Outdoor Education Research Office Book Series 3

# The Budding and Blooming of Outdoor Education

## in Diverse Global Contexts



Edited by Mao Tsai Huang and Yi Chien Jade Ho

The Budding and Blooming of Outdoor Education in Diverse Global Contexts

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# Preface I

In November, 2014, Ministry of Education Republic of China(Taiwan) announced the Directions Governing for the 12-Year Basic Education Curricula (The Directions ,hereafter), which holds the vision of holistic education titled "Empowering Each Child□Nurturing Individual Potential and Facilitating Lifelong Learing." The Direction features principles of taking initiative, engaging the public, seeking the common good. The curriculum objectives shift from developing basic competences toward cultivating core literacies, in order to foster socially and environmentally responsible citizenship beyond professional expertise. Before this curriculum reform, previous attempts tried to develop a curriculum beyond knowledge transferring. However, the deeply rooted ideology of diplomatism has continued to limit all forms of learning to knowledge cramming. Elementary school students are used to learning without interacting with the real world and therefore, their subjective experience becomes limited by the educational system. As a result, the limited subjective experience impedes students from cross-examining their actual experience with the systemic knowledge when they are in the middle school level, and thus more cramming is needed to help them survive the exams.

Outdoor education is an education in the real world, with real learning that features real benefits. It integrates cognitive, affective, and physical learning, improving the holistic development of the students' body, mind, and spirit. The concepts and methods of outdoor education can be complementary with knowledge learning in the classroom, making outdoor education a crucial and necessary part of the 12-year basic education.

This special edition introduces the policy and the history of outdoor education in seven countries, including Canada, the USA, Scotland, Denmark, Australia, Japan, and Taiwan. It reveals the multiple possibilities of outdoor education, as well as the embedded interactive relationships between the local residents and the environment in different regions. The interconnected relations among the geographical conditions, the landscape, the climate, the culture and the society reflect diverse interactions between people and the environment. Now it is time to put the curriculum reform of the basic education

into practice. We need to not only broaden our global view by digesting international experiences, but also have further and deeper understanding of local features. This publication is among the best resource for building the foundation of outdoor education in Taiwan because it provides the readers with the context of outdoor education in both time and space.

*Sheu Tian-Ming*

**President, National Academy for Educational Research**

# Preface II

As Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan) devotes to promote outdoor education in middle and elementary schools, this special edition published by National Academy for Educational Research collects prominent cases of outdoor education at home and abroad to provide educators at all levels as well as concerned parents, NGOs, and academic institutions a comprehensive glimpse into outdoor education in different contexts. It is a pleasure to be invited to write the preface of this book and to be among the first to read it.

The draft of this book, which I carefully read through, introduces cases of outdoor education in Europe (Denmark and Scotland), North America (Canada and the USA), Australia, and Asia (Japan and Taiwan). Despite the fact that the pages are limited, these brilliant cases reveal not only the practical experiences of outdoor education, but also a trend of moving out of the classroom by educators worldwide. The promotion of outdoor education is to pursue and realize the ideal of quality education. Furthermore, the trend is, instead of the arrangement of schools, the result of the collaborative support from the national policy, the society, the parents and the teachers, as well as from the students' feedback and their progress in their learning performance and personal attributes. These cases prove that the ideals advocated by sages such as "education is life itself," "learning by doing," and "meaningful learning" can be put into practice. Thus, I believe this book is more than guidance for outdoor educators, parents, educational administrators, and the academia. It will become a great resource for everyone concerning quality education.

The curriculum of the 12-year Basic Education is coming into effect in Taiwan and different stakeholders are still disputing over its content. At this moment, the contribution of this book should not be, in my opinion, limited to the practice of outdoor education. A broader vision could be adopted to bring out the implied educational meaning of its content. The book displays the efforts for quality education abroad and our own reflection at home at the same time. After ardently disputing over the new curriculum, the Taiwanese society has to go back to the origin of education and ask the most fundamental questions:

what is the purpose of learning? Why do students have to learn in schools? What is meaningful learning? Where can we create meaningful learning? How do we teach? How do we learn? I believe the readers will find (not necessarily perfect) responses to these questions in the chapters of this book.

The impact of this book will not be confined to the realm of outdoor education. My reading told me that through facilitating dialogue and achieving mutual understanding, we could go back to the nature of teaching and learning to visualize a philosophy of meaningful learning for quality education, build up a supportive environment, and promote appropriate methods. I believe the quality of a society will be improved when student learning is meaningful and has quality. Stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of our own. The innovative curriculum, teaching concepts and methods in this book are not out-of-nowhere but truly applicable. Let us roll up our sleeves and get down to work. We can also make the best case at home.

*Chou Ju*

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# Preface III

People are proud of their homelands. This is often the case and is sometimes even expected. If you are an outdoor educator, this sentiment, I suggest, is amplified. Outdoor educators are proverbial storytellers of place, people and practices. This is to say: they explore both travel and dwelling in the near and far. They consider past, present and future for the place of attention, and their study can involve IN, For, ABOUT and WITH the environment. This is the strength of outdoor education. It follows, then, here with *The Budding and Blooming of Outdoor Education in Diverse Global Contexts* we have a recipe for an enthusiastic sharing of information with rich, well-chosen and thoughtful themes. Here we have, proud outdoor educators with ample space to flesh out details, free to follow their agenda with a demand (they must have felt pressure to deliver) to get it right.

It does feel right! A good mix of seven countries are represented. Of course there are similarities and differences between countries. This is best absorbed with a start to finish read. For example, Denmark and Canada both have outdoor education strategies and policies largely built up from grassroots or bottom up initiatives. Scotland, Japan, and the United States all share a strong government policy implementation. Taiwan has a challenge to return outdoor education to its schoolteachers given a shift to tourism agencies as outdoor excursion providers. While teachers from Denmark enjoy significant, perhaps even unparalleled, freedoms to interpret curriculum measures. Australia's challenge to curb colonial influences is a defining quality of its outdoor education.

Two common themes that touch on our omnipresent anxiety and emerging thinking, dare I say, for all countries presented are as follows: outdoor education is not synonymous with recreation, and outdoor adventure (personal/social development) has shifted over time towards a more place responsive/sustainability education. It was intriguing to see these two themes run through each country in different ways as a maturation in the field. Common of the authors as a point of emphasis is the role of universities and colleges in promoting and defining outdoor education through their offerings both in conjunction with and separate from governmental policy.

Each region offers its unique insights. The Taiwanese theme parks as a prominent site for schools outdoor excursions sets my imagination alight. The Outdoor Journeys as a local community place-based school initiative from Scotland seems worthy of wide application beyond Scotland. Worth noting also is the claim that Scotland was the first country in the world to officially introduce outdoor education into school curriculum. The North American phenomenon of summer camps is a unique contribution with a long history to a global understanding of outdoor education but I am left wondering about the parallels to the Japanese Youth Nature Houses. More, how is it that the Canadian and Australian bush/outback with similar colonial influences evolved different practices? Though arguably both countries practice their own form of terra nullias.

Seven countries, seven outdoor educations, seven chapters: it is an impossible task within which to feel fully comfortable for editors, authors and readers. There is just too much material to consider with intriguing similarities and differences, as one might expect. Succinct treatment or comprehensive tone is an impossibility for the chapter authors. Each country is forced to be treated with a broad overview sweep of attention. And yet, readers will often experience succinct writing and a "feel" of comprehensive treatment. Hats off to authors and editors!

This is a rewarding volume for readers, who in their own glance into outdoor education in seven countries, will come to a significantly enhanced understanding of different ways of educating in the outdoors and an inspired look into a global sense of outdoor education. You will be a better policy maker, educator, parent and student for a good read of this new contribution to outdoor education.

*Bob Henderson*

**Professor (Retired), Outdoor Education,**
**McMaster University, Canada**

# Acknowledgement

*Since the establishment of the Outdoor Education Research Office at the National Academy for Education Research in 2014, the Research Office alongside the Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan) has been working on grounding outdoor education in Taiwan. In 2015, we had the idea of creating a platform for educators and people who care about education to share how outdoor education has been developing in diverse global contexts. We hope by presenting the diversity, possibility and potential of outdoor education in different regions we can gain deeper understandings of this particular field. The Mandarin version of the book was published in June 2016. In the process of editing the Mandarin version, we saw the valuable lessons in each of the chapters and decided to share this rich and resourceful volume to wider audiences. Thus this English publication was conceived.*

*We want to thank Dr. Kuo Kung-Bin for his administrative support and tireless leadership, without which we could not have finished this book in such a timely manner. Second, we want to give a big thank you to our translators, Lin Ya-Fan, Chen Kang-Po, Joelle Chevrier and Yun-Chia Luo. They have had the hardest task in this process as many of our chapters were originally in Mandarin. A special thanks to Benjamin J. Anderson for taking the time to proof read many of the chapters in the volume. Your advice was very helpful for us and greatly appreciated. We also want to acknowledge the editing team for all of their work from planning, noticing details, organizing to pulling resources. It has been an honour to be able to work with such efficient and brilliant individuals. We thank the authors for lending their voices to us. Without you, this project*

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# Introduction:
# Outdoor Education in Diverse Contexts

# *Introduction: Outdoor Education in Diverse Contexts*

Yi Chien Jade Ho
Mao Tsai Huang



*…why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd.*
—Henry David Thoreau, 2001

*One does not simply learn about land, we learn best from land*
— Manulani Aluli Meyer, 2008

One summer day in Sanxia, Taiwan, a group of fifth-grade students stepped out of their classroom and started their one-month dialogue with the plants living in their schoolyard. Two plants a week, they gathered under the cockspur coral tree, huddled beside the honeysuckles, and crouched by the garlic vine — drawing different parts, writing reflections and learning about the history of its relationship to

their school and community. In their reflections, referring to the cockspur coral, one student wrote, "I walk past you everyday to go to school and to go home, but today was the day I finally got to know you!" Although it was a single short month, her words show that the students have become more aware of their daily surroundings and the joy of connecting to and learning about the ecosystem at the school. However, at the same time the reflection reveals the hidden curriculum of a modern education that focuses on standardized testing and textbook knowledge that directs students' attention away from their surroundings and experiences to such a degree that they don't even notice the beauty in their paths everyday. In this we should see the importance of outdoor learning.

The idea of outdoor education is not a new one. In fact, it has a history as long as institutionalized education (Quay & Seaman, 2013) or longer, as indigenous peoples around the world have been educating their young in their local environments for millennia. However, there has been growing attention and awareness internationally of the importance of learning in the outdoors since mid 20$^{th}$ century. In many places, this growing awareness is partly due to increasing understanding of the potential benefits presented in outdoor learning, but also as a critique of the scarce presence of the outdoors in school-based education (Humberstone et al., 2016). Recognizing this marginalization of learning in the outdoors as well as the recent educational reform in Taiwan to move towards holistic education, in this volume, we pay more attention to the development of outdoor education in institutionalized settings. More specifically, it includes brief histories of how outdoor education has evolved in each of seven countries, discussions of important curricular and policy plans, examples of places, sites, resources and organizations that are dedicated to outdoor education/learning, and accounts of related teacher education, training and/or qualification programs.

At the outset, we should understand that "outdoor education" is not a homogeneous term. It represents a diversity of meanings and educational values, as it is often a response to and/or a product of different local cultures, histories, political and social values and beliefs, and geographic landscapes and environments. Therefore, this volume aims to present this diversity by placing outdoor education in the global context to hear voices and expressions from different regions. There are seven countries presented in this volume: Canada, USA, Scotland, Denmark, Australia, Japan and Taiwan. However, borders should not be

the limit of our exploration and imagination. We also recognize that this volume by no means represents a 'complete' global perspective, even the authors in each chapter represent particular orientations to outdoor education. We invited authors from these seven countries because first of all we wanted to include voices from different continents. Second, these are also countries that have been developing outdoor education at various stages and levels. We hope their works can shed light on the differences and similarities in the formations and understandings of outdoor education in order to connect voices, fill in gaps, and understand this abundant field of education and its potential to challenge dominant assumptions about pedagogical practices, learning environments and our relationship with the natural world. Deeper inquiry into outdoor education may compel educators to ask difficult questions concerning their own educational values and beliefs and the fundamental purposes of education and the kind of learning students experience.

As mentioned above, each chapter depicts the uniqueness of the development of outdoor education in each country influenced by their cultures, histories, social values and physical environments. We will see outdoor education as a grassroots movements, a top-down institutionalized educational strategy, or some combination of both. We will also see the differences in people's relationships with the outdoors and how its conceptualization informs the formation of outdoor education, for example, Scandinavian's 'friluftliv' and the Austrian 'bush' verse North America's 'great outdoors' to Japan's 'field' ( 田野 ) and the Taiwanese '*xiangtu*' ( 鄉土 ). Despite these differences, each national context demonstrates shared challenges facing outdoor education globally. It continues to be at the margin of mainstream education, and there is an increasing need and urgency for more longitudinal research and evaluation on the long-term effects of outdoor learning.

## Canada

The collection begins its exploration into the field of outdoor education in North America. The first chapter portrays a picture of outdoor education in Canada. Being the world's second largest country by size, Canada has abundant geographical features, cultures and histories. For that, it is likely an impossible task to provide a cogent view of the entire range, complexities, varied sophistications, and intended goals of outdoor education in Canada. Recognizing this, the authors

divide this immense collection of vibrant and varied education projects into 11 aspects like a multifaceted jewel. Through this comprehensive review of the different aspects of outdoor education in Canada, the authors highlight the diverse, complex but flexible and adoptable nature of the field. Not only so, the chapter also provides the readers an encyclopaedic overview of the different types of outdoor programs or projects that may exist under the umbrella of outdoor education. Many of the forms of outdoor education mentioned here can be seen in later chapters. The authors demonstrate that doing outdoor education does not only involve changing the learning context from indoors to outdoors, but also requires an exploration into questions of the purpose of education and perspectives on pedagogy, teaching and learning, informed by social, cultural, historical, political and ecological realities.

## USA

Similar to Canada, outdoor education in the US has a long history and vast diversity. Worth mentioning is the tradition of camping education in the US, which has built a foundation for the development of outdoor education at the institutional level. Using a historical approach, the authors introduce four representational programs, policies, key sites and related resources and organizations. From 1930 to 1960, adventure education flourished in the US especially camping education, which was introduced to the school system in 1930. Due to the ecological crisis of the 1970s, outdoor education became a site of sustainability education. At the same time, philosophies and curricula from influential organizations, such as Outdoor Bound, started to take root in the US. This led to a diversifying of the field in the 1990s. However, because of the deepening divide between nature and culture, children in America spend less and less time in the natural world. Richard Louv (2005) describes this separation as "nature-deficit disorder" in his ground breaking work, *Last Child in the Woods*, that inspired global attention to the relationship between children and the natural world. This growing attention also led to several national initiatives that influence the direction of outdoor education in the US. In 2008 the proposal of the No Child Left Inside Act was approved by the House of Representatives, and in 2010 President Obama launched America's Great Outdoor Initiative.

## Scotland

Next, we shift our gaze to Europe, specifically relating to outdoor education in Scotland. In Chapter 3, the author uses an historical approach to map the development of Scottish outdoor education in the 20th and 21st centuries. In the years immediately following the Second World War, outdoor education was positioned to flourish in Scotland, specifically in terms of adventure education, but lost traction in the last decade of the 20th century due to decreasing funding and a sluggish economy. However, outdoor education has come to prominence in the 21st century after the English Devolution. Scotland had one of the most ambitious educational reforms in history. Due to this educational reform and the nation's new commitment to sustainable development, outdoor education became highly valued to achieve these new goals. Many policies supporting outdoor education and training were developed during this period, encouraging teachers to integrate outdoor learning into their practices, paving the way for innovative new directions for research. However, the author recognizes that there is still a need for more high quality research in this emergent field. Overall, the author attributes the success of Scottish outdoor education in the 21st century to the continuous support of national and local governments, academic and non-governmental organizations, and schools and other educational institutions. However, to fully integrate outdoor education into all areas of schooling, concludes the author, requires a change in Scotland's current educational culture and philosophy.

## Demark

Unlike other chapters, Chapter 4 focuses on one specific form of outdoor education, *udeskole*, in Denmark and in Scandinavia as a whole. It has great ties in the ways Scandinavians view education and the world. The literal meaning of *udeskole* is 'outdoor school'. It has roots in Scandinavia's *friluftsliv* (open air life) practices and in the Nordic educational model that holds social goals, such as cultivating a sense of community, as its main focus. Although *udeskole* has not been formally mentioned in the national curriculum in Denmark, it has been taken up by many individual educators, groups of teachers, and whole schools. *Udeskole* in practice can be characterized by teachers using local environments when teaching

different disciplines. Similar to other forms of outdoor education, *udeskole* faces practical barriers like funding, lack of resources, and lack of teacher qualifications. It also needs to negotiate the pedagogical and ideological differences amongst educators and schools. The chapter provides details of the current understandings, practices, policies, and streams of research that support *udeskole* in the cultural, political and ecological contexts of Denmark. It also discusses a different way to consider and theorize outdoor learning and living that differs from the Anglo-Saxon understanding. This is not to dichotomize two ways of understanding outdoor learning. It is important to take into account the social, cultural, political and ecological contexts in which the outdoor learning practices are embedded.

## Australia

In Chapter 5, we visit the Southern Hemisphere to explore understandings and practices of outddor eduction in Australia. In this chapter, the author looks into Australia's history and culture, relationship to the outdoors, ecological scenes, educational policies and aims, and international influences. He also provides us a glimpse of the history and practices at the various Austrian Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres. One observes a split in contemporary outdoor education practices in Australia between adventure-based outdoor education and environmental education. On the one hand, many outdoor programs in Australia maintain their focus on adventure and risk-taking due to a historical priority placed on personal growth and social skills. On the other hand, recently there has been a rise in seeing outdoor education as a vehicle to cultivate environmental stewardship through direct contact with the natural environment. At the end of the chapter, the authors surveys various debates in Australian outdoor education, pointing out the contentions faced by the field. He concludes that outdoor education in Australia will continue to face varying degrees of fragmentation because of social influences. To address these, there have been attempts made in Australia, but it also requires a major transformation to the conventional outdoor education.

## Japan

Returning to Asia, Chapter 6 takes a deep look into the development of outdoor education in Japan. To do so, the author focuses his analysis on national education policies, giving a thorough overview of language, curricula, national and local infrastructures and projects, and teacher education in support of outdoor education. Outdoor education in Japan is commonly referred to as "野外教育" (field/wilderness education, but not in the same sense as wilderness education in North America), which can be defined as intentionally planned activities that have set educational goals carried out in direct experience in the natural world (see chapter 7. The development of Japanese outdoor education has taken a big leap in the past two decades. There have been many new educational policies and funding programs in direct support of outdoor education. The rise of NGOs or private organizations that focus on outdoor learning and activities have also shaped contemporary outdoor education in Japan. Namely, there are now programs targeting age groups other than elementary and secondary students. There also has been more organized outdoor education network in Japan, for example, Japan Outdoor Network (JON). More, with the establishment of academic organizations such as Japan Outdoor Education Society, research related to the field has flourished. Japan's emphasis on outdoor education has a deep relationship with the social realities and changes surrounding children. The author believes that outdoor education plays an important role in addressing the issues tied to modernity.

## Taiwan

In the final chapter, we return to our home country, Taiwan. Through looking at Taiwan's diverse topography, rich ecology, complex social, historical background and critique of diplomaism that prevails in the Taiwanese educational culture, the authors provide a comprehensive and intricate view of the development of outdoor education in Taiwan. This final chapter leaves us with a frank presentation of some of outdoor education's most realistic challenges and questions. Although outdoor education may be seen as a young field, institutionally it can be traced back to the Japanese Occupation as it started as school field trips. Taiwan is at an interesting time as the new curriculum reform is rolling out and the promotion of outdoor

education policies is increasing. From this vantage point, the authors analyze the development challenges of Taiwanese outdoor education from two axes. Early experience in mountaineering, hiking, rural education, and scouting education provided the basis for promoting outdoor education. More, from central and local governments to non-governmental organizations, Taiwan has a rich and diverse system of outdoor education resources. There are efforts from both the top and the bottom. However, despite these rich resources and efforts, Taiwan also faces great challenges, such as the aforementioned culture of diplomaism, as well as lack of administrative support and low will for teachers to implement outdoor education. By looking at these challenges, the chapter makes some recommendations that are worth considering even in different contexts.



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# A Multifaceted Jewel: Outdoor Education in Canada

# A Multifaceted Jewel : Outdoor Education in Canada

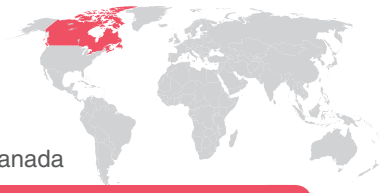
Yi Chien Jade Ho
Stefanie Block
Sean Blenkinsop



## Introduction

For as long as humans have existed in this place now called Canada there has been outdoor education. The Indigenous Peoples of this vast land have always educated their young with, in, and through the natural environment. For them, living on the land and learning was, and in some places still is, fully integrated. This was interrupted by European colonization and domination as the settler-colonizers introduced modern Western schooling. Yet, although outdoor education may not have been implemented in modern schooling consistently since its inception, children in Canada, depending on accessibility and proximity, are generally exposed to some form of learning outside.

Often, outdoor education in Canada, following Priest (1986), aims to cultivate intra- and inter-personal skills. For as Potter and Henderson (2004) argue, “personal





and group skill development is central to outdoor teaching as part of a holistic process" (p.78). And yet, to neatly describe the scope of outdoor education in Canada is impossible. Its forms and goals are as diverse and complex as the country's abundant geographical, ecological, cultural, social, historical and political landscapes. In other words, outdoor education in Canada (as the case in other places) is a response to Canada's complex social, cultural and historical conditions as well as a product of the country's vast physical environment.

Canada is the world's second largest country by area. Due to its size and northern latitude it tends to offer four distinct seasons although the temperature range and characteristic precipitation vary significantly from west to east and north to south. Climatic zones, geophysical features, ecosystems and living populations are diverse and vary a great deal across Canada which creates a wide range of locales that can support a plethora of different educational activities. The human population in Canada numbers more than 36 million with the majority concentrated along its Southern border with the United States. As with many "modernizing" states, people are leaving more rural areas and concentrating in the bigger cosmopolitan cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. However, despite these facts with regard to population concentration and movement that leaves most of Canada's northern regions relatively uninhabited by humans, there are constant encroachments by extractive industries such as mining, logging, and fossil fuel, that are violently impacting and thereby jeopardizing the well-being and wildness of those ecologies.

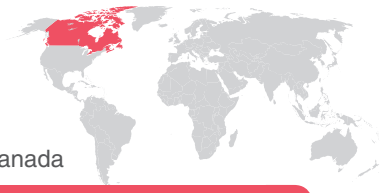
As Canada continues to urbanize and with its history of colonization, issues of sustainability, equity, and social and ecological justice no longer go unnoticed. As a result, part of the more recent formulation of outdoor education in Canada has been a response to different social and environmental issues. For example, Outward Bound Canada was one of the first organizations in the world to develop outdoor programming for at-risk youth and women who have experienced violence. This has led to some re-thinking about outdoor education with regard to its elitism, its romantic inclinations, its masculinist orientation, and its European reverberations. Also, due to the needs and changing understandings of the (hidden) meaning of education and learning (Blenkinsop & Creeping Snowberry, 2010; Orr, 2004), outdoor education began to garner the attention in mainstream schools. Starting from the 1970s, outdoor education was gradually taken up by public schools.

This was often due to the efforts of small groups of teachers/parents who 'dare(d) to be different' [and] believed in [the] educational value of arbour days, school gardening projects, natural study trips, athlete field days, and school camping" (Passamore, 1972, p. 8). At that time, many, though by no means all, school boards across the country funded outdoor education centres and teacher professional development; however, this support saw a significant decline in the 90s (Potter & Henderson, 2004). According to his research, Passamore (1972) observes, "It has became very evident to me while I was traveling on my fact-finding mission that one of the unusual feature about outdoor education in Canada is that it has a clearly been a 'grass-roots' development; that it has come about with relatively little encouragement and support from above" (p.14).

Over time outdoor education has partnered with other educational theories, such as experiential (Warren et al, 1995), environmental (Van Matre, 1999) and place-based (Sobel, 2004; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). This inter-mixing has influenced the development of outdoor education and vice versa as they are "all part of the spectrum of ideas and practices that have sought to develop a knowledge and love of the natural world" (Piersol, Personal Communication). One shared goal has been to counter the human-centric mainstream education that "tend to be isolated from local processes of knowledge-building, planning, and decision-making for sustainability" (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2009 quoted in Blenkinsop, 2012).

All that being said, it is likely an impossible task to provide a cogent view of the entire range, complexities, varied sophistications, and aimed for goals of outdoor education in Canada. In the rest of this paper we are proposing to divide this immense collection of vibrant and varied education projects into 11 aspects. We have chosen the word aspect because like any single face, or aspect, of a multi-faceted jewel, each category is but one small side of a splendid whole. These 11 chosen aspects include:

(1) School-based Outdoor Education
(2) Adventure Education
(3) Summer Camps
(4) Outdoor Education Centres
(5) Therapeutic Outdoor Education
(6) Wilderness Outdoor Education
(7) Indigenous Education





(8) Place-based Education
(9) Environmental Education and Urban Ecological Education
(10) Primitivism
(11) Scout and guides programs and Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Although these categories stand on their own in this chapter, it is important to understand that rather than categories, they are aspects of outdoor education and they often intricately intertwine with one and another—some are the responses to others; some have similar practices but hold different philosophical outlooks; and pedagogically, many often work as components of one program. We hope through introducing these 11 aspects of outdoor education, we will be able to get to know more about the history, evolution, relationships, and different practices, pedagogies, policies and training that exist in Canada.

## The 11 Aspects of Outdoor Education in Canada

### School-based Outdoor Education

#### *Nature-based Schools*

Recently, there have been efforts to push for a way of structuring schools by foregrounding the natural environment. These programs are school-based and students spend a significant amount of time outdoors. The curricular content, when enacted both indoors and outside, is often tied thematically to the natural world. Public schools of this sort have teachers who hold provincial teaching certifications or qualifications and are required to follow governmentally set educational guidelines, standards, and mandates. These programs often incorporate pedagogical and curricular principles such as child-centered curriculum, emergent curriculum, and project-based or inquiry-based learning. In some school districts, though not all, such schools can be viewed as alternative in nature.

The Maple Ridge Environmental School (MRES)[1] is an example of a nature-based school. Initially partially supported by a research grant it is now a fully funded public school located in the municipality of Maple Ridge in British Colombia. In November 2010, the board of trustees voted unanimously for the project (Blenkinsop, 2014), as it aligned with the municipality's long-term strategic plan to

1. See: http://es.sd42.ca/

incorporate environmental as well social and economic sustainability (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2009). At MRES, the majority of the learning takes place outside. The school, which has no building, rotates through several locations, mostly forest parks as well as the city center. Opened in 2011 the school now consists of 88 students, aged 5-12, divided into four mixed-aged 'classes', five teachers and three educational support teachers. The teachers are public school certified with personal orientations towards the outdoors although none are officially trained in outdoor education. For MRES the emphasis on emergent curricula has been challenging for the teachers but their practices have grown and changed as a result of their day-to-day interactions with the students, the natural world and also through continuous professional development[2].



*Forest Schools*

The forest school movement started in the 1950s in the UK. Schools of this sort are usually implemented as early childhood education, children tending to spend up to a full day in nature-based settings (Forest School Canada Website). Programs vary depending upon the locations and particular philosophies of the educators

2. In British Colombia (and other provinces in Canada), there are days set during the school year dedicated to teacher professional development, also called Pro D Day. See: https://bctf.ca/PD-days.aspx



involved. But for the most part Forest Schools can be viewed as a pedagogical approach as well as an educational program that is child-centered, place- and play-based, and emergent. The arrival of Forest Schools in Canada has been very recent, such programs spreading rapidly.

Canada's first Forest School, Carp Ridge Preschool in Ontario, was opened in 2007 (MacEachren, 2013). Since then there have been many more opened and in 2012, Forest School Canada was launched as "an education initiative of the 'Child and Nature Alliance of Canada', by hosting a series of professional development workshops" and courses. They are currently working on developing "best practices" for the field. And yet, due to the newness of these programs in Canada it has been a challenge to gather the range of pedagogies and theories involved into any single set of practices. There is also some concern that positioning best practices so early in the development of these programs might limit the possibilities that could be imagined.

### *Integrated School Programs*

With a longer history than Forest Schools, integrated programs /nature-based programming is the last aspect of school-based programming we will explore.

Usually occurring at the secondary level, these programs take an interdisciplinary approach to provincial standards and often involve a group of teachers working together to deliver four or five credit courses at a time. The programs usually extend at least one semester and the students remain together throughout. They will spend time in and out of the school exploring the natural environment, working through curricular content, 'on trail' in the back country, and/or engaging in service learning with local communities. Often the credits awarded include: physical education, science (biology), and English at the appropriate levels but the offerings also vary according to the teacher's expertise and creativity. To be more specific, there are three dominant trends in integrated school programs – travel-based program with fund raising, place-based program partnering with community members, and mentoring programs. There are many integrated programs across Canada.

One of the earliest was the Tamarack Program in Deep River, Ontario. Started in the 1980s by Bill Patterson, the program offered four course credits to 20 grade 11 and 12 students at Mackenzie High School. The program also included field trips, outdoor environmental education activities and community engagement activities, which all took place without interrupting the regular school schedule (Patterson, 1995). By 2004, there were approximately 30 integrated program in Ontario (Potter & Henderson, 2004).

Another example, one that continues to exist, is the TREK Outdoor Education Program based at Prince of Wales Secondary School in Vernon, British Columbia.[3] Started in the 1980s the objectives of TREK include outdoor activities, education for sustainability and character development (http://www.trekoutdoorprogram.ca/). The program involves every grade 10 student at the school. In each term of the school year, half the students are "on-TREK" involved in outdoor activities, field trips and studies, and class-based activities, while the other half are "off-TREK" completing their academic curriculum. During their "on-TREK" term, students complete partial or full credits in English, Social Studies, Planning, Physical Education, and Outdoor Education. At the end of the school year, students who complete the TREK curriculum will complete the requirements for grade 10. The teaching staff and instructional facilities for TREK are funded by the Vancouver School Board.

3. For more information see: http://www.trekoutdoorprogram.ca/

## Adventure Education

As the name suggests, adventure education focuses on adventurous outdoor activities such as whitewater sports, rock-climbing, mountaineering, powder/back country skiing, etc. Because of Canada's diverse geophysical features, there are multiple possibilities available in myriad landscapes. Climate also influences the possibilities and while there are not as many winter programs, winter still plays an important role in Canadian life and in adventure education. In these programs, taking risks, getting out of one's comfort zone, and invoking adrenaline is usually a large component. The curricular goal tends to emphasize technical skills. Potter & Henderson (2004) also point out that, "technical skill development allows participants to explore not only the wilderness beyond, but also, most critically their personal wildernesses within" (p.78). Many adventure education programs in Canada "blend camping/travel skills with intra/interpersonal and environmental-based field skills" (p.78). Recently, there has been work done to incorporate environmental elements into adventure education programs in terms of developing relationship with the natural world, as well as cultivating a deeper understanding of Canada as "a storied landscape" (p.78).



Adventure education teachers and staff are usually trained either within the particular organization they work for or through a national, provincial or international certifying body, such as, The Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association[4], Rescue Canada[5], Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG)[6], Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI)[7], Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT)[8], etc. It can be observed that one of the clear trends in outdoor education in Canada is a move to more certification, and more "sanctioned" training.

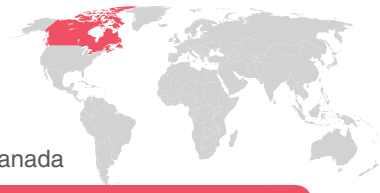
## Summer Camp

The tradition of parents sending their children to summer camp is deeply rooted throughout Canada. A recent study shows that "47 percent of Canadians attended an overnight camp when they were children and 84 percent of all Canadians feel that camps are important in providing children with social, practical, physical, and other life skills, that they might not get elsewhere" (Ipsos-Reid, 2001, quoted in Fine, 2004, p. 4). Summer camps in Canada are generally located in natural settings, where children spend time from a day, a week to a whole summer. Irwin (1950) defines camps as:

An educational enterprise, located in an out-of-doors environment, which provides children with the opportunity to live, work, and play in a group situation; obtain experience and insight into many of the basic processes of life; and receive guidance from a mature counselor (p.15 – 16).

The summer camp movement began in the late 1920s and early 1930s as part of a growing romantic view of nature. Pedagogically it was influenced by John Dewey's experiential learning, Rousseau's focus on the child and sensory learning, and the social context at the time. The founder of the first school camp is thought to be Frederick Gunn when he started Gunnery Preparatory School for Boys in Washington, Connecticut, in 1861 (Fine, 2004). Gunn believed that teachers are guides rather than decision makers and he often held classes outside for students to pursue nature study and character building (Fine, 2004).

4. See: http://www.orcka.ca/
5. See: http://www.rescuecanada.ca/
6. See: http://www.acmg.ca/
7. See: https://www.padi.com/
8. See: http://www.acctinfo.org/





Summer camps also have a long tradition in Canada with influences such as: Ernest Thompson Seton and his "woodcraft" movement, Lord Baden-Powell and the Boy Scouts, as well as Kurt Hahn, Outward Bound, and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. The pedagogy and activities have changed dramatically over time as social norms and awareness have evolved. The earliest programs tended to be separated by gender with different skills taught to the different genders. The first co-ed camps in Canada were not established until early 50s (Fine, 2004). A large variety of summer camps exist today: from the traditional outdoor adventure, to sport specific, to arts and music, and on to camps focusing on different special needs and abilities, specific skills, different populations, and therapeutic programs[9].

