University of Nevada, Reno

**Place, Literacy Learning, and Civic Engagement:
A Case Study of Adventure Risk Challenge**

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by

Merrilyne Lundahl

Dr. Jane A. Detweiler /Dissertation Advisor

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Jane A. Detweiler, Advisor

Kathleen A. Boardman, Committee Member

James Webber, Committee Member

Deborah A. Boehm, Committee Member

Lynda R. Wiest, Graduate School Representative

David W. Zeh, Ph. D., Dean, Graduate School

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Abstract

Place, Literacy Learning, and Civic Engagement: A Case Study of Adventure-Risk-Challenge investigates learning that takes place at Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC), a nonprofit, outside-of-school program that supports the literacy and leadership development of California's underserved youth. Previous research on place, literacy learning, and civic engagement has looked at these elements together in studies of service learning, (e.g. Dubinsky, Reynolds) and spatial and ecological theories of writing (e.g. Reynolds, Dobrin, Weisser). This study engages three tensions: one between literacy sponsorship and literacy violence; one between operating assumptions about the importance of settings vs. how settings actually influence learning; and one about competing definitions of "citizen." I located and examined these tensions based on data collected from participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research, which was coded as part of my analysis. Based on my findings, I argue for an ecological model of literacy sponsorship that highlights greater agency for beneficiaries and offers heuristics for examining reciprocity. My findings suggest ARC students' literacy learning is improved due to direct and indirect impacts of the natural, outdoor settings where ARC takes place. Finally, my work illustrates how rhetorical education and consideration of "citizenship" can be implemented into place-based education to build a more comprehensive model of Greenwood's critical pedagogy of place. These findings have implications for practitioners interested in a model of possibilities for literacy, place-based, and rhetorical education.

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Chapter 1
Winning the Race: Considering Civics, Education, and Environment

Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.
H.G. Wells

"Why Teach? Why teach English?" These questions were put to me several years

after I left a middle school language arts position. I went to the position fired up about

making an impact, helping youth see the power and possibility that literacy offered, and I

left it as a cynic, traumatized by my complicity in a system that failed kids. I did not burn

out because the "why" of teaching was lost to me: I still teach English to contribute to a

civil society where there is more access and inclusion, more justice and peace, and

greater attention to and care for our planet—in short, to save the world. I left because I

did not know "how" to teach in ways that changed a status quo where some kids and

cultures were more valued than others, and where the planet was irrelevant to education.

During the Vietnam War, Mary Rose O'Reilley took up a question similar to

mine: How can we teach English so people quit killing each other? My context is

different from O'Reilley's; my students are not going to be drafted if they fail my classes.

But there is just as much urgency in our current context, so I, too, ask how we might

teach English so people quit killing and hurting each other, themselves, and our shared

planet. I do not know a research design that might fully answer this question; however, as

someone situated within the general discipline of English Studies and more specifically

within rhetoric and composition, I have sought to examine learning within three realms:

literacy, civics, and the environment. Asking "How do people learn?" in a context

combining all three realms enables me to envision many small ways that we—as

educators, researchers, and citizens—might alleviate threats to our shared humanity and

habitat. This is an interdisciplinary effort that requires looking beyond the boundaries of one field to see how holistic approaches to civic involvement, education, and sustainability might benefit individuals and our shared, multiple communities.

Many disciplines, individuals and organizations share concerns about how best to work toward a future that is more humane, inclusive, and sustainable. For example, one week after Donald Trump was elected as president, Judy Braus, the executive director of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) sent an email to members of the organization reaffirming the non-partisan nature of the organization but also pointing readers to resources about becoming politically involved. NAAEE's focus on "advancing environmental literacy and civic engagement" demonstrates interrelationships between environment, literacy in its broad forms[1], and civics. Furthermore the work of environmental education requires content knowledge as well as knowledge in communication and teaching, as environmental educators' expertise is "more essential than ever to promote understanding, bridge cultures, and connect people to nature" (Braus). The letter discusses how important an inclusive movement is, how both our environment and our democracy face challenges ahead, and asserts that environmental education can "help us create informed citizens, engaged communities, and strong institutions that are committed to creating a more sustainable future" (Braus). Braus's note sends a clear message about the civic aspects of education and environmentalism and highlights overlaps between science, civics, communication, social justice, and planetary health. Environmental education, like rhetoric and composition, is

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[1] I use the term "literacy" to refer to text-based reading as well as writing, speaking, and listening. To avoid confusion, I've used different terminology, like "pro-environmental behaviors" to get at the more graceful idea of ecoliteracy, which involves ecological knowledge *and* effective communication.

an interdisciplinary endeavor, and researchers, scholars, and practitioners within each field seek ways to improve both student learning and community vitality—often with overarching aims of making a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Though I recognize these goals may sound grandiose, they undergird my work: like many other observers, I sense that the systemic, interacting problems related to Americans' civic involvement, educational system, and the environment can begin to be solved through deliberate interventions in any one of these areas.

Civic Involvement as a Problem

There is a collective belief that Americans are disengaged from civic life. Whether and to what extent this is true depends largely upon definitions. Some studies suggest positive trends in civic engagement, measured by behaviors other than voting, canvassing, or protesting. For example, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) issued a report on civic life in America that presents statistics about participation through discussing politics, exposure to news and current events, registering to vote, and boycotting based on a company's politics that highlight engagement in community life. The CNCS especially emphasizes volunteerism as a means of civic involvement, including its statistic that 62 million Americans volunteered through an organization (Corporation) as evidence for Americans' civic commitments. Defining what constitutes "civic engagement" in order to assess people's participation in public life is its own project. The CNCS included a wide range of behaviors; other measures— like voter turnout or knowledge of how government works—might present a less rosy picture of Americans' civic life. What is clear is that as a nation, we value being involved

in our communities in some way, and we believe education has a role to play in nurturing a type of citizenship that includes civic involvement.

This collective belief about the importance of "citizenship" and education's role in promoting it has led colleges and universities to move toward more formalized programs of civic engagement for students, sometimes requiring coursework[2] or establishing programs for civic engagement or types service learning that purport to serve communities. The U.S. Department of Education contracted with the Global Perspective Institute and the Association of American Colleges and Universities in order to evaluate the "state of education for democracy and produce a paper with a National Call to Action through which multiple stakeholders could significantly increase democratic participation and the number of informed, engaged, and globally knowledgeable civic participants" (National Task Force). The resulting report, "A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future" is firmly rooted in the ideals of education for democracy, and it presents both symptoms of "Anemic Civic Health" and a strategic framework for improving that health across educational, economic, government, and community sectors. The document has echoes of *A Nation at Risk* but presents a civics crisis in America—the authors call it a "civic recession"— that highlights the values of civic knowledge and action that have been associated with education and democracy since ancient Athens.

What is new about the values articulated in "A Crucible Moment" is the awareness of how race and class are associated with participation in civic life; the report includes data about civics education and assessment showing that white high school

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[2] For example, California State University, Los Angeles began requiring two courses in civic learning in the fall of 2016, and many other universities offer course work that involves civic education. There has been pushback. Critics perceive the civic aspects of higher education as a cynical "New Civics" that encourages disruption and only values civic action intended to benefit a "liberal agenda."

seniors outperform African American and Hispanic seniors by 29 and 19 points, respectively, in civic engagement measures, and describes that opportunities for high school students to develop civic knowledge, skills, and abilities through "community service, school government, or clubs are available disproportionately to wealthier students" ("National Task Force").

Schooling as a Problem

At the same that civic health in the United States is "anemic," so too, according to many observers, is our educational system. While John Dewey called for education to be "of, by, and for experience," too many of the experiences students encounter in school do not facilitate social, intellectual, civic, or moral growth. In short, too many students do not leave high school prepared for postsecondary education or a workforce that will sustain them—or even with a strong sense of self, community, and confidence to build the lives they might want. Systemic inequities plague education and Jonathan Kozol's "savage inequalities" continue through segregated schools, lower rates of graduation for youth of color, and even a schools-to-prison pipeline. Privatization is an ongoing threat to the "public" in public education, and privatization creep can be seen in philanthropy, charter schools, and vouchers. Access to quality education is too often determined by zip code, race, and socioeconomic status. Many schools are overcrowded and underfunded. Standardized testing trumps other forms of assessment that may be more valuable to teaching and learning, and the stakes of such tests are high. Although high school graduation rates are at an all-time high, the standards for graduation are inconsistent and despite the rates of graduation, many students still must do "remediation" in order to succeed in college

In fact, students learn many lessons not related to stated learning objectives, internalizing a hidden curriculum of implicit messages. First named by Phillip Jackson in his ethnographic study *Life in Classrooms,* a hidden curriculum operates alongside and underneath a formal curriculum. It refers to the sometimes-subtle transmission of values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits that work to socialize children in ways that, at minimum, maintain the status quo. The hidden curriculum is also cited for reifying divisions in class, race, gender, dis/ability, and other social markers. In the preface to the *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education,* editors Henry Giroux and David Purpel explain that while it is generally assumed that schools have a socializing role and there exists a hidden curriculum, what is actually worth investigating is the "function and consequence of such a curriculum" (ix). The connotation of "hidden curriculum" is negative as the "lessons" students learn from schooling tend to stifle identity, reinforce arbitrary structures, foster dependency on authority figures, and eliminate self-reflection in addition to maintaining systems of injustice (Christensen, Friere, Giroux, Gatto). Besides some apparent weakness in enabling youth to master content knowledge, the implicit social and political messages of school often are at odds with humanist and democratic ideals.

Despite evidence that individualized education that is culturally and personally relevant and offers a wide range of experiences for students is effective, the factory-based model of mass education and associated national standards and measures drive curricula. Schooling falls far short of ideals of education as the great equalizer. In fact, too many educational experiences are what John Dewey calls "mis-educative" as they have the "effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (13). School, for many students, crushes curiosity and diminishes a sense of autonomy. It teaches people where

they fit in social hierarchies and according to scholars like Chet Bowers, reifies societal values like individualism, anthropocentrism, and commoditization of the commons. These values are directly implicated in our current state of environmental destruction.

Ecological Threat as Problem

Our planet seems ever more closely pushed to the brink of health, resilience, and what it can sustain. We face more catastrophic weather patterns, mass extinctions, polluted air and water, deforestation, desertification, the bleaching of coral reefs, and myriad other threats to humanity, biological diversity, and our varied habitats. The problems outlined here—in civic involvement, education, and environmental health—are interrelated. David Orr, a scholar in environmental design and education, suggests that a crucial component of slowing ecological decline is changing education, and warns, "the crisis cannot be solved by the same kind of education that helped create the problems" (*Ecological* 83). Environmental issues are always also issues of social justice, as are education issues; interventions in education have the potential to move toward more justice, more community involvement, and a more sustainable environment. Addressing real and urgent issues related to environmental and human health as part of curricula and pedagogy can make learning more relevant, project-based, and interdisciplinary.

Delaying Catastrophe

I see civic involvement—some return to a rhetorical education for all that emphasizes working for a greater good through nurturing a type of practical wisdom that includes action—as one means toward improving education generally and nurturing pro-environmental behaviors specifically. Being involved in some way within one's community has potential to make education more relevant. Connecting experiences in

school to engagement with community—volunteering for organizations, citizen science projects, informal service, or just speaking up—matters. I speak from my own limited experience, but my efforts at environmental activism and service during my youth helped me invest in education even when I saw that education as difficult, hoop-jumping, or boring. More importantly, those experiences helped me negotiate a grim adolescence. I encountered intelligent, committed, healthy people willing to do the work of making our community better. Through these encounters, I came to believe in possibilities for my life that my own family and culture could not envision for me.

Studies validate my anecdotes. Greater civic engagement has been correlated with personal as well as community and ecological benefits. Peter Levine summarizes research that finds benefits such as higher motivation, broader networks, lower rates of depression, and in adolescents, higher academic achievement associated with civic engagement (4).

This was my experience, and it seems to ring true for those who participate in Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC), a nonprofit educational organization that deliberately brings together literacy, place, and civic aims in an "integrated literacy and leadership" program for California's high-school youth, primarily with highly motivated but underserved English Language Learners and members of Generation 1.5. ARC "inspires youth to become life-long learners, stewards of the environment, and leaders in their schools and community" through its outside-of-school programming (About). ARC bills itself as an organization that intervenes in problems of schooling, ecological health, and civic engagement. As such, it seemed like an ideal site for research motivated by questions of how, as teachers, scholars, and policy-makers, we might work toward a more humane, vibrant, just, and sustainable world, no matter how small the scale.

I approached this study from my own experiences. As a youth, I was high achieving but also at-risk; my self-sponsored literacies and forays into outside-of-school learning saved me. My ninth-grade English teacher nominated me for a scholarship-funded Young Women & Science Program at Teton Science School (TSS). I met other girls from throughout the Intermountain West who were interested in the outdoors and science; I encountered strong women who had meaningful careers and told me I could, too; I felt awe and wonder; I met a lesbian birder. My interests and sense of self—from being a "tomboy" to being head-over-heels in love with the planet to being pretty bright—were supported, not criticized. I returned to TSS for a six-week high school field ecology program, where those same interests and sense of self were nurtured. Ten years later, after an undergraduate program where I'd tried to blend humanities and sciences and emerged with a degree that included American Studies, Biology, and Women & Gender Studies, and with work experience in the Forest Service, environmental consulting, and teaching middle-school language arts, I returned to TSS for a professional residency in environmental education. There, I learned that I am an English teacher—I couldn't build community or teach field science without incorporating poetry and writing to learn. By the time I came to my doctoral education, I had gained experience and exposure to place-based education, critical pedagogies, and greening English studies. During my coursework and comprehensive exams, I continued to investigate English education, environmental education, and rhetorical education from the belief that overlaps, gaps, and intersections could offer insights into improved pedagogies—those that could help in saving the world. These lenses—the scholarship of literacy, environmental, and rhetorical education; my own experiences as a student and teacher in

outdoor and place-based education; and my insistence on seeing the world through

multiple disciplines—shaped my research at ARC.

ARC operates at the confluence of literacy education, civic involvement, and pro-

environmental ethics. Driven by my interest in these areas, and based on subsequent data

collection and analysis, I situate ARC in the following ways:

1) As a nonprofit educational organization that works to boost academic

achievement, ARC is a community literacy and outside-of-school learning

program that has potential to disrupt typical notions of literacy sponsorship;

2) ARC is an environmental/place-based educational organization, and it

delivers this education primarily through exposure and access to wild nature;

3) ARC is a provider of rhetorical education through its leadership curriculum

and emphasis on communication and service.

I argue that aspects of ARC offer correctives to some current practices in outside-of-

school literacy programs and in place-based and rhetorical education. Though relevant

literature is brought into each of the chapters that follow, I offer here a brief overview of

the larger scholarly conversations of which this project is a part.

<u>Rhetorical Education</u>

Many recognize the interconnectedness of civic involvement, education, and

environmentalism as both a problem and potential solution. Charles Saylan and Daniel

Blumstein judge environmental education as having so far failed "to bring about the

changes in attitude and behavior necessary to stave off the detrimental effects of climate

change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation" (1). Part of their critique is that

the "importance of participating in the government is not taught in a meaningful way in

American schools" and one of their solutions is for environmental education to broaden its scope and help students with information literacy, communicative power, and an understanding of civics.

When Saylan and Bernstein lament that the "importance of participating in the process of government is not taught in a meaningful way" in schools, or when environmental education researcher Martha Monroe calls for communication, argument, and advocacy as part the "knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors" necessary to being "competent and responsible," (115) these scholars are in fact calling for a form of rhetorical education, the idea that a key purpose of education is to nurture civic virtue and prepare students for a type of citizenship that is informed and engaged. "Citizenship" as an educational aim is also present within literacy studies and composition; Amy Wan traces how course objectives demonstrate expectations for "citizen writers" who can "use writing skills toward action" and produce "participatory action through writing" ("Name" 31).

That education in both the humanities and sciences calls for some sort of citizenship demonstrates how civic aims are foundational to the enterprise of education. Indeed, for centuries it made little sense to differentiate between education and civic training, as the purpose of schooling in the ancient Western world was to prepare young men to lead their societies. Rhetoric, as both skill and art, was a foundational course of study intended to "enable students to govern knowledgeably and virtuously both their own households and [the] commonwealth" (Glenn vii). The schools of Isocrates and eventually Plato's Academy in ancient Athens worked toward this end, and education in Rome similarly sought to prepare students for an active civic life. The assumption that

schooling and democracy are related continues to inform debates about the purposes of education.

Many scholars have questioned what rhetorical education might mean in the present time. While our students do not face the immediate "prospect of taking the knowledge and skill mastered in the class directly into practice in the running of the polis" (Jarratt 84), rhetorical education is still relevant because of the potential it gives people to engage more effectively in public life. However, rhetorical education is also susceptible to the same functions of most education: it "legitimate[s] social inequalities that exist before, after, inside, and outside its educational operations" by maintaining dominant cultures and discourses (Glenn ix). This has been true throughout history, and many scholars work to trouble it. Only males in the highest social and economic classes—those who were to be the deciders—were granted an education. The democratic "marketplace" was hardly a utopia, and classical rhetorical education should not be held up as an ideal in modernity as "the historical relations between 'paideia', 'citizenship', and democracy', also need to be situated in a very elitist and—by our standards—even non-democratic context" (Rutton & Soetaert 731). Rhetorical education in modern time is still disproportionately available to the privileged. As Cheryl Glenn explains, "an assessment of any judicial or legislative branch of government or of the Fortune 500 leaders" supports the claim that "well-born males continue to receive…the best preparation for participating in the public sphere" (viii). The move to question rhetorical education, to consider its potential and problems, is an ongoing and important development. The values that underlie education continue to draw from historic roots, where a primary purpose of education was to prepare statesmen, politicians, and lawyers

who would govern. Because access to education has historically been reserved for those with gender, race, and class privilege—and has also been used as a tool of assimilation and oppression—it is crucial to consider issues of power. As Shirley Logan so clearly puts it, when discussing rhetorical education it is essential that we "speak of privilege and opportunity first…. And then we have to ask—if we can get through the tangle of oppression and denial to think about rhetorical education—rhetorical education for what?" (Logan 48). One of the ways composition studies has taken up this call—to consider rhetorical education for what—is in its public turn. Through community literacy, service learning, community action and other types of grounded research projects, composition has combined its roots in the rhetorical tradition with the socially responsive values of its emergence as a discipline.

Turning to Literacy and Environmental Education in Out-of-School Contexts

Paula Mathieu explains the public turn in composition as the revived interest—often linked to the rhetorical tradition of education for citizenship—in connecting writing to "text, events, or exigencies" in the so-called "real world." A social turn preceded the public turn, and these and other turns continue to develop and unfold in specific contexts, building on and informing each other and the practices and scholarship of those in the field. Frank Farmer explains that none of these "turns" is a replacement of prior turns or frees us from the responsibility of attending to all of them, arguing that "while our discipline advances as a result of the many turns it makes, composition studies remains too varied and too complex for any one turn to supplant or govern all others" (2). It is some combination of the values to teaching, research, service, and university-community

partnerships represented in these turns that has led to both community literacy and ecocomposition.

According to Mathieu, the public turn encompasses a "desire for writing to enter civic debates," to "focus on local, social issues," for "students to hit the streets by performing service, and for teachers and scholars to conduct activist or community grounded research" (1-2). Operationalized, these moves include "public writing, public-oriented course content, place-based writing, Web-based publishing, service learning, community literacy, ethnographies of communication, and community publishing" (8). Mathieu's definition of community literacy links it to partnerships with universities, but there are non-profit organizations with literacy-based missions, such as 826 Valencia and 916 Ink, which operate independently of universities. [3]

Shirley Brice Heath, in her foreword to *School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice*, describes learning as life-long, constant, and not singularly defined by the setting of school. She explains: "Outside the physical barriers and arbitrary limits of education, the concept of learning unrestricted by time and place is an ancient and instinctive one" (vii). This intuitive understanding of learning Heath articulates drives organizations that offer educational programming, whether it's wilderness travel, field-based science, or community literacy. Nonprofit organizations are often able to overcome the limitations of public education for the masses and can respond more quickly to address the needs and wishes of particular communities. With specific

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[3] Adventure-Risk-Challenge has been associated with the University of California (UC) system, as it was part of Berkeley and continues to rely on the UC Natural Reserve System for its basecamp and retreat sites. However, it is now its own nonprofit, and though it has partnerships associated with schools like UC Merced and Sierra Nevada College, these are not formalized under a "community literacy" scenario. I contextualize ARC as a stand-alone nonprofit engaged in community literacy practices.

and limited missions and lower student-to-instructor ratios, many outside-of-school learning programs can orchestrate experience in the ways Dewey envisioned, where "education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learning and for society [is] based upon experience—which is always the life-experience of some individual" (113). Though highly individualized education can neglect the realities of the social nature of learning, outside-of-school contexts are usually strongly community based. Many outside-of-school programs draw from a principle of experiential learning, that learning is a "holistic process of adaptation to the world" interested in the "integrated function of the total organism—thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving" (Kolb 31). Adapting to the world and functioning within it means attending to one's community and relationships. This holds true for individuals and the organizations that serve those individuals and their communities.

In composition and rhetoric, as well as literacy studies, outside-of-school learning opportunities have been associated with university-community partnerships and service learning, and include community or family literacy (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Water; Cushman; Deans, Roswell, & Wurr; Dubinsky; Flower). ARC, which blends literacy learning with leadership and outdoor education, is a type of outside-of-school learning opportunity. It is both a community literacy program and an organization involved in environmental and place-based education.

Judy Braus's note in the aftermath of Trump's election marks a change in environmental education (EE), which often has been perceived as pitting the environment against the economy, emphasizing individual over collective efforts at conservation, and teaching about nature independently of people. Many observers and practitioners

recognized a need to include people and human communities within the aims of EE, and to be more holistic both about the problems, purposes, and solutions within this type of education. One intervention has been place-based education (PBE), which addresses human and nonhuman communities, and which can answer calls for environmental education to include advocacy and activism. It is a strand of experiential education in which aspects of the local community—including ecology, the built environment, and human communities—are used to teach academic subjects. The most widely cited definition of PBE comes from David Sobel, who explains that PBE is "the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in…subjects across the curriculum" (7). From this framework, PBE would include most types of service-learning and internships as well as projects that invite inquiry based on local contexts. In composition studies, it is the public turn made locally and often with attention to ecosystems.

One strand of composition's public turn has been the question of how teaching and scholarship can serve the goal of sustainability. Inspired by the work and potential of our field to effect change, practitioners have focused on issues of environmentalism and sustainability, citing planetary health as the most pressing concern of our time. The convergence of composition's social and public turns with environmental threat has led to our field's attempts to bridge care for the biosphere with English studies through such developments as ecocriticism and ecocomposition. This is distinct from the ways in which scholars like Nedra Reynolds have so eloquently drawn from cultural geography and spatial theories of discourse and pedagogy; however, what Reynolds and those whose work is in community settings offers is a way of meaningful civic engagement (e.g.

Cushman, Goldblatt, Reynolds). All of these strands—public, ecological, rhetorical, and pedagogical—suggest we need to bring "place" back into our scholarship and teaching. Sidney Dobrin discusses the backgrounded role of "place" in scholarship and pedagogy even though *topoi* is Greek for "place" and context, which is spatial, both creates and is created by discourse. He calls for expanding inquiry from "environmental" themes to considering ecology in any aspect of writing and teaching writing. We could also work to integrate whatever personal values we may have for the natural world with our professional lives; Glen A Love suggests we "apply our nominal concern for 'the environment' to the sort of work we do in the real world as teachers, scholars, and citizens of a place and a planet" (7). The rationale for an environmental orientation is because we face a planetary crisis and urgently need to intervene for our own survival— Derek Owens's most basic argument is that "learning how to live sustainably ought to be our primary cultural concern and, as such, must play a central role within our curricula" (8). The practices that support Owens's call include various pedagogies related to composition's public turn: attempts at service learning and civic engagement, public and professional writing.

The reasons for considering place in education generally and in writing specifically have been as much for an outcome of nurturing an ethics of care toward the planet as for effective literacy and composition pedagogies. Whether specific educational outcomes for students are met has been slightly less relevant than the larger goals of systemic change to education and helping individuals become more place-and-planet conscious. While I recognize the goals of health and sustainability as far more important and helpful than that of creating consumers and competitors in a global economic

workforce, the realities of that market system and the expectations of stakeholders in education compel me to also consider how incorporating pro-environmental practices or engaging students in outside-the-classroom experiences help, hinder, or otherwise impact literacy learning. Many pedagogical approaches, including those from the public turn, claim both to improve student learning outcomes and make the world a better place. It makes intuitive sense that combining aims of civic engagement, environmental protection, and literacy can make both education and our communities more humane and sustainable, but such aims reveal assumptions, controversies, and complexities within education. There are ongoing tensions between stakeholders; students, instructors, administrators, institutions, legislators, and employers may all have different expectations of what a course or major should provide, as well as what it should mean to graduate from high school or college. Scholars and practitioners who have participated in composition's public turn—in its various iterations—grapple with these tensions. This contextualized case study of ARC is part of that effort.

Research Site

Adventure-Risk-Challenge is a nonprofit educational organization; Katie Fesus Zanto founded it in 2004 based on her postgraduate work in integrative literacy, English teaching credential, and experiences as an outdoor educator, as well as her commitment to meeting local educational needs. Based on New York City's Outward Bound model that integrated leadership with literacy, "ARC targets English Language Learners and low-income high school youth in California" (Job Description). The organization, like many nonprofits, continually works to define itself as it develops and grows. When I started my research, the organization's website explained that ARC, "links wilderness to

academics, adventure to leadership, identity to literacy and confidence to activism."

Board retreats over the last year have led to revisions, with ARC describing itself more

specifically and within context. In the following description, links among wilderness,

academics, literacy, adventure, leadership, identity, confidence and activism are pulled

apart and the organization is situated in the context of outside-of-school learning:

> ARC specializes in exceptional summer learning opportunities for young people that are strengthened through academic-year programming. ARC inspires youth to become life-long learners, stewards of the environment, and leaders in their schools and communities. Through our innovative integration of outdoor and academic education, they learn valuable social skills and increase their self-esteem, to support them in their academic, personal, and professional pursuits. High quality summer learning programs are essential to the success of today's youth. (About)

Many of ARC's descriptions highlight positive youth development through

academics and outdoor leadership, like this description: "Through our innovative

integration of outdoor and academic programming, ARC helps young people build the

social, emotional, intellectual, and professional assets they need to be successful in life"

while others also demonstrate specific values of place and civic engagement:

> Our transformative year-round program improves academic skills, exposes youth to a range of natural environments and wilderness experiences, and inspires the confidence they need to envision and accomplish goals, succeed in high school, attend college, and become engaged, empowered citizens.

While the iterations of ARC's self-description morph for various rhetorical purposes and

under different leadership, the mission and vision offer consistent, grounding guidelines.

ARC's mission is "to empower underserved youth through integrated literacy and

wilderness experiences" and its vision is "that all youth will have a pathway to complete

post-secondary education and to live as engaged, empowered citizens" (About). In an

effort to understand ARC's culture and how its mission and vision are enacted, I studied the organization as a participant observer. My lenses were from literacy studies, place-based, and rhetorical education.

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In the backcountry somewhere near Yosemite's boundary, I am travelling with the entire staff of Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC). It's All-Staff Training 2015, with ARC's executive director, program coordinators, and the instructors and interns from both Tahoe and Yosemite sites. A key objective of the trip, besides learning ARC's structures and practices for wilderness leadership, is building empathy for the kids ARC serves. In a few weeks, the Tahoe and Yosemite teams will be on backcountry expeditions with high school students. At all-staff training, not only would we practice stove maintenance, map reading, wilderness medicine, and other essential skills—we would experience some of what students go through: getting out of our comfort zones, experiencing discomfort, building community, learning about ourselves and each other. We would go on our own solos, and we would encounter some challenging conditions.

