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Abstract:	Background: During transport to and from outdoor education field trips, students experience a period of togetherness and minimal imposed structure. Transport time also appears to align with Oldenburg's third places, where people spend time together without a particular agenda. Purpose: To examine educators' perspectives on the contribution that transport time makes to OE programs through an analysis featuring the characteristics of third places. Methodology/Approach: The perspectives of 16 outdoor educators (four each from New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong and Scotland) were gathered using a semi-structured interview protocol. Data were analyzed using a deductive process based on the third place characteristics; four unforeseen themes also emerged. Findings/Conclusions: Findings highlighted the centrality of conversation between students and between students and educators; the low profile of transport time; and a sense of excitement and fun. Students controlled the intensity of their "presence" through the use of devices (where allowed) and by selecting their sitting position in the vehicle. Implications: The findings show that transport time allowed students to have a broad variety of conversations that could be variously silly and fun, deep and introspective. Educators are encouraged to more carefully consider the contribution that transport time makes to their programs

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Abstract

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Keywords: field trips; travel; emergent learning; transport; unstructured time

Outdoor educators design a range of experiences to meet particular learning intentions for their students, but there also exist myriad less-structured experiences which can have a significant impact on learning and program outcomes (Orford, 1994; Seed, 2008; Zink, 2004). These unstructured experiences may enhance students' freedom to learn about their surroundings and others (Purc-Stephenson et al., 2019), but they have also been associated with negative outcomes such as clique formation (Mirkin & Middleton, 2014) and poor decision-making (Jordan et al., 2018). During transport, educators are often focused on driving, which leaves students in close proximity and with considerable unstructured time.

Field activities are a signature pedagogy of outdoor education (OE) (Thomas, 2015), and it follows that OE programs often require participants to travel to particular locations. This time spent travelling to and from OE activities can constitute a significant proportion of OE experiences (Lugg, 2004), yet there is little research investigating what happens during this time. Our experiences and discussions with colleagues suggest that this time is neither considered "school" time nor "home" time. Transport time is thus somewhat akin to a liminal or "in-between" space (see van Gennep, 1960).

Our search for a theoretical framework that would help us more deeply understand the influence of travel time in outdoor education programs led us to Oldenburg's (1999) book, called *The Great Good Place*. Within the book, Oldenburg explains his concept of the third place, which is a place that is neither home nor work. This inquiry aims to more deeply understand how educators perceive transport time and what (if any) role this time can play within OE programs. In the next section, we outline the framework of third places developed by Oldenburg, then review the literature on unstructured time in OE.

Third Places Framework

According to Oldenburg (1999), a third place is neither the first place of home nor the second place of work, but a place in which people spend time without a particular agenda.

These include cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons and a host of other venues which have the primary function of "uniting the neighborhood" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. xvi). Oldenburg unashamedly promotes third places as "happy gathering places" and argues that society needs these places to flourish. Through his analysis of third places, he develops a set of characteristics that include providing: neutral ground; status levelling (i.e., your wealth or lack of it is not important); conversation; accessibility; regular attendees; a low profile (i.e., not heavily advertised); a playful mood; and a home away from home. Oldenburg states that "[n]othing more clearly indicates a third place than that the talk there is good; that it is lively, scintillating, colorful, and engaging" (p. 26).

For Oldenburg (1999), third places function as "ports of entry" into communities, help connect people with others and identify people they dislike or like, and serve to unite a community or neighborhood. Third places are neutral grounds where people can meet on equal terms and are thus important for people from diverse backgrounds to be able to mix. Behind much of Oldenburg's promotion of third places is an underlying assertion that contemporary society has lost opportunities for regular social interactions beyond the individualized home and work settings, and therefore lost access to ways of developing a democratic and healthy community. By promoting third places as a societal good, Oldenburg attempts to stimulate a resurgence in public spaces where people from across traditional social divisions of class and race, for example, can meet and mix. A central tenet of third spaces is that each person feels that they "can contribute in the face of various problems or crises, and to learn to be at ease with everyone in the neighborhood irrespective of how one feels about them. A third place is a 'mixer'" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. xviii).

