desks. Although not every classroom resembles this traditional form, it is still common, and other designs, circles or learning hubs, don’t necessarily impair the potential for continual surveillance.

From this, Foucault envisioned that “the perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly” (Foucault, 1975: 173). However, this goes beyond the classroom itself and suggests a mechanism of observational units embedded within each lower set. The current public education system structure is an excellent example of such *hierarchical* observation: starting with a

province's Department of Education, headed by the Minister of Education, who oversees many subordinates who in turn oversee and observe the school boards, each in turn observing the schools (principals) within their jurisdiction, which in turn observe the teachers, who finally observe each individual student. While the Minister of Education does not directly oversee the education of every student, hierarchical observation is a means of correct training that ensures the maintenance of the power dynamic for the docile body to increase utility.

Although outdoor education has a governing hierarchy, it may be argued that at the level of the classes, it offers a distinct contrast. Outdoor education does not typically have the architectural confines of institutional schooling, and thus might arguably not provide the teacher with the same opportunity for constant observation. However, there is typically in outdoor education a serious reliance on the circle as meeting place or a conscious setting of boundaries within which participants may move both physically and emotionally. There is also a much reduced student-teacher ratio and closer, more intensive interaction between teacher and student to ensure, it is argued, the safety, physical and emotional, of the students. Potentially this, like the open school design, might be offered as an example of Foucault's relations of power not necessarily always being considered negative and, indeed, exerting power in this way in order for students to have a successful and safe experience is arguably a priority in both settings. Nevertheless, outdoor educators need to recognize that they are involved in a relationship of power which can be abused both thoughtfully and in ignorance and that it has the potential to cause harm. It is not enough to assume that simply because the trappings and

structures of the school system are not present that discipline and control are no longer being exercised.

2. **Normalizing Judgments** – It may be considered that Foucault’s idea of normalizing judgments to be of greater importance to his means of correct training. His essential argument is that, in order to maintain disciplinary control, institutions must create a system that not only individualizes bodies, but, in doing so, judges them in terms of acceptable behavior. “What is specific to disciplinary penalty is non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it. The whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable” (Foucault, 1975: 178). Foucault then goes on to describe how “disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially corrective” (Foucault, 1975: 179). What Foucault suggests here is a process whereby norms are established and then learned by individuals. These norms also become the background against which the individual is judged. In the context of modern schooling, the idea of normalizing judgment creates observed deficiencies in students: those that fall behind their classmates in terms of ability to comprehend their academic studies are those who are judged against a particular set of norms and found to be lacking. In this context, Foucault sees discipline as part of the double element of gratification-punishment, and as a result, “it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards” (Foucault, 1975: 181). Here one can see the example of the child who finishes his/her schoolwork early and is rewarded with ‘free time’ in the class, while those that continue to struggle must remain engaged in their work until it is completed (ironically using schoolwork as punishment). In summary,

Foucault sees the art of punishing as “the perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*” (Foucault, 1975: 183). Here we should note that language of standards and expectations are part and parcel of this process. When outdoor educators gather to ‘standardize’ the field or create curriculum that ‘meets expectations’ these discussions and decisions are creating norms against which all have the potential to be judged.

With regard to punishment, there appears to be a significant difference between pedagogy in outdoor education and that of traditional schooling, and even from Foucault’s view of its normalizing influence on the individual. Success or failure in outdoor programs is often seen as a function of the team that incorporates individual skills within the collective work of the group. For example, in the commonly used challenge of the obstacle wall, success can only be defined in terms of the contribution and participation of the entire group. No one person would be considered solely responsible for the success of the group, so no individual may be singled out for blame or praise. However, perhaps the idea of group itself becomes a mechanism for controlling the individual. The notion of norming is built into the very way group formation is described in outdoor education. Questions of how success or failure is to be understood, of what might be done differently next time, and of whether all members feel empowered or engaged, involved or heard are all part of the group normalizing process.

For example, in any debriefing portion of an activity, when instructors provide students a moment to reflect on their experience, there are a thousand subtle clues indicating underlying normalizing judgments: the kinds of questions asked, the nod of the

head or the ubiquitous verbal support when a student describes a ‘correct’ action or insight, and the quick move over a troublesome, tangential suggestion. Acceptable behavior in an outdoor program may be different from that in the public school classroom, but the mechanisms of control do not vary. The success of the high-functioning group may be attributed to the acceptance by each of its members of norms established by the group (and, perhaps, the program) and of fear of the consequences of non-conformity, which in an outdoor setting might be seen by the participant to be quite dire. By focusing on the group, rather than the individual, outdoor education has shifted the emphasis of normalizing judgment but not abandoned it. If normalizing judgments are, indeed, an integral part of outdoor education then what is important is that instructors be aware of this and ask themselves whether those judgments are being used to promote the learning goals, or whether they may unwittingly reflect norms extraneous to the purpose of the program and detrimental to the students’ experience. Are we ‘fixing’ mistakes present in traditional schooling or are we creating new ones?

3. **The Examination** – The final element of Foucault’s means of correct training is the examination. It is a means of confirming the individuality, and visibility, of the docile body and, in the process, establishes a normalizing judgment on his/her actions or abilities. Foucault noted how the examination exercised power by creating a field of documentation that could be used for comparison, and thus could be used to grade one’s rank within a group. This results in the creation of winners and losers within an institution, and that to have one you must have the other, thus placing individuals on the unacceptable extreme, which Foucault called “the external frontier of the abnormal”

(Foucault, 1975: 183). “The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment” (Foucault, 1975: 184) and therefore “the examination in the school was a constant exchanger of knowledge; it guaranteed the movement of knowledge from the teacher to the pupil, but it extracted from a pupil a knowledge destined and reserved for the teacher” (Foucault, 1975: 187). The impact of the concept of the examination as power control and means of correct training can easily be seen in the use of final and provincial exams. Since students never see their corrected provincial exams for the purpose of discovering omissions in their knowledge, this type of exam has the one function of documenting the student’s position within the school system through both observation and normalizing judgment. This creates the docile body through pressures to ‘measure up’ to their peers and through the apprehension that the exams are useful to unknown observers.

In outdoor education the instructional design is very different. Outdoor education embraces the theory of experiential education, and although presented in various ways, the theory goes through typical stages of learning: action, reflection, abstraction, and application (Itin, 1999). Students engage in activities, in order to gain experience, prior to the critical reflection stage of their learning where the greatest contribution to their understanding occurs. For example, in a typical wilderness first aid course, students are given a scenario of providing care to a simulated patient. Then the instructor gathers the students together for the de-briefing session when critical aspects of procedure and learning are discussed in terms of their newly acquired experiences, thus reinforcing content knowledge. It is at this stage that students internalize the new information and, thinking about it, make it their own. In this educational experience the examination – in

our example, whether the patient lives or dies – occurs at the initial action stage. Because of this reversal of the usual sequence of teaching followed by testing, outdoor education appears to avert Foucault’s critique of examinations.

However, we might ask ourselves whether, given the relationship of power that Foucault describes, the examination might not creep into experiential outdoor programs. Since, in our approach to the learning process, action precedes reflection, we need to ask ourselves what happens if, at the reflection stage, students appear not to be learning or to be getting things wrong. If the instructor then tries to steer the reflective process, the question immediately arises as to whether the normalizing process is at work, and whether individual creativity is being sacrificed on the altar of ‘best practice’. This form of control might be more insidious than that practiced in the classroom situation with standardized examinations.

In our discussion of Foucault’s three principal means of correct training, I have argued that, though perhaps different in the way they are used, they do occur in outdoor education, and this poses a difficult question. If one takes the view that Foucault’s notion of docile bodies should always be perceived negatively, then this would be a potential source of consternation for outdoor education, as it is typically viewed by those in the field, as an emancipating and enlightening experience for students. There appears to be an educational paradox at play here, can one really support the process of emancipation through creation of docile bodies and the use of discipline and control? Yet Foucault’s fundamental argument is that the effect of discipline is to increase the usefulness of bodies while decreasing the ability of these bodies to resist. Thus, if an institution had less disciplinary control over its individuals, Foucault would argue that there would be a

corresponding decrease in utility; in the case of teaching this utility is in the form of student learning. The corollary response to the paradox above might then claim; if the goal is to teach/support emancipation and that is something that can be learned then why not maximize docility in order to succeed? We can certainly imagine examples where students are given free reign to pursue whatever activities they wish or to engage in reflection or not as the case may be, in short, a situation with limited docility, where no learning occurs. Without the direction and structure provided by an instructor, there is the potential for students to engage in activities with which they are already familiar, and reflection is neglected, thus limiting learning potential. However, outdoor experiential education believes itself to be an effective means of promoting learning, thus suggesting, if Foucault is to be believed, that mechanisms of disciplinary control do, yet in a particular form, underlie its practice.

3.2.3 Institutional Frameworks and the Panopticon

Now that we have examined how Foucault perceives the functioning of discipline and power, I will briefly describe how he views institutions maximizing this potential. Foucault recognized that the structure of Bentham's architectural Panopticon embodies the principle in which discipline and control can be intensified in a person based on their institutional environment (Foucault, 1975: 200). As such, he used this model to describe five key characteristics that enhanced the use of power: 1) constant surveillance, which creates 2) an internalization of discipline that 3) reduces the requirement for punishment and 4) creates a productivity increase, through 5) an automatic system. What is important to take from Foucault's use of the Panopticon framework is that if power and discipline

are used effectively, then individuals will internalize and self-perpetuate the system of control.

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault, 1975: 202)

Therefore, Foucault saw the major effect of the Panopticon “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1975: 201). A concrete, and somewhat intriguing example for our purposes here example is that of a school built during the height of the last wave of community education design innovation. The school is built in pods around a central hub, the library, with the pods only separated by walls of glass. This open concept represents the extension of progressive educational ideas into school architecture, and yet, if one stands at the door to the principal’s office, one can see into every nook and cranny of the entire school; supervision, or constant observation, is built into the fabric of the structure.

Although Foucault recognized that, historically, discipline was used to subjugate the physical body of an individual, his fundamental premise is that our society has transitioned from the idea of imprisonment for the body to that of the mind. From this, he derived his view on relationships of power. Foucault believed that power and discipline could not be separated by any societal interaction, and that we have accepted that this is how society operates. Not only are we imprisoned by “systems of thoughts and practice”, but we become so blind to them that we have become our own jailers.

The single experience which was always at the source of [Foucault’s] thought was the reality of imprisonment, the incarceration of human

beings within modern systems of thought and practice which had become so intimately a part of them that they no longer experienced these systems as a series of confinements but embraced them as the very structure of being human. (Bernauer, 1988: 45)

However, if we are to question how power and discipline are used, we must then consider how we frame our interpersonal interactions and relationships. This is of particular importance for outdoor education that attempts to bring learners into a novel environment in order to enhance their cognitive and social interactions. Thus the ultimate question in this discussion becomes: How do outdoor educators actively or unconsciously develop power structures into their outdoor programming, and how readily do students accept and assimilate these structures?

As discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, when students engage in outdoor education there is a fundamental notion that they are placed in a *physically and socially unfamiliar environment*, and this modifies their behavior and learning potential (Priest & Gass, 2005: 20). As students prepare to enter the unknown, be it kayaking, a new group, or a solo site, a degree of anxiety is generated. This risky situation and the associated anxiety has been discussed in great detail (Priest & Baillie, 1987), and, as was also outlined in Chapter Two, what is important is to minimize the actual risk while maintaining the anxiety (the perceived risk) in order to obtain peak learning performance, or to be in a state of flow. Therefore, regardless of how safe an activity may be, students feel anxiety whether about their ability to perform, peer judgment, or even their personal safety. It appears then that, in Foucault's terms, the wilderness setting and the unfamiliar challenges it presents are a form of discipline, and that the possibility of some shameful misfortune or of a physical accident may well occur as a form of punishment, presumably to be avoided if possible. Just as society has social and cultural rules defining and setting

limits to behaviour, so does the wilderness environment. If one does not respect the forces of nature and takes risks, then one faces the consequences.

This restriction of activity resulting from the apprehension of risk is related to Foucault's ideas of disciplinary measures, as the following quotation shows.

Discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space... Discipline sometimes requires *enclosure*... It does this first of all in the principle of elementary location or partitioning. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual. ... Even if the compartments it assigns become purely ideal, the disciplinary space is always, basically, cellular (Foucault, 1975: 141).

In programs of outdoor education it is the natural environment that potentially establishes the 'cell walls'; the boundaries within which an individual can operate without suffering punishment. The solo site is a clear example of a natural, physical, and we could argue, mental cell. Of course, students involved in outdoor education often test these boundaries, and this may be encouraged in order for them to explore their true potential. So, in addition to the natural limits, educators will impose further boundaries or rules. This will often be done for reasons of safety, but the instructor may deliberately build risks into the program in order to heighten the learning experience, and this follows very closely Foucault's claim that utility (learning) increases when the ability to resist decreases, that is, in this case, when the risk, perceived or actual, of penalty rises. It might be mentioned in passing that students play a much larger role in the setting of limits than we tend to give them credit for. Maximal utility occurs, according to Foucault, when the prisoner (the student) is not, at first, aware of natural or personal limits but, by the end, reaches a point where he or she is able to take responsibility for him- or herself, becoming, as it were, their own jailer. At this point, students may no longer feel that the

outdoor educator is trying to punish or control them, but is, rather, the means to a safe adventure.

3.2.4 Foucault and Outdoor Education

The effect of discipline is to increase the usefulness of bodies (in terms of education, the understanding of the learner) while decreasing the ability of these bodies to resist through the use of limits and controls. Though the mechanisms of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the examination may be different in outdoor education they, nevertheless, still pertain. For example, discipline becoming the use of and response to risk may be a different mechanism than typically is incorporated in a public school, but it nevertheless fulfills the same purpose. The outdoor educator can now allot to students roles, responsibilities and functions far more easily than can the traditional classroom teacher. Handing out packs and paddles doesn't meet the same resistance as finding the student willing to pass out new textbooks. The willingness (docility) increases to such a degree that the outdoor educator can easily establish roles in a team for each individual to fill, such as taking up the rear of a hiking group, maintaining canoe counts on the water, or being a spotter in rock-climbing. The students have the sense that they are gaining power, becoming emancipated, but they are also assimilating the disciplinary structure, participating in the process of observation and control. Foucault states that whenever an instructor assigns duties or tasks to particular members of a group, there is an automatic, implicit or explicit, structuring of the "unit".

The unit is, therefore, neither the territory (unit of domination), nor the place (unit of residence), but the *rank*: the place one occupies in a classification...Discipline is an art of rank, a technique for the transformation of arrangements. It individualizes bodies by a location that

does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations. (Foucault, 1975: 145)

While the outdoor educator might believe that he or she has given responsibility and freedom to the students under their care, a belief which may be shared by the students, this does not negate the fact that disciplinary measures underlie the program. The learning environment is designed by the instructor to maximize perceived risk, and therefore establishing roles becomes a matter of *tactics*. “Tactics, the art of constructing, with located bodies, coded activities and trained aptitudes, mechanisms in which the product of various forces is increased by their calculated combination are no doubt the highest form of disciplinary practice” (Foucault, 1975: 167).

Outdoor education is perceived to be highly successful in terms of the increasing responsibility and autonomy assumed by its students. Ironically, this suggests, according to Foucault’s correlation of increased learning with increased docility that students in outdoor education programs are more docile than others, those in the regular school system for instance and, if more docile, then might they not be less emancipated? But let us recall that Foucault also states that the use of discipline to promote learning is not necessarily a bad thing, and the docility of the students may be less a fear of punishment than a willingness to participate in an adventurous, if somewhat scary, experience; in this we might argue they are willing their own docility from a place of freedom.

However, an important point to this argument now arises. I would suggest that typically outdoor instructors develop programs that model or focus on elements or situations in the outdoors that they themselves have felt to be transformative. This sense of change within themselves has prompted them to share this experience with others. Yet in doing so they automatically transform the experience; as Foucault argues that no

relation is without a power structure. For example, an instructor may be impressed with a site so much and felt how it has transformed their outlook on the wilderness and society that they develop a program to expose students to a similar 'view'. But in doing so, expectations of a learning moment arise; the outdoor instructor expects students to 'get something' out of the experience, and will guide the activity in such a way as to produce this result. Although the end result can be a wonderful and effective program, it must be seen that any designed learning program adds an element of control that shifts it away from a truly emancipatory experience.

Therefore, contrary to the common understated belief in the field that outdoor education does not reflect the hierarchical structures of the mainstream society, I have proposed in this chapter that the relationship of power that prevails in public education is very much a part of outdoor, experiential programs. Though its application may differ from that in the public school system, it forms an integral part of the pedagogy. There is close supervision of students by their instructor; risk, inherent in nature and added to by the instructor, imposes discipline and even the threat of punishment; and, though there is no examination per se, judgment by instructor and by peers makes itself felt.

In view of this we should ask ourselves whether outdoor educators are justified in making use of these means of control, these common levers of power, if they appear to contradict the very goals that they set out for their programs. It is at best inconsistent to claim that the purpose of experiential outdoor education is to promote autonomy and critical-thinking in its students when the instructors employ the methodology and structures of the dominant society. Can outdoor education really be seen to be a force for emancipation, when the tactics used are the same as those that serve the social hierarchy?

A tentative answer to this challenge may lie in how those means of control and discipline are used. As I have noted, Foucault did not think that the use of discipline to create docile bodies for the purpose of utility was necessarily bad. Indeed, how else can we perceive the process of teaching and learning if not by means of an unequal relationship, i.e. that of teacher and student or parent and child. The key to the problem is to be found in the consciousness that the instructor brings to bear. He or she must be conscious of the nature of the relationship that exists with the students, and that this relationship is necessarily unequal and also temporary. The goal is to re-establish equality, to lead the students to the point where they are autonomous, where they are no longer docile bodies.

To elaborate this important point let us take the example of a master craftsman and their apprentice. This relationship of power can be very close and rigid, where the apprentice does not deviate at all from the craftsman's techniques and procedures. Yet this relation is transitory; eventually the apprentice will become the master craftsman. If the original master had taught the apprentice in order to control simply for the extra help than this might be considered an abuse of power, but if they taught with the goal of creating the next generation within their field then this could be argued to be the good in the use of power and discipline. Likewise, as educators we must consider that our use of outdoor experiential programs are not themselves emancipatory but rather allow for the opportunity for the student to develop a perspective on future freedom and transformative goals. Our end goal as educators is empowerment, but through a Foucaultian argument we can only do this by modeling a structure of power in order to bring students to the position of choice. That is to say, the outdoor program may follow all these rules, which we have argued are needed, in order to bring students to the point of empowerment, but

are not necessarily empowering in their acts themselves; could not outdoor education be the great example of how the docile body is used in a positive way to increase utility?

3.3 Schön – The Reflective Practitioner

Through the works of Foucault, I have suggested a correlation, or bridging, between experiential outdoor education and public schooling in terms of their use of institutional structuring. This provides the argument that outdoor education should be compatible with public schooling in terms of program control and administrative mechanisms. Now we should also consider a second important factor when dealing with these two educational forms: the role of the educator. If we can find similarities between the outdoor education facilitator and the public school teacher then it could be argued that these roles are compatible and potentially interchangeable (provided an individual has the base skills required in both areas). To demonstrate this I would like to draw on the work of Donald Schön and his view of the reflective practitioner as one such model that can help enlighten our understanding of such potential compatibility between educational roles.

In order to potentially bridge the role of outdoor education facilitator and school teacher, first we need to understand how Schön initially frames professional practice. A driving force for Schön's research stemmed from his observation of how professionals related their practice to theories of knowledge. He observed that often in order to justify their practice, individuals for the most part relied on what he called 'technical rationality'.

According to the model of Technical Rationality – the view of professional knowledge which has most powerfully shaped both our thinking about the professions and the institutional relations of research, education, and practice – professional activity consists in instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique. (Schön, 1983: 21)

He perceived that this derived from the use of quantitative results through scientific technique that allowed one to ‘prove’ a particular stance, thus supporting the belief that the method was seen as rigorous. A good example of how technical rationality can play out in the school system can be seen when new programs are introduced. Often the first benchmark for determining the success of these new programs is in the correlated results of possible increases in standardized test scores or the reduction of drop-out rate percentages. Although these indicators have value in both research and practice, Schön wondered if there was something perhaps more influential that could underlie professional practice than just adhering to technical rationality.

3.3.1 Artistry and Learning Loops

Donald Schön believed that another kind of practice, which he called *artistry*, exists and has an important place in how professionals interact with their chosen fields and clientele.

I have used the term *professional artistry* to refer to the kinds of competence practitioners sometimes display in unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice. Note, however, that their artistry is a high-powered, esoteric variant of the more familiar sorts of competence all of us exhibit every day in countless acts of recognition, judgment, and skillful performance. What is striking about both kinds of competence is that they do not depend on our being able to describe what we know how to do or even to entertain in conscious thought the knowledge our actions reveal. (Schön, 1987: 22)

Schön had considered the role of artistry by reflecting on the intermediate zones of professional practice that were not easily explained by the epistemology of technical rationality (as thought of as a frame of mind or set of expectations). In this argument, he considered artistry to be an important method of dealing with *tacit knowledge* (Argyris &

Schön, 1974: 10), in which a skill is demonstrated without being able to explicitly explain the actions or verbalize the procedures used. We often see this in everyday practice within the school classroom where a teacher has set up an approach and pedagogy based on 'what works'; their own tacit knowledge and use of professional artistry. Frequently, researchers may even try to understand this performance through the use of technical rationality by quantitative analysis of the teacher's work using the scientific method. However, for the teacher it did not matter that they could not consciously comprehend why they taught the way they did, for the use of tacit knowledge allowed them to become successful in their chosen practice.

Thus, Schön considered the need for professionals to consider the use of artistry to compliment, or even supersede, the mind set of technical rationality in order to think through everyday ambiguous or complex situations when reliance on pre-established methods may prove limiting.

From the perspective of technical rationality, professional practice is a process of problem *solving*. Problems of choice or decision are solved through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to established ends. But with this emphasis on problem solving, we ignore problem *setting*, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. In real-world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain. (Schön, 1983: 40)

In order to understand how individuals cope with such situations in professional practice, a distinction must be made between single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning relies more on technical rationality for a person to construct problems and solutions within the frame of existing facts and procedures. However, in double-loop learning the individual actually re-frames the existing situation and redefines

the problem in order to overcome the challenge rather than working in the confines of the established criteria. For example, in the automotive industry two ways could be developed in order to deal with the rising cost of gasoline: either use a single-loop learning method and try to assemble a more efficient engine, or use double-loop learning and question if this is even the best means of transportation and look towards alternate and more sustainable options.

In single-loop learning, we learn to maintain the field of constancy by learning to design actions that satisfy existing governing variables. In double-loop learning, we learn to change the field of constancy itself. Double-loop learning does not supercede single-loop learning. Single-loop learning enables us to avoid continuing investment in the highly predictable activities that make up the bulk of our lives; but the theory-builder becomes a prisoner of his programs if he allows them to continue unexamined indefinitely. Double-loop learning changes the governing variables (the “settings”) of one’s programs and causes ripples of change to fan out over one’s whole system of theories-in-use. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 19)

It is important to note here that Schön did not always see the need to engage in double-loop learning, particularly if the activity in question was a rote task or problem. For example, the day-to-day operation of a classroom requires a teacher to maintain a class list of students present. A simple problem of how to record attendance represents a single-loop learning moment, and in this case is justified based on the task. However, more complicated cases may involve double-loop learning. For example, a teacher may have a student that does not understand the material presented to him or her. Regardless of the techniques used nothing seems to allow for the transfer of knowledge to this student. Now at this point there could be value in double-loop learning and questioning outside the confines of the problem; maybe the student is too young to learn such material, and now the question becomes a matter of whether or not the material is

appropriate for learning rather than the focus on the student's 'ability' to learn the material. Thus Schön considered the use of double-loop learning to be a skill that is paramount for moving away from technical rationality in practice towards professional artistry.

3.3.2 Modeling Group Dynamics

Schön's work on artistry and technical rationality, and the issues derived from them, were also considered in terms of their effects on group dynamics. Chris Argyris, a frequent collaborator, and Schön were motivated to understand the ways in which individuals in a given profession, as the sole experts in their field, joined together to form self-regulating bodies to govern the working relationships between professionals and their clients. In order to overcome the novel challenges presented in professional practice, Schön and Argyris examined the group dynamics of individuals working together and proposed two distinct models of professional practice, which they simply referred to as model I and model II. I will briefly outline the main assumptions and implications of both methods, and go on to explain Schön's theories of reflection-in-action (as introduced in the first chapter of this thesis) and the resulting reflective practitioner as a means of moving from model I to model II ways of practice.

Model I (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 63)

The key characteristic of interactions in model I behavior is that they are defensive in nature. The authors argued that model I behavior is the predominate mechanism used in group dynamics in our society. As such, the characteristics of this

method may appear, or can be used, as a general template for group decision making processes.

When a group of professionals, or arguably any group for that matter, is presented with a problem, model I behavior predicts certain responses to such a challenge. First, the group explicitly attempts to define goals and then proceeds to achieve them. This stance fundamentally implies that there is a definable problem that can be fixed in a sound procedural way. In order to do this, group members hold strongly to the idea of being rational, or finding logical conclusions or solutions. As such, there is little room for intuition, and emotional considerations are deemed counter-productive. However, the group is likely to try to minimize the generation or expression of negative feelings as these are perceived as detrimental to the model of technical rationality. Finally, after establishing the goals for the problem, individuals become very concerned with maximizing winning and minimizing losing, even to the point that “once they decided on their goals, changing them would be a sign of weakness” (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 67). Note that it could be argued that brain-storming sessions are an attempt to break out of technical rationality and its reliance on logical conclusions. This may be considered a bridging technique between model I and model II (described in the next section), but its success can be in question. If individuals hold true to the model I method of group dynamics than any brain-storming or consideration of alternate views is superficial at best since this would be counter productive to them establishing individualized ‘winning’ roles within a group.

From these governing variables, individuals within the group attempt to situate themselves in the most successful position to meet the particular goals. These behaviors,

although generalized, are considered to be the fundamental principles that guide individuals using model I behavior. First, individuals attempt to design and manage the situation unilaterally. Here, “individuals tended to plan actions secretly. They attempted to persuade and cajole others to agree with their definitions of a situation” (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 70). As such, individuals are likely to claim ownership and control the task, while being ‘the guardian of the definition and execution of the task.’ In doing so, individuals attempt to unilaterally protect themselves and others. As such, “withholding valuable and important information, telling white lies, suppressing feelings, and offering false sympathy are examples of this strategy. The speaker assumes that the other person needs to be protected and that this strategy should be kept secret; neither assumption is tested” (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 71). For example, if a teaching staff gets together to talk about ‘best practices’ for their school, often teachers will bring up activities and procedures that they use within their own classroom. But in doing so, often they try to defend and establish that their method is the ‘best’ for the school, yet at the same time attempting to keep their techniques and details secret enough so that they maintain ownership ‘rights’ over such a procedure. Here there is an intimate connection made between the value of the individual and the value of the contribution or idea. To defend an idea is to defend one’s position within a group.

Of course, consequences result from such model I behavior. Typically, the individuals are seen as inconsistent in action, competitive, controlling, and manipulative. They are seen as defensive in both their interpersonal and group relationships, and as such do not typically offer help to others. As a result, defensive norms quickly surface, including mistrust, withholding of feelings, conformity, emphasis on diplomacy, and

rivalry. As such, this generates a situation which has low freedom of choice, low internal commitment or personalization of the task, and low degrees of risk taking.

Even more importantly, there are learning potential consequences of model I behavior because such group situations are self-sealing, where the problem under consideration becomes the only possible frame of reference. As a result, single-loop learning is the predominate method used in model I situations. Also, little testing of individual theories is done publicly due to the risk associated with stating possible fallible opinions. In the previous example of a teaching staff trying to determine ‘best practices’, even though a teacher may bring forward their idea, and rationally state why it is the best, there would be little desire to actual test this out against others as this might uncover problems (which they view as weaknesses) in their approach. Thus consideration of the idea becomes biased in an attempt to hold true to that very idea.

From examining such group dynamics, Schön proposes that model I behavior explicitly makes four main assumptions about all social interactions: 1) it is a win/lose world; 2) other people behave according to assumptions of model I; 3) rational behavior is most effective; and 4) public testing of assumptions is intolerably risky (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 79). All these characteristics, strategies, and consequences are in sharp contrast to what the authors propose for a model II behavior method. As Schön suggests that model I is the predominate model for most group interactions in society, we must, at the very least, consider the potential of its presence in not only public education, but also in experiential and outdoor education.

Model II (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 85)

The most significant property of model II is its ability not to be self-sealing, its tendency to permit progressively more effective testing of assumptions and progressively greater learning about one's effectiveness. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 86)

When model II behavior is used in group settings, a significant shift occurs in how individuals define the governing variables used for such an interaction. First, it is observed that an emphasis is placed on maximizing valid information, and thus goals are less important as ends than the information is as means. From this, two points also arise: the maximizing of free and informed choice, and the maximizing of internal commitment to decisions made. What this suggests is that individuals take personal responsibility for group action.

Internal commitment means that the individual feels that he, himself, is responsible for his choices. The individual is committed to an action because it is intrinsically satisfying – not, as in the case of model I, committed because someone is rewarding or penalizing him to be committed. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 89)

Because of these considerations, the way in which individuals manage group activity sharply contrasts with model I behaviors. In model II, designing and managing the situation becomes a bilateral task where each individual has the potential to feel essential to the group process of the activity. As such, defensive action is reduced and now individuals become jointly responsible for maintaining emotional protection of self and others. From this lack of defensiveness, individuals now speak in directly observable categories because there is no longer the fear of needing to defend one's position against attack. As all input can be weighed for the value of meaning, and not its personal source, "this creates a predisposition toward inquiry and learning" (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 91). I would argue that model II behavior can be considered a method whereby individuals

release personal ownership of knowledge positions and instead use their resources in combination with other members of the group. This results in the ability for each individual to critically re-examine their predispositions in light of new insight provided from the group. In other words, a distinction is made between the value of the individual and the weighted value of possible information brought to the group by this person. Of course, this transition from model I to model II is more of a mindset than a procedural task. It involves 'letting go' of personal ownership of ideas in order to mitigate the defensiveness that model I produces. In a world dominated by model I behavior, as Schön argues, such a transition is challenging at best.

However, it can be observed that natural consequences result to alter the relations between members of the group. Since each individual is less defensive in model II, roles can be defined such as facilitator, collaborator, or choice creator. Next, the minimally defensive individual role allows for interpersonal relations and group dynamics that are also not driven by competitive or defensive stances. Finally, this results in learning-oriented norms such as trust, individuality, and open confrontation on difficult issues.

If individuals behave according to the governing variables and action strategies of model II, others will tend to see them as minimally defensive and open to learning, as facilitators, collaborators, and people who hold their theories-in-use firmly (because they are internally committed to them) but are equally committed to having them confronted and tested. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 91)

What results, Schön argues, are three important points for model II behavior: 1) disconfirmable processes, or methods that are in place that allow for knowledge to be confronted and tested; 2) double-loop learning becomes the dominate method; and 3) testing of theories enters the public realm rather than being maintained in secret.

By examining the differences between these two models of behavior, it is easy to see that the objective of any group, in order to be the most effective, should be to move from model I towards model II action. Yet, the presence of defensive action and secrecy present in model I, which makes it a less desirable than model II for group dynamics, is the very aspect that makes it challenging to transition out of this mindset and into a model II group dynamic. This transition, however, is the focus of much of Schön's research (as will be described in the next section).

The examination of Schön's model I and II group theory has interesting implications for considering the compatibility of experiential outdoor education and public schooling. To address this issue, we must also consider what Schön referred to as the use of espoused theories versus theories-in-use. He considered espoused theories to be those that individuals perceived their actions and beliefs followed as a procedural idea, while theories-in-use become what their actual actions and beliefs that they have may demonstrate.

When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the answer he usually gives is his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory to which he gives allegiance, and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory; furthermore, the individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories. (Argyris & Schön, 1974: 7)

Schön believed that much of professional group dynamics and interactions with their clientele follow the pattern of model I behavior. Therefore, let us make an assumption that the institution of public schooling is no different than other professions which Schön has studied in-depth. This is not to say that there are not many gifted educators that follow model II behavior (even if they are not aware of it, as in the form as

tacit knowledge). Indeed most individuals should be able to recall a teacher or mentor that possessed such group interactive traits as outlined in model II. However, what I would argue is that, as the larger society, we view the espoused theories of the public school system as following model I behavior. Now if we consider the profession of outdoor education, there is very much an espoused theory among its educators that resembles a model II approach to group dynamics (even if the educator does not label it as such). From the micro-scale use of de-briefing circles where all individuals are given conscious voice and value to the macro-scale scope in the understanding or belief that outdoor education empowers groups dynamics by shaping and re-framing social interactions in a more positive way, these can be viewed as manifestations of model II behavior (even if the outdoor facilitator is doing so through the use of tacit knowledge of why these skill sets seem to be effective). Therefore, even though much of the outdoor education profession does not frame their argument in the terms proposed by Schön, we see a similarity in their espoused theory of education (as detailed in the Chapter Two of this thesis) and that of model II.

Since if we still assume that public education is operating in a model I form, we can see why many outdoor educators would oppose such a form of education as not being emancipatory in design. Yet this is only due to an espoused theory of their practice. As one can claim that there are many gifted school teachers that operate in a model II frame, it is just as obvious to state that not every outdoor educator would operate in a model II frame. Even though outdoor education has an espoused theory of using model II behavior, there would be times, places, and certain individuals/facilitators where their theories-in-use operate as model I. Therefore a bridge presents itself. If we agree with

Schön that transitioning from model I to model II behavior is possible, and that public schools and outdoor education both have the potential for their theories-in-use to model either method, then the transitioning towards more model II behavior becomes a similar goal for them both (even if the espoused theory of outdoor education ‘believes’ they are closer to achieving this than in public schooling). Thus the compatibility between these two forms of education may exist in utilizing outdoor education as a catalyst in public schooling to strengthen and transition more to model II group dynamics. This can leave us now to understand how Schön believes such as transition is possible, as I will outline in the next section.

3.3.3 Frames of Reference

From the above argument, I believe, comes an important point about frames of reference: because model I depends on static frames, in order to move to model II behavior, the practitioner, through reflection, must re-frame or manipulate the problem set in order to discover alternate solutions.

Inquiry, however it may initially have been conceived, turns into a frame experiment. What allows this to happen is that the inquirer is willing to step into the problematic situation, to impose a frame on it, to follow the implications of the discipline thus established, and yet to remain open to the situation’s back-talk. Reflecting on the surprising consequences of his efforts to shape the situation in conformity with his initially chosen frame, the inquirer frames new questions and new ends in view. (Schön, 1983: 269)

For Schön, this notion of re-framing is central to examining the role of the reflective practitioner. Re-framing and reflective practice requires the use of artistry over technical rationality as it attempts to make sense of possible tacit knowledge embedded in ambiguous situations. Therefore, as Schön would argue, the ability to reflect on both the

action and the frame of the action is important. For example, for a public school teacher to be a reflective practitioner not only do they need to reflect on how to take attendance of a class, but also the underlying need for this action to be present as a benefit to their institution and profession.

However, in practice, this theory of framing and re-framing becomes more complex as individuals encounter learning binds, or situations in which they are not able to progress further because they are unable to frame the problem or understanding in such a way to discover a solution. When this occurs, Schön has suggested that:

We can also introduce another dimension of analysis, a vertical dimension according to which higher levels of activity are 'meta' to those below. To move 'up', in this sense, is to move from an activity to reflection *on* that activity; to move 'down' is to move from reflection to an action that enacts reflection. The levels of action and reflection on action can be seen as the rungs of a ladder. Climbing up the ladder, one makes what has happened at the rung below into an object of reflection. (Schön, 1987: 114)

Therefore, for example, if an individual is having difficulty with an action, such as Schön's typical case study of architectural design, then student or teacher need to reflect on the principles behind their design project in order to move forward, or down the ladder, by actively testing their ideas or assumptions of the design. By doing so, there is the potential that they re-frame the problem in such a way as to alleviate the restrictions that were previously holding them back.

