

**“Sense of Place: A Qualitative Study of Pedagogical Decision Making in a Wilderness Setting”**

An Honors Thesis

by

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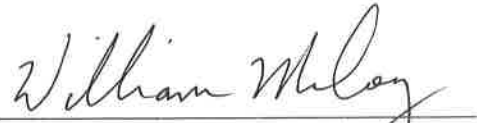
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## **Abstract**

Have you ever felt an emotional, spiritual, or physical attachment to a certain place? It could be your home town, a favorite vacation spot, where you proposed to your spouse, or any area that has left an impact on how you live your life. That feeling or relationship that you have with a physical location is a sense of place. In this qualitative study I explore how my sense of place in the wilderness can help me make effective pedagogical decisions that will help my students develop a strong sense of place in the future. This study is focuses on my sense of place, but the outlets that I use to explore this phenomenon are common in the realm of qualitative research. The problem that I define, literature review, research method description, data collection, and data analysis provide real world examples of sense of place experiences and their characteristics, as well as a thorough study of my personal experiences with a sense of place and some ideas of how I will use those experiences to influence others' in the future.

As a child I got up and went to school like everyone else. I remember it like it was yesterday. When I was going through secondary it seemed like my entire life was dependent on a bell. When the bell rang I left one room and went to the next class on my schedule. The environment was so structured. Everyone knew where they were supposed to be and when they were supposed to be there. There were definitely times when I had fun, but overall I was bored and uninspired. I got good grades because I always made sure to turn in my completed work on time, but by no stretch of the imagination was interested in what I was learning. The days were predictable and they often seemed to be endless. I would always catch myself staring out the window and wishing I was outside doing something significant.

I love being outside. It does not matter if I am out on the Appalachian Trail for a weekend trip or if I am playing with my dog in my backyard. For me there is something peaceful about turning off my phone, laptop, and television. I am certainly a big fan of technological development, but at the same time it can often stress me out. Being outdoors allows me to free myself from the many distractions in this world. In nature, I am not constantly receiving and checking emails or text messages. I am simply walking with the purpose of going somewhere unknown, but strangely enough every time I get to that place it is incredibly comforting and oddly familiar. The feeling that I just described is something called a sense of place. My sense of place is not any physical location, but rather it is the mental state that I find myself in when I am exploring the backwoods of Pennsylvania or hiking to the peak of one of Maine's incredible mountains. Every time my mind is in that sense of place, I seem to learn something new. Sometimes it is a new skill, while other times it may be a history lesson about the land that I am walking

through. One thing is for certain though, and that is the fact that I have never forgotten anything that I have learned while spending time in nature.

As a result of all my years of schooling I have found that the traditional education setting, while effective in many ways, may not be the best solution for helping students discover their sense of place. I say that as both a current student and a future teacher. I feel that in order to be a successful teacher I am going to have to think like a student, and if there is one word that can be used to describe all students, it would be unique. It did not matter what level of education I was going through, I always noticed that my peers and I were all different, even my best friends. All of us thought differently in some way, and although I received a quality education, there were many times where I felt absolutely no mental or emotional connection to what I was being taught. As I get older and I begin to complete my placement courses in college, I am noticing students go through the same learning issues that I faced in high school and middle school.

Outdoor experiential education offers unique opportunities that have the potential to help students find their sense of place. I can strongly empathize with the students who struggle to make it through a school day. Some people can find their sense of place while in a classroom, but others, like myself, require a view of a much bigger picture and what bigger picture is there than the outdoors? Outdoor experiential education programs do not play a significant role in many schools today, but the need for them exists. There is a dire need for all students to find their sense of place and by implementing more of these programs, students like me can get to that place where education generates excitement and wonder as opposed to reluctance.

Not everyone enjoys being outdoors as much as I do and people who do love

being outside as much as me may enjoy nature for different reasons and in different ways; therefore, the goal of this project is not to prove that outdoor experiential education is the best way to help students develop a sense of place. Instead I will be aiming to answer the following question. How will my outdoor experiences help influence my pedagogical decisions in order to instill a sense of place in my future students?

### **Literature Review**

#### **What is a sense of place?**

Sense of place refers to a person's physical or psychological connection to a certain geographical location, as well as the overall meaning that place has to someone based on the experiences they have had in that place (Hug, 1998). Some of the defining characteristics of a sense of place are as follows:

1. Developing a sense of place gives people the chance to build meaningful relationships with one's environment.
2. There is a connection between one's sense of place and his or her desire to solve ill structured problems that exist in their community (Kaltenborn, 1998).
3. Knowledge that is gained through developing a sense of place is natural and can be applied to real life and scholastic problems.

For the purpose of this study I will be adopting the idea that a sense of place cannot be reached as a result of one lecture or trip into the woods. It is a state of mind that can only be reached as a result of spending a substantial amount of time exploring oneself in an environment that you are emotionally connected to (Aucoin, 2011). I will also add to that the idea that a sense of place is dependent on two separate concepts of place.

1. Place Attachment – This is the actual connection between an individual and a physical location (Kudryavtsev, 2013). For example, many people feel place attachment when it comes to the place they grew up in because they feel like their hometown played a significant role in molding them into who they have or will become. Another prime example of place attachment was shown in a study about visitation in the Kentucky State Parks (Kudryavtsev, 2013). This study defines place attachment as a person's bond to a specific place, which is very similar to the definition that I state above. Kudryavtsev also used the terms “sense of place” and “place attachment” interchangeably. For the purpose of this study I will be adopting the idea that the two phrases are separate from each other in terms of ideology. However, something new that was presented in this study was the idea that place attachment consists of two separate theories, those being place identity and place dependence. Place identity had a strong connection to an individual's environmental ethics, while place dependence shared a correlation with the amount of times a person revisits a certain place (Bradley, Bogard, Liu, and Maples, 2016). I will be adopting the idea of place identity and dependence for this project.

2. Place Meaning – This concept is a little more complicated because it involves symbolic connections as opposed to physical ones. A place's meaning is determined by the person who feels the place attachment. Place meaning can be explored through something called place-based education. It has been suggested that place meaning is a necessity for human existence because it helps us understand more about ourselves (Eyles, 1989). We learn more about ourselves by understanding place meaning because place meaning refers to the spirit of a certain location, rather than the practical function a place serves (Hutson, 2011). Essentially, a place's meaning is the answer to a person's

place attachment (Stedman, 2006).