A review of the literature shows that the concept of third places has been empirically employed in a variety of contexts – none of which feature outdoor education or transport time. Curling clubs, for example, provide an important venue for interaction between

generations in rural communities in Canada (Mair, 2009). Seniors who volunteer at the Australian Jazz Museum enjoy it as a fun, vibrant space for socializing and leisure (Cantillon & Baker, 2018). The benefits of third places have been linked to enhanced social capital and to improved community resilience and well-being, with corresponding implications for urban designers to plan for these places (Frumkin, 2016).

Online gaming and libraries could potentially be precluded from being third places, due to the centrality of conversation in the characteristics of third places. However, libraries are important third places for young Singaporeans to meet and interact (Lin et al., 2015). Also, while Oldenburg decries the chilling effect of "electronic gadgetry" on conversation, multi-player online games have been shown to increase informal social interaction by exposing participants to a diversity of world views (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2017). In these diverse contexts, the literature indicates a growing interest in third places and how they contribute to the community and social outcomes Oldenburg promotes.

The Role of Unstructured Time in OE

Within OE, there has been a long-standing call to more deeply understand the mechanisms by which program outcomes are achieved (Ewert, 1989). Through making more concerted efforts to understand what is going inside Ewert's "black box", OE programs may increase their capacity to deliver "more potent outcomes" (Paisley et al., 2008). Teacher educators spend considerable time helping pre-service teachers (PSTs) to understand the importance of planning. This time includes developing appropriate learning intentions and success criteria in order to assess the learning of the student and the effectiveness of the lesson (Santoyo & Zhang, 2016). By contrast, Oldenburg argues that one of the benefits of the unstructured and spontaneous nature of third places is that important personal and social issues emerge. He argues strongly that not everything worthwhile can be planned for. Indeed, by tightly defining and constraining learning intentions, educators "might limit some 'bads',

but at the same time it would probably severely limit the acquisition of any 'goods'" (Beames & Brown, 2016, p. 32). Zink (2004) concurs and suggests that the time between activities can be an important aspect of outdoor education experiences for students. Unstructured aspects of OE may include time around camp, in tents, designated "free time" and transport time.

Lugg (2004) asks why so many outdoor educators structure their programs "around activities that involve driving for hours to access particular environments?" (p. 4). Others question the purpose of travel to far-away locations when local places are usually rich in the socio-cultural and geo-physical content matter (Wattchow & Brown, 2011), or when the burning of fossil fuels through transport exacerbates climate change (Long et al., 2014) and therefore undermines the pro-environmental aspects of OE. These are legitimate concerns and worthy of deeper investigation. This paper does not attempt to answer such questions, but rather asks –given that transportation occurs – how do educators perceive transport time as a component of their OE programs?

Among the limited research into transport time, Fairley (2009), researching Australian sports fans who travelled to competitions by bus found that group travel time "best enables and reflects that which is at the core of the group identity: support for the team and a social experience… The bus is not simply just a mode of transport for these groups" (p. 217). By contrast, we found minimal research into transport time in education. In rural areas, Gristy (2019) finds that the bus journey to school often acts as a connector between students, although some negative experiences, such as physical discomfort and interpersonal conflicts with other students, do take place. Gristy identifies a silence in the literature arising because bus transport is a "peripheral part of the school day" which falls "between policy and practices as well as traditional research disciplines and approaches to enquiry" (p. 287). Within bus rides on geology field trips, Elkins and Elkins (2006) developed a portable lecture system to better prepare students for the upcoming field experience and to avoid squandering

time spent in transport. In study abroad programs, which may include many hours of air travel, Koernig (2007) provides a checklist for leaders, but skips from pre-trip meetings to the arrival in the new country without mentioning flights or transport time. Similarly, in a literature review of the educational benefits of travel (including study abroad programs), Stone and Petrick (2013) did not identify any publications on people's experiences in transport (for example buses, trains, airplanes). This oversight is reminiscent of the attitude we (the authors) took to transport in OE. To interrogate this under-researched area, we set out to examine how outdoor educators conceptualize transport time, as interpreted through an analytical framework of Oldenburg's third place.