An interesting perspective could now be taken here in terms of outdoor education and public schooling. If the outdoor education facilitator believes that his or her profession is incompatible with the public school institution, by Schön's argument there is a need for the individual to be able to re-frame such an interaction in order to overcome their current learning bind. To do so, we would now need to look more closely at the

relation between the teacher and student in these two forms of education to suggest compatibility.

3.3.4 The Interplay Between Student and Instructor

This discussion brings me to my final point on Schön's work, which is very important for this portion of the chapter: the relationship between the instructor and student, and how that can fall into either model I or model II behaviors. Since model I behavior is defensive in nature, we can see how this would prevent effective instructor-student relations, as the student may feel challenged by the instructor's authority, while at the same time the instructor may feel that the student is resistive or dismissing their suggestions. However, model II behavior provides the potential to move beyond this, and Schön has described two elements for effective model II reflection-in-action that can be used to overcome these learning binds: 1) the 'willing suspension of disbelief', and 2) imitation, and each will now be discussed.

In considering that the instructor has an expertise and experience that the student does not (which can be used as a form of authority), it is important to consider if the student will accept what the instructor has to offer in terms of knowledge either blindly as 'fact' or by reflecting on the new ideas presented to him or her. In order for the student to successfully reflect on what the instructor has to offer in terms of knowledge, he or she must first be willing to suspend disbelief to accept for the moment the instructor's framing of the experience. Once the student accepts what the instructor has to offer in terms of knowledge, then that student would be able to re-frame his or her own situation

in its context. But such an interaction cannot take place with model I behaviors because it places the student in a more vulnerable position.

[The student] becomes dependent on his instructors. He must look to them for help in acquiring understanding, direction, and competence. As he willingly suspends disbelief, he also suspends autonomy – as though he were becoming a child again. (Schön, 1987: 95)

In this case, Schön argues that the suspension of autonomy and disbelief is necessary but also must be temporary. Once the student has re-framed the problem in terms of the instructor's understanding, then they have provided themselves another avenue of reflection. However, if they continually maintain a lack of autonomy, then the student does not learn to reflectively re-frame the problem.

The second point deals with imitation. Schön argues that our society in particular has an espoused theory that distains imitation as a method of instruction that hinders the development of individualization in the student, although we often have a theory-in-use that behaves in such a way. Yet, he argues that imitation is not a bad thing so long as it is used to model actions on which the student later develops the ability to reflect and re-frame. By doing so, he sees imitation as being a critical component in the instructor / student relationship:

Imitative reconstruction of an observed action is a kind of problem solving... Problem solving may take the form of successive differentiations of a global gesture or of learning to string together component actions. The imitator has access to observation of the process and of the product and may regulate his selective construction by reference to either or both of these. When the process of imitation is interactive, the demonstrator's reactions can also regulate the constructive process. (Schön, 1987: 109)

Imitation would involve risk-taking behavior in the public sphere where the student attempts to model the skill set of his or her instructor. By conditioning this skill set it

provides the student with another frame of reference that could potentially allow them to overcome a learning bind he or she encounters. For example, when an athlete learns a different way or tactic in playing their sport from a coach, he or she can now re-frame a game situation that allows for a successful solution based on this new skill set.

It is interesting to note a similarity between Schön's idea of imitation and willing suspension of disbelief to that of Foucault's notion of increased docility increasing utility. By imitation and allowing one to be willingly guided by an instructor, the student suspends their autonomy in order to gain a re-framing of problem sets in order to overcome a learning bind. Since this aligns nicely with how Foucault sees the use of institutional power and control, one could argue that model II reflection-in-action is possible through the use of imitation and the willing suspension of disbelief in an institution that predominately operates as a model I setting.

To conclude this brief overview of some of Schön's work, we have seen the importance for individuals to use model II behaviors in order to successfully establish sound group relations that do not rely on defensive means of practice. By doing so, this allows individuals to re-frame problem sets and move away from the dependence on technical rationality and perform reflective action on tacit knowledge through a form of professional artistry.

3.4 Implications for Outdoor Education in Public Schooling

Let us consider the following quote pertaining to the public school system:

The efficient transmission of knowledge requires a system of controls. The teacher is supposed to convey standard units of knowledge to large numbers of students and must employ measures, in the form of quizzes and examinations, and more informal means, students are rewarded for their ability to demonstrate that they have digested the appropriate knowledge and skill, and they are punished for their failure to do so... Teachers are also subject to a similar system of controls. They are monitored, and rewarded or punished, according to the measures of their students' progress. And just as teachers function as centers of instruction and control in relation to students who are peripheral to them, so teachers occupy peripheral roles in relation to their supervisors. Curriculum and lesson plans, as well as measures of performance and rewards and punishments, emanate from a center and are imposed on teachers at the periphery... In the control of both students and teachers, a high priority is placed on *objectivity*. It is considered important to achieve quantitative measures of proficiency and progress which are independent of individual judgments. These are much preferred to qualitative, narrative accounts of the experience of learning or teaching. Quantitative measures permit the system of control, and the other systems that depend on it, to take on an appearance of consistency, uniformity, precision, and detachment.

Although one may easily first believe that this quote was from Foucault, it was in fact written by Schön (1983: 330). In this quote, he considered that systems which operate in model I behaviors utilize technical rationality in a process that allow for problem solving rather than problem framing. By considering reflection-in-action, as outlined in my first chapter of this thesis, Schön proposed this as a mechanism for transitioning from model I to model II behavior. What is interesting to note, also described in Chapter One of this thesis, is a similarity in the pedagogy of experiential education using an action/reflection component for learning and how this can potentially relate to Schön's ideas of reflective practice. Though experiential education theory does not explicitly state this, it can be argued that by its very focus on the importance of reflection that it provides a solid case-study in itself for the understanding of Schön's theories of reflection-in-action. As such,

this can imply that experiential education would also be a good case-study for the transitioning between model I and model II behavior. Therefore, if we accept the need to transition to a reflective practice that uses model II behaviors, we should, at the very least, consider experiential and outdoor education as one such means.

Also, it is important to note that incorporating imitation and the willing suspension of disbelief into the model of experiential education, one can further reinforce how experiential outdoor education can follow an institutional setting conducive to Foucault's idea of power structures, while at the same time provide a point of reflective practice that allows for the potential transitioning between model I and model II behaviors. As such, by considering both the role of the institution and the role of the educator or facilitator, I would suggest that there are sound linkages between outdoor education and public schooling in the methodology of framing their pedagogy. Even though many outdoor educators have an espoused theory that pits the goals of their profession in opposition to that of public schooling, in terms of the emancipation of the individual against mainstream or conventional society, I have argued that the frameworks for both systems are indeed compatible. Here they both operate under similar, although structurally different, mechanisms of control, and that it becomes the educator or facilitator that enables the opportunity for authentic reflection-in-action.

However, from this argument an interesting point does arise. If we acknowledge that experiential outdoor education has a greater focus in its theory and pedagogy for incorporating a reflection and action synergy than does the typical school classroom, then it could be argued that, at the very least, this form of education has the potential to more easily shift or coach individuals from a defensive model I type of group behavior to the

more collaborative model II dynamic. It is therefore unsurprising that we find outdoor education being used in many cases where there is a need to re-frame one's social concept, be it for therapeutic recovery, at-risk juvenile offenders, or corporate executive programs, all of which have long histories of use in this field.

Let us now re-consider the public school. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I discussed the need for sustained exposure to outdoor education in order to promote the transference of skills through a metaphoric model of experiential learning. As such, I have suggested that this exposure is possible through the incorporation of outdoor education in the public school system, and that from the discussion of this current chapter that the two systems of education are compatible. However, now let us consider what outdoor education can bring to the public school setting. By considering outdoor education using a reflection-in-action pedagogy that attempts to transition individuals to a model II type of group behavior, then this becomes a wonderful case-study for public school education to re-frame their understanding of how to develop critical-thinking curricula. That is to say, by schools engaging in a willing suspension of disbelief in the running of outdoor education programs they enable the opportunity to use these programs through imitation for exploring and defining the very characteristics of reflective practice and learning upon which Schön built his theories. Therefore, outdoor education can offer more to the school system than simply the benefits of it as an isolated program. It leaves us with this question: can outdoor education alleviate a potential learning bind in creating reflective learners by re-framing how the school system designs effective curricula? In attempting to answer this question Freire's idea of praxis is again brought to mind – reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. If we suggest for the

moment that everything Freire proposed for his notion of praxis is correct, then we can view outdoor education as the metaphoric student with the ability to empower itself to transform the way in which we have come to view the existing school structure.

Having outlined the theory of experiential education, the practice of outdoor education, and the compatibility between this epistemology and the operation of public schools, in the next chapter I will now examine more detailed discussions on the interaction of outdoor education programs currently in the public school setting. I will provide overviews of the various issues that arise with such blending of professions, and then in Chapter Five describe significant case studies of the Australia and New Zealand school systems that have officially regulated outcome based curriculum in outdoor education, while comparing this curricular method in Chapter Six with Canadian integrated outdoor programs that focus more on a thematic teaching approach for curriculum delivery.

Chapter 4 – Outdoor Education as Praxis for Schools

4.1 Potential Interplay of Outdoor Education in the Classroom

Throughout the previous chapters detailing experiential and outdoor education, I have included many features of both practice and theory that play pivotal roles and have been influential to the evolution of this field. This includes such issues as the fundamental relationship between action and reflection, student-construction of knowledge through experience, the role of the teacher as facilitator actively bringing forward expertise rather than being a passive observer, the use of surprise or discrepant events to initiate reflection, and the use of flow state to engage learners in order to become successful reflective practitioners. From this, I will now consider whether the public school system has anything it can draw out from such a conversation for consideration in its own learning environment and practice. When one examines all of these issues, it can easily be argued that they go beyond the realm of experiential education and simply represent good teaching practices. Although this may be true, by having demonstrated the synergy between experiential and outdoor education, it could also be argued that the study of outdoor education provides the best case-study for teachers to model such practices and for students to grow from such interactions. It therefore becomes important to ensure that the design of experiential pedagogy has a solid educational framework on which to build. And for this, it has been suggested that outdoor education potentially offers the best demonstration of how experiential education can be properly integrated into learning, thus providing possibly the best structure for the continuation of such practice (Chapman, McPhee & Proudman, 1992). From this, it can

be seen that outdoor education has a potential critical role to play in the public education system, and not only in terms of how public education can enhance the overall prolonged transference of outdoor education, but in what *outdoor education has to bring to public education*.

Many outdoor educators have felt the need for this strong connection between outdoor education and the public school system: both practitioners and philosophers have written on how outdoor education curriculum should be developed (Horwood, 1995a; Lindsay & Ewert, 1999); the increased need of teacher education for such programs (Raffan, 1995); how student learning can be enhanced (McKiernan, 1995); and how experiential education can relate to traditional classrooms (Coleman, 1995; Ives & Obenchain, 2006). There has even been a paper examining the political necessities of working with the various interest groups in order to advance outdoor education (Miner, 1993). There has also been an initial examination of the way in which training curriculum could be constructed to achieve these goals (Sakofs, *et al*, 1995). Although the combination of outdoor education within public schooling is still somewhat controversial (Puk, 1999b; Wurdinger, 1999), in the previous chapter discussions of this thesis one may see the value of trying to push these boundaries.

Outdoor education, regardless of its actual defined environment or particular skill set for any one program, would still generally attempt to impact student engagement using an experiential learning model. This situation can be described as the following:

The student experiences a state of disequilibrium by being placed in a novel setting and a cooperative environment while being presented with unique problem solving situations. These situations may lead to feelings of accomplishment which are augmented by processing the experience which promotes generalization and transfer for future life endeavors. (Nadler & Luckner, 1992: 9)

Such a statement should have the opportunity to connect to the public school system. At the very least, cooperative environments, unique problem solving situations, feelings of accomplishment, and transfer of future life skills are typically espoused theories of achievement in any school setting, with many teachers and administrators attempting to implement the best pedagogy in order to make such learning successful. Outdoor education has the potential to model such a learning environment for school systems as it has been stated that “the principles of Expeditionary Learning, closely related to the philosophy of Outward Bound, form a process that is transferable to other educational settings” (McKiernan, 1995: 165). What may contrast the typical school setting is not only the actual learning environment itself but in how the student responds and interacts with their surroundings. “In this framework [of experiential learning], students can be highly involved in designing their own content, determining how to learn the desired material, and assessing their progress” (McKiernan, 1995: 147). Often schools and teachers attempt to create learning environments that promote leadership roles for their students. But these roles may be created in the realm of learning outcomes without having the students becoming responsible for their own learning. For example, a student may be given a single-loop learning opportunity by being assigned a ‘leadership’ role in, say, a science classroom debate on global warming. But this is very different from a student taking a true leadership role and with double-loop learning attempting to define how global warming issues should shape their science classroom discussions. Therefore, “a sense of commitment is developed by the students who become actively involved in their own educations” (McKiernan, 1995: 166). Again, such a consideration of student

leadership references much of what Freire and Shor discussed in terms of empowering education (Shor, 1992).

In outlining how outdoor education has a direct focus and emphasis on such skills and interactions, I would argue that this form of learning and engagement has much to bring to the public school debate.

Many calls for reform of MS [mainstream education] have been critical of the non-humanistic values inherent in the system and have called for practices that would promote a more humanistic approach. EE [experiential education], with its longstanding humanist traditions and its focus on individual growth within a broader social and civic framework, would speak directly to this segment of the current education reform debate. (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999: 17)

This is not to say that we should simply abandon our current teaching practices; such an either/or stance would be in opposition to Dewey's fundamental claim in developing progressive education. Instead, we need to consider a realm or segment within public schools that can be best met with the use of outdoor and experiential education, while at no time sacrificing such skill sets as reading, grammar, and math. Arguably, however, outdoor education may even provide avenues for all these forms of traditional education topics. Thus much consideration must be taken in determining not only *how* but *where* outdoor education can or should be utilized in a public school. This contextualizing of outdoor education in public schools will be discussed in great detail in Chapter Five, as curriculum, and in Chapter Six, as pedagogy. By making these key distinctions in the how and the where that outdoor education has in the potential to play out in public schools, I will suggest that we can better refine our understanding of the dynamic interaction that would be necessarily involved in such an amalgamation. Yet, in order to do so it is first important to critically examine possible barriers and opposition to such a

suggestion, as well as establishing key principals that outdoor education can bring to public education from which it can benefit. That is to say, if we are to suggest that the incorporation of outdoor education into public schools is beneficial to student learning it would then be necessary to explore limitations that have hindered such an interaction from becoming prevalent in our current system of public education, as well as providing support for such a synergy of systems.

4.1.1 Opposition to Integration

Any discussion on the integration of outdoor education with public schools would be unbalanced without considering those who seem opposed to such an interaction. Later in this chapter I will discuss practical and logistical barriers that may impede the development of outdoor education in schools, but here we will consider possible incompatibilities in fundamental views of each system's pedagogical approach. However, such a discussion will not be as strong a comparison as one would like for this topic because, at least in the literature (even if it is in contrast to many outdoor education facilitator's verbal espoused theories), there tends to be a large weighting to those who view these systems as compatible (Wurdinger, 1999). When I later discuss the barriers to outdoor education, I will argue how some in this field may confuse barriers with an incompatibility of systems, and thus focus too much on obstacles that they feel can make such integration 'impossible' or impracticable. For now, having previously compared the institution and the role of the educator in both outdoor education and public schools, we will now briefly consider their pedagogy, as this generally tends to be the conceptual area that those opposed to such combination of systems focus on as the contentious issue.

Lindsay and Ewert (1999) attempted to compare and contrast experiential education (EE) to that of mainstream education (MS). Here they examined key features of both educational systems and came up with, what they believed, were fundamental differences between the two systems. This included 1) origins and foundations, 2) educational goals, 3) concepts of knowledge, 4) organization of students, 5) communication methods, 6) organization of topics, 7) resources for teaching, and 8) evaluation strategies. From these differences they concluded that EE should remain apart from MS. Note that some of their ideas will resurface once again when we consider barriers to implementation further on in this chapter. Also, a larger discussion will be placed on evaluation strategies later on in this thesis, as much debate has attempted to bridge how assessment tools are used in outdoor education and public school.

In formulating these key distinctive features of the two systems the authors considered the educational framework of each as a whole:

What is clear in comparing EE and MS is how these two traditions fundamentally differ in a variety of ways. MS is directed by criteria external to the learner and defined by the larger society. It is characterized by strategies that direct and measure student performance according to normative values. It depends on views, knowledge, and learning that are relatively compartmentalized. In stark contrast are some of the qualities of EE. These include the attempt to individualize, rather than normalize, student learning and evaluation. In general, EE views both knowledge and learning as fundamentally holistic, while not denying certain occasions where specific skill development is needed and appropriate. (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999: 16)

One difficulty with such a conclusion, however, may derive when considering goods-external-to-practice versus goods-internal-to-practice (as defined by McIntyre, 1984). Here Lindsay & Ewert have defined mainstream education as “directed by criteria external to the learner and defined by the larger society”, and although there can be a

great deal of agreement with this statement, it is necessary to consider how such an interchange can exist in both systems of education. For example, a classroom student may become so engrossed by a particular piece of literature that they reflectively move beyond the base requirements of what the school system wishes for them to learn, often exhibiting behaviors similarly outlined to being in a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), yet at the same time one can think of a student disengaged by a paddling expedition because they do not ‘get it’ or understand any relevancy it has to them as a person. As such, the general comparison of outdoor versus mainstream education may not be fair, but the point certainly poses perhaps a better probability of what they consider differentiating the two. Essentially this comes back to the notion of students being ‘empty vessels’ that must be guided towards their own education (mainstream education) instead of actively and reflectively shaping it (outdoor education). Therefore, it might even be possible to argue that this position could actually help to reinforce the use of outdoor education in public schools as a way to re-frame typical understanding of the practice, as I have proposed in the previous chapter of this thesis.

From their position, the authors go on to consider the potential damage that might be done in attempting to integrate the two, and they do so by considering the detriment to the outdoor education field.

We have concerns that EE activities such as ropes courses will be adopted into MS settings without the necessary understanding of the foundations and underlying processes that guide these activities. In this case, we suspect that much of the value to individual students from such activities could be diminished and the subsequent perceived efficacy of these learning activities placed in jeopardy. (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999: 18)

Of course, this argument must speak true for any form of education or pedagogical approach that is not properly understood by its facilitator and hence has the chance to decrease the learning potential of the student. For example, one could even consider that a student can develop better rote memorization skills if their teacher is better versed in the understandings and practices of traditional education. The correlation between the foundations and underlying processes with the efficacy of learning activities can not be isolated to the field of outdoor education incorporated into public schools, as it reaches into every pedagogical approach of education and is maintained as an important consideration.

For the most part though, it must be stressed that potential differences certainly exist between outdoor and mainstream education, and at the very least we must be aware of the debate in order to frame and justify any arguments that would be in favor of such integration. What is also important to consider is how we frame such differences: do they create a fundamental incompatibility between the two systems, or simply introduce a barrier or learning bind that must be understood if to be overcome? As such, with this discussion on the opposition for the integration of outdoor experiential education in public schools it would now be important to consider one possible counter argument. From here, I will then return to many of the issues presented by Lindsay and Ewert in a discussion that helps to distinguish between potential incompatibilities between outdoor education and public schools versus barriers to integration.

4.1.2 Schooling Roles in Society

Like Lindsay and Ewert's paper suggesting that outdoor education should remain apart from mainstream education, James Coleman (1995) has articulated an argument for the reason that public schools are in need of experiential education (and as I would further argue, outdoor education based on it being such a great case-study for this form of learning). Coleman compared schooling and society of today to previous generations, using a particular example of when David Copperfield grew up in England. Here he reflected on the fact that the creativity of Copperfield was not hindered by the traditional methods of his schoolings because as a child he had a more varied experience base to draw from.

For children of his time and experience, the narrow concentration of the school provided supplementary information that enriched, and could be assimilated by, the base of existing experience. The school of today is in the same role for some children, but for most children, two changes have occurred: there is a multitude of *other* media outside the school, from books to newspapers to television, to supply information which bypasses experience; and there is, for many of these children, only a weak experiential base on which to build. (Coleman, 1995: 125)

Here he considered that traditional schooling had the function to enhance a student's experience, but never move to actually replace it, thus becoming complementary to the life experience of the child by providing some 'formal' learning. "For the school has always existed to provide a set of *auxiliary* skills and *supplementary* knowledge, to augment the basic skills and knowledge the child gains through experience" (Coleman, 1995: 125). In modern times, he sees too many opportunities where children are able to bypass experience, such as with television or the internet. How often do parents need to remind young children that something they see on television *wouldn't* be real? If this bypassing of experience was occurring too often it results in a weak experiential base to

draw conclusions (perhaps even reflections) from. The similarity between this and the view of Kurt Hahn is strong, by considering the value of experience for the development of youth, but we might consider that Coleman has brought this discussion even a step further.

This then, is one goal, one function, of experiential learning: the creation of a solid experience base, in one's own life, for the very symbolic media that are subsequently used to transmit information bypassing experience. It needs hardly be said that only if these experiential foundations are strong – whether they are built in the home or by an extensive use of school time in play with language, games with printed words, or in still another way – only then can language and reading serve as the vehicle by which information that bypasses experience can be assimilated. (Coleman, 1995: 127)

That is to say, Coleman argues that the use of 'formal' educational skills, such as reading and grammar, provides a means to bypass experience. For example, by reading a user manual for some form of electronics I would be able to operate the device even though I had gained no prior experience of it from which to build upon. Such a function of bypassing experience, he argues, has enabled each of us in a society to be able to accomplish more than one lived experience would allow, and many of us would view this as a good thing in of itself. But he also believed that such a form of bypassing experience still requires a solid experience base of which to draw from, and thus increase the learning retention of new facts. For example, a child may be able to construct the concept of a woolly mammoth or dinosaur only in the context of a lived experience where they relate this information to that of other large animals they have seen. How many children can describe how they think a mammoth would walk even though they have never witnessed this? Would this view be different from another child who has never seen a

four-legged mammal? This is why he viewed an interconnectivity between experience and supplementary information that could bypass experience.

Since Coleman, like others such as Hahn, sees our society become increasingly experience poor, he asserts possibly the most important positive point for the integration of experiential education with public schooling:

But it has come to be time to recognize that for many young persons, there is a vacuum outside the school, devoid of such intense experiences that gives one self-knowledge. And it has come to be time to design learning environments, whether in school or in another setting, that contain those experiences that move one along the path to self-knowledge. (Coleman, 1995: 128)

That is to say, if we consider that society has shifted to a more experience-poor environment, dependant on supplementary stimuli such as media and television, does this not potentially hinder the construction of self-knowledge through lived experience that allows for reflection and re-framing of one's own understanding? Here Coleman believed that experience by-passing did not allow for growth in self-knowledge, an aspect that I might suggest is similar in scope to the inter- and intrapersonal development established in Chapter One of this thesis for experiential education. Such interactions, and through them self-knowledge, may not be as accessible through means that by-pass lived experience.

Therefore, by such an argument, it can be considered that outdoor education can provide a solid experience base in which to allow mainstream schools to supplement their current experience-bypassing knowledge, but also to actually enhance the learning retention of such knowledge. Yet this is possible only if such base experiences are offered in some other form, as they are now, arguably, weakened or void in many children's lives. From this, outdoor education could certainly fill such a role. Thus the

question arises: does the current public schooling system need to move more to a realm of experience building when once there was a time that such educational systems assumed children were coming to their schools equipped with such backgrounds? If so, with outdoor education and its base epistemology centered on experiential education, we might consider this a solid possibility for integration.

But in doing so, this may generate many logistical and practical considerations that may hinder such a development. As such, if we consider the value of integration of outdoor education with public schools, we must also be aware that obstacles would naturally arise, and at times may make it appear that such integration might be impossible or impractical. By offering Coleman's work as one possible solid counterpoint to Lindsay and Ewert (1999) for a need of experiential education in public schools on the basis of pedagogy, it is now important to return to their discussion on differences between these two forms of education. However, what I will argue here is that, unlike Lindsay and Ewert who view possible issues as incompatibilities, many of these may represent only barriers to integration.

4.2 Barriers to Integration

Our comparison of EE and MS illustrates the marked differences between these two educational traditions and suggests one reason why EE has not found ready acceptance in MS. (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999: 17)

The issue of acceptance for outdoor education in mainstream schooling is not straightforward. Although compatibility between these two educational systems can, and most likely always will, be debated, there also underlies this argument certain logistical considerations that may shift the balance of such deliberation. For example, is it sufficient to say that most outdoor education experiences require more time than the typical classroom block allows, but to then assume outdoor education can not be integrated in the school system as reaching too far with one's conclusions? Obviously such a simple situation can be solved by considering, for example, one-day out-of-school trips, but it provides the context that educators need to engage in double-loop learning and reframe their existing understanding of school structure and procedures in order to assimilate any new learning approach. Of course, such practice is often easier said than done, and the act of implementation generates barriers to integration.

When teachers were introduced to experiential education, they loved it. They loved the activities, the underlying values, as well as the educational impact on the individual and group regarding personal growth, the acquisition of academic content through flexible and multisensory learning strategies. Unfortunately, another truth was apparent as well. Time, inflexible administrative structures and well-established routines individually and collectively eroded the enthusiasm for experiential education simply because it was often easier to go with what was than to fight the battles required to change things. (Sakofs, *et al*, 1995: 128)

At this stage in the discussion it can be acknowledged that there are many small issues that can generate large barriers to integration, such as timetabling considerations or financial limitations of a school. However, I will guide this dialogue to focus on more

dynamic or complex factors that must take into account different approaches and understanding in order to deal with learning binds. This is not to dismiss the potential that a great outdoor education program may be stalled because of key ‘simple’ logistics, such as transportation issues, but that they do not fall under the category of what I would call ‘guiding principles’ that shape and direct the energies of outdoor education and public schooling. In particular, I would like to provide an overview of such larger issues that can generate barriers, including assessment tools and strategies, political infrastructure of schools, certifications versus qualification, and potential needs for teacher preparation and training.

4.2.1 Assessment Dynamics

The role of assessment in schools is a major part of the institution, and as Foucault would argue to all societal relationships. Thus for the potential integration of outdoor education in public schools, notions of assessment become a key pillar for any discussion. When one considers the role of assessment in outdoor education and public schools, it would be possible to argue that each approach represents a fundamental shift in pedagogy that perhaps still generates a case for incompatibility as previously discussed. However, if we wish to use outdoor education as actual praxis for schools, as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1970: 51), then we need to consider not only how we might be able to align assessment methods and the value for such roles, but also use assessment strategies of outdoor education to re-frame existing concepts in the school system on that very issue. To do this we must first consider how each system utilizes assessment.

The problem is even greater when one considers the unique treatment given to student failure found in experience-rich settings. Events that go wrong, which might be rated as failures in another school's context, are treated as valuable occasions for learning. ... Reframing error from being something shameful and discreditable into a natural occasion for further exploration is a wonderful feature of those practices which we call 'experiential'. (Horwood, 1995a: 283)

From this quote we can reflect on perhaps one of the biggest barriers to integration: fundamentally, the two educational systems utilize failure differently. School can be seen essentially as corrective (a term also used by Foucault). Thus, the assessment strategies in schools are developed to identify learning weaknesses in order to provide further reinforcing practice until the student corrects their understanding of a topic. By critiquing mistakes or learning-gaps as failures, students in the school system quickly identify that 'success' relates to the correct answer (or the answer that the teacher is looking for). In contrast, the theory of experiential education embraces mistakes as the finest opportunity for student learning. By many named concepts, from the discrepant event to learning moments to re-framing a learning bind, errors in performance allow a student to rework with material, be it an activity or concept, in such a way as to re-frame their own understanding of how it relates to those other parameters with which it is intertwined. Errors provide the avenue for exploration, and exploration provides the path to reflection, where reflection is ultimately used to re-frame, and learn the material at hand.

Of course not all public schooling is 'traditional' by any means, as is seen with such practices as progressivism and constructivism. In a way, the issue of differences in assessment strategies becomes pragmatic; students need to be exposed to more experiential education in order to develop the sense that success is not the avoidance of

failure, but in this very process opportunities would need to be established that allows for this greater exposure. However, fundamentally it is not as simple as to say ‘give students experiences that nurture failure’ because assessment based against failure would still be the predominate method utilized by schools. Thus, outdoor education would have to employ skills and strategies that allows for an assessment method that meets the criteria of the school while at the same time allowing for student growth from the very failures that they might be graded against.

Despite these pragmatic, creative, and valuable methods [discussed in this book], they are still essentially stunts being played on the pervasive and oppressive reliance on grades. Experiential teachers have yet to come to grips with this central issue. Grades or marks determined by conventional testing and examination are inimical to experiential education. It is not possible, using these devices, to discover what each individual student has learned from their school experiences. Neither is it possible to discover what collective or communal learning there may have been. ... The delightful thing about the writers in this book is that they have found ways, in various degrees of subversion, to live with the problem. (Horwood, 1995a: 284)

Horwood then goes on to argue that assessment strategies can move beyond ‘subversion’ and attempt to create genuine analysis of the student’s learning potential.

It is instructive to examine a form of report developed by Kurt Hahn for use in his schools. Hahn did not shy away from the evaluative process, but he did put it into the broad framework of human development which he wished his schools to promote. (Horwood, 1995a: 285)

This links well to terminology that is currently in heavy circulation within schools: the use of formative evaluation versus summative assessment. It could be argued that in schools this has simply become a terminology game, and that teachers are still doing the same thing under a different label. However, if we consider the differences established between typical outdoor education and public schools, then one can argue that the shifting to formative evaluation from summative assessment is a similar approach being

attempted in schools where the focus hopes to be on student success and abilities rather than learning weaknesses. Thus outdoor education may be able to assist with the public school's emphasis on 'authentic assessment and evaluation'.

The difficulty now arises in the field of education and schools when individuals have an underlying belief that by focusing on formative evaluation, often thought of as assessing higher order cognitive functions, that this weakens more traditional forms of information assimilation, or what is typically considered low order cognitive skills. It is even more difficult when, in a model I type of world, this goes on untested in the public domain. This dilemma between balancing such things as critical thinking skills with base learning skills is not something new for the public school system, but it is an important one to consider when framing the potential interaction of outdoor education within such a learning environment.

Teachers choose time-efficient delivery models of instruction (e.g., lecture) over instructional models that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and inquiry (e.g., experiential education-based models). Studies report that teachers abandon innovative, active, and higher order experiences in favor of rote memorization and drill, believing this is the wise course of action for testing, although not necessarily for student learning. (Ives & Obenchain, 2006: 63)

This consideration is important in terms of examining outdoor education, which typically has a pedagogy with greater focus on higher order thinking skills, and thus may develop opposition within the public school that operate a theory-in-action of focus on base learning skills. It is not sufficient to say that outdoor education would promote higher order thinking skills unless one could support that doing so would not impede other educational objectives of the school. The question then becomes;

Are there instructional options for those teachers who believe that classroom learning should be more experiential, higher order, thoughtful,

connected to the community, and student-driven, but are aware that their students must be successful on measures of lower order thinking? (Ives & Obenchain, 2006: 64)

The study by Ives & Obenchain (2006) examined student performance in higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and lower order thinking skills (LOTS), both before and after a designed experiential education program, to that of two control groups that learned through more traditional means of education. Two main points were determined; they found an increase in HOTS with experiential education (arguably an obvious statement based on the literature review of Chapter One of this thesis); but, secondly and more importantly, there was no significant difference in LOTS between the experiential test group and the two control groups. They also examined their work with others and found a similar correlation in results indicating that gains in higher order thinking skills do not necessarily have to align with a decrease in the development of lower order thinking skills. An important point to their study is that they particularly examined the use of experiential education, but then compared this to the performance of control groups, an aspect that they had found lacking in previous studies.

At the same time, it is gratifying that our findings are consistent with those from other disciplines in showing that students engaged in a curriculum that emphasizes student-directedness and complex problem-solving over focused practice on lower level fact and skill acquisition show a significant advantage in HOTS with no loss in LOTS. (Ives & Obenchain, 2006: 72)

Therefore a shift in assessment strategies with outdoor education focusing on higher order thinking skills does not preclude its integration with public schools, and arguably allows strengthening of assessment methodologies.

4.2.2 *The Political Landscape*

If one considers that outdoor education is compatible with the institution and role of the teacher in public schools, has a value that it can contribute to the school in terms of experience development for experience-bypassing knowledge, and can enhance assessment and critical thinking strategies, then one still has to wonder why outdoor education has not been embraced by all schools. One important consideration may lie with the notion of the perceived educational goals of the institution.

Of the more than 90 respondents [to this study survey], over three-quarters ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement ‘Internal support for experiential education is a major issue for the profession’. ... For these experiential programs the internal ‘jungle’ of the parent institution can be a far more challenging and threatening environment than the outside world. They share a common concern – acquiring internal support for a program that is often seen as a peripheral extra. It is easy to assume that experiential education is denied support because of our non-traditional methodology. However, many programs or activities that are not part of the traditional function of the institution, such as athletics, field study, or conferences, continue to receive strong support. The central reason why experiential programs suffer from lack of support is not our methods, but rather that we are not seen as central to our institution’s mission. (Miner, 1993: 21)

Here Miner has outlined his central premise: the political landscape of the institution must be understood in order to work *with* the school rather than an isolated program that is under constant attack from perception rather than critical assessment of its performance. It is interesting to note the comparison made with other successful alternate programs. It is not sufficient to assume a public untested view that outdoor education is limited in schools because of its differences in pedagogy to that of the ‘standard’ classroom. Such programs as art, music, drama, technology education, physical education, and others typically represent the majority of funding for a school even though they do not represent the ‘three R’s of education’ (reading, writing, and arithmetic). In all

three schools where I have personally taught, these alternate programs have received ten times more funding than the science departments. The difference is, Miner argues, that these programs have demonstrated their value to the governing school rather than assuming everyone (tacitly) understands their value. Thus outdoor education, in order to become a successful component in a public school, must consider how the school views such programs, and more importantly to understand how the two systems can benefit from one another.

Marketing must reflect the organization's values and mission in addition to your own. For example, we used to promote our programs with spectacular photographs of rappelling or kayaking. We now use photos which are less dramatic – groups of student practicing a skill, writing in journals or in a group discussion. The setting is still outdoors, with beautiful backdrops, but it is clear that there are academic components. (Miner, 1993: 25)

From this discussion, Miner suggested key features or strategies that are politically necessary for convincing parent organizations that experiential programs also serve the mission of the larger institution. They are 1) identifying client groups, 2) learning to distinguish key players, 3) developing strategic alliances, 4) adapting to the institutional context (such as described in the previous quote), 5) serving the organization, and 6) developing financial independence. However, these are more than simple political games; they represent ideas of how to communicate a program's value in such a way that it becomes meaningful to someone who has never been engaged in such an experience.

From this conversation Miner derived an important point: he considered that the clientele of an outdoor program are not just the students but rather the overall institution. Here we see a fundamental difference between company-based outdoor education programs and those present in schools. A company-based program attempts to draw from

a group of individuals who, for the most part, must have some degree of acceptance for such programs (assuming they voluntarily signed up). But in public school, your critical clientele may not even be the students, for they typically do not have the decision making power that administrators, school boards, or even parents do. That is not to say that the students are not critical for the program success, since it is their potential knowledge growth that drives education, but that others make the decisions that influence how educators can reach these students. Therefore, by considering the public school as clientele, it establishes a focus to publicly test the value of such outdoor education programs in order to gain support. In other words, from Miner's argument, it can be suggested that outdoor education programs can strengthen their relationship with public schools from what currently exists if they enhance communication of their fundamental educational goals with the school system itself.

