



Out Aha Ahoout



This Issue

Lessons from the land

A primary school that leads the way

EOTC at Berkley Middle School

EOTC on TKI

When we were very young





Education Outdoors New Zealand

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

Our mission

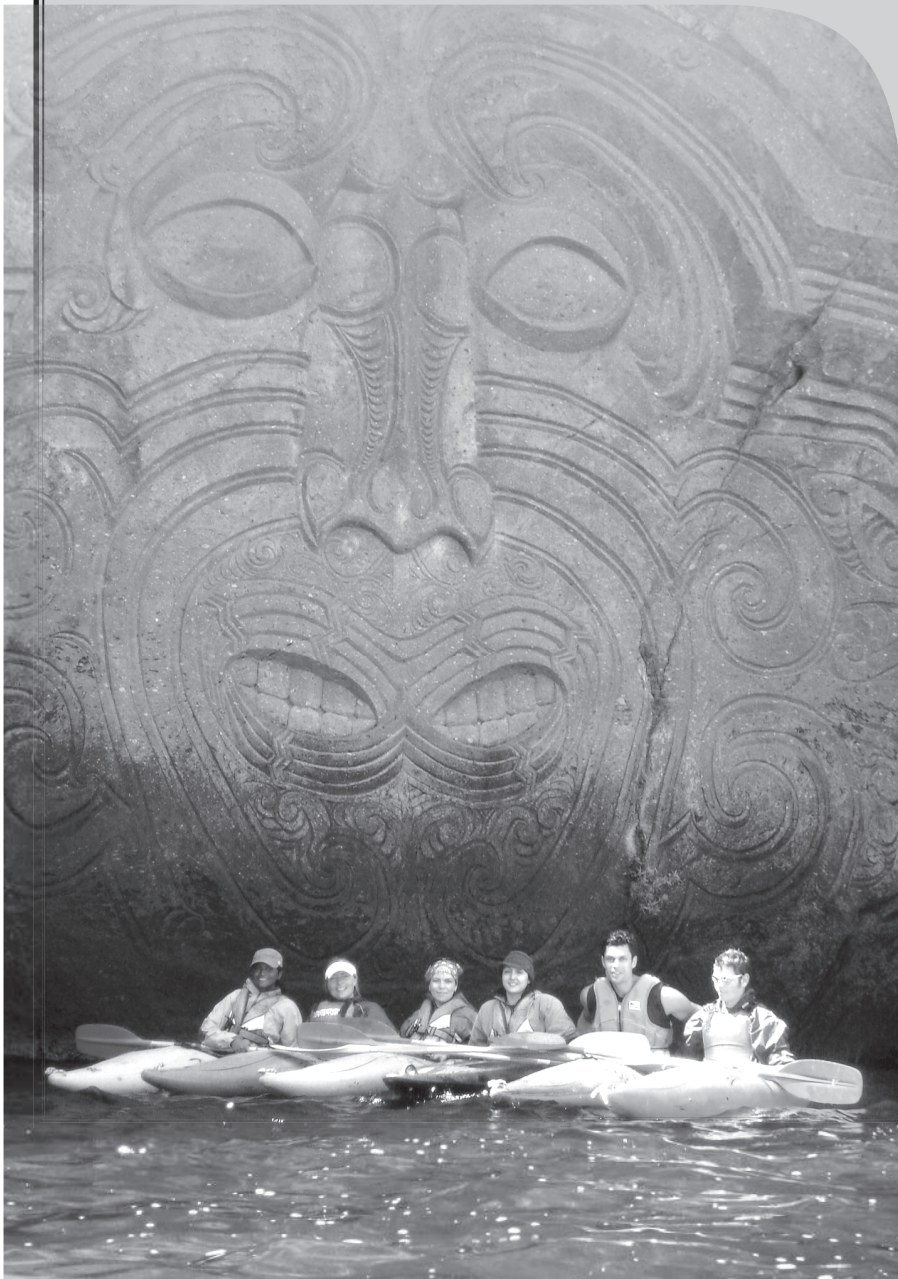
To increase participation in quality outdoor learning experiences.

Our goals

Engagement in advocacy to advance education outdoors

Education to build capability and improve practice

- **Advocacy**
- **E Newsletters**
- **Membership Magazine**
- **Training**
- **Professional Development**
- **Publications**
- **National Body Representation**
- **Networking**
- **Regional Focus**





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EONZ is committed to fostering

and advocating for quality

outdoor learning experiences

that can educate for a

sustainable future.

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Autumn 2012

by David Irwin

Editorial

Kia ora and welcome to the autumn 2012 edition of *Out and About*. This issue has a theme of EOTC in primary schools and, although difficult to pull together, I hope will be thought provoking and stimulating. Much has happened since the last edition.



I have a new student this year: an international student who is a trained primary school teacher with four years teaching behind her. She comes from India and arrived in the country about 4 days before her course began, to start, what would be considered by most people, a new life. Aside from the gaping divide that separates us in terms of culture, language, and tradition, I have been absolutely amazed by the different paradigm that she has experienced in her own education both as a practicing teacher and as a student. The conversations I have had with her have reminded me what a wonderful education system we have here in Aotearoa New Zealand, and that many of us (myself included) take that system

• Continued on page 4

Contents

Editorial	3
A word from the Chair (Liz Thevenard)	5
Bridget Gourlay – Lessons from the land.....	8
Liz Thevenard and Marg Cosgriff– A primary school that leads the way	11
Craig Donnelly and students – EOTC at Berkley Middle School	13
Reflections on the 2012 NZAEE Conference:	17
EOTC on TKI.....	18
Catharine Wood and Linda Morris – When we were very young.....	23
EONZ Best Programme Award 2011 – Mt Aspiring College	26
Review: Radio New Zealand National: Ideas – Child Safety.	28
Beach Education Game: The Sensory Buckets	30



for granted much of the time.

In pulling this edition together I have been revisiting some of the resource material produced through the EONZ, NZAEE, NZMSC joint project funded by Sport NZ (and now available on the Ministry of Education's tki web site). The collection of incredible case studies and activities demonstrate the innovative quality of our educators, and I congratulate the members of the development team on assembling this fine resource. A sample case study and activity taken from the web resource are included in this edition of *Out and About*, to give readers an idea of what is available.

An important development over the last year has been the recognition of education for sustainability (EFS) achievement standards for university entrance. This recognition has the capacity to significantly impact on the shape and uptake of outdoor education in senior secondary school. As signalled in earlier editions of *Out and About*, there are an increasing number of senior secondary outdoor education programmes that have moved away from assessment via technical skill focussed unit standards in order to engage students in EFS achievement standards. This move, suggest teachers I have contact with, has the capacity to engage more students in outdoor education, engage more women in outdoor education, offer more opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration, and to raise the academic profile of outdoor education in schools. I encourage outdoor educators

to explore these relatively new assessment standards because they offer many opportunities to reinterpret how we use the outdoors and can add much depth to what we do. Such alternative teaching practice can also offer approaches that sidestep the increasingly risk/safety focussed pedagogy that has become so prevalent in the past decade that has acted to inhibit the engagement of some schools with the outdoors.

The integration of teachers colleges into universities that has taken place over the last few years continues to play out. The increasing financial pressures placed on institutions by way of reduced government contribution coupled with a focus on performance based research funding (PBRF) has had a significant impact on who teaches the teacher trainees. Until recently, teachers colleges have been able to support smaller and less popular programmes such as EOTC, environmental and outdoor education, and in all curriculum areas employed skilled teaching practitioners who are not necessarily active researchers as defined under the PBRF. However, increasingly the smaller programmes and those staff not research-active have come under pressure. In many teachers colleges environmental and outdoor education and EOTC courses have been squeezed, and staff redundancies are not uncommon. Joining the trend is Victoria University that has recently reduced its previously well regarded EOTC programme.

The key theme of this edition is primary school EOTC. The

articles include an interview with the visionary Heidi Mardon from Enviroschools (that now number some 800 mostly primary schools) by Bridget Gourlay (courtesy of *Principals Today*); a discussion about Thorndon Primary School - an example of place-based approaches within a primary school setting by Liz Thevenard and Marg Cosgriff; sample case study and activity taken from the Ministry of Education's tki web site; and a collection of reflections of EOTC experiences from primary students at Berkley Normal Middle School provided by Craig Donnelly.

