



"How do we move the current generation of critical, interpretive thought and inquiry beyond rage to progressive political action, to theory and method that connect politics, pedagogy, and ethics to action in the world?"

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.x)

4.9 million barrels of oil contaminated the Gulf of Mexico thanks to BP

**If the shoe fits:
Student activism
and identity**

Dave Irwin

Who am I?
Who are you?
Who are we?
Who are they?
Order and Buffer...

Not static ... we (individuals and communities) work on our identities

Ed M. Flynn

"The identity work that people do is not most usefully understood as primarily an 'internal' self-focused process.

Instead, it is better understood as a coming together of inward / internal self-reflection and outward / external engagement - through talk and action - with various discursively available social identities." (Watson, 2008)

Our actions define our identity at any particular time....

Action projects allow students time and space to explore who they are and who they could be.

Our actions define our identity at any particular time....



Action projects allow students time and space to explore who they are and who they could be.

Our actions define our identity at any particular time....



Action projects allow students time and space to explore who they are and who they could be.

Our actions define our identity at any particular time....



Action projects allow students time and space to explore who they are and who they could be.

Key individual processes were evident:

- Engaging with sustainability discourse over time increases level of comfort
- Internal struggle to position contrasting identities (ordering and separating)
- Not me positions (anti identity)...

A student reflected:

“On the topic of sustainability I have worked through a cycle of feelings and opinions relating to environmental issues, which resembles the grief process. Firstly, I was in denial. Secondly the reality of the inherent destructive nature of man hit me as I examined the evidence. Thirdly, I reflected on whether there was hope that education would be beneficial. Finally, I reasoned that I have a moral obligation to attempt to make a difference in protecting our environment”...

Step 5 is ACTION...

A student reflected:

“If my neighbour is driving to work then why shouldn't I? ... If my brothers are flying around the world having big adventures, why can't I? ... These last couple of years of study have really increased my awareness of the environment, however ... I am not willing or prepared to make any changes in the way I live that requires any extra effort on my part, especially if my efforts are not noticeable and are insignificant from society's point of view”



What is the role of community?

- Shared beliefs & a sense of ‘we-ness’ helps shape individual identity (Saunders, 2008)
- Individuals move between positions of ‘in-group’ (advocating sustainability) and ‘out-group’ (protecting the status quo)
- Social validation through acceptance of group actions leads to solidarity of the group over the wider organisation or society (allowing radical behaviours to be normalised)



Students acting politically: Senior Management Team support the action

Te Kāhui Manukura		Information Item
Campaign Against the use of Plastic Water Bottles	Meeting	3 May 2013
	Chairperson	A J
	Presenter	Ko-Dea

Mr Goodman is a student in the third year of the Bachelor of Sustainability and Outdoor Education. He has recently been featured in a CPT media release: http://www.cpt.ac.nz/news/news_2013/03/2013

Mr Goodman is currently undertaking the final project required in the degree programme. For his project, he has chosen to photograph students engaged with the act that would be committed in making one plastic water bottle. He proposes to use these photographs to create posters advocating limiting the use of plastic water bottles.

I have approved that Mr Goodman use the CPT logo on the posters and that they can be displayed around the campus.

I have asked that the Manager, Environmental contact the contacted officer and to advise them that this initiative is underway, as it may have an impact on their sales of bottled water. In addition, it should be ensured that any new building plans or refurbishments make adequate provision for water fountains.

Ko-Dea
 Chief Executive

Student movement to ban the bottle

Step towards a better level of this interior - the aimed sustainability campaign draws you in with the striking imagery and a few simple words. "What is the real price of bottled water?"

There is nothing in your face about it, no obvious clues, no grimy images of thirsty people. It's an interesting thought and it's powerful.

You could say it's a little pretentious. The young people in your class aren't that there is a huge issue around bottled water, but it's their choice. They see what is sold to them.

Mr Goodman who wrote on the back of his campaign to end bottled water is committed and it has to please. Take the Christchurch earthquake for example, bottled water has to be used. Their idea is to make the issue about the quality of bottled water. They don't want to buy it simply because it's the healthy option as your plastic bottle.

