



Social Emotional Learning in Year 9 Boys Through Place-Based Digital Storytelling

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Further Information

This poster and further information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>

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Introduction

I believe Outdoor Education provides a transformative educational experience. It is experiential, active, and relational learning involving people and natural resources. It requires all senses and domains, and is based upon interdisciplinary curriculum content. Outdoor Education capitalises on boys' inherent learning styles.

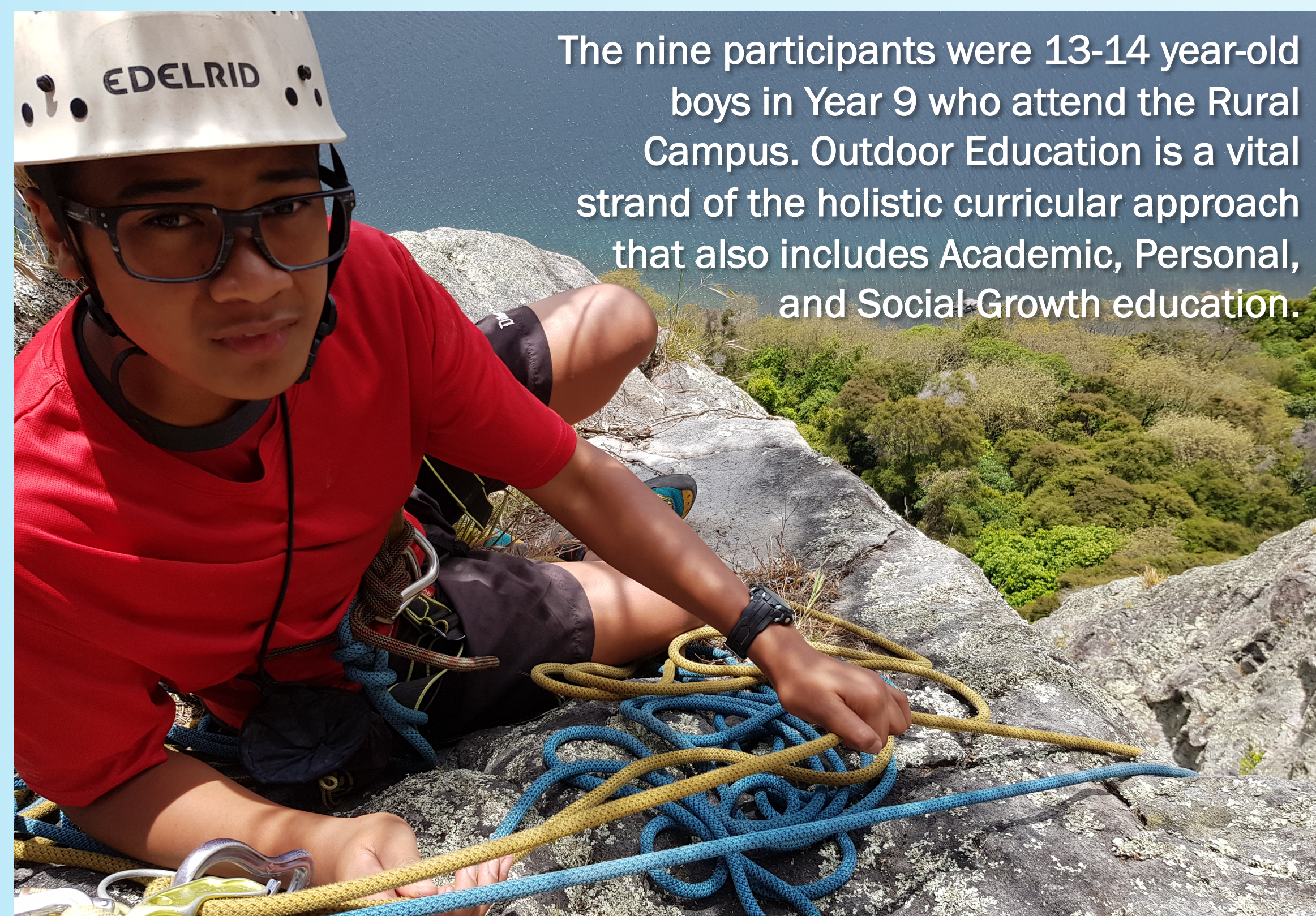
I wanted to challenge educator practice and philosophy by implementing an under-realised pedagogical approach that embraced digital technology for learning outdoors. I believed that digital storytelling through a place-responsive lens enables boys to better understand, evidence, and communicate their (social emotional) learning.