Other reading includes a reflection on the 2012 New Zealand Association of Environmental Education conference held in Hamilton earlier this year; a review of Radio New Zealand National's Ideas that featured child safety; the 2011 EONZ Best Programme Award recipient Mt Aspiring College; and a game for the beach by Emily Roberts-Mordue and Virginia Connell.

The next edition of *Out and About* due out in spring of this year will focus on innovative EOTC. Please contribute if you have something that others might be interested to hear about. Have a safe and happy year.

Kind regards,

Dave Irwin





A word from the Chair Liz Thevenard

Exciting years past and future.



Another year flashes by and EONZ members have been extremely busy with the Sport NZ (previously SPARC) professional development across the country, the development of the resources on the Ministry of Education website, and the partnership with Skills Active to develop the EOTC Leader qualifications. Many other projects also continue. My chair article will focus on camps, play, professional development, qualifications, and the recent outdoor education book edited by Dave Irwin, Jo Straker and Allen Hill.

Outdoor Education and Camps

Outdoor education continues to be an important part of New Zealand's school programmes. I have recently talked with many teachers who are very involved with school camps and they believe the camp is a vital component of school life. Both Newland College and Wellington East Girl's College have recently had camps on the Kapiti Coast and I have had the privilege of talking with these passionate teachers who are totally

committed to their students having the opportunity to adventure and explore the outdoors, experience living together, and getting to know each other in different ways. Their focus has been on making connections with class mates and across the school in accessible local environments. Many schools are choosing to use fixed camps and with the weather over the summer this is understandable. These camps offer a unique opportunity for students to live and play together away from the trappings of modern life. An opportunity to step away from technology, texts, computers and television allows students to communicate directly with each other and enjoy real interactions. These camps are being replicated up and down the country and we should continue to support and promote this aspect of EOTC.

The Importance of Play

A recent television programme on the importance of children's play hit a real cord with me and reinforces my belief in the vital place play has in children's development. It emphasised the importance of

allowing children to explore, play and create their own experience without being totally organised by adults. On one recent Sunday, we experienced this first hand when five grandchildren arrived, ranging in ages from 3 to 10 years. We all set out on an adventure down the Waikanae River. Some kayaked and some walked. From the time we arrived at the estuary they were all totally engaged and engrossed with water, sand and a glorious day. Apart from the occasional adult approval, safety guidance, and the odd suggestion, the children played for hours and could have easily stayed all day. They were all immersed totally in their play, building sand castles, creating holes, chasing each other and finding hundreds of different ways to play in the water. This rich resource needs to be popularised and promoted and families need encouragement to take opportunities to make the most of sunny days and play where ever they live. In the last Out and About my article on "*What a Difference a Day Makes*" also highlighted the simplicity of using a local resource



in innovative ways. Some of the examples included building stone towers on river beds and making mini rafts out of natural materials to race down the river. In this case there was a competitive element and a major focus on teamwork. The great thing about using local environments is that these places are easily accessible and so it only takes a bit of innovation and organisation to make things happen.

Professional Development and Resource Development

The collaborative project with EONZ, Mountain in Safety Council, (MSC) and New Zealand Association of Environmental Education (NZAEE) to deliver professional development and develop web based resources to support EOTC and the Ministry of Education (2009) EOTC Guidelines Bringing the Curriculum Alive are well underway. The first round of Workshop 1 has been delivered very successfully around the country and the second round of Workshop 1 is in full swing thanks to extra funding from Sport NZ. This has allowed the delivery of 40 plus more workshops. Workshop 2 is underway after the facilitator training in Christchurch in March. Participant's feedback has been extremely positive and suggests that many schools are reviewing their EOTC Programmes as a result of the workshops. Fiona McDonnald (Project Manager), Catherine Kappelle (Project Administrator) and the skilled writers and facilitators involved in the project must be congratulated for their innovative approaches have strengthened the delivery of very worthy EOTC professional

development opportunities. The professional development has included the development of web based EOTC Resources that are now up on the Ministry of Education's tki web site under EOTC www.tki.org.nz/communities/eotc. The resources offer a range of ideas including a variety of authentic case studies, ways to enjoy and adventure in a variety of natural environments and many ideas to extend learning. The principles of sustainability underpin the resources and many ideas are accessible in the school grounds and local environments.

National Certificate in Recreation and Sport (EOTC Teacher).

Good news regarding training and qualifications development. Skills Active in collaboration with EONZ is developing a National Certificate in Recreation and Sport (EOTC Teacher). It will be designed for Education outside the classroom (EOTC) teachers and leaders and acknowledges that EOTC is a key component of school life in New Zealand. Learning beyond the classroom provides many and varied opportunities to support the national curriculum (*The New Zealand Curriculum* and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*) throughout primary and secondary education. It is important that students have an opportunity to learn in a variety of EOTC contexts, and to gain the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values, and teachers and leaders need to be competent, well trained and qualified to take full advantage of the New Zealand's unique learning environment. This qualification will give you an

opportunity to demonstrate your personal understanding of EOTC, to validate your professional role and apply 'best practice' skills to your teaching. It will also provide a useful stepping stone in your career pathway, in New Zealand and around the world.

Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand - A new vision for the twenty-first century.

Twelve prominent outdoor educators have put forward their visions for outdoor education for the 21st century and congratulations must go to editors Dave Irwin, Jo Straker and Allen Hill for their ability to pull such a diverse, experienced and insightful range of contributors (including Mike Boyes, Mike Brown, Margie Campbell-Price, Marg Cosgriff, Brigid Graney, Simon Graney, Maureen Legge, Howard Reti, and Liz Thevenard) together. The book has 10 chapters and each chapter has a specific focus and includes examples and case studies to illustrate ideas and current noteworthy practice. The book has been published by CPIT and provides an interesting and future focussed discussion for outdoor educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is excellent to see a celebration of our unique environment and to read about the many and varied perspectives from early childhood to tertiary outdoor education. The book is available from EONZ, (contact: eonzeo@clear.co.nz) at a cost of \$35.00 and is an accessible easy read. This book is a must for all outdoor educators. Well done Dave, Jo and Allen and thank you for the energy and effort you put into pulling this



all together. The editors introduce the book as follows:

The purpose of this book to provide a practical, insightful, and innovative reappraisal of outdoor education theory and practice. Drawing from a range of New Zealand academics, teachers, and practitioners this book is aimed at all those who educate in outdoor environments, including teachers, outdoor instructors, and those involved in voluntary youth organisations such as Scouts, Guides, and YMCA.

Embracing a critical socio-ecological perspective the contributing authors chart a direction for outdoor education which is committed to educating for a sustainable and more equitable future. This perspective draws from the strength of outdoor

education's experiential traditions whilst advocating an explicit politics of change. This politics calls into question the status quo, forcing us to ask the question; what are we educating for? A socio-ecological perspective sets the platform for how we might answer this question. It compels us to move beyond individual focused models of learning to consider the wider contexts of people's relationships with human and non-human nature.

Readers will encounter theory and practice blended into a mosaic of discussion that is informed by research and literature relating to contemporary trends and debates in outdoor education. Examples and stories of cutting-edge practice are sprinkled liberally throughout the chapters along with explanations of


theoretical concepts in ways which are accessible and increase understanding. Embedded firmly in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, this book recognises the uniqueness and importance of the places we live in and the cultures we live with. In particular it acknowledges the central position of Māori as tangata whenua and attempts to address a perceived silence pertaining to Māori issues and culture within Pākehā dominated outdoor education. (Irwin, Straker, & Hill, 2012, p12-13).

Irwin, D., Straker, J., & Hill, A. (2012). *Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand - A new vision for the twenty-first century*. Christchurch, N.Z.: CPIT

An order form for the book can be found later in this edition of Out and About.

**New Zealand
Journal of Outdoor Education**

Ko Tāne Mahuta Pupuke



Ko Tāne Mahuta Pupuke: Tāne (god of the forest)
is welling up, designs, thought and plans
are springing up in profusion

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Table of Contents

Editor's Note	5
Preventing fatal incidents in outdoor education. Lessons learnt from the Mangatepopo tragedy. Andrew Brookes	7
Outdoor education fatalities in Australia 1960-2009. Part 1: Summary of incidents and introduction to fatality analysis. Andrew Brookes	33
Outdoor education fatalities in Australia 1960-2009. Part 2: Contributing circumstances: Supervision, first aid, and rescue. Andrew Brookes	57
Outdoor education fatalities in Australia 1960-2009. Part 3: Environmental circumstances. Andrew Brookes	75
About the Contributor	100
Notes for Contributors	101
Outdoors New Zealand	102



Lessons from the land

Picture above:

By Bridget Gourlay

Super storms, mega floods, wild fires, disastrous drought and holes in the ozone layer. Once considered the paranoid belief of left-wing nutbars and ostracised scientists, New Zealand children are witnessing climate change unfold before their eyes.

