

**USING INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY AND PHILOSOPHY TO ENRICH OUTDOOR
EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

By

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Abstract

What purpose does outdoor education (OE) serve? What are the overall objectives of outdoor education programs, and are these objectives helping students connect with the environment around them? These are fundamental questions that need to be raised in order to provide outdoor education opportunities that are meaningful and enjoyable, and that encourage environmental sustainability among students.

Currently, in Ontario, there is no official Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum document for OE. In order for schools to offer OE, they must draw expectations from the physical education curriculum at the desired grade level. Thus, since there is no specific OE curriculum, students may not be receiving the teachings of OE such as being made aware of and learning how to appreciate the local environment, which may in turn prevent understandings of environmental sustainability. This thesis uses policy analysis to examine two curriculum documents that address the following research questions:

1. Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?
2. Does the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,” include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?

Furthermore, this thesis references two Ontario policy documents that provide additional information about incorporating environmental sustainability throughout the curriculum: *Acting*

Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario

Schools (2009) and *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007).

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Introduction

What purpose does outdoor education (OE) serve? What do educators wish for students to take away after having an outdoor educational experience? What are the overall objectives of outdoor education programs, and are these objectives helping students connect with the environment around them? These are fundamental questions that need to be raised in order to provide outdoor education opportunities that are meaningful, enjoyable, and encourage environmental stewardship among students.

As a high school teacher, these questions have made their way into my thoughts over the years. I have taught outdoor education, physical education, geography, and Native studies and have noticed similarities as well as differences between these four subjects. OE often involves adventure activities and physical challenges, thereby mirroring physical education in format and delivery. What I have noticed is that nature becomes a “backdrop” for activities that could just as easily be done in a gym. Thus, in a physical education course, students may not be receiving the teachings of OE such as being made aware of and learning how to appreciate the local environment, which may in turn prevent understandings of environmental sustainability.

Currently, in Ontario, there is no official Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum document for OE. In order for schools to offer OE, they must draw expectations from the physical education curriculum at the desired grade level. Teachers create a description of the outdoor activities and incorporate this into a course syllabus. In essence, OE courses are actually physical education courses with an outdoor twist or theme.

All of my teaching experience has taken place in First Nations communities, where I have learned about various First Nations’ ontologies that place a priority on human-land relationships and environmental sustainability. For this reason, I became interested in exploring

how integrating Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy into OE programs may help students to connect to their natural surroundings, which may in turn promote environmentally sustainable behaviours.

In this research, I explore the existence and integration of Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy into outdoor education (OE) programs in Ontario Secondary curricula as a way of connecting students to their natural environment and promoting environmentally sustainable behaviours. Policy documents regarding OE will be analyzed to determine if objectives encourage students to learn about environmental sustainability. Furthermore, Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy will be explored as a possible informing agent for OE curriculum with regards to its ability to include environmental sustainability objectives.

My view is that it is important for students to be connected to their natural surroundings because feeling emotionally connected to the environment may encourage students to become environmentally sustainable citizens. The need for education to focus on environmental sustainability is of paramount importance as the world is undergoing many environmental challenges and crises, such as loss of biodiversity, extinction of species, increasing levels of pollutants, and unsustainable use of natural resources. These environmental issues will be of paramount concern for future generations. Students will need to develop the skills to solve problems regarding the environment if balance is to be restored between humans and the environment. Furthermore, students will also need to understand government policy and be able to voice opinions about policy that does not support balance between humans and the environment. These policy analysis skills will be important and could possibly prevent problems from occurring in the first place. Hence, it is crucial that education makes students aware of

environmental challenges and that it encourages them to develop skills to deal with these challenges in a way that personally connects them to their natural surroundings.

Thus, OE may serve as an excellent vehicle for teaching students about environmentally sustainable views and behaviours. Barret (2006) believes the salvation of our planet lies in the education of our young people (p. 5). Likewise, Cosgriff (2011) argues that based on current environmental issues, sustainability should be a focus of OE (p. 51). The importance of OE for connecting students to the land and encouraging environmental sustainability cannot be underestimated.

Research Problematic

The research problematic is to uncover the gaps in current outdoor education curriculum with regard to the encouragement of students to foster environmentally sustainable behaviours. There are many OE secondary programs in Ontario that aim to provide outdoor opportunities for students. However, there are limited curriculum mandates within the field of OE that encourage students to connect with their local environment. This absence may hinder students from adopting environmentally sustainable views and behaviours.

While offering outdoor education opportunities is vital for understanding the environment, I posit that program planning and delivery needs to incorporate a vision that prioritizes human–land relations. Simply offering time to be in nature without a guiding philosophy and pedagogy does not necessarily mean students will inherently develop a connection to their natural surroundings. However, it is important to note that it is possible to over-structure teachings in the outdoors where educators do not allow for any time for students to simply “be present” in their surroundings. One example of over-structuring outdoor experiences is having students go on a hike where the objective is to get to the destination as

quick as possible, set up camp, and cook a meal without providing time during those activities for observation and reflection in the natural surroundings. Conversely, those same activities would be received very differently by students if there was time allotted for observing animal tracks, edible plants, sit specific art, solos, games, storytelling, and journaling as it would allow students the time and opportunity to connect with the environment around them. Offering time in nature can be extremely rewarding for students, if teachers provide the time, context, and a philosophy that encourages students to explore and acknowledge their local environment. In this sense, outdoor educators need to assume responsibility for the role of guiding or leading outdoor experiences that encourage students to connect with the environment around them in meaningful ways, where nature becomes the true teacher. Considering that outdoor educators draws on Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum for its programing, it is therefore relevant to explore the curriculum used by OE regarding its ability to encourage students to connect with the world around them.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to highlight the necessity of including environmental sustainability objectives in current Ontario OE curriculum as a means of encouraging youth to develop environmentally sustainable views and behaviours. Furthermore, as each province has its own autonomy over the education curriculum, priorities may vary depending on provincial concerns. For this reason, I will examine only curriculum in Ontario.

This research aims to explore the possible limitations in OE curriculum in Ontario with regard to its inclusion of overall expectations that encourage students to learn about and practise environmental sustainability. Furthermore, localized Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy will be explored as a vehicle that could better inform the OE curriculum.

In education, written curricular documents are intended to guide teachers in their planning of courses by outlining objectives and expectations that need to be covered. While the curriculum does not make mention of specific pedagogies that teachers could use in their teaching, this does not mean that teachers should not consider using pedagogy when teaching OE materials. The process in which content is taught is a fundamental part of the learning. Eisner (2002) also identifies the presence of the “hidden curriculum” by discussing the consequential negative impact on student initiative. He believes that it is important for students to develop initiative as they progress through their education. Initiative could be acquired through allowing students to assume responsibility for their own education. This could be done by encouraging students to identify their own goals and develop strategies needed to reach these goals. In Eisner’s (2002) words, “Students become the mappers of their educational journey, so that when they leave school they are in a position to pursue goals and interests that are important to them” (p. 89). Eisner’s point illustrates the importance of having learning opportunities where students are able to make decisions and solve problems. These skills may prove useful with regard to environmental protection efforts in the future.

Rationale

The rationale for this research is to teach environmental sustainability by incorporating local Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy into outdoor education. Herein lies the potential “gap” of OE: the curriculum offers objectives regarding physical and cognitive activities but may lack the emotional activities that play a crucial role in connecting students to the natural environment. Consequently, emotional activities may play an important role in encouraging students to connect to their natural surroundings that help encourage environmentally sustainable

behaviours. Tilbury (1995) believes that in order to feel responsible for the earth we must first feel emotionally connected to it. This sentiment is expressed in the following quote:

Environmental Education for Sustainability (EEFS) recognizes that the decision to participate in environmental improvement is not stimulated by the cognitive realm, but is dependent on personal motivation and a sense of responsibilities which results from the development of a personal environmental ethic. (p. 201).

The health of the environment is being threatened and youth will play a key role in addressing and handling many of the challenges regarding the sustainability of our planet. Thus, becoming an environmentally sustainable citizen is a worthwhile direction for youth. Henley (1989) has quoted Suzuki, the well-known geneticist, television host, and parent, regarding the environmental state of our world:

Essentially, nature has become alien, an enemy, and we live with a terrible delusion that somehow we are different, no longer subject to the same rules that govern all other life forms. We have lost all sense of belonging in nature and have become intoxicated with the short-term benefits of science and technology that have bludgeoned nature into apparent submission. (p. 13)

Suzuki believes that humans need to reconnect with the environment and that instilling this importance in youth is a good place to start. At the beginning of this chapter the question was posed, “What purpose does OE serve?” This question is best answered by Robinson (1988), who states: “The general goal for education may be summed up with one phrase: creation of a good citizen” (p. 117). He continues, “A good citizen is not passive; rather, she or he asks questions and seeks better solutions. Ironically, as a result, such citizens seek to change the very institution with which they are involved, and run into the intransigence of the institution as they

do so” (p. 118). With regards to OE, these qualities may be helpful in assisting students’ to connect with their local environment and, thus, may shape their actions regarding care for the environment. One of the many possible purposes of OE will be to develop citizens who care for the environment and who will act as stewards in order to ensure its sustainability.

Defining Key Terms

It is important to define OE in terms of its philosophy and practice. Ford (1983) defined OE as “in, for and about the outdoors” (p. 12). While this definition was one of the first to be commonly accepted, it was quite vague and remains questionable what *in*, *for* and *about* refer to. Numerous scholars have suggested definitions for OE; some focusing on physical adventure and self-serving benefits of the outdoors, others have prioritized interactions and awareness of the environment. Priest (1986) provides the following definition: “In outdoor education the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on RELATIONSHIPS, relationships concerning people and natural resources” (p.13). Furthermore, Tilbury (1995) defines OE as involving a concern with developing awareness, knowledge, and understanding about human–environment interactions. For the purpose of this research, the OE definitions that foster human–land interactions and relationships will be referenced.

While this research examines OE, it also includes reference to other curricula that include learning outdoors, such as outdoor experiential education, outdoor environmental education, and environmental education. Thus, the distinction will be made among these terms to provide clarity of the terminology. While these three terms are often used interchangeably, they do differ in their scope, delivery, and objectives. Outdoor experiential education most often refers to “learning by doing.” Itin (1999) references the Association of Experiential Education with the following definition: “Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge,

skill, and value from direct experiences” (p. 91). Thus, this term can be interpreted as more of a “process” that can be used in teaching practices. While experiential education could take place in any location, the “outdoor” aspect of experiential education indicates that the experiences are predominantly outside. Conversely, the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (2009) document titled *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (2009) provides the following definition of environmental education:

Environmental education is education about the environment, for the environment, and in the environment that promotes an understanding of, rich and active experience in, and an appreciation for the dynamic interactions of: the Earth’s physical and biological systems, the dependency of our social and economic systems on these natural systems; the scientific and human dimensions of environmental issues; and the positive and negative consequences, both intended and unintended, of the interactions between human-created and natural systems. (p. 6)

Thus, while the focus of environmental education is to increase people’s knowledge about the environment, students do not necessarily need to be outside to meet this focus. Environmental education can be delivered in the classroom using textbooks and lectures. Lastly, outdoor environmental education is an antecedent of environmental education but focuses on being immersed in the outdoors and on learning through experiences in the outdoors to learn about the environment. Hence, while there is a common focus of all these types of education with respect to emphasis on environmental awareness, there are differences between the delivery, process, and specific objectives.

In this research, the focus will be on OE. However, I may draw on examples and references from the aforementioned outdoor curricula. All of the curricula that involve learning outdoors have similarities and differences amongst them; however, they all focus on the benefits of learning outdoors that need to be included when exploring this research topic.

Personal Interest in Research

I am interested in this research topic because I have taught OE using the Physical Education curriculum and have first-hand experience with the challenges of planning and delivering a course that fosters environmental sustainability. I am a qualified Junior-Intermediate teacher with Native Studies, Geography, and Outdoor Education as my teachable subjects. I am interested in providing students with outdoor learning experiences that connect them to the land around them and I view the curriculum as a starting point to accomplish this goal.

As a non-Indigenous person, I have lived and taught in Indigenous communities across Canada for a number of years and have learned a great deal about environmentally sustainable practices from these experiences. I have lived and worked with people from the Arctic, BC Coast, Northwestern Ontario, and Yukon and have learned that while these cultures differ greatly, there is a common practice of respect for the land that permeates across these Indigenous communities in Canada. I believe that including this knowledge in the OE curriculum could greatly benefit all students with regards to fostering environmentally sustainable behaviours.

Components of the Research

In this thesis, I discuss the possibility of utilizing Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy as an informing agent for the field of OE and as a means of teaching about environmental sustainability. I use a methodology of qualitative, discursive research to examine a number of curriculum and policy documents to determine whether environmental sustainability is

encouraged. In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review that explores the current literature on OE programs with respect to inclusion or exclusion of environmental sustainability objectives. Chapter 3 outlines a description of the methods employed in this research, which involve a critical policy analysis of OE curriculum. In chapters 4 and 5, I write about the substantive analysis of the curriculum document that I undertook by examining three specific themes. In Chapter 6, I offer conclusions by discussing the contribution of my work to the field of OE, as well as limitations and possible recommendations to the curriculum document.

Literature Review

The primary focus of this literature review is to examine the current notions of OE. The second focus is to examine OE curricular documents to see if there are principles of environmental sustainability in the documents. The third focus is to examine Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy and to reflect on how they relate to sustainability in OE.

Before examining the current notions of OE, it is important to further examine the various terms that pertain to education about the outdoors. While definitions of various terms were provided in Chapter 1, here, the purpose of the discussion is to provide more background about education that focuses on learning outdoors. This practice formally began in schools in the 1960s, and since then, there has been much discussion about appropriate terminology regarding various studies in and about the outdoors, such as environmental education and outdoor education (Brookes, 1993; Ford, 1981; Gough, 1990; Kearney, 1996; McRae, 1990; Martin, 1998; Nettleton, 1993; Priest & Gass, 1997; Tilbury, 1995).

One of the first and most commonly used definitions of OE was Ford's (1980), which describes OE as "in, for and about the outdoors" (p. 12). However, this definition is quite vague as it remains questionable what *in*, *for* and *about* refer to. Tilbury (1995) further explains the distinctions between education *about* and *in* the environment, whereby she defines education *about* the environment as being concerned with developing awareness, knowledge, and understanding about human–environment interactions. Therefore, Tilbury (1995) connects education *about* the environment to environmental science or studies. Conversely, she defines education *in* the environment as favouring pupil-centred and activity-based learning, and this approach usually takes the form of OE. Hence, Tilbury (1995) believes that while education *about* the environment (environmental education) involves the "head," education *in* the

environment (OE) involves the “heart”. Furthermore, she views education *for* the environment as prioritizing environmental improvement through sustainability, which involves both heart and head.

