Getting There from Here: Mapping as a Process for Relationship Renewal

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Abstract

Inspired to guide students toward more ethical relationships with the living world, this article looks at maps as a common tool used in outdoor environmental education. I argue that maps are tools laden with European Enlightenment ideologies and reinforce a type of human being who has lost their way within an ecological web. To balance these understandings, I offer a process of mapping that was shaped alongside students during multi-day outdoor learning experiences. Through sharing student-generated examples, I offer insights for how a more interpretive means of mapping (and unmapping) through experience can support students to situate themselves within place-based ecologies as a form of relationship renewal.

Résumé

Dans le but de renforcer la relation éthique des jeunes avec le monde vivant, le présent article s'intéresse à la cartographie comme outil couramment utilisé en éducation à l'environnement en plein air. Il soutient que les cartes sont chargées d'idéologies de la Renaissance européenne qui reflètent, entre autres, la conception de l'être humain égaré dans un dédale écologique. Pour illustrer ces propos, je présente une expérience de cartographie effectuée auprès des jeunes lors d'une sortie éducative en plein air échelonnée sur plusieurs jours. Les exemples tirés de cette expérience révèlent comment l'intégration de moyens interprétatifs encourage une symbiose renouvelée dans une écologie territoriale.

Key-words: Maps; Mapping; kinship; relational process; place-based ecologies

Mots-clés : cartes, cartographie, symbiose, processus relationnel, écologie territoriale

How might students be guided to build healthier and more ethical relationships within a living world? The question is pressing in the era of intensifying climate change, immense biodiversity loss, and initiatives meant to promote truth and reconciliation between Indigenous and Canadian communities. As a non-Indigenous educator who is passionate about outdoor and environmental learning, the subject of relationality opens both critical complexities and creative possibilities within the entanglements of identity, story, place, and responsibility.

Papaschase *nêhiyaw* (Cree) scholar Dwayne Donald (2019; 2020; 2021) illustrates how dominant curricula are derived from European Enlightenment ideologies that inherently deny relationships. This denial is naturalized in teaching

and learning due not only to the limited opportunities to understand differences and build relationships between worldviews (i.e., meaningful interactions between Indigenous and Canadian communities), but also due to the Cartesian split that privileges the cognitive, intellectual mind over the rest of the body, as well as structures that negate interactions between human and more-than-human kin (in that most formalized learning happens indoors). As I examined my own approach, I was led to grapple with the colonial underpinnings of my pedagogy, which exist despite my well-meaning intentions to offer outdoor experiences to students, and my belief that something profoundly important happens when doing so. That is, while being active outdoors, we were on pre-determined paths with little concern for who has been displaced from that land or for the rhythms already pulsing within the flow of our experience (MacDonald, 2020). So then, how might we navigate experiences otherwise, to acknowledge that we already exist as kin within place-specific networks of relationship, and that, as human beings, we have responsibilities to contribute to the continuation of life for all?

One tool that humans use to find their way is the map. Beyond the paper map, I understand that we navigate the world with a variety of maps, and that maps come in a variety of forms. Both literally and metaphorically, maps provide direction for understanding the past, present, and imagined future. Various worldviews offer particular maps, curriculum and school structures provide another, while histories, languages, and family lines curate yet more maps. Even this article – in its research, content, and format – is a map informed by academic directives that make certain assumptions about what counts as knowledge and knowing. We are all guided by a unique variety of maps that consistently work on our relationships with and in the world.

Often unquestioned in my experience was the function of maps as representations of place, and how these representations might impact experiences in outdoor and environmental learning. Growing up, I was enthralled by maps. In educational contexts, however, most attention was on the map of Canada – memorizing names and locations of the provinces and their capital cities. The map on the wall in one classroom had a permeant pin to show our location in eastern Ontario. We shaded in bodies of water and made symbols to represent certain details, on which we would have weekly quizzes. I was a perfectionist and strove to make my maps neat and to always stay within the lines. As an educator now, I wonder what I learned from these tasks around being a responsible citizen in the place where I lived. Today, I use the same maps to facilitate more nuanced discussions about issues of colonialism. For example, what names and stories are present on the map? Whose stories are missing? How does such an incomplete representation impact how we perceive and relate with the world? Practically, how might these representations influence how we move through and with place?

In this article, I argue the ongoing need for educators to unpack taken-for-granted practices that deny relationships. Equally, we must seek and enact

guidance for proceeding differently; that means, in my case, to encourage more sensuous and embodied participation as part of a "sacred ecology" (Abram, 1996; 2010; Cajete, 1994; Donald, 2021; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). In what follows, I share how maps are central to my work in both tasks. First, I describe how maps are commonly used in outdoor education in ways that naturalize ways of knowing, being, and doing that are embedded in the colonial project. Inspired by the emergent field of "counter mapping," I turn to inspiration from a Treaty 6 Elder on how we might proceed differently. I introduce a practice of mapping that was developed with a group of students in a wider study on how students interpret the living world in outdoor learning programs. Finally, I share four student-generated maps that highlight the ecological characteristics of a kinship worldview, whereby all is alive, related, and interdependent, as a way of promoting renewed relations (Donald, 2021; Topa & Narvaez, 2022; Van Horn, Kimmerer, & Hausdoerffer, 2021).

