Acts of Reading and Gathering in Place: Our Stories so Far…

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ABSTRACT

This article maps the ongoing journey of our reading group's investigation of outdoor and environmental learning and early childhood education as a form of conceptual and practical activism. The journey is presented as three 'streams' exemplifying the fluid, non-linear ways in which the reading group and our ideas appeared. Place, Environmental Education, and Activism are currents guiding our emerging understandings of the relations between activism, stories, local and global communities, and the importance of education happening outdoors. Our monthly gatherings act as confluences of these topics via readings of local and international papers, and contributions from our members, a diverse set of local and international academics, students, teachers and community organizations. We offer a glimpse into our learning, our dynamic journey, and our discoveries. We invite readers to enter these conversational streams, and to consider how a local outdoor reading group might become a form of activism in their own international contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This article maps the ongoing journey of our reading group's investigation into outdoor and environmental learning and early childhood education as a form of conceptual and practical activism. The article is presented as three 'streams', composed of text and images, that aim to illustrate the fluid, non-linear processes of the movements and discoveries that our reading group has experienced in its gatherings, reflections, and actions. This fluidity and complexity also reflect the process involved in writing this article. While the article appears divided into rows and columns, this is our intentional effort to represent a three-dimensional and fluid network of relationships within a two-dimensional format. Deleuze and Guattari (1987), described difficulties associated with network writing in a linear format:

> For example, a book composed of chapters has culmination and termination points. What takes place in a book composed instead of plateaus that communicate with one another across microfissures, as in a brain? We call a "plateau" any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome. We are writing this book as a rhizome. It is composed of plateaus. We have given it a circular form, but only for laughs. Each morning we would wake up, and each of us would ask himself what plateau he was going to tackle, writing five lines here, ten there. We had hallucinatory experiences, we watched lines leave one plateau and proceed to another like columns of tiny ants. We made circles of convergence. Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau. To attain the multiple, one must have a method that effectively constructs it; no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending or creation of words, no syntactical boldness, can substitute for it… we only know of rare successes in this. We ourselves were unable to do it. We just used words that in turn function for us as plateaus. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21-22)

Like Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work regarding plateaus, our article's 'multiplicities' and intersections are interrelated currents. Each stream – Place, Environmental Education, Activism – is supported by and supports the others, and should be understood in relation. You are invited to read the article backwards, forwards, across, or from the middle, if you would like.

More generally, the non-linearity of this work is evocative of complex system processes (e.g., life, weather, land, education, writing). An important feature of complex systems is that they shape and are shaped by the interactions between participants, not the participants themselves (Davis & Sumara, 1997), and are thus mutually emergent, ever changing, and unpredictable. Conversations, too, are complex systems (Davis & Sumara, 1997). This means that, as reading group members, we did not actually control where reading group discussions went – and writing this article was quite similar. The writing emerged from conversations among reading group members, on a particular day, in a particular place, eating particular snacks, and in relation to the readings. Dabby, Hastie, and Stacie (2016) and Speedy et al. (2010) have written papers in ways that resembles ours, in that their work also emerged from collective group processes and experiences.

Our work is like river currents, where water flows together, meets, and weaves, thus creating turbulence and back eddies. No individual stream of water can ever be extracted and analyzed as representative of the whole. Reader, we invite you to flow through this journey with a spirit of interconnectivity and emergence, and that your pauses within the document may offer opportunities to rest, reflect, and breathe, along your way within the currents. Thank you for joining this conversation.

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On a cool and overcast day in late February 2016, our reading group met for the first time. The reading group formed organically from a proposal to explore intersections of outdoor and environmental learning and early childhood education.	Conversation stops. Eight sets of eyes gaze skyward as an eagle dips and coasts above the rooftop patio before disappearing behind a metal and pine horizon. Our glowing eyes meet, in silent awe, before resuming our discussion. The new Student Union Building where we gather at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is aptly named "the Nest." Like birds, we have been migrating here each month to gather and contemplate our place, perched atop land and landscapes whose stories hold millennia of dynamic history.	
In fall 2015, we dreamed of starting a reading group that would gather regularly to discuss papers of common interest, related to pedagogical and ethical questions about the relations between early childhood and outdoor		On January 13, 2016, an email circulated through the emerging group, stating, "This is the review we've been waiting for!" (Beattie, personal communication). The email referenced Chawla's (2015) research review paper,

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education. Our January 20, 2016, meeting minutes state, "Informal reading groups can be a good segue into bigger gettings-together. This will form itself. Folks will be able to contribute other things, others can share articles. Undergraduates, teacher education students, graduate students, practitioners, etc., may be interested." (Strich, 2016a)		*Benefits of Nature Contact for Children.* It was decided. This would be our first reading, and a date was set for the first meeting of our reading group. (See Appendix II for the list of articles we read)
Referring to the 1975 symposium on Children, Nature, and the Urban Environment, Chawla (2015) commented, "the gathering was motivated by concern that 'urban children of today have become increasingly divorced from the natural environment of forests and fields that was part of the surroundings in which children developed just a generation ago'" (p. 435).		Commenting on our current ecological crisis, Latour (2005) calls for the creation of new political assemblies, needed for their "ways of bringing together those who are concerned" (p. 20). For the political theorist, Arendt (1958/1998), the constitution of matters of concern, or what she calls an '*inter-esse*,' is conditioned upon the act of people coming together in robust talk about a common worldly issue -- endowing it with significance, multiple meanings, and complicated entanglements. The main purpose of the experience of a gathering is not to achieve consensus by homogenizing differences, but to sustain the multiplicity and fluidity of the plurality of opinions in such a way that the unexpected or newness (new relations, ideas, and stories) can emerge; destabilizing the status quo and making space for action and transformation. In the act of coming together, people perform caring for a common world and a commitment to make their *inter-esse* a public 'thing' (Arendt, 1958/1998).
	Chawla's (2015) paper spoke to the notion of 'wastelands,' "wild areas like riverbanks, woods, and hills [that] evoked both attraction and fear" (p. 436). Chawla noted that wasteland "places also appeared when children talked about where they best liked to be" (2015, p. 436).	

