

# HORIZONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OUTDOOR LEARNING

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**WHAT NOW?**  
SYNERGISE SKILLS AND  
BUILD ORGANISATIONAL  
RESILIENCE



ISSUE 91 AUTUMN 2020

**USE PEER PRACTICE**  
LEARN FROM LOCKDOWN, BE A ROLE  
MODEL AND TRY SENSORY APPROACHES



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Let us create your exciting new course!

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## HORIZONS

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Content for publication is always welcome and should be emailed to the Editor. The Editor will attempt to return all unsolicited material but cannot accept responsibility for it.

Please read the contributor guidelines before submitting content:  
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For additional details visit: <http://bit.ly/Advertise-Horizons>

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### INSTITUTE FOR OUTDOOR LEARNING

The Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) champions safe activities and effective learning in the outdoors. We are a professional membership institute working towards an application for a Royal Charter.

Learn about IOL and how to become a member: [www.outdoor-learning.org](http://www.outdoor-learning.org)

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### JOIN OUR EDITORIAL PANEL

Having a specialist panel means we have a wealth of experience in different types of Outdoor Learning at our finger tips. This helps ensure the stories we publish are up-to-date, well structured and useful to our readers.

If you're interested in joining our specialist panel, go to:  
[www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Research-Resources/Horizons-Magazine/Horizons-About-The-Panel](http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Research-Resources/Horizons-Magazine/Horizons-About-The-Panel)

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Thank you to the Horizons panel for their continued support and contributions.

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# EDITORIAL



## Weathering the storm: reimagining tomorrow and trying to be resilient

**U**nfortunately we can't just wrap up, batten down the hatches and wait for the storm to pass. Here, in this issue, there are some brilliant ways to strengthen our resources, build our resilience and, where necessary, reimagine the future of Outdoor Learning.

Although the precise nature of the storm we're each facing will be different, we are not alone... feel connected to Outdoor Learning professionals from around the world by reading their experiences of COVID-19 (from page 8). Go to our new 'Viewpoint' feature (page 40) for practitioner opinions on our sector, and get involved with the new 'Knowledge base' (see the back page).

Uncertain about where to begin with reimagining our new normal? Head over to page 15 for Catherine's guide to spectrum thinking. Here you will learn how you can *"seize the opportunity to consider ways to expand our audience, to include more touchpoints with active participants, and to leverage the distant but connected virtual environment"*. It is as good as it sounds! From page 32, Kerry shares lockdown learnings from the Suntrap Forest Centre; I loved watching the film shorts created by young people as part of the *At home safari film challenge*. There is also plenty of inspiration to be found in the sessions shared in 'Coming to our senses' (page 12), and practical guidance to follow in the interview with Tim, who answers questions about changes to the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (page 22).

Reflect on the skills and experience we need, individually and as teams, in order to bring our reimaginings to fruition. Start by reading 'Professional matters' (from page 19) which includes examples of professional benchmarks, and then head over to Paul and Loel's article about developing good judgement and decision-making skills on page 25. From synergising skills, it's only a small leap to multi-solving; Marcus writes about how our sector has an opportunity to both recover from COVID-19 and tackle the climate crisis facing us (page 28).

Alongside the new 'Viewpoint' section, there are also other new features to explore. 'Being Earthwise' (page 38) introduces a new question and answer approach to nature connectivity, and Janek shares the first of four articles thinking about diversity, equity and inclusion (page 35).

Whilst we dream of calm seas and blue skies, I hope you find lots to mull over and begin reimagining futures with ■



### EDITOR

Dr Carmen Byrne

horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org

*Horizons* looks to share different perspectives, ideas and good practice from across the Outdoor Learning sector. I'm always interested in hearing about your experiences and ideas for features. Look at our writer's guidelines, and then have a go at writing an article: <http://bit.ly/Writing-for-Horizons>

### READER VIEWPOINTS

It's great to introduce a new regular 'Viewpoint' feature which asks readers to give their opinions about current issues in Outdoor Learning.

Go to page 40 to get the latest thoughts about what our sector is doing well, and what could be better. Plus, find out how to have your say!

### IMAGE CREDITS

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## IN THE KNOW

The new members-only 'Knowledge base' is now live on the IOL website.

This new resource is a place to share knowledge, presentations and links about all aspects of Outdoor Learning provision.

It will be particularly helpful to students, apprentices, and members completing RPIOL, APIOL or LPIOL Awards.

To learn more about the 'Knowledge base' go to the back page.

# SCANNING THE HORIZON



WEB

## Designing learning

### Resource:

*The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines* by CAST.

### Why it's useful:

These guidelines have been iterated since the 1990s and reflect considerations for learning experience designs that accommodate all learners at every stage of their development. They are useful for formal and informal educators alike, are comprehensive yet manageable, and apply across domains and disciplines.

### Where to find it:

<http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

### Recommended by:

Catherine Saldutti, President and Founder of EduChange, based in Los Angeles, California.

*Go to page 15 to read Catherine's article about using Spectrum Thinking to build resilient organisations.*

WEB

## Resource recommendations by readers for readers

## Resourcing resilience

### Resource:

The Resilience Project.

### Why it's useful:

The Resilience Project, based in Australia, has a lot of online information and resources about mental health strategies to help people become happier and more resilient, which is a key and growing aspect of work in Outdoor Learning.

### Where to find it:

<https://theresilienceproject.com.au>

### Recommended by:

Calvin Healey, Program Manager.

*Calvin shares professionals' perspectives from around the world about what is happening in Outdoor Learning during COVID-19. Read from page 8.*

TOOLS

## Acting for change

### Resource:

*John Muir Award* by the John Muir Trust.

### Why it's useful:

There's plenty of inspiration to be found on this website and the award itself allows young people to explore and discover wild places and to engage in positive action for change. There's lots of ideas, examples and links to further resources.

### Where to find it:

[www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award)

### Recommended by:

Nuala Dunn, Freelance Outdoor Environmental, Arts Educator.

*Go to page 12 for Nuala, Geoff and Stu's how-to guide to sensory awareness and emotional understanding in Outdoor Learning.*





## Gaining flexibility

### Resource:

*Yoga for the inflexible male* by Yoga Matt.

### Why it's useful:

Taking the time to work on your own movement and flexibility is key to continued working as an Outdoor practitioner. This book is a useful stepping stone to helping manage expectations (and potentially limit damage to your own ego) and help individuals who may not have engaged with yoga, start that process.

### Where to find it:

Good bookstores.

### Recommended by:

Paul Smith, Multi-disciplined Adventure Sports Coach and Coach Educator.

*Paul, with Loel, writes about developing good judgement and decision-making skills from page 25.*

### IMAGES

Images are sourced from pxhere.com, except for *Last child in the woods* which was sourced from Blackwells.co.uk. Photographers retain copyright.

## Being guided to safety

### Resource:

*Guidance from the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004* (known by its reference L77) by HSE.

### Why it's useful:

It sets out the regulations applicants are required to meet, so is essential reading for anybody applying for a licence. In addition to some really useful guidance, the crux section is Appendix 3: the 20 regulations that make up the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. After over 15 years of inspecting I'm still surprised by the number of people who apply without actually reading them, especially regulations 6 and 9. It's a bit like turning up for an assessment course without ever reading the syllabus.

### Where to find it:

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l77.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l77.htm)

### Recommended by:

Tim Morton, Head of Service at Adventure RMS.