The Research Question

How does participation in a place-responsive digital storytelling project foster social emotional learning in Year 9 boys?

Research Context and Participants

Dilworth School is an independent boarding school for 640 boys from Years 5 to 13, spread across three campuses in the Auckland region. Every student that attends Dilworth receives a full scholarship.



The nine participants were 13-14 year-old boys in Year 9 who attend the Rural Campus. Outdoor Education is a vital strand of the holistic curricular approach that also includes Academic, Personal, and Social-Growth education.



The boys' films and responses to the "Director's Plenary" were a rich source of reflection. Scan the code with Zappar app to view a sample.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected over three overt stages:

- **Stage One** entailed establishing baseline data on perceptions of place-connectedness, the impact of digital storytelling for learning, engagement, and agency through descriptive survey.
- **Stage Two** collection techniques consisted of methods to encourage reflection on the relevance and meaning of connection to place.
- **Stage Three** collection techniques revisited baseline data collection to compare any change across the course of the project.



The boys' experiences were described using self-assessment rubrics, descriptive surveys, classroom observations, researcher and participant reflection logs, researcher field notes, photos and video, participant interviews, and student work samples.



Key Findings and Discussion

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data:

The learning experience provoked boys' critical thinking.

"I...think differently about how I am with different places and how they relate to me and connect to me." Boy D

"(it) changed my point of view." Boy G

The boys showed increased self-awareness and ability to articulate their social emotional learning.

"I didn't think it would feel like this." Boy F

The boys developed an increase in social awareness.

"I like hearing stories... that have something do with our culture." Boy G

The boys grew skills required to build relationships with their peers, parents, communities and the world beyond.

"it honestly really helped me tell stories to my dad." Boy G

"I think it was easier to explain to my mum ... what I was doing." Boy A

Conclusions

Place-based digital storytelling is an effective medium for exploring learning in the outdoors. Through an improved capacity to reflect on their outdoor experience, the boys' social emotional competence grew significantly. In short, they knew more and felt better about themselves, their challenges, and achievements.

Such clear evidencing and alignment with four of the five social emotional learning competencies was a welcome surprise. The boys were ambivalent for the most part about the role digital devices played. Subsequent cycles of action research might explore whether digital devices materially improved outcomes or if employing more "boycentric" pedagogies, tools or technologies would be more effective.

This opportunity has provoked me to consider the difficulty of capturing social emotional and other learning in the design of outdoor activities while allowing boys choice of expression.

Key Readings

Boase, C. (2013). *Digital storytelling for reflection and engagement: A study of the uses and potential of digital storytelling*: Centre for Active Learning & Department of Education, University of Gloucestershire. Retrieved from https://gjamissen.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/boase_assessment.pdf.

Brown, M. (2012). *A changing landscape: Place responsive pedagogy*. Christchurch, New Zealand: CPIT.

Neill, J. (1997, January). *Outdoor Education in the Schools: What can it achieve?* presented at the meeting of the 10th National Outdoor Education Conference, Sydney, Australia.

The Research Action

Comprising three parts and ranging in duration from 45-minute lessons to week-long immersive experiences.

Part One:
Digital storytelling technologies and techniques were explored in a conventional classroom setting.

Part Two:
Storytelling, watching, and making occurs within a place-responsive outdoor pursuit trip.

Part Three:
Digital story creation and display to demonstrate "connection to place."

