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Outward Bound Canada Journal of Education

Recycling Past Wisdom for Present Times



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
<i>Alon Gelcer</i>	
FEATURE ARTICLE - - Remembering Our Roots: Kurt Hahn	5
<i>Sean Blenkinsop, Volume 8, 2002</i>	
What is Experiential Education?	10
<i>Association of Experiential Education</i>	
FEATURE ARTICLE - - What is a Profession?	11
<i>Peter Martin</i>	
Reconnections: Forging links between Hahn-inspired schools and programs	20
<i>Sarah Wiley</i>	
FEATURE ARTICLE - - Community: Past and Future	21
<i>Wendy Pieh</i>	
Call for Articles	23

The Outward Bound Canada Journal of Education is an occasional publication of the staff and friends of Outward Bound Canada, intended to spark healthy debate, discussion and the exchange of ideas relevant to the Outward Bound tradition of adventure-based experiential education, with a particular focus on the OBC community. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of OBC nor of anyone officially representing the organization. The journal receives financial and logistical support from the school. Correspondence should be directed to:

The Editor
OBC Journal of Education
Outward Bound Canada
996 Chetwynd Road, RR#2,
Burk's Falls, Ont. POA 1CO
1-888-OUTWARD

Introduction

Reduce, re-use, recycle. A familiar mantra for all of us, no doubt. Can this be applied to knowledge and wisdom? Sure, in fact this sort of recycling is a testament, an indication of the depth of truth which lends itself to a timelessness required to be recycled. Likewise it is often the case that the good teachings are those which are worth learning and relearning time and again, each time integrating the knowledge at a deeper and broader level.

When asked to produce another journal of education before upcoming staff training, I first delved back into the past journals to see what where we'd come from. As the ancient Chinese proverb goes, "To know the road ahead, look to those who've traveled there before." In reading articles from 1984 onwards, what stood out was the timelessness of the insights, knowledge and wisdom contained in those articles. So many of the articles are still so valuable that they beg to be let out to breathe after many years on dusty shelves.

With no time to collect enough new articles for a journal before staff training, the idea of recycling emerged. As necessity is the mother of invention, so was born the issue at hand.

But how to select a few from the many? Over the past 20 years, there have been 8 journals produced (the last 2 under the new title of OBC JOE), roughly 40 odd articles of outstanding quality and diversity. One article from 1991 examines the role of staff "ownership and control" in our organization while another tackles the issue of job satisfaction and it is fascinating to look at what has changed over time and yet how much today is so similar to the reality of 20 odd years ago. On issues of growth and management, there is an article about how decisions and change take place in our organization and even an expose on the ramifications of developing a second base while a third article way back in '84 looks at the organizational characteristics of COBWS and explores the possibility of fostering organizational "expansion without compromising the integrity of educational and community values" (Suchman). There are articles about experiential learning theory and about the use of psychodrama and theatre techniques in de-briefs. The entire fifth volume is devoted to issues of gender and diversity within our organization. The 2001 issue contains some hard hitting articles including a second look at staff compensation and an article about whether OBC is losing it's edge on quality. In the last issue of 2002, there is yet a third excellent exploration of compensation and professionalism, a look at pro's and pitfalls of working with your partner/spouse as a staff pairing, and an article on creating sympathetic connection with students by putting yourself on your learning edge. Even the very first article of the very first journal, about the nature of relationships between organizations such as ours and their boards of directors is fascinating and twenty years later it is still relevant for anyone interested in understanding fundamentals of the relationship with our board.

Of course, there is no right choice when faced with this sort of selection. Contained inside this issue are three feature articles which mingle nicely when read in sequence but also embrace the guiding themes of the 2005 season: "student centered learning", "quality" (in all that we do), "parallel process" and "living Outward Bound". The first is a piece entitled "Kurt Hahn: Remembering Our Roots" by Sean Blenkinsop (past instructor and graduate in Philosophy of Ed at Harvard), the second is an insightful look of what it means to be a professional in our field by Peter Martin, and the last is a short article on community by Wendy Pieh.

Remembering our roots is obviously crucial. Our past history not only creates a sturdy base from which to grow and branch out, but also grounds us in our fundamental purpose, and seems an obvious place to start. But, as the old Jewish aphorism goes, "the past has a vote, not a veto" and the article on professionalism takes a stark look at how our behaviour in the here and now of the present day work force, impacts our status as professionals. To continue with the tree metaphor, the two articles side by side remind us that although it is important to be aware of strong roots, it is equally important to be

REMEMBERING OUR ROOTS: KURT HAHN

Taking Concerns to Action; A Challenge for Today

By Sean Blenkinsop

History is always a delicate place to wander. There are times when programs, like children, outgrow their roots and need to move on and face the changing world of their existence. However, often children return to those roots in order to regroup, gain sustenance from the depth, or just to remember where it is they have come from. That return can act as a reminder and a re-orientation. With respect to programs, which are constantly changing members, growing, and morphing; this return can serve as a foundational anchor as the members try to understand where they fit in the larger scheme of the world.