*Read the interview with Tim about the latest updates to Adventure Activity Licensing from page 22.*



## Keeping a sense of wonder

### Resources:

*Last child in the woods* by Richard Louv.

### Why it's useful:

Possibly the first book I had read which articulated my own concerns about the problems for humanity if we are disconnected from the natural world. The problem hasn't gone away, but perhaps we are becoming more aware of it. During our lockdown many more people have become aware of how important the natural world is for their own wellbeing, be it a walk in the park or watching the birds from their window. I hope as we begin to come out of lockdown we don't lose that sense of wonder and hopefully care for the natural world.

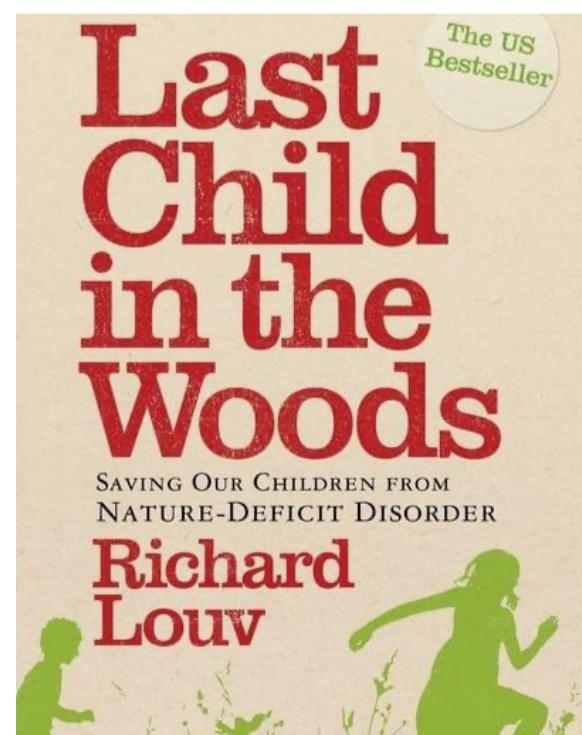
### Where to find it:

Good bookstores.

### Recommended by:

Kerry Rolison, Head of Suntrap Forest Centre, East London.

*Get inspiration from Kerry's article about learnings from lockdown at Suntrap Forest Centre, from page 32.*



## Training Courses

### Inspector Courses Include:

- RoSPA approved PPE Inspector
- RoSPA approved Wood Pole Inspector
- Wire Rope Inspector
- Working at Height and Access
- RoSPA approved Operational Inspection and Maintenance Course



### ERCA Courses Include:

- Traditional High Ropes Course Instructor
- Rescuer
- Adventure Park Instructor
- Low Ropes Course Instructor
- Temporary Low Ropes Instructor
- Site Specific Instructor



Courses can be run at **your own facility** - to ensure staff familiarity - or you can visit **our training venue** in Penrith. Courses count towards CPD points for various associations including ERCA and MTA.

All of our training courses will provide Outdoor Professionals (old and new) with the skills they need to operate safely and confidently. Using a combination of practical and theory to teach, train and assess, our courses are always very well received.



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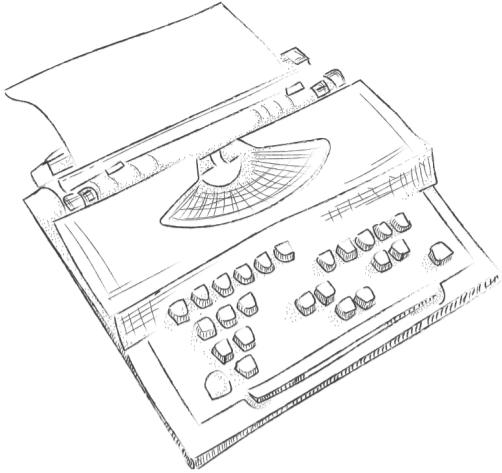


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# INSIGHTS

## IOL AND OUTDOOR LEARNING SECTOR NEWS

### || IMPACT REPORTING 2.0 ||

Measuring the potential impact of the current pandemic and associated health constraints influencing Outdoor Learning remains an important exercise (further surveys will follow). The findings of the second impact survey in July made it very clear that a significant proportion of provider organisations are at risk of closure if a 'no school residential visits' policy remains in force in 2021.

Findings from the report have been used to provide insights to UK and home nation governments. Details can be found at: [www.outdoor-learning.org/Covid-19/Covid-19-Impact-Surveys](http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Covid-19/Covid-19-Impact-Surveys) ■

### || STRENGHTENING OUR THEORIES OF CHANGE ||

As part of the work to build evaluation capability across the Outdoor Learning world, a very accessible series of blogs are being published on the IOL website. The blogs, written by Dr Lucy Maynard and Dave Harvey, are designed to enable all to articulate the rationale their work is based on. Constructing a theory of change helps us better consider why an intervention works and provides a basis for evidencing the impact, which is particularly valuable for beneficiaries, funders and policy makers. This is part of a range of research-related work supported and enabled by the Institute.

Read the theory of change blogs here:  
[www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/Theory-of-Change](http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/Theory-of-Change)

Further information about Outdoor Learning research is available at: [www.outdoor-learning-research.org](http://www.outdoor-learning-research.org) ■

### || REALISING THE VALUE OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION ||

IOL has teamed up with the Brathay Trust and the Outward Bound Trust to enable a new piece of research through Lancaster University Management School. This three-year project aims to develop a new understanding of how the UK Outdoor Learning sector is valued and to explore the possibility of enhancing that value by attaching it to contemporary social and environmental issues and priorities. The work is also supported by ERDF, UK Government Northern Powerhouse and Eco-I NW funding. The project will be led by Matt Healey and supervised by Dr Chris Ford and Professor Katy Mason ■

### || THE DEVELOPMENT OF UKOUTDOORS ||

In addition to the recent demonstration of the ability of the Outdoor Learning community to act cohesively under the UKOutdoors banner, the wider development of UKOutdoors continues. The Transformation Group continues to look closely at governance and financing, membership structures and accreditation. The group recognises the value of existing groups, identities and member services, and is seeking to retain and enhance those in the new organisation.

The recently launched website [www.ukoutdoors.org.uk](http://www.ukoutdoors.org.uk) is designed to support a single voice function and the individual founding organisation websites for IOL, AHOEC, BAPA and Outdoor Council continue to exist. ■

### || RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL VISITS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ||

IOL and the wider UKOutdoors team have worked closely with the strategic communications consultancy Monfort, enabled by PGL, in the past few months. This work has resulted in a clear message about the impact of school visits policy in England and Wales, and the need to change advice against school residential visits. The decision to focus on residential is a result of identifying the significant overlap in resources, people and organisations with non-residential Outdoor Learning and the wider school travel sector.

#saveoutdoored is being used to bring additional profile to the work; use this across social media to join the conversation and campaigning.

The differing position in Scotland, where Education Scotland has already stated its intention to not allow school residential before September 2021, has led to support for a campaign by the Scottish Outdoors Consortium. You can support this campaign through #saveyouroutdoorcentre ■

#### VISIT THE LICENSING SPOTLIGHT

Are you up-to-date with the latest guidance around Adventure Activity Licensing?  
Go to page 23.

# GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Outdoor Learning professionals from around the world talk about the impact of COVID-19



The start of 2020 quickly brought the Outdoor industry, like many others, to a grinding halt as COVID-19 spread around the world. Governments closed schools and introduced travel restrictions and safety regulations which made Outdoor activity work with individuals or groups impossible. Outdoor sector workers and organisations have been hamstrung, but given varying degrees of government support from country to country. Many will be forced to leave the industry, so these are quite desperate and uncertain times.

Although some countries are still going through very dark times, others are starting to show some green shoots of recovery which might offer us some light at the end of the tunnel (as of summer 2020). With this in mind, I reached out to some industry contacts around the world to ask them to share their thoughts and experiences of the impact and effect of COVID-19 in their country. I have provided some details about their background and experience to provide context. Contributors have provided their personal thoughts and anecdotes, so this article intends to give you flavour of what is going on from an individual perspective, rather than anything more in depth, or academic. I hope these insights will raise awareness and understanding about the global picture of the industry and highlight that there is a way forward for us in the (hopefully) not too distant future. Please note that English is not necessarily the first language of all contributors, and I've left some grammatical errors so it is still their voice and account.

## CANADA

PERSPECTIVE BY:

**Rachel Simoni**  
Multi-activity Instructor

Currently making, selling and donating face masks, Rachel has 10 years' experience working with children, four of those years specifically in Outdoor and Environmental Education.

**“** Each province in Canada is in slightly different states of emergency. Ontario (where I am) sees 200 new cases of COVID-19 each day out of 14.5 million people. Only emergency children and youth programs are open this summer so far. Day trips and tours are beginning to open up but not many places are hiring yet.

Many Outdoor workers I know have taken up a trade; my brother who was the one to push me to follow a career of Outdoor Education, is now learning carpentry skills and working with one of his childhood friends building decks.

Personally, I have signed up for government support which is enough for me at the minute as I am living in a cabin and not paying rent. To keep myself busy and feeling motivated, I have dusted off my sewing machine and have been making face masks. This fall I plan to go back to university to get my teaching qualification. I hope that there will be more governmental motivation to incorporate Outdoor and Environmental Education with traditional schooling, as contracting COVID-19 is significantly less likely in the outdoors.

## BRAZIL

### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Fabio Raimo de Oliveira

Freelance Guide, Trainer, Instructor

Working freelance, including as NOLS Instructor, OB instructor, safety and risk management consultant, Fabio has over 25 years' experience in guiding expeditions, over 15 years of staff training and over 10 years in safety and risk.



## AUSTRALIA

### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Ben Newham

Mentor, Instructor, Leader at the Outdoor Education Group



Ben has six years of experience in Outdoor Education.

**“** The Outdoor industry in Australia has been hit hard by this pandemic. Over the past months many full-time employees have been stood down, while many casual employees have effectively been made redundant. Unfortunately, it was necessary for organisations to take such drastic measures in order to maintain some degree of financial stability. Fortunately, the federal government was able to respond quickly with financial support to aid people in this situation. My partner and I are quite fortunate in that we are able to live comfortably on what we are receiving from the government, without diving into our savings. This isn't the case for everyone.

As restrictions ease, some schools are beginning to run their internal Outdoor Education programs, with appropriate risk management practices in place. Larger organisations are still working through the many policy/risk management issues now present, before they are able to begin getting back to normal. At the Outdoor Education Group, we hope to begin running programs again by the last quarter of the year. However, at this time, we are again seeing a spike in cases here in Victoria, which may push that date back further still.

As I'm sure is the case worldwide, there is so much uncertainty here in Victoria, Australia. Unfortunately, it seems almost impossible to say when programs will run again. Despite the anxiety that comes with such uncertainty, it is heartening to see so many people across the industry working together to figure out what a new normal looks like for Outdoor Education here in Australia post-pandemic.

**“**

Brazil is at stand still. 100% stopped Outdoor tours and Outdoor Education. Most (if not all) natural areas are closed to visitation. Independent users are still going outdoors to a certain extent, as lockdown was never implemented and enforcement of closed up areas never happened. People are starving for outdoor recreation.

The vast majority of Outdoor work in Brazil is freelance and has been freelance for decades, which means most people were not caught 100% by surprise having to re-invent revenue streams. Most of my friends and acquaintances went into hibernation of expenses, and most maintained some level of socially isolated outdoor activity, which helps mental health.

The government support is minimal and not extended to most Outdoor professionals, so largely people are on their own. Most business owners went into hibernation, but there hasn't been time for noticeable bankruptcy yet, as most of the operators are small.

The Outdoor industry is having a chance to live up to some of its most noteworthy skills: adaptation to reality you cannot control, living simply and serendipity. I believe there are a lot of positives to have come from this. Most people I talk to say if it wasn't for being broke and knowing of emotional pain associated with fatalities for some, this has been a good grounding period. I love staying local and living simply and paying attention to what matters.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



### PERSPECTIVE BY:

David Moreira Cardoso

Outdoor Education Instructor

Starting as a multi-activity guide in 2007 in Portugal (mostly on the tourism side of things) David mostly works as a freelance Outdoor Educator around the world.

**“** In North Carolina, where I currently work, most of the Outdoor industry was struck severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. The parks were closed and many companies stopped working. The only job in the Outdoors industry that has continued is wilderness therapy programs, as they were deemed an essential service.

The company I work for (North Carolina Outward Bound School) cancelled spring and summer seasons and autumn is still an uncertainty. Most of the employees, including myself, were dismissed. Until this decision the school requested, and got, monetary help from the federal government and used it to pay salaries to all staff and supported them in any way possible. Many of my colleagues and I are looking for, or have taken, jobs elsewhere (some outside the Outdoor industry), or even went back to school.

I felt that the support by the government wasn't enough, but it's also a very complicated, bureaucracy heavy and very politically driven system. Most of my colleagues applied for and are receiving unemployment benefits, in addition to a one-time support payment of \$1200. I personally applied for unemployment benefit, but it's a slow process that is still ongoing; hopefully it will be approved soon.

As the restrictions are lifted (parks are currently opening up and some companies are starting to run trips) the future still remains uncertain. The decision of opening the Outdoor industry is left to personal judgement. Some rules are set in place but it seemed to me very vague, and the decision to run activities is up to the companies, schools or individuals. The season is gone for many and the light at the end of the tunnel is dim and flickering. However, adapting is part of this industry, so I remain hopeful and positive about what lays ahead.

## AUSTRALIA/ NEW ZEALAND



### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Ian Ganderton

Professional Development Coach, The  
Outdoor Education Group (OEG) (to March 2020)

Ian has over 30 years' experience, starting as an instructor in 1988 and having also worked in retail, distribution, military, expeditions and freelance roles.

