Outdoor education and school curriculum distinctiveness: More than content, more than process

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Abstract

For many years now, those of us engaged with outdoor education curriculum work in Australia have been debating questions which orbit around the issue of defining outdoor education. We claim to be doing so in order to clarify what we are pursuing educationally, our purpose, not only for ourselves but for others, so that we can legitimately stake out our position, our own little piece of educational turf, amongst the other subjects in the school curriculum. However, this debate has never been easy and any attempts to bring it to a resolution inevitably, it seems, settle some issues while heightening tensions in other areas. In this paper I explore two of the more recent approaches to the question of outdoor education's positioning in the school curriculum: the question of distinctiveness and the question of indispensability. Then, through an historical excursion involving Australian and US curriculum history, I highlight some of the difficulties created by shifts in language use. Finally I argue, using definitions of outdoor education that emerged in the United States in the 1950s, that the distinctiveness of outdoor education lies in neither a body of knowledge (content) nor skills and practices (process) but in a deeper level of educational understanding which emphasizes ways of being.

Key words: outdoor education, curriculum, history, subject, Australia, United States, definition

Outdoor education in the curriculum (or not)

Two major questions have been raised over the last 20 years which attempt to draw outdoor education discourse into a broader discussion of curriculum, not just outdoor education curriculum but curriculum per se, as this informs how schooling is organized. One of these questions raises the issue of how outdoor education may be distinctive in this broader curriculum discourse, and how it may be different from the subjects that are currently in the curriculum (Gray & Martin, 2012; Lugg, 1999; Lugg & Martin, 2001; Martin, 2008; Martin, 2010). The other question tackles the same problem from a different angle, asking after the indispensability of outdoor education or why, if it is in the curriculum, it should be (Brookes, 2004). One question searches for outdoor education's universal distinctiveness; the other challenges the universality of this distinctiveness while maintaining the need to find some way of considering outdoor education in curricular terms. In the first part of this paper I revisit both of these questions with the aim of finding a way to move the discussion forward so that any distinctive contribution of outdoor education can be perceived.

A school curriculum question: Is outdoor education distinctive?

Prominent amongst the questions asked of outdoor education in curricular terms are those seeking a definition. "What do we mean by the term "outdoor education"? Is there a common understanding and vision for this area of the curriculum? To what extent is outdoor education a subject in its own right with distinctive content and processes?" (Lugg, 1999, p. 25). These are questions that Alison Lugg asked in this journal close to 20 years ago, at a time when the school curriculum in Victoria, Australia (from preparatory to year 10) was undergoing review. While foregrounded within the context of the curriculum review, these questions were premised on a long-standing awareness of "the lack of clarity about the purpose and content of school outdoor education, even amongst outdoor educators" (p. 25). Lugg went on to argue that as a consequence, "we need to be able to clarify what it is that makes outdoor education distinctive. That is, what makes it significantly different to other subjects" (p. 25). Clarity in this regard is about positioning within a curriculum as a subject, requiring determination of a distinctive body of knowledge, which makes up the subject matter of *this* subject, outdoor education, and no other. If this could be achieved, Lugg believed it would provide capacity to develop legitimate arguments for compelling schools and education institutions "to include outdoor education in the curriculum of the 21st century" (p. 25) — expressly as a standalone subject in the middle school years, to supplement the already existing range of cognate subjects offered at the senior school levels in most Australian states (see Martin, 2008).

Standing in the way of clarifying this distinctiveness is anything that draws attention away from articulation of subject content. Indeed, "if the school community does not see outdoor education as having distinctive content," then "it may be more difficult to justify as an essential component of what is often perceived as a 'crowded' curriculum" (Lugg & Martin, 2001, p. 44). By way of a survey of Victorian schools in relation to outdoor education, Lugg and Martin (2001) concluded that it was perhaps

an "emphasis on outdoor education process rather than content" which may be a factor contributing "to the difficulties outdoor education teachers face in establishing their programmes in schools" (Lugg & Martin, 2001, p. 44). This emphasis on outdoor education as process is often a major consideration in the "junior levels of schooling," positioning outdoor education in these levels as "mostly personal development education" (Martin, 2008, p. 14). But "while personal or group development outcomes from outdoor education are worthy achievements, they do not help distinguish the contribution outdoor education makes to schooling" (p. 14). This understanding was premised on the belief that personal and group development outcomes could be readily achieved in any school subject as they were process orientated and as such could be applied in virtually any teaching situation.