Camps in Canada have long had governing bodies to oversee the operations, act as accreditation and certification granters, as well as holding national conferences and professional development. One of the oldest governing bodies of summer camps is the Ontario Camping Association (OCA)[10] established in 1933. Nationally, the Canadian Camping Association (CCA) was formed in 1936. With a membership of over 800 camps the CCA is "a non-profit, national federation of nine provincial camping associations: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island" (Canadian Camping Association Website).

The curriculum is usually designed by each camp individually, but the range is quite similar across the whole industry. As mentioned before, the pedagogical strategies tend to be experiential, hands-on and student-centered. Given the number of camps and the range of accrediting processes most are required to follow provincial and/or federal government policies on health and food safety, water quality, transportation safety, building and fire codes, labour laws and human rights (CCA website). Unfortunately, this can mean that camps are governed by rules that oversee a large range of very different kinds of institutions. For example, summer camps and restaurants operate under the same food safety guidelines. Much of the summer camp staff are often either volunteers or low-paid young adults with some training in first aid, swimming safety, and occasionally bus driving licences.

9. Visit: http://www.ourkids.net/camp/ to get a grasp of the range of summer camps that exist in Canada.
10. See: http://www.ontariocampsassociation.ca/

## Outdoor Education Centres

Outdoor Education Centers operate as resources for conversations about the local and global environment, science education and even Indigenous life and practices. Through activities, games, exploration, and experiences, the pedagogy of many of these centers is experiential in nature. The curriculum varies, from camp-like and adventure-based experiences, to engaging students in environmental activism and community organizing, to place-based knowledge and nature awareness. The training varies as well, with some centers hiring teachers who have studied Outdoor Education in their schooling, and others offering training that is coordinated by either the site's system or the larger program that is being offered by many sites. Historically, the centers have been developed by school districts through the initiatives of passionate teachers, or by regional municipalities as part of their parks and political mandates, or by summer camps extending their work seasons into the spring and fall. Issues of funding have pulled some Outdoor Education Centers to the periphery of public programming and while some function within school districts (ie. North Vancouver Outdoor school) most have found financial stability through operating a site schools pay to visit. Those that operate in the private sector are often forced to make cost-based decisions with regard to the populations with which they work.

Two groups that these centers often work with, beyond schools and school-aged students, are corporations and sports teams. Businesses and teams seeking to build social-emotional skills such as trust, communication or leadership, will attend programming for short periods of time, participating in a variety of activities in the outdoors which are then used as metaphors through which to understand their own situations and build skills to enhance the work place.

## Therapeutic Outdoor Education

Therapy through facilitated outdoor experiences is gaining momentum as a response to mental health issues, with the understanding that time spent in the natural world can contribute to well-being and general health. The therapeutic aspect can be integrated into program offerings (e.g. the Pine River Foundation), or operate as the organizational focus, as seen with Human-Nature Counselling and Consulting. In these programs, the natural world offers a 'new' context in which participants can negotiate the practical challenges of their environment while

being supported by facilitators and counsellors in their personal development. In some programming, particularly in Indigenous communities, the natural world is understood to be a place of healing, the land itself being the therapist (Redvers, 2016). Training for these programs varies in sophistication from therapists who hold PhDs in eco- and depth psychology to teams built through on-site training. The primary focus of these programs is the health and well-being of the individual with learning plans designed to meet each participant's need. These programs are becoming more popular in Canada and are being used to treat a growing range of mental health and well-being challenges.

## Wilderness Outdoor Education





Wilderness programs are rooted in the tradition of going onto the land, to a "wild" area to achieve a deeper attention and level of awareness of the self. There are connections in this sort of programming to the adventure type programming described above. Schools such as Outward Bound and Educo Adventure School take students on extended trips into what is understood as the "backcountry". Outward Bound Canada offers one of the biggest adventure education programs in Canada. The organization was incepted in 1941 in Wales by Kurt Hahn (Outward Bound Canada Website). The Canadian chapter started in 1969 and its mission is "to cultivate resilience, leadership, connections and compassion through inspiring and challenging journeys of self-discovery in the natural world" (Outward Bound Canada Website). They work with different learning institutions such as secondary schools and universities, community groups, and government and non-governmental organizations. Outward Bound Canada, as mentioned, is the first in the world to have a strong community

service element. It also offers its own certification programs for outdoor, adventure educators.

The goal of current programs is often individual development and self-discovery achieved through risk, extended group experience and constant challenge. The experiential pedagogy focuses on two areas: technical skills, such as cooking meals over fire, paddling, knots, etc.; and personal skills such as leadership, communication and self-reflection. While much of the learning is done as a group, the curricula often include solo experience, reflective time, service of some kind, and ongoing practice of skills that equip participants to take on leadership roles during the program and later in their communities. Place plays an important role in these programs as it often forms the "wild" or "inspiring" backdrop for the experience (e.g. three weeks paddling deep in the boreal forest or two weeks dog-sledding in the Arctic). These programs also focus their work towards specific populations, such as youth in the foster care system, indigenous populations, outdoors clubs, etc. as well as offer open enrolment that brings students in who are financially supported.



## Indigenous Education

In the discussion of outdoor education in Canada, it is very important to acknowledge that Indigenous People have been educating their youth in the natural surrounding for millennia. Indigenous education looks at the educational process as "a communal social activity" (Cajete, 1994, p.20) which is individual-, community- and nature-based. "Tribal education was a natural outcome of living in close communion with each other and the natural environment" (Cajete, 1994, p. 33). Education is "for Life's sake" (Cajete, 1994, p.4). There is a reverence for the natural world embedded in mind and heart through education and life as a whole. Outdoor educators in Canada (and in other places) are beginning to recognize the significance of Indigenous practices and culture and how these might be respected and learned from such that they might influence and change on-the-land educational practices. Recently, voices and actions pushing for Indigenous justice have increased and as a result, there is more and more Indigenous leadership, Indigenous programming, and presence of Indigenous cultures and ways of learning in various outdoor education programs.



There is a wide range of Indigenous outdoor education programs. From Rediscovery , a short-term series of activities type of program through to fully land-based culturally immersive experiences such as the programs offered at the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning. At Dechinta students work with Elders and instructors with a view to an Indigenous way of being and learning. (Dechinta Website). The majority of the program takes place outside or at the Blachford Lake Lodge in Chief Drygeese Territory in northern Canada.

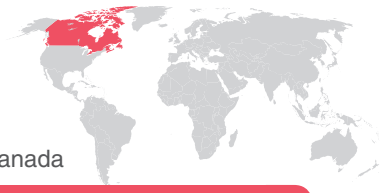
Indigenous education programs tend to incorporate Native Languages, Elders involvement, land (place) and community-based initiatives, and a holistic experiential pedagogy that "engages all aspects of the individual; emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual" (Canadian Council of Learning, 2009, quoted in Franz, 2012). There is a heavy emphasis on Indigenous traditions such as story-telling, ceremonies and protocols.

This is a rapidly growing area with some of the most exciting new outdoor educational programming in the country. The oversight of these programs varies from program to program. Many programs are responsible to a school district or to provincial standards, and others to a chief and council or group of Elders. Teacher training for Indigenous education has been historically contentious, as some existing Western teacher training tends to clash with Indigenous ways of educating (Hampton, 1995) but there has been substantial discussion and expansion thereof over the last ten years.

## Place-based Education

In the past two decades, place-based education (Smith, 2002; Sobel, 2004) has become an educational movement that responds to "the isolation of schooling's discourses and practices from the living world outside the increasingly placeless institution of schooling" (Gruenewald, 2003, p.620). It is worth noting here that while Indigenous education can be seen as place-based, place-based education is a newer Western attempt at returning to the local.

Place-based education can be understood as a pedagogical and curricular approach that deliberately involves the local places and community while providing an opportunity to explore current social and ecological issues (Sugg, 2013). As an evolving pedagogy, there are many ways of looking at place-based education. The most widely used definition is put forward by David Sobel (2004),





who has contributed to the development of place-based education in both the US and Canada. He defines place-based education as: The process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school (p. 7).

As the definition suggests, place-based education is centered on the local and students' lived experiences. Gregory Smith (2002) points out 7 common threads of a place-based education program. These threads or elements include:

1. The surrounding phenomena is the foundation for curriculum development;
2. Students are the creators of knowledge rather than mere consumers;
3. Students' questions are the basis for what is being studied;
4. Teachers are facilitators, guides, co-learners and brokers of community resources;
5. Teachers must become creators of curriculum rather than mere deliverers;
6. The wall between school and community is being crossed;
7. Assessment is based on students' competence and contribution to community well-being and sustainability (p.593 – 594).

Also engaging with place-based education forces educators to explore "tough questions about the true aims of education" (Sugg, 2013).

In Canada, there is a rising awareness in of the importance of knowing one's environment. In British Columbia, competency for social and personal development includes, "Students develop awareness and take responsibility for their social, physical, and natural environments by working independently and collaboratively for the benefit of others, communities, and the environment" (BC's New Curriculum Website). Place-based education is being taken up by individual programs, by classroom teachers, and by whole schools, such as the aforementioned Maple Ridge Environmental School, where learning is solely based in local places.

There are also more support and training for teachers in this area. There are

individual courses offered by different organizations, such as The Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN)[11]. Certificate and diploma courses for in-service teachers are also available in colleges and universities across Canada. One example is Simon Fraser University's Nature-based Experiential Learning diploma programs.[12]

## Environmental Education and Urban Ecological Education

This aspect overlaps a great deal with several of the other groupings already discussed and yet it is important to name this as separate given both the expansion of cities and the need for outdoor programs that can occur within an urban context and the different orientation that most environmental education takes with regard to focus. Environmental education programs both urban and rural have historically focused on the environment. The focus could be on natural science programming with students involved in pond studies, plant identification, climatic research, and other biological activities in conjunction with educators who have a background, usually at the University level, in science. Or, the focus could be more in keeping with the work of a naturalist where programming might include nature walks, sophisticated species identification work, or close examination of the natural history of a particular locale. Again, these programs are often offered by university-trained teachers in conjunction with an outdoor center or urban park facilitator. The final focus of this category might lean more in the direction of nature appreciation thus often with less of a focus on the particular science and more substantial immersion and relationship building. Activities here might include: special spots, reflective listening, and games designed to engage the senses of the learners. Historically a lot of this programming required students to be transported to a particular place outside the urban center however today there is a growing emphasis in Canadian cities to offer these programs in the immediate neighbourhoods of the students. This is both due to cost and the recognition that a natural world exists in the urban context. An example of this kind of urban ecological programming is the Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre.[13]

11. http://cbeen.ca/
12. https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/education/educationresponsive/graduatestudies/GraduateDiplomas/1161_Programs/Nature-BasedLearning1161SunshineCoastweb.pdf) and the University of Saskatchewan's critical environmental cohort (http://www.usask.ca/education/students/graduate/efdt-cohorts/critical-environmental-education-cohort.php
13. http://www.lynncanyonecologycentre.ca/

## Primitivism/Traditional Skills



This category might be best described as involving survivalists and those who prefer to head into the wilderness with limited support and see how closely they can live to the land. Building shelters, starting fires, plant identification, trapping and hunting, tracking, and caring for oneself are all elements of this sort of "survival" programming. Some of these programs have developed out of military style training and have evolved into television programming that glorifies a person's ability to survive the wild. From this angle, the pedagogy is very much about overcoming challenges, conquering the wild, prevailing over it, and using the resources it provides.

From another angle, similarly styled programs that include shelter building, tracking and fire making have developed out of a desire to challenge the growing urbanization and presence of technology and to disconnect from the modern world by returning to a "simpler" living using more traditional skills as a means to do so. This training is being offered in a variety of contexts. Many of the "traditional" skills being taught are teachings and learnings from Indigenous peoples, both shared with and appropriated by the non-Indigenous purveyors of this knowledge. Programs with lineage to the Tom Brown Tracker School in the eastern United States (ie. Soaring Eagle Nature School, Pine Tree Project) tend to have a focus on developing meaningful connection to the land and a sense of respect that cultivates an attitude of reverence and listening to/with the natural world. The pedagogy is focused on the individual, with the instructor acting as a mentor and guide.

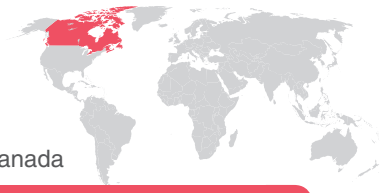
## Scouts, Guides and Duke of Edinburgh

The tradition of Scouts and Guides started with Gen. Robert Baden-Powell in 1907 (http://www.scouts.ca/ca/scouts-canada-history). It comes from a history that values skills and is merit based. In 1910, Girl Guides Canada was formed, giving

girls an opportunity to learn practical and hands on skills, encouraging young women to take action in the world[14]. Today, groups gather weekly to work on skills for which badges are awarded once mastered. Weekend excursions are coordinated to gain practice and experience "surviving" in the outdoors. The outdoors is understood as something to test oneself against and nature as a place that gives young people the character training they need. Guides and Scouts wear uniforms and learn pledges to their respective groups, cultivating a sense of belonging and a personal identification as a Girl Guide or a Boy Scout, that some carry for life. Former graduates often become the adults who lead the next generation, organizing meetings, children, and the programming. It is mostly volunteer run with a central organization (Scouts Canada/Girl Guides of Canada) that encourages and supports individual operations. Deeply steeped in tradition, the Guides and Scouts of Canada defer to conventional hierarchies and politics. As a result, the pedagogical style tends to orient itself around a knowledge holder with the authority to share and teach. While the program can vary greatly depending on local branch, the central office remains conservative in their political engagement with relevant issues such



14. See: https://www.girlguides.ca/web/GGC/Parents/Who_We_Are/History/GGC/Parents/Who_We_Are/History.aspx





as sexuality or the environment.

The Duke of Edinburgh Awards is a program modeled after one in the UK that developed in Canada in 1963 as a way of motivating young people, initially young men, to engage in a balanced lifestyle. Currently it has a four focus areas: Service, Adventurous Journey, Skills and Physical Recreation. The award is given to the students upon completion of the programs requirements, and students are considered to be in competition with themselves. The program was founded by the Duke of Edinburgh (the current Prince Philip husband of Queen Elizabeth), Kurt Hahn and Lord Hunt. It is considered an opportunity for young people to distinguish themselves and receive recognition for achievements that would otherwise go unnoticed. (https://www.dukeofed.org/history)

## Conclusion

The examples we have provided here are by no means exhaustive, but through this comprehensive review of the different aspects of outdoor education that exist in Canada, we hoped to highlight the diverse, complex but flexible and adoptable nature of the field. Doing outdoor education does not only involve changing the learning context from indoors to outdoors, but also requires an exploration into questions of the purpose of education and perspectives on pedagogy, teaching and learning. In a time where our environment is facing dire challenges and when our mainstream education separates learning from the natural world to focus on competition and individualism, outdoor education presents an opportunity to reconnect students' learning with their lived experiences and the environments that sustain them. It also has the potential to cultivate the kind of citizens that will care for their human and non-human neighbours. Although outdoor education has not been a top priority of most schools, it is currently growing and branching out. However, we should also acknowledge that outdoor education programs, in their myriad forms and approaches, are typically of short duration and often lack theoretical or methodological sophistication. As mentioned, they are marginal to the mainstream curriculum, and lack comprehensive research evidence with regard to the full range of their educational efficacy or the long-term effects on students' relationship to or engagement with diverse others including the natural world (Piersol, personal communication, 2016).

Given this observation, there are four areas that we believe the field needs to probe and develop as it goes forward. Although this discussion leans toward school-based outdoor education implementation, it might also be helpful for other outdoor education programs.

First, curriculum needs to move towards a place- and land-based pedagogy where place, land and the nature experience become the foreground (Derby et al, 2015). There should be a respect for traditional wisdom, local diversity, and culture and an active move to incorporate local communities into the learning project. Piersol points out, "Within the field of outdoor education, some theorists argue that although leaps and gains have been made in terms of educating for the intrapersonal or 'self'-development, they have come at the expense of the development of equally important relations with the local land and community" (2014, p.43). Outdoor programs should find ways to explore local stories, social realities and the complex relationships that exist in their 'home' place. Literature has suggested that such engagement will be more authentic and will help cultivate the deep affinity children have with their community and the natural world (Hacking et al, 2007; Louv, 2005; Ballantyne & Packer, 2009). This requires the pedagogy to be more extended, experiential, meaningful and reflective.

Second, educators who are or desire to be involved in outdoor education need to be willing to engage in on-going pedagogical inquiry and risk taking (Smith, 2007). The role of outdoor educator may be more than it appears to be as they are in a position that can engage students in re-learning the meanings and understandings of their everyday life experience and realities (Duenkel & Scott, 1994). Educators also need to be supported through ongoing professional development and training, positive collaboration and alliances with other teachers and community, and openness and flexibility in curricular development and preparation time (Kiefer & Kemple, 1999; Williams & Taylor, 1999; Tung et al, 2002; Hagreaves & Fullan, 2012). Smith (2004) further iterates that teachers who work within the official mandate will need to decrease their dependence on academic disciplines as curricular frameworks and accept more qualitative and holistic measures of students' learning independent of subject areas.

Third, government policies and mandates, and school leadership and administration need to be supportive, flexible and work with the educators as a team (Smith, 2007). Continuous support, and flexibility in administrative procedures

are central to implementing outdoor education. While the research appears to be more theoretical than practically based, there is a leaning towards a flattening of hierarchies, an expansion of the decision-makers, and an onus on the responsibility for decisions coming from the larger community and not being located in an administrator or a researcher or a group of outsiders (Takano et al, 2009).

Lastly, community (including the natural world and its denizens) involvement needs to be present through dialogue, partnership, and action. Smith (2004) stresses that "Agencies and organizations outside of the school, including businesses, must come to see themselves as partners in the education of children, and they must be willing to accept interns and provide multiple learning opportunities for younger members of the community" (p.594). The participation of different sectors of the community promotes the collective support and provides various resources and expertise for different outdoor education programs.



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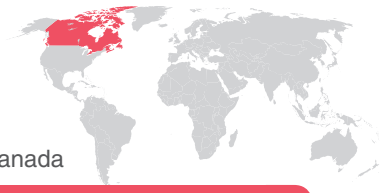



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# American Outdoor Education: Policies, Practices and Progression

# *American Outdoor Education : Policies, Practices and Progression*

Guan-Jang Wu
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## Introduction

For hundreds and thousands of years, humans had lived closely with nature till the Industrial Revolution occurred. Since then, people have started crowding into cities and made the human civilization and the wilderness seem to be more divided in the past several hundreds of years than ever. Therefore, humans need to rediscover how to live with nature in a harmonious way. In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, American writer Richard Louv mentioned that the lack of nature in children's life is linked to their symptoms of obesity, Hyperactive Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and





depression. Louv's book has surely raised the awareness of such a matter in our present day society. Now, how we are going to save children from "Nature-Deficit Disorder" and help ourselves find the future of human and nature will be one of the major topics for outdoor education in the twenty first Century. The United States of America was founded on pioneering spirits, therefore the country specifically values the spirits of being outdoor, adventurous, explorative in nature, independent and free. The country's abundance of natural resources allows the mechanisms and units of activities such as one-day outdoor trips, nature (field) study, summer boarding programs, or wilderness expeditions to be well-developed, diverse, well-equipped, and mature. What is worth mentioning is that the American outdoor education is deeply influenced by the native American culture. The reason being that the ancient wisdom of living with nature by native Americans of North America, such as their rites of passage and the gift ceremony, can be used as outdoor education materials and contents in such a natural way that they have become a unique historical and cultural context for American outdoor education (Quinn and Smith, 1992). In 2010, the Obama government launched the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" which responded to people's needs and offered American citizens various gateways to outdoor leisure; at the same time, it also took environmental protection and communal economic development into account, creating a chance for a multiple-win situation for sustainable development. From which, we can see that American outdoor education does not only have its rich historical heritage, it also plays an important role in the modern world. This article is going to start from the historical context of American outdoor education and introduce some of its iconic curriculum designs and the executions of related policies. After that, the article is going to introduce outdoor sites and resources that can be used for outdoor programs as well as some of the outdoor organizations. Finally, the article is going to discuss the important issues of cultivating professional outdoor educators with proper training as well as setting up related outdoor accreditation systems.

## The History and Change of American Outdoor Education

When talking about American outdoor education, inevitably, we have to start from camping education. Camping is an old, basic, and popular outdoor activity. Organized camping has its history in America for over a hundred years. It, of course,

has been deemed by Americans as one of the educational growing-up experiences (Smith, Carlson, Donaldson, & Masters, 1972).

Hammerman, Hammerman, & Hammerman (1994) divided the history of American outdoor education into six periods which respectively are Period of Inception (1930-1939), Period of Experimentation (1940-1985), Period of Standardization (1953-1964), Period of Resurgence and Innovation (1965-1969), Period of New Directions (1970-1985), and Period of Diversity and Networking (1986-present).

Hammerman and other scholars pointed out that the outdoor education started entering into the school system in the 1930s. Few of the schools at the time started using organized camping as curriculum for outdoor education. Though educators at the time had their differences on interpreting the concept of outdoor education, they generally recognized the educational value of those camping activities. It was through the mutual understanding and cooperative work of people and the government at the time that school camping became more acceptable by formal education and the public, and then became the outdoor tradition for American families.

In its initial stage of development, the American camping education's main purpose was to support an organization's core objective such as leisure or religion. It was not till later that it gradually became a means to outdoor education. At the same time, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Scout Movement, and Outward Bound came to America from the United Kingdoms and influenced America. Camping education is valued by the Scout Movement. It is an important activity for a scout troop at every stage. The National Scout Jamboree is an especially important camping event for scouts in America. The scout movement was started by Lord Baden-Powell in 1907. It came to America in 1910, and was intended to mold civic consciousness, leadership, and physical and mental health in youngsters aged from 7 to 20 (Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff, & Breunig, 2006).

Meier and Mitchell (1993) believed that the initial trend of camping education was to be related to the Progressive Movement (1890-1920) at the time. It was hoped that the participants of a camping event could develop self-reliance, self-control, resistance to pressure, and a sense of social responsibility, and through the development of these traits, the young participants would gain democratic literacy so they could spread and develop it in the society.





In the Period of Experimentation in the 1940s, there were more and more schools in America that experimented with the idea of "learning outside the classroom" through school camping and projects like school garden, school farm, and school forest. These experimental outdoor activities, one after another, extended to everywhere in America. In the Period of Experimentation, outdoor education has transformed its leisure-based thinking to a formal teaching and become a part of existing school programs. For the first time, there were articles on outdoor education published in the professional journals of education (Freed, 1991).

The Period of Standardization started in the early 50s when terms like "camp/camping" were substituted by "outdoor laboratory" and "outdoor school." It was also a period when organizing outdoor activities, school teachers started following guidebooks and manuals, allowing their outdoor curricula to proceed with certain guidelines. At the same time, professional outdoor institutions, organizations, conferences and standards were founded, such as Outdoor Education Association (1951), standards formulated by American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) (1954), the implementation of the National Outdoor Project (1955), the first National Conference on Outdoor Education in Washington D.C. (1958), and the first National Conference on Outdoor Teacher Education in Northern Illinois University (1960). The establishment of these outdoor education organizations, institutions, conferences and standards was one of the features of the Period of Standardization.

The Period of Resurgence and Innovation (1965-1969), though relatively short, was the period when books, journals, conferences and organizations that are related to outdoor education to flourish. Due to the implementation of National Outdoor Project in 1955, the other three conferences on National Outdoor Project were then held during 1960 to 1970, and they attracted leading figures from the fields of environmental protection, tourism, outdoor education, and business to attend. The Outward Bound School, which was founded in the UK, had their first campus in Colorado in 1962. From then on, the adventure education institutions started taking their root in America. Following that, the Journal of Outdoor Education had their first issue in 1966, stating the birth of the first national journal that allowed all outdoor educators in America to share information with (Freed, 1991).

Hammerman deemed the period from 1970s to 1980s as the Period of New Directions because outdoor education has become more influential and

its development has become more diverse. In this period, due to the presence of environmental issues, outdoor education started linking up with issues regarding natural resources and environmental protection. With three major events taking places in 1970—the founding of Earth Day, the issue of Environmental Quality Report, and the approval of National Environmental Education Act—the environmental education was then made a new trend in outdoor education. The other trend of the time was the development of experiential and adventure education. Besides the establishments of Outward Bound's campuses in many states, Project Adventure was also founded in 1971, whose main focus is to incorporate adventure education into school curricula. Also, in 1977, the Association of Experiential Education was founded. With hands-on learning as its philosophy, the association gathered the power of many organizations to promote outdoor education. From 1986 to present, outdoor education entered the Period of Diversity and Networking. Various organizations, groups and institutions have actively put effort into developing outdoor education in the country. By using the internet to connect and to publicize, they have been allowed to hold international conferences and meetings on the topics related to outdoor education and environmental sustainability (Hammerman, Hammerman, Hammerman, 1994).

It is obvious that the American outdoor education initially focused on camping education; and with camping education, it influenced thousands of teenagers. As it grew more mature, it became more valued by schools, and was incorporated with experiential learning methods and applied into different school subjects and curriculum designs. In the 1970s, many environmental issues were raised which contributed to the forming of the trend of environmental education that aimed to teach students to understand ecology, cultivate their environmental ethics, and motivate environmental protection activities. At the same time, outdoor education broke with its tradition of conducting activities on campsites only, and a new trend that is called adventure education started getting popular. The adventure education stresses on adventurous activities that take more days, go deeper into the wild, and involve higher risks (Priest, 1986). The establishments of Outward Bound campuses and National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) were the embodiment of the flourishing adventure education. This embodiment was also the start of the interwoven relationships between outdoor education, environmental education and adventure education. From the Outdoor Education Tree by Priest (1986), we can

have a clear overview of the essence of outdoor education and its relationships with various different concepts.

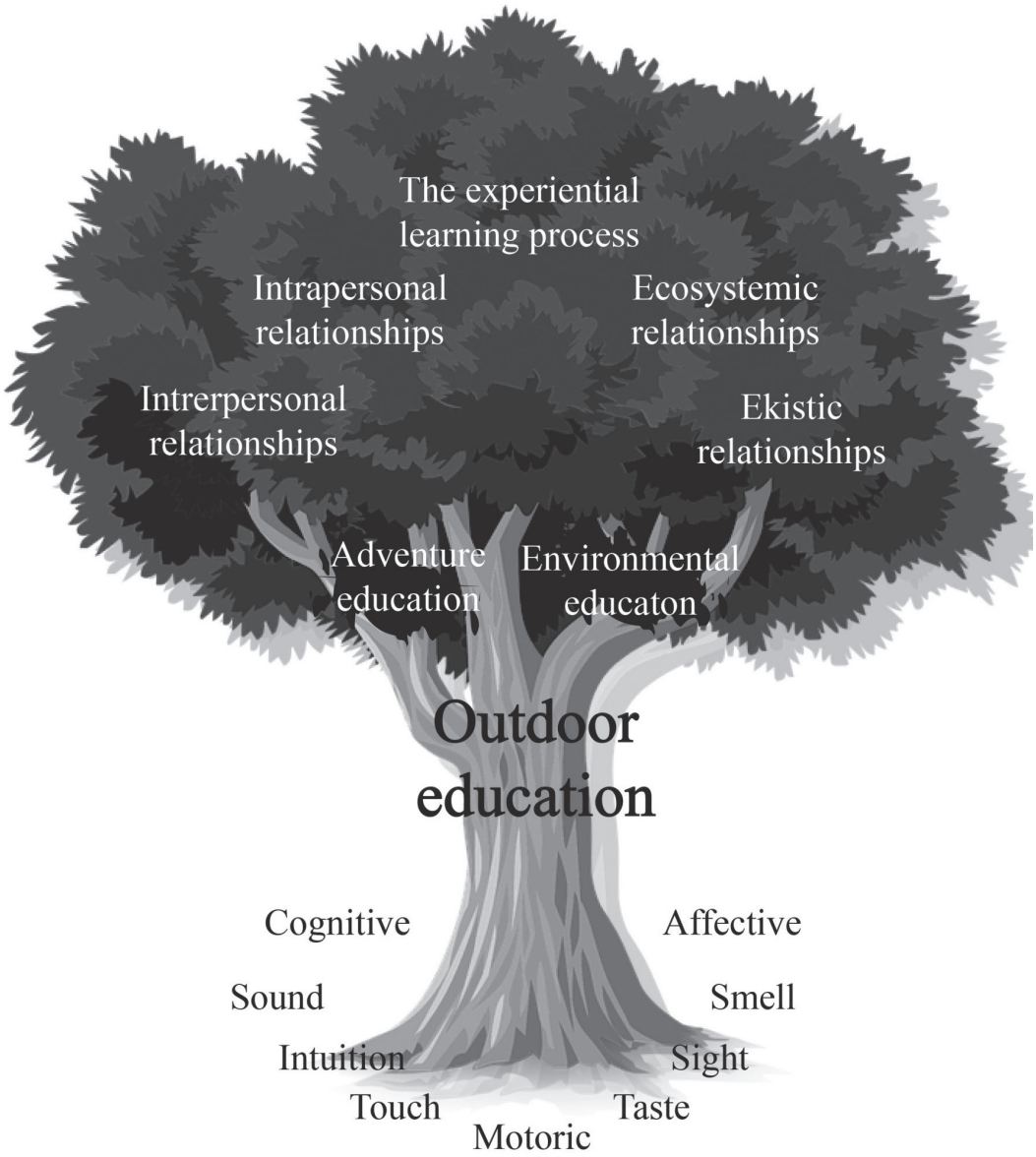



Figure1 Priest(1986) Outdoor Education Tree

# American Outdoor Education's Curriculum Plan and Important Policies

## K-12 Outdoor Education Curriculum

There are many well-known curricula that are applied to the teaching at K-12 schools in America, and they all play important roles in the nation's compulsory education. Here, we introduce four of those outdoor education curricula that are used nationwide:

### *Project NEED*

National Environmental Education Development (NEED) was a program organized by National Park Service in 1967. Its goal is to raise K-12 students' environmental awareness and ethics. Its curriculum contains three phases. The first phase cultivates elementary school students' ability to appreciate nature. The second phase, targeting middle school students, instructs them to discuss specific environmental issues. The third phase aims to have high school students embark on a field-based environmental investigation project. The NEED Program offered many useful educational resources to school curricula, and has received much positive feedback from schools of all levels.

### *Project WILD*

Founded in 1983, the Council for Environmental Education worked with many private organizations and governmental institutions to launch an environmental education program named Project WILD. Project WILD's curricula are the most used curricula from Kindergarten to high school when it comes to promoting environmental conservation and environmental education in the American education system. It stresses that people should be aware of, treasure, and understand the importance of the roles of wild animals in the ecosystem. It also encourages people to take up the responsibility of being a citizen of the Earth. Series of curriculum resources by Project WILD have been widely adopted by teachers of all grades, environmental education workers, outdoor instructors, and governmental employees. Its interdisciplinary curriculum materials are extensively applied to subjects such as science, sociology, language, the arts, mathematics and physical education.





### *Project Adventure (PA)*

Project Adventure (PA) was founded in 1971 in Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, Massachusetts. It started out as a three-year project proposed by the high school principal at the time, Jerry Pieh. The three-year project received federal funding that supported it to incorporate the adventure-based learning from Outward Bound with formal physical education. From then on, Project Adventure was applied even to the curriculum subjects such as history, English, acting and etc. The outstanding results at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School allowed the project to receive more federal funding to extend it through out the nation. It is said to be the most successful case of the outdoor adventure education influencing the traditional education (Prouty, 1990). PA eventually transformed into a nonprofit organization that mainly provides well-designed outdoor adventure activities or initiative games that motivate one's personal growth and transformation through warm-ups, trust-building activities, analyzing and solving issues, as well as high and low ropes course. The curriculum module was quickly applied to different curriculum subjects, for it uses cooperative learning as its instructive strategy, which helps students build up self-confidence and also encourages teamwork. The most important teaching principles of PA are as follows:

- Challenge by Choice: It means that participants are allowed to decide if they are fit for the activity, and their fellow participants should respect their decisions.
- Full Value Contract: It is about establishing a proper behavioral norm in the group that covers aspects such as mutual respect, mutual aid, positive languages and etc.
- Experiential Learning: It is hands-on leaning. It allows learning to produce meaning and to extend through reflections and feedback.

### *ELSOB*

Launched in 1992, Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound (ELSOB) is an education reform project. Based on experiential learning, it incorporates interdisciplinary subjects and character-infused philosophy in its curriculum to strengthen students' knowledge, abilities, and integrity. The project started with 10 schools that experimented with its curriculum. Now there are 150 schools in America that participate in the project. It is another project after PA that successfully joins adventure education and formal school curriculum together.

## Outdoor Education in Universities

Compared with the outdoor education at K-12 level, the outdoor education provided by the American higher education appears to be more diverse in nature. Each university, with the help of its professional teaching faculty that are able to promote outdoor tourism and education by utilizing their knowledge on related theories and practices, is therefore able to produce programs that are all different and unique. Western Illinois University's ECOEE program and Indiana University's the CORE Program are two well-known outdoor education programs.