Place attachment and place meaning are two very different ideas, but both of them share several similarities. One of the most important aspects of both place attachment and meaning is the desire to preserve the natural environment within a certain area, and in order to do that one has to have a fair amount of knowledge regarding environmental issues in that area. An example of this that is currently going on is people developing emotional and psychological connections to national parks. National parks have become a hot commodity in the world of tourism. As urbanization increases, so does people's desire to escape from it once in a while. Many tourists are falling in love with the national parks, and as the interest in visiting these areas increases, so does the desire to preserve their beauty (Wolf, Stricker, Hagenloh, 2015). The national park example will not play a big role in this project, but the overall idea of preservation being part of a sense of place is another idea that I will be exploring in this study. The seven Leave No Trace principles provide proof that more and more people are starting to care about natural areas all over the country. The principles that Leave No Trace has laid out are as follows:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate to other visitors

Every summer I visit Acadia National Park up in Maine. Each year I see more



signs around the park stating the Leave No Trace principles. I find that there is a correlation between these environmental ethics and the booming ecotourism economy. More people are being exposed to these beautiful places, therefore they want to see places such as Acadia be preserved. The Leave No Trace principles are very important to people who has developed a sense of place for a certain location.

Most importantly, both place attachment and place meaning share the characteristic of being personalized. That means that when someone feels a certain attachment or meaning regarding a place, those feelings are specific to that person alone (Bradley, Bogard, Liu, and Maples, 2016). In other words, when talking about sense of place, personalized means that people typically do not have the exact same ideas and feelings about a place as someone else does. For example, I feel a strong sense of place on the Appalachian Trail, specifically the Appalachian Trail in the Delaware Water Gap region of northeast Pennsylvania and New Jersey. While other people probably feel a strong connection to the Delaware Water Gap area as well, the chances of them having the exact same experiences in that area that I have had are very slim. This idea also influenced the direction of this study.

The definition of sense of place that was developed by Hug in 1998 contains many characteristics that are vital to this study. Throughout the duration of this project I will remain open to new ideas that may present themselves regarding my idea of what sense of place really means. For now I define sense of place as the relationship between a person and a physical location that has formed as a result of the person's experiences at that specific location. The experiences can include anything from physical interactions with other people to meaningful spiritual or psychological interactions with the land.

Either way those experiences culminate in the desire to defend that place from threats, so that it remains exactly as it was. Only in this way can that sense of place be achieved by an individual.

**What are the characteristics of high quality outdoor experiential (adventure) education?**

Outdoor experiential education is not a new form of learning by any stretch of the imagination. When the idea was first conceived, it was strictly referring to camping education. The whole concept was very black and white. Essentially, the developers of outdoor experiential or adventure education believed that some concepts can only be taught inside a classroom, while others can only be taught properly in nature. Over the years, the definition of adventure education has greatly expanded. Today it can encompass a variety of different subjects, most of which can be taught indoors or outdoors (Adkins & Simmons, 2002).

In my view, the main thing that separates outdoor experiential education from traditional education in the classroom is its authenticity. For students like me, the experiences and possibilities that exist outside in nature are far more realistic than those that exist within the walls of a regular classroom. For the purpose of this study I will be exploring characteristics of adventure based outdoor experiential education and its potential advantages for learners.

Some of the main characteristics of adventure based outdoor experiential education include:

1. A successful experience in adventure education requires a certain amount of risk taking. Without risk the true objectives and goals of the lesson cannot be met (Nichols

2002).

2. The result of taking on risks in adventure education is not only academic development, but personal growth as well (Miles & Priest, 1990).

3. The backcountry or wilderness setting provides people with an opportunity to escape from their every day lives and to step out of their comfort zone (Huber, 2013).

4. Adventure education teaches us more about our values, and understanding our values improves our overall ability to make decisions (Stinger & McAvoy, 1992).

5. Many students who enjoy being outdoors have spiritual experiences in nature, which contributes to the development of their sense of place (Stinger & McAvoy, 1992).

One characteristic of adventure based outdoor experiential education that appears consistently in the literature I reviewed concerns whether it is appropriate to use technologies while engaged in the outdoor adventure experience. It seems to me that technologies that involve better sleeping bags, stoves or other gear are acceptable while cell phones and tablets are thought to interfere with the experiences. The concern appears to be the same as those in a traditional classroom. Teachers fear that bringing technology into the classroom will cause a disconnect between the students and the lesson. The concern is the same for outdoor experiences. People seem to think that the use of technology is a distraction in the outdoors. When it is used inappropriately that may be the case; however, research shows that learning in remote locations with emerging technologies is even more engaging and motivating (Veletsianos, 2015). In my experience the use of technology in a wilderness setting has never negatively affected my experience, therefore I reject this idea. I have found that digital technologies serve a huge purpose in a wilderness setting. They are what allow me to capture certain areas

and moments, so I can bring visual evidence of these places back to the front country.

Then I can share my experiences with others, which in turn may inspire them to go visit a certain place. This will not play a huge role in this project, but part of developing a sense of place with nature is understanding the appropriate use of technology while engaged in adventure education, consciously managing the specific technology's strengths and weaknesses to positively impact the outdoor experience.

**How does outdoor experiential (adventure) education increase the likelihood that students will achieve a sense of place?**

Adventure education provides several attributes that contribute to the development of a student's sense of place. Several program models help describe these attributes. The educational models that they are using resemble that of the one used by Outward Bound (Austin, Martin, Mittelstaedt, Schanning, & Ogle, 2009). Many of these schools are developing these programs for students who are close to graduating in an attempt to better prepare them for college, but students of all ages can benefit from programs like these. The attribute that exists in these programs that can better help students find a sense of place is the emphasis on character development, not just intellectual development. These programs use wilderness settings as a tool for developing character and building leadership skills (Outward Bound Today, 2017). The idea of promoting adventure education specifically for high school seniors and college freshman is to help them increase their level of independence, but becoming independent is heavily reliant on developing a strong sense of place.