*“My wife and I have both been stood down from our jobs in Australia. Fortunately we saw it coming and took the drastic action of packing up our rental house and catching a plane to Auckland, New Zealand. This gave us a level of financial resilience.*

*COVID-19 started shutting down programmes in Australia around the end of February/beginning of March. At the time of writing, the current situation varies from state to state in Australia. Western Australia has no current cases and OEG has just been given the go ahead to start operating in that state again. Across the rest of Australia the interstate borders remain largely closed and while Australia has not seen the rise in cases the rest of the world has seen, the most populous states have enough cases to keep things pretty much shut down. There is a general optimism that things are under control enough for Outdoor programmes to be up and running in school term three, with term four being very, very busy.*

*Here in NZ we are in the unique position of having no active cases and internally life has returned to normal. Pubs are open, schools are fully open and last weekend's rugby games had packed houses of up to 40,000 supporters. The Outdoors is fully open and operating again with no restrictions needed.*

*It's amazing to be here while watching what is happening in the rest of the world. The key restriction still in place is the virtually closed borders. To enter the country requires permission and a 14-day managed quarantine on arrival. Because of the specifics of my Australian visa I have not been able to claim any government support from anywhere, so have had to rely upon NZ family support. We are currently making the most of the time by doing a dream lap of New Zealand's North Island multi-day hikes. While doing this we are evaluating our options. We are definitely feeling very optimistic about what's in front of us in the near future and can see the light at the end of the tunnel.*

## ANDORRA

### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Lorena Gamo

Tourist Guide and Car Hiring Manager.

Lorena has 25 years' tourist industry experience and one year ago started work in the car rental industry.



## SLOVAKIA

### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Peter Gmitro

Outward Bound Instructor in Slovakia, Germany and USA.



Peter has over 10 years' Outdoor industry experience, starting as a rope course instructor, then shifting to Outdoor Education and has recently started a new job as an office assistant with an Environmental Education non-profit in Slovakia.

*“My usual work when the COVID situation began was as a guide/leader for groups (mostly school groups) who come to Andorra for a ski trip. If I speak about tourism in Andorra, I have to say I see a cloudy landscape. Tourism is one of the most affected fields at the moment; the tourist industry has been stopped since March, without hotels, restaurants, culture places, activities etc. I know a lot of people who have lost their jobs. The government has helped them but now we are recovering the pulse of life, government aids are finishing, and people have to return to their jobs. This point is a little bit complicated and a challenging time for the tourist industry because the hotels can't open and can't work without people. And people have not been able to travel during the pandemic so could not come.*

*In my own experience, and speaking about my main job, it's been very difficult, and I sincerely don't know what will happen during the next days, months, years etc. On the other hand, I'm very lucky because I began another job last year, and now that is my main occupation - I'm the manager in a Rent-a-car, and I can do telework with an app that manages my cars. I can continue with my life and even travel to Madrid to work from home and be with my family during the state of emergency.*

*I understand this pandemic situation has been terrible for many nations and for their economies. We will have a lot of work to do in the coming years. But personally, this situation has been a special time for me; I spent time with my family, my parents and my sister, and I think it was the best thing I could have.*

*Last year before COVID-19 outbreak I was working in the US as an Outward Bound Instructor, but in the long-term I reside in Slovakia, where I have worked with a local Outward Bound school. I am not sure if it is possible to talk about an existing Outdoor industry in Slovakia as there are very few providers that I'm aware of. Most of the Outdoor Education programs were cancelled or postponed for the next year or fall. I think the majority of people working (at least) with Outward Bound here don't do this work as their primary or only source of income, so it didn't impact most people that much. If I take into account my co-workers both in Slovakia and the US who lost their primary source of income, I see all kinds of different personal situations. For example some people are registered as unemployed and are getting government support, in some centres there are opportunities for doing remote work within Outdoor Education, other people are looking for and taking other jobs, at least temporarily. That can often be not highly skilled work.*

*The majority of instructors here in Slovakia work as freelancers, and that can often exclude paying accurate social insurance. In this situation this results in not being eligible for unemployment social benefits, which is specifically harsh in this situation. Later on during the pandemic, the government launched some more types of support for unemployed people who were not eligible for unemployment benefits. However, this additional support is still not necessarily eligible to everyone though (or maybe people just don't know about it!). Light at the end of the tunnel? Outward Bound schools that I worked for are currently all hoping to launch programs again this fall. I am all hoping that will happen!*

## FRANCE



### PERSPECTIVE BY:

Daniel Cummin

River Guide and Director of Experience Ardeche.

With 25 years' of Outdoor industry experience starting as a multi-activity instructor back in 1995, Daniel is also a qualified secondary school teacher.

**“**I created Experience Ardeche in 2008. Personally, I think that it is because I am a small independent operator that, despite a potentially catastrophic year, Experience Ardeche should survive and be able to ride it out; for the short term at least. We were fully aware of the unfolding situation early in January and were already starting to think about how we might be affected. To be honest, it has happened pretty much as expected (although many of the restrictions were imposed a little later than hoped for) and we were preparing for the loss of the entire season.

We were receiving bookings as usual until the end of February. The last booking, before lockdown was imposed, was on 10 March and from then onwards enquiries have understandably reduced significantly. As a result, we only have about a third of the normal level of bookings at this time of year. Several clients who were about to book, including a school group for April, naturally cancelled their plans and any bookings we had which we were unable to provide, due to local lockdown restrictions, were refunded in full. All other clients were offered the option to transfer to next year with no additional charges, or would be refunded 80% of the total paid if they chose to cancel future dates. This allows us to have some plan for the future and helps us to take the hit that we undoubtedly will this year.

Now that restrictions are being lifted here in France we are thankfully back in a position to provide our holidays to our clients. The river is open and campsites, hotels and restaurants are welcoming back guests. There are some changes, of course, such as hand sanitizers at entrances, reduced numbers at the bivouac sites and obligatory mask wearing on transport, but things are generally getting back to the new normal. The main issue we find ourselves in now is that nearly all our clients are UK-based and are therefore still restricted in their ability to travel to France. As it stands today, clients could come to France with little problem but would be required to self-isolate on return to the UK for 14 days. With the potential creation of so called air-bridges this quarantine may not be required for some countries. If France is included in this soon then it should enable most trips to go ahead as planned. To be frank, that could pretty much save the season.

## UNITED KINGDOM

From my own perspective in the UK, the year so far has been a write-off for work. I was due to start as an Assistant Centre Manager for one of the bigger UK providers at the end of March. However, the start to the season was initially postponed by the company in order to comply with government restrictions and guidelines and was recently cancelled completely to focus on next year. From what I can tell, the situation will be the same for most Outdoor workers in the UK, unless perhaps they were contracted staff. All Outdoor Education work essentially stopped dead in its tracks when the government announced the lockdown on 23 March.

I saw many online discussions, particularly in March and April, about who was eligible to receive governments benefits. However, in the government's rush to respond to the crisis and support people, there were some complexities and shortfalls and many fell through the cracks, putting them in desperate situations, often with long delays before payments. As the company I was due to start with didn't furlough most of its staff (myself included) as we had not actually started our season and contract, I was only able to get a small benefit of £400 per month from the government in the form of Universal Credit. Fortunately, I have been able to stay at my mother's house which has kept costs down (otherwise I would have been in real trouble), but I am unsure how long these payments will last. I have been looking at alternative kinds of employment, but options are limited as millions of others are in the same boat as me, looking for work. I also need to be very careful as to what kind of work I can take in terms of contact with others as my mother is in the high risk category and I don't want to risk bringing the virus home. With lockdown restrictions easing, some smaller companies and freelancers can respond quickly and are starting to advertise and take clients out. However, it is harder for bigger companies to mobilise mid-year/ season, so they may have to start back up early next year.

When setting out to write this article I wanted to raise an awareness of the global state of the Outdoor industry, create a sense of unity and find some reasons to be optimistic after such a devastating

period. Although different countries are at different stages of recovery from COVID-19, most are (hopefully) over the peak. It is encouraging and perhaps no surprise that Outdoors workers are being positive, pro-active, flexible and creative in navigating their way through these difficult times. After all, problem-solving is a fundamental aspect of our work. Likewise, my contributors seem to be making the best use of their time; reconnecting with what is important and spending time with loved ones.

