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Training for Instructors of Outdoor Adventure Activities

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Square backets indicate my comments as the researcher and interviewer.

Sensitive information that could identify the participant has been removed from the transcript. The participant’s name has been pseudonymized.

**Interview with Ben**

I wanted to know more about what sits behind this document as it shows me the glimpse, but there's a whole (without using big words), I’m desperate to know where it's coming from, from a kind of epistemological kind of, point of view, cause that’s the bit you can see sitting above the waterline, and I think that's for me, that's the critical bit. So, for me it's just this idea of how we are delivering education in a context that either perpetuates a particular way of seeing humans in nature, or actually challenges the kind of normalised way that we see humans in nature. So, I kind of went through it in that kind of discursive kind of a way. Like I said, because it's not, for me it’s not like I read this and saw this and read this and saw this, but I do have some things that I can point out really quickly, just to give you a sense of where we go on. Just thinking that might help. And I'll show you a typo! I thought you’d appreciate that! It was so normal- I wasn’t sure that it was a typo- that I wondered whether this is different, just try and find it…its where you mention the Pembrokeshire um… there it is there, see that word ‘foundered’

[Yeah, okay]

I’m assuming you meant ‘founded’. ‘Foundered’ means to seek something down through water. So if a ship ‘founders’ – right? So I almost thought, is that deliberate?!

[No! It should be founded!]

So that was what I thought, I thought that I can be all professor-torial and pedantic to start us off right?!

[yeah, well, that’s what I said to mum before starting, nobody’s seen this handbook apart from me and my supervisors, and I was like I don’t know what people are going to say about this, it could be brutal!]

Well, I mean, look, you know that what we were saying before, the level of enthusiasm and support and stuff, so it is all good right?! So… how do we start this?!

[Well, if it’s easier we can start with the questions? If that makes it easier?]

Yeah, yeah, you do that, see where it takes me, because as I say they overlap in how I would respond to each question, they’re not quite as specific.

[yeah, so and as you will have seen with the questions they start off quite vague really. So in terms of the objectives, do you think they are relevant? And can they be useful in the outdoor industry?]

Yes, right. So course objectives, right. So I'll just try and start us off and then it will start to roll. There’s a course that I have to do when I started at the place I’m at now and it’s called a Carbon Literacy program, have you done it?

[Oh yeah, I’ve come across it, but I haven’t done it yet, I’d like to]

So I was wondering, so when I said how relevant are the course objectives, it does tie into another question further down as well, is I was wondering whether there is something around having an element of just a general introduction to carbon accounting. Because I think that's where some of- when you go back to the foundational knowledge, yeah, then you've got something to build on. And I was thinking about entry behaviour, and I was thinking about that foundational knowledge like how do we know the people we’ve got in the room know what we think they know? And how are they interpreting that knowledge before you even start? The reason I'm poking this bear, and I’ll probably poke it quite a lot through this whole conversation is that, I think that we have got, within education generally, more specifically from circumstances within outdoor education is that we've got the wool pulled over our eyes in terms of how we see ourselves in this environment right?- learning environment, education environment, market environment, right. Because we are engaged with the outdoors, professionally all the time, we've got this warm fuzzy feeling that we're actually doing something about the environment, and we aren't. I think that's where I want to just kind of draw this out a little bit. I'm drawing it out because I think it's important to get those- you know, if you're building a curriculum you need to start in the right place. And I thought of things like hierarchical task analysis- I don’t know whether you have come across that model for curriculum design?

[no, I haven’t actually]

It’s really interesting, but it's probably quite old school now. But it’s worked for me really well, because it allows you to bring in actors that aren’t just about the educational content, or you’re bringing in context as well. It's a really nice way of just mapping what do you need to know before you can, before you can move to the next bit and the next bit and the next bit and the next bit. And then once you start getting into it, then identify the different strands that actually make up that little packet of knowledge. So you’re into kind of education in that kind of transactional sense in terms of building a knowledge curriculum, then if you've got, you've got space to play out with that. Because I really want to kind of challenge this foundational belief in the outdoor sector. This is why I was saying to you before that we need to get the words right, because I've got it wrong sometimes and people have been coming with feeling, or I have felt like they are now becoming defensive because I’ve challenged them such an extent that you don't have that grasp to feel like I'm picking on them, and that’s not the case at all. It’s just trying to work out how you start it, so that was where I was going to start about the objectives, is just thinking about, um, I mean obviously they’re absolutely, you know, there is nothing wrong with the objectives themselves. There's nothing wrong, no problem there at all. But I almost wanted to go back and challenge it at a more specific level. So, I did something similar to this, bringing some positive psychology into an organisation I was working for. And, what I realised is that, I could write the curriculum, because I had the knowledge, right, so I could write you know, about CBT a bit of NLP a bit of transactional analysis, a bit of this, build this nice curriculum, teach instructors to then deliver this with kids, teach them about facilitation skills and all the rest of that; the problem was, was that I hadn't thought about what knowledge they were coming with. So I had to kind of go prior to any of the course content and actually build them a platform to step off from. And then also a reason that it didn’t go as well as I would have liked, is that I forgot I had a sales team as well. So it wasn't just about instructors delivering it, I was so wrapped up in my own little outdoor education world that I forgot that actually the people that needed this stuff to get this off the ground; there’s a pedagogical process that I needed to go through for Salesforce as well. So this is like a kind of- you actually mentioning your pre-course information, this is a, potentially a, commercialised product?

[yeah]

So this is where this process of marketisation for me gets entangled with the process of pedagogy. And if I’m honest, I still haven’t fully in my own mind, worked out how to pull those things apart. And that's where my work is, because pedagogy the process, but it's also the product. So for that product to survive you have to then take that product and attach it to someone’s specific world, right? So this goes to your question about somewhere about would outdoor centres give the time to their staff to do it? So, what's the value? The value is because you then have to entangle is good, this is positive good with their world in a way that they can see that it has value. And that’s the principle of performativity. So, this is where it gets a bit chewy. So that's why I was thinking about foundational knowledge, cause where this is kind of going, if you start building that, that network of who are the ‘actors’ if you like, and actors could be human, could be materials; an actor is a kayak. An actor, you know, and actor is the instructor, an actor is the minibus that gets the young people to the centre, an actor is the parent sitting at home. So, you know, one thing is that you might think the kids on the residential are having the adventure, but if they’re 11 years old and have never been away from home before, it’s the parents that are having the biggest adventure. So it's how do you draw in and ameliorate all of those actors, or decide which one you’re going to discard because they weren’t that powerful, or the ones that you actually realise you need to connect with because they are powerful. So that kind of course objectives bit for me was- and I come back to this as well because it's about- you called, you’ve used word outdoor ‘industry’, and ‘adventure clients’, and I found that jarred a little bit because I don't think there is an ‘outdoor industry’ per se. Because the outdoor industry, an ‘industry’ is about efficiency, and I don't think the outdoor sector is about efficiency somehow! Call me a traditionalist! I mean, I have work settings, commercial settings, where efficiency has been a very important principle, and they might be approaching what you would call industry, but they see themselves not as an outdoor industry, they see themselves as a travelling industry, or hospitality, right? So because she got this pedagogical overlay, part of your product is about is about altruistic change of behaviour bailed up on a moral grounding; you’re not about commercial efficiency, you’re about something else. So I just thought I'd poke at that bear a little bit. So, you know the words industry and clients, work in some settings but not in others, and I've struggled with that a little bit myself. So I'm just, I'm sharing that really is a kind of, a very, well, I haven’t got an answer really. I've talked about markets because that works for me in my setting. But I know if I then went and stood in front of the IOL tribe and used to word ‘market’, I’d lose 30% of the room straight off the bat. If I use the word outdoor movement, that captures another group of people but then loses another group. So I've still not managed to find a way to describe this hodgenous group of people from, from a centre manager who works with PGL or Kingswood who's turning over in their centre turning over 17 million a year and all the profits come from selling pick and mix, right, and they do the outdoor activities cause it's the thing that gets people through the doors so they can sell them the pick and mix right thing, right, been there, got the T-shirt right! Or you can go to, you know, an entirely ideologically entrenched bushcrafter, right, who thinks that, you know, their kind of this luddite, who thinks technology is a bad thing and we need to dress in wool that we’ve knitted ourselves, and they're all in the same room together, and that's for me, that’s the problem with problematizing this setup. So that's why I said, just to put the kind of critique into that kind of context, that's where it's coming from cause I’m struggling with it as well. I’ve used the phrase nature-based learning and then when I was thinking down that avenue, it forced me to question whether or not this needs to be just for outdoor instructors; is this just about educator’s full stop. You know, I don't know, and then you end up butting up against forest schools, and you end up butting up against John Muir Award. So this is market considerations about how you frame it as well, and how you delimit it. So that’s just a question mark for me.

[I mean ideally in the long run it would be nice if it could be something that was good for school educators as well]

Absolutely

[Well any business really I think could benefit from knowing how to learn more, but certainly at the moment I think narrowing the field is quite useful!]

It’s full of paradoxes, right? So, there was an interview I did not that long ago, from an organisation that is a British institution, they did some research during lockdown that’s going to come out very shortly, that showed that young people get as much benefit from doing expeditions in the middle of London, going from Country Park to Country Park and doing science based investigations on a micro scale, to the young people who go and tramp across the Cairngorms or the Lake District; the outcomes for them are the same.

[Wow, that’s interesting]

It is interesting isn’t it, but the paradox is, that on the one hand from an accessibility point of view, from a relative wealth point of view perhaps, you can get amazing experience for young people from Tower Hamlets and know that it’s an equivalent experience to the more well-heeled families from the private school outside the M25 who travel to northern Spain to do their expedition right. But, on the other hand, all of the organisations that exist in that world environment, suddenly have had the rug pulled out from under their feet, because they haven't got that USP from a market point of view. So, on the one hand they’re celebrating it, and on the other hand their going you know, shut up man, shut up! So this is where you get back to your kind of accounting of value, so a carbon accounting, you value something but you create value in something, so we create value in nature by building a pedagogical process around it; we ship people in and they give us money and we get a salary from that and on we go right. But then what we’re not very good at is evaluating that, so if you want to change the behaviour of instructors then they need somewhere in this process to measure- to evaluate the benefits of what they’re doing, and that's the bit that’s in here somewhere, maybe further down, about that pedagogical process, what’s your, what's your assessment?

[something that they can do that they can measure as well]

Yeah, and then from a performativity theory point of view, it materialises it, so then it acts as a material device that can get transported; so we go out to the outdoors and use some cunning psychological profiling that allows you to demonstrate to me that you've changed your attitude to nature, but then once you’ve done that you’ve turned that into some kind of material entity; I’d stick that on my website, print it on the T-shirt you know, I use it as part of every conversation I have with every school that I talk to from the salespoint, and then they go ‘oh! So it does work then!’. Without that all you’ve got is lots of hippy outdoor instructors in fleeces going ‘yeah man this is totally cool, we’re changing the world man’

[this is our office]

Yeah, it doesn't wash! So this is where you know, these slippery terms like sustainability and environment and industry and client and even the word adventure, you know they are quite loaded phrases that we just use as part of our vocabulary, but as soon as you step outside they look quite incongruous sometimes in the setting that they’re in.

[yeah, I can see that]

So, that, like I said, that carbon literacy trust is the organisation that I ended up doing it through, and it was online, possibly because it had to be at the time that I did it, but it worked easily online.

[Was it a two day-]

I think it probably worked out as about two days, I'm sure we could find out the details if you needed to-

[yeah]

I think I did it over- I don't know remember it being two full on days, I think it must have been a number of sessions over a period of time, but there was an assessment process, and again, I can be critical of that, because it was kind of a summative questionnaire assessment, and so yeah it would be dead easy to cheat if I wanted to, but it gave it some kind of measuring material outcome; I got a certificate, I know you’re talking about a certificate as well, but I just thought it sets that- cause it asks some very difficult questions within it, which were, it forced people to disentangle smoother decision-making, right, so for example, some of breakout sessions were about, right, six people here, you will need to be in Istanbul in three weeks’ time, what are the choices you’re going to make, or you know, we've got family who go on a cycling holiday to Wales, a family who fly to such and such on a skiing trip, we got family who… you know, who’s got most carbon credible approach, and it just gets people to kind of start to unpack, because they can put themselves into that dynamic, so I don’t know if I’m teaching you to suck eggs here, but it was that, so I kind of liked that in terms of the objectives weren’t about just allowing us to perpetuate this bubble of outdoor education and making ourselves feel better by keeping the conversation relating specifically to the to the setting, and the context of being outdoor education, it pushed people outside that bubble, so yeah that's the thing for me, yeah politicising it a bit.