Adventure based education programs also have a strong potential to increase landfullness (Baker, 2005). Landfullness seems to be a relatively new concept of mind

because there is not much related literature available. From what I read, it seemed like the general definition of landfullness is an emotional and mindful connection to the land. Another way to look at it is being mindful in regards to physical land structures. Essentially, it means caring about a certain place in the wilderness and being aware of threats that are specific to that area. My interpretation of this information is that landfullness and a sense of place are one and the same thing. Authors and other researchers in this area seem to use the terms place attachment, place meaning, and landfullness interchangeably. However, for the purpose of this study I will be adopting the idea that while all of them are very similar, they still have slightly different characteristics and meaning. Adventure education experiences appear to be a unique and promising method for promoting landfullness among students.

### **Research Method**

#### **Question**

As a future outdoor educator, how do my experiences in the wilderness better prepare me to make pedagogical decisions that help my students develop a high quality sense of place?

#### **Qualitative**

The research method suggested by the question for this project is of the qualitative variety. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that the researcher is conscious of his or her own biases, but is still open to different perspectives (Leggett & Yates, 2016). Many pioneers in outdoor adventure education adopted qualitative research as their primary outlet for information and data collection. For example, it has been well documented that John Dewey found that human thinking was complex in nature (Pappas,

2016). He recognized that people are emotional thinkers, as opposed to linear ones. That implies that it is hard to separate oneself from being biased about topics that we are advocates for (Pappas, 2016). Therefore it is more important for the researcher to disclose their biases to the reader to be as transparent as possible, so that the reader can decide whether or not the researcher has been fair and honest in their procedures.

For the purpose of this study it is important to note that qualitative research methods are inductive in nature, while methods of the quantitative variety are deductive. An easy way to differ between the two is that inductive reasoning goes from general ideas to a specific theory, and deductive reasoning goes from a specific theory to general examples (Mertler, 2012). The main difference involves the actual researcher. When applying deductive reasoning it is crucial for the researcher to remain distant from the topic, so as not to disrupt the outcome of their study. However, when using inductive reasoning, research variables are not only expected, but they are welcomed as well. The contrast between these two forms of research played a huge role in this project. My overall goal was not to falsify or confirm the accuracy of an existing theory, but rather it was to take a grouping of general observations and develop an entirely new theory based on those observations. For this reason, the choice to use inductive reasoning to form my theory was an easy decision.

The choice to go the qualitative route as opposed to the quantitative one was a rather simple decision for this specific research method. Since I am an advocate for outdoor adventure education it would have been impossible for me to be a distant and unbiased researcher throughout this entire project. Therefore, quantitative research methods were out of the question. The true purpose of this study would not have been

able to have been met if I was unable to embrace my outdoor adventure education advocacy. The idea of this research project was to show that outdoor adventure education is an effective way to help students achieve a sense of place when the instructor is making decisions that are appropriate and pedagogical. Since the idea of having a sense of place means to be attached to a certain location, it only makes sense that the sense of place researcher should feel a connection to the study.

The qualitative method that I prescribed for this project involved the use of different data points. Using different viewpoints to gather information and data is called triangulation (Carter, Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, Neville, 2014). To be more specific, the type of triangulation I will be using for this project is data triangulation. Data triangulation requires the researcher to collect data from different sources through the use of methods such as conducting interviews or distributing surveys, and conducting a document analysis of other researchers' work.

Qualitative research has a huge scope in itself. For this project I had to narrow it down and choose a specific qualitative research method that fit exactly what I was trying to achieve. Historically, data triangulation has been a very popular method for conducting research regarding the overall effectiveness of outdoor adventure education. There are different ways to carry out this method, but ultimately all of them achieve the same results. For example, in 2006 a study involving a group of three researchers was conducted (Ballard, Shellman, & Hayashi, 2006). Each researcher was somehow involved with an outdoor leadership program. One of them was a program coordinator, another was an assistant instructor, and the final researcher was a member of an outdoor education program. Each researcher conducted interviews and then the three of them

analyzed and shared their findings.

### **Context**

Since this study focused on outdoor adventure education the majority of the research was conducted in an outdoor setting. This research method was carried out over the course of three months, during which I went on several backcountry trips. These backcountry trips provided the backbone for me to build this method process. These trips included several weekend outings on the Appalachian Trail, a weekend outing on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, and a ten-day Wilderness First Responder (WFR) class in the Adirondacks. Some of these destinations were places I have been before, while others were completely new to me. Some of these trips were solo outings, while others were with groups of people ranging from one to twenty. However, this study was not specifically about any of the locations I traveled to during the span of those three months. All of these places contributed equally to the study by providing unique characteristics which can be found in the data collection and analysis section of this research method.

### **Participant**

I am a twenty-one year old male and I was the primary participant in this project. I am both a technology education major at California University of Pennsylvania and an advocate for outdoor adventure education. Like anyone else, there is a story behind my advocacy. I grew up in northeast Pennsylvania with the Appalachian Trail right in my backyard. There was always a draw to the "People's Path". Growing up I would not say I spent a significant amount of time on the trail, but I spent enough time on it to notice a change inside myself. Spending time with nature brings out the best in me and as soon as I made that connection I hit the ground running. I threw myself into the beauty and



magic of the backcountry. Up to this point most of my backcountry experiences have been of both the personal and solo variety. The more time I spent backpacking, kayaking, rock climbing, and participating in any other outdoor recreation activity, the more I saw the educational value in adventure education.

### **Data Collection Strategies**

The data that I collected in this study was designed to collect information about my thinking regarding a sense of place in the wilderness. Even though all of the information that was used for this research project was about me, other people participated by means of natural conversations with me, which provided me with several data outlets. These individuals' participation in the conversation portion allowed me to gain outside perspectives that might not have been obvious to me. Their input also helped to reduce the use of bias throughout this study. All of the people who were involved in these talks were close to me in some way, but my relationship to each person varied. These people also spanned throughout a variety of different hobbies and professional fields. I had conversations with my parents, my brother, a couple of my old teachers from high school, friends that I made during the WFR course in the Adirondacks, and my WFR instructors. All of these participants knew me on a different level which allowed me to gather accurate and honest information during the data collection process.