Methodology

Taking an interpretive approach, which searches for meaning in the subjective experiences of individuals engaging in social interaction (Creswell, 2013), we sought to understand educators' perceptions of transport time with students, to and from specific sites for outdoor learning. We developed a semi-structured interview protocol that was used to gather the views of four outdoor educators in four countries: Australia (AU), New Zealand (NZ), Hong Kong (HK) and Scotland (SC). The 16 interviews were conducted between 2015-2019 and reflected highly contrasting modes and lengths of travel. HK participants mainly used public transport, such as ferries and buses for less than one hour; those from SC and NZ used 12 seater vans for travelling up to seven and five hours respectively; while two participants in AU travelled up to 2.5 days, one for 15-16 hours, and the other a half-day. The interviewees included free-lance instructors, school-based teachers, and specialist OE teachers. This study was approved by the IRB at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Pseudonyms have been used for the participants' names.

A similar interview structure, built around the following key questions, was followed by each investigator.

- Do you believe that the transport time is useful?
- What do you think your students/participants learn during the transport time?
- How do you think your students/participants learn during the transport time?
- Do you use transport time for structured learning?
- Can you see the learning that could happen during the transport time being learnt anywhere else?

Following Stake's (1995) analysis of data using *etic* (or theoretically-driven) themes, each author analyzed their interview recordings by searching for indicators of the seven characterizing features of third places: conversation, accessibility, neutral ground, status levelling, low profile, regular and playful mood, and home away from home.

Findings were verified through Skype meetings, where the four investigators were able to scrutinize each other's analyses and give due consideration to Maxwell's (2005) question, "How might you be wrong?" (p.105). We pushed each other to find explanations for the unforeseen themes at which we had arrived. These *emic* themes are not theoretically driven *apriori* and emerge in contrast to or beyond the analytical framework (Stake, 1995). This process continued until we deemed the data to be saturated (Bowen, 2008), in that nothing more was to be gained by further re-analyzing the data through Oldenburg's theoretical lens. The trustworthiness of the data is demonstrated by weaving participant quotes into the interpretation of findings and by using illustrative examples to thickly describe the data (see Geertz, 1973).

Etic Findings

This section presents the findings through the structure of Oldenburg's (1999) seven characteristics of third places. Themes are presented with the most prominent themes first and in order of decreasing emphasis in the data: conversation, a low profile, regulars and a playful mood, accessibility, neutral ground, status levelling, and home away from home. Note that

some data could be used as indicators for multiple themes. In these cases, the data deemed most appropriate for supporting (or not supporting) a theme were chosen. Also note that except for "accessibility", this section does not interpret the findings with literature other than Oldenburg, as this is reserved for more a general discussion afterwards.

Conversation

Oldenburg (1999) argues that conversation is the cornerstone of third places and that people must first acquire the skill of conversation before they can understand its benefits. The educators all valued interactions between students, and between students and themselves, during transport time. The conversation on the way to the site involved "a lot of excitement - chatting about stuff", reported Nigel (SC). Speaking in Hong Kong, Sam explained that the "chit-chat during transport is more natural and genuine", as you get to ask students the kinds of questions "you don't get time to ask in a classroom". Jim (SC), found that the "quieter ones sit up near you, at the front of the bus. That's maybe why now and again you get these sorts of more thoughtful chats".

The common use of the word "chat" from all countries in the study suggests that rather than more formal and perhaps purposeful "talk", conversations during transport time can be easier and more natural – though, in many cases, much deeper. Jim (SC) recounted a time when he had an especially intense conversation about a student's experience, which was "like kind of debriefing it almost –where she was able to articulate questions which I felt… yeah, she has learned something or is in the process of it. It would be lovely if there was more of that".

A focus on conversations was common to all participants in the study and something about transport time seemed to allow these conversations to emerge in ways that contrasted with other contexts, such as at school or within other aspects of the OE programs. These are explored further in the next sections of the findings.

A Low Profile

Oldenburg (1999) outlines how third places are "typically plain" and are very often "establishments built for other purposes are commandeered by those seeking a place where they can linger in good company" (p.36). In the context of this research into transport, Oldenburg's use of the term "establishment" appears very static, staid and made of bricks and mortar. However, other aspects of his description seem fitting, as vehicles could be regarded as establishments "built for other purposes". For example, passenger vans, ferries and buses, are built for travel, efficiency and safety, with socializing being a by-product of a greater purpose. This focus on efficiency and safety, rather than "lingering in good company" or any other aspect of transport was revealed in numerous comments. Christine (SC) typified these, stating that "it's more just logistics rather than any guidance about what the young people need to be doing or what I need to be doing with them. It's more a case of here's the keys, get in the bus". These sentiments are echoed in by Ellie (AU), who noted that "the focus is on get there, do the program" and Pete's (NZ) observation that, "it's not a prescribed learning situation". By contrast, in Hong Kong, taking public transport allowed travel time to be used slightly more productively. For instance, Jenny explained how "on the first and the last day…the transport time could be used for administration, for example, filling in forms, checking on medical history". None of the participants' organizations placed expectations on transport time other than for safety and efficiency.

