Place-Based Education Is an Intergenerational Practice

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Abstract

This article makes theoretical links between place-based education and intergenerational learning supported by an analysis of data from an empirical study. The paper argues that school-linked place-based education does more than provide opportunities for intergenerational practice; it is founded upon and requires the on-going production of relations between adults and children within and through place-change processes. The implications for place-based education theory and school-linked practice are explored.

Keywords: place-based education, intergenerational practice, community intergenerational education, environmental education, school

Introduction

> *There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it. Knowledge of a place is not then subsequent to perception…. Local knowledge is at one with lived experience if it is indeed true that this local knowledge is of the localities in which the knowing subject lives. To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in* (Casey 1993, 321).

Casey argues that we are not in places but "of" them. In this article, we draw on a variety of theories on "place" and learning, including pragmatism, to support a dialectical and relational understanding of what goes on between the sensing, meaning-making person and the environment in which they find themselves. We begin by looking at the connections between two related areas of educational research and practice: intergenerational education and place-based education. Thereafter, we argue theoretically and demonstrate empirically how the intergenerational dimension of place-based education is more central to how places and people change and how place-based intergenerational learning emerges than is currently recognized. We close with some consideration of the implications for theory and practice.

Intergenerational Practice and Intergenerational Education

In western countries, we live in a time of fast-changing demographics where, despite generational markers and generational cohorts being identifiable, generational effects are often overlooked in educational and other forms of research (Field, Lynch and Malcolm 2008). We see the intergenerational field as parsed between (a) the governmental policy field (concerned with economic growth and social cohesion as a result of demographic changes), (b) the academic disciplines in, for example, geography, education and sociology (where there is yet to be a fulsome interdisciplinary conversation around concepts such as generation, lifecourse and intergenerationality), and (c) the practice field (where a wide array of practices are fast emerging and remain under-researched).

In human geography and new sociology of childhood, there are calls to stop fetishizing particular age groups (such as children) and look at age as a relational construct produced in interaction (Vanderbeck 2007). In this vein, Hopkins and Pain (2007) suggest we take a relational approach to researching age groups / generations. This is because people's identities are produced through interactions with different age groups. They go on to suggest we can usefully intersect the term intergenerationality with other identifiers (race, class, and gender for example). The term *lifecourse* is also emerging as a useful framing in empirical analyses of fluid intergenerational experiences.

On the ground, intergenerational projects have been described as "vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits" (Hatton Yeo 2006, 2). Intergenerational practice can also have a variety of espoused and incidental outcomes related to health, wellbeing and social inclusion or social cohesion, urban

renewal or regeneration, participation and citizenship, and the need for mutual respect between the generations (see, e.g., Springate, Atkinson and Martin 2008; Martin et al. 2010). Many early intergenerational practice projects took the social inclusion of older adults as the main desired outcome and neglected the possibility of more relational approaches to learning. Now however, the field is taking a more reciprocal multigenerational approach in response to policy calls to realize a "society for all ages." In the USA, Japan, and the UK there is a growing field of charity-supported intergenerational practice (see for example, The Beth Foundation Centre for Intergenerational Practice, http://www.centreforip.org.uk/). Drawing on this exciting, nascent territory, we wish to empirically and theoretically consider the connections between children's school-linked and place-based education and intergenerational education.[1] In this article we utilize the following definition for intergenerational practice:

> *Activities or programs that increase cooperation, interaction and exchange between people from any two generations. They share their knowledge and resources and provide mutual support in relations benefiting not only individuals but their community. These programs provide opportunities for people, families and communities to enjoy and benefit from a* society for all ages *(Generations United, undated)* (from Sánchez et al. 2007, 35, italic in original).

Environmental and Place-Based Education

Environmental education projects in schools have often had an intergenerational dimension (for example, in gardening projects, conservation activities, and farm visits) and some frameworks and theories for intergenerational environmental education practice have been developed (see, e.g., Uzzell 1999; Kaplan and Liu 2004). Kaplan and colleagues (2005) suggest that sustainability and lifespan perspectives are important (among other aspects) when intergenerational practice and environmental education meet. Despite the abundance of interesting intergenerational environmental education practice and longstanding calls for taking a more interactionist and process-focused approach to researching school-community relations and learning (Ballantyne, Connell and Fien 1998), there has been little empirical work undertaken in this area. Earlier research has tended to look at the intra-familial interaction, or the unilateral direction of effects (for example, how young people influence their parents towards environmentally friendly behaviors) (see Rickinson 2001). More recently, there are signs that researchers are taking a more reciprocal and relational framing (Payne 2010; Barratt Hacking, Scott and Barratt 2007) but the lack of empirical work remains a challenge.