For this study, I have adopted several outlets for data collection. In order to collect the data necessary to answer my thesis question I have decided to use a combination of personal journal entries, natural conversations, and a review of lesson plans that I have written in the past. Keeping a journal has never been something that I

do regularly while spending time in nature, but over the course of the past few months, I have been documenting my backcountry journeys using journal entries and video documentary. The purpose of using journal entries to collect data is to provide a firsthand description of how I was feeling at certain points throughout the day. I reviewed all of my journal entries during this period very thoroughly. While reviewing my entries I was looking for patterns, such as similarities between words and phrases that I used while writing. This was only the first step in the data collection process.

The next step was to have natural conversations with certain people who are close to me. The people that I spoke with included my parents, my brother, several of my friends from our WFR course in the Adirondacks, and my WFR instructors. The purpose of having these natural conversations was to gain outside perspectives on my overall demeanor before I depart for a backcountry trip, throughout the trip, and after I return home from one. Each natural conversation followed this question outline:

#### Wilderness Experiences

1. What am I like before my wilderness trips?
2. What am I like during my wilderness trips?
3. What am I like after my wilderness trips?

#### Pedagogical Decisions

1. What do my teaching/leadership decisions look like now versus a year ago?
2. What does my leadership role look like in an outdoor setting?

#### Sense of Place

1. What do I say about the places I have visited in the wilderness?
2. What place(s) do I talk about the most?

Interviews, like journal entries are a very popular qualitative research method, and these natural conversations shared many similarities with interviews. They both involve gaining outside perspectives by asking questions to different groups of people. Some recent examples of acceptable studies in the scope of using adventure education to find a sense of place that used interviews or surveys as a portion of their method section include Kilimanjaro: A Case of Meaningful Adventure and Service Learning Abroad (Cavanaugh, Gajer, Hargis, Mayberry, O'Connor, 2015) and Place Attachment in Kentucky State Parks: An Opportunity to Increase Park Visitation and Advocacy (Bradley, Bogard, Liu, and Maples, 2016).

The final portion of my data collection process involved referring to my old lesson plans. During this phase, I looked at lesson plans that I have written in the past and compared them to lesson plans that I developed within the past two months. At this point, I was looking to tie all of the data collection points together by finding distinct connections between my lesson plans, journal entries and answers to the interview questions. I broke each natural conversation down into the five questions listed above and each question revolves around a certain category. The categories are motivation, preparation, impression, social, and reflection. Those five categories are what I was looking for in each portion of this data collection process. Obviously I was asking for direct answers during the interview portion. Whilst reviewing my journal I was looking for answers to the same questions; however, the answers would not be as direct, which would allow me to expand the vocabulary patterns I was looking for. In my lesson plans I was looking for areas where I encourage students to express their sense of excitement and motivation for the course, allow them to enjoy their preparation for an activity, points

in the lesson where I as the instructor took time to gather a general impression of the students' overall progress, times when I simply allowed them to interact with one another in order to promote social growth, and finally areas where I gave them the opportunity to complete a thorough self-reflection about their learning experience.

### **Presentation of Data**

See the data analysis section for a thorough description of how I went about reviewing my journal entries and lesson plans, as well as how I conducted my interviews or natural conversations.

#### Journal Entries

■ Indicates that nothing was found in that journal entry to suggest that I thought about or did anything regarding that topic.

⊕ Indicates that evidence was found in that journal entry to suggest that I thought about or did anything regarding that topic.

	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Impression</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Reflection</b>
<b>12/19/2016</b>	⊕	■	⊕	■	⊕
<b>12/20/2016</b>	⊕	■	⊕	■	⊕
<b>1/6/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/7/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/8/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/9/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/10/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/11/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
<b>1/12/2017</b>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕

1/13/2017	+	+	+	+	+
1/14/2017	+	+	+	+	+
1/15/2017	+	—	+	—	+
1/17/2017	+	—	+	—	+
1/21/2017	+	+	+	+	+
1/22/2017	+	+	+	+	+
2/4/2017	+	+	+	+	+
2/5/2017	+	+	+	+	+
2/25/2017	+	+	+	+	+
2/26/2017	+	+	+	+	+
3/16/2017	+	+	+	—	+
3/24/2017	+	+	+	+	+
3/25/2017	+	+	+	+	+
3/26/2017	+	+	+	—	+

### Natural Conversations

— Indicates that the topic was not discussed during that conversation.

+

	Motivation	Preparation	Impression	Social	Reflection
Parent	+	—	+	—	+
Parent	+	+	+	—	+
Peer 1	+	+	+	+	+
Peer 2	+	+	+	+	+

<b>Peer 3</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Peer 4</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Instructor 1</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Instructor 2</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Instructor 3</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Instructor 4</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Instructor 5</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>

Lesson Plans

**-** Indicates that nothing was found to suggest the presence of that lesson

**+** characteristic.

Indicates that evidence was found to suggest the presence of that lesson

characteristic.

2014-2016 Lesson Plans

	TED 100 Lesson Plan	TED 300 Lesson Plan	TED 335 Lesson Plan	ITEEA Lesson Plan	TEECA East Lesson Plan
Motivation	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Preparation	<b>-</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Impression	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Social	<b>-</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Reflection	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

2017 Lesson Plans

	TED 450 Lesson Plan	ESP 413 Lesson Plan
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Motivation	+	+
Preparation	+	+
Impression	+	-
Social	-	-
Reflection	+	+

### **Data Analysis**

My data analysis was based off of the three themes that presented themselves in my thesis question. Those themes were my wilderness experiences, pedagogical decisions, and sense of place. Within each of those themes I found subcategories that existed. The subcategories were motivation, preparation, impression, being social, and reflection. While reviewing my journal entries, conducting interviews, and assessing my lesson plans I was on the lookout for the existence of these themes and subcategories in each theme. This is a qualitative study, so of course I was open to any new ideas that were presented as well.

