

### **Time, Trust and Transition**

"Time flies when you are having fun" óit is an old saying that I often ponder. I wonder if we could also say "time flies when you are engaged in learning". Of course, many of us like to think that, yes, that is a reasonable comparison to make and that adventure education and outdoor learning does 'engage' people in a learning process so the time does fly. Looking back on 2004, it certainly seems, to me, that time has flown by! Time seems to be a theme that runs through the papers in this issue.

This issue of the journal starts off by looking back in time to the Norwegian explorer Nansen. Repp offers an overview of some of Nansen's experiences, writings and philosophy as it informs friluftsliv in Scandinavia. Some readers who are familiar with friluftsliv may be pleased to see this work; others who are not familiar may be keen to learn more of the philosophy and practices of friluftsliv and the sophisticated ways in which it is embedded in the Scandinavian culture. Some may disagree with some of Repp's interpretations and claims. Whatever people think, it is hard not to admire the achievement of Nansen crossing the Greenland icecap in 1888 then breaking up his pulk to make it into a small rowing boat to get to Godthab and spending the winter there while waiting to return to Norway. Following the crossing Nansen wrote "the impossible will take time, the difficult will be done immediately". It would be easy to interpret this in a 'conqueror of the mountains and of nature' paradigm but Repp clearly shows how Nansen was interested in nature and the importance of the relationship of humans and the environment for learning. I have great admiration for Repp writing in a second language about theoretical and subtle meanings, interpretations and cultural differences.

Cuthbertson, Socha and Potter continue the theme of time by looking back at traditional technology and examining some of the impacts of modern technology on outdoor education. As we seem to be increasingly pressured by a culture of consumerism and the festive season is referred to, by some, as the 'spending season' the issue of technology looks set to come under a brighter spotlight. In this paper the authors detail interpretations of technology and its influences on experiences in the outdoors, the social implications and potential hegemony it could contribute to creating. Furthermore they begin to explore the ways technology might influence what some refer to as an outdoor industry rather than outdoor education. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the paper notes the normative nature of education and the subtle ways in which values are portrayed: It is necessary for outdoor educators to realize that whether the equipment we use be traditional, modern or a mixture of both, each will convey unique underlying messages to participants and will have implications for student learning.

Beames presents a case study of an expedition to Ghana where he collected data that suggests five themes that are critical to the expedition experience. For some readers this tradition of expeditions may seem strange as it is a quintessentially British phenomenon where young people travel overseas with the varying aims typically involving science, adventure and community work. This sector of the outdoor field can be traced back to the history of exploration to which Nansen was a significant contributor, followed by other polar explorers such as Scott then Watkins and later Herbert. Beames takes a critical look at an expedition and makes implications of his research clear for others utilising similar mediums but in various cultural and social contexts. He is also careful to point out that " Öthere is no algorithmic formula ensuring that the adventure phase yields a, b and c outcomes and the community phase yields x, y and z outcomes." Personally, I am pleased to see researchers in outdoor education turning their attention to overseas expeditions as this is a growing area of provision in the UK and, I believe, a fruitful area for both philosophical and empirical research.

O'Connell and Dymont examine journaling, previously unexplored in this journal but a common practice in a great deal of outdoor education practice. The assumptions around

giving students time, after an experience, to reflect and write, in the hope of enhancing the meaning making process appear to be, at best, questionable. This paper throws light not only on a variety of problematic issues but also offers some suggestions for solving difficulties that students encounter when critically reflecting on their experience:

Given that the students with whom we are working are products of an educational system that promotes a 'banking' style of learning (Friere, 1993), emphasises knowledge acquisition, and separates disciplines, perhaps it should come as little surprise that when students are provided with an opportunity for critical reflection, engagement, and evaluation in their journals, they are unable to perform.

Leberman and Martin examine the process of structured reflection in a higher education context where students examine theory, have practical experience, and then are asked to reflect. From the qualitative data presented they suggest a modification to Kolb's learning cycle to incorporate structured post-course reflection and the importance of time for both formal and informal reflection.

Finally, McCulloch presents two case studies from the sail training sector of outdoor education based in the UK. They are an example of an historic practice which is heavily steeped in tradition and culture and, it appears, is a powerful medium for learning and development. Presenting a sociological analysis he offers a fascinating deconstruction of the powers at play in the two contrasting traditions and the value laden nature of what may otherwise appear to be merely logistical choices. Furthermore, the findings and the methods employed throw some light on other sectors of outdoor education, provocatively suggesting that: ...the classic Duke of Edinburgh's Award type of expedition with its emphasis on group decision making and independence...supporting young people to travel autonomously through challenging environments may be understood...as radical and empowering.

As I mentioned in the last editorial, this will be my last issue as editor. Time has flown by and it has been an enjoyable experience to start and edit the journal during the first five years. The trust that I have been given by the Institute for Outdoor Learning to do this work is much appreciated and, as I pass that trust on to the new editorial team, I am excited to see the journal grow and develop further to enhance our understanding of adventure education and outdoor learning.

On a personal note it has been filled with some wonderful experiences, from the support of Chris Loynes to take on the trust, working with Kaye Richards on the early issues, collaborating with Steve Lenartowicz who provided wise perspectives and helped me to navigate through some difficult terrain at different stages and in the recent year working with Phil Donnison as the convenor of the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB). The editorial team (Joe, Nic and Dave) have all worked extremely hard, as have Fiona and Melanie in the office. Of course, all of the people who have served on the review board and the authors from around the world are the people who make the journal 'work' and the readers give the journal purpose.

I am pleased to hand over to Linda Allin, Barbara Humberstone and Nic Tucker who make up the new editorial team and will be working, growing and developing the journal. I am sure that the journal will grow and mature under their careful and attentive eye and make valuable contributions to this exciting and rewarding field in which we work.