We are now well into the 21st century and the task of clarifying the body of knowledge and of discovering what is especially unique and distinctive about outdoor education should be well underway. Peter Martin took steps towards this in a paper published in this journal in 2008 titled "Outdoor Education in Senior Schooling: Clarifying the Body of Knowledge." This work investigated the position of outdoor education as a senior school offering in the curricula of the various Australian states and territories, revealing that, compared to the middle school years, senior school outdoor education was relatively well established as a subject, albeit with names that varied — revealing differences in the foci of these subjects (recreation and conservation being two) and the bodies of knowledge with which they were aligned.

The subject specializations available in senior school curricula are not necessarily offered at the levels below, mainly because the concern preceding senior school is provision of a general education. This more general curriculum became a major focus nationwide when a new wave of curriculum reform was initiated by the Federal Government in Australia, aimed at development of a national curriculum from foundation (previously called preparatory) to year 10. The new imperative was to argue strongly for outdoor education to be "included as a distinctive discipline" (Martin, 2010, p. 4), "as a subject" (p. 5), within this new Australian Curriculum at the levels preceding the senior school curricula of years 11 and 12, which remained under the full jurisdiction of each state or territory.

Connections between outdoor education and physical education meant that this curriculum challenge was interpreted at the time as one of positioning "outdoor education as separate and distinctively different to physical education" (Martin, 2010, p. 5). This quest was unsuccessful for a range of reasons, one being "the somewhat paradoxical situation of arguing for separateness from physical education whilst lobbying to be included in the Health and Physical Education learning area as a distinct subject" (p. 10). The Health and Physical Education learning area is one of eight designated in 1998 by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) — a grouping of all Australian education ministers: state, territory, and federal. Attempting to reshape what is now known as the Melbourne Declaration (because the 1998 MCEETYA meeting took place in Melbourne) in order to include outdoor education as a subject, when it was not previously mentioned in any learning area, was always going to be difficult.

Potential consequences of the various possibilities for positioning outdoor education within the complex ramifications of the Australian Curriculum were articulated by Tonia Gray and Peter Martin (2012) in a further paper. They took up the task of reconsidering "how outdoor education as a subject, or a key part of other subjects, may be included in the National Curriculum via the HPE learning area" (p. 42). They articulated their issue as a key question: "Are there distinctive contributions of outdoor education that may strengthen a claim for space within the HPE framework?" (p. 42). Again, the issue of distinctiveness is proffered as the key curriculum question for outdoor education. And yet the search for the distinctiveness of outdoor education, justified via articulation of a body of knowledge unlike that of any other subject in the curriculum — and significant in its own right — continues. But are there other approaches to this curriculum dilemma?

A different curriculum question: Is outdoor education indispensable?

Another approach to questioning how outdoor education may be considered in curricular terms was introduced by Andrew Brookes, prior to efforts to construct a national curriculum in Australia. Instead of asking about the distinctiveness of outdoor education, Brookes (2004) turned this question around and enquired after the "indispensability" of outdoor education, a question of "whether existing outdoor education programs are necessary, or whether there might be better alternatives" (p. 23), alternatives which may perhaps not even include outdoor education, either curricular or extracurricular. "In what circumstances and on what grounds may outdoor education be dispensed with?" Brookes (p. 22) asked, a question central to his determination to make "some stronger connections between outdoor education theory and curriculum studies." Rather than shy away from this curriculum controversy, Brookes aimed to promote a deeper level of engagement between those involved in outdoor education and a more general curriculum conversation. In this way he was attempting to challenge the assumption that a one-

size-fits-all definition capturing in perpetuity the distinctiveness of outdoor education was required, or even achievable (see also Brookes, 2002).

Contending with this indispensability question required "an 'outside' perspective," Brookes (2004, p. 23) argued, "specifically a broad educational perspective," a perspective not limited by "sentimental or pragmatic attachment to any existing form of outdoor education." Along with the need to take a broad educational perspective, Brookes (p. 31) recognized that "any contribution outdoor education may make can only be determined relative to particular social and cultural contexts." And "to the extent that 'the outdoors' is relevant to the aims and purposes of outdoor education, one might add 'geographic context'" (p. 31). In other words, taking a broad educational perspective cannot be such as to decontextualize the indispensability question. This question can only be answered in situ, a conclusion that he premised on the notion that "the aims and purposes of what to leave out of curriculum, only emerge from actual discussions at particular historical moments in specific material, social, and cultural circumstances" (p. 31). Brookes (p. 32) intended to highlight the inadequacies of "universalist or absolutist approaches" to curriculum. In this vein, he claimed that, "in Australia at least, approaches to outdoor education theory which try to eliminate or discount differences between societies and communities, cultural differences, and geographical differences, are seriously flawed" (p. 32). Brookes is here advocating for the need to take into account the local circumstances in which decisions are being made which influence outdoor education curriculum, to the extent that outdoor education may, if deemed inessential, be dispensed with.