4.2.3 Certification versus Qualification

Yet, despite all of this research on integrating with the public school system, outdoor education continues to have difficulty maintaining any significant footholds in our schools. Certainly one practical explanation has to do with teacher certification: do teachers have the required skills and experiences in order to successfully teach such a dynamic and different topic than what they are accustomed to in public education? Compounding this question is the dilemma in outdoor education over the value of certification (Plaut, 2001). Those against certification typically cite the argument that certification does not necessarily provide a valid means of assessing an individual's strengths in judgment and problem solving. Although there is truth in this, it has not

stopped most of mainstream society from continuing to push for certification. Although most professions now require some form of formal degree, most do not relate this to an immediate growth in judgment, and require intern programs after graduation (for example, doctors, lawyers, and architects) as well as distinguishing between junior and senior professionals in their fields. Yet, they all use certification to create a foundation for their professions. As such, outdoor education might need to consider implementing a more formal certification structure to further its advance into public education, which certainly has an emphasis on certification standards. At this point, this conflict of certification versus qualification is only initially outlined, but its argument will surface again frequently in the next few chapters, particularly in Chapter Eight which outlines initiatives taken in this direction.

The possible importance for implementing standardized practices and certification is not a new issue for the field of outdoor education.

The need for a standardized instructor training course eventually led [Paul] Petzoldt to establish the National Outdoor Leadership School in 1965. While NOLS has traditionally certified graduates of certain of its outdoor leadership training courses, the school has not taken a decisive stance on the issue [of certification]. (Cockrell, 1990: 251)

As any new field grows there will always be a transition point when the argument of certification versus qualification arises. Even in public schooling, in the recent generations we have seen the shift from college diplomas to university degrees being required in order to teach within the classroom, while even many generations ago those classroom teachers had no formal certification. Yet, in every case when a profession is growing there has been a value added by the use of certification.

Petzoldt presents two arguments in favor of outdoor leadership certification. First, outdoor recreation in general is experiencing a trend

toward greater challenge and risk. ... Second, there is a growing sensitivity to the ecological impacts of wildland recreation. (Cockrell, 1990: 252)

Whereas,

Arguments against the certification idea also fall into two general groups. The essence of the first argument is that it would really be impossible to certify a leader to be safe. ... [Secondly] the assessment process itself may significantly alter the performance of a certification candidate. Candidates may falsely believe that a test problem has been contrived by the instructor and therefore contains no objective risk. Assessors' attitudes may artificially intimidate certification candidates or artificially encourage compliance. (Cockrell, 1990: 252)

Here there becomes a rift in understanding of the role that certification can have in outdoor education programs. On one side, it can be considered that a formal certification process *can* provide a background knowledge and context of issues surrounding a profession. On the other side, it can be considered that a formal certification process can *not* provide judgment skills that seem best developed through experience. Of course the question should now be asked if these two aspects can really be separated. Can a certification process provide individuals with a solid foundation of knowledge in the field without assuming it must somehow provide experience-rich judgment skills? What is still important to stress when considering the value of certification is not to assume that any training program would completely replace the need for experience.

Even though degree-granting programs arguably provide one appropriate venue for vocational training, it is nonetheless true that those with adventure education degrees also need personal expedition or adventure experience in order to compete successfully in the job market. ... Ultimately the most desirable candidates have a mix of both institutional training and personal experience. (Plaut, 2001: 136)

However, even more interesting when considering the value of certification for a profession is the status of the profession itself. Cockrell (1990) discussed literature

identifying five essential elements for an occupation's admission to the status of 'profession': 1) a specialized body of knowledge with a high degree of intellectual content, 2) a recognized educational process and standards for admission to the profession, 3) a self-imposed code of professional conduct, 4) a motive for service oriented to the precedence of public interest over personal gain and self interest, and 5) a recognition of status by persons outside the profession.

Certainly, with the literature so far discussed in this thesis, I would argue that outdoor education possesses a specialized body of knowledge, and undoubtedly a motive for service oriented to public interest. But a potential weakness may develop for the case of considering outdoor education as a profession when examining "a recognized educational process and standards for admission to the profession". Without a formalized governing body that can guide a certification process there becomes no unified 'voice' or agency that can develop the perception of being representative of a 'profession'. Also, strengthening this aspect of certification would in turn, I would suggest, strengthen the recognition of the status by persons outside the profession. This is where the argument of certification may hold an even greater importance to outdoor education than just the formal training of instructors and educators; the very acceptance of outdoor education as a profession by a society that values the certification process.

Academic programs in adventure education provide students with a theoretical framework for concepts that many of us, without academic training in this field, have learned through luck, intuition, or independent study; or have not learned at all. This framework is important for two reasons. First, it equips students of adventure education with the skills they need to be more effective and confident practitioners. ... Secondly, students who have studied history and theory will have the framework to be more effective ambassadors and spokespeople both within and outside of our field. (Plaut, 2001: 137)

Therefore, certification may hold the key to not only intensification of the knowledge and competency base in the profession (by working in conjunction with an intern system, not replacing experience) but also in assisting to justify outdoor education as a profession to society at large.

Yet, advocates against certification still tend to take the untested view that a system of certification would decrease the value placed on experience. Recently, work has been done examining perception versus implementation of certification within outdoor education programs (Woollven, Allison, Higgins, 2007). After a tragic accident, Great Britain established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations in 1996.

The passing of the act itself and the introduction of the AALA were not universally welcomed by the outdoor sector. Considerable disquiet was expressed because of the perception that the AALA had chosen to ignore 'appropriate experience' as a measure of instructor suitability and was concentrated instead on NGB standards and awards. (Woollven, Allison, Higgins, 2007: 5)

However, what their study discovered was that after implementation of the licensing body, most organizations surveyed expressed satisfaction with such interactions. "The centres and businesses contacted during this study had, on the whole, embraced licensing favourably and with little if any adverse effect" (Woollven, Allison, Higgins, 2007: 18). This study drove at the heart of the issue for many in the field who were initially opposed to formalizing regulations and requirements and felt that certification did not represent qualification. What was discovered, however, is that once in place the outdoor industry looked positively to what could be offered to their professional practice. Therefore, blending certification with experience can benefit outdoor education just like it does for so many other professions. In the context of public school, which has placed a growing

emphasis on certification, any shift in outdoor education for more formalized certification standards would only assist on its integration into this setting.

In addition, one last point may also be examined in this argument of certification versus qualification; how we actually frame such considerations. Certification deals with the individual and in doing so establishes pre-set criteria with which that person has been 'deemed' certified. However, if we consider a 'certification' of a system or program, than our frame of reference is now dealing with accreditation. Accreditation contributes to this argument with the notion that a well-run system recognizes and creates norms that could compensate for poor leaders, thus considering a value to the group due to a normative environment. Certainly if a program in outdoor education meets a particular standard of excellence, then it becomes possible to bring individual leaders up to and maintain this level of performance. In the realm of outdoor education, where there can be significant variance among individual programs, the idea of accreditation becomes another important factor. However, one thing to also consider is that although accreditation is used to a small degree in the public school system, it is still the certification (and qualification) of the individual teacher that dominates the discussion, as such things as job placements have almost nothing to do with a previous school's accreditation process for the teacher but rather their own certifications. Therefore, in considering a compatibility of outdoor education in public schools it is important to frame this discussion in terms of teacher certification, as this is more dominate over accreditation in the larger institution.

4.2.4 *Teacher Preparation and Training*

The moment one considers the possible need for any certification process, then this naturally leads to a wide range of questions about *how* to structure such certification and *what* to offer in terms of content. But even before such finer details as this can be contemplated, fundamentally there must first be a good foundation of programs from which to draw a unified curricula for professional certification. This factor, however, is considerably lacking for outdoor and experiential education in the realm of the classroom teacher. Consider that,

My own experience as a student teacher, and later as a teacher educator, convinced me that there was very little, if any, direct training, study, or practice of experiential methods in the education of most teachers. (Horwood, 1995a: 286)

and that,

There is very little in the teacher education literature that prescribes paths for such [experiential] training, perhaps because there are very few teacher training institutions that offer specific programs for preparing experiential educators. (Raffan, 1995: 117)

In more recent years, there has seemed to be little growth for outdoor experiential learning in teacher preparation. It can even be argued, based for example on the number of publications on this issue decreasing over the last few years in the *Journal of Experiential Education* [16 key articles between 2001-04 versus only 5 key articles between 2005-2009, as well as a reduction of associated comments from other semi-related articles throughout this time, while not observing any increase in such publications from other journals], that outdoor education has moved emphasis away from trying to implement its practices in more traditional forms of education systems, such as the public schools, and back to areas over which they have more direct political control.

Of course the issues for this, as previously discussed, could be more to do with barriers rather than incompatibilities, but nevertheless a shift in the literature is noticeable. Alternatively, perhaps the increased growth of environmental education programs over the last few years has overshadowed outdoor education programs, via a closer connectivity with technical rationality and the sciences, and by a misguided indistinction between the two forms of programs by society in general.

Yet, many consider this an ideal time to reinforce the need for experiential education and to really be able to establish this as a transformative method of instruction. “The formal institutional infrastructure specifically dedicated to the preparation and training of experiential teachers for the work in schools is young and in the process of building an image of itself, of its ways, and of its guiding premises” (Raffan, 1995: 118).

What is even more interesting is that Raffan goes on to note:

It is ironic, perhaps, that experiential education has been occurring in formal learning settings since the days of progressive schools and yet the professional discussion has not to date focused to any great extent on the preparation and training of people to conduct experiential education in classrooms. (Raffan, 1995: 118)

This may, however, stem from an even greater issue. The question becomes whether teachers to any great extent attempt to apply new teaching strategies that are taught in a training setting or simply go back to the approaches they have been exposed to as being the most efficient.

Teachers are not likely to implement new approaches that they have learned about in teacher education programs unless their training in new approaches is continuous, large scale, offers incentives, and can be done without a significantly greater time commitment. (Ives & Obenchain, 2006: 73)

This very issue was taken up by others (Sakofs, *et al*, 1995) and they proposed a feasible training program called the Teacher Development Model for Sustainable Education Reform [TDMSER]. Here they considered utilizing a five phase system for the development of experiential teaching skills in education. It involved a linear flow consisting of 1) immersion (training), 2) skill building (training), 3) skill demonstration (main), 4) creating and using curriculum (final) and 5) constructing networking and support (final). This linear flow focused on what the authors considered a model of “thaw-shift-praxis”. That is to say, first teachers would have to reframe their views of effective teaching methods to now include experiential education; the “thaw” or training aspect. This would then be followed by practicing these new skills and theories in a controlled training environment; the “shift” or main component of the development model. Finally, teachers would take these newly learned skills and implement them into their existing classrooms to transform their educational practice; the “praxis” or final stage of the model.

It [TDMSER] is a practical way of conceptualizing a teacher development seminar as its phase structure identifies essential elements and sequencing of events that enable teachers to learn, internalize, test and practice experiential methods, and to create support systems that can sustain educational innovation in schools. (Sakofs, *et al*, 1995: 132)

Of course, a greater difficulty in offering such transformative experiential-based training programs deals with their consistency and longevity. As with any professional field that is still in its relative infancy stage, where establishment of a governing body for the profession has yet to occur, the reliability of a uniformed teaching base (certification or ‘credentials’) becomes a key factor in stabilizing the view of the field as a profession. That is to say, without a universalized, accepted outdoor education training program for

teachers, each individual program that attempts this will vary from the next, and also vary within itself as semesters progress and external factors play out around it.

One of the oldest Canadian teacher education programs involving outdoor experiential education has been offered by Queen's University, Faculty of Education... However, it has changed over time, changes I would suggest that mostly have to do with financial pressures, personnel and safety issues. (Puk, 1999b: 181)

Of the many factors that can influence the progression of these programs, one of the leading causes for this fluctuation in goals and programming of outdoor education teacher training certainly has to deal with the availability of experienced educators/facilitators.

One problem with this situation is that the few teacher training programs that offer experiential education depend upon the energies of a few people... This has to be a practical consideration for any administrator in creating such a program. You can always find many qualified people to teach English or physical education, etc., in a tenure track position in a teacher training program. It is not as easy to find people to teach outdoor experiential programs with the same level of qualifications. (Puk, 1999b: 179)

This issue of finding qualified people will come up again when I discuss the role of existing outdoor education programs currently existing in public schools in the next two chapters. The difficulty of a profession in its infancy stages develops because of a 'chicken-or-the-egg' dilemma. You need knowledgeable instructors with a unified vision to offer a consistent teacher training program, but in order to get these you need a consistent and stable training system from which they are to come. Therefore, one might consider this potentially being the biggest single obstacle for outdoor education to overcome in order to establish itself as a distinct and recognized profession within society.

If the profession of adventure education would invest seriously in universities as training vehicles for entering professionals, perhaps a

college degree would be the only certification we would really need. (Cockrell, 1990: 260)

Again, not only would a well established training program allow for consistency and unification in the field of outdoor education, it would also provide a ‘legitimacy’ to the profession as viewed by the greater society. By addressing how we prepare educators to work in this field, we can also reframe how the general public may work together with such a system of experiential education. That is to say, by utilizing existing educational structures for certification, such as university-based degree-granting programs, outdoor education can naturally generate a ‘partnership’, where now the greater institution develops an investment in such a program.

They [training programs] provide skeptics with a framework within which to understand those ‘silly games’ we play. This, in turn, allows our students to more effectively enlist support of potential educational partners, such as teachers and administrators in more traditional schooling systems, and with parents or potential sponsors. It gives them a more persuasive and credible voice in educational reform. (Plaut, 2001: 138)

Where this potential partnership between outdoor education and public schools develops is in the outdoor education teacher themselves. Being a member of a larger institution, such as the public school teaching profession, an educator who is trained in experiential outdoor education methods is able to bridge these theories into current practice. “College level degree-granting programs represent an opportunity to train practitioners who are bilingual when it comes to the rhetoric of adventure education and more traditional schooling methods” (Plaut, 2001: 138). Therefore we might consider the idea that an outdoor education teacher training program would not only support the enrichment of experiential education methods in the school system, but also provide an avenue for the legitimacy of outdoor education as a profession by linking said curricula with existing

teaching institutions. I will return to this conversation once we have examined more in-depth the next element needed to consider outdoor education praxis for public schools: the method of delivery for such programs. It is by considering how outdoor education is used, or can be, in schools that will allow us to properly frame how a teacher training program may manifest itself to serve the needs of both the field of outdoor education and the public school institution.

4.3 Educational Frameworks for Modeling Outdoor Education in Schools

When one considers how outdoor education can be utilized and integrated into the public school system there are many ways in which to view such interaction. I will propose that we can consider three generalized methods of delivery for this to occur. These I will call 1) supplementary outdoor programming, 2) curricula-based outdoor programming, and 3) integrated outdoor programming. (Technically, there would be a fourth method one might consider and that is extracurricular outdoor programming or school ‘leisure’ pursuits, but this type of interaction requires no pedagogical balancing between forms and thus will not be considered here.) These generalized methods differ from each other in terms of duration of exposure, integration with existing curriculum, and thematic context or emphasis. Each will be briefly outlined here in this section, and then I will draw more specific examples and case studies from the literature as well as present new research for this conversation in later chapters.

Supplementary outdoor programming can be considered the ‘one-off’ programs used by schools to expose student to concepts and experiences in outdoor education. Simple examples such as a school hiking trip may focus solely on the outdoor experience itself in terms of value, or link the outing with current school-based curricula. The importance to the expedition would be that, in some way, it supplements or enhances school objectives currently in focus for the students. The example of the hiking trip may be used in a specific course such as science for the study of biodiversity or to survey principles of ecological impacts to a sample site, or it may be more general in outcomes for the school such as an expedition to encourage trust and teamwork amongst students. One important characteristic of what I define as supplementary outdoor programming is

its duration: typically these experiences are isolated within themselves. There may be overlap in the school, which would strengthen such experiences, either as preliminary discussions or the essential de-brief sessions that allow students the opportunity to reframe their understanding based on the expedition. However, supplementary outdoor programming would tend to be isolated from one activity to the next. Flow or connections between various activities may be planned but are weak at best, as each has its own defining outcome and goals specific to that activity.

It can be easily argued that this form of outdoor education is the predominate method of delivery currently used in the school system, and thus its impact should not be underestimated. However, my discussion on outdoor education in public schools will not address this delivery approach in any great detail because such a method of delivery makes it challenging, at the least, to distinguish the ultimate goals behind such an activity. The espoused theory of any program should be in curriculum enrichment, either in specific outcomes (such as the sciences) or general outcomes (such as communication skills). Since schools are based on curriculum outcomes, any one-off program must be able to speak in these terms. The difficulty arises in the theory-in-use of possible supplemental outdoor programs: are their goals centered on school outcomes or their own agendas? For example, when a class goes on a hiking expedition was this activity planned with the curriculum outcomes established first and the program developed to meet these goals, or was the hiking trip designed first and then attempted to be linked with existing outcomes? The importance to this is that if expeditions are planned prior to outcome considerations, as is frequently the case when dealing with an external outdoor education company or provider, then the value of such a program in terms of how it relates to the

school would always be in question. Certainly there are good programs that design themselves around the needs of the school and the students, but the other programs that attempt to justify their practice in the terminology of outcomes would also have the same espoused theory of being derived from curriculum outcomes. That is to say, is an outdoor activity attempting to justify its existence through connectivity with schools even if its goals were not genuine to this form? Without being able to clearly distinguish the two forms, it makes it challenging to discuss outdoor education in public schools in the context of supplementary outdoor programming without adding in this possible bias. The interaction between outdoor education and public schools centers on the use and meeting curricular outcomes. Therefore, the remainder of my conversation will explore the other two methods of outdoor program delivery, which I will argue have greater connectivity to schools and their curriculum.

Curricula-based outdoor programming is a much rarer form of outdoor education being used in the public school. Here, the actual school board or Department of Education of an area has developed outcome-based curriculum specifically focused on outdoor education. As such, the use of outdoor education does not become a supplementary form of course enrichment that must be supported with other outcome-based curricula. For example, a class hiking expedition would no longer be designed to meet the curriculum needs of say a science class, but now be used to meet the outcomes established for an 'outdoor education course'. Obviously the first requirement of such a delivery system is that the governing institution has already placed a value on outdoor education and thus established specific outcomes to be met. This may be done as a part or unit of a larger curriculum guide, say a physical education course, or be a dedicated

stand-alone curriculum document entirely focused on outdoor education. The strength to such an approach would be in terms of outcome specific objectives established prior to the course activity. For example, a teacher may weigh the value of a hiking expedition using a ropes course over that of a kayaking program depending on how it meets the outcomes of the course or unit. Although far from a common approach, such curricula-based outdoor programming has been developed in some school boards, and the extent and implementation of this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

The final method of delivery, integrated outdoor programming, shares some similarities with supplemental outdoor programming in terms of developing activities to enhance existing curricula of other school subjects and courses. However, the fundamental difference is seen in the scope, duration, and connectivity of the outdoor education experiences. Here, outdoor education is used methodologically as a thematic teaching approach over the entire duration of a course in order to strengthen student retention of the taught outcomes through an experiential means. Larger programs can develop a cohort system, where one group of students shares a number of classes that all use outdoor education as a thematic teaching base. For example, within a high school semester a group of students may all take the same section of courses in say English, science, art, geography, physical education, history, or almost any other course offered, and all are taught with a thematic emphasis on outdoor education. This can also be done with a single teacher or a team of two teaching multiple courses to the same cohort of students, and the actual sequence of individual course outcomes may blur and blend together in the thematic approach. Here, the activities utilizing outdoor education must be more carefully designed to meet the curricular outcomes of the subjects simply because

of the larger exposure time involved. Teachers might be able to afford to lose one day on a supplementary outdoor program that does not truly meet their outcomes, but if the activity represents a significant part of a course's timetable then the teacher must ensure good overlap with the curricular outcomes. Even more, by attempting to use outdoor education as a thematic teaching tool, the teachers involved must develop an expertise in making linkages between outdoor education activities and specific course outcomes. Obviously such an approach represents a significant commitment by the teacher and students to be willing to immerse their studies so deeply in an outdoor education setting, as well as making the multitude of logistics even that more challenging.

That being said, there are indeed a handful of such programs in existence, and this method of outdoor program delivery is the focus of my research presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis. For now, a deeper examination of curricula-based outdoor programming will be discussed so as to allow for a better comparison and dialogue to be generated in Chapter Six, focusing on integrated outdoor programming, as a means of identifying key differences between the two systems. By recognizing and distinguishing how outdoor education has been incorporated into public schools, I will argue that this provides a greater understanding of potential learning binds that have formed in practice which have hindered this process from becoming more widespread and accepted by society.

Chapter 5 – Curricula-Based Programming: Outdoor Education as Curriculum

5.1 Outdoor Education Curricula for Schools

The difficulty in understanding how new subject content, like outdoor education, may play out in a public school is that it typically becomes dependant on existing subject areas. For example, the current value of outdoor education in Canadian schools is often linked to such ‘established’ areas of education like the sciences (environmental issues), history (cultural understanding of place), or English (thematic journal writing and expression). Here, outdoor education becomes a means, or theme, for teaching existing school-based course outcomes (as will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter).

However, as much as the approach allows outdoor education a linkage with schools, it does not place value on it as an identifiable subject.

There is codifiable knowledge about teaching in at least three areas: teaching practices, content, and classroom enactment. The assumption inherent in this organizational framework is that these three factors are shaped and constrained by the dictates of the traditional subject disciplines. Unfortunately, experiential education – call it method, call it philosophy – is almost never elevated to the status of a statutory subject, like mathematics, or reading. (Raffan, 1995: 117)

Therefore, in order to fully understand the possible synergy that can develop between public schools and outdoor education it would be of value to find a system that has raised outdoor education to the status of ‘subject’. Although little discussion of this has occurred in North American schools (and the corresponding literature and research), it has however become an established practice in some Australian and New Zealand school systems (detailed in this chapter), and also some initiatives in Scotland (for example, see OLSAG, 2010).

5.2 Australian and New Zealand Initiatives

In New Zealand and the Australian states of Victoria and South Australia, outdoor education has been developed into curriculum-based subject matter for secondary schools. A brief outline of each of the three initiatives will be outlined here in order to set a context for this discussion of curricula-based outdoor programming. This is not to say that all outdoor education in these areas consist of actual curriculum initiatives, and it must be recognized that other outdoor education programs are run in Australia and New Zealand that will not be presented in this discussion.

We have two quite distinct outdoor education systems in play in this state [of Victoria]: the extra-curricular ‘camps’ programs that are often run for large groups of students such as entire year levels; and the semester or year length elective subjects including OES [Outdoor and Environmental Studies], offered as one of a range of academic courses to middle and senior students. Both are called outdoor education, but they have very different learning objectives and pedagogical strategies. (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 39)

Here, they distinguish a difference between extra-curricular ‘camps’ programs, which I have referred to in this thesis as supplementary outdoor programming (and perhaps even the forth category of leisure pursuits), to that of curricula-based outdoor programming as they define as distinct elective subjects.

In the state of Victoria, the school district established the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) in Outdoor Education in 1991. With its full introduction in 1992, the state of Victoria had over 5500 senior school students enrolled in this elective course/program. By the late 90’s approximately one third of Victoria’s 468 secondary schools were offering the VCE in Outdoor Education to their grade eleven and twelve students, while still maintaining a number of curriculum initiatives in this field for grades between seven and ten (Lugg, 1999: 27). The importance of the VCE was the shift in

understanding of how outdoor education served the needs of students. “The socially critical study of human-nature relationships in VCE Outdoor Education is the key difference between this view of outdoor education and other conceptions” (Lugg, 1999: 28). Here the school curriculum moved away from the idea of outdoor education as personal growth to the primary emphasis being on group and environmental interactions. (It is important to note, as discussed later on, that even though there was a curriculum shift away from personal development that this concept is still entrenched in much of the teacher’s dialogue on the subject.) Although prior to this, outdoor education had still been a curriculum component, having been established as an outcome in 1989, the creation of the VCE has been seen as a pivotal point in outdoor education in the schools.

In Victoria, Outdoor Education has been a curriculum component in its own right since the publication of The Personal Development framework in 1989. The subsequent introduction of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Outdoor Education in 1992 has been a significant influence on the development of Outdoor Education thinking and practice in Victorian schools. (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 42)

Since this time, other initiatives were undertaken and the VCE Environmental Studies was developed. This course never gained the momentum that the VCE Outdoor Education did, and so in 2001 a new course was developed called the VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies, which attempted to blend the practice of outdoor education with the content of environmental education. Preliminary studies indicated that this course became more attractive for student enrollment (Lugg & Martin, 2001). From this survey research, the authors determined the scope of activity and outcome focus that was being utilized in outdoor education.

Results indicate that group cooperation, improved self esteem and increased responsibility were considered the most important outcomes of Outdoor Education. Fitness, survival skills and recreation/leisure skills

were considered the least important. Interestingly environmental appreciation and knowledge were considered quite important while understanding of human-nature relationships was considered less important... Environmental action rated poorly in comparison to other environmental outcomes. Leadership was generally considered more important by principals than by Outdoor Education teachers. (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 44)

Here we can start to see how educators blurred the lines between personal development and group interaction by considering them jointly in outcome requirements. This may possibly be only a semantic difference and the reason why some authors claim that the VCE Outdoor Education shifted from one to the other, yet both personal development and group interaction still remains persuasive in the dialogue. “These findings essentially paint Outdoor Education as personal development education, a finding consistent with the inclusion of Outdoor Education in the Personal Development framework, or the Health and Physical Education key learning area” (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 44).

A survey of South Australian secondary schools found a similar framework for outdoor education in this state as was present in Victoria (Polly & Pickett, 2003). There were some subtle differences in practice and approach, particularly found in dealing with a more rural rather than urban population, but for the most part it was consistent with other findings.

The responses indicate that coordinators rated most highly those outcomes related to personal development, interpersonal skill development, and personal relations. They rated least the outcomes of environmental action, fitness and academic improvement. (Polley & Pickett, 2003)

However, this survey was one of the few that did not involve a study of the state of Victoria. Even though it represents a wider range of outdoor education in curriculum expanding outside this one state, its later development in South Australia and the more informal use of outdoor education in the rest of Australia indicates that outdoor education

as curriculum is still a generally localized occurrence. However, their findings allowed for some correlation of outcome objectives and indicated that similar to its origins in physical education, outdoor education was still grounded in personal development and group interactions with a progression into environmental science and related issues.

A similar pattern of curriculum development had evolved concurrently in New Zealand. Prior to the 1940's, their 'outdoor education' was mostly recreational in public schools. Later on a greater educational focus was taken, and by the 1970's it became more directed to the "skills and values that are associated with employability" (Zink & Boyes, 2006). In 1999 outdoor education became one of seven key learning areas of the Health and Physical Education (H&PE) curriculum. "Outdoor learning is included in the Science, Social Studies, Environmental Education and Technology curriculum statements but it has an explicit place as a key learning area in the H&PE curriculum" (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 11). The general curriculum outcomes established there can be summarized as follows:

To achieve the outdoor education aims of the H&PE curriculum students require a range of structured, sequenced, and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities in outdoor education. These include: 1) adventure activities and outdoor pursuits that focus on physical skill development, fun, and enjoyment, 2) adventure activities and outdoor pursuits that focus on the development of personal and interpersonal skills, 3) learning about the traditions, values, and heritages of their own and other cultural groups, including those of the tangata whenua [Maori meaning 'people of the land'], 4) opportunities to learn about the environmental impact of outdoor recreation activities and to plan strategies to evaluate and manage personal and group safety, challenge, and risk, and 5) finding out how to access outdoor recreation opportunities within the community. (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 12)

Although similarities exist between the New Zealand and Victoria models, it is interesting to note a minor distinction: Victoria schools went so far as to establish outdoor

education as a stand-alone course for senior grades, while New Zealand kept outdoor education under the directives of a physical education curriculum initiative. As such, to no surprise, the Australian system developed a quicker and more in-depth focus on environmental issues than the New Zealand counterpart, as it provided more exposure time for students to outdoor education and thus an increased likelihood of curriculum expanding into environmental education. But exactly how these school systems evolved their outdoor education curriculum is important to discuss.

5.3 Outdoor Education as Curriculum

Similar to other country's public school systems, in Australia "many writers have criticized the narrowness of education based on mechanistic thinking" (Cooper, 1996: 12). As such, outdoor education initially gained momentum in their school system as a curriculum focus on personal development. Like the broader field of outdoor education in its various states of play, there is an underlying emphasis here for the role of the individual within the group, and it was considered that such an approach had benefit in the school system. "It is clear from working with young people in the outdoors, in informal situations, that some fundamental needs are not being met by education in schools. There appears to be a need for community" (Cooper, 1996: 11). This need for community, combined with the concept of environmental awareness became the founding points for its curriculum development in Australia. From this, their education system established the role that outdoor education was going to play for students:

Outdoor education focuses on personal development through the interaction with others and responsible use of the natural environment. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills that enhance safe access, understanding and aesthetic appreciation of the outdoors, often through adventure activities. (Lugg, 1999: 28 – quoting *The Personal Development Framework P-10* [Victoria's public school curriculum guide], 1989: 131)

The inclusion of outdoor education in their course offerings was seen as a way to address the perceived weaknesses of a school system relying on 'mechanistic thinking' (a concept very similar to points addressed by other authors already presented in this thesis, such as Schön's technical rationality).

Good education is holistic, it is concerned with mind, body and spirit, motivation and enthusiasm are essential ingredients of effective learning. ... Young people who underachieve in the classroom may suddenly come

alive and show a range of skills that have remained hidden in formal teaching. (Cooper, 1996: 11)

Thus, early on, one of the principle aims for the curriculum of outdoor education for schools was this concept of personal development. Here the medium of the outdoors would be used to provide transformative experiences to students. “The methods of development training is compatible with educating future citizens. ... There is little doubt that this learning cycle helps participants to clarify values and make changes in their behaviour” (Cooper, 1996: 13). However, this associated value of outdoor education in schooling practice needed to be substantiated. For this, Neill & Richards (1998) used a meta-analysis of survey and outcome data to support the claim that outdoor education ‘works’ in the Australian school system.

These results are a positive endorsement of outdoor education as a legitimate and effective educational training method... A particularly impressive strength would seem to be that outdoor education programs can trigger in participants an ongoing cycle of personal growth. (Neill & Richards, 1998: 7)

From this study, the authors concluded that one of the most common claims that outdoor education programs make a valuable contribution to a person’s sense of worth for him or herself could be seen to be present. “This evidence suggests that participants experience additional growth on returning to their home environments” (Neill & Richards, 1998: 4). What was even more interesting to note is that they addressed the issue of transference; how the personal development skills learned in an outdoor environment are conducive to everyday life. Here they even suggested that outdoor education was seen to have an even greater lasting effect than other methods developed in the school system.

With most forms of intervention and training there is a steady loss of benefits once the program finished. This makes the long-term outdoor education results particularly impressive. (Neill & Richards, 1998: 4)

From this starting point, outdoor education curriculum as a means of personal development, the Australian and New Zealand schools established outdoor education as a viable and legitimate curricular topic to be offered to students. What is now important to discuss is how such a subject as outdoor education in schools has potentially transformed in concept since its inception.

5.3.1 Shifts in Outdoor Education Curriculum

The scope of outdoor education for Australia and New Zealand curriculum has undergone a pendulum effect between two key aspects: that of generalized personal development and that of more established curricular topics, like environmental sciences. Initially, outdoor education was seen as a form of personal development, or having a focus on individual skills. “The location of outdoor education primarily in the H&PE [Health and Physical Education] has ramifications relating to the perception and practice of outdoor education in Victorian schools” (Lugg, 1999: 30). However, a shift in curricular focus was observed to occur.

During the last decade outdoor education curriculum in Victoria has moved considerably from the emphasis on individual development to one which focuses on developing an understanding of the ecological concept of interconnectedness and the social and cultural influences on human-nature relationships. (Lugg, 1999: 27)

Thus, it could be argued that outdoor education underwent changes that prompted for more ‘specific outcomes’ than what are normally associated with personal development, which in curriculum documents tends to be an overarching outcome itself not specific to any one discipline or subject. What is interesting to note is that Lugg in a later study commented on how those in the profession viewed such a transition.

The majority of teachers and principals see the educational value of Outdoor Education as primarily related to personal development objectives with environmental objectives of secondary importance. (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 47)

Here we start to see an interplay emerge between curriculum development and teacher practice, and that sometimes there is a discrepancy between the two. “Some teachers in the current project admitted that their outdoor education ‘agenda’ was based in their personal passions and did not necessarily reflect the stated aims of the program they worked in” (Gunn, 2006: 32). Therefore, even though curriculum documentation on outdoor education has shifted from personal development to environmental objectives, it is not clear to what degree of an actual transition may have occurred in terms of teacher practice. However, at the very least it could be concluded that their outdoor education programs have shifted to more greatly include environmental objectives. This growth in curricular frameworks was noted by others;

Further support for this [that outdoor education is more than physical education] is the assertion by over 60% of responding teachers that outdoor education is linked to other curriculum and learning areas. Over 30% of schools linked the outdoor education program to the Society and Environment learning area and 30% linked the curriculum to the Science learning area. Other learning areas mentioned included English, the Arts, Tourism, Maths, Technology, and Language Other Than English. (Polley & Pickett, 2003)

In addition, even though many teachers recognized what they considered ‘personal development’ outcomes for their courses, there was a significant shift in how they perceived the value of performance-based skills as thought of in terms of physical education.

Most participants made reference to environmental knowledge or appreciation as well as personal development as being desired outcomes of outdoor education. ... In both the journals and interviews, very few

teachers commented on activity skill development as being a primary outcome for outdoor education. (Gunn, 2006: 31)

More so, outdoor education transitioned to what may be considered more reflective learning. It developed into a better model of experiential education than simply being a skill-based model which is more representative of outdoor leisure pursuits. “I am suitably impressed by recent efforts to develop the ‘Australian’ model of OE that incorporates elements of critical thinking with a deeper understanding of ‘place’ and one’s connection to a particular environment while engaged in challenging experiences” (Priest, 2000: 65).

This conflict between its origins as physical education and its role with more encompassing environmental and group considerations caused a shift not only in curricular outcomes but also in entire course structuring. In the state of Victoria, the VCE Outdoor Education was combined with the VCE Environmental Studies, and the resulting curriculum established in 2001 was called Outdoor and Environmental Studies. However, there was more behind this than simple semantic name changing, and it represented the blending of various like-minded outcomes. “The merging of *Environmental Studies* with *Outdoor Education* was intended to give an academic orientation to complement the perceived skills basis of the *Outdoor Education* study design” (Gough, 2007: 20). However, outdoor education still maintained its identity and simply used concepts in environmental issues to enhance its outcome base.

The discourses of the *Environmental Science* document have been regulated so that there is a greater likelihood that the subject will be acceptable to scientists and science teachers whereas the study design for *Outdoor and Environmental Studies* has been allowed to be more holistic in its approach, while aiming to be acceptable to outdoor educators. (Gough, 2007: 20)

Thus, even in curricular objectives a distinction was made as to the role of outdoor education as it shifted to a more 'academic' orientation while still attempting to maintain its identity as a distinct course. "Outdoor education distinguishes itself by its separation from schools and its experiential orientation, yet environmental studies are generally school and text based" (Gough, 2007: 23)

However, the origins of outdoor education in the physical education documents and its shift to environmental sciences, while attempting to hold on to its identity as an experiential-based learning model, created a multitude of understandings of what the 'subject' represented. Thus, "Along with the numerous definitions of outdoor education come equally numerous goals for outdoor education programs and subjects" (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 40). From this, an emphasis has developed to try to understand the context of outdoor education in schools.

The diversity and complexity of that history is reflected in the lack of semantic agreement around outdoor education in New Zealand. One of the challenges has been to move away from a narrow, activities based focus to finding terminology that encompasses education that occurs outdoors. (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 12)

It was also noticed that general trends in outdoor education throughout the New Zealand school system showed that teachers perceived it more as curriculum enrichment in later grades, whereas they still viewed it as activity-based in younger grades (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 15). This curricular shift between grade levels is similar to that which occurred for the senior outdoor education courses in Australia, and may represent a comparable transition in thinking.