While Tilbury (1995) provides a substantial overview of the different orientations that exist between outdoor and environmental education, it is evident that there is still much overlap and vagueness between these two definitions, which numerous scholars have acknowledged. For example, McRae (1990) identifies three broad forms of OE: outdoor teaching and learning, outdoor environmental education, and outdoor leisure education. Priest and Gass (1997) identify two “branches” of OE: adventure education and environmental education. Kearney (1996) adopts the view of OE as adventure education, describing it as “a good way to help the learner understand themselves and their relationship with others. It is an avenue for seeking physical adventure, challenging attitudes, offering alternative views and developing a sense of community through direct experience in natural environments” (p. 96). Likewise, Brookes (1993) and Martin (1998) both state that the purpose of outdoor education lies in its potential to facilitate a socially critical view of the world. They both believe that a socially critical view allows students to understand social values that influence environmentally destructive behaviour. They see the potential of experience in natural settings for developing a more critical understanding of the world than is perhaps possible in urban contexts.

As noted in the discussion above, there is quite a lot of overlap even within the different distinctions of education regarding the outdoors. For example, within the field of OE, there exist many different understandings and directions that incorporate elements of environmental education and experiential education. It is not my intention to examine all understandings of outdoor and environmental education, but rather provide a brief overview of some of the existing

concepts in order to offer a context for discussion of outdoor and environmental education in terms of its connection to environmentally sustainable behaviours. Thus, for the purpose of this literature review, I examine literature from the OE and environmental education fields as I am primarily interested in education that takes place outdoors (OE) and that incorporates teachings of environmental sustainability (environmental education).

Current Notions of Outdoor Education (OE)

It is important to explore OE as it is currently understood, practised, and taught because it is this understanding that will guide future OE practice. In addition, the purpose and outcomes of OE need further exploration. Lugg (1999) has identified many outdoor educators, such as Brookes (1993), Cooper (1994), Higgins (1996), and Martin (1992), who see outdoor education as a powerful medium for transformative education. They adopt a view that sees the primary purpose of OE as educating for an environmentally sustainable future (Lugg, 1999). While many scholars may identify the primary purpose of OE as educating for environmental sustainability, little literature exists regarding methods and avenues that achieve this desired goal (Ballantyne & Packer, 2006; Neill, 1997). For example, Neill (1997) believes that while many outdoor programs make claims regarding the benefits to their students, little research has tracked the actual positive outcomes of these OE programs. He reiterates this trend in the following excerpt:

There is no shortage of literature that makes substantial claims for the educational achievements of experiential outdoor programs in schools. These claims range from the global and comprehensive, to extensive lists of specific physical, social, intellectual, and psychological outcomes. For some people, the value of outdoor education programs is self-evident and they require no further justification or proof. However, it remains

unclear what specific outcomes outdoor education programs have achieved. (Neill, 1997, p. 1)

Furthermore, this excerpt makes no mention of environmental sustainability benefits or student responsibility with taking care of the environment as measurements of program success. The omission of mentioning the importance of environmental sustainability with respect to OE outcomes is problematic as it highlights the deficiencies associated with current notions of OE. The literature indicates that the focus by which conventional OE programs operate may not be successful with achieving program outcomes that support the fostering of environmentally sustainability among students (Neill, 1997; Curthoys et al., 2005).

In addition to the above, three current notions of OE stand out in the literature. First, conventional OE programs operate in culturally homogenous groups. They are primarily Caucasian, middle-class people residing in urban areas (Curthoys, Cuthbertson, Dymont, O'Connell, & Potter, 2005; Brookes, 2002; Banks, 1994). Second, OE programs focus on physical activities to the exclusion of emotional activities that may provide opportunities for human–nature relationships (Higgins, 1996; Thomas, 2005; Lugg, 1999). Lastly, OE programs operate from anthropocentric perspectives that situate humans as more important or dominant when juxtaposed with nature (Stewart, 2008; Jickling & Spork, 1998). Each is examined in more detail below.

Cultural homogeneity in OE.

Researchers have identified the cultural homogeneity represented in the field of OE (Curthoys et al., 2005). However, little attention has been given to this lack of cultural diversity with regard to the possible consequences on human land perceptions, interactions, and relationships.

Researchers have identified that the field of OE is composed of a homogenous group of educators and students (Banks, 1994; Brookes, 2002; Floyd, 1998; Curthoys et al., 2005; Holland, 1997). Curthoys et al. (2005) describe this homogeneity that exists in university outdoor recreation programs:

Yet, a new challenge emerges when diversity issues are addressed at post-secondary institutions where outdoor recreation professionals are trained. For example, the student population in our outdoor recreation program is composed almost of entirely of white, traditional university-aged, able-bodied, middle to upper-middle class individuals, with a large percentage whose primary residence is in urban centers; we would argue that these demographics are not atypical to the field at large. Thus, it appears that very little diversity exists with respect to age, class, ability, and race among the student population in outdoor recreation programs. (p. 89)

The presence of such homogenous representation in the field of OE may have negative consequences, the most notable being the exclusion of culturally diverse perspectives and world views towards the environment. Many researchers have identified the dangers that exist from having a homogenous group of teachers and students regarding increased social control of course material, philosophy, and direction of education programs (Floyd, 1998; Holland, 1997). Hence, there may be less diversity in class discussions and therefore less questioning of opinions and viewpoints regarding human–land connections. Brookes (2002) also discusses the dangers of OE from a homogenous perspective with regards to the misuse of influential power:

The development of universalist outdoor education can be read as the continuance of a colonizing mind-set, operating not through obvious physical occupation but

through seepage into everyday assumptions in what Rouse (1987) has termed, following Foucault, the capillary effects of power. (p. 407)

Banks (1994) further acknowledges how a homogenous group limits the contributions that might have been made from a more diverse student population. In this sense, the depth and variety of discussion and perhaps learning opportunities may be more limited than if the group of students were more culturally diverse.

Perhaps the question could be raised: Are homogenous teaching practices from a Western perspective causing students to become separated from the land? Louv (2005) believes that the lack of connection between people and nature is causing what he refers to as a “nature deficit disorder” (p. 10). Young people’s disconnect from their local surroundings not only reduces the richness of human experience but also manifests higher amounts of stress and misunderstandings about the world we live in. Louv (2005) states: “Reducing the deficit – healing the broken bond between our young and nature – is not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depends upon it” (p. 3). Furthermore, Louv (2005) posits that students’ connection to the world around them influences their ability to feel a sense of reciprocity with that land. Weston (2004) raises some interesting points about our current teaching practices, which aim to teach about the environment in ways and locales that are completely disconnected from the environment. The task of OE, as Weston (2004) believes, is to address our disconnection with the earth, reverse it, resituate us, and welcome us home. Is this task possible with the current homogenous approaches to OE?

The current notion of OE prioritizes physical activities.

The current notion of OE prioritizes physical activities (Higgins, 1996; Thomas, 2005; Lugg, 1999). However, the omission of emotional connections to the physical activities may

hinder students from connecting to their local environment. For example, Kearney (1996) describes his view of outdoor education in the following excerpt: “Outdoor Education is a good way to help the learner understand themselves and their relationships with others. It is an avenue for seeking physical adventure” (p. 96).

It is interesting to note the emphasis on physical activities and relationships with other people in Kearney’s quotation, yet there is no mention of relationships with the land through emotional activities. Likewise, Preston (2004) expresses concerns that adventure activities such as rock climbing and white-water paddling allow the environment to become the backdrop to the activity encouraging students to focus their attention on the activity and themselves rather than the place (p. 35). Thus, the literature points towards an emerging theme of OE focusing on physical activities that do not enable students to connect to the local environment in which the activities are taking place. Nicol (2002) further explains that the conventional form of outdoor education focuses on physical activities: “In the absence of stated philosophical underpinnings and empirical evidence, it is clear that outdoor education has developed, to some extent, as a series of practical activities” (p. 89).

Lugg (1999) connects the presence of physical activities in OE to the strong connection and influence of physical education. This connection is expressed in the following quote: “Politically, however, outdoor education has an historical association with physical education which tends to influence the way it is perceived and located in the curriculum” (Lugg, 1999, p. 4).

Scholars have noted the connection OE has to physical education (Lugg, 1999; Martin & McCullagh, 2011; Quay, 1995), which may explain why OE focuses on physical activities. Martin and McCullagh (2011) acknowledge that OE has its roots in physical education.

However, they explain the difference between OE and physical education in the following passage: “PE is focussed most on physical health and wellbeing through activity. OE is focussed most on human to nature relationships, often formed through recreation activity, and the benefits that can ensue for people and the environment” (p. 72). Similarly, Cosgriff (2011) believes that in OE programs there is an ongoing focus on self-esteem and character building that uses physical activities as a means of working on these skills. Cosgriff (2011) further states: “Skills-based, outdoor pursuits can thus become the taken-for-granted content of many outdoor education classes, and unintended pedagogical consequences may arise” (p. 53).

Thus, while OE usually consists of physical activities in the outdoors, these authors state that the physical activities alone do not form the basis for an OE program. The missing components may be the presence of emotional activities that highlight the local environment in which activities are taking place.

Furthermore, Lugg (1999) states: “The natural environment serves merely as an alternative setting for some activities which may facilitate particular outcomes but these outcomes could equally be achieved in the classroom or school environs” (p. 5). Wattchow and Brown (2011) state, “The geographic locations where programs run can all too easily come to be seen as clinical sites, obstacle courses, testing grounds, venues or curriculum resources” (p. 25). Thus, if the outdoors is merely a setting to do activities that could be done in a gymnasium, what is the need to be outside? The idea that the purpose of outdoor education as being a series of physical activities that are void of educational goals has also been expressed by numerous other scholars (Cosgriff, 2011; Lugg, 1999; Martin, 1992).

One of the reasons for omitting emotional activities is that the current purpose of OE programs is to complement the mainstream curriculum, and because mainstream curriculum only

contains cognitive expectations with offering emotional learning opportunities. For example, Ford (1986) advocates, “Outdoor education is also referred to as a method or process for extending the curriculum, or a process involving direct learning experiences” (p. 3). Knapp (2001) reiterates this focus: “The main purpose of Outdoor Education is to provide meaningful contextual experiences in both natural and constructed environments that complement and expand classroom instruction” (p. 2). Hence, according to Ford (1986) and Knapp (2001), the guiding philosophy of OE emphasizes experience in natural environments but is still working within the mainstream Western educational framework to construct learning from the provincial curriculum. However, the Ontario provincial curriculum may not contain sufficient information regarding methods to incorporate land-based learning other than stating the physical activities that need to be covered. Higgins (1996) highlights the potential dangers of OE evolving into a “wilderness theme park” where physical activities that fail to acknowledge the local environment are the basis for the programming. He advises educators to guide students beyond simply enjoying the physical activity towards a deeper meaning of the outdoor experiences:

My sadness is that the simple messages of connection and consequence, available to us through respectful experiences of the outdoors, will be lost in the wilderness theme park. However, arguing that because many of us as outdoor educators do care and we carry the title “educator,” we should endeavour to guide our students in directions other than just enjoying the activity alone. (p. 38)

Similarly, Wattchow and Brown (2011) warn of nature being used as a backdrop for activities in the following quote: “Outdoor places are much more than mere sites for human activity. They make us and we make them. They are sources of our identities” (p. ix). Likewise,

Greenwood (2013) states, “In the practice of outdoor education, the outdoors can simply become another decontextualized and colonized space for scripted learning outside of buildings; a place is where meaning is made through a reciprocal relationship of coming to know” (p. 26).

It is apparent that activities that are not connected to the outdoor environment in meaningful ways and do not promote environmental stewardship run the risk of being contrived, artificial, and scripted.

Conventional OE operates from anthropocentric perspectives.

Another trend in OE is rooted in anthropocentric perspectives where people are considered to be more important than nature and therefore are separate from nature. Stewart (2008), Payne and Wattchow (2008), and Cosgriff (2011) all highlight the presence of the anthropocentrism in the field of OE. Payne and Wattchow (2008) identify this presence in the following excerpt:

Traditionally, mainstream or modern outdoor education has focused on certain outdoor activities and pursuits, preoccupied itself with notions of adventure and challenge, touched on the paradox of risk and safety, and emphasized the human, or anthropocentric, benefits of personal and social development by being immersed in the outdoors. (p. 25)

Payne and Wattchow (2008) warn of the “invisibility” of anthropocentrism in OE and advise educators to rethink possible assumptions that may go unnoticed in the field: “It is against this backdrop of the fast, often invisible, and still anthropocentric notions and practices of outdoor education that we sense it is timely to rethink and perhaps ‘retraditionalise’ many of the assumptions that lie dormant in modern outdoor education (p. 28).”

Likewise, Jickling, and Spork (1998) put forth the warning that education is not “value-free”: “Outdoor environmental education, in theory and practice, is a process of telling, performing, representing and creating stories about places, people and their interactions. Education, including outdoor environmental education, is not value-free (p. 80). Thus, it could be extrapolated that the values being taught by educators are the values being received by the students. Furthermore, if the values of OE educators are anthropocentric, then students will learn about the environment through these anthropocentric values.

Plumwood (2003) describes a Western perspective that treats nature as “other,” and believes this perception casts nature as inferior or of a “lower order”, lacking any real continuity with the human (p. 54). Likewise, Cosgriff (2011) notes that the pervasiveness of anthropocentric assumptions and practices – wherein, humans are considered to be separate from, and above, non-human nature – is recognized within the field of outdoor environmental education. Similarly, Andkjaer (2010) states: “Nature tends to be viewed as a ‘functional room’ or ‘arena,’ a gymnasium for personal development, immediately useful to humans only in so far as providing a resource for the achievement of programme goals that may have little to do with developing knowledge about the distinctiveness of the specific environment itself” (p. 54).

Brookes (1994) notes, “The ‘blind spots’ anthropocentrism causes may...unintentionally reinforce the view that wild places have value only if they are useful to humans” (p. 30). Hence, if people learn to view nature as valuable only as long as it serves a purpose for humans, then the relationship between nature and people will remain unbalanced. Humans will continue to use, manage, and exploit nature at their convenience, which could have and has had irreversible environmental damage.

Numerous scholars in the field of outdoor and/or environmental education have identified a disconnection between humans and nature. (Brookes, 1994; Cooper, 1996; Martin, 1993; Nettleton, 1993). Much of this disconnection can be attributed to homogeneity in OE, anthropocentrism, and the focus on physical activities.

It is interesting to note that this disconnect is not a new phenomenon; rather, it has existed for many years. In the 1940s, Aldo Leopold, an American wildlife biologist and conservationist, warned about the separation of humans from nature (see Leopold, 1949). Today, many OE writers and teachers are still concerned with the human-nature disconnect and advocate for a paradigm shift that promotes sustainable relationships between humans and nature. Two Ontario policy documents that promote environmental sustainability and sustainable relationships between humans and nature are: *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (2009) and, *Ontario, First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007). *The Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (2009) policy commits to implementing environmental education across the curriculum that promotes environmental sustainability as indicated in the following quote:

The policy framework for environmental education in Ontario offers School boards and Schools an approach to environmental education that recognizes the needs of all Ontario students and promotes environmental responsibility in the operations of all levels of the education system. (p. 6)

Likewise, the *Ontario, First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) commits to fostering human-land relationships through the inclusion of Indigenous culture and perspectives across the curriculum.