The second night out is cold. Sitting around makeshift lanterns, we share "life stories"— three to four things about what makes us who we are. People talk about family, faith, difficulties, and place before cold and long-windedness require that we wrap up until the next night. We have to get into our bags because we are out of ways to get warm: fires are prohibited, and we can't make hot drinks because the kitchen has been bombproofed and bear bags are hung. Plus, we've already done the hokey pokey and a group dancing routine to try to warm up.

The next morning we hike up Lundy Canyon and are rewarded by dropping into a bowl of alpine lakes. It feels rugged, wild, and pristine. Along the way—gaining elevation, crossing talus slopes—we discuss definitions of terrain and subsequent risk management while interacting with various terrains and managing associated risks. We scramble up a route that requires helmets and climb using scouts, spotters, and multiple points of contact. This bit of mountaineering seems difficult and risky, and it pushes some of us out of comfort zones. Sarah, the executive director, talks about the "growth zone," which is out of the comfort zone but not to panic zone. There is a constant interplay of doing some activity—from telling "life stories" to crossing snowfields—with reflection. Members of the trip give feedback to each other about what worked, how we felt supported (or not), and moments where we might improve our leader- or follower-ship.

When Katie Zanto emerged from the wilderness bearing gifts of fresh produce during the training, she seemed like a goddess from ancient mythology: strong, capable, generous. Later, as the group circled up to learn about ARC's origin story, she seemed no less remarkable.

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Site History

The story of ARC is closely linked to the story of its founder. After completing a master's degree that included studying the partnership between New York City Outward Bound and North Carolina Outward Bound that focused on combining literacy and adventure education, Katie founded ARC rather than going into a doctoral program. Her academic background has always been interdisciplinary—she's now chair of

interdisciplinary studies at a small liberal arts college—with experiential education as the context. Katie is guided by wanting to create experiences that bring out the best in students. With the all-staff crew circled up in a little meadow, she relayed her experience of a decade working with Outward Bound and having "incredible endings" and powerful course debriefs. She wondered, "How much does it stick?" and "What if we wrote down and returned to what was said in those circles?"

For her, combining the insights from adventure and wilderness education with writing seemed essential to making the experience relevant once students left their programs. The wilderness components help students discover a best self and show them their potential; with writing, students are able to re-read their essays and stories for all of their lives. They create touchstone texts they can come back to; they are their own audience. Their ARC experience becomes part of their story, and writing makes it "solidified in [their] psyche." Writing makes outdoor experiences more powerful and the outdoors make the writing more powerful.

As a high school English teacher, Katie saw potential in the NYC and North Carolina Outward Bound program to be more effective by having credentialed teachers be part of outdoor adventure components. Though she worked to strengthen their writing curriculum, as a person passionate about the mountains and the West, she didn't feel particularly inspired by the work she did with this program—it was not her place and not her community. However, she saw a need in her California community, especially for English Language Learners. She searched for a program that was meeting these needs through literacy and outdoor adventure education, but found nothing. She went to Mexico and Guatemala to work on her Spanish, and used her notes and curriculum from working

with NYC Outward Bound to launch the ARC program in 2004. Katie needed three things: district support and the ability to grant students credit, a location, and students.

She was able to get the local district's blessing to offer elective and English credits to students who completed the summer course. She partnered with the University of California Natural Reserves field station system and UC Berkeley to locate the program at Sagehen Creek Field Station outside of Truckee, California. Initially, the program had ten students from Tahoe-area schools and was 40-days long. Partnering with Summer Search in the second year helped rural Tahoe students encounter greater diversity and helped fund the program.

In 2007, the program expanded to Sedgewick, and in 2011 to Merced. The Central California sites are based out of the Yosemite Field Station in Wawona. Between Katie's departure from the executive director role and Sarah Ottley, the current executive director, there was one other person in that position. The number of staff has grown significantly, with full time programs and part-time outreach positions in addition to paid interns and summer teaching staff. As part of an experiment in making ARC available to more students, the Tahoe program moved to a 24-day program in 2014.[4] As of 2017, ARC has three main components to its programming: the 40 or 24-day summer immersion, weekend retreats, and mentoring. Participants are drawn from local communities and students are also brought in from Summer Search to fill available slots in the summer immersion program. Summer Search contributes a significant proportion of funding for its participants, and local students' slots are paid by partial and full

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[4] In 2017, Tahoe will go back to being a 40-day program, but the 24-day program developed during the Tahoe pilot will be implemented at ARC's new Sequoia site, which serves youth in the Fresno area.

scholarships from a range of individual donors, foundation and government grants. Almost all families also contribute based on a sliding scale.

ARC, which has striven to be evidence-based from the beginning, boasts impressive results. At the time of ARC's first program in 2004, Latino students were at greater risk than their white peers for dropping out of high school, failing the mandatory California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and not going on to post-secondary education. Katie saw a need and founded ARC to intervene in these trends, and she astutely began evaluating the program from the very beginning. All but one of its summer program participants graduated from high school, and ARC's internal data show that 97% of its summer immersion participants pass the English Language portion of the CAHSEE and 82% go on to attend a 2 or 4 year college.

The needs of students may have shifted somewhat in the last several years; more and more students enter ARC as already proficient in English speaking, reading, and writing, and California abolished and retroactively granted diplomas to those who failed the CAHSEE. Still, students take a pre- and post-test that includes CAHSEE questions testing language/grammar usage, reading comprehension, and essay writing. While highly relevant in ARC's early years and still part of an important measure of ARC's academic goals, the pre/post test now also includes questions from the SAT, demonstrating a stronger college-orientation for students. ARC describes its ideal candidates for participation as those who "lack access to meaningful and transformational experiences in the outdoors, who need to improve their ability to communicate well through speaking and writing, and who would benefit from an experience that bolsters their academic and leadership skills" (Ottley). Youth of Hispanic/Latino heritage whose

home language is primarily Spanish make up more than 70% of students participating in ARC's programs. 30% are from African American, Hmong, Chinese, Nepali, and White communities.

Adventure-Risk-Challenge does many things for its multiple stakeholders. In a recent annual report, ARC articulates its guiding principles as growth and transformation: "ARC challenges everyone to continuously learn and reach their greater potential," sustainability: "ARC thinks strategically and uses data to guide the long-term health of the organization," authenticity: "ARC promotes transparency and genuine interactions at all levels of the organization," and mentorship: "ARC supports long-term relationships that foster accountability and personal growth" (2015 annual report). While the organization shifts to accommodate the many challenges it faces in funding, staffing and recruitment, it has solid foundations and guiding principles that seem to allow it to effectively meet its mission and work toward its vision.

Research Questions & Brief Overview of Methods

I first encountered ARC students reading their metaphor poems at a Sierra Business Council event, and I saw a unique opportunity to investigate an organization with an explicit mission of citizenship achieved through integrative literacy and leadership education set in the wilds of California. Based on the short presentation by ARC executives and the students' readings, I was persuaded that the organization helped youth make transformative change. But I also wanted to interrogate assumptions like those portrayed by a Sierra Business Council staffer, who asks, "How does introducing a child to the beauty of the natural world and exposing them to their own considerable potential embolden them to accomplish their goals and become engaged citizens? The

real question should be, how could it not?" (Powers). Taking for granted that mere exposure to the natural world and experiencing one's potential results in achieving goals and automatically becoming an engaged citizen is problematic; I sought to understand what and how students at ARC learn. When I saw ARC's website, which explained that the organization, "links wilderness to academics, adventure to leadership, identity to literacy and confidence to activism" I wondered, "But how?"

After additional research on the organization and exploring possibilities for collaboration, I developed an overarching question to frame my research and guide my study design: What happens for students and instructors when place, literacy, and civic aims are intentional and explicit components of a curriculum? This became the broadest objective of my study, and I focused this question on the curriculum. Asking, "What is the curriculum?" allowed me to address questions about ARC's aims, intentions, qualities, and pedagogical approaches, while the question "How does it work?" allowed me to consider how stakeholders experience the curriculum.

To investigate these questions, I used a qualitative, naturalistic, context-based approach. I used techniques from ethnography such as participant observation, field notes, and thick description along with participant interviews and textual analysis of ARC materials. I identify with qualitative researchers who see knowledge and truth as subjective, acknowledge there is no such thing as apolitical or value-free science, employ a range of methods, incorporate a variety of available tools, and recognize that "research is an interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting" (Denzin & Lincoln 3). I also identify with feminist researchers who emphasize the ethics of representation

and recognize the researcher's subjective position within social and political contexts. More specifically, my starting points are aligned with what Joanne Addison and Sharon James McGee articulate as the main principles of empirical feminist research: it starts with political commitments and its goals are social and individual change (3). My work resonates with ethnographically oriented approaches undertaken in rhetoric and composition and literacy studies (e.g. Bishop, Bruce, Cintron, Cushman, Schaafsma). I entered this study aware of the specificity of the context and the responsibility of fair representation and making ethical, trustworthy interpretations.[5] When I write reflectively of my own experience and subjectivity, it is in order to be transparent and engender trustworthiness. I worked to conduct the study with both rigor and flexibility, and with utmost respect for the organization and its participants.

By having a variety of sources and collection methods, these data are triangulated and contribute to the trustworthiness of my study. Though prior reading and experiences focused my interest on three broad topics—place, literacy learning, and civics—I relied on aspects of grounded theory methodology, particularly the general methodology to "[develop] theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (Strauss and Corbin 273). Through coding and memo writing of field notes and interview transcripts, and through analysis of ARC's materials, I continuously analyzed data to understand its potential significance and to guide my research process.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is defined as a method "in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the

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[5] I have encountered hiccups in adhering to my commitments. Protecting participant privacy, for example, is trickier when there is a significant public record of their writing.

means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture"
(DeWalt and DeWalt 1). ARC, which functions as a culture, has been the subject of
several graduate theses, but never before has a researcher integrated herself into that
culture as much as in my study. Doing so allowed for a deeper understanding of students'
and instructors' experiences that shaped subsequent interpretations about the literacy
curriculum, the role of setting, and leadership training at ARC.

My participant observation included having a role in the organization as the
grammar (now Language Power) instructor. This included adapting the grammar
curriculum for a shorter course (from 40 days to 24) and delivering it through seven,
hour-long lessons. I was also responsible for students' independent reading time, and
helped students select books and had informal discussions with them about reading
strategies and about their chosen texts. In part, serving in these roles was an act of
reciprocity, but it also allowed me to integrate myself into the organization in an
authentic way. My formal roles allowed me to experience some of what an instructor
might experience and to have an opportunity to relate directly with the students. As a
participant observer, I was involved in the backcountry all-staff training trip, a
backpacking orientation trip with Tahoe staff and potential student participants, the pre-
course work prior to the students' program, all of the students' basecamp days, their rock
climbing and ropes course experiences, their final backcountry expedition, and the post-
course work and debrief. I was in this role from May 21-July 22 of 2015. When I was
invited to be on the curriculum committee in the fall of 2015, I continued to consider that
work as both a participant on the committee and as an informal researcher of the

curriculum and organization. For example, the committee helped me recognize ARC's value of feedback informing programming, something less obvious in the instructor role.

While in the field as a participant observer, I took field notes that have been essential to capturing and describing some of the ARC experience. Because I sometimes was so immersed in being a "participant," my field notes often included jottings throughout the day that I fleshed out during spare moments. I also made notes about conversations with students in real time. All of these field notes were coded for emerging themes and contributed to the development of interview questions and my broader understanding of ARC's contexts. For example, I recognized early that "risk" was a key aspect of ARC's pedagogy and that setting created some of the risks students were asked to take; this led to interview questions about risk. When talking to students about the setting at ARC, they often compared it to the settings of school, which helped me formulate more specific questions about students' experience of writing and place.

Interviewing and Recruitment

The primary advantage of interviews is that it highlights meaning for participants, allowing us to co-construct an understanding of their ARC experiences and its impacts. Gabriele Griffin explains that semi-structured and in-depth interviews have the advantage of bringing topics for discussion, rather than a rigid set of questions to be answered in a particular order, and allowing for detail and elaboration in responses (182). While my interview questions reveal an assumption of positive experiences at ARC, I led the interview with a disclaimer acknowledging as much and urged participants to let me know if their experiences were less than positive. In addition to background questions about the type of ARC programming participants completed and their current educational

and career standing, interview topics included leadership, writing, risk-taking, and community participation. Questions also prompted participants to reflect on how ARC experiences might currently influence them. For example, I asked: "Thinking about your schooling, work, and community activities, can you tell me about an experience you've had where something you learned at ARC was useful?" and "Thinking back on the leadership and adventure aspects of ARC, what do you think you learned?" I defined "community" and "participation" very broadly and then invited participants to discuss their community participation. Participants and I talked about the locations of their expeditions, living at basecamp, their solos, and then I asked them what about the settings of ARC was important to the writing. I asked participants what stood out when they thought about different writing tasks and what they remembered about performing their poems at a public reading. See Appendix A for informed consent materials and Appendix B for the interview guide.

My recruitment protocol had an inherent selection bias that likely contributed to participants' generally positive responses. I interviewed ARC alumni in two waves; the first, in fall of 2015, were with alumni who had participated in the Yosemite or Tahoe programs between 2004 and 2014. In this first wave of interviews, ARC leadership directly referred participants to me. As such, many of the people I interviewed in the first wave—those who maintain relationships and involvement with ARC—may have been particularly inclined to speak positively about their experiences. ARC leadership and I reached out to these alumni through ARC's Facebook group and via email. With all interviewees, I offered to meet at a time and location they suggested, and participants received $20 for their expertise and time.

For the second wave of interviews, during spring 2016, I invited all ten of the Sagehen 2015 cohort; the six who agreed may also have had a more positive experience than those who did not. Although the selection of participants was positively skewed, I did get "negative" responses to my questions. That is, some interviewees from both waves told me they were not involved in their communities, that they did not know the purpose or audience for their writing, and they seemed especially eager to reflect on the difficulties associated with Voices of Youth and living at basecamp. These responses suggest a willingness to respond to interview questions in a way that is true to their experience. The concluding question of the interviews, intended to allow participants to speak openly, was "Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your ARC experience or its impact?"

In total, I conducted twenty-one semi-structured interviews. Two of these were with ARC instructors, thirteen with ARC alumni who participated in the Tahoe or Yosemite summer immersion program between 2004 and 2014, and six with students who were part of the 2015 summer cohort. Some study participants hold multiple roles in the organization and may have been ARC students prior to becoming members of the board or staff. I also had informal conversations with board members, volunteers, and especially with ARC's founder, and the current program director and executive director. For these conversations, I made notes during or after the interaction, but did not record and transcribe.

Analysis of Interview Data

Interview transcripts were coded in several rounds. My coding process draws from grounded theory, where data is segmented, named and labeled as a tool that allows

the researcher to "define what constitutes the data and to make implicit views, actions, and processes more visible" (Charmaz 113). Open coding allowed me to find emergent themes, and to "reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of [my] data" (Saldaña 115). I read early interview transcripts and noted parts of the text that seemed potentially relevant to my overarching research questions about ARC's curriculum, settings, and civic engagement but I also noted what else was within the data. For example, a portion of text from Sebastian's transcript: "I remember being a little self-conscious at first about my writing because English is not my strongest subject, and especially if we had to read it" received initial codes of *writing* because that is the subject he's discussing, *language* because ARC targets English language learners, *self* because he's assessing his strengths, *change* because he indicates that he felt self-conscious "at first", *audience* because he talks about reading to others, and *anxiety* because of his feelings. In a subsequent round of coding, I merged many individual codes and lumped them into larger categories. For example, "involvement," "participation," "activism," and "volunteering" became part of a categorical code "civic engagement."

Coding allowed me to do a careful and close reading of transcripts and to see emerging patterns. I used memoing, writing about coded data, to define codes and ideas in more depth, compare them to other codes, find connections, and pose additional questions. The memo-writing ultimately helped me determine which findings to emphasize in writing up the project: the ecological nature of literacy sponsorship in ARC's curriculum, the ways in which place impacts student learning—often indirectly, and how important leadership preparation and rhetorical education are to ARC's identity. Other findings, such as the organization's value of risk and the physicality/embodiment at

ARC, emerged strongly in the data. These continue to interest me but are not developed

in this project as they are less implicated in my research questions. See Appendix C for a

list of my categories and codes.

Archive Analysis

Finally, I used rhetorical analysis to examine ARC's materials. These materials

included ARC's English and leadership curricula, its website, promotional materials, and

anthologies of student writing. Some of these materials are publicly available through

ARC's web presence and promotional material, and some of it was accessible to me

through the organization's master live archive hosted by Dropbox. My analysis asked

questions about purpose, audience, structure, content, and tone. The archive of ARC

materials also bolstered my understanding of the history of writing invitations at ARC,

particularly through the collection of student writing in "memory books."

An orientation to this text:

Conveying the entire picture of ARC is not possible—neither is it possible to

capture, in writing, the transformative power of being a participant, or a participant

observer, at ARC. I have made difficult choices about what to include and omit, and how

to most effectively communicate my findings. While ARC has solid grounding, the

organization is dynamic. Changes occur across the organization, but also within

particular sites and with particular groups of students and instructors. When I briefly

returned at a volunteer in 2016, I immediately noticed how participants who are truly

English Language Learners—those who have recently emigrated from Mexico, Central

America, and China—are central to ARC's founding mission. My study, like all

qualitative research, is highly contextual. The claims I make are limited to the brief

window in which I was part of the organization and the brief, sometimes awkward, dance between interviewer and interviewee as I sought to understand intersections among place, literacy learning, and civic engagement. The organization of this written text, much like the conversations and experiences I had with participants, tends more toward an associative logic than a hierarchical one. Ideas recur and resonate across chapters.

My scholarly impulse is driven by a sense of anxiety and possibility; my animating question is how we can teach English to win the race against impending and unfolding catastrophes, as well as the myriad smaller-scale problems impacting our local contexts. I look to approaches in outside-of-school learning, place-based/environmental education, and rhetorical/civics education as possibilities. Asking how and what students learn in each of these areas helped narrow my focus in shaping this dissertation, and it is this thread—description and analysis of student learning—that holds this essaying report together as a cohesive whole.

Still, this dissertation departs from genre expectations of a social science research report; it has unfolded more as a narrative weaving together the voices of participants and scholars in a range of fields. My own voice, as the researcher and writer orchestrating the selection and arrangement of data, is in conversation with the others. As such, my "review of literature" is present in several places: in this introductory chapter as a frame for how I situate the project, within each analytic chapter as close as possible to local arguments, and throughout as discursive footnotes. My hope is to demonstrate my knowledge of relevant literature, to draw from it in my analysis, and to avoid bogging readers down in details in order to maintain the primacy of my participants' voices.

Chapter 2, which considers literacy sponsorship, started with the question, "Why these genres?" ARC's use of narrative genres allows it to meet the purposes of ARC as an organization and the purposes of participants. However, there are tensions because the stories students reveal become commodities. By arguing for an ecological model of sponsorship, I demonstrate that ARC is sponsored by students as much as students are sponsored by ARC; indeed, ARC is dependent on students, and some of the sponsors of their literacy are nonhuman: genres and settings.

Setting is the topic of Chapter 3, which began with the question, "Why here?" ARC's settings are active participants in students' literacy learning, both directly and indirectly. While setting drives students' literacy development, it is somewhat less clear how ARC uses curriculum and pedagogy to develop environmental stewardship.

In Chapter 4, which discusses ARC's leadership curriculum, I consider the question, "Why citizenship?" I demonstrate how ARC operates in a tradition of rhetorical and place-based education that seeks to develop "citizens." However, "citizen" is a contested social and political term, and it is especially unexamined in place-based education (PBE). I critique PBE's assumptions of rootedness and legal citizenship and posit that ARC, which combines rhetorical education within PBE, is a model of an effective "critical pedagogy of place" (Greenwood).

Chapter 5 concludes my dissertation by providing implications for teaching and future research. Doing justice to my participants and my process may not be possible; moving from the experience to writing about the experience can never capture the experience. My hope is that readers will consider the importance of action—of doing something—in the face of challenges, and more importantly, will recognize the many

routes to and forms of action. As researchers, it may be engagement with communities and organizations committed to greater access and lending them our expertise and institutional authority. As teachers, perhaps it is refocusing attention on our bigger purposes for teaching, particularly during our current political and ecological climate, and adjusting our pedagogies appropriately.

Chapter 2
Ecologies of Literacy Learning & Sponsorship at Adventure-Risk-Challenge

Jess and I are the only adults for the first leg of Expedition II. We've just come from an intense experience at the ropes course, packs are heavy, and students seem tired and distracted. Jess calls them out for their inattention and crankiness when she was trying to orient them to the topographical map; once we start moving, the mood of the group lightens but conversation is minimal. The trail climbs through an open landscape of granite, tobacco brush, and wildflowers before shifting to a mixed conifer forest. While the other instructors shuttle vehicles to the trailhead where we will emerge in five days, our group will hike a few miles and then break to practice reading poems for Voices of Youth, ARC's signature community event.

The mood of the group shifts as we stop hiking, snack, and divide into two groups for poetry practice. There is something profound and joyful listening to students read, applauding, and then noticing how smoothly feedback happens. The feedback is specific, starts positive, and offers observations and suggestions. I tell my group the feedback I see them giving each other is even better than what my college composition students usually do, and am told it's because they are all so comfortable with each other and because being outside helps them feel more at ease. The air is warm with morning sunshine, the sky a brilliant Tahoe blue, and students read to each other, Jeffrey Pines and red firs. Literacy learning in this moment resonates with how Rhea Estelle Latham describes it in an African American citizenship school; students' performances and feedback in this place "demonstrates a symbiotic relationship between sacred and secular ways of knowing, being, learning and living. Literacy, here, is felt; it is embodied" (43).

Curriculum, community, pedagogy, and place snap together; this is ARC as an "integrated literacy and wilderness" program, a moment of interdependence between the organization and its stakeholders.

This chapter describes ARC's literacy curriculum through an ecological lens. Drawing for my study on Marilyn M. Cooper's heuristic of systems of ideas, purposes, interpersonal interactions, cultural norms, and textual forms (8-9), I also propose an additional system of positive identity development that is crucial to ARC's literacy practices. Cooper's early work identified systems and argued for recognizing writing as social; I work to identify and describe the relationships among systems in ARC's local context. Through articulating these systems and tracing rhetorical situations at ARC—the genres, audiences, and purposes—I argue that both literacy learning and literacy sponsorship at ARC are ecological, co-evolved, and symbiotic.

Literacy Sponsorship

When I asked alumni, "What did you think about Voices of Youth?" their responses alternated between "What was that?" to "I hated it." Once I reminded them that Voices of Youth was the required poetry reading, they sighed and said things like, "I was so scared," "It was nerve-wracking," and qualified their initial responses with examples of how much the experience of reading to an audience helped them. For some, it meant learning they could do anything—not just rock climbing and peak ascents, but also taking the risk of communicating honestly with an audience. They saw benefits to "[opening] yourself up like that" and to practicing public speaking: "It helped a lot like to get out there and to read in front of other people." They also found the audience response supportive and deeply validating: "We all got good responses, everybody was very

supportive, clapping." Some even described the poetry reading as near cathartic.

Sebastian described his experience:

> After everybody had read their poem, the community members that came were walking around saying, "Good job," and it really did feel like a heavy load was lifted because they were accepting. They're like, "Thank you for sharing. We really appreciate it. This is why you love art, because it teaches you to kind of come to terms with what has happened to you, and to kind of be yourself, and move forward." It was nerve-wracking for sure, and very emotional, and then at the end it was like a sense of relief.

This type of experience is most representative for participants; they share their stories and get affirmation and support. They do something risky and hard and it pays off, partly by boosting their confidence and helping them see they are not alone. They get an opportunity to have their voices recognized and celebrated, which rarely happens in their regular academic or community lives.

When I was in the role of participant observer at ARC, Voices of Youth seemed a mix of celebration, evaluation, and stress. Partly this is due to timing within the students' summer program and the multiple purposes the event serves. This public reading comes right before graduation from the summer course; students perform metaphor poems they've been crafting and practicing since their first eight-day backcountry expedition. The reading is ARC's biggest fundraising event of the year, and the audience— a mix of board members, local teachers and school administrators, donors, volunteers, and alumni—is there to support ARC generally and this year's cohort particularly. The supportive audience is mostly local members of the Tahoe and ARC communities. Except for alumni, the audience is almost all white, and the students reading are almost all kids of color. This year the racial mix is mostly Latino and white, but usually the partnering national organization Summer Search brings in Asian students, too. It seems

the experiences of the speakers and the audience are worlds apart, not only because of race and class but also because of age.

I arrive with the 2015 cohort hours before the actual reading since students need time to practice at the venue and with microphones before the audience and patrons arrive. Patrons need an opportunity to drink and dine at a pre-reading cocktail. ARC leadership mingles with the patrons as part of their fundraising work. During this cocktail and mingling, students are in the basement, waiting. Anxiety is mounting for some. One student, a self-identified perfectionist, experiences nausea-inducing panic; another seems to be feeling rejected by his crush, who is being friendly with an alumnus from her home community. Instructors Jess and Ashley offer encouragement and distraction during the waiting period, while Ryan, the program coordinator, tries to negotiate the organization's needs for fundraising with the needs of his students to get on with things. While we wait, Ezra, a student who has been a powerful leader all summer, initiates a motivational cheer. "Step up!" they yell back to his call and response. "I am powerful beyond measure!"

A little later, students walk through the fancy resort to a standing room-only crowd. As the reading finally begins, one participant proclaims, "I am the sun," and another, "I am water." One hunches his shoulders to explain how his fur coat—he is a wolf—didn't fit previously, but now he is an alpha leader who fits within his own skin. As each student reads, I think, "This one's my favorite." I feel pride in students' hard work and courage. They are powerful people; they have faced significant difficulties, and in this moment I have so much faith in their resilience.

No one elicits so much from me as Rosa. I relate to her distrust and dislike of painful emotions, and I still am haunted by her backcountry panic attack. I adore this

tenacious, feisty, wounded kid. When she goes to read, all who've been working with her hold our collective breath. Rosa has struggled with the "emotionally open and expressive writing" demanded throughout the course. Before settling on her metaphor as a wildflower, she self-identified as a cactus: prickly. She has encountered tremendous loss in her life. People have made assumptions about her and have violated her trust. And Rosa's not accustomed to allowing herself to fully experience painful emotions— something the writing pushes her to do. When we started practicing for the poetry reading back at basecamp, Rosa would start out sitting, endure long silences with intermittent sobs and statements of "I can't do this." Slowly, painfully, and with lots of encouragement, she worked her way through the initial practice readings. She broke words down into their syllables and rehearsed different ways of emphasis. She practiced and practiced; when she read in the backcountry to friends and peers, she seemed joyful and confident. At Voices of Youth, she starts, pauses, cries, and keeps going. A little girl in the audience tells her, "It's okay…" and it allows a moment of ventilation. Rosa rocks her reading, brings the audience to tears and to their feet.

At the conclusion of the readings, the executive director acknowledges the huge risks students have taken throughout the summer and at this reading, and she builds risk into the theme of her appeal to the audience for their financial support. The organization has just moved from the umbrella support of Berkeley and the University of California system to being its own 501-c-3, and somehow the students' voices, the executive director's appeal, and the mix of audience members allows for this Voices of Youth event to raise nearly double the goal. Afterward, the audience briefly mingles with students, praising them, asking questions, and relating experiences of their own. Many students

seem practically high on the relief and the overwhelmingly positive audience response. But as we head back to basecamp, driving past a crowd of patrons, I hear Rosa in the back of the truck say, "Fuck those people. They don't know me."