My juxtaposition of these two questions leaves us, seemingly, with a choice between two options — seeking a universal definition on the one hand *or* a response incorporating local considerations on the other — as there appears to be little wriggle room between. And yet, if we look at two or more outdoor education curricula, we recognize that while there are aspects that can be held up as differences generated from the local specificity of the programme, there are often overlaps and similarities apparent at the same time. So perhaps a middle ground exists between the uniqueness of particular contexts and universalist approaches to outdoor education curriculum, a middle ground that lies in acknowledging the differences and the similarities between contexts, and working with awareness of these. In this way, we accept aspects of the responses to both questions, but neither in isolation.

Such an awareness of differences and similarities between contexts becomes apparent when the experience of educational problems is considered. "Before one could be in a position to advocate outdoor education as a 'solution' one would have to know what educational problems were perceived by a community and what the alternatives to outdoor education (of any kind) were," Brookes (2004, p. 27) argued. He (p. 26) hinted at such a basic educational problem, experienced in a range of contexts, when he remarked that, "the question of choosing between classroom based education and something resembling contemporary outdoor education could only really arise when the provision of basic classroom education was universal in the colonies." Hence "the idea of outdoor experiences as part of the curriculum only emerged alongside debates about curriculum reform around 1900, and it is difficult to see how it could have come much earlier" (p. 26). My interpretation of these comments suggests that early forms of outdoor education can be understood to be a response to problems associated with classroom-based education, problems that arose when "education moved indoors" (McRae, 1990, p. 1).

Consistent with Brookes' account, Green (2003, p. 127) has noted that "it is only since [Australian] Federation in 1901 . . . that a full-scale educational apparatus has been built, ranging from differentiated mass schooling at all levels and stages to systematic and formalized teacher education and training." But this problem was not unique to Australia. "There would seem to be scholarly consensus that this was a significant period of nation building across many countries" (p. 127). This large-scale development of schooling was prevalent across many nations endeavouring to implement a basic form of education for all citizens during the period of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Whilst there are, of course, local differences between versions of classroom-based education, enough similarity exists to suggest that such development may offer a reason for the original establishment of outdoor education, as it was distinct from education conducted mainly in the classroom, indoors. A historical approach to the curriculum questions surrounding outdoor education may thus yield some insights.

Learning from other curriculum contexts

In commentaries from Victoria in the 1970s, outdoor education was considered to be a collective term encompassing a range of distinctive initiatives including "school excursions, the 'local studies' movement, educational tours, adventure courses of the 'Outward Bound' type, and school camping" (Grauer, 1971, p. 5), all of which took place primarily beyond the classroom. But many of these endeavours had been introduced by Australian teachers much earlier, before the 1970s and any notable mention of outdoor education locally. Camping as an extracurricular activity had been a part of schooling in

an uncoordinated and somewhat sporadic way since at least the early 1900s. Morley and White (1973, p. 1,031) reported that in Victoria, "the first [Melbourne] Teachers College camp was that organized in 1901 by Frank Tate, then Principal." This camp, situated in bushland not far from Melbourne, had a nature-study focus and pre-service teachers undertook "exploration under the guidance of lecturers versed in various aspects of natural science" (p. 1,031). Neither school camping nor nature study, along with school excursions and tours, were at this time associated in Australia with the name of outdoor education. Yet this did not prevent school camps from being conducted by teachers as a response to perceived educational need, events that were organized fairly informally until the 1940s and 1950s when school camps were increasingly institutionalized within state education departments (Giese, 1952).

