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In and out of place: exploring the discursive effects of teachers' talk about outdoor education in secondary schools in New Zealand

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The purpose of this article is to explore and problematise teachers' talk about outdoor education in New Zealand. The focus is on what can be said, how it is said and the discursive effects of such ways of speaking. The inquiry draws on Foucauldian theoretical insights to analyse interview transcripts derived from semi-structured interviews with eight outdoor education teachers who work at secondary schools in New Zealand. Findings suggest that different discourses co-exist and are intertwined in the participants' talk. Associated with a dominating discourse of adventure are subdiscourses of risk and safety, pursuit-based activities, skill and assessment. Connected to a discourse of learning are subdiscourses of environment, sustainability and social critique. Resistance towards a dominating discourse of adventure with pursuit-based activities can be traced in a discourse of learning in the form of a more place-responsive pedagogy.

Keywords: discourse; adventure; learning; place; curriculum

Introduction

In recent years, a growing body of literature has suggested that formal outdoor education schooling in New Zealand occurs in multiple forms (Boyes, 2000; Cosgriff et al., 2012; Lynch, 2006; Zink & Boyes, 2006). However, the (re)production of claims regarding what constitutes and legitimises outdoor education has been documented by several authors (see Brookes, 2002; Cosgriff, 2008; Hill, 2010; Nicol, 2003; Payne, 2002; Wattchow & Brown, 2011; Zink, 2003). In discussing how the field of outdoor education has historically been contested and conceptualised in New Zealand, Boyes (2012) argued that the key struggle has been between the outdoor-education-as-adventure discourse and the outdoor-education-as-learning discourse. This calls for some questions to be asked. Does naming one discourse after 'adventure' and the other after 'learning' imply that there is no possibility of learning, environmentally or otherwise, through adventure-based outdoor education? Are other discourses besides adventure and learning in play?

In this article, as a response to Boyes' (2012) argument regarding the two major discourses in New Zealand's outdoor education and to the call for more poststructural perspectives on outdoor education (Bowdrige & Blenkinsop, 2011; Zink & Burrows, 2006), we address these questions through a discourse analysis inspired by the work of Michel Foucault. Hence, the purpose of this article is to explore and problematise the discursive effects of how outdoor education teachers talk about outdoor education in New Zealand. The inquiry draws on Foucauldian theoretical insights to analyse interview transcripts derived from semi-structured interviews with eight outdoor education

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teachers who teach at secondary schools in New Zealand. Attention is given to what can be said, how it is said and the discursive effects of such ways of speaking. The article begins with an overview of the theoretical framework used in this study. We then briefly explore some historical and contemporary perspectives on the development of outdoor education in New Zealand; this is followed by a description of the research process. The remainder of the article focuses on the empirical analysis and discussion of our findings.

Theoretical framework

A central tenet of Foucault's work is that there is nothing natural or normal in the social world. In Foucault's line of reasoning, what seems normal only seems that way because of normalising practices, not because of qualities inherent in the practice, object or people involved (Foucault, 2002). Foucault was interested in social practices, and his work aimed to consider the effects of certain practices and to define and fragment what was thought to be unified and whole. One of the key strategies that Foucault used to examine practices was investigation into discourses. Using discourses as products of knowledge classifies and justifies what is normal or deviant (Foucault, 1977).

The term 'discourse' signals a relationship between meaning and power that constitutes practices. These three strategies—practices, discourse and power—work together to constitute particular ways of understanding the self. Foucault (2000) described practices as 'places where what is being said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect' (p. 225). In discourses, what Foucault calls regimes of truth are defined through the dominating relations of power and knowledge. Relations of power define the knowledge that may be accepted, and knowledge is a prerequisite for power to operate. The effect of the discourse disciplines itself from the inside and responds to pressure from the outside. This article focuses on what outdoor education does and how particular practices in outdoor education in New Zealand are rendered possible. Through the power-knowledge relationship within the discourse, certain desirable subjects are created, and within the framework of the discourse, a variety of subject positions are also made available (Andersson & Fejes, 2005; Foucault, 1980).