Back at basecamp, the final day is packed: students go for a long morning run, have a celebratory breakfast, take an academic post-test, fill out a number of surveys and assessments, clean, and prepare for graduation. In the midst of these final activities, students write thank you notes. Some of them go to specific volunteers the students worked with. And some thank-you messages are approved by staff and written, over and over, on a one-page flyer that includes a message from the executive director, photos from ARC programs, and hand-written thank yous from participants. Sarah, the executive director, tells students that much of her work is raising money for ARC programs. She brings the students into this work in a way that feels honest; what volunteers and donors love about ARC are the students, reading their work, seeing pictures of them in spectacular places, hearing their stories. Sarah also tells students how successful the Voices of Youth event earlier in the week was for the financial health of ARC. Because of the students' engagement and stories, ARC is able to continue offering literacy and wilderness experiences to others within the community.

Though it's concept she likely is not familiar with, Sarah is explaining literacy sponsorship. Deborah Brandt's *Literacy in American Lives* introduces sponsorship into literacy studies, and it offers a framework for tracing social and, especially, economic impacts of literacy development. Brandt describes literacy sponsors as "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way" (19).

ARC's donors—the audience students write to at this thank-you note session, the donors who write checks at Voices of Youth—sponsor students' experiences, and students' experiences offer donors some benefit: feeling positive about their support of underserved kids in their communities and possibly taking tax deductions.

ARC functions as a sponsor; the advantages it gains are ontological and economic. The organization exists because of those it sponsors, and as a nonprofit organization it has four full time employees and also creates part time and contract work. The foundations and government agencies that support ARC also benefit: jobs are created and maintained within granting organizations. Individual donors may experience fewer financial advantages from their sponsorship, but they still are part of the system of sponsors. Economic benefits to literacy sponsors are also less direct; when people have support in finishing school, maintaining employment, being self-sufficient, avoiding the criminal justice system and do not claim so-called "entitlements," local economies benefit. At ARC, sponsorship extends beyond economics. For example, the settings in which students write sponsor their literacy learning—a topic I discuss in depth in the following chapter. In fact, it is the "all" of ARC that "enable[s], support[s], teach[es], and model[s]" literacy learning: place, genre, audience, wilderness experiences, community, relationships, and pedagogy.

Ecologies and Literacies at ARC

That everything is interconnected is an assumption of many qualitative researchers, and various theoretical models try to account for interrelatedness: systems theory, communities of practice, and activity network theory have been salient in education, rhetoric and composition, and literacy studies. Marilyn Cooper, who

introduced the field of composition to an ecological model of writing, develops a framework of writing as social action that emerged, in part, from critique of cognitive models of learning to write that were highly individualistic. When she first published "Ecologies of Writing," the idea of writing as social had only recently emerged; more than three decades later writing as a social practice socially influenced and socially situated is a basic operating assumption of literacy studies and rhetoric and composition.

Moving exclusively to a social conceptualization of writing is inappropriate at ARC; while there is always an element of the social at work, the writing invitations and adventure experiences are designed to build positive identity and highlight autonomy. Furthermore, a primary audience endorsed for student writing is the student him or herself. An ecological model can synthesize the false dichotomy of individual or social— a single organism is always part of a species, which is part of a population within a particular habitat. For Cooper, an ecological model moves composition from a solitary author with an imagined or analyzed audience to writers within systems "of ideas, of purposes, of interpersonal interactions, of cultural norms, of textual forms" (*Writing* 8). The model allows researchers and teachers to conceptualize writers as more than the individual and her or his immediate context; rather, writers are interacting with systems in ways that shape the writing, the writer, and the systems.

Cooper looks to ecology as a useful discipline for considering writing because ecology considers more than a current, unchanging, singular context: "In place of the static and limited categories of contextual models, the ecological model postulates dynamic interlocking systems that structure the social activity of writing" (7). Certainly,

students at ARC are acting within and creating such systems; it is this reality that

compels the argument for rethinking literacy sponsorship at ARC.

Many scholars in literacy studies recognize sponsorship in ecological terms[6].

Ellen Cushman, for example, traces consequences of sponsoring and sponsorship. She

explains that "sponsors work within mutually sustaining relationships with both those

they sponsor and those who sponsor them" ("Elias" 27). In ecological terms, these

"mutually sustaining relationships" are coevolved and symbiotic. Coevolution describes

interactions of species over time, where a change in one species triggers change in

another. Thus, as natural selection leads to faster prey animals, it also drives changes in

predator populations that adapt to faster prey. Though sometimes called the "evolutionary

arms race" in terms of predator and prey dynamics, coevolution also influences other

types of relationships, including those that are mutually beneficial. This is often seen in

relationships between plants and their pollinators. Plant and pollinator depend on one

another, and changes in one reciprocally influence changes over time in the other.

However, sometimes organisms are so co-evolved as to be entirely reliant on each other.

For example, lichen is in fact two separate species—algae and fungus—so coevolved that

it is considered a single organism. The alga uses photosynthesis to provide energy, and

the fungus provides structure. This is a type of symbiotic relationship, which describes

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[6] Trying to bring ecology to composition resulted in ecocomposition, defined most broadly as "about relationships" (2). More than specific definitions, ecompositionists present principles of what ecocomp might be, but always it is within systems thinking. Christian Weisser and Sidney Dobrin explain that ecocomposition is "an area of study which, at its core, places ecological thinking and composition in dialogue with one another in order to both consider the ecological properties of written discourse and the ways in which ecologies, environments, locations, places, and natures are discursively affected" (2). While my analysis resonates with ecocomposition, I find terms like "ecological thinking" overly vague and shallow analogies to nature too convenient, often reifying negative conceptions of the natural world and minimizing complexity. Many scholars describe symbiosis; few describe it specifically. For example, the negative connotation of "parasite" easily overwhelms a discussion of sponsorship, despite the fact that parasites are only surviving and it is not generally within their best interest to kill their host.

interactions between individuals of different species within a community. There are different types of symbiosis; each type describes costs and benefits to the individuals. A yucca plant and its pollinating moth, as well as lichen, are mutualistic: both species benefit.

At ARC, there are various types of relationships that can be described at different scales. Most broadly, the relationship between ARC as an organization and the participants who go to ARC, is mutualistic. ARC would not exist without its participants, and participants benefit in some way from their ARC experiences. There are other descriptors that can be applied to more specific relationships; some parts of the sponsorship at ARC might be more commensal, where one party benefits but the other is neither harmed nor helped. From some perspectives, sponsorship at ARC feels parasitic; while the organization benefits, it seems that there are also moments of symbolic violence[7] where individuals are not supported on their own terms. When Rosa muttered "Fuck those people," she may have been feeling taken advantage of; she made herself vulnerable and it did not feel good to her. However, "Those people" helped fund Rosa's experience. Through the students' readings, sponsors learn something of the lives of local youth and feel connected; they want to help and one way to do it is by opening their

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[7] In their *Education Policy* article, "Mexican Immigrants in U.S. Schools: Targets of Symbolic Violence," Sheila M. Shannon and Kathy Escamilla offer concrete examples of symbolic violence: English only education, the low status of Spanish and bilingualism, assumptions and stereotypes about Mexican culture and family that go unquestioned, and the impact from " a colonizing education process" (349) that demands "American" values and integration into White society while withholding the rights of citizenship. The authors demonstrate the bind Mexican immigrants face: "Americans resent Mexicans for taking jobs away that they are unwilling to do. Mexicans are not welcome into U.S. Society, but they may still be hired while working under the threat of deportation" (354). Their article was published in 1999; in 2016, with President Elect Donald Trump, the "nationalistic ideology" of the 1980s that finds threat in immigrants and Spanish is ever more prominent.

wallets. The stories students reveal through their metaphor poems elicit the best, most generous, most helpful, most interested and concerned impulses in the crowd.

Metaphors can be both generative and limiting. A fully analogous ecological model eliminates agency and erases individuals. In ecology, populations and communities are the unit of study—not individuals. ARC believes in individual agency; having a sense of agency tends to be more enabling than having all identity and behavior determined by factors outside one's control.[8] Ecosystems and the individual species within them are shaped through causal determinism. However, considering the ecological concepts of co-evolution and specific symbiotic relationships helps illuminate the ways in which sponsorship and literacy move through the metaphorical ecosystem and actual system that is ARC. An ecological model requires an understanding of ARC's stakeholders: the students, instructors, staff, volunteers, board members, alumni, partners, and donors who interact in dynamic ways within intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational microclimates. Literacy sponsorship at ARC, however, is not entirely driven by humans. Genres and settings also sponsor students' literacy development. The genres interact with the audiences, which interact with purposes for the organization and student participants. Articulating literacy sponsorship as ecological at ARC does at least three things: 1) it allows for tracking sponsorship as complex, interrelated, co-evolved, and symbiotic; 2) it recognizes the agency and power of the sponsored; and 3) it moves literacy sponsorship away from critiques of symbolic violence. I begin by tracing literacy

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[8] Moore and Cunningham discuss agency as particularly important to adolescent literacy, as adolescents are concerned with individual freedom. They describe human agency as focusing on autonomy and "accounting for some of individuals' unique thoughts, beliefs, and feelings" (132). For them, agency is enacted through decision making and taking responsibility. Attending to thoughts, beliefs, and feelings and making decisions and taking responsibility is at the core of ARC's programming.

sponsorship at ARC in order to demonstrate the multiple relationships and systems

stakeholders interact within.

<u>Overview of Rhetorical Situations at ARC</u>

One means of tracing literacy sponsorship at ARC is through the rhetorical

situations ARC and students encounter and create. Students at ARC engage in multiple

genres: journal-writing, an identity and nature based metaphor poem, the spoken

performance of that poem, a profile essay or thank you letter based on interviewing a

community member, instructional materials and lesson plans for teaching younger

students, thank-you notes, blogs, and a transformational essay. Though I observed

teaching and composing in all of these genres, my investigation focused on the most

formal and public genres at ARC: the metaphor poem and transformational essay. Both

are published in an anthology, the poems are performed at Voices of Youth, and at

graduation students choose to read from their poem or transformational essay. Table 1

summarizes purposes and audiences for ARC and for students within the most public of

ARC genres: the metaphor poem, the Voices of Youth reading, the transformational

essay, and graduation from the summer program. This scope of this chapter is a close

analysis of the metaphor poem and Voices of Youth.

	Purpose for students	**Purpose for ARC**	**Audience for students**	**Audience for ARC**
Voices of Youth Reading	Experience in public speaking, risk, validation & support, being heard	Celebrating ARC, enabling student purposes, fundraising & development, exposure to community, giving something back (service), informal assessment	Older, whiter, sympathetic	Donors, board members, community at large
Graduation Reading	Communicate to family & each other	Family inclusion, community support, celebration	Family, each other, ARC instructors	Families, students, intimate ARC circle
Metaphor poem	therapy, getting to know each other, privacy, safety, strategies for relating to self & others, material for school writing, reprieve from formal English structures	Identity building, teachable/accessible, meets learning objectives, conducive to effective public reading, informal assessment	Self Family Others like me	In addition to students' audiences, larger public (local community members, donors, board, volunteers, partners)
Transformational essay	College essay Memory Reflection	College essay 5 paragraph essay, Informal assessment	Self Family	People who read the memory book; donors

Table 1: Rhetorical Situations at ARC
Summary of purposes and audiences for ARC and participants across public ARC genres

<u>Narrative Writing and Genre at ARC</u>

At ARC, genres and purposes are co-evolved. That is, the genres and purposes are

so closely interrelated that students' and ARC's purposes might not be met if the genres

were different. At the broadest scale, the "genre" ARC relies on is narrative, expressive

writing. Sebastian saw the purpose of writing at ARC being to help students reflect on

and accept their experiences in order to find relief from difficult life experiences:

> Yeah, it's almost like coming to terms with what happened to you, like kind of accepting it and learning from it, and bringing awareness to the issue or whatever the situation may be. Again, it was kind of like a therapy session. Like write your feelings out and write about your life kind of thing. It was hard, but in a way it was kind of relieving at the end because whatever is on your back or on your shoulder you just kind of let it out.

Sebastian's assessment could apply to any of the informal writing at ARC as well as the formal and public ARC genres of the metaphor poem and transformational essay. He found Voices of Youth especially cathartic, but some students didn't seem to need any audience besides themselves, and the narrative writing helped in strengthening a sense of self and processing experiences. Luis sums up the overall purposes of the ARC writing invitations:

> I feel like most of the writing assignments revolved around how you felt, and the things that were going through your mind, and just your experience. That's how I took it, it was what I'm learning, and what challenges I'm going through, and writing about them, and as you write about them you reflect, and you look back and you think, "Oh, I did this," and it wasn't that hard. For me, that was more like ... writing, it was more like expressing yourself, and expressing your feelings, and how you felt with a bunch of activities that I have never done before. I feel like writing for me was more like expressing and finding who you are, who you want to be.

Luis is representative of many of my participants who talked about the value of narrative, expressive writing. When Katie Zanto was first designing the ARC curriculum, she recognized that students would make greater academic gains if their writing was not entirely free form. Her observations of a different program that combined literacy and outdoor adventure were that without direct instruction and a clear outcome, the benefits of writing were too haphazard. Incorporating defined genres solves this: direct instruction

is required and there is a finished product. Genres enable balance between a type of expressivist free-writing and structured form.[9]

ARC and its metagenres, especially the bigger umbrella of narrative and self-reflective writing, evolved together and need each other. ARC's purposes—from positive youth development to fundraising— are met through its genres, and students take up these genres to meet their own and ARC's purposes. The genres, as Anis Bawarshi suggests, invent the writers ARC seeks, and ARC reinvents and maintains its ARCness through its genres. As Bawarshi explains, genres "are not innocent or arbitrary, but are at work in rhetorically shaping and reproducing our social environments, our practices, and our identities as social actors—how, that is, we become socialized by genres to assume and perform certain situated roles and actions" (*Ecology* 73). The narrative genres at ARC invent a first person writer who can find themselves in the past, present, and future. Estelle explained the purpose of her writing at ARC as reflecting on who she is, using the ARC experiences to see, "…this is the person I was, this is the person I want to be, and this is the person I currently am." She was referring specifically to her transformative essay, a genre which assumes transformation and prompts reflection.

While all of the writing at ARC has narrative elements and performs functions for both the organization and the writers, the clearest demonstration of specific ecological relations is seen through the metaphor poem. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to

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[9] The tension between free writing and structured forms can be productive in a writing process; Bruce Ballenger describes it as dialectical thinking, where one sometimes writes to play and discover while silencing an inner critic as much as possible before bringing in more analytic habits of mind to find meaning, organize and support ideas, and eventually edit. Katie's contention is not with "creative" or free writing—it is a lack of balance between the creative and analytical. She believes academic gains in writing, and solidifying insights from wilderness programming, require both. Journal exercises have specific prompts, but students have freedom within those prompts. Early writing can be free form and have errors, but later drafts need to have a clear purpose and organization.

describing and analyzing this and related literacy events in order to reveal the ecological relationships.

Tracking Systems and Ecologies at ARC through Metaphor Poems

The 2015 Sagehen cohort I observed worked diligently on their metaphor poems. They started in the backcountry, making their way past Aloha Lake and over Dick's Pass, and did a peak ascent of Mount Tallac along the way. The earliest English lessons included using a word web to describe pine needles and the lake, making comparisons to other things, and defining similes and metaphors. Students took turns calling out what they saw around them and practiced making a word web for the object, and then go through a guided journaling exercise. They are asked, "Why did you choose this object?" and "What would it feel like to be your object?" and are prompted to brainstorm similes and metaphors for their natural object. They worked to combine their responses into a final piece, and were invited to share with the group. Another lesson was on the five senses. A touchstone exercise of bonding for the group and informal prewriting came from "Heavy Rock/Light Rock," where students think metaphorically about their own lives. The lesson associated with the peak ascent took them through a word web and metaphors describing Mount Tallac, and prompted students to think metaphorically about their own lives: "How is this peak a metaphor for the challenges and fears you have already overcome on this trip? What other peaks have you overcome in your life? What do the peaks that lie ahead of you look like?" (24 day English Curriculum). Finally, students worked to discover their own metaphor for their poems. Jess described this process, and how she adapted it so that students start with a theme—what it is they want to express—and then work to find a metaphor that fits. She

really had them focus and their theme first, with all the writing that builds up to that, have them really figure out what it is that they were going to want to talk about, like their family or moving or whatever it is that was the core thing that they felt like they wanted to express, and then have them spend some time looking through the field guides and trying to find something that matched that. Instead of doing it the other way around, where they would just say "I really want to be a bear," "I really want to be an eagle." Then trying to make the stuff that they're saying fit that, so just switching it around and having them be very sure about their theme. Say, it's family, then the things that they're looking at need to have some kind of a connection to that. What is it about the family? Is it that they're close knit?

Then maybe you're going to look for an animal that also is close with its family, like that stays in a family unit or you're going to think about something else like clouds, they stay close together but then gets far apart. Trying to just to walk them through that process of really holding on tightly to what it is that they're are willing to talk about, and then thinking about what is it around them that also does that thing or works in that way or operates in a way that would make sense with that.

Jess's approach to the poetry curriculum aims to start with what the student is "willing" to say and then finding an appropriate metaphor from what is around them or from what they could possibly find; while a student might never encounter a wolverine in the Sierra, wolverines are a species that historically have been here—and it might make a perfect metaphor for a student who is shy, alone, used to have more of its kind around, and needs lots of space.

The more specific the metaphor, typically, the stronger the poem. Over the years, students have chosen metaphors of geographical features: rivers, lakes, a switchback, a glacier, and different types of rocks; animals: a mosquito, a bald eagle, a mountain lion, a butterfly, a yellow-bellied marmot; plants: a water lily, white fir, Jeffrey Pine, Sugar Pine; and more: a 4.2 inspiring earthquake, life, the wind's games (memory books). Instructors help guide participants in thinking through their choices; sometimes the first

choice of a metaphor isn't quite right and students are invited to switch. If you identify as a cactus because of its sharpness and resilience, but you are also feeling vulnerable—and maybe if you're stunningly beautiful—it might make more sense to be a Wood's Rose. Participants are urged to choose something in nature; Jess told me about working to find a new metaphor with a student whose first choice was to be an empty water bottle. While in the backcountry, the students work on ways to connect their metaphor and their theme, with the goal of having material to work from when they start crafting their poems back at basecamp. Field guides and brief articles about their metaphor are used to help students extend their metaphor through specificity.

"I Am…" Metaphor Poems at ARC, or, What Would a Fir Do?

The metaphor poems at ARC enable ARC's purposes of self-discovery and development; all of ARC is devoted to strengthening students' confidence, leadership abilities, and academics. Participants who go through ARC often talk about the impact of the program on their self-esteem. Naomi talked about how ARC enabled her to make friends once she returned from the summer program, and about how

> ARC has just kind of helped me to accept myself…it's because of the experiences I had at ARC that I'm able to love myself now and look past my flaws…ARC let me accept my failures or shortcomings or however you want to think of that. It let me stop judging myself. I think that was a really big deal for me.

As adolescents, students at ARC negotiate the difficult work of building identities separate from family and community while simultaneously struggling to gain acceptance. Naomi, who was fiercely self-critical and made frequent disparaging comments about herself while at ARC, was called out for these behaviors at the same time she was offered validation and opportunities for acceptance from others. ARC's group norms include

being respectful of yourself; Naomi benefitted from this and treats herself differently having gone through ARC. Her sense of herself is more positive. This is similarly true for Ariella, who explained that she didn't just do ARC to improve her literacy: "It actually [has] done more than that for me. … It boosted my self-esteem. I became more confident. It definitely improved my leadership skills."

Because ARC aims to be transformational and emphasizes self-identity, ARC illuminates an additional system to those Cooper suggests. This is a system of positive identity development, which I define as the means by which writers consider their past, present, and future selves with curiosity, compassion, and high regard. The individual human beings at ARC matter; much of ARC is built around helping students recognize autonomy and agency. The system of positive identity development is networked and interactive across the systems Cooper identifies; a benefit of seeing literacy learning and sponsorship at ARC as ecological is that it does not require a hierarchy of these systems. All are important, overlapping, and influenced by the others. Cooper explains: "The metaphor for writing suggested by the ecological model is that of a web, in which anything that affects one strand of the web vibrates throughout the whole" (9).

The poems are taught with concrete ideas—actual things in nature—to ground abstraction. The remarkable landscapes of the first expedition inform student writing, as does the experience of being away from home, doing adventurous and challenging activities, and forming a close-knit community of peers and instructors. All of these elements sponsor student literacy at ARC, and using Cooper's heuristic, these elements map onto systems. The experiential nature of ARC that draws from fully embodied activities, such as backpacking, and pedagogies that toggle between concrete and

abstract, self and world fit with a system of ideas, or the "means by which writers comprehend their world, to turn individual experiences and observations into knowledge" (Cooper 8). ARC offers access to exceptional experiences, provides cues and practice in observation, and uses writing to facilitate knowledge making.

Because I was not on the first expedition, my picture of what happens is a sketch taken from full participation in the backcountry all-staff training and the second expedition, being part of the poetry lessons at basecamp, interviews with alumni and ARC personnel, and talking to students during the 2015 summer course. During free time at basecamp, I quickly surveyed students about the purposes of the metaphor poem. Cooper describes the system of purposes as the "means by which writers coordinate their actions" and posits that purposes emerge from interactions with others, such that "individual purposes are modified by the larger purposes of groups" (8). Purposes for students at ARC arise from their experiences and relationships preceding ARC and during the immersive summer course. My participants endorsed purposes along a spectrum with ARC's purposes as an organization at one end and more autonomous and individual purposes at the other. In response to my questions about what they saw as the purpose of the metaphor poem, students replied: "connect to nature," "see nature as alive," "reflect on life," "find a sense of ourselves and better descriptive words for schoolwork," "connect and think of how the metaphor relates to me," "connect to the ways the world works, the natural forces and how it relates to me," and because the metaphor poem and reading it at Voices of Youth is an ARC "tradition." In this snapshot, taken while students were working three hours daily on crafting their metaphor poems at basecamp, the purposes students identified seem external; they are theorizing about

ARC's purposes for using the metaphor poem as a genre. The pedagogical purposes they imagine are about helping them connect to the natural world, reflect and find relevance between self and nature, and develop vocabulary. When explaining the poems as a tradition, the student demonstrates the coevolved nature of the metaphor poem and ARC as an organization.

When I interviewed alumni—some of whom had participated in ARC eight years earlier—they always came up with a purpose for the metaphor poems, though they were sometimes hesitant. The stated learning outcomes in the curriculum include recognizing metaphors and similes and using sensory detail, imagery, and strong action verbs in their writing. This is the purpose Josiah imagined: "I'm not sure what the main purpose was. I think just them trying to teach us more about writing, trying to get the hang of poetry, how words structure writing." Marcus assumed the point of the metaphor poem was for instructors to get to know the students. These students articulate an externalized purpose for the metaphor poem that relates to school writing and relationships. Many students, however, internalized self-driven purposes for the metaphor poem. For example, participants talked about the metaphor poem as allowing them to express their stories and be heard, as helping them reflect on their lives and work toward acceptance, as giving them strategies for effective coping, and as providing enough room to allow them to combine ARC's purposes and audience expectations with their own. The genre of the metaphor poem allows for these purposes.

Cooper's ecological model explains, broadly, a "system of textual forms" that is "the means by which writers communicate" (9). Metaphor poems at ARC are undoubtedly ways of communication, and they also "play a role in helping… organize,

experience, and potentially change the situations within which we communicate"

(Bawarshi 25). The metaphor poem influences how students relate to nature and to

themselves and their experiences. The metaphor poem, part of the system of textual

forms, functions together with the other systems of ARC's writing ecologies: ideas,

purposes, cultural norms, interpersonal relationships, and positive identity development.

Indeed, "genres shape us as we give shape to them" (25). The "us" includes all of ARC's

stakeholders, including student participants.

Narrative writing, which can be raw and painful, is not always therapeutic.[10] It

can reopen wounds. In talking about the risks and "safe environment" of ARC, Jess and I

discussed at length how narrative is used at ARC. She explained:

> I think [the narrative writing expectations are] an area that as a program
> we could continue to evaluate for its benefits versus risks. I think that
> we've done some things to set it up to be more safe like to have trained
> psychologists on call and having them come out and visit and giving
> students the opportunity to speak with them. I think those things are
> important and I'm glad that they're happening. I have had a big question
> about how vulnerable they, the students, tend to make themselves, and
> whether we're equipped to really handle that.

ARC is clear that it is not a wilderness therapy program; this is part of the reason that

trained and licensed psychologists are on-call and sometimes on site, but talking to them

is never mandated. However, being in an environment where people share painful

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[10] James Pennebaker, a social and research psychologist, has extensively published research about the physical and mental health benefits of writing. Much of his work supporting expressive writing as therapeutic and/or beneficial to health has been empirically validated. Other studies, however, such as Batten et al. demonstrate that when writing about trauma, writing alone is insufficient in providing benefits. Based on observation and participants' self-report, expressive writing at ARC is often and generally helpful. However, some students also seem to be triggered by their writing and do not take advantage of ARC's supports, like talking to available psychologists. The concern over whether ARC is set up to support students who "break themselves open" is partly a result of moving from a 40-day to a 23-day program, and not being confident in having enough time to help participants mend and be stronger than before.

experiences and are offered support and acceptance naturally leads many students to

disclose their struggles. Jess talks about the revelations as almost inevitable:

> I think it's almost like we couldn't even [avoid difficult material] if we
> tried to … because they feel the safety of the community and they have the
> stuff inside. It's not like we're forcing them to do it. They just need to get it
> out. I think even if we said, "Okay, we're not going to go that deep
> anymore. We're going to keep it more on the surface," I still think it would
> probably come out.

What matters, according to Jess, is that all approaches to the writing invitations be

seen as okay—protecting oneself is okay, and so is opening up. We discussed this in

terms of two students, one who seemed more self-protective and obfuscated meaning in

her work, and one who could no longer avoid painful issues:

> Every individual needs to be able to decide how much they want to open
> themselves up at any given moment. [A student] opened up and kind of
> broke herself by opening all of that stuff up. [Another student] held it
> together. I think both are okay and we have to, I think, not try to just poke
> them on purpose just to get more out of them, you know what I mean? I
> don't think that's valuable. I think we provide an opportunity and they can
> step into it as far as they want.

Although there is choice and autonomy in Jess's description of the writing

invitations, ten percent of the academic grading criteria for the course include

"emotionally open and expressive writing." ARC's English rubric describes this as:

> Student **openly and genuinely reflected** on his/her accomplishments, and
> **effectively** used personal details and anecdotes to discuss their past,
> present, and future. The writing has **emotional depth.** (English rubric,
> emphasis in original)

While actually assessing what is open, genuine, effective, and deep is difficult and

potentially problematic, the expectations for self-revelation and authenticity are palpable.

Participants do intensive journaling in the backcountry that invites them to reflect about

challenges and goals, and as Jess explains, many of them have a need to tell aspects of

their stories. Lessons like "Heavy Rock/Light Rock" (which I discuss extensively in the

following chapter), open space for participants to share difficulties, build empathy, and

find support. Students might reveal a history of abuse, loss, war trauma, difficult family

situations, moving, or feeling like they have no friends. Talking about experiences in the

intimacy of a wilderness setting with a small group is different than committing

experiences to writing for an unknown audience. When it comes time to engage in the

formal ARC writing assignments, students pick up on expectations for open and

expressive writing, and some of them worry about losing control of the circulation and

reception of their work. Mayumi described:

> I remember my poem was really hard to develop because I just didn't want
> to get anything out there but they made me. It's not like they forced me to,
> at the end I gave in and it wasn't that bad. … It's like "oh, I don't want to
> get this out but it's out there and you cannot do anything about it."

One of the benefits of the poetry genre, and particularly of metaphor, is how a savvy

writer might maintain her sense of privacy and control. Mayumi recognized the

expectation ARC held that she would write personal material, some of which might even

be painful to revisit. She reveals some ambivalence: ARC "made [her]" write her poem

but didn't "force" her because she "gave in." This suggests she might have resisted if the

stakes were just too high. She recognizes that once the writing it "out" she loses control

of it; however, she was able to use the metaphor poem to maintain some control and

autonomy. She explained about the poetry:

> I liked it because you're using metaphors so something that means
> something to you can mean something different to someone else. It
> depends on how they view life. Some privacy is still there although it's not
> fully. You still have some of your privacy because some people don't take
> it the way you wrote it. You know what I mean?