While not in common use before the 1970s, the term "outdoor education" gained popularity in Australia during this decade. With the introduction of the term into the vocabularies of Australian educators, most likely from overseas, connections with similar endeavours in other nations became more obvious. Following a visit to the United Kingdom from Australia, Whitford and Whitford (1974, p. 8) reported that, "use of the outdoor classroom in Britain is an exciting adventure, but people hasten to add that it is a new venture and there is still much to learn." Critically, they (p. 8) noted that, "we in Australia have more to learn, but we can learn from Britain and bypass some of the trial and error stages." "We will, of course, need to develop an approach geared to our way of life, our climate and our resources," they (p. 8) observed, "but there is no reason why outdoor education should be less important in Australia than in Britain. No reason why Australians should not gain comparable benefits from the programmed use of the outdoors." This critical gathering of ideas from other countries was a circumstance common across many areas of the curriculum. Indeed, "the influence of British, and increasingly, North American, institutions, ideas and practices has been a staple of the history of Australian education" (Vick, 2007, p. 245). Vick (p. 254) characterized this process as a form of "strategic appropriation, at the level of local practice."

Australian teachers have been familiar with these ways of critically accessing ideas for many years. New developments in outdoor education were no different, as evidenced in the work of Whitford and Whitford (1973, 1974), as well as the committee convened in the early 1980s by the Education Department of Victoria, known as the Committee to Study the Alternatives in Outdoor Education (Bewsher et al., 1981), which referenced texts on outdoor education from the United States (see Lugg, 1999). However, prior to the 1970s in Australia, there was little discussion of practices which could be considered various forms of outdoor education and little, if any, use of the term outdoor education. Indeed, Green has acknowledged the difficulties presented to historical investigation by the relative "paucity of available Australian curriculum history" (2003, p. 125), a circumstance influenced by the "archetypically bureaucratic character of Australian curriculum and schooling," the practical effects of which have been "a lack of due regard for history, manifested as much as anything else in huge gaps and silences in the archive — in sharp contrast, for instance, with the North American scene" (p. 125).

It was North American literature, specifically that from the United States, that Jayson Seaman and I drew on to chart developments concerning the term outdoor education over the course of the twentieth century (Quay & Seaman, 2013). In drawing on literature from the United States, the intent was not to smooth over differences between contexts, but rather to accept the possibility of connections and to learn from them, while acknowledging contextual differences, as has been achieved by teachers on numerous occasions in the past. As Green pointed out, when compared with Australia, there is an abundance of curriculum history in the United States that draws on original sources, making it fertile ground for investigations of this type.

Meanings of "outdoor" and "education"

Responding to questions concerning the distinctiveness or indispensability of outdoor education relies on some agreement, but not necessarily consensus, as to what the term outdoor education means. Lugg, Martin, and others in Australia have approached this issue by trying to find agreement in the body of knowledge of outdoor education, an approach which has been fraught with some difficulty. In an attempt to move this discussion forward, I shall draw attention in the final parts of this paper to the two words which comprise outdoor education — "outdoor" and "education" — focusing on each distinctly while not losing their connection. My aim in doing this is to show how the meaning of the term outdoor education has changed over time, with added interpretations creating confusion. But I am not arguing for overcoming this confusion by way of adding another, somehow more refined, universal definition of outdoor education. Instead, I aim to reveal how a more experientially informed comprehension of how outdoor education "works" may contribute to efforts to change understandings of education itself, a perspective which is lost in attempts to make outdoor education conform to contemporary educational structures and arrangements governing schooling.

Outdoor education and meanings of "outdoor"

In the 1970s in Australia, Grauer listed a range of activities — "school excursions, the 'local studies' movement, educational tours, adventure courses of the 'Outward Bound' type, and school camping" (1971, p. 5) — which fell under the banner of outdoor education. Interestingly, outdoor education was already understood as an umbrella-type term in the United States of the early twentieth century, a point made clear in the title of the monthly bulletin of the School Garden Association of America, *Outdoor Education*. This publication highlighted school gardens, home gardens, elementary agriculture, rural science, and nature study as major forms of outdoor education. It was the notion of education occurring outdoors that held all of these together. Early appearances of the term outdoor education in the United States were premised on a broad understanding that this was not indoor education, resulting in a paired opposition — outdoor education and indoor education — as documented by Zueblin (1916). Outdoor education was a term used to describe educational advances that occurred away from the schoolhouse and classroom, thus being literally out-of-doors.

This particular point of distinctiveness of outdoor education, captured in the clearly visible and identifiable differences from indoor classroom-based education, continued virtually unchallenged until the 1950s in the United States. Through the 1920s, '30s, and '40s advocates such as Lloyd B. Sharp spoke to the importance of camping to outdoor education, alongside others such as Bill Vinal who championed out-of-doors versions of nature study (as contrasted with indoor nature study via object lessons) (see Quay & Seaman, 2013, pp. 22–37). The key point here was being outside rather than inside the classroom — and all that went along with traditional classroom-based education.