To understand contemporary discourses within outdoor education in New Zealand, attention must be given to the contours of different periods of time. A genealogy, in the form of a historical ontology (Foucault, 1977), can help alert the reader to how normative practices and the governing of subjects can be understood and how they become intertwined as 'techniques and procedures to direct human behaviour' (Foucault, 1980, p. 80). Foucault (1972) treated discourses as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (p. 49). Wright (2003) suggested that 'the notion of discourse provides a means to understand what resources are available to individuals as they make sense of the world and themselves in the world' (p. 37). The discursive space that is available in outdoor education thereby becomes a part of how subjectivity is created. Foucault saw the subject as active in fashioning itself. How the self is constituted depends on the discourse. According to Foucault, meaning does not originate from or reside within an object or social process. Therefore, power is deeply implicated in the process of meaning-making. Power, in a Foucauldian sense, is not a question of how a person's power is exercised on someone else. Instead, power is always present; it positions different subjects and determines their relations to one

another (Foucault, 1980). In this article, we explore how teachers in New Zealand speak of outdoor education. In line with Zink and Burrows (2006), we believe that 'there is nothing "normal" or "natural" about outdoor education' (p. 40). We believe that what can be said and how it is said are functions of 'power relations operating at particular junctures' (p. 43). This, in turn, may lead to certain contemporary normative regulatory ideals, in terms of attitudes, behaviours and practices. In the following section, we take a genealogical approach in an attempt to portray how outdoor education practices have merged with different beliefs in the historical development of outdoor education in New Zealand, as described in the literature.

Historical and contemporary influences on outdoor education in New Zealand

Outdoor education has been part of New Zealand's education for more than 150 years (Lynch, 1998). According to Boyes (2012), the adventure ethos has its genesis in the early days of settlements and migration stories. Up until the 1940s, the focus on outdoor education in school settings was primarily recreational. Over time, no stand-alone curriculum for outdoor education existed, and its focus has shifted several times. Boyes (2000, 2012) argued that one of the educational shifts since the 1970s was that outdoor education, after being aligned with environmental education, became more instrumental. This shift of focus was due to an overall shift in the educational system to emphasise skills and values associated with employability, which coloured knowledge and learning with neoliberal ideologies, economic vocabulary and commodities within the free market (Boyes, 2012).

In response to the economic and political pressure put on education in general, the term 'education outside the classroom' (EOTC) was adopted by the New Zealand Department of Education in 1980. EOTC was introduced as a cross-curricular approach which recognised outdoor learning experiences throughout the entire range of the school curriculum (Boyes, 2000). Lynch (2006) suggested that, despite the cross-curricular approach encouraged by EOTC, outdoor education was understood as the part of EOTC which engaged students in outdoor activities for the purpose of social and personal development. In 1992 New Zealand received its first outcomes-focused curriculum. However, it was not until 1999 that outdoor education gained an official place in the curriculum, becoming one of the seven key areas of learning in New Zealand's Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999, 2007). The national curriculum was revised in the early 2000s, and a new curriculum came out in 2007.

According to Zink and Boyes (2006), outdoor education, when placed within in the HPE curriculum, has developed into pursuit-based activities such as mountain biking, tramping and kayaking. Hill (2010) argued that, despite being a stand-alone subject in the form of a key learning area, the revised New Zealand curriculum did not provide a prescriptive curriculum or syllabus for outdoor education courses. In response to the lack of curriculum guidance, many schools were offering courses in outdoor education using unit standards developed by Skills Active. This government-funded industry training organisation develops and facilitates nationally recognised qualifications for the recreation, sport and fitness industries in New Zealand (Skills Active, 2015). These standards could be used and linked to the New Zealand curriculum, but they were primarily developed to meet the needs of the outdoor industry. While the outdoor standards developed by Skills Active gave outdoor education some validity and status, they also directed outdoor education towards assessment in a wide range of outdoor

pursuit skills. Hill (2010) also pointed out that, since these standards were written for the industry, they ‘lacked a holistic educational perspective and direct curriculum guidance’ (p. 31).