Place-based education (PBE) could be seen as a sub-field of environmental education and can also be synonymous with education for sustainability, service learning, and community-based education. It too can take many forms (see Smith 2007) including, for example, local environmental monitoring, and community

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[1] It is also noteworthy that it was the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice (and not an environmental organization) that funded this research. We are grateful for their support.

gardening. Key principles of PBE include the need for learning to arise from experience of and in local contexts and to take a problem-solving approach. In practice, within PBE, many disparate disciplines and subject areas can come into a conversation around a local challenge, problem or concern. Another key focus for PBE is the need for schools, their environs and communities to become more permeable (Smith 2007; Uzzell 1999).

Critical PBE theorizations tend to paint a stark, rather black-and-white picture; proponents seek to counter the effects of the globalization of industrial civilization which is seen to impose "a single way of life on all people everywhere and diminish human adaptability… unraveling both the natural and social systems that underlie our species' health and security" (Gruenewald and Smith 2008, xix). For expressly "critical" forms of PBE (Gruenewald 2008a; Sobel 2004), the call is for a fundamental change in educational structures and aims. Gruenewald (2008a, 144) suggests "schools must provide more opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in the process of coming to know places and shaping what our places will become." Gruenewald and Smith (2008, xix) posit that "place-based education is a community-based effort to reconnect the processes of education, enculturation, and human development to the well-being of community life." Smith (2007) sees the *effects* of PBE (after Stevenson 1987) as a form of positive deregulation of education via a de-standardization of knowledge, less reliance on teachers as fonts of knowledge, and less regimented approaches to assessment and student control.

Controversially, Gruenewald (2008b) sees critical pedagogy of place as possible through interacting processes of "decolonization" (rejecting some dominant ideas such as consumerism) and "reinhabitation" (recovering non-commodified cultural patterns). Bowers (2008) refutes this position and advocates we do not need to decolonize or emancipate students from what is often readily available, potentially useful intergenerational knowledge and skills. He suggests that critical transformation is a less certain outcome requiring first that the educator, as mediator, looks closer at local *existing* practices in the "cultural commons" to spot the forms of "inter-generational knowledge" that strengthen mutuality and have a smaller ecological impact.

Intergenerational Place-Based Education?
As we have seen, PBE has called for schools to re-think their relationship to their community. All PBE therefore lends itself to being seen as a type of intergenerational practice and education. The literature is less clear about this as a foundation. Bowers (2008) acknowledges the importance of local "elder" knowledge and has called for a thicker description of local practice before deciding on the educative trajectory. Gruenewald (2008b) suggests PBE can offer useful "opportunities" for intergenerational collaboration and communication and acknowledges that within PBE, "the study of places can help increase student engagement and understanding through multidisciplinary, experiential, and *intergenerational learning* that is not only relevant but potentially contributes to the well-being of community life" (315, italics added). On the one hand, PBE does set out a spatio-relational change agenda for schools, their communities and local places but this agenda tends not to see changed relations between the generations

or intergenerational learning as an inherently critical element; instead the focus seems to get subordinated under the aims of addressing pupil learning, harnessing young people to improve the local area through the provision of "skills and dispositions needed to regenerate and sustain communities" (Gruenewald and Smith 2008, xvi). Also, the intergenerational dimension is often subsumed within the homogeneous term "community" which is often not viewed via intergenerationality.

We see PBE as only possible through spatial practices that work to change intergenerational relations. On its own terms, PBE asks us to understand, interrogate and change the intergenerational transfer of routines and ways of life that enhance or harm people-place interactions. Our core theoretical argument is that, if "community vitality *and* environmental quality" (Sobel 2004, italics added) are seen as interacting features of the enhanced sustainable lifestyle, then, place-based programs must also be sensitive to how learning arises from intergenerational person-place encounters. Put another way, since PBE is located in the nexus of relations between "child-adult-place" or "pupil-teacher-community-place" it must more fundamentally be about intergenerational education too. Let us expand this argument somewhat.

One argument for recognizing the importance of intergenerationality in PBE in part rests on dialogical theories of participation (Percy-Smith 2006) and generational identity formation. Mannion (2007; 2009) argues that children and youths' participation needs to be understood as both a spatial and a relational practice: participation cannot be understood outside of the practices and places that constitute it or allow it to flourish. Similarly, Pain (2005) reminds us that young people are embedded in intergenerational relations:

> *Relations within one space (for example the home) also affect expectations, behavior and relations within another (for example local public spaces). Intergenerational relations, then, form part of our identity or social make-up (and are an aspect which has been underplayed until recently)* (10).

