Outdoor Education as a Deep Education for Global Sustainability and Social Justice

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Outdoor education is an Anglocentric approach to describe a range of organised and facilitated activities in the outdoors and includes outdoor activities (sport) as well as physical activity. As a term, it is pervasive in North America, the United Kingdom (UK), Australasia and parts of Asia with variants such as adventure education, experiential education, and experiential learning. Traditionally separated through terminology from 'environmental' education, there is a widespread view that education about, for and in the environment is an important part of education in the outdoors, with a consequent shift in recent years to incorporate this through 'outdoor learning' (UK and New Zealand (NZ)) or 'outdoor environmental education' (Thomas, Dyment and Prince, 2021).

Education in the outdoors is contextualised in different countries through cultural, regional, and historical influences. The genesis of activities in Europe in the eighteenth century was influenced by the ideas of Enlightenment and Romanticism (Becker, 2008). Beyond experiential space for outdoor activities, nature was seen as a therapeutic space and led to the emergence of outdoor cultures such as friluftsliv (literally 'open-air life') in Scandinavia (Henderson and Vilander, 2007; Gurholt, 2014), outdoor education in the UK, variant forms of Erlebnispädagogik (literally 'experiential pedagogy') in Austria and Germany (Becker, 2015), Turistika (active movement involving outdoor and cultural activities) in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Jirásek and Turcova, 2017), the CŠOD organisation in formal education in Slovenia (Dimec and Kokalj, 2018) and developments in Iceland, Poland and the Baltic States (Becker, 2018). The differences in approaches to education in the outdoors have been sustained

and are important for intra-continental cultural identity and diversity.

In Europe, cultural diversity promotes inclusivity both in individual countries and through international collaborative organisations such as the European Institute of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE1). The emphases of different approaches vary (or this is the extrinsic perception) between more focus on outdoor recreation and outdoor sport (e.g. Turistika) to outdoor 'living' (e.g. friluftsliv). However, all cultures view outdoor practice as space in nature for people to participate in sport, activities and/or experiences towards a broad spectrum of inclusive and pluralistic outcomes, cross-cultural perspectives, environmental and social justice, and trans/inter-disciplinary and formal/non-formal learning contributions (Prince *et al.*, 2018).

In Australasia, there is much debate about the meaning of the concept 'outdoor education', and it has been given various terms to broaden it beyond outdoor pursuits. The New Zealand organisation that caters for teachers in this domain turns the words around to call itself Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ). The EONZ interpretation is that, in the outdoors personal attributes, attitudes, and values that help communities flourish, are explored. This is framed under the concept "kaitiakitanga," which resonates with guardianship of the environment for future generations.

The question is not just about the benefits or otherwise of different cultural approaches to education in the outdoors but how outdoor education can contribute to societal education in a global context. Deeper perspectives from the UK and NZ are examined here to illustrate current drivers and future directions of outdoor practice, including the training of outdoor professionals, through acknowledged cultural lenses.

UK perspective

The historical development of outdoor education was influenced by Robert Baden-Powell and the Scouting movement, and Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound. These influences are not without critique in terms of masculinity and 'a distinctive form of militarism shap(ing) Anglosphere outdoor education' (Brookes, 2015, p. 13). There is little doubt about the foundations of outdoor education in youth movements with their anxieties about the perceived 'declines' in youth in terms of 'manliness' and physical fitness. However, the twentieth century saw the growth of expeditions contextualised within exploration with components of learning (for young people) and scientific work (Prince and Loynes, 2016).

Thus, many outdoor education programmes were founded on physical activity and traditional outdoor activities (sport) such as climbing, canoeing, mountaineering, sailing, caving etc., involving technical skills for the development of character, resilience, hardiness etc., albeit latterly without gendered rhetoric. However, in the last decade of the twentieth century, outdoor spaces came to be appreciated for learning and education through a broader conceptualisation. Paradoxically, this might have been influenced by the introduction of the National Curriculum in England in 1989 which, whilst seen as a constraining framework by many educators, included outdoor and adventurous activities in physical education, which through its iterations have been either compulsory or optional at various stages for all children in mainstream schools (Leather, 2018). Some educators pursue this broader notion of outdoor education as an entitlement for all children, supported by such initiatives as the UK government's Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto in 2006. Therefore, creative, and imaginative ways have been developed by many educators in teaching the curriculum outdoors for cognitive, social construct, environmental care and concern as well as health and wellbeing outcomes (Ager,

2019; Prince, 2019). There are also sector-wide campaigns, for example, to ensure that by 2035 every 18-year-old is an outdoor citizen2.