Boyes (2000, 2012) highlighted several studies which described how traditional Māori customs and practices have influenced New Zealand’s cultural beliefs concerning the land and cultural places. Māori myths and legends, such as the concept of *whenua* (land) and the oneness of people, land, sky and living things, have helped form the basis of current beliefs and value systems. In particular, Boyes (2012) identifies how the integration of Māori cultural traditions expresses itself in outdoor education, especially through strong links to land to promote *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship), ‘the mantle of responsibility to promote the care and protection of waters, coasts, flora and fauna, forests, mountains, the earth and the sky’ (p. 40). The various expressions of traditional Māori customs and practices in contemporary outdoor education show that the construction of outdoor education is dependent on its context: in this case, the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand (Cosgriff et al., 2012).

When Boyes (2012) drew on Bourdieu’s concept of field to explore the dominant fields that are (and have been) influential in determining legitimate forms of outdoor education practice in New Zealand, he located two forms of discourse: outdoor learning and outdoor adventure. Over the years, a tension has existed in relation to the impact of an environmental discourse which focuses on sustainability in outdoor education. This has resulted in a tense relationship between the discourses of outdoor adventure and outdoor learning (with environmental education). At present, adventure activities as a curriculum methodology has had a strong influence on how outdoor education is supposed to be taught in school: ‘The outdoor education-as-adventure discourse has been dominant in the UK and totally embraced in NZ’ (Boyes, 2012, p. 31).

Discourses are powerful, and certain forms of practice are more powerful than others (Edwards, 2008). How is it possible, then, to understand what conditions are at play to make particular practices within contemporary outdoor education in New Zealand seem rational, legitimate and normal at a given moment? To be able to uncover claims made about an object or a practice, Zink and Burrows (2006), Bowdridge and Blenkinsop (2011) and Zink (2013) encouraged researchers to use the work of Foucault to think differently in the struggle to understand the practice of outdoor education, with its messiness and complexities.

The aim of this study is therefore to explore and problematise the discursive effects of how teachers talk about outdoor education in New Zealand. Based on qualitative interviews with New Zealand outdoor education teachers, we intend to explore the following research questions:

- How is outdoor education being spoken of?
- What is put forward as normal or true learning objectives?
- What sort of learning objectives are being excluded and/or marginalised?
- How is it possible to understand the subjectivity created through this talk?

Research process

Sample and empirical collection

Eight outdoor education teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview methodology (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interviews were in-depth and face to face.

To find teachers willing to be interviewed, all the secondary schools in one South Island region were contacted by telephone. Seven men and one woman agreed to participate. The following is a brief description of the participants in the study:

- Christopher (male, age 36): physical education (PE) teacher at a co-educational school; more than 10 years' teaching experience in PE and outdoor education.
- Tom (male, age 54): PE teacher at a co-educational school; more than 20 years' teaching experience in PE and outdoor education.
- Sebastian (male, age 32): outdoor education teacher at an all-girls school; less than 10 years of experience teaching outdoor education.
- Stewart (male, age 45): PE teacher at an all-boys school; more than 20 years of experience teaching PE and outdoor education.
- Brenda (female, age 56): PE teacher at an all-girls school; more than 20 years of experience teaching PE and outdoor education.
- Paul (male, age 33): PE teacher at a co-educational school; less than 10 years of experience teaching PE and outdoor education.
- Jim (male, age 42): PE teacher at a co-educational school; more than 10 years' teaching experience in PE and outdoor education.
- Oscar (male, age 52): outdoor education teacher at a co-educational school; more than 20 years' experience teaching outdoor education.

All of the interviews were conducted by one of the authors in New Zealand in November 2009. Each participant was guaranteed anonymity; therefore the names used are fictitious. To prepare for the interviews and to obtain a better understanding of the New Zealand context for outdoor education in secondary schools, the relevant national and local curriculum documents were studied. The participants were asked about what (and how) students should learn, the educational value of outdoor education and forms of examination and assessment. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. During the analysis, the recordings and transcriptions were used simultaneously to capture the emotions of the spoken word, from joy to resignation.