5.3.2 An Outdoor Education Body of Knowledge

Along these lines of determining the terminology used to understand the subject of outdoor education, it has been suggested that “what’s lacking is a coherent outdoor education body of knowledge” (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 39). To frame the concept of outdoor education, these authors took the view of its practice in schools as curricular-based subject matter. By doing so, it can be suggested that they made the clearest distinction between outdoor education as curriculum versus more of a generalized and encompassing personal development program.

Because of our focus on developing a body of knowledge for outdoor education as a curriculum subject we deliberately avoid framing any definition from the perspective of personal development and growth in participants. Such a focus may be appropriate for extra-curricular outdoor education programs, but we believe it is not suitable for an outdoor education subject embedded within a curriculum as an equal with other, more traditional subjects. (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 39)

Here their emphasis was in developing an understanding of the content of outdoor education and what one would expect students to learn from such a subject. From this perspective they proposed four parts that should comprise an outdoor education curriculum: 1) knowledge construction, 2) outdoor environments, 3) living and traveling in outdoor environments, and 4) ecological sustainability (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 41).

Each of these areas of content was further broken down to define how the outdoor education curricula may be structured:

(1) Knowledge construction consists of a) recognizing and valuing different ways of knowing, for example, scientific, spiritual, religious, cultural, artistic and indigenous, and b) making and examining arguments.

(2) Outdoor environments consists of a) understanding natural environments and built environments, b) understanding differences between environments, from the perspective of human relationships with those environments, c) understanding differences in human relationships with environments over time, and d) understanding basic ecological concepts.

(3) Living and traveling in outdoor environments consists of a) developing basic skills in outdoor environments, and b) understanding risk in outdoor relationships.

(4) Ecological sustainability consists of a) developing and understanding connection with place, b) understanding environmental and other worldviews, c) knowledge of environmental ethics, d) knowledge of minimal impact practices, e) understanding sustainability, and f) participating in environmental action.

By outlining such a content-based curriculum for outdoor education, the authors were not suggesting a change in approach to outdoor education, and maintained that the emphasis on experiential education and the ‘hands-on’ activities would still be critical components.

In establishing a body of knowledge that focuses on environmental understandings and relationships we are not advocating that adventure activities be removed from outdoor education programs. These are often the things that make it attractive for us to go into the outdoors in the first place – especially for many teenagers – and removing adventurous activities may well reduce the interest in many students for examining and developing an understanding of environmental issues associated with the outdoors. (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 43)

As the complexity of the subject of outdoor education grows in Australia and New Zealand, and as the curriculum shifts to include more and various aspects to its content knowledge, a fundamental need for teacher training and certification has started to take form. It has been recognized that “as is the case in both Victoria and South

Australia, outdoor education is predominantly taught by enthusiastic teachers many of whom appear to have developed their outdoor skills separate to their teacher training”, and while this trend was being observed, Christchurch Polytechnic in New Zealand had a dedicated outdoor education degree program graduate its first cohort in 2005 (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 19). However, the challenge of teacher training for a shifting curriculum does not represent the only barrier for the Australia and New Zealand outdoor education programs.

5.4 Logistical Barriers

Being the largest of such curricula-based programming in the field of outdoor education, a good amount of study has been possible in Australia and New Zealand that examines the practical and logistical barriers associated with running such dynamic and nontraditional programs. As mentioned previously, establishing content in outdoor education becomes important if it is to be viewed as an academic subject. Of course, the need for establishing content can also become a barrier.

The lack of clarity about the purpose and content of school outdoor education, even amongst outdoor educators, serves to inhibit its development both within the education system and in the industrial sector. Outdoor education will continue to remain on the 'fringe' as an extra-curricula offering in schools unless outdoor educators can clearly articulate its educational purposes, content and methods. (Lugg, 1999: 25)

Thus, central to the idea of offering an outdoor education curriculum is the importance of understanding the scope of that subject, not only in terms of the institution as a whole but also in reducing different conceptions amongst outdoor educators. Questions have risen as to whether or not this has developed because of differences in interpretation of the existing outdoor education curriculum or a lack thereof. "It is not clear whether the lack of public articulation of the aims of outdoor education is due to a general lack of common understanding among outdoor educators, or to the lack of *documentation* of those aims" (Lugg, 1999: 27). It has been discussed that "there is scant specific information about Outdoor Education programmes, teachers or implementation issues in [Victorian] schools" (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 42), and that understanding of how outdoor education operates as a subject body is important. Also, the difficulty in offering a program area that also happens to operate outside the public school system is that the general public develops many preconceived notions of what these programs would look like. In many

cases this creates an industry-based idea of what outdoor education should look like rather than an academic one. Thus in order to address this fundamental barrier that may arise, outdoor educators must unify and present a clear and distinct curriculum.

The belief in the ability of outdoor education experiences to ‘speak for themselves’ in relation to educational goals and outcomes may, in fact, be a significant contributor to the general lack of understanding of outdoor education as a component of the school curriculum. Tacit understanding may be effective amongst those who have shared the outdoor education experience, but it is unlikely to be effective in convincing policy makers of the value of outdoor education. (Lugg, 1999: 27)

Such a political view for the articulation of outdoor education curriculum is similar in scope to the general promotion of outdoor education in schools (Miner, 1993), as discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

From this position, clearly defining this curriculum becomes important when considering how these courses have shifted from a focus on physical education and personal development skills towards more specific course-based outcomes such as environmental science. An importance in distinguishing the exact role of outdoor education, as something more than just ‘simply’ physical education, is in how the institution will assign teacher appointments to such programs.

The location of outdoor education in the H&PE Learning Area may inadvertently perpetuate the perception that outdoor education is the province of the physical education teacher. ... In recent years at least, teachers with physical education qualifications but no formal outdoor education qualifications, are being employed specifically to teach outdoor education. ... It also suggests that outdoor education is not understood as a distinct component of the curriculum requiring specialist knowledge and expertise. (Lugg, 1999: 30)

Because of this, it has been suggested that the exact nature of teacher preparation becomes critical. “What is needed in Australia and New Zealand is an arrangement where the three approaches of program accreditation, leader qualifications, and staff

certification can exist in harmony and with synergy” (Priest, 2000: 67). This again links back to a fundamental aspect that in order for outdoor education to run as a consistent program, there must be a unified understanding of the subject by those teachers in charge of it, and at the same time ensuring they have developed the skills and content knowledge needed to execute such a program.

If outdoor education curriculum is becoming more focused on environmental education through experiential education in natural environments, the training of the outdoor education teacher is a crucial issue. The kind of knowledge and skills required will be more specialized. ... Considerable in-servicing will be necessary for teachers as the outdoor education curriculum evolves. (Lugg, 1999: 31)

This need for teachers that are specifically trained in outdoor education theory and methods has become identifiable as a significant hurdle to implementation of these courses. “36% of teachers thought finding appropriate staffing the main issue... Staff expertise and qualifications is an underlying issue in identification of barriers to the conduct of programmes” (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 46). It has been suggested that such teacher training should be done by a variety of sources and training institutions in order to ‘produce’ the best outdoor education teacher (Priest, 2000: 67). Possible training logistics might include the use of sport governing bodies to develop technical and leadership skills that often require specific certifications for insurance licensing, being combined with interpersonal skills, such as teamwork theory, being developed by universities or colleges. It is felt that “the key here is to make sure no one agency does all the developing” (Priest, 2000: 67) in order to maintain a diverse and up-to-date program. Yet in some studies, the discussion of certification versus qualification had surfaced again:

In general many felt that experience was more important than qualifications but that training and education was important. Significantly, metropolitan state schools rated qualifications as more important than experience with many teachers concerned about legal liability. Many coordinators felt there was a lack of recognition by training bodies for previous experience and that courses were too difficult to access. (Polley & Pickett, 2003)

However, the perception of these programs and the subsequent required teacher training are not the only possibilities that could create barriers for outdoor education programs in the Australian and New Zealand public schools, if implemented as curricula-based outdoor programming. Studies in the state of Victoria have shown numerous 'simple' logistics creating potentially overwhelming barriers that, at times, have greatly hindered these outdoor education courses.

Staffing, cost and timetable are the big three [barriers], which is no surprise. Generally teachers looking at conducting Outdoor Education programmes seemed thwarted by the need to find appropriate staff to support the practical excursions seen as essential to Outdoor Education. (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 46)

Likewise, similar to these findings, it was determined that programs in the state of South Australia were also presented with these difficulties.

The survey results suggest that outdoor education is generally valued as a curriculum area, but schools are experiencing difficulties with the implementation of outdoor programs. The barriers experienced by SA [South Australia] secondary schools can be largely categorized as economic, staffing and logistical barriers. ... Both coordinators and Principals reported largely structural rather than philosophical barriers to the implementation of outdoor education within schools. (Polley & Pickett, 2003)

In addition, it was discussed that these practical barriers and resource limitations for implementation of outdoor education programs was compounded or intensified by the teacher staff for these courses having school qualifications in discipline areas other than in outdoor education, and thus not 'experts' in this field (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 48). In

New Zealand, a similar trend in barriers occurred with only a slight difference in the emphasis on perceived difficulties.

The cost of the program was seen as the greatest barrier to teaching in the outdoors. ... The crowded curriculum was seen as a greater barrier in New Zealand schools than it was in the Australian schools surveyed. ... Demands on personal time, emphasis on safety and the paper work involved with organizing outdoor education programmes were seen as the next greatest barriers. (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 18)

Here a noticeable change in the discussion dealt with the notion of a crowded curriculum, and this may be due to differences in how outdoor education has been offered: as a distinct course in Australia and as a single unit incorporated into a physical education course in New Zealand. Another point when dealing with the demands on personal time was that it was suggested that heavy workloads became a choice of dedicated teachers rather than requirements of these programs (Gunn, 2006). However, there is a potential difficulty in distinguishing this fact if one considers that indeed a demanding workload would naturally 'select' teachers who maintain such jobs that were very dedicated and would unsurprisingly put in extra time.

In order to address these logistical barriers for outdoor education, it was proposed by Polley & Pickett (2003) that six key support measures are needed to be in place, as was determined by research conducted with coordinators of these outdoor education courses in South Australia. These measures, rated in order of importance, are: 1) an established budget for outdoor education, 2) set teaching relief time, 3) supplemental resources to teach the subject, 4) general support required from administration and other staff, 5) continual in-service training, and 6) availability of post graduate university courses.

In addition to these more pressing barriers discussed, there were numerous other factors that concerned teachers as potential barriers that would play into the exact role of outdoor education in schools (Polley & Pickett, 2003). These included: 1) the aging population of teachers reducing the tendency to take students on outdoor experiences, 2) the failure of certification and training bodies to acknowledge teaching experiences, 3) getting funding support becomes a constant struggle, 4) the time spent away from families, 5) the lack of recognition of the value of outdoor education in schools and society, 6) difficulties in obtaining staff with appropriate qualifications and experience, 7) the instability of the workforce within the Education Department causing the demise of many good programs, 8) dissatisfaction with the Education Department at placing inappropriate staff to these positions, and 9) frustration with activity specific training bodies requiring difficult to obtain qualifications for simple outdoor education activities.

However, an even greater barrier was considered for these programs:

The very attributes that make outdoor educators effective, for example independence, strong commitment and lifestyle investment, are the ones that most threaten their longevity in this field. (Gunn, 2006: 29)

Thus, in a way, we come full circle. Certainly logistical issues are, and will always be, pressing and needing to be dealt with in effective curricula-based outdoor programming if we wish to utilize these courses in schools. Yet, does the very nature of experiential and outdoor education, and the methods of delivery used, present greater barriers to implementation? In order to deal with such a question, this argument brings us to the discussion of outdoor education utilized as pedagogy versus its development as curriculum.

5.5 Subject or Method?

What is very interesting to note in the literature of Australian and New Zealand public school outdoor education programs is that although they have been established as curriculum-specific outcomes and courses there is still some confusion as to their nature as curriculum or pedagogy. For example, research has noted how teachers respond to such an issue:

The statement that respondents most consistently agreed strongly with is that 'outdoor education can enrich all curriculum areas'. As a corollary to this, respondents agreed least strongly with the statements that 'outdoor education is based substantially in the H&PE curriculum' and that 'outdoor education is mainly focused on outdoor pursuits'. Yet at the same time respondents were less inclined to agree with the statement that outdoor education is best thought of as a teaching methodology. More detailed investigation of teachers' beliefs and values is needed to try and tease apart this apparent contradiction. (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 18)

Here we see a potential confusion develop, maybe even one being a result of outdoor education teachers wanting 'the best of both worlds'. It could be suggested that these teachers have developed an espoused theory that places the value of outdoor education in many subject areas and thus has great importance in public schools, but at the same time they wish to view outdoor education as being strongly content driven, perhaps as a way to strengthen the notion of a needed specialization in their field of study as a way to elevate it to the status of profession. Yet when one considers how educators mostly see the value of such programs presented here there becomes a difficulty for establishing them as a stand-alone subject.

The learning outcomes that were considered most important [to teachers] were largely concerned with personal and social development. These included group co-operation, improved self esteem, consideration of others, safety knowledge, increased self-responsibility and social and communication skills. (Zink & Boyes, 2006: 16)

Where this becomes important is in dealing with how outdoor education will establish itself and its role in the school system. “If the school community does not see Outdoor Education as having distinctive content it may be more difficult to justify as an essential component of what is often perceived as a ‘crowded’ curriculum” (Lugg & Martin, 2001: 44). Thus, in order to ‘defend’ a needed role of outdoor education in schools, educators must develop an outcome-specific curriculum that reinforces its educational value for schools. But the discernment of outdoor education as method or as content still surfaces in individual’s theories-in-use for this issue. “The weak support for the role of outdoor education in developing academic outcomes likely reflects a general perception that this subject is a practical one” (Polley & Pickett, 2003). Because of this general perception in education that anything of ‘value’ must have specific outcomes rather than being an effective established methodology, the importance in creating curricula-based outdoor programs for schools becomes a matter of subject survival.

Lugg and Martin (2001) conclude that outdoor education may be harder to justify in schools if it is predominantly about personal development outcomes, as there are other subjects that can make legitimate claims for similar outcomes. They suggest the problem lies in outdoor education’s emphasis on process rather than having a distinctive content. (Gunn, 2006: 33)

Thus, one aspect of curricula-based outdoor programming can now be suggested to be true: it allows for a stronger integration of the subject of outdoor education into public schools, even if it does not fully address the exact nature of these programs for that school system. Here we can understand this in political terms: curricula-specific programs in outdoor education start to speak the dominate ‘language’ of the larger institution, and thus the governing body, who usually has less of an appreciation and understanding for the theory and practice of outdoor education, can now understand

possible linkages for their schools. But even as Australian and New Zealand schools have established curriculum in outdoor education, and certainly strengthened the notion of this area as being a viable subject worthy of study, it has not made significant headway in clarifying outdoor education as curriculum. “For the current research participants, it is not the content necessarily that makes outdoor education distinctive but the context” (Gunn, 2006: 33). Such an ambiguity may have possibly developed, again, out of political necessity. It may actually be a case that many outdoor educators ‘feel’, or have a tacit theory-in-use that the value of outdoor education lies within it as context, but that in order to justify their practice in the public school system they may be politically motivated to develop an espoused theory stating its value as content.

Again, however, the language of the outdoor educator and researcher assists in creating this learning bind where the distinction of outdoor education as method or content still becomes difficult to ascertain.

We divide the goals of outdoor education as falling broadly into two categories: those aimed at improving social and individual skills such as leadership, self-confidence, team work and cooperation, motivation and so on; and those aimed at developing environmental understandings and awareness. (Bucknell & Mannion, 2006: 40)

The difficulty with these two broad categories is that they have the potential to speak to different elements of schooling. In terms of individual skills, such as leadership, self-confidence, etc, these can often be viewed as ‘global’ outcomes. As such, global outcomes become embedded in specific outcomes and demonstrate the ability for them to be addressed across a wide range of curricular topics. Thus, they essentially become a methodology; an approach to teaching specific outcomes in a manner that addresses the embedded or global outcome. This is in stark contrast to such aims as environmental

understanding and awareness, which would require specific teaching outcomes. Here, the subject content would be directly guided by what exact content knowledge is to be taught to students, such as for example the roles of global warming on a marshlands ecosystem. This distinction between embedded versus specific outcomes can also be linked to the larger debate of outdoor education as method or content. Furthermore, it demonstrates how curriculum language may hinder any immediate clarification.

This debate in the role of outdoor education in schools is not helped when one considers the typical origin of much of the outdoor education practices beginning within the commercial outdoor industry. Here, outdoor education companies must rely more on their trade as providing a content or specific skill base than what may be needed in the school system.

There is an obvious dissonance here with the previously mentioned call for a distinctive content that suggests a disassociation between the school and tertiary sectors of the outdoor education field. This distance needs to be addressed if each is to profit from the other's expertise. (Gunn, 2006: 33)

As such, influence from the industry sector of outdoor education may naturally create a shifting weight to establishing outdoor education in schools as curriculum rather than pedagogy. What is also interesting to note is that such a view may be slightly, or perhaps significantly, in conflict with the practices of many outdoor educator teachers. Such a distinction may result in a continuing rift between school and industry that does not allow either to grow from such a potential interaction (since schools could benefit from the expertise of the industry, while the industry could benefit from the validation of their field as having educational merits in the more public realm).

However it may be viewed, it must be acknowledged that the Australian and New Zealand system of curricula-based outdoor programs are still the best case-studies available to consider the role outdoor education has as curriculum in the public school system. We have discussed how educators in these areas have developed such a program of study, and how they have come to understand both the importance and limitations of such a content-based course within schools. As such, though the idea of curricula-based outdoor programming for schools may be significantly more limited in practice than supplementary outdoor programming, the discussion of these examples provides a solid base for establishing its viability in schools.

From here it will now be of significant value to explore the idea of integrated outdoor programming and to compare and contrast this practice with that of curricula-based outdoor programming. From this I will play out an argument that addresses the need of outdoor education in schools as being one that is predominately based on either a pedagogical method or one sounded in curriculum outcomes.

Chapter 6 – Integrated Programming: Outdoor Education as Pedagogy

6.1 Integrated Curriculum

While curricula-based outdoor programming requires its foundation to originate in a Department of Education or school board that provides ‘official’ course guides for its existence, the other two forms of outdoor programming, supplemental and integrated, do not. Though supplemental outdoor programming requires much less preparation and commitment than integrated programs, by being considered a ‘one-off’ approach or activity to support a particular school topic, it can also be considered equally less dependant on that curriculum. Many supplemental outdoor programs are run in schools that may only loosely connect to the school’s curricular subjects. By having such variation, the existence of supplemental outdoor programming has an equal chance at hindering the progression of outdoor education in schools as it does to benefit it. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, integrated outdoor programming relies much more heavily on developing a strong interconnection with existing school curriculum, and thus has a greater potential for enhancement. Another aspect that will be discussed is that the influence and enrichment that integrated outdoor programming has for school curriculum is paradoxically based on its difficulty for implementation; since these programs are challenging to start, the teachers who are typically involved tend to be very gifted in their profession and, by their very nature, this reduces the chances for weaker programs that could potentially devalue the role of outdoor education in schools. But this difficulty in implementation means that integrated outdoor programming exists

as a much rarer form of school-based outdoor education than it does as supplemental programming.

While school-based environmental education practices across Canada are diverse, it is still unusual to find environmental education infused into all secondary school subjects or integrated so that the curriculum is organized not around subjects but interconnected issues and themes. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 287)

Although Ontario recently created initiatives to implement many programs for interdisciplinary studies (Barrett, 2002), our main conversation will focus on integrated outdoor programs generated by practicing teachers as ‘grass-root’ initiatives. The rationale for this is two-fold: first, the creation of a system of interdisciplinary studies programs focus on many other areas besides outdoor education (such as industry preparation, health professions, and business programming, to name a few) and as such may lose many key and critical elements of outdoor and experiential education by developing a more global program system; and second, by creating such programs at the Department of Education level there becomes the possibility of blurring the lines between curriculum and pedagogy because of how easily they are able to transform curriculum documents at the departmental level in order to align with new programs. For example, if an integrated program does not align well for the inclusion of existing curriculum, at the Department of Education level it is possible to create new curricula to meet the goals of the new integrated program. Therefore, in such a case the ability to distinguish between curricula-based and integrated programming is diminished.

In addition, it must be recognized that integrated outdoor programming (as well as other themed programs) is not exclusive to Canada, but has been developed in other countries as well (Drake, 2002). In particular, simply because of the sheer size difference,

programs (and research) in the United States that have integrated outdoor education as their core far outweigh initiatives in Canada.

While there has been some research conducted on the Canadian programs, to date there has been nothing to rival Lieberman and Hoody's 1998 US study of 40 schools which had adopted what they called the EIC model – the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 48)

This one study alone culminated data from enough schools to represent an equivalence in number to roughly all integrated outdoor programs present in Canada (COEO, 2003). However, the focus on Canadian integrated programs in this thesis is for three reasons: first, it provides more preliminary research through Canadian educational systems which can be noted as being lacking in the journals; secondly, it aims to provide a base that may potentially expose differences in practice and pedagogy between Canadian- and US-based programs that would allow a starting point for future research; and finally as a Canadian dissertation, this work is more interested in the Canadian contributions to this discussion in terms of how they relate to our existing public school system. However, at this point it will be assumed that such differences in program approach would most likely be slight, and that both countries, and others, utilize the same general system of implementing integrated outdoor programs, as will now be discussed.

6.1.1 Thematic Approach to Teaching

The most fundamental element of integrated outdoor programming is that it incorporates the theme of outdoor education as a teaching methodology to span across existing school curriculum subjects. Here in Canada, outdoor education as process

becomes more important than as content, since the content nature is already outlined in the subject material that outdoor education endeavors to integrate together.

Integrated Curriculum applied to the outdoors is a blending of skills and knowledge from a number of traditional subjects to be presented through a holistic teaching approach in the outdoor classroom whereby the students gain credit for the integrated subjects. Integrated curriculum is a curriculum where the students cannot discern between subject material because the lessons of each subject are intermeshed, as in life. (Comishin & Potter, 2000: 26)

Again, it must be noted that differentiating between the notions of outdoor education as curriculum versus pedagogy is not common, and thus some researchers, as above, speak of integrated programming as 'curriculum' even though they then immediately discuss it in terms of a holistic teaching approach.

The key feature of integrated outdoor programming is that by using a themed approach to learning, although specific subject curricular outcomes are present, they are no longer organized sequentially or specifically separated into 'subjects'. For example, in an integrated outdoor program a teacher may have students undertake a winter 'skills' camping expedition. Although students would gain non-school oriented content (the 'hard-skills' or technical skills of cold weather camping), activities would be geared to cover other school subjects within the curriculum; for example, journal writing for English class, analysis of a dormant winter ecosystem for a biology class, or perhaps a comparison of contemporary and historical technologies used for wilderness survival for a history class. Each of these outcomes would no longer be isolated in separate activities, and it would become difficult for students to actually distinguish which course is being taught at any given time. Again, the difference in this approach as compared to supplemental outdoor programming is that this would not be a 'one-off' activity:

planning how this activity becomes the primary source of learning for a subject outcome is different than teaching it in a regular classroom and then using an outdoor theme to reinforce the concept. Here, the outdoor classroom is the only avenue for the concept to be handled and thus a much greater focus on integration with existing curriculum becomes critical.

6.1.2 Structuring of Integrated Programs

Although there are relatively few integrated outdoor programs in Canada (COEO, 2003), or elsewhere in the world, the exact nature and design for integration and implementation can be quite varied. However, they all share a fundamental structure that defines them as ‘integrated’:

In these programs, students spend the full day with one group of peers and one or two teachers, as in elementary school, for a semester. An integrated approach involves grouping four or five subjects together to make a "package" (for example, from physical education, leadership, environmental science, geography, English, or co-operative education). Courses to be offered are selected by individual teachers based on their own areas of expertise. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 288)

Students, who often undergo a selection process due to the popularity of the programs, would enroll for such integrated outdoor programs the previous school year. Then every student is essentially scheduled into a cohort structure, where each has an identical timetable of courses for the semester that they are participating in the program. The courses are selected by the teacher and typically represent courses in which they have experience and knowledge, and also ones that are best met around which to design the course. These can typically include the ‘standard’ courses such as English, biology, and physical education, but may also involve co-op (work placement) credits and/or

specialized locally developed courses. There are even cases where the co-op credit is designed to give students a leadership role by providing high school student led supplementary outdoor programming courses for elementary school students, and thus further increasing outdoor education exposure in schools (Russell & Burton, 2000; Jupp, 1995). The only course selection in the integrated program is typically that students elect to enroll in the entire program, although some allow for a variance in one course by having the program cover the learning outcomes for five courses while the students officially are graded for four, hence given choice in one elective.

As with any program, the final grades are separated into the core school courses for administrative and graduation purposes, but while in such a program students cannot typically discern one course from the next in day-to-day activities.

Sample course outlines and culminating units representing different ways to structure interdisciplinary programs have also been developed [by Ontario for their interdisciplinary studies initiative]. Of particular interest to outdoor and environmental educators will be a model 5-credit package incorporating Interdisciplinary Studies (Grade 11, Open), Environment and Resource Management (Grade 12, University/College), Healthy Active Living Education (Grade 12 Open), English (Grade 11, University), and Field Ecology from a Local Perspective (Grade 11, University/College; a locally designed course that has already received ministry approval). (Barrett, 2002: 5)

Yet, “it is one thing to put schools subjects together by administrative fiat; it is quite another for students to integrate their learning” (Horwood, 2002a: 8). This becomes a central issue for teachers implementing integrated outdoor programs: by providing a thematic means for delivery and integration, teachers must do more than simply rearrange the sequence of particular course outcomes; instead they must ensure that the thematic delivery enhances student performance and information retention. The best example for this is to critically examine one program that has a slightly different origin and focus:

This July, the first “English in the Wilderness” course ran at Outward Bound Canada (OBC). The three-week course combined the traditional OBC curriculum with ENG 3U, a grade 11 English credit. This is the first time an academic, university preparation course has been integrated with the core OBC summer program. (McIntyre, 2004: 12)

Here is an example that demonstrates integration of a public school course within an existing outdoor education program. However, what is fundamentally different between this and integrated outdoor programs offered by provincially-funded public schools is the emphasis of curriculum integration designed by classroom teachers. Arguably, classroom teachers hold a greater ‘specialization’ or experience for curriculum outcomes, as the outdoor industry educator does for skill-based expeditions. Because of this, it became noticeable in McIntyre’s paper that much of the ‘integration’ of the English credit did not have sound pedagogy. Here there was a good deal of assignment work prior to the trip expedition: reading texts, assignments, and even quizzes resembled a similar structure to traditional classroom teaching and did not provide much added benefit for integration of outdoor education. However, at one point they did use their own outdoor journey quite well as an active lived metaphor for the experiences of a main character in their book of study – a good example of integrated outdoor programming. But for the most part, OBC used the English course rather traditionally and this brings into question that they, outdoor educators, were not experts in curriculum design, unlike teachers, and managed only a blanket approach to more traditional methods that happen to be in the outdoors (not true integration). Therefore, similarly in the regular school system, teachers need to ensure that an integrated outdoor program is more than simply a name and scheduling framework for students; elements of outdoor and experiential education must enhance the student’s learning environment.

Another significant benefit of a cohort-designed integrated program is that it alleviates a great deal of scheduling pressure from the school for the teacher. Here, a high school teacher that is normally used to teaching in very set one hour or so blocks now has the same group of students for the whole day, similar to that of an elementary school teacher. Because of this, there is little problem in an activity taking many hours or even a day or more to complete. Likewise, subject outcomes do not have to be evenly disbursed throughout the day; some days may see more of a focus on biology than English, or physical education rather than art class. Some programs have even gone a step further:

To free the programs from timetable constraints, many are physically separated from the school itself. For example, some programs operate out of portable buildings on school property, and others bus students off-site to nearby camps or natural areas. Some also involve extensive travel both within Canada and beyond. Outdoor and experiential learning is emphasized, thus students in these programs usually spend the bulk of their time outside the classroom. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 289)

Here obviously the medium of the outdoors is important for such programs, but by developing a cohort structure this not only allows for a more flexible teaching timetable, but now also allows for more flexibility in location. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties with supplemental outdoor programming is that, by its very use of the outdoors, it typically requires greater time blocks than high school scheduling allows. How often can a biology teacher pull students away for full-day field expeditions before other teachers start to complain about the effects of this on their own classes? With the natural structure of the integrated outdoor program this major difficulty is overcome.

6.1.3 Central Features

Beyond the structure of integrated outdoor programs, we need to consider what central features are incorporated into such a learning environment. Then I will examine how such a system benefits students and their academic performance. However, it is the use of central features, or themes, that allow integrated outdoor programs to become more than simply a change in structural logistics for the student's courses.

The main focus of this program [Earthquest, a program also contained in this thesis's research] is not to make fantastic backcountry skiers, paddlers, hikers, cyclers or climbers; it is to provide students with personal and professional direction, build self-esteem and leadership skills, and to become more responsible citizens. Earthquest facilitators mentor these lessons through the aforementioned outdoor activities. (Comishin & Potter, 2000: 28)

What these programs do not do, however, is change outcomes; student's learning objectives are still embedded in actual school-based course outcomes. For example, an outcome, say a particular writing outcome for English class, is met through a journal entry during an expedition. The value may have been in the experience, but the graded outcome for the school has not changed. Thus we may start to see how teachers developing an integrated outdoor program are more concerned with outdoor education as method rather than as content.

Bert Horwood (2002a & 1995) outlined six central features for all integrated programs (note: he referred to these as integrated curricula rather than programs, but a distinction is made here from previous arguments on curriculum versus pedagogy). These integrating factors were: (1) experiential learning, (2) whole process, (3) authenticity, (4) challenge, (5) responsibility and (6) community (Horwood, 2002a: 7). Here, he described experiential learning as meaning that instruction placed prime value on students having

early, first-hand experience with every aspect of the program. The whole process refers to the experience having a reasonably complete sequence of events and authenticity that these experiences make a solid connection and relevancy to the student's real world. From this, Horwood found that students faced greater challenges in this setting than they would in a regular school setting, and from this they developed a greater sense of responsibility to both their studies and their teacher. By utilizing experiential learning, through a whole process with authenticity, that would provide challenge and increase responsibility, a strong feeling of community develops in the class and makes it possible for "individual learning to become common property" (Horwood, 2002a: 7).

Another study found similar patterns for integrated outdoor programs:

Building on the insights of the students in the ESP [Environmental Studies Program, a program included in this thesis's research], there are four interrelated characteristics of this program, and integrated programs in general, that the two of us find particularly appealing: experiential learning, authenticity, connections to human and natural communities, and holism. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 298)

Here experiential learning and authenticity are obviously the same factors as described in Horwood's work, while connections to human and natural communities could be considered the same as community, and holism being similar to whole process. "Learning through direct experience is the quintessential factor that integrates curriculum elements. Direct experience is present to the highest degree possible in outdoor education. On this count, therefore, the outdoor curriculum stimulated integration of the whole" (Horwood, 2002a: 11). From these key elements of an effective integrated outdoor program, we can now consider how these programs bring benefit to student learning and growth as individuals, arguably over and above what the traditional classroom has to offer.

6.2 Program Benefits for Students

Obviously with such a specialized thematic teaching environment as outdoor education requiring a large time commitment of an entire semester for a group of students, a significant value for such programs would need to be recognized and established. Here we will begin to see many elements that were considered in the early chapters on outdoor and experiential education across many learning environments start to surface again. As such, what becomes important for this discussion is to consider how these recognized elements can enhance the function of public schooling, and in which cases do they allow outdoor education to fill a vacancy in the needs of our students.

In my experience, integrated programs like ESP offer a unique alternative to the regular classroom environment. They create an atmosphere where students can develop a love of knowledge, the ability to think critically and creatively, and a respect for our world and for others. In the program, I felt that students became more informed about themselves and about the world in which they live. If the goal of public education is to create engaged and informed citizens who are dedicated to life-long learning, then there should be more integrated programs since they go a long way towards meeting this goal. (Henderson, 2002: 16)

From this description of integrated outdoor programs we can notice that the language used centers on process-oriented material much more than a specific content. Issues such as thinking critically and creatively or life-long learning are not sole possessions of outdoor education. However, as outdoor education in general utilizes experiential education to enhance its impact on individuals, we can also consider that outdoor education (using this experiential framework) could do the same for school students. Of course, what becomes important is not only how we, as educators, consider the possible value of these programs for students, but also what students perceive as benefits for learning standard school material in a more novel and holistic approach to the classroom.

There have been a number of Canadian studies that have examined student perception of integrated outdoor programs and how they benefit learning (Horwood, 2002a; Russell & Burton, 2000; Jupp, 1995). From these studies I will discuss key elements of importance that can be drawn out from such an approach. However, first a few critical points must be acknowledged. First, with integrated outdoor programming being such a rare form of outdoor education in schools there is little empirical evidence to 'conclusively' state how it beneficially operates in Canada. Secondly, one must view student opinion with a certain degree of bias. Although we can gain insight into elements that students feel are important in such programs, all involved had elected to enroll in such programs; unlike a typical classroom where not all students have chosen to be there. As such, it does not become a question of whether or not they strongly support such programs, as they probably do, but wherein they place value for their learned experience.

That being said, general themes do come out of the research that demonstrate program attributes valued by students which are typically not present, or to a much smaller degree, in traditional classrooms (particularly at the high school level that concentrates more on academic achievement rather than individual growth). Jupp (1995) found four main areas of importance to students: authenticity, empowerment, responsibility, and personal relations, Russell & Burton (2000) summarized three important themes: experiential learning, interpersonal skill development, and personal growth, and Horwood (2002a) indicated patterns valuing three areas: inescapable consequences, personal growth, and a 'sense of wonder'. I would propose that all of these program traits valued by students can be encompassed by distilling them down into two main areas that I will call (1) authentic learning and (2) personal growth.

Authentic Learning. One key aspect of traditional classrooms about which many teachers hear students complain is that what they are learning doesn't 'mean anything' to their everyday life. That is not to say that the school curriculum does not have a connection, but it does mean that it is not apparent to some (or most) students. Where integrated outdoor programs use existing course outcomes, the relevancy of material has not changed but the student's ability to understand and relate to the curriculum has. Thus, many students in such programs speak highly of the practical nature of their studies.

Theory is taught and learned for a reason – to use it. A Bronte Creek student will not have a single day's notetaking not used in practice by the end of the semester. ...For the students of the Bronte Creek Project, this type of schooling is more authentic than traditional high school – their responsibilities reach beyond work habits and marks. The theory is put to practical use and the outdoor setting makes them feel alive and connected to their subject matter. (Jupp, 1995: 20)

This authenticity in learning styles gives students focus on the material being presented to them. Students, like many of us, typically do not like to learn material for which they cannot perceive a functional value. How many of us would want to spend the time to learn the theory of a musical instrument if we knew we would never be given the chance to play? Similarly, students in integrated outdoor programs come to understand that material covered will have, or has already had, relevance to their activities and provided enhancement for their performance. This, of course, is a major element for experiential learning in general.

Most students indicated that learning experientially, outdoors, was easier thus more effective for them than a traditional school setting. In the words of one student, 'we actually did the things we were learning about, instead of just learning about it.' (Russell & Burton, 2000: 294)

One aspect to generating relevancy to real-world scenarios, over the isolated realm of a traditional classroom was what Horwood (2002a) called ‘inescapable consequences’. Here he considered that:

Inescapable consequences ensure that experiences have an edge they would lack if the outcomes of the experiences could be evaded. The world of the school is too small to be able to follow the complete process in any enterprise. But when the necessary indoor and outdoor steps are strung together, there is continuity of linked processes and integration is improved. (Horwood, 2002a: 10)

That is to say, because activities and expeditions utilize taught elements in order to generate successful experiences, students then find this a driving force for their learning. For example, in a typical traditional classroom a teacher may assign individual projects to students to complete. In some cases, once finished and collected, the teacher finds that a number of students did not bother to hand in the material. Of course these students may be given a final grade on the assignment of zero, but both teacher and student know that even though they did not do this work, the next day they would move on with the rest of the class in their studies. If a student did not value grades highly there would be no real consequences for them not doing, or learning, the material presented to them. In the case of an integrated outdoor program, the inescapable consequences are generated because if such an assignment was not completed this could actually cause a particular expedition or activity to be stopped, or even worse place students in an unsafe environment. For example, if the student did not fulfill his or her role on an expedition (e.g. data recovery of the ecosystem visited) then as a class this might negate taking the expedition to the next survey site. Or in another case, by not preparing material or equipment prior to an expedition may cause the teacher to deem the trip too risky without the proper knowledge or skills required for its margin of safety.