Then there's increasing concern about chemicals in our food, the effects of dairying on our water; and just for good measure, the fast approaching perfect economic storm called peak oil.

It seems as if everything environment-related is bad.

But there is good news. The

desire for change is real and now permeating daily life. Serious money is being spent on sustainable R&D. Environmentally-friendly buildings and green business schemes are becoming commonplace.

At grassroots, one of these actions is taking place among our children. EnviroSchools, a nationwide programme with 800 school members aims to empower students and their communities to learn about the environment in a myriad of ways.

It started as the brainchild of the Hamilton City Council in the late 90s. EnviroSchools national director Heidi Mardon, who has

In 2010 EnviroSchools held an Eco Hut challenge, which invited students to design and build an ecological habitat on their school grounds that would enhance all living things around it. Challenge rules included a cap of \$100 on building costs and a maximum size for the structure.

This is an example of a project that gives students a real life opportunity to use foundational skills such as numeracy, and also links in well to other parts of the curriculum such as technology and science. The picture shows Tangowahine School students in their eco-hut.



Pictures above: *These pics relate to a project undertaken by Carew Peel Forest school in conjunction with the Department of Conservation. Inspired by a camp in Peel Forest, students decided to create a habitat for skinks and geckos in their school grounds.*

been with the organisation since day one, never imagined herself working in education. Trained as an architect, Mardon developed her own business, designing sustainable homes. When she moved home to Hamilton in the late 1990s, she got a job at the city council.

“One of the things in the job was to co-ordinate this thing called EnviroSchools. This was a bit tricky as there wasn’t anything to co-ordinate, it was just an idea to develop.”

But everything was ‘just an idea’ once upon a time. And this one inspired a lot of people. Soon a competent team assembled around Mardon and the first EnviroSchools programme, at Hamilton East Primary, was born.

“What we were designing was quite different from what was already out there, which was single issue focus programmes mainly,” Mardon explains of EnviroSchool’s 10 years’ of success.

“What this was, was a whole school community programme. It was based on empowering young people to know how to look at the environment and make decisions and work together, how to plan and follow through and take action. So it was empowering the whole process. Education hadn’t focused on that before.”

Because EnviroSchools isn’t a set programme, it differs from school to school. It depends on the school’s values, communities and environment. A rural school near the sea might study humans’ impact on the environment of the local seals and dolphins. An inner city school’s approach might be about building an edible garden or planting trees.

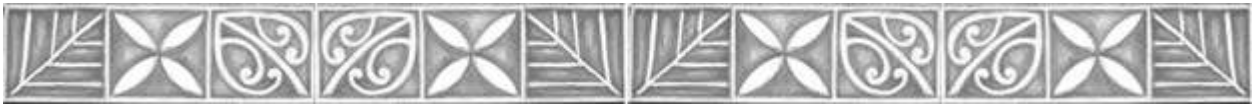
On a small scale, for example, the children at one school might decide they want to do something about the school’s rubbish. They would investigate the different options they can take to minimise it – for example, they might create a

worm farm to eat organic leftovers, or one class might educate everyone in assembly about what can go in the recycling instead of the rubbish bin.

Mardon says she knows of a school where ‘student waste managers’ were created from the older pupils. They designed their own badges and were in charge of making sure people were putting things in the right bins. When they left they then trained the younger children, who then get to wear the badge – a good system as the children took ownership of the scheme and it wasn’t left to a couple of adults to enforce.

On a larger scale, Mardon says one particularly impressive project took place at a school in the far north. A teacher and her students decided to do a project on the local river. After a site visit revealed it to be very polluted, the children were disgusted. “The teacher thought maybe they’d want to go and clear out the rubbish but the kids had bigger ideas,” Mardon remembers.

“They said that they couldn’t do it themselves and they needed



Left: Children show Heidi Marton their folder of work.

to get the whole community involved. So they went on the radio, they hired a helicopter and flew the length of the river to see where it started and where it finished and how it deteriorated. "They found stories from their elders about what the river used to be like and then they set about getting communities to clean it up. They set up tree planting - they've got a community nursery and they planted 30,000 trees. It's just been a whole river restoration project, starting with one class."

This was back in 2003 and the project is now an integral part of the community. Mardon says one of the pupils who was heavily involved in the project is now doing an environmental degree at Waikato University.

The three Rs

Some will argue that school is not the place to learn about the environment; and that children should instead be doing reading, writing and 'rithmetic.

Mardon has come across this argument before and says it doesn't make sense.

"If you look at a child who has investigated the environment, seen some things they want to change, made some decisions and then designed, planned and implemented those decisions - I would defy anybody to tell me there was no maths, English, social studies or science in that.

"They're measuring things, quantifying things - there's heaps of maths in it. Literacy is all the way thorough. It's all about communication, doing these projects. They're looking at concepts, describing them, talking about them, they're debating them. There's so much literacy in it I wouldn't even do literacy any other way!"

Future foundations

Like many education projects, EnviroSchools struggles for funding. It doesn't receive any from the

Ministry of Education but schools are signing up in a growing rate regardless - proof to Mardon that there is a need and want for environmental education. Now the programme is ten years old, she's seeing students come out of secondary schools with a passion for a more sustainable world. "The imperative is getting more and more strong, more and more pressing to do something about having a green economy. "There are a lot of business people getting on that track and the thing we're trying to raise is - what kind of education system do we need to have a green economy? Where are these green designers, decision-makers, collaborators going to come from? "Education continually gets left out of the picture. We talk about green industry, green politics, green economy, but where's the education system that we need to create that?"

In spite of this, Mardon believes we have a huge head-start in New Zealand to face the coming affects of environmental degradation.

"We have the opportunity in this country - we haven't wrecked it beyond recognition. But we need to take those opportunities now because they won't always be around if we don't do it now."

Article provided courtesy of Principals Today (Issue 99, term 3, 2011); visit www.magazinetoday.co.nz.



A primary school that leads the way

By Liz Thevenard and Marg Cossgiff

“The river as the text book and the town
becomes the classroom”

The following excerpt is from chapter 4 of *Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand A New Vision for the Twenty First Century* (Irwin, Straker, & Hill, 2012). The excerpt highlights an example of a forward thinking primary school: Thorndon Primary School in Wellington.

Thorndon Primary School and their retired principal Bill Sutton endorses “Sobel’s view of providing opportunities for students to become “connected to the land and environment” and “to be active seekers, users and creators of knowledge and informed decision makers” (2005, p.8). Sobel describes such a connectedness to the land and local environment as a place-based approach, which is “the process of using the local community and environments as a starting point to teach concepts” (p.7) in a range of subject areas. Using hands-on learning approaches and “real-world” learning experiences, Sobel suggests such an approach facilitates student connectedness to their local communities, valuing of the natural world, as well as an increased commitment to being a contributing member of the community. Furthermore, it is proposed “Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations and environmental resources in the life of the school” (p.7). Martin (2005) similarly highlights the importance of direct

experiences to develop a relationship with nature and revisiting areas to get to know and discover them more fully. Hammonds (2008, p.7) also reinforces the point that developing “a real appreciation of the natural world needs to be part of children’s lives from the earliest age and integral to all school learning”.