Understanding and Resisting the Colonial Legacies of Maps

Maps influence how we see, interact, and experience the world. Modern maps, as Chellis Glendinning (2002) specifies, are a product of imperialism, stemming as much from early European endeavours to accurately survey and chart unknown terrains for the purposes of settling, controlling, and owning land, as from present-day dynamics of the global economy that persistently divide and commodify land. Glendinning writes that we are part of "relentless mappings that isolate us from our own humanity" (p. 6). David Turnbull (2000) also articulates how modern cartographic practices ignore other knowledge systems. He writes:

> The development of 'scientific maps' has come to be identical with a progressive, cumulative, objective, and accurate representation of geographic reality, synonymous with the growth of science itself …. We are blind to the processes by which the social is naturalized. Maps have boundaries, frames, spaces, centers, and silences which structure what is and is not possible to speak of. (p. 95-99)

The assumption here is that maps already represent the world as *real* and can tell us exactly how to see and move through places. All humans need to do in this case is match symbols and illustrations to their surroundings. However, this notion of what is 'real' discounts that humans come as storied beings with abilities to interpret and make meaning through bodily knowing.

In outdoor learning, reading and using maps are foundational skills that are taught early, fine-tuned, and progressively advanced to more complex systems of navigation. In my experience, a starting point is to have young students identify landmarks by comparing the map to what the students see in the *real* world – thereby already positioning the students as separate from the surroundings. Techniques are scaffolded, and eventually students use topographic maps, with

their features of coordinate grids, contour lines, scales, and legends, to learn how to read coordinates, follow bearings, and systematically triangulate their locations and navigate to others. In more advanced assignments, students generate detailed "time-control plans" whereby they map out desired routes with co-ordinate checkpoints and estimated times to complete each leg of the route. Doing so, as I have seen, prompts students to obsess about time; consistently thinking ahead and rushing from place to place to meet their pre-planned goals.

Of course, these skills provide safety training within wilderness travel contexts for several reasons: to know where you physically are, to know how to get where you want to go, and to be able to provide a precise location in an emergency. In my experience, however, the mastery of these skills is a fixed and unquestioned part of what happens in the curriculum of many programs. The problem that arises for me, is that humans are not separate from the world. We already participate in much more complex processes than just matching identifiable landmarks from the map to our surroundings. Employing maps without reflection serves to position students as observers of static spaces and asserts a sense of "placelessness," whereby local ecologies are not honoured as unique "living relatives" (Donald, 2020, pp. 158-159).

My concern that outdoor learning pedagogies are entrenched in colonial logics is not a new issue in the field of environmental education. Emily Root (2010) showed the complexities that white environmental educators face in recognizing Eurocentrism to decolonize practices. Other studies also wrestle with the problematic ways that place is mediated through outdated activities and advancing technologies, amid claims of promoting place responsiveness and values of sustainability through direct experience. For example, Allen Hill (2013) articulates how adventures in wild places separate students from local places and impact sustainable everyday behaviours, where Brian Wattchow and Mike Brown (2011) confirm my observations that orienteering practices encourage a focus on tools rather than place-based encounters. Chris Loynes (2020) traces the widespread navigation activities used today back to curriculum that centered around character development, which originated in the post-war Boy Scout Movement. Here, reliability, accuracy, fitness, and team spirit were valued highly and were not necessarily intended to promote place-responsive education. Sharing similar concerns as myself, his study compared how students in two groups navigated the same terrain: one with maps and compasses, and the other without. He found that students without navigational tools attended to the natural features for direction and expressed the intrinsic meanings of their experiences, where students with the mediating tools got caught up in the goals of the task and objectified the landscape through focusing on human-made features.

My interest in unlearning the problematic cultural values entrenched in maps has led me to the growing field of "counter mapping." This field offers forms of cartography that challenge dominant power structures and centre Indigenous, feminist, and racialized communities in the creation of alternative maps (Orangotango + , 2018). For example, scholars and artists have created

maps to resist colonialism and promote social justice (Hirt, 2012; 2022), practiced "performance cartographies" of oral cultures (Oliveira, 2019), extended imaginations through creative expressions of different experiences (Berry, 2011; Harmon, 2003), and have given meaning to invisible layers of connection, such as the ever-changing dynamic of cityscapes (Solnit, 2010; Solnit & Jelly-Schapiro, 2016; Solnit & Snedeker, 2013). A map art project led by Zuni artist Jim Enote caught my attention due to the relational ways in which the map art illustrated possibilities beyond the birds-eye grid view of the land (Loften & Vaughan-Lee, 2018). Based on the notion that modern maps confuse and disorient people, his maps honour the local knowledge system and ancestral stories of the Zuni River Valley through documenting vignettes of experience. While I am not Zuni, nor an expert of Zuni ways, I was inspired by the relational ethic embedded in his approach, and wondered how students in my setting might engage other forms of being and knowing to think beyond the grid map.

Drawn to counter maps as an approach to document expressions of place as perceived and experienced, I wanted to broaden how maps are used by stretching the imagination of what a map can be, and to position students differently – as participants within a living web of relations, in dialogue with various lifeforms. I was interested in a different kind of map, which led to considering different processes of mapping with students.

Turning to Kinship and Mapping

A struggle for me as an educator is that conversations about background maps – the traditions and pre-understandings that govern values, actions, and relationships – become too abstract. For years, I felt resolved to show others how problematic structures continue to separate humans from healthier ecological relations. This critical frame achieved some of what I intended, and helped expose some challenges, but also created resentment and tension amongst my students. My approach, I see now, was ill-guided, as it did not provide any guidance for other alternatives. For me, the pedagogical task became how to best support learners to question their background assumptions, to then undertake processes toward life-sustaining wellness for all. To do so, it was essential for students to experience and generate understandings for themselves.