Personal Growth. The second element of which students speak highly of in these programs, in many various forms, can be summarized as feeling a great sense of personal growth from the time they started the program to its culminating end.

Many [students] discussed their increased awareness and knowledge about nature, environmental issues, and environmental action. Others discussed opportunities to learn about and test skills needed in various careers. Others brought up more personal issues, particularly growth in self-awareness, learning patience, trust, and team-work, building self-confidence, and increasing their physical fitness. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 297)

Here, many students considered their personal growth both in terms of intrapersonal, such as self-awareness and patience, and interpersonal, such as trust and team-work. In most cases, students spoke more of how to use the knowledge gained rather than a greater value placed on the knowledge itself. That is to say, by linking their learning with actual activity, students became empowered with their growth in knowledge content. Again, this would imply value being placed on these activities as process rather than just content. From this, students also noted how empowering action strengthened their views on personal responsibility.

Personal growth makes experience have personal meaning, as distinct from academic or impersonal meaning. Outdoor education provides the most pointed demands for responsibility, and students know when they rise to that demand. The challenge of apparently impossible outdoor events enables students to probe their perception of limits, both for themselves and others, which includes the artificial limits of subject-specific learning. (Horwood, 2002a: 11)

Here we see how students perceive their personal growth in terms of rising to challenging circumstances, perhaps one of the most fundamental notions that James (1910) spoke of for outdoor education providing a moral equivalent to war where individuals could build

virtue in the face of adversity, as a means to the commitment of the common good (see section 2.2.1 of this thesis).

In addition to this gain in intrapersonal growth, the structure of these integrated outdoor programs allows for a greater interpersonal framework, and one very similar to early elementary school classrooms.

In a program more akin to the elementary model where students spend the entire day with one teacher and one group of peers, there is greater opportunity for students to get to know one another and more attention is devoted to learning how to work as a team. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 296)

It is important to note that this strong sense of teamwork, which is rarely present in most traditional high school classrooms, is strengthened by the very nature of the age of the students being older than in elementary grades and by these programs instilling a sense of empowerment and responsibility. From this, students have a greater opportunity to work collectively, but due to these changes in maturity from earlier years, can do so now with more autonomy from the teacher. Here this allows the teacher to become more of a facilitator than they could in an elementary school model, and thereby again increasing the impact that such a methodology has on group work and social dynamics among the students.

All of these characteristics of personal growth for students were seen to be enhanced by the physical and socially unfamiliar environment of the outdoors requiring a greater degree of teamwork. However, it has been suggested that another element plays into this: a sense of wonder.

The sense of wonder brings emotional validation to processes that are otherwise mostly intellectual. Experiences are put into a context that includes intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social elements. Students marvel at the cumulative, creative effect of linked steps in complete processes. (Horwood, 2002a: 11)

Here students commit more than just simply intellectual energies as they would in a regular classroom. The cumulative effect of these programs, both individually and collectively, draws out other aspects of learning, including the emotional connection for learning. Shared experiences within a group generate a bonding effect that strengthens the learning moment. Students interviewed after such programs have often indicated how many of their other classmates who did not take the outdoor program ‘wouldn’t understand’ or ‘won’t get it’ in terms of how transformative such experiences have become for them.

In addition to this work, the Lieberman and Hoody Study (1998) for the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER) in the United States found similar results as was established for these Canadian programs. More importantly, the extensive nature of this study (over 40 individual programs involved) has given perhaps the only published work that has empirically examined this issue of integrated program benefits for students to this degree of magnitude, and has been used as a key foundation point for further research (for such examples see Comishin, *et al*, 2004, and Russell & Burton, 2000). It has been summarized that:

Through their examination of standardized test, samples of curricular materials, student work, and interviews with teachers, administrators, and students, Lieberman and Hoody provide solid evidence that integrated environmental programs can have positive outcomes. For example, they documented a significant improvement in student performance in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Further, they concluded that such programs have the potential to: (1) ground learning in authentic ‘real world’ experience; (2) demonstrate links between subject areas; (3) foster responsibility, collaboration and a sense of community; (4) increase and enhance student-teacher contact; and (5) improve relations among students. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 48)

Here we see similar themes surface as seen in the Canadian studies, such as authentic ‘real-world’ experience, responsibility, and community. They also pointed to the benefits of greater student-teacher contact, which is a similar notion that many such as Dewey, Schön and Freire thought to be of critical importance for experiential education in general. This study is perhaps of even greater critical importance for schools and teachers since they not only examined the more global benefits of such programs for students but they also linked this to increased performance in more skill-based school subjects such as reading, math and science. This would be of particular interest to bring to the attention of any administration for teachers attempting to start up such integrated outdoor programs as it speaks directly to values that the greater educational system view as fundamentally important, and thus helps counter the tacit perception that outdoor education is ‘just playing in the woods’.

It has been noted however, that even though such integrated outdoor programs offer substantial benefits to student learning, there is a potential that such intense but limited durational exposure to experiential education may weaken its lasting effects on students.

It [experiential learning] opened their eyes to a whole new way of thinking about their education; however, it should not be expected to completely transform their paradigm. It simply did not have enough time... Perhaps we can start by extending their experience. Not so much in the programme, but through a support network created once the programme is over. (Hobson, 1996: 28)

This, of course, is a similar argument as presented in Chapter Two of this thesis when discussing transference and rites of passage. It is not only the degree of isomorphism between the outdoor experience and the student’s usual social network that is important, but the degree that transformative experiences can be maintained after such a program (if

general society does not recognize the transformed moment as a rite of passage). Indeed, this can be considered a particular limitation of integrated outdoor programs: due to their intensive nature, typically there is little, if any, follow-up support for students after the integrated outdoor programs are complete. However, with the limited number of such programs, and the corresponding research and literature, this question has not been able to be addressed specifically in this context and thus we must rely on the more general arguments for sustained exposure to outdoor education already presented in this thesis. But this is not the only obstacle that integrated outdoor programs must face.

6.3 Barriers for Implementation

Similar to curricula-based outdoor programming, although there is established student benefits in learning by using integrated outdoor programming there are many barriers that hinder a more widespread implementation of such an approach. Many of the general themes in possible barriers branch across to both curricula-based and integrated programming, but a few that will be discussed here appear to dominate more of one program style than the other.

The most immediately noticeable difference between the two programming methods is that there appears to be a much greater time commitment for integrated outdoor programs. Here, it is not simply the extra time that teachers need to devote during field expeditions and trip planning, but it spans over to the entire logistics and development of a complete integrated program. Teachers now are required to promote the program, select student participation (typically done with application and student interviews the year prior to the program), program budgeting, and most importantly redesigning the implementation of four regular school courses around a thematic outdoor approach, not to mention typically having to teach outcomes from four different courses at once and doing so without release or prep time during the program. Also, this stress placed on available time is intensified if a teacher is attempting to bring such an integrated program into their school or board for the first time.

There is a substantial amount of preparation required in getting the program initially off the ground, continually adapting it to comply with new Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, changing Board priorities, internal school politics, and teacher contract issues concerning teaching and supervision time. Moreover, the amount of time required to organize it on a yearly basis is substantial. (Russell & Burton, 2000: 299)

This need of ‘continually adapting’ to curriculum guidelines and board policies is another barrier that appears in a different form than with curricula-based outdoor programming. In curricula-based programming, typically the initiative was developed at a higher administrative level than the classroom teacher, one that allowed those designing such curriculum to maintain a consistency with other projects and curriculum directions, or to modify such directions as to allow for outdoor education. Yet, in the typical integrated outdoor program the creators tend to be ‘simply’ very talented classroom teachers who have no substantial voice in policy direction.

The greatest difficulty [while developing integrated curriculum] was adhering to the ministry’s need for coherent units that meet curricular expectations while remaining true to the reality that, in a fully integrated interdisciplinary package, learning refuses to move forward in a strictly linear fashion or to be bound by static curricular units. (Barrett, 2002: 5)

The above quote is an example of conflicts arising when a group of teachers were attempting to ‘streamline’ concepts of integrated programs at the administrative level. Here at this level of education, the focus becomes what school subjects ‘look like’ in terms of curriculum units and corresponding documentation rather than the ‘how’ of implementation. Thus, we see that an emphasis on outdoor education as process (as in integrated programming) rather than content (as in curricula-based programming) means the teacher no longer speaks as directly to the dominant political language of a system that is driven by curricular outcomes.

In addition, by shifting away from curricular outcomes to a more thematic learning style, integrated outdoor programs also generate more difficulties with aligning assessment strategies to the larger educational system. “The dilemma is whether to evaluate student learning to fit discipline-based expectations, or to evaluate on the basis

of integration” (Horwood, 2002b: 4). Is it fair to create a learning environment that promotes teamwork and critical thinking only to then grade students on standardized content recovery that aligns with the traditional courses which it utilizes? Although, this certainly brings forward a valued question, most integrated outdoor programs have been able to function successfully in public schools by doing just that. However, it is interesting to note in the literature that many students place great value on the experience of the program as actually overriding any academic credit acknowledgement. This possibly suggests that students involved in such programs have moved on to model II double-loop learning where they have reframed their perception of grades versus the value of personal growth that is not as easily assessed or credited by an institution.

Of course, it is not only a matter of teachers finding that a rift can develop between their programs and the Department of Education or school board level, but also within their school. The shift away from the emphasis of outdoor education as content and towards process can create a similar limiting perception of such programs with principals and staff of a school.

Each [of the teachers surveyed] described several instances where they felt a lack of support when developing their own integrated program. Examples included administrators who constantly demanded justification of the pedagogical approach, administrators who worried about increased risk and liability issues on trips, colleagues who felt that pure disciplines were preferable to ‘watered-down’ interdisciplinary approaches and who considered outdoor programs to be of little academic value; and colleagues who felt that the existence of an integrated program in the school would threaten the viability of their own departments. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 50)

Here, teachers cannot rely on any validation brought down from higher levels of administration to support the existence of their programs, as could be the case for curricula-based outdoor programs that operate under documented and established school

board outcomes. Of course, with the limited number of such integrated outdoor programs operating in schools, “another ongoing problem is convincing skeptics of the value of integration by gathering data” (Horwood, 2002b: 4). Many principals, administrators, and even staff can potentially be swayed in their perceptions of outdoor education if it is substantially backed-up with ‘facts’ adhering to model I technical rationality. This is certainly a circumstance that can demonstrate the need for outdoor education research in schools in order to advance such understanding of it as a pedagogical approach. By considering how the school system would view integrated outdoor programs, this places the argument back into political terms, where the value of such programs cannot simply be thought of as being clearly understood by the larger institution.

An integrated program does not operate in a vacuum and effort must go into harnessing any possible support and developing strategic alliances. ... The teachers also stressed the importance of always being prepared to justify the existence of the program, as many people will not value it as much as its creators. Documenting the learning outcomes of the program, collecting student materials that demonstrate significant learning, keeping a scrapbook of photographs and positive publicity, and being aware of research that supports the existence of such programs are all helpful strategies. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 50)

In addition to these more global barriers for integrated outdoor programs that deal significantly with the overall educational governing body, there are still a number of barriers that operate within such programs. Although most have already been addressed, Horwood (2002a: 12) considered four major problems arising from integrated packages: (1) the administrative difficulty of finding adequate blocks of time, (2) the dominance of assessment for grades in most school systems, (3) budget constraints, and (4) lack of teachers competent in both school subjects and outdoor leadership. Others have also considered similar barriers to integration; Comishin, *et al*, (2004: 49) outlined five

common challenges in developing and implementing integrated programs: (1) funding constraints, (2) insufficient support from administrators and colleagues, (3) time constraints, (4) liability and risk management, and (5) inadequate skills and qualifications. Of the barriers not previously discussed, this leads us to examine internal factors that affect an integrated program: funding, risk management, and teacher qualifications.

Certainly funding support and risk management can be considered vital, but also logistical in nature. That is to say, most would agree that effective fundraising and careful risk assessment should be an ongoing emphasis for the success of such programs. More fundamental to this issue, perhaps even encompassing the areas of cost and risk management, is the qualifications of the teacher. This is a similar consideration for any outdoor program designed for public schools as to whether the teacher has a sufficient background in outdoor education to be able to run such a program. However, this is intensified with integrated outdoor programs because now the teacher not only has to be a specialist in the field of outdoor education but also must master curriculum design for a broader range of school subjects that are to be integrated into a thematically taught cohort. This is particularly challenging at the high school level where teachers have often already separated into specialized fields.

The teachers [surveyed] mentioned that there was, in fact, a limited pool of teachers qualified to teach these programs, given the emphasis on experiential pedagogy and outdoor skills. ... In their opinion, an ideal integrated program teacher not only needs to have experience teaching, but also an understanding of how to integrate subjects, a strong foundation in environmental education, all the required certifications to teach outdoor skills, and in-depth knowledge of the local area. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 52)

Once again we see the value of teacher training arising in this discussion. More critical, however, is the need for teachers to possess the experience, skills, and training not only in terms of outdoor education curriculum and pedagogy (and the differences between the two) but also the same base-set within the requirements for a general public school teacher who must learn to negotiate assessment and delivery practices among many other varied subjects. It is interesting to note how the issue of teacher training seems to intertwine amongst most issues perceived as barriers to integration of outdoor education in public schools, and may perhaps even suggest that addressing teacher training may alleviate some of these other issues. I will return to this discussion in Chapter Eight after a detailed examination of this thesis's primary research presented in the next chapter.

6.4 The Blending of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Throughout this discussion of integrated outdoor programming, and its corresponding literature, it is interesting to note that there is a perception that teachers view outdoor education as pedagogy much more than they do as curriculum. This is in contrast to the work presented for curricula-based outdoor programming where there appears to be much discussion on where the value of outdoor education for schools should lie, in terms of curriculum or pedagogy. However, a more critical examination of integrated outdoor programming suggests that this question may not be as clear-cut as the espoused theories of the teachers involved would suggest.

When studying the various existing programs utilizing an integrated approach for outdoor education, it can become apparent that although these programs do center around and use some key courses in their design, such as English or biology, many, if not most, also encompass more alternative courses, such as co-op credits, generalized interdisciplinary courses, and locally-developed and approved courses specializing in environmental topics. Many of these alternate course offerings can provide a much more flexible arrangement of course outcomes that allow for better streaming of outdoor education. That is to say, perhaps these courses are selected because they already potentially contain the curriculum of outdoor education but in a different manifestation. For example, in the co-op credits of some integrated outdoor programs, students develop and lead other outdoor programs for elementary students (Russell & Burton, 2000; Jupp, 1995). Here the course outcomes for a co-op credit are aligned to encompass the curriculum of other outdoor education activities. Thus, it may be considered that the use

of outdoor education curriculum may not be implicit for these integrated outdoor programs, but that it may be present nonetheless.

Therefore, a difficulty arises with the potential that integrated outdoor education teachers may have an espoused theory that outdoor education has value as pedagogy, but a theory-in-use that operates outdoor education as both pedagogy and curriculum. Personally, I tend to lean towards outdoor education as pedagogy, but with the careful examination of this field, it does not become apparently possible at this state of play for anyone to truly state which form outdoor education conclusively represents. Of course, from the programs and literature presented so far, it may be argued as to whether or not outdoor education could potentially be both. In acknowledging this potential, it still becomes important, if not more so, to distinguish the two forms of outdoor education. This becomes crucial, as many who oppose such programs in schools often offer up defenses that focus on one form while presenting how they do not meet the expectations of the other form. For example, an administrator may criticize a particular environmental course as not being needed since its content material is present in another ‘established’ science course, yet the emphasis in this environmental course may center on the delivery approach and its localized setting as a field-course rather than as a specialized content. If practicing teachers distinguish outdoor education when used as pedagogy versus curriculum, this reframing of their profession and practice allows the potential to overcome many learning binds that are generated by this existing duality.

Chapter 7 – Qualitative Analysis of Canadian Integrated Outdoor Programs

7.1 *Articulating the Position of Outdoor Education in Schools*

While examining the current state of outdoor education in public schools, as discussed in the previous chapters, three key aspects of interplay between these two instructional systems emerged: (1) lack of research, (2) a dichotomy between outdoor education as pedagogy and as curriculum, and (3) teacher training and certification in the field of outdoor education in public schools.

First, there is relatively little research, in comparison to other educational fields, on *how* outdoor education has been utilized by public schools (as has been outlined in the last two chapters of this thesis). This is not to say that no literature exists for outdoor education in schools, but that a great deal of what has been written examines other focus areas such as gender and cultural shifts in outdoor programming, ecological impacts of outdoor education, therapy use of the wilderness for at-risk youth, sustainability, and inclusion practices just to name a few. Yet, it could be argued that these studies pertaining to outdoor education in schools have been constantly attempting to confirm the benefits of the *why* for bringing these fields together but not the *how*. That is to say, there appears to be a tacit assumption that outdoor education programs in schools would operate in a similar manner as they do in other areas, including the recreational adventure industry. (However, this is a generalization of the overall research field of outdoor education and how it pertains to public schools, and some research does exist that examines the *how*. For examples, see: Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Comishin, *et al*, 2004; Horwood, 2002a; Russell & Burton, 2000.)

This brings us to the second key aspect of outdoor education in schools. If we are to critically examine *how* outdoor education operates in public schools, then a distinction needs to be made as to the purpose of utilizing this field of education: is it methodological, as pedagogy, or is it centered on content, as curriculum? The reason suggested for this clarification is that by each approach, the use (and limitation) of outdoor education can be framed differently based on the program objectives, as described in the previous chapters of this thesis. This is not to say that programs may not attempt to blend both uses of outdoor education (pedagogy and curriculum) in practice, but it is important to identify *when* the *how* of practice is changing. In other words, do we see a change in approach to practice when teachers use outdoor education either as curriculum or pedagogy, and in doing so does this suggest a different set of conditions that operate and define each use? By examining this issue, it would allow for a more articulated argument and also a broader understanding of the interrelations of outdoor education in public schools, and how the two systems may benefit each other.

This leads to the final key aspect of these programs: teacher training. As it has been shown that the understanding of the *how* of outdoor education practices in public schools, beyond the required training and experience in wilderness pursuits, may be limited and varying, this demonstrates a need to unify this practice into one coherent form. That is not to say that we require all outdoor education programs to look and act the same, but rather that fundamentally each teacher needs to understand the role of their program along the spectrum of possibilities ranging from purely a pedagogical approach to purely a curriculum base, and every amalgam in-between.

7.1.1 Purpose and Role of Primary Research Study

To address the issues of limited research, pedagogy versus curriculum, and teacher training and certification, a preliminary qualitative case study was undertaken for this thesis. Although this primary research will add to the existing work being done in this field, it neither intends to be conclusive nor to radically alter the landscape of outdoor education in schools. Instead, it endeavours to shed more light on how outdoor education is being implemented in public schools, by examining its roles as pedagogy and/or curriculum, and in so doing it can provide insight into further needs for teacher training in this area. As such, this research study should be considered supplementary, not conclusive, to the work presented in this thesis. This preliminary research is intended to be supportive in nature: it has been undertaken as a means to determine whether the arguments of this thesis, in terms of outdoor education in schools operating as either pedagogy and/or curriculum, could be noticed as an undercurrent in the dialogue of practicing outdoor classroom teachers. By this approach, it must be noted that this preliminary study represents only a small portion of this thesis and, although it does help to support the arguments presented here, this dissertation does not critically hinge on the results.

By keeping to a Canadian examination for this study, it would have been beneficial to be able to look at both curricula-based and integrated outdoor programming; however, the lack of strong curricula-based programs in Canada proved problematic. As such, the key emphasis for this contributing primary research was the examination of integrated outdoor programming. The larger scheme of supplemental outdoor programming was avoided because of the difficulty in establishing actual strong linkages

to goals of public schools versus the espoused theories that almost all such programs claim. With integrated outdoor programming there is a clear documented need to establish outdoor education activities directly relating to enhancement of school-based outcomes and objectives. However, by selecting only integrated outdoor programs this created a much more limited sampling population to use for such a study.

Currently, there are at least 40 integrated environmental studies programs operating in Canadian secondary schools; most are in Ontario, some others are in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and British Columbia. (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 48)

Previous studies have found that the majority of such programs were located in Ontario, having 26 such integrated programs alone (Crawley, 2003). It is interesting to note that while Ontario has a very high number of the relatively few integrated outdoor programs in Canada, British Columbia has over half of all outdoor adventure companies in Canada (Cloutier, 2005). Perhaps a strong correlation for this situation is that Ontario has the two most established outdoor-orientated teacher training programs in Canada, at Queens University and Lakehead University (other universities do offer some outdoor education courses, but these are the only two that have attempted to bring them together into a distinct offered program).

In addition, with the noticeable increase of such school-based programs, there is no body of work that can suggest if these programs are actually on the rise or merely becoming more visible to researchers and their corresponding literature fields in the last few decades. Certainly it can be assumed that either growth or exposure could perhaps be increasing the apparent number simply because of the ever increasing emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability upon which our society is currently focused. However, a discussion on the relation between outdoor adventure education and

environmental education will be left for the moment and addressed later in this thesis, once this preliminary research is presented.

It is important to note that this work will not attempt to ‘justify’ outdoor education in schools, but rather examine the approach, or *how*, of such interplay. The primary reason for this is a very obvious assumption that can be made: all school teachers involved in this study have a strong bias as to perceive outdoor education as a significant source of excellence for student learning and growth. This assumption will go untested in this work, as the focus is not to establish the validity of such outdoor programming, as it is felt that previous work, already outlined in this thesis, has been published to address this issue. What will be important to examine is the teachers’ perceptions of why and how such programs do so much for student learning that they implicitly feel they accomplish.

7.2 Research Methodology

As mentioned in the previous section, the research undertaken for this thesis was designed to be supplementary, not conclusive, in nature. As such, extensive and rigorous model testing was not undertaken, nor did I commit to any particular interpretive methodology. This work might even be considered as a pilot study, so that the framework and results presented here could be used as a future launch point for a more extensive research study into the role of outdoor education as pedagogy and/or curriculum in schools in Canada and/or elsewhere in the world. That being said, the rationale, approach, and structure of this research study will now be outlined.

7.2.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Analysis

There were two primary reasons for selecting a qualitative research analysis over a quantitative one for this thesis. First, pragmatically, integrated outdoor programming is of such a small size in Canada that it could not provide the volume of work for a conclusive empirical study to quantitatively ‘prove’ any position in this field. Second, it was felt that a qualitative analysis would be more sensitive to teacher back-talk of this field (LeCompte, Millroy, Preissle, 1992), and that ‘confounding variables’ in outdoor education add a greater degree of complexity to research analysis (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2009). Because of the significant interpersonal experiences faced by both teacher and students, integrated outdoor programs must be looked at as a whole rather than attempting to dissect it into parts, as each part plays a critical role in the other.

The most appropriate method for investigating the lived experience of teaching is a qualitative one. The reduction of human experience to numbers or standard descriptive phrases, as is often the case in quantitative research, does little to inform the reader of the actual

experience of the people involved. Teaching is a very human experience, a very emotional project and, therefore, the lived experience of teaching can be affected by a wide variety of factors. The time of the year, time of the week and time of day can all have significant impacts. Outside-of-school experiences will impact on teachers' and students' inside-school experience; location of the school and even the weather can make a difference. With teaching providing such a diversity of possible experiences in a wide range of contexts any attempt to establish *a priori* variables, as is required in quantitative research, becomes extremely difficult. Qualitative methodologies provide a more apposite means of researching complex human experience. (Gunn, 2006: 29)

Therefore, the attempt of this research study is to carefully examine how the teachers contextualize their programs, roles, and significant contributions to student learning and enrichment, while at the same time being sensitive to any possible inconsistencies between programs or among comments from the same teacher as to imply possible tacit espoused theories that may have gone untested.

7.2.2 Participant Recruitment

Two methods were used to solicit participation from teachers for this primary research, both of which are included in Appendix A. The first involved placing an ad requesting involvement in the November 2008 electronic newsletter of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO), the space for which was offered by the COEO as a means to support my work in this field. The COEO is the largest, and perhaps the only, Canadian teacher's organization dedicated to outdoor education and, according to the newsletter editor has a current membership and newsletter subscription of over four hundred. Although they primarily draw from Ontario, membership is represented in most provinces across the country. Unfortunately, this ad only solicited three responses: one from an established but non-integrated outdoor program and two from teachers who were

using outdoor education in their classrooms but without specialized programs. However, such a limited response was not surprising considering how very busy teachers of integrated programs tend to be.

The second, and more successful, method involved conducting a detailed internet search of all possible integrated programs in Canada, and then contacting each individually to request their participation. The limitation of this method meant that any programs contacted were required to have a web presence in order to be identified. Fourteen such programs were found and contacted, and this number would roughly represent one third of all the integrated programs currently being run in Canada (Comishin, *et al*, 2004: 48), although there would be a constant state of fluctuation of such programs as teachers change schools, budgets are modified, or other factors either create or terminate such programs. Of the fourteen contacted, ten indicated a willingness to participate in this research, but three, with regrets, eventually had to pull out as they could not find the time to complete the survey. Seven programs still represents a good number of integrated programs, and, more importantly, to date is the highest number of such Canadian integrated outdoor programs to provide feedback in a single survey. In addition, feedback came from a total of eleven different teachers, each completing an individual survey, as some integrated programs use more than one teacher in their operation.

These seven integrated programs span three provinces: four in Ontario, two in Saskatchewan, and one in British Columbia, and represent an equivalent distribution of all integrated programs across Canada, with larger density being present in Ontario. What is very positive about this survey research is the wealth of experience and knowledge of

these eleven teachers from which it draws. These programs represent, for the most part, the longest and most successful integrated programs in Canada, with the exception being the Bronte Creek Project, which declined to participate due to time constraints. For this research there was a combined total of 209 years of public school teaching, with the average of teacher having taught for 17 years. Likewise, this group represents 233 years of outdoor experience, and an average of 19 years for each teacher. More importantly, these teachers have a total of 176 years running integrated programs, with an average of 15 years each, and a combined total of 22 different programs, as the average teacher has been involved with 1.8 different integrated programs. The most experienced teachers had 38 years in the traditional school-based and outdoor education fields, and had participated in 4 different integrated outdoor programs. For their own initial training in outdoor education, four indicated learning through university courses/programs, six gave credit to gaining industry certifications, and seven referred to having developed a personal experience base from which to draw. With such contribution and feedback, it is considered that these veteran teachers' voices, in the form of this research, will speak well to the overall scope of integrated outdoor programs being offered across Canada.

7.2.3 Ethics Review and University Requirements

The application for the primary research undertaken for this thesis was first reviewed and approved by Simon Fraser University's Office of Research Ethics, and had to meet all the requirements in the use of human subjects. This research project was categorized as 'minimal risk' in accordance with University policy R20.01.

As per university guidelines, each research participant signed an Informed Consent form (see Appendix B), the final draft of which was approved by the Office of Research Ethics. The informed consent document addressed and outlined many issues for the participants, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time, the rationale for conducting the research, how the research data was to be used and handled, and who to contact at the university if they had any concerns. In addition, this form indicated that no names or case studies would be individually documented without the approval of the participant. While maintaining their corresponding gender, the names presented in the analysis section of this research study have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

7.2.4 Structure and Analysis of Research Survey

The original research for this thesis was intended to be conducted in two parts: first an open semi-structured survey, in which each participant could give their individual input, was to be completed; this was to be followed by a second survey that was to rank all responses and have participants comment on the collective summaries. This second survey was intended to provide a participant-checking mechanism to ensure reliability of the data. However, following the initial survey, five of the eleven participants declined further involvement in this study due to personal time constraints. As such, the intention of the second survey could not be achieved. This was considered acceptable due to the fact that the research presented here was not intended to be rigorously conclusive in nature, but rather simply intended to shed some additional insight into the arguments presented in this dissertation.

Each of the eleven teachers involved in this primary research completed the first original survey questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix C. The survey was comprised of a series of questions pertaining to their perceptions of the roles and successes of outdoor education in schools, teacher requirements for such programs, what benefits such programs have for students, and other similar questions. In order to allow teachers to flesh out any points that they felt were critical for such a discussion, the survey feedback took the form of descriptive open-ended semi-structured text that always permitted additional comments and clarification. By not wanting to ‘guide’ the responses, this open format allowed participants the opportunity to add further points that may not have originally been considered in the design of the survey but that could still provide valuable information on the issues examined.

The questions contained in the survey were carefully selected. An emphasis was placed on questions pertaining to teacher training and qualifications, but no explicit questions were asked in terms of their consideration of outdoor education as pedagogy versus curriculum. This was intentional in order to determine how the participant’s language would naturally frame outdoor education, without possibly adding a biased view considering it distinctively as method or content. Thus the intention of this research was to address the key three aspects of Canadian integrated outdoor programs described in this chapter: (1) the lack of research, done through the existence of this preliminary research itself, (2) the dichotomy between outdoor education as pedagogy and as curriculum, through indirect feedback on the surveys, and (3) teacher training and certification in the field of outdoor education in public schools, through direct feedback in the surveys.

Although all teacher feedback was integrated into the summaries for the questions presented in this chapter, based on some individuals giving only point form or little description versus those that provided more detailed reflection, some voices have been quoted more than others (although all have been quoted to some degree in the next sections). However, each teacher's response was still given equal weight in the analysis. This equal weighting of participating teachers was achieved by indexing their responses to questions into codifiable positions. For each question, the participant's response was distilled down to a key position (only for the purposes of indexing), such as yes/no, in favor or against, important factor #1, 2, 3, etc. Each participant's response, or sub-set, was categorized into an already existing point from another survey, or another key point was added to the index. These annotated responses were then sorted into like groupings to ensure the discussion of these results were representative of all the given feedback from each survey.

For example, for Question 1, in section 7.4, participants were asked to comment on what kind of 'success' they felt they were having with their teaching programs. In this case, every teacher's response ended up falling into one of four categories: academic connections (4 related comments), sense of community (6 related comments), practical skill development (3 related comments), and personal growth and development (5 related comments). From the number of comments it can be seen that some of the teacher's responses had been further broken down and divided amongst the categories, as they had spoken to more than one issue. In all cases, participant feedback was taken into account, even though some descriptions and quotes leaned more to one teacher than the other (in this case, of the eleven teachers only two were quoted for this question).

Following an initial descriptive overview of the participating programs in the next section, responses to key questions will be outlined in section 7.4, followed by a discussion of the generalized trends that emerged from the surveys. Not all questions from the survey will be discussed here, only the ones that generated significant or differing feedback from the participating teachers. In some cases there were questions in which teachers reinforced or re-stated comments already discussed in previous questions, creating a redundancy in the survey, but at the same time ensuring that their views were established by possibly addressing them in one question and not the other.

7.3 Overview of Participating Integrated Programs

Listed here is a very brief overview of each of the seven integrated programs that participated in the research survey. Although the programs will be identified here, as previously mentioned, individual teacher feedback will remain anonymous. Names have been changed when discussing the survey results, while maintaining gender, and will not be linked to the actual programs.

Community Environmental Leadership Programs (CELP) (Gad, Dalziel & Elrick, 2009). Located in Guelph, Ontario, CELP is actually two separate programs; the original CELP that is offered at the grade 10 level, and a new program called Headwaters which is offered in grade 12. Three teachers work together to run these two programs, and in addition to the focus on community, environment, and leadership there is a strong connection to English programming. CELP integrates the school courses of English, Career Studies (0.5 credit), Civics (0.5 credit), Outdoor Activities, and Interdisciplinary Studies, while Headwaters integrates the school courses of Outdoor Activities, English or Canadian Literature, Environment and Resource Management, and Interdisciplinary Studies.

EarthQuest (Reid & Reid, 2009). Located in Vernon, British Columbia, EarthQuest is one of the longest running integrated outdoor programs in Canada, perhaps even the longest. With its mountainous location, EarthQuest offers conceivably the most adventurous of program styles, incorporating backcountry skiing, mountaineering, kayaking, rock climbing, and cycling. However, as with any of these programs, it is solidly grounded in curriculum by integrating the school courses of English, Physical Education and Leadership, Earth Science, and Fine Arts for grade 11 students.

EcoQuest (Thompson & Loeffler, 2009). Located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, EcoQuest is possibly unique in integrated outdoor programs in Canada as it is offered at the junior high school level. Here grade 8 students enroll in the program for the full school year, not just a single semester as is the case for the high school integrated programs. Students apply and are selected from a number of neighboring schools and brought together for a program that focuses on what it calls the three 'challenges' of academic, physical, and emotional. It does so while fulfilling all requirements for grade 8 including the course outcomes of language arts, math, science, social studies, art, physical education, career education, and health.

Environmental Studies Program (ESP) (Burton, 2009). Located in Flesherton, Ontario, ESP offers an outdoor education program solidly built on experiential education theory. Students spend approximately 75% of the regular school day out of the school classroom learning first hand about the environment. At the grade 12 level, students earn course credits in Environment and Resource Management, Outdoor Physical Education, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Physical Geography. This is one of a few programs that use course outcomes in Interdisciplinary Studies to have its high school students develop and lead supplemental outdoor programs for elementary school students (other programs do so using a co-op credit), and thereby also allowing an avenue for fundraising.

Northern Outdoor Studies Program (NOS) (Pomeroy & Gillis, 2009). Located in Bancroft, Ontario, NOS has a very distinct focus for outdoor education as being centered on career and industry skill development for students. Since 1997, this program has been preparing students for direct entry into the work force with employers in selected sectors such as logging, resource and wildlife management, and ecotourism. Offered for both

grade 11 and 12 students, NOS integrates the school courses of Designing Your Future, Environment and Resource Management, Co-op, and The Enterprising Person, all being particular specialty courses designed for workforce transition skills.

Tamarack (Patterson, 1995). Once located in Deep River, Ontario, Tamarack is the only program in this survey set that has transitioned from one teacher to another, and is also the only program that is no longer in operation. Having been provided survey results from John Steer, the second teacher who took over this program from its originator, Bill Patterson, it was hoped that some insight would be gained as to why a solid program could be shut down; unfortunately this was not to be the case, but a good contribution for this research was still gained for a program that had grade 11 students earn course credit in Earth and Space Science, English, Healthy Active Living, and Physical Geography.

TREK School (Notenboom, 2009). Located in Regina, Saskatchewan, TREK School has a similar name to a program offered in Vancouver, BC, but no association between the two was determined. This program offers outdoor education for grade 11 students by integrating with the school courses of Biology, Geography, Math, Communications Production Technology, and Physical Education. It was not determined whether students gained five credits for this semestered program or whether they had a choice of one elective to drop.

7.4 Teacher Feedback of Research Survey

To speak to the overall discussion of this thesis, the teacher survey feedback was later categorized into five key areas: Outdoor education as pedagogy and as curriculum, formal and alternate teacher training, and the potential of a formal relation between outdoor education and public schools.

7.4.1 Outdoor Education as Pedagogy

As the teacher survey intentionally did not refer to the role of outdoor education as either pedagogy or curriculum, it was therefore very interesting to note how most of the teacher dialogue placed a strong value on the benefits to the methodology of outdoor education. Questions from the raw survey data have been grouped here that emphasize this relation of their programs to what many considered the personal development (and empowerment) of the student.

1) What kinds of “success” do you feel you are having in your teaching?