### *The ECOEE Program at Western Illinois University*

The Environmental, Conservation and Outdoor Education Expedition (ECOEE) program is an outdoor program that belongs to the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration (RPTA), Western Illinois University. The program was first developed in 1976, and is based on experiential education to foster the profession of outdoor leadership (Dilworth, 2006 ; Lupton, n.d.). The program starts from the spring semester with two prerequisite planning courses, and proceeds to the fall semester with the main expedition training. The main goal of the ECOEE program is to train its students to be professional outdoor leaders. The training focuses on learning the management of adventure recreation, development on outdoor education and interpretation, and getting familiar with communication and leading skills in small groups. Other aspects of the program that benefit personal growth include the increase of self-confidence, the development of a self-awareness, being familiar with group dynamics, and having more contacts with recreational tourism. The ECOEE program requires the participants to gain accreditation by Wilderness First Responder and CPR certification.

The program's curricula are designed by the program's teaching faculty and coordinator annually. Every year, there are 10 to 15 undergraduates that apply for the program, and occasionally there will be few graduate students that participate in the program, too. The program emphasizes that it is not designed for students to participate in high-risk activities, nor for therapies in nature; instead, it is all for education. During the expedition course, students travel in a bus to different places to visit, to climb, to provide services, or to stay and experience. During those trips, students learn the importance of risk management through experiential-adventure-based elements while enjoying the activities. The ECOEE program also





works with the Wilderness Education Association (WEA). WEA teaches leadership, outdoor skills, the ability to make judgments and decisions that eventually will allow outdoor leaders to plan and perform outdoor activities safely and decrease the impact and harm that are caused by those activities (McKiernan, 1995). Overall, ECOEE is a course full of physical, psychological, spiritual and cooperative challenges, for the destinations of its outdoor activities are usually unknown and uncomfortable yet students are still required to conduct diverse outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, mountaineering, rock climbing and kayaking. Alongside those activities, students learn about diary writing, group process, extended evaluation that are part of the outdoor curriculum.

### *The CORE Program at Indiana University*

Starting in 1995, the Conservation Outdoor Recreation Education Program (CORE) is an outdoor leadership program of Indiana University's Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies. The program only runs during the spring semester every year. Its curriculum includes leadership development, group and self management, environmental education, and attaining outdoor technical skills and related professional certifications that include Leave No Trace Trainer (LNT), Level 1 instructor certification offered by American Canoe Association, CPR, and Wilderness First Responder. The program allows students to learn professional outdoor skills, and through the process of gaining certifications, students have the chance to strengthen what they have learned. The program therefore equips students with more competitive advantages when they enter the job market of the outdoor business. The CORE program requires undergraduate and graduate students to take 15 and 12 credits worth of courses respectively to learn about all theories and knowledge on outdoor adventure and to build up their outdoor leading skills through field studies and outdoor activities. (Wu, G. J., & Wang, C. C., 2013).

The CORE program's outdoor recreation curriculum offers training on many different outdoor skills. Students must be able to improve their skills so eventually they are capable of conducting outdoor activities themselves or leading others to participate. The main outdoor activities and skill training include map reading and navigation, snow travel and snow camping, rock climbing and abseiling, mountaineering, being alone, canyon, cave expeditions and etc. All students are required to take up two major curriculum tasks, which are being the Leader of the Day (LOD) and designing the Instructor Manual, as a way to utilize what they

have learned from the curriculum. All of the training targets to cultivate students to become outdoor leaders.

Many graduates from the ECOEE program or the CORE program have jobs that are either directly or indirectly related to outdoor recreation such as outdoor guide for Outward Bound, NOLS, or outdoor curriculum in universities; wilderness counselor or adventure therapist; government-employed outdoor guide in national parks or forest service; or human resource developer. Students that choose different career paths such as working for top 100 companies in America, or starting their own companies, or pursuing graduate degrees, also apply what they have learned into their careers.

## Important Policies

Smith, Carlson, Donaldson and Masters (1963) in their book, *Outdoor Education*, stated that there are two important periods in the American education history that greatly improved the country's outdoor education curricula. The first period was in 1917 when the Educational Policies Commission drew up seven major educational goals. Among the goals, there was one to ask schools to practice health and recreation related policies, which in turn influenced the early outdoor education curricula. The other period took place during World War I. At the time, many men who volunteered to join the army were denied because they were unable to meet the physical requirements. Such a phenomenon made the society aware that people needed outdoor education to improve their health and physical ability. In response to the society's need, many departments of Health, Physical Education & Recreation in state universities started providing outdoor courses. Later on, when the camping education gradually became mature, the need for outdoor education was then finally valued by the government. In 1954, the American Association for Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) formed a special team that was responsible for making and reviewing public school's camping guidelines. The team also published specifications for camping goals, camping participants, camping instructors, and camping curriculum and training. In 1955, with the support of AAHPER, Julian Smith started the National Outdoor Education Project, which aimed to elevate the quality of outdoor recreation and education. The project has a long-term effect on the outdoor education across America (Daniel, 2009).





Smith was therefore named the father of school camping. AAHPER then set up the Camping and Outdoor Education Committee in 1965. The same year, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was approved. It provided special funding to schools of all levels to allow them to hold camping activities during summer time or even through out the year. In the following two years, a total of five million US dollars was invested in 89 outdoor education projects, which allowed many schools to integrate outdoor education into the formal education (Hammerman, Hammerman, and Hammerman, 1994).

The development of American outdoor education, other than relying on the direct support from governmental policies, requires the collective power that come from individuals, schools, private organizations, and associations across the country to make it flourish. Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, which was published in 2005, caught people's attention and triggered their interests in children's environmental cognition. This further made people try to understand why children are gradually dissociated from nature, as well as the physical and psychological problems and deficits that come with such a dissociation. The United States House of Representatives approved the No Child Left Inside Act on September 8, 2008. This act was proposed by North American Association for Environmental Education. Its purpose is to increase children's environmental awareness and knowledge on natural environment, and to improve the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that was overly oriented towards standardized testing. At the time of No Child Left Behind Act, even though studies showed that being in a natural environment may enhance a student's critical thinking, social skills, and academic performance, when it comes to designing their curriculum, however, schools would still choose subjects such as reading and mathematics over outdoor activities that are actually valuable due to their excessive emphasis on the importance of academic subjects. Though, the No Child Left Inside Act did not become an official enactment, its spirit still affected the federal government. In 2015, the government finally made it in law that every year there will be one hundred million American dollars provided as the fund for training professional environmental educators, for creating innovative learning techniques for outdoor education, and for developing outdoor environmental education curriculum from Kindergarten level to high school level. For example, a public school teacher who has received the training will have understandings of environmental issues such

as climate change or water scarcity in order to provide proper outdoor education opportunities for students to understand environmental issues. They also need to be able to design outdoor environmental education courses that have both quality and quantity so these courses are able to generate more impact on people. For example, by developing and executing Environmental Literacy program, they are to encourage people to participate in outdoor activities in order to have a healthier lifestyle.

In 2010, President Obama launched America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), which aims to allow Americans to enjoy the benefit of tourism, economy, and health generated by the abundance of the country's nature. The president took real actions to promote community-based environmental preservation and outdoor tourism that included plans such as environmental preservation on a local level, increase of outdoor leisure access to natural lands and waters, conservation of water and land resources, and establishment of urban parks and community waterways. The AGO especially focuses on encouraging young people to take parts in outdoor activities. It also combines resources from Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, and Council on Environmental Quality together to provide the younger generation access to outdoor activities and outdoor career pathways as well as opportunities to utilize outdoor resources to make contributions to the society and their country. By doing so, the AGO hopes to cultivate a new generation of leaders (Salazar, Vilsack, Jackson, & Sutley, 2011).

## Outdoor Learning Spaces and Organizational Resources

America has vast land and abundant nature that has rich natural resources. There are many sites for outdoor education activities to take place. Places such as state parks, national parks or wilderness areas are where outdoor education activities can be conducted at. There are 57 national parks, 155 national forests, 677 wilderness areas, 5,655 state parks across America (Holland and Eagles, 2006). These are places that can be taken as good outdoor classrooms for outdoor courses. At the moment, the government has not yet established a specific department to manage outdoor education affairs, therefore, it usually requires the cooperation and collaboration among federal agencies when it comes to promoting outdoor education. Agencies that cooperate with each other on such a matter are as





follows: National Parks Service, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Bureau of Reclamation and local governments. Spaces are the most important element for outdoor education when, especially, being in the "outdoor" is the key concept of outdoor education. As George E. Donaldson and Louise E. Donaldson stated in their journal article published in 1958 that outdoor education is an education in, about, and for the outdoors; the outdoor environment, therefore, is what makes outdoor education different from other forms of education. Outdoor education revitalizes the traditional teaching method and makes learning more interesting and sensational. Therefore, Priest (1986) defined that outdoor education is a form of learning through the experience of using all of our senses and it usually takes place in a natural environment. To make the outdoor environment a site for learning and emphasize learning by using all five senses is a specialized profession. It requires specific techniques and knowledge for a person to conduct and guide an outdoor course. Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, and Ewert (2006) pointed out that outdoor skills, interpersonal skills, and ecological relationships are three key elements of outdoor education, and they can only be presented and practiced through outdoor education as well. Outdoor education is not only promoted at K-12 schools, but also in the communities, universities and colleges, and among private institutions. Here we are going to introduce the outdoor education in universities and in private institutions.

There are usually three groups in the universities that promote outdoor education: academic departments of the field, outdoor recreation and education centers, and outing clubs (Jensen and Guthrie, 2006).

1. Academic departments and graduate programs: Jensen and Guthrie (2006) emphasize that outdoor education courses in universities play an important role in promoting professional outdoor tourism/education in America, for students are able to learn professional outdoor knowledge systematically and gain training on professional skills. In America, there are quite a few universities that offer bachelor or graduate programs on outdoor education. Academic departments that provide courses on outdoor education, generally speaking, are the following ones: department of outdoor tourism, department of management of natural resources, department of adventure education, department of outdoor education, department of experiential

education, department of environmental education, and etc. Universities that are well-known for their outdoor education related programs are Indiana University, University of Utah, and Prescott College.

2. Outdoor recreation and education centers: American universities usually would have an outdoor recreation and education center that is intended to provide services regarding outdoor leisure and learning outdoor skills to all students, faculties, alumni, and local communities. In particularly, Princeton University, Brown University, Yale University, Cornell Medical School, Harvard University, and Stanford University all have freshmen outdoor programs that bring outdoor education and freshman orientation together in order to help students bond with their fellow students and adapt to the new environment.
3. Outing clubs: American universities have a diverse range of student clubs, among them, the outing club is one that is popular with many students. It provides many outdoor education opportunities and allows students to learn about leadership and self-reliance. The Dartmouth College has founded their outing club since 1935. It is America's oldest university outing club.

In America, there are many private outdoor education institutions that are diverse and active. Among them, the most representative ones are Outward Bound USA, National Outdoor Leadership School, Wilderness Education Association, Association for Experiential Education, and Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education. The following will be respective introductions to these institutions.

## Outward Bound USA (OB)

The Outward Bound was originated from the United Kingdom. At the moment, it is already a world-wide organization. The founder Kurt Hahn, who was a great educator in the 20th Century, established the first OB campus in Wales in 1941. American educator Joshua Miner, who studied under Hahn in the UK and was greatly influenced by him, introduced OB into America and built the first Outward Bound USA campus in the mountains of Colorado.

The Outward Bound uses outdoor activities to achieve its goal of holistic education that especially emphasizes the cultivation of the ability to sympathize with others. It asks not only students' academic performance but also their development of personality, and most important of all, "their compassion towards





others." Nowadays, OB offers a diverse range of programs such as mountain climbing, rock climbing, kayaking, mountaineering, canoeing, skiing and etc. However, the four values that these activities work by remain the same till today: self-reliance, physical fitness, craftsmanship and above all compassion. So far, the Outward Bound USA has five branches: Wilderness, Expeditionary Learning Schools, Professional, Urban Center, and Discovery. Every year, there are an average of 40,000 students that participate in OB's programs.



## National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

National Outdoor Leadership School is the most well-known outdoor education school in America. It also plays the leading role in the field of outdoor education in the world. Its courses mainly focus on environmental ethics, outdoor skills, wilderness medicine, risk management, leadership and judgment making. The feature of their courses is that they usually conduct extended wilderness expeditions that take many days. In a primitive and real wilderness classroom, they forge their students' minds and train them to be more persevering and responsible. In the end, they encourage students to apply what they have learned in the wilderness to their daily life and continue to be a leader. NOLS works with the University of Utah and allows the course participants to gain university course credits. NOLS has campuses on six continents. They also provide scholarships to people who are in need in order to encourage equal learning opportunities and to recruit students of all backgrounds to join and learn about outdoor education.

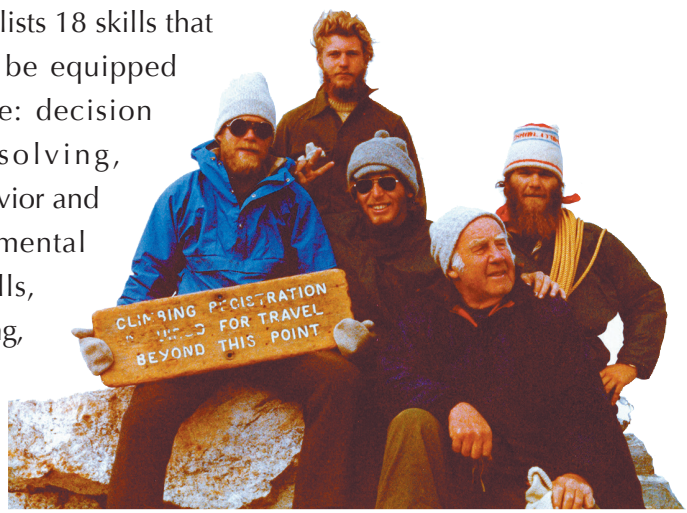
NOLS was founded by Paul Petzoldt. He was the head trainer of Outward Bound USA in 1964. In 1965, he started NOLS. In 1974, he published *The Wilderness Handbook*. In 1977, he founded Wilderness Education Association with Dr. Frank Lupton and others. Petzoldt expressed the reason he is so fascinated by mountains and forests is that, in them, he finds the beauty of nature, the bond between partners, the thrills of the adventure activities, self-realization, and the joy and fulfillment of achieving goals. Petzoldt developed many innovative courses and policies for NOLS, including co-ed expeditions, scholarship policies, and low impact outdoor activities (the predecessor of Leave No Trace). He also invented the climbing commands of "on belay; belay on; climbing; climb" for rock climbing that are still in use today. The advocacy of environmental ethics and wilderness medicine is also one of NOLS's contribution to the field of outdoor education worldwide. They successfully made Leave No Trace known to the world and founded the Wilderness Medical Institute (WMI), and in turn allow for the specialization of outdoor education and the improvement of its safety.

## Wilderness Education Association (WEA)

Paul Petzoldt, who was praised to be the pioneer of wilderness education of America, did not only found the NOLS, he also founded the Wilderness Education Association. In 1977, Petzoldt founded the Wilderness Education Association with

Dr. Frank Lupton, Robert Christie, and Charles Gregory. These forefathers of outdoor education and wilderness education shared the same vision. They believed that the survival of American wilderness and all the outdoor lovers need an institutionalized wilderness education system. Therefore, the founders of the WEA came up with a standard training course and a promotional plan to realize such a vision. The WEA's mission is to build a standard program and to facilitate outdoor education's professional leadership through course design, practice, advocacy and research. It aims to become an important supportive group for the field of outdoor education and outdoor leaders during their process of specialization. Through its partnership with main interest groups, WEA and those groups, together, developed a standard for courses and provide outdoor personnel a professional space to audit and converse (Lupton, 1990).

In its early days, WEA designed an 18-point curriculum which lists 18 skills that an outdoor guide should be equipped with. These 18 points are: decision making and problem solving, leadership, expedition behavior and group dynamics, environmental ethics, basic camping skills, nutrition and rations planning, equipment and clothing selection and use, weather, health and sanitation, travel techniques, safety and risk management, navigation, wilderness emergency procedure and treatment, natural and cultural history, specialized travel/adventure activity, communication skills, trip planning, teaching processing and transference. In 2008, WEA conducted a three-year strategic plan which allowed the association to reexamine their mission and vision, it also updated the operation of the association. The thirty-year-old 18-point curriculum was reformatted and was condensed into six core competencies that are categorized as outdoor living, planning and logistics, risk management, leadership, environmental integration, and education.



### Association for Experiential Education

The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) is a non-profit membership organization. Its goal is to promote experiential education. Founded in 1977, AEE is dedicated to advocate the importance of experiential education and also to provide educators an important platform for them to converse with each other. The annual AEE International Conference was held even before the association was founded, and this year the 44th Conference will be held. Every year, the conference attracts nearly a thousand people to attend. AEE is also dedicated to facilitating academic studies. Founded by AEE in 1978, the *Journal of Experiential Education* has been a quality journal that is professional and equipped with peer review system. Dr. Alan Ewert of Indiana University, who is also an important figure in the academic field of outdoor education, at the 2001 AEE International Conference, launched the Symposium on Experiential Education Research (SEER) which promotes the dialogue between the academic and the practical in order to stimulate more research topics. This symposium has made a great contribution to the development and scientification of America's outdoor education.

### Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education

The Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) is a grass-roots organization that was founded by a group of enthusiastic outdoor educators in 1984. They started out by spontaneously holding annual conferences as a group of professionals, providing outdoor professionals and students an opportunity to learn and network. They maintained as a "non-organizational" group and held their annual conferences for nine years. Finally, they officially founded the association in 1993. The main goal of the association is to advocate environmental protection; provide services to professionals, communities, universities and colleges, and students who are of non-profit background; and serve as a bridge for the outdoor community to communicate with the government.

## Development and Training for Outdoor Educators

During the process of professionalization of American outdoor education, the field started to pay more attention to the training for the educators, the effectiveness of curriculum, theoretical foundations, and practical studies. In the





future, related theory-based curriculum will gradually carry more weight in the field. The governmental units are going to ask for quantitative and qualitative data from the outdoor education organizations regarding the activities they have held as a proof of the effectiveness of these activities and as the review basis for future funding assessment. Outdoor education will no longer continue to be viewed as only for fun, subjective, and unprofessional. This is to say that research, theoretical foundation, and teaching methodology are becoming more and more important. The effectiveness of outdoor education, which has been proved by many studies, can generally be found in the following six outcomes(Hattie March, Neill, and Richards, 1997):

1. Academic: GPA and the improvement of reading and writing
2. Self-Concept: Confidence, independence, and physical ability
3. Interpersonal: Positive attitudes towards socialization which includes learning to respect, trust, care, and tolerate of others
4. Personality: Emotional control, reduction of aggressiveness, and internal locus of control
5. Adventuresome: Cultivation of one's appreciation, respect, and curiosity to nature and the sense of responsibility for sustainable development
6. Leadership: Attention to details, management, and teamwork skills

While the effectiveness of outdoor education has gradually become known and recognized, the teachers of such a profession are therefore regarded as the critical influence to the learning outcomes. How to train these educators to teach has become a more important task.

Though the educators and curriculum of outdoor education have become more and more professional, the American outdoor education is still lacking a national standard for its teachers. The government does not have any regulations or laws to regulate the teaching faculty. Therefore, the outdoor education field can only rely on the internal training provided by each organization or accreditation programs offered by different institutions of the field. Internal training usually covers training in hard and soft skills as well as first aid. Accredited camps or camp sites are able to provide their organizations the newest resources for training methods, risk management, and course design; and are therefore capable of further providing a safer, high-quality camp experience to their camp participants. The evaluation system also provides potential camp participants specific standards of selection

when choosing camps to attend. According to the statistics gathered by American Camp Association (ACA), there are about 12,000 camps in America that provide children and teenagers diverse summer camp choices. However, there are only 2,400 of these camps that have been accredited by ACA. The Association for Experiential Experience also provides accreditation programs that help outdoor programs commit to higher quality and safety (Sugerman & Hirsch, 2007).

Though outdoor educators keep working towards to be more professional, in reality, there are only few full-time outdoor instructors, most of the workers of the field are part-time workers or school teachers. Some organizations require their outdoor educators to be able to do everything: from course design, marketing, being a driver, executing courses to leading reflection and etc. These workers are also usually required to work overtime with long working hours. The working environment has made many who aspire to work to be professional outdoor educators bear the heavy weight of external expectations and pressure. Generally speaking, the salary and benefits of being an outdoor educator are not in balance with the efforts, time, and responsibility an outdoor educator invests in their work. Therefore, many young outdoor educators leave the field after suffering from burnouts (Kesselheim, 1981). In view of this, the cultivation of professional educators should be achieved gradually by following the three directions as shown below (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, and Ewert, 2006):

1. Accumulation of knowledge: An educator has to be familiar with the knowledge he or she is about to teach. For example, if one is going to teach university students basic rock climbing skills, one has to be familiar with rock climbing signals, the climbing route and its geography, rock climbing skills, instructing skills, and effective communication skills to be used when communicating with university students and etc. The level of the contents taught should be adjusted according to students´ level of understanding.
2. Advancing skills and teaching methods: An educator should be familiar with the topic he or she is about to teach. The most important thing is to systematically and clearly pass the skills on to students. Teaching ability is to be acquired. It takes many practices and preparations for one to become an efficient teacher. A person with good skills does not necessarily know how to teach those skills. Therefore, the cultivation of teaching skills is very important.

3. Understanding students: Understanding the background and abilities of one´s students is fundamental. Truthfully speaking, a teacher, who is able to care wholeheartedly for his or her students and their learning, is a rare gem. However, a teacher has to at least understand a student´s background in order to adjust his or her teaching contents or methods accordingly to meet with the student´s needs and improve the student´s learning.



## Conclusion



This article explained the development of outdoor education in America. From the earliest camping activities such as the Gunnery Camp in Connecticut in 1861 to the early outdoor education organizations such as ACA, YMCA, and 4-H Club as well as Scout education, these activities and organizations have worked hard to improve the holistic development of the younger generation of America. Lloyd B. Sharp was praised as the father of American outdoor education. He took over to oversee the Fresh Air Camp in New York in 1925 and from there he made outdoor education that emphasizes experiential learning flourish. He and other scholars advocated the educational value of camping, and therefore started a trend that opened up the channel that linked outdoor camping experiences with formal school curriculum. In the 50s, lead by Julian Smith, the father of camping, outdoor education gradually connected with formal education. With the support of government, there were many national conferences on outdoor education held across the country as well as publications of outdoor education books and journals.





The American camping activities has founded the base for outdoor education. After going through the developments of different periods that include the promotion of school's outdoor education curriculum, the flourish of outdoor organizations, the diverse developments of its discourse, and the implementation of related national laws, the American outdoor education has grown quite mature.

The development of American outdoor curriculum also has a deep influence on the present school education of all levels. This article also discussed the design and plan of outdoor activities at K-12 level, the promotion of environmental education, and the use of adventure education. It also mentioned professional outdoor courses at the higher education level, introducing related academic departments, education centers, and student clubs while featuring some unique university outdoor leadership programs. Private outdoor organizations in America also dedicate much effort to promoting outdoor education. The Outward Bound that focuses on self-growth and character education and the later founded National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) that stresses on the training of outdoor leadership and environmental stewardship are two organizations that, till today, still have great influence on the development of outdoor education in America and worldwide. Two organizations that have greatly been influenced by Outward Bound are Project Adventure (PA) and Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound (ELSSOB). These two organizations both work to incorporate adventure-based learning into mainstream physical education, and have designed many man-made expeditionary environments to help one achieve the goal of personal growth.

The establishment of the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) states the importance of experiential learning. The Wilderness Education Association (WEA), which was founded in 1977, has its goal to bring the outdoor education into higher education while it tries to create a standardized outdoor leader accreditation system. In 1993, the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) was officially founded. So far, it is one of the most influential outdoor recreation education organizations. Those organizations mentioned above all have aided the growth of the field of outdoor education.

Sensing the disconnection between younger generation nowadays and nature, Richard Louv wrote about "nature-deficit disorder" in his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, and once again raised people's awareness of education and nature. This awareness indirectly made No

Child Left Inside Act receive attention in the Congress and win support from related organizations. In 2010, the Obama government showed its determination and vigor in supporting outdoor education by launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. What we have presented here are the important events and development history of American outdoor education from 19th century on.

Though outdoor education is a field full of thrill, adventure and challenges, it is human's care to the natural environment that is really the essence and value of outdoor education. Quality outdoor education provided in the formal education system is something that many people expect and demand to happen. Connecting outdoor education with mainstream education is something agreed upon by different American scholars (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, & Ewert, 2006). Therefore, only when the outdoor education in Taiwan is able to connect with mainstream society and education can it then go a long way.





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# Towards Excellence:
# Scottish Outdoor Education in the 21st Century

# *Towards Excellence : Scottish Outdoor Education in the 21st Century*

Shang Zhan Lee



## Introduction

Distinguished from other parts of the United Kingdom, Scotland harbours precious natural and cultural resources with its 5.3 million population and a total area of eighty thousand square kilometres. Edinburgh, its capital city, is a cultural centre that merges traditions and innovations. The natural and cultural environments of Scotland have fostered numerous scholars that excel in various fields. Inspired by the igneous landscapes, James Hutton (1726-1797) established the modern science of geology. Once studying at the University of Edinburgh, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) completed On the Origin of Species after his voyage of the Beagle. Peter Higgs gained inspiration for his theorisation of the Higgs boson from a Highlands journey, which subsequently led him to win a Nobel Prize fifty years after. The

natural and historical environments of Scotland are thus perfect for outdoor exploration. In the Old Town of Edinburgh, we can often see teachers and students wandering through cultural and historical sites and immersing themselves in stories and legends. The prestigious John Muir Award and Duke of Edinburgh Award are also originated in Scotland. As the Scottish geographer, Archibald Geikie (1835-1924) remarks, natural environment ceaselessly grants human beings new forms of knowledge, and Scotland exemplifies this notion, offering excellent opportunities for the developments of outdoor education.

With these promising conditions, Scotland has become one of countries which have the most vigorous developments of outdoor education. However, traditions do not always favour outdoor education. For example, in the past, there was a conservative division between sexes, which considers that women walking alone in forest as inappropriate. Therefore, this article addresses the recent developments of outdoor education in Scotland and its significant rise in the twenty-first century, through the scopes of history, policy, and research.

## The Historical and Policy Developments of Outdoor Education in Scotland

During the Second World War, the fortification of mentality and physicality, as well as socialisation, was considered more vital in Scotland. "Healthy and wellbeing" had become a crucial component of school education. In 1945, the Scottish parliament passed the 1945 Education Act, which obligated educational units to provide, manage, and maintain camps for primary and secondary students to strengthen their physicality and socialisation.[1] Although there was no direct mentioning of the word "outdoor" in the Act, it was nonetheless a ground-breaking legalisation. It encouraged schools to adopt spaces outside classrooms to enhance students' mental and physical developments, initiating the trend of Scottish outdoor education in the 60s and 70s (Higgins, Nicol, Beams, Christie, & Scrutton, 2013). During this period, Scotland became the first country in the world that introduced outdoor education into official curriculum of schools. (Higgins, 2002).

At its infant stage, the places for the activities of outdoor learning were mainly

1. See: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/acts/1945-education-(scotland)-act.pdf

provided by the private-owned "outdoor residential centres," and the content of outdoor curriculum consisted of experiences and explorations (Higgins & Kirk, 2006). Generally, these outdoor residential centres offer accommodation for students and the public when they are engaged in outdoor recreations and explorations. Also, some schools would hold overnight outdoor activities at these places. In that age of growing fashion of outdoor explorations, expedition teams often hit the pages of Scottish newspapers. At the same time, the Scottish Highlands had become popular, offering widely-loved exploration routes. In the past, the training program for teachers in Moray House of Education required student teachers to live in forest self-sufficiently for one month. Thus, we can perceive the prosperity of outdoor explorations, which was regarded as an important part of school education. However, during the 90s, the re-organisation of administrative divisions resulted in the cuts of budgets, which, along with economic depression, reduced the need for expensive education of outdoor expedition. Many outdoor residential centres closed consequently (Christie, Beames, & Higgins, 2016).




Due to the changes of government form, outdoor education in Scotland gained an opportunity for re-development in the early twentieth-first century. In 1999, after the British Parliament executed Devolution, Scotland had its own Parliament and was able to constitute its own national policies and educational systems. The year of 2004 witnessed one of the most ground-breaking educational reforms (Priestley

& Humes, 2010), which formalised the "Curriculum for Excellence" for students aged between 3 and 18.[2] This curriculum design aimed to establish four abilities of students: a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor. The Curriculum for Excellence has been put officially put into practice since 2010.

From its announcement and implement, the Scottish educational authorities had been seeking methodologies to achieve the four aims proposed by the Curriculum for Excellence. Outdoor education hence gained support from this wave of educational reforms. In 2005, the Scottish Ministry of Education a two-year "Outdoor Connections" project, which gathered experts specialising in related fields of outdoor education and formed an Advisory Group. This Advisory Group explored the aspects in the new Curriculum that might be benefited from outdoor education, and ameliorated the quality and resource distribution of outdoor education. The implement of this project brought forth an official report "Taking Learning Outdoors" that formally connected outdoor education with the new Curriculum.[3] The report indicated that outdoor education reinforced and incorporated the core experiences in the Curriculum, corresponding to its tenor: "to learn from experiences." As also suggested in the report, effective forms of outdoor education provided students whose performances were denied in classrooms more opportunities to show their potentials, and furthermore, to develop the four abilities promoted by the new Curriculum. Finally, the report accentuated the exigency of empirical researches to attest to the values of outdoor learning, and to improve its quality, feasibility, and effectiveness. In 2008, based on the report, the Scottish government established the "Outdoor Learning Strategic Advisory Group (OLSAG)" to offer advice and lead the development of outdoor education within the frame of the Curriculum for Excellence. The OLSAG propelled the formal combination of outdoor education and the Curriculum. In 2010, the Scottish Ministry of Education announced the Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning (CfEtOL), making outdoor education one of the focuses of the Curriculum for Excellence.[4]

The CfEtOL ascertained the status of outdoor education in the Scottish educational reforms, incorporated outdoor education into learning areas, and widened its implements. The CfEtOL highlighted the actual benefits outdoor

2. See: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/
3. See: https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/TknLrnOutA4_tcm4-402066.pdf
4. See: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/images/cfeoutdoorlearningfi nal_tcm4-596061.pdf

education has for students' learning of literature, mathematics, science, and health. The locations for outdoor education included campus, suburbs, the Scottish countryside, and remote wildness. Aside from natural environments, other recommended locations for outdoor education included historical and cultural sites. Students were encouraged to start from campus and communities—places that they were familiar with—and then explore natural environment and wildness. We should note that the CfEtOL regarded individual and social developments as the core aims of outdoor exploration. However, this sort of outdoor activities had higher cost, in terms of finance, manpower, and time, which might not benefit the promotion of outdoor education.

In addition to including outdoor education into educational reforms, the Scottish educational authorities offer practical information and instructions for outdoor education online.[5] On the website, the concept of outdoor education is illustrated. Instead of conducting a solidary activity, teachers are encouraged to introduce it into various learning fields, design its contents, and employ the spaces on campus as its locations. The pragmatic content is also constantly updated, displaying successful cases in various fields of study.[6] Security has been the most

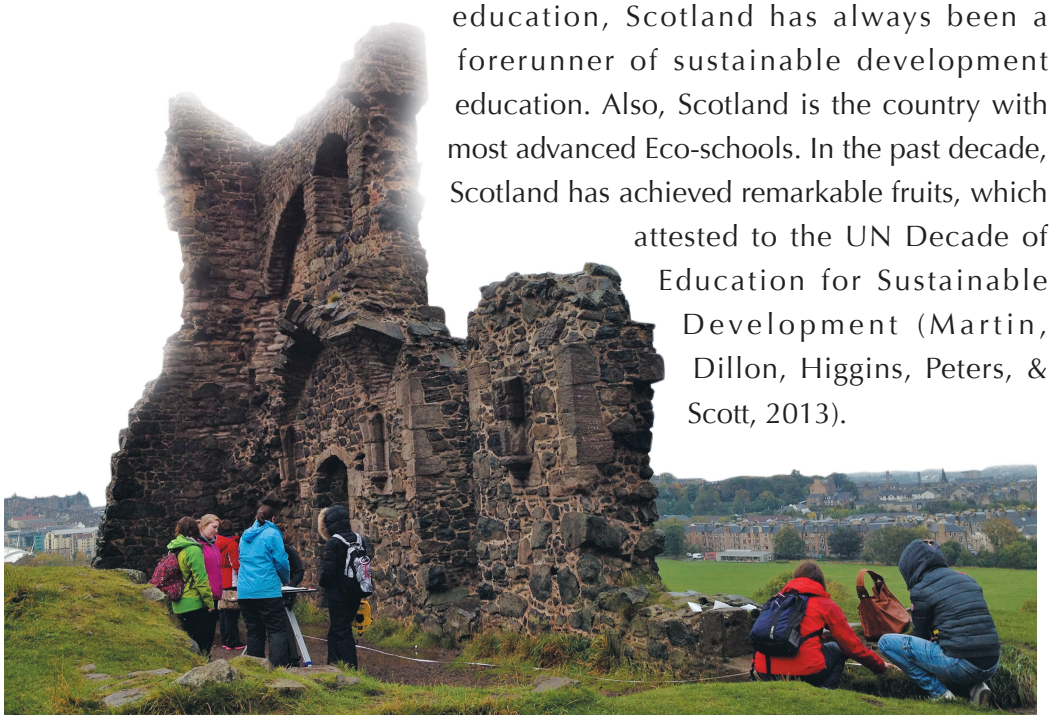


5. See: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/approaches/outdoorlearning/
6. See: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/0to9/genericresource_tcm4817001.asp

important concern for frontline teachers. The Scottish Ministry of Education cooperated with professional outdoor groups and announced risk estimations and safety guidelines of outdoor education, providing teachers concrete instructions to follow while conducting outdoor education. Thus, the official website offers solid supports for teachers (Christie et al., 2014), and encourages them to participate in outdoor education, rather than merely organise events and accompany students in the past activities.