Few would dispute the importance of sport and physical activity for mental wellbeing as well as individual, social and community development. The Sport England strategy towards an active nation monitors the activity levels of children and young people, and adults annually and twice per year respectively through the Active Lives surveys3. Focused on walking, swimming, cycling, and running, it also includes outdoor activities and other sport. In 2019 (Sport England) there was a 3.6% increase in the number of children in England doing an average of 60 minutes or more of physical activity per day, but those from low affluence families and those with a disability or long-term health condition were likely to be less active. Public Health England reported that the use of outdoor space for exercise/health reasons had remained remarkably consistent across all regions (2015-2016) at a mean of 17.9% with initiatives such as 'This Girl Can' and parkruns with associated funding maintaining participation rates.

The breadth of contexts for outdoor education is expanding as markets have developed beyond outdoor activities (sport). In their 2015 study of demography, motivation, participation and provision in outdoor sport and recreation, Sport England identified eight individualised outdoor participant segments from extensive national databases. The majority (51%) of the Active Outdoors market were 'Explorers' (people seeking a sense of being part of, and exploring, the natural world) and 'Challengers' (people focusing on personal achievement) with a further 17% 'keeping fit in nature'. The 'Thrillseekers' and 'Freestylers' comprised only seven percent of the market. To facilitate the outdoor experiences of these and future participants requires competent, safe outdoor education professionals.

Training and development of outdoor educators in the UK

The role of the adventure sports coach is primarily that of technical sport development (Collins and Collins, 2012). This is distinct from 'guides' who lead people in the outdoors and 'teachers' who use the outdoors as an environment of practice. However, as outdoor education has broadened its scope, professional training has needed to shift to respond to this. According to R.P. Lemmey (personal communication January 19, 2020) following consultation with 26 stakeholders (organisations, outdoor centres, national governing bodies, government departments, charities, and the community) about the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective outdoor professional, they should be, "autonomous professionals capable of working safely and sustainably in the moment and forming supportive relationships through which to effect change". Employers identified that there need to be cognitive and affective pathways to learning and the skills to build effective rapport with participants are, in most cases, more important than high-level technical skills. Experiential learning through the first-hand experience of the natural world within outdoor education facilitates the development of motivations, values, and behaviours which, when combined with knowledge, effect change.

Having identified the market, how do we train and develop outdoor educators? Certainly, in the 21st century, there has been an expansion of outdoor studies degrees in the UK (Collins and Humberstone, 2018). In 2006, Humberstone and Brown edited a collection of papers from higher education lecturers indicating that outdoor education degree programmes reflected a broader curriculum and have become more critical in orientation, perhaps reflecting the growing research culture and evidence-based practice in the discipline. Indeed, Collins and Collins (2019, p. 1) developed the notion of the "pracademic" – people who can understand and exploit "the synergy between theory and practice (lying) at the heart of effective education for outdoor professionals".

Recently with the influence of neoliberalism, many ‘outdoor’ degree programmes have been cut or amalgamated, including initial teacher education. Those that survive provide that theoretical basis to practice that might not be as integral to other training routes such as instructor trainee/development schemes in outdoor centres, or through apprenticeships. Built over the last two years by a wide range of employers, the Outdoor Activity Instructor apprenticeship is a funded training route over 12-18 months for entry-level roles across the breadth of outdoor instructional work in England. Several employers are also proposing further higher-level apprenticeships for more complex roles such as an “Outdoor Programme Leader”. In support of existing practitioners, there is currently a debate in the UK about chartered status for outdoor professionals. At present, the professional body, the Institute for Outdoor Learning, has occupational standards for outdoor professionals and accreditation at three levels “registered”, “associate” and “lead” practitioner of the Institute although the number of jobs identifying these in person specifications is variable.