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	As well, Chawla (2015) introduced us to R. Hart's concept of "'microspheres'" (p. 437) as small-scale places children created in play. Some examples of microspheres included: "dirt at the base of a tree in a yard, an overgrown hill behind houses, or a distant riverbank" (Chawla, 2015, p. 437). Chawla (2015) recalled R. Hart's conclusion around urbanization, that it "systematically removed the undeveloped spaces that children needed to explore and modify their landscape" (p. 437).	(February 24, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Kate: "I guess the things we take so academically in terms of loose parts and social constructivist learning and all the bits and pieces that we think of in education, they happen so naturally and intuitively when you break down the walls of a space, and literally don't have those physical boundaries of a building, and I live it. I am working on finding the research and the words and the philosophies behind it, but I see it. There is a deep gut feeling that something is different and its hard to explain specifically to the children, because I cannot know what they would have been like without this experience, but as a cohort, as a collective, this feels different from the previous twenty years of my life as an early childhood educator. There is empathy and an imagination and trust and creativity between these children that is beautiful. There is a capacity and there is resilience but there is also a settled wellness that is a part."
(February 24, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Hart B.: "I think it's interesting the whole notion of wellbeing, and here in the paper (Chawla, 2015) it's sort of dropped on us. But even from our short conversation, there are so many ways that we can conceive of wellbeing. Perhaps we are ex-communicating many other senses of wellbeing and I think that those are valid to consider and bring into the conversation." Hart B.: "There is one expression that I came across through the Cree language, and they say 'being alive well' (Adelson, 1998), and if you compare [this] with 'wellbeing' – 'wellbeing' is a very objectified way of saying it, whereas 'being alive well' is in the moment, emergent."	(February 24, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Margaret: "I did a search and the word 'spirit' comes up once, and it's a beautiful article but it's dead. There is no spirit in it, and the First Nations' relationship with land is all about the spirit and the idea that we can learn from the land as teacher, as opposed to it has plants that feed us, and that it has stories and that it holds instructions for living well. And that is present within our own history and in European cultural history but also within today, so that idea, that way of understanding this relationship with land somehow belongs to other people, I mean it's untrue. I know from Irish ancestry there is deep connection to land and place, so I can look within my own culture and those histories, even though they were changed by time they are still here, still within our language, our songs."	(February 24, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Estella: "What you are saying makes me think of two recent readings*, The Wellness Syndrome* (Cederström & Spicer, 2015) and *Dead Men Working* (Cederström & Fleming, 2012), and they touched upon this neoliberal… let's make people feel as if they are actually doing something positive for each other, for the environment, while still maintaining the trajectory towards economic success in this very narrow, neoliberal conception that we have, and it speaks to the discomfort in co-opting environmental politics and wellness politics in environmental politics and wellness politics in general."

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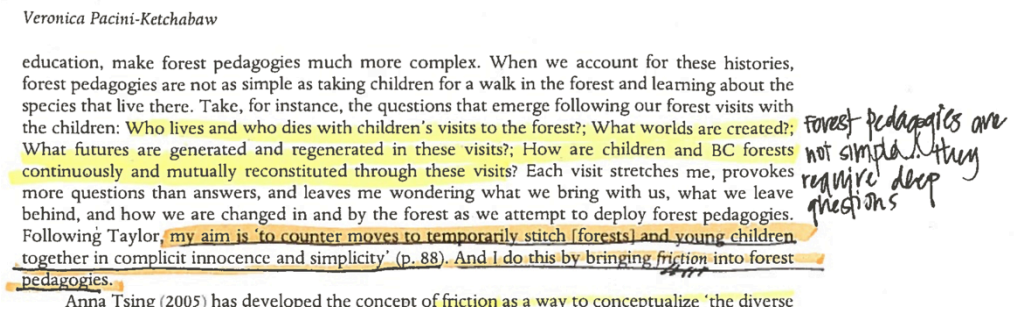
Our reading group met again in March, 2016, to discuss a paper by Derby, Blenkinsop, Telford, Piersol and Caulkins (2013), which introduced themes of ecology and democracy in education. These became touchstones in our discussions as we returned to them repeatedly in various gatherings and conversations.	Our reading group met at several outdoor locations around the UBC campus. Meeting outdoors was a conscious, intentional choice. Issues of engagement with our local place were very much a part of the reading group, both in the articles we read, and in the questions and discussions they raised, particularly as they applied to our own praxis. Gathering outdoors opened possibilities for different types of discussions than we might have had if we had met indoors. Being outdoors led to our being more grounded and rooted in our gathering places, and increased our awareness of the animal, plant, environmental, and human activities going on around us. Our outdoor gatherings allowed for forms of outdoor, place-based action, such as dressing for the weather and historical or aesthetic contemplations related to our meeting places.	Throughout our gatherings, movement occurred in diverse ways: seasonal changes, location shifts, group member configurations; our reading selections were influenced by prior readings and the evolving interests of the group. Ideas from our readings provoked us. As we moved through time, we were moved by our gatherings, in stochastic ways. We were moved to tell stories and by the stories we heard. This piece of writing emerged from our gatherings – an inspiration to map and share our gathering's trajectory, our reading group's movement. This map, our story, is evidence of the activism that a reading group may generate.
	 Figure 1. Annie's conversation with Pacini-Ketchabaw's (2013) article. This shows one of the ways in which the reading group interacted with the articles we read, both intellectually and physically.