Throughout this time, however, the pedagogical complexity of outdoor education had been increasing. There was no argument that outdoor education occurred *in* the outdoors, but the diverse range of activities going on outside could be perceived very differently when considered from varying educational perspectives. Some teachers saw outdoor education as an avenue to teach *in* the out-of-doors *for* how to *be* out-of-doors. Being out-of-doors in these mid-twentieth century decades often involved outdoor pursuits such as fishing and hunting. This is exemplified on two covers from the magazine *Michigan Out-of-Doors* in 1950 (see Figure 1), which depicted scenes of hunting and fishing. In these decades, hunting and fishing formed part of many a school's outdoor education curriculum (see for example Smith, Carlson, Donaldson, & Masters, 1972, p. 22).

Figure 1. Two front covers from the *Michigan Out-of-Doors* magazine from 1950, highlighting perceptions of the out-of-doors as a place for people to be involved in certain types of activities. For further information on this magazine, refer to http://www.mucc.org/michiganoutofdoors

Other teachers viewed outdoor education differently, primarily as a medium for moving normal school subjects such as science, outdoors — and conducting various activities there. This outdoor education also occurred *in* the out-of-doors and away from the classroom, but the focus was on learning *about* the outdoors from the perspective of the particular subject; in other words, for science, learning about nature and natural (scientific) processes. If this involved elements of conservation, then it could be regarded as education *for* the outdoors; in today's terms we may speak of education for sustainability.

During and following the 1950s a more acute awareness of these differences led to a number of important attempts to define outdoor education more specifically. (Again may I emphasize that I am not supportive of trying to ascertain universal definitions of outdoor education; however, they are useful in analysing the meaning attributed by some to this term at particular moments in time and in specific contexts, especially concerning the way outdoor education may relate to schooling). Significant were those which emanated from the Outdoor Education Project of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (Smith et al., 1972, p. 22), which was initiated in 1955. These definitions attempted to capture the diversity of outdoor education practice while maintaining a level of simplicity that ensured commonality and inclusivity. The earliest was published by George Donaldson and Louise Donaldson (1958) who defined outdoor education as "education *in*, *about* and *for* the outdoors" (p. 17) — making a valiant attempt to bring together in some simple and coordinated way the various pieces of

the pedagogical puzzle that outdoor education had become. Lugg (1999) mentioned this definition in her paper on outdoor education curriculum in Victoria as "a commonly used definition of outdoor education" (p. 25), but attributed it to Ford (1981) who had drawn on the work of the Donaldsons.

Following the Donaldsons was Julian Smith, also of the Outdoor Education Project, who interpreted outdoor education as more closely aligned with outdoor pursuits. Notably, Smith (1960, p. 156) defined outdoor education as *in* and *for* the outdoors, leaving out *about* the outdoors. This definition was articulated again in the influential book *Outdoor Education* (Smith et al., 1972), which was quoted in the 1981 report of the Committee to Study the Alternatives in Outdoor Education convened by the Education Department of Victoria (Bewsher et al., 1981).

Hidden within the simplicity and commonality of these definitions were significant tensions (amongst *in*, *about* and *for*) that each definition was designed to redress, but only did so by sitting the tensions alongside each other as if they were somehow neatly compatible and in this way downplaying them. And yet the tensions continued to grow. Exacerbating them was a subtle shift in emphasis in the meanings of the word "outdoor." The 1950s and '60s were the decades which marked a growing popular awareness of issues concerning the environment, especially in the United States, with publication of books such as *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962) that focused on the use of synthetic pesticides and their impacts, particularly on birds. This growing awareness was fuelled by an increasing number of environmental issues and led to expanding membership of environmental organizations. The outdoors was no longer a term that had its primary meaning in its contrast with indoors; and it was not just a venue for outdoor pursuits either. It was now also nature, the environment, the natural environment, in contrast to the urban environment of the city. The more local character attributable to education conducted out-of-doors rather than indoors was complicated by education which focused on *the* outdoors itself, as the natural environment in contrast to the urban environment.