### **Journal Entries**

Reviewing journal entries or some other form of personal reflections is a very common method used in qualitative research. Researcher, Clark Moustakes (Moustakes 1994) said that “Phenomenology seeks meanings from appearances and arrives at essences through intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts, judgements, and understandings.” This statement describes what I have done with my journal entries perfectly. The purpose of this study is to analyze how my

sense of place in the wilderness can better help me make meaningful teaching decisions, so in essence that is the phenomenon of this study. I am using intuition and personal reflections on my past experiences, my journal entries, as an outlet for information on this phenomenon. Not only are journal entries commonly qualitative research, but more importantly it is almost always used in outdoor education. Outdoor adventure education organizations such as Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) incorporate journal entries into their curriculum in order to assess student growth in terms of both hard and soft backcountry skills. The usage of journal entries in both qualitative research and outdoor adventure education shows that their use for this project is appropriate and justified.

The process that I used to review these journal entries involved a lot more than reading and recording the text in them. The analyzation process that I implemented for my journal entries was very in depth. I began by reading through each entry twice. After that I went through each entry and highlighted different portions with different colored highlighters. Each color represented a different theme. I found that the themes in my journal entries coincided with the themes that my interview questions revolved around. Those themes included motivation, preparation, impression, social, and reflection. However, as I reviewed my journal entries more in depth I found that more themes existed. One of the biggest themes that I found in my journal entries was the theme of culture. When I talk about the culture of a certain place I am not just referring to the social aspect of a certain location. Culture encompasses all of the themes that I identified. It is my impression of a place in the wilderness and how I act based on that impression. I also discovered a whole new aspect of sense of place that I did not find



while completing my literature review. It is something I have been calling place respect or place understanding. When I talk about place respect in my journal entries I am not referring to respect in terms of wildlife. There is not really any mention of the Leave No Trace principles because that is something I just do naturally. I do not even have to think about environmental ethics while I am in the wilderness. To me place respect and understanding is knowing what a specific area is capable of and basing my actions heavily off of those facts. For example, one of the journal entries that I wrote was while I was backpacking in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire. The Whites, as they are famously called, are known for being home to some of the worst weather in the world. The highest wind speed ever recorded occurred in the Whites, an incredible 231 mph. Naturally, I noticed in my journal entries both before and during my trip there, an underlying tone of respect in regards to the weather. My talk of preparation was a lot more thorough than usual and while I was there I wrote things like, "The Whites have not disappointed with their weather," and "I am getting the full Whites experience." Statements like this suggest a recognition of how severe a place in the wilderness can be, but by respecting the potential of that area, I was better able to enjoy it.

My journal was the first data point that I began to analyze. I was looking at journal entries dating back to October of 2016, which is when I first started to document my backcountry adventures through the use of writing. While analyzing my journal entries words and phrases regarding how I was feeling or my state of mind were very important pieces of information, but that is not all I was looking for in this data point. Obviously I did not appear to be happy and cheerful in all of these reflections. I have spent many days in the backcountry when it has been raining or snowing, and there have

certainly been times when physical ailments have affected my overall attitude. The purpose of analyzing my journal entries was to not to confirm or deny my level of enthusiasm and joyfulness while on these trips. The purpose of using journal entries as a data source was to study my awareness in regards to sense of place. When I first sat down to complete this task I found that I was focusing heavily on words that showed my emotions, but as I got further into this data analysis I found that there were certain themes in my writing. Those themes included writing about my feelings and emotions, using backcountry skills such as cooking and completing tasks to make a safe/comfortable camp for the night, my motivation for hiking to these places, different things that I saw throughout the day while hiking, and of course post experience reflections. Once I noticed these themes and patterns in my writing I began to categorize them.

A large portion of my journal entries were not even written during the duration of these trips. Many of them were prepared the night before, as well as the night after I returned from wherever I had traveled. The post trail journal entries are essentially trip debriefs. However, even though I did not write these entries while I was out in the wilderness I was still looking for the same categories and patterns that I found in my other journal entries.

Debrief entries offered a lot of post trip reflections. My reflections were whole in the sense that they included both positive and negative aspects of my experiences. For example, I noticed that a lot of my entries included statements about how the weather affected my experience. I often wrote things like “The weather was perfect, which added so much joy to this experience” or “The combination of freezing rain, snow, and strong winds made several portions of the trail very hard to travel on.” Both of those statements

do not seem that important at first glance, but due to the nature of this study, they actually offered a lot of vital information. Obviously the weather has the potential to play a huge role in setting the overall tone of a backcountry journey. Clearly I was not searching for words of comfort and joy, but rather my true motivation. Why do I go hike long distances and live outside when it snows, rains, and sleets? Why do I continue to walk when I am physically exhausted? The one example statement that I provided above uses the word joy in relation to the perfect weather. When the sky is blue, the sun is shining, and I have an endless view of the Maine or West Virginia wilderness it is easy to think that my motivation stems from the picturesque scenery, but there is so much more behind it. Something very important that I noticed was that a lot of my entries were about challenges that I faced while on these trips, but no matter how challenging things got I pretty much always ended my entries by saying, "I'm excited for the next adventure" or "I can't wait to get out here again." Ending my journal entries with this type of statement implies that I will be back. It is like reading a book with plenty of chapters, but no ending. These type of statements also show enthusiasm. All of these details were things that I discovered initially by reading my journal entries, but in order to understand my true motivation I had to delve further into my writing.

The more I read into my journal entries the more I discovered. I found that there were several layers behind my motivation for going on these trips. Obviously the impression of each location, meaning the physical beauty, was a huge draw, but I knew that going in. For the purpose of this study I found that sense of place was not something that could be captured in a video or a photograph, so the physical impression that each location gave me was just the beginning of the experience. I started to notice that journal

entries I wrote before, during, and after each trip often referred to my preparation in some way, shape, or form. I referred to preparation in many different ways. Sometimes I wrote about studying a map of a certain area or testing out a new piece of equipment. For example, many of my journal entries included statements like, "My new boots made walking 10-15 miles a day a lot more comfortable on my feet," and "My new pack is a lot more spacious than my old one which made packing much easier." Other entries included statements like, "The map shows a spring located about a ¼ mile down trail from the shelter," and "The trail conditions have been rated as moderate by most hikers." These kinds of statements suggest that my excitement for each trip started before I actually started hiking and continued after I returned home.