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(April 20, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Estella: "I have been wondering how to define the term 'ecology.' Is ecology a philosophy, an ethic, an aesthetic? How do we relate as teachers or researchers to the term ecology? Ecology speaks to relationship, it speaks to web, it can speak to cyclical patterns. Can it maybe replace this linearity or binary pattern that has led to so many destructive patterns?" Elizabeth: "If you say you are going to use an ecological lens to examine relationships, I think that is a mis-use. I think we should come up with a new word. I am a little tied to the scientific use of ecology. I don't think to continue to use it in ever more diverse ways is helpful." Estella: "My concern is that we are going back to the same sorts of limits that throw us back into our quagmire. These terms are so ephemeral really. It is about what we do… If we say we cannot move forward until we have a term, we don't move anywhere and we are constantly embroiled in disputes."		"Resonant education experiences, framed within locally sensitive ways of understanding human embeddedness in the more-than-human world, offer the possibility of drawing students toward a deeper attentivity to their ecological-ontological relationality and, ultimately, a flourishing democratic and ecological society" (Derby et al., 2013, p. 5).
"Abram's (and Merleau-Ponty's) notion of 'the flesh of the world' as participating in 'a vast, interpenetrating webwork of perceptions and sensations borne by countless other bodies' (Abram, 1996, p. 65) leads the way to a description of places as an ecology of reciprocal, interdependent relationships between bodies and forms" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 624).		

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So, I look to these trees, whose branches swing like feathered wings, for guidance and wisdom; some of these wooded elders were alive before colonization began in North America. They teach me what it means to stand tall. They encourage me to stay in place. They whisper about holding hands with all of my relations even if it is going on through unseen, often hidden, underground systems. They remind me to be reverent by slowly sinking roots deep into the ground, holding firm to the truth of the land as the provider of life. They show me how to adapt to adversity by swaying in the strong winds, sharing space, moving with others, and eventually rebounding to center. They share the secret that death and life are interconnected, as decaying nurse logs make space for young trees, and other species, to grow. They inspire me: even a tiny seedling can get lucky, be in the right place, gather nutrients over time and create a space for itself while fortifying others in its community. Our reading group is a human manifestation of these lessons. We center our discussions about literature on the land. We recognize the importance of creating fertile outdoor spaces for our younger generations -- Early Childhood Education. We embrace being out-of-building in various weather conditions -- Outdoor Learning. We stay in place and talk and engage with one another, deepening connections though conversation and vulnerability. We sink our roots deep into ideas and practices so we can stand tall together. We are lucky to share the space together and support one another in efforts to bolster our communities.		

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"What about the democratic participation of nature itself? Does nature get to participate in democracy -- if so how? Western culture is colonizing nature, in a rather violent way. It takes away the democratic or the equality processes to impose something on [nature]. How do we reverse this? How about in environmental and outdoor education?" (Strich, 2016b)	 Figure 2. Rooftop patio at the Nest. (Photo from UBC Bookstore, 2016)	Hart B.: "I am thinking about the theme of democratic participation... I am not sure that I understand this theme. Is it to suggest that including the 'more-than-human' is democratic? '*Demos*' derives from Greek and means 'people'... Moreover, democracy is marred with problems... In the Apr 20th transcript the term 'ecology' was discussed. Ecology, from the Greek '*oikos*,' can mean home, but also dwelling place... this seems more aligned. Perhaps we might reconsider the use of the word democracy and revert to ecology? I know that there is a very biological definition, but there are many other (broader) senses?" (H. Banack, personal communication, October 5, 2016) Iris: "Your thoughts make a lot of sense to me. I, we, are facing the most disastrous era of 'democracy' (just look across the border). I'd like to develop this idea of ecology and it connects with some of my ideas about how we need new ways to speak about activism (politics) because the 'old' words (e.g., democracy) do not work anymore in responding to our current political/ecological conditions." (I. Berger, personal communication, October 6, 2016) Elizabeth: "On the one hand, I might suggest that we are according personhood to place by including it in our democracy... and in our particular case, this is meant as a respectful and humble gesture, where we consider this neither a raising or lowering of status, but an equalizing of all beings. Perhaps what we want to create is an 'ontocracy' (from Greek '*ontos*' = being). I agree the current practice of democracy is awful. But does that mean all applications of the theory (praxes) must

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		be so? I think the problem is that ecology has become a value-laden term... as if it is good to be ecological or to take an ecological lens. But that is nonsense. Ecology, or an ecosystem, just is. It is without judgement and without purpose, and further, without a goal or a creator with a plan. There are no power dynamics. It is not a social system. We would not want to ecologize our schools or writing or politics because many of the realities of ecosystems are things we have created social systems to avoid (disrespect, murder, etc.)." (A. E. Beattie, personal communication, October 6, 2016)
For Latour (2004), the gathering is an occasion for a collective experience that not only generates "a rich set of connections" but also an investigation "to detect how many participants are gathered in a thing to make it exist and to maintain its existence" (p. 246).	Inspired by our conversations and curiosity about place, one group member shared a perspective from a previous class that had impacted her: "UBC/LAND: A Non-authoritative History of this Place" (P. Walter, personal communication, February, 2016) (See Appendix I).	