By this view, schools, places and intergenerational relations co-evolve and are affected by each other. In a similarly relational account, McKenzie (2008) sees environmental educative experiences as cognitive and embodied intersubjective process that involve people, places, and different species. Definitions of sustainability too have for some time flagged an intergenerational concern with changing current lifestyle so that we do not adversely affect the viability of future generations. Any viable account of PBE must, therefore, call for attention to the contemporary intergenerational processes that might realize or prevent greater eco-social justice. It seems viable to argue that PBE, even on its own terms, must involve intergenerational, intersubjective learning that involves people in coming together to "negotiate their identities in the context of various subcultures, public spheres, and places, and in their coalescence, create social and cultural change" (McKenzie 2008, 368).

Biesta's (2008) reading of John Dewey offers some leverage here. For Dewey, it is people's participation in communication that makes education possible because it is only through communication that we can share an activity in an interested, meaningful and purposeful way. Importantly, educative communication, when successful, is authentically participatory and can result in a shared outlook for all participants (Biesta 2008). By the pragmatist view, place-based education occurs when members of different generations come together to cooperate to intervene in the world and, thereafter, deal with how the world responds.[i] Through educational communication, Dewey believed all participants would gain a new and shared outlook. Therefore, we can expect in place-based education that new shared outlooks will arise and new relations between the participating adults and children will emerge. This may be a subtle change or a more radical one: for example, they may understand a member of the other generation's perspectives better, or come to a viable view of what a "society for all ages" might look like in a given time and place.

Another important implication for intergenerational education can be drawn from a pragmatist analysis (Biesta 2008). Taking a pragmatist stance, we can say that we do not need to have shared places and shared ideas between the generations as prerequisites before intergenerational learning and practice begins. Rather, it is through the successful interaction of the generations together that meanings, practices, and places shared "in common" can be created. Sharing these in common does not mean they need to be identical; they only need to be adequate enough for the different generations to continue re-working in their own unique way (Biesta 2008). This re-working is an ongoing, unfinished business where experiment and experience are closely tied and are "a way of moving the relational midst of the world" (McCormack 2010, 205).

Drawing these perspectives together, we posit that place-based education is inherently intergenerational and involves (a) people from more than one generation participating in a common place-focused activity; (b) different interests across the generations in addressing community vitality and environmental quality at the same time through tackling some problem or engaging in an experiment; (c) a willingness to communicate across generational divides (through activities involving consensus, conflict or cooperation) with the hope of generating and sharing new intergenerational meanings, practices and places that are held in common; and (d) a willingness to be responsive to what the world throws back at us when we try things.

The Study
Our research set out to find a small number of cases of intergenerational place-based education in Scotland and empirically explore their effects. We sought out cases that had a reputation for having an interest in intergenerational processes and learning; that set out to make material changes to places; exhibited a degree of difference; offered opportunities for reciprocal, intergenerational flows of ideas, knowledge, skills, routines or social practice; and, were school-connected and at the same time community-based. Space limitations here allow us to document one of two cases researched. This article confines itself to data from a primary school

project where locals, parents and pupils worked together to design and improve a local community garden space. The case sheds light on the theoretical arguments presented above along with foregrounding some additional concerns. Further analysis of both projects is available from
www.scotcip.org.uk/files/documents/IG_Place-based_Education.pdf

Our research questions were:
1. What do participants of different ages find important as they engage in place-based intergenerational practice?
2. How is learning brought about through engaging in intergenerational practice?
3. How is place and context implicated in intergenerational place-based learning?
4. What are the opportunities and challenges associated with intergenerational place-based practice?

Methodology
Our methodology brings together insights from transactional realism (Biesta 2009a; 2009b). By the transactional view,

> *as living beings we are always already acting 'upon' and 'with' the world. This means that there is no fundamental gap between us and the world…. Transaction means that we are always already 'in touch' with the world and this connection, in turn, ensures that our knowledge is always knowledge 'of' the world* (Biesta 2009a, 37).

This transactional approach means that participants' constructions of themselves, their places and the relations between them can be taken as the real effects of local person-place encounters wherein knowledge arises contextually in a given location. Our methods, therefore, were designed to collect data on these constructions and on the transactions and encounters that give rise to them.

Critics of PBE literature (e.g., Nespor 2008) have challenged the binaries operating in some theoretical accounts: for example, urban versus rural, standardized curricula versus place-focused, modern versus traditional knowledge, globalized versus local or indigenous cultures. Our methods, therefore, needed to be sensitive to local and extra-local effects and relations that work across these binaries. For us, intergenerational PBE cannot take "place-as-community" uncritically "as a stable, bounded, self-sufficient communal realm" (Nespor 2008, 479) unconnected to other sites and times.