**Update:** Approximately two months has passed since I first wrote this article and the landscape is changing quickly. Governments are trying to balance the economy against health and safety with some re-applying lockdowns (e.g. in the UK and New Zealand), in the hope of clamping down on localised Covid flare-ups. This is making it very difficult for Outdoor companies to make plans or take bookings with any kind of confidence. So this restart has been stuttering (at best) for most of us and looks set to continue like this for the foreseeable future. Time is key here as it's giving us more clarity about managing with the virus. However, time is not something that most Outdoors workers and companies have; I've heard of many leaving the industry, or teetering on the edge of financial ruin with little, if any income for several months. The longer this stasis and uncertainty goes on, the more staff, skills and organisations will be lost. Therefore it's vital that we keep this international conversation going so that we're aware of and can deliver current best practice, wherever that may come from. There's still a bumpy road ahead, but we need to ride it out as the Outdoors is a critical industry to so many. There will be many lessons to be learned and we'll need to adapt what we do, but by sharing information, experiences and supporting each other, we stand a better chance of getting through these challenging times ■



### AUTHOR

Calvin Healey, Program Manager.

Calvin began career in the Outdoor Industry as an instructor for PGL in 1998 and has over twenty years in a variety of roles and organisations, most recently returning to the UK from his role as a Program Manager for The Outdoor Education Group in Australia.

# COMING TO OUR SENSES

## Emotional understanding through the Outdoors

“

*It is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow... It is more important to pave the way for children to know than to put them on a diet of facts they are not ready to assimilate.”*

Rachel Carson (1).



This article gives the background to an unusual European Outdoor project that has developed theory and practical activities to show the value of sensory awareness and emotional understanding.

**Who is involved and what's the purpose of the project?**

The European Network of Outdoor Centres (ENOC), a special interest group of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure and Experiential Learning (EOE), has developed the project. ENOC was formed in 2012 to promote the value of Outdoor Education Centres for Lifelong Learning across Europe. It achieves this through job shadowing, youth exchanges and joint Outdoor Learning projects.

*Aesthetic Approaches in Outdoor Learning* is an Erasmus Plus two-year project that has run from 2018 to 2020. The term ‘aesthetics’ is used as a broad concept to encompass feelings, perceptions and understanding that arise from emotional experiences in the outdoors, rather than to solely imply beauty.

**Why aesthetic/ sensory approaches?**

- They help us to understand our place in the world
- They lead to emotional awareness and memorable experiences
- They are undervalued in formal education and implicit in Outdoor Learning
- They inspire learning and interests
- They allow us to slow down and free us from our busy lives
- They serve as an antidote to screen culture
- They may appeal to those who have difficulty with cognitive learning
- They can lead to stronger connections with nature
- They often inspire and may encourage artistic responses

**How was the project planned?**

The five organisations, CSOD (Slovenia), BSJ (Germany), Metsäkartano (Finland), Frajda (Poland) and Brathay (UK) developed a Strategic Partnership project in Poland in

2014. After several unsuccessful applications to the EU Erasmus Plus Programme, the German partner's submission was accepted. At a kick-off meeting in 2018 partners agreed the design and outputs for the project. Unfortunately, the Polish partner withdrew at this stage. The other four then recruited practitioners to take part in a *Training the Trainers* seminar held in Slovenia with each country organising a day covering methodology, activities, reviewing and evaluation.

The activities covered four themes:

1. Pure experience of being in nature
2. Artistic responses through, for example poetry, dance, singing, art, stories
3. Approaches using digital technology
4. Aesthetics through adventure

The Implementation phase followed and involved the trainers running workshops for both leaders and young people in their own countries. This was evaluated at Brathay in July 2019 and at the final meeting in Marburg, Germany the team prepared information and resources to spread the project to a wider audience.

Here are several examples of practical activities developed during the project. Stuart Meese shares ideas *Being in nature* and *An Interview with nature*, and Nuala Dunn shares *A mountain journey*.

## BEING IN NATURE

This is an Outdoor Education oldie but I want to highlight it as a valuable activity in any Outdoor educator's toolkit. It's simple; individuals find a spot where they feel comfortable to spend time alone, freeing their minds and absorbing themselves in nature.

Much of our Outdoor practice, for example in forest schools, residential and expeditions, is based on working with others. We know this works and develops personal and social outcomes. However, not all of our participants find group work satisfying and as work patterns change there is a need for individual reflection. This activity enhances our connection to ourselves, others and our environment.

I have been using this activity from early years in a forest school setting, to prolonged expeditions with young adults. Many have struggled with it to start with, saying that being alone and not talking to people is difficult. Some want more physical activity. But by steady repetition and slowly increasing the length of solo time it has become a popular activity. My forest schoolers told me it was unlike anything they do at school. My expedition teams said it was a chance to just be, looking into the seeming nothingness of an Icelandic desert. All told me that they developed a critical skill: they noticed. What they noticed was as varied as you might expect, from the sand between their fingers, the feel of a leaf, their breathing, their thoughts and actions that day, the wind and so on. That for me is the essence of this activity, giving time and space to allow noticing to happen.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH NATURE

Often technology is cited as taking us further away from nature and creating a barrier to our engagement, but this simple exercise shows otherwise. It was developed by the German project team with teenage groups who enjoy using their mobile phones, though any type of video recording device can be used.

The groups are placed into threes, with one person being the interviewer, another the interviewee and the last the camera

## FREE DIGITAL HANDBOOK

Get access to articles and c.50 session ideas by downloading the full ENOC *Aesthetic Approaches to Outdoor Learning* handbook here:  
<http://bit.ly/EOE-ENOC-Handbook-download>



operator. The first task is to decide what bit of nature they wish to 'interview': the sky, a tree, a mountain, a stream, a single leaf; the list is endless but often the more static elements are best. Then each trio agrees the questions they want to ask- just three works best for a short exercise. I will ask them to come back to me after this stage, to affirm their ideas, provide guidance or monitor the rude or offensive! I also say they can go off script if they like and ask follow-up questions, but an idea of a script to start with is good.

Off they go into the wild to find their subject and interview 'it'. They are briefed that one person will ask the questions, one person, (off-camera) will act as the natural element, and the third person is in charge of directing the camera and recording the interview. It's up to each trio how it works. No one has to be on camera and they can use their usual voice or a chosen one. Playback can be later, back at base or in the wild, and the use of a small Bluetooth speaker will bump up the sound. The results are surprising: their videos, the humour and the depth and qualities they project onto their chosen aspect of nature. They are encouraged to reflect on an inanimate object and embody it with emotion, thought and history. Their values are reflected in the process and when shared with the larger group it provides insights not only into their relationship with nature but with each other (2).

There is scope to develop this mini-activity further by expanding all the areas of the activity with more depth and production time. I've had the opportunity with some Bronze Duke of Edinburgh groups to include this as their expedition aim with interviews with several different elements of nature for the expedition. Groups struggling with prescriptive aims found they enjoyed the fun, freedom and creativity it allowed them to bring to what has often been the afterthought or very dry bit of the expedition.