In fact, until she explained this to me, I did not understand that her metaphor was about migration. It was a lovely poem, full of imagery and literary flair, regardless of whether readers knew what the content meant to her. When I reread her poem with the understanding that she is discussing immigration, the poem becomes more powerful, both devastating and profound. However, for Mayumi, maintaining her privacy as much as possible was more important than communicating the "true meaning" of her poem. The metaphor allowed her to craft a poem she was ultimately pleased with that also was self-protective and met ARC's expectations. I do not know if, in choosing the metaphor poem genre, ARC personnel were aware that it was one way of allowing participants an invitation of "coming to voice" (hooks) while at the same time offering them a way to protect their privacy.

Working with metaphor allowed students a level of safety within the risk of the "open, expressive writing" ARC values. Mayumi protected her privacy. For Alberto, this safety was in how the metaphor allowed him distance from painful emotions and self-judgment as well as reprieve from the structures and rules of formal English. Alberto was a cricket.[11] He explained,

> It just help[s] me to actually get distracted a little bit from my actual emotions. When I was writing my emotions or my personal feelings, I would get distracted by, "man, I'm a cricket." It doesn't feel so weak or I don't feel so different because I'm comparing myself to an animal and animals are weird or whatever.

Crickets are just crickets. They are not "weak" or "different" for being themselves. For Alberto, who struggles with self-worth, connecting to an animal allows him to be both a step removed from painful feelings related to his evaluation of himself as small and as an

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[11] In order to protect anonymity, metaphors associated with participants have been changed. I have tried to use alternatives that remain as true as possible to the original.

outsider and to recognize that being "weird" is natural. The metaphor poem allowed Alberto to create and be created. The genre of poetry also allowed him a sense of freedom from the constraints of English language rules: "For me being an English learner, being able to express myself freely in a piece of paper without looking out for grammatical errors or just making sense which is really special." However, he had sufficient help with editing so that he took pride in his final product.

Alberto found much of ARC liberating and talked about how ARC made him feel more "like a person." For him, the overarching purpose of the poem was being heard: "The poem for me was a way to actually be heard. It was like a place where I'd tell my story and I think that's the one thing that stands out." The genres ARC uses matter; Alberto strengthened his sense of self because his writing allowed him to identify with something in nature that is free of evaluation; he also improved on his sense of himself as a writer because he felt greater freedom to express himself within poetry, which he saw as not requiring the same "grammar" and "sense" as other types of writing. Most importantly for him, his poem, which was performed and published, allowed him to share his story and feel heard.

All of the participants I interviewed could remember what their metaphor was. For some of them, it is still relevant to their sense of self. The genre enables ARC's stated curricular outcome that students will "construct a metaphor that is relevant to their lives." Relevance for some students, like Luis and Sebastian, was allowing them to work through their issues. For Alberto, the metaphor poem freed him both from the constraints of proper English grammar and his feelings of difference. For Molly, her metaphor helps her view herself as strong and act in her world in effective ways.

When I asked Molly how she chose her metaphor, she explained, "Well, I kind of needed something that would pretty much withstand anything, fire, winds, anything, you know what I'm saying?" Molly and I met just for an interview; I didn't know her from her summer course, so I didn't know exactly what she was saying. My interpretation was that she'd encountered some difficulty in her life, and she needed a symbol that would communicate as much. Her metaphor, a Douglas Fir, did more than communicate to others, however. Molly's metaphor is generative not only in enabling her to invent and craft the poem; her metaphor informs her sense of self and the actions she takes. When I asked her about the purpose of the poem, she explained that while she didn't know for sure, she thought it was to:

> kind of put yourself there, and see what [the metaphor] would do, so then what would you do? You'd really take a much calmer approach on that, you know? When you think about what would you do in nature, and then what would you do out here with a bunch of things in your head?

Molly, who struggled with her temper and people "getting under [her] skin," saw the purpose of the metaphor poems as giving students strategies to manage intense emotions. In pausing to think about what a Douglas fir would do, Molly regains her sense of self-control and enhances her interpersonal effectiveness. I followed up, asking if she ever relates to herself now as if she is a Douglas Fir: "Every day. Strong. Every day." Molly met all of ARC's objectives for the metaphor unit, including finding and creating relevance for herself.

By relating to a tree every day and seeing herself as "strong" like that tree, Molly demonstrates how ARC's genres and purposes depend on each other. Would Molly have such a symbol of strength without a metaphor poem? Could she relate to something less

concrete? Would Alberto have gained some freedom in his second language, or recognized that some things just *are* what they are, not good or bad, but just "weird or whatever?" Would Mayumi have been able to protect her privacy and still write something authentic that pleased her and her audience? The metaphor poems do particular things for student writers, enabling and supporting their own purposes and operating within systems of positive identity, ideas, cultural norms, and interpersonal interactions. As a textual form that emerges from and shapes the ARC community, draws from the natural environment, emphasizes personal connections to nature, and allows for personal relevance, the genre of the metaphor poem sponsors student literacy.[12]

The genre and the students' enactment of it also sponsors ARC. The participants at ARC write metaphor poems that achieve some of ARC's pedagogical purposes and are critical to ARC's fundraising. Sponsor and sponsored are coevolved; not only is the symbiosis protocooperative, where both "organisms" benefit, but is mutualistic, where the relationship is obligatory—for ARC.

Audience at ARC

The system of textual forms, crafting a metaphor poem as a means of communication to self and others, interacts with the systems of multiple purposes participants identified, and these systems further interact with Cooper's identified systems of interpersonal interactions and of cultural norms. The "system of interpersonal

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[12] Rhea Estelle Lathan, in "Testimony as a Sponsor of Literacy," discusses how African American testimony combines secular and spiritual ways of knowing, which compels her argument of how testimony functions as a sponsor. She calls for moving beyond the cognitive in understanding literacy learning: for "shifting literacy acquisition from its comfortable cognitive position to a place where literacy is felt" (43). African American testimony includes felt aspects, and it also functions to "articulate shared perceptions" developed in secular and sacred spaces. I see parallels with ARC's use of metaphor poems and writing in nature.

interactions is the means by which writers regulate their access to one another," and as Cooper defines it, relies primarily on negotiations of intimacy and power (8) while the "system of cultural norms is the means by which writers structure the larger groups of which they are members" (9). At ARC, the interpersonal interactions of intimacy and power and of cultural norms are clearest in considering the audiences for student writing.

Katie Zanto, ARC's founder, had an intuitive sense of the importance of audience for student writers. In the early days of the program at the Sagehen Field Station, Katie would try to round up researchers and others—anybody—so that students could read their poems in front of a live audience. Audience mattered because oral language was valued as much as written language, and many of the students were new to English. Practicing their work out loud gave them added immersion in language learning. Because public speaking is so difficult, the reading also allowed participants to do something challenging and gain confidence from the experience—the reading was analogous to other hard things the students did, from being the leader of the day to peak ascents. Katie valued clear, concrete outcomes for each aspect of ARC's summer programming: the science curriculum led to teaching younger students science, the wilderness and leadership curriculum led to independent backcountry travel, the physical fitness curriculum led to a seven mile race, and the writing curriculum led to a public reading. Additionally, Katie was acutely aware of how much support she received from the local community, and she recognized that her students could give back by sharing their stories and insights. She saw the performance of their work as an act of service. From the beginning, audience at ARC was central.

As ARC grew, the public reading became more formalized; it moved from Sagehen, which can be difficult to reach, to an upscale resort. The venue was donated and the reading, Voices of Youth, became a fund raiser. In order to allow students some freedom in their reading, their families are not invited to Voices of Youth. Rather, students selectively choose what to read at the ARC graduation, where their families are present and celebrated. Though students are told from the beginning that they will read their poems, this fact is not emphasized during prewriting and early drafting. As they start getting feedback from the English instructor and work closely with volunteer writing coaches, students are encouraged to think about what an audience can absorb, the power of repetition, and length. Some cohorts even get coaching from spoken word poetry troupes.

Some participants did not seem to separate their poem from its performance. When I asked participants about the writing at ARC, including about who they thought the intended audience was, they sometimes forgot all about Voices of Youth and sometimes they conflated their metaphor poem with that reading and audience. Enrique, for example, told me that his metaphor poem was what stood out the most from all the writing he did at ARC. When I asked him what was so significant about it, he talked about reading it in front of an audience: "Well, the fact that…It was definitely a super-personal thing. So, I thought it was just incredible…when we did it in front of an audience…" Enrique recognized how personal and brave his cohort was, and he identifies with them. He didn't read singularly in front of an audience; he speaks with the collective force and shared intimacy of a "we." The power of the metaphor poems was in sharing them.

There is intimacy and power among the cohort doing the reading; however, the audience shapes that reading. When students read at graduation, the reading has an entirely different timbre. As an audience member at both the 2015 Voices of Youth and Sagehen Graduation, this was palpable to me. At Voices of Youth, people cried and clapped, but it was different than the crying and clapping at graduation. I asked Enrique about why he thought this might be, and he replied, that graduation was "much more intense" because of "the simple fact of not knowing the people in the crowd" at Voices of Youth.

For Ariella, the intimacy she felt with her cohort expanded to feeling supported by strangers. After telling me that she cried a lot during Voices of Youth ("I cried a lot. That's what I remember. I cried a lot.") Ariella explained the difference in an audience of supportive peers and that of strangers:

> It felt really good, too. … Because when you practice and write it, it's just between us and the people that we were close with. We've been with each other for weeks. To be able to read it in front of a group of people that I don't know, it felt really nice. It was like, "okay," all these negative feelings were lifted. They were clapping and they came up to me, "I really like your poem. Thank you for sharing." It's very supportive. It's positive. It's like, okay, wow. I thought I was alone, and it was a beautiful experience.

Cooper talks about the system of interpersonal interactions as the "means by which writers regulate their access to one another" (8). This sense of "one another" is evident for Ariella, Estelle, Enrique, Marcus and nearly every participant who felt that the writing at ARC helped build relationships with self, peer, instructor, and others.

The system of interpersonal interactions, as articulated by Cooper, is most determined by two things: "intimacy, a measure of closeness based on any similarity seen

to be relevant…; and power, a measure of the degree to which a writer can control the action of others" (8). At ARC, there is constant back and forth between individual and community; Cooper's point is that we should move away from seeing lone and solitary authors and instead view writing as a purely social act. At ARC, the social act is still largely about the individual—writing, in community, is used to build identity, as students use writing to think about the past, present, and future. Having a live audience compels students to negotiate intimacy and power when they read their work. A lack of intimacy with an audience of strangers has particular impacts that are quite different from an audience where there is high intimacy. Mayumi speculated on the differences between reading at graduation and at Voices of Youth:

> I feel that closer family takes it emotionally and the audience in Voices of Youth took it more the literary style, the vocabulary you used, metaphors, similes. They see the level of writing you have and that's why it seemed to them different. I feel some of them might have gotten emotional but I feel like teenagers ... I feel like they have a picture of teenagers being wild and things when they actually see this grown up speech that has emotions and dark things in it, they think it's cool.

Mayumi makes a distinction between "emotionally" impactful writing and "literary" writing. It's almost as if, for the ARC Voices of Youth audience, the teenagers are simply performing a version of youth that is what the audience might not expect. The readers are not "wild" but "grown up." They've encountered "dark things" and the audience, in getting a different view of this sector of their community, sees it as "cool." Reading for family, according to Mayumi: "Well, it's so different."

For most participants I interviewed, the audience at Voices of Youth was seen as supportive and validating, and the public reading was experienced positively. Rosa did not give me an interview, but her "Fuck those people" sentiment influenced the questions

I put to those who did. Chloe was the only participant who spontaneously discussed her

hesitation with the Voices of Youth audience:

ML: What was it like to read your poem at Voices of Youth?

Chloe: It was pretty scary, and it was hard not to cry. You just get all
emotional and stuff. It feels kind of weird, because I didn't really
like reading it to a whole bunch of people because they don't know
me. For them just to hear that part of my life it's kind of weird to
me. I don't know. I feel like they don't actually connect with me. It
just felt kind of weird.

As our discussion unfolded, Chloe became more specific: "I did notice that there was a

whole bunch of white people, and that's why I feel like it felt kind of weird. I mostly

thought they were there to give money to ARC, mostly." While Mayumi spoke to

differences in age, Chloe seemed to be noticing racial and class difference. It didn't take

much to get Chloe to agree that there might still be benefit in Voices of Youth: "Maybe

[the audience at Voices of Youth] can reach out to teens more. I don't know. Give them

more support"; however, she seemed hesitant about the entire situation of the public

reading: "It's like you pour your heart out to some strangers, and you're not ever going to

see them again." In thinking about Chloe, Rosa, and Mayumi's responses to Voices of

Youth, it is important to consider the ways in which symbolic violence operates and is

resisted[13] at ARC.

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[13] Though she is speaking specifically to academic researchers, Ellen Cushman's assertion that we "shirk
our civil responsibility and always already enact violence under the guise of objective violence"
("Rhetorician" 11) is relevant to community organizations such as ARC. While Macedo may critique those
of the dominant culture who seek to empower minorities (see *Literacy and Power*), Cushman offers a more
useful notion of empowerment as something those with status or power (institutionally or otherwise) have
an obligation to do. For her, to empower is "(a) to enable someone to achieve a goal by providing resources
for them; (b) to facilitate actions—particularly those associated with language and literacy; (c) to lend our
power or status to forward people's achievement" ("Rhetorician" 14). ARC is involved with this type of
empowerment. Furthermore, the organization deliberately resists ideas that demonstrate symbolic violence,
such as white saviors rescuing at risk-kids, Spanish being an inferior language, or students needing a
particular legal status to participate. ARC staff operate from an assets-based model, value and celebrate

Symbolic Violence

Education, including literacy education, operates within systems of dominant

discourse and culture. Imposing one's own culture on others is a type of symbolic

violence, which arises from the symbolic power (Bourdieu) involved in language. Even if

the intentions are positive, assumptions are that someone with higher social power has

something to "give" to those with lower power, and that in the "giving" sovereignty and

self-determination are undermined. Literacy is implicated in symbolic violence as it has

been a tool to control participation in society, to "assimilate" American Indians and

immigrants, to determine voting rights and citizenship status. Some cultural critics and

critical pedagogues might see symbolic violence operating at ARC, particularly through

Voices of Youth. As Amy Brown so effectively demonstrates in her work considering the

impacts of philanthropic organizations in education, "social justice" often masquerades as

good intentions while requiring beneficiaries to perform stereotypical roles of race,

poverty, and being "at-risk." A cynical view of ARC is that it gets its participants to write

its marketing materials, enables the privileged to feel benevolent and generous for their

involvement with ARC, and exploits students' private, personal stories for (non)profit.

Rosa, Chloe, and to a lesser extent, Mayumi, felt something uncomfortable around

Voices of Youth. Their perspectives matter, and ARC personnel might do more to

foreground the students' essential position at ARC, including through Voices of Youth.

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students' home communities and families, and most ARC positions require job candidates be fluent in Spanish and English. Additionally, ARC works to build in structures so that members of Latinx communities are on ARC's board of directors and have paid internships, and provides ongoing mentoring and opportunities to its alumni. ARC faces larger barriers in hiring alumni full time, as outdoor education pays so little and in a place like Tahoe, where the cost of living is high, working for ARC full-time at $30,000/year is a privilege few can afford.

Though she may have been humoring me, Chloe did agree that there might be value to the community members in hearing stories of teens. She is not wrong that a major purpose of Voices of Youth is raising money for ARC, and perhaps students could be invited into a conversation about this: Why does ARC need to do fund-raisers? Why should students offer their stories? Who benefits? What are the obligations of the organization to the students, and of the students to the organization? Only rarely do student participants express their experience of Voices of Youth as parasitic: for Chloe, she is "pouring [her] heart out" in a way that feels "weird" for the benefit of ARC. The organization benefits at a cost to her. However, like all ecosystems, ARC exists because of cycles: Chloe would not have had the positive experiences she had at ARC—among them gains in literacy, self-confidence, and sobriety—if ARC did not raise the money it did, including through Voices of Youth and previous years' students' metaphor poem performances. And it is through her reading that future experiences for youth in her community are secured. I posit that an ecological model can help here: recognizing the interdependence of all stakeholders, and foregrounding mutual benefits to students, ARC, and community, can help to make Voices of Youth feel less "weird" to students like Chloe and others who pick up on the discomfort of fundraising from student stories. Because the cohort that reads has already experienced ARC—they've already had financial assistance from previous donors—there is another ecological aspect that, thinking metaphorically, might be persuasive. Ecosystems exist within time; the present is related to the past, and the future is related to the present. Framing sponsorship between ARC donors and ARC participants as ecological acknowledges that the sponsored are not merely beneficiaries needing rescue; they—students reading at Voices

of Youth— are the species within a symbiotic relationship that the other species—ARC

as an organization—depends on for its survival.

When Chloe talked about reading at the ARC summer graduation, she said:

> I like the graduation one better. I feel like that one was more meaningful,
> like it actually mattered. Because it's like you're reading it to your family.
> You're telling them what you've gone through and stuff like that. … It
> didn't even feel weird, at all.

Literacy sponsors at ARC are the donors, but supportive families also are sponsors.

Sponsorship operates across and within and between multiple systems at ARC. The

settings, community building, leadership training, and adventure elements are parts of the

web which also includes ARC's curriculum; the genre, purpose, and audience for its

literacy events are parts of systems evident in Cooper's model: ideas, purposes,

interpersonal interactions, cultural norms, and textual forms and in the important work of

identity building that occurs at ARC. Metaphors as models can be limiting or

meaningless—of course everything is interconnected—but they can also be extended to

better understand relationships within systems, such as literacy sponsorship.

Chapter 3

Why Here? Place, Literacy Learning and Adventure Risk Challenge

The campus where Marcus and I met for an interview is situated in the middle of agricultural land. It smelled like livestock; to get there I followed long, straight roads bifurcating crop fields. As someone who has worked in the fields, Marcus could tell me the crops were cotton. We met in an atrium overlooking flat plains, canals, and the occasional great blue heron. In his black cowboy hat, Marcus talked to me about his aspirations for a career in the National Park Service and about the continued work he's done with Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC). As the conversation moved to setting, we started to speculate about what would be different if ARC were in a city. After all, there are many programs devoted to positive youth development that take place on college campuses, take kids on missionary experiences, or otherwise work towards goals similar to ARC's that don't take place in wilderness or even particularly natural settings. Though he admitted that he had "never actually asked myself why the setting is so important," Marcus scoffed at learning the leadership lessons he took from ARC in a city because "it's not the same thing as the ponderosa pines, the incense cedars" and because in wilderness, "You hear yourself actually. You hear everything in your body." A city, he says, "it's not that real ... You don't find yourself." Marcus self identifies as "an outdoors person" and his background includes ranching in Mexico and agricultural work in the fields of central California. For him, what is implicit about natural settings is embodiment, "reality," and access to self. A particular set of sensory experiences allows this; he finds the built, urban environment as a barrier to his sense of essential self. It may

be Marcus's attunement to the sensory and his identity as an outdoors person that allowed him to speak to how setting impacts writing:

> …you would write differently because of the feeling of your setting. If I were to start writing something here for you, it'd be pretty academic compared to me writing outside of this building, would be very different as well. Even compared to me sitting out there with those cows, I probably end up to writing Spanish. Because that would remind me of back home in Mexico. Yeah. Let's say we were to sit in a dark, like in a black room and I would be [asked] to write. I'll probably start writing like death metal lyrics or something...
>
> Or if we were to sit in our church, which I probably start writing like, I don't know, something spiritual. In a spiritual sense or something. If you're asking to write, tell me about your life, I'd probably write about the bad things in that dark room while if I was in church, I'd tell you about my spiritual settings in my life.
>
> Then, if I were to write about my life here [at college], it'd be just academic. Just like, "Blah-blah-blah." But Yosemite, I would actually put the whole story in from the bad parts to the lyric. To the bad parts, to the spiritual to the amazing things that happened to me. Everything. Anywhere you go in the wilderness would like yeah, it'd be a better spot to write…

The impact of place on students' writing was one of my research questions, and is the main focus of this chapter. Marcus highlights how much different settings inform his writing, and he suggests that his writing is most holistic in spectacular and remote natural areas. For him and many of ARC's participants and stakeholders, setting matters and it matters a lot, including to literacy learning. Many of my participants described direct and indirect impacts of the setting on their writing. They credited the outdoor settings of ARC with boosting concentration and creativity in their writing. The positive feelings they experienced in nature translated to a greater sense of openness and ease in writing. ARC's practices rely on setting to encourage community and self-reflection; interacting with setting was one way that participants' confidence grew. Greater confidence, a strong

sense of community, and a developing sense of self also contributed to writing

experiences participants endorsed as far more preferable than what they do in school.

Setting and students' literacy learning are linked, and I was able to identify and describe

some of these links through my research.

My Assumptions: Environmental Education + Civic Aims = Environmental Activism

However, I also came to the project with lenses of environmental education and

political activism. As such, I was surprised when Jess advised the stressed-out science

teacher that "it's not about the science"—*everything,* including the science curriculum,

was in service to literacy learning. It also surprised me that most of the staff did not

identify strongly as naturalists.[14] ARC asserts that it inspires youth to become

environmental stewards. While place was used deliberately to benefit students' literacy

learning, the curriculum to teach "environmental stewardship" felt haphazard and

passive. I trace here some of the ways in which ARC seems to work toward

environmental stewardship; my research likely missed the work that happened in this

arena because I did not observe most science lessons and because I did not ask interview

questions to get at students' environmental commitments.

Once I started writing up my findings, I recognized my own underlying

assumption that ARC's civic aims would combine with its environmental and rhetorical

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[14] ARC's science curriculum has undergone many iterations, and the staff hired within a particular year have varying degrees of interest in natural history and diverse backgrounds in the sciences. When I was a participant observer, the science teacher brilliantly offered students a bingo game to help them engage with the setting through observation and using field guides, and some staff and I often pointed out birds, bugs, and botany; however, another staffer was so concerned about the terrain we were covering or time pressures that he requested that students quit playing bingo. I felt like we were often too rushed to really get into naturalizing. The year I was a participant observer staff at the Yosemite site included an avid naturalist; my site lacked a similar person. Natural history and the habits of mind that make a naturalist, especially close observation, take time, and have been built into a recent, major revision of the science curriculum.

education to more explicitly support participants in pro-environmental behaviors of political activism. I thought ARC might be answering the call in environmental education to include civics education as a direct path to political environmental advocacy. This is not the case, and I explore some of the reasons in the following chapter. Still, some background on ARC's environmental education is important partly because it demonstrates the larger challenges environmental education faces and partly because I still see opportunities to build literacy learning, civics, and environmental education into programming.

Based both on archival data and observation, I saw that ARC works to instill an ethic of care for the environment through its Leave No Trace curriculum, its core value of service, and practices of the organization such as getting locally-sourced food whenever possible. At some programs and sites, ARC's curriculum has focused on topics like water conservation. In at least one post-course survey, ARC asks participants about their connection to nature, if they like learning about ecosystems, if they would like to make a career working in natural areas, and whether they would give some of their own time or money to help the environment. There have also been questions aimed at assessing the before and after impacts of ARC on students' concerns with protecting and preserving our natural environment and about the amount of time they spend outdoors. However, these assessments of environmental stewardship are not, based on my limited research, part of a coherent curriculum in environmental education or a deliberate push to get students to take up pro-environmental behaviors. Instead, the organization seems to fall into the same assumptions of "Significant Life Experience" research in environmental education that posits exposure to and experiences in nature translate to pro-environmental

behaviors through a construct called "environmental sensitivity" (Chawla, Hungerford and Volk, Tanner). ARC undoubtedly enhances this sensitivity, but ARC's clear priority is positive youth development and literacy learning; as such, the environmental stewardship aims, like environmental education in more general contexts, "is still a largely inadequate, relatively inconsistent, and scattered presence in the curriculum" (Hungerford and Volk). Furthermore, as I take up in the next chapter, environmental stewardship might include pro-environmental behaviors such as activism or volunteerism that are not equally available to members of a community. Understanding what "environmental stewardship" means is an important area of additional research, but not the impetus of this study. Rather, I looked to how setting and literacy learning interact.

Setting as a Mediator of Literacy Learning at ARC

While Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC) might emerge from a sense of "the obvious" about nature, literacy, and kids, it has always been a program that is also intentional about bringing these elements together. Intentionality is a theme of ARC culture, something I observed during my time as a participant observer at staff trainings and something that emerged from interviews with ARC personnel. When I asked long time instructor Jess why she was drawn to working with ARC, she spoke to the deliberate links ARC makes between leadership, academics, and wilderness: "There was so much intention behind everything and everything was so thought through to support the outcomes and to support the students." This intention reveals a major, underlying operating assumption at ARC: particular types of settings—"nature" in its more wild, iconic, and dramatic varieties—contributes to participants' self-development, academic learning, and leadership. How setting *actually* affects outcomes and supports students is

rarely documented; one benefit of qualitative research is that it allows for a context-specific examination of assumptions. The sense that natural settings matter is inherent within outdoor education and wilderness leadership, but at ARC, there is also "intention" in trying to link academics and setting that draws from the wealth of field experience and pedagogical expertise Katie Zanto brought to the establishment of ARC. Asking "why these places?" allows me to investigate links among setting and academic learning.

Katie considered herself a guide before she saw herself as a teacher, and her settings and materials for teaching were the outdoors. Outdoor education assumes the outdoors as essential to learning experiences. There is much anecdotal evidence about how nature allows students to grow through being part of the natural world and learning to be competent in outdoor skills. As far as we know, "Nature" has *always* had a role in human societies not just as physical sustenance and a part of cosmology, but also as some sort of teacher and healer. We have accounts of indigenous living and education; a national history that includes scouting, summer camp, and the establishment of national parks; the American transcendental tradition; wilderness therapy, and many other examples to look to for ideas about how important nature is and has been in meeting both material and intangible needs.

Most of my participants recognized, easily, the value of being outside—they found solace, quiet, and resonance with their individual preferences—and my attempts to get them to articulate *why* were occasionally met with incredulity.

> ML: Anything else about setting or the place?
>
> Molly: Not really. I just love outside. Who doesn't? Who'd rather not be outside?

Molly's preferences for the outdoors clearly align with the founding assumptions of ARC, as well as with the many observers who claim nature as so important to the well-being of people.

The value of "nature" has been receiving more scholarly and popular attention in the last two decades.[15] Thoreau's love of walking and being outside the built environment and his admonitions that others need to do similarly for their own health and happiness has evolved to empirical studies about the relationships between nature and health, especially. In the contexts of health, we are told that green space leads to a greater sense of well-being (Maas) and that people heal more quickly when they can see plants (Ulrich). Research on green space and health has increased in urban planning and various policy fields, but only recently has the association between "nature" and "learning" been interrogated by researchers in education and psychology. These nature-learning associations have often been assumed as common sense, and it does make sense that if nature reduces stress, as indicated in health studies, there can be benefits to learning. In this chapter, I explore the context-specific nuances of associations between nature and literacy learning, specifically tracing the direct and indirect impact of ARC's settings on participants' learning. I argue that setting plays an active and crucial role in meeting ARC's learning outcomes.

Setting directly and indirectly impacts literacy learning at ARC. By using the natural, tangible objects in students' immediate environment, ARC uses setting to

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[15] As an example, Richard Louv's *Last Child in the Woods,* which discusses the impacts of nature on children, became an international best-seller and sparked a loose movement called "No Child Left Inside" as well as terms like "nature-deficit disorder." His subsequent *The Nature Principle* has also been very popular, and argues for designing lives and communities that that incorporate nature's benefits to intelligence, creativity, physical and emotional health, and family relationships.

directly impact students' writing process: participants find generating ideas is easier in nature than in built environments like school. Indirect impacts, facilitated by the setting, include the ways setting contributes to community building, building positive identity, and self-reflection, which then contributed to students' experience of writing in nature as easier, more meaningful, and more productive. The indirect impacts of setting emerged as powerful mediators of student learning.