Part of a sense of place is learning and learning does not just happen on the trail. Studying maps and reading about gear are both forms of learning that promote the development of my backcountry skills. Building my backcountry skills has not only become something that I need to do for safety reasons, but it has also become something that provides me with a tremendous amount of joy and excitement, therefore any opportunities that I have to build upon my backcountry skills is added motivation for going on these trips.

The next thing that I started to observe in my journal entries were the different dynamics that each trip offered. I often found that the social aspect, or lack thereof, on each trip played a huge role in not only my mental status, but also the connection I made to these different places. This was one of the most interesting portions of this study. How did I react to being alone for extended periods of time in the backcountry on solo trips? How did I react to all of the varying degree of personalities on trips with my

is that the people I travel with add to sense of place in nature not by providing me with company while I hike, but rather they enhance the experience by allowing me to share a part of my sense of place with others. Of course it is fun to pass booze and cigars around the campfire, but there is not really any mention of those things in my journal entries. Sharing trail stories, learning about peoples' backgrounds and why they are out on the trail, experiencing the culture of different locations together, and most importantly sharing the land that we walk on together is the real social dynamic that I refer to in my journal entries.

Reviewing these journal entries in depth provided me with not only a lot of hidden information about myself that helped tremendously with this study, but they also helped me build a foundation off which I could base the rest of my research method. By breaking down my journal entries into things that motivate my adventurous ways, the importance of my preparation, all of the place impressions that I shared, my social place in nature, and the importance of my reflections, I was able to form questions for my interviews and form a general idea of what I should be looking for in my lesson plans.

### Natural Conversations

One, of the pioneers in qualitative research, Michael Quinn Patton, compared the use of interviews and questionnaires in qualitative research to a photograph (Patton 1990). Both tell a story, but they differ in the sense that a photograph captures a specific moment in time, while interviews and questionnaires offer a method that allows for the collection of data that is constantly changing and developing (Patton 1990). Patton is a giant when it comes to qualitative research methods. His ideas about the usage of interviews and questionnaires are well represented in this project. While I did

not use an interview format, the natural conversations I had with people were a lot like interviews. That suggests that my usage of natural conversations as a data outlet for this project is justified and appropriate.

Having these natural conversations brought a whole new dynamic to my research method. The way that I went about conducting the conversations was very important to the overall effectiveness and accuracy of the information that I gathered from them. I wanted the setting of these natural conversations to be as authentic as possible. In order to achieve that goal I went into each conversation with a very broad set of questions to ask each person. While I did ask each person the same questions, every conversation that I conducted was different. These talks did not simply consist of me asking these questions, the person I was talking to giving me concrete or direct answers, and me transferring their answers into my data analysis section. Obviously each portion of every conversation started with me asking a question, but each time I asked someone one of the questions I prepared the conversation that followed was very unique and informative. Not only did I learn a lot about the people that I was talking to, but I also learned a lot about myself as well. Rather than being simple question and answer sessions these conversations were unscripted and I remained completely open to new thoughts, themes, or ideas that may have presented themselves. I had ideas about some themes that may present themselves during these natural conversations just as I did for my journal entries, but the process that I used to conduct these interviews allowed for flexibility in both the way I asked the questions and the answers that were provided.

While each talk offered something unique to this project, some of the natural conversations were similar depending on who I was talking to. What I mean by that is

that each group of people I spoke with provided their own input. For example, I noticed that the talks with my parents were similar to each other in terms of how each conversation flowed, as well as the answers that were given during each interview. The case was the same for the conversations with my peers and the conversations with my WFR instructors. The way the talks went had a lot to do with the person's background. What was their relationship to me? What line of work were they in? How long have they known me? What are their interests? All of these were things that may have contributed to their answers and the overall flow of the conversation.

As I stated above I conducted several natural conversations with people who know me in different ways. These natural conversations were with my parents, peers, and both current and former instructors of mine. These talks varied in terms of information depending on who the conversation was with, but I did take something away from all of them. Above I listed questions in different sections and those sections were taken from my thesis question. Those sections include my wilderness experiences, pedagogical decisions, and my sense of place. I noticed that all of the conversations, no matter who they were with, offered a lot of insight regarding how I act during the different phases of my wilderness experiences. The general consensus seemed to be that I appear excited before I leave for a backpacking trip. Many of the people I talked to mentioned that I talk a lot about my excitement to leave for the trip and I spend a lot of time looking at maps of the areas, conducting online research about the places I go, and conducting pack checks.

Other natural conversations provided me with more insight about my pedagogical or leadership decisions and my sense of place than others, simply due to the setting of the

conversations. Most of the ones with my peers occurred during a wilderness trip, so naturally they were able to offer more information about what I am like during my wilderness adventures and what I offer as an outdoor leader. Like the talks with my parents the ones with my peers were more of a conversation rather than a standard question and answer session. Typically they were with me at least the night before we left to go on the wilderness trip and they were also involved in planning the trip, so they offered a lot of input about my overall demeanor before we left.

My peers tended to be a lot more specific with their answers to the questions about my wilderness experiences. For example, rather than simply saying that I appeared to be excited and enthusiastic right before a wilderness trip they made statements like “Your voice tends to raise when you talk about the trip” and “You talk a lot about not being able to sleep the night before we leave.” Those are details that were not provided during the natural conversations with my parents. I noticed a common theme in their answers about what I am like during the trips. Almost all of my peers stated that I am “very quiet” while we are actually hiking, but I tended to “come alive in camp.” This can be tied back to one of the themes I found in my journal entries. In camp I have a tendency to be social because that is my way of experiencing the culture of a certain camp, but while I hike I prefer the quiet because I love listening to the sounds of nature such as bird chirps and flowing water in nearby creeks. There are two places where I have noticed this phenomenon specifically. The Adirondacks and anywhere on the Appalachian Trail are two places where I really noticed this occurrence, and the wilderness trips during which I conducted most of my face-to-face interviews. For me, being social with other hikers in camp is something that just comes naturally. There is no



hesitation and no hierarchy of conversation. Being social and interacting with others in camp is like being inducted into a fraternity. This is an important aspect in my understanding of sense of place and that showed in my interviews with my peers. I was surprised to hear my peers' response to the question regarding my post trip attitude. Many of them responded by saying that typically they are too busy reflecting on the experience to notice what I am doing, but they all said that I am rather quiet, which leads them to believe I am reflecting on the experience internally just as they are.