Analysis

In this study, we use a Foucault-inspired discourse analysis. The analysis is based on the outline suggested by Bolander and Fejes (2009) and is divided into four steps. Firstly, we look at how outdoor education is spoken of in the interviews. Secondly, we analyse what learning objectives in outdoor education are portrayed as normal or true. Thirdly, we analyse what sort of outdoor education learning objectives are being excluded. Finally, we look at what sort of subjectivity is being created through this talk. The purpose of a discourse analysis is not to reveal reality; it is therefore not our intention to capture the truth about outdoor education in New Zealand. Instead, through our analysis, we are concerned with the images of reality that our interviews produced.

The analysis of empirical material also focuses on the governing and discursive shaping of subjects within outdoor education. This is done by presenting and problematising the contemporary normative regulatory ideals that emerge through the participants' talk about their practices, attitudes and behaviours. As suggested by Bolander and Fejes (2009), we have tried to be reflexive in relation to the transcripts. We have asked ourselves questions such as 'What claims of truth does our research offer?'; 'What

categorisations, inclusions, or exclusions does our text construct'; and 'What relation do we have to the discourse we are analysing'? As researchers, we cannot put ourselves outside the discourses or the production of claims; we participate in the construction of the discourse we are trying to deconstruct.

Conducting interviews from an outsider's perspective

As authors, we have, to various extents, been involved with the collection and analysis of the empirical material that this article builds on. We have experience as PE teachers, outdoor educators, teacher educators and researchers at different schools and universities in Sweden. From our positions as researchers and teacher educators, asking teachers questions about their teaching practice might have exposed the participants to a symbolic violence—a limitation of their ability to express their thoughts. As suggested by Bourdieu et al. (1999), this symbolic violence is an effect of the social structure influencing the interview situation. However, the main impression from the interviews was acceptance; collegial trust was established between the interviewer and the participants. As Swedes interviewing teachers about outdoor education in New Zealand and analysing transcripts from those interviews, we risk not fully understanding or acknowledging local cultural meanings and values related to New Zealand's history, traditions and customs. However, the outsider's perspective offers the potential to distance ourselves from issues that, for a researcher from New Zealand, might be taken for granted (Bridges, 2001). When analysing the interviews, we have tried to be vigilant regarding how our backgrounds and experiences as Swedish outdoor educators and researchers may have influenced our understandings and interpretations of the results found in this inquiry.

The talk about outdoor education

The first part of the analysis is guided by the question of how outdoor education is spoken of in the interviews. It is possible to recognise and relate the participants' talk about the development of outdoor education in New Zealand to discourses in literature (Boyes, 2000, 2012; Cosgriff, 2008; Cosgriff et al., 2012; Zink & Boyes, 2006). One participant, Christopher, describes outdoor education in the following way:

Gradually over time, it [outdoor education] has moved and shifted as things do, and it also used to be very connected with environmental education. Probably in the 1980s at some stage and certainly through the 90 s, outdoor education became more strongly aligned with PE [Health and Physical Education], and in the process a gap developed between environment education and outdoor education. So what I mean by that is that when it [outdoor education] became more aligned with PE, it became more skill-focused; it became more outdoor pursuits, and so outdoor education was defined by going rock climbing, going kayaking, going tramping, going mountain biking, doing these pursuit-type activities.

Christopher relates back to when outdoor education became embedded in HPE and the influence this had on the character of the knowledge being sought. Even though environmental education has a long history in outdoor education, the focus on adventure activities and outdoor pursuits became both stated and dominant when placed within HPE, and 'a gap developed', as Christopher chooses to describe it (Boyes, 2012; Lynch, 2006). In relation to the placement of outdoor education within HPE, Christopher also mentions that skills and pursuit-type activities came to define outdoor education.