We used a place-sensitive ethnographic approach using individual interviews and focus groups, supplemented by fieldnotes and video evidence of intergenerational and place-based events, within a comparative case study design appropriate to the concrete, context-dependent sites and processes (Flyvbjerg 2006). Data herein come from interviews with participating community members (mostly parents), a key parent who led on the practical side of the gardening project, the school management (headteacher and deputy headteacher), pupils, and members of the

eco-committee in the school. The presented data are punctuated with stills generated from the video footage. Interviews focused on these areas:

- Who worked together in the garden and how decisions were made
- Why the garden was important and who and what it was "for"
- How learning had been brought about and what this learning was about
- Perspectives on the initiatives and school-community links

Transcripts, photographs and video were analyzed by both authors. Data were coded under a number of themes that emerged after a process of inter-researcher readings of the dataset. The two general themes that emerged were "relationships" and "place-person interaction". The main sub-themes we used were (i) boundaries (ii) learning and sharing (iii) ethics, values and imagined futures, and are loosely used as subheadings below. Authors' first names are used where appropriate. Otherwise, pseudonyms are used. "Pupil" means primary school-aged child.

Methodologically, the writing and imagery here involves the production or performance of an "ethnographic place" (Pink 2009, 41) involving photographs and texts and the "coming together and 'entanglement' of persons things, trajectories, sensations discourses and more." This article provides, we hope, a viable, performative (Dirksmeier and Ilse 2008) opportunity for readers' own experimental (McCormack 2010) meaning-making about intergenerational place-based relations in ways that are revealing of the process producing the hybrid child-adult-places via interactions and transactions of various kinds.

Westhill Community Garden

Context

Westhill is a primary school in an area of deprivation undergoing urban renewal and housing development in Scotland. The community garden space was left in a state of disrepair until two years ago when the school won an award to work on its redevelopment. The garden project has suffered from ongoing vandalism but this has abated over time. The community garden project was part of an ongoing effort to change the image of the school and its relationship with its locale. Of late, the school roll had increased as many parents were opting to send their children to this primary school now rather than the other local schools. This was thought to be as a result of the headteacher's distinctive approach to discipline and the "open door" policy. As researchers, we too experienced a generally open, less formal and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Children, staff and pupils were seen to share an entrance and the staffroom was relatively freely frequented by children as well as staff (for example, in the afternoon pupils would come by to pick up props for the school play). In Westhill, pupil-teacher-parent committees in eco-school, health and school councils were meeting regularly.

The community garden development was one of a number of initiatives that tried to involve and encourage the parents to participate in their children's education. The hands-on aspects of the project are often led and organized by Francis, a local parent, through the support and leadership of teachers from the school. The project

had received some grants and awards and other support from local businesses. Decisions about what to do in the garden reflected the desire to ensure the children had some pride in and ownership of the work. The children were involved in many stages of the work. The public entrance to the garden had been kept in place in an effort to build relationships with the community and to try to discourage people from the community from vandalizing the garden. The children and teachers had access to Wellington boots and gardening equipment that was stored in and around the school. Pupils regularly accessed these tools and worked in the garden during their morning break or lunch time and when the school was closed. Each class had worked with a visiting artist to design a particular area of the garden. At the time of this research, a small maze that had been installed was being improved upon and pupils were using this space, among others, for learning math as part of school work. Francis dedicated a lot of her time and resources from her own garden to the work. She regularly worked with the children and other parents during the school day as well as leading garden clubs that involved pupils, teachers and parents after school. Some events in the garden involved parents and their children in subject-focused tasks during the school day. The school held other, less-formal community events in the garden regularly (including a barbecue, an open day and regular participatory gardening days).

New Boundaries
We found ample evidence that the school was working hard and succeeding to a considerable degree in rendering the school-community boundary more permeable. Parents were encouraged to access the school (often via the garden) even when there were no planned events:

> *Parent (mother): I came in last week… they were on lunch and I came in to see what they were doing [in the garden]. You can come in when you like. I was passing… they had an open day [for the garden] and I couldn't make it. They [the children] showed me round.*

How the school-community boundary worked related to how entrances and exits were used and managed:

> *Headteacher: I think we genuinely value parents and accept them, differences and all, and understand the difficulties they might have in not coming to the school and so on and even when they come in late to the school they can take their children to the class; they are not stopped at the office door.… it's a huge step in breaking down barriers and also we don't have this, 'if only those parents would behave more middle class we'd be fine'!*

We found that traditional school-community boundaries were also broached through subject-focused events outdoors involving parents and children in active intergenerational problem solving experiences:

> *Parent (mother of Pupil 1): It's great to come out, especially if you get [good] weather, to actually come out and get to see what they are doing. [Whereas] in the class they are really telling you but [outdoors] it is nice to see them*

demonstratin'… the fact that you are outside, getting more hands on and that
kinda thing.
Researcher: Does it change the atmosphere?
Parent: Aye definitely. It is not really as claustrophobic I suppose…
Researcher: Does it make it easier for you to come in?
Parent: Aye it does. You can concentrate. Definitely.

**Figure 1. Parents and children worked together under guidance from the
teachers to perform math-related tasks outdoors**

Video still © the authors 2010.