Thorndon school in Wellington provides a rich illustration of a future-focused outdoor education programme which exemplifies the prompt to use “the river as the text book and the town becomes the classroom” (cited in Sobel, 2005, p. 2). Reflecting the school motto of ‘Developing independent creative thinkers and learners’, learning experiences at Thorndon School are based on integrated, authentic contexts in local environments. The potential of the immediate surroundings is embraced and students provided with regular opportunities to engage in environments within walking distance of the school. Thus downtown Wellington, the Botanical Gardens, Tinakori Hill, and the public library all become the ‘classroom’ for outdoor education, with teachers tapping into students’ interests and topical units. Thorndon school students are regularly seen exploring the waterfront and the history of the shore line, visiting the City Galley or Te Papa museum, or involved in projects about sustainability in and around the school. Teachers pride themselves for the integrated approach



taken to units of work: Science extends to sailing on the harbour with students learning to sail and to understand and ‘read’ the weather; the local farmers’ market becomes a focus of study with producers coming to school to show students how to make cheese, cook fish, and prepare vegetables and the students then journeying to the farms in the Wairarapa to study the source of the products. School playgrounds are also student-centred and emphasise the importance of play in the natural environment. Students can explore and create by digging holes, building huts, developing their own gardens, and the grounds are ever changing. In short, as the school principal Bill Sutton noted (personal communication, June 1, 2011), “the playgrounds [in this school] don’t tell kids what to do” and “the more experiences students have, the more connections they can make”.

Extending to more traditional camp experiences does not mean however that the school’s commitment to integrated learning approaches, ‘real’ life relevance, and connectedness to local communities is compromised or forgotten. Thorndon School camps are sequenced through the school, beginning with an overnight noho marae in the school grounds, followed by camps within local environments, and finally a camp planned and implemented by students. Such an approach is ideal for integrated studies and investigations where planning, implementing, and reviewing sits naturally in the teaching and learning process. Planning menus and a programme that allows time for skill development and building an understanding of the history and cultural significance of the place, necessitates the provision of opportunities for students to discuss and negotiate food choices, alternative transport options, impacts on the environment, environmental clean ups, and the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the surroundings. Cosgriff (2008) emphasises the value of this integrated approach when she suggests we should look more holistically at outdoor education and take advantage of the “unique histories, geographies, cultural understanding and traditions associated with any given rock, river, lake, or area of bush... (and see them as) integral to the teaching approaches employed or students’ learning” (p. 21).

Martin (2005), Hammonds (2008), and Sobel (2005) amongst others, highlight the importance of learning occurring in natural, backdoor environments to engage and connect learners with their immediate world and encourage appreciation and care for the environment. School grounds, creeks, stands of bush, walkways, and parks just outside our classroom doors provide accessible, cost effective, and low risk environments in which students may build a greater depth of relationship, understanding, and engagement by observing and monitoring seasonal changes, the effects of weather, growth patterns, and the many small creatures that live close at hand. Like others (e.g. Owens, 2009), Thevenard (2010) has noted that such “...authentic experiences where students research and experience ‘the real deal’ connects them to the environment and the issues of the planet” (p. 6).”



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at Berkley Middle School

Contributed by Craig Donnelly and students

Berkley is a middle school in Hamilton that caters for students in years 7-9. As with many schools, we do not have a school camp every year, with camps generally running every second year. In the between camp years, the school offers a range of outdoor education activities. In 2011, a between year in our cycle, students had the opportunity to opt in to a range of outdoor experiences including a three day camping trip to Northland where students snorkelled at Poor Knights' Island, and a trip that runs every year to SEHOPC Tongariro.

The following reflections were written by students who had participated in these experiences.

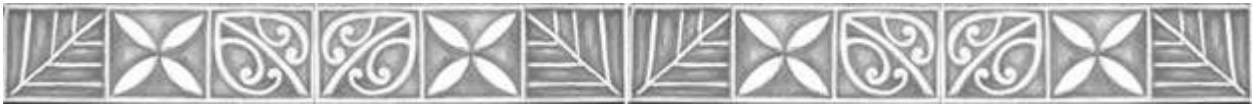
Sleeping Out

"How about I sleep here?" I got a nod back then I put my sleeping bag right by the door. "Ok, I will sleep here" Bailey said as she put her sleeping bag behind me.

As we were putting our pillows down on our sleeping bags I suddenly noticed the smell. "EW yuck, Bailey can you smell that?" I asked, pinching my nose. "Yes I can and I think I just put my hand in it!" she said, disgusted.

Then we both sprinted out of the tent screaming, "Yuck, yuck, YUCK!"

We ran up to all the parents to ask if they had any tissues to wipe Bailey's hand and to get the horrible stuff out of our tent. All the parents said no. By then we had decided that a possum came in the tent and peed on the floor. As we were about to find a stream to wash our hands the parents called us in to sit around the campfire. We thought we didn't have any hope to get it out, when Luud came with a wipe for Bailey's hand. "What about the tent?" I asked.



The Abseil

By Paige

Finally, the wait has finished. I step over the rope and get hooked up to my harness. When that's done, I get myself tested so I know how to lower myself, how to stop and what stance to be in as I make my way down. My heart races as step by step I get closer to the big drop. I pause on the edge; take a deep breath and start walking down.

Each step becomes less shaky as my nervousness disappears and my confidence takes over. About one quarter of the way down I stop and take a look at my surroundings. I can clearly see the tops of hundreds of trees. In a clearing, our white van with tents dotted around it is in my view. I can see for miles, and everything is wonderful, serene – apart from my teammates urging me on. So I turn back and get on with the job, letting the rope slide through my hands and having the stance perfect.

When I near the bottom, the supervisor asks me to try and jump the rest of the way down. I perform the challenge and almost crash face first into the rock! Recovered from the shock, I try again; a little hop on the spot. The supervisor then asks if I can travel down while jumping. I hold the rope loosely and try once more. This time, the challenge is achieved. I take the last few jumps to the end and am met with lots of 'Well done!' I had a great time abseiling at OPC, and I'm sure to do it again.

The High Ropes

By Cayla

"Come on Cayla! Don't look down! Keep on climbing!" That's what I heard through the wind as I climbed up the "Pamper Pole". I was strapped into a full body harness. My hands were trembling trying to keep grip of the tiny handles. "Breathe, Cayla,



breathe” I kept telling myself. At the top of the pole, the platform that we were supposed to step onto was about the size of a dinner plate and the pole was at least 5 metres high. It felt as if my heart was about to thump out of my chest. I could see the snow covered mountains. I looked up. I wasn’t quite up yet; I had a few steps to go. “Hold onto the ropes!” I heard someone say. I put my shaky left foot onto the wobbly platform. “Ok, one foot on, now the other.” Slowly I managed to place my other foot onto the platform. I peered down... “Oh, no! Bad idea!” I started swaying in time with the wobbles. “1, 2, 3 JUMP!” I pounced off screaming the whole way. It felt like I was flying...for a couple of seconds. But all of a sudden I was yanked back, the wind knocked out of my lungs. That was it. Slowly the rest of my group lowered me down.

“How was that?” Julian (my group instructor) asked. “REALLY FUN!” I proudly said back. My personal goal was to get up to the top of that pole and jump off. I was really proud of myself that I had done it. What a great way to start my adventures at O.P.C.

Bombing

By Cayla

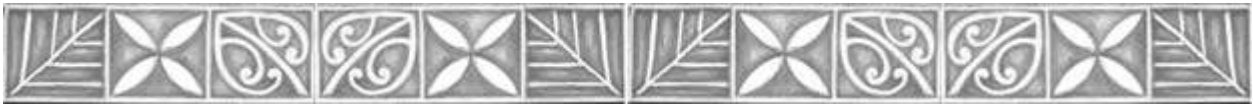
A few days later it was announced that we would be going “bombing”. I bet you are all thinking “What’s bombing?” Well, I was thinking the exact same thing. But now that I have done it I assure you that it is a whole lotta fun! Here’s how it went...we all got told that we had to use the map and compass to find where each checkpoint and group was and that it was a game with points collected. If you found a checkpoint the team got 100 points, if you bombed (radioed in the coordinates of another group) then your group got 50 points, and if your group got bombed then you lost 100 points. We had a compass and a map to find our way around the track, and a radio.

Anyway, back to the story. My group had found two checkpoints already when we started on the Silica Rapids track. After a lot of discussion (or arguing) we all reported that we had found checkpoint number 5. Our instructor checked her map and said, “Yes, now you are on 300 points”. “Yeah! We are really cranking now.”