Several of the teachers' ways of speaking about outdoor education centred on pursuit-based activities and adventure. They describe a variety of activities, such as camping, tramping, rock climbing, kayaking and mountain biking. An underlying theme emerging is the individual focus on the acquisition of skills and techniques for these activities. This contemporary normative-regulatory ideal, which embraces an activity-based approach to outdoor education, seems to be self-evident and taken for granted, but some of the participants still question it. Paul relates this activity-based way of thinking to a teaching and learning style that mainly supports assessment, with little or no relation to a student-centred approach:

The way we do things is very much activity-based. The way we have the unit now is all kind of autocratic teacher-led as opposed to student-centred. And I would certainly say that there are things that we only do for the assessment. It's not because it is something that I think is important, but more that it is a box that needs to be ticked.

Another example of an activity-based approach to teaching outdoor education is expressed by Tom:

Different activities have different qualifications. For some of the pursuits we do, we take in instructors. Skills Active offers and owns some assessment and unit standards in New Zealand across a whole wide range of things and one of them is outdoor recreation. So what we can offer our kids depends on what sort of skills we can present in our staff.

Mentioned by several teachers, Skills Active has set some frames for what should be learnt and assessed as part of outdoor education for HPE in New Zealand. Skills Active appears to be used as a complement to the ordinary curriculum, especially regarding the choice of content and assessment. Findings from the interviews also indicate that professional instructors seem to be more often engaged in school programmes when the school has a practice that draws from the discourse of adventure. For instance, Brenda states:

For the junior classes it is more camp-based with rope courses and a lot of trust activities. We go up to this really cool gorge where they have some adventure-based activities, a bit of abseiling and traversing and navigation. For years 11 and 12, rock climbing is a major assessment, and in year 13, we go white-water kayaking for a week. We use assessors and instructors from outside the school for this.

The implications of using hired outside instructors on the power-knowledge relation between the teacher and student, and on the values and beliefs that form the basis for assessment, are of interest when trying to understand what Foucault called disciplinary practices, which are practices that legitimise even problematic discourses (Gruenewald, 2004).

One of the participants, Stewart, points out what he feels outdoor education is all about by saying: 'Everything in outdoor education is about challenge and risk.' Through the interviews with Tom, Brenda and Stewart, concepts like adventure, challenge, trust, risk and safety are frequently mentioned in relation to outdoor education in their school setting. This notion of outdoor education was also mentioned by Andkjær (2012), who suggested that adventure, challenge and risk are closely linked to the philosophical underpinnings of outdoor education in New Zealand.

In relation to adventure and learning, emphasised by Boyes (2012) as the two major discourses in New Zealand outdoor education, some different themes appear in the teachers' talk about outdoor education. The participants discuss environmental education, sustainability, place, risk and safety, pursuit-type activities, skills and assessments—some more than others. One of the participants, Christopher, says the following regarding the philosophical underpinnings of his way of teaching outdoor education:

My philosophy is underpinned by concepts of sustainability, which is around helping students to develop relations with people and communities and good relationships with place and understanding and connecting to place. In Aotearoa New Zealand, we use terms like *kaitiakitanga*, which is a Māori term for guardianship of the land, and *manaakitanga*, which is the care for other people's needs. So those terms I guess underpin my philosophy.

Working in relation to each other, sometimes intertwined and sometimes separately, the expressions of these themes can be understood as subdiscourses in relation to the major discourses of adventure and learning. Some of the subdiscourses, such as risk and safety, pursuit-based activities, skill and assessments, seem to dominate the teachers' talk. Contemporary practices of outdoor education relate to the reproduction of what Zink and Burrows (2006) call 'success through danger' (p. 41). At the same time, other types of knowledge and values are being excluded, leading to what Foucault (1980) called subjugated or neglected knowledge, as an effect of the disciplinary power of the dominant educational discourse.