<u>Implicit Learning of Settings</u>

The role of setting as crucial is assumed but not theoretically grounded in rationales for ARC's pedagogies and curricula. In order to theorize the impact of setting on student learning at ARC, a helpful framework is that of implicit learning. In education, this includes the hidden curriculum, the concept that in addition to the explicitly taught curriculum, there is a parallel and unstated curriculum that conveys messages to learners. Setting is intricately linked to such a curriculum; Jane Martin explains that "we cannot avoid some hidden curriculum or other unless we abolish the setting itself" (Martin 129). Since there is no way to abolish the places where learning happens, it behooves educators and policy makers to consider what lessons particular places teach. Various studies document that students internalize messages based on aspects of their physical environment. Seating arrangements, which have been studied as part of maximizing learning environments (Wannarka and Ruhl) are a clear example of messages students might internalize about individuality, order, and control or about cooperation, creativity, and autonomy.[16]

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[16] When I taught in southeastern Utah, a senior teacher told me his seating arrangement was based on students' last names, but in practice the seating arrangement was entirely racial; the teacher made it so

Education and environmental studies professor David Orr examines the spaces of schools and college campuses for their own hidden curriculum; that setting influences learning is clear to him, and the lessons tend not to support his call for ecological literacy. Instead, schools and their spaces promote institutional values such as individualism, anthropocentrism, authority of privileged knowledge, technology, and commoditization. These values of Western education, endemic to how disciplines are divided and schools are built, contribute to ecological crisis

Jennie Winter and Debby Cotton sought to understand how a hidden curriculum could implicitly reinforce positive messages that aligned with a university's mission. They recruited students at a British university known for its sustainability efforts to look for sustainability on their campus. Participants noted the presence of recycling bins and energy-efficient light bulbs in the setting, but didn't see how sustainability was supposed to be central to the campus. The authors suggest that the hidden curriculum of the campus could be strengthened and made more explicit to help students better internalize or value sustainable practices.

Wolff-Michael Roth and Pei-Ling Hsu, science education scholars, theorize that setting is an active, often underutilized, participant in science. Erica Blatt, also a professor of science education, argues that laboratories and classrooms convey particular messages about science, such as that science is a known set of facts to be memorized and delivered by experts and that there is a rigorous and repetitive process designed to confirm answers that are already well established. Setting contributes to learning in myriad ways, though they are often unarticulated and undertheorized.

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white students from religious majority families sat in front, "mild" Navajo students sat in the middle, and "rowdy" Ute students sat in the back. One imagines the profoundly negative message this sent to everyone.

While there is a growing body of literature on place and space in rhetoric and composition (Dobrin, Reynolds, Sinor, Weisser) and a wealth of literature about the importance of context (Brandt, Gee) in learning and about the implicit messages conveyed by schooling, what is less examined is the messages students internalize from learning in natural settings, such as those students at ARC encounter.

Working Definitions: Setting & Context

First, it is necessary to provide a working definition of setting in the context of this study. Broad definitions of setting in literary works include examples like, "the environment where a story takes place." It is often referred to as a backdrop to the action, as influencing tone or mood. In Burke's dramatism, "scene" is one of the elements of the pentad essential to understanding a rhetorical situation and addressing questions of who, what, when, where, and why. He defines the scene as the "container" for what happens and who does the action (3). For most scholars and teachers, setting is time and place. My work, however, seeks to foreground setting and recognizes it as agentive.

When I discuss setting, it is both what is constructed by language, experience, and community in a particular time and place and it is the material aspects, biotic, and abiotic features of ecological systems. Except for the greater emphasis I put on ecological and/or nonhuman components when using the term setting, it is simultaneous with "context." ARC as an organization and every participant at ARC is situated within contexts and settings at the same time and in overlapping scales; atomistically delineating them is a reductionist exercise in futility[17]. My research seeks to foreground setting, to consider the

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[17] Furthermore, linguistically separating humans from their habitats seems ineffectual and even dangerous for the same reason; we *all* exist within contexts and settings, constructed and "natural" environments

interactions between people and their environments, always keeping in mind Sid

Dobrin's declaration: "Writing takes place." From an enhanced ability to concentrate to

experiencing positive emotions, from building relationships with self and others, setting

at ARC sponsors student writing.

ARC Settings

At ARC, participants operate in multiple settings most easily differentiated as

basecamp and expeditions. The Yosemite site's basecamp is at Wawona, a very small

town within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. It includes an elementary school

where students engage in academic tasks[18]. Tahoe's basecamp is at the Sagehen Creek

Field Station in the national forest. Academics take place primarily outside, at the lower

camp where students set up at picnic tables. During the 40-day Yosemite course, there are

four expeditions in and around Yosemite National Park. The two expeditions of the 24-

day Tahoe course take place in the Desolation and Granite Chief Wilderness Areas.[19]

When my participants talked about place, several themes emerged related to

affective, social, and cognitive domains: they experienced positive emotions while in

natural settings, setting was important to self-reflection and community building, and

doing academic work in natural settings, especially compared to school settings, was

easier and allowed for better thinking. ARC is integrative and holistic; separating out

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simultaneously. The nature/culture divide is a premise I reject and one that has been taken up in many other works.

[18] Participants talked very differently about Wawona and Sagehen basecamps. For example, a Yosemite alumnus said: "I always felt like when we were in the classroom for some reason I always felt mentally tired all the time…I wasn't as productive as when we were in the back packing because when you were back packing I felt like your mind was fresh, your body might be physically tired but your mind was fresh and able to think. While you're in the Wawona I felt like all the time you just want to just fall asleep because it's like your mind always just tired." I did not encounter similar sentiments about the Sagehen basecamp, which is set outdoors and away from anything resembling school.

[19] In the summer of 2017, ARC will operate in three sites: Yosemite, Tahoe, and Sequoia. Yosemite and Tahoe will be 40-day programs and Sequoia will be a "new and improved" 24-day program.

domains and experience is artificial—it may be that immersion in the natural world, time

to focus on self, writing assignments that felt relevant and were self-focused, and having

a supportive community *all* allowed participants to feel like writing was easier, or that

one component especially did, or that various elements worked together synergistically.

Setting offers ARC an additional pedagogical resource, one that supplements and enables

other effective writing instruction.[20] [21]

"Beautiful Positivity" and Peace: Perceptions of Nature's Role in Learning

My participants did not associate school with well-being. However, at ARC they

often felt a sense of peace, freedom, and inspiration. They also experienced social

connection, gratitude, and self-confidence. These positive feelings map onto several

components of well-being described in a 2013 synthesis article in the *Annual Review of*

Environmental Resources by Russell et al, which examined peer-reviewed studies from

multiple disciplines in order to consolidate information and claims about how intangible

ecosystem resources impact human well-being. The authors' primary purpose is to argue

that continuing to understand the nonmaterial benefits of nature is essential to policy

decisions. They draw from multiple scholars to discuss basic human needs, including

physiological needs (shelter, food) as wells as autonomy, competence, purpose, growth,

and identity; when these needs are met, people experience greater well-being, defined as

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[20] For example, students build fluency through writing a lot; read their work aloud; get timely and specific feedback; take their work through multiple drafts; have a 'real' rhetorical situation; pay attention to the moves of published writers; and much more.

[21] Setting may also be what integrates academics at ARC; the learning that occurs in a school, for example, includes messages that one space is for learning "science" and another for learning "English." Gatto explains that that when a bell determines when time for learning something begins and end, the message is that everything is of equal value and nothing is worth completing. At ARC, English and science happen together, not just in building habits of mind like observation (part of the science curriculum and essential to the metaphor poem) but in the same place. There is also enough flexibility to move more naturally between subjects and activities.

"people's capacity to be and do well in life, and achieve a state of health, happiness, or prosperity" (474). ARC settings are instrumental to meeting innate human needs that contribute to well-being. Participant discourse about natural settings eliciting positive feelings resonates with what studies from psychology to urban planning and much of human history suggests: being in nature, even with its potential physical discomforts, feels good. It often alleviates stress and puts people in contact with positive feelings. Molly illustrates this when she asks who wouldn't rather be outside, and other participants also reflected on how nature made them feel.

Participant responses about feeling some sort of ease or peace in nature show up particularly when asked very broadly about how setting may have impacted their ARC experience, about how it was to write in particular settings, and when asked about their solos. Loie, a smart and feisty 16-year-old, described part of her first expedition by talking about "a very big lake, with little islands all around. It's awesome. I don't know about all of this, it's just nature. Everybody's in peace." Loie associates being in nature, and nature itself, with peace in herself and with others. When I asked her to unpack this association, she went nearly metaphysical:

ML: but what is the connection between nature and a sense of peace?

Loie: Nature is a neutral charge I would say. It has rocks that are like negative charge. Plants are a positive charge because those are alive. That gives it balance; air, trees, plants and when there's no sounds of cars and all that, it's calm. I would say that when we enter in the neutral place where it's nothing that can disturb you, nothing that is made by human, we get in this space that we feel the energy going through us. It makes us calm. That's how I see it.

Again, peace or calm is the outcome of being in nature—something that just emerges from settings with plants and rocks and that is facilitated by a lack of human

disturbances. Nature provides "space" that allows some sort of energy. Loie at least

indulged my probes into why and how nature has the impact it does. Over and over,

students would talk about feeling somehow better while outdoors. Enrique was aware of

how mushy it sounded to talk about the *feeling* of the natural setting.

> Enrique: How important was the setting to me?
>
> ML: Yeah. Did the setting matter? And if so, why do you think it matters?
>
> Enrique: This is kind of cheesy, but just the beautiful positivity going around.
> (Both chuckle)

Later in our interview, Enrique talked about how the setting allowed him to think more

clearly, but his sense of "beautiful positivity" represents the experience of natural settings

as conducive to general positive feelings. Participants also talked more specifically about

what might be under the "beautiful positivity" umbrella. Estelle and Sofia talked in depth

about how their experiences on expeditions increased their sense of appreciation for their

lives. For some participants, like Molly who would always prefer to be outdoors and for

Marcus, who described himself as "more of an outdoors person," nature was part of

identity and ARC supported and validated that identity[22]. For others, like Sebastian and

Alberto, the natural setting allowed relief from stressors and rare contact with positive

emotion. "I remember that nature helped me a lot to have my thoughts unroll because I

wasn't worrying about anything," reported Alberto.

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[22] Molly and Marcus might have what multiple intelligences theorist Howard Gardner refers to as a "naturalist" intelligence; for many other participants, ARC helps strengthen a naturalist intelligence through observation, data collection, using field guides, and personally relating to places.

Participants also discussed particular constituents of well-being like those identified by Russell et al; one such constituent their research examined was empirical literature on "Inspiration and Fulfillment of Imagination" as an intangible benefit of nature. Recognizing that inspiration is a possibly unique feature of being human, they looked at the "diverse ways in which natural systems affect inspiration, creativity, and imagination" (485). Though getting at this through positivist methods resulted in some paucity of the literature under review, the authors point out there is an obvious tie between nature and the arts and call for more ethnographic studies to help parse out the relationship. My experience is that articulating the why and how of inspiration in nature is also very difficult for most people—nature is inspiring because it just is. I pushed participants to try to get at the impacts of nature on their writing, which they often described in terms of inspiration, by inviting discussion about *how* the setting influenced their writing. For example, when asked what he remembered about writing in the various settings at ARC[23], Sebastian explained:

> …you sit on a rock or a log, and you're just thinking, and it goes back to being reflective of whatever experiences you've been through. It's also inspiration because there's … It's almost like bliss. There's quiet, there's birds. I don't know how to … It's just a setting that inspires ideas. … I don't know. It's just peaceful.

Enrique, Loie, Sebastian, and Alberto are highly representative of participants who reported feeling more at ease, somehow, in nature. Few participants were able, like Loie, to come up with a theory for why being outside might help them feel generally more at

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[23] Interestingly, participants also remembered places where they had written; the places they recalled most vividly were the places where they had done journaling. Grace said, "It was through my writing, I have to say, my journaling time where I can remember just the settings…I can't really remember much besides a lot of so much excitement…it was the scenery where we were always journaling."

ease or might inspire them. However, participants could talk in more specifics about how the feeling of a natural setting might help them with their writing. Sofia, a college junior with strong Mexican identity and heritage, helps illustrate the interaction between setting and inspiration. She had been talking to me about how ARC made her appreciate her home place, Tahoe, and how issues of access had prevented her from exploring the Sierra and Tahoe region.

> ML: You talked a minute ago about sort of just being exposed to Tahoe. I wonder if you can sort of think about setting…and just sort of talk for a minute about what about the setting was important to your experience.

> Sofia: I notice like in all my poems and my essays, I was always upbeat, and it was mostly like nature, like the beauty of it, like birds. I could just [do] writing, like creative writing, like the detail. It wouldn't have popped up in my room. It was because I was out there exposed to a different environment, the trees, writing peacefully. … You find a nice rock. A nice view. On one side there's a sunset that's bright and beautiful. On the other side, it's all gloomy. It touches your feelings and inspires you to write different things.

Sofia attributes the positivity in her writing to nature. While some of the "upbeat" reference refers to the content—her poem and transformational essay are forward looking and full of hope and determination—she seems also to find the act of writing easier outdoors. This is because she has more concrete details to work with; ideas she gets in a natural setting don't just "pop up" inside her room at home, and the place allows her access to feelings.

Russell et al conclude that, "The effects of nature on mental and physical health have been rigorously demonstrated, whereas other effects (e.g., on learning) are theorized but seldom demonstrated" (473). In part, this may be because of the reductionist bent of Western science. However needs are mediated, when they are met and mental and

physical health are improved, learning is facilitated. Separating out the impact of setting on, for example, inspiration and well-being or inspiration on learning, or well-being on learning, or learning on well-being is not possible or helpful. The point is simply that students felt positively in nature and students felt writing in nature was easier and preferable. Loie felt adamantly that "Writing in nature is always easier." One message participants take from their ARC experience is that they can come up with things to write about: themselves, their experiences, their surroundings.

Open Space, Open Mind: Natural Settings Enhance Thinking

Participants credited the settings of ARC with enhanced learning. Specifically, they reported being more creative, more energetic, and having higher concentration when working outside. During the summer course, it was easy to pick up on how much participants preferred ARC's pedagogy and places to those of school. They talked about school classrooms as having more pressure and making them feel trapped. In contrast, participants spoke about feeling a sense of freedom at ARC, how the world was more peaceful in a way that "gets your mind flowing." They appreciated having more and new "stuff" to look at, particularly when working on writing. Enrique, a student who gets accommodations through an individualized education plan in regular school, said it most articulately:

> Out there we were just out in the open and free and now [when I interviewed him during the school year] we're in classrooms where it's a little bit more enclosed. You feel like you're in a little box trying to think, but out there in the whole wilderness where we were, it was a little more open and easier to think really well.

Enrique credits the open space with an ability to think well. He is free of the constraints

of a "little box." Explaining exactly why being outside makes for better thinking is hard

to articulate, but he tried:

> I think it's just the fact that you know you're outside, and that … Pretty much
> you're just in an infinite space now. So you just feel kind of … Your mindset is
> just easier to wander and go out there. You're more open to everything and just
> willing to take everything in and concentrate as well as you can.

For Enrique and so many others, ARC was associated with freedom. He makes a shift

from the external environment which is "infinite" and open to himself—he personally

becomes more open. The external space seemed to literally allow participants like

Enrique to feel more at ease internally. Willingness to engage the processes of learning,

including frustration, expanded with more space. For all students, but particularly for

those with labels like "learning disabled," the willingness to tolerate frustration, to not

shut down in the face of difficulty, is key to learning. For Enrique, the space helped boost

his capacity for concentrating as best he can.

The notion that place allows for creativity, or at least for a greater capacity to

generate ideas, also was expressed by multiple participants. Naomi talked about how

interesting surroundings led to better description, and offered the following example of a

writing exercise from the first expedition, when the group was at

> this one lake and there was this dead white tree reaching upward to the sky. It
> was really cool looking; it looked like a claw I thought, and we were describing
> it and everybody came up with these different descriptions, whereas if you were
> in the school and you asked someone to try [to describe] the wall, they'd be like,
> 'white brick.'

Even when teachers try to make space more interesting, Naomi complains, it doesn't

work: "Teachers put these stupid posters on their wall thinking it will liven up the

classroom and it just doesn't because there's only so many times you can read the words, 'you make the choice to something something your future.'" They key terms of the poster were not even memorable to her, which we both laughed about. Naomi is an avid reader, articulate in speech and writing, but she shared with all participants the experience of school as oppressive. The perceived learning and thinking benefits of being outside of classrooms were universal to my participants.

The outdoors, just by not being a classroom, inspired writers. For Naomi, this was largely about using the environment to craft more descriptive, concrete language. For others, the natural environment allowed ideas in. Chloe explained about writing outside: "I feel like it would give me more stuff to write about. Because when we were at a lake and we had to write about certain stuff, and I would just look up and stuff, and I would just think of something. It just felt really cool writing out in the wilderness." While seemingly vague, Chloe is speaking to being able to generate ideas at all, to being able to think. She compares this to writing in school: "In a classroom, it's way different. It's four walls, and a whole bunch of people. I can't really think when I'm in a classroom. When I went out there, I felt like I could really write, and express myself how I wanted to." Chloe addresses several aspects of the ARC setting that are different from school settings: the physical space is different, there are fewer people, generating ideas is easier, and agency is appreciated.

While students strongly associate natural settings with greater ease, there are also pedagogical practices that seem relevant to their sense that ARC allows for better thinking. The writing students are asked to do is highly personal, and the curriculum often uses concrete and tangible experiences or things as part of the content. Rather than

writing about others' experiences in literature or analyzing literary devices, participants

tell their own hero's journey after days backpacking in the wilderness and taking risks in

peak ascents, rock climbing, rappelling, rafting, and ropes courses[24]. They compose an "I

Am" poem based on something in the natural world. If participants were inside a

classroom of ten students, had frequent one-to-one attention, a strong sense of

community, and the curriculum focused on identity, it seems likely that also would result

in students feeling like writing was easier—though perhaps they would lose access to

some of the idea-generating power of natural settings. ARC has the additional

pedagogical resource of setting. The setting, through the ways it supports students'

literacy, is a key part of the ecological system of sponsorship from which ARC operates.

ARC is deliberate in using place as part of its curriculum and pedagogy, both for what

setting includes—positive feelings, community building, experiences to compel

writing—and for what ARC's settings omit, like digital technology and social media.

Josiah explained that ARC made it so participants were "isolated from the rest of the

world, you know it kept us away from phones, computers, so it kept us really on track to

concentrate on what we were doing." He also suggested a particular type of mindful

presence:

> You just felt like you're just here and now, there's nothing to distract you and so
> I think it's really helpful and that's one of the things I remember, that it was just
> really helpful to be outside because you get to focus and it's peaceful and it's
> quiet.

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[24] Curriculum revisions are being piloted in 2017 to make metaphorical thinking and seeing oneself as on a journey even more explicit. For example, the transformational essay for the 24-day program is being reframed as a "turning point" essay, where students think about an event that might be the beginning of a change. Journal prompts from rock climbing and the ropes course invite students to think about the feelings and behaviors from those experiences and when they have felt/acted similarly and differently in other situations.

Students at ARC have freedom from distractions—some of these are external distractions that they could hypothetically control in their own lives, but some freedom from distraction also results from time away from regular expectations and demands of family and community.

Sometimes participants even appeared to conflate "nature" with "no distractions." For example, Loie made the assertion that

> Writing in nature is always easier. There's no distraction. Nobody really will sit next to you and try to show you something on their phone, so you don't look at it. It makes it easier and because it makes you [peaceful] when you're in nature, it makes the mind go faster so you can make up your mind and write whatever you think about. It feels right.

The greater ease of writing in nature, according to Loie and others, is a mix of interrelated factors: freedom from distraction, more creativity, feeling "right," being able to concentrate. Participants learn that the present matters—they have the "here and now" to focus. They learn what it is to hear themselves, to as Alberto said, "think a thought through." One of the reasons students might find concentration easier is because ARC, in its pedagogies and just the nature of the program, limited distractions. If students were better able to manage their own distractions, particularly social media, would an outdoor, natural setting still allow such improved concentration abilities?

Yes, according to research on nature and attention. Attention Restoration Theory posits natural settings, which have a variety of interesting stimuli, require a less-demanding type of attention and thus allows more directed, focused attention to be restored. Psychologist Stephen Kaplan explains that directed attention, which is essential in information processing, "requires effort, plays a central role in achieving focus, is under voluntary control (at least some of the time), is susceptible to fatigue, and controls

distraction through the use of inhibition" (Kaplan 170). Writing and other literacy tasks, particularly if not in one's first language, require directed attention, and directed attention is difficult to maintain and results in mental fatigue. Attention Restoration Theory suggests that natural settings have important characteristics allowing for the fatigue of directed attention to be restored. These characteristics include involuntary attention to many different types of non-threatening stimuli, which Kaplan describes as "fascination."

Experimental design studies have helped theorize and confidently demonstrate how time spent in different types of environments—walking in a park vs. a busy street, for example—influences subsequent attention. The result is that "after an interaction with natural environments, one is able to perform better on tasks that depend on directed-attention abilities" (Berman, Jonides, and Kaplan). Participants at ARC continuously interact with natural environments; when Chloe just looks around and sees "stuff" and can then return to her writing with ease, what may be happening is that by attending to natural "stuff" for a bit, she is taking an intuitive break that allows her to refuel attention for the cognitive demands of writing.

Setting as a means to community building and self-reflection

The setting is instrumental for community building and self-reflection. Sometimes ARC's wilderness curriculum builds community because of the nature of backcountry travel, and sometimes community building is more explicit as part of English lessons. A strong sense of community is foundational to ARC. I define community building as deliberate strategies to encourage perspective-taking, enhance empathy, and develop interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills. Such community building happens through the formalized sharing of personal stories, feedback sessions, and

debriefs that occur throughout the course. Similarly, the stories, feedback, and debriefs enable self-reflection. Community-building and self-reflection are part of the systems at ARC; they are symbiotic, sometimes mutualistic and sometimes commensal—and the settings of ARC, from the challenges the setting provides to the time and space students find within those settings—support the relationships among literacy, community, and reflection.

Students who apply for ARC's summer immersion program are required to attend an orientation backpacking trip, as the challenges of backpacking help instructors see group dynamics and envision the sort of cohort community that might be most beneficial to participants. Backpacking is an activity that creates community out of necessity: participants travel together, literally sharing the weight of the group's equipment and food. People work together to find appropriate routes, campsites, kitchens, and bear hangs and then to set up shelters, cook meals, and store food. Along the way, there are spontaneous as well as structured opportunities for getting to know participants. For example, during the orientation I attended as a participant observer, the staff team leader, Ryan, urged each of the adults to spend time talking to each student while hiking, even if we'd prefer to have our own quiet trail time. I witnessed Ryan's capacity to ask general questions, followed by more specific and sometimes personal ones, and then just listen and validate. Conversations often became relationships of interest, support, and trust. While adults were perhaps more deliberate about initiating conversations, participants talked among themselves. Fostered by the open conversations on trails, relationships developed.

Sebastian, a psychology major who did the 40-day Tahoe course before going into his first year of high school, explained to me how expeditions encouraged getting to know one another. I had asked him about the notion of "freedom" that many summer participants referenced, wondering what he thought people might mean by that, and his response highlighted the talk and community building that comes from trail time:

> I think the sense of freedom comes from just being free to talk about whatever you want, whatever is on your mind, especially when you're hiking for a long amount of time. If everyone's just like quiet and strolling around it's not enjoyable, but if you have the freedom to say whatever you want or do whatever you want … Just let those walls down and try to get to know each other. I remember hiking, and we would hike in a single file line, and I remember the first expedition I was towards the back and there was a person in front of me and a person behind me. I remember just kind of talking in between us, so I guess it's like a freedom to talk about whatever you want and get to know each other even though you're completely strangers.

For Sebastian, it was largely the time on the trail and his interest in others that encouraged conversation and the subsequent sense of community. Sometimes participants crossed the lines established in their high school and community social orders: Mexican, white, Black, and Asian kids became friends, as did students in honors classes and those in special education; students with unimaginable backgrounds became bffs with kids of substantial privilege; kids who had never stepped out of line connected with those who had been to juvie. They were free to get to know each other, and they benefitted from the relationships they built. One alumna I interviewed discussed how much more she cares about diversity since ARC; she identifies as Latina, but that didn't stop her from serving with the Hmong student organization at her university. Because of the shared time, space, and experiences, the notion of insider and outsider fades at ARC, and for some, long after.

Participants reflected on how the teamwork required for a successful expedition led

to community. They recognized that "you definitely fail if you don't work together"

(Josiah) and that in order to accomplish goals—from getting to a site before dark to peak

ascents, they needed to help and rely on each other. Molly put it this way: "It's all about

helping each other. Like if we don't help each other, we're never going to get to where

we're going to go."

The physical and mental demands of being in the backcountry helped participants

build community with each other and with ARC staff. However, there are many ways in

which ARC is isolating. Participants discussed being away from friends, family, and

losing access to technology and social media. Luis explained ARC as being, "away from

my family, and my friends, the internet, and just being away from everything." This

separation from routine life and the experience of being away from "civilization" had the

impact of uniting participants—it created a sense of "we are all in this together."

Participants were on more equal footing; while they may have different strengths and

challenges, the natural setting put them literally on the same ground, and ARC's

leadership curriculum provided each participant with opportunities to inhabit necessary

roles—cook, cleanup crew, navigator, leader of the day—in the community. Community

is a value at ARC, and it includes taking on leadership roles and performing service[25].

Participants learn that their individual behavior impacts the group. They also accept that

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[25] Being a leader *at ARC* is localized to ARC; while the group is isolated together and learns to be more interpersonally effective and to work together to achieve group goals, it is difficult to envision how the group dynamics established from being in the backcountry together translate to home communities. One participant, Ariella, suggests that it did. She communicated with her parents about how they could better communicate with her. Ariella explains that her parents, "Say things in a harsh way. They have a harsh type of love that a lot of [her culture's] parents have." After ARC, Ariella says that, speaking on behalf of her siblings, she told her parents, "'You need to be a friend in order for us to tell you about our worries and our concerns and what you can do to help us.'" Since then, they've improved a lot on their communication skills. I learned that from ARC."

there is no real way out; escape is not possible, and so participants ultimately make choices about engaging with one another. Alberto describes the sense of expeditions as uniting people and how nature encourages concentration:

> It's just also like when a group of people, like 12 of us are in nature together, it gives you the idea that we're all human beings, we all have the same feelings, we all have the same thoughts and that gives you the chance to express your feelings a little bit more and open your mind about what you're learning … Also it gives you this feeling of I'm not going anywhere so I might as well just pay attention.

Alberto, who frequently expressed how his time with ARC allowed him to experience freedom from judgment, explains the unifying aspect of nature: it helps him realize everyone is only human, and that regardless of background, there is some notion of fundamental equality. We are all just social mammals surviving in given habitats. In turn, this leveling of the field allows for his greater self-expression and willingness to learn. For Alberto, identity is everything; he talked about going into school classrooms with an automatic stance of going "against the teacher." At ARC, with nowhere else to go, the natural setting and camaraderie with peers and instructors eliminated that need.

The work of expeditions fostered healthy interdependence and community among participants. In addition to the activities of hiking, climbing, crossing snowfields, fording streams, attending to blisters, purifying water, cooking, setting up and taking down shelters, and on and on, participants were taking part in English lessons that asked them to write and reflect on their experiences. The writing prompts, in addition to and in combination with the setting, allowed them to engage in self-reflection. My interview data suggest that reflection was most powerful to participants during their solo experience, but prior to that they had significant experience in self-reflection through the

many journaling prompts they did. In both the course-long journaling and the 24-hour

solo, setting facilitates reflection.