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	 Figure 3. The gathering place outside the UBC First Nations Longhouse. (Photo by H. Banack)	
We gathered outside the UBC Longhouse to discuss Jickling's interview with Naess (Jickling, 2000) about education, action, and deep ecology. This reading was suggested in response to the Derby et al. (2013) paper, particularly in relation to themes of ecology and democracy.	(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Hart B.: "Good morning! We've got butt pads – we've got rocks – we've got stumps!"	
(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Elizabeth: "If you live somewhere like Beijing – not only can you not see the clouds, you shouldn't go outside because it's not healthy. And I think – I don't know – if we accept that the edge of the railway is a place for environmental education (EE), it means we don't need to work (and this is where I don't know if	"Whereas if you look at the sky -- there are a fantastically lot of different clouds in Norway -- you are free, and therefore free to strengthen the imagination. More and more I look at clouds. I did it as a boy and now at the age of 88 I get back to clouds -- changing, changing, changing. There must be much more of that in school -- keeping imaginations intact." (Naess, in Jickling, 2000, p. 54)	(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Annie: "I didn't think of him [Naess] as an opposition to activism, it's a different way of activism. He talks about Gandhi, he talks about peaceful reactions to others, and just asking people questions that get people thinking about it rather than… imposing or sinking into negativity about the state of the world, which is so easy to do."

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activism and EE can always go together) to preserve the really wild places." Hart B.: "How do activism and EE go together? Some might say there is a strong connection, and Naess (Jickling, 2000) says there is no connection beyond "'sweep[ing] before your own door'" (p. 52). David Y.: "But isn't that what he's [Naess'] saying – he is encouraging students to think deeper. How do you do that with different kids?" Maria: "You must not lead them" (Jickling, 2000, p. 52). For me, he [Naess] felt a responsibility to share knowledge… I feel he is inviting people to question deeper (with Socratic methodology?), but without thinking he knows more than the others. He felt a responsibility to share."		
	(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Kate: "I think it is essential to have that idea that it is anywhere along the railroad tracks, along the playground… otherwise environmental knowledge, experiences, schools, practice, whatever, become a privilege. So if you can get out of the city, if you can get out to those natural areas, if you can afford… whatever it is as those areas become increasingly scarce or inaccessible, then you have to change your perspective so that it is doable the moment one steps out of a built space – whatever that looks like. If you take that perspective, then it goes back to the ideas of place-based learning about… um in urban Detroit and how it connects with social justice issues – because otherwise you have teachers or anybody saying we can't do that here."	

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Orr (1992) wrote, "all education is environmental education" (p. 90). Drawing on Hart, Jickling and Kool's (1999) questions for praxis, I would say that 'all education *can be* environmental education.' Environmental education (EE) and outdoor education (OE) invite learners to engage with their immediate surroundings (Hart et al., 1999; Sobel, 2004, 2008). EE and OE encourage learners to consider situations in complex ways, and to understand multiple viewpoints – and then to bring critical thought to bear (Hart et al., 1999; Slingsby, 2006; Sobel, 2004, 2008). Our reading group read and discussed local and international articles about outdoor learning and environmental education. For example, we read an article (Somerville, 2013) that investigated the relationships young children in a polluted, industrialized area of Australia formed with a local wetland. We read Pacini-Ketchabaw's (2013) piece that troubled the use of forests in BC as blank settings for outdoor learning and environmental education. In both cases, we were reading about learning that took place in the learners' local outdoor settings, that engaged with local issues, and required a critical consideration of the multiple voices or perspectives which were present – all fundamental aspects of OE…		… I would go further, and suggest that the reading group members were simultaneously taking part in OE by participating in the reading group. We met outdoors, and became the learners, engaged with issues of OE praxis and theory, and their application in our immediate sphere. Finally, participating in this reading group was also a form of activism. Both Davis (2009) and Caiman & Lundegård (2014) have emphasized that EE and OE are inextricably linked to action. When I consider activism, I look to Naess, who spoke of taking action locally, in the Gandhian sense. For Naess, "education should itself consist of actions" (Jickling, 2000, p. 60). So, the experience of being in the reading group was an outdoor environmental education experience, co-created by the members, the readings, and the places we meet, an experience that was both educative and activist at once.
We traverse borders and boundaries within our reading group. These are some of the places that the participants and readings come from: Bellingham, Washington, USA Latrobe Valley, Gippsland, Australia Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada Newfoundland, Canada Oslo, Norway		

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Richmond, British Columbia, Canada
Romania
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

We meet on traditional, ancestral, and unceded xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) territory (Musqueam Indian Band, 2011), part of the expansive traditional Coast Salish territory that crosses the border between the United States and Canada (Marker, 2015). This meeting place serves as a foundational invitation for us to consider a different concept of 'inter-nationality.' Coast Salish cosmology, and thus their traditional homeland, is tied to the Salish Sea, the coastal waters of southern BC and northern Washington state (Marker, 2015). The colonial boundary that runs through this homeland is meaningless for the Coast Salish, who cross it freely, and recognize that imaginary lines do not affect natural or cultural ecologies (Marker, 2015).