Because the events were scheduled outdoors, they were experienced as inviting by
both parents and pupils. The familiar nature of the place meant there were
opportunities for active engagement for parents through local, familiar and material
practices:

Researcher: Does it make a difference that this event is outdoors?
Parent (father): It does in a way. That's what I like all the time. I wouldn't like
to be workin' inside. This is the kinda thing I would do…. the maze… they are
drawin' it out. I am telling them [the children] what's left and right…

In the last five years, the school has shifted from solely offering indoor formal
parent-teacher meetings to offering more problem-based outdoor activities driven
by an interest in children's learning at one level:

Researcher: Aside from the academic side of things is there any other impact?
Headteacher: We've discovered that the parents won't come to a curriculum
thing at night or a curriculum meeting on teaching reading; they just don't

> *come [but] over the last couple of years, we have discovered that they will
> come to something that the children are doing.*

**Figure 2. Parents, children and teachers gather outdoors for an outdoor
math event**

Video still © the authors 2010

The evidence suggests that the participants were engaged in a variety of boundary
practices that were material with strong relational effects. Through the work to
change the garden, the school-community boundary became less distinctly drawn
and this appeared to allow for new points of intergenerational contact in various
times and places (including the home, within the school and in the garden itself).

Producing Places for Intergenerational Learning and Sharing
The next evidence supports the view that the making of the garden and its use
during and outside of school time afforded an inclusive "middle ground" where
different generational groups felt comfortable to participate in practices of various
kinds. The next data relates to the forms of learning that accrued from various
forms of intergenerational education and practice-based links between the school
and the community. We note that it was through *practices* of various kinds that the
garden as an intergenerational educational space was produced and the attendant
relations changed.

While children's learning was offered as a motivation by both teachers and parents,
a more distributed and intergenerational experience of learning was apparent for
the headteacher as well as parents and pupils:

> *Researcher: Who is learning here today would you say?*

> *Headteacher: The parents, children, everybody.... I would hope the parents are learning a wee bit more about how we teach children in primary schools.... they don't realize that and they go away saying we really enjoyed that but most parents will be able to say something they learned.*

With respect to subject-focused events in the garden, the outcomes for children were distinctive in that they involved a performative application in an everyday material place:

> *Researcher: What do you see as the role for the garden overall?*
> *Headteacher: The biggest difference is the children can see the relevance of their maths... there was too much maths going on where the children couldn't see the relevance of what they were doing. And they weren't getting enough opportunity to apply skills that they were being taught like volume, length, area,... I can see an improvement in their maths skill and their ability to work together.*

Here, two teenage boys see wider benefits too that are related to the on-going garden development work—in particular, intergenerational teamwork:

> *Researcher: Whose garden is it?*
> *Teenager: The children. So they can work in it and see how it feels and then they can go home [and try it].*
> *Researcher: Who is learning here today?*
> *Teenager 1: The children.*
> *Teenager 2: Everyone.*
> *Researcher: What kind of things are people learning?*
> *Teenager 2: Teamwork. Aye... working along with other people so that when you are older you know how to work in a team.*

Place-based school-supported educational activity meant there were changed relations among parents, children and teachers. There was evidence of a sharing of expertise among parents, pupils and teachers in a range of tasks associated with the garden (such as weeding, soil enrichment, composting, and so on). For example, the children and the teachers learned from a parent about the use of a wormery:

> *Researcher: Who do you learn the most from [when it comes to] gardening... is it your mother or the teachers?*
> *Pupil: My mother.*
> *Mother: I brought in wormery stuff and showed the teachers how to make wormeries and I ordered 100 worms from eBay.*

Here, the pupil reports on how they get to spend more time with their parents, and also have a role in instructing them on "what to do" while the father makes a different but practical contribution.

> *Pupil: I go down in the weekends, I do it with Francis [the parent helper in the garden] if she needs help.*
> *Researcher: So what makes you want to go down on the weekends and do it?*
> *Pupil: When you're bored.*
> *Researcher: And do you go down on your own?*
> *Pupil: Sometimes you need your mum or your sister or your dad to go down with you, but… if you see Francis like you'll say she needs to come down…*
> *Researcher: And you said your mum and dad sometimes come down with you?…*
> *Pupil: She plants the plants and she helps like with the digging and stuff.*
> *Researcher: So do you show her what to do or does she show you what to do?*
> *Pupil: I show her what to do and then… she'll probably—cos my dad, he was going to make some planters—so she'd go down and take measurements and stuff….*
> *Researcher: And is it nice to work in the garden with your mum?*
> *Pupil: Yeah cos I never really get to spend time with her cos she's always doing something.*

The busyness of adults that is referred to above comes through again in this next extract. The following evidence from a pupil focus group interview indicated that some of the learning was about gardening but also focused on the desire for changed relations between the generations through changes in place use:

> *Pupil: I think the teachers are learning too.*
> *Researcher: What are the teachers learning?*
> *Pupil: To garden a wee bit better I think.*
> *Pupil: How to look after gardens and to interact with us more.*
> *Researcher: They're learning to interact with you more?*
> *Pupil: Uh-huh, cos normally they don't like play with us or talk to us or anything, cos they're always too busy doing something else, and now that we're out in the garden she'll… or they'll… come up to you and start talking to you.*
> *Researcher: So do you get to know your teachers better when you're in the garden—you're all nodding your heads for that.*
> *Pupil: Yeah we see like the fun side of them.*
> *Researcher: You see the fun side of them?*
> *Pupil: uh-huh.*
> *Researcher: So they're learning how to relate to you differently?*
> *Pupil: Yeah… it's kind of good when you get to work with adults, apart from… they can do more stuff, but they can understand you more, like you need to do this and they listen to you.*

In a related way, this father considers how the physical and material dimensions of gardening practices adds to what is possible with respect to his son's upbringing and the way his own expertise gets valued within school:

> *Researcher: What do you think the garden is for?*

> *Parent (father): It's teaching stuff, learning things. I need to learn how to get my wee boy a job. (laughs).*
> *Researcher: What kind of work would you like to see him get into?*
> *Parent: I don't know. I do grounds works,… slabbin', fencing, pipe laying.*

It is worth noting that it was critical how materials were sourced as this involved the enactments of intergenerational linkages that brought about learning. One parent, who led the gardening club, describes her strategy thus: "it's pretty much using what we've got, bits of scrap… it's all imaginative." Many materials were often sourced locally. These included leftover seeds from elderly people's gardens, second-hand boots from parents, cardboard boxes from the shops, homemade planting boxes and greenhouses made from recycled plastic bottles. Another parent organized for the delivery of four tons of compost from his workplace to the school (Figure 3).

Figure 3. During the fieldwork, we took time to assist with moving this compost from the street into the garden

Pink suggests the sensory ethnographer can gain "access to areas of embodied emplaced knowing and to use these as a basis from which to understand human perception, experience, action, and meaning and to situate this culturally and biographically" (Pink 2009, 44). We felt the activity of moving the pungent compost allowed us to gain some "correspondence" with the other participants' emplacements in the scene; we certainly remember the strong smell of the fermenting compost as it lingered in the car on the way home! Video still © the authors 2010.

Choices about how to spend funds, how to enact the gardening were commonly driven by cost alongside a concern for the environment and a concern to make sure pupils and community members could participate in activities. Funds were used to employ an artist to help with design work. Time was taken to make things, or grow things from seed rather than buying ready-made solutions. Materials were selected

that would not adversely affect the environment (for example, paints with low toxicity) and pupils and adults helped with tasks.

> *Pupil: We never actually paid any painters—there was only one painter, he showed all the children how to paint and we all just got messy pretty much.*

There was ample evidence of intergenerational education that was multi-directional and reciprocal in nature that had been brought about by concern with changing and enhancing a local place through material practice. While formal educational outcomes for children were important, and were planned, these worked at a surface level, catalyzing other relational and spatial changes that grew from place-based intergenerational education opportunities.

Contingent Ethics, Values and Imaginaries

The headteacher hoped that new ethical valuations would become possible through place-based intergenerational practice. As the garden is interacted with and changed, a future eco-social imaginary was created that might radically change relations among participants.

> *Researcher: What's the big picture?*
> *Headteacher: Ideally, you would have—like we have in the nursery—where parents come in and play and work [with the pupils]. [interruption] Ideally we'd want parents to be coming in naturally and working with the class.*
> *Researcher: And the reason for that would be?*
> *Headteacher: Better partnerships to impact on [children's] learning… working together.*

"Opening up learning" was a term used by the headteacher to capture this place-based intergenerational imaginary that involved a widening of the target constituency from "just pupils" to the wider community within new places and practices and through new kinds of valuations and meaning making.

> *Headteacher: I suppose a lot of it is buying parents into our value system as well… a lot of our children find it difficult moving from one value system at home to another value system in the school… The more parents that are involved the more are likely to encourage their children not to vandalize this area… I suppose we are opening up learning.*

Another aspect of the imagined future that is expressed through gardening practices relates to the school's reputation. While in the past, vandalism had been encountered (and was still a threat to the on-going work) and roll numbers had been low, now, new families were beginning to join the school and vandalism was lower. In part, this was explained by the caring approach to pastoral support and the impact of new building work, but also the gardening project. The pupils supported this view:

> *Researcher: … And you said 'it's for the reputation of the school.' What do you mean by that?*

Pupil: …cos before we had the garden it was all [broken] glass … and nobody really … came round to the school or walked by…
Pupil: I know, I mean everybody looks down now from the flats, or they walk by and they come into it.
Researcher: Right, so it affects how the school is viewed. Do you think it affects how people think about the school?
Pupil: Yeah because they might think that we just don't care about … other things, but when we make it look nice they might think the school's … a better school because they're trying to help the community.
Researcher: Right, and vice versa, the community helping the school maybe?
Pupil: Yeah, cos some people really do help the school, like donate raffle prizes or they'll help out in the garden.