New Zealand (NZ) perspective

Aotearoa New Zealand has a human history stretching back about 800 years. Māori narratives talk of Kupe, who, as the first Polynesian to arrive in Aotearoa New Zealand, fished North Island (Te Iti a Maui) out of the Cook Straight (the sea between the two islands of Aotearoa), while on his waka (canoe) . We must remember that the Māori of Aotearoa were doing most of their educating outdoors. Learning was passed on by Rangatira (elders/chiefs) in the form of korero (narrative/discourse) and whakatauki (proverbs/wisdoms) and people lived on the land and travelled either by foot (early trekking) or by sea (waka-canoe). Māori originally lived in nature as it was their source of food, water, and shelter (Reti, 2012, p. 148). Like all indigenous people, they have a strong and spiritual connection to the land. They engaged in

outdoor recreation as evidenced in whakaheke ngaru (surfing), waka hoe hoe (canoeing) and horua (tobogganing). Aotearoa was then colonised by Great Britain (18th – 19th centuries) and The Treaty of Waitangi (TeTiriti o Waitangi, 1840) was written and taken round all Māori tribes to sign. After this, the country experienced British/European colonising influences, and these continue to cause issues and challenges to this day. In terms of indigenous culture, Aotearoa New Zealand recognises both the indigenous Māori culture and the colonising pakeha culture equally and calls itself a bicultural country. Government departments have Māori names and meld aspects of Māori culture with English. Haka is a symbol of respect and challenge that is performed frequently at many events. It is with this background in mind and with great respect and humility that various Māori concepts are included in this narrative, as these often have richer meaning than the English translation and they have become part of Aotearoa New Zealand's education and values (Legge, 2012). For pakeha (white New Zealanders), the concept of being an ally to the Maori culture is an acceptable and welcomed way to support the Maori cause.

The Europeans influenced outdoor activities and outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Trekking (known as tramping in NZ English) became a very popular activity around the time of World War I. This was followed quickly by the introduction of outdoor sport such as climbing, mountaineering, kayaking, sailing, caving, surfing and more recently white-water rafting, mountain biking, kite surfing, windsurfing, adventure racing, orienteering and rogaining. NZ has a strong tourism industry (the second largest earner after agriculture) and a considerable component of this is based on NZ's spectacular scenery and outdoors. This ranges from adventure tourism activities such as rafting and bungy jumping to gentler tourism like eco walks and nature studies, and there is a considerable number of cultural activities within the tourism domain.

Training and development of outdoor educators in NZ

Outdoor Education – tertiary providers

There is a large number of tertiary providers with six to ten polytechnics offering outdoor-related programmes, developed in response to the outdoor tourism industry. From the early 1990s, these proliferated, offering certificates and diplomas – one- to two-year programmes in activity instruction and safety management, each with its separate course and identity. In 2019 the government amalgamated all polytechnics to rationalise funding with a national review of tertiary qualifications including 'outdoors'. There is now a New Zealand National Certificate (one year) and Diploma (further year) in outdoor adventure education. These programmes are mainly targeted at activity instruction, but they do include an education paper on people development/facilitation, an environmental studies paper including sustainable practice, and a kaupapa Māori paper (total of eight papers in a year). The New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association is the body that assesses most activity leadership qualifications and polytechnics sometimes embed these leader awards into their courses. Other activity organisations also grant awards for activity leadership and instruction.

Education outdoors also makes a significant contribution to schools and communities. Some tertiary providers look at education for the future, which includes social and environmental sustainability, health and well-being and critical thinking. Beyond polytechnics, other tertiary providers are Institutes of Technology offering outdoor courses at various levels, for example, as part of a bachelor Sport and Recreation degree (Auckland), in Sustainability and Outdoor Education (Ara Institute of Canterbury) or a post-graduate teacher education programme with outdoor education as one of the many specialist subjects.