## A MOUNTAIN JOURNEY

Many of the activities we have highlighted through the handbook can stand alone or be used in a short session, but they can also form part of a day's activity session in a longer course. As facilitators we consider individuals' needs, team aims, weather constraints and the location when deciding how to structure a day. Even when the day is planned, choosing the moment can add magic; following an individual's interest, a break in the clouds

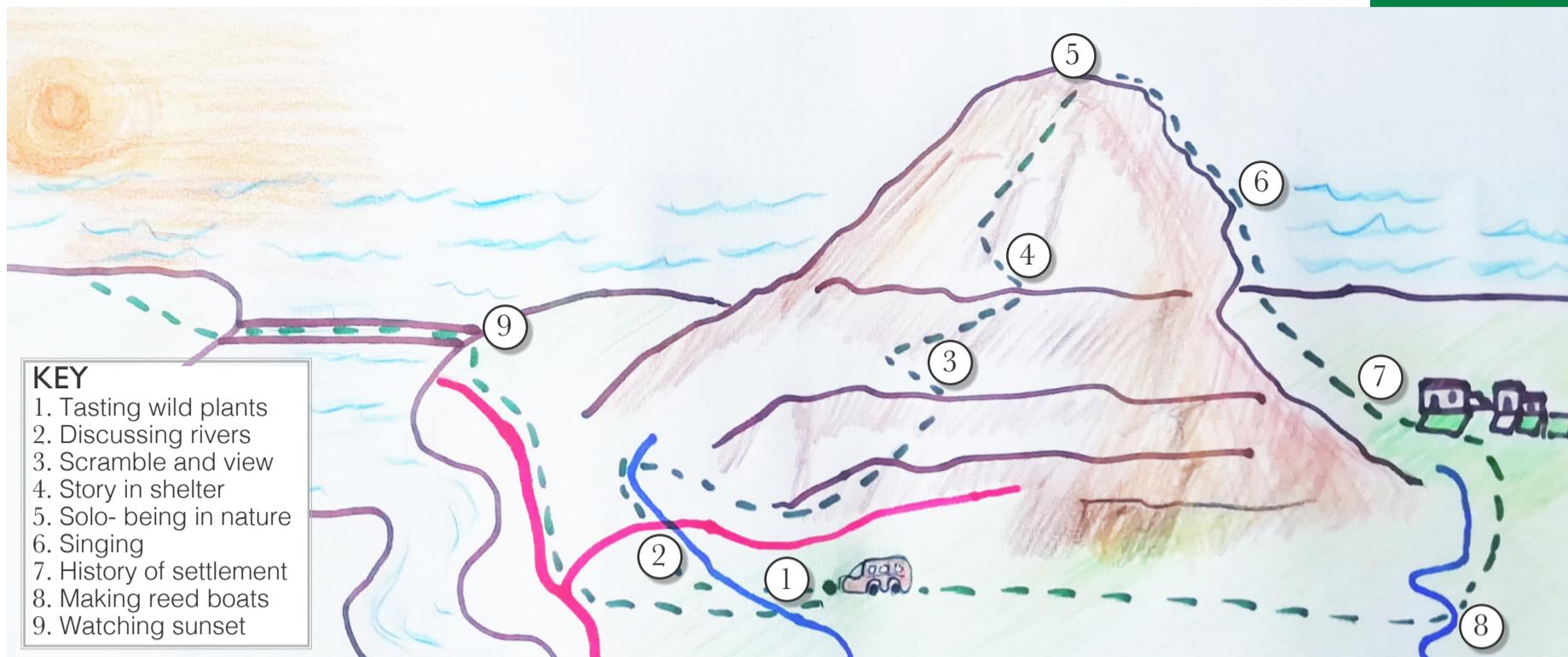


IMAGE ONE: Mountain journey

revealing a view, the song of a bird, a shell found on the beach. Serendipity can enhance the aesthetic experience for all. Here's an example of a mountain day in a multi-activity year 6 residential Outdoor Education week that incorporates a number of aesthetic approaches, illustrated with reference to the numbers on the sketch (see image 1).

Setting off from the car park uphill to the crag, we smelled and tasted a variety of plants including marsh pennywort, gorse and wood sorrel (location 1). Questions from the group when we followed a fast-flowing river led to discussion, "Where does the water come from?" "Is it fresh?" We looked at the patterns it makes (location 2). Above, we reached the "Wow look at the view" spot, taking time for a memory photo to compare with on the return journey as the estuary view changes with the tides (location 3).

We kitted up at the crag and used interesting routes, bouldering and setting challenges for each other, working in pairs. We had time to stop at a high viewpoint then we retreated inside a group shelter for lunch and read *The Princess's blankets* by Carol Ann Duffy. This chimed with us wrapping up from the cold and linked to their work at school (location 4). After some roped climbing we scrambled up to the summit of the craggy mountain. Here, the group savoured a sense of achievement, then chose a spot of their own in which to sit and absorb the surroundings (location 5). The grassy descent prompted one child who had an interest in music to sing, "The hills are alive with the sound of music" and we descended Von Trapp style singing some silly songs (location 6). We continued down to a ruin where we discussed the history of small coastal smallholdings. Sheltered from the wind and rain we shared stories (location 7). Crossing a fast-flowing stream, we made reed boats and floated

them under the bridge, a bit like Pooh sticks (location 8). We returned to the minibus and the group were dropped at a bridge over the estuary. They walked and I later picked them up and took them to a beach to watch the sun go down over a wintry sea (location 9). We returned to the centre after a full day out.

I have noticed over the years that being open to opportunities to connect with nature, taking a child-centred and experiential approach has many positives alongside any outcomes you may have for a particular day or session. Being open to the sense of wonder is where the true magic happens.

If you've found this article interesting, there is a free online handbook with a series of background articles on sensory approaches in the Outdoors and guidelines for leaders to facilitate about 50 tried and tested activities. The handbook and other information about the EOE can be found on the main EOE website: [www.eoe-network.eu/enoc](http://www.eoe-network.eu/enoc). There is also an established Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/706196373082997/>

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#### IMAGES

(1) Mountain journey image has been supplied by Nuala Dunn. Images featuring people have been supplied by authors, who retain copyright. All other images have been sourced from pxhere.com. Photographers retain copyright.

### BUILDING NATURE CONNECTIVITY

Go to the new *Being Earthwise* Q&A on page 38 for practical answers to professionals' questions.

#### AUTHORS

Geoff Cooper, Nuala Dunn, Stu Meese.

# SPECTRUM THINKING

## The great equalizer for resilient organizations

In the present moment, many organizations face disruptions in service, loss of participants or visitors, and dwindling revenues. To negotiate this landscape, we may seize the opportunity to consider ways to expand our audience, to include more touchpoints with active participants, and to leverage the distant but connected virtual environment. In sum, we must work to increase the resiliency of our organizations in dynamic social and economic environments. Spectrum thinking is a strategic planning process that taps the power of range and diversity on a variety of continua. Spectrum thinking allows designers and leaders to consider a range of times, places and purposes that enable us to learn more about, and better serve, our program participants. And it may be used for a variety of different actions: information-gathering efforts, new experience design, or recruitment tactics.

Spectrum thinking works best when we consider a certain participant profile with the goal of building an experience for that individual or small group. It may seem strange to examine such a small segment. Not only does this approach keep the team focused, it allows for deeper consideration of the barriers, needs, and goals that encourage or prevent given participants from enjoying your offerings. When we consider several spectra simultaneously, we can use them as a sound engineer might, setting the dials to create the kind of resonance desired when all elements work in concert.