Participation in our group flows and overlaps like currents in a stream: new members join, others flow to different conversations, and steady participants carry the conversation over time. All the while, individuals bring experiences to the group and then take the experience of the group with them wherever they go. The ideas we explore are expanding to international destinations via conversation and writing:

Bali, Indonesia.
Bellingham, Washington, USA.
China
Richmond, British Columbia, Canada
Wherever
You Are Right Now

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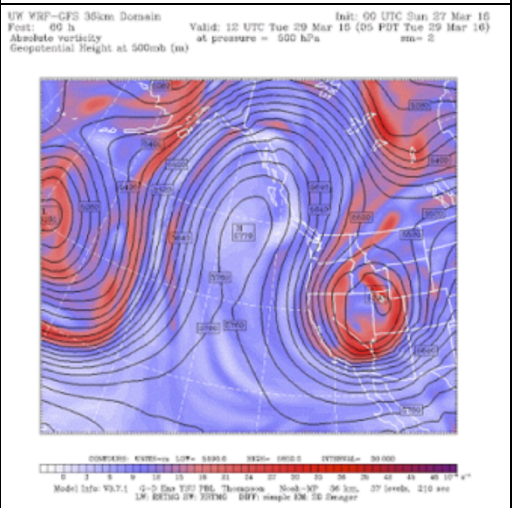
	(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Jane: "I'm thinking of the Neville Scarfe Children's Garden [at UBC]. It was real. I think the idea behind it was that future educators would learn outside in this outdoor space as a part of [their] education." Annie: "Where is this?" Jane: "In between the Education Library and the main Education building." Hart B./David S./Elizabeth: "The Secret Garden!" Jane: "So that existed… and it's what we were talking about earlier. How do we do this? And it makes me think of this. It happened once. It happened once *here*." Hart B.: "So it happened and then what happened?" David Y.: "That's what I want to know…" Jane: "If I had to guess, the slice [of the Secret Garden] that is still remaining there is geographical water flow that is in there… and they actually couldn't build… or it was a compromised slice because of the landscaping…"	 Figure 4. Atmospheric pressure map of the Pacific Northwest from March 29, 2016. (Photo from wxloop.cgi?mm5d1_x_500vor+v2016103115///+-st, 2016)
(March 30, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Iris: "There are some studies done in Australia, by Somerville. She thought through a methodology to work with children and a lot of it is through drawing and thinking about the land and being outside and creating images… but it reflects their knowing of the land…"	(April 20, 2016, Reading Group Transcript) Elizabeth: "I read an article about Australian Aboriginal songlines (Brady, 2005). So people are walking on the land, and each place and location has a story and a song and a set walking speed. A researcher was in a truck with an elder and the man was talking, talking, talking, talking… because the truck was going too fast, and there was no way to get all the words in … [laughter] -- it is funny, but it is	For our next gathering, we discussed a paper by Somerville (2013) that looked at Australian children making meaning of their local places through drawing.

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	also sad because the culture is dying and if families do not get to walk, they will never be able to pass on all this knowledge. They are moving through the landscape too fast." David S.: "I've done a songline, and they are fun. I'll tell you something, even though I made it up and didn't know the actual story of that land, we taught it as a way to not get lost. So you walk out a mile in a dense forest and you recognize a few key players, and you reverse the song on the way back. Young talks about this in his connection stuff, and his work… (Young, Haas & McGown, 2010). Young is huge. He has worked with the folks in Botswana, the Bushmen. He has a Wilderness Awareness School. He said practice these with kids, how not to get lost." Elizabeth: "The Aboriginal songlines are more than just not getting lost stories, they are singing the world into existence. People own them as well." Estella: "I remember reading about an Inuit, and they do story-knifing. It is female-based, only the girls and the women do it, and the men used to carve bone knives for their daughters. The [girls and women] would go to very specific places in the village, and they would sit where their grandmas sat and they would draw the stories with their knives and they would take turns telling stories, and as they told them, they would erase them, just as generations upon generations had done, in the same place." (For more about story-knifing, see deMarrais, Nelson & Baker, 1994, or Stabenow, 2011) Hart B.: "How do the experiences of songlines or story-knifing appear in the lives of children today? How do they	