Reinforcing such findings, all four authors of this article have cumulatively spent in excess of 60 years designing, running and evaluating OE programs that have made use of a wide variety of transportation modes. However, when we searched for images of transport time for presentations, our image libraries were remarkably thin. This lack of images underscores the low profile of transport time. In our experiences, transport time is not included in the program other than as a logistical by-line.

The low expectations of transport time, combined with seating arrangements (often side by side) and perhaps the view out of the windows, seem to encourage conversations. Liz (NZ) found it "pretty special", how students who didn't usually socialize together at school, very much enjoyed being together "when they are forced to sit beside someone for a 3-4 hour journey". Nigel (SC) suggested the small group size creates "a shared intimacy in a van compared to a coach simply by physical distance", and similar comments arose from Australia and Hong Kong.

There is an element of slowness that comes from enforced time together in a vehicle and which allows people to linger in each other's company. While many cultures socialize as part of everyday life, according to Oldenburg (1999), in many Western societies, "we glorify our freedom not to associate" (p.10), to be independent, autonomous and isolated. By contrast, transport time encourages association by the physical arrangement of the seating and duration of the trip, and this may allow for the commandeering of these "low profile" places by those wanting to "linger in good company" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 36).

Regulars and a Playful Mood

Many of the educators highlighted playfulness, excitement and fun during transport time as distinguishing features. Bill (AU) recalled driving "past one of the old Mr. Whippy vans in the middle of nowhere, in between towns. Chasing up to them to pull them over so that we could have twenty-two people having an ice-cream in the middle of the north-east, in the middle of nowhere". In Hong Kong, Fred noted how his students were "very excited to see wildlife", such as monkeys, during bus journeys. Stuart (NZ) explained how he "might give them some brain-teasers or riddles" as fun, group-tasks along the way. His compatriot, Jerry, found that very often his students would "develop car games among themselves and with the person beside them". Jerry then explained a favorite activity of his:

> There is a game that we play and it's a list of five things –random items that we may see like a road cone, a hawk, or a blue car –and we are all on the lookout. Whoever sees it first calls it out and adds another thing to the list. I do that to keep them involved and make it enjoyable for them. It makes them take in the surroundings a little better and interact and laugh and get competitive with one another.

While educators were occasionally involved in initiating or directing activities during transport time, for the majority of the time, educators let the students organize their activities. Therefore, if students wanted entertainment, they needed to provide it themselves. This playfulness may become an end in itself, with many educators noting the students' anticipatory excitement at the prospect of travelling together. The above points on playfulness resonate with Oldenburg (1999), who highlights both of these aspects in third places. First, he notes that "[w]hat attracts the regular visitor to a third place is supplied not by the management but by the fellow customers" (p. 33). Second, he states that "sometimes the playful spirit is obvious, as when the group is laughing and boisterous; other times it will be subtle. Whether pronounced or low key, however, the playful spirit is of utmost importance" (p.38). Importantly, it is the participants – as opposed to educators – who determine what is valued and what is not.

A certain playfulness was evident in many interviews, with examples such as students developing a routine whereby at every stop they would play a round of hacky-sack. Music and joke-telling were often mentioned in interviews. Liz (NZ) described how "even though students are on their cell phones and stuff, they still yarn and they sing… I think the van is a big, big part of the trip for them –especially with the music on, and they all just sing along". Ellie (AU) laughed as she remembered how an entire "coach full of year 10 girls started singing songs from Frozen" (the film). This playfulness arising from student creativity in

transport time appears to be an especially important element of students' OE travel experiences.