This article provides four different spectra, each one emphasizing a different scenario and target audience. You can see how an organization might “*dial in*” to a new or enhanced offering using spectrum thinking.

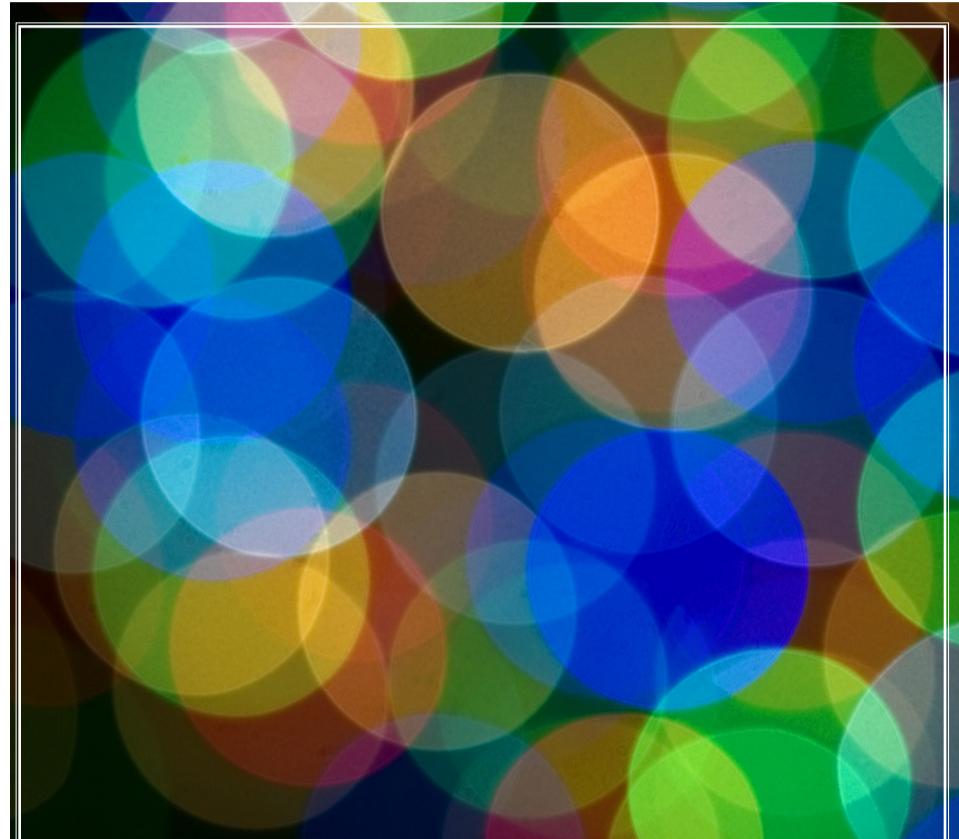
### Developing appropriate spectra

Different spectra are appropriate for different organizations, but the goal remains the same: to design for range. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines, which are grounded in principles of architectural design, were developed by Anne Meyer and David Rose in the 1990s and are now available through CAST. UDL helps us consider a given learner as a human with complex needs, interests, and goals, rather than as a unidimensional student or participant. Since 2008, I have lead teams of learning experience designers to enact spectrum thinking sessions based on these Guidelines. Here I provide some example spectra and ways to deploy them for organizational brainstorming and planning purposes.

It is always a good idea to have your Mission Statement, Core Values, or other organizational guidelines handy so that spectral discussions remain grounded in the ‘look, sound, and feel’ of your experiences and offerings. In the following examples, notice how each spectrum addresses a type of learning experience for a particular participant segment.

### TEMPORAL SPECTRUM

This range plots the possible timeframes surrounding a learning experience. My team often taps this spectrum to consider the development of rich pre- and post-experiences, with an eye toward how those might inform the experience itself. I find that all too often, organizations will focus solely on the central experience, for



### DEFINING SPECTRUM THINKING

The Institute for the Future (IFTF) defines spectrum thinking as:

*“Full-spectrum thinking is the ability to seek patterns and clarity outside, across, beyond, or maybe even without any boxes or categories while resisting false certainty and simplistic binary choices.” (1)*

example the hike they are leading. With all eyes on the hike, the pre-experience may be limited to sending a list of recommended gear for the hike and scheduling details, perhaps accompanied by a short video or safety guidelines. Though this information is essential, it is not really a learning experience in and of itself. We may miss out on ways to engage participants prior to the hike. And when hikes are cancelled due to pandemic lockdowns or extreme weather events, the disruption can devastate an organization.

Offsite pre- and post-experiences may help absorb the shock of these periods. They may become avenues for new participant recruitment. And they may allow us to address known issues within the central experience. (See Figure 1.)

For example, my team observed that certain hikers sometimes reject the food options provided during Outdoor Learning experiences and field work. Some of our students have never eaten an energy bar or trail mix in their lives, and this seemingly small issue might associate negative feelings with the hike (particularly if

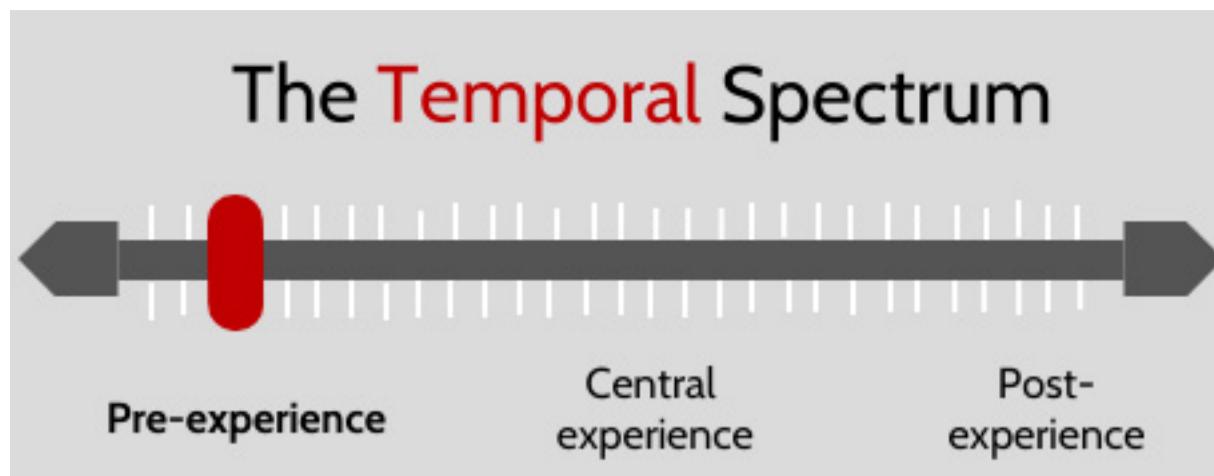


FIGURE ONE: Temporal Spectrum

the students don't eat). The opportunity presents itself: can we craft a pre-hike experience that allows participants to follow basic criteria to prepare their own trail snacks?