Normal or true learning objectives

The second part of the analysis is guided by the question 'What is portrayed as normal or true learning objectives, and what sort of learning objectives are being excluded and/or marginalised?' One of the participants, Sebastian, understands that outdoor education lacks a stand-alone curriculum and that the prevailing standards have been linked to the Skills Active programme; this worries him, as the learning objectives may be narrowed down to hard technical skills:

In New Zealand, if you go to science, there is a stand-alone curriculum; in PE and English, the same. There is none of that for outdoor education. We are just making it up. And a lot that we are making it up with is Skills Active, and a lot of that is hard, complacent learning. If you are not careful, it is going to be the case where everyone is lining up in front of you and demonstrating what they have learned and I think that is a plastic and artificial way of assessing people.

The consequences of outdoor education being imbedded within HPE, rather than being a subject in its own right, with its own curriculum, worry Sebastian, especially regarding the object of learning and how it will be assessed.

Several teachers express the educational value of working with outdoor education as a medium for studying practically any subject area in the curriculum. Their way of speaking draws on the idea that outdoor education stimulates learning and knowledge acquisition on different levels (e.g. personal, social and intellectual). Words such as 'learning', 'medium', 'cross-curricular', 'place', 'environment' and 'sustainability' are often mentioned in the interviews. These teachers identify personal, social and environmental benefits as key features and primary learning outcomes. Christopher shares some of his

educational beliefs when saying 'I firmly believe that if we are not educating for a sustainable future, then I think we are wasting our time.'

Another highlighted outcome is teaching students to become guardians of the outdoors. Oscar's immediate answer to questions about his approach to teaching outdoor education is: 'just don't use traditional teaching'. Instead, he tries to find ways to teach students how to gain and earn respect, not for the instructor but for the place and the natural world. Oscar points to aspects of power relations:

So, methods ... just don't use traditional teaching! Because that is based on power, on one person being more powerful than the student and based on the power of position. Whereas my power relationship is based on the power of respect, and that's different, you got to earn that from the kids. The new methods I am looking at are the rites of passage that indigenous people preach. In some way coming along that way to becoming a guardian of the outdoors, putting some sort of formalised indigenous process into that.

In this excerpt, Oscar uses a socially critical perspective to talk about power relations (Zink & Burrows, 2006). Social critique can be seen as a subdiscourse of learning. Interestingly, however, when teachers are asked about methods for teaching in the subdiscourse of social critique, their answers appear to lack clarity as to the definition of traditional teaching. In the interviews, examples of practices that can be understood as intertwined combinations of discourses may also be identified. One of the participants, Tom, describes the content his school focuses on:

Along those pursuit skills, there is always a bit of environmental flavour: camping appropriately, leaving the environment as you found it, and looking at the impact on that.

Environmental education can be seen as a subdiscourse of learning. Obviously, teachers' thoughts about contemporary practices and learning objectives are influenced by different discourses, which generate a field of tension and struggle. Walkerdine (2005) emphasised the possibility of different subjectivities and said that some groups, more easily than others, resist or embody dominating discourses. How is it then possible to understand the subjectivity created from the teachers' talk about outdoor education and their teaching practices?

Subjectivity created

From the way in which the participants speak about their own teaching practice, several different discourses emerge that, in turn, relate to the constitution of a contemporary normative-regulatory ideal and the tensions in the teachers' excerpts. Current practices—in other words, the subdiscourses of adventure (risk and safety, skill, assessment and pursuit-based activities)—are described as problematic in several aspects. One aspect relates to what Foucault (1977) called the histories of the present. This is how people come to believe that their present actions and beliefs are rational and legitimate. Christopher, Sebastian and Paul describe how outdoor education has come to be more closely linked to what Kirk (2010) describes as sport techniques. This affects how culture, power and language construct and reinforce the dominant educational system, what that system demands of the individual and how it positions the self (Gruenewald, 2004).

Certain forms of skill are accepted as natural and legitimate. The teachers' way of identifying with the discourses mentioned serves to legitimise and retain the dominating practices in outdoor education rather than challenge them. The teachers reflect upon and

question the skill-focused (and artificial), decontextualised way of assessing the students, which Paul calls 'a box that needs to be ticked'. According to the participants, the standards developed by Skills Active seem to contribute to the maintenance of the dominating adventure discourse. Another factor that contributes to this development in outdoor education is the placement of outdoor education within the HPE curriculum and the accompanying lack of a stand-alone curriculum. The discursive space for other ways of speaking of outdoor education in HPE seems to be limited by the dominant power within the prevailing disciplinary discourse.