[Yeah I think that's the hard thing is pushing, yeah pushing instructors outside their bubble whist they’re instructing-]

Exactly

[and also pushing the ‘clients’ outside their bubble a bit, just being their session, to taking it home and what does it mean, what are they going to do then-]

Totally

[so maybe they’ve been, yeah in a really remote place in the lakes or Pembrokeshire, or wherever it is, and then going back home to maybe an inner city and-]

Totally, and it’s this kind of social world, but, so you know, so let's see your social world and my social world, we’re sitting here having this conversation, they overlap right-

[yeah]

We've got an affinity for the environment in XXX let's say, you know we’re both interested in whatever, that works, but if I was XXX stood in front of a XXX group, made-up of computer programmers from Milton Keynes and their families, they might not even believe climate change is a thing, so, so you could actually be breaking that whole relationship. And I know, I think you allude to that somewhere, but I remember thinking that’s interesting, cause- you just don't really know, you know we’re just a bunch of hippy outdoor educators, we think this is the way forward, we want to change the world you know, me and Greta Thumburg you know we’re like this (fingers crossed) kind of thing (laughs), but then as soon as you get further out there, you know, it’s in the papers this morning here you know, the top 1% of the polluting elite in this country create more carbon than 10% of most impoverished

[yeah, ridiculous]

So you realise, that’s your market, that’s your market you’re messing with, so, I think that's where some of the challenges come. So, I think it is, it is, the objectives as you’ve set them are very achievable, I’m just not sure how, um, this is a decision about to what extent do you want to challenge that, that fluffy outdoor ed reality of, of, ‘we’re doing a great job cause we, we love the outdoors, we’re in the outdoors all the time, cause that’s a lifestyle choice for us, not everybody can make that lifestyle choice because they're not able to, you know, walk up mountains seven days a week, or you know, do I have that kind of cultural background that enables that, so, it becomes actually quite elitist in itself.

[yeah, absolutely]

So the reason I am- the way I picked up on that- sorry I am just, is this is alright?

[yeah yeah]

So the way I wanted to demonstrate that was, just looking at that paragraph there right, and I highlighted all the times you talked about the environment belonging to humans, so ‘we’ ‘our’ you know, and that for me is the, is the problem, you need to ‘decentre’ is the phrase, humans, in the narrative. So that's why I want you to go and find out epistemologically where you’re coming from, because I thought that, that kind of human centric autology is where it's all going wrong for us, for all of us right-

[That’s really interesting actually because I've spoken a bit about like ecocentrism and anthropocentricism, and yet in writing this I hadn’t even noticed that I did it in-]

No, and that’s the point right, so this, is in my world that’s a black box right. It's become so normalised, that you don’t even see it anymore, right. So, there’s some really good stuff from the political ecology point of view, that if you want I can, I can share with you, it's quite avonguard cause it is quite challenging-

[ok, avonguard sorry?]

As in like such new knowledge, its right at the front end because it is so powerfully talking about decentring humanity, but not in a way that- so it’s in a way that unpacks this kind of post-colonial, scientific cartesian duality of reason, objective nature subjective human, right, breaks all that down, so as I said before an actor is a kayak, a person, a cats eye in the middle of the road and they come together to create these entanglements, and those entanglements are what create power, and if that power is formed in the right way, then it is transportable as product, as a good, you can sell it, or you can use it as a leverage or you can do whatever you want with it so, that's the kind of performativity theory. It's actor network theory that’s been taken into economics, it’s also being taken into political ecology, so it works for me beautifully because I can use both, and then it's also gone in another place which is, a writer called Judith Butler who's the, really the thinker behind all the gender roles theory stuff, so realising that gender, sex, and representation are three different things and they're all created through an ongoing process of symbolic normalisation of ‘you’re a girl therefore you wear this, you’re a boy therefore you where that, you’re a-’, you know, and she’s become incredibly powerful, she’s the kind of, the thing that sits at the centre of all these LGBTQ+, because it’s all about how you, how do you create those, those entanglements, and the theory is that when something becomes so normalised that’s it, it just falls into a black box, we don’t see it anymore. Its only when something breaks that then you go ‘oh, hang on a second, why aren’t the lights working click-click-click-click-click, all of a sudden you realise there’s a power station, and then there’s a gas supply coming under the Baltic?! Who’s have thought about that 10 weeks ago you know! So, it's, it’s that-

[connecting-]

Connecting it all up so when you’re thinking about, that this is, as a product, but also as a pedagogical entity, or actant, or whatever jargon you want to use that's how I think is where it gets quite important to get the epistemological position right, cause then whatever you build with that, will either survive in the, you know in the ratified atmosphere of outdoor education, or not. So, and that's the tricky thing right! That’s the art, that’s why there’s a PhD in it right! (laughs)

[Absolutely, yeah!]

So yeah, so that was about, you know, that’s where the course objectives sit for me, is about, as they stand they are absolutely laudable, but I just wanted to question the viewpoint, where are they standing, and where are they looking towards, and are they, you know, this word sustainability, and sustainable development, once you put those two words together it becomes quite problematic, because the two things don't actually physically exist in that way, you know, so this is where, like to say, I find it quite important because then it filters down to what then do you connect your pedagogy to, like what do you connect your market to, how do, you know, how do you sell it, how do you change behaviours, so yeah.

The structure I think works, I think it's really important to have some practical aspect of it, because that's about sense making, and that’s important for the type of learners that are predominant in the outdoor sector right, they’re not, they’re not good at knowledge-interpreting knowledge based stuff, they’re very, they want, they want to push it over, stand on it, see what happens if they pull this rather than that, so I think that’s really important, but I also know that, or at least I think I know, that for this to actually achieve its objectives, which is long lasting behaviour change, that, the actual, the actual curriculum itself needs to be quite well thought out, you know, which, which leavers are you pulling- deliberately which leavers, and when you know, and how are you going to show those people those leavers, when they’re being pulled change something material in their world. Right, what’s the ‘thing’? And it’s that, and that makes it sticky, if you give them a ’thing’ it’ll stick, if you can’t give them a ‘thing’ it’ll just fall back into the, the rhetoric that we see in the newspapers every morning.

[And by ‘thing’, what do you mean?]

As in I mean making it an actant, making it an entity, so it's that value and evaluation cryptic you know, it's like the double, the double faced God Jannis you know, and on one side saying ‘I value this’, on the other side saying ‘I can evaluate it’, yeah? So, when I write the word evaluate the ‘e’ goes into brackets; so, it's two different things, valuation in French it would be ‘valorising’, I valorise something, I give it value, whereas evaluate is when you measure that value and then transport it somewhere else. So, we create value from the outdoors, but what value are we measuring? And again, there’s some really seminal work where they looked at two different- it might be useful or not, I'm not sure- it’s in terms of how you think about the curriculum but, one of the really good pieces of work about this was, there was two big oil spills, one happened in Northern France, one happened in Alaska; similar kind of spills, within 10 years of each other, destroying wildlife you can imagine the fallout, and you can still you know, if you Google it you’ll see the spoiled beaches. But what they- what the study did, was they looked at how each culture (so the American culture and the French culture), calculated, evaluated, calculated the cost of the oil spill in order to get the two oil companies to pay repatriation costs. The way that the French culture and their system of government and everything did it, meant that the evaluation of the damage came out like millions and millions and millions of dollars less than the way that the Americans evaluated it. So, they evaluated nature as, something that was about the national, a national asset for future generations, and the importance of the land to indigenous people who lived on the coast of Alaska, and all of these things that were really hard to equate to a purely monetary measurement right. Whereas the French weighed the amount of biomass that was killed, and based that on the current price of fish, right, so they had a very clear, mechanistic, engineering mindset, cause they’re French, yeah, that's how they calculated the value of the damage. The Americans went into a different world altogether. And as result the two things came out massively differently yeah. Interestingly, the American one- the court case was found before, even though it happened after, the court case was found before the French one, and it was- and I can’t remember the details- I’ve got the details somewhere- but it was like let’s just say 500 million- 500 billion dollars right, and then about a month later the French one came out, and it was a 10th of it, and because of that, the shares in Moco went up, because they were all expecting this massive cost to company to pay for the damage and they were budgeting for 50 gazillion dollars, and it was like huh, it’s like uh- it’s like loose change! So, it, that’s how, if you get your evaluation system right, then the value that you create is different, because you’ve measured something differently, and you’ve set it up differently, and that's where, you know, this is important for me because I think if you keep just asking the same questions and evaluating it in the same way, you know, if you always do what you've always done, you always get we've always got right, so it's kind of that for me. So I’m, you know, if I see one more study about, you know, primary school age group of Norwegian children during Friuvliv, right, I'm gonna, just lose my shit! Cause we know this! Like lets move on, lets find out what's going on here, you know, let's do a study on the consumer choices of outdoor instructors after they’ve done this course you know, are they gonna go out and buy another massive campervan, cause that’s their lifestyle choice, or they gonna buy an electric scooter, you know, and forgo, you know, long weekends surfing. Do you see what I mean?

[Yeah absolutely!]

So yeah, yeah.

[Yeah, it's really interesting and especially I think trying to measure, I get really frustrated with- similar- the nature connectedness, you know, you go, you see these studies of children going, and they’ve done a four-day course and ah, their nature connectedness has shot up, and you think… how do you know that though?! Like yes, you’re saying it at the end of the course but there’s no longitudinal value in that at all-]

No, no (laughs)

[And one of the main drivers of me doing this course actually was, um, I helped run a surf course which was like five-days, or four-days, with some, teenagers, and they came and they- it was the biggest change I’ve sort of seen in a group, they went from, like really ‘why, why can’t we litter, why is that not a problem’, to at the end a couple of them came up to me and said ‘I can understand now why you want to protect this place’, I was like, brilliant, we have hit gold here! Six months later I was like ‘are you guys still doing this?’, and they were like ‘na, there's nothing to protect back home, it’s just rubbish’, and I thought, ‘wow, we’ve done something really wrong here’-]

Exactly, yes, yes, but, but also what you've done, and I’ve got tonnes of these anecdotal personal experiences, and we’re very good at talking about those, we valorise that bit, but if I was sitting in Whitehall trying to work out where I’m going to put this next 50 million pounds worth of funding in order to achieve what the Lords, the House of Lords came out with the week before last, saying that the strategy for carbon reduction is supposed to be through behaviour change is dysfunctional, it doesn’t work, there’s no structure to it, right, so there’s money there, they want to spend it on something and we don't have the critical evidence to say this is- so I’m back to being an economist, if we don’t have the critical evidence to say we can account for the work that we do, if you give us the money, we can prove it. Because we don’t fall back on anecdotal self-representative ‘do you feel a bit better at the result of your trip up a mountain? Well of course you do! It’s a lovely thing to do, why wouldn’t you? – it doesn’t mean it’s going to change your life. And so again double-edged swords, this nature connectedness stuff, I’m a real fan, but they actually stated, their 2019 paper I think it is, might have to go and check, but there’s Richardson et al there’s like 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022-, but there’s one of them that says there is no evidence to show that residential outdoor education changes behaviour-

[wow]

And it’s there in black and white, but it’s at the end of a paragraph, just before you turn a page right, and it’s one of those ones where when I was talking to them they said we just offered that really tentatively, cause we need to say it, but we didn't want to say it too loudly. But it’s in there, and then also because of the work that I’m doing- I’m working with an organisation that’s just been working with XXX the project was called XXX. But they are a consortium of heritage brand providers, and I can’t remember what their name is, but they’ve called themselves- but they again did a study that they evaluated, they’ve just published the evaluation, they can’t show any impact on nature connectedness; they can show that they increased- they had lots of participation, yeah, so they got, actually I think the headline is we got 10,000 people to get a closer connection with nature, as in, physically they brought them together, so it’s not wrong, but its’ not nature connectedness, and it’s you sneaky buggers you, but that, if you read it, and again I’ve got the evaluation if you remind me I’ll send it to you if you’re interested, but, if you read it’s, it is a marketing device, it’s not a, it’s not an academic, you know, they’re not really claiming anything and I just go ah really?!