Remembering the Problems: The Declines

In speeches given in North America in 1960 Kurt Hahn suggested that the youth of the day had "to be protected against certain poisonous effects inherent" in the society. He went on to say that "five social diseases surround them" (Hahn, 1960). These 'diseases' were the five¹ declines:

There is the decline in fitness, due to the modern methods of locomotion: the decline in

That said, with this short piece I propose to remember. First, to remember what Kurt Hahn saw as the problems facing the society of his day. Then, to remember the beliefs Kurt Hahn drew from in order to respond, with inspired action, to those problems. The rooted beliefs that have made Outward Bound and those many other movements that Kurt Hahn created and inspired, (e.g. the United World Colleges, the Round Square Alliance, and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards) the unique and powerful educational organizations they are.

initiative, due to the widespread disease of spectatoritis: the decline in care and skill, due to the weakened tradition of craftsmanship: the decline in self-discipline, due to the ever-present availability of tranquilizers and stimulants: the decline of compassion, which William Temple called "spiritual death". (Hahn, 1960)

¹There are in some places 6 declines: The missing decline is "the decline of memory and imagination due to the confused restlessness of modern life."

Are we remembering Peace?:

Hahn's first school, Salem, was named after the Hebrew word for peace, Shalom. One of the greatest intellectual influences for Hahn, apart from Plato, was an essay by William James called "The Moral Equivalent of War". In it James argues fiercely for a peace built out of adventure, challenge and growth. James saw that war seemed to provide something for the young and that it would be impossible to stop war without being able to replace it with something that could provide similar opportunities for experience, challenge, and deeply shared relationships. Hahn translated this into group adventure in the wilderness. For Hahn, James' notion was a clarion call for the group wilderness expedition

Are we remembering Service and Ideals?:

Hahn talked little and did much; deeds reflected the man. We must remember that it was Kurt Hahn the Jew, albeit lapsed, in the increasingly anti-Semitic Germany, who wrote to the alumni of Salem, after a young activist was jack booted to death by the SS youth in front of his mother, to say that they must choose between Salem, peace, and Hitler. It was Kurt Hahn who was among the first to be jailed by Hitler. This was an ideal in action. But,

Are we remembering our commitment to personal growth: for ourselves as much as our students.

Students have within them unique passions

and every expedition is ultimately for peace.

Built into peace for Hahn was the idea that bringing people together from different cultures, different languages, and different socio-economic positions was the way to foster understanding. In fact, the world colleges were to be "living examples of what it means to be at peace"(James, 1995). They were to be a utopian ideal in the tradition of Plato come to life in experiential education. Hahn told of the times when the "head" students, they were called "guardians"(after Plato's philosopher kings), were a Hindu, a Hungarian, a boy from the local village, and Prince Philip of Greece (later the Duke of Edinburgh).

Hahn believed that this kind of service and action was part and parcel of learning. The goal of learning was "to purify the destructive inclinations of the human personality, to redress the imbalances in modern ways of living, to develop each person's disabilities to their maximum potential, and to place new found strength in service of those in need". (James, 1995)

and talents and Hahn said we must always respect

What is a Profession?

By: Peter Martin

Introduction

Outdoor education purports to be many things to many people. A flick through the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education, or the Journal of Experiential Education out of the USA, will attest to the diversity of outcomes and program options described under the broad heading of outdoor education – programs for youth at risk, corporate groups, environmental stewardship, and adventure recreation feature prominently. It is my experience that in each case, those working in the field regard themselves as *professionals*. But what is a profession? And further - could examples or literature from established professions provide hints as to how outdoor education could be conceived and developed as a profession? This paper suggests a model of how professions are constructed and raises some considerations for outdoor education.

There is a wealth of writing and research concerned with the nature and meaning of professions and professionals. Professionalism is understood within Western culture in certain ways - understanding whether or not we are a profession can help resolve some of the issues currently facing the field. In this article I have used the word *professional* at the outset to refer to the collective of people working in the broad area of outdoor education - would you as a reader have reacted differently if I had referred to outdoor educators as *workers*, or as having a *trade*, or even as *amateurs*? The term professional carries with it a number of constructed meanings, however, usually such constructions are aligned with positive, somewhat more sophisticated beliefs.