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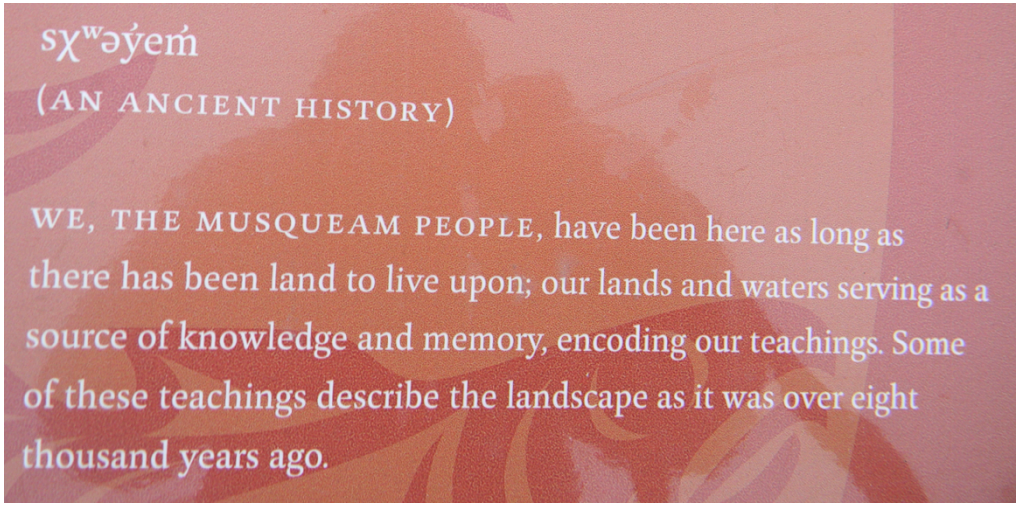
	have these connections? What's replaced these?"	
	 Figure 5. First paragraph of text on the sχʷəy̓eḿ (ancient history) plaque beside the Musqueam Welcome Post at UBC. (Photo by H. Banack)	
"[Australian Aboriginal ways of being are] a complex intertwining of self, country, language and knowledge, a way of being in the world in which nature and culture are one. This is fundamentally different to an ontology and epistemology of western cultural language and	"The power of place and water to demand something of us, to propel us to grapple with representation and language" (Somerville, 2013, p. 409).	

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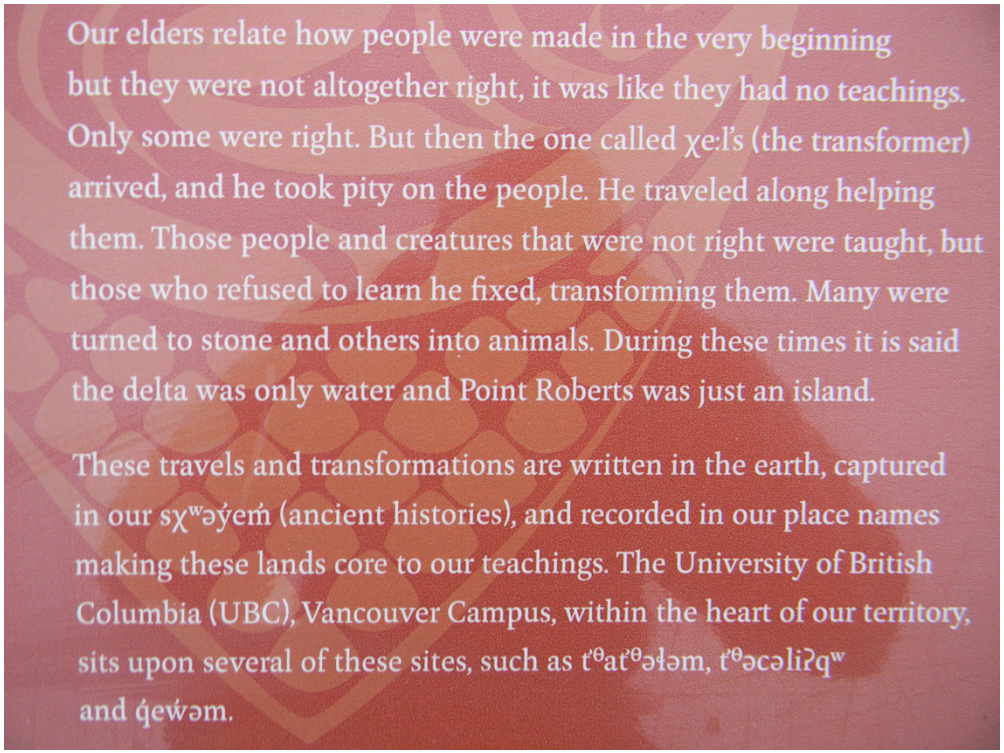
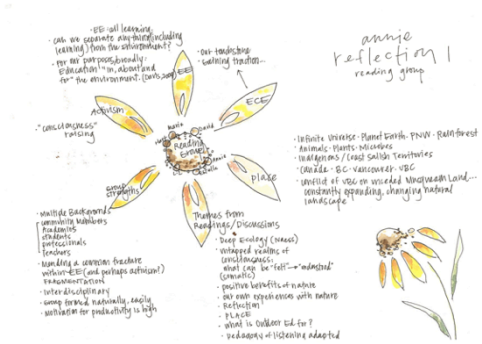
practices in which nature and culture are separated." (Somerville, 2013, p. 410)		
	This question of what place demands of us propelled us to read and discuss an article by Pacini-Ketchabaw (2013) which explored 'frictions' between local, colonized forests, indigenous knowledge, and early childhood outdoor and environmental pedagogy.	

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	Land/ *Place*	Movement/ *Activism*
"Naming, as a practice of knowing, makes worlds and Schiebinger (2007) notes that naming practices 'are historically and culturally specific, growing out of particular contexts, conflicts, and circumstances' (p. 95). … These names, however, like most Indigenous place names, have been silenced in North American forest pedagogies." (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2013, p. 359)	 Figure 6. Second paragraph of text on the sχʷəẏeḿ (ancient history) plaque beside the Musqueam Welcome Post at UBC. (Photo by H. Banack)	