At Ara, students are trained to use the activities as a tool to develop people towards a well-rounded set of qualities that is culturally responsive and cares for self, community, society, and environment. Students study a broad range of supporting subjects such as geography, environmental studies, tikanga Māori health, well-being, education, adventure therapy and safety management alongside a range of outdoor pursuits from the traditional kayaking and rock climbing to other areas such as waka ama paddling, surfing, and rogaining/orienteering. The course also embraces tikanga Māori across the curriculum and develops students' well-being, communication skills, personal attributes, and emotional intelligence, leading to professional capability. At present this is the only outdoor and environmental route into teacher education, so a sizable emphasis is on the school curriculum and how to embed Hauora (Māori view of wellbeing) and sustainability into it. There are other routes into teacher education in the outdoors through physical education and sport degrees and various postgraduate programmes; all have a close alignment with the NZ education system.

Outdoor Education in schools in NZ

The primary sector caters for five- to 13-year-olds in NZ in years zero to eight. Some areas of higher population have intermediate schools which cater for year seven to eight. The curriculum is the same for both types of schools. The background values of the NZ school curriculum include striving for excellence in innovation, equity, community, diversity, integrity, and sustainability with an underlying guideline to respect themselves, others, and human rights (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2007).

Primary and intermediate schools frequently support their curriculum with education outdoors. This includes activity trips such as surfing, sailing or ski/snowboard, school camps with visits to outdoor centres and other outdoor and environmental education trips such as visits to the

rocky shore, the local waste management centre, the museum, or the forest. These trips vary across the country depending on the local environment and the ability of parents to pay. An attempt to make this more equitable across socio-economic groups was made by the government when they limited schools from collecting money for out-of-school activities, but this is still work in progress.

Many secondary schools in Aotearoa run outdoor education programmes and have outdoor education teachers. This was aided by the introduction of a new secondary school qualification system from 2002-2004, the NCEA (National Certificate in Educational Achievement). It replaced an old norm-referenced system of examinations, which used to leave half of the school leavers failing their school certificate. Although the NCEA had teething problems at its initial inception, it has been developed to be an up to date and relevant qualification. Unlike some other countries, pupils gain small chunks of qualification towards their final result over the course of the year. Students take about 20 credits of learning in each school subject to build a set of 80-120 credits for each of years 11, 12 and 13 (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2019). An aspect of the NCEA that saw a growth of outdoor education in secondary schools was the writing of various credits called unit standards. These standards had a vocational focus, and they included many skills in outdoor activities; secondary school pupils were able to take a number of these credits and count them towards their final NCEA. Unfortunately, these credits were quite simple and just included activity skills and covered no broader concepts such as personal growth, community, or the environment, which missed the more holistic and deeper applications of education outdoors. However, some teachers (often graduates of the teacher education programmes above) applied a few of the more academic achievement standard credits to outdoor courses such as sustainability and environmental education.

This demonstrates the link between the tertiary programmes and school courses and how each has influenced the other. Currently, a working group is developing a set of outdoor education achievement standards, which will include personal attributes, interpersonal skills, environment, cultural knowledge, well-being, and activities. Further examples of good practice in education outdoors in Aotearoa New Zealand schools are illustrated by Education Outdoors New Zealand (2020) with its journal for sharing good practice (Te Whakatia) and book resources.

Outdoor centres

NZ has numerous outdoor centres and camps; this chapter can only give an overview of the most well-known and those seen to be promoting innovative practice. All of them have a common thread which is aptly described using some of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) positive psychology principles: to create thriving people that help communities flourish and nurture and conserve the planet.

Outward Bound established a centre at Anakiwa, Marlborough Sounds in 1962. They have a distinctly Aotearoa New Zealand flavour and their vision is "Better people. Better communities. Better world" (Outward Bound, 2019). Following this, Hillary Outdoors (formerly known as Outdoor Pursuits Centre) was established in 1972 by Graeme Dingle with Sir Edmund Hillary of Everest fame as its patron, which now has several centres. Their vision includes experiential learning with participants gaining lifelong impact that helps them connect, create, and shape their learning. Their purpose is "Youth learning through adventure" (Hillary Outdoors, 2019).