In 2016, I was a graduate student in a course through the University of Alberta, *Four Direction Teachings: A Holistic Inquiry in Support of Life and Living*, where I was introduced to Elder Bob Cardinal. This course followed the 13-moon teachings of the nêhiyaw calendar through monthly meetings. Our gatherings took place at Elder Cardinal's ceremonial grounds, and we began each session with smudge, shared in circle, listened to Elder stories, and had opportunities to participate in ceremony and spiritual practices. Through different learning processes, the course engaged us with wisdom principles of *miyo-wîcêhtowin* (good human-to-human relations) and *miyo-wâhkôhtowin* (good relations with

all living beings). Coming into relation with Indigenous teachings was hugely significant. There were many lines of inquiry that surfaced for me, making it hard to pinpoint what made the whole so meaningful. I was not merely learning about Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, cosmologies, and axiologies passively through lectures or reading assignments through the filters of my own worldview, I was actively participating in them.

By learning to balance insights from all four directions (emotional, spiritual, mental, physical) in my life, I started to experience the world differently. It is not my purpose to position myself as any kind of expert in Indigenous knowledge, but I learned that the teachings are something that I am a part of as a human being. Elder Cardinal encouraged us to carry the wisdom in our own ways and in our own contexts. Thus, I see that the work of bettering relationships is not solely the obligation of Indigenous peoples; we all have roles and responsibilities. Donald (2021) refers to this as kinship relationality. He writes:

> Following the relational kinship wisdom of wâhkôtowin, human beings are called to repeatedly acknowledge and honour the sun, the moon, the land, the wind, the water, the animals, and the trees (just to name a few animate entities) as, quite literally, our kinship relations, because we carry part of each of them inside our own bodies. Humans are fully reliant on these entities for survival, and so a wise person works to ensure that those more-than-human relatives are healthy and consistently honoured. (p. 59)

The key insight that I wanted to carry forward was that place-based, ecosystem-specific lifeforms that support human life and living can guide all of us if we let them in and attend to them. Within this wisdom, I pictured students already arriving with a sort of holistic atlas – as direct, sensuous, and embodied knowing – that they can learn to read and understand more deeply, and that connects them with ongoing relations.

Tim Ingold (2000) draws important distinctions between map-using (navigation), mapmaking (cartography), and mapping (wayfinding). All of them have a purpose and function in outdoor learning, yet mapping caught my attention as transformative in ways that were underexplored in the field. He writes:

> The traveler or storyteller who knows as [they go] is neither making a map nor using one. [They are], quite simply, mapping.… wayfinding might be understood not as following a course from one spatial location to another, but as a movement in time, more akin to playing music or storytelling than to reading a map. (pp. 231-238)

Aligning with kinship relationality, and my learning from Elder Cardinal and Dr. Donald, I saw that students needed to be brought into a process of knowing as they form understandings of their relationships. Rather than focus on how students might generate counter maps of a place, which I see as an alternative representation of life within the grid map, I wanted to bring students into the fold of attending differently to moments of felt connection to then generate the

map. Therefore, in my study I considered mapping as a relational process for students to build meaning and story within a kinship network.

Bringing Students into a Relational Process

The mapping I share in this article surfaced within a hermeneutic study inquiring into student interpretations of the living world during outdoor learning programs (MacDonald, 2022). Ethical Approval for this study was granted by the University of Calgary Research Ethics Board. In this project, there were two interconnected journeys brought into dialogue to inform the whole. One journey was my continued learning with Elder Cardinal who I met with during the research process. When I asked for his involvement, I explained to him what I saw, in his terms, *kîkwaya e-patahaman oma* (What is missing?) in my outdoor learning contexts. I spoke to him about wanting to bring students into a relational process and to centre more holistic ways that acknowledged life and living in places we visited together. I asked for direction around how, as a non-Indigenous educator, I might ethically guide students who were predominantly non-Indigenous, white, middle-class, from an urban centre, and who might have no previous experience seeing the world in this way.

The other journey was travelling with 16 secondary school students (11 female, 6 male) in two different courses as part of a school-board outdoor education program. One course (with students finishing grade 9) involved an eight-day canoe trip in Killarney Provincial Park followed by a seven-day backpacking trip in the Adirondack High Peaks of Upper New York State. The second course (with older students finishing grade 12) was a 28-day sea kayaking trip along the shorelines of Anticosti Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On these trips, I gathered data on the experience by taking fieldnotes (both textual and visual), facilitating semi-structured interviews and group conversations, and through examining the student-generated maps.

Prior to meeting the students, Elder Cardinal told me that the work ought to begin with the students knowing who they really are. In a holistic way, they must get in touch with the sacred within to understand their purpose within a greater web. He encouraged me to share stories of my learning and to allow space for struggle within the process. Additionally, he said that the spirit needs to be remembered as it is often overlooked in any schooling context. The spirit, as he described, cannot be boxed in, because it flows through the lifeforce of different connections, always in flux, and its meaning will come as a mystery. Introducing more relational ways was not about restructuring the entire program to fit my purpose (for example, not going map-less), but to see how holistic elements were already alive and to make them more accessible to students. Therefore, keeping this guidance in mind, I wanted to see how mapping might co-exist within pre-existing programs to expose students to the web of relations already present.