## Sustainable Development and Outdoor Education

The emphasis on sustainable development in Scotland has widened the influences of outdoor education. After the Devolution, the national development of Scotland has leaned towards the European Union. Sustainable development has become the most crucial national goal for Scotland. In 2011, the Scottish government announced 2020 Vision, aiming to become a country of sustainable development in 2020, and to employ sustainable energies completely (currently 40%). As the first country to pledge to abide by the Paris Agreement, Scotland actively supports acts of sustainable development in the UN. In terms of school education, Scotland has always been a forerunner of sustainable development education. Also, Scotland is the country with most advanced Eco-schools. In the past decade, Scotland has achieved remarkable fruits, which attested to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Martin, Dillon, Higgins, Peters, & Scott, 2013).



After the Paris Agreement, Scotland announced Vision 2030+, a project for sustainable development education, which considered outdoor education an important methodology for sustainable education.[7] Vision 2030+ supported schools to renovate their campus environments and promoted outdoor education. In terms of sustainable development education, a model similar to outdoor education was adopted in Scotland. Advisory groups were commissioned to implement projects promised by the government. After the stage of implement, reports were filed and presented to advise the reorganization of advisory groups, so the future projects will be kept under continuous supervision. Sustainable development has become a core feature in the Scottish education, and outdoor education has been regarded as a major approach to promote sustainable education, which should be put into practice on every single student (Higgins & Lavery, 2013; Russell, 2014).

The combination of sustainable education and outdoor education in Scotland was achieved through the efforts of a key scholar. Professor Peter Higgins, the joint chairperson of both advisory groups and the creator of outdoor education at the University of Edinburgh, played a crucial part in this combination. He delivered a joint speech with the UN chairperson of Sustainable Development, presenting the Scottish success in this aspect and aspiring to new goals for the UN.[8] Also, his presentations of research achievements at the Scottish Parliament propelled the developments of outdoor education and sustainable education.[9] Supported by empirical researches, Scotland was able to adopt outdoor education as a significant method to promote sustainable development.

## The Professional Improvement of Teachers for Outdoor Education

In the context of education reforms, teachers' professional abilities must be renewed with the support of policies, in order to implement outdoor education in schools. The General Teaching Council For Scotland (GTCS) is responsible for establishing professional basis and certification of teachers. In recent years, the GTCS has decisive influences on the promotion of outdoor education and

7. See: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/Vision2030_tcm4-876109.pdf
8. See: the speech video on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYJMHuPIjGE
9. See: Peter Higgins's presentation in the Parliament on http://www.youtube.come.watch ? v=tzR60LHFUto

sustainable development. As the only non-governmental qualification institute for teachers in the world, the GTCS determines the required qualifications and abilities for teachers in Scottish primary and secondary schools. Every teacher who wishes to teach in any Scottish schools must obtain a certificate from the GTCS. In 2012, the GTCS updated its professional standards for teachers, sustainable development education becoming one of the crucial fields for in-service training.[10] In the new certificating standards, it is suggested that learners must connect themselves with the natural environment that they rely on to survive, and develop a sense of belonging to local and global communities. From this perspective, we can observe that the GTCS regards sustainable development education as conforming to the concept of place-based education (Sobel, 2004), and values local connections. Such a goal is best achieved by teachers in education locales. The GTCS's direction of outdoor education and sustainable education is a pragmatic one, as the new standards are designed to motivate teacher make use of the surrounding environment to develop suitable outdoor education and sustainable education. As suggested by the GTCS, teachers should understand and construct the most appropriate learning environments, which includes the adoption of outdoor education and proper teaching methods in these environments. The concrete methods and guidelines provide a clear direction for teachers to enhance their professional abilities in terms of outdoor education (Christie et al., 2014).

After announcing new guidelines and standards, the GTCS proceeds to re-certificate teachers, so that they can meet the new standards. "Professional Update" is a project that requires teachers to present their achievements in professional fields in five years, which allows an opportunity for them to review their professional abilities, to understand the essence of this education reform, and to identify the professional fields that should be strengthened. Outdoor education and sustainable education are also designated by the GTCS as two of the essential abilities and achievements in professional fields of teachers. "Professional Recognition" is another professional certificate that encourages teachers to excel and become expert in a certain field, which will then be officially recognized. From 2013 to 2014, there has been 103 teachers who obtained the GTCS's professional certificate for outdoor education. It should be noted that although the GTCS has professional certification scheme for outdoor learning, Scotland does not regulate the profession

10. See: http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards.aspx

of outdoor learning. Without professional certificate, a teacher can still conduct outdoor learning. That is, the projects of professional certification intend to encourage teachers to excel in professional fields, rather than confine teachers' qualification.

With the developments of policy, the teacher training for outdoor education is a specific aspect that calls for improvement in Scotland. According to the investigation of Christie, Higgins, & Nicol (2014), teachers in primary and secondary schools are generally in need of professional support in terms of outdoor education. As recent information shows, in Scotland, there have been considerable changes in this aspect. In terms of training for teachers, several Scottish universities have established degree programs related to outdoor education. For example, the University of Edinburgh has many programs relevant to outdoor education, providing undergraduate and postgraduate programs of Outdoor Education, Outdoor Environment and Sustainability Education, and Leaning for Sustainability, and professional courses for teachers to obtain certificates.[11] The University of Sterling has different orientation, incorporating outdoor education into natural science by establishing the department of Environmental Science and Outdoor Education.[12] These departments and programs offer broad and systematic training for outdoor education. After the announcement of CfEtOL, there has been remarkable growth concerning outdoor education training for educators in the Scottish higher education.

Departments and programs in universities offer systemic professional training, while local workshops provide more versatile opportunities for teachers to enhance their professional abilities. In Scotland, the requirement of in-service training for teachers is stricter than in other places in the UK, as every teacher in Scotland must participate in training courses for at least 35 hours per year.[13] Therefore, continuing professional development (CPD) programs for teachers play a vital role in enhancing teachers' professional abilities in Scotland (Donaldson, 2010). Most programs for outdoor learning are organized by Scottish local governments. For example, the East Lothian Council holds a series of in-service training for educators, in order to assist

11. See: http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/institutes/etl/outdoor-education/programmes
12. See: http://www.stir.ac.uk/undergraduate-study/course-information/courses-a-to-z/school-of-natural-sciences/environmental-science-and-outdoor-education/
13. See: http://www.ssta.org.uk/pdf/IGAgreement12.01.pdf

teachers obtain outdoor learning professional certificates.[14] As for private institutes, Creative Star™ founded by retired principal Juliet Robertson is worth noticing. This institute collaborates with local governments and schools to organize outdoor education training workshops, which help teachers incorporate outdoor education into various learning fields, such as mathematics, literature, and natural science. The activities held by Creative Star™ are not confined in Scotland, expanding to foreign countries in recent years as well. In addition, the two monographs on education written by Robertson are of high value for pragmatic references in teaching.[15] Until now, the Scottish Ministry of Education also cooperates with many units to hold professional development projects for teachers, such as national parks, Outward Bound Trust, the Field Studies Council and the Conservation Volunteers (Vision2030+, 2016). In the past, relative programs usually focus on individual experiences of outdoor activities, rather than instructions. After the CfEtOL was announced, there has been long-term and systematic training workshops for teachers. From this perspective, the new standards set by CfEtOL and GTCS have had substantial influences on the professional development of teachers in Scotland, as more and more educators are personally involved in outdoor education.

## Outdoor Education Studies in Scotland

The promotion of a policy needs to be supported by scientific evidence. In other words, the outdoor education development in Scotland can be credited to its academic researches. Since outdoor education is a new field with multiple disciplines, there are few high quality empirical researches so far. It is difficult, thus, for related units to convince the government to support outdoor education. Scotland has great academic resources to provide support, as in recent years, research teams in the University of Edinburgh and the University of Sterling have published many reports in Scottish outdoor education, concerning many aspects such as philosophy, theory, and empirical research.

The results from these studies set a solid foundation for promoting outdoor education. For example, in term of curriculum, the research by Beames, Atencio, &

14. See: http://www.edubuzz.org/eloes/staffdevelopment/outdoor-learning-specific-to-teaching-staff/

15. See: http://www.crownhouse.co.uk/publications/messy-maths and http://www.amazon.co.uk/Dirty-Teaching-Beginners-Learning-Outdoors/dp/1781351074

Ross (2009) accentuates outdoor education's function to inspire student potential under the framework of new curriculum. This study is also the basis of CfEtOL. The research by Beames, Higgins, & Nicol (2008) also points out that outdoor education should be regarded as a teaching methodology adopted to achieve certain goals of a curriculum, rather than an additional part of extracurricular activities. Considering teachers' situation, the research of Higgins & Kirk (2006) argues that the difficulties encountered by teachers while choosing outdoor education as a teaching method result from their lack of confidence in executing outdoor education. Also, the study of Ross, Higgins, & Nicol (2007) points out that in terms of teachers' motivation and decision-making for choosing outdoor learning approaches, the major concerns lie in the estimation of cost and the extracurricular benefits students can gain through outdoor learning activities. The research team led by Professor Mannion has conducted a long-term study on the professional development of teachers in outdoor education, offering insights into teachers' learning and execution of outdoor education (Mannion, Fenwick, & Lynch, 2013).



In recent years, the researches on the effectiveness of outdoor education have accumulated certain fruits. Professor Simon Beames proposes a simple learning method "Outdoor Journey," which starts from the communities adjacent to schools and allows students to explore and share their experiences (Beames & Ross, 2010). The study of Christie, Beames, and Higgins (2016) suggests that such an approach can enhance students' ability of critical thinking. The Scottish government also commissions several investigative reports on the benefits of outdoor learning. These reports show that outdoor learning activities held in natural environments allow students to face challenges and enjoy learning. Outdoor learning helps students get more involved in learning activities and improve learning effectualness considerably (Mannion, Mattu & Wilson, 2015). In terms of implement and promotion of outdoor education, Christie et al. (2014) conducts researches on primary and secondary schools in Scotland. Their study shows that in primary schools, outdoor education has been promoted and incorporated into more subjects, while there has been no such progression yet in secondary schools, teachers have demonstrated strong willingness to devote themselves to outdoor education and require more resources. The rapid development of outdoor education has offered academia adequate research materials. Moreover, researches on outdoor education progresses along with government policies. At present, the achievement of outdoor education and related researches have become an important social asset in Scotland, setting a fine model for other countries.



## Conclusion

In the past decade, Scotland has obtained great success in outdoor education, which is achieved through the implement of policies, and the collaboration of academic units, non-governmental organizations, educational units, and local governments. Outdoor education has undergone rapid changes and taken on multiple tasks since the beginning of the 21st century. The scope of outdoor education has been extended and diversified as well, encompassing personality development, sustainable development, and the enhancement of students' subject performance. Moreover, the of role of teacher has started to alter; in this new era of outdoor education, teachers are more involved in more diverse ways. How to direct outdoor learning into learning fields and how to actualize sustainable development are the two major concerns for the outdoor education in Scotland. As discussed by Christie & Higgins (2012), the improvement of outdoor education in Scotland requires changes in terms of culture and educational philosophy, in order to transform and incorporate short-term and episodic activities into curriculum and common teaching approaches. With the continuous support from governmental policies and academic researches, we firmly believe that outdoor education will keep evolving in Scottish school education.

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# Udeskole:
# Education Outside the Classroom in a Danish Context

# *Udeskole: education outside the classroom in a Danish context*[1]

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## Introduction

This chapter introduces and discusses a form of outdoor-based education that has blossomed from a progressive education system that has resisted, to some degree, the neo-liberal takeover of its egalitarian history (Wiborg, 2012). Denmark and other Scandinavian countries provide a unique context in which outdoor-based education has developed. This type of education developed during the 'classical

1. The overview and ideas presented and discussed here are based on research we have done over the past two decades on udeskole, and is based on work that has been published before (e.g. Bentsen et al. 2009; Bentsen 2010; Bentsen & Jensen 2012; Bentsen et al. 2016; Mygind 2005, 2007, 2009; Waite et al. 2015), but have been revised and updated to current status for the purpose of this chapter. An earlier version of this chapter has also been published in Mandarin (Bentsen & Stevenson 2017).





period' of the Nordic model of education, which was characterised by a focus on social goals, such as fostering a sense of community (Telhaug, 2006). Such social ideals likely lead to a dynamic relationship between schools and their surrounds, which is still a characteristic of the Scandinavian concept of udeskole today.

*Udeskole* (literally meaning 'outdoor school') has been described in a Norwegian context by Jordet (1998), in a Swedish context by Dahlgren and Szczepanski (1997) and in a Danish context by Mygind (2005). Generally speaking, the concept of *udeskole* emerged from the writings and works of Norwegian scholar Arne N. Jordet. Jordet was one of the first to position *udeskole* in a theoretical pedagogical context. He argued for its potential and described the theoretical, pedagogical and didactical thoughts, ideas and background for *udeskole*, and he defined *udeskole* as

"…a working method where parts of the everyday life in school is moved out of the classroom – into the local environment. *Udeskole* implies regular activities outside the classroom. The working method gives the pupils the opportunity to use their bodies and senses in learning activities in the real world in order to obtain personal and concrete experiences. *Udeskole* allows room for academic activities, communication, social interaction, experience, spontaneity, play, curiosity and fantasy. *Udeskole* is about activating all the school subjects in an integrated training where activities out-of-doors and indoors are closely linked together. The pupils learn in an authentic context: that is, they learn about nature in nature, about society in the society and about the local environment in the local environment" (1998, translated in Jordet, 2008, p. 1).

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge about practices and development of *udeskole* in Denmark, targeted towards an international audience. We describe and discuss the aims, content, and pedagogy of *udeskole* and consider how they reflect the social, political, cultural, and ecological contexts and factors in which *udeskole* is embedded. While the focus here is regular education outside the classroom (EOtC) in Danish schools, similar developments and practices can be seen in many other Western post-industrial countries as e.g. Germany (Sahrakhiz, 2017) and the UK (Edward-Jones et al., 2013). We hope this description and discussion of *udeskole* has relevance for a wider international readership at different stages of considering outdoor learning in their own school curricula. It is relevant to discuss the extent to which *udeskole*

is culturally specific to Denmark versus the extent to which it might be relevant to other countries.

The chapter is organised in six sections: firstly, we provide an overview of the Danish education system and landscape in which *udeskole* is embedded and provide a short historical overview of the development of *udeskole*. Secondly, we define and describe the concept by answering basic questions related to what, why, how, by whom, where, and why not, in relation to *udeskole* in Danish schools. Thirdly, we describe key initiatives, programmes, and a recent reform of the Danish school act and curriculum that has accelerated the interest and provision of *udeskole*. Fourthly, we introduce recent research in *udeskole*. Finally, we summarise the chapter by discussing *udeskole* from an international perspective; how *udeskole* might influence practices in other countries; precautions to consider when implementing *udeskole* in other contexts; and what the future might hold for *udeskole* practice in Denmark.

## The Danish Context and the Unique Cultural Tradition of Scandinavian 'Outdoor Life'

In Denmark (and Norway and Sweden), outdoor recreation and outdoor education is frequently referred to as *friluftsliv* (literally meaning 'free/open-air life,' but could be understood broadly as 'outdoor recreation and education') (e.g. Bentsen et al., 2009; Henderson & Vikander, 2007). The Danish development of outdoor education can be perceived as a parallel-history to the European and is especially influenced by British, German, Norwegian, and Swedish thoughts and ideas within sport, recreation, and general education (Eichberg & Jespersen, 2001; Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001; Sandell & Sörlin, 2000; Tordsson, 2003).

In a Danish context, *friluftsliv* practices exist throughout society, for example, in communities, families, schools, pre-schools, institutions, free schools, sports organisations, outdoor centres, etc. This chapter however specifically deals with outdoor-based education/udeskole/EOtC in Danish schools. School-based outdoor education and *friluftsliv* concepts, like forest kindergartens and *udeskole*, have attracted international attention, and even acknowledgement from other countries that have adapted Scandinavian models and approaches to inspire their outdoor education curricula (Henderson & Vikander, 2007; Muñoz, 2009; O'Brien &

Murray, 2007; Sahrakhiz, 2017). However, Denmark has a distinct landscape (e.g. Jensen, 1999; Mygind & Boyes, 2001) and school system (e.g. Danish Ministry of Education, 2009a, 2009b; Cirius, 2006), which offer a unique context for *udeskole* practice.

## The Danish Landscape

Denmark is a small country, with a population density of 128 inhabitants per km2 (total land area of 43,000 km2), and 85% of the population live in cities. An intensive cultivation of the country has resulted in a landscape influenced by both natural and cultural processes. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Danish landscape was used extensively for agrarian production (to-day around 65% of the total land area), and because of overexploitation, forests accounted for only about 2% of the land. Therefore, there is a rather homogeneous geographical distribution of a relatively small forest area per inhabitant (Jensen, 1999). Today, the forested area has grown to about 14% of the total land area, and a national political decision was taken in the 1980s to double the forested area of Denmark within a forest generation (more than 20% in 2020) (Jensen & Koch, 2004). With more than 7,700 km coastline and more than 550 islands, Danes have generally easy access to the coastlines and beaches. In this context, forest and beaches are the most frequently used nature areas for recreational as well as outdoor educational purposes (Jensen, 1999, 1995). In addition to this, Denmark is a relatively safe country with few dangerous animals and plants, and the vast majority of the population has access to bicyles and uses them regularly, making transportation relatively easy.

## The Danish School System

The Danish public school is an inclusive and broad school in the sense that it includes both primary and lower secondary education with no streaming (Cirius, 2006). Danish children begin their ten years of compulsory schooling the year they turn six. Children between the ages of three and six attend kindergarten, All children between the age of 6 and 16 must receive education provided by municipal school, private school, or at home, which is a matter of choice as long as national standards are met (Danish Ministry of Education, 2017).

Danish public schools are run at the local governmental level. Recently, a

development towards decentralisation within the public school system has taken place, which may be characterised as a model within the framework of each municipality, which gives school and teachers more autonomy and control over their own teaching and curriculum (cf. with an Anglo-Saxon curriculum tradition; please see section 5 below). The public school act of 1989 decentralised a vast amount of decisions to school boards, of which parents make up the majority (Danish Ministry of Education, 2009b). In general, the public school has the same curricular structure in all parts of the country, but there is a wide range for variety based upon local government and local school decisions. The central administration of public schools is carried out by the Danish Ministry of Education. The Danish Parliament takes the decisions governing the overall aims of the education, and the Minister of Education lay down the target for each subject, but the municipalities, schools, and teachers decide how to reach these targets (Danish Ministry of Education, 2009a). Beside the public schools, one fifth of Danish schools are independent, 'free' schools. Being sufficiently supported by the government, these schools (e.g. Waldorf schools, free schools, religious schools) are economically accessible for all levels of society and not only for the wealthy. These schools have to reach the same targets as the public schools, but often show more variability in teaching methods than public schools.

## The Danish Context and the Development of Udeskole

A unique context is created by an interplay between the national school system and the landscape in which is resides. Outdoor educational practices are shaped by pedagogical freedom within the school system and features of the national, regional and local environments. For example, schools may refrain from large one-off excursions to wilderness areas, that are absent in Denmark, in favour of regular use of local natural environments. Smaller, regular excursions are possible and indeed supported by the Danish central *light-touch* regulation of education practice (Hopmann & Riquarts,1995) that offers more flexibility than the more neo-liberal and assessment-controlled education, common in Anglo-Saxon countries (Kelly et al., 2014). In this way, the integration of outdoor learning practice within schooling, as in *udeskole*, means that alignment with assessment and evaluation, curriculum coverage, and timetabling, are less challenging compared with England (Waite et al., 2016).



Within the Danish system, the school teacher is responsible for identifying the areas of the curriculum and the learning that would benefit from being taught outside the classroom. Outdoor learning is not a statutory requirement of the Danish school system, so the decision to take teaching outdoors rests with the individual teacher and school. *Udeskole* is not mentioned specifically in the Danish national curriculum, but outdoor teaching and learning are mentioned indirectly in the overall aims and directly under some of the subjects, such as biology, geography, and physical education (please see section 3 below for an introduction to recent school reform supporting *udeskole*). Beside this, teachers are encouraged to 'open the school' and either take the pupils out on excursions and visits into society, for example, to factories, museums, cemeteries, libraries, railway stations, or wastewater treatment plants; or to invite members of the community into the school, such as forestry workers, policemen, farmers, football team players, or nature guides. By this, the overall aim is to integrate the school in the society, not to isolate it.

Danish schools are, however, permitted to draw up their own curricula as

long as they are in harmony with the aims and skill areas set by the Ministry, and teachers have within this framework what could be called 'freedom of methods'. Fundamentally, Danish teachers have professional autonomy – 'freedom of methods' – and as a consequence of this, the obligation to argue (for their choices). However, as in other developed countries, Denmarks' society, education, and schools are moving towards an increased focus on accountability and control. This development could result in alternative methods requiring better argumentation as well as documentation and evaluation from teachers and schools.

The concept of *udeskole* is not written in the Danish national 6-16 curriculum as it is (or has been) in Norway (Jordet, 2007; Mygind, 2005). Instead, it has been initiated as a local development project by individual teachers, group of teachers or whole schools. These development projects must be seen in the light of the Danish 'free school model', schools and teachers' interpretation of the curriculum, and their relative freedom to develop new pedagogical ideas and methods. Thus, Mygind (2005) characterised *udeskole* as a bottom-up phenomenon started by devoted and enthusiastic teachers originating from 'the reality in the Danish school system'. As such, this form of EOtC has been a practitioner's project and can therefore be characterised as a grassroots movement – and a form of counterculture to the existing ways of practising education, schooling and teaching.

In a historical perspective, the term *udeskole*, with inspiration from Norway, was getting known by grassroots in schools and NGO's in the late nineties. Initially, *udeskole* spread with support from individuals and non-governmental organisations (Bentsen et al., 2010). However, more recently, a current Danish educational act has facilitated its further dissemination (DMoE, 2014a, 2014b). This provision has reinforced Denmark as a country of reference for EOtC (Rea & Waite, 2009). Several trends in *udeskole* have been unfolding in Denmark. A research environment developed around the turn of the millennium from a case study, 'the Rødkilde project', which described and evaluated an EOtC intervention in which a class received the equivalent of 20% of their compulsory education in a forest setting over three years (Mygind, 2007, 2009). During this development, the first PhD theses explicitly concerning *udeskole* were written (Bentsen, 2010; Hyllested, 2007). Parallel to the development within the academic environment, *udeskole* gradually became an optional subject in teacher education and amongst nature interpreters and educators. Several development projects funded by the European

Union improved practice and education in the field of EOtC amongst teacher students, in-service teachers, and educators (Barfod et al., 2012). These initiatives formed the background for much larger grants and funded projects. For example, 'Development of *Udeskole*', an approximately 1 million EUR project, funded by The Danish Ministry of Children, Education and Equality and The Danish Ministry of Environment and Food, aiming to develop, communicate and expand practical knowledge in EOtC / *udeskole* (please see section 3 below); and the *udeskole* research project 'TEACHOUT', a four-year 1.3 million EUR research project studying physical activity, learning, and social relationships in pupils in *udeskole* on the one hand, and teachers' intentions and practices on the other (Nielsen et al. 2016) (please see section 4 below).



# The What, Why, How, Who, Where, and Why not in Relation to Udeskole?

## What is Udeskole?

*Udeskole* targets children aged 6-16, and is characterised by compulsory educational activities outside of school on a regular basis, such as one day weekly or fortnightly. *Udeskole* activities are characterised by teachers making use of the local environment when teaching specific subjects and curriculum areas by, for example, measuring and calculating the volume of trees in mathematics, writing poems in and about nature for language-related tasks, or visiting historically significant places or buildings in history education. Teachers may draw on history and development of the local community to create a closer link between schools, community, and local places. A Danish geography teacher, for example, may instruct pupils to take photos of different places in the local city, such as the buildings, statues, or a local castle. Subsequently, the pupils work with local history and origins of names of places. Other specific examples include visits to a local museum, cemetery or library.



While local cultural areas may be used, *udeskole* has mainly been practised in natural and green space to date. One example of teaching in natural places is Røsnæs School, which has a row of 'green bases' with a fireplace and a few benches in the local community and within walking distance. One of them is on private land, some on the school grounds, and others on public land.

Another example of *udeskole* practice is the teaching mathematics in the school yard with a focus on body and movement. A Norwegian math educator has developed a series of teaching activities where children's play and movement cultures are integrated with mathematics education. The pupils jump, run relays, and use gestures. Pupils in a circle throw a ball while they say numbers in order to practice the time tables, measure their running time for a bar chart or jump math problems in hopscotch.When practicing *udeskole*, teachers often encourage pupils to work together in groups. At several schools, pupils carry out specific practical tasks, such as building a table, lighting a campfire or cooking lunch, but at most times linked to subjects like Math, Danish or Science. Every autumn, a Danish teacher from Kalundborg conducts a course in mathematics and home economics where pupils collaboratively make their own jam using collected blackberries and a homemade scale to follow a recipe.

As shown, teaching and learning activities are often cross-disciplinary. The approach is often to work with an academic subject matter or concept in its real, concrete form to facilitate learning and understanding. *Udeskole* is practised by classroom and subject teachers themselves. In this way, all school subjects may be implemented; however, Danish, Math, Science, and PE are the most common to be taught using *udeskole*. Schools and teachers often argue for the potential of pupils getting to know their neighbourhood and visiting nature as an aspect of everyday life. Visiting and knowing their local environment can help them develop a sense of community; recognise and understand neighbourhoods; and build a relationship with their own place and with local people.

Jordet (1998/2008) answered the 'what' question of *udeskole* curriculum, by placing emphasis on 'academic activities', 'everyday life in school', and '… activating all the school subjects…' (see quote above), and by underlining that outdoor teaching should be curriculum-based and the out-of-classroom activities 'more than a picnic'. With this rationale, the main content of *udeskole* in Danish schools would be the overall aim of the Danish schools, the standard requirements

concerning the subjects, and standard regulations concerning the so-called 'Common Objectives' for teaching in the individual subjects (i.e. the national curriculum) (Danish Ministry of Education, 2009a). However, Jordet (2002) also called attention to the pupils' general education and 'bildung', focusing on the 'whole' person and holistic education, including social, cognitive, physical, and motor skill development. In this sense, *udeskole* can be characterised as curriculum-based outdoor learning or EOtC.

## Why Udeskole?



In Denmark, although *udeskole* is not explicitly mentioned in any formal curriculum, as a bottom-up educational grassroots movement, it arises from the personal initiative of enthusiastic teachers or dedicated schools moving parts of their teaching from the classroom to local environments. Therefore, *udeskole* might be seen as a critical response to schooling that focuses on the classroom as the only space for learning; text as the principal medium for transferring knowledge; and the teacher as the one who knows best.

Danish school teachers' aims for *udeskole* as part of compulsory educational activities are to deliver a range of academic, social, motivational, and health-related aspects including the ability to promote concentration, learning, and support for pupils' academic outcomes. Use of the local and outdoor environments helps to contextualise learning in concrete experience providing authenticity to learning processes and promoting curiosity (Bentsen & Jensen, 2012). In particular, it is argued that green environments promote awareness, knowledge, and skills on cultural use, sustainability, and aesthetic qualities of nature. *Udeskole* aims





to enhance physical activity as a counterbalance to sedentary work indoors (Grønningsæter et al., 2007; Mygind, 2007, 2016; Schneller et al., 2017a, 2017b).

In his definition, Jordet (1998) emphasised pupils' opportunity to experience and use their body and senses in learning activities. In this sense, *udeskole* is a way of understanding learning, and thus, education and schooling. He focused on a 'holistic' and progressive education by accentuating communication, social interaction, spontaneity, play, curiosity, and fantasy. Furthermore, he called *udeskole* a 'working method', thereby emphasising its humanistic pupil-centred tradition (cf. a teaching method) and indicating the active role of the pupil. However, Jordet argued (1998/2008) that *udeskole* is more than a method; it builds on a fundamental progressive thinking and a philosophy about teaching and learning. It is an understanding that education exists in a social, political, and geographical context, and that *"…learning activities in the real world to obtain personal and concrete experiences"*. Historically and in contrast, 'mainstream' curriculum has focused on the classroom, the book, and the timetable (Brookes, 2002). Jordet's definition could be interpreted as a reaction to 'context-free' schooling, education, and learning. He wanted theoretical, practical, and aesthetic approaches 'to walk hand in hand', ultimately contributing to a better school, strengthening pupils' learning outcomes, and improving their health and well-being (Jordet, 2008). This renewed focus on localism, context, and the situation could be perceived as a form of counterculture to existing ways of practising schooling while still emphasising the importance of the written curriculum and didactical considerations.

To summarise, the pedagogical foundation or platform of Jordet's 'didactics of *udeskole*' could be labelled progressive outdoor-based experiential education. *Udeskole* theory emphasises that learning does not exist or happen in a vacuum. Drawing on Dewey (e.g. 1916, 1938), Klafki (e.g. 2001) and a constructivist tradition, Jordet (2007) argued for a progressive pedagogy, emphasising the socio-historical, cultural-historical and situated nature of learning.

## How (to Practise) Udeskole?

*Udeskole*, as mentioned, arose as an ad hoc alternative to the indoor classroom teaching, a part of the teachers' wider pedagogical repertoire. The approach draws on a philosophically progressive reform where pedagogical tradition has an emphasis on pupils' interaction, opportunities for spontaneity, play,

stimulation of curiosity, and a first-hand visual approach in outdoor, cultural and green environments. Due to different structures and facilities in various outdoor environments, teachers perform their teaching differently compared to traditional indoor classroom teaching; for example, using more inductive learning activities such as problem solving tasks that demand collaboration amongst pupils. Thus, *udeskole* encompasses humanistic pupil-centred pedagogy with an active role for pupils in their learning activities that make learning more relevant for the pupils, whilst providing teachers with the opportunity to show their personal passion in life and through their own fascination engage their pupils' motivation for school.

## Where (Practise) Udeskole?

*Udeskole* is characterised by compulsory educational activities outside the buildings of the school on a regular basis (Bentsen, Mygind & Randrup, 2009), and takes place in both natural and cultural settings, such as factories, farms, forests, galleries, local communities, parks, and theatres (Jordet, 2007). Danish *udeskole* teachers mainly use school grounds and local green space for their outdoor teaching, and a majority use the same place or predominantly the same place.

## Who (Practises) Udeskole?

More and more Danish teachers have started introducing curriculum-based outdoor learning/EOtC as a weekly or biweekly 'outdoor school' day for school children aged 6-16. Results have shown that almost one fifth 18.4%) of all Danish schools have one or more classes practising *udeskole* in 2014 (Barfod et al., 2016), growing from at least 14% in 2007 (Bentsen et al., 2010) with a similar trend in Norway and Sweden (e.g. Bjelland & Klepp, 2000; Limstrand, 2001).

## Why not (Practise) Udeskole?

Many Danish urban schools need to travel to green and forested places for *udeskole*, causing barriers of transportation cost and travel time, even if bicycling is a healthy alternative to transportation by bus. As *udeskole* is often delivered by two teachers, additional teaching costs apply. Moreover, upgrading teacher qualifications to acquire skills in supporting outdoor learning can also reduce uptake, and some school staff are not confident that they will find support or interest from managers of green space, parents, or indeed the pupils themselves (Bentsen et al., 2010). The

same study by Bentsen et al. also found that some teachers experienced barriers to implementing *udeskole* due to a crowded curriculum, inflexible timetables, and perceived external performance pressures derived from increased systematisation and academisation of Danish schooling. Major barriers to practicing *udeskole* include both financial constraints and pedagogical ideology within specific schools.



## Development of and Key Initiatives Related to Udeskole

Several trends, initiatives and programmes have influenced and driven the development and growth of *udeskole* in Denmark. In addition to the growing interest in *udeskole* and the perspectives of using outdoor spaces for educational purposes from teachers and schools there is an increased awareness from governmental, non-governmental and private organisations and institutions.

### Organisations within Policy, Planning, and Management of Natural Spaces

Traditionally, the classroom has been the central place for formalised teaching of children and adolescents. However, outdoor education and learning is a growing focus for organisations within policy, planning, and management of natural and

green space, such as forests, woodland and urban parks. This includes public organisations, such as the Danish Forest and Nature Agency (2002a, 2002b); private organisations, such as the Danish Forest Association (The Forest in the School, 2008); and NGOs, such as the Danish Outdoor Council (1997, 2006), and The Danish Society for Nature Conservation (2009). The focus on EOtC seems to have become increasingly popular and has increased during the last decade in Denmark (Christensen, 2004; The Forest in the School, 2008). Thus, outdoor education and learning has received more political and administrative attention in Denmark.