Youth development emanates from the outdoor centres into the community with organisations

such as ‘The Graeme Dingle Foundation’ (Project K) whose values for young people include Manaaki (caring), Maia (courageous), and Tuhono (collaborative) (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2019). This overlaps with the concept known as adventure therapy, in which the outdoors is used directly as a personal growth tool for anyone with special needs from disabilities to disaffected youth. YMCA (Known as the “Young Men’s Christian Association”, but its meaning is much more than this) is renowned around the world for its work in the field of community development and the YMCAs of Aotearoa New Zealand “are community organisations who aim to develop individuals and families to develop physically, mentally and spiritually and enjoy a healthy quality of life” (YMCA, 2020, many of which include outdoor camps and outdoor activities. The provision extends into environmental and conservation areas in the huge range of Department of Conservation (DOC) and local city council provisions. Most outdoor centres include environmental topics in their agenda, and for some of them, the environment is their main focus. A very recent innovation is an outdoor centre in Raglan, The Institute of Awesome, focusing on the use of technology to solve local, national, and global problems (Education Gazette, 2019). Camps have moved from a traditional entertainment style to a position where schools and camps work together to offer students learning opportunities in the outdoors. Several schools have their own camps or have strong connections with a camp, and courses can be two to three months long. These include school study but also cover life lessons like living together, growing food, cooking, and having reduced use of technology.

Kaupapa Māori

There is a strong link to kaupapa Māori (customs and belief structure) in more recent outdoor education and physical education provision. Hauora is the Māori concept for well-being, and it encompasses much more than the English term. It covers taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (mental/emotional), taha whanau (social) and taha wairua (spiritual) well-being.

Kaitiakitanga is a frequently applied concept for guardianship. Manaakitanga (respect and generosity), is promoted throughout the outdoor sector. Turangawaewae stands literally for the place where you stand, meaning a connection with land and place, which resonates with whanaungatanga, which is kinship/community. All in all, matatau (proficiency, experience) and observance of whakatauki (proverbs) is what leads to matauranga (wisdom). Aotearoa New Zealand tries to embed indigenous knowledge in education, it is not just about using the Māori words in place of English (Alsop and Kupenga, 2016).

Summary

The cultural foundations of much of education outdoors in a global context are as important today as they ever have been in creating identity, teaching, and learning practices, and in the way that people relate and connect to their environment. Outdoor education will continue to enhance learning about place in the future. Whilst there are opportunities for outdoor professionals as adventure sport coaches and activity leadership/instruction, much training and development relates to a wider and more holistic outdoor educational provision that seeks to embed values, social and environmental justice, and citizenship.

Outdoor education globally is an important approach to enhancing physical and mental health and wellbeing in citizens and these outcomes will likely be even more valued in the future. The importance of accessibility to green and blue spaces has been heightened in the mindsets of policy makers through a global pandemic, with the valuing of time outdoors for exercise and mental and spiritual wellbeing, appreciation of local spaces, fresh air and noticing nature. Future directions for education in the outdoors might concentrate on optimising the benefits of activities and experiences in local spaces including parks and gardens in active and creative ways to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for a broader demographic. Educators

are moving from risk aversion to risk benefit in the management of outdoor experiences for personal and social development. Global future perspectives should see policymakers valuing these opportunities and the environments in which they take place.

Aotearoa New Zealand may exemplify a bounteous land with rich opportunities for learning in the outdoors but like many other countries, the value of its outdoor education is deeper. If outdoor citizens are to be equipped to address the challenges facing the natural world and their community globally, it follows that outdoor educators need to be similarly equipped to respond to sustainability and social justice issues.

'…it feels as though the journey is just beginning … at last it has begun! We believe that outdoor education can play a critical and crucial role in this process' (Collins and Humberstone, 2018, p. 66). This resonates with the impactful Maori proverb; 'He aha te mea nui o te ao, he tangata he tangata he tangata' (proverb uttered by Te Aupouri wāhine rangatira (female chief) Meri Ngaroto in the early 19th century). This is simply translated as: (What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people). This phrase also uses "tamariki", which is the children who will inherit this world. We need to leave a better world for our children and better children to the world.

Education outdoors is uniquely placed to provide deep education towards a better future, and it must step up with action on this now.

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