

## **JAEOL 2.1** Editorial - Kaye Richards and Peter Allison

### Building a Body of Knowledge?

Since the publication of the first issue of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning in December 2000 we have been inundated with papers for review and potential publication. We are, of course, delighted at this response and also fascinated by it. Not only have we received increasing numbers of papers for review, we have also noted a steady increase in the quality of the papers. This is refreshing and, we believe, an indication of an increasing number of people thinking critically about and researching adventure education and outdoor learning. As a result we are pleased to move to the publication of two issues of JAEOL annually. Increasing the number of issues has meant some work behind the scenes to ensure that the appropriate systems and structures are in place: the reviewing and publication process is becoming smoother and more efficient and Fiona and Melanie have moved to a new office. We are also delighted to welcome Joseph Gibson as the editor of an exciting new series 'Country Focus', to be launched in the next issue.

As we work through all of these changes and growth we are also thinking about a 'global picture'. Within the field of adventure education and outdoor learning there are two other peer reviewed journals - Journal of Experiential Education (JEE) and the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education (AJOE). We are pleased to have excellent working relationships with Alan Ewert (editor of JEE) and with Tonia Gray (editor of AJOE). Tonia is about to move on from AJOE and hand over the reins to James Neill - we want to thank Tonia for her work over the years and welcome James with whom we look forward to collaborating.

It seems that we are at a transition phase where adventure education and outdoor learning is beginning to emerge as a more clearly defined body of knowledge. For us, it is an exciting prospect to be involved in the building of this body of knowledge. Of course, there is a great deal of work still to do in this process and there are many exciting debates to engage in. This body of knowledge which, of course, overlaps with numerous other bodies of knowledge can provide us with a forum for discussion and debate of a critical nature, but it also indicates a stage of our own development as a field to other disciplines. Of course, some will argue that this happened long ago, some will argue that it will never happen and for some the suggestion, speculative as it is, will be rejected without consideration. These responses are to be expected (and encouraged) and help us all to work on considering some of the bigger questions and issues regarding both what it is that we do and why it is that we do what it is that we do! Questions that we are continually surprised at the lack of discussion on. As we see this body of knowledge developing and growing it may be useful to describe what we consider the role of a paper published in this journal to be.

Papers published in JAEOL have been through a rigorous review process to reach publication. This review process is undertaken by the editorial board. Each paper considered for publication is blind reviewed by two members of the editorial board and by both of us. Papers can be accepted, accepted conditional upon minor changes, suggested to be rewritten or rejected. Papers are typically returned to authors for further changes or additions and then accepted for publication conditional on agreement from the reviewers, and some final changes regarding layout and format. So one logical question is about who is on the editorial board and why they are gatekeepers of knowledge? As you can see we have deliberately gathered members of the board from all over the world who are specialists in their fields and have extensive experience to bring to the journal. Not only are the board members from all over the world, they also represent many different facets of adventure education and outdoor learning and are leading researchers and practitioners in their specific areas. This enables us to ensure that papers published are of the highest possible quality. Occasionally we receive a paper which requires us to find another reviewer in order to do the paper justice. The hard work and commitment to quality often goes without acknowledgement. We are both very thankful of their service to the field in general and to the journal - they provide a solid foundation which helps to build the journal and the body of knowledge. As the body of

knowledge emerges, grows and develops so too do the editorial board so membership of the board is not permanent or static by any means.

Papers published in the journal have all been through this rigorous review process. This means that there is a tight and structured argument, it means that the research methods are deemed as appropriate and sufficient details included so the concluding comments are justified given the study undertaken (whether empirical or philosophical in nature). It is important to note that the publication of a paper does not mean that we, or the reviewers necessarily agree with the thesis. We do, when publishing papers, consider the timeliness of publication and in this sense filter the papers deemed by ourselves and reviewers as most timely in their proposal to knowledge.

Papers published are a proposal of knowledge, they are not statements of fact or of claims regarding what everyone should believe. In writing a paper for publication authors are making proposals to a body of knowledge. These proposals can then be accepted, rejected or simply ignored by the field. The way in which this happens is through citations in subsequent papers and books. If papers are cited and praised then this indicates acceptance, if papers are refuted and rejected then this indicates healthy debate moving the field forward, and if papers are ignored it means they are rejected as irrelevant or inappropriate. Of course, in using others work authors are indicating one of three things. First, that there is a sound body of knowledge on which they are building. Second, that there is a sound body of knowledge which has a gap they are proposing to fill. Third, that the current body of knowledge is flawed and it should be replaced by their new thesis.

This indicates two further stages in the review process which are important to consider.

Reviewers look to the above categories when considering a paper and ask whether the texts referenced are appropriate, are they from other scholarly journals or from magazines, the popular press or other non-monitored sources. Reviewers also look to the final three areas to understand the purpose of a paper, to answer the 'so what' question that should typically be clear in the conclusions of a paper. We hope that the above is clear and useful to both potential authors and to readers. Above all, we hope that you will enjoy reading the proposals to the emerging body of knowledge in this issue.

The first issue examined in this issue is managing emotional safety and emotional crisis in an outdoor setting. Dene Berman and Jennifer Davis-Berman examine 'An integrated approach to crisis management in wilderness settings'. They alert us to the ways in which the power of the adventure and wilderness experience can impact upon an individuals psychological well being. As they state, 'the frequency of emotional crises can equal or even exceed those of physical events'. In recognising that the outdoor and wilderness experience can have adverse effects, they discuss a mental health perspective and a crisis intervention model to attending to emotional crises. This highlights how anxiety can be an adaptive response and the skills that outdoor leaders require in order to competently manage emotional safety.

Shayne Galloway also attends to issues of outdoor leadership examining theoretical cognitive differences in expert and novice outdoor leader decision-making. He examines decision-making and judgement, and how the naturalistic setting of the outdoors impacts upon such processes? Galloway considers how outdoor leaders develop their knowledge base in terms of progression to expert and competent judgement. His comparison of expert and novice outdoor leader decision making raises questions about the structures of professional training and the considerations that are required in preparation of competent outdoor leaders.

Robbie Nicols' first paper, in a series of three, gives attention to the historical foundations and functions of Outdoor Education drawing specifically on outdoor education in Scotland. He introduces important philosophical questions of outdoor education and indicates how, 'the assumptions, values and practices and justification of outdoor education developed as a dynamic process of change over time'. Nicol encourages us to not only recognise our historical foundations, but also to examine these more fully in the context of outdoor education provision and practice.

Dorin Festeu examines the motivational factors that influence Romanian University students participation in outdoor activities. In his study of over one hundred students he identified five

main categories of motivational factors and argues that evaluation of outdoor activity provision should consider these core motivational factors. He also highlights how the need to take the individual from their daily life routine and familiar environment may be 'more acute' for these students as in the Romania context leisure and tourism industries are in their infancy, therefore opportunities to escape from the daily monotony are poorer.

Donna Little offers an examination of the different ways in which meanings of adventure experiences can be constructed. Her study of women's personal meanings of adventure recreation asks in 'what ways do women access a sense of adventure in their lives, and how do women perceive themselves as participants in adventure recreation?' Little's research suggests that women continue to lack access to outdoor space and that this is, in part, a result of 'the continuing domination of male culture' in adventure recreation. The women in her study indicate 'a sense of not quite fitting with existing understandings [of adventure recreation] and of reconstructing adventures to fit with personal circumstances and abilities'. This issue serves to remind us of the multifaceted nature of many concepts of adventure education and outdoor learning. We hope the proposals to knowledge contribute to a richer understanding of what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.