[It almost devalues the outdoor industry]

Yes, yes

[when there’s all this pressure being put on it, and its being said it’s really good, and then actually you think, well we’re working in it saying I’m not actually sure it’s as good as you’re saying it is, it might be, and let’s have a look and hopefully it is, but actually, if it isn’t then we’re actually making ourselves look like frauds!]

Totally, exactly, exactly! And we know that, well I feel there’s the potential, I think I’ve made differences to people in the job that I’ve done, right, and, not just in a nature connectedness way, but in you know, in a self-esteem way, in a self-confidence way, in a , in a, diversionary youth work tactic to take them away from prison and drugs and get them onto an education strain, I’ve done, you know, I’ve used outdoor ed to do all sorts of things, and the things that you can measure are the things that are tangible and durable. So if I say I've got John Smith away from a life in an institution- in a children's institution where he's been locked up for shoplifting, I now have got him a place on an FE course to become a whatever and he’s followed that through, and then he’s gone on to this, and you can track that and you can measure it, tick, tick, tick, that’s what Whitehall want to see. You know, for better or for worse that's the currency that they operate in, and this is where I say I think we’ve got a problem because we are on one hand, this is where I say it gets a bit chewy for me, because pedagogically we are experiential educators, not knowledge based people; we trade in knowledge but only so much as it gives people a more non-cognitive appreciation of who they are and what they do, and that’s when you’ll get a problem because then it becomes hard to measure, so maybe we’re measuring the wrong thing. That’s my, that’s my point really. Yeah, yeah.

[A few of the things I’ve got, so the course that I’ve developed, I’ve got the presentation and we can flick through it, I’ve tried to get instructors to kind of self-reflect on their own- like using wonky wood diagrams, have you come across them?]

No, no that’s a new one on me

[ok, well I’ll show them to you, but yeah kind of evaluate on their beliefs and what they think they know and then how they are in teaching it, and just trying to do some self-evaluation as you go throughout the course, but yeah, the whole, looking at that short-term increase, I can probably be fairly confident that, well hopefully, that the course will be influential in you know, before you start and when you finish, but actually-]

yes

[in terms of the value I reckon the longitudinal value will be much more influential than that]

I think, you need, my view is it- you- need to create contested, you need to create a contestation in this, yeah-

[contestation?]

As in, as in, you have to challenge, you have to challenge something right, you have to challenge something that then forces people to experiment with something different

[ok]

And then if you can force them to experiment, then they will find anomalies in places that they didn't know were there right, so new realities will emerge by the process of challenging them; get them to experiment and then they’ll start to go ‘oh I never thought about it like that before’, and then, you then, hit them with the fact, yeah, and this is what changes as a result. And then they go ‘oh right’, and then you say ‘oh and also this is supported by you know, a top university and we’ve got the buy in from all of these people who believe in it, and therefore, then it becomes something that’s got that integrity, I’m calling it a ‘Practice Device Bundle’-

[ok]

So, it’s a mixture of changing someone’s practice, it’s a material device, or devices, and you’ve mixed them all together and you’re plonking it on the table. That’s what, that’s what I’m doing here, and that’s where that process of making it, making it perform means those stages, um, you know, different change people’s durable practice, otherwise you get, well as you said ‘yeah I really understand why you want to look after this place now, but then as soon as you step out of that bundle that you’ve created with the surfboards, some nice waves, you and, you know, your pedagogical skills and everything else, they step back out of that world, as soon as they get back on the train and get off in Bermondsey, nah, the worlds- entanglement is different.

The other thing I was just going to- and again what, what I thought I was going to say to you was, I mean it is just semantics- it’s just words right, but I think somewhere you talk about attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviours sometimes you talk about skills knowledge and behaviours, sometimes you talk- so it was like a point of order, as in, again vocabulary. Because we used to talk about KSB’s; knowledge, skills and behaviours, and that then fits into the apprenticeship kind of language, and whether that’s an important entanglement for you to make further down the line, it might be worth using that phraseology, cause you’ve then, you’ve then, this then becomes something that's accredited as part of the degree apprenticeship and the language is the same, so you might choose- decide that's not what it is, that’s- but I just thought I’d flag it as a question, because as this thing develops, you’ll want to decide which things you want to connect it to and which things you don’t so, you know

[That’s worth knowing]

So as the chief executive of British Cycling found out, don’t make an, a partnership with BP- did you see on the news he’s resigned?! So, British Cycling decided for some reason, I mean, they were sponsored by HSBC Bank which I thought was hard enough, but now the CEO has built a relationship with BP – cycling and B- and British Petroleum, what! In what world! So, he’s gone! But how fool- I just, its beggar’s belief isn’t it! Anyway, so-

[The reason I’ve sort of chosen them is because they’re the components of environmental literacy]

There we are, right, that helps me

[And I’ve sort of played with is environmental literacy the right term to go for, because literacy is sort of education and is something different, but I think in terms of the outdoors, maybe literacy is maybe becoming more well known in sort of carbon literacy or nature literacy or ocean literacy and I didn’t want environment education, because that’s different again-]

It is yeah

[And, and so I couldn’t quite, yeah, I’ve sort of stuck with environmental literacy because I like the idea that actually it’s not- for me- I, I buy in, I like nature connectedness, but it’s too focussed on attitudes and not about anything else and that for me I think actually, without the knowledge and without giving people the skills, how can you be expected to make a behaviour change?]

Absolutely

[Because like with these surfers then, we’d totally changed their attitudes, but when they got back, they didn’t know how to change- transfer that to their everyday lives-]

No, totally

[Whereas if you can mix that with the knowledge and give them the skills of how it can be transferable-]

Yeah

[You’re more likely to end up in behaviour changes]

Absolutely agree, yeah, yeah, yeah

[But it may well still be useful to relate that back to the degree apprenticeship]

So, you can see I’ve scribbled on mine (referencing handbook)

[yeah, and it may be useful if that’s ok to have sort of a scanned copy of your-]

Oh yeah, you, you can take, take this away with you-

[oh perfect]

The bit that, when I saw skills right I’d use the word practices. So, I’m thinking about outdoor education as a practice, and there’s a whole ton of literature around practice, and changing practice, and again, in terms of performativity, if you do something a number of times it becomes repeatable, or itterable, whichever language you want to use, and therefore it becomes, it becomes durable, so you do it once, it’s not very strong, you do it again and again and again, so then again, just to give it a sense of where its coming from, where I was teaching the other day I was showing people a video of a flute maker-

[a flute maker?!]

A flute maker.

[ok]

Flute, yeah. And its online, you can find it, it’s beautiful, ah it’s just such a nice thing to watch!

[ok!]

But it starts off with this guy just walking into a nice forest, he's looking and he’s like this- and then he sees the perfect pollard of wood right, and he goes up and he cuts it off, and he puts it under his arm and he walks out of this misty, caniture, manly forest right, and then he goes back to his workshop, and it’s just, it’s a bit like, I don’t know, you probably won’t remember this, but it’s a bit like some of the kids programmes from when I was little you know, like how does, how does a factory make such and such, it just goes through the process right, so there’s your word, ‘process’. So, process, so he goes through the process and then he shows that, that- how he then builds this flute, right. And the question is, to the, to the group is how do we know this is a practise? How do you know he's done this before? Right. And the one that I hope people are going to point out, is when he drills the whole for the mouthpiece of the flute, he uses an electric drill, and on the drill is a piece of blue tape wrapped around the drill, and that’s his depth gauge; that’s his benchmark. So again he’s, he’s evaluating it, he’s made a benchmark, he’s made a measurement, and that, repeatedly creates practice. So, that’s where for ‘skills’, I’ve written ‘practices’ because it’s about changing practice, and if you’re talking about these as outdoor educators in their professional role, then it is practice change, it’s not, I don’t think its necessarily, it will be the same, but it’s not, it’s not quite, um, you know, it’s where attitudes come together I think, so they have their personal attitude, but professionally have a practice, and then, the attitudes doesn’t necessarily need to effect the practice, you know, I could have some views around, you know, I’m trying to think if an example from my world, yeah, I can think of a few actually, but, you know, the way I behave when I’m walking my dog might not be the way that I would train other people to walk my dog, right, so it’s that, so I was kind of getting a bit kind of interested in how that, in how that intersection creates you know, changes of professional behaviour, because again if you want to be intentional, are we talking about changing the professionals behaviour as an outdoor educator, or are we talking about changing their behaviours as an individual?

[I think, in… yeah- ok, well I think a mixture of both because this-]

Of course, of course, yeah

[yeah, for the instructors, I was sort of looking at it a bit differently, in, in the actual model of environment literacy, ‘skills’ is ‘competencies’ and it sort of refers to skills and abilities, so I sort of broke it down just to skills for the purpose of this, but I suppose maybe I was looking at it a bit differently in that what, what skills do you need to, if you really want to help the environment and actually, you know that recycling helps but unless you have the skill of being able to determine how to recycle then you’re not going to do it, so-]

Yeah

[And, I suppose, yeah, it all still comes into practices because if you, once you’ve done it you, it becomes in your practice but its, so for the instructor and if you can develop this of the, say adventure client, but if you can somehow inform their skills so that they can take it away to home and it changes their behaviours, then you’re influencing their skills or their practices]

Of course, and it’s like I said, look, it’s process-

[yeah]

So this is not a static-

[No]

It’s constantly being reconfigured every time it happens. Cause, you’ll know this, you know, like you only cross the same- you can’t cross the same stream twice and all that stuff right. So, that's, that's where I think it’s quite interesting cause it, for that behaviour change to happen it’s that, again I’ve written ‘qualcuation’ right, right, see so it’s like a calculation but it’s not a dry mathematical calculation, it comes, it’s using also my beliefs, attitudes, values, right, and the model I’m using to kind of unpack this is called ‘Economies of Worth’, and again, , it’s, if you want any of this stuff, I won’t laden with stuff, but if you want stuff, you’ve got this record of it so give me a shout-

[perfect, thank you]

What- Economies of Worth show that philosophically we all have social worlds, and we have it all the time, and they align to different moral perspectives, so civic is one, domestic is another, so I might make a decision from a domestic world, this then conflicts with the civic world, and then I need to decide how I’m going to choose one or the other, and I might decide- and then the industrial world, and then there’s the world of fame, so there’s eight, and you, and you constantly- we are all individually, constantly, building our, our social worlds out of a compromise between all of these different things. So, , you know, I might decide that in that setting, like you say, when I'm surfing I might pick up every little bit of plastic that floats past me, but then when I get in my 3.5l diesel van and drive home, not thinking about the environment, because I’m thinking well this is about domestic, it’s a big vehicle, its warm and safe for my kids, so you make a different decision right. So, it’s those contestations, and that's where I think, with that theory, you can, you can flip that into it being quite provocative pedagogically, and say ‘oh you’re thinking about this from this point, but what would it look like from this point of view?’ you know, and just challenge them, and that’s what I’ve been trying to do but, like I say… people can only cope with so much before they disengage, because it becomes too threatening-

[yeah, yeah]

Its force- it breaks down so, yeah, but no, I love- I mean, I loved, I loved this, but this is like I say, this is where I got and this is why I’m saying I’m finding it quite challenging with a background in education and then trying to think about markets, and they all fallout! It’s so hard (laughs) I haven’t got to the bottom of it yet!

I totally- and I’m, I’m just looking here and saw this bit about process, and I was thinking about, when you talk about syllabus on page 8, at the bottom there, and you talk about stories, right. I loved that by the way, just totally with it, but it’s about you can construct those stories, or the tools to make those stories to mess with peoples temporal and spatial realities, and that's a really useful thing again to try and take them out of the bubble that they’re in. And someone talked about- I was talking to someone the other day about is it ‘inside out’ or ‘outside in’? You know, are you on the inside, taking things out to the world, you know, or are you on the outside bringing things into the world, and it was how do you get people to think perceptually differently, um, and the boundaries that you cross in order to do that, so that was, that was just a scribble I made on here…

Yeah… we talked about climate deniers didn’t we… Yeah, I’m really interested in the nature connectedness things as well

[Yeah?]