Heavy Rock/Light Rock: Interactions of Landscape, Reflective Writing, and Community

  The lesson "Heavy Rock/Light Rock" is an example of how participants use the

physical place and writing both for community building and self-reflection. It takes place

on students' first expedition, and the stated objectives include developing the use of

metaphor and simile; defining goals and hopes, and sharing their writing with the group;

and creating content for their metaphorical 'I Am' Poem (24 day English curriculum).

The English teacher invites students to write in their journals about burdens that are

keeping them down, which is analogous to a heavy rock, and about hopes and goals for

the summer program and for life, which constitutes the metaphorical light rock. I

examine the lesson from two perspectives: Jess, the Tahoe English instructor, and Ariella,

a Yosemite participant. Both spontaneously went to this lesson when I asked about

setting, and their discussion illuminates the synergy between place, writing, and

reflection. I asked Jess how she uses the setting in her teaching, and she responded:

> I think that we try as much as possible to incorporate the setting into the
> teaching, so that where they are is integral to what they're doing. I think there's
> some lessons and some pieces that are more tied than others, but the light rock
> heavy rock lesson is kind of the foundation for a lot of that sharing and opening
> that they do. They're on the edge of a lake and they pick up these two different
> rocks and they write and then they share burdens or heavy things that are going
> on in their lives, and then things that make them feel good and lift them up.

Students write before they share—focused journaling is part of nearly every ARC

activity. For the Heavy Rock/Light Rock lesson, the prompts include directions to

"describe what weighs you down in life" and asks, "Is there any heavy part of yourself or

your life that you would like to leave behind/not have to deal with anymore?" There are

also questions about goals, anticipated changes over the summer and "What part of your

everyday life would you like to change when you return home?" (English journal s15).

For Ariella, this lesson changed her perspective about her parents. Her capacity for

thinking by analogy met an iconic landscape. She explained that setting was important

because "it was through those scenes that I also realized a lot of things." She went on to

describe Heavy Rock/Light Rock:

> I remember the day before we reached our destination of Mount Watkins, we had a writing session. I remember one of the instructors, she rolled a huge rock over, and she brought one small rock, and she's like, "Okay, well I want you guys to think about this. Think about it and write about what this huge boulder reminds you of. What does it represent? Maybe things that hold you down in life. Then this small rock, things that make you happy."

> I remember thinking about that. I remember doing the exercise, and I compared the big boulder to low self-esteem. I compared it to the fights that I was having with my parents and my current boyfriend during that time. There's a lot of things I compared it to. The small rock was my family. Just my family in general. The people in my life.

> I remember I was sad and angry, like, okay ... then I realized I have so much anger in me. When we got to Mount Watkins, which is right across from Half Dome… It's high up, and you basically see the whole Yosemite Valley, too. When I saw that, I was like, "Wow." I just kind of let go of that huge boulder, because it's like what I saw was waterfalls, the river, trees, and everything else. Wow. If it wasn't for the water, these trees wouldn't be green. That's like love. If it wasn't for the trees holding soil back and the rocks back from the river flow, then the river wouldn't be able to flow so beautifully. I was like, wow, there's so many ways to show love.... Maybe I don't understand and agree with the way my parents have shown me how they love me, but still [I'm] loved.

> I was like, "Okay." I had to let that go. My parents do love me. That's why it's so important to me, like scenery is really important. …seeing the beauty and everything that I see and putting meaning to it, it's made it like, I've fallen in love with it.

Ariella's description of "Heavy Rock/Light Rock" provides data points about

multiple components of ARC. The reflection-based prompts enabled her to recognize

sadness and anger about how her parents demonstrated their love and seek an alternative way of understanding. She experienced positive feelings, saying "wow" three times to convey a sense of awe. Journaling cued her to think metaphorically, and then to make meaning throughout the landscape. The tangible aspects of the setting—rocks, water, trees—plus the scenery and a personal writing prompt mediate Ariella's subsequent positive emotional experiences. In addition to spurring reflection, Heavy Rock/Light Rock also exemplifies how ARC incorporates the place to build community. Participants share their heavy and light rocks—something Jess pointed out as the foundation of the openness and sharing done throughout the course. The Heavy Rock/Light Rock lesson operates within ARC's systems of positive-identity development, community building, literacy learning, and the place. Reflection emerges from and facilitates these systems.

The model of reflection at ARC follows a distinct pattern: students are invited to connect to something in their tangible surroundings or direct physical experience, to think metaphorically, and to toggle between present, past, and future. This pattern, which links the concrete and the abstract and asks students to encounter their best self, works through informal writing like the Heavy Rock/Light Rock and other journal prompts. For example, reflection is built into peak ascents through journal prompts that ask students to think about how the peak is a metaphor for other challenges they have faced on the trip, what peaks they have encountered in their lives, and what peaks lie ahead of them. These informal writing invitations and the practice in thinking by analogy provide students the raw material for the more formal writing assignments at ARC, such as the "I Am" metaphor poem and transformational essay discussed the Chapter 2.

Solos: Reflecting Alone in the Wilderness

While reflection can be an aspect of any setting or pedagogy, some of the most powerful reflective experiences come during students' 24-hour solos. During all-staff training, I experienced the solo set-up, a night alone, reflective writing, and reuniting the next day first hand. Before being led to our solo sites, we were eating an early dinner, nestled in the shelter of white bark pines that stifled some of the wind whipping off the ice-covered lake. While we shared a special hot meal and parsed out desserts, ARC's executive director, Sarah Ottley, explained that the point of the solo is to ask students, "Who are you at your core?" and more specifically, "Who is at the core of your character when you don't have family, friends, entertainment, or comfort?" If not for the wilderness setting and the preparation students do for their solos, plus a healthy infusion of helping students recognize their autonomy—including through writing—Sarah might be describing an experience of solitary confinement. The setting matters to the reflection that emerges from students' solos.

During all-staff training, ARC leadership led us through a "toneset" that included talking about the expedition's challenges and risks so far. As the conversation went on and I thought of the night ahead, I found myself grateful for a down sleeping bag and other good gear. I felt relieved to finally have time by myself and anxiety about getting through the frigid night. Sarah explained that for some students, the experience is transformational. For others, it's fine or interesting. And for a few, it is so scary they don't really get much out of it—they just get through it. The all-staff solo, which was only about twelve hours, was not my first experience alone in wilderness, and it was still very powerful—the hardest part was writing in the cold and the pressure to write at all. The writing led me to reflection ranging from recent trauma experiences to a sense of my

whole self, from what I wanted to do with my ARC fieldwork to a bigger picture for what makes a meaningful life. I felt some "mini-transformation" through this writing and from a feeling of deep safety, calm, gratitude, and wonder. When staff have solo experiences, it helps in setting students up for their own, hopefully positive ones.

When students are prepared for their solos, they are encouraged to think about it as something almost holy, and their fears are validated along with the fact that by the time they've gotten to the solo, they've already accomplished many difficult things. By solo time, students have been with others for at least two weeks and have usually accumulated some sleep debt; sometimes solos are opportunities to catch up and have real down time. Participants are taken to pre-selected sites, told how special this opportunity is as a chance to be with themselves free of distraction to think about self, life, and identity.

Solo experiences are part of many wilderness schools, but ARC's focus on directed writing—students are expected to write at least four pages in their journals—is one of the things that makes it unique. The solo is designed to allow participants to think about themselves, their past, and their future without the influence of others in their space, and with plenty of time; unless there are weather or safety issues, solos are a full 24 hours. The writing prompts are: 1) What changes, growth, transformations have you experienced? 2) What have you begun to discover about yourself? 3) What adventures and experiences have impacted you most? Describe with specific and powerful language, and 4) How will you use lessons you've learned and apply them at home? (English journal s15). All of the writing students do is material for formal writing assignments, but the solo prompts are directly tied to their final project, the transformational essay that's built around the hero's journey.

As the 2015 cohort prepared for their solo, mountain weather, malfunctioning stoves, and a student recovering from a panic attack so massive she had lost feeling in her limbs set the stage for some anxiety. Because I was on dinner duty with the malfunctioning stoves, I missed most of the toneset Jess led with students while the other instructors, Ryan and Ashley, scouted out solo sites. Eventually the students were led away and the staff gathered for our own special meal and reflective time, which included giving feedback to ourselves and each other. Reflection is inherent to ARC's entire culture.

After students are retrieved from their solo sites, they are invited to share some of their experiences. My observations of the 2015 cohort were that students talked more about their site, describing it as a "kingdom" or explaining to the group a particular tree or cliff, than about their writing and experience of being alone. They laughed together, shared the dreams they had during the night, and just seemed glad to be back as a group. How much of their writing during the solo translated to their final essay is unclear, but all the participants I interviewed—from the 2015 cohort, the 40-day Yosemite program, and Tahoe alumni—found the solo experience, including the explicit reflective aims, important and memorable.

Six months after students were gathered up from their solos, I met up with Naomi at a local tea shop. She told me that "some of the stuff that I realized on my solo trip I'm only thinking about now like months later and realizing how important that stuff was." For her, the solo and the writing she did enabled her to see how her negative perception of herself was limiting, and the recognition of how important the reflective writing was seemed to grow as time went on. She also talked about how important the setting was to being alone, and how being alone with yourself is its own challenge:

> I think I got like deeper into myself than I really had before because it wasn't so much the being alone that got me, because I've had days where like I don't talk to my parents at all for like twenty-four hours and I'm just like ... I'm like in my room when I'm alone. I think it was just being alone in the wilderness. It's easy to be alone, it's not easy to be alone with yourself. I just remember thinking about myself in ways that I hadn't before and realizing things about myself.

Naomi is appropriately self-protective in her conversations with me; the writing done in solo settings can be much more personal than what emerges in the more crafted, school-type writing of the transformational essay.

Alberto talked about the writing he did during the solo as not even being writing—it was as if the page was a "vessel" for communication with himself. His solo allowed him to meet himself:

> …it was a really emotional moment for me and I think that was the turning point for me to actually change the way I was to the new. It was a moment where actually I was with myself. … I just heard my thoughts, I couldn't hear anything else but my thoughts so it was like having two me's in the same place and just having a conversation with myself and asking myself, "What am I doing, what are my goals, what are my dreams?" It was really important for me to hear myself tell me I want to do this in life because I always heard people telling me, "You should do this, you should do that. This is the way to do it."

Would Alberto have felt comfortable enough to have these conversations with himself in another setting? I'm doubtful because of his and many other participants' references to the solo space as being secure, secluded, and one's own in ways that are different from their regular life. Mayumi said her solo setting allowed her to write differently than while at home because she didn't worry about anyone interrupting her or going through her stuff, and she was able to write *all* of her feelings. She reported this as somewhat painful but also positive: "It felt good because I wasn't being watched and I knew I was there by myself to get all my feelings out." For Estelle, the solo allowed her to, "Reflect upon everything and it was really nice to do it in that setting because no one was around and I

could just kind of talk to myself out loud and write and didn't have to worry about anybody hearing me." And for Alberto, who tied his bandana to a stick creating a flag that marked "my fortress" he could "be where no one would see me because I wanted to just be myself."

There is some emotional safety in being entirely free from the gaze of others, and although participants are not that far away from one another during their solos—each has a perimeter but all the sites are within a few miles radius—the perceived isolation and the natural setting supports their self-reflection. They feel like they are alone, and for most of them, that sense of aloneness is generally positive. One of the "lessons" of the hidden curriculum described by John Taylor Gatto is about privacy and surveillance; when students feel watched and have to ask for basic things like permission to use the restroom, they learn "that no one can be trusted, that privacy is illegitimate" (11). At ARC, the lesson of solos is that privacy is essential to a healthy life of self-reflection, that it is okay to be entirely focused on the self, that they have a self independent of others, that they are trustworthy. For many, these lessons are at odds with their regular lives; they may have significant caregiving roles, be so overscheduled or distracted as to never have quiet moments, be called self-absorbed, feel empty when alone, and not be trusted. The solo provides sanctioned alone time with the self.

Being alone, however, is not enough—it's being alone in the wilderness setting. Though it seems romanticized and evidence and mechanisms for it are sparse, people feel connected to something larger than themselves in nature. Whether it is life resonating with life, experiencing one's place in the cosmos, or something else entirely, this sense of being a part of instead of apart from seems common to many people, including my

participants. While Naomi was particularly articulate about what it's like to be alone and what it's like to be "alone in the wilderness," the notion that nature enhanced reflection was not unique to her experience. Luis, who confessed he'd been afraid of the solo for the extended period alone and because of his fears of the dark, actually found peace during the night:

> I remember waking up in the middle of the night, and just looking around, and listening to everything. I was actually right next to a creek, and I remember just laying down and looking at the stars because you could see a million stars, and just breathing and relaxing, and just letting things go, and just being by myself.

Luis was able to relax, to let things go, and to just be by and with himself. There was amazement or humility in his voice as he told me about the stars; something about the environment and being mindful of it impacted and soothed him.

While the solos give participants 24 hours to be alone-in-nature, time is also an important component of backpacking more generally. The combination of time and of nature, of opportunities to allow participants to be alone—these are key aspects of why ARC uses particular settings to meet its outcomes. Some of those outcomes are measured as internal assets[26], and some are big picture "empowerment," and a means to achieving them is reflection and self-discovery. ARC wants participants to discover a best self, and provides leadership and adventure opportunities to facilitate it. ARC also wants participants to understand their histories and have better relationships with those histories, which reflection supports. Writing prompts might ask students to compare climbing a peak to overcoming a past challenge and thinking of how they'll deal with future ones. Wilderness and time are critical ingredients, as Sebastian explains:

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[26] ARC uses the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) as one of its assessments; internal assets include "commitment to learning," "positive values," "social competencies," and "positive identity." (Search Institute)

> I think that you have a lot of time to reflect, especially in the wilderness. … It really gives you time to think about what has happened to you, what's going to happen to you. It just helps you understand yourself, in a way. I think the setting helps you reflect on who you are…

The settings of ARC, often full of natural wonder and secluded from the technological world, facilitated reflection. Sharing insights from that reflection, as well as working together to succeed in the backcountry, helped build community. The community—which offered both positive and constructive feedback as well as opportunities to encounter difference, similarities, conflict, and support—encouraged reflection. All of these transactions seemed to help participants experience ARC very differently from other aspects of their lives, including traditional schooling[27].

Setting: An active participant in student learning

The settings where ARC operates boost participants' sense of well-being; they feel more at ease and peaceful while in the backcountry, particularly. The setting is used by ARC to build community and facilitate self-reflection. Participants associate the settings of ARC with freedom from judgment and distraction. Any of these benefits— feeling less anxiety and more confidence, feeling unconditionally regarded and supported, feeling a strong sense of self identity and agency—seem through commonsense to be instrumental to learning. We also have a body of literature about learning and teaching that highlights the critical roles of emotion, relationships, identity, agency, and efficacy. Adolescent literacy scholar Donna Alvermann, for example, argues that two of the most critical aspects in teaching adolescent literacy are self-efficacy and engagement. She describes self-efficacy as "task-specific" confidence important to

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[27] See Appendix D for a description of how participants discussed the differences between school and ARC settings.

motivation and gives an example of struggling readers who benefit from having a concrete goal and getting feedback on their progress (191-2). At ARC, the writing goals of an "I Am" poem and a transformational essay are clear and feedback is prevalent. However, the setting also provides many other goals for students to meet: climbing peaks, backcountry travel, spending 24 hours alone in the wilderness. Achieving goals and getting/giving feedback occur in adventure activities students encounter and in academic tasks, and success in the former is assumed to positively impact students' confidence in the latter. The settings and activities also enable participants to have new, often compelling experiences, and these direct experiences and the writing and reflecting they do throughout those experiences generate material for their writing. That is, students are highly engaged and encouraged to take ownership of their experience and their work.

The "setting" of ARC, like all contexts, is more than any one element such as being outdoors. ARC and its settings limited many distractions. The settings facilitated supportive relationships between teachers and students to the point that cohorts identified as family. Positive identity building was prioritized. Students were offered challenges to overcome and given much feedback. The writing students did required intense self-reflection that was grounded by actual experience in and observation of the physical world.

When Orr writes that by what you include or exclude, everything is environmental education, it's not hard to think at a broader scale: learning and teaching happen everywhere all the time; the question is, what are the lessons? This, perhaps, is what ARC's use of setting, examined in part from the framework of implicit learning, can illuminate for other disciplines. We need reminders about what we actually are teaching

and about what is possible, in our own classrooms and in the public spheres where more and more of composition is moving. Students come to our classrooms with beliefs about writing and learning (and many other things…), and many of their lessons were not from explicit components of a curriculum. In the short time we have with students, we can work to undo less helpful beliefs and to enable those that will serve the learner and her or his communities of practice. Even with the push toward public writing and our emphasis on context, composition classes cannot reproduce ARC. Besides the fact that the goals of a university and any individual class differ, setting is one major reason why ARC cannot be brought into schools. What ARC settings provide—risk, community building, relationships, self-reflection, grounded writing, freedom from distraction, literacy integrated into all subjects, relief from cognitive fatigue, novelty, and more—can be incorporated to an extent, and should be if and when they support students and the learning outcomes of our courses.

Chapter 4
Matters of Scale: Citizenship, Education, and Adventure-Risk-Challenge

As we are circled up for a teambuilding exercise, the ropes course director starts taunting students. He says he's a cop, and he's pulling you over because you're Mexican. He says Donald Trump has just called Mexican immigrants murderers and rapists and that his poll number shot up as a result. I am stunned and uncomfortable—I feel protective of these kids—and I see Ezra, especially, getting angry. A high school student who identifies as Mexican, Ezra usually shines as the group's natural leader. My attention turns to him partly because his reactions influence the mood of the group, but I'm also remembering the 4th of July Leadership Lesson back at basecamp. The students watched a documentary about immigration, and as the instructor asked the group what could be done to remedy the complex issues involved, Ezra said, "Those who can vote should vote." I don't know Ezra's legal status—it might be he was referring to being under eighteen—but it was one of many moments when I saw "citizenship" in stark, legal terms.

Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC) does not take citizenship for granted. Legal status has been a barrier in connecting some of its graduates to opportunities, like national service. An ARC mentor who worked hard to find a loophole for one undocumented ARC graduate conceded that the participant is "totally screwed." Although this ARC participant was barred from AmeriCorps because of her status as a noncitizen, ARC's vision is that "all youth will have a pathway to complete post-secondary education and to live as engaged, empowered citizens" (About). ARC's insistence on this vision seems to require a definition of citizenship that is different from

legal status[28]. At ARC, citizenship is behavioral; it is full membership in a community of leaders and collaborators, and citizenship is also part of being ecologically aware. Ezra and his peers are educated *for* citizenship without always *having* citizenship. Because citizenship is loaded term and not having legal status has significant consequences, ARC deliberately chose the label "Wilderness Leadership"—not "citizenship"— for its nonacademic grade.[29] Tension between the ideals of citizenship as a set of behaviors and the material realities of citizenship within a nation-state is ever-present at ARC.

This tension is not unique to ARC. Being an "engaged, empowered citizen" is often invoked as a purpose for education. More specifically, "citizenship" is the tradition of rhetorical education and is a founding warrant of place-based education. This tradition is in contrast to a neoliberalist perspective, in which "citizen" can be replaced with "consumer" and education is directed at benefiting a capitalist economy rather than a democracy.

One approach to resisting neoliberalism, according to education scholar David Greenwood (formerly Gruenwald) is to combine critical pedagogy and place-based education to create a "critical pedagogy of place." Alone, critical pedagogy's focus on the multicultural and urban tends to miss ecology as a key component of justice issues, while place-based education's ecological focus doesn't attend sufficiently to issues of power.

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[28] Robert Asen, a rhetoric and communications scholar, argues for a "discursive theory of citizenship" that emerges from asking *how* people enact it rather than trying to define *what* counts as citizenship. While he is not addressing the implications of having status as a citizen, his scholarship addressing citizenship as context based and a process, and that includes criteria like risk and pro-social behaviors aligns with ARC's vision of citizenship as accessible even when "citizen" status is not. The same concept of asking how instead of what applies to the concept of "environmental steward."

[29] Historically ARC has given grades for English, P.E., Science, and elective credits. It's "Leadership" rubric has included criteria such as participation, effort, and trustworthiness. A recent revision includes communication, followership, initiative, responsibility, and demonstrating ARC's Core Values of service, determination, compassion, and integrity.

Blending "critical pedagogy's sociological focus and place-based education's ecological emphasis" begins to remedy the blind spots within each field, allowing critical pedagogues to consider ecology and place-based practitioners to think more about power relations (5). I extend Greenwood's theorized pedagogy by arguing that rhetorical education, as delivered by ARC, offers students the tools to act as citizens. My work operationalizes a critical pedagogy of place enabled by rhetorical education, and calls for rethinking "citizenship" as part of such pedagogy.

Rhetorical Education: Creating Citizens

Historically, "rhetoric" and "education" were nearly synonymous. David Fleming, in "Rhetoric as a Course of Study," explains that when Plato discussed "rhetoric" he "was thinking specifically of *training* in the rhetor's art" (170; emphasis in the original). Rhetoric is the "the study of speaking and writing well, a historically prominent and remarkably consistent program of instruction involving both theory and practice and aimed at the moral and intellectual development of the student" (Fleming 172). Rhetoric, as a discipline, is strongly tied to the historical roots of Western education; furthermore, there is a "rhetorical dimension of all education in that imparting knowledge and leading students to that knowledge is itself a rhetorical act" (Brummet 809). Stated most simply, rhetorical education is a type of training with the intent of creating "good" people who can participate in communities. As such, being deliberate about the rhetorical educations students encounter is an important goal, and it is difficult to be deliberate about rhetorical education without understanding its histories, tensions, and possibilities. Beyond a basic understanding of what we mean when we say rhetorical education, for the purposes of my

study it is important to recognize at least three aspects of rhetorical education: its goals of

developing character or virtue, its purpose of civic engagement, and its limitations.

In *Rhetorical Education in America,* Cheryl Glenn offers a useful introduction to

the topic of rhetorical education and situates the task of defining it:

> Ever since Isocrates (c. 370 BCE) argued against the Sophists, teachers
> have tried to define precepts of a rhetorical education that would enable
> students to govern knowledgably and virtuously both their own
> households and commonwealth (vii).

She explains the Roman call for education that prepared students for "*vita activia,* the

active life in the polis" and how thousands of years later, scholars continue to make

claims about what rhetorical education is and should be (vii). To illustrate, she brings in

Walter H. Beale, who sees a dual purpose of rhetorical education to develop both an

individual's character and a culture's success; Bruce Herzberg, who puts rhetorical

education as the keystone in participatory democracy as it connects academic discourse,

civic virtue, and the public; and Thomas P. Miller and Melody Bowdon, who call for

civic action as a main component of rhetorical education (vii).

While ideals such a civic virtue, civic action, and participatory democracy seem

desirable, rhetorical education is not without problematic aspects. In the present time,

issues of access—who gets what education?—remain relevant. Scholars and practitioners

may also have hesitations about the idea of "civic virtue"— who gets to define it, who

benefits from it and who doesn't—as these are messy issues at the heart of ethical

discussions about identity, agency, and privilege.

ARC promotes civic virtue in its student participants and elicits it from the many

people who lead and contribute to the organization. It can be helpful to think about virtue

as Fleming suggests, both as "inherently moral" (184) and as discursive skills or habits like "fluency, adaptability, and civility" (185). Even if virtue can be operationalized as particular discrete skills, the idea that a purpose of education is to influence character, values, beliefs, and behaviors is unsurprising even as it is also potentially unsettling.

Dale L. Sullivan's argument that education is epideictic rhetoric is a helpful way of situating the concern many feel about the socializing and enculturating work of education. Epideictic rhetoric is concerned with the present and with ideals. It functions educationally to inspire students through imitation and idealization. Sullivan suggests teachers are conflicted about their roles and are caught in debates about the social-ethical-political space of classrooms. Because ideals exist within cultural constructs and contexts, epideictic rhetoric locally "draws on implicit, commonly held values" (73) and it is the educator who is granted authority from the community to reify these values. Regardless of how educators conceptualize ourselves and our work, what Sullivan points to is tied to troubling notions that suggest the potential for symbolic violence, where a privileged social group is recognized as the status quo and, intentionally or not, reinforces that status quo and oppresses Others. Educators *should* be conflicted or at least cognizant of how hierarchies are maintained: imitation and idealization beg questions of *whose* culture is being imitated, idealized, and made normative. Given the expectations that teachers represent some cultural virtue or morality even as institutions and individuals simultaneously suggest educators "save the world on your own time" (Fish) it makes sense that educators might be conflicted.

My assumption is that there is no neutral scholarship or pedagogy and that education is about more than creating a work force. I aim to work against the neoliberalist

assumption that education should primarily "support individualistic competition in the global economy and that an educational competition of winners and losers is in the best interest of public life in a diverse society" (Greenwood 3) and for greater justice, peace, and sustainability. Along with many others in rhetoric and composition, I see in rhetorical education a means to work toward those goals.

Unlike the period of Classical Rhetoric, schooling is now a requirement for most Western communities and notions of "citizenship" are still marshaled as one of the purposes of modern education. However, there is a key distinction between rhetorical education in ancient Athens and that in 21st Century America. Namely, our students do not face "the prospect of taking the knowledge and skill mastered in the class directly into practice in the running of polis" (Jarratt 84). Instead, modern rhetorical education is less about training political leaders and more about helping students negotiate enormous amounts of information, communicate effectively in a pluralistic society, and develop as ethical and engaged citizens at multiple scales. In rhetoric and composition, we seek pedagogies and scholarship to achieve these goals.

Scholars discuss rhetorical education as still relevant in our current time. Barry Brummet explains that in a time of popular culture and pluralism people need to know how to connect knowledge to decision making. The emergence of new media demands more effective rhetorical education, and people are saturated in media's own form of rhetorical education. Gert Biestra suggests that rhetoric be used to analyze curricula, and that the aspiration of any curriculum should be towards emancipation. In "Rhetoric as a Course of Study," David Fleming explains that contemporary rhetorical education needs inquiry, which combined with theory and practice "encourages critical and substantive

reflection about the situated relations of discourse to reason, character, and community in human action" (184). Such approaches to rhetorical education happen in a variety of situations, including in writing courses that include argumentation, rhetorical analysis, and production of texts. Composition Studies' public turn is more explicitly linked to rhetorical education's aims of civic participation.

This public turn encompasses a "desire for writing to enter civic debates," to "focus on local, social issues," for "students to hit the streets by performing service, and for teachers and scholars to conduct activist or community-grounded research" (Mathieu 1-2). Both Composition Studies' public turn and ARC's founding mission share values and impulses toward community-based contexts for literacy education. Both may also share operating assumptions about what is effective and meaningful pedagogy such as learning opportunities that highlight personal relevance, direct experience, and contributing to a community. When scholars and practitioners go about rhetorical education, regardless of how we do so, it is crucial that we consider rhetorical education for whom and toward what ends. Shirley Logan argues: "…we have to ask—if we can get through the tangle of oppression and denial to think about rhetorical education— rhetorical education for what?" (48).

ARC as Rhetorical Education

Although ARC enacts rhetorical education through its leadership curriculum and cultural practices, ARC also inherits a hidden curriculum where the literacy myth operates and where "good" or "successful" people are particular types of community members. Furthermore, ARC might not recognize the extent to which it is engaged in rhetorical education, and from a cynical perspective it might seem the organization is

working to assimilate minority communities into some norm of white, middle-class values. However, I see the organization as productively working through Logan's tangles of oppression, privilege, and opportunity. ARC offers its participants academic and adventure experiences to boost confidence, but there is also a deliberate emphasis on leadership. This leadership development relies heavily on learning and practicing effective communication—something essential to notions of "empowerment" and "engagement." As an educational nonprofit organization, ARC sees education as an important part of working toward a larger vision of developing particular types of people, something ARC strives for by combining literacy instruction, civic aims, and setting. Though the organization may not recognize just how well it fits into the classical rhetorical education frame that seeks to create certain types of people—"engaged, articulate, resourceful, sympathetic, civil…" (Fleming 172)—it is rhetorical education through and through.