“Okay. Let’s keep going.” I said to my group. We passed a mini waterfall and stopped to take some fantastic photos (It can’t all be about the points!). But just as we passed the next bridge disaster struck. We had been BOMBED! We all ran up the hill laughing madly, only to find that sadly they had radioed the correct coordinates of our team and we lost 100 points. Fun anyway, even getting bombed, we carried on and managed to find another checkpoint (worth 200 points) and we even bombed another team! YEAH! We were all really happy with our points until we remembered the last part of the rules...we must be back by 1pm or else lose 10 points for every minute that we were late. We had no idea where we were or how long it was to get back. Panic set in. I think we had about 1km to go and about 10 minutes left. We kept jogging until we passed the holiday park, then we knew we were really close, but with only 3 minutes left would we make it? The countdown in my head started “2:59, 2:58, 2:57... Just keep running.” I told myself. “Look, there are the toilets “2:27, 2:26, 2:25... Group 3 are just behind us. Keep running!”

“Phew!” Just made it without losing any points. I was proud of our group for working together to get to the end on time. What a fantastic game. Plus we learned heaps about using a compass and navigating our way around. Great for my next outdoor adventure.





The Trapeze

By Gabrielle

I'm trembling like a mouse being stalked by a cat. The wind whips around me, pulling my clothes in different directions. The harness digs into my thighs and neck. One more rung to go, I tell myself. I place my left hand on the pole; it wobbles beneath me. Cautiously I grip one rope with my right hand and hold on tight.

Scared out of my wits, I pull down with my right arm and at the same time push with my left. I quickly raise my foot on to the last semi-circular rung. The pole sways and my heart pounds in my chest. Quickly I move both feet up those few centimeters until they're planted firmly on the pole. I now grip both ropes with my hands, the knuckles turning white.

I turn my head and see the beautiful landscape spread out before me. From all the way up here I can see the sugar topped mountains with trees and bushes surrounding them. I rip my gaze away and focus on the task at hand. Slowly I bend my knees and let go of the ropes. The bar taunts me, laughing. I don't listen, and jump. The wind whistles round my ears and I miss the bar by miles. They start belaying me down and I think to myself, even though I hadn't caught the bar I had still achieved my goal. I had climbed to the top of the pole and jumped. So in that way I had conquered the trapeze.

After everyone has finished their turn and we are walking back to the gear shed, I think to myself how that was a fantastic way to finish our time at the high ropes.

The Big Drop

A mix of confidence and curiosity flooded through me as I looked up at the 13 metre high climbing wall. I was in my harness and strapped in ready to get belayed. I got the thumbs up from up top and prepared myself for the climb. The first bit was easy, just a couple of closely compacted handholds which I could scale quickly. It got harder as I got closer to the top, but most of the climb was relatively easy.

I entered the gate at the top to be greeted by Hamish who was busy working the belay. He quickly taught me how to do this type of belaying before getting ready to be the first person to conquer the big drop. I got into position, took up my stance and gave the "all clear". Up and through, up and through, I kept repeating to myself as I belayed Callum who was climbing at quite a remarkable speed. When Callum was about halfway up the wall I heard cords being pulled and a slight yell as Hamish stepped over the gap and flew off away into the distance. I concentrated back on my belaying, forcing down the 2nd thoughts I was having about it.

Callum cleared the wall in little under a minute, leaving me just enough time to force down those bad thoughts. I welcomed Callum up and clipped him into the belaying harness and taught him the 'up and through, up and through' I was taught by Hamish.

Now it was my turn. No turning back. I was nervous and excited, but mostly nervous. I stood behind the safety chain as Sally (our instructor) got the ropes ready for me. She clipped one cord to my karabiner and told me to walk through. My hands shook as I stepped through, making it difficult to attach what seemed like the 50 other safety ropes and cords.

About 2 minutes later Sally stepped behind the safety ladder and said, "When you're ready." I stepped up to the edge and took a quick look. I immediately regretted it. It looked so high – bringing back those second thoughts into my head. But I knew I couldn't look like a chicken in front of my mates. I took a deep breath in, walked over to the edge and stepped off. The G-force hit me like a punch in the face. I couldn't breathe but the adrenaline kept my eyes wide open. I swung out then back in and out then back in before coming to a stop over the open area of dirt. I was shaking on the ladder while undoing all the chords – but not from fear. I stepped down off the ladder, still shaking, and smiled the biggest smile. I had done it. I'd survived the giant drop.





Reflections on the 2012 NZAEE Conference: Changing Course for a Sustainable World – Hurihia te waka, Hurihia te Ao

By Dave Irwin

The New Zealand Association for Environmental Education (NZAEE) conference, held every two years, took place in Hamilton in January of this year. The three day conference was held at the recently restored Wintec campus and was attended by some 220 delegates comprising a wide variety of environmental educators from schools, councils, museums, universities and polytechnics, outdoor centres from all over Aotearoa NZ, as well as from other countries further afield. The conference was convened by Chris Eames from Waikato University, and together with a talented organising team, the conference ran very smoothly.

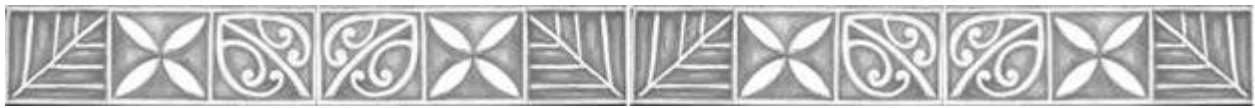
The conference was organised around concurrent presentation sessions arranged into themes of early childhood, schools, central and local government, tertiary education, and societies and communities. Needless to say there was something for everyone and the issue for most delegates I spoke to was the difficulty in making choices between presentations arranged at the same time.

Presentations included research on environmental education in teacher training, understanding action competence in the curriculum, place-based education in Wananga, whole-community approaches to environmental education, and long-term impacts of environmental education. An interesting alternative thread to the conference was provided by youth delegates. This group of young people had a parallel programme within the conference participating in events and doing their own things.

There were five key note speakers: Joseph Cornell (author of numerous books on outdoor and environmental education) spoke of the importance of reconnecting people with nature through a process of Flow Learning and used stories and role play to illustrate how to encourage enthusiasm, focus attention, experience directly and share inspiration. Wayne Cartwright (of Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand) encouraged delegates to imagine a steady-state economy in which growth would come to be viewed differently to how it is now. Les Robinson (an expert

in behavioural change relating to sustainability) explained the key role of innovation in social change, and emphasised the need to let reality drive the change process. Finally, Rod Oram (a well known international business journalist) and Catherine Delahunty (Green Party MP) provided contrasting and thought-provoking presentations on economic and political sustainability.

There was an afternoon interlude away from the presentations provided by a variety of field trips. There were ecological restoration sites, Green Gold Enviroschools and a number of eco-buildings to visit. There was also plenty of time to meet people over drinks each afternoon and the conference dinner at a local vineyard. Conference presentations will eventually be loaded onto the NZAEE website for those interested. The next NZAEE conference is planned for 2014 and will likely be held in Christchurch. I recommend EONZ members consider attending, for the synergies between these two organisations are strong, and we have much to gain from each other.



EOTC on TKI

By Dave Irwin

The newly created EOTC resources on the Ministry of Education's TKI website (a product of the joint EONZ, NZAEE, MSC initiative funded by Sport NZ) are fantastic, and if you have not spent some time on the site recently, you should do this. Those who worked on the creation of these resources should be congratulated for there is a wonderful array of resources and links for teachers, parents, principals and boards of trustees, and providers. Although there is not the space here to fully navigate the site, there are several sections that deserve closer inspection.

The *For teachers* section provides a very valuable collection of supportive resources for teachers collected under teaching resources, frequently asked questions, key resources, policy examples, making connections, and professional development. Under *Teaching resources* the user will find a selection of inspiring case studies in *EOTC in action*, teaching and learning theory in *Making EOTC happen*, a collection of practical teaching examples under *Activities, ideas and tools*, and guidance and support for safety strategies under *Learning safety*. The following two examples are taken from *EOTC in action* and *Activities, ideas and tools*.

The first example is a case study of a reward experience using EOTC to broaden student experiences. The description identifies the case study is of a Porirua school that takes students out of school for the afternoon to participate in reward experiences; the learning areas relating to curriculum are integrated; and the years described in the case study are primary and intermediate; while the curriculum level is 1-4.

The second example is an activity relating to how we use shade in our schools. The description of the activity suggests it can be completed as a social action inquiry where students investigate and provide solutions to do with the importance of shade. The learning areas outlined suggest the activity could be integrated, or sit within health and PE, science, mathematics, social science, English or technology. The curriculum levels for the activity are 2-7.