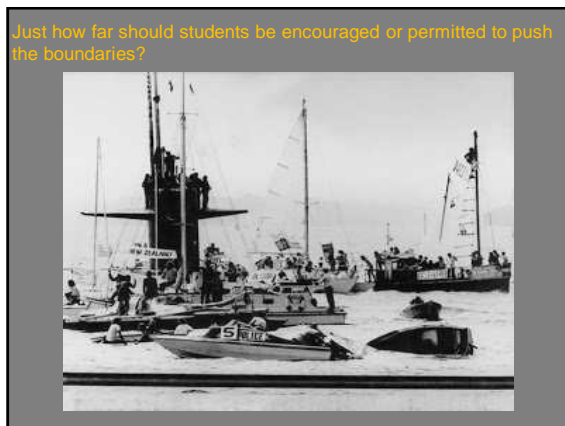
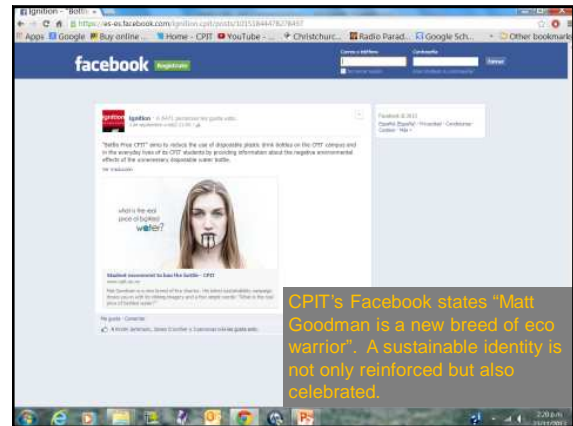
But would you buy it if you knew it was more expensive than petrol? Or petrol? Would you buy it if you knew it was more expensive than petrol? Would you buy it if you knew that you were not water in Christchurch is actually the best in the Southern Hemisphere?

There are the facts surrounding the issue of bottled water: an issue which has been highlighted with the campaign 'Bottle Free CPIT'.

As part of the third year of a Sustainability and Outdoor Education student, Mr Goodman was challenged to appear as one of the students in an environmental action project. His response came from a day of work at the University where he was required to use plastic water bottles and provide water bottles (highlighting the environmental problem).

Mr Goodman's response brought the issue closer to home. It's not the accountability to make people aware of bottled water but the issue that this is made as a 'one-off' or a 'one-time' thing.

Universities and polytechnics are communities: What messages about their identity do they portray?



There are many available ways an individual can present themselves to the world:

- A strong community sustainability identity encourages individuals to strengthen their own position to reduce alienation (Porter, 2005)
- Community identity allows individuals to feel loyal
- Individuals and groups seek validity

There are many stories interpreting the world available to the individual:

- Organisations (e.g. schools) signal the importance of sustainability through strategic policy formation, institutional processes, and regulation
- These create opportunities for the resonance of students and staff with the school's framing of sustainability

Reflections on identity:

- Communities create a sense of belonging and alleviate feelings of loss
- Affirmative actions create opportunities to explore identities
- Change is difficult in strongly valued social contexts
- Incremental changes in individual and organisational identity lead to weak sustainability
- Time is a critical factor – identity processes take time ... but we don't have much of that...



NEW BOOK ... explores education in the outdoors using a social ecological framework.

Contributing authors:
Mike Boyes PhD, University of Otago
Mike Brown PhD, University of Waikato
Margie Campbell-Price, University of Otago
Marg Cosgriff, University of Waikato
Brigid and Simon Graney, SHOPC
Allen Hill PhD, University of Tasmania
David Irwin PhD, CPIT
Maureen Legge PhD, University of Auckland
Howard Reiti, University of Auckland
Jo Straker, CPIT
Liz Thevenard, Victoria University

Available from :
Education Outdoors New Zealand
Email: eonz.eo@clear.net.nz

Key resources used:

- Alvesson, M., Ashcraft, K. L., & Thomas, R. (2008). Identity matters: Reflections on the construction of identity scholarship in organization studies. *Organization* 15(1): 5-28.
- Ashford, M. (1997). The power of one. *Trumpeter* 14(1) [juicode: <http://www.icaap.org/juicode?6.14.1.2>]
- Chapman, D. (2004). Sustainability and our cultural myths. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 9, 92-108
- Cardno, C., & Piggot-Irvine, E. (1994). *Action research – The key to successful management training in schools*. Paper presented at the NZARE, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- della Porta, D. & Diani M. (2006). *Social movements: An introduction*. Malden, MA, USA, Blackwell Publishing.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp.191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Jensen, B. B. & Schnack, K. (1997). The action competence approach in environmental education. *Environmental Education Research*, 3(2), 163- Retrieved from EBSCO host database.
- Porter, T. B. (2005). Identity subtexts in the discursive construction of sustainability [pdf]. *Electronic Journal of Radical Organisation Theory* 19(1): 1-14.
- Saunders, C. (2008). Double-edged swords? Collective identity and solidarity in the environmental movement." *The British Journal of Sociology* 59(2): 227-253.
- Watson, T. J. (2008). Managing identity: Identity work, personal predicaments and structural circumstances. *Organization* 15(1): 121-143.