Outdoor Environmental Education and Environmental Sustainability

Gough (1990) argues that most approaches to environmental education and OE objectify the natural environment as something that has instrumental value that benefits or serves humans. He advocates a relationship with the environment based on kinship or an identification of self as part of the natural world. Likewise, Martin (1993) and Nettleton (1993) view the potential of OE as fostering more intimate relationships between humans and the natural world. Birdsall (2010) quotes from a UNESCO document when he writes: “It is often touted that one of the central goals of formal environmental education programs is to empower students to act in an environmentally responsible manner with the intent of building a sustainable future” (p. 65).

Birdsall (2010) clearly illustrates that a main goal of OE is to encourage students to act in environmentally sustainable ways. Similarly, Cooper (1994) argues that OE could make an important contribution to educating for sustainability. Cooper (2012) warns educators not to lose sight of the “big picture”: “I believe that our work in outdoor education is about values and that we should look for opportunities to question our beliefs and help young people clarify their own attitudes and values. If we ignore this then we lose sight of the big picture and the potential for outdoor education to contribute to more sustainable living” (p. 29).

The purpose of OE has shifted in recent years, away from merely social or skill development towards establishing human–nature relationships as the basis for pro-environmental behaviour. Martin (2004) states: “In recent years, outdoor education’s contribution to curriculum has shifted from personal and group development towards seeking to understand humans and their relationship with the nonhuman world” (p. 2). Martin (2004) refers to this new orientation of OE as “greening” outdoor education. Likewise, Thomas (2005) advocates for the “greening” of outdoor environmental education and notes that many other scholars have advocated shifting

the focus away from personal and social benefits and towards human–nature relationships and sustainability (Brookes, 1993; Cooper 1994; Martin, 1998).

Numerous scholars have coined terms that pertain to making outdoor environmental education more “green” or “sustainable”, for example: deep outdoor education (Brookes, 1993); critical outdoor education (Martin, 1998); place-based education (Greenwood, 2013); and practising an “ecopedagogy” (Payne & Wattchow, 2009). All of these terms attempt to, as Cosgriff (2011) states, “re-place” or “re-earth” OE so that student connectedness to, and care for, non-human nature is a more central pedagogical concern. For example, Brookes (1993) coined the term “deep outdoor education”, which he believes “develops alternative understandings of the nature of knowledge, the role of science, the ways in which nature should be valued, the relationships between individual and the wider community” (p. 16). Conversely, Martin (1998) developed the term “critical outdoor education”, which in his words means going “to the bush,” not just to recreate and have fun, but to look back with a critical perspective at the contexts left behind, particularly to those sets of beliefs which help shape human-nature relationships” (p. 465). Likewise, Payne and Wattchow (2009) coined the term “ecopedagogy”, which they believe “allows us to pause or dwell in spaces for more than a fleeting moment and, therefore, encourages us to attach and receive meaning from that place” (p. 16).

It is apparent that many scholars argue for the need for OE programs to be focused on sustainability. For example, MacRae (1990) believes there is a need to develop awareness about the total human environment through programs designed to foster positive attitudes towards environmental improvement. While the goal of sustainable OE programs may be advocated, the research indicates it is more challenging to achieve this goal through the program delivery. Many schools, centers, and programs around the world recognize that sustainability is a goal, yet few

have found ways to instill this goal into their OE programs. This is problematic as there are many positive outcomes that result when sustainability is included as a core teaching component in OE programs – the most notable being citizens acting in sustainable ways to protect the planet.

Including environmental sustainability as a core component of OE programs.

While many outdoor environmental education schools exist around the world, many do not focus on sustainability as a core teaching in their programs. Ballantyne and Packer (2006), after a major review of environmental education programs across Australia, found that few programs promote learning for sustainability. Therefore, the need for sustainability as a core component of OE programs is paramount. The planet is undergoing detrimental treatment at the hands of humans on a daily basis, and education is a powerful tool that has the ability to change this pattern. Martin (2008) states the pragmatic necessity for sustainability in OE programs:

It ought now to be clear to Western civilization that it is impossible for us to reshape the planet in a sustainable way. Rather, we need to reshape ourselves. Outdoor education must play a significant role here and it must start with developing in every young person a love and respect for nature and the capacity to understand and think about our connectedness to the earth. This is why the first outcomes of ecological literacy for students of outdoor education must be comfortable with and personal desire to be in nature. It's an emotional base, founded in love and respect, that drives action. (p. 35)

Barrett (2006) concurs that the salvation of our planet lies in the education of young people. This is echoed in the following words:

A recent United Nations' report claims that nearly two-thirds of the Earth's natural systems are unhealthy or failing, and many point to education – environmental education,

education for sustainable development, or sustainability education – as a key means of addressing these issues. (p. 5)

Therefore, it is essential to reference the government of Ontario policy, *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (2009). This policy, which was released in March 2009, is a framework that guides the implementation of environmental education across all grades and subject areas. Furthermore, the policy aligns with Barrett (2006) regarding the importance of youth in making positive environmental change and the importance of focusing on personal behaviours as a means of promoting positive environmental change. This congruency is evident in the following quote from the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (OME, 2009) policy:

The policy framework seeks to move beyond a focus on symptoms – air and water pollution, for example – to encompass the underlying causes of environmental stresses, which are rooted in personal and social values and in organizational structures. It seeks to promote changes in personal behaviour. (p. 4)

Hence, the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (OME, 2009) policy framework may prove useful with the goal of fostering environmental sustainability by encouraging change in human behaviour.

Cosgriff (2011) and Thomas (2005) advocate for the “greening” of OE, whereby the OE program focus is shifted to human–earth relationships and sustainability. Cosgriff (2011) explains this importance in the following quote:

Given contemporary global concerns about the scale of environmental issues and the associated recognition that educating for sustainability is a matter of urgency, the

continuing exploration of pedagogies promoting human connection to nature is arguably a central concern for outdoor educators. (p. 51)

Hence, it is apparent that OE could benefit from including sustainability as a program component. *The Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (OME, 2009) could guide the inclusion of environmental sustainability as an OE program objective. The policy reflects, promotes, and guides the implementation of environmental education through student engagement and action-oriented leadership, as evident in the following quote:

Ontario's education system will prepare students with the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and practices they need to be environmentally responsible citizens. Students will understand our fundamental connections to each other and to the world around us through our relationship to food, water, energy, air and land, and our interaction with all living things. The education system will provide opportunities within the classroom and the community for students to engage in actions that deepen this understanding. (OME, 2009, p. 6)

The positive student outcomes resulting from teachings of environmental sustainability.

One of the most obvious outcomes from teaching students about environmental sustainability is that they could gain knowledge about environmental issues, which could then enable them to address environmental problems. Ballantyne and Packer (2006) suggest that learning in the natural environment is potentially a powerful medium for developing students' environmental sensitivity, bringing about concrete understandings of environmental issues, and engaging students actively with ecological issues. If students become aware of environmental

issues and the causes behind them, they may be better equipped to solve the problems facing the planet today and in the future. Likewise, Louv (2012) acknowledges that time spent in nature stimulates the senses, improves the ability to learn, and helps students connect to the world around them. Riordan and Klein (2010) stress the importance of including sustainability as a core component of outdoor environmental education in the following excerpt: “In our shrinking world, sustaining the environment relies on students becoming problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and ultimately, change makers” (p. 135).

Another positive outcome from teaching sustainability is fostering an emotional connection between humans and nature. If students feel that they are a part of the environment around them, it is likely they would want to protect the environment because they could adopt more sustainable behaviours. Research indicates that humans have lost the connection to nature and, as a result, no longer feel emotionally connected to it (Louv, 2005, 2012; Orr, 2004). Barrett (2006) believes that “human estrangement from nature is a significant factor in current ecological crises, and humans might be less destructive if they were able to develop a closer, less estranged relationship to the natural world” (p. 508). Orr (2004) also believes emotional connections are vital to saving the environment, as emphasized in the following quotation: “We cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well – for we will not fight to save what we do not love” (p. 140). Likewise, Tilbury (1995) acknowledges that in order to feel responsible for the earth so that we are driven to protect it, we must first feel emotionally connected to it:

No amount of preaching to the citizenry about the perils of a polluted environment, the dangers of irresponsible disposal of wastes or deforestation and the benefits to mankind of greening the environment will make people act to seek to forestall environmental

degradation unless they are imbued with a deep concern for the common good, a sense of responsibility for maintaining a healthy ecosystem and a strong drive to achieve harmony with nature. (p. 201)

Orr (1992) foreshadowed Tilbury's opinion that emotions are a crucial component of acting sustainably when he says, "Even a thorough knowledge of the facts of life and of the threats to it will not save us in the absence of the feeling of kinship of life of the sort that cannot entirely be put into words" (p. 7). Likewise, Martin (2004) found that students develop relationships with nature that are increasingly based on emotional responses. He posits that these relationships with nature lead to changed actions with respect to nature for students. Martin (2004) states, "A greening of outdoor education and a growing emphasis upon teaching for improved human/nature relationships is a worthy cause" (p. 27).

Thus, the importance of emotional responses in developing relationships with nature is supported by previous research (Bragg, 1995; 1996; Haskell, 2000). Bragg (1995) posits that, "emotional connections to nature are most consistently related to environmentally responsible action" (p. 383). Fien (2003) discusses how humans first feel emotions, then develop ethics, and then make decisions to take action. He explains this process:

Compassion refers not only to the emotional willingness to enter into another's feelings and express empathy and solidarity; it also involves the active will to share and help alleviate the plight of others. In this way, compassion moves us from the emotional realm to the ethical realm, from the world of what we feel and want to do to the world of what we are and what we must do. (p. 5)

Martin (2004) refers to this process described by Fien (2003) as an “ethic of care”, which begins when students have emotional connections with nature and that develops into ethics of caring for nature.

Lastly, if students possess knowledge about environmental issues and feel emotionally connected to the environment, the next hope is they will act to protect the environment by adopting sustainable behaviours and lifestyle choices. Birdsall (2010) believes that in order to achieve the goal of having students act in environmentally responsible ways, they need to have knowledge about the environment, as well as positive attitudes and values towards the environment, so that appropriate behaviour will follow.

Indigenous Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Sustainability in OE

Jolly, Whiteman, Atkinson, and Radu (2011) state, “Indigenous peoples manage 19% of the world’s land surface and effectively organize sustainable approaches to hunting, trapping, fishing and agriculture” (p. 28). Likewise, North American Indigenous peoples who lived in traditional small-scale farming, fishing, or hunter-gather communities also have a rich history of living off the land and interacting with the land in a sustainable way. Thus, it seems plausible to explore how Indigenous education may provide the philosophy and pedagogy necessary to address the missing component of sustainability in OE programs. Lowan (2009) believes Indigenous teachings have much the potential of connecting people to the land, as evident in the following quotation: “Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into educational practice with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike offers another layer of possibilities and understanding of place” (p. 55). Many other scholars of outdoor and environmental education have discussed the possibility of learning from Indigenous worldviews and their interactions with the natural world (Henderson, 2007; Sharkawy, 2008; Vikander, 2007).

Indigenous people have close connections to the land and an understanding of the land. Also, they have been the original stewards of the land for millennium. Battiste and Henderson (2000) state that traditional Indigenous knowledge is related to a deep understanding of the land within a specific ecological context. Furthermore, Jolly et al. (2009) state that “Indigenous peoples and their place-based value system can have direct relevance for education in sustainability” (p. 31).

Cajete (1999b), renown advocate of Indigenous education outlines a number of characteristics which encompass Indigenous education, some of which are as follows: nature is connected to all parts of learning; circular teaching methods are used to understand the interconnectedness of contexts and processes of learning; mutual reciprocity between humans and non-humans is present in all parts of the learning process; deeper layers of meaning are always present; knowledge comes from the individual and nature; learning occurs through participation and relationships with human and natural communities; the use of stories in the education process; education is based on successive stages of learning (see, feel, listen, act); learning is done by watching, doing, reflecting, and doing again; learning requires context that is real and relevant to the learner; education encompasses a holistic orientation where learning is about seeing the whole through the parts; learning through bodies and spirits as much as mind; teaching mirrors thinking and reflecting back to the learner; and students learn things when they are ready.

Hence, common within this extensive, but not exhaustive, list is the importance of nature in the learning process; the interconnectedness of all aspects of learning through holistic approaches, and the relationship between humans and nature that develops an ethic of care and promotes environmentally sustainable behaviours. Thus, for these reasons, Indigenous practices,

philosophies, and pedagogies may be an excellent way to include sustainability as a core focus in OE programs. As Jolly et al. (2009) believe, “Educating for sustainability requires a fundamental shift toward in-depth immersion in the outdoors – where students develop deeper, more complex appreciation of the nonabstract nature of nature” (p. 32).

Using indigenous pedagogy to encourage sustainability in OE.

It may be beneficial to explore a more culturally diverse approach to OE that provides alternative opportunities for students to connect with the land. Scholars such as Kato (2002), Agyeman (2002), and Dymont (2005) advocate the necessity of a culturally diverse approach to environmental and outdoor education. Kato (2002) supports the need for cross-cultural awareness in environmental education and states that, “in current environmental discourse, many aspects of environmental ideologies are often assumed to be universal” (p. 110). He reiterates the importance of providing a variety of perspectives when discussing mainstream environmental ideologies. Likewise, Agyeman (2002) discusses the culturing of environmental education as the need to reframe environmental education so it better meets the needs of a wider cultural diversity. Curthoys et al. (2005) reference Dymont (2005) who also highlights this importance of cultural diversity in OE with regards to the developing positive human–land relationships.

Additionally, Dymont (2005) states:

... juxtaposing the generally human-centered paradigms inherent in the more traditional programs with alternative world-views can help students to explore and meet the challenges of developing and fostering positive, responsible interactions between the humans and more-than-human realms. (cited in Curthoys et al., 2005, p. 209)

Therefore, the literature identifies a gap between the current delivery of OE programs from a homogeneous Western perspective and the potential delivery of OE programs from a

culturally diverse perspective. This gap might help to shed light on the challenges students face with developing sustainable views and behaviours towards the environment.

It appears that conventional OE is not providing adequate opportunities for students to connect with the land and adopt environmentally sustainable views and behaviours. Indigenous education would be an effective informing agent for OE. Indigenous education focuses not only on content but also on how that content is delivered. Learning is not simply based on presentation of material but on the cultural process that is involved in learning, which is rooted in experiential methodology. Brandt (2006) emphasizes this point of view: “The inclusion of culture-based knowledge and skills is a concept broader than content” (p. 31). Likewise, Simpson (2002) articulates the importance of not just teaching content but of teaching process. The following excerpt illustrates this importance:

Employing Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, including ceremonies, dreams, visions and visioning, fasting, storytelling, learning-by-doing, observation, reflecting, and creating, not only allows students to share and learn in a culturally inherent manner, but also reinforces the concept that Indigenous Knowledge is not only content but also process. (Simpson, 2002, p. 18)

Cajete (1994), Graveline (1998), Peat (1994), and Simpson (1999, 2002) hold that OE needs to shift from being content-driven curriculum towards process-oriented learning. These scholars state that Indigenous pedagogy is an excellent vehicle for this initiative, as relationships with nature initiates the lessons about what and how students will learn.