Wearing and Darby (1994) argued some years ago that outdoor education and outdoor recreation are not professions, but that people who work within these fields practice "degrees of professionalisation" (p.68). In 1999 and 2000 outdoor educators in Australia sought to consider these issues of professionalisation via a series of conferences concluding with a national summit conference in Bendigo, Victoria. The summit was built around a model of professionalism developed from a review of literature in the fields of teaching and nursing – fields which have both struggled more recently with issues of professionalisation (Martin 2000). It is this model that is offered here as a starting point for considering how professionalism ought to be shaped, and what such a process has to offer outdoor education. To that end I intend describing a number of signposts which point the way to a profession. (The metaphor of a signpost is suitable in that it 'points the way' - or 'gives an indication of' - rather than defines or describes. It leaves open the expectation that to really understand what is being indicated you would need to go

a general idea that contributions and specialized knowledge varies between different outdoor education orientations, such as corporate training, youth at risk or more critical outdoor education, clearly describing these aspects has not yet happened. I suspect we are also less than clear about what specific commonalities and differences may exist. I'll risk trying to explain commonalities and differences between different versions of outdoor education by mapping my interpretation of four different orientations of outdoor education – namely, outdoor recreation (OR), critical outdoor education (COE), adventure therapy (AT) and corporate training (CT). Firstly different orientations to outdoor education aren't *things* in the same sense that a rock or a tree is a thing. OR, CT, AT and COE are social constructs defined and shaped by the society or culture in which they sit. These variations can only mean what we make them mean in a given time, culture and space. I'll be very clear in acknowledging what I am describing here is meaning emerging from my Australian based experience of outdoor education.

Space prohibits a full discussion of the different orientations I have chosen here, however, the I offer the following brief descriptions of the respective motives of service for each orientation.

- Outdoor recreation seeks primarily to increase opportunities for recreation and leisure through skill mastery, socialization, relaxation or intellectual stimulation.
- Corporate training is concerned with enabling work groups to improve functional communication and vocationally related productivity outcomes.
- Adventure therapy seeks to “change dysfunctional behaviour patterns, using adventure experiences as forms habilitation and rehabilitation” (Priest and Gass 1997, p.24).
- Critical outdoor education is concerned with humanity's relationship with nature. It “is aimed at examining outdoor recreation and environmental issues in light of the dominant social order” (Martin 1999, p.464).

Figure 2, attempts to chart some of the similarities and differences between these four variations of outdoor education. What is immediately important however, is that such a map of the field is bound to be contestable. I doubt many would easily agree on such a mapping, yet this is exactly what the first two signposts to a profession are suggesting. Unless each of the different orientations of outdoor education, outdoor recreation, corporate training or adventure therapy (to mention only those I have selected here) can *clearly* describe their motive of service or contribution, *and* their specialized body of knowledge, then professionalism and its attendant benefits will continue to evade each aspirant professional. In Australia at least, a clear motive of service and body of knowledge for different orientations has not been adequately identified.

are understood - that members have an identified motive of service, understand the body of knowledge and the code of ethics which apply. This is a problematic area for outdoor education, outdoor recreation, adventure therapy and training. Each of these family members have their own educational pathways. For some it has traditionally been a university qualification, for others technical courses, community certificates or extended personal experience. In Australia, the development of Industry Standards for Outdoor Recreation has come a long way in identifying the training pathways and options for the *outdoor recreation* family member but it has faltered in my view because it hasn't acknowledged the differing needs of the other members, such as adventure therapists or corporate trainers. In some respects differences in accreditation are ideological differences between alternate views of what education ought be about (Martin 1998). The long standing ideological difference between universities offering a broad based liberal education compared to the vocationally specific training programs of technical colleges is one example with implications for the outdoor field.

I think the way forward in accreditation debates lies with acknowledging the disconnections and connections between each sector of outdoor education, then determining what is appropriately shared accreditation and what is specific to each family member. However, the extended outdoor education family has not yet sat around the table long enough to solve this potentially divisive issue.

Public recognition.

The final signpost I would erect to point to a profession is that of public recognition via either social standing or remuneration. Now this might seem a bit externally driven, but for many this signpost is the clearest indicator of a profession. It's the last signpost, but pivotal if we ever wish to move beyond self congratulatory mutterings in our own little groups. It's essential to ensure that the burnout and social trauma that is relatively common for people who work in our field, becomes a thing of the past.

Conclusion

I am excited by what is happening in the extended outdoor education family, both within Australia and internationally. In many ways the family is growing with new members on the way, perhaps some also leaving. What transpires in the family will ultimately come down to how we collectively clarify our respective contributions and motives of service -- the first signpost remains pivotal. While it will be a lot easier to develop the initial stages towards professionalism in a small group the risk is no-one will hear. Politically, small groups aren't very effective, can be easily ignored and exploited (sound familiar?). I believe that if the broader outdoor education field wants to

Hampshire: Human Kinetics.