Gruenewald (2004) reminds us how particular disciplinary practices are rooted in assumptions and in the language and metaphors of industrial culture and consciousness. Hence, cultural practices are perpetuated, and they stem from 'root-metaphors' encoded in the thought or language of a cultural group (Gruenewald, 2004, p. 86). The stress on adventure, risk and trust emphasises the sorts of focus that have taken on a dominant position in outdoor education in current educational settings. However, these values and metaphors can be linked to neoliberal forces in society, which are built on economic growth and competition but which do not pay attention to environmental aspects or socio-cultural differences (Boyes, 2012). While educational or philosophical ideas underpin the strong belief that challenging outdoor activities provide arenas for personal, social and educational development, this raises questions about how the field is constituted and what powers are operating. A Foucauldian way of reasoning would be that the subdiscourses associated with adventure produce and reproduce disciplinary practices of a subjectively centred individualism. These root metaphors of adventure circulate and are embedded in the thoughts and actions which sustain the discourses. As individuals, we participate in the maintenance and (re)production of relationships which affect the power and technology of the self and the subjectivities that this process may offer. In a Foucauldian sense, selves are constructs, and the terms subjects and subjectivities are used to denote different ways in which human beings are formed through power-knowledge relations and how they come to understand themselves. In this regard, relations of power both produce pleasures, displeasures and knowledge and repress other possibilities (Macdonald, Hunter, Carlson, & Penney, 2002; Zink & Burrows, 2006). The fashioning of the self may teach students how to grow from challenging experiences and foster a feeling of mastery in them. However, as Zink and Burrows (2006) highlighted, these experiences and feelings are not experienced by each subject in the same way.

Discussion

The focus of this article is to explore and problematise outdoor education and teaching practice as described by a group of secondary school teachers. Furthermore, the article discusses the discursive effects of such ways of speaking. The analysis focuses on what can be said, how it is said and which power relationships, subjects and subjectivities this speech makes available. The analysis presents different ways of speaking about outdoor education. We are aware that outdoor education is often considered a male and socially stratified domain (Humberstone, 2000; Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001; Odden, 2008). The fact that seven of eight participants in this study are male may mean that the discourses displayed are constructed primarily through a male perspective. A dominating discourse of adventure is suggested from the analysis of how outdoor education is spoken of in the interviews. Our findings propose that subdiscourses of pursuit-based activities, risk and safety, and skill-based assessment have developed as discursive effects from

having outdoor education imbedded within the HPE curriculum, in combination with a lack of direct curriculum guidance for outdoor education as a stand-alone subject.

Based on the questions about normal and true learning objectives and the learning objectives which are being excluded and/or marginalised, a discourse of learning emerges which is related to subdiscourses of environmental education and social critique. Our interpretation is that the subdiscourses related to learning have been strengthened as a result of a critique, both by teachers and researchers, against the adventure-related discourses' domination. It is important to emphasise here that while discourses and subdiscourses can operate separately, they can also be intertwined. With that said, we believe that environmental learning can occur within adventure activities and that these activities can and do occur within environmental education (and *vice versa*). Different ways of speaking contain different claims and different understandings of the curriculum. However, what can be said is influenced by the contemporary normative ideals which are regulating the practice and, in turn, affecting the teachers' educational philosophies. As claimed by Zink and Burrows (2006), 'power produces what is known as outdoor education' (p. 43). What can outdoor education become if it is not governed by a hegemonic adventure discourse?