As previously mentioned, developing an emotional relationship to nature is essential to pro-environmental behaviour and is one of the missing components of OE programing.

One initiative taken by the Ontario government to encourage the integration of First Nation values and perspectives is the implementation of the *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007). This policy identifies the importance of teaching Indigenous perspectives, values and cultures that promote environmental sustainability to all students. Strategy 3.2 in the *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) states the following goal: “Build capacity to support identity building including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures by all students, School board staff, and elected trustees”. (p. 18)

The Ontario government has recommended that First Nation, Metis, and Inuit culture and perspectives be integrated across the curriculum. It is important to reference this policy when discussing the OE curriculum and the goal of teaching environmental sustainability as it holds great potential to enrich the OE curriculum.

Storytelling as a means of teaching sustainability.

One way of building a dialogue between humans and nature is through the practice of Indigenous storytelling. As a strategy for enabling the land to be the teacher, numerous scholars have advocated for storytelling because it places the students within a much larger living system; therefore, it is an excellent means of teaching sustainability (Cajete, 1999a; Cheney, 1999; Profeit-Leblanc, 1996;). As Profeit-Leblanc (1996) states, “According to traditional understandings, the land is not separated from us as human beings; we are part of it and it is an extension of us” (p. 14). Storytelling connects people to the nonhuman world in a respectful way. For example, in Anishnabe culture, plants are not talked about in the winter as they are sleeping and do not need to be awakened. Hence, teaching students about the proper protocols of when to tell stories and how to tell stories is in itself a form of education about respecting and listening to

the land. Cheney (1999) believes that “stories in relationship to one another behave more like elements of ecosystems than like arguments squaring off against one another (p. 98). Likewise, Cheney (1999) references Geddes who has remarked that the Tlingit “would never have a subject called ‘environmental ethics’; it is simply part of the story” (p. 96). Hence, these scholars have found creative ways to incorporate storytelling about the land as a means of teaching about human–nature relationships that focus on sustainability. The notion that teachers take the shape of many forms, including nature, is unique to Indigenous culture. Viewing the land as a teacher rather than a resource is an important component of learning about interacting with the land in a sustainable way.

Fostering a dialogue between nature and humans builds an emotional relationship, which in turn leads to environmentally sustainable behaviours. As numerous scholars have identified, the challenge with the inclusion of sustainability in OE programs is the philosophical understanding of people and nature as being separate from one another. This separation is at the heart of the sustainability problem as people do not feel the need to preserve nature if they do not feel a connection with it. The significant difference between many OE philosophies and indigenous philosophies is that the former views humans as separate from nature and the latter views humans as part of nature. This key distinction fundamentally changes the way in which humans perceive and interact with the land, which consequently impacts the depth of knowing and understanding our place within nature. Numerous Indigenous scholars, such as Ermine (1995), Greenwood (2013), Simpson (2002), Tripp and Muzzin (2005), and Wane and Waterfall (2005), articulate the interconnectivity of Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and the land as integral components of maintaining community well-being as well as environmental sustainability. Therefore, it is imperative to keep the learning in OE within the context of the

land in order to maintain relevancy and meaning. Separating or compartmentalizing areas of learning away from the land can result in detachment of the learner from the process. Ermine (1995) suggests an alternative way of interacting with the land that fosters connection rather than detachment: “Indigenous philosophies are rooted in a world view that recognize interrelationships among the spiritual, the natural, and the self and these relationships form the basis of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating to the world and self” (p. 50).

The land plays an important role in Indigenous learning process. The field of OE could benefit from this world view. Indigenous philosophy fosters environmentally sustainable relationships with nature. Cajete (1999b) articulates the complementary congruency between Indigenous and OE in the following excerpt:

Indigenous people have been touted as the spiritual leaders of the environmental movement. Such a designation is more symbolic than actual since most environmental education is primarily founded upon mainstream Western education models. Still, many environmental educators, writers and philosophers advocate getting back to the basics of relationship to the environment and to each other within communities. These ways of getting back to basics parallel the traditional practices of Indigenous societies. (p. 190)

Similarly, Cheney (1999) reiterates the importance of this relationship. He states that, “missing in modern conceptions of knowledge is a sense of active and reciprocal communication with the non-human world” (p. 141). This quotation accurately depicts Cheney’s discussion on the importance of conversing with nature in order for humans to listen to, and learn from, nature. He warns that Western knowledge usually consists of monologues where humans dictate their ownership of nature and assert their colonial powers by exploiting it. In this sense, knowledge is

gained through domination and control of nature. Thus, it could be extrapolated that if OE programs are developed and delivered from an Indigenous perspective, they would foster a more respectful view of nature and a better understanding of the importance of connectedness between humans and nature.

Holistic learning approach.

In order to connect with nature, humans need to have experiences that utilize the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual states of being. The holistic orientation of Indigenous education encompasses the whole dimension of humans, including the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual components, which allows students to develop a deeper understanding of their learning. Intellectual refers to knowing, emotional refers to feeling, physical refers to doing and spiritual refers to honouring and respecting. In general, Cajete (1994) describes Indigenous curriculum as involving reflection of the deeper understandings of relationships and that true learning is communication with the deeper self.

One example of an Indigenous curriculum model is the medicine wheel, which has many different orientations and teachings depending on the origins of the model. Bell states (Kulnieks, Longboat, and Young, 2013) that Indigenous scholars have used a group of universal Indigenous values referred to as the four Rs. These four Rs have been used in some medicine wheel teachings. Bell references the following four Rs: respect, relationship, reciprocity and responsibility by exploring the role they play in creating a spiritual connection to the environment.

Another interpretation of the medicine wheel which has been taught and modelled to me is a progression of learning: I see – I think – I feel – I act. This progression connects the student to the emotional, spiritual, physical and mental parts of them self; thereby deepening their

learning experience. This medicine wheel teaching begins with relationship where the student observes a teaching which is the “I see” stage. Then the student relates what they have observed to their personal experiences, which is the “I think” stage. Then the student takes what they think and through land-based activities learns about reciprocity with the land which is the “I feel” stage. Lastly, the student assumes responsibility to turn their learning into action in the “I act” stage by sharing their knowledge with the community. Therefore, in this medicine wheel curriculum model students are called upon to engage all parts of their being to learn in a meaningful way by utilizing their intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual part of themselves. Students would also be guided by the 4 Rs, which are: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. I have seen how such a model can positively impact student engagement and learning and I feel it would assist with connecting students to themselves and to the world around them in a holistic manner.

This medicine wheel curriculum model is different from the methodologies commonly used with OE, which predominantly rely on physical dimensions by participating in activities using the environment as a backdrop, or cognitive dimensions by studying science curriculum, thus utilizing the mind in isolation. Wane and Waterfall (2005) believe that the holistic nature of the spiritual journey from within an Indigenous context often takes place in an outdoor environment. Hence, the field of OE has huge potential to provide students with these holistic learning opportunities which originate from Indigenous curriculum models.

Accordingly, Cooper (1994) notes:

The development of self-esteem, cooperation and environmental awareness encourages an holistic approach to learning outdoor education is concerned with the development of

the whole person, through mind, body and spirit. We need this holistic approach to achieve the changes required for a more sustainable lifestyle. (p. 12)

Conclusion: Environmental Sustainability and Students as Stewards

Incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, storytelling, and holistic interactions with the land may benefit OE programs and guide OE programs towards the inclusion of a goal of environmental sustainability.

Through adopting philosophies and pedagogies from Indigenous education, students can begin to develop deeper layers of understanding about themselves and the world around them. Instead of trying to piece together fragmented experiences, students can place their experiences within the larger context of nature and derive meaning relevant to their everyday lives. Therefore, this ability to situate experiences within a relevant context can enable students to understand their connection with nature, culture, and community, and thereby empower them to act to preserve them. Hence, such empowerment can benefit not only individual students but can also lead towards improving environmental sustainability, because students who have a connection with the land will be more likely to want to preserve it. Obviously, this is one of the many reasons why Indigenous education should be incorporated into the practices of OE. Here, not only can students benefit from richer connection to the land but this connection can motivate environmental practices that can result in the betterment of the planet. Cajete (1999b) identifies the process of Indigenous education as a “curriculum of place” and believes that such curricula of place are evolving among Indigenous peoples. These, he argues, hold great promise for new models of OE because they focus on environmental sustainability.

There is strong scholarship to support the notion that the interconnectivity of Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and the land are integral components of OE that encourages

environmentally sustainable views and behaviour. It is the view of these scholars that OE could greatly benefit from the philosophies and pedagogies rooted in Indigenous perspectives. Whereas conventional OE programs focus on the physical activities that fail to provide opportunities for students to connect with the land around them, the literature suggests that the incorporation of Indigenous practices and beliefs in OE may offer the emotional connection to the land during learning experiences, which currently does not exist in OE. Such an approach could encourage environmental sustainability among youth. The importance for youth to practise sustainability is paramount, as has been illustrated through the literature. Incorporating Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy into OE curriculum and practice may encourage environmentally sustainable behaviours.

There are two Ontario Education policies previously mentioned that encourage the inclusion of Indigenous values that promote environmental sustainability across the curriculum: *The Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2007) aims to “provide curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Metis and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students and that also contributes to the education of School board staff, teachers, and elected trustees” (p. 7). Many of the goals and strategies reflected in the policy promote environmental sustainability and respectful behaviour towards the land as evident in the following quote: “The framework reflects, promotes, and guides the implementation of environmental education that is locally relevant; culturally appropriate; and builds capacity for community based decision making and environmental stewardship (OME, 2007, p. 4).

Likewise, the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (MOE, 2009) describes how this Ontario Ministry of Education

document can guide schools to move forward on the implementation of environmental education that is environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate.

Therefore, when exploring ways to incorporate Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy and environmental sustainability into OE curriculum, it is important to include these two Ontario policy documents.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented current notions of OE. Literature was reviewed to investigate the history, evolution, and current understandings of OE. The theme of “environmental sustainability” was explored in relation to the field of OE. Lastly, Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy were explored regarding their relation to environmental sustainability in OE. The next chapter discusses the methodology and methods used to conduct the research. A rationale is provided for using Pal’s (1987) policy framework for the policy analysis.

Research Methodology

Introduction

This study used a qualitative research methodology, and aimed at understanding OE curriculum with respect to its inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methods that I used in this research. In this chapter, I present document analysis and policy analysis as the methods used in this study, outline the documents and policies chosen for the analysis, and provide a rationale for choosing Pal's (1987) policy framework over other frameworks.

Defining the Problem

Throughout the literature, numerous scholars acknowledged that the current notion of OE does not go far enough to develop a human–land connection amongst students. This lack of connection to the land directly affects students understanding of sustainability and conservation about the environment.

This aforementioned trend begs the question: What is the overall objectives of OE and are these objectives helping students connect with the environment around them? The rationale for this research is to explore the limitations in OE curriculum in Ontario with regards to its inclusion of overall expectations that foster environmental sustainability. If OE expectations contain information about environmental sustainability, then students could benefit from a deeper understanding and appreciation of protecting the world around them. Teaching youth environmental sustainability could promote stewardship practices where youth could be able to make choices that protect the earth. Thus, OE can serve a vital role in this endeavour of promoting environmental sustainability and also speaks to the importance of exploring whether these expectations are included in current OE curriculum documents in Ontario.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?
2. Does the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,” include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?

Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used for this study because of the holistic and heuristic orientation that it provides. Policies and documents are understood and interpreted differently amongst different people. Thus, it seems appropriate to choose a research approach that will allow for the representation of these diverse perspectives rather than narrowly represented perspectives.

The policy and document analysis in this study examined two separate policies or documents, with a specific focus to their inclusion, or not, of environmental sustainability objectives. The two documents were:

1. Ontario Ministry of Education, *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a).
2. Ontario Ministry of Education, *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b).

All policies or documents were written for the Province of Ontario and were intended to guide program implementation in Ontario's schools. Each province in Canada has its own autonomy over the educational curriculum and policy; hence, priorities across the Canadian provinces depend on provincial concerns. For this reason, I examined solely education curriculum and policy documents in Ontario.

Rational for Analysing Selected Courses and Curriculum Documents

I chose to analyse the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document because I have experience using this curriculum to teach both Physical Education and OE at the grade 11 level. Thus, I understand the mandate of this curriculum for teaching Physical Education and also the challenges with using this curriculum to teach OE. I also knew that the Grades 9 and 10 Physical Education courses were more introductory and thus were not as suitable to be used to develop OE curriculum. For this reason, I was channelled towards using either the Grades 11 or 12 Physical Education curriculum as the objectives were more flexible and, therefore, more readily adapted to be used for OE curriculum. Further analysis guided my decision not to use the two Grade 12 Physical Education courses for this research because they both seemed to be more specific and, therefore, less adaptable to being taught as an OE course. Specifically, the course Exercise Science, Grade 12, University Preparation (PSE4U) focuses on biology and physiology and the course Recreation and Fitness Leadership, Grade 12 College Preparation (PLF4C) focuses on development of leadership skills where students learn to plan, organize, and implement recreational activities. As both of these Physical Education courses are very specific in their focus, they are difficult to adapt to an OE context. In the end, the Grade 11 curriculum for PPL30, *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) was selected for this study because the content was a good fit for the development of an

OE course. As such, this was the reason that I have used it in the past to develop OE courses that I have taught.

In addition, I chose to analyse the course NBV3C in the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document because I have also taught this course and observed the strong emphasis of Indigenous customs, relationships, and practices that foster connection to the land. I realized that these customs, relationship, and practices were effective at connecting my students to their surroundings and eliciting their curiosity about the world around them. I was interested in exploring if and how the objectives in the NBV3C curriculum might enrich the PPI30 curriculum to encourage students to have that same appreciation and curiosity about the land around them.

However, I understand that the other *Native Studies* courses contained different objectives that also may enrich an OE curriculum. If there is an opportunity for future research, it would be interesting to explore other Native Studies courses regarding their ability to enrich OE curriculum.

Policy Analysis

Before discussing the framework used for this research, it is important to understand what policy analysis entails. Pal (1987) defines policy analysis as “the disciplined application of intellect to public problems” (p. 19). Similarly, Downey (1988) defines policy analysis as “the generation of information for the purpose of informing the policy-making process” (p. 33). Therefore, as the “problem” in this study is the possible lack of environmental sustainability initiatives in educational curriculum and policy documents associated with OE, it seems reasonable to examine these documents using an intellectual approach that may generate solutions to the aforementioned problem. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) view the purpose of policy analysis as follows: “...evaluates government policies to provide policy-makers with

pragmatic recommendations from among policy alternatives” (p. 439). Thus, it is evident that as the aim of policy analysis is to identify problems and provide alternative recommendations, this approach is a suitable fit for my research topic.

Pal’s policy analysis framework.