This development in the meaning of the word outdoor fed into the complexity of pedagogical interpretations of outdoor education. From its initial distinctiveness juxtaposed with indoor education and its identification with activities conducted out-of-doors, to its potential for countering environmental issues through educational means, outdoor education now increasingly meant different things to different people, leading some to raise the question: "How does outdoor education fit within the school program?" (Blackman, 1969, p. 5).

> The more I've focused upon using the out-of-doors for learning — education "in" the out-of-doors, the more I've become concerned that education "for" the out-of-doors may too easily become seen, in the eye of the non-outdoor educator, as being all of outdoor education. Thus, I'm left with the dilemma of how we can place primary emphasis upon utilizing the outdoor environment to enhance a wide range of learnings, yet not lose sight of the significant skills and understandings which better permit us to live in and utilize the outdoors as human beings – those things classified as "for" the outdoors. (Blackman, 1969, p. 5)

This confusion continued through the 1970s and into the 1980s, when Ford raised it again, in very similar terms.

> To many people in the United States, Canada, England, and Australia, outdoor education is synonymous with education for outdoor pursuits or recreational skills. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, winter survival skills, backpacking, fishing, hunting, and related outdoor pursuits that are physical in nature (i.e., non-mechanized) and rely on the natural environment for implementation are the sole topics. . . . On the other hand, as many or more people feel that outdoor education is outdoor science education and consists only of teaching about natural resources and their interrelationship. Between the two poles of this spectrum are many people who seem to compromise on some, albeit weak, combination of the two issues. There are also those who would not agree with either point of view, because they feel that outdoor education is not a separate subject, but rather a process of teaching (any subject) in the outdoors. (Ford, 1981, p. 69)

Lugg mentioned Ford's definition in her 1999 paper, employing this confusion as evidence to support the need to advocate for articulation of a distinctive body of knowledge for outdoor education which would see us through the complexity. It is noteworthy that despite much effort this has not eventuated, suggesting that a new approach is required. So how can we understand the universal distinctiveness of outdoor education amidst local claims for its indispensability? This is not a matter of squeezing outdoor education into the curriculum,

but of re-visioning curriculum per se, which requires a new framework offering a new understanding of education.

Outdoor education and meanings of "education"

Essential to gaining a deeper sense of outdoor education through a new understanding of education itself is the meaning held in what the Donaldsons (1958) referred to as "the key word" (p. 17) in their definition: *for*. For equates to purpose. What is the purpose of outdoor education? What is the purpose of education? This question of the purpose of education has raised myriad answers across centuries, presenting an increasingly complicated pedagogical picture over time — as has occurred in outdoor education but even more so (see Cuban, 1993; Kliebard, 2004).

The Donaldsons (1958) suggested that *"for* implies both a mental attitude toward the outdoors and a set of skills and abilities which will enable the learner to do something about his [sic] attitudes. Skills are not enough; neither are good attitudes without implementation" (p. 17). It is my understanding that they were trying to bring together conservation attitudes with outdoor pursuit skills — and thereby resolve the tensions in outdoor education. But attempting to bring these tensions into some form of unity, of oneness, was not unlike seeking one unique and distinctive body of knowledge for outdoor education. The tensions continue to gnaw away at any resolution and the glue which binds them is open to dissolution at any moment.

A clue to a way forward may be found in asking after what characterizes these tensions themselves. What is it that distinguishes outdoor pursuits from outdoor sciences? Commonly, we see one endeavour focused on skill acquisition (including personal and group skills) and the other on knowledge acquisition. One is about doing and the other knowing. But if we can get past this perspective, we can also discern two broadly different ways of *being* a person (in the world), where being is a verb "be-ing," not a noun; thus being is doing is knowing — all verbs. This emphasizes the importance of an *experiential* comprehension of any way of being, rather than treating it merely as a label which identifies a person in some particular way.

On the one hand we have all the various "ways of being" associated with outdoor education as outdoor pursuits: for example, being-a-rock-climbing-group-member, being-a-cross-country-skiing-group-member, being-a-bushwalking-group-member, being-a-camping-group-member, (or in the 1950s, being-a-hunting-group-member), etc. On the other, we have "ways of being" associated with outdoor education as outdoor sciences: for example being-a-science-excursion-student, being-a-conservation-excursion-student, being-an-ecology-group-student, being-a-birdwatching-group-student, etc. It is worth noting that while I have chosen to employ the phrase "ways of being" here, I have also referred to these as "cultureplaces" (Quay, 2016) or, following Dewey, as "occupations" (Quay, 2013a).