Whenever I go on backpacking trips with my friends I have always felt as if leadership is something that is shared amongst us all, meaning that we all have our own specialty areas. Some people are outstanding backcountry cooks, while others have exceptional navigation skills. Some people have very prominent technical skills, while others are skilled in the area of encouraging others to stop and enjoy the surrounding area and all that it has to offer. I never quite knew what category I fell into while on trips with my peers until I had these natural conversations. I received mixed answers to the questions about my role as a leader in the outdoors. Some of my peers view me as someone who knows a lot about every place we go before we get there due to my extensive research that I do prior. Several of my peers specified that I love to state facts regarding the history of certain places, as well as talk about wildlife "fun facts." A specific example is a trip that I am currently planning now. In a few weeks I will be traveling to the Grayson Highlands in southern Virginia. My friend that will be going with me commented on all of the facts that I have been sharing with him about the area, such as the origins of the wild Grayson Highland ponies. For me there is a sense that having this knowledge ahead of time will further my enjoyment of these places because I

am better able to understand the area and its origins.

I also spoke with both current and former instructors of mine. These instructors included school teachers, professors, and my NOLS instructors. Some of my instructors had the ability to offer more input regarding my wilderness experiences than others due to the setting of each conversation. However, all of my instructors had a lot to say about my pedagogical decisions and my outdoor leadership experiences. A lot of the natural conversations with my instructors followed the mentor and mentee theme, meaning that they shared a lot of their experiences with me and made connections between them and the things I am currently doing. The consensus seemed to be that my instructors saw a lot of the same character traits in me that they believe they possess. All of them expressed that I was enthusiastic about outdoor adventure and education, as well as incredibly conscious about my sense of place in the outdoors. Some instructors were able to offer more input specifically regarding my outdoor leadership, simply because they had more opportunities to see me in action. Ironically enough, my instructors seemed to be asking most of the questions during these interviews. Anytime I would ask a question they would reply by asking even more questions. Natural conversations with my instructors allowed me to learn a lot about myself due to the fact that I had to think about their questions. For example, one of my instructors would often answer my questions about outdoor leadership by asking me what I think an effective pedagogical decision looks like in certain scenarios. We would discuss this and come to a conclusion. That instructor then specified that our similar character traits such as the ability to stay calm in situations that encourage panic and our ability to stick to our training allowed us to develop similar solutions. The natural conversations with my instructors allowed me to see that although

I have not had much experience leading groups in the outdoors, I do have the ability to apply what I know to situations that I face in the backcountry and what I know can help me make favorable decisions for my future students.

### Lesson Plans

The analysis process that I used for the lesson plans was the exact same as the ones that I used for my journal entries. I used different colored highlighters to mark the different themes that existed in my lesson plans just as I did for my journal entries. The only difference that I noticed in the two processes was that different themes resulted from each data outlet. Obviously my lesson plans presented more pedagogical based themes than my journal entries did. For example, I found that my newer lesson plans included a lot of information about how I perceived my students interests and levels of performance rather than what I believed would work best for me. This was the main difference between the analysis process that I used for my lesson plans and the one that I used for my journal entries.

There are certain things that must be included in a lesson. For example, all lesson plans should have certain standards and objectives addressed in them. Therefore, naturally while I was dissecting the content of my lesson plans I was not concerned with the standards and objectives. The language that is conveyed in teaching standards and objectives has been spelled out for teachers ahead of time, so there is not really anything unique about those portions of a lesson plan. The sections of the lesson plan that I was primarily intrigued by were the student assessment and the lesson delivery sections. The lesson delivery portion was written from scratch by me, the teacher, which allowed for much more flexibility in terms of language. One of the biggest things I was looking for

in the lesson delivery was word choices that suggested I was including the students in decision making or at least giving them the opportunity to voice any concerns they had about an assignment. I noticed that this was something my older lesson plans lacked. I found that the lesson plans I wrote within the past year improved a lot in that area. I used language in my writing that suggested a more open and flexible demeanor. For example, I noticed that I started a lot of my sentences or bullet points with phrases like “allow the students to...” or “invite the students to...” Using words like “allow” and “invite” suggests that I am taking more of an interest in my students’ satisfaction and personal growth.

A big portion of reviewing my lesson plans revolved around my overall impression of their content and how I planned on presenting the content. Something that I was looking for to give me an idea of my overall impression of a lesson plan was the existence of student adaptations. My older lesson plans did not contain detailed student adaptations because I had not learned a lot about them at that point in time. However, all of the lesson plans that I developed over the course of this study contained some type of student adaptation or several adaptations. So, naturally the existence of student adaptations alone did not tell me anything. I was looking at them in much more detail. Some questions that I was trying to answer by doing this were:

1. Did the adaptations relate to me or the student?
2. What type of work did I provide in place of the original assignment?
3. Did I adapt the entire lesson plan or a specific portion of it?

I noticed that my newer lesson plans contained adaptations throughout the entire lesson as opposed to just the assessment portion. This indicates that I am attempting to

be more mindful of my students' needs throughout the entirety of the lesson and that I am preparing ahead of time for a diverse group of students. This can be linked to my outdoor experiences in the sense that I can plan ahead, but I have to be able and willing to make adjustments based on the present conditions. Leading groups outdoors seems to present obstacles that are similar to those that a teacher faces in the classroom. For example, during a group backpacking trip different people may be at different physical levels, which means the entire group may have to take more frequent breaks in order to allow those who are less fit or not as used to the altitude to hydrate and catch their breath. The decision to halt the entire group is up to the discretion of the group leader or instructor. Implementing student adaptations in a lesson plan is very similar. The teacher needs to make a conscious decision to implement adaptations for students of different skill levels. Deciding to implement certain adaptations may mean that the teacher needs to turn some of his or her attention away from some students in order to help others succeed. By addressing student adaptations throughout my entire lesson plan I am showing that I recognize the importance of adapting a lesson or an outdoor experience in order to fit the needs of all who are involved.