The procedure used for the policy analysis in this study is Pal’s (1987) framework, which includes three styles of analysis: descriptive, process, and evaluative. A descriptive analysis includes content analysis and historical analysis. A process analysis focuses on the politics that shape and influence the policy, and an evaluation analysis involves logical, empirical, and ethical evaluations. I would like to explain all three elements of Pal’s (1987) framework below, however, it is important to note that for the purpose of this research, I have chosen to focus on only the content portion of descriptive analysis. Nonetheless, I feel it is important to provide an overview of all components of Pal’s (1987) framework in order to understand its holistic and encompassing orientation. Pal’s framework will be explained below, followed by a rationale for choosing to use the content portion of descriptive analysis for this research.

Descriptive analysis.

In the descriptive analysis of the two documents analyzed in this study (PPL30, in the document *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) and NBV3C in the document *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b), I attended to content analysis. The content analysis provided the essential components of each policy or document by providing an overview of the purpose, problem, goals or vision, and instruments of the current policy. This research focuses on a thorough examination of the content of the two curriculum policies which is used to make recommendations for policy changes.

The descriptive analysis is an important stage of policy analysis as it sets the stage for the policy evaluation, the last step of analysis. It is important to understand what a policy is about before one evaluates it. Pal (1987) states, “One cannot assess the impact, logical consistency or ethical rationale of a policy unless one is absolutely clear about what policy contains” (p. 37).

The historical analysis, which is part of the descriptive analysis examines events and influences that came before the creation and implementation of the documents and policies. This history provides a context and understanding of the patterns that took place and led to the development of policies.

Process analysis.

The second step in the analysis is process analysis. As mentioned, this step was not used in this study, but explanation is provided for a broader understanding of Pal’s framework. Process analysis involves looking at main ideas and actors involved in the political discussion that leads to and describes reasons for the development of the policy. Pal (1987) believes that this analysis pays less attention to content and its evolution and more to the process whereby that content is determined. Pal (1987) states, “Process analysis focuses on the immediate political process, decisions, debates, conflicts and compromises that produce public policy” (p. 30).

Evaluation analysis.

In the final stage of the analysis, evaluation analysis (again, not used in this study), the components of logical, empirical, and ethical evaluations are used and are described by Pal (1987) as judging the curriculum and policy documents in terms of their consistency, efficiency, and ethical character. Logical evaluation is used to assess, as Pal (1987) states, “a policy’s internal rigour and consistency” (p. 32).

Empirical evaluation involves a number of techniques to assess the efficiency and efficacy of public policy (Pal, 1987). Thus, this step of the analysis involves looking at the intended impact of the documents and policies under examination and whether that desired impact had been achieved.

Finally, in the ethical evaluation step, policies and documents are assessed in terms of pre-existing value systems of right and wrong (Pal, 1987). Thus, this evaluation sought to ensure that moral principles were not violated in the contents and vision of the policies and curricular documents that were being examined.

Why only the content portion of the descriptive analysis.

Using the content portion of descriptive analysis in Pal's (1987) framework allowed for a comprehensive and diverse analysis of the curriculum and policy documents. It was my primary goal to assess the degree of inclusion of sustainability objectives in the curriculum and policy documents that shape the delivery of OE in Ontario public education. Hence, only the content portion of descriptive analysis in Pal's framework was used as it alone would not allow me to answer my research questions.

Instruments and Procedures

Below is an outline of Pal's (1987) three dimensions of the framework for policy analysis.

1. Descriptive

- a) Historical analysis: This analysis contains the events, policies, and programs that led to the development of the policy.
- b) Content Analysis: This analysis includes the definition of the problem, the intentions, goals, and instruments used in the policy.

2. Process:

a) This analysis involves identifying the political interactions that influenced the content of the policy.

3. Evaluation

a) Logical evaluation: This analysis involves the examination of the internal consistencies of the goals, consistency between goals and instruments, as well as the differences between intended and unintended consequences.

b) Empirical evaluation: This analysis consists of evidence of the efficiency and efficacy of the policy in practice.

c) Ethical evaluation: This analysis assesses the policy in terms of pre-existing values or rights systems.

Lastly, although using comparison is not included in Pal's framework, it is recommended for good quality policy analysis. Pal (1987) states, "Comparison shows what is unique about a given policy or policy proposal, and provides a broader canvas for assessment and reflection." (p. 37). Thus, a comparison was made of the two OME curriculum policy documents examined in this study.

Rationale for Policy Analysis and Pal's Policy Analysis Framework

The key reason for choosing a policy and document analysis as the method for this research was to provide an exemplar in how to critically examine their practice for teachers of OE. When planning a course, unit, and lesson plan, teachers refer to policy and curriculum documents to guide their practice. Delaney (2002) emphasizes this importance: "Policy ultimately dictates what happens at the building and classroom levels and it is at these levels that teachers do their work on a daily basis" (p. 100). Thus, it is important to examine these

documents with respect to their inclusion of certain objectives that arguably, from my world view, should be reflected in that curriculum. Underrepresentation of important expectations and objectives, in this case, those that bring sustainability and the environment into OE, can result in a lack of knowledge and understanding about these issues in the student population. I view this absence as having serious consequences.

Another reason I chose to conduct a policy and document analysis is because written words last longer than spoken words and thus may have a long-lasting impact. For example, Hodder (2000) refers to the longevity of policies when he states that “the information provided may differ from and may not be available in spoken form...texts endure and thus give historical insight” (p. 704). Thus, while it may be difficult to measure overall teacher practice in terms of teaching environmental sustainability, it is more tangible to investigate curriculum where learning objectives are clearly stated and accessible.

Furthermore, there are numerous benefits to conducting a policy analysis for educational institutions, administrators, teachers, communities, and most importantly, students. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) outline a few of these benefits that pertain to my particular study. They posit that policy analysis achieves the following:

1. It allows planning and implementing school improvements on a systematic basis.
Evidence of what works is important in program justification. Evidence of what does not work allows decision makers and those with influence over policy to recast alternatives considered as solutions.
2. It reduces uncertainty about educational practices when experience is limited. (p. 451).

In terms of choosing Pal’s (1987) framework, specifically, the content portion of descriptive analysis, there are a number of reasons for my selection. Although other scholars

have proposed varying policy analysis frameworks, Pal's (1987) framework suits this research topic with its holistic approach. Policies are interpreted through different lenses, depending on the individual. Thus, Pal's approach enables a diverse population to participate in the analysis due to the encompassing three elements. Hodder (2000) also talks about the importance of including diverse perspectives in policy analysis in the following quote: "The use of document analysis is of great importance for qualitative research that seeks to explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations" (p. 705).

Pal's (1987) framework also offered a systematic approach to conducting analysis and allowed for a very broad examination of policy. Pal (1987) warns about policy analysis being "mundane and technical" (p. 38) and instead has created a framework that focuses on approaching analysis in a creative, inclusive, and thorough manner.

However, it is important to acknowledge that I selected the content part of descriptive analysis and did not use the other two elements of Pal's (1987) framework: process analysis and evaluation analysis. While I favour Pal's (1987) framework for its broad and holistic orientation, my interest lies with a thorough examination of the content of the curriculum policy documents. Thus, I wanted to keep the scope of this study streamlined to maintain clarity and focus on content of the curriculum documents being analyzed. If I were to pursue further research in this area, I would examine these other two elements of Pal's (1987) framework: process and evaluation.

Furthermore, I did not use the historical analysis as part of my descriptive analysis because there is no pre-existing curriculum document for OE. Therefore, it is not possible to examine the events, policies, and programs that led to the development of the policy when no

curriculum policy document exists for OE; OE borrows from the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document to develop courses.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative study consisted of a policy and document analysis of two Ontario curriculum documents. This policy and document analysis focused on examining the inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives in OE programs in Ontario through the use of Pal's (1987) framework. This approach to policy analysis was described as the data collection method, and was used to guide the reporting and analysis in subsequent chapters, in which emerging themes are identified.

Policy Analysis; Health and Physical Education Curriculum Document (PPL30)

I have chosen to use a narrow scope of Pal's (1987) policy analysis by focusing on the content portion of descriptive analysis. This chapter uses the framework to examine the content of the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum (OME) document titled *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a), specifically the course "Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open," with a course code of PPL30. Pal (1987) defined policy analysis as "the disciplined application of intellect to policy problems" (p. 19). Thus, the general focus of this policy analysis is to gain an understanding of what the course PPL30 really is in terms of content and, through an intellectual lens, pinpoint the problem(s). Pal (1987) describes content analysis as analysis that includes the definition of the problem, the intentions of the policy, and the goals of the policy. Therefore, this framework will be used to examine the content of the PPL30 course curriculum.

Definition of the Problem

Currently, in Ontario, there is no specific curriculum policy document for OE. However, there is a pre-existing course in the curriculum titled "Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open" (PPL30), which allows a teacher to insert a statement at the beginning of the course indicating that the course will focus on a particular group of activities. In the case of this thesis, the activity would be "Outdoor Activities" (OME, 2000a, p. 5). For example, if the "Outdoor Activities" course (PAD40) were offered in the winter, a list of activities such as skiing, ice fishing, and winter camping could be added to the beginning of the course syllabus followed by course expectations for "Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open" (PPL30). The problem is that OE does not have its own curriculum to guide the philosophy and practise of OE, and inserting a list of outdoor activities in a physical education course may not ensure that

outdoor activities are carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner. As discussed in the literature review, OE involves the teaching and awareness of environmental sustainability. It is unknown whether the course (PPL30) in the curriculum policy document *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) includes expectations related to environmental sustainability that I deem as being required for OE. Thus, using a policy analysis, Research Question 1 will be investigated: “Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document include expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?”

Intentions of the Curriculum Document

“In general, the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum in Ontario has been designed to provide learning experiences that will help students realize their potential in life” (OME, 2000a, p. 2). Students will develop skills required to participate in a healthy lifestyle throughout their lives. More specifically, the following excerpt describes the course focus of “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30):

This course focuses on the development of a healthy lifestyle and participation in a variety of enjoyable physical activities that have the potential to engage students’ interest throughout their lives. Students will be encouraged to develop personal competence in a variety of movement skills and will be given opportunities to practise goal-setting, decision-making, social, and interpersonal skills. Students will also study the components of healthy relationships, reproductive health, mental health, and personal safety. (OME, 2000a, p. 8)

It is evident from this passage that the curriculum for “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30) focuses on physical activity, skills, and attitudes for healthy living. While this and other courses in the curriculum policy document for *Health and Physical Education* have specific goals and expectations, in general, this curriculum policy document indicated that “all courses address relevant health issues and provide students with a wide variety of activities that promote fitness, the development of living skills and personal competence” (OME, 2000a, p. 4).

For the purpose of this policy analysis, one course from the curriculum policy document for *Health and Physical Education* will be analyzed: “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30). There are four themes, called strands, in the PPL30 course: Physical Activity, Active Living, Healthy Living and Living Skills. Each strand has its own Overall Expectations, and subsequent categories of content with Specific Expectations. These four strands are discussed. Next, for each strand, I present a description of the nature of the strand, list the Overall Expectations, and provide a discussion in the context of Research Question 1 addressed in this chapter: “Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document include expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?”

Overall Expectations by Strand

The course PPL30 consists of four curricular strands: Physical Activity, Active Living, Healthy Living, and Living Skills. This section provides analysis of policy represented in the Overall Expectations outlined in PPL30. The analysis is presented by strand.

Physical activity.

The Overall Expectations for the Physical Activity strand are listed as follows:

- Demonstrate personal competence in applying movement skills and principles;
- Apply their knowledge of guidelines and strategies that can enhance their participation in recreational and sports activities. (OME, 2000a, p. 9)

It is evident that these Overall Expectations focus on a set of physical skills that can be acquired through instruction and practice. It is also evident that knowledge expectations are linked to sports strategies and guidelines of sports. There is no mention of knowledge of personal consideration for the environment in which people engage in physical activities.

Active living.

The Overall Expectations for the Active Living strand are as follows:

- Participate regularly in a balanced instructional program that includes a wide variety of enjoyable physical activities that encourage lifelong participation;
- Demonstrate improved physical fitness;
- Demonstrate responsibility for their personal safety and the safety of others. (OME, 2000a, p. 10)

These Overall Expectations prioritize a commitment and improvement to a healthy lifestyle. It is interesting to note that responsibility is mentioned in connection to personal safety and safety to others. However, responsibility for the environment in which these physical activities take place is not mentioned. Given this void, there is opportunity to expand on the notion of responsibility to include consideration for the local environment and appreciation for places to recreate outside.

Healthy living.

The Overall Expectations in the Healthy Living strand are as follows:

- Demonstrate an understanding of sexual and reproductive health;

- Demonstrate, in a variety of settings, the knowledge and skills that reduce risk to personal safety;
- Describe the influence of mental health on overall well-being. (OME, 2000a, p. 11)

Healthy Living Overall Expectations address the importance of personal safety and mental well-being. The wording “in a variety of settings” is an interesting phrasing: if it is read in connection to the outdoor setting, it provides a different interpretation of the concept of “safety.” This is because in an outdoor setting, if someone were to have knowledge that would reduce risk to personal safety, they would have to possess knowledge of the physical environment and survival skills required to exist safely in that environment. Hence, if we were to examine what “safety” means in the outdoors, it would lead the teacher towards a more environmentally sustainable approach because her/his teachings would need to incorporate skills for outdoor survival.

The expectation that involves describing the influence of mental health on overall well-being is interesting as it pertains to Indigenous mental health strategies. People’s connection to the environment can have a positive impact on their mental health. This connection is known in many Indigenous nations across Canada through the practice of bringing people together in ceremony or custom to connect with the land and with each other. Some examples of these ceremonies or customs include: sharing circles, sweat lodges, pow wows, vision quests, drum circles and pot latches. These ceremonies provide social support for a community as well as a connection to the natural world, which therein have positive impacts on mental health.

Living skills.

The Overall Expectations for Living Skills are as follows:

- Use decision-making and goal-setting skills to promote healthy active living;

- Demonstrate an ability to use stress management techniques;
- Demonstrate the social skills required to work effectively in groups and develop positive relationships with their peers. (OME, 2000a, p. 12)

The Living Skills Overall Expectations focus on positive social interactions that lead to effectively working in groups and being able to have positive relationships with peers. They also reflect life skills that are necessary for youth to develop in order to be successful in the workplace. The ability to cope with stress, establish a plan to meet goals, and work collaboratively with others are all qualities that will assist students with being successful in the workplace. However, the concept of relationships is only represented in a social context. If activities take place outside, the relationship expands to include the environment. A human–land relationship becomes a living skill important to the success of the individual as well as to the well-being of the environment.

Specific Expectations that Operationalize the Overall Expectations

Beyond Overall Expectations in the PPL30 curriculum, learning expectations are further broken down into categories of Specific Expectations. The Specific Expectations provide the framework for teachers to teach the Overall Expectations to students. Next, general descriptions of the categories of Specific Expectations are provided, as is one example of an associated Specific Expectation. The description and example for each category of Specific Expectations support the policy analysis presented earlier for the Overall Expectations of each strand.

Specific Expectations for the Physical Activity Strand

There are two categories of Specific Expectations in this strand: Movement Skills, and Sports and Recreation.

Movement skills.