Proceeding with this guidance alongside students, I knew mapping would be part of the study and I had an idea of how it might work prior to the trips, but the process emerged as I learned what worked from the students. Throughout the study, mapping took different forms as I played with different variations. In Killarney, I knew students were introduced to map and navigation concepts in the first days of the program. I presented the mapping activity toward the end of the trip as a way to contrast the navigation skills they learned with a different understanding. I started by reviewing map features and we discussed how the map of the park might work on us to determine how we experienced the park and thereby standardized our relationships. I encouraged students to pay attention to information from all their senses. I also prompted them to reflect on what caught their attention and what stories surfaced to make their experience meaningful. They completed their maps independently during their solo sit, a time when students are alone in a sit spot. Afterward, students were excited to share their maps and it was interesting to see the variety in how students took up the task. For example, one student created a symbol to represent their highlight from each day, while another student generated a circular shape to represent the route that we took with trees reaching out to help us along the way.

From this foundation, for the next part of the course (in the Adirondacks) we moved to mapping each day. I wanted the process to encourage dwelling within the kinetics of the experience, and for students to recognize moments of felt connection as they were occurring, instead of framing the map as a glorified reflection exercise. Students were prompted to attend to moments that caught their attention – when they felt connected or drawn to an encounter – during our various activities. Each evening, they were asked to add to their map as a way of mapping their connections as we went along. This approach was not as successful; in contrast to the first session in Killarney (when students generated maps in solitude), they were influenced by how their peers took up the task. When I asked students for feedback, they commented that doing the activity in the tent at night (necessary due to bugs and rain) was difficult because it led them to compare with each other and discuss the day together. Students also shared that it was difficult to recall specifics of deeply felt moments once they were removed from the occurrence.

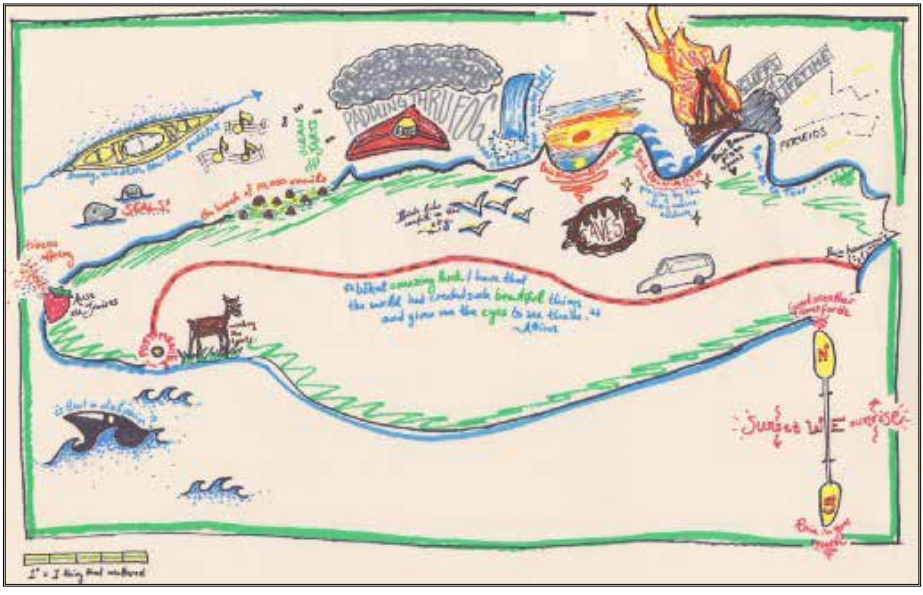
For the longer Anticosti trip, I wanted build on what I learned in the first program and combined both approaches. Students were asked to keep field notes along the route, paying attention to moments of "feeling fully alive." This prompt arose during the Adirondack trip through one student's enhanced perception of aliveness. During our debrief discussions, I learned that this sentiment resonated with students and invited them into the type of holistic experience that I was after. The field notes were not structured, but each student kept notes in a way that made sense to them. At the end of the trip, students then used their notes to look back on the whole of their experience. They were then tasked with creating a map to capture their experience holistically, including which aspects

of the maritime ecology struck them the most. Students completed the activity independently while I was having one-on-one conversations with each of them to debrief the trip. Students continued to work on their maps on and off for two days before our final sharing circle on the day we left the island.

Prior to sharing, I asked each student to identify a question that their map was asking them to carry forward as they returned to their daily routines at home after the trip. This was inspired by Gadamer's (1975/2004) "priority of the question," whereby a text (in this case, their map) presents a response to a question (p. 370) and was meant as a practice to translate their experience to their everyday lives. Their recollection of the question that their map asked of them provided me an access point to begin conversations during our follow-up discussions four months after our return from Anticosti.

Expressions of Mapping

In this section, I present four examples of the student generated maps from the Anticosti trip. To honour the students' voices in sharing their stories, experiences, and connections, each map is accompanied by two blocks of text: first is their description of the map (transcribed from the sharing circle prior to departing Anticosti) ending with their question to carry forward, the second is their response to the question collected during our follow-up conversation four months after the trip.