Several municipalities, especially some of the larger ones (e.g. Aarhus, Copenhagen and Esbjerg) have been important stakeholders in promoting *udeskole* (Hansen, 2005; www.udeskole.dk). The Danish Forest and Nature Agency is also emphasising *udeskole* and supports schools with facilities. In addition, the private forest owner's organisation has started the project 'The Forest in the School' (e.g. www.skoven-i-skolen.dk) (see section 3.2.). Non-governmental institutions such as the Danish Outdoor Council also stress and support the role of nature and green areas in education for children and adolescents (Danish Outdoor Council, 2006). In addition, there is a growing interest from researchers and media in *udeskole* and more recently, a documentary film has been made about *udeskole* in Denmark by a group from Germany and the United States (www.natureplayfilm.com).

## The Webpages The Forest in the School and Udeskole.dk

In 1999, the project 'The Forest in the School' developed and established the website www.skoven-i-skolen.dk that contains unrestricted ideas and description of activities for teachers working outside the classroom. In 2006, a website (www.udeskole.dk) was established, with a teachers' network that provided a platform for philosophical and theoretical discussions and sharing of practical knowledge to further support the dissemination of *udeskole*.

## Nature Interpreters

Organised nature interpreters became more aware of the aims of the public schools, and started to support not only science and nature-related subjects, but also innovations such as language and mathematics learning in nature. The number of nature interpreters and outdoor educators has multiplied in recent years with courses in nature interpretation now being offered through the University of

Copenhagen's Centre for Outdoor Recreation and Education.

## UdeskoleNet

In 2007, the interest in *udeskole* was seen on different levels. Research interest was growing; teacher educators saw a market and a new challenge in training teachers in using the method; and practitioners in and around schools, including guides and pedagogues, initiated the formation of a national independent network, *UdeskoleNet*. Among other initiatives, the network arranges two yearly *udeskole* seminars, supports the development of *udeskole* in Denmark, and presents an annual outdoor teaching award.

## A New School Act Supporting Udeskole

Danish public schools have been continuously reformed, most recently in 2013. In 2001, the Danish liberal government introduced a new curriculum 'Clear Goals' (Klare Mål) emphasising teachers' autonomy to define their own lesson plans and apply teaching methods of their own choice (Wiborg, 2013). However, in 2003, a new curriculum was implemented 'Common Goals' (Fælles Mål) with a greater emphasis on the development of competences, resulting in reduced autonomy for teachers. Along with a promotion of an evaluation and test culture towards the end of the last decade, these changes have resulted in a greater focus on testing and academic performance in Denmark (Wiborg, 2013).

In June 2013, a broad political agreement was signed with an aim of providing public schools with an academic improvement. In August 2014, the new school reform was initiated in Danish schools, which among other things seems to support movement, physical activity and EOtC, although not mentioning *udeskole* explicitly. The reform was not just an adjustment, but a radical change of how the Danish school is organised and practised. Among the sixteen major changes, especially three has impact on the development of *udeskole* in Denmark:

(1) A longer and more varied school day, which means, that there should be more time for different approaches to learning, such as *udeskole*. The longer days must be seen in light of a Danish school, where children, depending on their age, now go to school usually from eight o'clock until two or three o'clock.

(2) *More PE, physical exercise and activity* is translated so that every child should

be physically active in 45 minutes per day on average.

(3) *The open school*. The schools should be aware of, and use, the surrounding society as a part of the teaching, such as sports clubs or museums. Some of these facilities are supported to serve the schools and the schools are encouraged to use them.

Thereby, the reform encapsulates a political agenda and provides a structural framework that has the potential to increase the provision of *udeskole*. However, reforms implementing curricular steering documents that enable EOtC do not necessarily initiate or enhance the provision of outdoor learning (Beames et al., 2009) as development projects have shown to do (Waite et al., 2016).

### A Joint Ministerial Project 'Development of Udeskole'

Following the new school reform, the Danish Ministry of Education and the Danish Ministry of Environment, in a unique collaboration, decided to support and develop *udeskole* with approximately 12 million DKK (app. 1.8 mill euro) over three years by launching a large national development, research and demonstration project, 'Development of *udeskole*'. The ministries allied themselves with a consortium of university colleges and *udeskole* experts, and decided upon an action-research development model. The project supported the new school reform, and the aim of the project was to generate and disseminate practice-related knowledge about *udeskole* and thereby support the development of *udeskole* by creating a basis for spreading *udeskole* as a teaching method.

## Danish Research Investigating Potential Benefits Associated with Udeskole

Danish research in relation to outdoor education and specifically to *udeskole* is a recent and growing phenomenon, and is therefore limited. Since 2000, research has been carried out in the context of student theses and papers, research and development projects, and recently as PhD studies (Bentsen, 2010; Hyllested, 2007; Schneller, 2017). A similar trend can be seen in Norway and Sweden (e.g. Jordet, 2007; Szczepanski et al., 2006).

The first major Danish research and development project in *udeskole* was a case study that took place in Rødkilde School in Copenhagen. Teachers from the

school conducted their lessons with their pupils in a forest one school day per week during 2000-2003 (grade level 3-5; age 8-11). Erik Mygind, a lecturer at University of Copenhagen, organised a multi-dimensional and cross-scientific research project that aimed to investigate the impact of this weekly compulsory teaching in natural setting on pupils, their parents and the two teachers (e.g. Andersen, Sølberg & Troelsen, 2005; Herholdt, 2005; Jacobsen, 2005a, 2005b; Mygind, 2009, 2007, 2005; Stelter, 2005).

This influential case study, known as 'The Rødkilde Project', found a significantly higher level of physical activity among pupils during outdoor learning in natural settings compared to a 'normal' school day (Mygind, 2007). In the Danish case study, the pupils also (in addition to the increased physical activity) expressed a significantly higher level of well-being, improved social relations and joy while being taught in the outdoors compared to classroom teaching (Mygind, 2009).

In 2010, Bentsen finished his dissertation at University of Copenhagen, as the first thesis about *udeskole* in Denmark, mapping the provision, the barriers and the perceived potentials. This work also contributed to the international understanding of the concept, as Bentsen wrote his dissertation in English and published several peer reviewed articles on the subject (Bentsen et al., 2009; Bentsen et al., 2010; Bentsen & Jensen, 2012, Bentsen et al., 2013).

In 2013, a cross-disciplinary research group got funding from the private fund TrygFonden for the TEACHOUT project (Nielsen et al., 2016). The research project studied how *udeskole* influences three overall outcomes, pupils' physical activity, learning, and social relations by studying *udeskole* classes and control classes. Three PhD students investigated each of the three mentioned pupil-related outcomes and a fourth PhD student the role of experienced *udeskole* teachers. In addition to these core investigations within the TEACHOUT project, there are currently two PhD projects exploring other aspects to outdoor- and nature-based education. A fifth study collaborated with teachers in primary school focusing on developing a method for formative assessment in outdoor Science education and was based on the approach of design-based research whereby practitioners' knowledge and experiences, together with relevant theory, informed the development process. A sixth PhD project investigated how nature settings (*udeskole*) influences cognitive skills among children with and without ADHD.

Several positive outcomes to pupils have been attributed to *udeskole*, including

academic, personal, social, and physiological benefits. It seems to enhance learning outcomes and increase motivation by stimulating pupils' interest. Specific outcomes include enhanced sensory awareness and understanding of links between green environments and community. Other studies have found increased language and communication functions compared to classroom practice. Furthermore, *udeskole* appears to support new and more varied relations among classmates, social competences, and teamwork. From a health perspective, natural settings can also stimulate coordinative and motor skills, promoting higher levels of physical activity compared to normal classroom teaching.

However, some caution is required. First of all, the scope of research is limited, and so too is the number of children and teachers investigated. Second, evidence mainly relies currently on case studies and action research. Third, the research has mainly been carried out among teachers and schools as to who are positive about *udeskole* – and in addition, maybe also carried out by researchers who are positive about *udeskole*. In addition, it is important to be aware of potential bias towards publication of positive results. Further, these outcomes, however, depend upon how teaching activities are organised with the individual teacher playing a considerable role in creating learning experiences that among other promote physical activity.

In summary, there is a need for an increased number of high-quality studies to increase understanding of different programmes, people, places, and processes and make more secure conclusions about impacts and outcomes – especially with regards to impact on academic standards. In addition, studies that examine the long-term impact of *udeskole* would also be relevant.

## *Udeskole* in an International and Comparative Perspective

While the focus above is Denmark and the examples provided are Danish, similar development, practice, and research can be seen in many other countries and contexts (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 1998; DfES, 2006; Davis, Rea & Waite, 2006; Edward-Jones, Waite & Passy, 2016, Jordet, 2007; Sahrakhiz, 2017). The cases of Norway and Sweden are very similar to Denmark although the contexts are different especially in relation to landscape and access.

There has been a strong mutual inspiration between Norway, Sweden and Denmark as regards practical and theoretical issues in relation to *udeskole* (Dahlgren

& Szczepanski, 1998; Jordet, 2007; Mygind, 2005). However, as mentioned, Danish outdoor education is also influenced by international outdoor education traditions especially from English speaking countries such as USA and the UK (Bentsen et al., 2009). Terms and concepts from the English speaking world are increasingly being incorporated in Danish outdoor education. But, it is not a one-way inspiration. Scandinavian approaches to outdoor education seem also to influence the English speaking world.

An interesting discussion point is what is characteristic about Danish school-based outdoor learning compared to school-based outdoor learning practices in other countries (cf. e.g. Higgins et al., 2006; Lugg & Martin, 2001; O'Brien & Murray, 2007; Polley & Pickett, 2003; Thorburn & Allison, 2010; Zink & Boyes, 2006). The answer seems to be programmes which are widespread (cf. more sporadic), compulsory (cf. optional), regular (cf. week-long residential programmes), of a cross-disciplinary educational method/approach (cf. subject-specific), with a substantial amount of outdoor learning carried out by classroom teachers (cf.



specialist providers) in the local environment (cf. a pristine nature area further away) with early-years school children (cf. secondary education) (Bentsen, 2010).

We have identified a number of cultural issues and questions which could be interesting to discuss and explore further. Perhaps some of the differences between *udeskole* and other forms (or 'constructs' of outdoor learning in schools are caused by divergences between (and point of departure in) the Anglo-American curriculum tradition vs. the German-Nordic *Didaktik* tradition (see e.g. Gundem & Hopmann, 1998; Westbury, 2000); a 'social pedagogical approach' vs. an 'early education approach' (see e.g. OECD, 2006); or friluftsliv vs. outdoor education (see e.g. Henderson & Vikander, 2007)?

## A Didaktik Tradition vs. a Curriculum Tradition

"If Europeans are to make sense of North American curriculum theory, or Americans to make sense of *Didaktik,* the approach has to be made in a humanistic, culturally appreciative spirit which is as sensitive to uniqueness as it is to commonality" (Reid, 1998, p. 24). The history and concepts underlying a country's education system is likely to play a role in how outdoor-based education is practised. Westbury (1995) and Hopmann and Riquarts (1995), argued that there are broadly two overarching, although not entirely mutually exclusive, educational traditions: a German *didaktik* tradition and an Anglo-Saxon/-American curriculum tradition.

Based on local interpretation of curriculum, a large degree of autonomy is afforded to teachers in the *didaktik* tradition (Westbury, 1995). Education and development in the *didaktik* tradition are linked closely to Rousseau's concept of education as natural development, as well as the German concept of *bildung*, where an individual is formed in his/her own right (Klafki, 2001; Krejsler, 2007). In this instance, the enactment of curriculum is responsive to the individual rather than vice versa.

Conversely, in the curriculum tradition education tends to be based on fixed content-driven curricula wherein to be educated, individuals need to accomplish specific knowledge and skills (Buchardt, 2007). Teachers are trained in the most effective method to deliver the content, which reduces the likelihood that professional autonomy will operate (Westbury, 1995).

It is likely some of the differences between *udeskole* and other forms (or

'constructs') of outdoor learning in schools are caused by divergences between the Anglo-Saxon/-American curriculum tradition vs. the German-Nordic *Didaktik* tradition. (see e.g. Gundem & Hopmann, 1998; Westbury, 2000).

## A 'Social Pedagogical Approach' vs. an 'Early Education Approach'

Bennett (2004) outlined two fundamentally different approaches to early childhood education in Europe, a 'social pedagogical approach' and an 'early educational approach' (also sometimes referred to as an 'infant school' approach or as a 'schoolification' approach) (Moss & Bennett, 2006). The social pedagogy approach focuses on the whole child; education in a 'broad' sense; a short core curriculum that is developed at a local institutional level; along with a play-based, active, and experiential pedagogy with a strong emphasis on the outdoors and outdoor learning.

On the other hand, the early educational approach focuses on children's' readiness for school, a more teacher-directed play-based pedagogy, and there is often a detailed curriculum by a central curriculum authority for 3-6 year-old children. Linked to this, one could think about the didactic/curriculum continuum going from broad developmental goals to focused cognitive goals. Bennett (2004) suggested that the social pedagogy approach was found in Scandinavian and Eastern European countries, while the early education approach existed in Central Europe (e.g. Belgium, France and the Netherlands) and Anglo-Saxon countries (e.g. Ireland and UK).

Siraj-Blatchford (2008), however, argued that this rather dualistic view is mistaken, and that there is a need for more balanced view and approaches.

## A 'Friluftsliv' Approach vs. an 'Outdoor Education Approach'

As mentioned earlier, *friluftsliv* is a concept native to Scandinavian countries with an influence that can be recognised within education practices, along with other aspects of society. Scholars have outlined two different traditions encompassing 'outdoor life' and how it is integrated into schools: an Anglo-Saxon approach to outdoor education and a Scandinavian *friluftsliv* tradition. *Friluftsliv* is often characterised as a 'simple way of life' as opposed to the more commercialised, risk-oriented concept of outdoor education, as found in English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon countries and cultures. Scandinavian *friluftsliv* has

traditionally been associated with strong cultural affiliation with nature and the outdoors (Henderson & Vikander, 2007). Hiking and sleeping in tents, 'being' in nature and bon-fire cooking are common elements of this 'simple' outdoor life. Perhaps some of the differences between Danish udeskole and e.g. Taiwanese outdoor education practices are caused by divergences between the Anglo-Saxon outdoor education traditions vs. the Scandinavian *friluftsliv* traditions? Examples are how some outdoor education practices are inspired by Anglo-militaristic and North American adventure-based education while the Danish case illustrates how even the journey to the outdoor learning site is seen as valuable and contributes to the good relationships between adults and children and the development of the whole child.

The international interest in comparative issues between *friluftsliv* and outdoor education is growing (see e.g. Henderson & Vikander, 2007). However, one has to beware of simple polarised contrasts. Scandinavian *friluftsliv* and Anglo-Saxon outdoor education cannot account for all differences between examples and practices which are likely to be influenced also by local sociocultural and place-based contexts (Waite, 2013).







## Conclusions

In this chapter, we have introduced and discussed the concept of *udeskole* embedded in the socio-cultural context of Danish education and Scandinavian society, and hereby illustrating how contextual social realities may influence (outdoor) pedagogy and practice. This description was discussed in the light of recent policy and practice initiatives, projects and programmes as well as developing research environments and projects in Denmark. We have illustrated and discussed how EOtC, *udeskole*, in Denmark has developed from being a grass-roots movement to rapidly being part of a top-down school reform in Danish schools and finally shared some thoughts and reflections about Anglo-Saxon approaches to outdoor education versus Danish/Scandinavian *udeskole* and *friluftsliv* traditions.

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# Outside Downunder:
# A Brief History of Outdoor Education in Australia

# *Outside Downunder : A Brief History of Outdoor Education in Australia*

David Kopelke



## Introduction

From the earliest of times, for the indigenous inhabitants of Australia, all education can be described as outdoor education. This situation remained for millennia until the arrival of Europeans. Australian outdoor education must be understood in its unique broad national context. However, Australian outdoor education programs have been shaped by northern hemisphere traditions generally (Lugg, 2004) and UK traditions in particular (Brookes, 2002).

Australia has a rich history in outdoor learning. When one hears about outdoor education, images of young people engaging in challenging outdoor adventure activities usually come to mind. That is, it is a general term that is frequently applied to programs or activities that can be, and usually are, conducted in the out-of-doors.





Outdoor education can mean different things to different people, depending on the nature of its application and the context in which the outdoors is used. The result is that the term 'outdoor education' has been defined and used in many ways within the Australian academic literature.

## Defining Outdoor Education

Australian definitions of outdoor education draw on foreign influences (Brookes, 2002; Lugg, 2004). In 1947, Sharp, an early advocate of camping education, described outdoor education as "That which can best be taught inside the schoolrooms should there be taught, and that which can best be learned through experience dealing directly with native materials and life situations outside the school should there be learned" (p. 363). This definition identifies outdoor education as any learning beyond the classroom.

Smith (1955) in the National Outdoor Education Project described the connection between outdoor education and the school curriculum in his definition: "Outdoor education means learning "in" and "for" the outdoors. This definition identifies two major themes which were to become two branches of outdoor education within Australia and provided the core of the definition given by Donaldson the Donaldson who, in 1958, added that outdoor education is education in, about, and for the outdoors which is used commonly in Australia.

What is evident is that there has not been a single definition through the history of outdoor education in Australia. Priest (1986) uses a metaphorical model of a tree to describe these two approaches to outdoor education.

- Adventure education (involving outdoor pursuits,) relates to interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships.
- Environmental education concentrates on ecosystemic and ekistic relationships. (p. 14)

For Priest, based on this analogy, outdoor education programs should include a blending of both adventure and environmental branches.

Over time, a dichotomy has occurred with education **in** the environment within the Australian context, resulting in a split into adventure-type education and environmental education / environmental studies field work. The term 'outdoor education' in Australia is now mainly reserved for adventure-type education and

should be more accurately called outdoor adventure education. In the following sections, I will discuss the proposal that outdoor adventure education can be defined in terms of its curriculum content and pedagogical practice.

## Outdoor Adventure Education as Curriculum

When considering outdoor adventure education as curriculum, we are attempting to define it in terms of its outcomes. The vast majority of literature surrounds outdoor education as a means of eliciting some kind of personal growth. Outdoor education's main focus in Australia is on personal and group development, with much emphasis placed on 'character building' and developing 'fitness for war' in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1998, the Outdoor Educators' Association of Queensland, in their book Outdoor Education in schools: *A guide for planning and implementation*, lists seven key principles and values of outdoor education:

- Enthusiasm for the environment.
- Respect for self, others and the environment.
- Appreciation of different points of view.
- Preparedness to recognise responsibilities in caring for self, others and the environment.
- Willingness to work with others and preparedness to participate in decision making.
- Willingness to undertake adventure to challenge pre-conceived ideas and perceptions.







- Preparedness to reflect about and adapt to changing circumstances.

Gilbertson, et al. (2006) describes outdoor education as being comprised of three components - physical skills, interpersonal growth and ecological relationships. In 1998, for example, the Outdoor Educators' Association of Queensland (OAEQ) described outdoor education as "interactions with the environment, as much as possible in a natural setting, adventure outdoors, interactions with others and experiences of self-discovery" (OEAQ, 1998, p. 1). By 2008, OEAQ was using the definition "through interaction with the natural world, outdoor education aims to develop an understanding of our relationships with the environment, others and ourselves. The ultimate goal of outdoor education is to contribute towards a sustainable community" (OEAQ, 2008, p. 1). What all of these definitions have in common is an emphasis upon personal development, with an emphasis on the person, where an anthropocentric view of the environment prevails, where personal health is paramount, and where interpersonal or socio-centric perspectives dominate.

Outdoor education is not a subject in the Australian Curriculum. However, students are required to develop personal and social capability as they "learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively" (ACARA]. (2012a). Key Australian education documents such as the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008), identifies that students should 'have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing'. The *Australian Early Years Learning Framework* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009), identifies and lists ways to support healthy, calculated risk-taking as important aspects of children's learning and development, as well as social and emotional well-being and identifies as learning outcomes that children should be able to "make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected" (DEEWR, 2009, p. 31). The Framework acknowledges that healthy levels of positive risk-taking play a vital role in fostering children's emerging autonomy and agency, resilience and self-esteem (DEEWR, 2009).

Typically, outdoor education is presented in the professional literature as being concerned with personal and social development of young people across a range

of areas of interest. It has become increasingly focused on adventurous activities conducted in highly controlled environments (e.g. ropes courses). Character building remains foundational in much outdoor education theory, with the main focus on personal and group development, so much so that *'self, others and nature'* has become something of a mantra.

## Outdoor Adventure Education as a Form of Pedagogical Practice

When discussing outdoor adventure education as a form of pedagogical practice, we examine the nature of its teaching practices. Neo-Hahn approaches appear to be tightly woven into much outdoor education theory in Australia. That is, the idea of an adventure conducted in a wilderness-like setting, involving activities with uncertain outcomes (due to the presence of risk) that necessitate people applying their personal competence and physical skills to meet the challenge. As a consequence, the 'character' of the person can be 'built' by these, often one-off, outdoor experiences (Brookes, 2003a). Priest (1986) proposed redefining outdoor education founded upon six major points based on pedagogy. For him, outdoor education:

- Is a method for learning.
- Is experiential.
- Takes place primarily in the outdoors.
- Requires use of all senses and domains.
- Is based upon inter-disciplinary curriculum matter.
- Is a matter of relationships involving people and natural resources.

The idea that outdoor education is a form of pedagogical practice is supported by Wattchow and Brown (2011) who propose that outdoor education is hands-on learning, involving direct experiences that make learning real. The learner has to make decisions for themselves, then have to work through the consequences, with the learner having to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Experience is reflected upon/debriefed so that learners may be able to generalise useful knowledge that transfers into other situations. In this view, the individual is seen as an autonomous agent who is capable of internalising experiences and applying the new knowledge acquired in an OAE program, to real life contexts





(Brown, 2009).

The *Australian National Curriculum General Capability* - Personal and Social Capability requires that students engage in a range of practices, including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills (ACARA, 2013)

Outdoor education is not considered in Australia as some leisure activity for when children finish their other school work, but considered as a form of pedagogical practice based on diverse educational theories and models. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss these educational theories and models in detail, but I will identify some key theories to help put this discussion into context.

Outdoor adventure education as a method in Australia is founded on the heritage of many educational theorists; for example, Dewey (Dewey, 1938) and his theory of experience. Kolb (1984) proposed a cyclical learning process which drew on Dewey theory of experience. This premium on the participant's experience and their ability to interpret learning reflects a Constructivist epistemology. While Piaget takes a cognitive approach in which individual learners construct meaning in their minds, Vygotsky (1978) takes a social approach and argues that learning and understanding are products of social influence. Both approaches are used within outdoor education.

Outdoor adventure education as a form of pedagogical practice is based on various theories including Psychosocial Theories[1]. However, there is professional discussion in Australia around the value of some of these theories. For example, although there is no comfort zone theory *per se*, "the comfort zone model is premised on the belief that, when placed in a stressful situation, learners will respond to the challenge, overcome their hesitancy or fear and grow as individuals (Wattchow & Brown, 2011, p. 41).

Outdoor Education as a form of pedagogical practice sees programs in which experiences are based on several key principles:

- Experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and the transfer of

1. For example, but not exclusively: Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy, General Efficacy Versus Task-Specific Efficacy, Expectancy Value Theory, Optimal Arousal and Flow and various Psychosocial Theories and concepts, such as the zone of proximal development and the comfort zone model

things learned to other aspects of an individual's life,

- Learning is personal and provides a Foundation for developing meaning and relevance.
- Participants are encouraged to examine their own values and behaviours during and from the OAE experience.
- Participants are engaged at the physical, emotional, cognitive, and intellectual levels.

(Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014)

This allows the Australian teacher to become more of a facilitator, providing scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976), than a keeper and 'imparter' of knowledge.

The idea of an adventure conducted in a wilderness-like setting also involves Place-based education. In Heimlich's (2007) view, "place-based education draws on the use of the natural and cultural environments to help generate emotional connectedness in learners" (p. 222). As Gruenewald (2003) states, place is "where the world manifests itself to human beings" (p. 625). Experiences in nature are intended to help participants experience the natural environment, gain direct contact with ecological processes and acquire skills (such as critical thinking), to investigate how to take action to address environmental concerns. Further, place settings encourage individuals to explore their own ways of reasoning as well as providing opportunities for autonomy and critical thinking within experiences. Somerville and Green (2011) argue that "place-based education is presented as a conceptual framework that supports the educational significance and potential of places outside the classroom, in the school grounds and beyond" (p. 18).

The preceding section has concentrated on one branch of the Priest (1986) tree. In the following sections, I will discuss the second branch, outdoor education as environmental studies / environmental education.

## Outdoor Education as Environmental Studies

Fien (1988) identifies how learning *about* the environment emphasises knowing how natural systems work or develop investigation and thinking skills. Environmental studies are a form of outdoor education that emphasise knowledge *about* the environment, but do not necessarily emphasise an environmental care ethos. In the quest for ecological knowledge, pedagogical principles and practices

may go so far as to reflect an anti-environmental ethos through, for example, experimentation on animals. In Australia, a number of curriculum areas, for example biology, require that students undertake fieldwork as part of the assessment required in order to successfully complete the subject.

Citizen Science plays a role in Australian environmental studies/education. Often including the word 'Watch' in its title, these programs provide an opportunity for schools and communities to collect data about particular aspect of some environmental concern. Examples include among others: Coralwatch, Bleachwatch, Oceanwatch, Seagrasswatch, Mangrovewatch, Pasturewatch, Wormwatch, Frogwatch, Airwatch, Waterwatch, Streamwatch, Harbourwatch and Saltwatch.

## Outdoor Education as Environmental Education




For many Australian educators, environmental education begins with two founding documents: The Belgrade Charter (1976) and The Tbilisi Declaration (1978) by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-United Nations Environment Programme [UNESCO-UNEP). The *Tbilisi Declaration* (1978) confirmed a general set of goals and principles for environmental education that sought to "provide opportunities for learners to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills to protect and improve the environment and to

create new patterns of behaviour" (UNESCO-UNEP, 1978, p. 3).

Some outdoor educators believe that "education *in* and *about* the environment provide most educational value when they are used to provide skills and knowledge to support education *for* the environment" (Board of Teacher Registration [BTR], 1993, p.24); that is, education in the environment is not merely an outdoor education camp. Instead, through education out of the classroom, "increased awareness of aspects of the environment can be expected" (BTR,1993, p. 22).



The purpose of outdoor education has been described as the triple goals of education *in*, *about* and *for* the environment (Donaldson & Donaldson (1958). The distinctions *in*, *about* and *for* the environment constitute a socially constructed framework for thinking about environmental education as well as outdoor education and allows an explanation of the different aims and approaches to the teaching of environmental education under specific circumstances. Fien (1988) attempts to identify the contribution that can be made from each of these forms as environmental education. Education *in* the environment can give reality, relevance and practical experience to learning through direct contact with the environment. If people are to understand their environment, then they need to know the workings of the systems around them. Education *about* the environment can provide that understanding. However, the preposition *for* extends the meaning of environmental education from simply learning *about* or *in* the environment. An element of environmental responsibility is implied and, inherent in this, the need to take action when necessary. Therefore, education *for* the environment builds on education in and about the environment and:

- Develops an informed concern and sense of responsibility for the environment.





- Develops an environmental ethic.
- Develops the motivation and skills to participate in environmental improvement.

Although not a subject in its own right, the Australian Curriculum places emphasis on Sustainability as a priority for study that connects and relates relevant aspects of content across learning areas and subjects. Through the priority of Sustainability, students are meant to develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living (ACARA, 2016).

Haven given a brief description of the nature of outdoor education in Australia, in the following sections, I will discuss some of the influences that have shaped it.

## Historical Influences on Australian Outdoor Education

Early European explorers contributed to the development of the idea that the natural environment may be considered to be the arena for challenge in a physical sense. There is a long tradition in the West generally, and Australia in particular, on the position and status of explorers in society. The *Age of Discovery* is an informal European historical period from the 15$^{th}$ century to the 18$^{th}$ century, marking the time in which extensive overseas exploration emerged as a powerful factor in European culture and globalization. Sea routes were found to North America, to India and beyond. For Australia, key figures of this period included the Dutch navigators Willem Janszoon in the north and Dirk Hartog (1606) on the west coast. Englishman, Captain James Cook (1728 – 1779) achieved the first recorded European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia. The British subsequently settled Australia in 1788. However, colonial relationships were built on the principle of denial of an indigenous culture. Australia was deigned *Terra* nullius by the British. Terra nullius is a Latin expression deriving from Roman law meaning "nobody's land", which is used in international law to describe territory which has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state (Wellington, 2016). This settlement culture was unwilling or unable to allow indigenous culture to shape it and methods of settlement and conquest became the foundation of national myths and cultural traditions. It is not surprising that such myths often evoke anti-nature or conquest-of-nature images. Home is usually seen as something ‘carved out of’ a

wilderness.

In a peculiarly Australian manner, unsuccessful explorers who perished in the wilderness receive recognition alongside successful explorers. In 1860–61, Burke and Wills led an expedition with the intention of crossing Australia from Melbourne in the south, to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north, a distance of around 3,250 kilometres. Burke and Wills never learnt how to survive in the Australian landscape. Despite local aborigines (the Yandruwandha people), giving them food, Burke attacked them, causing them to flee. Within a month of the aborigines' departure, Burke and Wills both perished. The unwillingness to recognise value in the natural Australian landscape has been implicated in extensive, ongoing ecological disruption that has resulted from the colonization of Australia

A western attitude to the environment reflects, and is reflected in, its literature. Romanticism was a nineteenth century movement reacting to the values of the rapidly growing industrial society in Europe, during the preceding century. This industrial society was characterized by industrial capitalism, rapid urbanisation and large-scale environmental despoliation. The quintessential Romantic landscape is wilderness and the Romantics launched the ascendency of outdoor places as desirable destinations to visit. This Romantic celebration of nature is evident in much Australian writing and continues to influence profoundly Australian attitudes (Horne, 2005; Park, 2006).

For example, *The Man from Snowy River* is a poem written by Banjo Paterson in 1890. The poem tells the story of a horseback pursuit to recapture the colt of a prizewinning racehorse that escaped from its paddock and was living with wild horses of the mountain ranges. The poem tells the story of the pursuit and subsequent capture. When the wild horses, and colt, descend a seemingly impassable steep slope, all riders, except the young hero, give up the pursuit. The hero spurs his horse down the "terrible descent" to catch not only the colt, but also the horses. Australians looked to the bush for their mythology and heroic characters. People saw in *The Man from Snowy River* a hero whose bravery, adaptability and risk-taking could epitomise the new nation of Australia that was developing at the time (Paterson, 2016).

Judith Wright's poem *The Surfer*, published in 1963, describes Australians complex relationship with nature. At the beginning, the poet is almost reverent in the way she describes the ocean, it's an uncontrollable element of which she

seems respectful and in awe. In the first stanza, man (the surfer) and water are virtually indistinguishable. The reader has the sense of exhilaration. By mid-poem, the tone is one of concern, the now 'swimmer'; rather than 'surfer', is no longer 'masterful' as in the first stanza; he's just a mortal. By the third stanza, conditions have completely changed; the ocean is portrayed as sinister and takes on an almost animalistic quality, like a threat waiting to pounce upon its prey, that is, the surfer (Wright, 2016).

## International Influences on Australian Outdoor Education



International institutions such as the scouting movement, Outward Bound and the Duke of Edinburgh Award have influenced the shape of outdoor education in Australia.

Scouting is a movement that aims to support young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development, with a strong focus on the outdoors and survival skills. This approach reflects the militaristic background of the movement's founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell. Scouting started in Australia in 1907 and was known as the Australian Imperial Boy Scouts (A.I.B.S.) by 1912, reflecting the continuance of a colonizing mindset in the development of an outdoor education description. Until 1976, Scouting Australia admitted only British Subjects to membership and programs and other nationalities only on special conditions and approval.

Numerous accounts in outdoor education literature trace its origins to the development of Outward Bound and its originator, Kurt Hahn, although these statements are rarely substantiated.

Hahn had fled Germany before the Second World War II and established the school Gordonstoun in 1934 with a routine that could be described as Spartan. Outward Bound was developed originally to build the character of British merchant shipmen in WWII, but developed into a youth movement to "help people discover,

develop and achieve their potential" (Outward bound, 2016) and was established in Australia in 1956.

The Duke of Edinburgh had been a student at Gordonstoun and established The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in 1956 for boys aged 15 to 18 and in 1957 for girls, with it later extending its age range to 14 to 25. The program borrowed from the Moray Badge, instituted at Gordonstoun School. The Award is a structured, non-formal education, youth development program, that seeks to "empower all young Australians between age 14 to 25 to explore their full potential regardless of their location or circumstance. The Award is a fully inclusive program and has no social, political, or religious affiliations" (Duke of Edinburgh, 2016).

Although there are evident links between Australian outdoor education and international institutions such as Outward Bound and the scouting movement, there appears to be public ambivalence about these and other organizations. Australians have not delegated socialization into the outdoors entirely to organizations outside the school and scouting has not been universally embraced for a number of reasons.

## Cultural Influences on Australian Outdoor Education

Australia is one of the world's most urbanised countries. At 30 June 2004, three quarters of the Australian population (15.1 million people) lived in urban areas. (ABS, 2006b). The most popular dwelling in cities is in suburbs of single-storey detached houses; consequently, Australian cities cover large areas. Non-urban areas or remote rural areas are known in the Australian vernacular as 'the bush'. 'The bush' has complex resonances in the Australian consciousness. A sense of discontinuity between city and the bush is accentuated by a discontinuity between indigenous flora and fauna found in the bush and those encountered in cities, which are often exotic plants or imported animals.