In response to Boyes (2012), our findings suggest that discourses other than the outdoor-education-as-adventure discourse and the outdoor-education-as-learning discourse exist in New Zealand and that these discourses cannot always be clustered together (as has often been the case); instead, they must sometimes be dealt with separately. As mentioned in some of the interviews, discourses about adventure, learning and environmental education co-exist. They all, to some extent, describe learning in the form of the skills and techniques required for outdoor pursuit-based activities, and they all encompass learning in a wider context. Within the discourse of adventure, especially when associated with the subdiscourse of skill, one could argue that the role available for the teacher is the more traditional role of an instructor. Beames and Brown (2014) argued that outsourcing and the use of specialists 'may allay the concerns of teachers about their ability and competence to deliver appropriate outdoor learning experiences' (p. 128). Similar to Boyes (2012), Humberstone and Stan (2012) called attention to how neoliberal ideologies have contributed to a shift away from student-centred learning and towards production and outcomes in informal educational experiences.

Conducting research in a New Zealand context as outsiders (i.e. not New Zealanders) has both limitations and benefits. Undertaking a discourse analysis is a complex and messy endeavour, and there is always the risk of normalising and essentialising past or present discourses. The limitations are based on not fully understanding the context of outdoor education in New Zealand and how that context has been constructed through historical and cultural processes over time. The benefits relate to our ability to distance ourselves from what might be self-evident for an insider (and which therefore might not be acknowledged). Being outsiders may have facilitated a more questioning critical dialogue than if we had shared the same influences of culture and practice (Bridges, 2001).

Conclusion

Our main conclusions from this study are that several discourses co-exist in the way the participants talk about their practice. However, subdiscourses—in the form of pursuit-based activities with a focus on skill, risk and safety, and assessment—suggest that a dominating adventure discourse exists. Tensions between the different discourses can be found in the participants' talk. Power relationships within a discourse define which

knowledge may be accepted. The adventure discourse is underpinned by values and beliefs associated with the outdoor recreation industry. These recreational underpinnings create a tension when implemented in an educational setting or in the school curriculum.

This study pays attention to outdoor education as it is constructed through social practices which are evident in the way it is thought and talked about. Outdoor education in New Zealand has taken on different shapes and forms, and it has moved in and out of place over time. On the one hand, it has taken the form of a discursive practice which draws from a decontextualised way of learning outdoor activities, where place becomes irrelevant (or not important as an object of learning in itself). On the other, it takes the form of a practice that draws from pedagogy which is responsive to the outdoors in terms of particular places and their local conditions and cultural traditions and which is rich in local meaning and significance (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Resistance to the dominating discourses of preferred competence, or the acknowledgement of learning in the adventure discourse, can be traced in the interviews, particularly for individual teachers striving to use and teach outdoor education in alternative ways. The participants mention examples such as bringing in environmental aspects and a more place-responsive pedagogy. However, the dominant contemporary ideals seem to regulate learning to focus more on the how (performance) and less on the what (competence). In line with authors such as Brookes (2003), Stewart (2004) and Wattchow and Brown (2011), we encourage researchers and practitioners to take a more place-responsive approach, which may open up other possibilities for teaching and learning in outdoor education. Less focus on individual performance may lead to other subject positions being made available to both teachers and students.

In this study, intersectional aspects such as social background, gender, class and ethnicity have not been in focus. How these aspects influence hegemonic and/or marginalised discourses would be of interest for future research. Bowdrige and Blenkinsop (2011) pointed to the need to challenge hierarchical and oppressive power relations: 'outdoor and experiential educators should understand how negative relations of power operate so that they may avoid unwittingly incorporating them into their practices and programmes' (p. 149).

Foucault alerted us that it is not enough just to uncover assumptions and how power operates; the constitution of the discourse as a disciplinary practice has to be challenged, and 'new politics of truth' need to be established (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Irwin, Straker, and Hill (2012) argued for the value of changing how we think about and perform outdoor education, and they suggest a call for change—a new vision for the 21st century that recognises 'a shift towards more sustainable and place-sensitive approaches' (p. 187). How the 'new politics of truth' will develop in outdoor education practice in New Zealand remains an open question. According to this study of how teachers talk, there is a growing potential for change in outdoor education in New Zealand's secondary schools.

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