Fiona: Events of Encounter

My compass rose is a paddle; north it says, "good weather come forth" and south "rain in your mouth" then sunrise and sunset for east and west. I go along the shoreline mapping out unique moments. Starting with the whale we saw on the ferry. It was my first moment foreshadowing how connected I'd feel. There was the paddling with the seals, then the sunny windless low tide paddles where we just chatted the whole time. The beach of 10,000 seals and the smell of the ocean…. paddling through the fog and we went through big patches of birds that would just fly off all at the same time and look like confetti in the sky…. The fog turns into stumbling onto a waterfall. The sunrise at Baie MacDonald, the caves, the massive waves onshore at Baie Observation. Creating ovens that day at Baie Beacon felt like nature telling us that everything we need is here, you can just make things by using your hands, or you can just make do with what you have. Those incredible cliffs that we saw, the meteor shower, the early morning hike. There was a line from a poem in the instructor's book that I took to heart: What amazing luck I have that the world has created such beautiful things and given me the eyes to see them. This map is asking me: *How will I find space in the noise of my mind, in the day-to-day life, to be with the quiet of nature?*

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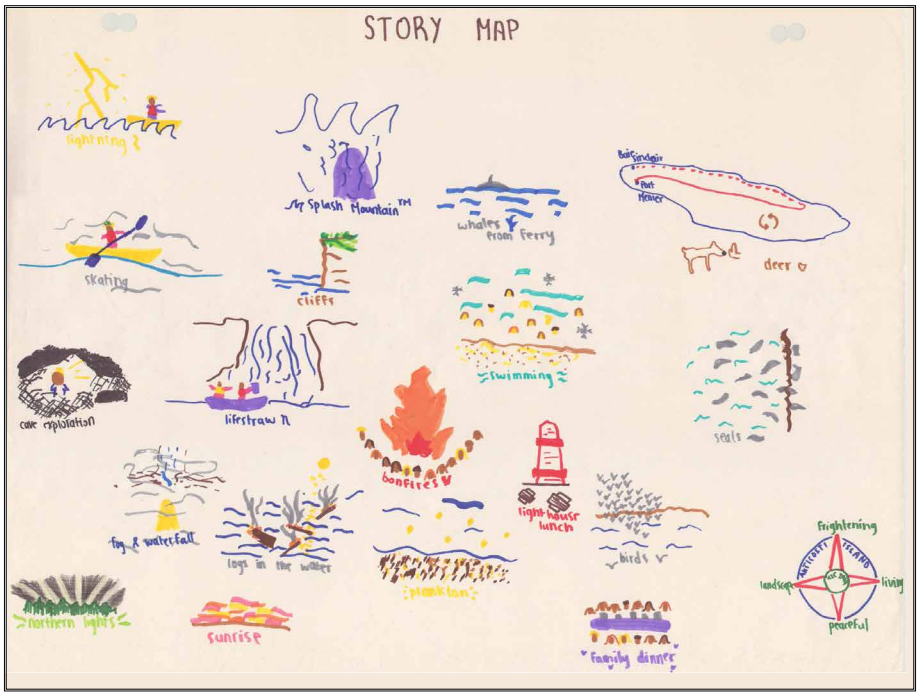
I need to make the effort, and I've learned it is not just in the present, but also making plans that involve seeking out quiet…. I think that's how it will become ingrained in how I build my life. Since the trip, I find that there is not enough promotion of quietness in school. In the university context now, I've found there's a lot that promotes critical thinking, and that can breed that quietness in a sense that it feeds your ability to just think, and to not just let yourself think, but specifically to think about why you're thinking certain things and why you have certain preconceptions. This has been absolutely life changing and built on our way of being on the trip. We learned to ask "why" all the time. I've learned to think about my assumptions about needing to be busy, our assumptions about the economy and how things should be about what we should care about…. More than that though, the quietness comes in being optimistic and focusing on the body…. Outside of outdoor education, my studies are absolutely immersed in the mind. I'm reading a lot, and I'm writing a lot, I'm thinking a lot and I don't know how much I'm experiencing. And a lot of it is, like, "Here's why we're doing everything wrong and why everything is going terribly." And I'm trying to look more towards acknowledging what needs to be done. We don't have to just despair. We should be outraged that has happened, and that we're allowing it to continue in our own lives, we are doing things that are unsustainable, but we should still have hope. I didn't always think this way. I didn't always care about sustainability the way I do now. If I was able to change how I think, I think that means anybody else can.



Courtney: Exhilaration and Reflection

I follow the directions of the compass rose at the side for the different ways I felt alive during our trip. South, I have peaceful and then north is frightening. I don't think frightening is really the word I am looking for, but somewhere along those lines, then east and west are landscapes and living. Then I took all my field notes about the moments where I felt most alive and then put them where they made me feel. So, for landscape and frightening, I have the lightning that hit close to the boats, and then peaceful I have the northern lights, and then here is all of us swimming in the ocean in the middle, and then the seals, and then here is the deer, and then we have the bioluminescent plankton, family dinner, explorations. I think this map is asking me: *Are exhilarating moments better or worse than reflective ones?*