One of the most important aspects of my lesson plans that I analyzed were the activities included in them. Student activities are the meat and bones of a lesson. The nature of the activity that accompanies a lesson can either make or break the lesson's effectiveness. For example, I consider myself to be a kinesthetic learner, so simply taking a test does not ensure that I am going to comprehend what was taught to me. While analyzing the activities in my lesson plans I was looking for certain things. The first thing was simple. Did the activity involve some kind of hands-on project or

assignment? Due to the fact that I study technology education all of my lesson plans are for technology education classes. Technology education is very hands-on; therefore all of my lesson plan activities involved some sort of project. The next thing I was looking for was whether or not I allowed students to complete projects as a team. In my lesson plans I found that I gave students the option to either work alone or with a small group. The fact that I allowed students to work together to complete the projects shows that I am encouraging team building and leadership skills amongst my students, both of which are crucial skills in a wilderness setting. I have found that working as a team is inevitable in the backcountry. There are too many variables and more often than not people in the group have certain specializations. The same can be said about group projects in a classroom setting. Some students are skillful at keeping organized binders and work logs, while others are very gifted in terms of building things. In a wilderness setting some people are pros at navigation, while others are phenomenal at constructing makeshift shelters. Promoting team work in the classroom is a pedagogical decision that I feel roots from my experiences in the wilderness.

I provided examples of how my lesson plans look now verses how they looked a year ago. I mentioned the language that I use in my lesson delivery, as well as the activities and adaptations that I now include in my lesson plans. These are three indicators that I am considering my students' motivation, providing them with ample time to prepare, observing their overall impression of the activity, creating opportunities for them to have valuable social experiences, and allowing them to reflect on the lesson both individually and as a group. By implementing those themes into my lesson plans I am attempting to create experiences for my students, and that is a crucial step in

implementing a sense of place in their lives. In order for students to care about their learning it is important to use things such as place-based education. This opens up a whole new world of opportunities and makes it possible for them to achieve a strong sense of place. The combination of place-based education and implementing those five themes from my journal entries into my lesson plans is what I intend my classroom to look like as I move forward as a teacher. I believe this is an effective way to instill a sense of place in my students.

### **Conclusions**

In the near future I plan on becoming an outdoor educator, and as a future educator I want to provide my students with an opportunity to develop a strong sense of place. I conducted this study in an attempt to learn more about how my pedagogical decisions and how they can be used to achieve exactly that. Using my journal entries and lesson plans, as well as participating in natural conversations offered unique data outlets. Before conducting this study I did not have a clear idea of what sense of place actually was. In this thesis I use several characteristics from a definition that was proposed by another researcher in 1998 (Hug, 1998). Sense of place is the relationship between a person and a physical location that has formed as a result of the person's experiences at that specific location. I kept that definition in mind throughout the entirety of this study.

This project took place over the duration of eight months. During that time I went on many backpacking trips during which I had the opportunity to write many journal entries. While writing all of them I kept the theme of sense of place in mind. Before I started to review my journal entries I knew I was looking for things such as motivation, preparation, impression, social interactions, and reflections. However, I discovered more

themes in my writing, which included culture and place respect. These themes play a very important role in my idea of sense of place. While not all of these appeared in every single journal entry, they presented themselves in different forms in most of my writing. I also found that these themes were very important to my pedagogical decisions, which I explored when I analyzed my lesson plans. The data presentation section in this thesis suggests that over the past year my pedagogical decisions have changed drastically.

I mentioned some specific indicators in my lesson plans that may suggest a change in pedagogical decisions, but the biggest indicator is the change in my backpacking trips. Before, my backpacking trips were focused on the physical and visual rewards that came as a result of them. I loved the accomplishment of hiking up the side of a large mountain, and being rewarded with a picturesque view at the top. The gems that a place has to offer still plays an important role in my pedagogical decision making in regards to the impression theme. However, when I go on a backpacking trip now I am much more mindful of all those themes that appeared in my journal entries and lesson plans. Motivation, preparation, impression, social interaction, and reflection are all important aspects of my wilderness experiences. Now when I go on a backpacking trip I think a lot about my motivation, as well as my hiking partner's motivation for being there. The preparation plays a huge role in my sense of place. Looking at maps and researching the area in order to learn more about are things that I highly enjoy. As my peers and I are hiking along we can stop and enjoy the gems that a place has to offer. When we stop and take these breaks I get to share the information that I learned through researching that place beforehand. In camp there are social experiences like no other. We gather around a camp fire, share trail stories and do a couple rounds of our well-



coordinated foot warming dance. After all of this is over we discuss the trip together on the ride home and then I spend time at home reflecting on the trip by myself. All of my wilderness trips follow this format now, which indicates a drastic change in my decision making. Going forward I can see myself following this trip format with my future students. Doing these things creates an atmosphere in which they can think about their motivation for backpacking, enjoy the preparation process before the trip, take in the beautiful views and secrets that a place has to offer, experience everything that social interactions have to offer, and finally reflect on the trip individually and as a collective group. Completing this project has made me more aware of those themes, and therefore better able to identify them for my students during a wilderness experience.

The results that this project provided only offer a small sample size of the overall picture. In order to get the most accurate results possible for a project like this the study should go on for years. As I move forward with my teaching career in the field of outdoor education I plan on continuing my research about my sense of place. Until I started this project, keeping a journal while on my wilderness trips was not something I did. However, I will continue to write journal entries during my wilderness trips, as well as analyze them upon my return. Doing this will allow me to continue to develop my knowledge and awareness of the role a sense of place plays in education.

The fact that the research I have done so far only offers a small bit of information compared to what I could potentially find suggests that there are more questions to be answered regarding a sense of place in wilderness education. One of the questions that I find myself asking now is, how can I use my sense of place to further develop my wilderness hard skills so I am more prepared to teach in the near future? This question

opens up a lot of new research avenues. As I write more journal entries, prepare more lesson plans, and participate in more natural conversations I intend to be on the lookout for more themes that I may use to help my future students develop their own sense of place.

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