Like, and-… So there’s a, you know they talk about their, the principles?

[who’s-]

Sorry nature connectedness, there’s, is there five principles or something?

[yeah]

There’s also some other stuff out there as well which if you do a reading of it, like I did a reading of your paragraph with all of the words that we’ve- have become- its eco, ecocentric language rather than, there’s a paper I’ve got that talks about the different types of pedagogical process

[ok]

Um, and ones that decentre the human to such an extent that it almost becomes- with a contemporary reading it almost becomes like surreal. So, there's a movement called ‘pataphysics’ which I’ll- again it’s, it’s just at total head doer! I read it because I’m part of this, this group looking at how management education has an impact. So, you know, I honestly think that, if you wanted to change decision-making paradigm of a lot of people, then actually the conversation you need to be having is about economics, it’s not about nature at all, right, nature is only- is, is being treated in the way that it is because of the economic infrastructure that, that, that we’re in right, so, pushing at that a little bit, but then also thinking about how if you’re going to train all these international MBA’s who are going to go out there and become the CEOs of international corporations, what tho- what actually are we teaching them about the environment and their responsibility for it and their role within it, you know. So there’s this thing called pataphysics and there’s the- this, the Dutch, there’s, there’s groups all over the world, there's a Dutch institute of Pataphysics, it’ got 10,000 members; 6000 of whom are dead, right, the chief exec is a crocodile who lives in a swamp in South Africa and the treasurer is a 18- 18th century steam pump, right! So, it just creates all these entities that aren’t human, and it just takes all of the human out of it and just decentres humans over there and says you’re not that interesting! You know, this is- what- speaks through the voice of the crocodile in South Africa; what’s their perspective on the way the world's going, right-

[but presumably, is there human representatives that represent that?]

Yeah, so it’s Pa- ‘Parliament of Things’ is the, is the nutarian reading of it so- so as you’ll see you know, people are claiming that- I think it’s happened recently where a forest has been given the legal status of a person, for example, because then it gives them a voice, and the problem is, is that natures voice as you just rightly pointed out, natures voice is not mediated through anything other than our current economic structure, so it’s a resource, it’s the store cupboard that we go to get the things that we need, right, and that’s- its reduced to that, so it’s quite a reduction, so, so pataphysics tries to mess with that, and it does it and it makes people laugh because it’s just like ‘what?!’, but that’s the kind of the point is , is that, who’s- you know, what, what view of humanity would this 18th century steam pump, that pumped all the water out of the Netherlands in order to make that land agricultural, what perspective oud that have on decision making, you know, in a post-colonial view of the world right, what would the crocodile in South Africa think? What would the- what about all these dead people, what would they be saying to us now?

[yeah]

You know, and it’s, it’s, and, and then there’s another model of education which is called ‘bunto’ or ‘abunto’, which is an African, indigenous concept of educating people round the culture, or the family, and community, and responsibility and accountability to community, so there’s these other like- dramaturgy, have you come across that?

[No]

So, dramaturgy is again it’s a particular model of, of outdoor education that is adopted, but it also goes back to the theatre. So, dramaturgy is the study of theatre productions, but it also goes back to the sociologist Gothman who talked about, people living their lives as though they were actors, so you’ve got your- ‘on stage’ self, which is the one I can see, but you’ve also got a self that I will never see, and that’s a backstage you, you know that’s you with your shoes off on the sofa picking your nose! That’s the bit I will never see! Well, possibly not! (laughs) and, but then, you know, and so- so you, so as you bring yourself into the fore- in front of your audience, you’ll then behave in a certain way. You know, if you’re a waiter, you throw a cloth on your arm and you become snobby and aloof, so, so that’s where Gothman started, and he invented the word teamwork by the way, so you can see how this idea of- this is, this becomes normalised – teamwork! We all talk about ‘teamwork’; he, he invented it 1964! So, this is where it- you know, how can you- using a vehicle like this training course, I, I know I’m pouring loads of stuff onto it, and, and a lot of it needs just needs to get washed away again, but I say, if you think, I think that it’s really powerful, but for it to be successful, it’s got these strands, so, could the material, the materialisation of this program, for example, be the thing that brings a new wave of delivering outdoor learning that’s dramaturgy, or its pataphysics, or its abunto, or its fruifuvliv, or it’s whatever, that then decentres the traditional way of delivering outdoor learning. I went to XXX the other day, there was this guy still working, still working there as an instructor who, who worked with me in the early 90’s at the XXX centre, you know, a bit younger than me but not much, and I'm looking out the window while I'm talking to someone, I thought, ‘oh look, there’s my mate’, and he’s out there and he’s put a thing in the middle of the grass and then he's putting a rope circle around it, and then all these kids are going to come round with bits of string an try and pick the teddy bear out of the circle, I’m going, ‘he was doing that in 1992!’ and it was boring then! Right! So this where I'm thinking come, come on, we can- we should- if we are the professional educators that we want to be, we should be doing something that’s not just, you know-

[bomb disposal or-!]

(laughs) we all know it right! I didn’t even have to tell you what it was about! A circle with a toy in the middle, yeah, I know (laughs). If I said to you go and run it down there now with 10 kids you would just get up and do it wouldn’t you!

[yeah! (laughs)]

But so that- it’s those tropes that exist still in the process of outdoor education that drive me mad! And this is why I’m so critical of it, whilst also being quite passionate about it as well.

[Yeah, it’s that hard balance, isn’t it-]

Ah, it is

[-between going, yeah it is- I think sometimes you recognise it when you see it, like you say you don’t necessarily recognise it when you do it yourself, cause you’re in that environment and someone has told you to go and run that session, so you go and run that session and you try and make it as fun as you can, and then yeah, like you say you see somebody else doing it and you think why are we all still doing that?! It needs to change!]

Something big- the- epistemologically the world has changed, right, the way we create knowledge is- is different, and then you turn round from this crazy world of different realities that- realities that young people have got now compared to the one that I had, which was also very- told to be so incredibly different to the ones that my parents had, right, bam, bam, bam, bam, all that stuff is going on- I was reading an article this morning over my morning coffee about Manga comics, and how, this massive explosion of Manga in youth culture in Britain, right-

[Manga?]

Manga comics, you know, like the kind, Japanese comics ah, comics, Manga, anyway-

[ok, yeah] (1:03)

That proves a point right! Waterstones can’t keep them on the shelves cause, cause 12-year-olds are going mad for them, and it’s a literal fall, and its’ got thousands of years history in Japan, and now it’s come here, anyway, the point I’m making is that, that world of how do you create knowledge, you know, you’ve got the fake news of Donald Trump, you’ve got the reality of climate change, you’ve got crazy politicians, you’ve got Elon Musk buying Twitter, all that shit going on, and then I turn around and my mate is still doing the same old outdoor education trope

[yeah]

You know, and it’s that ontological weighting, the weight that gets put on to ‘this is how we do outdoor education, in this place, now’ right, and I write that in big letters you know, you know, *what are we doing in this place now*, and, and content, pedagogy, context, relationship, knowledge, you know, all- why- why are we teaching them to do that, you know, yeah…

[yeah, it is interesting in how somehow it doesn’t seem to keep up so well with everything else, things get passed down and that becomes the way it happens-]

Yeah, and it’s been a very comfortable place to be for generations of educators hasn’t it. But I’m, I’m challenging that by saying ‘is it?’ Cause very shortly, nature’s going to become so valuable, outdoor educators won't be allowed anywhere near it, you won’t be able to get into the Lake District, you know, it's already starting, I mean the National Trust charging for access to beaches in Pembrokeshire not that long ago, they’ve talked about charging people up here on some of the land you know, they’re going through the struggle with the far right wing move, movement that’s trying to overtake the National Trust, you can see where these things are going, this, this commercialisation and we’re going to get priced out the market-

[yeah and again then it’s hard because then nature becomes an elitist place for people to go-]

Yeah, some would argue it already is, right-

[yeah, absolutely, well, just in our jobs you know, it’s not an industry that’s paid particularly well, so you’ve got to be- and you have to be living in a nice place to be able to do it, so it’s not the- the type of job that anybody could just go in to-]

No, and you’ve got to buy in to the post-colonial world view as well-

[yeah, yeah definitely, and then in order to do that your kind of, judged on what you’re wearing or, you know, buying the expensive brands because arguably they are more sustainable and all the rest of it, but yeah, absolutely, it’s it doesn’t come cheaply]

No, so these are some of the things that I think are worth thinking about in this, and just, what can you poke at, you know, because these are the things that actually are going to be the changes that need to happen, just thinking about a different way to facilitate a kayak session is not going to do the thing. You know, I’m not saying it’s not a good thing to do, but, depending on the amount of leverage that you want to put in, you know, how long is your lever and where do you put your fulcrum, you know, and it’s, it’s kind of a bit like that for me, but the bit that I think is, is as I go off on one of these soap boxy type conversations, is realising that you’ve also got a market there that you need to meet, and you know, you can create the most outrageously challenging, dynamic, alternative, progressive pedagogy of outdoor learning that you can possibly imagine, you know, bringing in non-human actors to facilitate the session you know, you could do all sorts of random shit couldn’t you, but no one’s going to buy it, and therefore you voice won’t get heard, so that's the- that's why I'm qualifying all the stuff I'm saying about how do you challenge it, how do you mess with people, you know, the kind of, the ontological weight of this program, and that's fine, but on the other hand, it’s only going to get an audience if it, if it gets to be challenging enough, but not so challenging that people just shut down, you know, if it doesn’t speak to them they’ll just, walk away

[yeah, and that’s where it’s challenging as well, you have a group of individuals that it’ll target some and not others]

I mean, you know, I used to dress differently, from living in Australia, we worked in Australia for a while, I went to the outdoor education group that I managed in Victoria, they were all hippies, right, total outdoor, we used to call them dirtbags you know, like dirt bag climbers, right, they were all dreadlocked, there wasn't, they were all drinking out of jam jars because they were recycling glass, that was the thing yeah, they didn't have a glass or cup, they didn't even have a recyclable cup that you carried from place to place even that was too consumptive you just got a jam jar, so they’re all drinking out of jam jars right, so straight away you see that, so I had to dress for that group and then I'd go and travel to NSW and they had more of a corporate identity and they would be a little more zecci in the way that they dressed and stuff so I would dress appropriately for that, and then, and I still managed to alienate myself from both groups by the way, but the point is that, that you know, you realised, so Pembrokeshire, that's that community of outdoor- you know you go to Outward Bound and they’re all wearing suits you know, they're all wearing shirts! They see themselves as being, you know, management educators or- you know-

[yeah, it is interesting, and like you say, management educators, I always find it quite funny hearing the different, um, labels within you know, whether it’s, you know it’s instructor or senior instructor or head instructor, or guide or whatever it is-]

Yeah, I think I circled guide somewhere just because it made me laugh as well! And they all mean something to us, but to the person in the street they don’t mean jack! They don’t know, you know, I, I, I just, being, as I said, being in Australia ‘guide’ was the word everybody uses, so I would just say I’m a guide! Or was a guide, because I know that that’s going to mean something to them, if I said, ah you know, I’m a mountain leader or something, what does that mean?! It doesn’t mean anything you know, ‘I’m a single pitch supervisor’, (laughs), so again, this is where I was thinking about this level of genericness, and again sorry I’m just connecting things up in my head, so you know the bit about the genericness which ties me back to this, the carbon literacy- carbon literacy trust thing, it starts with generic, right so it terms of curriculum development, or hierarchical task analysis I was just thinking about actually this should, this could be a sweet, and it starts off generic it gets increasingly more complex all the way through, so by the time you get to um, level 4 then you’re able to have challenging economic conversations about account- you know, qualification of decisions that you make, based on the heterogeneous network of different decision making practices, right, whereas right at the start you just need someone to know that if they’re going to go from Haverfordwest to bloody Swansea they should probably go by train, yeah, do you know what I mean?