Today, many suburban middle class children in Australia are growing up in homes in master planned estates, or what Hawley (2003) terms 'McMansionland'. 'McMansionland' is characterised by large houses on small blocks of land that reduce opportunities for children to interact with other children or adults in their neighbourhood streets, and the design of such houses discourages children's outside play (Farrelly, 2003; Allon, 2005). Australian Bureau of Statistics data (2001, 2006b) identify These mega-house designs, in Australia internalise activity





by apporting large amounts of space to passive recreation such as home theatres, lounges, rumpus and computer rooms and courtyards and is seen as contributing to a reduction in opportunities for children (and adults) to interact with nature.

A disturbing aspect of this contemporary life is a profound decline in both the quantity and quality of children's direct experiences of nature (Samways, 2006; Stokes, 2006). Pyle (1978) uses the phrase 'the extinction of experience' to describe these tendencies toward diminished and compromised direct contact with ordinary nature. Louv (2005) coined the phrase 'nature deficit disorder' to describe the effect of this tendency on children who have become alienated from nature. Hyun (2005) talks of Biophobia, "a negative affiliation with nature that ranges from discomfort in natural places to active contempt/disrespect for whatever is not manmade or managed by humans" (p. 200).

Australia lacks an equivalent to the Scandinavian *'Friluftsliv'*. *Friluftsliv* roughly translates as 'open-air life' and is an ancient Nordic philosophy of outdoor life that emphasises the role and value of spending time in the outdoors (Henderson & Vikander, 2007). However, many aspects of the Danish *'Udeskole'* (literally 'out of school') reflect the integrated approach to learning (i.e. indoors and out) with strong links to community-based and place-based education movements found in Australia. Udeskole has a strong resonance with 'outdoor learning and involves regular use of a school's natural surroundings and cultural settings as extensions of the classroom (Bentsen, Mygind, & Randrup, 2009). In contrast to the USA and Canada, there is no significant middle-class tradition of sending children to summer camps in Australia. Also, unlike many other countries, Australia has not had a tradition of compulsory military service until recent times, when it was introduced to support the Malaya Emergency (1951-1959) and Vietnam War (1964-1972).

## History of Australian Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres

In Australia, the history of formal outdoor education can be traced back to the establishment of the first National Fitness Camp in 1939 at Broken Bay, New South Wales (NSW). Natural science was a core part of the program (Webb, 1980), making the first formal outdoor education curriculum reflect a more environmental education approach. Centres were called, at first, Field Study Centres, again

reflecting a nature study approach. This naming drew on a British tradition with its then Field Studies Council of Great Britain, established in 1943 (Webb, 1980).



In Victoria, outdoor education has unusually wide acceptance in schools as a distinct curriculum offering. The institutionalisation of outdoor education at a state level in Victoria occurred in 1972 when the Ministry of Education established a School Camps Branch (SCB) which helped to maintain an experience-centred approach. Large scale programs are run by a staff of trained camp leaders from the Department of Education. Students sleep in large dormitories, eat in dining halls with meals prepared by a cook. Programs include activities such as canoeing, swimming and fishing, organised sport, hikes, excursions, bushcraft, handcraft and evening camp fires. This approach reflects an outdoor adventure education approach in its curriculum.

In Queensland, the first of a state-run network of 25 centres was established in 1966, with the Tallebudgera Camp School on Queensland's Gold Coast. The first centre where the curriculum was to emphasise the study of the environment was Jacobs Well Field Study Centre, which was opened in 1974. In the early years, the emphasis in Field Study Centres was on nature study, but by the 1990s, Queensland environmental education centres were being described in the P12-Environmental education curriculum guide (Queensland Department of Education [Education Queensland-EQ], 1993) as "multi-purpose curriculum venues working in partnership with teachers, schools, advisers and the wider community to provide specialist environmental education programs, professional development, advice and resources that meet the ongoing curriculum of students" ( p. 4). Centres have the task of "promoting, demonstrating and modelling environmental education" (EQ, 1993, p. 4).

In South Australia, in 1975, the Education Department developed Arbury Park





Outdoor School as "a school, not a holiday resort, for students from all types of schools …They would come to learn, particularly from the natural resources of Arbury Park. They would learn to live together, to cooperate and to share, and of course, it would be pleasurable, it would be fun" (Arbury Park, 2013).

Within Australia, there are a number of private providers[2]. For example, Hall Outdoor Education provides outdoor education programs to schools in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales and the ACT for the past 20 years. "We pride ourselves on offering the best in great customer focused service, fun, and adventure all in a safe and educational environment, supported by our fully qualified and dedicated team" (Hall Outdoor Education, 2016).

In Queensland, private centres are usually linked to private schools or community organisations. Examples include Dunwich Research Station (University of Queensland); Eprapah (Scout Association); Moogerah Dam (Brisbane Boys College); Camp Bornhoffen (Police Youth Club); Binna Burra Centre (Natural History Association).

Outdoor education programs in elite non-government schools have been a mainstay of outdoor education, with some programs dating from the 1930s. In 1992, more than a third of 48 elite private schools included their outdoor-education programs or campus when listing their key attributes. Outdoor education's association with elite schools elevated the status of outdoor education across the state.

Post-Secondary outdoor education programs can be traced to the outdoor education degree by Bendigo College of Advanced Education (Victoria) in 1982. The course sustained an experience-based model of outdoor competence. Vocational-training organizations have increased in both number and role. La Trobe University provides more outdoor and environmental education courses than any university worldwide. Corporate adventure training proliferated in Australia in the early 1990s in the wake of federal legislation mandating corporations spend 1.5% of payroll costs on structured training.

Commercial outdoor environmental education programs: Although most environmental education programs are developed locally for schools, there are some private groups who have developed programs used in Australia. The Institute for Earth Education was set up in 1974 by Steve Van Matre and others. It is a not-for-

2. Identification in this chapter does not provide nor imply endorsement of the organization by either the author or the publisher or support for any claims made by the organization and mentioned here.

profit organization with branches in several countries, including Australia. Critical of mainstream environmental education, the Institute developed alternative forms of educational programs, including Earthkeepers (for ages 10-11); Sunship Earth / Earthkeepers II (for ages 10-11) and Sunship III (for ages 13-14) (Institute for Earth Education, 2016).

Government Agencies providing outdoor environmental programs: Some programs are developed by Government or Government Agencies. The Reef Guardian schools program was established by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority [GBRMPA] in 2003. A key objective of the program is to create awareness, understanding and appreciation for the Great Barrier Reef and its connected ecosystems. Students team up with others in their community to actively participate in activities aimed at improving catchments, water quality, sustainability, and Reef health. This includes environmental and sustainability projects within their classrooms, their school grounds and local areas such as native habitat revegetation, cleaning up beaches and recycling. The Marine Park Authority has created educational resources to assist teachers with education about the Reef. The Reef Guardian Schools program has 276 schools, more than 1200,000 students and 7400 teachers participating (BGRMPA, 2016).

## Debates in Australian Outdoor Education

Within the Australian educational community there is vigorous debate on a number of aspects of outdoor education (Lugg, 2004; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

### Decontextualisation

Australian outdoor education activities are often generic, conducted largely irrespective of environmental variations or implications (Brookes, 2002). Activities are chosen for their applicability to foster personal or group goals and there is little opportunity to reconnect with the 'place' where the activity is being undertaken and are not purposefully based in a locale that has meaning for the participants. 'Decontextualisation' is an ontological given (Brookes, 2002). Programs are predominantly activity focused and are conducted largely irrespective of the environmental variations or the implications upon either people or "place". This reflects how outdoor education in Australia has become increasingly focused on





adventurous activities conducted in highly controlled environments (e.g. ropes courses). Packaged outdoor-education programs derived from 'character building' adventure programs such as those offered by Outward Bound, have been criticized on ideological grounds (Beames, Higgins, & Nicol, 2011).

## Risk

Risk is often inherent in adventure activity. This risk can be real or perceived, based on the perceptions (including misconceptions) of the participant and the reality of the situation (Thomas, 2005; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). An adventurous pedagogy of risk is troubling for Place educators as it has overtones of a progressive and imperial ideology. Australian children are now living highly scripted lives, marked by pervasive anxiety by adults and the absence of free and independent play (Cadzow, 2004; Irwin, 2004; Ewart & Garvey, 2007; Malone, 2007) in what Malone (2007) describes as 'the bubble wrap generation'. This situation is developing despite evidence showing Australia is a greatly safer place for children than it was three decades ago (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005a, 2005b. The result is that childhood generally, and children's experiences with nature in particular, are becoming undermined by risk aversion (Gill, 2007). The exaggerated perception of risk as something negative that needs to be avoided is a relatively recent phenomenon. An exaggeration of the risks involved in many common childhood pursuits has resulted in children being denied opportunities to engage in many worthwhile activities that can facilitate their learning and development. Australian children's positive attitude to feeling safe, facing risk and undertaking challenges when in the outdoors, has identified in the research as being contrary to the attitudes of adults (Kopelke, 2012). In his research, Kopelke relates how children describe their experiences with nature as *"It's a lovely place and you feel very safe here"* and how they *"did a lot of fun things"* and were *"able to look at things a different way…and look…up close"*. Some children appreciate how they can explore spaces that are considered out-of-bounds by some adults, for example, *"I'm usually not allowed to go on the rocks"*.

## Outdoor Education is Good for Everyone

The uncritical assertion that outdoor and adventure education are inherently good for everyone has been challenged (Burke, 2010; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Burke (2010) argues that there is a need to "address the fact that not all people's experiences of nature are, or have been, positive" (p. 91). He goes on to assert that outdoor educators "must acknowledge the role of domination and oppression in the colonial history of adventure, and he or she must question whether an approach that rests on such a foundation is universally good for everyone" (Burke, 2010, p. 91).

## Outdoor Education vs Natural Environment

Outdoor activities can be a humanistic enterprise in which personal development is achieved by modifying and exploiting one's surroundings and is often framed in terms of a human conquest of nature (Kellett, 1977) with the modern outdoor adventure educator seeing nature as "an assault course, gymnasium or puzzle to be resolved and controlled" (Wattchow & Brown, 2011, p. 77) and as a place where "short raids on the bush" (Brookes, 1993, p. 31) can occur. In these approaches, 'place' tends to be rendered as abstract and emptied spaces, in order that they may be dominated or colonized by the achievements of the person.

Education that uses the environment merely as an opportunity to achieve personal or social outcomes is in marked contrast to education that emphasises the importance of actively caring for the natural environment. The theory supporting outdoor education is "predicated on the belief that an individual's true nature is revealed through working with nature, as he or she is removed from the distraction of modern comforts and conveniences" (Schroth, Helfer & Lanfair, 2011, p. 288). This use of the environment merely as an opportunity to achieve personal or social outcomes illustrates that, without attention being given to attitudinal and behavioural outcomes in adventure programs, vital learning opportunities will be lost and even the very environment on which the educational / recreational experience depends, can be destroyed (Newhouse, 1990). Lynch and Moore (2004) describe this as a paradox for outdoor education. As Wattchow and Brown (2011) state "the natural environment is considered to be the arena for challenge in a physical sense" (p. xviii).

The environmental impact of outdoor education programs is one such contentious issue in Australia. It can be challenging for outdoor leaders to incorporate adventure activities with attempts to foster environmental awareness. Some authors have sought to raise the profile of outdoor education by shifting the

focus away from personal and social benefits (Brookes, 2002; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

## Outdoor Education as an Industry

An increased concern about litigation has led to increased levels of training and certification required and has made it progressively more difficult to mount outdoor education programs. There has been a national trend to define outdoor education as an industry requiring vocational training. Therefore, vocational-training organizations have moved to offer national competency-based training for outdoor leaders, underwritten by federal funding for vocational-training initiatives. In these contexts outdoor education teachers were increasingly referred to as guides, leaders or facilitators. Participants, including school students became 'clients'. Outdoor education is seen as an industry that provides human capital, as embodied in modular competencies (activity skills, safety skills and facilitation skills), to a range of employers of which schools were only one (Pickett & Polley, 2001).



## Conclusion

In Australia, there have been two traditions of outdoor education; field studies which focus on nature studies, science and environmental education, while outdoor pursuits focus on physical skills and personal and social development through challenging situations. Although these two approaches have much in common and much to offer each other, they are often contradictory.

Given the historical basis of the three aims of outdoor education, there is a small but growing number of critiques of some contemporary approaches and practices of outdoor education (Beames, Higgins, & Nicol, 2011). Typically, outdoor education is presented in the professional literature in Australia as being concerned with personal and social development of people across a range of areas of interest. Character building remains foundational in much outdoor education theory with the main focus on personal and group development, so much so that *self, others and nature* has become something of a mantra.

Outdoor education in Australia will continue to undergo fragmentation because of the impacts of increasing middle class affluence and social hierarchies, technological developments (e.g. in equipment), along with media-representations of nature (Payne & Wattchow, 2008). However, outdoor education can contribute to sustainability education, sustainable living and environmental education (Nicol, 2002a; 2002b; 2003). To achieve this outcome, major transformations to traditional outdoor education need to be made. Attempts are being made in Australia to resolve the apparent tension between adventure activities and outdoor environmental education, and in the process, addressing the dichotomy that has evolved.





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# Into the Fields:
# Japanese Outdoor Education

# *Into the Fields: Japanese Outdoor Education*

Yoshinao Hirano



## Historical Background of Outdoor Education Through the Perspective of Education Administration

In Japan, the terms "outdoor pursuits" and "nature-experience activity" are often used when referring to the field of "outdoor education." However, while the meanings of these words are similar, their distinct usages arise from changes throughout the history of education administration in Japan. The following section provides further explanation and historical background describing the different contexts in which Japanese administrative documents use these different terms.





## Outdoor Education

The term "outdoor education" first appeared in Japan at the 1996 "Meeting for Researchers Investigating the Revitalization of Youth Outdoor Education" which presented a "Report on Enrichment of Outdoor Education for Youth" to the director-general of the Ministry of Education's Lifelong Learning Bureau. In this document, "outdoor education" was defined as "organized nature-experience activities with clear educational goals." The term "nature-experience activity" refers to camping, hiking, skiing, sailing, and other nature-based learning activities, such as, observing plants and animals and star-gazing. It can also mean doing arts and crafts with natural materials or organizing outdoor concerts and other arts and culture activities. Outdoor education, on the other hand, is limited to experiential educational activities taking place in a natural environment.

Since the founding of the Japan Outdoor Education Association in 1997, the term "outdoor education" has gradually gained popularity throughout the country. At the same time, a variety of outdoor experiential activities have long been referred to as "outdoor pursuits" or "nature-experience activities." These activities, like camping trips, school hikes, forest schools, and ocean schools, have been common among Japan's youth organizations (such as the YMCA, the Scouts) and schools. They became popular starting at the beginning of the 20th century (Hitoshi Imura, 2008).

## Outdoor Pursuits

The term "outdoor pursuits" is deeply connected with the administration of physical education and athletics in Japan. Nozawa (1989) notes that the term "outdoor pursuits" was first used in the 1951 "Guiding Principles for Social Physical Education," published by the Ministry of Education, which introduced three activities: camping, picnicking, and hiking. Later, in 1955,the term appeared for the first time in civil service documents when the Vice Minister of Education announced the "Youth Outdoor Pursuits Awards." The term outdoor pursuits refers to non-standardized athletic activities, outdoor leisure activities, or physical education activities undertaken in a natural environment.

In 1957, the Health and Physical Education Council of the Minister of Education's advisory body put forward a policy proposal entitled: "On the Revitalization of Physical Education for Maintaining Health, Prospects for the Future

of the National Arena, Revitalization of Youth Outdoor Pursuits, and Revitalization of Local and Workplace Physical Education." In 1961, they further formulated the Sports Promotion Act. The second clause of this legislation defines sports as "Physical activity, athletics, and physical movement with the goal of promoting mental and physical health (including camping activities and other outdoor pursuits)." With the inclusion of outdoor pursuits in the legal definition of sports, the promotion and revitalization of outdoor pursuits became the responsibility of the Sports Administration of the Ministry of Education, and was mostly carried out by the health and sports divisions of prefecture, county, city, or village level education committees. In 2011, the fiftieth year since its passing, the Sports Promotion Act was revised and adapted into the Basic Act on Sports. This law calls for "the popularization and promotion of outdoor pursuits and exercise/leisure activities." Today, the Japan Sports Agency, an external agency established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2015, is responsible for the promotion and revitalization of outdoor pursuits throughout Japan.

Hiking, camping, bicycling, skiing, sailing, and other forms of exercise in natural settings are common and beloved pastimes among Japanese citizens of all ages.

## Nature-Experience Activities

The term "nature experience activities" became widely used after 1990. It was used in the "Second Report on Educational Policy Reform" issued by the Provisional Council on Education Reform, an advisory body to the office of the Prime Minister, in1992. The "Report on the Improvement of Youth Extracurricular Activities"(the council summary) organized by the Ministry of Education in 1992 also used the term "nature experience activity" several times.

While there are no records in which the terms "nature experience activity" or "nature experience learning" are clearly defined, they are generally synonymous with the term "outdoor pursuits." When used differently, it is generally because those who use the term "nature experience activity" wish to distinguish its meaning from the definition of "outdoor pursuits" as used in the Sports Promotion Act. That is to say, in some cases it is necessary to categorize "outdoor pursuits" as physical activities, which requires the use of "nature experience activities" to describe non-physical activities. Generally, "outdoor pursuits" and "nature experience activity"





both describe a variety of activities undertaken in a natural environment (Yoshinao Hirano, 1998).

In 1996, the Central Education Council of the Minister of Education's advisory body issued their first policy proposal "Prospects for Japanese Education in the 21st Century," which suggested that education must cultivate "survival skills" even for children in a society of wealth, and that in the cultivation of "survival skills," life, nature, and social experiential learning are vitally important.

Furthermore, in 1998, the Central Education Council stated that in order to "foster open minds for a new era" they must "revitalize long-term nature-experience activities." They proposed plans for using the power of the private sector to create opportunities for long-term nature-experience activities, in addition to establishing "long-term nature-experience villages" to provide children with important and necessary experiences of group living away from their parents.

In the following year, the Lifelong Learning Council proposed a policy of "life and nature-experiences for cultivating the hearts and minds of children," in which they suggested that interactions with friends and local people of all ages as well as a variety of goal-oriented experiential opportunities are vital for cultivating children's "survival skills."

In 2001, after revisions to the Law on School Education and Law on Social Education, the promotion of nature experience activities and other experiential activities became obligatory for national and local public organizations, schools, and education facilities. Then, in 2013, the Central Education Council proposed a policy "On the Future Promotion of Youth Experiential Activities." This policy addressed the significance of experiential activities for adolescents, proposed a strategy for promoting experiential activities in schools and communities, defined the role of youth educational facilities/relevant measures for their establishment, and described the necessity of a system for teacher training.

As mentioned above, in the last twenty years in Japan, there have been numerous policies proposed for the enrichment of nature experience activities.

## Specific Measures on Outdoor Education by National and Local Public Organizations

The measures that have been taken by Japan's central administration agencies and public organizations can be divided into the following three representative categories: (1) Arrangement of youth education facilities, (2) supporting school outdoor education planning, and (3) assistance with implementation of outdoor education by local government education committees and private organizations. A detailed explanation of these categories is given in the section below.

### Arrangement of Youth Education Facilities

In Japan, lodging facilities that support outdoor education programs include "Youth Houses," "Children's Outdoor Learning Centres," "Outdoor Pursuits Centres" and other youth education facilities. There are also "Youth Education Facilities" that include public facilities set up at the national level, as well as at the prefectural and city levels. A majority of these facilities include lodging, cafeterias, showers, training facilities, exercise facilities, and camping sites, etc. Moreover, they tend to be built in areas with abundant natural resources, providing hiking, walking trails, outdoor cooking, orienteering, sailing, skiing, and other outdoor education activities. Typically, these centres are staffed with operations and managing staff, including outdoor education activity instructor staff. Because these are public educational facilities, schools and youth groups can use their services for a very low price, only costing about 2,000 Japanese Yen (About 18 USD) for one night



National Taisetsu Youth Friendship Centre

of lodging, including three meals. According to the results of the Social Education Survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2013[1], there are a total of 458 youth education facilities that provide lodging across the country.

"Youth Houses" provide outdoor group lodging or adventure challenge activities for youth with the goals of cultivating respect and intimate connections with nature, learning to be considerate of others, feeling emotionally fulfilled, and strengthening the body. Beginning in 1958, the Ministry of Education implemented a nationwide grant program to support local governments in establishing public Youth Houses. National Youth Houses began to open starting in 1959 and by 1976 there were already 13 completed Youth House facilities (See Image 2).

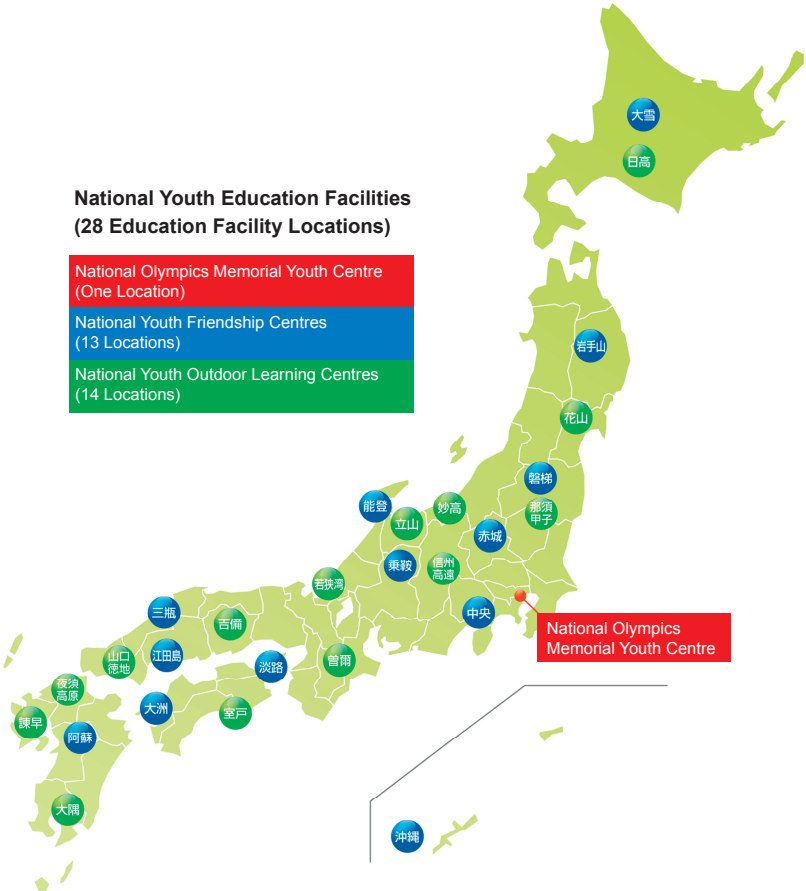


Image 2 Japan's National Youth Facilities

1. In 2001, after the Central Government Reform, the Ministry of Education changed its name to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

"Children's Outdoor Learning Centres" are "educational facilities with the goal of bringing youth (children and students enrolled in compulsory education) closer to nature, cultivating fine moral character and socialization through group living in a natural environment, exercising the mind and body, and training robust and healthy young people." Beginning in 1970, the Ministry of Education implemented a nationwide grant program to assist local governments in establishing public Children's Outdoor Learning Centres. National Children's Outdoor Learning Centres began to open starting in 1975 and by 1991, 14 facilities were completed (See Image 2).

In 2003, when revisions to the Local Autonomy Law introduced a system of appointed managers, there was a major change in the management of youth education facilities and other public facilities. Before the revision, only local governments or relevant organizations could be responsible for the management of public facilities. After the law was revised, private enterprises, non-profits, or other agencies could be commissioned for management. At present, the operations and management of a majority of public youth education facilities has been transitioned from management by local governments to management by commissioned private agencies.



National Wakasa-wan Youth Outdoor Learning Centre

National Youth Education Facilities originally fell under the management jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. However, after the establishment of independent administration agencies in 2001, the agency responsible for the National Institution for Youth Education began to integrate the management of these facilities nationwide in 2006. In addition, National Youth Houses were renamed as National Youth Friendship Centres, and National Children's Outdoor Learning Centres were renamed as National Youth Outdoor Learning Centres. These names continue to be used today.

More, youth education facilities located all over the country which also provide facilities for outdoor education activities. They mostly serve as sites for outdoor education programs run by schools or youth groups. Based on a survey on social education published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2013, youth education facilities that provide lodging are used by around 6.66 million people every year. However, due to aging facilities and a decrease in the youth population, the use of these facilities is declining. These factors combined with local governments cutting budgets in the face of financial problems have led to continuing cases of closing and abandonment of these facilities.

## School Outdoor Education Program Support

This section will provide a summary of national and local government strategies for supporting school outdoor education programming.

### *Program for the promotion of nature classrooms*

In Japan, many schools have implemented overnight outdoor education programs under through “Forest School,” “Ocean School,” “Group Overnight Activities,” “Moving Classrooms,”etc. A majority of these programs include one or two nights of lodging where students are separated by grade-level. They typically take place at Youth Nature Houses, Youth Houses or other youth education facilities.

Since 1984, as a result of the Ministry of Education’s national “Nature Classroom Promotion Plan” subsidy program, elementary and junior high schools lengthened the duration of overnight outdoor education programs. Under the subsidy policy, the standard duration of these programs was one week (six days), but also included five-day as well as four-day programs. Up until 1997, throughout the duration of the Nature Classroom Promotion Plan, an estimated 1,000-1,600

schools in Japan participated.

*Program for the promotion of integrity-cultivating experiential activities*

According to the standards established in the revision to the School Education Law in 2001, elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools were required to make efforts to augment volunteer and other social outreach activities and nature experience activities. Later, the Central Education Council also proposed policy aimed toward advancing experiential activities, requiring schools to increase related programming.







In this context, from 2002 to 2012 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology implemented a rich series of programs for the promotion of experiential activities. Included was the "Programs for Overnight Nature Experiences -- Farming and Fishing Village Exchanges for Children" which provided subsidies for the organization of four-day or longer overnight experiential activities for elementary students.

In 2013 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology also carried out the "Program for the Promotion of

Integrity-Cultivating Experiential Activities." The program subsidized three-day or longer experiential programs for elementary, junior high, and high school students. These programs were designed with the goals of cultivating children's character and social skills through various experiential activities in farming, mountain, and fishing villages, in order to improve their sense of identity and inspire them to think about their future careers.

*Local government measures*

Responding to national policies that aim to advance school-based experiential activities, local governments also began to promote overnight school outdoor education programs.

Starting in 1991, Hyōgo Prefecture established a six-day "Nature School" course for all fifth grade students in the prefecture. In 2016 the Hyōgo Prefecture Nature School Promotion Program (which changed to 5 days in 2009), allotted a 390 million yen (3.46 million USD) budget for the use of all 754 schools in the prefecture.

In Musashino City of Tokyo, beginning in 1995 a seven-day to ten-day "second school" course was established for fifth-graders, and a three-day "pre-second school" course was established for fourth-graders.

In 2008, Kyoto City also established a five-day "Extended Overnight Nature Experience Promotion Program" for fifth-graders.

Additionally, Edogawa-ku of Tokyo has established a seven-day "second school" course for elementary students; Inagi City of Tokyo has established a "moving classroom" five-day program for sixth-graders, and a four-day "skiing classroom" course for first year middle school students.





Local governments have promoted overnight outdoor education programs through funding subsidies. A majority of this funding has been allotted for providing wages to instructors and assistant instructors. School teachers often lack the necessary professional skills in outdoor education, so in longer programs where there are higher expectations for student outcomes, these programs must rely on instructors who are expert in various kinds of activities, as well as assistant instructors who provide support for student life and activities (most of whom are university students who aspire to be teachers). This funding includes budget for instructor wages, transportation, lodging, teaching materials, etc. It would be a serious challenge for families if program participants (students) had to be burdened by these costs, so local government economic assistance is a vital component in the advancement of school-led outdoor education programs.

Compared with the cases of longer-duration programs described above, a majority of elementary and junior high school programs throughout Japan are implementing shorter overnight outdoor education school programs. In fact, many schools are shortening the duration of outdoor education programs, or cancelling them altogether. Most people think that this has resulted from shrinking budgets or the increasing workloads of instructors; however, the most significant factor is broader problems with elementary and middle school education curriculums in Japan (to be explained further below).

## Outdoor Education Program Support by Local Government Education Councils and Private Organizations

Here is an overview on national government policies enacted to support local government education councils and private organizations in implementing outdoor education programs.

### *Frontier adventure program*

In 1988 the Ministry of Education's "Program for the Promotion of Nature Living Challenges" provided funding to local governments in order to implement outdoor education programs that are 10 nights or longer focusing on adventure activities for students from the fifth grade of elementary school to first year high school students. While the program only lasted until 1991, during this period elementary school summer outdoor education programs lasting 10 nights or longer spread all over Japan.





*Programs for the promotion of youth nature experiential activities*

From 1992 to 1996, the "Program for the Promotion of Nature Living Challenges" was replaced by the "Program for the Promotion of Youth Experiential Activities" which offered central government funding for programs lasting one week to 10 days. In addition to adventure programs, this program added a focus on environmental education programs, and was directed toward students with truancy problems, students with behavioural issues, and mentally or physically disabled students. Later, as the targets for outdoor education programs expanded, environmental learning activity programs and other diverse activity programs gradually increased.

*Programs for the promotion of youth outdoor education*

In 1997, the Ministry of Education implemented the "Program for the Promotion of Youth Outdoor Education" which promoted July 20th to August 19th as "the period for youth outdoor education experiences." During this time, youth education facilities, cities, and prefectures actively promote the "youth outdoor classroom" movement.

*Program for the promotion of nature-experience villages and long-term youth nature-experience activities*

In 1999, the Ministry of Education formulated the "National Children's Program (Emergency 3-year Strategy)," working with relevant departments to strategically promote policies promoting the advancement of diverse experiential activities for children. For example: the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries worked together to create the "Program for Children's Long-Term Nature Experience Villages" which utilized existing facilities in farmer houses and youth hostels to provide children long-term lodging, nature experiences, environmental learning, and farming experience opportunities for two weeks during summer vacation. The program expanded to include private education programs held during these two weeks of summer vacation, and continued to grow rapidly until the program ceased in 2001[2].

Later, in 2002 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries to implement the "Program for the Promotion of Long-Term Youth Nature-Experience

2. There were 50 programs in 1999, 70 programs in 2000, and 84 programs in 2001.

Activities." This program was in effect until 2004 and was implemented with the support of local public organizations. Aimed toward youth participants, the program utilized outdoor activity facilities or farmhouses for two-week period and offered funding for different age groups living together and participating in nature-experience activities. With this program, long-term outdoor education programs became more prevalent and consistent.

After the implementation of national-support policies for outdoor education programs as described above in sections 1-4, long-term outdoor education programs for children during summer vacation implemented by local governments or private education companies have continued to be developed across Japan to the present.

*Children's dream fund*

In 2001, the independent administrative corporation now called the National Institution for Youth Education established the "Children's Dream Fund" to provide funding for non-governmental organizations to implement a variety of experiential activities or reading activities with the goal of cultivating children's physical and mental health.

The funding budgets for children's experiential activities or reading activities are as follows: local-level programs were provided with 500,000 yen (about 4,430 USD); prefecture-level programs were provided with 1,000,000 yen (about 8,870 USD); and national-level programs were provided with 3,000,000 yen (about 26,600 USD). In addition, according to the records provided by the National Institution for Youth Education's project execution report, by 2013, the "Children's Dream Fund" had funded a total of 3,262 projects amounting to a total of 1,179,000,000 yen (about 10,457,700 USD).

Across Japan, private organizations have utilized this funding to launch local experiential programming including outdoor education.

## Outdoor Education Measures for Middle and Elementary Schools

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, according to the School Education Law, established standards for middle and elementary school educational course materials entitled "The Course of Study." This part of the paper will introduce the contents of the "The Course of Study" for elementary and





junior high schools in Japan and also provide an explanation about the descriptions it provides for outdoor education and school implementation of outdoor education courses.

## The Course of Study

### *The course of study*

Before introducing the specific measures taken by Japan's elementary and junior high schools in implementing outdoor education, we must first provide a broader context of the "The Course of Study."

" The Course of Study" is the standard for school education course curricula and teaching materials established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology based on the "Implementation Bylaws for the School Education Law." The guidelines are revised every 10 years. The guidelines are separated into The Course of Study for Elementary Schools and Junior High Schools, etc., providing detailed standards for school learning objectives for all grade levels, as well as learning content and course duration standards. The standards presented in The Course of Study are legally binding. Japan's elementary and junior high school courses must abide by the standards set in the guidelines. Therefore, aside from meals, cleaning, and some other non-standardized activities, all of the educational activities undertaken within schools must be clearly defined and implemented within the standards set in The Course of Study.

Table 1 below lists the educational courses stipulated in the current version of "The Course of Study for Elementary Schools " (as announced in 2008). The elementary school educational courses outlined include five major categories: "Core Subjects (9 subjects)," "Ethics," "Foreign Language Activities," "Comprehensive Learning Time," and "Special Activities." Then, for each of the core subjects (9 subjects) listed in Table 1, as well as the other four categories, the teaching aims, content, main points of attention, and number of classes are described in detail for each grade level (in "Special Activities" only "Grade-level Activities" includes further description). For example: under the "Japanese Language" course category, the contents of kanji charts for the kanji taught in each grade level are specified.

