

環境教育實務實習

ISLANDWOOD

A SCHOOL IN THE WOODS

Bainbridge Island, Washington state

United States of America

July 8 – August 4, 2013

Wong Oi Lye

Internship Report

Islandwood – A School in The Woods

8 Jul – 4 Aug 2013



I, Oi Lye Wong, have been participating in an internship program at Islandwood, 4450, Blakely Avenue NE, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-2257, *from 8 July until 4 August 2013*, together with two of my fellow graduate students from NTNU. During this period of time, we were participating in several courses of Islandwood's "Summer Camp Program", joined children programs that were guided by Islandwood instructors, were invited to various events as well as had the opportunity to have discussions with various staff from Islandwood. The participation in an internship program is a mandatory part of my studies in Environmental Education at NTNU.

In this report, I am going to describe each part's contents and provide my own opinion or recommendation wherever possible. This is to provide feedback as well as useful information to Islandwood in order to incorporate any suggestion in their future programs.

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Program participation

As part of the internship program, I was attending the following programs that were held during my stay at Islandwood:

10 July	“Wizard in the Woods”
11 July	“Nature Chefs”
12 July	“Sprouting Scientists”
15-19 July	“Ocean Discoveries”

I was assisting Islandwood instructors in these programs while shadowing the guides in order to observe their way of educating their groups.

The most relevant event was my participation in the “Ocean Discoveries” program, which I will be focusing on in more detail in this report. Regarding the other above mentioned programs, a brief description can be found here:

Wizard in the Woods (For Campers Entering 3rd - 4th Grades)

Description of the program:

There’s magic all around us - you just have to look for it in the right way. In this wacky camp, enroll in wizarding classes about the magic of nature. Earn your wand by mixing potions in the lab, studying herbology in the garden, and creating your own spells during this week full of imagination and creativity.



Figure 1 Camper read out his spell

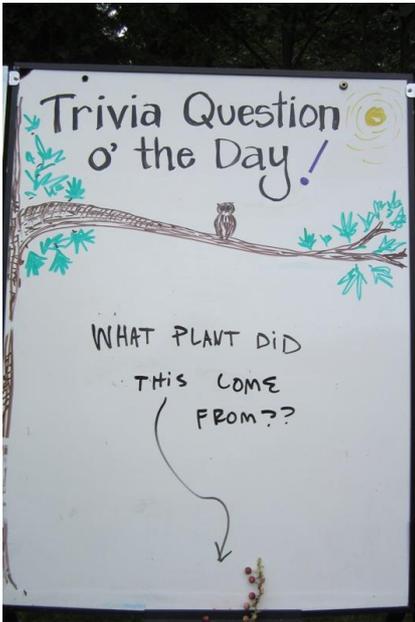


Figure 2 Warm up session in the morning

This is the first day I shadowed the program. The summer camp program always started by forming a big circle for campers from different programs, putting up an educational trivial question and then moving on to a warming up session lead by an instructor.

Programs for “Wizard in the Woods” today were making block prints of animal foot prints, teaching their names (both in English and Latin) and its habitat. Then, we went to the woods and made our personalized spells. Later, we were at the learning studio, where the instructor provided information on the care of magical creatures: owls. In the late afternoon, we started with unicorn tracking and had a “*Quidditch match*” between our two guilds.

Educational focus:

- Learn about the concept of predator and prey in nature.
- Encourage campers to wonder & be curious.
- Motivate campers to get familiar with nature’s wilderness via participating in creative games.

Nature Chefs (For Campers Entering 1st - 2nd Grades)

Description of the program:

In this unique camp, learn how a seed transforms into a snack. Identify edible plants in Islandwood’s forest, get your hands dirty in the garden, and take your harvest into the kitchen with our chefs to create your own yummy treats.



Figure 3 Picking berries



Making gnocchi

I love this program as I enjoy cooking myself. We played the “Bear-Salmon-Mosquito” game in the morning, then got our chef hats & aprons and harvested berries for popsicles, and made gnocchi from scratch. We played “Tail-Tag” after lunch. Afterwards, we were hiking to the “Floating Classroom” and enjoyed our popsicles in the warm sun!

The education focus of the program was to teach campers about the food source.