Four key aspects of success were a continuing theme in most of the discussions of this question. First, academic improvement was clearly identified. Comments included how the curriculum became ‘real’ for the students, or that students became more engaged and did better work. Also noted was the ability for students to show different strengths from what they demonstrate in a school classroom. In particular, it was commented that “academically, graduates of the program most often out perform previous academic standings and are able to identify their specific learning styles” (Kate). Secondly, the importance of ‘hands-on’ and community learning was noticed to dominate their

discussions. This primarily included bringing students closer to the natural environment and the student's reframed understanding of their own community. The idea of 'fostering connections', 'immersing students', and 'greater appreciation' were concepts used in terms of student and environment interplay. Thirdly, a number of teachers spoke of more practical benefits for students including numerous certifications and 'hands-on' skills for future employment. Others spoke in terms of more global benefits such as citizenship and transference of views into the student's adult lives. Lastly, it was very common for teachers to speak of success in greater personal growth and development for their students. This included such issues as students understanding real consequences for decisions made, passions for lifelong learning, being more comfortable in their interpersonal relationships, being excited about school, and developing a sense of adventure. One respondent commented that "I hope that helping them to become more connected to and articulate about their own experience will help them to know/understand their own values and promote behaviours that are consistent with these" (Claire).

2) What is the role of the outdoors in education?

Two fundamental points emerged about the teachers' perceptions of the role of their programs. First, they predominately viewed outdoor education as providing an experiential framework for students, which in many cases they commented was lacking in traditional classrooms. Second, there was a running theme that suggested the development of personal skills and attributes was underlying much of their practice. Two teachers concisely summarized this:

Kate: As outdoor educators our function is to provide and mediate experiences, connections and relationships. The outdoors is the tool we use to cultivate these interactions. If we do our job well, we create a ripple affect. We create a sense of wonder that allows kids to experience the wow factor. In other words, we awe them by nature. Secondly, the tools nature provides allows for experiential learning; the hands on stuff that has relevance and is essential in marrying intellect and emotion. Thirdly, out of doors education provides a more authentic environment, one more conducive to sharing thought and opinion.

and,

James: Outdoor Educator's role is multifaceted. Our role is to teach, facilitate, lead, follow, nurture, protect, challenge etc. Our role is to provide engaging and meaningful learning experiences that involve adventure. Learning experiences should be holistic that balance the Cognitive, Affective, Physical and Spiritual. Our role is to develop constructivist experiences so students can develop personal meaning in what they experience and so students have a strong role in the decision making through independence and trust.

What was very interesting to note was that no teacher spoke of the role of outdoor education through the eyes of curriculum (though they do later speak to increasing academic success for their students). In every case they considered it either as a foundation in which to frame experience, or a methodology to develop personal skills, and sometimes they considered both as important roles.

3) What do you feel outdoor education provides to its participants?

This question was included to see if teachers had different perceptions for the role of the outdoors (as asked in the previous question) versus outdoor education, and if they

distinguish between the two. However, comments to this question on outdoor education were very similar to those comments pertaining to the outdoors. Here such words as ‘appreciation for the environment’, ‘personal meaningful experiences’, ‘sense of community’, and ‘character development’ were often used. As mentioned by one teacher for this question,

Kate: Our goals are not to produce top notch skiers or rock climbers, rather to use the emotional and intellectual endeavors while participating in these activities to promote personal growth in such areas as self confidence, trust, determination, resilience etc. etc... the qualities that make us good citizens and human beings.

It was also mentioned that there was an importance for students to perform both as an individual and as a team, thus once again supporting the notion that, at least in the view of these teachers, outdoor education is more methodology than content. It was even commented that this social interconnection extended over to changes in student-teacher interactions. Again it was commented how students develop such personal growth in terms of experiential education:

Claire: They [the students] value the opportunity to learn by doing. This seems to involve some sense of unfolding and developing relationship with tasks and skills which seems to promote a profound sense of empowerment – which extends to enthusiasm for learning.

7.4.2 Outdoor Education as Curriculum

Even though the participating teachers of this survey indicated the important, if not critical, role that the pedagogy of outdoor education has for student development, they still related to the curricular aspects of their programs and how they enhanced and

broadened school learning. In particular, the questions addressed in this section indicate how teachers framed outdoor education content to be both within and outside the standard public school curriculum.

4) What key elements or practices do you feel are important in outdoor education?

This question generated many practical elements for the operation of an integrated outdoor program. The one aspect that bridged across much of the feedback was the critical importance of safety and risk assessment. Besides this, responses were varied and diverse. In addition to safety, they included: student training (outdoor skill based), equipment maintenance, funding, certification training for teacher, community connections, adventure, ecology, social justice, spirituality, outdoor pursuits, leadership, independence, teamwork, critical thinking, role playing, interpretation, slowing the pace down, removal of electronic devices, rigor and accountability, framing and debriefing an experience, adequate format and time for group and individual reflection, integration of the experience, relating curriculum to the city classroom, engaging, immersion in natural environments, and “the attention to self that leads to the development of ability to articulate personal voice” (Claire). Other particularly interesting comments included:

Claire: I think that what I am trying to cultivate is a capacity for attention – to self, to others, to literary art forms (written voice) and to the land – and becoming articulate about the experience of the experience that come with this kind of attention.

and,

Desmond: To have students begin to re-examine their ideas, their approach to learning, their beliefs about the natural world/environment/society. OE is a springboard for a student's awareness on many levels.

5) What do you feel are important areas or topics that a good outdoor education program should expose students to?

What was very informative about the responses to this question, as well as the following question, is the degree and nature to which the teachers easily relate their programs to teaching areas and content topics. Why this is so interesting to note is because even though this shows these teachers to be very adept at constructing an understanding of their programs in terms of this content, this is not where they place its value. As discovered in questions two and three, teachers largely saw the value of outdoor education and their programs as a pedagogy relating to more global issues such as personal development. Yet, this question indicates that they did not overlook the idea of content, but rather did not relate it to the key role of outdoor education.

That being said, teachers generally responded in two distinct ways to this question. First, about a third saw this to relate to technical skills (or 'hard skills') and gave topics of importance as such things as canoe tripping, map and compass navigation, survival skills, first aid, risk management, and general outdoor pursuits. The other two thirds constructed the question along more global topics such as sustainability, environmental awareness, resource management, and both urban and natural geography.

6) *What current areas or topics in public schooling are best included in an outdoor education curriculum?*

Like the previous question, it was interesting to note how frequently teachers would associate their programs to a broad range of curricular topics. Even more interesting was the difference between their responses here and those for question five; their responses here, as requested, related current curriculum topics to their programs, yet in the previous question these are not what they indicated as important areas or topics. Instead they included the areas of technical skill development and global environmental issues, indicating that they may perceive their programs are covering more topics than simply their required public school courses under their specific program umbrella.

That being said, through the teachers surveyed a wide range of school topics were seen to be inclusive with outdoor education. These primarily included biology, environmental science, geography, and physical education, but other courses indicated also included history, language arts, drama, and even math. As one teacher commented, “it looks like everything!” (Shannon). However, it was also noted that:

Juliet “Outdoor education” that follows the experiential learning model is really only currently represented in Physical Education Departments in secondary schools. I believe that a combination of outdoor and environmental education could be and should be taught in numerous subjects and at different grade levels.

7) *What topics or issues do you feel are required to be taught to new teachers who wish to teach outdoor education in a public school setting?*

Because of the broad scope to such a question, the survey broke this down into five key areas, as presented here.

a) in educational methodology and public school curriculum implementation

This question alone perhaps distinguishes a fundamental difference between outdoor training and certification for school teachers versus other outdoor facilitators and guides. The teachers surveyed indicated the importance here of not only the knowledge of school curriculum but also how to integrate such topics successfully into outdoor education. Various points such as choosing the relevant curriculum, school board policies, outdoor learning being integrated with classroom learning and school curriculum, differentiated instruction, progressive assessment, and inquiry based learning were mentioned. It was noted that teachers needed to “understand how students learn (including when out their comfort zone) ... and how to assess if students are actually learning what you think you’ve taught them” (Shannon). The need for more critical insight into assessment over other forms of outdoor education outside the schools became apparent.

b) in outdoor programming

Little feedback was given to this question, but a recurring point was the focus on risk management. In addition to this, other comments included teaching strategies, equipment and maintenance, trip planning, sustainability and ecological concepts. There was a slight discrepancy in teachers viewing this question in terms of outdoor education practice skills, such as risk management, versus more global issues in outdoor education, such as ecological concepts.

c) in technical skill training (previously called “hard-skills” in outdoor education)

It was interesting to note the language shift with this question as many teachers began to speak in terms of ‘industry certification’. Many indicated the need for

certification in the various technical skills that would be taught to students, and all stressed that teachers would require first aid and CPR training at minimum. Certification was noted to be necessary in order to assure that proper safety guidelines were met. The discussion here quickly indicated that these teachers viewed some essential connections to current outdoor industry practices, such as first aid, in order to run their integrated programs, and would indicate at least one area that schools should not separate themselves from the greater outdoor education field. One teacher did note that many of these technical skills should be basic transferable skills and “not 100 types of paddle strokes” (Jack).

d) in personal and group development (interpersonal skills, previously called “soft-skills” in outdoor education)

The points raised by these teachers reiterated those commonly expressed in the literature about the various elements of personal development. As such, this question did not indicate anything more that was particularly noteworthy other than a consensual understanding of the practices needed to enhance personal development in students. Such comments included theories and practice from adventure-based counseling, group formation and dynamics, communication skills, debriefing techniques, using a good set of curriculum tools in order to develop the interpersonal skills, previous experience in using the out-of-doors, making the experiences relevant to students, interpersonal skills, models for decision making, consensus (a concept rarely engaged in traditional classrooms), facilitation, and conflict mediation skills.

e) in philosophical foundations and/or historical traditions

This question proved interesting because it may demonstrate a potential weakness in many of the teachers' discussions about teacher training. Here most indicated the need for "a general knowledge of historical traditions and the progressions from the past to the present and into the future" (Nikki). However, there were few detailed points to this question even though many agreed it was needed. This may indicate a possible general lack of knowledge about the foundation and theory of outdoor and experiential education in school practice. This might also be a point that, if strengthened, may allow for teachers of these programs to design a better 'defense' for those administrators that challenge the worth of such programs. Also, it could be argued that knowledge of the past allows one to avoid making the same mistakes, and thus provide another avenue to develop stronger programs in themselves.

7.4.3 Formal Teacher Training

As the teachers participating in this survey see outdoor education as an important aspect of student learning, it was no surprise to discover they were in favor of the idea of some form of outdoor education teacher training. The insight provided in these next questions emphasized how they felt the school system could contextualize such training. This feedback was informative and spoke well to how these teachers perceived the key importance of outdoor education as pedagogy, while at the same time recognizing a distinct curriculum for their field.

8) *Who should be responsible for this training, and why?*

The responses to this question were fascinating as they indicated three main differences of opinions, with no unified ‘voice’ emerging. Discussed about equally, teachers indicated three governing bodies that should be responsible for this training: (1) schools and school boards, (2) the outdoor adventure industry, and (3) faculties of education and universities, while some teachers commented on utilizing more than one. In some cases teachers indicated that school boards should take the initiative so as to be aware of the program focus, but that they might not do the training themselves (implying the outdoor adventure industry might). In a few cases, teachers went on to suggest a need for partnership between school or college training and that of the outdoor industry, although there was caution suggested in not blindly following industry standards in outdoor practices as there is a shift in teaching emphasis in schools (Kate). One teacher also thought that the “initial training should be the responsibility of the teacher who should gain valuable experience on their own time while not in charge of students” (Charlie). The variation in views to this question indicates that many potential organizations may, and perhaps should, come into play in any discussion about training teachers in outdoor education for public schooling. It is interesting to note, however, typically in the outdoor adventure industry training it is uncommon to have a discussion about needing the framework of universities for training purposes, and rarely, if ever, to consider public school – even though this institution would have a significant body of work to contribute. Indeed, it was thought that many outdoor facilitators feel they are ‘counter’ to public schools and oppose their understanding of how such institutions are run (Kate, Shannon, and Charlie).

9) *Does the training of a public school teacher in outdoor education need to differ from the training currently provided to educators in other areas of outdoor education and if so, then how?*

Besides two teachers, one who was uncertain and the other that thought perhaps not necessarily a difference, all others strongly indicated that a difference in training is needed for school-based outdoor education. Although it was recognized that “naturally some areas will have commonalities like safety issues” (Kate), most indicated that a greater emphasis on curriculum and integration requires a different set of skills to be instilled in teacher training. Some key points considered were:

Shannon: The ability to understand and use the curriculum must be part of public school outdoor education programs. Other outdoor educators are able to do this, but for a public school, outdoor education programs must be making curricular links and meeting appropriate provincial and school board standards of education.

and,

Vincent: Given that teachers should be implementing outdoor education on a massive scale within the community of the school and will maximize the value of these experiences by integrating them into the school curricula ... these are not to be “isolated experiences” and “one-shot” deals.

It was nicely summarized that “the focus in outdoor education is education first and foremost and should have continuity and longevity within the curriculum” (Kate). Thus, it became apparent that an emphasis on outdoor education in a school setting creates different considerations than other fields of outdoor education.

10) Looking back, what elements do you think should have been added to your own background and training?

This question did not solicit much response, which was interesting in and of itself considering the importance of self-reflection embedded in the theory of experiential education. That being said, some comments included more information on risk management, trip leadership, more on assessment and evaluation, integrating outdoor education with other subjects, and a better grounding in the philosophy and theory of outdoor education. One interesting point was made however:

Charlie: It would have been very helpful at Teacher's College to have had an Outdoor Education class where the issues regarding taking students into the out of doors could have been examined in an education context. Presently, there is no standard within this education field and as such, there is a huge variety of teachers with a range of experiences taking students on outdoor trips to places that they may not be trained to lead.

This comment again indicated the lack of any unified understanding of the scope or practices of outdoor education and how it relates to public schools. As such, some of the teachers surveyed viewed teacher training as inconsistent.

11) If you could go back and re-take your formal training, is there anything you would like to see done differently?

Similar to question ten, there was not found to be any great degree of self-reflection in the responses to this survey. Of the few comments, it was indicated that it could be important to look at how to integrate outdoor education into other subject areas, and to be able to do so with less access to equipment and resources, which is typical for

most schools. One interesting point, noted by three teachers, was that they would have liked to have some formal training, with one reference to the programs offered at Lakehead and Queens University. This perhaps indicates that a lack of formal structure in the training of teachers in outdoor education has caused a decrease in reflection of this issue for these teachers because they have not witnessed a significant shift in practice because of such a context.

12) What organizations should have a voice in the operation and/or accreditation/standards of any outdoor education teacher-training program?

This question generated a lot of feedback from the surveyed teachers, and simply by the volume and detailed nature of their responses this indicated strong opinions to such a question. First, many thought that partnership between various governing bodies in outdoor education, such as school boards, university programs, advisory councils, and industry, to be very positive, and that “they provide insight, knowledge, resources, funding, curriculum, etc. already that enable programs to occur at the high school level” (Nikki). Here distinctions were sometimes made of industry being able to provide training in technical skills while program accreditation was maintained at the school board or university level. Some considered that the role of industry should be only advisory-based as to offer guidelines in practice but still acknowledge a difference in approach and goals between them and public schools, and that faculties of education or school boards should be responsible for determining and maintaining program standards. This difference was well articulated in one discussion:

Shannon: If outdoor education is to gain status as a “teachable”, then defined certification needs and standards would have to go with it. Outdoor

education and the outdoor adventure industry are not necessarily striving for the same goals and clientele. Given the presently stringent (and sometimes overly so) requirements from school boards around outdoor activities, it would be a good idea to give legitimacy to outdoor education and define the standards provincially and adopted by school boards.

At the same time, another mentioned that such partnerships and sharing of teacher training programs had benefits but also limitations.

Desmond: I think it's important that organizations either share or can enhance the goals of public education if they are to provide a service. Therefore skills training would be a natural but I'm not sure other industries (such as Outward Bound etc) would have much to offer except in bits and pieces.

A final point raised was the need to include many partners in the development of such training programs otherwise we would be 'reinventing the wheel' in terms that schools are generally behind in standards established in the outdoor adventure industry.

7.4.4 Alternate Teacher Training

In addition to the survey feedback given about a formalized teacher training program in outdoor education, many participating teachers perceived other potential avenues for teacher preparation (and their role of integrating this field with public schools). The questions presented here articulate the difficulty in teacher preparation, as the field of outdoor education requires extensive knowledge in both delivery (pedagogy) and content areas (curriculum).

13) Should new-teacher training involve some form of mentorship with existing teaching professionals?

This question generated unanimous agreement for the positive value of mentorship as a method for new teachers to gain experience with outdoor education practices in schools. It was noted that “taking the theory and applying it with somebody helping to guide your reflection is invaluable” (Shannon) and that “mentorship is critical for helping future teachers develop those skill and abilities that they either innately possess or have not developed to their potential” (Desmond). It was also commented that “people with outdoor experience still need to know how to apply outdoor skills to educational settings” (Jack), again reinforcing potential differences between outdoor education in schools and other private sectors, with which a system of mentorship could potentially assist.

A further question asked participants to consider a good balance between classroom-based theory and practicum placement, which elicited a mix of responses ranging from a quarter to a half of teacher training time being spent on a mentored practicum placement. Although some of these ranges were higher than typical practicum placements used by universities for teacher certification, there was a subtle acknowledgement by these numbers that still indicated valued was being placed on the access to classroom-based theory for these new teachers. However, one particular point was made that is worth considering:

Desmond: It would be interesting if the two could be combined ... theory training within a practicum. Unfortunately in my experience, most teachers taking an intern rarely talk about educational theory as applied.

Therefore, possibly finding some way of integrating learned theory in a teacher education program with a practicum could allow for a greater benefit to both; although this issue would span the larger concept of practicums in general and not be just specific to outdoor education. It was also mentioned in this context, that perhaps one would not gain the required experience to teach outdoor education over the period of a practicum, and that “you need to spend years to acquire experience when you’re talking outdoor pursuits” (Kate).

14) Are classroom based theory and practicum placement the only two choices for teacher training, or are there other key elements that should be included?

One major theme arose out of the teachers’ comments to this question: new teachers must develop more experience than what can be offered in a teacher education program, even with practicums. Three quarters of the respondents indicated that experience should be the responsibility of the new teacher prior to undertaking any outdoor program, while a few mentioned that extended practicum placements or addition co-op opportunities could be another possibility. “New teachers should be encouraged to arrive at a faculty of education with a solid background if they know that they wish to pursue a career in outdoor education” (Shannon). It had been suggested that:

Ben: Probably industry work experience of at least 2 years would be a big bonus. You just can’t replace experience and it is hard to develop good hard skills when your trying to teach someone else - seen it done and it doesn’t really work.

and,

Charlie: Personal experience in the outdoors is critical in order for teacher candidates to gain experience before being in charge of a group of students where higher levels of risk are present. Such experience would normally be gained outside of the education field during summer employment opportunities, personal trips, etc.

Of course, the requirement of extensive experience prior to any teacher training and certification may greatly hinder enrollment and the continuation of such programs. At the other end of the spectrum, there may be individuals entering the education profession who could be drawn to such concepts and practices as outdoor and experiential education but then be excluded because they lack the compulsory outdoor experience. Requiring experience as a prerequisite for teacher training would have to be carefully considered in how it impacts such a program, and potentially create limits to its success of exposure to new teachers.

15) In what ways could an outdoor teaching-training program contribute to the existing programs in schools?

The only comment mentioned by several of the teachers was the same that many existing classroom teachers have made regarding mentoring new student teachers: someone with a new view or idea can contribute by providing a reflective opportunity to reconsider an existing method of practice.

Shannon: Any time somebody comes into an existing program with fresh eyes, it is helpful to the practitioners and the programs. In order to mentor somebody, one needs to be clear about ones own practice and purpose. Being able to articulate and discuss this with somebody else strengthens and clarifies what, how and why one is doing what one is doing. A person

looking at an existing program with fresh eyes, very often brings fresh ideas. It is a win-win situation.

However, there was not any indication that during a practicum placement new teachers would be able to contribute to additional aspects more specific to outdoor education in schools than would be the case in other subject areas.

16) When should this teacher-training in outdoor education take place in a teacher's career?

What is interesting to note about the feedback to this question is how a shift in teacher thinking occurred. Most considered that such teacher-training in outdoor education should be offered as either a pre-service portion of an education degree or as an upgrade program for existing teachers, and many also indicated that both options should be available. "It is impossible to say at what point in ones career that one decides that outdoor education is the area to be in. Some may come to it as a destination and others may arrive to it later on" (Shannon). What is interesting about this general perspective is that it partially contradicted most beliefs discussed in question fourteen where many considered experience beforehand as being important, which would indicate that individuals were aware of their interest in outdoor education and does not provide the avenue as stated here for one that might come into the field later in their career. Again, how previous experience is weighed in value will have a factor on how outdoor education training programs could be structured.

17) What benefits to do you perceive could or should result from a formal teacher training process that could enhance the preparation of new teachers to the field of outdoor education?

Although some specific issues were mentioned, such as developing good risk management practices and being able to grow from shared expertise, overall many considered a key benefit as being more able to deal with the stress and logistics of starting new outdoor education programs or taking over old ones.

Charlie: If more teachers graduating from facilities had already received training in this area, more elementary and secondary students would have opportunities to have outdoor education included in their school careers. Many teachers are reluctant to take students on field trips as they do not feel they have the proper training and experience to do so in a safe and meaningful way.

7.4.5 Formal Relation of Outdoor Education in Schools

As seen in the previous questions, the participating teachers gave detailed feedback on their perceptions of outdoor education, how their field (and specific program) operates in schools, and how the value of teacher training programs could be utilized. Further questions, as detailed below, examined how a more formalized relationship between outdoor education and public schools might be envisioned. From this discussion, the value of understanding how outdoor education at times plays out as pedagogy or curriculum is seen to continue to be an important consideration.

18) In places like Australia, outdoor education is sanctioned by the government as a “teachable”. What are your thoughts, concerns, or support if such a direction was taken in Canada?

Most of the teachers surveyed indicated that they thought such an approach would be a ‘good idea’ but only a few of these expressed any strong feelings one way or the other. This might indicate that either they never thought to frame outdoor education in such a way as ‘teachable’ or in its actual value as curriculum, but such a distinction could not be made with the given feedback. It was mentioned that since outdoor education has specific skills that it should become a specialized area, but other comments also indicated that in creating it as a teachable allowances would have to be made for those already in the field that did not have formal outdoor education training. An interesting point was made that happened to speak to similar occurrences in the Australian system where outdoor education as a teachable naturally generates support for such programs from higher up administrative levels.

Charlie: More government support would make outdoor education on equal terms as other areas of the curriculum. It is often ignored because it doesn’t appear in curriculum guidelines or is not a teachable at Teacher’s college. More opportunities would encourage healthier lifestyles and more environmental awareness when presently the environment is the “in thing”.

19) Is there a need to create or push for the idea that outdoor education in schools should be a recognized teaching specialty?

As with the previous question, the teachers surveyed tended to agree that there could be benefits to recognizing outdoor education as a specialty, but that this did not

generate many strong views. However, one teacher did feel that we needed to move away from ideas of specialization because this has hindered acceptance of outdoor education in schools where “turf and content continues to be so important” (James). It was also mentioned by another teacher that such a teaching specialty could include but still be distinct from environmental education.

Shannon: Maybe this should be done in conjunction with the push for Environmental Education. I personally would favour the title of Outdoor and Environmental Education so that neither component is lost.

Lastly, the value for recognizing outdoor education as a teaching specialty was considered politically in terms of its acceptance in schools by other teachers and administrators.

Charlie: I believe that outdoor education should become a recognized teaching specialty. Being a teacher who teaches this field, other teachers often don't support the value of this as a teachable on its own and often comment how it is an elective or not very valuable for a student's academics. Post secondary institutions should also accept the value of such credits appearing on student's transcripts and not view them as “wasted” credits of little value.

20) How do you feel about the idea of outdoor education becoming a curriculum specialty, as suggested in the previous question, generating “mandatory” outdoor education training for new teacher-candidates? What might be the benefits or drawbacks of such an approach?

This question was designed to draw possible comparisons between teachers and the current profession of outdoor facilitators who typically develop an opposed stance to

certification as not recognizing previous experience. What was interesting was, that for the most part, the teachers surveyed here thought that such a situation could potentially be a good thing in terms of providing consistency among educators in this field. It was also mentioned that “it would certainly attract a different kind of teacher and would provide much different experiences for students” (Desmond). This difference in how teachers viewed this question from other outdoor facilitators may be a result of how the question was framed; for teachers their profession centers on certifications over qualifications more so than does the outdoor adventure industry. However, some drawbacks were recognized when teachers spoke of possible difficulties of providing specific training for the varied nature of existing programs, and that mandatory training would not mean one was necessarily effective in outdoor education. It was also noted that a possible relation between a school board having outdoor curriculum and required training may exist.

Shannon: I would be in favour of all teacher-candidates having training in and for the outdoors. Most teachers that we see at our centre believe that teaching outdoors is out of their comfort zone. If outdoor education were a secondary course, then the mandatory training would necessarily follow.

21) Do you feel there are any drawbacks to teacher-training in this field, and if so, what are the particular concerns you have to such an approach?

This was felt to be an important question because it caused the teachers surveyed to critically think about outdoor education in a limiting way. The feedback was diverse and although much can be considered, there was certainly no unifying theme to the comments. Thus, we might consider that drawbacks may exist but perhaps nothing obviously critical that could limit such a program. There were comments on such

practical things as the cost of certification and membership fees in outdoor practice being difficult to pay for by new teachers, creating an increase in liability for the teacher, and even one respondent who felt there was too much emphasis on getting certificates in the first place. In addition, it was thought that “the training may have to be too general in order to benefit most. Programs at different schools can be so different” (Ben). Of course, a similar argument could be offered for any subject area: the different approaches to science curriculum in schools do not hinder all teacher education programs from having a general science methods course. Also, the issue of experience not being gained in a single semester of practicum placement resurfaced, where it was commented that teachers should only use this teacher training to enhance their own experience and knowledge. Lastly, it was also discussed by one teacher that the pre-service teachers taking this program might have difficulty in utilizing such outdoor theories and practice.

Desmond: Potentially participants could come out of a program and not be able to realize [enact] what they envisioned while in it. We have had some pre-service teachers who do a short practicum with us and then find it very difficult to make it through their full semester practicum that is completely classroom based (it seems like drudgery in comparison).

Of course, one might not consider exposing student teachers to a different practice to be a drawback of that particular practice simply because these students do not immediately find an avenue of execution for such a teaching approach.

22) Are there any other key issues that you feel would be important for teacher-training in outdoor education that has not been discussed in the above questions?

This opened-ended question was important as it had the potential to draw out other dialogues from teachers on the issue of outdoor education in schools that may have been framed in their minds from the previous questions that they had yet to articulate. A few interesting points did arise from this, and included such issues as:

- developing an annual forum for each school board to allow teachers to share ideas and resources
- generating advocacy or ‘general public’ education on what outdoor education is and why it is important since “simply having a large number of enthusiastic and well trained teachers of OE may not be enough for it to become something supported by tax payers” (Shannon)
- the difficult politics and logistics of getting field trips approved by administration, having non-outdoor education teachers in OE placements to examine reflection and learning
- concern with possible adventure tourism involvement since “They [adventure tourism] don’t have the educational component, there’s a big difference between teaching and guiding” (Kate)
- possible difficulties in teachers maintaining a large degree of required certifications to run such programs (which typically all need to be renewed every few years)

Further consideration was noted to be necessary when taking into account a more global importance of outdoor education to the profession of public school teaching:

James: I have to say that most colleges of education across Canada do not value Experiential and Outdoor education. They simply continue to model lecture, essay, test formats and are fearful of scrutiny if they change. Many education students are so used to this style of learning that they feel it is too much work to learn using inquiry or experiential methodologies. We need to provide engaging experiences in our communities that challenge students to critically think about how they will challenge their students in the years to come.

7.5 Trends in Teacher Approach and Critical Issues

The survey data collected from these teachers operating integrated outdoor programs at their schools provides further insight into issues regarding how outdoor education plays out within the public school system. Explicit feedback provided a context for the possible need and roles that teacher training in the area of outdoor education would have for a school teacher and how that may differ from other outdoor industry fields. Implicit feedback provided a framework for understanding how these school teachers viewed the relation of outdoor education as pedagogy and/or curriculum, demonstrating a similar trend in approach with other integrated outdoor programs.

Teachers viewed the success of their programs as contributing to many aspects of a student's school experience. The focus of their work reinforcing academics articulated a belief that such outdoor education programs provide students with more than simply a wilderness experience, and that significant growth in school-based performance abilities was possible to achieve in such a setting. This coincided with statements that demonstrated the methodological success of their programs being founded in experiential or 'hands-on' learning opportunities. "[The program's] hands-on experiential approach makes for powerful, lasting and potentially transformative learning" (Vincent) was indicative of many of the teacher's responses. Lastly, most viewed the success of their programs as providing more than just academics, and the importance of developing personal growth in their students was apparent.

Kate: We really feel that the program contributes to the growth of each of the kids holistically and that they have acquired life skills that are transferable in to their adult lives. It's most often that students don't really understand this growth and connection to the program until later in their life.

It was interesting to note how often these teachers spoke of personal growth considering the context of most high schools being largely academic. This shift to a holistic understanding of student performance allows outdoor integrated programs to bring something greater to the traditional and established high school system, yet at the same time it may provide a barrier for implementation if such holistic learning and growth is not appreciated by such a school system.

Aligned with the notion of success for their programs, teachers surveyed here defined the role for their programs in school systems as largely providing (1) an experiential framework for learning and (2) the development of personal skills (and how this can extend beyond the context of applied academics). With such a focus on the roles for these programs it was noted that “the students from years previous come back and acknowledge the value of the course and how much better off they are than many of their peers in college or in the workplace” (Nikki). This statement reflects the possibility that such a learning environment may provide an advantage for students to be able to accomplish later in life that may not be met within the traditional classroom, and as such that academic performance can not be distilled down into quantized units of testing. It was noted that this role for outdoor education in schools in being able “to bring education to life by experiencing it first hand and not just talking about it removed in a classroom” (Charlie) indicates that student performance is intimately linked to their learning environment, and that a holistic approach needs to be considered.

A key point that did arise from the teachers’ feedback was how they viewed outdoor education as an approach to teaching, that is to say a pedagogy, rather than a specific and defined curriculum with its own set of outcomes.

Vincent: [Outdoor Education is] a teaching methodology rather than subject content. A methodology that addresses education for environment, character (both the development of personal traits & social skills), wellbeing (spiritual as well as physical) and curriculum (all subject areas).

Here, the emphasis on personal growth and the teaching approach was considered paramount for such programs by these teachers. Such a view can be seen to be indicative of many integrated outdoor programs and reinforces the notion that those operating such programs do indeed have this tacit understanding of outdoor education as method.

However, this is not to suggest that these teachers did not see the potential for outdoor education to serve as curriculum, but rather that this is not where they held its importance. Throughout all the surveys collected for this study, teachers did speak in terms of curriculum outcomes and linkages to their programs; the very nature of being able to provide an integrated program that utilizes outdoor education as a thematic learning style.

Kate: What truly makes it an educational experience is that the activities are not isolated, but integrated and experiential. Rock climbing is a great time to teach rock formation, ski touring can incorporate snow metamorphisms, crafting a cedar root basket combines ethno botany, fine arts and resource management etc... , all while integrating language arts skills in journals and fine arts skills in art work and crafts.

Here we can start to see how these teachers transform the educational medium of outdoor education in order to provide a context for existing school-based curriculum, while utilizing experiential education in order to provide retention and transference of such learned moments.

Yet, by using outdoor education in such a thematic way, the teachers also indicated that additional core topics to their programs did develop that were outside the required course outcomes that they modeled their programs to cover. These were able to be defined by two broad categories: specific technical skills, such as canoeing strokes necessary for a particular expedition; and more global environmental issues and awareness, such as societal responsibility for sustainability. However, again the emphasis of outdoor education as method over content became clear in many conversations. For example, one teacher articulated this argument as:

Claire: I think the experiential element is the most important criteria for me, and actually not high skills/high adrenalin which tends in some ways to become a focus of expertise that doesn't really support awareness of self in environment. To me skills are certainly important but "in the service of" something further.

From this discussion on additional topics being covered, one critical aspect of this relation of outdoor education as either pedagogy or curriculum as noted by one teacher is highlighted here.

James: If we want to change the structure of secondary education to more integration and meaningful experiential learning then OE will have to change as well. If it is recreational clubs, then the canoe trips and backpacking trips are wonderful. However, Integrated Programs go deeper into the delivery of curriculum in an engaging way. It is not solely about the memorization of content and writing of tests.

What is interesting about this comment is the teacher's perception of how outdoor education as content, in terms of recreational skills, would limit the value of outdoor education, which he felt had more to offer by integrating with existing curriculum. Such

comments could be seen as support for the need to distinguish the *how* of outdoor education practice in public schools.

Of course, such an argument for the relation of outdoor education in public schools brings into question its relation to environmental education also. Concepts pertaining to environmental issues and awareness were certainly present within the teacher's surveys, although none significantly discussed the value or role that their programs had for students. Instead, many teachers viewed the content of environmental education as an important topic, but by doing so naturally distinguished it from outdoor education, which they thought of as process.

Juliet: [Outdoor education is] the process of framing and contextualizing experiences in the outdoors in a way that allows participants to transfer lessons learned through outdoor experiences to other areas of life. [This is] different from environmental education which encourages an affective connection to nature, an understanding of natural systems and a change in environmental habits.

This could be argued to be an important point to consider with respect to the potential interplay between outdoor and environmental education. One might consider outdoor education as pedagogy that uses the content of environmental education, while environmental education is a curriculum that may (or may not) use outdoor education as a process. Once again we see a need to distinguish the role that outdoor education plays in public schooling.

From these discussions detailing the success and roles of each integrated outdoor program, the issue of teacher training arose many times even outside the context of specific questions. It could be argued that the teachers surveyed collectively saw teacher

training to be imperative for the continued success of all areas of outdoor education programs in public schools, not just their own realm of integrated outdoor programs. “Given the potential for the widespread use of OEE [outdoor experiential education], there must now be formal training through the Faculties of Education” (Vincent). What was even clearer from their feedback was the idea that such teacher training should be accomplished by the use of several different agencies. Here, three key agencies were seen as important for developing a solid teacher training program in outdoor education: (1) the school board or provincial department of education, (2) university faculties of education, and (3) outdoor adventure industry. Many comments indicated a relation suggesting that the department of education or school board should serve as an advisory role in establishing such training even if they did not administer it themselves, as they should be involved at this stage of global outcomes to such programs and how they fit within their own initiatives. University designed programs were seen as important for two reasons: (1) they provide solid avenues for extensive teacher training, and (2) by ‘legitimizing’ the value of outdoor education in schools since “it is often ignored because it doesn’t appear in curriculum guidelines or is not a teachable at Teacher’s college” (Charlie). The synergy between school boards and the universities, and the classroom teacher’s role were well articulated by the following comment:

James: We are all responsible for progressive Experiential Education training. K-12 Education School Divisions need to support innovative educational programs that connect students with the community. K-12 teachers that are progressive need to take more interns so that they can have the experiences necessary. University colleges of education must develop more courses that combine theory and practice. Education professors need to model experiential education, not just talk about it.

Though the roles of school boards and universities were generally uniformly accepted by the teachers surveyed, the exact role of the outdoor adventure and tourism industry was not as conclusive, and a few concerns were raised about considering such a partnership. It was acknowledged by most of the surveyed teachers that the outdoor industry had significant value in terms of certifications and training for risk management and safety (including first aid and CPR training), and by providing teachers with the necessary technical skills for the various types of expeditions they would undertake with their students. However, a few teachers were concerned that outdoor adventure and tourism companies do not specialize in curriculum outcomes and integration theory to the degree that is necessary for the operation of such school-based programs. One teacher offered the following when describing the role of industry based companies:

Kate: I think that we have to be careful about making sure there is an educator in outdoor education and that outdoor programs are not simply sporadic blocks of time where you take kids out of the classroom, engage them in these wonderful opportunities and activities without following through with long term goals. What kids learn in their outdoor experiences must be transferable. If it fails to be so, then the experience remains nothing more than your typical PE class.