[yeah, absolutely, yeah, and knowing where to find that information, yeah like you say just how to-]

So that was my other thing about the structure was that thinking actually it could be that, and I guess the outdoor sector has got an accreditation scheme called the ‘Gold Standard’, which has got some environmental stuff in it, but as I pointed out to XXX actually, calling it the Gold Standard is exactly the wrong thing from an environmental point of view, you know, it’s a symbol of wealth and it’s a symbol of mineral extraction from the planet and it’s, you know, its elitist, so it shouldn’t be called that it should be called something else, but for what it is it works and it’s got traction right, so if it's not broke don’t fix it! But the future footprints stuff; I really like that, and she’s been very astute and knowledgeable about the way the sector works because she imposed anything on anybody, so she’s left with this translatable as she possibly can, that people pick up the things that they can do in their sector and their environment, and I applaud that massively. So, you know, again, back to this as an- this accreditation, this program holding an accreditation that then is designed in a way that it can fit into other degree apprenticeship programs, or it can fit into, CPD in schools, or it can fit into module 4 of scout leaders, or it can fit into, you know, and how, how transportable can it be, and also, you know valuable, so, yeah.

The research that you’re doing, are you using any particular theoretical framework? I mean, PCK is, is that the, is that the one? Is that the- how does that, tell me some more about that, how does that work?

[Yeah, I came across it, Dyment *et al*., and they’ve done a PCK framework, in fact I’ve got it here because I printed it out … a PCK framework for outdoor education]

Right

[and, this is one that I’ve changed for outdoor instructors for environmental literacy, because outdoor education was such a broad spectrum, but it is basically focussing on content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge in a content context, and so I’ve sort of based it on that, and the syllabus is, yeah, based on that on a much more broken down level. And I sort of played with the idea of having this somewhere within it, within the handbook and then thought no, it’s too academic really, it’s too boring! But yeah, this is what I’ve based it around]

I like it-

[the idea that it’s not just about what you do, it’s about what you do and how you do it and why you do it.]

Yeah, yeah that’s good isn’t it. I mean I just have; I mean I- that is, that is about, you know… the noncognitive, the attitudes, behaviours stuff right. I’m not a- I’m, I’m, when I do my- I’ve got a presentation that I’m still developing but I’ve used it a few times and I kind of again, have three circles, I have economics, ecology and market, markets, right, and I show the literature that I’ve used that fit into these overlaps where they intersect. So, this idea of intersectionality is quite important, so you’re finding authors that are- might be economists by trade, but their writing about ecology, but their writing about ecology in the context of business that does CSR-

[CSR?]

Corporate Social Responsibility

[ok]

And therefore, you get this really interesting bit of work that’s drawn all these together.

[yeah, ok]

Of these three circles, one of them has got nothing in it outside of work intersects, right, whereas the others do and that's, that's ecology, so I've not gone down their scientific, ecological route so, the bits around the specifics of environmental science is a, is an area of enquiry – I haven’t gone anywhere near it. I’d love to! But just- boom, too much

[yeah, too much]

So I’ve only been looking at where, if you like the scientific knowledge that she’s generating in that place, and how that might then be socially constructed in other, other places right, so I’m just saying that's where my- I just want to be clear, that's where my gap is, so when you're talking about, you know environmental literacy, I don’t- I’m not sure I know specifically what that entails right, so I'm just saying, everything I’ve said, just be aware, that’s a gap for me, I don’t know enough to be able to argue what’s better or worst in the world of environmental science – that’s someone else’s world you know.

[yeah, well I think um, in terms- sort of similarly really in that I’m looking at- cause the scope of the environmental knowledge is, yeah massive, ecology is so massive, then sort of looking at ways to facilitate conversations and actually say well, if I’m going to go and facilitate this course say in the Lake District, the instructors here likely know much more about the landscape and the environment here than I do, because I’ve never worked here-]

yeah, possibly not! (laughs)

[Well, I’d hope so! But so to leave that, um, to leave that to them and then teach them how to facilitate it in terms of conversations of knowledge, and attitudes and behaviours, um and that was actually one thing with, I’m looking at knowledge, and it was one thing I thought actually it would be interesting to chat to you about because when we had our original teams conversation and you mentioned something about the field studies council is quite scientific, and I look at kind of adopting that a little bit in terms of citizen science and I was wondering your, kind of, your opinions on that really, because in my head, I don’t know how clear it came across in this but you know, when you’re taking out a kayaking session for example, whether it’s you say ok these are the kind of species you might see, we’re going to pick one, which one would you like to record today, this is why we’re recording it, these are the numbers we’ve seen so far, this is how they’ve changed, and this is what its indicating or whatever, and by collecting that data, say you’re going out and recording the number of barrel jellyfish you see or whatever, and it sort of triggers that as a conversation, whereas you might not have been able to talk about it before, all of a sudden you can think ok let’s really know how to identity this one species-]

Totally

[-let’s understand why its important to the ecosystem and why we’re seeing more now than we used to, or whatever, and actually at the end of it say ok how many did we see? Hope you remember and then, or if you’ve seen none, and record it and say, ok by recording it this is going in to the- you know, we’re not doing any more with it now, but this is a place that you can record it, and hopefully if it’s really clear to them, a really easy process so then when they visit somewhere, a beach or a hill or whatever, they can say ah I saw one of them I’ll take a picture and record it or whatever and just-]

Totally

[- to help kind of integrate science as a more, yeah let’s contribute to the knowledge because we need to know what’s happening with the environment and what our impact is]

No totally, yeah, yeah, so I mean… if we start from the point of view of not thinking about the outdoors as an industry, and not as a market, right, just hold on the idea that there is a social movement alright. So as social movement organisations and um, you know even though, you know, I’ll say XXX because we both know it right; so even though it is absolutely a commercial operation, it still has a founder who’s very passionate about a moral situation and employs people who also share that- generally share that affinity, right, so it has got this element of social movement. So, as a social movement it possesses something that, I’ve seen and I’m trying to call it ‘cognitive legitimacy surplus’, right-

[Ok!]

It’s great isn’t it! Told ya! So, and this is backed up in literature as well, so if I go to an organisation like XXX and have an instructor put in front of me, or a guide put in front of me and they are, as a client I look to that person and I give them a level of legitimacy on what they know, in that setting, that is beyond really what they should be able to have time to expect, right, considering they’re just about to throw my children off a cliff into the sea, right, there’s a surplus of legitimacy and that is what the centre trades on. So that’s what it trades on, it evaluates itself entirely differently, so what it- what it does on one hand it says ‘look at me I’m a really valuable social movement in the outdoors; Outward Bound, TYF, whoever, you need me, but what we’re going to do is measure how many bed nights we do every year, and that shows our- that’s the way we account for our value right, so its different. So, the reason I’m- where I’m going with this is if you take that cognitive legitimacy and then start engaging people in the scientific conversation, what it does is it democratises science, right, it makes science something that people feel like they can participate in, and I know I’m teaching you to such eggs here right, but this is, this is the imperative if you like of a movement or organisation, so it’s- I think it’s absolutely the right way to go about it because then the offshoot of that is that it gives you an evaluation mechanism which is congruent with your cognitive legitimacy. So if your instructor is setup as an ocean-going scientist, right, and you give them all of the trappings of that, I don't know what that might be, let’s just say a magnifying glass hanging off a buoyancy aid right, and a wad of laminated booklet comes out, right, you’re building that cognitive legitimacy, then you do experiments; you facilitate that in a way which is delivered educationally, valuably-

[Yeah, but also inclusively-]

-but also inclusively, all of that stuff right, and then you say right so what have we got?! Oh, here’s some data! We saw 15 porpoises, we saw, um, 2 sea anemone um dah dah dah… and you know, someone told the joke about molluscs having the biggest penis’s and all of that stuff that happens right-

[a classic!]

A classic right! So, all those come out, and then, and then they say right we’re gonna record, and I’m going to keep a recording of that for my organisation cause that’s my data I’m inputting to show how I’ve increased people's appreciation of the natural environment by direct interaction with it; tick! What I’m also going to do is I’m going to give you that and you’re going to take that away with you, and that’s a map- that’s something that’s telling you that you are now a citizen scientist, who is- who has done some good work for the planet, and here’s the evidence. And here’s a website you can go to, to find out other organisations that also use citizen scientists. So, you know, the only reason we know what state the rivers are in is because of fisherman, you know! Cause they’re there every day, you know. So, that’s how I like it, and then you see, that’s then, that’s the practice device bundle, right, and its transportable, it can go home with the family, it can go off to the department for education, it can go to the website, and you then interpret that anyway you want, so you know, XXX is chuffed to bits cause he’s said, you know, we spotted 18,000 porpoises on our adventures last year – all of a sudden everyone wants to come on an adventure! So, it, it’s that, so I’m really up for it, it just has to be done right. And it’s that democratisation of science bit, it’s, it’s the- cause that’s where I’ve not done anything within that environmental science bit because the field that I am in actually came from something that was called science and technology studies. And it started by showing how scientists construct knowledge in a non-linear, messy, random way. And then in order to justify their legitimacy of the knowledge that they’ve created they then use all of these other actors to back them up, so you know, how- you can’t tell me that that’s not what science has told us because you- it’s you that has access to an electron-microscope, so suddenly it becomes inaccessible, and eventually it goes in the black box, right, so getting kids to do their own science is wonderful, but I think what FSC and the old, the old definition of environmental education, that’s what it did badly, was it, it taught young people about science, but didn’t try and transfer the context anywhere, so it just got people how many daisies there were in a meter square, right, that’s bloody great but what’s that- what’s that doing-

[why are you doing it]

Why are you doing it, you know, and I think that’s where- and that’s why I say there’s if I really want to bring this home to people, I would be putting some kind of economics, or non-mathematical economics, like these qualculations, and put those in, you know, how do we say, … we’ve just walked to the beach rather than taking the minibus, that saved us 52g of carbon; if we did that for every trip this year then we’ll have saved this many tonnes, which is equivalent to you buying 30 laptops from China, right, or- I don’t, I don’t know but do you know what I mean-

[just making it relatable]

Yeah, yeah, and I think that’s there has been experiments in that before, at the National Trust place down near XXX, there’s an outdoor centre there, or there was, and the woman that ran that, she used to weigh all the waste food that came back off the kids plates, so if they took too much and then left half of it, that would go in and, they would see how much waste food they’d created in the week, so there’s things like that that you can do that are, again, it’s about how do you materialise it and make it something that they can comprehend from their social world, and that’s where the bubble of outdoor education forgets that bit, cause we’re all wrapped up in our own world and we forget; we just think everyone should see the world as we do and that’s the arrogance of it, so you know I think, so it’s a long answer to your question but that’s, that’s, that’s why I think it’s such a good thing to, to create something that is observable, it democratises this ability to feel like you can do something, you know, but as I said, the important bit is to turn it into something material. Talking to XXX; they’ve got professional potters on site, so I was really intrigued into the idea of having a you know following the kind of nature connectedness five ‘things’, or the John Muir award ‘things’, or the whatever ‘things’ we wanna have, but at the end of it they materialise it in clay, and that has also some metaphorical going on with it as well, as in its clay from- you know you go and give it from the ground first or whatever, but again it’s the tangible-

[like symbolic-]

Like a symbolic takeaway thing, that every time they look at it they’ll remember, you know, so.