Sprouting Scientists (For 4, 5 & 6 year-olds entering Kindergarten)

Description of the program:

You don’t need a lab coat to be a real scientist-everyone has a little mad professor in them. This camp is designed to introduce young campers to chemistry and physics through colorful art projects, wacky games and a little magic.



Figure 4 Exploring the compost



Finding living creatures in the compost



Figure 5 Making Art work in the woods – a bird nest

These are the youngest campers in summer camp programs. The program only lasted half a day for each group. In the morning session, we went to the garden and were investigating the compost system. In the afternoon session, we walked to the forest and gathered materials to make a *huge* bird nest.

Ocean Discoveries (For Campers Entering 3rd - 4th Grades)

Description of the program:

Do you ever wonder what lies deep beneath the surface of the ocean? Do you love searching for strange creatures in tide pools? Have you ever wanted to become a marine biologist? If the answer to any of these answers is yes, then check out Ocean Discoveries camp! Throughout the week travel all over Bainbridge Island to explore the wonders of salt water life.



Figure 6 Fay Bainbridge Park



Blakely Harbor

The “Ocean Discoveries” program was the longest that I joined regarding duration. Throughout this program,

interesting facts

- 4) We examined crabs, shells, and starfish
- 5) We learned about plants
- 6) We visited the **Bog Tree House**

The Watershed Education Model of Islandwood was simply brilliant. It was fun to see how the instructor was using a watering pot as rainfall explaining the watershed system. His overview shows the water's way of flowing down from high altitude via streams & rivers, ending in the ocean. The kids were shocked when the instructor was using colored chalk, painted the riverbank and then when "raining" it down, the pond immediately turned into color (i.e. polluted) - this was one of the best ways of educating I have ever seen.

My suggestion: The tree house was a fantastic experience for kids. We learned about some tree species around Islandwood. The program is about *ocean* discoveries - at least, I would relate it in any way to *water*. Thus, instead of introducing trees to the kids, more appropriate would be introducing them to the bog and the marsh next to the tree house.



Figure 8 Fay Bainbridge Park exploration

3rd day

We went to the Seattle Aquarium. We saw many "awesome creatures" (as Islandwood calls them for its younger audience, e.g. giant octopus, sea otters, sea lions, seals, starfish, lionfish, jellyfish, Anemones and many more).

Due to time constraints, we didn't manage to spend more time at the Aquarium.

My suggestion: It is advisable to pre-check the feeding times, as it this kind of experience is also fun and most of the time, the speakers would combine educational elements during the feeding time. The kids were disappointed for not having the opportunity to see the big water tank where divers were feeding the fish – we were just right at the corner gathering and waiting for others for the bathroom time, no kids were allowed

to walk another 5 meters to see the big tank - a real pity!



Figure 9 Seattle Aquarium

4th day

We went to Rockaway Beach where we met divers who brought us some sea creatures from the ocean: starfish, crabs, and sea slug.

My suggestion: As there were no bathroom facilities, may be Islandwood could prepare a portable toilet instead of sending the kids all the way back to the center for “nature’s calls”.



Figure 10 Meeting with divers



Campers enjoying the view on a sunny day

5th day

We explored a low tide at **Fort Ward**

We caught crabs and climbed onto rocks at Blakely harbor

We completed the species account booklet

Farewell Event



Figure 11 Fort Ward beach



Stranded Jellyfish



Beautiful creatures

My opinion about the summer programs at Islandwood:

Overall, there was a good ratio between educators and learners: 1 instructor, 1 assistant (intern) to 10-12 kids.

The teaching focused on guiding, encouraging on exploring, and provoking the kids' curiosity about nature. Islandwood's concept of offering hands-on experience and using scientific methods is the main core of the program.

Another positive point was to combine art, science, and physical exercise.

There is a big contrast to the Asian way of teaching and learning: In Asia, education programs are putting emphasis on knowledge rather than experience. Parents focus on how much knowledge the children gain through the program, rather than children getting to know how to find a problem and come out with a solution.

Presentation

As a final part of our internship, we all were asked to hold a presentation with a focus on our countries and the very nature of educational programs.