Just as it became apparent that teachers perceived a different focus and set of skills needed for their programs than is present in the outdoor adventure industry, their apparent acceptance of training certification was also markedly different. Here many teachers' views can be summarized as that "there have been some greatly watered down programs done called OE in the past. A formalized program should raise the standards for OE programmes" (Shannon). It could be argued that perhaps since teachers are in an

institutional environment that promotes certification standards more so than the average outdoor education program or facility that there could be a reduced opposition to implementing certification as seen within the recreation sector.

However, this is not to suggest that these teachers saw teacher certification as the sole means of teacher preparation for outdoor education. Quite the opposite, many indicated a similar view as is present in the outdoor industry that a certain degree of experience must also be present.

Charlie: The experience and confidence required by teachers can not be acquired in a single semester. They must gain this experience on their own and then use the teacher-training to enhance what they have already learned to enrich their education background that will encourage them to include outdoor education in their day to day teaching.

It was often felt that the amount of experience required was greater than what could be achieved through a typical practicum mentorship provided by university degree training. Though this form of mentorship was also considered invaluable by all teachers surveyed, it was acknowledged that more needed to be done in order to develop the proper amount of experience required to be responsible for students in the wilderness. This prior experience was frequently considered in terms of risk management and safety over other details such as group dynamics and curriculum integration. The practicum experience itself would then be a time to link together a teacher's wilderness experience with teaching outdoor education in the public school setting. "Alternating placements with reflection and learning would provide a reason for new teachers to share what they experience and to set goals for their own learning" (Jack).

One potential contradictory aspect of this teacher feedback relating to prior experience surfaced once the discussion shifted to the consideration of when a teacher should receive such training as to implement such integrated outdoor programs. Here it would appear that most teachers wanted ‘the best of both worlds’ in terms of offering this training to pre-service teachers and also to existing practicing teachers.

Shannon: The indisputable enrichment of learning that takes place in the outdoors should be an option for all teachers. I see many teachers who don’t think of it as an option because they haven’t had any exposure to teaching in the outdoors. There are others who are afraid of what may happen outdoors, either because they have personal fears or again, no training.

The contradiction arises when comparing this view that training in outdoor education should be available to all teachers (as a way to promote this field of education) with the previously stated view that enrollment restrictions due to experience should be established present practical incompatibilities. Thus, even though it was acknowledged that “many full time teachers would like to include the outdoors in their teaching but opportunities to receive adequate training are not readily available” (Charlie), the availability of such programs may not be enough if a prerequisite of extensive pre-teaching experience is necessary. In addition, by having this prior experience it could be argued that teachers would no longer have the personal fears that are stated as limiting such a field of education. Arguably, one key point must be considered when dealing with certification versus experience: it has to start somewhere. Perhaps for many teachers, a certification in outdoor and experiential education may provide the starting block to encourage gaining further experience in such a field as to eventually lead such integrated programs.

7.6 Summary of General Findings

The primary research collected and analyzed for this thesis correlated with the existing literature, particularly pertaining to the inclusion of outdoor education to the realm of public schooling (Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Coleman, 1995; Chapman, McPhee & Proudman, 1992). Similarities existed with other integrated programs, examined in additional studies (Comishin, *et al*, 2004; Horwood, 2002a; Russell & Burton, 2000), which critically placed the role of outdoor education as pedagogy, even if not explicitly stated as such. The role of outdoor education as a holistic approach for the development of personal and group skills became apparent, and differs in emphasis from one that might view outdoor education under a similar lens as a content-based environmental education program (that may or may not utilize experiential education practices in student development). This may also suggest a fundamental difference between public school programs and that of the outdoor industry that relies on their profession simultaneously as both method and content. Where this primary research benefits such an argument is that it critically examines where public school teachers place their emphasis for such an approach. Although outdoor curricular outcomes can be present in even integrated outdoor programs, through the use of specialty courses such as co-op or interdisciplinary studies, the lack of importance or reflection placed on this throughout the teachers' discussion in these surveys provides a solid indication of how these teachers place outdoor content beneath that of outdoor practice. As such, any possible implementation of a teacher training program in outdoor education may want to situate itself in terms of the balancing of outdoor education as pedagogy and curriculum.

Chapter 8 – Implementation Design for Outdoor Education in Schools

8.1 Defining the Role of Outdoor Education in Schools

In the discussions of the previous chapters, I have proposed that outdoor education sometimes can be considered as pedagogy while in other instances it can be seen as curriculum within the context of public schools. Since each of these views of outdoor education brings a different set of conditions and limitations, I suggest that, at times, the roles of outdoor education as either pedagogy or curriculum work as binary opposites in the school system, where one view has the potential to weaken the other. For example, if a teacher attempts to design an outdoor education program as a delivery method for experiential education, critics may argue that such a program lacks any real content thereby dismissing the role of outdoor education in schools. In this case, the critics were using the argument for the value of outdoor education as curriculum as a position to weaken the stance of outdoor education as pedagogy.

There was no evidence in curriculum guidelines or from providers that outdoor education was centrally located within the curriculum; rather it was currently a form of ‘curricular enhancement’. It seemed that outdoor learning could be located both within and outside the curriculum, with the same arguments being deployed to associate it as to distance it, laying the outdoor sector open to claims that providers take a utilitarian approach to the use of such justifications. (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 9)

Here, these authors (writing in the context of Scotland, UK) have identified that outdoor education can operate ‘within and outside the curriculum’ by also being a form of curricular enhancement. As demonstrated in previous chapters of this thesis, this ‘curricular enhancement’ often takes the form of personal development or an emphasis as pedagogy. It can be seen from this quote that other researchers have identified a way in

which the exact use of outdoor education in schools has a potential to weaken its stance, and I would argue that this directly relates to the discussion of how outdoor education can be seen as either content or method. As demonstrated from the work of outdoor education in the context of curricula-based programming present in Australian and New Zealand schools, and the integrated outdoor programming present in Canadian schools, it can be argued that these two systems may frequently blend with each other but that they are capable of providing different experiences. Because of the ways in which the dynamic of outdoor education may play out within public schools, I would suggest that it can be of significant value for teachers to become educated and versed in the roles that outdoor education has to offer. If one is able to more easily identify these roles then perhaps a major learning bind, which potentially limits the exposure and growth of such programs in schools, may be overcome.

There have been many reasons and arguments as to why we should educate using the outdoors. Peter Higgins (1997) has suggested many, including: education through direct experience, holism, health, play & adventure, personal & social development, environmental connection & sustainability, consequential education, sense of place, rites of passage, citizenship & taking responsibility, different potentials for different learners, and actual reality versus virtual, many of which have already been addressed in this thesis. What this thesis also suggests is that we must take these values and understand them in the context of outdoor education as curriculum and/or pedagogy. Based on this, I will now discuss theories and frameworks that have been used for the teaching of outdoor education in schools and also, more importantly, in the teacher training programs for outdoor education. In doing so, I will attempt to situate the nature of outdoor education as

curriculum and/or pedagogy in terms of its importance for understanding in teacher training as a means to avoid such potential learning binds as discussed above. From this, I will then bring the argument back to the value in understanding the exact context of how outdoor education can be, and is, implemented in schools. What I will not do, however, is propose an exact content or delivery for such teacher training programs, but rather demonstrate how the articulation of the role of outdoor education should play in such programs.

8.1.1 Dimensions of Outdoor Learning

In order to better understand the role of outdoor education in schools, we will first explore how we can contextualize outdoor learning for students. That is to say, whether outdoor education is used in curricula-based or integrated programming, are there key elements that such programs can emphasize for schools (in addition to the growth in inter- and intrapersonal development as discussed early on in this thesis)? This portion of the discussion has intentionally been left until later in this thesis so as to enable connections to be made to the notion of outdoor education operating as either curriculum or pedagogy.

It has been suggested that outdoor education embodies three core areas:

Within the wide range of options available to the Outdoor Educator three themes flow, environmental, residential and adventure activities. Within each of these themes there is a progression of experiences and an increasing empowerment of individuals to undertake their own ventures. (Loynes, Michie & Smith, 1997: 15)

For how this quote relates to our discussion, we would now need to consider how we are framing such themes. For example, we could possibly see the environmental theme as

content while perhaps viewing adventure activities as a learning method, and by doing so this could suggest other considerations that must be taken into account in terms of how the public school system may utilize such themes. However, before this discussion on specifics is taken up (as it will be in the next section), it can be of value to explore more global concepts for the benefits of outdoor education central to schools and public education.

Beyond the scope of outdoor education itself, it has been suggested that this form of education can center on 'holism' for the individual. "This is the notion that Outdoor Education can generate opportunities for integrated learning experiences which may incorporate aspects of intellectual, physical, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual development" (Higgins, 1997: 11). Here we can see emphasis on the whole learner, rather than just an 'empty vessel' analogy for content assimilation and regurgitation. What is also important to realize is that such a view sees these as integrated within one another, thus making the sum of the learning greater than the individual parts. For example;

There is a tendency to consider education as taking place in a purely intellectual domain. The view expressed above includes 'physical' and it is important to realise that this is intended as a form of education and not simply as exercise. Learning is likely to be more effective if it uses physical sensations as well as intellectual, and there are of course many things which must be learnt primarily physically. We know the world best when we encounter it through as many of our senses as possible. (Higgins, 1997: 11)

From this idea of the development of the whole learning as being something greater than an intellectual exercise, Higgins later explored what I would call a key dimension to outdoor education: complexity. Here it has been suggested that there is something more than just the value in the experiential aspect of outdoor education. By the very nature of outdoor education as a socially constructed activity which permits personal

investment to produce activity Higgins suggests that this generates a complexity in the situation that is not present in more traditional forms of education. More importantly, he suggested that such complexity actually has benefit rather than disadvantage for the learner.

In modern education the conventional approach is to make efforts to simplify the learning process. This is done through the application of appropriate methods to a defined and increasingly prescriptive curriculum which is in itself compartmentalised into subjects with well defined boundaries. However, most human interactions are complex. Understanding this world and living and working within it requires awareness of relationships, connections and consequences. Whilst there may be ways in which the school curriculum might be changed to encourage learning and understanding of this type, such changes seem unlikely. Direct experience outdoors is proposed as one way of achieving these learning outcomes. (Higgins, 2001: 99)

This notion of complexity also aligns nicely with the idea of generating a solid experience base from which to enhance knowledge (Coleman, 1995), as described in Chapter Four of this thesis. In both cases we can also see how engaging in the complexity of a social construct of learning can enhance higher order cognitive functions.

Thinking about and dealing with complex issues requires key skills which must include critical analysis, integrated thinking, problem solving and personal and social skills and the approach and ethos of the school is central to this process. If the subjects are taught without these dimensions they will not be valued. (Higgins, 2001: 101)

Here it is seen that students need to navigate a lived experience of education; they can not simply rely on becoming passive observers as a teacher lectures about what is deemed important knowledge. By engaging in complex and undefined situations, students rely more on reflective action, as also suggested by Schön (1987), in order to overcome a learning bind. From this idea of complexity, Higgins argued that outdoor education plays a critical function for the learner: “I would argue that outdoor education has an important

role in extending the student perspective out from simplicity towards encounters with complexity” (Higgins, 2001: 101). Hence, by placing value on outdoor education, through its connectivity to ideas of complexity, it is suggestive to also enhance critical thinking skills.

Through ‘encounters with complexity’, outdoor education can be further expanded to include many dimensions or facets that can be brought to the public school system. These dimensions of outdoor education were nicely articulated by Higgins when he later examined the roles that outdoor education has to play, drawing from ideas by Kurt Hahn for training *for* and *through* the sea (Hahn, 1947).

Outdoor education might be considered as education ‘in’ (*outdoor activities*), ‘through’ (*personal and social education, therapy, rehabilitation, management development*), ‘about’ (*environmental education*) and ‘for’ (*sustainability*) the natural heritage. (Higgins, 2008)

Very important to this thesis is that such notions of outdoor education as education in, through, about, and for the natural heritage help to distinguish the argument for outdoor education as either pedagogy or curriculum. If we consider outdoor education as education ‘in’ the natural heritage than this simply becomes the base framework for the physical environment, as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, as a setting used for adventure and environmental education, as well as outdoor recreation and leisure pursuits. If outdoor education is considered as education ‘through’ the natural heritage, then I believe this lends well to the idea of outdoor education as pedagogy, using experiential education as its framework. Now, if it is thought of as education ‘about’ the natural heritage, then this speaks directly to outdoor education as curriculum, particularly focused as the theme of environmental education. Finally, we can consider Higgins’ view of outdoor education as education ‘for’ the natural heritage. Here I would argue that this

view represents Freire's idea of praxis (1970), reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it, and as such I would suggest that education 'for' the natural heritage becomes *meta* to the 'through' and 'about' the natural heritage (as Higgins refers to the 'for' as sustainability, this becomes the transformative result of the action for outdoor education).

What differs in this discussion of outdoor education, once it is taken into the realm of public schooling, is that the 'in, through, about and for' can become isolated and selective in application by surrogate use of the existing school structure and curriculum. That is to say, schools have the ability to take outdoor education as piecemeal; using elements that it likes while disengaging from others for which it can rely on its existing system. I do not at all suggest that this is necessarily a good thing, but rather that its presence allows for rifts to form that can discredit such roles in school learning for outdoor education. From such a consideration of outdoor education as in, through, about and for the natural heritage, it is necessary to reflect on the needs of outdoor education as both pedagogy and curriculum as a way of generating greater awareness of the social condition and experiences of outdoor education in public schools. This reflection will better allow us to understand the limitations, expectations, and potential growth that this field can offer the classroom environment. "If experiential outdoor learning provides a significant means of addressing complexity and environmental sustainability, it is important that the approach becomes more widespread and integrated with mainstream education" (Higgins, 2008).

8.1.2 Integration into Existing Public School Structure

Outdoor Education has often been considered to be an approach to education which can permeate throughout virtually any curricular subject area. In addition it is used to satisfy the aims of those wishing to encourage outdoor recreation, environmental awareness and personal and social development: a role as broad as any subject area within the field of human experience. It should be no surprise then that this has often left Outdoor Educators with a feeling of some bewilderment and of being everywhere but nowhere. (Higgins & Loynes, 1997: 6)

From the above quote, one can understand a key difficulty for the integration of outdoor education into existing public schools; the sheer breadth and complexity that outdoor education encompasses. Therefore, refinement of the role and scope of outdoor education may prove crucial for it to find a lasting place in schools, and I would propose that understanding outdoor education as curriculum or pedagogy is an important step. Though not cleanly defined in this manner as curriculum or pedagogy, recent studies on outdoor education in schools have identified this very issue. A study by Nicol *et al*, (2006) examining outdoor education providers offering their programs to schools came to the conclusion that there was no evidence to suggest that outdoor learning was centrally located within the curriculum but rather a form of curriculum enhancement. More importantly, their study indicated a tendency for outdoor education providers to view their programs as different from, and potentially incompatible with, public school programs.

Providers seem to define the special character of outdoor learning not as complimentary to school education but as distinct from it, raising the issue of 'to what extent does the outdoor experience provide added value over and above classroom-based learning?'. The same arguments appear to be deployed to associate outdoor learning with the curriculum as to distance it. (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 4)

As the issue of incompatibility of outdoor education with public schools has already been discussed in great detail within this thesis, what is important to draw from this quote is the potential detriment such a framing of outdoor education may have in distancing it from public school education. At this point I would like to suggest one possibility for such a stance for many outdoor education providers. If we were to consider this argument under a model I type situation, as proposed by Schön, then we could consider providers utilizing outdoor curriculum in a defensive manner as a means to ‘strengthen’ their position against other forms of education. This approach obviously hinders integration of outdoor education by reserving a special realm of ‘outdoor knowledge’ exclusive to their trade and detached from schools. Therefore, the articulation of outdoor education as pedagogy may indeed assist to move to a model II type interaction in order to avoid this learning bind. Indirectly, this has been suggested by this study.

When addressing the question ‘can outdoor learning contribute to and enhance the future 3-18 curriculum in Scotland?’ it is clear from these data that the answer is ‘yes’ with the caveat that many could easily refer to classroom learning. These data provide a lot of evidence that outdoor learning is currently a form of ‘curricular enhancement’. (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 16)

A model II arrangement that may be considered here is in how these various educators define their own roles. “Taking the issue of the lack of confidence to educate outdoors amongst school-teachers and the lack of curricular knowledge and expertise amongst some outdoor education providers in this study there seems to be considerable potential for a ‘meeting of minds’ and sharing of expertise” (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 48). However, regardless of whether or not public schools utilize external outdoor education providers, this argument of defining the role of outdoor education for, and within, schools remains important for any potential growth in this field.

This understanding of the role of outdoor education in schools is confounded by not having a clear perception of outdoor education as either pedagogy or curriculum. From this duality, other particular issues arise that can interfere with the integration into public schools, often doing so without an apparent understanding of exactly how outdoor education can play out in the schools. For example;

Despite increasing awareness of the positive impacts, there is some evidence to suggest that opportunities for EOtC [education outside the classroom] have declined in recent years. The decline has been attributed to teachers' concern about health and safety issues, their lack of confidence in teaching outdoors, and school and university curriculum requirements limiting opportunities for outdoor learning. Barriers to curriculum integration have also included an increased perception that a high degree of risk is attached to EOtC, exacerbated by issues of bureaucracy, funding, timing and resources. Finally, competing curriculum pressures limiting follow-up work and a lack of connection to wider learning is reported to limit the effectiveness of current provision. (Kendall, *et al*, 2006: 2)

Here it is important to distinguish how certain limitations are contextualized as either curriculum or pedagogy in order to gain a better understanding of how to deal with them. Issues of curriculum pressures, lack of connection to wider learning, and school and university curriculum requirements may not be as serious an impact if outdoor education was considered or utilized in a school as a pedagogy for integrated programming. Likewise, perhaps the teachers' concern in their lack of confidence, safety issues, and risk assessment could be understood and addressed in terms of curriculum delivery (more so in this example as their required understanding of outdoor education as a field of knowledge rather than just activity). Yet, later work examining the role of outdoor education in schools still indicated that "there is increased evidence and both public and political conviction that 'education outdoors' can provide important learning experiences that enable young people to learn in, through and about the natural heritage through first-

hand experience” (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 1). Therefore, difficulties in integration of outdoor education in public schools should not preclude the development of such programs, but rather help reinforce the need to understand how outdoor education is possibly being used as either content or method.

In order to consider how such outdoor programs would be more successfully integrated into our school system, it is also important to consider the student’s view of such experiences.

What young people value in outdoor experiences depends on the way three dimensions interact: the context/place, the activity itself and the social aspect. Most young people valued outdoor experiences that were less formal (e.g. mediated by family members, clubs and with friends) and some outdoor learning delivered through ‘centres’ and awards schemes. These less formal experiences were more commonly associated with providing more sustained, purposeful learning, tailored to their own interests and needs... The kinds of approaches to learning which young people found valuable and worthwhile included learning in, for and about natural contexts, self-directed approaches, teamwork, intergenerational learning, peer learning, the use of smaller groups, and approaches that allowed for greater choice about where they go while on trips and what they might do while outside. (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 5)

In the context of our discussion, this quote might suggest that students may value outdoor education more in terms of integrated-programming rather than curricula-based programming. Here, students may find less connection to a school-based outdoors program simply because it may have a greater focus as curriculum rather than pedagogy. But that being said, this would not invalidate the role of curriculum because whether or not it is outdoor education based or another subject area, such as science, the existence of curriculum would still be present; this only brings into question how students view the value of outdoor education as pedagogy. From this, it is suggestive that such a role for

outdoor education as curriculum would be placed second in value after pedagogy for students, but that it would be present nonetheless.

Simply 'being outdoors' is not sufficient for young people to express an ethic of care for nature or develop an understanding of natural processes. These things seem to be learned when they are an explicit aim of experiential activities and when they are mediated in appropriate ways. (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 5)

That is to say, as mentioned in this quote, students may value outdoor education as pedagogy, but its role as curriculum is also necessary in order to move towards a praxis for outdoor education. What I have suggested is that such a framing of outdoor education as praxis can only occur if we are clear in the relation, and limitations, of the field as either curriculum or pedagogy and how this manages to play out in the public school system.

Therefore, a final note on the integration of outdoor education in public schools worth discussing deals with the exact nature of how we need to frame, or understand, such an interaction and how outdoor education establishes its roles under such a system.

It is vital that all 'providers' have a clear understanding that pupils on outdoor courses are there for *educational* rather than *recreational* purposes and that they are trained to deliver these. Consequently in the design of programmes it is always important to consider the *aims*, *assumptions*, *methods* and *content*, before any *evaluation* allows *claims* to be made... Without a careful process like this it is easy to jump from 'aims for the programme' to 'claims about the effectiveness of the programme'. (Higgins, 2008 – refers to original work done by Nicol in his doctoral thesis)

From this, the discussion of this thesis also needs to consider the aims of program development instead of the claims about the effectiveness of such programs. That is to say, early on in this thesis I outlined the established processes of both outdoor and experiential education, however, once the discussion moved towards outdoor education in

schools it became apparent in Chapters Four, Five, and Six that this position was not as easily defined. This problem I have been suggesting rests in a substantive way upon which the duality of outdoor curriculum and pedagogy exists for schools. Certainly claims about program effectiveness exist, some of which I have already included in this chapter, but the discussion I wish to focus on is the aims for such programs. It is this articulation, along with a consideration of how to develop teacher training programs that can potentially strengthen this interaction between outdoor education and public schools.

Along these lines, Higgins (2008) suggests that:

If experiential and outdoor educational approaches are to prove influential these may at some stages of schooling be a radical alternative, but at others complementary to mainstream education. In Scotland any lobby seeking political support for outdoor learning will require to develop mutual understanding and collaborate with mainstream education communities to have any hope of gaining ground.

Thus, what I suggest is that greater integration of outdoor education in public schools requires the understanding of its aims as described in terms of the context of curriculum and/or pedagogy.

8.1.3 Struggles between Adventure and Environmental Education

The fundamental focus of this thesis has been on outdoor adventure education as a ‘case study’ utilizing experiential education theory and its potential synergy with public schools, in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. In Chapter Two, a distinction in definition between adventure education and environmental education was made, with reference to key characteristics as defined by Priest (1990). In addition, it has been noted that outdoor (adventure) education in schools has been on a decline in the last number of years (Kendall, *et al*, 2006 – a UK study), which has also been noted by the reduced rate of

recent journal publications on this topic (for example in the Journal of Experiential Education there were 16 key articles between 2001-04 but only 5 key articles between 2005-09). Of course, what is very interesting to note is that our society, over the last decade, has developed a greater awareness and focus on environmental education and action. Recycling, alternate energy, green building, life-cycle analysis of consumer products, etc. all dominate our understanding of our impacts on the natural environment and resources. Thus, it could be valuable to tease out any possible characteristics of adventure education, on the decline in schools, versus environmental education, which I would argue is on the rise.

At this point I would once again like to consider Schön's notion of technical rationality (1983). Environmental education might be considered more conducive to a model of technical rationality, with an emphasis in the sciences, than perhaps adventure education, with an emphasis on personal growth and development. This is not to say that a great deal of environmental education and action does not follow reflective model II type behaviors for group dynamics and construction of knowledge; it is, however, suggestive that environmental education has a greater susceptibility to falling under a scheme of technical rationality. What becomes interesting to note at this stage is how technical rationality spans other professions, and thus public school education would also find itself under these potential circumstances. For example, an argument could be made that the sciences and maths traditionally hold to a model of technical rationality more than other subjects, and thus possibly become more easily integrated in a school system traditionally based on 'provable outcomes of student achievement'. Here measurement and data analysis become tools for gaining curricular merit and worth. If a similar

argument is suggested for outdoor education, one could see how environmental education might gain more 'worth' in the school system than would adventure education. Hence, I would tentatively suggest that, apart from the obvious value environmental education has for schools and society, the rise in focus on environmental education has resulted in a corresponding decrease in adventure education. Environmental education has potentially shifted thinking away from adventure education priorities for outdoor education in general (not only in terms of its value, but also its alignment with society's preoccupation with technical rationality).

However, this distinction becomes important when we consider the role of outdoor education in schools either as pedagogy or curriculum. Although there can be a significant overlap between the two, what I would like to suggest is that adventure education, with its focus on experiential education and group dynamics, is more conducive to its implementation as a pedagogy for schools, whereas environmental education is more aligned with curriculum programming for schools. The difficulty with this arises when one considers that environmental education, as curriculum, has already gained significant ground in public school programming. Therefore, it could be suggested that by creating a shift in outdoor education away from adventure and towards environmental education, a weakening of distinct outdoor programs in schools has occurred. Teachers and administrators may view 'outdoor education' as environmental education, see it done in other subject areas, and thereby dismiss the need for a distinct outdoor education program. Of course, in doing this the effective pedagogy of adventure and experiential education is weakened, or potentially lost, in schools by not clearly making the distinction between this and its function as curriculum. Although this

argument might well represent an entire doctoral dissertation in and of itself, it has been presented here to reinforce, at the very least, a need to establish this distinction between curriculum and pedagogy in teacher training programs in outdoor education (providing a 'balanced' view) in order to benefit its field and what it can bring to the public school system.

8.2 Design and Structure of a Balanced Outdoor Education Training Program

During the discussion in this chapter, I have attempted to articulate the differences between outdoor education as curriculum versus pedagogy, and to suggest that without a clear understanding of this field as either in the school system that they can potentially work against each other in schools. However, based on the work and initiatives currently existing for both curricula-based programming and integrated programming, it is not possible to claim one is ‘better’ than the other. Therefore, in order to consider how teachers may bring outdoor education into their schools, there becomes a need for teacher training programs that can expose these teachers to both systems of outdoor education delivery. Such a view shares similarities with other systems already suggested for teacher training in outdoor education.

Outdoor education is now seen within the profession as drawing upon the 3 main areas of outdoor activities, environmental education and social and personal development. A good outdoor educator may well be focusing attention on one or other of these at any given time but will still be sensitive to opportunities to guide experience within the complementary areas. (Higgins, 1995: 4)

Here, Higgins addresses the need for all areas of outdoor education to be understood and at least partially utilized in order to strengthen any one focus or position by leaning on the other two. What is interesting to note is the potential similarity that surfaces between environmental education as an emphasis on curriculum, and personal and social education as a pedagogy driving outdoor education experiences. Framed in these terms, we might then wish to consider outdoor activities similar to a medium for such learning to occur. Here I am not attempting to redefine Higgins’ views of well-rounded outdoor programs, but rather to suggest that it provides a complimentary support to the work and ideas presented here in this thesis. What this view also helps to bring to light is the fact

that although we may be able to (and want to) make distinctions in outdoor education in schools either as curriculum or pedagogy, and may lean towards one more than the other for any given program, we should not abandon the other entirely.

This suggestion of well-balanced programs places an emphasis on being able to train teachers to become aware and to utilize positively both outdoor curriculum and pedagogy in schools. Thus effective course design for teacher training programs in outdoor education must be carefully constructed to allow the teacher candidates to think across and between curriculum and pedagogy and be able to make these distinctions in order to lean appropriately depending on the context or situation. From this, we can consider:

Course design can be treated as a systematic problem solving exercise. This model breaks the process down into a logical sequence of problems. As each is resolved the structure of the outdoor event that will achieve the desired outcome emerges. (Loynes, 1997: 45)

Here, Loynes suggests a model for program design, which can just as easily be utilized for teacher training programs as it would be for student and public school based programs. The key stages to his design model includes: identifying needs, specifying performance, identifying learner needs, determining objectives, selecting strategies, obtaining materials, and the finally conducting training. What I suggest is that such a stage design model can be used here to carefully tease apart outdoor objectives in schools that may lean more heavily in one direction as either curriculum-based or pedagogy driven. Loynes' emphasis on this stage design is to ensure that that proper objectives and outcomes are created for an effective complimentary program, rather than one based on possible untested assumptions that could weaken such programs.

In practice many teachers short circuit the design sequence or, alternatively, go about it in a different order. The teacher often has an intrinsic sense of the worth of an event such as a residential experience. Student evaluation may support this view with generalised feedback that says it was 'good'. The teacher then ends up attempting to work back through the sequence to justify the activity in the light of the organisation's aims. If undertaken in this way the result can be defensiveness from colleagues who perceive the teacher's attempts as competing with their own efforts to justify their courses. It is also likely that there will be a lack of understanding from other colleagues about how this element fits in to the whole picture and might contribute to their courses rather than threaten them. By working the sequence through in the correct order these possibilities can be avoided. The course will be viewed as an integral part of an overall educational strategy and the commitment of colleagues can be obtained. This situation can be the cause of the continuously marginal position of Outdoor Education in the curriculum. (Loynes, 1997: 46)

From these quotes, if we contextualize outdoor education and its aims in terms of curriculum or pedagogy, then this process in which an educator can go about to 'justify' such programs would also help articulate its position and understanding in terms of either content or method.

By first considering a teacher training model that draws from all three areas of outdoor education – outdoor activities, environmental education and social and personal development (as suggested by Higgins), and the need to consider an effective process of course design, it will now be worthwhile to examine a case study of such a program for teacher training in outdoor education.

8.2.1 Case Study: The Moray House School of Education

In 1972 The Moray House School of Education (formally known as the Moray House Institute of Education and the Moray House College of Education), at the University of Edinburgh offered its first diploma program in outdoor education. It is

believed that Scotland was one of the first places in the world where outdoor education became formalized (Higgins, 2008). Since this time, their programs have grown in scope and size, and have included postgraduate certificates and diplomas in outdoor education, Masters in outdoor education, BEd in physical education, and a BA in recreational management (Higgins, 1995). Currently, their program specializes in postgraduate certification and degrees at the Masters and doctoral levels, while undergraduate initiatives remain only as elective courses for students training to become teachers in secondary schools. In addition, they also offer an outdoor education option for and alongside Moray House's regular Postgraduate Diploma in Education. Moray House is believed to have run the first Masters degree in outdoor education in Europe (Higgins & Morgan, 1999: 14), and now they offer a research PhD program. Three streams offered for their postgraduate programs include outdoor education, personal and social outdoor education, and outdoor environmental and sustainability education.

The training programs offered at the outdoor education section of Moray House consist of broad-based curricula, theory, and practice in outdoor and experiential education.

Courses are designed to provide an opportunity for professionals to gain the knowledge and skills to enable them to plan and implement safe and relevant outdoor learning experiences, including those based in residential settings. Throughout the courses there is emphasis on the underpinning philosophy of experiential outdoor education. (Higgins, 1995: 6)

These various programs allow for the direct training of public school teachers, among others, in outdoor education while acknowledging that curriculum alone is insufficient without a social context in which to frame such experiences.

As the majority of our students are training for posts as teachers or outdoor education instructors, the message is clear that the development of

physical outdoor skill lacks depth unless it is focused on personal and social skills of an ethic of 'sustainable' use of the countryside. (Higgins, 1995: 7)

Most programs at the certificate, diploma, and Masters levels have been broken down into modularized sections for teaching and delivery (Higgins & Morgan, 1999: 10). Main areas of focus include 1) professional practice in outdoor education, 2) learning and teaching in an experiential context, 3) environmental education perspectives, and 4) social context and personal development. These core areas of study represent detailed depth of focus for the underpinnings of both theory and practice for outdoor education to be successfully utilized and taught by public school teachers, and I would suggest that it goes beyond 'typical' outdoor education training programs that focus more on technical and safety skills. This embodiment of outdoor education as a field of study rather than just isolated program activities provides a solid foundation for growth of this profession and should be considered an important case study for other fledging outdoor teacher training programs.

This greater scope of study, however, does not imply that the programs offered at Moray House in outdoor education have steered away from practical and safety considerations required for effective program delivery to students. Recognizing the needed skill base for such programs, they offer additional competency courses at the diploma and Masters levels including technical, expedition, and placement components, and these are referred to as the 'Professional Development Programme'. These competency courses focus on three main areas: 1) technical competence, 2) professional competence "taken as an expression of the ability to 'teach', 'instruct' or 'facilitate' in a vocational context." (Higgins & Morgan, 1999: 13), and 3) sound judgment.

When we examine such a detailed and comprehensive training program as this, it is interesting to note how there becomes a subtle articulation, I would argue, in seeing outdoor education operate as both curriculum and pedagogy (even though it may not be explicitly worded in these terms). Patterns and ideas discussed in curricular-based programming, as described in Chapter Five of this thesis, align well with Moray House's modularized section on environmental education perspectives. Likewise, elements of integrated programming, as described in Chapter Six of this thesis, align nicely with Moray House's component on social context and personal development. Here, I would argue that such an extensive and established training facility as this has naturally developed specialized teaching modules to address the very issue of curriculum versus pedagogy that I suggest in this thesis, but that it has done so in terms of a tacit knowledge of the field rather than the through the formal articulation I propose.

From the program structure and research done at Moray House, I will now examine in greater depth the needs of public school teachers within such training programs. By doing so, what I will demonstrate is that how thinking about outdoor education in terms of curriculum and/or pedagogy can both assist the training of the teacher candidates in these programs as well as strengthening the structure and use of such programs themselves.

8.2.2 The Needs within a Teacher-Training Program

When examining the contributions that teacher training in outdoor education has in terms of preparing teachers to integrate such programs into the public system, it is important to understand how such training will frame priorities. That is to say, if formal

training of teachers in outdoor education occurs, what are the values that such an approach can best encourage? One such study suggests that:

When the responses from providers about how they can contribute to the curriculum are coded it is clear that they prioritise their work in terms of first, personal and social development; second, environmental education; and third, outdoor activities. (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 47)

Here it is important to note that referring to the curriculum of a teacher-training program does not place an emphasis on curricula-based programming in schools, as the primary interest stated in the above quote as personal and social development is more closely aligned with outdoor education as seen as pedagogy. As previously mentioned in this chapter, a balanced approach should be taken in terms of considering outdoor education as pedagogy and curriculum, and here it is also suggestive that this can be thought of in terms of personal and social development, environmental education, and outdoor activities. This three-fold consideration of outdoor education also nicely aligns with the idea that environmental education and outdoor activities, if thought of as adventure education, have separate outcomes that can be seen as divisible. For example, environmental education could be thought of as a medium for content delivery of sustainability issues while outdoor activities might be used as a method of developing experiential-based group interactions. Again, this broader-based understanding of outdoor education would still be within the framework of what Nicol suggests as personal and social development, which has also been noted by others as an importance.

The emphasis in training has, for some time now, been on encouraging teachers and instructors to extend their aspirations for their students beyond the physical to the academic, aesthetic, spiritual, environmental and social. (Higgins & Morgan, 1999: 9)

Set within this three pillar program approach (of personal & social development, environmental, and outdoor activities), it is also beneficial to examine more detailed skills for which teachers would need to develop in order to run such outdoor programs. In the past, these were often defined as ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills, where the hard skill sets are now more often defined as those technical skills needed for the profession, while soft skills are better represented as the intrapersonal skills needed to lead such programs. Though these have traditionally been the two defining skill sets for outdoor education, other considerations are important to include.

Despite the wide range of options for work in this field there are competences that are common to everyone. These can be divided into three types: Technical skills such as safety management, administrations skills and environmental skills. Process skills such as instructing and group leadership. Meta skills such as sound judgement, creative thinking, ethical behaviour and clear vision. The technical skills are the easiest to train in and the quickest to acquire whilst the meta skills grow over a lifetime. With this in mind many employers recruit for the meta and process skills knowing that the appropriate technical skills can be easily developed once you start work. (Loynes & Higgins, 1997: 23)

What is interesting to note here is the distinction of meta skills, or judgment skills, from that of technical and process skills. In Chapter Four of this thesis, the discussion of qualification versus certification examined the criticism of these meta skills not being met by training programs, but rather as lifelong skills in development. Loynes and Higgins also recognized this aspect, and considered teacher training as only one possible avenue for this career, and also included on-the-job training, volunteer or training placements, and youth training or apprenticeship as alternatives to higher education (Loynes & Higgins, 1997: 24).

In addition to technical, process, and meta skills, it has been suggested that other skill sets may be necessary for teacher training programs to give exposure to. Two other such skill sets have been coined ‘warm skills’ and ‘green skills’.