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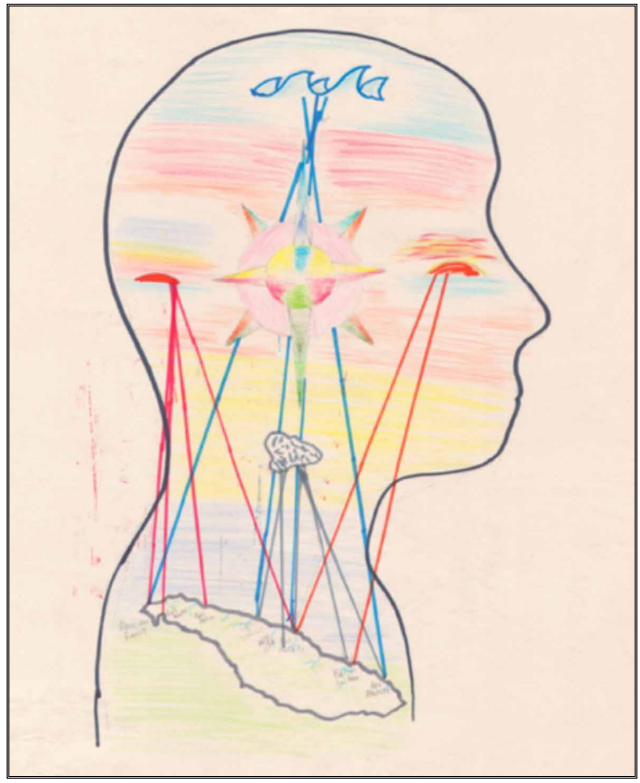
I realized I need both. Exhilarating moments are like the ones I want to have more of. But then, it's also important to take some time to myself to just calm down, especially for mental and physical health and well-being to take those reflective moments. I think they can maybe help appreciate the exhilarating ones a bit more too, so they don't just all pass by. I need both…. Exhilarating moments are more fun, but the reflective ones are important for keeping balance.



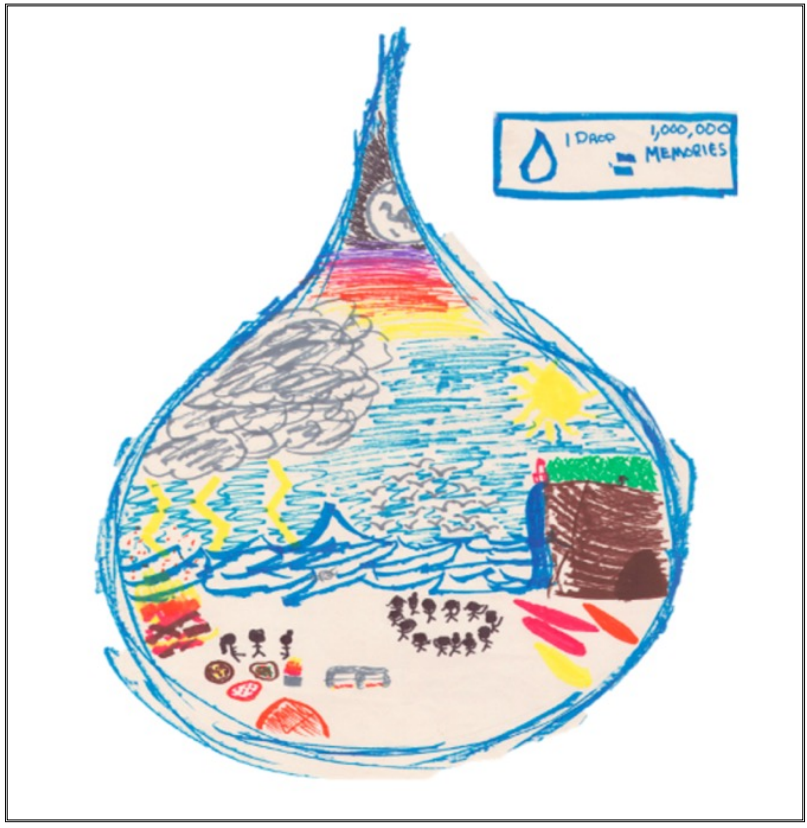
Nick: Connecting Head and Heart

I have a compass rose here, in the middle, pointing to the north. I always thought at any given moment, if we looked north, we would see the water, so I had that representing the water, south representing the land. Then I had east as the sunrise and west as the sunset and, down here, I drew the outline of the island. I tried to place it where my heart would be, then connected different points where I felt alive to different locations. So, moments when we were looking at cliffs, and I felt like they were protecting me at camp, I would draw to certain locations on the map. One of my field notes was about "the wave," and I drew a line from where that happened to the water direction. Kind of directing the moments to my compass…. If I was going to add to it, I would add more moments and keep connecting them to different parts of the island. The question I am taking home: *If I was the land, would I want me to live here, based on how I treat it?*

* * *

Where I am and the people that I am around, I see a lot of almost, hmm, ignorance. I mean, I don't want to accuse people of being ignorant, but I think

there's just a lack of respect and awareness. I guess others just haven't learned about the connections yet. I am thinking like, if I was the land, I guess, and no one even acknowledged me, it is like – it is just – again, it is not anyone's fault, I wouldn't want people to live here if I was the land. I think learning has to do with the experiences. We were lucky to have that experience on the trip we went on. We have kind of been exposed to experiencing it and living on it and relying on it, kind of thing. So, I think that's important when you're talking about how you can understand the land that you acknowledge the land. If I were the land, I would want people to live on me, but not the way that they are currently living. It is not that the land doesn't want us here, it's that it doesn't want us here the way that we are. There is no getting rid of us, but there's a more sustainable way to be here. That's something I think about a lot.