Summary Analysis
Using our definition of intergenerational place-based education, the evidence suggests that the case was an interesting example for a number of reasons. The work to change the garden and improve it required communication and interaction between the parents, teachers and children within and through the *material* practices afforded by the place. For almost all our respondents, the garden functioned as a site or place-holder for working towards imagined futures (for parents' children, for the teachers' school, for children themselves). The practice of working towards these futures connected younger and older people through a process of place production and intergenerational action. McCormack might call this a pragmatist intergenerational experiment. He suggests that "to think relations in transition is to experiment, and to experiment is to provide possibilities for making more of experience—for adding more relations to the processuality of the 'tissue of experience' (James 1996)" (McCormack 2010, 206). The futures being envisioned and to some extent being realized (in respondents' terms) included outcomes such as changes to intergenerational relations, to how the school was viewed, increased roll numbers, a reduction in vandalism, better partnership in education, and more respect for the natural environment. Through practices, there was a perceivable movement of boundaries around what kind of education was possible and where educational activities were possible, which seemed critical. This intergenerational boundary work was connected to local place production via material practices, and the generation of some sharing of ethics, values and imaginaries across the generations.

The analysis suggests that, for any case of intergenerational education, place production plays a role; place was more than a container for the action. Like Knorr Cetina's (2001) "unfinished objects of knowledge" (or epistemic objects), the community garden can be seen as a learning object that characteristically created problems to be solved. Because the problems were dealt with through intergenerational practice, the effect is one of dispersing education (among the home, school and garden and other places). Because the community garden was always unfinished it was always unfolding (as things changed and were improved or vandalized) and the responses involved on-going signification (the production of meanings around the school and its environs and locals) for those taking part in the practices to address it.

For any case of place-based education, we theoretically argue that intergenerational relations will be implicated. Following Knorr Cetina's analysis, because the garden worked as a "signifying entity" it was being continually "read" as wanting—lacking or needing different things (such as plants, compost, repairs, parent participation) by different members of the generations allowing for intergenerational transaction and communication and interaction between people and place (through, for example, weathering, decay, damage, repair, and vandalism). It was the intergenerational practices embedded in place change processes that brought about learning of various kinds for all generations.

We notice that practices were both located in one place (the garden) and were yet connected to other times and places (involving shop-bought Wellingtons, worms from eBay, compost from parents, planters from a father's shed, compost that was made elsewhere, seeds from locals' gardens). Following Nespor's (2008) critique of PBE, we were sensitive to how the *local* place of the community garden can be seen as itself the effect of local and *extra-local* participation; it is a hybrid production. The materials too (living and non-living things) that made up the places had a part to play in this meaning making: compost smells, seedlings thrive or die, parents come and sit on benches while their children play, insects populate the bug hotel (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The garden club was constructing a "Bugs' Hotel"—a place for invertebrates to hide and live

This is an interesting place production: a construction that symbolically expresses the on-going child-adult cooperation but also an awareness of the importance of inter-species, person-material relations. Video still © the authors 2010.

The analysis also suggests that intergenerational place-based education had an ethical dimension to how materials were ordered and reorderings in space and time. The ethical judgments of participants revealed a desire for greater participation, for inclusiveness and for a greater care for the environment. The limits of schooling were being stretched allowing for a degree of messiness, playfulness, hybridity, informality and unplanned intergenerational activity between school and community, parent and child, teacher and pupil, people and material places. Everyday mundane activities were what constituted participation in intergenerational place-based education. Perhaps the manner in which the organic, decaying compost with its humid smell permeated our clothes, the school building and our car that day is an apt reminder of this process in action. All of this reminds us that meaning making was contingent on relations between humans and non-human entities, or the "more-than human" (Whatmore 2002; Power 2005). By inference, this eco-social hybridity (involved in the production of a place) also applies to the people who inhabit it *and* to the school-community intergenerational relations that were in part involved in constituting it.[ii] In this way, inter-subjectivity, and intergenerationality, needs to be seen as arising through material entanglements in the world (Ingold 2006); people are corporeally immersed and intertwined with more than the social: the bodies, the ethical practices and the places themselves are brought about through material as well as language-based action.

> *The rhythms and motions of these inter-corporeal practices configure spaces of connectivity between more-than-human lifeworlds;... projects of making'
> more liveable worlds made possible by the on-going interweaving of our lives
> with manifold others* (Whatmore 2002, 162-163).