Richards, G. (1998). ORCA Who? ORCA What? *Journeys*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 10.

Wearing, S. Darby, M. (1994) What Makes you an Outdoor Educational Professional? In *Outdoor Education - Proceedings of the 7th National Conference*. Frankston: Victorian Outdoor Education Association.

They know enough who know how to learn

-Henry Adams-

The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing

-John Powell-

I learned that good judgement comes from experience

and that experience grows out of mistakes.

-Doris Lessing-

Quotes: Klavora, P. and Chambers, D. (2001). The Great Book of Inspiring Quotations. United States: Sport Books Publisher

Community: Past and Future

by Wendy Pieh

Certainly when I think of COBWS I think of community. By community I mean a place where an individual can feel an appreciated part of a greater whole, acknowledged as a valuable and contributing member, with a sense of freedom to explore, grow and take on increasing responsibilities.

When we began COBWS at Black Sturgeon, community was not a word that we were using in terms of what we were trying to establish. I had a strong personal bias toward the staff living Outward Bound, being models for what we were trying to offer students. As well, I believed that only when given choice and freedom would instructors take responsibility fully and benefit from a sense of really making courses happen. My father did a lot of personal growth work with us in groups, and we built pretty impressive levels of trust.

When hiring, I don't think that either of us looked for the normal profile of an Outward Bound instructor. For instance, I hired Mary Morgan because of her smile and travels, Oliver LaRocque because I couldn't figure out his laugh, and Bill Templeman because of his commitment to integrity. Hard skills were essential of course, yet more was required.

We also had no money, and had to rely on each other extensively to get through. The first summer we had no vehicles to start out, and borrowed them from neighbours, families and staff. We hauled people around in an old rambler and some big old other car, as well as using our neighbour Einer's van, which could actually pull a trailer.

Our isolation was also a factor, with us having to turn to one another to get social needs met. We would sometimes pile into a few cars and go down to the Dorion, where Moon Joyce would get the whole place doing the bunny hop.

At the end of that summer my dad and I looked at each other and said, "Yup, organized chaos, just the way we like it."

It wasn't until a couple of summers later that I began

to take note of and appreciate the community that was developing. When we started community meetings, thanks to a disgruntled Fritz Lehmborg, the commitment from staff to participate in discussing issues and concerns, and to making decisions together absolutely astounded me. We all felt not only great ownership and pride in COBWS, but also equally important in its future. We had a highly functioning community (even though Andy Orr and Wendy Talbot could not come to terms about dogs - I really think the issue was about height.)

Testing Grounds

Once we realized that we did indeed have a very special community, we worked hard to perpetuate and protect it. When the new director, Ali McArthur, arrived, he couldn't understand why we would do things with consensus when other ways were easier and more structured. He and I would discuss things for hours, always with me gaining his acceptance as well as his skepticism: "I mean, Wendy, what will happen when the balloon bursts, when the going gets really and truly tough. Do you think that your community will last through that?"

COBWS faced several major tests, wherein we displayed our community at all levels. The first was when the financial crisis occurred and we asked staff if they could make any donations. Several staff did, including Rob Linscott. Imagine when, two months later, he received his pay check, only to be told please not to cash it! I received only support from staff through those rough times, with never a complaint.

A second test was the drowning of a young student. When he drowned, we pulled together into a unit where I could hardly even see the line between myself and someone else. It's hard for me to write about it even now, as I feel back to the support offered by the community. That one made a convert of Ali; his skepticism evaporated.

A third test happened after I left, which I can only relate from hearsay. That was when the school had to be evacuated due to fire burning its way through

Call for Articles for Volume 10

"Service Above All"

Guided by Kurt Han's declaration of "service above all" service as a course component is central to Outward Bound's mission world-wide. In this issue we want to focus our attention on service, explore it's many facets in the context of EE and also ask: If service is such an important espoused value at Outward Bound, how do we give it even more prominence in every program we offer?

In Volume 6, Steve Couchman proposed a format for accepting submissions: "Once your work has been received, it will be reviewed by at least two people. If no major revisions are needed, and the work submitted is appropriate to the Journal, a copy will be returned including any suggested revisions. Unless we here otherwise, we will assume that the suggested revisions are satisfactory, and the piece will be included in the issue." Ideally, the Journal would have an advisory board who's members would coordinate the publishing efforts.

Deadline for submissions is September 2005 (extensions possible on a situational basis).