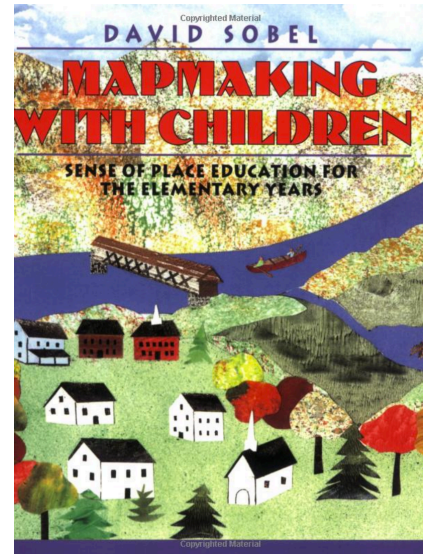


David Sobel
Workshops
Professor Emeritus
Antioch University New England

A. Mapmaking with Children

How do children naturally come to learn their neighborhoods and communities? Once we understand this, we can design curriculum that builds on the underlying biological patterns.

This practical and participatory workshop will include research on children's neighborhood maps, a clear developmental model of children's geographic understanding, examples of social studies and geography curriculum based on this developmental model and a mapmaking/treasure hunt activity that involves local exploration and a literacy challenge.



B. Developing a Ladder of Environmental Responsibility



A tidal wave of global climate change curriculum is crashing on schools. Teachers and administrators are baffled about whether it's a good idea to educate children about climate change and if yes, how they should do it. This workshop employs a research-based approach to thinking about how schools can change their own, and their students' behavior, so that the school is reducing its carbon footprint while helping students and families do the same thing.

The solution is the creation of a ladder of environmental responsibility that creates a distinctive culture of environmental care and behavior in each school.



C. Applying the Small Worlds Principle in Curriculum Development

In *Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators*, David Sobel identifies seven recurrent children and nature play themes and illustrates how these themes can be used as design principles. Some of these themes are special places, adventure, adventure and small worlds. This workshop will give you the opportunity to understand the developmental implications of the “small worlds” principle, see examples of it in elementary and middle school curriculum and experience it yourself in the creation of a micro-park. Literacy and numeracy content included.

D. Glad Animal Movement: Supporting a Full Range of Bodily Exploration in Childhood

As childhood becomes more digitized and indoors, one of the things that disappears is a full range of movement behaviors. Childhoods are becoming sedentary and constricted. One of the challenges for elementary school teachers and environmental educators is to counteract this trend and encourage a wider, fuller, healthier range of body movements in children. Creating a full repertoire of bodily movements makes students healthier and assures the development of a fuller range of neural pathways.

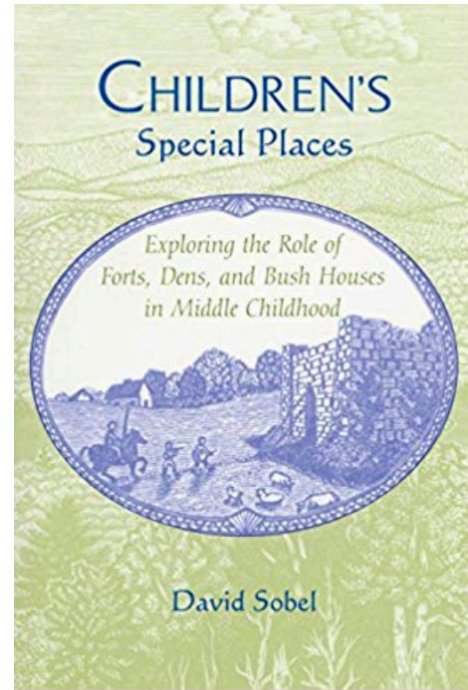
In this workshop, we'll spend time outdoors creating movement adventures for each other that encourage a full range of movements with an additional emphasis of vocabulary development. The process we used will serve as a model for doing similar activities with elementary-aged children.



E. Children's Special Places: Theory and Practice

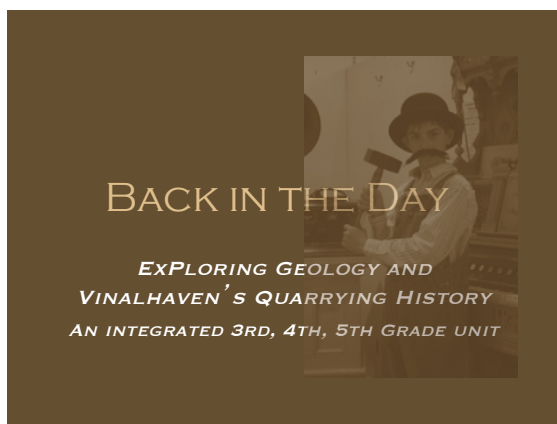
Around the world, in diverse cultures and environments, children create huts, dens, bushhouses, forts, special places, in between the ages of about six and twelve. What are the biological reasons for this worldwide phenomenon, what different forms does fort-building take, and why is this of interest?

We'll examine our own childhood special places, we'll see slides of special places from around the world, and we'll build some special places with indoor or outdoor loose parts. Then we'll think about the ways in which special place construction can become part of the curriculum or program in your educational setting.



F. Storytelling and Evaluation

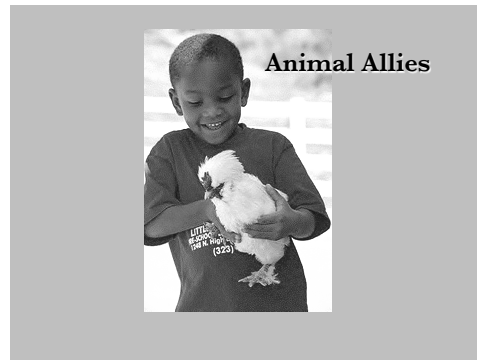
Karl Rove said that if he had the choice of using data or a Shakespearean quote to support a policy initiative, he'd use the Shakespearean quote. I take this to mean that the illustrative quote, or the good story, is often more persuasive than quantitative data. Similarly, when evaluating and documenting a project, it's often good to amplify quantitative data with qualitative impact. Telling the stories that illustrate the success of a project are often just as effective as data about number of students impacted or number of presentations delivered.



In this workshop, each participant will write a short story that provides "good news" about a classroom approach, project or initiative. We'll follow a highly scaffolded process that walks the participant through a series of steps to assemble the component parts of a story. Then each person will write a one to two-page story, complete with quotes and photos, that illustrates the positive outcomes of the project. The process will serve as a useful model for writing projects with students.

G. Program Development Based on Childhood and Nature Design Principles

The seven Children and Nature Design Principles are Special Places, Adventure, Fantasy, Small Worlds, Hunting and Gathering, Animal Allies and Maps and Paths. These principles can be useful in constructing new and innovative approaches to curriculum design in schools or program design for summer and vacation camps, nature center programming and even birthday parties.



We'll look at examples of applying the design principles in school and outside of school. Then we'll all work on a design challenge—using the design principles to do program design in the local setting. Finally, in small groups, we'll use the principles to innovate your approach to curriculum or a program you need to design in your personal or professional life.

H. Language Development, Movement and Nature Education

Early language development can be rooted in understanding the natural world. We'll examine how language emerges in traditional cultures and how we can foster language development through scaffolded explorations in nature. We will tie vocabulary development and language differentiation to the kinesthetic and tactile sensory modes.



And we'll hearken back to old-fashioned movement education and try to revive it outdoors. Be prepared to go barefoot, and to create/enact mini adventures inspired by lots of active verbs.