[Yeah I think having something to take away is, I toy with a bit, because part of me things it’s really cool to take something away so yeah you can have it as a reminder, and part of me thinks well it’s got to be something that- you know the amount of stuff that you take home and keep for a little bit and then it ends up in the bin, so in that respect I think well I’d rather not give something that’s just going to end up in the bin, but yeah something like a pot is maybe something-]

Yeah and I mean these are just experiments you know, I don’t, I don’t know what it might be, and it’ll be different things for different people and I'm sure that, you know, it's a never ending conversation, but I- it's that- if you want the knowledge to be a performative then it has to be materialised; it has to be made real and if it’s not then it remains in the abstract and it gets treated to such, you know, and your cognitive function it happen- its something that happens over there, you know, I can't bring myself to care about, um, you know, I’m going to be- this is a dreadful thing to say and I don’t mean it, cause I do care obviously, but you know, it’s hard to identify with load of people who have fallen off a bridge in India because it’s just so removed right, you know, and that’s not true obviously but it is, it is that idea, that principle of how do you keep real in someone’s life right, and I think outdoor ed has struggled with that forever you know. I got into teaching mountain biking, you know, I was kind of was very passionate about mountain biking as an outdoor education centre activity, cause I knew that most kids could go home and have a bike, that they could continue to go riding on, whereas not many of them have a kayak, or a, you know, set of ski’s-

[or the knowledge to go out and do it-]

Or the knowledge, yeah exactly, so it’s that transferability which again as soon as I say it’s a bloody, it’s an outdoor education trope; ‘transfer knowledge’ – it’s not the knowledge that transfers, it’s the person, right. It’s the material person that transfers, and people talk about the transfer of knowledge, and I just want to (clenches fists!) (laughs) and I just want to stop them, because I do think it’s about that, that materialisation is really, really important for me. But yeah. Yeah, I mean you’re sat with a group you can brainstorm it, it’s not fluffy gonk, it’s not a sticker that says ‘I saw the lions of Longleat’ it’s something that has a meaning associated with it, you know

[yeah absolutely, and then that becomes, in terms of it being a business, something that’s feasible so not something that’s too expensive to produce or-]

No, and something that perpetuates the ongoing conversation and relationship you know, a piece of A4 paper with some nice graphs on it that show where you are at in the number of people who have counted porpoises I don’t know! The amount of carbon that this program has saved by not using- you know, just some shit like that! But a link to the website or the app, and that then keeps the conversation going and then you’ve got data mining from that, you know, people- commercial people can get really excited by it, you know look at every large environmental charity, it’s what they all do isn’t it, that’s the market, you know.

[I, have you, sorry, I was going to say are you done with your notes, is it worth me asking questions or is there-?]

No, you go

[are you sure, cause if there’s still things that you-]

Yeah, please, no I think I’ve exhausted everything that I’ve wanted to say, by going about in this tangled way, I’m sorry that’s just how my head works!

[No that’s absolutely fine!]

I mean, like I say, I really enjoyed it, I was just looking at stuff going, yeah I’ve really success bias here-

[say again sorry?]

Success bias-

[ok]

We only ever talk about the things that worked well, and we build our thinking on the success stories, you know, what about the 500 kids that didn’t get it, talk about the one that did right-

[well yeah, that’s what I think really why it stood out for me really, finding out when we actually did speak to these people six-months down the line and heard that it had failed, and you’re like oh, but I only ever assumed that it was good-]

Yes

[ you know, you hear the short- you see the short term ‘ah thanks so much we really enjoyed that’, but never speak to them, or maybe you see them again next year because they’re returning customers, but actually you never see them in their home environment, you never know how really successful you’ve been]

No, totally, and again it’s, I mean I- I had some experiences that were- when I was working in a very commercialised setting, my job was really coming from an outdoor education point of view into a commercial organisation, I’m going to outdoor education and my job was to be like their kind of moral compass; make sure they didn’t go off on one commercially, but I learnt some stuff in that environment that surprised me quite significantly, one of them was that within the suite of products we used to do overseas school trips, and they could be you know, an orchestra trip to New York, they could be the World War 1 Battlefields to France, and we used to do ski trips. So I was getting really excited right, so I went out and did a focus group for all of these teachers, and we used to call the fam-events; familiarisation events, ok because you just get a load of teachers give, give them a free trip out to France at the end of the ski season, they get a weekend of free wine and free access to the slopes and we would just mine them for information and get them to book again for next year, right. So, I would host them, and I’d do a day of skiing and drinking, and God knows what else, and then in the evening we’d have a meal, and I’d plonk a bottle of wine on the table, and I’d do a focus group session. So, at the time I was really interested in how I could make this more valuable to them as teachers, right. And this might not surprise you at all, but it surprised me. I said right, so look, I'm really interested in the curriculum for ski trips, where I can use, and either, and you can tell me what you think is most appropriate, so I can either focus it around the French language, I can focus it around physics, because we can look at momentum and friction and angles and God knows what else, so I could focus it on physical geography, or I could focus it on economics and the tourism sector. Opening question – debate – which ones do you think would be most valuable to you? And every single one said, ‘fuck’s sake, don’t do that Matt!’ I’m like ‘what do you mean?!’-just have fun! If you make it educational then every child is entitled to that experience in our school, and not every child can afford to come skiing! So please please please don't make it educational. So, market reality suddenly- like being hit in the face with a wet fish, you know, passionate educator ‘ahh we could do all sorts with skiing’, you know, think of how much fun I could have, translating angle of slope to speed over time, you know, no can’t do that Matt!

[I think, it's a really hard one as well isn’t it, because to some extent, yeah, they’ll going away for their end of year trip, they just want to relax and have fun, and I think the same with, you know, working, and, to some extent these kids it’s their last residential of school, maybe they’re changing school! And there was school in particular that was just so good at reflection, it was absolutely incredible, and it really shone how us as instructors were awful at it! Because, you know, the students were used to doing it because they had done it all throughout school, but they would just sit in a circle and go round and say, I don’t know, somebody that they wanted to thank and why and their memorable moment in school or whatever it was, and they would just sit and listen to each other and laugh with each other and, and it was so beautiful to watch, and you just think ‘wow’! This is one school, and-]

Totally, and actually, I would probably, without knowing the situation you’ve got, probably say actually it’s not just, well it’s probably that one teacher who, who knows this and they’re teaching philosophy through the back door, and, you know, this is what they’re doing and dah dah dah dah dah…and you know, yeah totally, I can think of a school, a very, one of if not the best girls school, and they were taught from a feminist perspective about being critical thinkers, and my God! They didn’t take anything for granted at all! And the staff used to be exhausted by the end of the residential, because everything was questioned, everything was challenged!

[But great! Amazing!]

Fantastic, yeah! But for the staff who weren’t expecting it, and like you said, didn’t have the ability to deal with it, they were on their knees by Wednesday! You know, so, so I think this what I’m, I guess is, you know, all of this thinking about it is, it dies come back to this, you know, there is a realism in this, you know, and that’s, I’m very aware of that so, if I sound, yeah, I think there’s a possibility that when you’re playing this back, you know ‘he said that over there and then he said this over here!’ and, and that, you’re absolutely right, right, I think that’s, it is just really hard because on the one hand you need to be sustainable as an organisation, you need to put food on the table at home, and you need to do all this, and if that's what the market can cope with, that’s what, you give, you know, we’re in a situation where since Ronald Reagan and Margret Thatcher, the market became- market solutions became the solution to everything, so we haven't got a choice, you see, this is how we are, but yeah it doesn’t mean you can’t fuck with it a bit right!

[So, going back to, I think everything in the course objectives has been covered really; the course structure is one thing that I’ve played with a little bit. The intention was to have it running over two days; the morning of each having sort of 4 hours of ‘death by powerpoint’, but hopefully fairly interactive so that it’s not death by powerpoint! And then in the afternoon, so if I was going into a particular centre, you’d run it there and then say ok what activity do you want to try this with and they might say ok let’s go out and put it into practice with coasteering, in the afternoon then you’d go out on a session and, so whatever activity it was I would just be included in their ratio as a ‘not guide’, because I’m not going to be in all these activities, and then we can go along and do some role play or do some different bits where they can try, ok this is a good place where we can do a citizen science project, or this is a good place where we can actually just sit and reflect or, whatever it is, and you know, it would be quite good in some ways to go when its big swell or like really challenging conditions to say ok how can we still do this? Because obviously at the top you’ve got safety and fun or what they’re coming for, but how else can we engage in developing environmental literacy as we go, so I sort- yeah, I sort of tried to do 2 days and half a day of each of practicing what you’ve done in the morning in real life in the afternoon. Do you think that could work? Do you think it’s too- do you think it would be feasible for centres to do that kind of thing, or?]

Look, it’s definitely feasible, I say, it’s how or, if- I mean it’s how I design, you know- it’s how I used to run mountain bike, trail cycle leader, you know, lowest level, how can I lead a group of kids on bicycles on a tow path on a bridleway, you know, non-technical, no traffic or machinery, two day course, equivalent to you know, the kind of, um, what is it called, you know, the kind of, framework of qualifications, who’s on level 1 qualification, and I can’t remember what the acronym for that was, it’s been too long! So yeah, that model works, you know, you have a morning, people are warm, comfortable, dry, have some difficult technical conversations, take them out, get them wet and muddy to put it into practice it in the real world, problematize what you learned the classroom – does that actually work out here? What have we learnt? Taking the theory into the real world. Not a problem with that at all. It’s an expectation that I think a lot of outdoor staff will have, as in, that’s what they’ll be expecting, and therefore they’re already predisposed to that. The bit that, I mean it touches on what I said before, I’m a big fan of blended learning right, the papers that I've got that show behaviour change through outdoor education, or learning in the outdoors, or nature-based learning, or whatever you want to call it, they all have been supported by a technological platform, right. So, with the course that you’ve got, you could- I’d really be interested in suggesting that there is an like, an online element that they would have to do before the course took place right, and that could be where they get the generic carbon literacy stuff done, and that's not structured, they can do that on their smartphone whenever they want, but by the time they arrive on that first morning they have to have done that and passed the little mini exam that says that they’ve thought about some of the carbon accounting challenges of contemporary society, right, whatever that might be, I don’t know. Then they come, and then you’re then building- right so now we all this, now we’re going to translate it into your setting as outdoor educators in the Lake District or outdoor educators in Pembrokeshire, because, I mean- I used to love looking at Pembroke Dock, right, you look across to Pembroke Dock, the massive lights, piping and stuff like that and ‘oh we’re going to be carbon neutral by 2030’, if you started now you wouldn't be able to dismantle it by 2030, right! So, you can bring in that stuff. The Lake District, it’s a, it's a World Heritage site, what does that mean? You know, it means you can’t change anything, ‘oh well that’s interesting’, right blah blah blah blah blah… so I think that's how you should- I would like to kind of build it that way, and like I said before, the bit that I really, really want to argue for, and I don’t know how to get to this is that we need to get outdoor educators more aware of their role as economic actors. They’ve got a responsibility; they are taking value from the environment, they are monetising it, they’re also ‘pedagogising’ it, if that’s a word right, and then what are they, what they putting gback right? How can they look at themselves in the mirror and say, ‘I’m making a living out of this, but all I am doing is taking’. You know, you mentioned trampling and footpath erosion, and scraping plastic off the bottom of kayaks on barnacles, right, I get all that, and maybe then they get it, but then, do they, do anything, do they internalise it? I think that’s the- so I think there’s possibly, and there’s levels of critical thinking, that, that if it was me I’d like to build those in, and if you get, if you get 80% of the population of outdoor instructors who now are, you know, where this course is sitting, they’ll be the newbies coming into the centre I would imagine, right, so you get, let’s say 2% through, you target sort of the big box providers, you target Kings Wood and PGL and Stern Lodge and all them, cause that’s where the instructors for outward bound are going to come from, right. 500 a year come through Kings Wood at the moment, they’re going- they do a year at Kings Wood then they go off into the centre, right, they go and work at PGL, no sorry, they go and work at TYF or, so you get them all there, and then, I would have levels and at the top level, let’s say level 5 it’s really, it’s quite specific, and they get a badge (laughs) do you know what I mean?

[yeah]

You know, so, decisions you’re making as a manager of a department in an outdoor centre, is as important, if not more important than the behaviours as an instructor in your first season. And, the accountability increases with hierarchy, so you know, if I wanted to- if I was interviewing somebody for a chief or senior instructors job at Outward Bound, I’d want them to be able to articulately debate, you know, with me, the impact of environmental- the impact of their job on this environment, and if they couldn’t they ain’t getting the job, so that's how I would see it

[yeah, absolutely, yeah there’s a naivety I think that we’re only doing good]

Yeah, cause they’re in the outdoors, they see it, they believe it themselves, but as a result they’re not, they’re not actually being the thing- they’re the telling stories about themselves, but they're not actually living up to those stories, cause its context- they keep it contextualised.