There is amazing depth to the site, well demonstrated in the *Research and Resources* section. Here under a range of headings there is a wealth of information about EOTC in this country and from overseas. In this section can be found *Research links*, where users find a wide selection of useful sites. In *Research readings* can be found an excellent collection of contemporary research on a variety of topics including an overview of research in relating to EOTC in this country, teaching and learning in the outdoors, Treaty of Waitangi and cultural issues, sustainability and environmental education, place based education, critical research, and risk and safety. In *Articles* can be found a selection of articles (most sourced from the Education Gazette) on a wide selection of topics; *Archive* holds a number of historical documents and *Key Resources* presents the user with a range of documents by a number of agencies whose role it is to support EOTC.

Visit EOTC on TKI at <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/eotc-home>

Case Study:

A reward experience – using EOTC to broaden student experiences

What we focused learning on and why:

Holy Family, a decile 1 Catholic school in Porirua with a high population of Pacific Island and Māori students, operates a reward system. Selected students who have been observed by students and teachers to be supporting the schools values are taken out of school for the afternoon to participate in a reward experience. The reward experience is designed to involve the students in something they have never tried before to encourage them to try new and different things with a sense of adventure.

The EOTC reward scheme operates four times a term. Nine students are selected for the experience from throughout the school. While students who are consistently seen to uphold the schools values are recognised on an ongoing basis, some effort is made to spread the rewards across a wide number of students.

The scheme is a way to recognise and reward integrity and the ability to relate to others. It acknowledges positive participation and contribution.

What we planned (focusing inquiry):

The visit is planned to be a fun event that extends the students' thinking and stimulates inquiry and curiosity.

Safety considerations:

A RAMS form is completed following school procedures. Most of the experiences are 'off-site – short visits in the local community within school hours' and in a low risk environment. (EOTC Guidelines, 2009, p. 26-27).

Parents complete a consent form that includes a section on any current health issues the student has. The students are transported in teachers' vehicles and these must have a current warrant of fitness and

functional seatbelts.

Check the requirements of your own school policies when planning such learning experiences. *See the EOTC Guidelines, 2009 for further information.*

What we did (teaching inquiry):

Recent experiences have included:

- A visit to a local farm complex where students petted the animals.
- A trip around Wellington with the highlight being a trip on the cable car.
- A visit to the Weta Cave, the display place where students can discover how the models that are used in Peter Jackson's movies are made and filmed to look like large creatures.
- Going to Swish Dish where students decorated a plate or mug and were given it when it had been fired in the kiln
- Ten pin bowling.

What happened (learning inquiry):

Reflecting on the experience

The journey back to school is used as a time for the students to reflect on what they saw, smelt, heard, felt and did.

In most classrooms the next day the students give a brief description of what they did on the reward experience.

Year 3 and 4, students Jackie and Adah said:

"On our reward challenge we went to Wellington. We went through the city on the way to the cable car. The buildings were very tall and everybody was dressed up. Men wore suits. Everybody looked serious,

cont. overleaf

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

BRINGING THE CURRICULUM ALIVE

no one smiled, everyone was in a hurry. The tall buildings leant over us.

Then we went to a big hotel. We saw how they prepared the rooms and then we saw into the kitchens. The people who stay there have big rooms just for themselves and people to look after them and clean for them.

The kitchen was busy and the chefs wore aprons and hats. They kept everything very clean. They were cutting vegetables and they were very fast, the knives were very sharp. It looked like a good job but the knives were scary.”

The EOTC project is a joint initiative from EONZ, MSC & NZAEE with generous funding from SPARC and supported by the Ministry of Education.



EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

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Activity: How we use shade in our school

Learning intentions:

This activity can be completed as a social action inquiry.

It enables students to:

- Investigate the importance of shade.
- Examine the current use of shade in their school.
- Research an identified shade issue in the school.
- Provide practical solutions to the identified shade issue.

Students may then choose to present a case to the Principal or Board of Trustees to establish or modify a shade area in the school or change the way students use shade and shade areas in the school.

The activity can be used in Health and Physical Education, Social Science, Science or Technology learning areas and can include Mathematical measuring.

The activity encourages students to use critical

thinking processes to make sense of information, experiences and ideas. Students ask questions, seek answers from a range of sources, process information and use this knowledge and understanding to make and evaluate decisions.

Students can review and manage their own behaviour in relation to using shade, particularly in terms 1 and 4, and work together to address an issue and improve the school environment.

Activity

Part 1: Why is shade at school important?

Students can use material available on the website www.sunschools.co.nz to answer questions they generate about

- Why we need shade in schools?
- When students need to be in the shade?
- What sort of shade and shade structures schools can have?

Part 2:

What shade areas/structures do we have at our school and do we need more or different shade areas/structures?

Students can:

- Draw a map for the school and include all the shade areas/structures. They can visit the areas/structures before school, at morning break, at lunchtime and at end of school and mark the boundaries of the shade with different coloured chalk. They can use different colours on their map to show what happens to the shade provide by each shade area or shade structure during the day.
- Identify the source of the shade e.g. building, tree, fence, shade cloth, or special shade structure.
- Identify the activities that occur in the shade during morning break and lunchtime.
- Identify activities that occur in the sun during morning break and lunchtime.
- Keep a personal log over three days and identify times when they were in the shade and in the sun during a school day, and compare their log with other students.
- Use 'plus, minus and interesting' approach to review natural shade and constructed shade and specific shade structures at their school.
- Use the Internet to see what sorts of shade areas and shade structures other schools in New Zealand have.
- Develop questions and conduct surveys with students, teachers and other school staff including the Principal and ground staff to investigate:
 - Whether they think the school has enough shade areas?
 - What activities they would like to be able to do in the shade?
 - If there are current shade areas that are not used well and why they are not used?
 - What shade areas are well used and why?
 - What new shade areas the school could develop and why?
 - What encourages them to use the shade

and what discourages them from using the shade?

Students may want to interview the Principal or a member of the Board of Trustees to find out:

- If the school has policies about creating and using shade?
- If the school has current plans to develop more shade areas?
- What would encourage the school to create more shade areas?
- What barriers there could be to establishing more shade areas and how these can be overcome?

Part 3: What can we conclude about the use of shade at our school?

Students can:

- Collate their information about the use of shade at school.
- Review the information and decide if there is an identified need for new shade structures and/or if students use the opportunities they have to be in the shade in the terms 1 and 4.

Part 4: Researching a new use of shade at our school and /or promoting the use of shade

Students can decide what actions they want to take after they have reviewed the use of shade at school.

This may involve conducting research into the development of a particular shade structure for an identified area of the school (e.g. shade over the climbing area, shade over a walkway) and then presenting a case to the Principal or Board of Trustees for the new shade area or structure.

Websites of New Zealand shade structures or other shade solutions will provide information for students

EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

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Our new shade area/structure:	
How have we considered:	
Need for the area or structure?	
Who will use it and when and why?	
Features that will encourage students and visitors to the school to use it and respect it?	
Safety?	
Ability to provide shade at right time of day?	
Ability to prevent all or 94% UV radiation from coming through?	
Ability to handle wear and tear?	
Ability to handle local weather conditions?	
How it will look?	
Possible vandalism?	
Idiot proofing - can it handle someone being silly or over energetic near it?	
Cost?	
What it will be made of and why?	
What ongoing care and maintenance will the area/structure require?	
Why is this the best shade option for the site and to solve the identified issue?	

to consider however the checklist on the following page opposite may be useful.

The students research may have lead them to decide that the best way to keep students safe from UV radiation may be to change the way students use existing shade or change the timing of certain activities.

They will need to consider how to present a case to the school (Principal, Board of Trustees, teachers and students) to bring about a behavioural change.

Part 5: Reflecting on their learning

Students can:

- Reflect on what their learning means for them personally and for others at their school.
- Decide if there are other actions they want to take.
- Review the process they used to gather information and make decisions.
- Reflect on how they can use their knowledge

about the need to be in the shade as they are out and about in their home and local community in the summer months.

Safety Considerations:

- Students out in the sun need to be wearing sunhats and use sunscreen.

Equipment:

- Material to record observations e.g. paper and coloured pens.
- Chalk.
- Computer.

Location:

School grounds

Time:

Variable

The EOTC project is a joint initiative from EONZ, MSC & NZAEE with generous funding from SPARC and supported by the Ministry of Education.