In order for students to achieve physical activity, two Specific Expectations listed for the Physical Activity strand outline the development of movement skills. For example, one Specific Expectation for Movement Skills in this strand of the curriculum for PPL30 states that “students will demonstrate the development of movement skills in a variety of physical activities (e.g., performing such skills as an overhead serve in volleyball, a parallel turn in down-hill skiing, or a j-stroke in canoeing)” (OME, 2000a, p. 9). Thus, there is flexibility regarding the choice of activity and the associated movement skills which will lead the student towards competencies in physical activities. As such, the examples provide ideas the teacher can use to shape lesson planning and instruction.

By connecting this expectation of movement skills to Research Question 1, it is apparent that the skills could be practised indoors or outdoors, but there is no mention of movement that considers environmental impact or sustainability. For example, hiking could be a movement skill that is taught without consideration for trail erosion or noise pollution to local habitat.

Sports and recreation.

There are four Specific Expectations for the Sports and Recreation in the Physical Activity strand. One Specific Expectation states,

By the end of this course, students will apply the specific rules and guidelines for participation in recreational and sports activities, including team, group, dual, and individual activities (e.g., yellow card infractions in soccer, appropriate breathing patterns in weight training, strategies for effective performance in tennis). (OME, 2000a, p. 9)

Hence, a requirement for participation in physical activity is the knowledge and understanding of rules and guidelines for sports and recreation activities. Therefore, comfort and knowledge of

how sports are played will assist students in this physical activity. While knowledge of rules is deemed important to be physically active, there is no knowledge about environmentally respectful practices while engaging in certain sports.

Specific Expectations for the Active Living Strand

There are three categories of Specific Expectations in this strand: Active Participation, Physical Fitness, and Safety.

Active participation.

There are seven Specific Expectations for Active Participation that encourage students to lead active lives and that describe the many benefits of leading an active life. For example, one of the Specific Expectations states that students need to “explain the benefits of lifelong participation in different physical activities (e.g., social interaction, enjoyment, relaxation, self-esteem) (OME, 2000a, p. 10). If students understand the purpose behind active living, they may be more inclined to work towards achieving an active lifestyle. Furthermore, the variety of benefits listed in the curriculum is aimed to appeal to different people: some people may be drawn to the social benefits of active living and others may be drawn to the relaxation or stress-management benefits. Thus, together, providing reasons for active living and choice could help students to commit to an active lifestyle.

While the benefits of active participation are far reaching, the PPL30 curriculum does not include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about environmental sustainability.

Physical fitness.

There are four Specific Expectations listed under Physical Fitness. This category of Specific Expectations is important in that it seeks to ensure that the goal of active living is being met by offering indicators that measure commitment to physical fitness and improvement over

time. One Specific Expectation mentions the importance of maintaining or improving “physical fitness levels by participating in vigorous physical activities for sustained periods of time (e.g., a minimum of two ten-minute time periods or one twenty-minute time period four times per week)” (OME, 2000a, p. 10). If students are committed to a standardized amount of physical fitness over a period of time, they will see improvement and the fitness regimen will become part of their regular active living routine.

However, while the PPL30 curriculum includes expectations about improving physical fitness, it does not include expectations about improving environmental health over time through environmentally sustainable behaviours. If physical activities are taking place outdoors, then it would be beneficial for the curriculum to include preferred actions during physical activities that will ensure the least amount of environmental impact (e.g., jogging on an existing trail rather than creating new trail networks).

Safety.

In order to maintain an active living lifestyle, safe participation in activities needs to be a priority. There are three Specific Expectations listed for safety under the Active Living strand in PPL30. One of the Specific Expectations states that students need to “demonstrate behaviour that minimizes risk to themselves and others” (e.g., doing warm-ups, checking slope conditions before downhill skiing)” (OME, 2000a, p. 10). Hence, active living requires the awareness of safety precautions and measures.

However, if physical activities take place outside, the curriculum needs to include safety considerations that protect the environment (i.e., leave-no-trace camping procedures). The PPL30 curriculum does not include Overall Expectations that outline the environmental safety and sustainability concerns that one would need to know when recreating in the outdoors.

Specific Expectations for the Healthy Living Strand

There are three categories of Specific Expectations in the Active Living strand: Healthy Growth and Sexuality, Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, and Mental Health.

Healthy growth and sexuality.

In Healthy Growth and Sexuality, there are five Specific Expectations. These Specific Expectations acknowledge the role of learning about healthy growth and sexuality as an instrument for active living. For example, one Specific Expectation requires students to “describe factors (e.g., environmental, hormonal, nutritional) affecting reproductive health in males and females” (OME, 2000a, p. 11). Hence, students would need to research the variety of factors that influence fertility in order to understand more about healthy growth and sexuality.

However, healthy growth and sexuality could be expanded to include living flora and fauna in the local environment. Studying the growth and reproduction of the natural world around us could encourage knowledge about environmental sustainability. The PPL30 curriculum does not have Overall Expectations that educate about the importance of healthy ecosystems and environmental interconnectedness amongst living things.

Personal safety and injury prevention.

Personal safety and injury prevention are important components of active living. The seven Specific Expectations for Personal Safety and Injury Prevention focus on students’ needs to understand how to minimize risk and injury as well as understand how to make responsible decisions regarding personal safety. One Specific Expectation states, “By the end of this course, students will be able to: describe different types of violence (e.g. relationship violence – physical, verbal, sexual, emotional)” (OME, 2000a, p. 11). Understanding the different types of

violence and being able to utilize solutions and strategies for preventing violence are instrumental to having a healthy lifestyle and making healthy choices.

The PPL30 curriculum could also include different kinds of violence towards the land (i.e., clear-cut logging) as a means of increasing knowledge about environmental sustainability.

Mental health.

Mental health is an important factor of healthy living and is emphasized through the listed Specific Expectations. First, it is important to understand what a mentally and emotionally healthy person looks like, as echoed in one of the Specific Expectations for Mental Health in the PPL30 curriculum: “Describe the characteristics of an emotionally healthy person (e.g., positive self-concept, ability to manage stress effectively, ability to work productively)” (OME, 2000a, p. 11). By defining what good mental health looks like, it will be easier to detect signs and symptoms that are not healthy and need to be addressed.

The PPL30 curriculum could include the benefits of the environment to promote mental and emotional health as a means of teaching environmental sustainability.

Specific Expectations for the Living Skills Strand

There are three categories of Specific Expectation in the Living Skills strand: Decision Making, Stress Management, and Social Skills.

Decision making.

Living skills in the course PPL30 refers to the necessary skills required to work with other people, make good decisions, and manage stress in order to be successful in the workplace. The PPL30 curriculum identifies decision making as an essential living skill. One of the Specific Expectations for decision making is to “apply strategies to establish priorities and set goals” (OME, 2000a, p. 12). Hence, it is apparent that decision making is a complex process and the

skills required to make good decisions need to be taught to students. Setting goals requires the understanding of strategies, obstacles, and risk that are all involved in decision-making situations. These variables need to be understood by students in order to make informed and positive decision in their lives.

The PPL30 curriculum could also include decision making from an environmental advocacy perspective. Developing skills to make decisions about ways to foster environmentally sustainability could benefit students significantly.

Stress management.

One Specific Expectation for Stress Management in PPL30 notes the importance of using “appropriate strategies for coping with stress and anxiety (i.e., relaxation, meditation, exercise, reframing” (OME, 2000a, p. 12). Students need to understand that stress is part of everyday lives and learn coping strategies to effectively manage stress in order to lead a healthy life. One strategy for coping with stress could be connecting students to outdoor environments through therapeutic activities. Furthermore, allowing students meaningful time outside could assist with fostering environmental sustainability.

The PPL30 curriculum does not have Overall Expectations that acknowledge the important role that the environment plays in monitoring a healthy and balanced life.

Social skills.

Being able to work collaboratively in a group is a requirement in many jobs and is thus an important social skill for students to develop. One Specific Expectation for Social Skills in the PPL30 curriculum notes that students need to be able to “explain aspects of the process of group dynamics (e.g., organizational culture, stages of group development, characteristics of the group,

function of the group)” (OME, 2000a, p. 12). Students will need to use strategies for giving feedback to their peers in order to work effectively in a group setting.

The Teacher as Implementer of Curriculum Policy

Ultimately, the teacher is the main instrument in the implementation of the curriculum document. The teacher is responsible for bringing the expectations to reality when he/she deliver a course to the students or enacts the curriculum. However, the teacher can only work with what is provided in the curriculum, and herein lies the problem. The problem is that OE does not have its own curriculum to guide philosophy and practice. As illustrated through the policy analysis above, the expectations of the course PPL30 within the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (OME, 2000a) focus on physical skills and knowledge of sports guidelines and strategies. There is no mention in this curriculum of stewardship, sustainability, responsibility for the environment, conservation, preservation, or any other phrase that denotes a concern and care for the environment.

Chapter Summary

Returning to the initial Research Question 1: “Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (OME, 2000a) policy document include expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?” The answer to this question, then, would have to be “no.” Throughout my analysis, it is apparent that the expectations in the PPL30 curriculum are focused on outcomes to achieve physical skills or obtain knowledge about sport guidelines. There is no mention of the environment or environmental sustainability. It is also interesting to notice that all expectations in the course PPL30 self-service the individual. That is, all of the expectations have the outcome of advancing an individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities with healthy living, and the course expectations

do not include the family, community, or environment as beneficiaries. Furthermore, the literature review in this thesis confirms the results of the policy analysis for PPL30 in this chapter through the discussion of anthropocentrism and the focus on physical activities in the field of OE. It is apparent that the course titled “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30) within the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (OME, 2000a) policy document- is poorly equipped as a reference for OE as there is no evidence of environmental sustainability in any of the expectations, neither Overall nor Specific.

However, the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum does not stand alone. As previously mentioned the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (MOE, 2009) policy is to be infused throughout all curriculum and all grade levels in Ontario. Furthermore, the document focuses on student leadership and engagement to change human behaviour to be more environmentally sustainable. *The Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow* (MOE, 2009) policy states: “Environmental education enables students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be environmentally active and responsible citizens and to apply their knowledge and skills cooperatively to effect long-term change” (p. 11). Furthermore, the *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (MOE, 2009) has a number of goals to guide the achievement of this vision; two of the goals are listed below.

- By the end of the grade 12, students will acquire knowledge, skills and perspectives that foster understanding of their fundamental connections to each other, to the world around them, and to all living things. (p. 11)
- Increase student engagement by fostering active participating in environmental projects and building links between schools and communities. (p. 14)

Therefore, it is important to understand how incorporating strategies from this document can better inform the Health and Physical Education curriculum by including environmental sustainability objectives that are achieved through student leadership initiatives.

**Policy Analysis; Indigenous Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society,
Grade 11, College Preparation (NBV3C)**

This chapter uses Pal's (1987) content portion of descriptive policy analysis to examine the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) curriculum policy document titled *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b), specifically the course "Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation," with a course code of NBV3C. Hereafter, this course is referred to as NBV3C, which represents the course selected for analysis from the *Native Studies* curriculum. The course curriculum for NBV3C is analyzed by examining the definition of the problem, the intentions, goals, and instruments used in the curriculum in order to better understand the content of the course. Then, using the content from the policy analysis, Research Question 2 is addressed: "Does the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled 'Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,' include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?"

Definition of the Problem

As previously detailed in Chapter 4, through the analysis of the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document, specifically the course titled "Healthy Active Living Education" (PPL30), there is no specific curriculum for OE in Ontario. In Ontario, the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document is the curriculum used for OE. Since the literature review identifies environmental sustainability as a driving force in OE, it is problematic that it is not reflected in the curriculum that guides the development and delivery of the OE course. Therefore, the problem is that OE in Ontario schools is being guided by a curriculum that does not mention environmental sustainability; and environmental sustainability

remains a priority goal of OE. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to better understand the content of the course NBV3C within the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document in order to determine if the expectations include or incorporate environmental sustainability. Furthermore, if environmental sustainability is reflected in the expectations of the course NBV3C, could the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document, generally speaking, be used to enrich the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document with respect to teaching OE in an environmentally sustainable manner? In an attempt to understand this problem, Research Question 2 seeks to investigate the following question: “Does the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled ‘Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,’ include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?”

Intentions of the Curriculum Document

In general, the purpose of the *Native Studies* course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C) can be described as follows:

This course focuses on the beliefs, values, and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Students will examine world views of Aboriginal peoples and political, economic, cultural, and social challenges facing individuals and communities. Students will also learn how traditional and contemporary beliefs and values influence the aspirations and actions of Aboriginal peoples. (OME, 2000b, p. 28)

From the above excerpt, it appears from the initial stage of policy analysis that the course NBV3C in the *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) document focuses on world views, beliefs, and values of Indigenous peoples in Canada that influences their aspirations and actions. It is interesting to note that the course leads to and results in action. This is an important connection when discussing environmental sustainability, as beliefs, values, and knowledge about the environment are meant to influence student action towards sustainability and conservation practices. The fact that the curriculum of this course found in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document includes beliefs, values, and action makes this curriculum compatible with the expectations for environmental sustainability in the OE curriculum.

The presence of philosophy and practice is not reflected in the physical education curriculum and thus does not allow for the teaching of sustainable practices behind outdoor activities. For example, doing a physical activity such as hiking in the outdoors without the teaching of human impact on the environment and sustainable practices reduces the learning opportunity to a mere physical activity to be achieved. However, if the teachings of environmental sustainability are included, this underpinning philosophy can lead to sustainable actions such as packing out garbage, using fire shields, and walking on designated trail systems. It is evident in this example that if hiking is viewed as a physical activity, it is void of philosophical understandings about the land and remains a physical task to be accomplished.

It appears from the initial stage of the policy analysis that, unlike the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a), the *Native Studies* curriculum includes values and beliefs that are instrumental in teaching and learning about environmental sustainability. This chapter will further analyse the content of the course NBV3C in the *Native*

Studies curriculum (OME, 2000b) policy document for the inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives.

Overall Expectations by Strand

The course NBV3C in the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document has four strands: Identity, Relationships, Sovereignty, and Challenges. This section provides analysis of policy represented in the Overall Expectations outlined in NBV3C. The analysis is presented by strand.

Identity.

The Overall Expectations for the Identity strand are as follows:

- Describe traditional and contemporary beliefs and values of Aboriginal cultures that influence present-day activities and behaviours;
- Identify aspects of cultural identity related to specific Aboriginal peoples;
- Compare Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspectives on the contemporary culture identities of Aboriginal peoples;
- Describe the efforts and actions of Aboriginal communities and individuals to maintain their cultures and languages within traditional land bases, on reserves, and in urban settings. (OME, 2000b, p. 29)

The first Overall Expectation is interesting as it links beliefs and values to action. Furthermore, as traditional Indigenous beliefs and values are inextricably connected to the land, this expectation leads to the possibility of environmentally sustainable actions. Therefore, this expectation would significantly enrich the outdoor education curriculum as the presence of environmentally sustainable practices is reflected in the objectives of the curriculum. The *Native*

Studies curriculum (NBVC3) identifies the following Specific Expectation under the strand of Identity to further support the presence of environmental sustainability:

Explain an understanding of how Aboriginal people’s identity as custodians and protectors of the land entrusted to them by the Creator (e.g., as expressed in the thanksgiving address) inspires their historical and contemporary commitment to remaining on their lands (e.g., as reflected in their negotiation of treaties such as the Maritimes Treaty of 1752 and Treaty No. 11). (OME, 2000b, p. 29)

This specific expectation expresses the importance of Indigenous peoples as custodians or protectors of the earth and the responsibilities that are connected to these roles. Hence, any activity taking place on the land would need to be done in a sustainable and respectful way in order to ensure that the earth is being cared for and protected. This philosophical understanding creates a sustainable context for outdoor activities by outlining the respectful role that humans assume while on the land. Thus, in the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C), it is apparent that the purpose of outdoor activities is expanded from merely refining movement and coordination skills to an understanding of how to engage in the activity in an environmentally sustainable way.