[Yeah, and so I think that accountability I was hoping to get that across through the citizen science in kind of saying you know we are making a difference and this is the difference we are making and we’re justifying it this way, or whatever, but yeah, I think it needs to be more than that, it needs to be, you know, so justifying it that way and you can see it happening, but what else? What-]

Totally, and look, you know, if you’re working with primary school kids it’s too much of a step to suggest that they’re not the most important things on the planet, right! Cause if you’re 5, you are the most important thing on the planet! So, you can’t get into the kind of, a post human critique with a 5 year old! But by the time you are, um, you know, making purchasing- making purchasing decisions for a big outdoor provider, then yeah, you bloody should be able to thing about where are these buoyancy aids are coming from, you know

[and where they’re going next]

Where’s your supply chain, where they’re going- where they’re going next, of course. It’s, yeah, so that’s how I would, you know from a structure point of view, it’s got tendrils, and that’s- I think that’s why I was asking, you know, that question right at the start about understanding your epistemological kind of perspective, in terms of where you are seeing- is it, is it ecocentric? Is it anthropocentric? Is it, is it post-human? Is it buying into a dualistic, positivistic, scientific reality of science fact? Or is it actually thinking about actually how do we construct this stuff, you know, and I think that’s, for me that’s the bit that I think that- just because of the traditional aspect of where outdoor education sits- it’s very white, it’s very middle class, it’s very dah dah dah dah dah, it has got this epistemology of post-colonial, scientific, you know, valorisation of, you know, middle aged white men in beards who climbed a mountain right, it’s fucking, it’s a massive problem! Because equally if you’re, you know, intersectional, you know, brown lesbian from Birmingham, it’s just not going to happen. So, I think that’s where, it becomes interesting.

[yeah, yeah absolutely. Is there anything else you’d like to say about this, or shall I get the-]

No, you go with it, I’ll follow- please let- lead me, lead me where you want to go because-

[Well, maybe it might be good to have just have a quick look at the presentation, um…]

Is this working for you by the way, is this useful, yeah?

[yeah absolutely!]

Just tell- you know, tell me.

[So, this will be a very whistle stop tour of the presentation!]

Ah cool

[So yeah, sort of breaking it into two-days]

Yeah

[The first, just looking at which slides will be the best to look at… a sort of, an introduction to environmental literacy, hopefully it will be interactive, getting other people’s opinions, what do they know about the environment, what are- what do you know about your attitudes towards the environment, and yeah, sort of put things that I’ve thought of, but also be hoping it’ll be interactive right from the word go, otherwise people will just turn off, so yeah, what we know about our influence on the environment and then- sorry, the environments influence on us, and our influence on the environment, sort of just going over these things. This is the wonky wood diagram I was saying about, so hopefully-]

Oh right, ok, I get that

[yeah, so I’ll have a set of questions-]

Ah I like that

[- and they’ll answer during the-]

Yeah, so just because I used to use star diagrams, very similar- in many ways similar to that, because it gave you that sense of I’m really good on this area over here, and I’m absolutely shit at this over there, right, yeah, I get it

[So just, I just want to-]

See can- do you mind if I just, do you mind if I just challenge, challenge you a little bit-

[yeah please do]

Just going back there, the language you used is about, the ‘the’ environment, where we are in ‘the’ environment, I- I would be really cautious about that affirmation and reification of ‘us’ and ‘the environment’, right. There isn’t a duality. And I- and that’s the bit that, if, if, if you could find a way in the outdoors of just starting to see it more as a metabolism and we are part of, you know, it’s that thing of the Gaia thing, but I’m always reluctant to say stuff like that because then it becomes politicised, but it is just trying to constantly challenge that, and I’ll- because for me it’s not just important about humans and the environment, it’s about every other ‘other’, right. So we’re talking about- so you look at the 17 SDG’s of the UN, it’s not just about, um, - the Sustainable Development Goals, you know what I’m talking about yeah- there’s bits in there about women in- women’s role in society, women in the workforce, you know, dealing with inequality, dealing with that- it comes from the same problem in our foundational thinking, that we have white colonial men, and then everybody else is ‘other’ right. And then the next, the next layer out is white colonial women, cause I’m stood next to one, right, let’s just say that, and then on it- on it goes from there, so I think that- that for me is the thing that is a- is really, really critical because we are, and this is the bottom line, despite what outdoor education might think, it is ‘othering’ nature, right, nature is ‘other’, and it’s there as a resource for us to exploit, and it sits so comfortably with the outdoor sector right, because they don’t think that is the case, but of course it is the case! Where did outdoor education come from? Where did the Scouting movement come from? Right, so- so that’s, I know, I know I'm labouring the point, and, but it’s, it’s such- I think it’s such an important thing, that we should be challenging and if we weren't talking about environmentalism, let’s say we were talking about, you know, inequality in the outdoor sector, I would be saying the same thing, right. It’s not just about nature, it’s about the foundational premises that the outdoor education epistemology is built on, right.

[Yeah, so I did some work on this a couple of years ago, and yeah, looked at the kind of anthropocentric/ecocentric and at the end sort of decided I don’t want to put that viewpoint onto anybody else-]

Right, why?

[Because I felt it was, it was somebody’s epistemological view of how the world works, and that, and that whatever somebody’s view is, if we can get to the same outcome, whether it’s because they want to protect nature for themselves or whether they want to protect nature for nature, within the timeframe I’ll be able to talk to them I’m not going to change their view on- their worldview-]

Totally

[-whereas if I can sway it so that this, at the end of the day they’re still going to protect nature whether- for whatever reason it is]

Sure

[-then I can work with that. But in doing that, so in doing so I have my view and then trying to give the neutral view, I can then see in this it’s not neutral because it’s still anthropocentric.]

It is, and that’s the thing, and I’m not, I’m not, don’t get me wrong, I’m not evangelising a different political perspective, within, within the current construct there’s all sorts of ways of doing that you know… and this is where the political ecology thing comes in, that’s not what I’m talking about, I’m just thinking, I think that if you are thinking about a future, and I mean a market future here, right, not necessarily a human future per se- but, you, you must, I think, adopt a position which is in tune with all of the other intersectional practices about how we ‘other’, and ‘othering’ is something that happens to all sorts of, you know, women, people of diff- you know, and this is part of the same conversation. So I'm not saying that you're being evangelical about trying to teach a way of viewing the world which is, right, being congruous to different people in the room, it’s, it's becoming an accepted challenge to our orthodox, and I think you need to be in tune, and that’s why I thought actually- look if I walked into the room when you delivered that I’d go ‘Nah’. And it’s really funny cause there’s a book that's just come out that people were sharing on the kind of social media networks of the outdoor sector, I can’t remember what it is now, it’s written by two German academics and they produced a book. I read the preface and I was like that (-) I was gone, because they haven’t understood the thing that they’re talking about. And that, that’s for me, that’s the issue, because they are accepting of this norm, which is, which is the reason why this thing exists in the first place, right, you wouldn’t be having this conversation if it wasn't problematised, and then by dealing with it, then the irony is that to some extent you then actually perpetuate-

[so almost, by looking at it as an ‘other’, I was thinking of more of like an ecosystem where you exist within it, um, but yeah]

It’s hard to get your head round cause it’s so not the way that you’re used to thinking about it right and that’s why-

[Even though I would say I’m- I have ecocentric-]

Of course, and you are right!

[yeah]

Yeah, totally

[but then that’s-]

We wouldn’t be sitting- this is where you get, it’s gets so, like you say, you would never have gone through that paragraph and circled all of the eco- anthropocentricness of that paragraph didn’t appear to you cause you were talking about the environment, so it’s that, that’s what I’m poking at, and I, I mean I wrote something- I've struggled with this a little bit myself so I'm not just- I struggle with it too, it's not it's not a ‘thing’; how you make sense of it is really hard for other people, and I did a thing for Horizons magazine, I don’t know whether you’ve seen it or not, but again- and I ended up with a model, that almost shows a kind of scale of anthropocentric at one end, ecocentric at the other. The way that we evaluate outdoor education is in these three circles, and they sit at the ecocentric end of the spectrum, but then there is this other circle- sorry, the anthropocentric circle, but then there is an ecocentric, you know, who’s asking, to get the nth degree, who’s asking the alligator in South Africa what they think about this? Well, we’re not-

[who’s asking the barnacles that we’re walking over?!]

Who’s asking the barnacles that we’re walking over, right, and that sounds ridiculous, to us, but that is not so ridiculous when you think about how the value of that historical past has now created the situation that we’re in now, which is why we’re having this conversation in the first place, so it’s how do you get to the so, like I say, I’m very- of course I’m very conscious of it, and I don’t know to what extent you can nudge people in the right way, but that- that’s what I’m talking about, is just, if there is a way to at least flatten, flatten it out a little bit. You know, it’s you’re not throwing anthropocentricism out the window. Mind, I say, one of the things that I’ve read recently cause it said we don’t want to go back to indigenous ways of knowing about the planet, cause that won’t work either, you know, that was all very well for indigenous Australians for the last 20,000 years until the Europeans turned up, but you can’t take an indigenous- Australia, and put them back into that place, cause it just- they wouldn’t want to! Why would I want to- I can’t go back to that! So it’s not about that, it’s about constructing something new for the future, and I think that’s what, that’s what the opportunity is here is that you’re taking that but just being really, you know really conscious of the specific language that’s being used. Cause we’ve been doing it for a long time and we’re alert to feminist- feminism and racism and gender roles, we haven't quite matured in our thinking of to really incorporate nature into the same conversation, but we going there.

[yeah, yeah that’s really useful. So (back to the presentation) this wonky wood diagram is based on their, their own knowledge and how they view their own- yeah]

Perfect

[and then this one sort of challenges it a bit, in it says well how do you feel facilitating it? And then this is just a few quick questions to get everybody thinking-]

Cool (2:01)

[and then, have a couple of-]

Yeah, no they’re great questions, you could go all sorts- go all over the place with those couldn’t you-

[yeah, exactly, yeah just to get people thinking, and then these were two quotes, one from IOL; ‘we are ideally placed’ – I think we are, we have a lot of potential]

Yeah

[and then one from, I don’t know if you’ve come across Alison Lugg]

No

[but I really like this quote because I felt like it just really captured it]

Yeah, totally, and this is- I mean that ‘it’s not merely a matter of exposing people’, that’s the thing-

[and hoping-]

Yeah, I've got a very good friend and a long-standing colleague who's got senior, senior job in the outdoors and he still, he still delivers his- all his work based on this phrase that came from some kind of, I don’t know, some kind of romantic author from 1920-something ‘*let the mountains speak for themselves*’ – aaah. And yes if your perfect, if you have a perfect moment and you get the Aurora borealis over your- you know, yes there is a potential for that to happen. But mostly you’re in a muddy field on the Thursday afternoon and it's raining, you know (laughs)

[yeah absolutely, and I just thought this highlights it so nicely and then looking back at these and thinking so, you know, how able are you?]

Yeah, totally. Yeah, so I think you’ve got- you’ve got the scaffolding, you know that conversation we just had, you know, challenging though it might have been about just how do you situate what you've done, there you’ve got all of the scaffolding to really debate some of that stuff, depending on how far and how receptive people are in the room, right. So, you could from no-, those two phrases, those two comments, you know, you could build up a really quite dynamic and contestated conversation, showing how different people value the things that they all think they value the same, and this- coming back to this social model economies of worth, ‘oh you’ve just justified that from a domestic point of view because it’s about you and your family, or you and the, and the kind of patriarchal society we live in, you know, they’ll be weighting on that or whatever, ‘oh you’ve just said that’s about industry, I care about the environment because it brings people to my business’, right, ok, fair enough, well that’s two different people that value nature differently and we haven’t got round the rest of the room yet, you know, it’s that kind of shit, yeah

[yeah, absolutely. And this kind of touches on what- on marketing really, how is it sold-]

Excellent

[what, you know really starting to look at it from the beginning. And then looking at behaviours; so, yeah, I did this for Horizons about coasteering on barnacles, and just saying, yeah, it’s way more destructive on barnacles than I imagined, and actually it changed my way of coasteering, and you can justify it, or not, to yourself in any ways you want why you keep doing it, but, we do need to account for our actions and be able to evaluate them, so this was sort of all about the citizen science projects and storytelling-]

So this, this is the bit that again, some of the stuff that I’m doing, so my touchstone if you like in all of this is a, a- someone called Bruno L’Tour, who has just died in the last few weeks actually, but he, he is French anthropologist, sociologist, and he has written very recently, very well, on some of the things around the stuff we’ve been talking about. And one of his most- his latest book, or his, one of his- 2019 it is; he problematises this difficult thing to get people to think about the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ at the same time right, and then he also problematises this idea of the ‘global’ because global has got captured by the word globalisation, right, so, it- that in itself doesn't help, so then he changes the vocabulary and talks about ‘terrestrial’ or ‘local’, if I’ve got the reading right, so he talks about you know, things that are happening locally, so the barnacles, like how do you make that- translate that to a terrestrial scale and boundaries you have to cross to get there. And the other thing that I- really, really struck me was when you think about global you think about the planet right, and you might know this already, but he doesn’t he talks about the critical zone, is the only bit of the environment that we actually live in, right, and, and from a scale point of view, if you get a football and you put two coats of varnish on it, that’s the thickness of the critical zone; that’s where the atmosphere is, that's where we get all of our resources for life come from this tiny layer around the outside of the planet, so you can- he messes with this idea of global being, you know, like this big heavy massive thing, and goes no actually it’s not that, it’s this really delicate thin layer that sits round the outside, and then so he's translating the local to that terrestrial, as opposed to local to global which implies something bigger, resilient and heavy

[and almost incomprehensible]

Yeah, yeah, too hard- too big a step right. So that’s, so that’s where I think that, sorry that last slide I think that was where that was really interesting, is that’s your tool for your science, is, for me that’s the underlying performative education going on, is how would you teach in a way that starts to open up this cognitive translation- that’s what I’m seeing here, but this is what it means here, and, yeah. So, anyway, I dunno, I’m preaching to the-

[so, this kind of on the first, the first morning, or the first day is based on knowledge, and then the second day I’ll move on to, like participant thinking and, um, and then look at this-]

Go back sorry, what was that?