In addition to its curriculum, ARC intervenes in scholars' discussions of rhetorical education through the communities it reaches and its emphasis on public speaking. Glenn et al ask, "What students have been prepared for what action? How exactly have they been trained to behave, interact, and insert themselves into the economic, academic, and social politics of America?" (xi). For most of the students ARC serves, preparation for public action and participation in America's systems has been limiting. Students who come to ARC have been trained—by low expectations and low opportunity—not to insert themselves too much into America's economic, academic, and social practices. This is demonstrated by ARC alumnus Alberto, whose immigrant parents saw success for him as any job that was not as a field laborer:

> …since they've been working in the fields for as long as I could remember, they have always believed that a job in McDonald's is the greatest job in the world. Us growing up they told me like, "You don't need to go to college, you don't need to go to study, you don't need to do anything, just get a job either in McDonald's or Home Depot and you'll be fine." For them that's success—being off the fields and having a job like that…. I actually believed it for a while because I thought, "well maybe, I guess we don't have a choice, we don't have an opportunity."

Alberto is enrolled in college and aspires to working in a setting where he can use his education to help others. Though he avoids politics, Alberto credits ARC with helping him participate meaningfully and productively in the economic, academic, and social systems of which he is a part.

ARC provides opportunities for underserved youth, particularly for those who are English Language Learners. Many of ARC's participants experience poverty, and in general California's Latinx students face gaps in education and employment. By working with a demographic of underserved youth to boost communication and leadership and provide greater opportunities for civic participation, ARC intervenes in efforts at rhetorical education for all. Working with marginalized populations offers some correctives to traditional rhetorical education.

William Denman traces the historical decline in rhetorical education, and for many of his points about the reasons for this decline, ARC offers counterpoints. For example, Denman argues that the changes in rhetorical education are parallel to historical shifts in the nineteenth century: movement to urban areas, a loss of the "communitarian ethos" as individualism and competition were emphasized, separating oratory and writing, and valuing writing over speech. Most of ARC's participants come from rural communities, and ARC's leadership and wilderness curricula reward collectivism and

cooperation. Furthermore, ARC does not value print and writing over speech: ARC participants are explicitly trained in delivery and public speaking.

Of course, ARC personnel are not reading up on scholarship related to rhetorical education and working to remedy perceived shortcomings. Rather, ARC reveals commonly held assumptions about education and opportunity, even about education and notions of citizenship. These assumptions are evident in language about the program and in the curricula that strives to enable participants to "live as engaged, empowered citizens." ARC's literacy and academic support aims to help participants graduate from high school and complete post-secondary education, grounding ARC's beliefs that literacy and education allow for upward mobility and access to cultural capital. Its more overt rhetorical education is in its leadership curriculum, which aims to help students have a voice in their communities. Participants are offered experiences that boost their confidence and self-awareness about themselves as orators and leaders. The goal is civic engagement,[30] and ARC's rhetorical education helps participants reach toward that goal at varying levels of scale and influence.

As a participant observer, I noted moments of rhetorical education in both the curriculum and cultural practices of ARC. Such moments included public speaking and writing, self-reflection, considering audience, formalized leadership roles, and purposeful interaction with community members through practices such as "community interview day" and "cross-peer teaching" for younger students, as well as ARC's core value of service and a culture of feedback. ARC's curriculum and culture are tightly interwoven,

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[30] The terms "community engagement," "civic engagement" and "public involvement" are used across the globe and in various institutions to describe participation in publics, and generally include components like service, activism, or volunteerism.

and I've attempted to describe how components of both deliberately and implicitly shape participants' "moral and intellectual development" (Fleming) and enable them as "empowered, engaged citizens." Rhetorical education is not formalized or named as such at ARC; instead, there is a blending of leadership, identity building, and communication that seems to foster higher self-confidence and a sense of efficacy during the summer, and opportunities and support thereafter to volunteer or otherwise contribute to their communities. The immersive summer course is really just a first step; for participants to develop as "empowered, engaged citizens" at a scale beyond the community they build during the summer, they need additional supports and opportunities. ARC offers experiences and strategies to build a foundation for civic engagement. What every participant gets, regardless of how they apply it after the course, is leadership education.

ARC's Rhetorical Education: Leadership Training

When ARC students take their pre- and post-tests, the essay prompt asks them to make an argument about leadership. Participants who do especially well on these essays set criteria for what makes a good leader and use someone they've studied or know personally to illustrate their points. The concept of leadership literally bookends ARC's summer programming with the pre-/post-tests, and all of the wilderness and adventure components of ARC operate under a leadership umbrella. Leadership is so synonymous with ARC that recently there has been a push to rename the "leadership" curriculum, as naming one set of lessons "leadership" implies something discrete, when in reality "leadership" provides the entire context of ARC programming. This move makes sense, as the evening leadership lessons can seem a hodgepodge collection of lessons about food

systems, recycling, immigration, gender stereotyping, and identity.[31] Other leadership

lessons are explicitly about leadership and include direct instruction about leadership

styles, effective communication, and conflict resolution. This instruction occurs primarily

in backcountry settings.

While formal leadership lessons are taught during expeditions, participants in fact

are immersed in leadership throughout the course and in whatever ongoing involvement

they have with ARC after the summer course concludes. A major component of ARC's

leadership curriculum occurs through community roles, especially being leader of the

day. The leader's responsibilities are described as:

> Primary motivator for group. Check in with group members for
> individual safety and care, make appropriate decisions for group with staff
> help, morning wake-up, oversee completion of daily jobs, assist in
> navigation, lead [evening meeting] (Instructor Expedition Booklet 2015).

During expeditions, the leader of the day helps with navigation, camp selection, getting

water, and setting the bear hang; at basecamp, a primary responsibility is keeping the

group on task and on schedule. These duties are often challenging for participants, and in

isolation might not function as rhetorical education—the catalyst is a mix of self-

reflection, feedback, and the opportunity to be leader on more than one occasion. The

reflection and feedback occur formally each evening.

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[31] During the 2016-2017 academic year, ARC's Curriculum Committee has significantly revised the series
of lessons that occur in the evenings at basecamp. Under the last executive director, those lessons were
classified as a "social justice curriculum" and included lessons focused on identity, community, and action.
These lessons are now called "Community Conversations" and will be piloted in 2017 summer
programming. Though they still include units on identity, community, and action, there are some
significant differences in the content. "Self" is key in each: understanding self-identity comes from identity
lessons that include sharing aspects of identity not usually shared, telling life stories, and doing the
Strengths Finder assessment. Self in community includes lessons about expectations for self and others, self
in relationships (lessons on gender and sex ed). Self in action focuses on setting goals, preparation for
mentoring, and transitioning home.

The evening meeting is a core element of ARC culture and its leadership curriculum. It is the last group activity of each day, usually held around 9 p.m. Students take charge, with the leader of the day facilitating the meeting. The number of staff is deliberately limited so that students truly are the primary voices. Evening meetings serve important community building aspects: participants go through a structured agenda that invites them to share appreciations, accomplishments, and goals; and issues and questions are brought up in order to solve problems. The central component of the meeting is giving positive and constructive feedback to the leader of the day. The meeting starts with the leader reflecting on what s/he did well and areas where s/he might improve. Then each member of the group offers constructive and positive feedback. Because people are in the leader of the day role more than once, they have an opportunity to implement the feedback.

The discussions about each leader's impact, effectiveness, and shortcomings were rich with ideas about what leadership is and how to be oneself and an effective leader. Participants wondered if there was a way to be soft-spoken and a leader, how to get people to do things without being perceived as bossy, and why they might be seen as mean even if they didn't yell. Marcus explained that there was a "whole evening meeting about how I can work a little better and be respectful of people's feelings," and he came away with greater understanding of how to improve: "'I see what I did wrong, so I'll work on it next time.' It was pretty good, actually, getting that feedback."

While participants may initially struggle to give feedback, since they worry about hurting others' feelings, many of them, like Chloe, come to see the value in being honest so leaders "would know what to do better next time." Participants also became more

comfortable with receiving feedback, and positive feedback often contributed to

motivation for continued leadership development. Regarding the feedback at evening

meetings, Kamilah reflected:

> It was hard. It was good when it goes to the good things but you never want to hear the negative part. That's also a good learning experience as well. A good learning experience to being able to handle when somebody does tell you this is something you need to work on. It's for your own good.

Sebastian concurs that feedback was "nerve wracking at first," but ultimately, "I think

[getting feedback] helped build our leadership goals." Leadership roles, like many of the

other intentional aspects of ARC, are instructive largely because of reflection and

feedback. Participants get information and experience, theory and application. They are

encouraged to see themselves as confident and competent leaders and communicators,

qualities reminiscent of the schools of Aristotle and Isocrates. ARC's leadership training

is rooted in assumptions and ideals about what makes for a good citizen, including people

who can exert communicative agency. Participants learn to attend to an audience and

inspire action accordingly.

Community Engagement through Service: Applying ARC's Rhetorical Education

If rhetorical education is what happens during the summer program, civic

engagement is what happens after, when alumni take their enhanced leadership abilities

and apply them to community issues. For some ARC alumni, this is a clear outcome; they

step into leadership roles around issues of women's health, immigration, mental health,

the arts, medical care, bullying reduction, and greater access to public lands. Kamilah,

who considers herself "really involved in the community," has helped bring in pro-bono

attorneys to work with community members on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

paperwork, volunteered with the food bank and a domestic violence organization, and has

become active in education efforts related to maternal nutrition and mental health.

Kamilah graduated from ARC prior to 2011 when ARC had a community service

requirement; participants would commit during the summer program to doing a project

that would benefit the community, and then would have some support in executing that

project. There were also ongoing ARC activities and recruitment efforts that included

volunteer work. Kamilah explained that ARC strengthened her connection to her

community and helped her network:

> Kamilah: …before ARC I was involved in the school but I feel like ARC
> made that connection [to the community] stronger just because we
> were volunteering at some of these places like [the local
> food bank], we were just doing a bunch of volunteer work.
>
> ML: That was part of the community service component?
>
> Kamilah: Mm-hmmm. That's how I got involved and eventually I got to
> meet community members and that's how I got my first job…I was
> getting to learn to meet other community people and I got the job
> because I was doing so much volunteer work.

Kamilah and many other ARC alumni credit the structured volunteer opportunities ARC

provided them with help getting into prestigious schools, earning scholarships, and

obtaining jobs. Estelle, who volunteered weekly at a community health clinic,

demonstrated the connections between ARC's service requirement and an internalization

of a service ethic:

> ML: Do you think in any way that ARC might have, like, do
> you associate your work with ARC to your, kind of
> commitment to service? Do you think those are related in
> any way?
>
> Estelle: I think so … I mean, they kind of, I never really did much
> community service before I did ARC and then when they

had me do the 40 hours, it wasn't that difficult, you know, at first…I was like, 40 hours, oh my gosh, that, I could be getting paid for those hours, technically,

ML: Right.

Estelle: But then once I started doing them I was like this is actually pretty fun. And I like to know that I'm actually benefitting the community in some way.

ML: Right.

Estelle: And so, once I went to college I was like, [claps hands] all right, where can I find my community service organization?

ARC seems to help nurture an ethic of service and contribution; the value of contribution is instilled and for some it becomes part of an identity. These participants might already have had a fair level of engagement in their various communities, but ARC validated and supported their engagement.

Not all participants embodied the sort of commitment to service so important to Kamilah and Estelle, who strongly value contribution and who recognized the importance of extracurricular and service activities as important to their futures. For participants less inclined to see volunteering as important to their education and careers, there were still benefits—volunteering was fun. Xavier explained how much he liked doing a clean up day because he would get coffee and meet new people. He would recruit friends to do volunteer work ARC staff signed him up for:

I participated with ARC and every time was for community service 'cause I wanted my friend to go do community service for fun. Every time I'd be like, hey! [ARC staff] signed me up for this, let's go, me and my friend would be like, let's go, have fun, meet more people, get a shirt.

When community service hours were required of ARC alumni such as Kamilah, Estelle, and Xavier, it helped participants to actually engage with their communities. They came to see value in volunteerism and for many, they incorporated some notion of "service" into their identities.

Especially in ARC's earlier days, there was a strong focus on community service after the summer course. Participants regularly volunteered for community and river clean-ups, worked with the food bank, helped raise money for ARC programs, led workshops and provided tutoring as part of recruitment efforts, and one year alumni put together public service infomercials on issues including domestic violence, the need for Hispanics to enroll in AP courses, and the value of a bike path. These post-summer civic engagement elements have diminished with changes in ARC staffing, the role of schools in requiring community service, logistics of arranging service opportunities, and funding (graduates used to be awarded a stipend after completing service hours). Like with any program, perceptions of pros and cons can change over time; at this stage in the organization, ARC administration doesn't see the benefits of requiring regular community service as offsetting the costs of facilitating it. Currently, the summer course trains participants in leadership. Mentoring, which was not formalized when service hours were required, is provided after the summer program and mentors help participants find opportunities to further their abilities and gain experience. Mentors might look to community service as one route along that journey.[32]

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[32] As part of the "Action" component of Community Conversations, students have a session on setting SMART goals and preparation for mentoring. ARC's curriculum committee discussed how, if a participant is interested in community engagement, that interest might be worked into a SMART goal and be something their mentor can help with. The hope is that volunteering or service, when intrinsically motivated, will allow mentors a better relationship with mentees.

When I told Xavier that ARC no longer requires community service of its alumni, he was surprised and disapproving. He urged me to report back to ARC personnel how important community service is, explaining that eliminating it is "a huge problem." He went on:

> I personally think [ARC] should enforce community service because I think kids would stay more out of trouble or you know, [his town is] a small town but it's getting big, it's getting too big and if you don't do something now to making the community, service and participate…that can affect something small, could affect something big in your life.

Moving away from formalized community service may be undoing a founding goal of ARC[33]. For ARC's founder, Katie Zanto, internalizing service as part of an identity and experiencing social, educational, and professional benefits was a deliberate and valued outcome, but service was also important for its own sake. She saw service as necessary because it taught participants how to give back, something she deemed particularly important because ARC received so much support from the local community. She also recognized the value of encouraging young people to believe they could effect change. Volunteering, especially over time, helped ARC participants see positive change.

Engagement with the community—with place— after the summer program was important to recruitment, and participants could continue their public speaking and leadership skills by going into classrooms, doing fund raising, and tutoring students. Katie wondered, "How do we overlap community with service?" and service became part of the backcountry, basecamp, and post-summer ARC experience. When she led the organization, she partnered with the Forest Service on backcountry service projects, such as taking apart fire rings. ARC Students participated in wildland restoration projects and

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[33] Service is also an important element of place-based learning; by emphasizing it less, ARC loses some of its grounding in PBE.

community cleanup days, and service was a frame for academic projects such as teaching younger students science lessons on cross-peer teaching day and writing about their interviewees for community interview day. "Community members gave service to us and we did service for them by sharing writing and insight and perspectives," she explained. Participants' public engagement was through writing and speaking, and their service was via public discourse. ARC summer students, then, give back by default during the program through sharing their work. However, it is the alumni who come to understand and practice leadership, including service, and who willingly take up engagement in their communities who fulfill ARC's vision of being "empowered and engaged."

Disentangling relationships among rhetorical education, civic engagement, leadership, and service opens additional lines of inquiry and reveals assumptions about what constitutes a "good" person. It is important to resist a hierarchy where all participants are leaders, but only some—those who are involved in political, social, or community issues—are "empowered and engaged citizens." Not everyone has the same opportunity to be involved in particular, sanctioned ways—volunteering assumes resources such as time and energy. One participant who says they[34] don't do a lot of community work told me: "I'm having to work like eighty hours, do you know what I'm saying? Over eighty hours just to like make a living, and then try to buy my own stuff." Another explains they "help [my family] out as much as I can. I maintain the house on my own. I don't really volunteer for much because of two jobs." These participants are still contributing members of their multiple communities despite significant economic

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[34] In order to preserve anonymity, the discussion of these participants deliberately pluralizes pronouns and eliminates pseudonyms.

pressures; they may also be facing the additional stressors and limited opportunities that come from possibly being undocumented and not having accessible routes to legal status in the United States.

Definitions of community engagement as volunteerism or political involvement need to include supporting self and others economically and emotionally. We must value the necessary, quiet, and mundane practice of leadership that may have nothing to do with status or social power. Regardless of their continued involvement with ARC or their wider community engagement, many participants continue to demonstrate ARC's core values—service, compassion, determination, and integrity—all of which are aspects of leadership and hardly unique to ARC. Leadership can be practiced in many ways and in many situations; alumni told me how they help organize and motivate coworkers on paint and kitchen crews. One participant communicates with his crew to make sure they finish a painting job in time, and another talked about how much tone matters in asking people to do things in the kitchen: "You cannot be a dictator…there's ways of telling people, just how I learned at ARC, you can't be coming in 'come on! clean up! let's go,' more 'we gotta do this, help me out here.'" This person applies lessons from ARC, and despite self-identifying as highly anxious, not too interested in academics, not particularly confident, and not involved in politics, they are also benefitting from ARC and contributing to their communities.

Not all of the people living in the USA have the access or even the legal right to be engaged, empowered citizens in their communities; the barriers are structural and systemic, not individual. Glenn invokes Bourdieu and cultural capital to remind us that "by definition, rhetorical education promotes a culture and, in doing so, works to erase

those cultures, languages, and traditions that are not part of the dominant class" (x). ARC

offers tools, including leadership and communication, that ideally enhance access to the

material benefits of the dominant class while also supporting Other cultures, languages,

and traditions. ARC acknowledges difference rather than assuming a color-blind stance;

it includes families and home communities; and ARC draws on and highlights strengths

and abilities participants bring to the program. Its staff and board include people from the

communities it serves, and most staff are bilingual. There is dialogue, sensitivity, and

celebration across class and race. This negotiation across difference is discussed in depth

in Chapter 2; for now, it is important to consider power relations within conversations of

place-based education.

<u>Citizenship Matters: ARC as an Enactment of a Critical Pedagogy of Place</u>

Rhetorical education is often applied to "real-world" problems, including those of

sustainability. Place-based education (PBE) is a strand of experiential education in which

aspects of the local community—including ecology, the built environment, and human

communities—are used to teach academic subjects. ARC operates within frameworks of

both rhetorical and place-based education. Their leadership and literacy curriculum offers

students tools to live as "empowered, engaged citizens" at various scales. Additionally,

the population ARC serves problematizes PBE's assumptions of rootedness in a place

and legal rights of citizenship in that place. Such assumptions ignore, erase, or otherwise

discount the experience of millions of inhabitants of American communities, including

some of my participants who may be undocumented immigrants. By acknowledging the

reality and impacts of immigration status and providing opportunities for active, engaged

membership at multiple scales, ARC begins to synthesize some of the tensions in place-based education.

Place-based education emerged as a term in the early 1990s, largely as part of a convergence between education scholars and organizations interested in environmental education. Scholars like David Orr and Chet Bowers highlighted that education separates people from their habitat. There was a simultaneous sense that environmental education of the 70s and 80s was too focused on places students might never visit (like the Brazilian Rain Forest), and that it demonized or ignored human communities while also creating a sense of fear, what David Sobel termed "ecophobia." PBE addresses these concerns: it attends to local places, incorporates human communities, and combats fear with positive experiences and action—something that is more efficacious at smaller scales. The most widely cited definition of PBE comes from Sobel, who explains that PBE is "the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in…subjects across the curriculum" (7). From this framework, PBE would include most types of service-learning and internships as well as any projects that invite inquiry based on local contexts. Critiques of PBE therefore include oft-cited concerns about service-learning in addition to PBE's parochialism and idealization of the rural.

The critique of localism is one PBE works especially hard to refute. PBE and its supporters have tried to highlight awareness that we live in an era of globalization and yet it is only at the scale of the local that people are able to make connections with a natural environment, a community, and to effect action. Laurie Lane-Zucker calls this "enlightened localism—a local/global dialectic that is sensitive to broader ecological and social relationships at the same time as it strengthens and deepens people's sense of

community and land" (ii). Certainly, there is value in global education that considers

global systems, international events, world cultures, and geography and in considering

how PBE might address concerns of "global environmental protection, world peace, and

universal human rights" (Li 56). I agree with Huey-Li Li that an either/or dichotomy of

global vs. local is both false and unproductive. While I do not find the arguments that

PBE is problematic for its local focus compelling—we are only able to think, act, and

connect at a particular scale, and there is no way of escaping globalization—other

concerns, such as urban/rural divides, strike me as more relevant. This is not so much

because the rural might be privileged over the urban, but because there seems to be an

assumption that rural people are more connected to place.

The insights of place-based education—such as attending to concentric circles of

influence at levels of self, community, ecosystem, bioregion, planet—can help articulate

a citizenship at scale. My research with ARC emphasized another common concern with

PBE, which is that it seems to require rootedness and that it assumes legal citizenship. To

be a "good" place-based person, one must be settled in a place, belong to a single place,

fully inhabit a place, and contribute to that place as an active, engaged citizen. For

example, PBE materials sometimes include a quote from Gary Snyder that hints at these

values: "Find your place on the planet, dig in, and take responsibility from there." Place

is singular; commitments are made to that place. Such notions preclude communities and

lives that are more mobile, that have roots in multiple places and may not have the legal

rights of citizens—like many of ARC's students who have roots of varying strength and

depth in multiple places, such as in Mexico and California, and whose legal status may be

"undocumented." One of the most obvious ways "place" shows up in ARC student work

is when they write about moving, about migration. This type of writing is encouraged, and the difficulties of moving—whether from Eastern Europe, Vermont, or Mexico—are validated. For some participants, movement has been frequent—either across national borders or because of a military background.

A further criticism is that claims about what PBE is and what it can do, though they seem like common sense, aren't always particularly well grounded. Greenwood suggests PBE, "in its diverse incarnations, is currently less a pedagogy per se and more an alternative methodology that lacks a coherent theoretical framework" (9). PBE might be effective because it tends toward being relevant to students and their communities, is hands-on, and is project-based. Sobel asserts what PBE does, which also describes PBE's values and underlying assumptions:

> Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to service as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school. (7)

As this excerpt shows, PBE strongly emphasizes a notion of engagement and service that results from strengthening students' connections to a place or community. It assumes a holistic approach to education that involves schools and citizens and community organizations; in short, it assumes "citizenship" without interrogating who might be included or excluded. While ARC seems to fit within Sobel's definition, the definition does not account for tensions within communities, and it omits acknowledgment of the legal rights and opportunities that come with American citizenship. Greenwood argues that place-based educators need to "identify and confront the ways that power works

through places to limit the possibilities for human and non-human others" (7). Though his articulation of a critical pedagogy of place doesn't specifically address realities of migration and citizenship, his conceptualization would include these issues.

Topics of migration, citizenship, and legal status were ones that few students raised and I did not feel comfortable discussing, as the risks of being undocumented in the United States are high. Participants who talked openly had moved from a period of being undocumented to getting some protection from deportation, such as deferred action or worker authorization status. They explained to me the fear in their families and how identity was hidden—one participant was told to make up a story of his origins, and his parents were so fearful when they learned he had shared his status with ARC, something he felt safe doing and that allowed him to feel "like a person." Being told to hide who he was devastated him—he felt angry and confused about his new life in America, afraid of exposing his family, and ashamed. How does someone living so on the margins serve as an "active, engaged citizen?" Another of my participants, Marcus, spoke with pride about his mother, who graduated from college in Mexico; he spoke about ranching "back home"—in Mexico. Along with his parents, he has worked the agricultural fields of central California. I do not know his status; Marcus identifies as "an outdoors person." He is proud of his Mexican heritage, is committed to the mission of the National Park Service, and is deeply connected to Yosemite. Many of ARC's participants trouble assumptions of PBE.

When place is contested—who owns the ground, who works it, who lives on it, who gets to experience its wonders, who has the power to weigh in on how it is used— how might PBE need to shift? For Marcus, who trains horses for ranching in Mexico and

who is working towards a career as a park ranger in Yosemite, and for many other participants whose lives and families are in both California and Mexico, place-based education needs to recognize that while bioregions are defined by watersheds and natural features, countries are formed by borders—even walls—and identities are shaped by political, social, economic, and other boundaries.

PBE draws on ideals of citizenship that include a value of rootedness, but citizenship itself needs consideration. The values and warrants for PBE are often closely tied to aims of rhetorical education. For example, a group of Nebraska teachers were part of a National Writing Project initiative on effective rural education. They came together to develop principles of rural education, and some of these principles were under the heading of "place-based citizenry" (Brooke 13). One operating assumption is that "people learn to be active citizens by engaging with local issues, which they can actually affect and which directly influence the quality of life in their community" (Brooke 13). It is unsurprising those in PBE use citizenship as a warrant, as "producing good citizens is invoked as a goal" in nearly "any document that articulates the purpose of an educational institution" (Wan *Producing* 2). What is missing from many conversations is a clear understanding of what is meant by "citizen" and the realities of youth like Ezra, Marcus, and so many more of my participants who are leaders in their communities and yet have uncertain status as "citizens."

While the legal definition of citizen lacks nuance—you are or are not a citizen—the realities of immigration and legal status are complicated. This is not something PBE has addressed: how do you belong to a place, how do you settle and establish rootedness,

when that might not be your goal or when the state says you do not belong?[35] In rhetoric

and composition, we might grapple with issues of citizen education when "citizen" itself

can be a contested term. Amy Wan, for example, investigates the concept of citizenship

in literacy education and demonstrates the urgent need to be deliberate about what is

meant by citizenship and how we evoke it, since it "is a state of being that continues to be

in flux because of its real and urgent consequences" ("Name" 42). Literacy can be seen as

a "habit of citizenship" that broadens opportunities and also reassures people that those

who are "citizens" have academic abilities or are strong workers, as seen by debates over

legislation like the DREAM Act and temporary worker programs (*Producing* 4). Being

literate, civically active, and fluent in concepts of ecology are key components of the type

of citizenship PBE promotes, and yet PBE is problematic for its inattention to issues of

power.

For Greenwood, synthesizing critical pedagogy and PBE is a "response against

education reform policies and practices that disregard places and that leave assumptions

about the relationship between education and politics of economic development

unexamined" (3). His criteria for a critical pedagogy of place are that it, 1) enhances

quality of life, 2) recognizes the importance of context, and 3) improves empathy. ARC

meets these criteria and enacts a critical pedagogy of place. It does so through its

inclusion of different scales of community participation, enhancing empathy through

story and education, and by offering tools for advocacy. I argue that ARC performs a

more complete critical pedagogy of place because of its awareness of "citizenship,"

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[35] Such concerns are relevant, though the stakes are lower, for college students who leave their home communities for higher education and don't intent to establish roots in their college town. How do we think productively about PBE for all types of transitory, migrational groups?

including issues of documentation. One way ARC works toward the outcomes of improved quality of life, recognition of the importance of context, and enhanced empathy is by acknowledging the difficulties of being undocumented and educating those who might not feel invested in the issue.

For some participants[36], coming out about your status and then using whatever tools you have, including those ARC offers, to make change is operationalizing a critical pedagogy of place. For one ARC participant, there was tremendous validation and liberation in finally telling his story of immigration, something he recognized as risky but important to his sense of self. This individual has legal status now, and has led workshops for ARC staff on working with undocumented youth. This person recounted a lesson during the summer program:

> ...It was about undocumented youth that were scared to speak up or that we're scared to do anything because they were undocumented and they have that fear. I remember that the leadership lesson itself taught me to not be scared and to have a voice and to just go out there and take the risk. I think that's been one of the lessons that has been engraved in my mind for this long.

Simply acknowledging the realities of being undocumented is important for all of ARC's participants, regardless of status. Participants gain greater empathy and awareness of another type of privilege—legal status or citizenship, though grappling with the issue of immigration is tricky.

