What is outdoor education?
Knowing, doing and being

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What is outdoor education?

What is education?

More than a question of outdoor education alone.
What is outdoor education?
What are some important words/phrases we use in outdoor education?

- group-member
- bushwalker
- environmentalist
- canoeist
- climber
- camper
- cook

- program
- camping
- canoeing
- bushwalk
- climbing
- environment
- group
- cooking

- canoe
- tent
- nature
- harness
- stove
- boots
What is education?

What are some important words/phrases we use in education?

- student
- netballer
- maths-student
- cast-member
- process
- pedagogy
- netball
- assessment
- maths work
- drama
- curriculum
- knowledge
- content
- maths
What is outdoor education?

- **BEING**
  - who as world

- **DOING**
  - how

- **KNOWING**
  - what
What makes it [outdoor education] **significantly different from other subjects** and what educational imperatives exist to compel schools and educational institutions to include outdoor education in the curriculum of the 21st century?

(Alison Lugg, 1999, p. 25)

Are there **distinctive contributions of Outdoor Education** that may strengthen a claim for space within the HPE [curriculum] framework?

(Tonia Gray & Peter Martin, 2012, p. 42)
What is outdoor education?

Report of the Committee to Study the Alternatives in Outdoor Education, convened by the Education Department of Victoria (1981).

Nine terms of reference, the first of which was “to investigate whether there exists a body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be described as outdoor education and, if so, what is the nature of outdoor education” (p. 3).

The specific conclusion reached was that “the term (outdoor education) does not include a body of subject matter, but rather a range of learning experiences designed to reinforce the development of abilities which help pupils understand the world about them and their place in it” (p. 10).
What is outdoor education?

Quoted favourably in the Report:

Outdoor education means learning *in* and *for* the outdoors. It is a means of curriculum extension and enrichment through outdoor experiences. *It is not a separate discipline with prescribed objectives*, like science and mathematics; it is simply a learning climate offering opportunities for direct laboratory experiences in identifying and resolving real-life problems, for acquiring skills with which to enjoy a lifetime of creative living, for building concepts and developing concern about man and his natural environment, and for getting us back in touch with those aspects of living where our roots were once firm and deep.

Cynics might paraphrase such definitions as: ‘Outdoor education doesn’t have specific content, it just involves doing activities in the outdoors!’

(Alison Lugg, 1999, p. 26).
What is outdoor education?

Learning by doing activities – out-of-doors

Outdoor education as doing, as method, as process, as pedagogy that can be applied to many areas of knowledge.
What is outdoor education?

Turning the question around: From distinctiveness to dispensability

In what circumstances and on what grounds may outdoor education be **dispensed** with?

(Andy Brookes, 2004, p. 22)

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.

(p. 27)
What is outdoor education?

The problem of classroom based (indoor) education

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.


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).
What is outdoor education?

Education indoors

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.

(Bill Green, 2003, p. 127)

There would seem to be scholarly consensus that this was a significant period of nation building across many countries.

(p. 127)
What is outdoor education?

**Education out-of-doors**

The *first [Melbourne] Teachers College camp was that organised in 1901* by Frank Tate, then Principal.

Exploration under the guidance of lecturers versed in various aspects of natural science.

(Morley & White, 1973, p. 1031)

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.

(Ian Whitford and Peta Whitford, 1974, p. 8)
Movement for **out-door education**

(Elnora Whitman Curtis, 1909, p. 169)

The advantages of **studying nature at first hand** and of substituting live growing things for museum specimens or book descriptions, and of cultivating habits of observation, is apparent to every student of elementary education. The advantage, also, of substituting the **natural activities of play and work** for the more artificial physical exercises of the schoolroom is too obvious to need more than a passing mention. Less obvious but no less important is the subtle **influence of forest and field upon the aesthetic and emotional nature of children** usually ignored in discussions of educational questions.

(p. 188)
What is outdoor education?

Learning by doing activities – out-of-doors

But where is the distinctiveness?
But where is the indispensability?

Outdoor education as school subject?
Australia not unique in facing this conundrum.

The need for a solution to this dilemma was urged particularly by those whose quest it was “to solidify a place for outdoor education in the curriculum” so that outdoor education could “become an integral part of the curricula of the American school” (Knapp, 1967, p. 8). With this goal in mind, Cliff Knapp (p. 8) provocatively claimed that “the greatest single weakness has been the development of a broad concept of the term [outdoor education].” “An all inclusive definition tends to render the term ineffective” (p. 8). He (p. 8) argued instead that “the term outdoor education should assume a meaning within the framework of modern educational structure.” “Schools are placing more emphasis on academic programs,” he (p. 12) noted. So, arguing against an exclusive commitment to method, Knapp proclaimed that “outdoor educators must rise to this challenge and support this need. Outdoor education cannot attempt a reversal of this trend, but must function within this structure if success is to be realized” (p. 12).

What is outdoor education?

A bid to have outdoor education included as a **distinctive discipline** [in the national curriculum].

(Peter Martin, 2010, p. 4)

The push to have outdoor education *included as a subject in the national curriculum*.

(p. 5)
What is outdoor education?

A key signpost to a profession is a clearly defined body of knowledge.

(Peter Martin, 2008, p. 14)

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

(Chris Bucknell & Andrew Mannion, 2006, p. 39)
What is outdoor education?

From learning by **doing** to learning as **knowing**

Clarifying the **body of knowledge** that supports outdoor education is problematic.

(Peter Martin, 2010, p. 6)
Here we also face the knowing-doing gap

Kellert (2005) and Orr (2004), uphold the belief that simply having a cognitive understanding of environmental issues has little transference or impact upon behavior. This “gap” between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behavior has been well researched.

(Tonia Gray & Peter Martin, 2012, p. 44)
The position of Outdoor Education in schooling

In advocacy leading to the release of the draft Shaping paper for HPE, Outdoor Education Australia argued for the distinctiveness of Outdoor Education in schooling based on three main outcomes for students.

1. Providing direct personal contact with nature (the outdoors). *Doing*
2. Enabling socially critical perspectives on contemporary living and human to nature relationships. *Knowing contextualized by Doing*
3. Developing competence and safety management in the Australian outdoors. *Knowing contextualized by Doing*

(Tonia Gray & Peter Martin, 2012, p. 42)
Outdoor education means learning *in* and *for* the outdoors. It is a means of curriculum extension and enrichment through outdoor experiences. It is not a separate discipline with prescribed objectives, like science and mathematics; it is simply a learning climate offering **opportunities for direct laboratory experiences in identifying and resolving real-life problems, for acquiring skills with which to enjoy a lifetime of creative living, for building concepts and developing concern about man and his natural environment, and for getting us back in touch with those aspects of living where our roots were once firm and deep.**

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- DOING
  - how

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  - what
What is outdoor education?

**DOING**

how

outdoor education as pedagogy/method/process

**KNOWING**

what

outdoor education as curriculum/subject matter/content

**BEING**

who as world

outdoor education as various ways of being/occupations
What is outdoor education?

References


What is outdoor education?

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Thank you

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