Relationships.

The Overall Expectations for the Relationships strand are as follows:

- Explain how Aboriginal people’s relationship to the land traditionally sustained them in various environments across Canada;
- Demonstrate an understanding of cultural practices of Aboriginal peoples;
- Explain how Aboriginal people’s links to the land and to a sustainable environment are part of their cultural identity;

- Demonstrate an understanding of the varying perspectives on Aboriginal people's right to self-determination. (OME, 2000b, p. 31)

It is interesting to notice the use of the word “relationships,” which is commonly understood to mean involving people as reflected in the physical education curriculum, in which is mentioned the importance of social interactions and problem solving. However, within this *Native Studies* curriculum, the concept of relationships entails the connection between people and land. The first expectation reflects the importance of human–land connections as a means to sustenance and survival. The ability of Indigenous people to understand the land in a way that could enable them to adapt, survive, and thrive in different environments across the country is impressive and is contingent upon a reciprocal relationship between humans and the land. This ability is predicated on the relationship that places the person in an equal relationship with the land rather than in a dominating or superior one. Thus, it is crucial for this expectation to guide the outdoor education curriculum as environmentally sustainable practices require an understanding and appreciation for environmental phenomenon.

The third expectation is also interesting as it mentions the cultural identity link between Indigenous people and the land. Living an environmentally sustainable life is a fundamental part of Indigenous cultural identity. This expectation directly states that environmental sustainability is a vital part of cultural identity and therefore is reflected in everyday interactions with the land. This means that environmentally sustainable practices are a part of a value system that drives outdoor experiences, which are practised and integrated into outdoor activities.

Sovereignty.

The Overall Expectations for the Sovereignty strand are as follows:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how traditional teachings and contemporary beliefs are the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination;
- Describe the efforts of Aboriginal peoples to attain autonomy in their lives;
- Describe how contemporary Aboriginal communities assert their autonomy through a blend of traditional and modern practices;
- Identify the Aboriginal beliefs and values that provide or have provided the foundation for the negotiation of treaties and land claims. (OME, 2000b, p. 33)

The Overall Expectations of the Sovereignty strand do not mention environmental sustainability but do allude to the presence of values and beliefs that guide Indigenous people towards autonomy and self-determination. One of the Specific Expectations states: “Describe Indigenous beliefs and values (e.g., relationship to the land) that may affect the future direction of treaties and modern agreements” (OME, 2000b, p. 34). Thus, there is a direct connection between a sustainable connection to the environment and the ability to take action to protect it through the creation of treaties and land claims.

Challenges.

The Overall Expectations for the Challenges strand are as follows:

- Identify the obstacles that Aboriginal peoples must overcome to protect and maintain their cultures and languages;
- Describe the challenges that technology presents to Aboriginal cultures and communities, and the ways in which technology can assist Aboriginal communities;
- Identify challenges presented by the ways in which the media deal with Aboriginal issues;

- Demonstrate an understanding of differences in the challenges faced by various Aboriginal peoples, including Status Indians, Metis, and Inuit;
- Identify physical and spiritual survival methods practised by Aboriginal peoples to help them meet the challenge of maintaining their cultures. (OME, 2000b, p. 54)

The Overall Expectations do not present environmental sustainability as a challenge; however, it is woven into the challenges that pertain to preserving Indigenous culture, as this culture is predicated on a connection to the land. For example, the presence of technology, media, and urbanization, which are all mentioned above may threaten environmental sustainability and ultimately the traditional relationship between Indigenous people and the environment. Likewise, the last expectation states the importance of practising survival methods as a means of maintaining culture. Survival methods are based on environmental sustainability and are thus integral to preservation of a culture as well as the environment that sustains that culture.

Specific Expectations that Operationalize the Overall Expectations

Beyond Overall Expectations in the NBV3C curriculum, learning expectations are further broken down into categories of Specific Expectations. The Specific Expectations provide the framework for teachers to teach the Overall Expectations to students. Next, general descriptions of the categories of Specific Expectations are provided, as is one example of an associated Specific Expectation. The description and example for each category of Specific Expectations support the policy analysis presented earlier for the Overall Expectations in each strand.

Each of the four strands – Identity, Relationships, Sovereignty, and Challenges – have Specific Expectations. Within each set of Specific Expectations per strand are four categories:

Aboriginal World View, Aboriginal and Canadian Relations, and Renewal and Reconciliation.

Each of these is examined next.

Specific Expectations for Identity

Indigenous world view.

There are five Specific Expectations for the category Indigenous World View. The following example of one Specific Expectation explains how the Indigenous world view is used as an instrument for achieving Indigenous identity: “Describe how Aboriginal practices, behaviours, beliefs, and symbols (e.g., hunting and fishing traditions; ceremonies and feasts; the use of drums, music, and dance) strengthen Aboriginal cultural identities” (OME, 2000b, p. 29). All of these activities or ceremonies involve relationship with the land, and it is this relationship on which cultural identity is founded. Engaging in feasts, drumming and dancing, and hunting are all activities that require a sustainable and respectful relationship with the land.

Indigenous and Canadian relations.

Sharing information about Indigenous culture with all Canadians helps to educate people about the unique identity of Indigenous people. This importance is reflected in the *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b), which states: “Describe how Aboriginal cultural activities and symbols (e.g., eagle feathers) increase public awareness and contribute to public understanding of Aboriginal cultural contributions (e.g., Inuit carvings)” (p. 29). Every cultural activity or symbol has a significant story or teaching that can be shared. Therefore, explaining the significance behind these activities and symbols will enrich the understanding of all Canadians regarding Indigenous identity.

Teaching people an understanding of Indigenous culture could foster environmental sustainability as many of the stories, customs, traditions, and rituals are based on respectful and

sustainable care of the earth. The stories and teachings behind the practices can inform all Canadians about how to better treat, respect, and care for the earth, which therein fosters environmental sustainability.

Renewal and reconciliation.

Cultural renewal is a process that is occurring in schools, communities, and households as Indigenous peoples learn more about their culture and identity. The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) also recognizes cultural renewal and reconciliation as an instrument of cultural identity in the following quote, “Describe how Aboriginal communities and individuals maintain links with traditional spiritual beliefs and practices in urban, rural, and institutional settings (e.g., grandmothers’ roles, healing circles)” (p. 30).

In terms of fostering environmental sustainability, it is important to educate people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous that reside in urban areas. The majority of the Canadian population live in cities and thus need to have opportunities to learn about the natural world and sustainable ways of interacting and being in nature. The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) provides the acknowledgement that this is an important step in learning about environmental sustainability.

Specific Expectations for Relationships

Indigenous world view.

Indigenous world view is an instrument in developing human–land relationships as supported by the following curriculum expectation, “Describe how the spiritual relationship that Aboriginal peoples have with the land is integrated with their beliefs and values (e.g., the Aboriginal belief that many parts of nature have spirits)” (OME, 2000b, p. 31). It is the beliefs

and values that perceive the land as a caregiver and provider that enable Indigenous people to have a spiritual relationship with the land.

Learning to view the earth as a caregiver or provider is a very different ontology that could provide opportunities for fostering environmental sustainability. If a reciprocal relationship between humans and land existed, then humans would view their actions and impacts on the land differently because these actions would affect them as well as the earth. An elder once told me that people would not cut down too many trees if they viewed those trees as fingers of their own hands. What I learned from this story is that if we can view the land as inextricably connected to us, it will lead to more environmentally sustainable behaviours.

Indigenous and Canadian relations.

Comparing the relationships that exist between Indigenous people and the land as opposed to non-Indigenous people and the land would yield some interesting observations. The curriculum states, “Compare harvesting behaviours and beliefs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples (e.g., wild rice harvesting, fishing practices on the east and west coasts of Canada) (OME, 2000b, p. 31). These examples would produce an interesting study as the east coast fisheries have undergone overfishing moratoriums while west coast fishing has remained sustainable. The underlying reason for these differences could be connected to the relationships that exist between humans and land and the associated sustainable methods connected to fishing practices.

The *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3E) encourages environmental sustainability through the awareness and understanding of Indigenous and Canadian relations. For example,

moose harvesting is a traditional activity that teaches people how to sustainably harvest from the land and is taught through the understanding that unsustainable practices (over hunting) will lead to a disruption in diet and family nutrition; ultimately, it connects to the interdependence between people and land. Also, when the moose is harvested, all of the moose is used and nothing is wasted; the fur is used to make clothing, the skin for drums, the bones for games, and the meat for food. This teaching is based on the principle of sustainability and is therefore an excellent example of how Indigenous practices can foster environmental sustainability.

Renewal and reconciliation.

The human–land relationship that exists among Indigenous people is something that could influence how Canadian people view the land as well. The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) supports the importance of this modelling: “Describe the importance of customs, rituals, and ceremonies within Aboriginal cultures (e.g., the role of sweat lodges, smudging, burning sweet grass) in strengthening Aboriginal identity in their relationship with Canadian society” (p. 32). The customs, rituals, and ceremonies all originate from and return to the land, and therefore strengthen the human–land connection. While this may be a foreign reality for non-Indigenous Canadians, it could be an enriching learning opportunity of seeing the land in a different perspective that is more environmentally sustainable.

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) fosters environmental sustainability through its expectations that include customs and rituals and connect people to the land. For example, I have been taught and still practise that when I harvest something from the land I am to give an offering of tobacco. This ritual teaches me to slow down and be present in the environment, to notice things I had not previously noticed, and to give thanks for and appreciate

what has been provided for me. If I did not perform this ritual, it would be very easy to take something without thinking about the possible environmental impact or without appreciating it.

Specific Expectations for Sovereignty

Indigenous world view.

Indigenous people have always had their own governments and have exercised autonomy in their own lives. Indigenous world view is an important instrument in sovereignty as illustrated in the following *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) Specific Expectation: “Demonstrate an understanding of a traditional story that imparts a message of self-determination (e.g., the Sedna story of the Inuit, the hermit thrush tale of the Iroquois)” (p. 33).

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) could foster environmental sustainability through the stories that discuss self-determination. Indigenous people have always had self-governing systems and through these systems leaders have learned to speak up about what is important in leading a community of people. In today’s world, leaders need to stand up and speak on behalf of the issues that afflict the planet. In order to maintain environmental sustainability, people need to have the passion and motivation to speak up and protect traditional lands. This process is part of self-determination.

Indigenous and Canadian relations.

The differing values and beliefs amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can create challenges when communicating about policies, treaties, or land-use plans. The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) supports this challenge in the following Specific Expectation: “Identify the conflicting values and priorities (e.g., Anishnawbe treaty-making protocol) that affect the negotiation of treaties and agreements involving Aboriginal communities and different levels of government” (p. 33). It is important to acknowledge that while there are differing

values amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people there are also differing values within Indigenous communities as well. Across Canada, Indigenous nations, and members within those nations have different views, management strategies and leadership priorities. However, while there is diversity of values and beliefs amongst many different nations, there also exists a commonality of care and respect for the land.

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) could foster environmental sustainability through decision-making processes between Indigenous people and the federal government. If Indigenous people are able to share views regarding sustainable land use, then governments would learn a different and more sustainable approach, and decisions could be made that prioritize the health of the earth.

Renewal and reconciliation.

The beliefs and values held by Indigenous people may influence the rest of Canadian society and therefore impact the direction of treaties and land-use agreements. This reality is also reflected in the *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b): “Describe Aboriginal beliefs and values (e.g., relationship to the land) that may affect the future direction of treaties and modern agreements” (p. 34).

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) could foster environmental sustainability through treaties and land-use plans that prioritize the health of the earth. These treaties and land-use plans would not only impact Indigenous but all Canadians, who would be better informed about environmentally sustainable practices.

Specific Expectations for Challenges

Indigenous world view.

One of the challenges for Indigenous people is overcoming obstacles to protect and maintain their culture and language. The Indigenous world view is an instrument that can assist Indigenous peoples with this challenge. This challenge is also identified in the curriculum:

“Identify how Aboriginal peoples living in an urban setting can maintain their cultural identify (e.g., by using the services of Native Friendship Centres or enrolling their children in Native language classes in the schools they attend)” (OME, 2000b, p. 35).

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) could foster environmental sustainability by allowing Indigenous youth in urban areas the opportunity to experience their land-based culture. One of the challenges identified is the lack of cultural connection that Indigenous youth experience in urban areas. Focusing on more outdoor, experiential, and cultural opportunities on the land could help all students learn environmentally sustainable behaviour and practices.

Indigenous and Canadian relations.

One of the challenges facing Indigenous people is the role of technology in their culture and communities and its ability to lead to acculturation. However, if used according to traditional beliefs and values, technology can work to advance Indigenous culture and identity. The following Specific Expectation supports the importance of technology: “Describe the impact of technology on the relationship of Indigenous communities with Canadian society (e.g., advances in technology lead to acculturation)” (OME, 2000b, p. 35).

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b), specifically the course within this document titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,” encourages environmental sustainability through the use of technology.

The GIS and GPS systems that are used in collaboration with traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) provide opportunities to understand the natural world and therefore to protect and care for it.

Renewal and reconciliation.

Indigenous people have adapted to modern conveniences and technology while still maintaining a connection to their culture and identity, and this duality needs to be communicated to all Canadians. Just because people utilize new technology does not mean they have lost their culture of being connected to the land. The following Specific Expectation echoes this importance: “Demonstrate an understanding of how Aboriginal peoples have adapted to challenges caused by technological and environmental changes (e.g., using snowmobiles, air travel, and computer technology; the impact of dam construction in Quebec)” (OME, 2000b, p. 36).

The *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b) fosters environmental sustainability through technological changes because people are able to gather and compare information across large geographic regions. For example, previously, a community of people would understand their local environment and know the cycles and patterns that existed within it. However, with the addition of computer technology and air travel, different communities can communicate and share information with each other about environmental systems. This may be useful for the protection of threatened or endangered natural species.