Warm skills consider how we meet nature (our ‘manners’) and the ways in which the educator works to create an overall ambience within the group. This is a crucial antecedent to developing a reconceived ‘human–nature’ relationship. Green skills pertain to an instructor’s ability to ground the experience within stories, meanings, and contexts that are deeply relevant to local culture. (Beames, 2006: 5)

It could be argued that these skills are perhaps a sub-set of process (or personal and social) skills. Yet they still help to define a dynamic social relation present in outdoor education that may be more complex than what is encountered in the typical school classroom.

What now becomes important to understand about all these skills (and subsets) is in how they relate to the exact role that outdoor education plays in teacher training. Instead of thinking in terms of technical versus interpersonal skills, we could frame the argument in terms of the curriculum of outdoor education versus that of its pedagogy. That is to say, when outdoor educators debate about the merits of developing the technical skills in new teacher candidates, they are naturally referring to a curriculum base of outdoor education. Likewise, to place emphasis on personal development skills is suggestive of viewing the approach or pedagogy of outdoor education as an important foundation for new teachers. By framing the argument as such, this might also help shed light on the older argument of which is more important to teach, the technical or interpersonal skills of outdoor education. Now we can understand that each side may be referring to essentially a more divisive point; outdoor education tacitly seen as both curriculum and pedagogy.

8.2.3 The Needs for a Teacher-Training Program

In addition to the benefits that teacher training programs can provide to the individual teacher wishing to bring outdoor education into their classroom and schools, I would suggest that the role of teacher training programs is even larger, and that the need to maintain outdoor education as a field of study could potentially rest on the initiatives of such programs. Central to the theme of this thesis, the role of outdoor education as curriculum versus pedagogy, I would argue, is important to consider when dealing with teacher training in this field.

‘Outdoor Education is not so much a subject but rather an approach to education.’ This was a statement made by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department in February 1991 in response to a strong proposal to create a Teaching Qualification for teachers of Outdoor Education... As a result of this view a teaching qualification was not created and GTC registration remains impossible. (Loynes, Michie & Smith, 1997: 16)

Here is a clear example of why we need to distinguish between outdoor education as pedagogy versus curriculum. The argument taken by the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department framed the argument for outdoor education as one of curriculum. If the distinction was made in the two roles of outdoor education, it may have been possible to articulate circumstances or instances when outdoor education could be utilized as curriculum, as in the case of the Australian and New Zealand systems discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. By doing so, creating this distinction could prevent the disarming of outdoor education on merits of curriculum or pedagogy by those citing the opposite examples that programs may rely on. In the above quote, one could now argue and demonstrate that the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department framed their

argument of outdoor education as one of pedagogy, then further cite work done in the Australian and New Zealand systems as curricular-based programming, thereby questioning the Department's refusal for teacher registration based on not actually understanding the full scope of the outdoor education field.

Although I would argue that the strengthening of outdoor education in schools is very dependant on understanding its role as curriculum and pedagogy, there is still much that formalized teacher training in this field could bring to its incorporation into public schools. As discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, the duality of teachers requiring expertise in both public school education methods and theory, and a background in outdoor education makes the availability of such teachers low. Therefore, in cases where a school system may value outdoor education it may still be possible that its effectiveness in the classroom is not seen because of this issue of teacher training in this mixed field of outdoor education and classroom teaching.

Other forms of support [for schools] were requested too, notably in terms of training for staff (primarily accredited by universities etc) where some providers suggested better links between the academic world, the outdoor sector and schools, and also in initial teacher training and qualifications (both general and specific) and in-service provision. This is consistent with the findings amongst teachers. (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 6)

From Nicol's study, it was suggested that better links between academia, the outdoor sector, and schools may be met with an increase in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses, providing Additional Teaching Qualifications (ATQ), and also the opportunity of postgraduate certifications in outdoor education and an increase in staff in-service courses for teachers (Nicol, *et al*, 2006: 44).

Another detailed study in England indicated that a critical examination of general teacher training programs to include outdoor education (and other education outside the

classroom) was necessary in order to provide valuable learning opportunities for the teachers involved.

The main objectives of EOtC [education outside the classroom] training provided on primary and secondary courses focused on ‘preparing and enabling trainees to run EOtC activities’ and ‘enabling trainees to maximise pupil learning during EOtC’. There was less of a focus on gauging the quality or measuring the impact of such experiences, or enabling trainees to experience how pupils behaved in different environments. (Kendall, *et al*, 2006: 20)

That is to say, although some teacher training programs gave teachers exposure to outdoor and experiential education, a concern arose that the quality of such experiences had not been critically examined. Thus variance in such teacher experiences meant that the “vast majority of the coordination of EOtC training was the responsibility of individual course or subject directors” (Kendall, *et al*, 2006: 31), thereby potentially weakening the effectiveness of such programs due to lack of uniformity. Here the study indicated that frequently there was not a minimum expectation for EOtC in general teacher training, and that the typically short periods of time did not focus on practical experiences (Kendall, *et al*, 2006: 43).

Overall, three key issues emerged from the study: the variation between institutions; the possibility that some students may be inadequately prepared for EOtC; and the lack of quality assurance resulting from course and programme directors’ lack of knowledge of what happens on school placements. (Kendall, *et al*, 2006: 71)

Certainly a suggestion to address this situation is the development of teacher training programs specific to outdoor education. From this, it could also be possible to use these initiatives to provide other detailed exposure to teachers in more general teacher training programs.

The idea of the need for teacher training in outdoor education to provide a leadership role for other teachers currently in the school system attempting to provide such experiences can also be important for this field of study.

Despite the lack of curricular imperative, some teachers reported remarkable efforts to get their pupils outdoors, often citing curricular justification as a major reason for doing so. However the lack of structure and prescription may also act as a barrier to delivery in some cases. (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 6)

In this study, it was noted that teachers saw the benefits of outdoor education in different ways, particularly noting a difference between teachers already engaged in outdoor education versus those that are not. Additionally, I would argue that the role of outdoor education as either curriculum versus pedagogy would also play out in this argument once teachers understood which (or perhaps both) of these aims they saw as important objectives, but such distinctions were not made (as is the general case within outdoor education studies).

If teachers whose attitudes and situations are less conducive to outdoor study are to be encouraged to take learning outdoors, there may be little point in, for example, providing extra resources, when the root cause includes understanding (or lack of understanding) of the benefits. Increasing outdoor study may also depend on some form of staff training or the development of an appreciation or legitimisation of the wider benefits of outdoor study. (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 6)

That is to say, if teachers can not articulate the aims of outdoor education they value, which I argue needs to be framed in terms of curriculum and/or pedagogy, then further initiatives to promote outdoor education in schools could be in vain. In the above quote it was also noted that part of problem for this separation in thinking arose due in part to limitations to outdoor opportunities as part of the teacher's own training. "As there is no requirement to deliver teacher training outdoors (or even to refer to education outdoors)

any such training is entirely at the whim of the Teacher Education Institution” (Nicol, *et al*, 2007: 13).

From this discussion on the needs of establishing teacher training programs to enhance outdoor education in schools, it has been noted that much variance occurs with such training and that this fact in and of itself leaves outdoor education susceptible to opposition dismantling its perceived arguments from the outside of such systems.

For our purposes, then, we evaluate school outdoor learning in Scotland as follows: (a) current patterns of outdoor learning provision can be described as being variable; (b) this variability is in part influenced by varying teacher perspectives on the relationships between outdoor learning and the official curriculum; (c) the costs of outdoor learning are perceived to be exceptionally high; and (d) the combined effect of (b) and (c) has left outdoor learning exceptionally exposed to school-by-school and teacher-by-teacher decision-making, and thus the highly variable pattern identified above. (Beames, Atencio & Ross, 2009: 37)

Of course, central to my argument that outdoor education needs to be seen as potentially operating either as curriculum or pedagogy in public schools, this point I believe helps address this issue of variability. In many cases, if the perspectives of teacher, training organization, and school system recognize this fundamental difference in potential use or approach for outdoor education, then perhaps this clarification of language could assist this field in its role in public schooling.

8.3 Enhancing Outdoor Education in Schools through Integrated Programming

In terms of providing a stronger teacher training program in outdoor education that allows for the articulation and understanding of outdoor education as either curriculum and/or pedagogy, there is one last aspect of this I wish to examine for the establishment of such training programs: the enhancement of student learning through the use of integrated programming.

Outdoor education theorists suggest that programs need to incorporate 'broad adventure' where there is less emphasis on short, adrenaline-filled activities, and a greater focus on taking responsibility for more substantial outdoor challenges with uncertain outcomes, and all of this deeply rooted with a strong sense of place. (Beames, 2006: 7)

Put simply, the use of experiential education through the medium of outdoor education requires a longer time of exposure to become a transformative learning moment for the student (arguably within a social context). This is not to say that actual expeditions need to become lengthier, but rather the educational context within which it is framed must be extended. "I should add that journeys do not have to be multiweek arctic canoe trips... A journey can take place over an academic year and focus on curiosity-driven explorations of one's immediate surroundings" (Beames, 2006: 9). Here the concept of integrated outdoor programming works well to meet these needs by providing a mechanism of extended student exposure to this field.

While examining how to enhance the effectiveness of outdoor education for students, Beames and others considered three dimensions of outdoor learning, and I would suggest that such considerations fit nicely with the integrated outdoor programming model. [Note: the authors here speak of three dimensions for effective integrated programming, but these are different from the dimensions of outdoor education

as in, through, about and for the natural heritage as referred to by Higgins (2008) as Beames *et al* are essentially talking about the means/approach whereas ‘in, through, about and for’ are about place, approach, content and values.]

Effective outdoor learning needs to move away from fragmented ‘canned’ sessions towards journeys, involve the pupils negotiating what is learned with their teachers, and be place-conscious. (Beames, Atencio & Ross, 2009: 33)

The first dimension for effective outdoor learning considered by Beames *et al* is a shift from fragmented or ‘ready-made’ sessions towards journeys as a means to learn better about self and social relations. Here the authors considered that for effective transference to a learner’s life, outdoor experiences had to be of a greater duration with an emphasis on self-organized journeys that allowed for a move away from pre-established activities that simply used the outdoor environment as a medium. “There does not appear to be an overwhelming base of evidence that these kinds of outdoor experiences [ready made sessions] have any meaningful transfer into pupils’ lives back at their school or home community” (Beames, Atencio & Ross, 2009: 33). Certainly from the research presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis, these elements of self-organized journeys were present in the teachers’ integrated outdoor programs. The second dimension considered here is a shift for programs from universal to place-based focus. Here this considers the degree to which programs are grounded in a sense of place. “Outdoor education programs should be rooted in the history, ecology, culture, and stories of the place they are in” (Beames, 2006: 9). That is to say, when developing outdoor education programs for schools, the exact nature and implementation of such programs should be based on a particular context. This reinforces the notion that standardization of outdoor education programs does not create identical models in every school since the actual sense of ‘place’ varies.

Instead, the authors felt that programs which align towards a particular context or situation create a learning environment that better suits the needs of the students. Again, it was interesting to notice that in the integrated programs surveyed for the primary research for this thesis, because of the time demands such programs required of students, there was variance in how and what each program offered in order to meet the needs of the students and the school. For example, EarthQuest designed an integrated program that fostered learning using the natural mountainous landscape for adventurous journeys, while the Northern Outdoor Studies Program (NOS) was designed to meet the needs of workforce job placement in logging, resource and wildlife management for its local community. Each utilized outdoor and experiential education but in a manner that was sensitive to their exact learning environment. The third dimension considered was a shift from a model of instructor-driven programs to learning-negotiated programs. Here, this considers the degree to which students have choice in what and how they learn.

Teachers on the inner part of this dimension are those who are not overly authoritarian or prescriptive in their approach. Although uncertainty can be challenging for teachers and pupils alike, this more 'generative' approach, where knowledge is co-constructed by the learner and facilitator together, may be most able to cater to the needs and interests of individual students. (Beames, Atencio & Ross, 2009: 34)

Here, Beames *et al* did not frame a laissez-faire approach to teaching when considering a learning-negotiated environment, but rather that the teacher must be aware of how best to manage a group.

The notion of instructors retaining a fair amount of discretionary power may be regarded by some theorists as unexperiential, but I am hard-pressed to think of any experiential education programs that are so experiential they don't need a facilitator... It is the instructor's privilege to have control over the group and it requires tremendous judgment to know how and when to use it. (Beames, 2006: 8)

Although these three dimensions for outdoor education may not be exclusive to integrated programming, what I would suggest is, at the very least, these elements are certainly enhanced by such a delivery method and reinforces that such a model should be considered a great framework for the integration of outdoor education in public schools. Therefore, I would argue that the use of integrated programming, along with the articulation of when and how outdoor education is used both as curriculum and pedagogy are foundational aspects for any solid teacher training program in this field. I propose that the these foundational aspects, utilized in effective programming (such as the Moray House case study), would provide a system that has the potential to enhance the exposure of outdoor education to students in the public school system and allow teachers to overcome certain learning binds that have disadvantaged such programs in schools in the past.

Chapter 9 – Conclusions and Future Work

9.1 Conclusions

It has been suggested that teaching needs to be thought of as a triadic relation between teacher, student, and content. “There is a familiar logical point to be made about teaching: it is a triadic relation. For all X, if X teaches, there must exist somebody who, and something that, is taught by X” (Passmore, 1980: 21). Essentially, this argument suggests that when one speaks of teaching *something* or *someone* that they necessarily have to assume the other. For example, to say ‘we teach students’ is to imply that we teach them something, even if that something is not defined by the sentence, or that ‘we teach science’ implies that we teach this to somebody. That is to say, we teach *something* to *someone*.

I would like to suggest that this definition can be further expanded in order to better articulate our concept of education. Here, in order to define teaching, I propose that we must consider four points rather than just three, and I would expand the definition to the following: We teach something to someone *in someway*. The commonsense of this statement can be easily understood, as many educators spend a great deal of their time and energy designing different ways to teach their set curriculum to the same group of students in order to enhance their learning and retention. Therefore, even if the ‘*someway*’ is not explicitly stated, it is still very important to consider in a definition of teaching. To say that two different educators ‘teach science to high school students’ does not suggest that both teachings are identical (even if we try), and this can be understood in terms of the *someway* they deliver the same something to the same someone.

Under these definitions, a clear distinction is made between the ‘something’, which can be thought of as curriculum, and the ‘someway’, which can be thought of as pedagogy. Such an understanding of teaching also allows us to consider these factors as separate and divisible, although certainly interconnected. In this thesis, I have undertaken and developed a comprehensive argument that articulates the roles that outdoor education has to play in terms of curriculum and as pedagogy, and I also demonstrated how these can potentially interact with the public education system.

9.1.1 The Relation of Curriculum and Pedagogy for Outdoor Education

The understanding of the role of outdoor education in public schools has been supported in the work of this thesis by a thorough examination of both existing literature and primary research data. The background of both outdoor and experiential education was explored and defined, and additionally the potential compatibility between outdoor education and schools was addressed in terms of the roles of the institution and the educator. Under this framework, this dissertation contributes to the discussion by considering the exact nature and role of outdoor education in schools, and what limitations or challenges this creates for its inclusion. Contextualizing outdoor education as either pedagogy and/or curriculum involved the detailed study of curricula-based outdoor programs operating in New Zealand and Australia, integrated outdoor programs operating in North America, to date the broadest survey of Canadian integrated outdoor programs as primary research, and some teacher training initiatives in Scotland. As such, the doctoral work presented here represents some key global views of outdoor education and how the field can potentially, and does, operate in the public school system.

To conclude the discussion of outdoor education's role as either curriculum or pedagogy, I would like to take an example to articulate this from my own past. Following my university education in Science and Education, I spent a year working in the private outdoor industry prior to becoming a classroom teacher. During this time I worked for a scuba diving provider and developed a detailed scuba program that was offered to grade eight students. Designed as a one-day exploratory program, students were taken to the local IMAX theater where they watched *Into the Deep*, a 3-D immersion experience in cold water diving. This was followed by a 'teaching session' which included various group activities focused on problem solving skills developed for underwater work (such as hand signals for communication) and a hands-on 'show & tell' including ROVs (remote operated vehicles), commercial diving equipment, and old military grade dive gear (including the famous Mark V dive helmet). But the greatest experience was in the afternoon session where, in a local pool, all students were given the chance to actually scuba dive (two feet underwater in the shallow end), and also operate a commercially certified ROV. Feedback from students, teachers, and parents was overwhelmingly positive. The local television station aired a piece that referred to 'having a classroom at the bottom of a pool'. (I also later developed a high school program that had students run through an underwater obstacle course and attempt to assemble a 'widget' underwater while wearing industrial dive gloves).

What is important to take from such an example is how outdoor education (as pedagogy and/or curriculum) was actually used, and more critically, how we can define such use in order to understand its potential influence in the school system. Through the lens of curriculum, the program was developed to expose students to concepts and terms

used in recreational diving, marine research, and the commercial diving industry. Emphasis on underwater communication, equipment design, and environmental hazards was explored. The mini-curriculum guide developed also included links to school subjects such as science, English, maritime and local history, math, and technology education. Yet, through the lens of pedagogy, the role of experiential education was seen in terms of the students actually participating in a scuba experience (and learning how to operate an ROV), which brought them into a physically (underwater) and socially (dive-buddy reliance) unfamiliar environment. In terms of using the theory of experiential education to provide an action and reflection cycle to construct knowledge, here students developed first-hand knowledge to understand how to stay submerged in the shallow end of the pool, since buoyancy characteristics were intentionally not covered in the classroom sessions. The mini de-brief session at the end of the program had students reflecting on personal challenges and limitations that were discovered during the exercise of which most students were not previously aware.

The key point to this example is that the role of outdoor education as curriculum and pedagogy, specific for the school system, is separable. Where the outdoor industry sector requires both a topic and a method, the school system at times may need to draw possibly only from one. For example, in the above program if the school system held value to the curriculum, it would have been possible to teach the scuba theory in a traditional classroom setting, showing pictures and describing the history of the trade. Yet if the school system saw the value in the experience, possibly as a means to develop student empowerment and teamwork, then the scuba experience in the pool may have been undertaken without any reference to how such skills are used in the various

professions that were presented. This division between curriculum and pedagogy exists because the school system can act to become surrogate to one form; if outdoor education is used as content then it could be done using the existing school structure (outdoor education as curriculum with public school as pedagogy), while if it is used as pedagogy then it could meet personal development goals already existing for students (outdoor education as pedagogy with public school as curriculum).

What is also interesting to note about this example is in how it demonstrates possible limitations that can arise with the use of outdoor education in schools. This thesis focused on outdoor education as curricular-based outdoor programming and as integrated outdoor programming, yet this example of the scuba program falls under the unexplored category of supplemental outdoor programming, and the reasoning for not examining supplemental outdoor programming can now be fully understood. Feedback for the example of the scuba program from teachers was very positive, but it also revealed that essentially no reflective summary or other activities were ever done with the students prior to or after undertaking the program. As curriculum, the program remained isolated and unimportant to what teachers taught in the classroom and valued as ‘graded’ material for students. As pedagogy, the program lacked any significant duration needed to become transformative in nature to student thinking or action and was a far cry from anything that might have been considered a rite of passage. So essentially, even though the program was developed in terms of both curriculum and pedagogy, it became nothing more than an exciting leisure activity for students simply because of how the public school did not incorporate such a learning moment into their existing system.

This leads to the second key point that I have argued in this thesis: not only do we need to understand outdoor education in terms of pedagogy and curriculum, but in doing so it suggests how outdoor education can be more successfully incorporated into the public school system by use of such a distinction.

9.1.2 The Integration of Outdoor Education in Public Schools

When considering the relation of curriculum and pedagogy in the public school system, it is worthwhile to notice the hierarchical levels at which both play out. Curriculum design can be thought of as operating at a higher level than the individual school or classroom, either at the school board or provincial Department of Education levels. Although every teacher works with curriculum, and certainly there is an aspect of defining and framing such curriculum, it is nevertheless essentially prescribed to teachers. As a profession, teachers are given standardized curriculum documents from their school board and province to teach to students. This higher operational level within public education is where value judgments are made on what material is deemed worthy of student study. In contrast, this decision control level differs once one talks of pedagogy. Although school boards and provincial Departments of Education attempt to suggest ‘best practices’ when it comes to pedagogy, most of the control of how to deliver content rests in the creative approach of the individual classroom teacher. Within the same school in the same year, two teachers may approach the same prescribed curriculum for a course in two very different ways. One may be more traditional and ‘teach to the exam’, relying on memorization and rote practice drills, while another may use a more

progressive approach and develop a community of enquirers and lead-takers in their students and classroom.

In terms of outdoor education and this thesis, both the literature of this field and my own primary research have indicated that teachers identify difficulties and limitations when attempting to validate the content of outdoor education to administrators and other teachers. This can be thought of clearly in terms of such curriculum values operating at a level higher up than the individual classroom. Yet, in the same feedback, when examining challenges with outdoor education in the context of pedagogy, teachers often spoke of such things as time constraints, safety concerns, and training experience, all of which operate at the classroom level. With this consideration, I suggest that understanding outdoor education as curriculum and/or pedagogy does more than simply further articulate a definition, but that it proposes a different set of operating features, levels of decision making, and limitations.

This becomes an important feature once one talks of teacher training programs in outdoor education for public school teachers. Here, not only does there become the need for teachers to understand how they may use outdoor education, in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, but that such use naturally determines how the existing school system will potentially respond to such programs. That is to say, I suggest there is a chronology needed to be understood for establishing outdoor programs in schools. Since teacher training programs, if looking at outdoor education, are preparing individual teachers to initially operate at the classroom level, I suggest that such teachers have a better chance at incorporating outdoor education into schools as pedagogy rather than curriculum. Here, such teachers can take a thematic approach to teaching already set curriculum

through the medium of outdoor education. These programs have the potential to grow in value and strength, such as was demonstrated through the integrated outdoor programs surveyed in the primary research of this thesis. In contrast, other teachers early on in their careers can experience challenge in attempting to demonstrate the ‘value’ of outdoor education as curriculum since such decisions operate at a higher level in public schooling which naturally reduces their control.

Yet, as mentioned, I propose we consider a chronology for establishing outdoor education in public schools, and that this relates to the distinction of outdoor education as either curriculum or pedagogy. After such pedagogy-driven programs can be developed in school boards by teachers (operating at the classroom level), this can provide the opportunity for the higher levels of the educational system to critically examine such programs. Here, they may come to value such transformative moments for students and wish to extend such programs more extensively throughout their system of education delivery. At this hierarchal level of control, curriculum becomes the primary method of implementation. Yet this has value as a means of ‘justification’ of outdoor education in school systems, as has been demonstrated by the developments in New Zealand and Australia school boards (but that is not to say that considerable debate still does not go on in terms of the curricular value of outdoor education, rather it simply provides the solid framework for such a debate).

Therefore, articulating outdoor education as both curriculum and pedagogy, as has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation, allows for the understanding of how such a field might be potentially incorporated (or fail to be incorporated) into public schools. By considering a chronology of program development, I suggest that 1) individual

teachers being trained in outdoor education programs need to be taught to clearly define how this field can operate as both curriculum and pedagogy; 2) initial efforts from classroom teachers need to focus on outdoor education as pedagogy, as this is an area over which the classroom teacher has more direct influence; 3) that only after the establishment of various strong programs in outdoor education should the move be made at higher levels to bring a formalized value of outdoor education as curriculum to public schools; and 4) by eventually formalizing outdoor education in schools this would allow for a greater rationale to provide teacher training in outdoor education, thus finally developing a continual circle of advancement and opportunity for this field in the public education sector.

9.2 Future Work

As the work presented in this thesis represents a refined perspective on how we may view the interaction of outdoor education in public schools, this obviously leaves many avenues for future research that can expand and deepen the ideas offered in this dissertation. Here I will briefly outline some areas where I believe there could be significant benefit for exploration in regards to further developing the concept of outdoor education in schools as being framed either as curriculum or pedagogy.

Referred to a number of times throughout this work, the issue of how environmental education (in its various forms ranging from social responsibility to technological interventions) can relate to or influence our understanding of outdoor adventure education needs further consideration. Importantly, the scope of environmental education was only primarily examined in this thesis through the specific works of outdoor educators more aligned in background with outdoor adventure education, yet many other directives, research, and journals deal exclusively with the field of environmental education in both theory and practice. Only by providing a comprehensive overview of the potential interplay of environmental education in schools, as I have done in this thesis for outdoor adventure education, can we then carefully understand how one form of outdoor education can or might influence and alter the impact of the other in public education.

Along these lines of examining other outdoor theories such as environmental education and how it relates to this work, it can be of importance to consider the recent ideas and concepts behind place-based education. Certainly place-based education aligns closely to some of the theory and practice used in outdoor education in terms of the

contextual influence for learning, and the ideas behind place-based education have been addressed by many researchers and writers (for some examples see Sobel, 2004; Hutchinson, 2004; and Gruenewald, 2003). Place-based education considers not only the personal experience of the individual but it does so in the context of community and a sense of place that brings in wider variables for effective education including family, culture, natural history, and how the individual values the actual sense of place (hence countering the ‘void’ of a sterile classroom). Frequent concepts used in outdoor education, such as notions of a physically and socially unfamiliar environment, use of metaphor, and transference to a student’s everyday life changes the scope of how individuals use and interact with their environment and suggests differences compared to the scheme of place-based education in a ‘known’ sense. What would be intriguing to explore further here is in how a familiarity with a sense of place may or may not alter the view of how a more generalized form of outdoor education may be framed as either curriculum or pedagogy.

In addition to this future work that is grounded in literature discussions, there are also other avenues for further primary research to be done on this topic. First, an extended student-based inquiry would be of benefit to examine how the youth in various outdoor education programs view such distinctions for outdoor education as curriculum and/or pedagogy. It would also be interesting to note if these perceptions shift any prior to, during, and after such outdoor programs of study are undertaken. Likewise, it would be informative to observe if there is any potential shift in attitude based on the duration of exposure from single day activities to the longer integrated programs. That is to say, might students possibly view one-day outdoor programs in terms of curriculum where

those involved in longer programs start viewing it as a process or pedagogy, or maybe vice versa? A second area worthy of investigation would be a deeper examination of the use of what I have identified as supplemental outdoor programming in schools. In particular, as I noted in the previous section, the potential that supplemental outdoor programs might lack significant curriculum connectivity (through the commitment of the classroom teacher) and also lack the duration needed for transformative moments as a pedagogy, might the use of supplemental outdoor programs actually become a detriment to the rise of outdoor education in public schools? Essentially this brings into question whether or not the nature of the interaction between outdoor education and schools not only pertains to its use as either curriculum or pedagogy but that also the effectiveness of such use is of critical important for its continuation.

By considering where possible future research may direct this work and that it provides even greater understanding of how outdoor education can operate in the public school system, this only helps to reinforce the importance this dissertation has to this overall discussion. By clearly defining outdoor education in schools as having the ability to operate as either curriculum and/or pedagogy, how this can be incorporated into teacher training programs, and through the use of integrated schools programs, outdoor education has the ability to reach its potential to act as praxis (reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it) for our schools and the learning potential of our students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Participant Requests

1) Research Ad posted in the November 2008 electronic newsletter of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO):

What Makes a Good Outdoor Educator?

Survey Request

How can the current teaching profession prepare new teachers seeking to become effective outdoor and experiential educators? Would this involve formal training? If so, by whom; school boards, a university upgrade program, industry? What skills, aptitudes and background theory would be necessary? Should there be an intern or mentorship process and, if so, what would this look like?

Current doctoral research is investigating the need for training new teachers in outdoor education in order to further its development in Canadian public schools. As such, the knowledge and experiences of veteran outdoor educators in schools is sought in order to establish the requirements for this growing educational field. If you would like to participate in this research project, please respond to this survey request. The survey will consist of two parts and will require as much time as you wish to contribute. The first part allows you to identify the critical issues and concepts that you feel should be included in any formal new teacher training process. A short follow-up survey will consist of a rating scheme that will allow you to give feedback on the issues collected from the first survey to identify key ideas of veteran outdoor educators.

If you would like to have your voice heard on this issue please contact Michael Bowdridge, a Nova Scotia high school teacher and doctoral candidate, at mbowd@staff.ednet.ns.ca.

2) Individual e-mail solicitation of identified Canadian teachers operating integrated outdoor education programs in public schools:

Good afternoon _____,

My name is Mike Bowdridge and I am a high school classroom teacher in Nova Scotia. Currently I am also working on my doctoral thesis in the area of outdoor education and would be very interested to speak with you about your experiences in this field and about your program, _____.

I am investigating the ways in which the current teaching profession could better prepare new teachers seeking to become effective outdoor and experiential educators. As such, I am seeking to include the knowledge and experiences of veteran outdoor educators such as yourself to add a grounded basis for my

research and to give a “voice” to current outdoor educators in this dialogue. I am particularly interested in integrated programs, where the teachers need a solid foundation in current school curriculum and courses that are then blended with outdoor education by utilizing a thematic approach. In the most basic terms, I am seeking experienced feedback on where Canadian outdoor educators think we should be going in terms of new-teacher training in this field, and I would like to know your thoughts on this.

If you would like to participate in this research project, please respond to this e-mail and I will send you a teacher survey as a start point. The survey will require as much, or as little, time as you are able to contribute. This survey will allow you to identify the critical issues and concepts that you feel should be included in any formal new teacher training process.

Your time, and voice, would be really appreciated and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Mike Bowdridge
Halifax West High School
Halifax, NS
PhD candidate (Simon Fraser University, BC)

Appendix B: Research Informed Consent Waiver

Informed Consent by Participants in a Research Study

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 778-782-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, whether there are possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Title: Investigating Integrated Outdoor Education Programs

Investigator Name: Mike Bowdridge

Investigator Department: Faculty of Education

This study is designed to investigate key criteria or goals that should be considered when developing a new teacher training program in outdoor education. The survey of veteran outdoor educators would allow for the experienced voice of the profession be heard in order to address the needs for new training in this area in order to promote its continued growth.

You would be required to complete two survey forms. Form 1 will allow you to express your beliefs of issues and elements that should be taken into account when training new teachers in the field of outdoor education. This may include your understanding for the needs of practice, safety, implementation, or theory in the area of outdoor education. Form 2 will be generated from all the input of the first survey, and allow each individual to rank all the issues or elements as described by all other individuals. This two stage method allows all the participants, who are the experts in this field, to express their own views that are not shaped by pre-defined survey questions, but then allows each feedback to ensure that points brought up are considered important to the field as a whole and not an isolated view. Follow-up questions may be used only to help clarify any view on a particular position. This study will allow new insight into the needs and requirements of successful teaching training in the field of outdoor education, something that is currently not formalized anywhere in Canada. Such an understanding of how to progress in developing such programs allows for the development of a stronger field of outdoor education within the future teaching population.

No names or case studies will be individually documented without the approval of the individuals with respect to any written work pertaining to their programs or pedagogical approaches. Any and all reporting of survey feedback, when given reference to you or your program, will be confirmed with you to ensure agreement to what you submitted as survey data. It will be your choice entirely to whether or not you wish to have any of your work or program identified in this research. This study is aimed at understanding the needs of teacher education and training in the field of outdoor education, and as such does not wish to examine or include any issues of school board or provincial education procedures or mandates. This study

looks to examine how to better teacher training, not be a critique of any educational institution. The confidentiality of all individuals participating in this study will be kept in terms of their generated ranked responses to survey forms 1 and 2. When case studies or quotes for the voices of participants are wished to be used, you, as a leader within this field, will be contacted with the exact quote and context that your voice is wished to be used in this study. You can refuse to have a quote used for the study and it would not be used. You will be given final approval of any information or case study that uses your name or identifies your program.

This study will conclude in the writing of a doctoral thesis. Any other studies done in this field at a later time would not be in conjunction with this study, and any similarly would simply be a result of you being educational leaders in this field, and thus continually exposed to ongoing research in their area of expertise.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics.

Dr. Hal Weinberg
Director, Office of Research Ethics
Office of Research Ethics
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Multi-Tenant Facility
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
hal_weinberg@sfu.ca

I may obtain copies of the result of this study, upon its completion by contacting:

Mike Bowdridge
4 Emmanuel Dr.
Dartmouth, NS
B3A 4M2
(902) 463-6267
mbowd@staff.ednet.ns.ca

I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate:

Please print legibly

Participant last name:

Participant first name:

Participant contact information:

Participant Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Research Participant Survey Form

Investigating Integrated Outdoor Education Programs

Survey Form 1

Part 1 –Participant Information

The personal information here is intended to establish the credibility of this survey by demonstrating the expertise of those participants involved.

Name:

Current position held:

Official school-based teachables:

Years teaching in public schools:

Years of relevant outdoor education experience:

Years teaching outdoor education in a school setting:

Outdoor educational programs you have been involved with:

Have any of these programs included integrated outdoor programming in the schools:

Programs that you consider to be exemplary:

What kinds of “success” do you feel you are having in your teaching?

Part 2 – Contextualizing Outdoor Education

This section is intended for you to frame what you consider to be some key elements of outdoor education, its methodology, and practice.

- 1) How do you define outdoor education?
- 2) What is the role of the outdoors in education?
- 3) What do you feel outdoor education provides to its participants?
- 4) What key elements or practices do you feel is important in outdoor education?

Part 3 – Criteria for New-Teacher Training in Outdoor Education Programming

This section is intended for you to provide feedback on issues and training that you feel is important for consideration in training new teachers in the area of outdoor education implementation for school-based programs.

- 1) What do you feel are important areas or topics that a good outdoor education program should expose students to?
- 2) What current areas or topics in public schooling are best included in an outdoor education curriculum?

- 3) What topics or issues do you feel are required to be taught to new teachers who wish to teach outdoor education in a public school setting?
 - a) in educational methodology and public school curriculum implementation
 - b) in outdoor programming
 - c) in technical skill training (often called “hard-skills” in outdoor education)
 - d) personal and group development (often called “soft-skills” in outdoor education)
 - e) philosophical foundations and/or historical traditions
- 4) Who should be responsible for this training, and why? (for example, school board initiatives, university upgrade programs, outdoor adventure industry, etc.)
- 5) Does the training of a public school teacher in outdoor education need to differ from the training currently provided to educators in other areas of outdoor education (such as private adventure programs, guiding, or recreational summer camps), and if so, then how?
- 6) Consider your own background and training.
 - a) Where/how did you gain expertise in outdoor education?
 - b) Looking back, what elements do you think should have been added?
 - c) If you could go back and re-take your formal training, is there anything you would like to see done differently?
- 7)
 - a) Should new-teacher training involve some form of mentorship with existing teaching professionals?
 - b) If so, what is a good balance between classroom/scenario based theory training and some form of practicum placement experience?
 - c) Are these the only two choices for teacher training, or are there other key elements that should be included?
- 8) What other ways do you see an outdoor teacher-training program being able to link with and draw from existing outdoor practitioners operating current programs in the school system?
- 9) In what ways could an outdoor teaching-training program contribute to the existing programs in schools?
- 10) When should this teacher-training in outdoor education take place in a teacher’s career? (for example, as an elective part of a B.Ed. program prior to any classroom teaching, or as a certification upgrade program once one is an established classroom teacher, etc.)
- 11) What benefits do you perceive could or should result from a formal teacher training process that could enhance the preparation of new teachers to the field of outdoor education?
- 12)
 - a) Do you feel there are any drawbacks to teacher-training in this field, and if so, what are the particular concerns you have to such an approach?
 - b) Do you see any generic drawbacks of outdoor education in the schools in general?
- 13) What organizations should have a voice in the operation and/or accreditation/standards of any outdoor education teacher-training program? (for example, should the outdoor adventure industry provide an

advisory role, a certification partnership, or no interaction with any school board or university-run program?)

- 14) a) In places like Scotland and Australia, outdoor education is sanctioned by the government as a “teachable”. What are your thoughts, concerns, or support if such a direction was taken in Canada?

b) Is there a need to create or push for the idea that outdoor education in schools should be a recognized teaching specialty?
- 15) How do you feel about idea of outdoor education becoming a curriculum specialty, as suggested in the previous question, generating “mandatory” outdoor education training for new teacher-candidates? What might be the benefits or drawbacks of such an approach?
- 16) Are there any other key issues that you feel would be important for teacher-training in outdoor education that has not been discussed in the above questions?