Emma: A Drop of Water

If our trip is a body of water, each memory is a drop in it. So, here is my drop! At the top is the scale: one drop is equal to a million different memories. It is titled "the sauce" because I would say that each moment where I felt that I was

fully immersed in trip was when I felt "Lost in the sauce." Many of the moments had to do with visual things that were happening, so like when the gulls flew up over the water or the embers from the bonfire. If someone threw something one the fire, then the embers would just shoot up in the air. I was mesmerized by that. I have all of us jumping around while [Audrey] did her loon call. I have the caves and the cliffs. I have the sunrise or sunset depending on how you look at it. Then the moon and all the stars, especially on the night when we had to get up for water at 2:00 am because of the tide. It was incredible to see the stars that night. I have never seen more stars in my life. There were lots of times and moments where I felt absolutely grounded and centered in where I was. My question: *How can I continue to make meaning of different things that happen in my daily life?*

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Gratitude and humility are very important. Remembering how lucky I am for the opportunities I have. I guess before [the trip] these were concepts that related moretowards material things. So definitely, [the trip] got me thinking about the land and all the little things that are in connection. All the millions of little moments. It's about thinking about the rain drop. But now that I'm at university, I feel like my humility and my gratitude relates less to the land, which makes me sad, but it still translates into my day to day. I'll have moments where I'm walking back to my residence and I stop and think, 'Wow, I'm so lucky to be here right now. And I'm so lucky to be able to think about everything that I'm able to think about.' Those moments, they—I have them often, which is kind of special—nothing particular brings them on. It will usually be when I'm by myself and I'm able to stop and think of how much I get to experience every day. To make the most meaning of anything, we must make a choice to recognize it as something that's happening in the moment, or we must know when it's happening, and we must be aware that it's happening to us, and that it matters. My personal process is learning to recognize that whatever is happening is something that I want to remember or that I want to be significant.

Mapping (and Unmapping) for Relationship Renewal

The process of mapping throughout the Anticosti experience offered insight to better understand how connections surface for students, along with considerations for how relatives might be better honoured in outdoor practices. In the maps shared above, it is evident that inviting students into a process of noticing helped them attend to their participation within the natural world. Providing a frame through prompts helped students direct their focus while still being open enough that they could interpret their encounters individually. Students said that the task supported acknowledging connections that could otherwise be easily missed.

While mapping was generative in terms of supporting students to be in the moment and to position themselves in relationships, there were also processes of *unmapping* that occurred. By unmapping, I mean the process of undoing habits of thinking and doing that perpetuate the separations in the first place. I saw how dwelling differently – paying closer attention to rhythms of connection and taking time to consider our human position in the patterns – conjured awareness of tradition and involved revising deeply held ways of knowing and doing. For example, Emma spoke to her shift in gratitude from material consumption to the invisible or felt responses that surfaced during the day, and Fiona disclosed the importance of asking 'why' to expose her assumptions and to make do with what she has.

It is important to distinguish between mapping and unmapping to articulate the significance of what we were doing. Without this critical aspect (the unmapping), I fear that mapping might merely be seen as a neat art project or reflection exercise, instead of a rich perceptual practice that encourages transformed ways of being and relating. In this study, the students were involved in both mapping and unmapping, however the processes occurred in different ways and at various intensities among the participants. For example, Emma's drop of water demonstrated an integrated way of knowing as an approach that pulled layered relations together and then mirrored them back to her. This presented a richer level of connection compared to Fiona's map, which listed events that were meaningful to her. This is to say that the depth of relationships was not the same for every student in the group. As I make meaning of the student-generated maps and the students' interpretations of their encounters, I garner new understandings for renewing more ethical (kinship oriented) relations in outdoor learning practices. Based on my understanding of these maps, I suggest practices should work to: recognize cycles; generate knowledge through tracking clues; encourage an ecology of emotion; and meet unfamiliar responses.

Recognize Cycles

Inquiring about kinship as a concept, Tyson Yunkaporta (2020) writes: "kinship moves in cycles, the land moves in seasonal cycles, the sky moves in stellar cycles, and time is so bound up in those things that it is not even a separate concept from space" (p. 39). I am drawn to the scale and interconnectedness between various kinship cycles within the maps. I see patterns of sunrise and sunset, movement of tides, knowledge of directional winds, upward movement of fire embers, connection to the sun and the waxing moon. Likewise, an array of other beings (such as bird flight overhead and colonies of seals nearby) are present. I also notice that the human community of our group circled around natural cycles and instinctive needs to feed and hydrate ourselves, and to seek shelter from the elements. Comfort was shaped by simple tasks such as group meals, setting up camp, building fire, and collecting drinking water. As our human connections deepened, it seems that students were better able to trust

the process and form meaningful connections with the other beings. All cycles are connected, yet I notice that the maps focus on larger ecological happenings, instead of the smaller or hidden relationships. During our trip, we covered a large distance and encountered new features at every turn, meaning that there was a lot for students to capture in their mapping process. I suspect that if we had spent more time in fewer places, additional details and depth would be exposed in their maps.

Generate Knowledge Through Tracking Clues

Mapping encourages tracing interactions of patterns and rhythms to know how elements interact. Being thrown into a new maritime setting demanded hyper perception to swiftly decipher what was needed for survival. Our activities came already entrenched in the ecological network because we could not separate ourselves by going indoors during our journey; we had to endure whatever we encountered. Other than the prior experience of the other instructor and I (as educators who had been to the island and led this program previously), we did not have someone with local knowledge guiding us. We had to attend to cues from place and interpret what they were communicating.

At times, being wisely aware came through making mistakes. Nick's reference to "the wave" signifies a standing upsurge that caused him to capsize. This misjudgment led to more careful attention toward the movement of the water and how we were moving within the flux.