Accessibility

The fourth most dominant theme was accessibility. An accessible place is one "where individuals may come and go as they please" (Oldenburg, 1999, p.22) and to which "one may go alone at almost any time of the day or evening with assurance that acquaintances will be there" (p.32). At first glance, there appears to be virtually no possibility for students to come and go during transport time. Indeed, Christine (SC) went so far as to label her students' van ride as "enforced downtime together". She explained how they "probably wouldn't choose to spend two hours sitting in a van ...but it's that bonding time, talking, playing music, playing cards –enforced time together". Stuart (NZ) concurred: "there is nowhere to escape to, they are forced to stay together".

The data point towards a form of potentially oppressive, "coerced togetherness" that lies in stark contrast with the freedom to come and go of Oldenburg's (1999) third places. After one particularly long van trip in Australia, Dan explained how 2.5 days on the bus "almost ruined the [OE] experience". What appears to be of central importance is the actual amount of time spent travelling: if the transport time is too long, it can become stifling: if the journey is too short, the deeper conversations may not emerge. For Nigel (SC), "if it was only half an hour, it wouldn't be long enough. Three hours is a nice time. Five hours is probably the maximum".

Based on the findings presented so far, it is supportable to conclude that prolonged van travel is inconsistent with the third place framework. However, a more nuanced interrogation of the data suggests that when students are in the van, they possess the agency to decide how much they wish to engage in that third space that has been created; they can "come and go" through other means. This point of students having the power to choose how

and when they engage with the others manifests itself through subtle actions such as seat selection and the use of headphones and mobile devices. The van can thus be considered a kind of quasi-third space, in terms of its accessibility.

Liz (NZ) noted that "students will swap vans if they don't like the music in the one they are in". Christine (SC) found that in most cases, no one wanted to sit up front with her. She reported that "[u]nless they get travel sick, their first choice would always be to sit as far away from the adult as possible". Christine's comment resonated with Jim's (SC) observation that "the noise classically is always in the back of the bus –you know that's where the riot's going on!".

The majority of the interviewees raised this expansion of Oldenburg's (1999) concept of accessibility. Jim (SC) observed that "the quieter children want 'me time' and will be sat there just shoulder jammed into the corner, with the headphones – kind of obviously giving off signals that they're quite happy just being alone". Jerry (NZ) agreed, saying that when you "see someone with headphones in their ears, they are not approachable".

Listening to music through headphones and playing a mobile video game can be viewed as the privatization of the self (Belk, 2013), and an excuse to avoid interaction. Concerns about barriers to conversations came through very prominently in our interviewees' attitudes towards technology. In particular, devices such as phones were often viewed negatively by the educators we spoke with. There was a widely agreed position that journeys without mobile phones forced people to interact in different ways than they would in "normal life" and thus made for better conversations.

Shared music from the van's music system was universally regarded as acceptable by the interviewees because it was a communal activity and sometimes started group conversations about lyrics. Four educators banned the use of earphones because of its negative effects on social interaction.

Oldenburg (1999) harbors similar concerned about barriers to conversation, stating that "[w]hatever interrupts conversation's lively flow is ruinous to a third place, be it the bore, a horde of barbaric college students, or mechanical or electronic gadgetry" (p. 30). An important sidenote is that in 1999, when Oldenburg was writing, mobile technology was far more limited. His lamented "electronic gadgetry" primarily referred to loud music in cafés and bars which made conversation challenging. More recently, concerns about barriers to conversation are being expressed because the "flexible work-place" is filling cafés (classic third places) with people attempting to work on their laptops and making these coffee shops feel more like open-plan offices than the hubs of communities their proprietors wish them to be (Metz, 2017). Metz documents café owners who were removing wi-fi and banning laptops in order to enhance the quality of the interactions between people. By contrast, Steinkuehler and Williams (2017), speaking about virtual leisure spaces more generally, find that online game play is not a single, solitary interaction between an individual and a form of technology, but is more akin to playing five-person poker in a neighborhood tavern that is accessible from one's living room. These debates around the centrality of interaction and conversation in society's third places are directly reflected in the data.

Neutral Ground

Oldenburg's (1999) third places demand "neutral ground upon which people may gather" (p. 22), as these are necessary for communities to "offer the rich and varied association that is their promise and their potential" (p. 22). As such, third places do not exist within people's homes. For example, having friends over for dinner is (hopefully) an opportunity for a lively conversation, but since some people are playing the role of host and others are specifically guests, the dining room does not constitute a third place.