Each of these ways of being has associated with it a set of commonly accepted practices which circumscribe a body of knowledge. Being is the common denominator that enables doing and knowing to be seen as co-supportive. In other words, a body of knowledge is contextualized in a set of practices, the meaning of which is circumscribed within a way of being: being–doing–knowing (see Figure 2). As the Donaldsons had acknowledged, the key word in their definition is unquestionably *for*, as it takes us to a level deeper, beyond just content (*about*) and process (*in*) but including both. The key is to see that there are different *"fors"* and that this is okay. We don't need to try to unify them, but we do need to understand them.

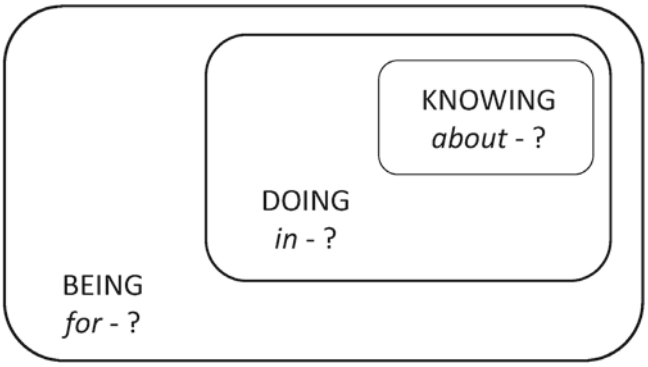

Figure 2. Ways of being circumscribe ways of doing and ways of knowing: being–doing–knowing. In the definition from Donaldson and Donaldson (1958), *for* circumscribes *in* which circumscribes *about*.

So what does this mean for outdoor education and curriculum? It suggests, firstly, that when outdoor education is understood in this way, it is more than just a body of knowledge (learned via process as content) and more than just a set of practices or skills (learned via process as content). Content is nothing without process, process is nothing without content — both require each other. However, this also suggests that different content involves different process and vice versa. The insight I am suggesting is that in emphasizing process over content or content over process we end up with two broadly different ways of being.

We need to see this deeper layer of ways of being, for it is in a living, experiential way of being that particular ways of doing (process) and knowing (content) make sense and come to life. As we plan

processes and content in our programming, we are always at the same time designing ways of being (see Quay, 2013b) that will be lived. Ways of being are not special things that appear every now and then — they are always with us, for as living, we are always being in some way. It is the ways of being that we create and help bring to life through our programmes that mark the distinctiveness of outdoor education, and provide a potential answer to the question of its indispensability. Outdoor educators excel at creating ways of being, for we are doing it all the time in both obvious and very subtle ways, but we lack the language to articulate and communicate it.

Secondly, it is worth contemplating how this capacity may be the one thing that marks humanity as different: to continually create new ways of being in order to cope with the problems that we face. Inventions (of things or ideas) do not just influence knowing and doing, they impact our ways of being. This suggests that all of education works in this way, via ways of being (see Quay, 2015). The usual disciplinary subjects are not just bodies of knowledge wrapped in particular pedagogies, they also always engender ways of being a person (in the world): being-a-maths-student, being-a-science-student, being-a-physical-education-student, etc. These are alive. However, most teachers are so concerned with content and supportive pedagogies that they do not see being! This suggests that for the contributions of outdoor education to be understood, a re-visioning of education itself is required, one that recognizes and highlights how knowledge (as knowing) is always contextualized in practices and that practices (as doing) are always themselves contextualized in being, in a way of being.

Outdoor education is distinctive. But its distinctiveness cannot be seen when this is sought from within frames that emphasize bodies of knowledge while disregarding the practices and ways of being which circumscribe them, as if these decontextualized bodies of knowledge have some claim to universality. There is a battle to be fought in championing the indispensability of outdoor education, but it is not for a place in the curriculum as standalone subject (matter). Instead it is a battle that takes the radical step of fighting for a new education discourse, one that introduces the idea that education involves more than just curriculum and pedagogy, for it is ontological, about being, about who we are in the world, about who we have been and can be. This draws in the local considerations of outdoor education curriculum which Brookes has advocated for, while also enabling a more widely perceived distinctiveness which Lugg, Martin, and others have sought. Outdoor education is perhaps the only area of education which can initiate this new conversation, for it stands outside (where it has always been most happy) the mainstream school curriculum, which is much more at home indoors. With outdoor education there exists the potential to articulate how all education can and should work.

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