One leadership lesson draws from a film, *Alienated*, about immigration and being "young, able, and 'illegal' in America" (Educational Video Center). Participants are prompted to think-via-writing about what can't be done without proof of citizenship,

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[36] Although I have tried throughout to preserve participant anonymity with the use of pseudonyms, the present political climate makes me very concerned about protecting ARC participants who deal with issues of immigration and legal status, so I have chosen to avoid even pseudonyms for these individuals.

what struggles undocumented people face, to consider the fairness of the laws and whether they might be effectively changed, and about how the film makes them feel (Leadership journal). In 2015, this lesson happened to fall on Independence Day, and students came to it after a celebratory BBQ. As I observed the debrief of this film, the mood was tense. Participants seemed a mix of sullen, angry, and taken aback. Ezra, who became so upset at the ropes course described at the beginning of this chapter, urged people who can vote to vote; another was stunned by the challenges her peers faced; one participant pointed out that unless you are a member of an American Indian tribe, you are an immigrant. There were also participants who did not speak up. Talking about immigration in an open way, allowing youth to protect themselves or to feel safe enough to reveal their situations, and educating people who have never thought much about what it means to be undocumented is difficult for all involved. However, such conversations are crucial and place-based educators and scholars need to initiate and facilitate these conversations.

Once people are aware of issues that impact their communities, programming by organizations like ARC might then include aspects of rhetorical education that enable people to be advocates. One alumni explained, "I was undocumented; I know how much as a student…how it affects their lifestyle [and] also their families. That's why I'm a big advocate...because I know how hard it is." This person is not a fan of public speaking, but with an issue they care so much about and with the experiences they had with ARC, they are able to make a real difference. They lead workshops about what it is like to live without documentation, and they have helped people in their community sign up for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). ARC blends the needs and realities of

communities where citizenship and legal status are highly relevant; it is sensitive to context and it works on a local scale.

ARC's emphasis on leadership and communication helps participants gain the tools to engage in communities of various scales, starting with the summer program and retreats, and then expanding to the wider ARC community of support and opportunity. There are overlapping networks of communities, and within all of them ARC's leadership curriculum supports participants' engagement: with employers, politicians, teachers, peers, work crews. PBE is built on a similar premise about scale; people learn to care about and for a place starting small and expanding outward. Sobel explains that the "curriculum can mirror the expanding scope of the child's significant world, focusing first on the home and school, then the neighborhood, the community, the region, and beyond" (19). Working at scale enhances self-efficacy, which is essential to feeling like a contributing citizen. ARC urges participants to contribute and give back and it provides some tools, like confidence and practice in public speaking, for advocacy.

Citizenship is a fraught concept because of its legal, material, social, and political realities. But citizenship is also about behaviors and belonging. I do not want to dismiss the enormity of political, social, and economic realities involved in immigration and legal status—it is real, it is stressful, and it impacts people in a multitude of painful ways. Being a natural-born citizen is a significant form of privilege that often goes unacknowledged. And yet, citizen/not-citizen is as arbitrary a divide as nature/culture and as countries and states versus bioregions and the biosphere. It is a construct, and one that needs nuancing within place-based education. ARC operates from a broader definition of

citizenship, recognizing its participants may have ties in multiple places and can contribute wherever they are, while also acknowledging the realities of legal definitions.

In framing ARC as a source of rhetorical education and an enactment of a critical pedagogy of place, it is necessary to also contextualize ARC within educational and social systems critiqued for reifying the power differentials within those systems. I see ARC doing important work that offers its participants—of all status, race, class, and other identity markers—opportunities for growth as human beings. I also understand concerns that ARC may be participating in unhelpful cultural myths about the need to "rescue" or "save" kids of color or kids in poverty, that there may be assumptions of deficit. However, my experience is overwhelmingly that the adults working directly with ARC youth operate not from notions of individual deficit in participants' character, family, ability, and community, but from knowledge of deficit in access and opportunity. While there may exist a hidden curriculum in rhetorical and literacy education that ARC perpetuates—namely about what constitutes a "good person" or about the promise of literacy and college—would-be critics, as well as researchers and practitioners, should also ask, "what is the alternative?" For so many of ARC's participants, the opportunities and resources ARC offers enable fuller participation in educational, economic, social, and political systems.

Chapter 5
Conclusion: A Manifesto for Endeavoring

I began this dissertation research curious about "what happens" when place, literacy learning, and civic aims are deliberate components of a curriculum. As I examined my data, I narrowed my questions to consider why ARC uses the genres it does, why the places where ARC summer programming happens matter, and why "citizenship" drives the organization's overarching vision. I argue that ARC's genres are part of much larger systems of literacy sponsorship; that place facilitates student learning indirectly because of the role of place in community building, self-reflection, and positive emotions and directly if Attention Restoration Theory holds; and that by considering "citizenship" within the context of place-based and rhetorical-education, ARC enacts a more complete critical pedagogy of place.

Through my research, I also identified several productive tensions inherent in trying to make a more just, humane, and sustainable world. Working toward such goals requires choices in the face of limited resources, and individuals and organizations are complex entities in still more complex social, political, and economic contexts. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated how experiences at ARC—often personally transformational and important for accessing greater material benefits—sometimes come at a cost to participants who feel that their stories are a commodity funding the organization. This is a tension often observed in community literacy and in education generally: improved access to material benefits pulls and pushes against symbolic violence. Aspects of our identities change as we assimilate into educational systems. ARC offers a helpful model

of working across difference as it recognizes and works to remedy deficits in opportunities and access, not in individuals or cultures.

In Chapter 3, tensions between the communal and individual emerge, as well as tensions between exceptional experiences and the mundane. ARC was founded on the idea that writing can help participants transfer lessons from outdoor adventure experiences to other aspects of life, and the settings where ARC students write are a powerful mediator of that writing; the settings fuel writing and both settings and writing help solidify lessons about self and community. In Chapter 3, I also briefly considered a tension less relevant to ARC than to me: the expectation that the organization encourage a narrow form of environmental advocacy when, in fact, ARC's goal is to "inspire youth to become environmental stewards." Providing access to spectacular places is an important initial step, one that some research says is essential (Chawla, Louv) and that has been less accessible to minority communities (Cronon). While "environmental stewardship" may seem to be the least developed and least consistent part of the program, participants experience awe and appreciation for nature and are offered opportunities to continue developing their relationships and values related to environmental stewardship. ARC is more about "saving" people than "saving" the planet; however, for interested participants what ARC can offer is a route to involvement and continued learning around sustainability and conservation.

ARC recognizes that "stewardship" encompasses much more than political advocacy, and the ways in which ARC conceives of stewardship is intentional. In fact, ARC's conceptualization of "environmental stewardship" is analogous to my argument

for thinking differently about "citizenship." Both encompass a range of behaviors and exist along a spectrum, and both are associated with different forms of privilege.

Service is a value and practice undergirding stewardship and citizenship, and in Chapter 4, which focuses on ARC's leadership curriculum, I consider how the significant difficulties associated with orchestrating volunteer opportunities conflict with the perceived benefits of community service to ARC summer graduates. In addition, some of ARC's participants lack legal citizenship status, making the risks of advocacy too high. Much of the civic engagement that happens at ARC is from board members and volunteers who support ARC, not from the actual participants. What ARC offers participants is training in effective communication and practice in leadership; participants have different opportunities to continue developing and enacting their leadership after the summer course.

I anticipated that Adventure-Risk-Challenge would be a powerful intervention for individual and community change against a backdrop of significant problems in schooling, community involvement, and ecological health. My research confirmed this, although the interventions and impacts are uneven within each area and across individuals. The biggest impacts of ARC are on positive identity development, something that makes sense for the adolescents it serves. Links between literacy learning and "the self" do exist, though untangling those links was beyond the scope of this study. Many students develop an improved relationship with writing, reading, and speaking that seems to emerge from ARC's integrated curriculum of literacy and leadership in the outdoors. Their confidence—academically, socially, and physically—increases.

While, alas, no one program can save the world, ARC does its part in helping connect people to places and in nurturing an ethic of care for nature. ARC builds empathy in its participants and across communities of socioeconomic, race, and generational difference. ARC supports literacy learning and helps kids who want to get to college to get to and through college. ARC also offers a powerful curriculum in leadership that has the potential to support individuals as effective communicators and actors in their world.

My findings, though limited by the constraints of my research, have implications for practitioners in several areas.

Implications for non-profits and outside of school learning programs:

Sponsorship. When programs serve communities, especially if working across difference, it is important to recognize the types of sponsorship at play and to disrupt traditional notions of beneficiary and giver. One heuristic can be the use of ecological relationships to think by analogy; another is to trace rhetorical situations for different stakeholders. Recognizing sponsorship can help organizations and participants highlight power relationships and understand where autonomy, agency, and service are present. Importantly, a thorough understanding of sponsorship within an organization can help in mitigating symbolic violence.

Setting. Articulating a rationale for "why here"—whether in an urban community center or a wilderness program—can be productive to thinking about how students actually learn and what an organization values. In experiential education generally and wilderness education particularly, there are assumptions about place; organizations should understand their assumptions and link settings to curricular and pedagogical rationales. In part, understanding why setting matters so much to organizations can help

the organizations facilitate "transfer" from the remarkable to the mundane. An organization like ARC might highlight that even though getting into the backcountry to do schoolwork isn't often possible, it's also not necessary. Research suggests participants can still obtain benefits to their thinking by spending time outside. ARC, which offers ongoing opportunities for participating in nature-based retreats, models what an organization can do to help youth access the outdoors—but the "outdoors" can include places and spaces less spectacular and more accessible on a daily basis.

Engagement. If "community engagement" or "empowering citizens" is part of an organization's mission, vision, or values, it is important to recognize what the organization means by those terms. There is strong evidence that civic behaviors are beneficial to individuals and their communities, and ARC's participants who did service that was facilitated by ARC found value in it: enjoyment, meeting new people, networking for future opportunities, experiences to aid in college and scholarship applications, help staying out of trouble, and a sense of contributing to their communities. Providing incentives and structures for involvement is important for working toward goals of community engagement and empowered citizenship. At the same time, organizations must recognize that contribution and leadership come in many forms; volunteering and service, political involvement, and attending community events require various forms of privilege. Organizations should recognize and value the community engagement that comes from working, paying taxes, abiding by laws, contributing to the economy, and being part of families, churches, teams, and other social groups.

Implications for Composition Teachers and Writing Studies

My findings from this study support much of what composition teachers suspect and research from writing studies and adolescent literacy tells us: literacy learning is social, identity is at the heart of learning, context matters, students appreciate writing invitations that are relevant, and specific and timely feedback is important to revision. Some especially strong themes, with implications for practitioners in writing studies, emerged.

Community & Rapport. Participants developed a sense of family at ARC, and these relationships both supported and challenged them. Conflict resolution, perspective taking, and giving/receiving feedback on communication and other behaviors offered important life skills and also enabled deeper, more meaningful learning. Classroom community may not need to be as intense as it was at ARC to meet the learning outcomes of a composition class, but deliberately building community is important for learning. We can have our students learn each other's names and invite writing tasks that allow our students to bring in some of their own authority and experience, and to share that with each other. We can also build rapport with our students by holding conferences, being available during office hours, and using non-instructional time to work on relating to students. Teachers can select readings and facilitate discussions, relevant to SLOs, which include difficult topics or tasks; doing so when we know our students and have established an environment of positive regard enables our classrooms to be "brave" rather than "safe" spaces. Research and genuine attempts to embrace a spirit of inquiry can help in perspective taking and empathy. When difficult things happen in our classes—a peer/student dies, a student discloses rape, students encounter mental illness, or struggle with a political environment—our classrooms can be places to acknowledge the difficulty

of being human in a terrible-beautiful world. Community can be the force that helps first-year students stay engaged; it can be the force that keeps instructors engaged.

Novelty. When Naomi said that ARC felt so different from the monotony of high school, she articulated something educators since the sophists have known: novelty is essential to learning. John Poulakos explains that Aristotle believed novelty can "wake up" an audience, while what is familiar "condition[s] our responses and restrict[s] our actions" (31). Novelty also wakes up our students. ARC introduces novelty through setting. In our classrooms, we might introduce novelty through assignments that ask students to radically shift the genres they compose in or by sending them into the world outside our classroom to conduct research or gain experiences. One value of service learning might be its novelty. We can also work to bring novelty into the classroom by asking questions such as, "What might surprise my students? What is something different we could try today?" It can be asking students to get up and move, to change where they normally sit, to work with different groups—there are many ways we can have small shifts, and these shifts might help interrupt conditioned responses to our classrooms.

Design. ARC participants benefit from the natural settings of which they are a part as well as the ways in which these settings create different relationships with peers and adults. The design of classroom spaces communicates messages to students about authority, collaboration, and relationships with the natural world. In writing studies, design is most often an element of composing spaces such as writing centers and studios. If we are able to manipulate our classrooms, we might think through how our seating arrangements, access to windows and views, and our own positioning as teachers impacts learning.

Autonomy, reflection, and relevance. Designing assignments where students have room and support to recognize their autonomy through rhetorical choices, process choices, and choices about their levels of effort and time invested can help them recognize autonomy and find personal relevance. With first-year writers, highlighting the many choices available to them and asking them to reflect on choices they make can help them start to recognize the agency they exert. Inviting them to use that agency in creating relevance for themselves offers an important shift in taking ownership of their own learning.

Integrated Literacy. Literacy—the whole of the language arts including reading, writing, listening, and speaking—undergirds everything at ARC. The science curriculum is about literacy, and so is learning to read maps and write route plans. College teachers and writing program administrators can highlight that literacy is foundational to all learning, and the work or learning to communicate effectively belongs to all disciplines.

Nurturing Ethics of Care. Lisa Newton, a philosopher, discusses the history of teaching ethics and the change from nineteenth century moral philosophy, when the purpose of teaching was "to show students how they *ought* to live their lives, with no apologetic waves in the direction of pluralism, objectivity, or professional humility" (269) to the more modern sense that educators should actively work to be neutral and detached. There are plenty of voices saying that the role of a writing class is to teach "skills"—students should leave knowing how to craft a sentence. I align myself with Christian Weisser and others who see the potential we have in first-year writing to influence students' thinking and behaviors, and I think it is urgent that some of what we do is try to help students develop greater empathy, compassion, and concern for their

communities. I speak of community in an ecological sense, where it includes people and also habitats and associated flora and fauna. At ARC, students care about each other and the places where they are. In our own classrooms and on our campuses, we can treat each other with respect and work to show what is at stake when our discourse lacks civility and when our willingness to engage in the public sphere diminishes.

<u>Limitations</u>

Like all research projects, my findings have limits to the claims I can make. Some of these limitations are related to facts of the program; at least to some extent, my participants self-selected to participate at ARC, so it is possible that the benefits they experienced would not be experienced by other populations. Other limitations relate to time; a longitudinal study of the 2015 cohort would yield different information than the recruited alumni, whose summer programming I did not experience. Even within the summer of 2015, human limitations prevented me from participating in the entire program: I was not on the first expedition, and I did not closely observe or study the science curriculum, which because of the integrated nature of ARC, is also part of its literacy curriculum.

Furthermore, I experienced only a tiny slice of ARC. Every cohort is different, and ARC has multiple cohorts in multiple sites. I have a very limited glimpse into ARC from a single summer. It was not until I went back the following summer to volunteer that I started to understand the English language learning aspects of ARC. In 2016, with recent immigrants from Central America and China, the group was far less proficient in English than the 2015 cohort. The whole of ARC is much larger than what I could engage

in a dissertation and ARC is a dynamic organization, with shifts not just in the students of a given summer, but also in leadership, staff and curriculum.

<u>Lines of Additional Inquiry</u>

This dissertation is an initial draft, a buffet of ideas. Within each of the findings chapters, I could refine and develop ideas. Based on my data, I could also follow lines of inquiry that did not fit into the dissertation. Several stand out.

Risk. One of the key ways ARC uses setting is to create authentic risk. Risk is a value of outdoor education, but it is also a value in education: when I give students criteria for an "A" paper, "risk" is listed. We talk about what that might mean—for some students it's tackling a project that threatens to change their mind on an issue, for others it is finally breaking out of a five-paragraph structure. I generally define it as doing something for learning rather than for a grade. Risk is associated with creativity; it is a value others and I hold that can be better examined.

Embodiment & post-process writers writing. Robert Yagelski proposes a non-dualistic theory of "writing as a way of being" that can help us understand how "the experience of writing shapes our conception of ourselves and our ways of living together on the earth" (33). He suggests that emphasizing the act of writing, separate from the final text produced, can remedy the separation of people and planet, body and mind. He discusses writing as a type of mindful practice that allows for a "view of the basic interconnectedness of all beings" where "language becomes a vehicle for understanding our experience of the phenomenal world as a foundation for truth…" (82). This sort of experience, so hard to articulate, seems to happen at ARC. Writing in wild places heightens a sense of self and awareness, and there is much potential to expand upon and

operationalize Yagelski's theory and consider how it might apply to writing in the more mundane world.

Leadership. Tracking ARC participants' understanding and enactment of leadership, as well as interrogating assumptions about it among all stakeholders, offers promise in further understanding what makes up a rhetorical education. What leadership is, the emphasis ARC also places on "followership," and the tensions between leadership and disrupting social hierarchies are relevant to organizations and classrooms.

Transfer. What do students learn at ARC that they apply to other settings and situations? During one difficult expedition day, I suggested to Ezra that he, in his position as leader of the day, might remind his peers about the toolbox—the list of commitments and examples of encouragement that the group had developed during the ropes course. He told me he didn't want to refer back to the toolbox and ropes course experience because it was "too special." This is problematic because it suggests a lack of transfer from one experience to another. I am interested in what lessons students learn about communication, as well as about academics, that they incorporate once home.

Identity. How, over time, do ARC participants incorporate their experiences into their academic, ecological, literate, and civic identities? So much of ARC is about building positive identity, and tracking the ways participants experience ARC as part of their varied identities over time might help in better understanding significant life experience research and in designing programming that, in whatever small ways, helps make positive change for individuals and our multiple communities.

Final Thoughts

Adventure-Risk-Challenge represents the "vitality of the struggle" in working toward a more humane, just, peaceful, and sustainable world. ARC brings together people, place, and literacy in productive tensions; it offers a model for a more complete critical pedagogy of place. People who participate in ARC are transformed in some way. I am one of those people, and ARC has shown me what it means to endeavor, to work with hope for a better world at whatever scale I can. ARC is about taking responsibility and doing *something* even if that something is one imperfect intervention in a complex world. As a teacher and scholar, I will continue endeavoring, working to find ways of teaching English so we might quit killing ourselves, each other, and this single planet on which we live.

Epilogue
"Climb on!"

School Rock is, in fact, a rock. Specifically, it's a granite slab near Donner Pass where rock climbers congregate. The mild pitch makes it perfect for beginners, and I'm there with a group of high school students learning the basics of knots, equipment, belaying and climbing techniques. Though we're mostly novices, as the day wears on, participants and volunteers with Adventure-Risk-Challenge (ARC) use the specialized language of experts. "Slack!" Enrique hollers down to his belay partner, allowing him to climb more freely, while, "Tension, please," tells the belayer the climber might be feeling a bit exposed and insecure. There is a constant back and forth between belayer and climber, trying to find a balance to allow for an experience that feels challenging and safe. Tension in the climbing rope offers a sense of security but limits a climber's growth, while slack allows for greater freedom to make your own way on the rock. Finding the right balance between the tension and slack enables maximum skill progression.

Tensions suggest productive places for inquiry, but they can also give you a wedgie—just ask the climber on belay.

The lessons of climbing are less a guiding metaphor for me than a koan. This project is full of tension and slack, the back and forth awareness and realities between here and there; in the summer of 2015 the "here" was being a participant observer, interacting with students and staff, building relationships, being on the ground as multiple dramas played out. "There" was the academy in the background, the place where theory and research protocols lived. As I currently write, the here and there have switched. "Here" is writing up my findings, grappling with concepts like implicit learning and

symbolic violence; "There" is the lived experiences and continuously unfolding stories of participants and the devoted staff, instructors, and volunteers who enable ARC to provide transformative experiences for youth.

The tensions of "here" and "there" also are at play for participants and the organization at large. Participants "here" are exposed to salient, unique, exceptional experiences whilst their families "there" might not ever understand why their sibling/child cares so much about outdoor recreation and wilderness experiences—or even about going on to college. "Here" the skills and abilities are accessible and worthwhile; application of the concepts "there" might not connect or seem relevant. "Here" is a community of unconditional support and high regard; "there" is pressure and expectations that might not support your individual, best self. For the organization, "here" is lived experience of individuals while "there" is the systemic, institutionalized barriers to the kids you work with; "here" is the impending grant deadline and "there" is wilderness travel in spectacular places.

 I've tried to find balance in synthesizing multiple roles, audiences, and purposes. I am a Ph.D. student and researcher, granted access to an educational nonprofit with a mission to "empower underserved youth through integrated literacy and wilderness experiences" (About). I was also the formal Language Power instructor for a cohort of these youth. Less formally, I was one of their writing coaches, and a cheerleader, supervisor, and cook. With the staff, I was a thinking partner, an extra adult, and somewhat of a confusion—what was my role, exactly?

The negotiation of my role has been ongoing, and I have learned about my values to community-engaged research and about the importance of humility, curiosity, and

listening. My role has created internal tensions for me, especially as I have questioned what ARC has gotten from this project and what I have gotten from it; the balance leans strongly in my favor. I have wondered what reciprocity actually means, especially when my work with ARC was so instrumental in obtaining a tenure-track position in the Academy. ARC has been a key sponsor of my own success. Being granted such access to the organization puts me in a position of profound gratitude. No amount of "reciprocity" will make me feel less indebted.

Another internal struggle has been that studying ARC seems to reduce its "magic" into disparate—sometimes obvious—individual parts. ARC works. It is a model worth investigating to understand how it works. While I recognize the importance of understanding nuance, complexity, and larger contexts, I have little patience for armchair theorizing. Working with community partners needs to be about playing the believing game if researchers and community partners are going to want to keep collaborating.

Audience and purpose, then, create additional tensions. I want to do rigorous scholarship while also being fair, and I want to celebrate ARC's work; I believe ARC experiences significantly benefit participants. I saw staff's energy, commitment, fatigue, compassion, frustration, and pride in participants, themselves, and the organization as a whole. Their intentions to make a world that is more just, more peaceful, and more sustainable is clear, as is their care for the students with whom they work. My association with the organization has renewed and inspired me, and I have struggled with the sense that "rigorous" means skeptical and even critical. I have felt protective of the organization and have gotten defensive when others have asked legitimate questions about ARC's intentions and impacts.

My time on the metaphorical School Rock does not end with this dissertation. It is a work in progress, and I am so grateful to those belaying me as I find my routes forward.

Appendix A
Consent/Assent Materials for Research with Human Subjects

Information Sheet

My name is Merrilyne Lundahl and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Nevada, Reno. My advisor is Dr. Jane Detweiler, and we are conducting a research study to learn about the Adventure Risk Challenge curriculum and its effects. We are especially interested in the role that place plays in literacy learning and civic education.

Volunteers in this portion of the study will be interviewed. Interviews take between 20 minutes and one hour, and you will be compensated $20 for your participation.

This study is considered to be minimal risk of harm. This means the risk level is typical to what you encounter during your daily activities. You may experience inconvenience or a disruption in your schedule. Additionally, it may be uncomfortable to talk to a researcher about your literacy and community experiences.

Benefits of doing this research are not definite, but we hope to learn about outside the classroom educational approaches, particularly those that emphasize civic behaviors and improve literacy. There are no direct benefits to you in this study activity.

The researchers and the University of Nevada will treat your identity and the information we collect from you with professional standards of confidentiality and protect it to the extent allowed by law. You will not be personally identified in any reports or publications that may result from this study. The researchers, the University of Nevada, Reno Social Behavioral Institutional Review Board and Adventure Risk Challenge may look at your study records.

You may ask questions of the researcher at any time. The contact email address is mlundahl@unr.edu or jad@unr.edu, and you may also call Merrilyne Lundahl at 775-351-4050 or Jane Detweiler at 775-785-6155.

The University of Nevada, Reno Office of Human Research Protection oversees all human research conducted by University researchers. If you have questions or concerns about the conduct of the study, call this office at 775-327-2367.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop at any time. Declining to participate or stopping your participation will not have any negative effects on your participation in the ARC program.

Thank you for your participation in this study!

Verbal Script for Consent Process

I am conducting research about literacy and civic education, specifically in the context of Adventure Risk Challenge. I want to better understand the impacts of the ARC curriculum, and would like to include your perspective. The project involves spending time with you, talking about your experience with ARC, and/or interviewing you. You are free to participate or not, and if you decide not to, you can end your participation at any time. Not participating won't impact any of the benefits you get as a member of the ARC community.

Any information you share with me is confidential and anonymous. I am the only person who will have access to notes or transcripts that link you to the information you provide. For example, if I publish your words or describe your experiences, it will be anonymous. I will use a made-up name and change details (year in school, age, where you're from, gender, etc.) that could identify you.

I am committed to protecting your privacy and making the research process as comfortable as possible. You can choose when and how we do interviews. I hope that this research will allow educators and policy makers to better understand how literacy learning takes place and what helps people be active in their communities.

I am always happy to answer any questions or discuss any concerns you may have about my research. You are also welcome to contact my faculty advisor, Jane Detweiler, or the Research Integrity Office at the University of Nevada, Reno, if you have questions or concerns. Please let me know if you would like contact information and I will provide it.

Appendix B
Interview Guide

What year did you participate in ARC?

Did you do a 40-day or 23-day program? At Sagehen or Yosemite?

Where are you in your education and/or profession? What are your educational/professional goals?

Have you continued to be involved in ARC?

What sort of community or extra-curricular activities do you do?

Thinking about your schooling, work, and community activities, can you tell me about an experience you've had where something you learned or did at ARC was useful?

Thinking back on the leadership and adventure aspects of ARC, what do you think you learned?

How do you participate in your community?

Do you think your experience with ARC influenced you to participate in those ways?

One of the unique things about ARC is the setting. What about the setting—both at basecamp and on expeditions—was important to your experience?

What do you remember about writing in those settings?

Thinking back on all the writing you did at ARC, what stands out?

What do you remember about Voices of Youth?

ARC emphasizes the value of taking risks. What risks do you remember taking at ARC?

Can you tell me about a time since graduating from ARC that you've taken a risk?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your ARC experience or its impact?

Appendix C
Categories & Codes

Civic Engagement
    Activism
    Involvement
    Leadership
    Models
    Participation
    Service
    Volunteering
Community
    ARC alumni
    ARC Networking
Emotion
    Anxiety
    Disappointment
    Embarrassment
    Gratitude
    Inspiration
    Pride
    Uncomfortable
Meta
Novelty
Pedagogy
    Academics
    Access
    Audience
    Communication
    Difficulty
    Feedback
    Mentor
    Student expectations
    Teaching style
    Technology
    Transfer/application
Place
    Basecamp
    Expeditions
    Isolation
    Nature
    School Spaces
    Solo

Reading
Risk
Self
    Agency
    Benefit
    Challenge
    Change
    Confidence
    Embodiment
    Family
    Freedom
    Goals
    Identity
    Language
    Motivation
    Self-efficacy
    Status
    Value
Voices of Youth
Writing
    Interview
    Metaphor
    Transformational Essay

Appendix D
Setting and Implicit Learning at ARC and at School

School	ARC	Role of Setting at ARC	Implicit Messages from ARC Settings
Functional Safe Irrelevant to curriculum	Inspirational Risky Major curricular component	Community-building; self-reflection & identity development; aids in generating ideas & concentration; elicits positive emotions; mandates relevant transitions and structures; facilitates toggling between concrete & abstract; requires competencies in multiple literacies; integrates experiences	Who I am and where I am are related; I care about and for a place; I have many strengths; I can take responsibility for my actions in this place; I can think of things to write about; subjects are interrelated; we are all just human animals

Summary of participant descriptions comparing the role of setting at ARC vs. their school environments.

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