One of the more surprising findings from the data was that the educators generally did not play "host" to the students during transport time. In schools, students tend to rotate

between classrooms that are places specifically established by the teacher and essentially hosted by them. The lack of structure and planning during the transport time can be viewed as indicators of neutral ground for both students and educators. Speaking in Hong Kong, Fred explained that the "ferry was unique because it is in a public setting", and so it provides the chemistry. Furthermore, the fact that the other passengers are on a ferry makes it "more natural to start a conversation [with members of the public]". Christine (SC) alluded to a lack of expectation around van interactions. She noted that sometimes there could be "interesting conversations", whereas other times she does not "speak to anyone for the whole journey. The young people sleep or chat amongst themselves".

These quotes provide evidence that the lack of structure (in contrast to classroom time) and the absence of a host in van travel and ferry trips align quite closely with elements of Oldenburg's neutral ground.

Status Levelling

Closely related to neutral ground is Oldenburg's (1999) concept of "status levelling". Third places generally permit people to "know a different and fuller aspect [of each other] than is possible in the workplace" (p. 24). In a third place, restricting values attached to social roles, such as manager, team captain, unemployed carpenter, retiree, are less dominant. All of the participants in the study indicated that transport time enabled students to get to know each other in fuller ways and to develop relationships outside of their usual friendship groups.

Christine (SC) observed that many know of each other, but "won't know each other in this context. So, a lot of what's going on in the van is team building; they're playing music, they're sharing what they like and what they don't like". Bill (AU) found longer bus journeys played a part in helping the students "establish a certain kind of group dynamics". Sam's (HK) comment shows some overlap with the previous concept of neutral ground, where the

third space allows participants to "know more about each other, because it is a more natural setting to talk".

There appeared to be a tacit assumption amongst the educators from the four countries that transport time provided vital opportunities to develop relationships between students, which would, in turn, contribute to a more successful OE program. Some educators also saw this notion of status levelling extending to student-educator relationships. Fred (HK) described how he used the travel time to chat to those "who are quieter and might have something going on in their mind". The neutral ground offered a setting that was "a little more casual", where it was "easier to start conversation" about their lives and his own on more equal terms. Stuart (NZ) spoke of getting kids "confident talking with adults" and providing opportunities for him to "learn about their life". Liz's (NZ) thoughts resonated here, as she recalled having students sit in the front with her, where they would chat like peers. These status levelling episodes might happen with all the people in the van, recounted Pete (NZ), as the educator becomes involved in the "banter, repartee, [and] social exchanges where you feel included as part of the group".

From these comments, it seems that transport was seen to offer students the chance to develop the confidence to talk with adults, while educators could feel included by the students and their chat. These are indicative of a form of status levelling where there is mixing across typical social divisions in ways that are not always easy in other contexts.

It should be noted that some of the worst situations that educators described in this research featured negative interactions with people in other vehicles (e.g., making rude gestures) and anti-environmental behavior (e.g., students throwing rubbish out the window). These actions may have arisen due to the transport time being neither home nor school, and thus not having a certain set of explicit behavioral expectations.

A Home Away From Home

The last of Oldenburg's (1999) seven features – and the one that had the least resonance with the data – is "a home away from home". Oldenburg describes this as being hallmarked by a "sense of possession and control over a setting that need not entail actual ownership" (p. 40). While this characteristic of third places did not emerge in the findings, one can see how students often sit in the same places on the bus, which allows them some control over who they are near and perhaps some security of familiarity. In a retrospective study of a high school kayaking road trip, one participant commented on the routine of knowing your place in the van because everyone had their seat and this never varied (Stott et al., 2017). Such an example shows how, over a longer period of time and repeated trips in the same vehicle, the "home away from home" characteristic might emerge.

Emic Themes: Beyond Oldenburg

Four themes emerged from the data that either did not directly align with Oldenburg's (1999) framework or which can be considered as additions to it. Stake (1995) considered themes that were not theoretical-driven *apriori* to be *emic* ones. Emic themes that emerged from the data concerned learning intentions, processing experiences, passenger safety, and the unique nature of transport time to and from OE sites.

