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*Contents and Abstracts*

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## **Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning**

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# **Qualitative Research and Making Meaning From Adventure: A Case Study of Boys' Experiences of Outdoor Education at School**

**Lee Davidson**

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

## **Abstract**

*This article details the process and analysis of a case study, conducted over a six week period, involving an outdoor education class in an all-boys Catholic, New Zealand secondary school. The questions explored by the case study were the subjective meanings of adventure experiences in outdoor education and the benefits of qualitative research for assessing the value of outdoor education. The methodological techniques used were observation, involving some researcher participation, and in-depth interviewing. Subsequent data analysis was based upon theories of experiential education and adventure education, and concepts of leisure and human agency. The results of the study suggest that the meanings participants make of their experiences, and the value they derive from them, exceed those that may conventionally be sought and measured as an improvement in self-concept. These findings suggest that learning through adventure is potentially valuable as a holistic and life-long form of activity that enhances the capacity to enjoy and engage in living. This is an important extension beyond its often limited and compartmentalised applications, which are rationalised by specific outcome based objectives. A qualitative methodology was indispensable to an inquiry of this kind and warrants further attention in the process of understanding the meanings of adventure and learning.*

## **Motivations of Older Adults to Participate in Outdoor Adventure Experiences**

**Deborah Sugerman, Ph.D.**

University of New Hampshire, USA

### **Abstract**

*As the number of adventure based programs has increased in the past 40 years, the opportunities for older adults to participate in outdoor adventure experiences has increased steadily. A previous study determined that information was lacking on the reasons why older adults participate in this programming area. The current study (n=782) sought to answer this question using a survey derived from the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) Inventory. Data from the study indicated that the most important motivations were: 1) being in a natural environment; 2) being physically active; 3) learning about outdoor skills and the environment; and 4) being in a group of people with similar interests. The data also indicated that these motivations were more significant for women than for men and for participants younger than 65 years old.*

## **Adventure Education and Resilience: The Double-Edged Sword**

**James T. Neill**

University of New Hampshire, USA

**Katica L. Dias**

Northern Territory University, Australia

### **Abstract**

*Adventure education philosophers have argued that controlled exposure to challenge can enhance participants' psychological resilience. This study supports this claim, demonstrating significantly greater gains in psychological resilience for 41 young adults participating in 22-day Outward Bound programs than in a control group. All Outward Bound participants reported positive changes in their resilience and their overall change effect size was large. Perceived levels of social support predicted 24% of the variance in resilience gain scores, with participants' ratings of the least supportive group member being the best predictor. The findings for enhanced resilience and the important role of social support warrant wider investigation. In promoting psychological resilience adventure educators are alerted to the importance of facilitating positive interpersonal relations and minimising the detrimental impact of the diverse needs of group members.*

# **Differential Social and Political Influences on Girls and Boys Through Education Out of Doors in the United Kingdom**

**Dr. Lynn Cook**

Nidderdale High School and Community College, UK

## **Abstract**

*The way the outdoors was used for educational purposes was determined by the need for young men to be made fit for war and service in the British Empire, the need to improve the physical health of children from industrial conurbations and the preoccupation of those in authority with the notion of adolescence as a problem, especially the anticipated fear of juvenile delinquency. In the 1950s and early 1960s, when there was a significant increase in the use of the outdoors in education, much of the provision reflected the earlier emphasis on character training and “manly” virtues. The suggestion is made that this was due, in part at least, to the role played by a number of charismatic and influential figures and to continued sensitivity to social, political and military factors.*

# **Practice -Theories of Facilitating Experiential Learning in Outward Bound: A Research Report**

**Hovelynck J. (2000)**

University of Leuven, Belgium

## **Introduction**

*Practice-Theories of Facilitating Experiential Learning in Outward Bound* is the report of an inquiry into the largely tacit knowledge that guides program facilitation in Outward Bound Belgium. The report is only available in Dutch. The research is based on interview conversations about 79 significant program events, selected and narrated by facilitators during 8 programs. Data-collection and analysis followed the guidelines of ‘action science’ and ‘grounded theory’. The main research findings can be summarised as follows:

- The program facilitators share an extensive, yet largely implicit theory about learning and group processes. The facilitators familiarise themselves with this collective knowledge through an increasing participation in the Outward Bound community of practice (see e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991). The research refers to this base of similar, overlapping and attuned reference frames as the community’s practice-theory.
- The Outward Bound practice-theory can be understood as a theory about ‘relational learning’, in which the distinction between experiential learning and group development fades, and that presents the development of the group and of its individual members as interwoven processes.
- The practice of facilitating Outward Bound-programs can be understood as an “enactment” (Weick, 1979) of this theory of relational learning. With this reference frame, facilitators notice certain events while overlooking others, and hence create the process of relational learning in which they further intervene.

This research update gives a brief summary of the research method and of the two central concepts in the Outward Bound practice-theory, i.e. the notion of “relational learning” and the notion of program facilitation as an “enactment” of this theory.

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