Table 1 Japan's Course of Study for Elementary Schools

- Ethics – Core subjects – Japanese Language, Society, Math, Science, Life, Music, Art, Home Economics, Physical Education
- Foreign Language Activities
- Comprehensive Learning Time
- Special Activities
  - Grade-Level Activities
  - Student Union Activities
  - Club Activities
  - Routine School Events
    - Ceremonial Events
    - Cultural Events
    - Health, Safety, and Physical Education Activities
    - Excursions, Group Overnight Activities
    - Labour Production, Social Contribution Activities

*Program for the enrichment of nature-experience activities in elementary school*

The main point of emphasis was enriching nature experience activities during the revision process that led to the current version of The Course of Study for Elementary Schools. In 2008, the Central Education Council's official statement upon the establishment of the new Course of Study entitled "On the Improvement of The Course of Study for Kindergarten, Elementary School, Junior High School, High School, and Special Education School" included the following content on enriching experiential activities:

Through experiential activities with other people, in society, and in natural environments, children learn to understand themselves, develop empathy, and recognize themselves as a part of larger society, cultivating the ability to be considerate of others and respect social standards. Moreover, through experiencing the majestic harmony of nature and encountering culture and the arts, students gain appreciation and care for a variety of subjects. By discovering problems, challenging themselves, developing trusting relationships with others, while experiencing the joys and fulfilment of personal improvement, students develop various social and personality skills, cultivate athletic abilities, mental and physical health, logic and mental processing abilities.

The statement on the Guidelines also mentioned the importance of enriching experiential activities based on different developmental periods, and provides the following description of one of the main points of promotion: "During elementary school, as sense of self gradually becomes solidified and self-awareness develops by experiencing the majestic harmony of nature and participating in overnight group





nature programs that strengthens emotional bonds between students." The statement also describes the importance of long-term implementation in order to increase the educational outcomes of experiential activities: "…experiential activities should be implemented during the academic term or during long school vacation periods (for example, around five days in a week)…." This, in term, advocated for the implementation of long-term overnight group nature activities during elementary school.

The general summary of the current version of The Course of Study for Elementary Schools mentions the following about nature experience activities: "The process of advancing ethics education…must be accomplished through group overnight activities and volunteer activities, nature-experience activities, and other rich activity content so that moral values become rooted and internalized in the children's minds." This description emphasizes the importance of achieving moral education through experiential activities. Descriptions of several of the other core subjects, "Society," "Science," "Life," "Art," and "Physical Education," also included content relating to nature-experience activities, and descriptions of "Comprehensive Learning Time" and "Special Activities" courses, specifically require the active inclusion and implementation of nature experience activities.

### *Specific measures for elementary school outdoor education*

While the Course of Study for Elementary Schools did not specifically use the term "outdoor education," such programs continue to be promoted in several subjects in the context of the promotion of nature experience activities (Toshio Hoshino et al, 2001).

As described above, Japanese schools widely implement overnight outdoor education programs under such names as "Forest School," "Ocean School," "Group Living Activities," and "Moving Classroom." For elementary schools, these activities are included in the official curriculum under "Excursions, Group Overnight Activities" in the "Routine School Events" category of "Special Activities," and for middle schools such activities fall under the category "Travel, Group Overnight Activities."

Within the core subject courses, nature experience activities are included through observations of biology, river environments, and astronomical phenomena, or the raising of plants and animals in "Science" courses; observations of regional topography, agriculture, or aquaculture, as well as surveys, and field visits in

"Society" courses; using nearby natural materials to make art in "Art" courses; and nature-based activities such as playing in snow, skiing, and other various nature experience activities in "Physical Education" Courses. "Life" was added to the core subjects curriculum after revisions to The Course of Study for Elementary Schools in 1989. This subject places an emphasis on creating connections with the nearby natural environment, which include using natural materials to create games, feeding and raising plants and animals, and other nature experience activities.

In addition, the "Routine School Events" category under "Special Events" includes skiing and ice-skating under the subcategory "Health, Safety, and Physical Education Activities," as well as raising plants and animals under the subcategory "Labour Production, Social Contribution Activities." The new category, "Comprehensive Learning Time" was added to the curriculum when The Course of Study was revised in 1998. Later, the revised version of The Course of Study announced in 2008 stipulated the need to: "actively introduce social experiences such as nature experience activities or volunteer activities, product manufacturing, production activities and other experiential activities, observations, experiments, field visits or surveys, presentations, discussions, and other learning activities," in order to actively promote experiential learning.

## The Challenges of Promoting Outdoor Education in Elementary and Junior High Schools

### *The categorization of education courses and guaranteed course hours*

As yet unresolved challenges faced in the promotion of outdoor education in Japanese elementary and junior high schools are described in the section below:

The first challenge is the categorization of education courses and guaranteed course hours. While schools have been required to enrich experiential activities and lengthen the duration of group overnight activities, nationwide, there are very few schools that have actually lengthened the duration of such activities.

As described above, schools are required to abide by the curriculum prescribed in The Course of Study, and group overnight activities are no exception. The Course of Study stipulates standard class hours for each subject during the school year, and based on the current Guidelines, class hours are as follows: for the 5$^{th}$ grade of elementary school, there is a required 175 hours of "Japanese Language," 175 hours of "Math," 90 hours of "Physical Education," and 70 hours of "Comprehensive





Learning Time." The course categories listed in Table 1 "Core Subjects," "Ethics," "Foreign Language Activities," and "Comprehensive Learning Time" all have stipulated standard class hours; however, within the "Special Activities" category, aside from "Grade-level Activities" with 35 stipulated hours, the class time for the other types of activities under Special Activities, "Student Union Activities," "Club Activities," and "Routine School Activities" is allotted based on content, grade-year, semester, and month, but lacks a specific standard. Because group overnight activities fall within the "Excursions, Group Overnight Activities" category of "Routine School Events," the class time and duration is up to each elementary school to determine for themselves. Given that there are no compulsory provisions for group overnight activities, it would seem as if elementary schools were free to determine the length of such programming as they see fit and to implement long-term activities. However, because The Course of Study stipulates the maximum number of course hours for all courses combined (980 hours for the 5th grade of elementary school), after subtracting compulsory course hours, it is very difficult to actually implement long-term activities within the remaining course hours, especially when overnight group activities are categorized under "Excursions, Group Overnight Activities."

So under these circumstances, how can we guarantee sufficient course hours to promote the lengthening of group overnight activities? The 2008 version of The Course of Study for Elementary Schools (in the Special Activities section) stated that in order to implement long-term overnight activities, course hours must be appropriately distributed between Core Subjects and Comprehensive Learning Time, as summarized in the following.

Long-term overnight activities which fall under the category of Routine School Activities utilize lodging facilities to hold outdoor activities and can be planned to include Core Subject-related activities or Comprehensive Learning Time activities based on the goals of the program and the extent to which the program is expected to effectively offer learning and exploration activities related to school subject matter.

Among such programs, a variety of experiential activities and overnight activities can be highly relevant to "Comprehensive Learning Time." The "Management of Teaching Hours" section in the general overview of the current edition of the Learning Essentials Guidelines describes the relationship between

"Comprehensive Learning" and "Special Events (Routine School Events)" as follows:

When the expected outcomes from holding special activities which are routine school events are the same as learning activities held during comprehensive learning time, the learning activities held during comprehensive learning time can replace relevant routine events.

*Decrease burden on teachers and guarantee budgets*

The second factor leading to difficulties in implementing group overnight activities is that such activities lead to increased workload for teachers. Teachers must move around in an unfamiliar environment and must be responsible for the safety and health of students from morning to night while conducting activities and serving as counsellors. The longer the duration of the event, the more crucial it is to take into account the burden it puts on teachers mentally and physically. In addition, there is the fact that many teachers have their own children to take care of; so it is extremely difficult for most teachers to be able to take the time away from their own family lives for so many days.

Most elementary schools that conduct long-term group overnight activities rely on the assistance of non-school affiliated instructors in order to decrease the burden for teachers leading activities. When conducting diversified long-term group overnight activities, the assistance of non-school affiliated instructors who possess professional knowledge and skills is substantially beneficial for the optimization of educational outcomes. In addition, university students can also act as instructing assistants to help with different activities and student life counselling. Therefore, teachers do not necessarily have to participate throughout the whole duration of the program, and can be responsible for guiding activities only during part of the program.

Of course, hiring non-school affiliated counsellors requires a substantial budget, and in addition to the costs of hiring instructors, long-term programs incur higher costs for food and lodging. It is not feasible for these fees to be paid entirely by the families of participating students; therefore, they must rely on budget assistance from administrative authorities. Successfully accomplishing meaningful group overnight activities requires the understanding and support of teachers and schools as well as the financial assistance of administrative authorities.





*Ensuring location and instructors*

In recent years, youth education centres have become infamous for problems with aging facilities. These centres include Children's Outdoor Learning Centres, which have long provided children with abundant facilities for experiential activities. After the popularization of a system of designated managers for these facilities, the number of Youth Nature Centre education facilities operated and managed by commissioned private organizations gradually increased. However, as a result of financial issues facing local governments, the number of facilities that have been closed has also increased. A portion of the schools that promote long-term group overnight programs make use of residential homes to provide lodging (farm houses or scattered home stays). However, when considering this issue on the national scale, low-cost public youth educational facilities are a must. While it is important to effectively manage government agency spending, when it comes to the continual establishment and operation of youth educational facilities for running children's nature experiential activities, as well as renovating and maintaining these facilities when necessary, national and local government financial support is vital.

Furthermore, the non-school affiliated instructors for group overnight activities described above possess professional knowledge and skills in outdoor education. Ensuring the quality and training for these instructors in leading and assisting with children's activities is extremely important and this training should be promoted at the national and local levels.

## Outdoor Education Measures by Private Organizations

In recent years, several private organizations promoting outdoor education have appeared in Japan. In this section, we will describe how the nature and number of these organizations have brought changes to outdoor education in Japan.

### Private Organizations Promoting Outdoor Education

For a long time, outdoor education in Japan has been promoted by youth groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, and YWCA. In addition, many private organizations promoting the popularization of outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, bicycle riding, orienteering, skiing, boating, and sailing have been established. Most of these organizations are operated as non-profit organizations,

but some are also operated as general public interest foundation corporations, general public interest group corporations, companies, and private groups.

Resulting from the emergence of these private organizations into the field of outdoor education in Japan, after 1990 even more private organizations promoting adventure education, environmental education, and local reconstruction began to be established all over Japan offering outdoor education programming. A majority of these programs were referred to as "nature schools." The time period during which many of these nature schools were being established coincided with the point at which the government began to promote children's experiential activities. As a result, the number of nature schools in Japan has rapidly grown in the last 20 years. According to the "2010 Fifth Annual Survey of Nature Schools across Japan Report" published by the Japan Environmental Education Alliance, 3,700 nature schools have been established across Japan. A majority of these nature schools are operated as non-profit organizations, but the number also includes general public interest foundation corporations, general public interest group corporations, companies, and private groups.



Shinshu University Faculty of Education "Children's outdoor education camp internship (camp instructing)"





In addition, in recent years, the number of companies that have introduced outdoor education activity programs for new staff members or managerial training has increased, at the same time giving rise to consulting companies which assist these companies in the planning and implementation of such programs.

## Changes after the Increase in Promotion of Outdoor Education by Private Organizations

The increase of private organizations that promote outdoor education has led to major changes in the landscape of Japan's outdoor education.

First, the targets for outdoor education have expanded. Originally, the primary targets for the implementation of outdoor education were elementary and junior high schools. Now, while many outdoor education programs are still geared toward elementary and middle school students, with the establishment of nature schools, the targets for outdoor education have expanded to include all age levels including kindergarten and preschool students, babies, and the elderly. In particular, northern Europe's popular "Forest Kindergarten" programs, which utilize natural environments for early childhood education and childcare activity support, have spread all around Japan by civil organizations. In addition, outdoor education aimed toward truant students, youth with cognitive disabilities or behavioural problems, elderly people suffering from dementia, and other people with physical or mental disabilities, as well as business employee training or athletic group teams (such as Japan's Football Alliance teams) have implemented outdoor education programs throughout Japan primarily through nature schools operated by private organizations.

Second, internet-based private organizations have emerged with the goal of popularizing outdoor education or environmental education. Specifically, this includes "Japan Outdoor Network" (JON, established in 1993), "Japan Environmental Education Forum" (JEEF, authorized by the Ministry of the Environment in 1997), "Council for Outdoor & Nature Experiences" (CONE, established in 1999), "National Network of Forest Kindergartens" (established in 2008), etc. These organizations continue to strengthen the networks between organizations including the sharing of information, letter writing, instructor training, study/training, and exchange.

Third is the participation of ordinary businesses in outdoor education. As

described above, the management and operation of public youth education facilities transitioned from direct management by local governments to a system of designated managers, commissioning private organizations to take over facility management. The bodies in charge of facility management are mostly private operators involved in the promotion of outdoor education through nature schools; however, there are only a few facilities run by local companies. What is more, there are some large companies that work together with private organizations to fund the promotion of outdoor education or environmental education to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities.

## Training for Outdoor Education Instructors

In order to promote outdoor education, it is vital to increase the number and ensure the quality of qualified instructors. This section will discuss the current situation and existing problems in the training of Japan's outdoor education instructors.

### The Current Situation of Outdoor Education Instructor Training

*Outdoor education instructor training in universities*

In Japan many universities offer courses on outdoor education or environmental education in the athletics/health department, environmental science department, agricultural science department, oceanography department and others; however, nearly none of these universities offer courses or departments designed for the training of outdoor education instructors. At present, universities with courses designed for the training of outdoor education instructors include the Shinshu University Faculty of Education Outdoor Education course, Hokkaido University of Education Iwamizawa Campus Outdoor Lifestyles specialized course, Biwako Seikei Sport College Outdoor Education course, among others. It is worth noting that International Nature and Outdoor Activity College is an institution that specializes in offering outdoor education and environmental education instructor training (offering a 3 year program).

*Outdoor education instructor training by national and local public organizations and youth education facilities*

National and local public organizations as well as youth education facilities

offer courses for the strengthening and training of outdoor education and environmental education knowledge, skills, and instructing abilities. Many of these courses are aimed toward school teachers, employees at youth education facilities, social education instructors, and employees of private organizations.

However, within this field of outdoor education instructor training, only youth education facilities offer training programs for activity volunteers.

*Instructor training by private organizations*

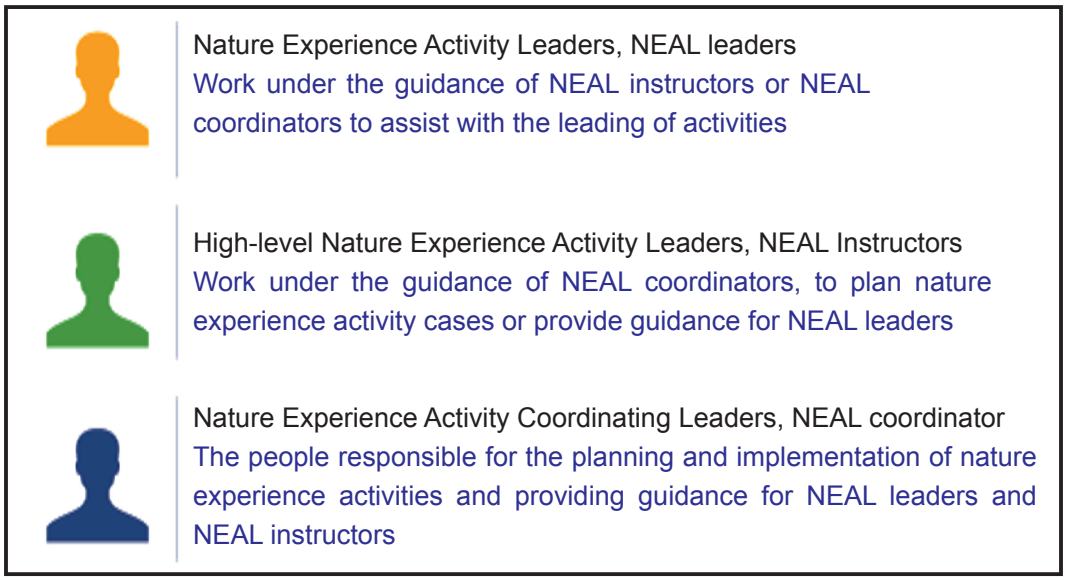


Image 3 Types of Certifications and Their Roles within Japan's Nature Experience Activity Leader Certification System (NEAL)

With the goal of cultivating physically and mentally healthy youth, one method, which youth groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, and the YWCA employ, is the offering of experiential activities in nature. As a result, when these youth organizations offer training for the instructors who assist with youth activities, they include outdoor education and environmental education knowledge, skills, and instructing ability training.

Private organizations which run camping, hiking, bicycle riding, orienteering, skiing, boating, and sailing outdoor activities offer instructor training to cultivate the professional abilities relating to the specific types of activities which they provide. Among these organizations, several have certification programs for instructor qualifications. However, these certifications that are defined by individual organizations are not nationally recognized, and their use is limited.

Moreover, because non-governmental nature schools are mostly operated by small-scale organizations, it is practically challenging for these programs to only employ instructors trained within their own organization.

Similar to the smaller scale instructor training offered at the private level, with the purpose of promoting and popularizing nature experience activities, in 1999 the non-profit organization "Council for Outdoor & Nature Experiences" was established in order to offer nature experience instructor training programs at the national scale for organizations and networks in the fields of outdoor education and environmental education. By March 2012, the number of instructors who had completed CONE instructor training courses had reached 15,000. Later, CONE worked together with the youth education revitalization organizations governed by youth education facilities (28 facilities, as in Image 2), to establish the Nature Experience Activity Leader Certification System in 2013 (NEAL) (See Image 3).

## Problems with Japan's Outdoor Education Instructor Training

Outdoor education instructor training at Japan's universities, national and local public organizations, youth education facilities and non-governmental organizations is not exactly thriving. The main reason behind this is that job opportunities in the field of outdoor education are limited.

Youth education facilities that serve as sites for outdoor education programs can be found all over Japan. However, a majority of employees at Japan's youth education facilities are school teachers or administrative workers who have been dispatched to work in those locations. For example, in "A" County Children's Outdoor Learning Centre, the employees in the instructing department are "A" County public school teachers and the management department employees are "A" County administrative workers (civil servants) who have been dispatched to work at the Youth Nature Centre for a three-year period, after which they will return to their original posts as teachers and administrators. This is the current situation at a majority of youth education facilities around Japan.

In recent years, with the popularization of the system of designated managers at public facilities, commissioning private organizations to manage and operate these facilities, it has become easier to hire staff with professional backgrounds. However, since most of these public facilities are small in scale, it is difficult to hire many young employees. Although larger-scale national facilities actively recruit

professional staff, there is a limit to the number of new job opportunities since there are only 28 locations nationwide.

In addition, nature schools operated by private organizations that offer outdoor education programs are prevalent all over Japan; however, many are small-scale organizations. As a result, a majority rely on student volunteers to serve as outdoor education instructors. Very few of these organizations are able to formally hire staff.

Training courses for outdoor education instructing at the university level are limited; however, programs which offer training in basic knowledge, skills, and leadership for outdoor education and environmental education are widely available, but also subject to the same influences described above.

In the face of these difficulties, the Council for Outdoor & Nature Experiences (CONE) and youth education revitalization organizations established the Nature Experience Activity Leader Certification System (NEAL) in 2013, in the hopes of enriching outdoor education and environmental education talent in the years to come.



## Conclusion

This chapter has described how outdoor education became a central tenet of Japan's national education policy, presented the history, current situation, and ongoing issues around outdoor education in Japan, and provided several examples of outdoor education programs implemented by schools and private organizations.

In the past 20 years, there have been major advancements in the field of outdoor education in Japan with the gradual emergence of many related education policies that have brought about more diverse education programs, and also with the establishment of private organizations that provide outdoor education programs. In addition, the establishment of outdoor education institutes has energized research on this topic.



"Outdoor education course coastal internship (snorkeling)", Faculty of Education, Shinshu University

The increasing importance of outdoor education in Japan is deeply related to changes in the social environment around children. Although with internationalization, and great strides in information and science, modern children do not lack material convenience, a number of educational issues continue to be prevalent, including rule breaking, truancy, bullying, lack of independence, cooperative ability, and decline in physical health. In a rapidly changing social environment, it is a crucially important task for education to cultivate talent for a world of globalization and scientific advancement, to cultivate students with the ability to adapt to the environmental problems facing the globe: in other words, students with problem-solving skills, the ability to take action, a sense of curiosity, rich emotions, communication skills, and physical health. Outdoor education has an important role to play in addressing the problems of modern education.

This chapter has described many of the on-going issues facing outdoor education in Japan that must be addressed in order to improve future prospects in this field. We hope that the measures taken in the promotion of outdoor education in Japan can contribute to the development of outdoor education in Taiwan. We also hope that the importance of outdoor education can be widely recognized across Taiwan and Japan, and that outdoor education activities can contribute to the cultivation of mental and physical health for generations of children to come.




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# Exploring Formosa:
# Uncovering Outdoor Education in Taiwan

# *Exploring Formosa：Uncovering Outdoor Education in Taiwan*

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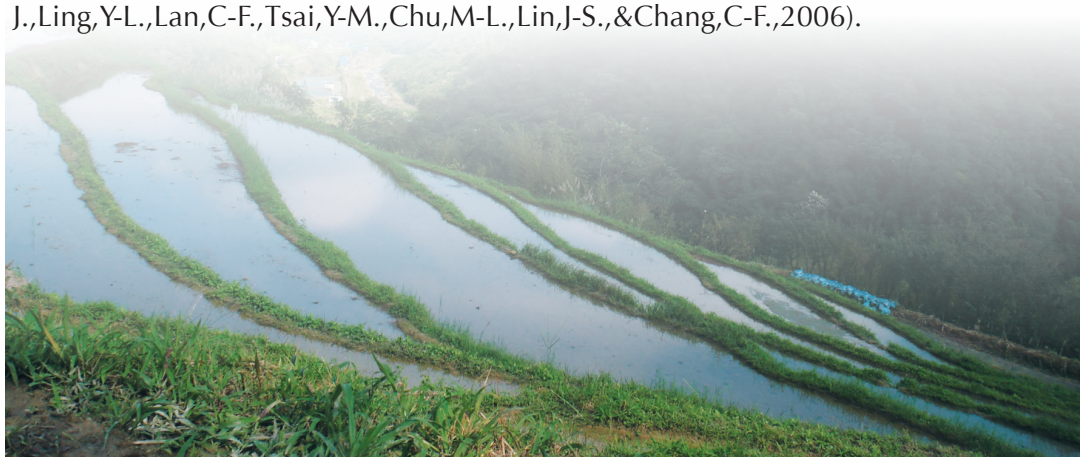
## Introduction

Situated between the Tropics and Subtropics (22-25°N latitude), the island of Taiwan is warm and wet throughout the year. The extrusion of the Philippine Sea Plate and the Eurasian Plate formed the towering mountains in the middle of the island. As there are over 200 peaks with elevations over 3,000 meters in Taiwan, it owns a diverse and unique terrestrial ecosystem, from the mangrove shoreline, the strand forest, the monsoon forest, the broad-leaf forest, the mixed coniferous forest, to the alpine tundra in high areas. Lying in the western part of the Pacific Ocean and in the middle of the Asian continent, Taiwan is an independent island surrounded

by the ocean, and the island's coastal landscapes include sandy shores (on the western coast), headland bays (on the northern coast), cliffs (on the eastern coast), and coral reefs (on the southern coast).

As of December 2015, the number of living species in Taiwan was documented as 58,216. The number of species per unit area is relatively high, considering that the total number of global life species is 1.75 million. Furthermore, the special geographical conditions of the island contribute to high percentages of endemic species (Ministry of the Interior, Construction and Planning Agency, 2016). There are 15 endemic birds out of the currently known 153 bird species in Taiwan and 20 endemic snakes or geckos out of the 96 reptiles. In 2000, the density of endemic species in Taiwan ranked number 7 in Myers' investigation of the top 25 regions with the highest biodiversity in the world (Zheng, A-Y. & Shen, S-F. ; Shen, S-F.)

The high demand for labor in Taiwan's economy boosted the population from 11.45 million in 1961 to 20.55 million in 1991. Most of the increased population lives in the city. Since 1950, people have been moving into cities which has increased the percentage of urban population from 24% in 1950 to 75% in 1991. Demographic data in 2016 shows that residents in the major six municipalities account for 70% of the overall 23.54 million people in Taiwan. Besides, school enrollment statistics from the Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan) (MOE) in 2016 indicate that over 200,000 school children are foreign-born Taiwanese, making up 10% of the overall number of middle and elementary school students. As Taiwan is experiencing demographic changes like low birth rate, immigration, and urbanization, human connection, social interaction, and the use of land and resource are gradually changing (Zhang, Y-H.,1999 ; Tsai, W-H.,Lee,C-J.,Ling,Y-L.,Lan,C-F.,Tsai,Y-M.,Chu,M-L.,Lin,J-S.,&Chang,C-F.,2006).



Its diverse natural ecology, unique geographical location and multiple landscapes have earned Taiwan the name "Formosa[1]." The island is also a connecting center for political, cultural and economic interactions between the East and West. The multicultural society in Taiwan, which nurtures risk-takers and challenge-bearers, is a result of 400 years of immigration history and recent immigration policies. While Taiwan possesses abundant outdoor education resources and materials, these assets are not fully integrated into school education, enriching the teaching and learning process. The history of education reform in Taiwan normally reflects complicated factors resulting from the shift of social and cultural paradigms. The latest progress is the implementation of 12-year Basic Education, and the MOE has determined to promote outdoor education. This article will review the history of outdoor education in Taiwan, related issues, and the development of relevant resources. It will then discuss difficulties, challenges and the future of outdoor education implementation.



1 Information from standardized textbooks in Taiwan : In the 16th century Portuguese sailors shouted at the coast of Taiwan: Ilha Formosa! Formosa means "beautiful island " in Portuguese.

# Evolving Forms of Outdoor Education in Taiwan

Outdoor education has existed in Taiwan's school system for a long time. In the period of Japanese rule, outdoor education was the extension of subject learning, taking the form of hiking trips, study tours, and school excursions. Today, it is more common for schools to hold overnight camping or graduation trips. While worldwide outdoor education is becoming more diversified and inclusive along the development of pedagogical concepts and practices, outdoor education in Taiwan tends to be a form of big-party tourism, with scant attention paid to the diversity of teaching models or to learning effectiveness. The following section will introduce the historical development of the forms of outdoor education in the Taiwanese school system.

## Hiking Education and Study Tours

During the Japanese occupation, schools offered several off-campus activities including excursions, study tours and hiking trips that required students to take a walk outside of the school, in order to improve team work, physical strength, and learning motivation(Lin, M-C.,2004). Study tours were normally longer and farther than excursions, and they were mostly academic oriented visits on foot or by public transport, though cross-regional study tours were sometimes called excursions as well. The concept of the study tour was thus brought into Taiwan in the beginning of Japan's rule in 1895(Jiang, J-S.,2014). In 1897, hiking became another outdoor learning activity accepted by educational institutions. The process and number of hiking trips were flexible and decided by each school. In February 1900, for example, Principal Kobayashi of the Taipei Normal School led more than 50 students to climb Mount Datun for the first time, letting his subtropical-living students experience snow. This was the start of school-organized mountain climbing and hiking in Taiwan(Lin, M-C.,2006).

## Excursions

The excursion was the most common outdoor education activity in Taiwan's elementary schools after World War II. The elementary school curriculum for group activities announced by MOE in 1962 mandated that there should be one field trip in each semester. Although excursion was usually understood as simply travelling,

it, in reality, fulfilled various educational purposes in its interdisciplinary nature—the activity itself was a comprehensive lesson. A school-organized excursion was like a huge teaching unit, in which students could learn in a holistic way. As a group learning activity, an excursion was divided into three phases: the preparation beforehand, the development in process, and the wrap-up afterward. Teaching of different subjects could be integrated to leave more impressions and improve learning effectiveness. For example, each group of students could present in a public speaking class what they had seen, smelled, done or thought during the trip. Such a practice helped children to increase life experiences.

There were multiple goals of holding an excursion. Aside from bringing out positive emotions and motivating learning interests, excursions could open up students' minds and broaden their knowledge by connecting them to nature and society. They were also opportunities to change the learning patterns of classroom teaching, inspiring students to take the whole universe as their school and nature as their teacher. Most excursions took place in spring and in fall. The distance was decided by students' ages as well as by their physical abilities. The lower grades normally visited neighboring areas and the middle grades traveled inside the county, whereas the higher grades could visit neighboring counties. An excursion usually took up a half day for lower grades and a whole day for other grades. Any destination less than 3 kilometers away would be reached on foot. However, many schools became increasingly concerned about safety issues after a great number of traffic accidents were reported. Some of the schools turned conservative and even closed off the activity(Hu, L-H.,1990 ; Kao, J-K.,1970 ; Wang, J-H.,1993).

## School Field Trips from 1980-2000

In the 1980s, excursions and hiking trips slowly faded out and were replaced by short visits and leisure activities in more distant places reached by vehicle. Our interviews with senior outdoor education instructors[2] reveals that in the early 1980s, there used to be one field trip organized by teachers in each school year. By the late 1980s, schools started to rent tour buses to transport students to farther destinations. In the 1990s, tourism agencies started to take over the organization of school field

2. The interviewees were four senior educators who have been involved in outdoor education for over 20 years. They are: Kun-Shan Lee with the expertise in Earth sciences, Mao-Shu Yang in social Science, Cing-Jhang He in biology and ecology, and Jin-Syue Chen in environmental education and art.

trips and, as a result, outdoor education has become a kind of tourism business. At the end of the 1990s, the Procurement Act enforced by the Taiwanese government officially set up standards for school field trip suppliers, shifting the responsibility of holding field trips from the teacher to the tourism agency.



From 1980 to 2000, school organized field trips evolved to become group trips of same-grade students. However, as environmental education in Taiwan was awakening in this period, many scholars devoted themselves to promoting the integration of environmental issues into experiential and exploration-based learning. Sin Wang (1991/1992/1995), for example, stresses that teachers should design their own teaching plans and units for school field trips, integrating natural elements into students' learning. Pei-Lien Wang (1995) points out that outdoor education has become the most common and effective teaching method for environmental education.

Guan-Cheng Yang (1998) argued that the most effective way to teach about the environment was to teach in the natural environment, namely outdoor education. Efforts from various scholars encouraged elementary and middle school teachers to connect field trips to environmental issues, and to increase their willingness to take

students into nature or neighboring communities to explore knowledge of the land and society(Lee, K-S.,1990/1991/1995 ; Lai, Y-F.,1997 ; Lee, K-S.&Yang,M-S.,1998). It is likely due to the close connection between outdoor education and environmental education made in this period that some environmental educators today argue that it is not necessary to promote outdoor education exclusively anymore, since it should be a part of environmental education. This reminds us to rethink the relationship between outdoor education and environmental education. How do we separate them in the elementary and middle school curriculum design? How do we make them complementary to one another?

## School Field Trips after 2000



Currently, schools in Taiwan typically appoint travel agencies to arrange school field trips for students of the same school year under the rules of the Government Procurement Act. Therefore, most trips are limited a theme park or designated recreational area to accommodate the space demanded by the tour buses. Thus, because of this way of planning, school field trips have become less meaningful in its educational value.

The unclear nature of the teacher's role in these outdoor activities is another problem. The administrative institution requests that there be one field trip in each school year, and therefore, most middle school students will have to attend three field trips throughout their junior high years at their own expense. 7th grade will go for a one-day trip in recreational areas, museums, farms or nature educational centers, and 8th grade will attend overnight camping trips 9th grade usually has a three-day graduation tour in multiple cities(Lee, K-S.,2006 ; National Academy for Educational Research.,2011 ; Liu, M-S.,2012 ; Hsu, T-L.,2013 ; Hsiao, Ian Y-L., &

Tsai, C-T.,2016).

Outdoor education in Taiwan evolved from an early style of experiential activities to the style of subject/issue-based projects, such as nature investigations, geographical field trips and environmental studies. The most common form of outdoor education today is, however, the commercial tour in a large theme park. The content of outdoor education in Taiwan did not have much profound development in spite of the abundant environmental resources of the island. Systematic planning and the development of high quality curriculum are needed to promote better outdoor educational choices. Moreover it is also a challenge for outdoor educators to work beyond the frame of the current educational institution and change the conventional textbook-based teaching divided by class sessions, allowing room for deeper reflections upon the value and the purpose of education(Lee, K-S.,2006 ; National Academy for Educational Research.,2011).

In the 2014 "ROC Outdoor Education Declaration" by MOE, the term "outdoor education" officially replaced the old term "school field trip" to be consistent with the multiple values and benefits of the international movement of outdoor education. The declaration not only announced expectations for the quality of outdoor curriculum, but also promised to establish supporting systems and mechanisms for the development of outdoor education, so schools could incorporate learning resources from both inside and outside to develop school-based outdoor education. Currently, school-based outdoor education experience and its quality in Taiwan vary from case to case. Three forms of outdoor education practice are described as follows:

1. **Activity-based:** this kind of outdoor education usually takes the form of an experiential visit. The point is to have fun in the activity. Although learning effectiveness is a purported goal, there is usually little in the activity designed for effective learning. Assessment of learning effectiveness is also rare; in most cases, there will only be a satisfaction survey.
2. **Subject-based:** this kind of outdoor education is integrated into a subject or discipline. Normally schools will set up curriculum objectives and conduct an assessment afterwards. The forms of assessment conducted in this case are limited to wrap-up presentations, reflective writing or worksheets, because the schools might have insufficient knowledge of evaluation methods and are short-staffed. Schools working on outdoor curriculum are more likely to

have experience in developing high quality learning projects which should be collected and organized through cooperation between schools and academia.