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	Land/ *Place*	Movement/ *Activism*
	"I play with the concept of friction in forest pedagogies to look at what might 'take shape when we act on our curiosity to find out more about where we are, and who and what is there with us' (Taylor, 2013, p. 79) – in other words, what takes shape in our *common worlds* (Taylor & Giugni, 2012; Taylor, 2013). These common worlds are 'full of entangled and uneven historical and geographical relations, political tensions, ethical dilemmas and unending possibilities' (Taylor, 2013, p. 86)." [italics original] (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2013, p. 356).	
Place is the home of many entities: human, other-than-human, and more-than-human. The land positions and is storied by these inhabitants. Overlapping stories of place are evident when we consider UBC's motto, "A Place of Mind." This reminds the group that our gatherings have an academic component and that the UBC campus sits on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people (Musqueam Indian Band, 2011; The University of British Columbia, 2015). Place is a knowledge holder for the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm people, transformed into human language through storytelling, reinforcing and reinforced by the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm language and worldview. As we move over the landscape and delve into the literature, we create the story of this reading group. But our group is in turn created by the places in which we hold each gathering. We become subject to the place. "In every case, we are still, even many years later, *in the places to which we are subject* because (and to the exact extent that) *they are in us*" [italics original] (Casey, 2001, p. 688). We bring our conversations and the place with us after we depart from our discussion. Places matter because they become integrated into our collective story of the reading group, and into the learnings of individuals who participate.	 Figure 7. Final paragraph of text on the sχʷəy̓eṁ (ancient history) plaque beside the Musqueam Welcome Post at UBC. (Photo by H. Banack)	

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	**Land/ *Place***	**Movement/ *Activism***
The places then hold important learnings. "Whatever happened, the ancient people instinctively sorted events and details into a loose narrative structure. Everything became a story… Thus the remembering and the retelling were a communal process… Through the efforts of a great many people, the community was able to piece together valuable accounts and crucial information that might otherwise have died with an individual." (Silko, 1998, p. 9) The ideas that emerge from our communal discussions are preserved because the places are integrated into the story, as the stories are held by the places that remember them.		
As ideas of place, stories, and their intersections with OE and activism provoked us further, we explored them through Preston's (2014) paper.	"When place is foregrounded, learning focuses on gaining contextual knowledge and being responsive to local conditions and cultures" (Preston, 2014, p. 176).	

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	**Land/ *Place***	**Movement/ *Activism***
"Massey's theorisation of spaces as a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005, p. 130) helps me see the ways in which stories about [outdoor environmental education] spaces and places of learning get reproduced and how multiple stories co-exist and provide contradictions, openings and disruptions." (Preston, 2014, p. 173)		 Figure 8. Annie's reflection relating our reading group to EE, OE and activism.
The collective experience of our reading group has served as a forum for radical encounters with our vulnerabilities, the vastness of our questions, and, on occasion, with the impasses facing our efforts and desires to re-create our common world. Through our engagements with the texts, each others' stories, and the materiality of our meeting places, we had opportunities and response-abilities to inquire into and reconfigure who/what assembled in our gatherings in a public space/place that is being challenged to reconcile with its colonial history.		Preston's (2014) use of the notion of 'stories-so-far' is evocative of the potential disruptive energy of the stories shared within our reading group. Storytelling became a forum through which new compositions of the world were encountered as provocations for re-thinking our co-existence with each other, with young children, and with the more-than-human. For example, Elizabeth's story about the children learning about pollination: *The children were asked what would happen if someone picked all of the apple blossoms, and they were expected to care about the idea that no blossoms meant no apple sauce, but a girl in the group*

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	Land/ *Place*	Movement/ *Activism*
		instead said that no blossoms meant no food for the bees. The girl expressed her concern for the bees as she imagined whole orchards dying... she didn't see the lack of apple sauce as the crisis, but rather the unravelling of the whole web that is held together by the bees. Or Kate's story about walking to the park with young children: *I love the walk to the park because it is the walk, the picking up the pebbles, climbing on things... it is always the walk to the park where everything interesting happens. It is the journey.* These stories reminded us what we might learn *from* children and their relations with the outdoors and the more-than-human. The stories *acted* on us inviting us into new wonderings about our assumptions and our practice.

Gatherings/ *Environmental Education*	Land/ *Place*	Movement/ *Activism*

Figure 9. Our reading group on February 24, 2016. (Photo from H. Banack)

CONFLUENCE

We have written about the reading group as we lived it; an emergent, non-linear process of encountering plateaus, multiplicities, turbulences, intersections, and currents. The larger currents we have felt in this work -- Place, Environmental Education, Activism – are inseparable, and have become entangled with our stories, the articles we have read, the members of the reading group, and the local weather each day we met. All of these currents and streams have merged into a river that joyously threatens to overflow its banks, to sweep everything away with it. No individual stream of water can ever be extracted and analyzed as representative of the whole; yet the collective current exists as movement and momentum.

We are not passive participants in the river. All we have experienced, all that places, stories, critical conversations and relationships have offered us, have become part of our stream-bodies. How we exist, as teachers, scholars and humans-in-relation-to-the-world has changed, as currents flow in new ways. Our reading group meetings continue. We interact with each other, with doers and thinkers in text, with new colleagues, with the more-than-human, with places and their storied layers layered stories. As our article intends to reflect, we meander through expanding interpretations of intellectual and embodied understanding. Our experiences as individuals, community members, educators and learners inextricably flow into dynamic connectivity.

This is not the ending, but an eddy. It is with hesitance that we gently guide the experience of this paper into a troubled relation with closure, as this article challenges notions of texts and places as static and passive – leading in a known path. This paper cannot be drawn into conclusion but rather slows into a back-current and a calm pool awaiting the next rush to carry it along. We wish to offer an opening, a provocation, that invites *more* movement and *more* gatherings, perhaps through enacting a reading group as a practice that trusts the immanent possibility of emergent ethical and ecological imaginaries.