When we were very young

By Catharine Wood and Linda Morris

When you're five years old, environmental education is literally down at grass roots level. In AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh, Eeyore quite rightly observes that "Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them." And for over 200 five and six year olds in the Tasman region, there's been a whole lot of getting to know plants through a unique pilot programme run by Whenua Iti, the outdoor education provider located near Motueka. In its' over 25 year history, it's the first time Whenua Iti has taken environmental education to this age group. The programme called 'Explore Whenua Iti' took advantage of their fantastic 4 hectare property that allowed the year 1 and 2 children from 6 local primary schools to learn about the

natural environment in a fun and creative way.

The learning experiences were conducted in groups of up to 30 children, who split into small groups, for a 2-hour long morning programme. As well as hands on experiences with plants, Whenua Iti Development and Communications Manager Catharine Wood said they developed a range of activities to keep the children engaged and responsive.

"The children helped transplant a seedling or native tree and we used that to reinforce what plants need, giving us the chance to talk about things such as competition for light and space. We also

included some more traditional Whenua Iti activities such as the low ropes and we integrated an outdoor experience game, such as blindfolded partnering up, where the children had to describe to their blindfolded partner what a plant looked, smelt and felt like on a nature trail we have at Whenua Iti."

The schools were warmly receptive to the concept when it was first mooted and wholeheartedly behind it once they had seen how it worked for their 5 and 6 year old students. The feedback was really positive:

"I like the way the children were fully engaged in the environment



and making connections between the tree they planted and the larger ones in the existing bush,” said Bridget Dryden, a Year 1 and 2 Teacher at Mapua School.

Jude Aikenhead, New Entrant and Year 1 Teacher thought the hands on activities made the teaching work really well. “The tree planting involved questioning and thinking through a process and working together with others and talking about it. Fantastic, well supported activities.”

Catharine Wood says the ‘Explore Whenua Iti’ programme came after a number of years of delivering Active Focus programmes for 10-17 year olds. These programmes have been very

popular. “We saw that there was nothing in place for the younger children and we know that at five and six they’re extremely receptive to this knowledge about the world around them.” Using the programme for the older ages as a basis, Catharine set about developing a programme that would appeal to new entrants and prove worthwhile for the schools.

“What we came up with is shorter, more exploratory programmes that aim to provide young children with the opportunity to engage with their local environment while still providing some team physical challenges which we feel are really important for this age group.”

Using Ministry of Education

funding to help subsidise the visits, the pilot programme was a huge success.

“We’re now developing plant identification resources for junior primary-aged children that will build on their previous visits and allow for great post-visit activities on return to school” says Catharine.

And to finish we return to AA Milne and that well known philosopher Winnie the Pooh who sums up perfectly Whenua Iti’s determination to take their knowledge out into the community they serve: *‘You can’t stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.’* A. A. Milne



Outdoor Education in Aotearoa New Zealand: A New Vision for the Twenty-first Century

Editors: David Irwin, Jo Straker, Allen Hill

Outdoor education in a variety of guises has a rich history in Aotearoa New Zealand, dating back more than 100 years. Outdoor learning experiences have a strong and often much-loved place in our collective education memories. However, the world in which we currently live is vastly different from the one which shaped those memories. What does that mean for education, and more specifically, what does that mean for outdoor learning experiences? This book attends to these questions from a forward looking position by providing a practical, insightful, and innovative reappraisal of outdoor education theory and practice. Embracing a critical socio-ecological perspective, the contributors celebrate aspects of creative practice and chart a direction for outdoor education which aspires to educate for a sustainable and more equitable future.



This is essential reading for outdoor educators, teachers, guides, and students who want to expand the possibilities and practices of education, especially education which builds a deeper understanding of our relationship to the world we depend on.

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EONZ Best Programme Award 2011

– Mt Aspiring College

The Education Outdoors New Zealand Best Programme award for 2011 was announced at the Outdoors New Zealand forum in Wellington. The award went to Mt Aspiring College in Wanaka and was judged by EONZ executive members Liz Thevenard (Chair), Margie Campbell-Price and Kath Wilkie. The judges made the decision based upon the following attributes:

- Mt Aspiring College provided a very clear and comprehensive application and supporting documentation.
- The independent living/flatting initiative and outdoor pursuits programme has been instrumental as a catalyst in shifting the school from one of declining rolls to one with strong enrolments. The educational experience offered by Mt Aspiring College is sought after and attracts students from across the country as well as the local Wanaka region.
- Other schools are adopting a similar approach using Mt Aspiring College as a model
- The school provided excellent evaluations and follow up. It makes realistic claims about the programmes benefits (direct/indirect and anecdotal). Approximately 80% of the students go on to university, with 10% moving into the outdoor industry. This reflects the holistic focus of the programme and how the outdoors have been used to provide a range of life skills, not just technical skills associated with pursuits.
- The school is clearly connected to its local community and environment, and the outdoor pursuits focus reflects the community's adventure and innovation 'personality'.
- The programme is clearly sustainable in terms of being able to maintain its offerings, staff, and resources.
- The school has developed facilities, staff and resources over time and has planned for the future.

The EONZ executive congratulates Mt Aspiring College, the 2011 recipient of the 2011 EONZ Best Programme Award.

Two programmes were highly commended. These were the Whakatupato Programme and the Perry Outdoor Education Trust Programme (often referred to as POET):

Highly Commended

– The Whakatupato Programme

- The Whakatupato Programme provided an excellent application, supporting documentation, and very good contextual background information.
- It is a focused programme that has a strong rationale which was articulated well and endorsed by the Police and others.
- The programme is meeting local needs and issues, especially in 'taking the message and training to the people', thus reducing barriers such as travelling and going to the police station for training. This is a huge point in their favour and provides guidelines that other programmes could follow.
- The programme is culturally embedded with use of tikanga, te reo and the local recruitment of tutors.
- The programme meets a community need and addresses the significant problem of firearms users not being licensed (and thus trained).
- Hunting is a huge 'every guy' leisure activity that largely goes under the radar, despite its significance particularly with Maori, males and Dads/sons/whanau.



Highly Commended

– Perry Outdoor Education Trust (POET)

- POET provided a very good and very clear application and supporting documentation.
- The objectives and principles of the programme were articulated well and succinctly.
- The Spiral approach and clear curriculum links to Key competencies and values were evident.
- The programme is structured to enable effective relationships and programme sustainability through key principles such as PD for school staff, cost sharing, expertise/instruction/advice, leadership for senior students and the 'big-little brother' mentoring.
- POET works with the school to establish a programme that works for them and meets their needs.
- It was inspiring that POET was evident in the two examples from Ngaruawahia High School and Mt Maunganui College.

The EONZ executive congratulates the Whakatupato Programme and the Perry Outdoor Education Trust Programme, highly commended in the 2011 EONZ Best Programme Award.

DOL releases Guidance for Operators

– notification required by 30 April 2012

The Department of Labour (DOL) has released its new guidance document, providing detailed information on the Adventure Activities Regulations which came into force last year.

DOL says the Guidance for Operators document has been prepared to ensure all operators fully understand what is required of them. It includes information about the notification process and what is covered by the regulations and what is excluded. All operators covered by the regulations must notify DOL regarding certain information about their businesses by the end of this month.

The guidance document also provides clarification about what constitutes deliberately exposing participants to a risk of serious harm and what constitutes being guided or taught how to participate.

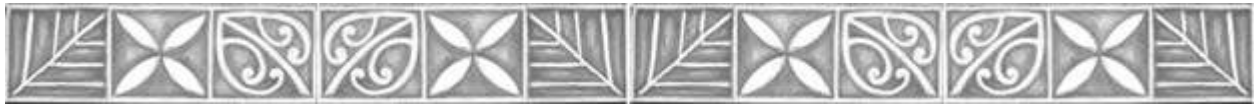
For guidance about safety management and what commercial adventure activities need to do to meet their legal requirements, DOL directs operators to the www.supportadventure.co.nz website.

DOL has also prepared Frequently Asked Questions & Answers about the regulations.

If in doubt - notify. It's free and easy to do.

If you have questions on DOL's guidance document or the regulations, phone DOL on 0800 209 020 (option 5, general health & safety requirements) or email DOL.

Look out for the April Adventure & Outdoor Update.



Review:

Radio New Zealand National: Ideas – Child Safety.