29 July - 3 presentations

- Katya and Liuba (USSR) – Environmental Education in Botanical Garden Institute
- Tangerine and Jane (Taiwan) – From Island to Island
- Li (Malaysia) – Environmental Education and Environment Issues in Malaysia

We spent 3 hours to complete all the presentations with questions and answer sessions among the speakers and the audience. It was a good opportunity for Islandwood staff to get to know more about our homeland countries and the present environmental education movement in each individual country.



Figure 12 Presentation to Islandwood staff

Meeting with Islandwood staff

Apart from the participation in programs and taking over smaller tasks to assist the guides, Islandwood made it possible for our group to interview many employees from various departments and discuss openly their tasks, challenges and mission. This opportunity has been one of the unique & well-worth parts of the internship, for which I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Islandwood and its management.

The following lists the dates & conversation partners with whom discussions were possible:

- 9 July – John Haskin (Senior Vice President for Education)
- 9 July – Karen Salsbury (Senior Faculty for Natural History Education)
- 18 July – Theresa Song (Graduate Program Coordinator)
- 26 July – Danny Moloney (SOP, School Overnight Program Coordinator)
- 29 July – Ben Klasky (President and CEO)
- 30 July – Kate Bedient (Brightwater Program Manager)
- 30 July – Derek Jones (Brightwater Lead Educator)
- 1 Aug – Blair Griffin (Event and Summer Programs Coordinator)
- 1 Aug – Thatcher Heldring (Marketing and Communication)
- 1 Aug – Jeannie Patterson (Philanthropy Officer)

One of my areas of focus was the administrative/managerial part of a nature center. I am happy to have arranged meetings with a number of Islandwood staff to enhance my knowledge in this area besides the

educational part of this internship.

Cultural events, activities and tours

During my internship period, Islandwood was organizing several events which enriched the width of the internship experience and added to the relaxed atmosphere that made studying & learning enjoyable as well.

The following lists the events that I was able to participate in:

- 8 July – (Cultural Event) Welcome dinner at Graduate Lodge by Karen and Maria
- 9 July – (Tour) Docent tour of Islandwood by Shannon
- 13 July – (Volunteering) Invasive plants, pepperweed picking at Battle Point
- 17 July – (Tour) Seattle Aquarium
- 17 July – (Cultural Event) Thank you BBQ at Battle point for pepperweed picking
- 20 July – (Leisure) Meeting with Uncle Yang, Fay Bainbridge Park, Clamming, Potluck for lunch
- 21 July – (Volunteering) – AlderDash
- 21 July – (Cultural Event) Welcome dinner at Karen’s house for Katya and Liuba
- 23 July – (Tour) Training to IW docents and volunteers by Karen
- 23 July – (Leisure) Kayaking at waterfront
- 25 July – (Leisure) Water aerobics and sushi evening with Islandwood staff
- 27 & 28 July – (Tour) Olympic National Park (Dana and Bill)
- 29 July – (Tour) West Sound Wildlife center (Michael Pratt)
- 30 July – (Tour) Brightwater center (Docent: Robert and Shannon)
- 30 July – (Tour) MercerSlough Education Center (Educator: Leilaini)
- 30 July – (Cultural Event) Thank you Ice-Cream to summer camp instructors and Interns by Karen
- 31 July – (Tour) The Bloedel Reserve (Docent – John and Joyce)
- 31 July – (Cultural Event) Farewell party for Russian, Taiwanese and Malaysian interns at Karen’s house
- 31 July – (Cultural Event) Willian Shakespeare – The Tempest
- 2 Aug – (Tour) University of Washington – Botanical garden (Educator: Patrick, Tara)

Overall conclusion

Overall, I was delighted to have been offered this internship because I had the opportunity to get exposed to various areas compared to local intern students which mainly focused on assisting the instructors in designing and guiding the summer camp programs. The summer camp internship for the local university’s students is well-designed at Islandwood internship program. However, in my opinion, the internship between Islandwood and NTNU has yet to get more refined and defined about the details of the program for each intern. Establishing a standard for on-boarding and guiding the interns through each department and its

tasks should become mandatory for each intern, regardless of his/her area of focus.

Personally, I liked most to have had the opportunity to interview Islandwood's senior management to discuss strategic issues. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Islandwood to offer this kind of internship to me and hope that this exchange is going to get established more and more over time. As a way to exchange on ecological education as well as to bring each other's cultures closer, this is the best hands-on experience to make it happen!