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Elizabeth Beattie is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on how students create meaningful outdoor environmental and science learning experiences, with an emphasis on early childhood education. She hopes to work with teachers and curriculum planners to incorporate outdoor learning into the standard curriculum, to promote meaningful, active, relevant, student-driven learning, teaching, and assessment. Elizabeth grew up in Toronto, but fell in love with the West Coast when she moved there to do her undergraduate degree in Conservation Biology. She also likes paddling, baseball, red wine, cats, and mystery novels.

Dr. Iris Berger has been involved in the field of early childhood education as a classroom teacher, researcher, community organizer, policy consultant, and university lecturer since the mid 1990s. Her passion for early childhood education (ECE) as a distinct and ever-engaging realm of/for research-pedagogy began when she worked with two, three and four-year-olds in the model classrooms at the *Child Study Centre* under the auspices of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, Canada. She is currently a Lecturer and a Coordinator with the UBC ECE Program. At the centre of her professional and academic inquiry lies the abiding notion that matters pertaining to education *and* childhood are entangled with questions of ethics and politics.

Hailing from the desert state of Utah, with degrees in Cultural Anthropology and International Studies, Annie Montague is a Master's student in the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. Her research explores the intersection of Early Childhood Education and Environmental Education, focusing on progressive educational models and young children as "agents of change" for the natural environment. Annie's Master's work includes an ethnographically oriented case study with preschoolers in Bali, Indonesia: examining how culture, curriculum, and place are woven into learning.

David Strich is a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. He has a passion to explore how (young) people develop what Aldo Leopold coined as a "Land Ethic." He very much wants to see the United States incorporating a Land Ethic into the standard public education curricula. With years of traveling, teaching, and living in countries around the Pacific Ring of Fire, Dave is excited to look at this idea through a cross-cultural lens. He serves as the director of an after-school program that promotes Mexican cultural enrichment and scholastic academic support. When not reading, writing, or working with students, he enjoys time homesteading and gardening with his wonderful wife in Bellingham, Washington.

APPENDIX I -- UBC / LAND: **"**A Non-authoritative History of this Place." Compiled by Pierre Walter

UBC land is covered in thick ice

- 1.65 million to about 35,000 years ago - Ice Age (Pleistocene)
- 17,000 years ago height of Fraser Glaciation in BC

UBC land is a temperate coastal rainforest

- 11-12,000 years ago BC glaciers recede
- Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Hemlock

UBC land is home to First Nations Peoples

- 10,000 years ago First Nations people populate BC

UBC land is home to Musqueam People

- 4,000 years to the present: "UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who prior had received teachings in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next." (The University of British Columbia, 2015)

- Approximately 200,000-2 million First Nations People in BC for many 1,000s of years
- Approximately 50% of population wiped out by smallpox, diseases, settler-colonialism, 1700's
- Today: about 200,000 aboriginal peoples in BC; about 1,000 Musqueam people

Undeveloped UBC land is part of the UBC Arboretum

- 1916 first trees planted

UBC is part of so-called "University Endowment Lands"

- 1920 BC Government declares 3,000 acres (12 km^2) at Point Grey is "endowed" to UBC

UBC "Nest"

- The building upon which we are sitting was approved for construction in 2010, completed in 2015

UBC

- UBC sits atop land, vegetation and history of which we have been a part for a very short amount of time.

Figure 10. View of UBC Campus. Part of "A Non-authoritative History of this Place." Compiled by Pierre Walter

APPENDIX II – OUR GATHERINGS

Date	Article	Location	Weather
February 24, 2016	Chawla, L. (2015). Benefits of Nature Contact for Children. *Journal of Planning Literature, 30*(4), 433–452.	Rooftop patio, UBC Nest	Partially cloudy Temperature 9 °C (Time and Date AS, 2016)
March 16, 2016	Derby, M., et. al. (2013). Toward Resonant, Imaginative Experiences in Ecological and Democratic Education: A Response to "Imagination and Experience: An Integrative Framework." *Democracy and Education, 21*(2), 1–5.	Rooftop patio, UBC Nest	Sun and cloud Temperature 8 °C (Time and Date AS, 2016)
March 30, 2016	Jickling, B. (2000). Deep Ecology and Education: A Conversation with Arne Næss. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 5*, 48–62.	Sacred Circle, outside First Nations Longhouse	Scattered clouds Temperature 14 ° C (Time and Date AS, 2016)
April, 20, 2016	Somerville, M. (2013). The nature/cultures of children's place learning maps. *Global Studies of Childhood, 3*(4), pp. 407-417.	Rooftop patio, UBC Nest	Sunny Temperature 20 °C (Time and Date AS, 2016)
May 25, 2016	Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2013). Frictions in Forest Pedagogies: common worlds in settler colonial spaces. *Global Studies of Childhood, 3*(4), 355–365.	Rooftop patio, UBC Nest	Sunny Temperature 20 °C (Time and Date AS, 2016)
June 29, 2016	Preston, L. (2014). Students' imaginings of spaces of learning in Outdoor and Environmental Education. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, 14(*2), 172-190.	Ponderosa Commons, patio by large pine	Sunny and hot Temperature 24 °C (Time and Date AS, 2016)