In retrospect, after this event occurred, we could trace cues that were unavailable to us beforehand because we did not know we had to question certain circumstances, meaning that tracking helped us build a language to understand ecological interactions.

Encourage an Ecology of Emotions

The experience became fuller as students gave heed to feelings, sensations, thoughts, movements, and connections. Courtney showed how movements bring forth assorted responses – in her case, through contrasting exhilaration and reflection. In this way, I better understand kinship relationality not as a utopian destination that one arrives at, but as something that may surface when the ecology of human emotion is linked to the ebbs and flows of experience within the greater whole of ecology.

In Courtney's example, there were times she felt frightened, and other times peaceful, and her illustrations of this spectrum point to connections with the diverse and dynamic moods of place. When she articulated her experience within this contrast, it showed me that both are needed for a balanced experience. One is not better or worse, but they can work together to generate something transformative. Exhilaration might awaken something new, but without adequate reflection on what the excitement might mean and how

the moment connects to everything else, deeper learning may be lost in the enthusiasm of the moment.

Meet Unfamiliar Responses

Nick's internal compass flowing in connection to the directions offers further learning about progressing along a line (or cycle) of growth. His description of connecting to the heart, while perhaps cliché, reminded me of common sayings such as *follow your heart, it knows the best path*. Through the task of deciphering what most needs attention, he was learning to trust himself. In that regard, I am drawn to Nick's expression of feeling "watched over" by the cliffs at camp. I wonder how the feeling was about encountering unfamiliar responses in himself. The more he attended to the unfamiliar, the more the unknown was able to speak to him, and perhaps this helped him understand his purpose. For example, as we came to know the shoreline, Nick's focus on connecting to the heart is interesting. His heart seemed to swell as more connections became visible and felt – as life around the island and our movement with it became more familiar. His question about what the land wants and needs strikes me as a movement from being a stranger (separate from place) to forming values of co-existence. His framing of land posing the question back to him suggests a deeper exchange with awareness toward the implications of our presence. More specifically, he was thoughtful towards entities alive in place and how they were experiencing strangeness by us being there. From him, I learned that flipping questions in our experiences might be a practice that can cultivate reciprocity within our encounters. Nick continued to puzzle on questions with increased concern after our trip. While he meets "ignorance" within his dominant circles, implying limitations of a worldview, he attributes the opportunity to learn more and understand his connections as openings to new possibilities for living more ethically.

Mapping Outward: Implications of this Work

Spending time with students during this study showed me that prolonged immersion and mapping of experiences can encourage healthier relationships, and even a renewal of kinship; however, the privilege of this study is not lost on me. The students were enthusiastic about spending time outdoors and had access to resources that enabled their participation. Not all young people want to spend time outdoors in this way or even know that it is a possibility. In addition, since the logics of placelessness are so deeply embedded in knowledges that stem from relationship denial, even educators who do not worship scientific-technocratic processes may find it difficult to connect meaningfully with place-based ecologies (D. Donald, personal communication). Likewise, not every educator has access to an Elder to seek guidance.

I am left wondering what all of this might mean for others. Since we are already embedded in systems of relationship, I hope my learning in this study will inspire others to look for simple openings or create routines that point out relational patterns to students and encourage them to see themselves as part of the ecological network. In many outdoor learning situations, these routines are already part of programs (for example, we attend to what the clouds, winds, or waves are communicating to plan activities) but I am focused on the shift that happens when we move beyond conducting these routines for the purpose of human-centric happenings. In doing so, it is important to remember that mapping is not a deductive process, and that it takes time, patience, and sometimes struggle, to bring students into the work meaningfully. This process-oriented approach might feel uncertain at first, but through practice, it became evident that it was the only way to support students to be who they are in the practice. I had to work through iterations of the task before I found one that worked well during the kayak trip. Prompts to help students recognize relations, devices to record experiences in the moment, reassurance that all parts of our human experience generate knowing (paying attention to emotion and connection), and encouraging students to ask questions of themselves and of their experiences, can all help students grow into who they are within a wider system, but to also respond to kin relatives with care.

In the background of mapping with the students, wisdom from Elder Cardinal inspired my disposition and approach. I was not, however, directly translating his teachings in what I shared with the students. I had to do the work of listening and understanding the wisdom for myself, to then share my story of widening kinship alliances in my context. This is constantly work in progress and my mapping process here is just one example of an activity that can encourage slowing down to recognize and honour the web of various lifeforms in which we exist. In my practice, I have tried to live the words of Donald (2019) who shares that in learning wisdom teachings, "nothing good grows from [them] unless people enact [the] teachings in their daily lives" (p. 119).

Conclusion

Maps come laden with historical and cultural values. In outdoor and environmental learning contexts, they are often used in scientific ways (navigational work) that separate humans from their innate ecological connectivites and inertly perpetuate colonial ideologies. In this study, I endeavoured to carry forward wisdom teachings to bring students into a more holistic process of mapping. In doing so, I found that there are tangible ways for students to be brought into dialogue with cycles, patterns, and rhythms of other lifeforms to uncover insights about who they are (to question their values and purpose) and to learn within kinship networks toward renewing and enhancing relationality. I hope that other educators will also increasingly question taken-for-granted

pedagogical practices and turn to approaches that can help students to slow down to observe, listen, feel, and connect in ways that help them recognize their participation in systems that give and sustain life.

Notes on Contributor

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