Conclusion

The school-community boundary has traditionally been a well-policed one, contained inside school walls under the regimes of timetables, classrooms and prescribed curricula, while on the outside, the community resides. Gruenewald and Smith (2008) suggest that we must get past the isolation of traditional schooling from community life (Sobel 2004). Gruenewald and Smith (2008, xx) put it like this: "The walls of the schools must become more permeable and local collaboratives and support structures must be built and maintained to that education truly becomes a larger community effort."

In Scotland, policies allow for greater permeability between schools and their communities. In fact, new community campus models bringing together all-age facilities and services underpin a comprehensive redevelopment of over 40 percent of school campuses (Scottish Government 2009), with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities. Scotland's new formal curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive 2004), offers strong encouragement to "take learning outdoors" and recognizes that learning happens in colleges, youth groups and in the voluntary sector as well as schools.

However, in Scotland, the reconstitution of school buildings and curriculum does not explicitly support intergenerational place-based education as we have defined it.

Within Scottish policy, as elsewhere, the direction of inputs and their desired outcomes is unidirectional: the concern is to harness resources (inside schools and now also outside of them) primarily for the betterment of young people's chances and achievements (Scottish Government 2011). Outside of schools, policies tend to ignore pupils' experiences and their civic contributions; policies focus instead on the need for adults and out-of-school youth to "build skills" for "sustainable economic growth" (Scottish Executive 2003) with community capacity building as one of the vehicles for achieving this. Current policies, therefore, do not foreground the *reciprocal forms of place-based engagement and learning* we have described, nor do they take full account of the local and material relational contexts of schools, families and their communities. Governmental vision in Scotland, as in many other countries, still largely limits its scope either to school-focused initiatives "for pupils" who will follow a school-based curriculum, or to initiatives "for adults" (and second-chance learning for young people) targeting the development of their skills in the lifelong learning arena.

Seeing schooling as a process of intergenerational place-based education (potentially located in many diverse places) is a more radical proposal. Our findings from the community garden project reveal that we require more than places where people merely co-locate or receive services in parallel and more than a narrow focus on pupil scholastic attainment and adult skills development. Our analysis suggests that place-based intergenerational education offers a different framing in that it *seeks to change people and places within and through multi-directional inputs and effects*. The participation of more than one generation in learning and in place-change processes are the key reciprocating elements of intergenerational education that precondition and result from it. Yet, these elements, we expect, are not deemed that important in educational practice, policy or teacher education programs.

Importantly, intergenerational place-based education offers quite a radical view on the possible role of schools. Embracing this approach will require attention to the significance of *the role of places, materials and other species in the interactions between learners*. This requires attending to the multi-directional flow of inputs and outcomes among pupils, the adult community (educators, NGOs, community groups and others) and the place elements that connect them. Interestingly, as place-sensitive ethnographers we found evidence of how non-human materials played a role in this case. The arrival of the small mountain of pungent compost (itself full of living microbes and an aggregation of the decomposing waste of many further-flung families) was perhaps symbolic of the way human and more-than-human worlds are intertwined in any educational context. PBE, when conceived as an intergenerational practice, might start with noticing these interweavings and perhaps encouraging or discouraging these processes through everyday place-based practices founded on some ethical positioning.

Through intergenerational place-based education, all participants, places, and the relations among them are co-produced. We suggest that intergenerational place-based education is a practice founded on a process of valuation and re-valuation through material reorderings in space and time. Because of this framing,

intergenerational place-based education is not easily prescribed. By definition, it will be contingent on relations that are intersubjective and intergenerational, but also place-based, material and embedded in the hybridized connectivities between humans and the more-than-human world. If schools are to embrace PBE in any form, our findings suggest the need for school-based changes to intergenerational relations and decision-making structures and the formation of new intergenerational collaboratives. Intergenerational place-based education requires schools and community-based learning partnerships to be locally sensitive to how the boundaries around places are drawn, and to what forms of knowledge are valued and harnessed in programs. Locally, we would do well to reconsider what material processes count in our intergenerational and place-based embeddedness, who is educator, who is learner, where education might take place, and what its goals might be so that places and people can better flourish.

Endnotes

i.   This view of learning takes an emergent view of knowledge creation that is different from other approaches where knowledge may be conceived of as a static entity that is transferred, or involve internalizations of any kind that reinstate the mind-world dualism Dewey was so keen to do away with.

ii. Offering an ethical analysis, Whatmore (2002) challenges us to consider the more-than-human, corporeal and dimensions of situated and practical inter-subjectivity. In doing so, she asks us to think beyond the rational autonomous ethical subject into the hybrid zone of embodied relational ethical practices in places. Rather than seeing people as individual rational entities, the evidence offers an account of the ways in which people "do" places (with all their material trappings) as sites for the performance of inter-corporeal, intergenerational and ethical encounters.

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