3. **School-based:** some schools feature outdoor education because it has multiple learning benefits. Some countryside schools faced with the outflow of population and low birth rates, for instance, use outdoor education to appeal to more students. Additionally, the recent "Three-Type Acts of Experimental Education" encourages schools to adopt alternative pedagogical concepts. Some experimental schools prioritize outdoor education in their curriculum design, and then integrate the national curriculum objectives into the new curriculum.

The above three forms of outdoor education are different in scope, teaching quality and learning effectiveness. They provide different perspectives of integrating outdoor education in the school curriculum: outdoor education as activity, outdoor education as curriculum, and outdoor education as learning. Each school can choose based on its own resources, features, and practical experiences, and gradually develop its school-based outdoor curriculum. To strive for a better integration of outdoor education in the school curriculum, we need more pedagogical studies and cooperation between academia and schools.



# Related Issues and Resource Development of Outdoor Education

## Outdoor Education Related Issues in Formal Education

Outdoor education has diverse contents and benefits, as well as the capacity to involve different educational issues/subjects, such as environmental education, oceanic education, mountain education, recreational excursions and education for sustainable development. In the historical development of education in Taiwan both inside and outside of the school system, there have been accumulated resources and experiences in these areas, including the development of teaching sites and curricula, the improvement of proficiencies and experiences of the teaching staff. These developments have become the foundation for the promotion of outdoor education.

The historical development of middle and elementary school education in Taiwan (as introduced above) reveals that these educational issues/subjects (see table 2) are closely related to the content of outdoor education. They took different forms in the early subject-knowledge based curriculum. Environmental education and oceanic education were, for instance, integrated as part of several learning areas. Scout and "Xiangtu ( 鄉土 )" education[3], on the other hand, had specific teaching hours every week. Study tours, education for sustainable development, mountain education and biodiversity were taught as special school-based curricula.

Although the efforts of integrating these issues/subjects into school curriculum inevitably involve some political intentions, these efforts still represent the call for a multipurpose and multi-value education from various social groups such as academics , various NGOs and teacher groups etc. Besides, we have to ask, "What has to be learned in compulsory education?" Currently, 19 issues are assigned in the curriculum outline of the 12-year Basic Education—which will come into play in 2019— including gender equity, human rights, the environment, the ocean, moral integrity, and so on. According to the outline, all learning areas are required to integrate issues into the curriculum. In the face of a tight teaching schedule and a busy campus life, educators have to thoroughly and constantly think about how to simplify the overall curriculum and incorporate various learning subjects and

3. For more details, see Table 2.

issues. Thus, it is fundamental for educators to know why it has to be "outdoors" and what the purpose of going outdoors is. Outdoor education is not an individual subject; nor does it mean simply relocating classroom teaching to outdoor spaces. The outdoor environment, especially nature, provides more diverse, plentiful, and variable learning materials, and therefore educators should have their lessons outdoors when it is appropriate to do so. This means the development of outdoor education must go hand in hand with school curriculum in terms of content and time available. In other words, the promotion of the current development of outdoor education in the school system will have to focus on two themes: school-based outdoor education and curriculum-based outdoor education.

Table 2. Related issues/subjects of outdoor education in Taiwan

| Related issues/ subjects | Year of critical events | Implementation highlights |
|---|---|---|
| Scouting | The subject "Scouts of the Party" was taught in middle school since 1929 | Scouting education was integrated into the junior high curriculum in 1983. Students participate in scouting activities one hour a week. These activities include lessons on scout movements, service learning, wilderness education and life-skill application. |
| "*Xiangtu* ( 鄉土 )"education | Taught as a subject in middle and elementary school after the amendment of the standards of middle and elementary education in 1993 | *Xiangtu* education can also be understood as local culture education. It aims to foster meaningful understanding of the place students live in. In this, *Xiangtu* education hopes to cultivate a sense of identity rooted in the place that culminate in giving back to the community and a open-minded worldview that respect different cultures. |
| Environmental education | The "Framework of Environmental policy" was announced in 1987 by the Executive Yuan. The Environmental Education Act was passed in 2011. | Environmental education became one of the main themes in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. Environmental education is closely related to outdoor education. The most effective method of environmental education is to teach in the natural environment. Environmental issues are important modules in the curriculum of outdoor education. |
| Oceanic education | The "White Paper of Oceanic Education Policy" was drafted in 2007. | Oceanic education became one of the main themes in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. |

| Related issues/ subjects | Year of critical events | Implementation highlights |
|---|---|---|
| Featured schools and rural study tours | The "Project and Program of Developing Featured Middle and Elementary Schools" was promoted by MOE in 2007. The "Program of Featured Study Tour for Rural Middle and Elementary Schools" was initiated in 2015. | Rural schools were encouraged to integrate their neighboring natural and cultural resources into their curriculum. The local community also played a part in attracting local and foreign groups to have study tours. This helped to boost the local economy, increase interactions, and expand students' learning fields, allowing the school to be a possible place for outdoor education. |
| Sustainable campus | The 921 Earthquake in 1999 resulted in the collapse and destruction of school infrastructure. The "Promotion Project of Sustainable Campus" was drafted by MOE in 2001. | Transforming the campus into a community-shared public space will help to provide a modern, safe, sanitary, healthy, and human-friendly learning environment. Combined with community building projects, the transformation of campus will be able to fulfill the goals of sustainability and education reform. Integrating the physical environment of the school into teaching will be the easiest step in promoting outdoor education. |
| Biodiversity | The "Executive Yuan[4] Biodiversity Promotion Program" was proposed in 2001. | The program was directed by the Executive Yuan with cooperation between various public offices. The MOE executed "Improvement Program of Biodiversity Promotion and Teaching" was the part of the program, in which the international working experience of promoting biodiversity was introduced. |
| Mountain education | The "Action Plan of Mountain Education" was signed by MOE in 2012. | The purpose is to educate about safety principles for mountain activities, reducing accidents. The broader definition of mountain education is for learners to have experience in the mountain area and the wilderness through educational activities like mountain climbing, exploration, and overall environmental learning. |

## Resource Development and Linkage Outside of the School System

The unique geographical location and landscapes of Taiwan have contributed to the island's splendid biodiversity, as well as to the development of agriculture,

4. The Executive Yuan is the highest administrative agency of the Taiwanese government.

forestry, and fishery. The rise and fall of these industries has left precious educational materials to us, which are diverse and rich resources for outdoor education in general. Learning facilities and sites run by either public offices or NGOs are able to provide the public not only places of leisure, but also resources for outdoor educators.

In 2013, the "Quality Outdoor Education Alliance" supported by more than 10 NGO/NPOs[5] determined to create more out-of-classroom learning opportunities for students by connecting with industries and local cultures that encourage hand-working or nature exploration experiences, in order to develop an environmental mindset and a healthy body. Caring about the Taiwanese society, these NGO/NPOs work on issues like land justice, environmental and cultural conservation, human rights, and education; all of these are under the discourse of interaction between human and nature, or between human and society. The organizing and action capacity of these NGO/NPOs, as well as their enthusiasm, have inspired conservative schools to make changes. In other words, citizen groups are now another strong force for promoting outdoor education.

Post-modern pedagogy believes that learning is not a linear process; nor is it limited to textbook knowledge, or confined by the classroom. In fact, only 18.5% of the learning that takes place between kindergarten and 12$^{th}$ grade comes from school education. There are abundant learning resources outside of school in Taiwan, but these are not commonly connected to school curriculum or teaching. This might be a result of a culture of closed teaching environments in schools. It is also related to the failure of trans-departmental cooperation and public perception of school education. Our school education has long been led by standardized examinations. Ideas of standard education not only prevail in the school system, but are deeply rooted in parents' minds. Standardized education makes textbook knowledge the only content of learning, while diverse and flexible out-of-school educational opportunities are given the cold shoulder by schools and parents. Outdoor education, triggering concerns of budgets and safety issues, is normally considered to be an unnecessary leisure activity. Furthermore, although there are

5. These organizations include: Taiwan Thousand Miles Trail Association, The Society of Wilderness, Homemakers United Foundation, The National Federation of Teachers Unions, National Alliance of Presidents of Parents Associations, The General Association of the Scouts of China, Chinese Society for Environmental Education, Chinese Wild Bird Federation, National Association for the Promotion of Community Universities, and K2 Nature Center.

splendid and diverse outdoor education curricula, most are designed to be one-time experiences, targeting general tourists, and therefore lack long-term and continual effectiveness. Also, the curricula are usually designed without knowing participants' needs and backgrounds, making it difficult to evaluate effectiveness, most evaluation conducted only through satisfaction surveys. Other factors like budget limits, unsupportive administrations, tight schedules, and lack of expertise and confidence, all discourage teachers from enacting outdoor curriculum. These difficulties need to be addressed before any promotion of outdoor education can work.

## Difficulties and Challenges

Outdoor education isn't uncommon in Taiwan, nor is it a new teaching approach. In fact, there has always been a historical context of outdoor education. As the learning effects and other benefits of outdoor education gradually earn recognition throughout the international education field, there are also efforts to improve outdoor education's quality in Taiwan, drawing expertise and wisdom from all fields. The Taiwanese MOE has drafted a mid-term proposal of the "Implementation Directions for the Promotion of Outdoor Education." Nevertheless, there are systemic and comprehensive challenges in implementing school-based outdoor education(National Academy for Educational Research.,2011,2014).



## What Is the Purpose of (School) Education



"Students will not study without having tests!" "If we get the correct answer already, why should we waste time to discuss the question, teacher?" This is the "test culture" in the Taiwanese school system, in which the values of fairness and standardization make the textbook the only material of learning. The purpose of learning is to enter a better school, and the purpose of studying is for better grades. Values like these have been highly criticized and the deconstruction of standardized curriculum is taking place: for example, through the Three-Type Acts of Experimental Education passed in 2014. However, it is undeniable that diplomaism is still the most prevailing ideology in Taiwanese society. As there is no assigned textbook or standard learning materials for outdoor education, parents, students, and teachers tend to regard it as an annual recreational activity. Thus, should outdoor education be considered an extra burden or a necessary profession of teachers? The promotion of outdoor education will spontaneously encourage society to re-conceptualize school curriculum. It will also inspire critical reflections on the purpose of schooling.

## Who is Responsible for Education?



"Teacher, where is your car? We want to give you 10 barrels of drinking water!" A passerby said this to a schoolteacher when he saw students biking on the road one summer vacation. This event struck a chord with us. Outdoor education is learning of the real world — "real learning," meaning stepping outside of the classroom and into the community, nature, and wilderness to have interactions with them. It takes the involvement of not only parents but every adult in the community to educate a child. There are diverse outdoor education resources in Taiwan, including national parks, nature education centers, experiential projects in rural and fishing villages, tourism factories[6], and so on. Policies and cross-functional cooperation are needed to integrate these learning resources. In addition, the younger generations will face more challenges beyond those defined by the textbook, as they grow up in a transforming world and a complex society. Therefore, they must learn in a real world context, and they need the support and recognition of society, as well as the support of every adult, including learning field administrators, parents, and teachers.

## Support of the School Administrative System

"I spent more time dealing with the bureaucratic documents than preparing for the class. I don't want to do this anymore! I will reconsider the decision of practicing outdoor education." These are the words of a junior high school teacher who used to be enthusiastic about outdoor education, and has acquired the subsidy from the Forestry Bureau. Yet his zeal was cooled by the tedious procedure of paper

6. The Ministry of Economic Affairs assists factories with unique characteristics, industrial history and culture, and desires to upgrade with holistic planning, promoting integration of local industry culture and tourism . Tourism factories may offer different activities such as guided tour, DIY activities, and/or various workshops.

work. While there are complicated problems and difficulties of implementing school-based outdoor education, the most frustrating situation for teachers is when school administrators refuse to support them. The support of administration includes assistance with paper work, course arrangements, and safety responsibilities. Even though MOE has announced implementation principles for outdoor education, municipal education bureaus and schools have not implemented practical rules accordingly. If outdoor education should be included in school curriculum, its incorporation with teaching disciplines and the support of the administrative system are necessary.



## The Benefits of Systematic Implementation

The "MOE Implemented Outdoor Education Promotion Plan" has 52 specific action projects, conducted by different offices of MOE. The action project is the driving force for outdoor education to move forward. While those who are concerned about the development of outdoor education hold high expectations that the MOE implementation project could push it forward, the following challenges should not be neglected in the process of implementing the action projects:

- **Horizontal integration:** as all the action projects are carried out respectively, it is necessary to combine and integrate the results, the products and the energy of these action projects, so that the comprehensive effect can be achieved.
- **Purpose oriented:** the implementing team needs to hold on to the purpose of each action project, avoiding formalism.
- **Targets of assessment:** the targets of assessment for the action project have to be comprehensive, so they can function as a lighthouse indicating directions for the implementing offices. An examination mechanism can then be built.
- **In-process modification:** action projects need regular in-process modification to remove achieved short-term objectives and add in further ideas.

## Trans-Disciplinary Cooperation

Non-school-based outdoor education resources in Taiwan are diverse and plentiful but are not commonly integrated into school curriculum. The implementation of school-based outdoor education requires courses and services provided by multiple learning sites, and yet these sites rarely incorporate teachers' requirements into their course and activity development. In light of the gap between schools and learning sites, policies of trans-disciplinary cooperation are necessary for developing outdoor education. These include:

*Short-term actions*

- Connect the resource and the information of both school and learning sites, such as school teachers' requirements of outdoor education, and the outdoor courses or activities the learning site can provide.
- Learning sites will be encouraged by MOE to provide high quality outdoor education curricula, for which the school can apply.
- Coordinate the cooperation between both sides and encourage them to develop the outdoor curriculum together.

*Long-term actions*

Develop supporting measures for school-based outdoor education, including integrating outdoor courses outside of and inside the school, conducting quality assessments for outdoor courses and the evaluation of learning effectiveness, improving the school teachers' competence of course management, as well as securing the financial sources and improving safety management.



## Improving the Quality of Outdoor Education

The reason we use outdoor "curricula" or "courses" instead of "activities" is to remind the reader that outdoor education should not end up as a pile of activities, or become "too much recreation, too little learning," as many educators criticize. The choice of words also emphasizes that outdoor education is not an individual subject, nor is it a transfer of classroom teaching into the outdoor environment(Ford,1981 ; Hammerman,1973). The purpose of outdoor course design is to create deep learning experiences, and the design should string every activity together, creating a continuity of learning experiences(Dewey,1938). This is why course evaluation is needed—to make sure that there is alignment between course objectives, teaching activities, and learning effectiveness. The improvement of outdoor education quality is guaranteed as long as teachers start to solve the problems of course alignment and course evaluation. Teachers in Taiwan would agree that the main difference between classroom teaching and outdoor education is that there is no textbook. A textbook itself is a curriculum designed by pedagogical experts. It already assigns the learning objectives, the knowledge maps,







the learning levels, and so on, and thus a teacher can only be creative in innovating teaching activities and carrying out a "good session." On the other hand, outdoor education relies on the learning site (rather than the textbook) to provide the content of learning. As a result, the curriculum will turn from standardized and structured into diverse and flexible, since most place-based learning topics are cross-subject or trans-disciplinary. Considering that education in Taiwan is conventionally textbook-oriented, the improvement of outdoor education quality will not be a short-term task in the aspects of course evaluation, effectiveness assessment, and course flexibility.

## The Gatekeeper of Curriculum Quality: the Teacher

Currently, the two most commonly criticized problems of school-based outdoor education are: 1) the experience is too recreation-oriented, and 2) the tour management is outsourced to travel agencies, and as a result the teacher's role is diminished. Front line teachers are historically the determining factor of course reform. In the case of outdoor education, unlike teaching in a classroom, teachers are no longer the only instructor on site. So what is the role of the teacher? An outdoor learning site may be able to provide quality teaching activities and a qualified lecturer, but it cannot be prepared in the aspects of the students' needs and their previous learning experiences. It is unlikely for a learning site to replace the teacher's role in conducting pre-course preparation and follow-up reflection, both of which are crucial for quality learning. Teachers of outdoor education are not always the one who carry out the teaching practice; instead, they are project managers who make sure that various learning resources are integrated. Besides, they are also learning facilitators and companions to the students, as well as gatekeepers of course quality who know the students' needs. This means the challenges of inexperienced outdoor educators lie not only in their teaching competence, but also in their beliefs and value systems.

## Recent Policies and Future Prospects

The recent development of the related issues of outdoor education reveals that the 12-year Basic Education and the MOE Implemented Outdoor Education Program, are the most influential policies for the future of outdoor education in Taiwan. These two policies are connected and complementary.

### The MOE Implemented Outdoor Education Promotion Plan

In recent years, several citizen groups, legislators, and authorities concerned with outdoor education have been working together to promote the implementation of outdoor education (see table 3), as they recognize its multiple benefits for students' mental and physical health, as well as its contribution to curriculum reform. The most holistic program of all is the 2014 MOE Implemented Outdoor Education Promotion Plan, the MOE action plan to promote outdoor education. In this promotion plan, there are five systems, 15 action strategies, and 48 (now 52) sub-projects (see table 4) hosted or coordinated by 12 public offices under MOE. Three additional sections have been set up to facilitate the program:"Outdoor Education Promotion Council","Outdoor Education Promotion Committee" and "Outdoor Education Research Office" (See figure 4). We expect four goals to be achieved in the following ten years, so the vision of the ROC Outdoor Education Declaration can be realized.

1. Flip the concept of learning—both inside and outside the classroom are places of learning.
2. Be consistent with the holistic 12-year Basic Education.
3. Establish normalized quality outdoor education.
4. Further the participation and cooperation of citizen groups in outdoor education.



Table 3 The recent development of outdoor education in Taiwan

| Year/Date | Event |
|---|---|
| Dec 03,12 | 60 legislators signed a provisional proposal, urging related public departments to promote the outdoor education policy together. |
| Dec ,12 | 11 nationwide grassroots organizations established the“Quality Outdoor Education Alliance”. |
| Jan 23,14 | MOE announced the “Directions for the Establishment of the Outdoor Education Promotion Council.” |
| Jun 26,14 | MOE announced the “ROC Outdoor Education Declaration” |
| Dec,14 | MOE drafted the “Outdoor Education Promotion Plan (2015-2019)” |
| Apr 21,15 | the K-12 Education Administration, MOE subsidy the “Implementation of Outdoor Education.” |
| Oct 7,15 | The establishment of the Outdoor Education Research Office and the Outdoor Education Practice Site. |
| Oct 31,16 | The establishment of the MOE Outdoor Education Promotion Committee. |

Table 4 The analysis of the MOE five-system action project

| The five systems | Action strategies/number | Number of the action projects |
|---|---|---|
| Administrative support | Add and amend outdoor education regulations; substantiate promotion organizations and resource mediation platforms; strengthen back office support; continue outdoor education promotion programs and establish evaluation and incentive mechanisms. /5 | 21 |
| Field resource | Establish cooperation mechanisms in every level of government; encourage schools to integrate community resources for outdoor education; encourage NGO/NPOs to get involved in the promotion of outdoor education. /3 | 9 |
| Safety management | Establish safety management and emergency response measures; improve the safety management capacity of the staff. /2 | 4 |
| Teacher education | Establish all levels of the teacher education system for outdoor education; build up outdoor education teaching communities; improve the expertise of outdoor education staff of all levels. /3 | 13 |
| Curriculum development | Improve the quality of outdoor curricula; develop robust outdoor education theory and encourage practical studies. /2 | 5 |
| Total | 15 | 52 |

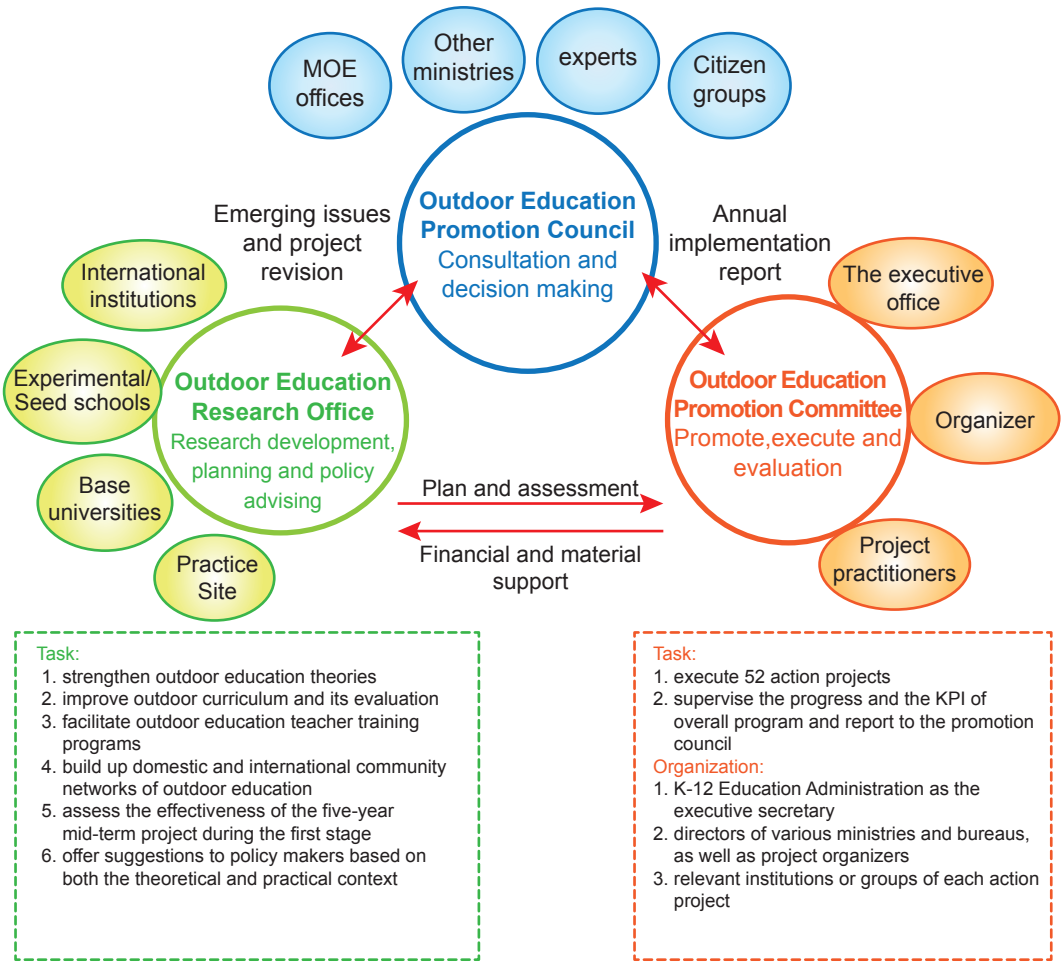



Figure 4 The promotion mechanism of outdoor education in Taiwan

Outdoor education may not be a new concept to the school system. But, because of deep-rooted ideologies like diplomatism a narrow educational values, the challenges of promoting outdoor education is not simply about teaching methods but systemic problems regarding the purpose of education. Education reform should be slow work. It requires strategies and quality check-ups. In the MOE's proposed promotion program, there are four scheduled milestones: normalization, quality raising, systematization, and cross-sector collaboration.

*1. Normalization*

Outdoor education is often considered to be an additional burden to regular teaching. Normalization of outdoor education means establishing resources and

support systems by sorting out relevant administrative rules, providing diverse learning sites, and establishing safety management. These efforts will increase the feasibility of outdoor learning for teachers who are willing to take students outdoors. The objective at the early stage is to encourage and support schools and teachers with the practice of outdoor education without giving any pressure.

*2. Quality Raising*

The key to raise quality is, instead of setting up standards, to direct the self-running system of education in the right direction. It is important to improve the quality of curriculum and human resources. This process does not wait for normalization to be achieved; instead, during the stage of encouraging and subsidizing schools for implementing outdoor education, expertise can be utilized for developing curriculum design models and for training professional staff.



*Improving curriculum*



As mentioned previously, outdoor education is not just about outdoor activities; nor does it relocate classroom teaching outdoors directly. To maximize learning effectiveness, it is crucial to have well-planned curriculum design, such as a three-phased (before, during and, after) design model. Other improvements include field resource transformation, evaluation tool development, and outdoor and school curricula integration. Besides, it is also part of the improvement effort to assess the project after the curriculum.

*The professional development of teacher and administrator*

From the teacher's perspective, the major difference between classroom and outdoor teaching is that there is no assigned content (textbooks) to teach in the latter scenario. One of the fundamental values of outdoor education is to learn in an interdisciplinary way. The teacher, whose role used to only involve teaching, becomes the course manager of the outdoor curriculum who coordinates all available resources. In this case, it is important to improve the school teacher's and other educators' capacity to conduct or participate in outdoor education.

*3. Systematization*

Systematization means transforming outdoor learning from optional activities into a key component of the implementation for holistic education by making it a necessary part the school system. Actions of institutionalization include affirming the learning influence of outdoor education and clarifying the integration model of outdoor learning into school curriculum. Pursuing sustainability with political tools is another possible practice, such as providing clear legal ground for outdoor education and putting it into the national curriculum outline, and making it a long-term policy.

### *4. Cross-sector collaboration*

Cross-sector collaboration is important for the promotion of outdoor education because outdoor education has to work beyond the school system and play a role in the broader society and economy into which students will emerge. The practice of outdoor education requires a trans-regional connection between educators, relevant sites, and service industries. The service field and educational should work together and benefit from one another. However, Cross-sector collaboration does not mean the direct cooperation between schools and industry. Instead, industry relies on trans-departmental cooperation led by the Executive Yuan to improve its capacity for education. Some examples are collaboration between MOE and MEA (the Ministry of Economic Affairs) for the use of tourist destinations as learning sites,working with COA (the Council of Agriculture) to develop rural life experience curriculum, or partnership between MOE and MOC (the Ministry of Culture) to create place-based outdoor curricula.



## Outdoor Education is a Crucial Part of Practicing a 12-Year Basic Education's Rationale for Holistic Education

As this generation is faced with an ever-changing world, life-long learning becomes an important preparation. The improvement of the education system aims at creating a better learning environment with fair learning opportunities. In view of global trends and domestic social transformation, holistic education is proposed as the core value of the new curriculum for the 12-year Basic Education, which will be put into practice in 2019. Holistic education adopts a holistic worldview (Ron Miller,1990)and emphasizes the concept of learning for the integrated development of an individual. It considers learning to be a process of developing one's body, mind, and spirit in an integrated way. In addition, the purpose of learning is not only self-development, but also concerns the collective good of society and the environment. Both knowledge and skill learning rely on accumulated experiences. As the previous curriculum was designed to have divided subjects, interconnection and integration become crucial objectives for designing the curriculum for holistic education. The 12-year Basic Education features literacy as its core of curriculum design. Cultivating literacy requires not only cross-subject integration (as mentioned earlier), but the integration of all learning aspects, including cognition, skill, attitude, sense and sensibility, and physical training. Furthermore, learning space is no longer confined to the classroom or the school. The integration of different spaces and places inside and outside of the school is necessary for meaningful learning and knowledge application(P. 21)[7]. Therefore, outdoor education is a crucial part of curriculum design in the current wave of educational reform. The outline of the 12-year Basic Education includes several concepts that are consistent with the idea of outdoor education: holistic education, integrated learning, spontaneity, interaction, the collective good, trans-disciplinarity, knowledge for application, contextualization, and so on. Letting learners interact with each other in real-life situations is the best way to engage them in meaningful learning. Interconnection and integration usually take place naturally in an outdoor learning environment.

Current school curriculum design and practice are conventionally objective-oriented and textbook-based, taking cognitive learning as the priority. School

7. For example, through curriculum design, different spaces in the schoolyard can transform into outdoor classroom; lessons can also take place on the route where students have to travel through to get to school.

teachers have to appeal to alternative resources to break out of the status quo. Outdoor education serves well as a kind of alternative teaching. The core idea of outdoor education is to provide experiential learning by coordinating local environmental resources (such as natural ecology, the geographical landscape, local history and art, industry and technology, and communities) for learners to explore the real world with all senses. This kind of learning fills the gap and compliments learning experiences and cognitive learning in the classroom.

Future learning will have more flexibility in time and space. Learning that is not confined to space, time, and discipline should be the basis of curriculum design. In order to put the idea of holistic education into practice, and to establish a literacy-oriented curriculum, outdoor education cannot be left out of discussion of the 12-year Basic Education.



## Conclusion



Taiwan has diverse and abundant resources for outdoor education, including natural ecology, cultural history, geographical landscape, and social industries. These resources allow students to explore and experience in various learning sites with learning materials in the real world. Furthermore, the historical development of related educational issues inside and outside of the school has accumulated diverse and plentiful resources for outdoor education, such as scouting, "*Xiangtu*(鄉土)" learning, environmental education, education for sustainable development, oceanic education, mountain education, and so on. In addition, long-term research efforts by outdoor education institutions and organizations has also established diverse and high-quality learning sites and increased the number of professional staff. These relevant resources and experiences are significant assets for promoting outdoor education in Taiwan.

However, the current teaching model and the ideologies of the majority of teachers and parents are too exam-oriented, resulting in limitation of the content and effectiveness of outdoor education. The essential difficulties of promoting outdoor education include lack of support from the school administration system and current legislation and inadequate interconnection of out-of-school resources. The 12-year Basic Education coming into effect in 2019 is an opportunity to reform education in Taiwan. The ideas and ideals of outdoor education are consistent with a holistic and literacy-based 12-year Basic Education. The multiple benefits of outdoor curriculum will play an important part in changing the educational ideologies of teachers and parents. The MOE implemented outdoor education program adopts systematic design to integrate curriculum, administration, teaching staff, the physical learning environment, and safety. It helps to build a supportive administrative process and connect resources inside and outside of the school, which will significantly improve the implementation of outdoor education. The policy will become the most influential foundation of developing quality outdoor education. Outdoor education features both universality and local uniqueness. Currently, the crucial tasks and challenges of promoting outdoor education in Taiwan are 1) building our linkage to international resources and experiences, and 2) developing a Taiwan-exclusive outdoor curriculum.

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### 《USA》

***Ya-Fan Lin***

Growing up in a family that farms, camps, and enjoys nature, I have become hooked with everything that nature can offer. I have my bachelor's and master's degrees in English and Foreign Language and Literature. My interests in literature and nature lead me to focus my master's thesis on the themes of environmentalism, the idea of a sense of place, the struggle of farmers, and the gap between the rural and the cities in Annie Proulx's *Wyoming Stories*. I worked for a couple of years behind the desk before I decided to come to Australia. I lived as a fruit picker in this country for a while and saw everything about a farm firsthand. I saw the struggles of a farmer and how food is wasted before it even reaches the supermarket. My experience of living in rural Western Australia also gave me the chance to appreciate the power of local community and how it can contribute to a more sustainable way of farming and living. I am now currently residing in Sydney, Australia in pursuit of the art of patisserie. As I am about to embark on a new journey in the industry of hospitality, I wish to continue my interest in agriculture and the environment and do my part to make some contribution to a more sustainable and conscious way of food producing and dining. (yafanlin14@gmail.com)

### 《Scotland》

***Kang-Po Chen***

Kang-Po Chen obtained his MA degree in English literature by presenting a thesis on William Blake's poetical revisionism of Christian archetypes at National Chengchi University, Taiwan. He then embarked on a PhD study

since 2015 at the University of Edinburgh. His doctoral project aims to re-conceptualise the idea of "obscenity" in the Romantic period, and examine the erotic images and motifs as a unique aesthetic phenomenon of self-annihilation in the works of Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. (Kangpo.Chen@ed.ac.uk)

## 《Japan》

### *Joelle Chevrier*

Born and raised in south Florida, Joelle began her study of Chinese language at age 14. She graduated with a BA in Chinese Language and Asian Studies from Bard College at Simon's Rock in Massachusetts. After studying abroad in China, she followed her passion for Chinese language and culture to National Taiwan University for a master's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language. During her studies, she became involved as a volunteer with the Society of Wilderness and discovered an interest in organic farming and ecology. Joelle's work as a researcher and translator contributed to the publication of "Village Fengshui Forests of Southern China – Culture History and Conservation Status" and "Golden Snail Opera: The More-than-Human Performance of Friendly Farming on Taiwan's Lanyang Plain." Joelle has now made her home in rural Yilan County, where she works as a part-time rice farmer with Land Dyke Feminist Farm, an eco-friendly farming collective, in addition to undertaking translation and oral interpreter projects relating to agriculture, education, and the environment. Her work includes subtitle translation for "Giwas Loves Science," interpreting for Taiwanese delegations to international La Via Campesina meetings, and translating essays for Taiwanese independent agriculture media "News & Market." (joellechevrier@gmail.com)

## 《Taiwan》

*Yun-Chia Luo*

A translator who believes in the communicative power of literary text, devoted to bridging the gap between English, Chinese, and even German readers, and always gets inspired through the work of cultural translation. She has participated in the translation work of the series of "State of the World" published by World Watch Institute, the series of "Story of Stuff" films, and several academic publications. After acquiring her first master's degree in environmental education in Taipei and her second master's degree in transcultural studies in Heidelberg, Yun-Chia has lately moved to an indigenous-based small island where she could practice the principles of sustainability in a multi-ethnic society and feel the Wonder and Awe of Nature while swimming in the ocean. (yunchialuo@gmail.com)

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# 放眼國際－戶外教育的多元演替與發展趨勢（英文版）

The Budding and Blooming of Outdoor Education in Diverse Global Contexts

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