[This?]

Yeah, participant thinking. Yeah, no, sure, and that’s again, that’s a really good place to bring the ‘self’ into the- themselves in, like what are you doing, you know, the conflict management again was my thing for a while and teaching outdoor staff to deal with violence and aggression and conflict, and they all forgot that it was them that started it. So they would come in with these attitudes and beliefs and, you know, trying to impose their will ‘if you don’t get out of your tent in 10 minutes I'm gonna do dah dah dah dah…’, and then the kid will get out of the tent and punch them, and they’d go ‘but what did that kid- that awful behaviour by that child’ and then it’s like, well, you brought some yourself to that party, so in terms of building that rapport, I like that, yeah, yeah.

[yeah, and then I just look at these from the office for nation statistics about climate anxiety and just looking at-]

Right, oh beautiful

[- kind of different colours representing people that may or may not be anxious about the environment, and so how to frame that in a way that, um, so obviously it doesn’t take into account that some might be family groups, so you might have- it might be more or less, but if you had random group of eight it could look something like this; you might have some who don’t believe in it or are not worried, and then some that are really worried, and yeah so how you frame that and yeah, looking a little bit at ecocentric and anthropocentric-]

Do you know the ONS of Windermere? That’s a good one!

[The ONS value of Windermere? No, I don’t, what’s that?]

So I’m back to value and evaluation stuff, right, so the the Office for National Statistics, they put a value to our natural, as they call it ‘capital’ right. So, if you see a- let’s just say Windermere, you know, Lake Windermere as an entity of natural capital; it's a resource, as in capital implies, so what resource provide humanity, right. They measure it as its cooling capacity on a hot day, to reduce- and then they equate that to the amount of energy saved running air conditioning units, to give it monetary value, right, straight up! The second one is they measure and calculate how far people are prepared to travel to see Windermere; the logic being the further they travel, the more valuable it is! And then thirdly, and this is my favourite, they look at the relative value of the houses on Lake Windermere shore and compare them to an equivalent house in an urban setting, right! So, you take something that’s as aesthetically pleasing, spiritually powerful, as ecologically diverse as Windermere, and you measure it- and it’s this need to try and qualify it in an economic sense, because without that it has- people can’t- the ONS can’t talk to politicians about the value of Windermere unless, unless they make it about economics right. Isn’t it great!

[so odd!]

So yeah

[And then looking at environmental inclusion, the Nature in Self scale, so yeah-]

Ah yeah, great, got you, beautiful, there you go, that’s the conversation we’ve just had right!

[yeah, absolutely]

Beautiful, yeah

[and then looking at how we can make that, you know, what we see as nature, ok we spend all of our time out in this ‘big nature’ but actually it could be quite patronising, and actually we can’t say that the other things that when you go back to your street, which might have a couple of tree’s down that you’re not in nature, so just to try and capture that as well. And yeah, the nature connectedness pathways and sort of bringing it all together in this one sort of looks at the barriers that people don’t participate in environmental reasons-]

Does that come from the nature connectedness stuff?

[No, that comes from the Office for National Statistics]

Right

[So I don’t- and it would be quite nice to make that a bit nicer but that was the one I had at the time so that’s what I used. But sort of just looking at barriers in general and then saying ok to look at those barriers what could you say or what could you suggest because-]

Great, I like it, I like it

[- there is more things that you can do, and that’s sort of it, oh and then just finishing with, um, ‘knowing, doing and believing’, because I think that’s quite a nice thing and-]

No, I think that’s great, I think-

[That’s a very whistle stop tour but-!]

No but you’ve shown- you know you’ve expressed things that I’ve been banging on about so it's really nice for me to, you know, after climbing up on my soap box then go oh right yeah I can see, that’s- you know- you’re in that-…the- I'm just really fascinated like I’m just gonna be so fascinated about how far outdoor folks will be able to consume this if that’s- I’m struggling with words here. I’ve got a great quote somewhere from a chief executive of an outdoor provider, right, who said to one of his senior staff after he delivered something very much like this, it’s a direct, he said to him ‘our sponsors would be turning in their graves if they knew you were presenting this green propaganda’ right! So that’s a CEO of an outdoor provider organisation, right. So, this is what I mean, it’s like it’s far- we get it right! We’re passionate about it right, but you know… but I- you know, again, not the same provider, cause there’s- the one I’m thinking of now, their CEO would never say that, but another provider, their doing some of the best intervention work in the outdoors that I’m aware of, I think they’re fantastic. One of their biggest corporate clients is BAE Systems, right. See, it’s that- that’s paradoxes fucking everywhere right, so yeah, so it’s like I say, the level of traction you get to and the- the learnings that will happen in that process of deep bugging it - taking it out into the market seeing what people do with it is going to be really interesting

[yeah, I’m excited about it! But as you say, it’s all about getting a market as well]

Yeah totally

[and actually getting people to- getting clients to buy into that and them to listen as well, cause you could take some people out and straight away you know they don’t want to have a conversation about this, and yet, I think while its- if we’re not going to do that conversation who is? Because we’ve got to make them care at the end of the day!]

Totally, and I think I’m- you know, I’m guessing, I’m guessing but I think you’ll start with- I could imagine a situation where people will come to this thinking they already know it, right, and I think that’s the bit where you need to set up a contestation, set up an experiment so, for them then to find you’re not always in their thinking, and then they’ll go ‘oh! Oh, right… maybe I’m not the green eco-warrior that I think I am’, and it’s, you know, it’s where do you create that? And that’s I think, that’s the, for me that’s the, that’s the big reveal, you know. And then they’ll go ‘oh, oh right, maybe I do need to know a bit more’ cause-

[maybe I do need to change]

Yeah, maybe I do need to change, maybe I need to think about the way I deliver outdoor education, or outdoor learning, or nature-based learning, or whatever different learning, because all I’m doing is perpetuating this model that, you know, was basically designed to make young people more employable! You know, ‘teamwork’ ‘communication skills’ yay yay yay!

[yeah, well hopefully it will be a- hopefully it will be a tool that will be useful!]

Very cool

[I think that’s all of my- I’ve exhausted the list of questions! Unless there’s anything else that you want to add about it?!]

No look, I mean- as you can tell- I hope I haven’t been mans-plaining, I just, I just, I’m really passionate about it, and I’m still exploring this in my own mind as well, so it’s just such a really challenging thing. I find this market fascinating, because it has such a relational closeness to nature, right, but it’s being driven by such a distant policy environment. And everybody's trying to make sense of it, and that’s why it’s an interesting market setting, so I’m holding on to that, but of course I can't just forget all of the work I've done in education, right! So I do get lost in the woods trying to keep the two things separate but, I say the bit for me, and I- this might- in six months’ time this statement might sound really naïve, but right now I’m just really interested in this fad, that the outdoor education is the process by which we make behaviour change, it’s the value that’s created by the sector, it's the problems, but it’s also the process, you know, so, how many folks work in the outdoors for money? Not many. How many folks work in the outdoors because it's all about them creating something that works in their social worlds, it’s about their identity, it’s about all these things. You wouldn’t go into a company that sells- makes, I don’t know, plastic spoons, and find that the workforce’s personal identities are wrapped up in what people make, right, but here we do and I just- it's really hard, it’s really hard to create a market without that objective, singularise of a product, you know, if you’re just selling plastic spoons- dead easy, cause, you know, we’ll agree how much a plastic spoon is worth, I give it to you, gone! Never speaking to you again. This is a constant interaction.

[Yeah, I see what you mean. Yeah, you probably wouldn’t have the people working in a plastic spoon factory in their spare time going and making plastic spoons-]

Exactly

[-but you absolutely would have somebody like ‘do you want to go surfing? I’ll teach you!’]

Yeah, yeah, totally

[and there you go, that’s what you do in your spare time]

Yeah, yeah absolutely, I spend all day down a cave and then what do I do on the weekend? I go caving! (laughs) So, so it’s that, and it’s- that’s why I think it’s such a fascinating market, but it’s, it’s, it is quite interesting cause of that, that way that the, the pedagogy’s process and product. So in economics, the only way you can sell a good is if you singularise it, you detach it from reality for the period that you agree a price, right, so it has to be singularised and detached, whereas something that's about- even the value you know, we’re talking about, not what’s valuable to a child at the time that the experience happens, we’re talking about the value it’s going to have 30 years’ time, right. That’s a peculiar good! You know, it’s immeasurable purely by economic terms, yeah

[yeah, absolutely, and even trying to imagine, you know, the reality will have changed by then, so what will it mean by then it’s- yeah, really challenging!]

Yeah, so that’s, that’s what- the problem that sits behind all of my waffle is that, that trying to make sense of this thing, which is, you know, a politicised critique of the current economic system from my point of view, it's also about how do you create new, new good markets that don't tie into that, but it is also just a fundamental belief in outdoor education as being the right vehicle for it, right! (laughs)

[yeah, absolutely, it’s true, yeah!]

Yeah

[Yeah, well hopefully it is, but we’ll- that’s all to see!]

Yeah, well it is, but as I say, I think, if I wanted to predict the future I would say that the work that will be done in this area won’t be by outdoor education organisations, it'll be environmental organisations; the RSPB, the National Trust, it’ll be the- Natural England it’ll be, you know, the Woodland Trusts, they’ll be the ones who’ll be doing it because they understand the economics. The outdoor sector will maybe train their staff to deliver it maybe, but I don’t think it’s a problem that’s viable in its current outdoor education format is what I would say.

[Yeah, I think there has got to be quite a big shift]

Yeah, hence my, you know, being pedantic about language and shit!

[yeah absolutely. Thank you very much!]

My pleasure! As you can tell, I don’t get out much, right! (laughs)

[well, I hope it’s been useful for your work too]

No look it’s been great because it’s good practice just speaking from an academic point of view, it’s really useful just to be able to try and explain yourself to somebody else to see if they’re getting what it is that you’re saying, so no- for me it's been incredibly useful and like I say, don't be a stranger, you know, if you want, like I say there’s stuff that I’m reading that unpacks some of this, kind of, ecology / economy – they call it the battle of the eco sciences!

[oh right, ok!]

So, it’s the battle of the eco-sciences; economics and ecology, right. Bang bang bang, right. And, it’s really interesting when you then translate it into market a setting like outdoor education, you know, you want outdoor centres to buy this, you want outdoor instructors to buy it, so they can sell it to somebody else right, it’s a market transaction you’re setting up, but it has to be a good one! Otherwise, you’d just be selling them something that, you know, just told them they were brilliant at it, yeah.

[yeah, it’s definitely a hard balance. Well thank you!]

My pleasure, thanks for the coffee!

[You’re welcome! Thanks you for coming to meet me here]