Learning Intentions

In order to be consistent with the neutral ground characteristic of third places, social interaction needs to be stimulated without a manager or educator setting the agenda. While there are many aspects of transport time where this characteristic can be largely supported, there are key areas where it breaks down. Ultimately, educators are responsible for students learning on their programs, and our participants revealed that they took steps to support this learning. All of the interviewees felt it was important that students learnt about the places they travelled through.

In terms of teaching methods, one used worksheets to be completed at particular stops, and others drew students' attention to what notable things could be viewed out of the windows. Irrespective of journey time, educators were keen to harness the potential for learning that could be accomplished on the way to and from OE sites. Irwin (AU) highlighted how he uses worksheets and flora/fauna guide-sheets to facilitate learning about historic sites and local ecology. Referring to her trips to an island-based residential center, Jenny (HK) recounted how "because there is more time and there is more space on the ferry, I would run ice-breakers and frontload the course by telling the story of [the OE organization's] history". Nigel (SC) stated that the van rides presented "a super opportunity to introduce Highland folklore, the geography and history of the place". Similarly, Pete (NZ) recalled how he had taught a weather unit at the school and how "travelling in the van is a great time to figure out what is going on and to use some of those things we are doing in class".

Through such deliberate practices, educators are undeniably moving into a host or manager role. While these moments or initiatives did not dominate the transport time, they point to a purposeful approach to elements of this time which, according to Oldenburg (1999), should not be present in third places.

Reviewing and Processing Time

In addition to learning about the places travelled through, educators felt there was value in having time to prepare for what was coming up and / or reflect on what had taken place. Christine (SC) observed that the students could be "revving themselves up for being away from home or getting in the zone for what they are needing to do, or calming nerves. There will be some kids who are trying to find out what they are going to do – they'll be asking questions".

By contrast with the outward journey where students are "revving themselves up", a more contemplative experience emerged in the homeward journeys. Stuart (NZ) noted that on

the return legs, "you are reflective and doing that key part of learning and looking back at what happened". Fred (HK) found that on the trip home, participants "reflect when passing through places that they visited during the course". For Nigel (SC), coming back is very different, as "there's a physical exhaustion going on. There's more sleep going on but not always – more a sense of reflection, knowing that they've been through something, when they've been on a journey for two or three days in the hills". Indeed, Jenny (HK) strongly felt that her students "would learn to look at normal things they do in their life with a different perspective, and reflect and appreciate that".

The utility of transport time as a processing or reviewing time for students was widely acknowledged and moving through the landscape (or seascape) appeared to facilitate this process. This processing space was not just worthwhile for students. From an educator's perspective, the journey to the OE site can be an important time to shift one's focus to the trip itself, as the teachers usually leave their schools "feeling very frazzled, as they are having to deal with all the institution's demands of them" (Nigel, SC). He went on and described how driving the minibus is a "time to breathe out and get your wits about you, and, after an hour or two, you can stop for a coffee and think a bit more clearly and be prepared for the next thing". Liz (NZ) felt the same way, as she noted that "if you are going to be three or four days 24/7 [on an expedition], with driving it's kind of like your down time". Educators saw the transport time as an opportunity to recover, prepare and reflect. In peoples' hectic everyday lives, there can be less time for thinking that the transport time appears to provide for staff, as well as for students.

Responsibility for Safety

The third theme to emerge from the data that was not part of Oldenburg's framework has to do with the safety aspects of transport. While student experiences during transport time were universally regarded as important for the OE program, it was heavily stressed that the

number one responsibility during these times was health and safety. Dan (AU) stated "I still see driving transport as the most dangerous part of OE". Al (SC) noted that his top priority as an educator is "to get to the start – get to the venue", while Stuart (NZ) placed equal importance on safety: "I can't manage behavior and drive the van. I have turned back in the past [due to problems with student behavior]". On the longer trips, Bill (AU) claimed that "fatigue management for drivers" was his biggest worry.

Unlike most OE activities, road travel potentially puts *all* participants at substantial risk. In another study, school bus drivers noted the impossibility of closely supervising students while concentrating on driving, and that students who consistently caused trouble were banned from the bus (Gristy, 2019). Educators have a duty of care for their students, and the data from our study show how this weighed heavily on educators' minds during transport time, in a way that is very different to Oldenburg's characteristics of third places. The exception was the Hong Kong program, where this safety concern did not emerge – presumably due to the more common use of public transport, where the educators are not responsible for controlling the vehicle or vessel.