By Dave Irwin

On Sunday the 15th April, 2012, Chris Laidlaw asked his guests to *Ideas* programme the question “Are we breeding a nation of risk averse children?” The programme focussed on primary school aged children and the first two speakers in particular will be of interest to educators.

The first person to be interviewed was Carolyn Deuchar, Senior research officer at the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at AUT. Carolyn had oversight of the TRI report on the influence of perceived risk on participation in outdoor education by pre teenage children in New Zealand. Researchers wanted to see how risk was perceived by parents and teachers, and to establish what impacts such perception had on participation in outdoor education programmes in schools. The results surprised the researchers.

Parents and teachers were surveyed about risk involved in a variety of activities including camping, paddle sports, skiing and rock climbing, and the hypothesis was that parents would have a higher perception of risk associated with the activities than teachers. However this was not the case and teachers held higher perceptions of risk than parents.

Carolyn suggested the research found no evidence of children being “wrapped in cotton wool” by their parents. Media coverage of an accident in outdoor education resulting in a fatality did arouse increased parental anxiety but very few parents responded by preventing their children from participating. However, what the researchers did find was that some schools cancelled their outdoor education camps and made more detailed requests of outdoor education providers for risk management documentation (with the highest level of concern being for water based activities).

Laidlaw observed that outdoor education is not just beneficial to health but also to mental stability. It teaches children about dealing with problems, and yet we are less likely to see more outdoor education in the future because of the problem of perceptions around risk. Laidlaw asked his guest what are the ramifications of this, for if kids do not go outside and test themselves physically, the consequences are quite severe.

Carolyn responded that the urban drift to cities is increasing, and for many of those children in cities, the only opportunity for engagement with the outdoors

comes from schools. When schools cancel their outdoor education programmes, the kids loose out. Children loose the opportunity to calculate engagement with small risks and therefore loose the basis for later calculations for behaviours that are more risky. Carolyn suggested the increased scrutiny of schools and outdoor education providers, coupled with the increased paper work being requested by schools is a problem for the continued provision of outdoor education.

The second guest speaker was Phil Harding, Deputy President of the Principals Association and Principal of Paparoa Street School, and Laidlaw asked him if the problem of risk aversion is creating more difficulty for schools.

Phil responded that parents recognise that walking to school has risk associated with it but that generally schools themselves were seen as low risk environments. Parents he suggested certainly had a concern about how risk was managed at school camps, and he observed that this concern might be a result of the media that tended to give more exposure and status to isolated accidents than was probably warranted.

Phil was not sure that there has been an actual decline in physical activity at schools, and suggested that increased obesity in children was probably more of an issue for out of school behaviour. Schools, he noted, had been asked to increase the amount of physical activity and to provide better quality food to students.



When pressed about schools becoming more risk averse because of liability, Phil responded that ACC has removed most liability but that there remained liability to parents. He suggested that as long as safety systems supporting education outside the classroom are carefully built over time, there should not be too much concern. One of the problems Phil experiences as a principal is that some parents want to micro-manage their children and want to have input into everything they do.

The remaining two speakers were Anne Weavers, Director of Safe kids New Zealand which is the national childhood injury prevention service operating through the Starship Children's Health speaking about injury prevention, and Professor Mark Henaghan from the University of Otago speaking about the legal and policy framework relating to children.

A MP3 file or podcast of this Ideas programme is available for download from <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ideas/20120415>

If readers are interested in finding out more about this subject, Mark Jones, senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology recently published "The influence of perceived risk on participation in outdoor education activities by pre-teenage school children in New Zealand". What follows is the abstract to that Master's thesis (a link to which can be found at *Research resources* on tki's EOTC home, also discussed in this issue

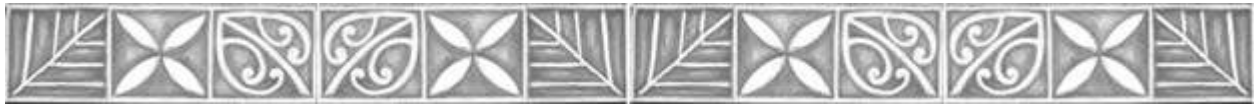
of Out and About):

Outdoor education is a formal part of the New Zealand school curriculum under the auspices of Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC). Anecdotally New Zealand parents and teachers are becoming more risk averse as a result of high profile fatalities associated with outdoor recreation. Consequently, it is important to understand how risk is perceived by parents and teachers and what influence it may be having on participation rates and programming for outdoor education. Views on perceived risk were gained from teachers with responsibilities related to EOTC (n=276) and parents from primary and intermediate school boards of trustees (n=534) via an online self reply questionnaire. Eleven semi-structured telephone interviews were also conducted with key informants from providers of outdoor education to these schools. Higher levels of the risk of serious harm perceived by teachers (moderate risk compared with low risk for parents) are likely to be related to a greater emphasis on and increased discourse around safety in EOTC and their responsibility for the safety of children in their school when undertaking outdoor education activities. Accidents and fatalities reported in the media increased parental anxiety, but only resulted in isolated cases of parents preventing their children from participating in outdoor education programmes. A small proportion of schools

(8%) responded to accidents and fatalities reported in the media by reducing outdoor education programmes. Aversion to water activities in outdoor education by some schools was shown and is likely symptomatic of high perceived risk of the aquatic environment. Outdoor activities such as canoe sports on rivers and climbing/abseiling from cliffs were perceived to be the most risky activities by both parents and teachers. There were isolated cases of parents, and sometimes, whole schools cancelling outdoor education trips for children. These were seized on by the media as documented proof of "wrapping children in cotton wool", "paranoid parenting" and other phenomenon implying parents or teachers are risk averse to an unhealthy degree. This study has provided empirical data showing that the vast majority of parents and teachers do not respond in a risk averse way as a result of high profile fatalities associated with outdoor recreation. (Jones, 2011, p.X)



Jones, M. (2011). *The influence of perceived risk on participation in outdoor education activities by pre-teen age school children in New Zealand*. Unpublished Master's Thesis: Auckland University of Technology.



Beach Education Game: The Sensory Buckets

By Emily Roberts-Mordue and Virginia Connell

Purpose:

This game has participants thinking about what belongs on the beach and in the ocean, and what does not. It generates more general discussion about human impacts on the marine environment. This game has been played with two groups of 6 students but other variations will work. This game can be modified for a range of different age groups.

Gear needed:

- Blind Folds for each student
- Pens and big sheets of paper for each group
- 10 buckets or ice cream containers
- A range of things that belong on the beach and in the ocean (e.g.: Fine clean sand, shells, fresh sea water, sea weeds)
- A range of things that do not belong on the beach or in the ocean (e.g.: drink bottles and cans, plastic wrappers, bottle caps, cigarette butts, old shoes, etc)

Set up:

Line up half of the containers about a metre apart and place in them things that belong on the beach (there can be more than one thing in a container such as sand and sea weed).

Line up the other half of the containers about a metre apart and place in them things that do not belong on the beach (there can also be more than one thing in a container, such as sea water and an old bottle, sand and an apple core and cigarette butts, etc).

The lines of containers are about 10 meters apart.

Away from the game site divide participants into groups of 6, blind fold participants, and then walk them in their groups (holding each other for support) to the game site.

Introduction to activity:

The students are told that they are not allowed to speak until they are told they can. The aim of this game is for the students to use their senses of smell and touch to guess what is in the containers. Participants must keep quiet and simply smell and touch as directed.

One group goes to the 'belongs' station and the other goes to the 'does not belong' station. Students are then directed to investigate each bucket without talking (about 10 minutes). Swap stations and repeat.

Reflection post activity:

Get the students to stay in their two groups, remove blindfolds, and ask each group to grab big paper and pens. Ask each group to brainstorm words that sprung into their minds when doing the activity and to describe the emotions/feelings they experienced. (encourage negative and positive emotions). Discuss.

Questions:

- 1) What were some of the concerning /upsetting things you felt during this activity?
- 2) What damage/ effect could these things you experienced have on our environment?
- 3) Ask students what they think we have tried to achieve with this activity. Give them a few minutes to discuss this in their groups.
- 4) Explain as required that the purpose of this activity is to effectively show the difference between what our beaches can be like vs. what they are turning into and will be like if we don't take action.
- 5) Get each group to brainstorm actions they could take to prevent some of the examples we used or preserve and improve the beach environments of New Zealand. Ideas should be creative and look at the bigger picture. E.g. where is the rubbish actually coming from?

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