Chapter Summary

It is evident through the policy analysis as well as arguments from the literature review that the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C) in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document

(OME, 2000b) has environmental sustainability as one of its primary focuses. Every Overall Expectation in the curriculum for the course NBV3C mentions the environment by connection of human activity to the land. This human–land connection, which is woven throughout all facets of the course curriculum, assists with the prioritization of environmental sustainability. Thus, the specific course analysed in this chapter, NBV3C, which is found in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b) offers an example of course content that could greatly enrich the content of the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a) when offering OE courses. Based on the results of the policy analysis from this chapter, it is recommended that the *Native Studies* curriculum (OME, 2000b), and specifically the course NBV3C, be used to enrich the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (OME, 2000a) with respect to courses associated with the offering of OE.

In addition to the *Native Studies* curriculum, the *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education policy framework* (2007) could be used to enrich the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum (OME, 2000a). This policy outlines a number of strategies that aim to include First Nation, Metis, and Inuit traditions, cultures and perspectives that promote environmental sustainability across the curriculum.

The following excerpt from the *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) demonstrates the Ontario governments' commitment to this goal:

The Government of Ontario creates and supports an academic environment that fosters Aboriginal, Metis, and Inuit languages and cultures. It acknowledges the diversity found in First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities and endorses learning about First Nation, Metis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives in the public education system. (p. 8)

Hence, the *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) could inform the creation of OE curriculum that fosters environmental sustainability, through the inclusion of practices and perspectives that value and respect the land.

The next and final chapter, Conclusions, presents the purpose of the research, and an overview of the methodology used. The next chapter also discusses three themes: relationships, values, and leadership, which emerged during the policy analysis; these themes are reflected upon in terms of addressing Research Questions 1 and 2. Lastly, the implications of the research are provided, in relation to both education policy and practice.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overview of the Study This study examined the content of two Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents: *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a), specifically the course titled “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open,” with a course code of PPL30, and *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b), specifically the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,” with a course code of NBV3C. The purpose of this research study was twofold: to examine the PPL30 curriculum for inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives, and to examine the content of the NBV3C curriculum for inclusion of environmental sustainability expectations. The central aim of this research was to explore the extent to which Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy is, or is not, integrated into OE in secondary school curriculum as a way of connecting students to their natural environment and promoting environmentally sustainable behaviours. Furthermore, Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy was explored as a possible informing agent for OE curriculum with regard to its ability to include environmental sustainability expectations.

I chose to use Pal’s (1987) policy analysis framework by focusing on the content portion of descriptive analysis. This framework examined the definition of the problem, the intentions, goals, and instruments used in the policy to better understand if OE has principles of environmental sustainability reflected in the curriculum that guides the course.

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. Does the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* (OME, 2000a) curriculum policy document include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?

2. Does the *Native Studies* (OME, 2000b) curriculum policy document, specifically the course within this document titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation,” include Overall Expectations that encourage knowledge about the practice of environmental sustainability?

Emerging Themes

Throughout the research, various themes were found repeated in both curriculum policy documents examined for this study as well as in the literature that was reviewed. These themes act as a foundation to understand and guide the development and delivery of OE courses. Three themes emerged as important to the purpose of this study: relationships, values, and leadership. Each is examined next.

Relationships.

The *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document of the Ontario Ministry of Education (2000a), specifically the course titled “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30), discusses the importance of social relationships with respect to gaining skills for the workplace. For example, under the Living Skills strand, the following Overall Expectation is listed: “Demonstrate the social skills required to work effectively in groups and develop positive relationships with their peers” (OME, 2000a, p. 12). Interpersonal interactions are considered an important learning expectation in physical education as most activities are group based and thus require the participation of more than one person. Hence, understanding group dynamics, group effectiveness, and strategies for cooperatively working in a group are considered important objectives in the physical education curriculum.

In the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document of the Ontario Ministry of Education (2000b), specifically the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in

Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C), the expectations also discuss relationships. However, rather than social relationships as found in the course PPL30, in the course NBV3C, the relationships discussed occur between humans and nature and the importance this relationship plays in environmental sustainability. For example, the following Overall Expectations are listed in the course NBV3E in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document:

- Explain how Aboriginal people’s relationship to the land traditionally sustained them in various environments across Canada;
- Explain how Aboriginal people’s links to the land and to a sustainable environment are part of their cultural identity. (OME, 2000b, p. 50)

These Overall Expectations also note the importance of relationships, but more of an emphasis is placed on the human–land relationship that prioritizes the sustainability of the environment. Without the presence of a relationship with the land, the outdoors becomes the same as the indoors and may as well be a gymnasium. In order to want to protect or preserve the land, people need to feel connected to it. Hence, relationships and emotional connections to the land are fundamentally important to the teachings of environmental sustainability.

Both the OME curriculum policy documents analysed in this study have the theme of relationships woven throughout them. However, while the course PPL30 in the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a) covered social relationships that advance the individual, the course NBV3E in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b) covered human–land relationships, which advance the sustainability of the environment. Therefore, the PPL30 curriculum encourages relationships that advance

individuals, while the NBV3E curriculum encourages relationships that advance the community and its involvement in the protection of the environment.

Values.

In the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a), specifically the course titled “Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open” (PPL30), all expectations are about performing or perfecting physical skills or gaining knowledge about sports. There is no mention of values or beliefs that guide physical activities. While this may be acceptable for physical education courses that take place indoors in a gymnasium, they fail to acknowledge the philosophical needs for activities that take place outdoors for an OE class.

In the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b), specifically the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C), the expectations focus on the values and beliefs that guide Indigenous people to protect and care for the land. For example, the following Overall Expectation was cited under identity: “Describe traditional and contemporary beliefs and values of Aboriginal cultures that influence present-day activities and behaviours” (OME, 2000b, p. 29). These values and beliefs are recognized as the forces behind activities and behaviours. Thus, activities are not mere physical tasks that are performed, but rather purposeful and meaningful activities that stem from values. Principles of environmental sustainability are woven through the expectations in the NBV3C curriculum. It is interesting to note that values and beliefs do not need to stem from academic knowledge, but rather from an emotional connection to the land. Thus, it is interesting that the NBV3C curriculum contains a number of emotionally charged expectations and the PPL30 curriculum does not.

Hence, while the course curriculum for PPL30 does not mention the presence of values in the expectations, the course curriculum for NBV3C recognizes that values drive actions.

Therefore, there seems to be a missing component in the course curriculum for PPL30, especially considering the guideline for outdoor education.

Leadership action.

The third theme found in both OME curriculum policy documents is leadership action. In the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a), specifically the course titled “*Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open*” (PPL30), leadership is listed under the Active Living strand as the Specific Expectation in the category Active Participation: “Demonstrate leadership (e.g., planning and leading in-class activities)” (p. 10). Thus, in this course, leadership is viewed as understanding a sport and having proficiency in a sport to be able to lead an activity.

In the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b), specifically the course titled “Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society, Grade 11, College Preparation” (NBV3C), leadership is mentioned, but in the context of organizing cultural initiatives that work towards achieving autonomy or sovereignty. For example, under the strand titled Sovereignty, the following Specific Expectation is listed: “Identify initiatives and projects at the community, provincial, and national levels that demonstrate Aboriginal self-sufficiency and autonomy (e.g., North American Indigenous Games, Native Child and Family Services agencies in First Nation Communities)” (OME, 2000b, p. 34). Thus, exercising leadership through cultural projects and initiatives helps to foster Indigenous culture and identity.

Leadership is an essential skill to Indigenous autonomy and sovereignty. In this context, leadership has the purpose of maintaining cultural identity and practice, whereas with the

physical education curriculum, leadership is leading a physical activity. Again, while the theme of leadership exists in both curriculum policy documents, the context and purpose differ significantly. In the course curriculum for PPL30, leadership is meant to serve the individual in leading a healthy lifestyle, whereas in the course curriculum for NBV3C, leadership serves the whole community and, ultimately, the lands on which the community resides.

With relation to outdoor education, the curriculum for the course PPL30 is anthropocentric as it focuses on the individual or the group. However, the course curriculum for NBV3C is more eco-centric as it focuses on human–land interactions and outcomes that promote the sustainability of the land. Therefore, if OE continues to follow the *Health and Physical Education* course PPL30, as it is currently set up to do, the focus will continue to be on physical activities and the individual without consideration for the environment. This is problematic as students are not taught about their connection to the land and thus will not be motivated to protect it in a sustainable manner. For example, if students go outside and play a sport, or go on a hike and come back inside, they are essentially using the outdoors as a gymnasium. However, if students are taught to care for the land and be responsible stewards with every activity they do outside, then they will learn far more than the physical activity itself.

For example, a moose hunt could be an activity that takes place in an OE course. If this activity were done by following, for example, the curriculum expectations found in courses such as PPL30, students would go outside, walk until they found a moose, shoot it, quarter it up, and bring it back to prepare food. While there is a lot of learning in those expectations, they are void of connection and consideration for the moose as well as the land on which the moose has found sustenance. If a course in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document had expectations that referenced a moose hunt, it would look considerably different. Students might give an offering

before they went hunting and have an elder explain the significance of the ceremony. Then, students would learn how to travel in the woods with little impact. If a moose was killed and harvested, there would be teachings on how different parts are used. Once the harvested moose was brought back to the school, there would be a celebration to give back to the community and give thanks to the land for providing for people. The second experience is the same activity, but it draws on a wealth of information and teachings about the land and could alter the way that students view their experiences on the land and the way they treat the land.

Implications

This research provides implications for policy, practice, and further research. The implication of this research for policy is that the results can inform the actions of policy makers (Ontario Ministry of Education) about deficiencies in curriculum expectations that could be revised in the future during the stages of policy development and implementation, to provide a different direction for OE. In addition, the implications of this research for OE practice involve making connections between expectations in curriculum policy documents used in OE and the realities that teachers face in the classroom. Lastly, this study provides implications for further research by exploring new research questions that have arisen out of the present study that may shape policy development in the future. These implications will be discussed in further detail below. In addition, future research could involve studying the *Native Studies* curriculum to create a curriculum for outdoor education that exists on its own.

Policy.

Arguments in the literature review were confirmed by the results from the policy analysis carried out in this study. The current notion of OE, which is based on the course PPL30 found in the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a), prioritizes

physical activities (Higgins, 1996; Lugg, 1999; Thomas, 2005). There is also evidence in the literature that OE operates from an anthropological perspective (Cosgriff, 2011; Payne & Wattchow, 2008; Stewart, 2008). This evidence was further supported in the policy analysis as the PPL30 expectations were all self-serving and benefited humans only. In general, these arguments in the literature review were confirmed with the results of the policy analysis which showed short-comings in the course PPL30 found in the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000a) in terms of lack of representation of environmental sustainability expectations. This curriculum does not have expectations that include environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the course examined, NBV3C, in the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b), does have expectations that include environmental sustainability and could be used to enrich the content of the course PPL30 curriculum used to plan OE. This study has illustrated that the course PPL30 used to plan OE does not respond to the needs of an OE course, and it should be enriched using courses such as NBV3C. Other policy documents that could be referenced to enrich the OE course regarding environmental sustainability are: *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (MOE, 2009) and *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2007).

Furthermore, it is also recommended that the process of curriculum development be more inclusive of representatives at the school levels and, more specifically, of the teachers who are responsible for teaching the OE courses from adapted curriculum. Teachers must be given more influence with the development and implementation of environmentally responsive curriculum by considering the need for environmental sustainability as a primary goal in the *Health and Physical Education* curriculum used to plan OE.

Practice.

There are many implications for this study's findings on educational practice in Ontario's schools. Curriculum expectations posited in the Ontario Ministry of Education's documents influence the practice and delivery of education in the province. For example, the expectations in PPL30 are all based on physical skills and knowledge of sports, which is what teachers will draw on in planning and enacting their OE courses and lessons. Thus, this research has identified the gaps in the PPL30 curriculum with respect to OE. Therefore, it is recommended that the PPL30 curriculum be enriched using the NBV3C curriculum in order to change the practice of OE so that it becomes more environmentally sustainable. Other Ontario Education policy documents that could enrich the OE curriculum are referenced throughout the research and are as follows: *Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (MOE, 2007); and *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools* (MOE, 2009). Both of these policies are recommended to be implemented across all Ontario curriculum and grade levels and it is therefore appropriate to reference them when discussing the planning and delivery of OE curriculum. In addition, both of these latter mentioned policies prioritize environmental sustainability as a learning objective and provide engaging and leadership-oriented strategies to achieve environmentally sustainable behaviours among youth.

Furthermore, it is important to note the existing PPL30 curriculum should be revised by current OE teachers, Native educators, and policy makers as an important step in ensuring policy will be implemented by those who are responsible for practising it.

Further Research

This study provides implications for further research by exploring new research questions that have arisen out of the present study that may shape policy development in the future. For example, further research could involve studying the *Native Studies* curriculum policy document (OME, 2000b) to create a curriculum for OE that exists on its own. That is, rather than borrowing other subject domain's curriculum document (i.e., PPL30) and adapting all of its expectations into OE, a new and relevant curriculum could be created by incorporating a multitude of expectations from different curriculums that best represent the goals of OE.

Another area for further research is the possibility of creating integrated curriculums, whereby two or more course curriculums are combined to offer an integrated course. While integrated courses are being offered in practice, teachers are still required to create their courses from scratch by piecing together course expectations from different curriculums. This additional workload often results in fewer integrated programs being offered, and if offered, they may not be as well planned as they could be. If an integrated course curriculum already existed, it would be easier and more accessible for teachers to offer integrated programs, which are ultimately more holistic and comprehensive, especially in the field of OE. An excellent example of subjects that would benefit from an integrated program are outdoor education, geography, language, and fine arts.

Reflections

It has been my intent to research the benefits of rooting OE curriculum in Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy in order to better connect students to the environment, thereby encouraging environmental sustainability. I hope that all OE educators alike will find this research study helpful with the planning and execution of their programs. Obviously, the real contribution of having OE programs that are more culturally responsive is for the benefit of the

students. Education needs to be relevant for students in order for them to be engaged with their studies and to see purpose in their learning. OE holds the potential for being engaging for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike and for empowering students to become more deeply invested in the world around them.

The importance of having students develop a connection to the land is so that they will be concerned citizens who are invested in the future of the environment. There needs to be a connection between humans and nature in order for people to care about what happens to the environment. If the connection is primarily intellectual, then people may “know” about the environmental issues plaguing our planet but may not know what to do about them. This is why having the emotional connections are so vitally important. Indigenous people across Canada have exercised these connections to the land for centuries, and they have been revered as the original stewards of the land. By extension, if this philosophy has worked to foster a human–land relationship for thousands of years in Indigenous communities, it is plausible that it would also work in the delivery of OE programs to assist youth with developing the same relationship.

Furthermore, the importance of having students invested in the future of the environment is crucial to their well-being, safety, and security in their home communities. As natural resources continue to be sought after, exploration and exploitation will be venturing into First Nation reserve areas and traditional territories. Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people alike will need to be informed about environmental issues, threats, and precautions that will directly affect their communities. Thus, educating students with this objective will benefit them in the future.

I have spent my entire teaching career in Indigenous communities. I have taught on the British Columbia coast, in Northwestern Ontario Ojibway Territory, and in Northern Tutchone

communities in the Yukon. I have first-hand experience with the deep respect that Indigenous people across the country have for the land. I would like to personally thank all of the influential people across the country who have inspired me to do this research.

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