Uniqueness of Transport Time

The fourth emic theme that emerged from the data was the uniqueness of transport time. When asked if the learning during transport time could be replicated in other parts of the OE program or schooling, the educators were unanimous in their responses: "No", this experience was not reproducible. The length of time and the proximity to the group are especially important factors. Liz (NZ) commented that she didn't think there was "a situation quite like it because they are forced to be in each other's company". Ellie (AU) had almost the identical thought, but added that in these unique circumstances, students "have to learn how to deal with others". For Fred (HK), "transport creates a unique space for us to chat with each other", since people are "physically closer to each other".

It is also important to note that the data revealed that Oldenburg's (1999) somewhat idealistic "happy gathering places" did not always emerge. There are circumstances where group culture, conflict with members of the public, illness or mechanical problems caused transport time to become stressful and unpleasant.

What is clear, however, is that educators must manage the multiple demands of transport time. As noted, they have responsibilities for student safety and ensuring there is a positive social environment, while often driving the vehicles at the same time. This combination of tasks presents a significant cognitive load. It would appear that because of this load, educators have largely left the students to themselves during this time, which seems to have allowed many characteristics of third places to emerge.

Implications and Conclusions

Writing in 1982, Oldenburg and Brissett note that "participation in the third place does not guarantee anything" (p. 273). Perhaps travel time in OE goes some way to providing its participants "with a realm of social experiences and relationships that are increasingly unavailable in the society at large" (p. 273). While the context of this study sits within OE, a focus on the importance of learning that occurs outside the headline activity is relevant to other sectors. In particular, the common practice of transporting students or participants to and from field trips, sporting events, cultural festivals or study abroad experiences, should resonate with practitioners and researchers beyond the field of OE.

Our findings support the importance of transport time as a contributing factor to the overall experience of a program. The findings strongly echo Orford's (1994) mantra that "everything is program", in that the time and activity before and after the "main event" have central importance in shaping participants' attitudes and actions. While some might therefore argue that we should make more intentional use of this time with a structured and planned approach, we strongly support Oldenburg's (1999) belief that not everything worthwhile can

be planned for. This view is shared by Pete (NZ), who stated that "It's not something that you can program". It would appear that there is merit in trusting the power of the journey (Asfeldt & Beames, 2017) and the serendipitous joy and learning that will likely occur in unforeseen ways (Krouwel, 2005).

The vast majority of the experiences shared by the educators revealed transport time to be valued and to contribute to the overall program goals. Following these findings, we suggest that by being conscious of the opportunities that lie within the time dedicated to transport to and from program places, educators can work to create the conditions for learning, reflection, and social connections between students to emerge in subtle and unforced ways.

We have used Oldenburg's (1999) characteristics of third places to analyze interviews with OE educators about their perspectives on the value of transport time. As researchers, we have found the framework particularly useful in helping to understand the role of transport within outdoor education programs. Transport time aligns well with the third place characteristics of neutral ground, status levelling, conversation, a low profile, regulars and a playful mood, and accessibility. By contrast, "the home away from home" characteristic was not supported in the data, and having a legitimate authority figure with responsibility for learning and safety also stands in contrast to third places as described by Oldenburg.

As indicated early in the paper, there is a growing body of literature examining third places, which has broadened into online communities, clubs and libraries. In general terms, the participants' views demonstrate that transport time can be seen as a third place. The functions of the third places and transport time are to provide ports of entry into communities, connect people with others, identify people they want to spend time with, and unite a community or neighborhood (Oldenburg, 1999). If third places are important for the

flourishing of society, then the findings of this study have implications for outdoor learning, and programs with field trips more broadly.

Other theoretical perspectives may also help deepen understandings of third spaces and travel time. Anthropological lenses, for example, could explore transport as rites of passage, where the transitions between experiences can be seen as liminal spaces that can elicit some kind of personal development (see van Gennep, 1960).

Some of the participants expressed concern that this research would show transport time as wasted time, and promote the view that educators try and use this time more constructively for student learning. It is not our place to agree or disagree with such views, but it is clear that the third place framework pushes back against having more structure and accountability, as this would remove the organic, unprescribed, neutrality that is so central to it. This research strongly highlights the breadth and depth of experiences that occur during transport time and the contribution they make to programs.

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