Many hikers grab bars and packets for underlying reasons, including type of nutrients, stability outside a refrigerator, and convenient storage. The trail snack challenge may be conducted while participants are remote, and is perfect for those spending more time in their own kitchens. Leaders could hold virtual meetups to frame the challenge and create a web page where people can ask questions, share photos and recipes, and receive feedback. Participants could prepare snacks consistent with their cultural culinary preferences, effectively respecting heritage and identity while increasing anticipation for the hike in parallel. The product of this pre-experience, the trail snack, becomes a self-actualized preparation step that may make novice hikers feel more confident and autonomous about hiking in general. Hikers may even receive guide-approved badges for their self-made snacks while enjoying them on the trail. By creating a trail snack challenge, we may be able to correct a known problem without altering the central experience, re-engage past participants, and tap new channels for participant recruitment. And by attending to one spectrum and one participant segment (those who don't enjoy our provided food options), it is possible to create an entirely new offering. As you see who participates in the new offering, you are primed to gather additional participant information that can inform revisions.

## LOCATION SPECTRUM

This spectrum plots alternate locations for activities where participants engage with organizational leaders. This is an interesting spectrum for Outdoor Learning and school leaders to consider, since experience planning usually revolves around the trails, rivers, sites or buildings where the central experience takes place. But when our locations are off-limits, for seasonal or other reasons, the learning doesn't have to be. The "any time, any where" mantra applies to this spectrum. (See Figure 2.)



FIGURE TWO: Location Spectrum

A great way to identify potential new participants is by tapping the networks of your past participants. However, when we tap their geographies rather than their interest-based or social connections, we can diversify our participant group as well.

Continuing our hiking example, let's say that one of your past participants resides in an area that does not easily connect local transportation options to your commonly used trail locations. This brave pioneer may help you understand how she overcame the transportation hurdle, as well as other barriers that may prevent others in her neighborhood from engaging with you. As you well know, place-based experiences require leaders who are familiar with

a given location. Might this pioneer, regardless of her hiking abilities, become a participant leader who draws new recruits? Why not bring a hike to her neighborhood?

Leaders can collaborate with the participant to stage a one-hour neighborhood hike. A trail map could be developed and provided, daypacks and other regular hiking gear brought to the meeting place, and the participant with local knowledge leads the hike, alone or with other locals. Advertising the neighborhood hike can be strategic due to the hike's neighborhood draw, and a rain date may be set without too much disruption. Participants would gain comfort with elements that may be new to them; wearing a pack of a certain weight, selecting footwear, or using a trail map without the use of a Smartphone, even if the location is quite familiar. The role reversal is a powerful relationship-builder: members of the organization learn a new trail alongside local 'guides' who share stories and points of interest. At the end of the hike, all participants reflect on their neighborhood hiking experience, and explore what would make a journey to the remote trailhead a realistic possibility. The neighborhood hike simultaneously rewards a past participant with a leadership role in a post-experience, provides insights into transportation or other barriers that make engagement difficult, and serves as a recruitment opportunity for the organization.

## PARTICIPATION FREQUENCY SPECTRUM

In the Location Spectrum example, the participant tapped to lead the neighborhood hike did not have advanced hiking skills. The organization was able to re-engage her by identifying her ability to overcome transportation difficulties as an entry point for leadership, and by honoring her local knowledge. When we engage learners in a new skill set like hiking, it is easy to focus on their technical ability level (novice, intermediate, or advanced). Though many guides relish opportunities for technical advancement, repeat participants may not be aiming to traverse steeper terrain or hike twice as many kilometers. When we separate an individual's participation rate as a separate spectrum, we may uncover new ways to support our biggest fans, and possibly recruit new ones. (See Figure 3.)

Participants who repeatedly engage with us are valuable sources of information. They are also the very people we cannot disappoint. Ultimately, organizations who wish to increase participation frequency need to a) create participant profiles as early as the first experience; b) continue to expand the profile using both participant and organizational feedback; and c) provide modifications, rewards, new roles or additional offerings that honor these participants.

Some organizations now use electronic tablets such as iPads so participants can complete intake or evaluation surveys on site. However, the questions tend to focus only on the organization's performance. We can employ spectrum thinking to acquire information that is more participant-centered, crafting questions related to personal goals, emotional or wellness connections, and key takeaways. Hikers are tired by the time they reach the end of the trail, so a short, virtual post-experience that happens several days after the hike may work better. Accumulating learning science research indicates that human brains can't do the thing and reflect on the thing in the same moment. This is what makes a separate post-experience necessary.

Fast-forward to a participant's third hike with the organization: information gathered from the first two hikes informs an in-person conversation with one of the guides during lunch on the third hike. The guide learns that the repeat hiker craves forest sounds and uses the hikes as opportunities to practice nature photography. The guide might offer to showcase their photos in a special gallery on the website, and narrate a soundscape recorded along their favorite trail. Would these participants be interested in leading a small friends-and-family type event to share their multimedia portfolio more broadly?

When we explicitly acknowledge the talents, interests, and goals of repeat participants, we show them, and others, that people representing diverse perspectives and ability levels can thrive on their own terms.

This paves the way for specialised offerings that keep them coming back, and helps inform our recruitment efforts to boot.

## IMPACT SPECTRUM

This is probably my favorite spectrum, as it pushes organizations to consider their impact through the eyes of their participants, and at a minimum of three distinct levels. Beginning at the level of personal impact, we may see intersection points with participation frequency. If a participant is compelled to join a second, third, or fourth hike, can we help her discover why? Classroom educators preserve time for self-reflection after a learning experience to help students make explicit connections to their own motivations, emotional responses, cultural connections, and goals. Similarly, Outdoor Learning participants may not be able to articulate exactly how hiking impacts them without some structured prompts or conversations. Why not offer some post-experience time to help them figure it out?

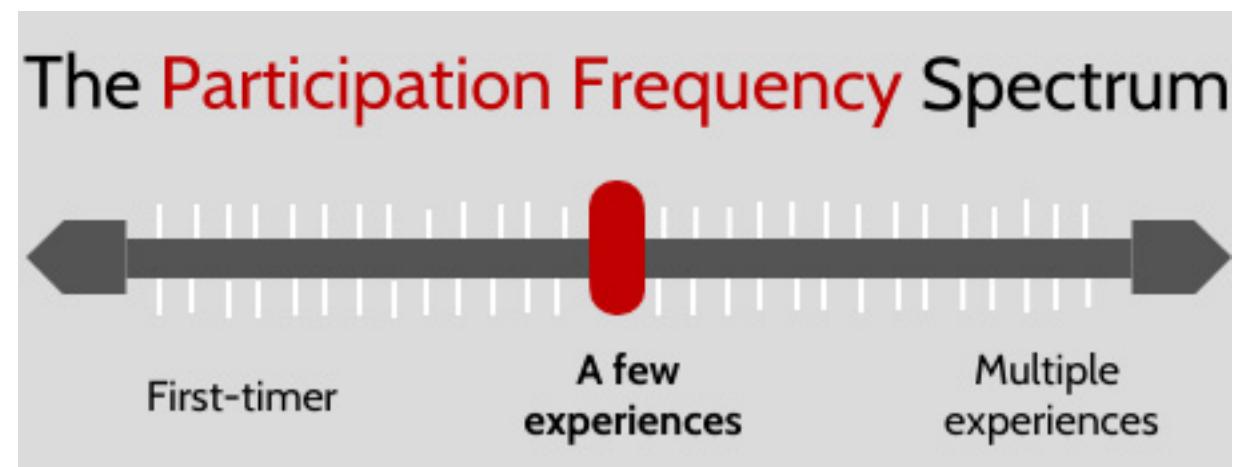


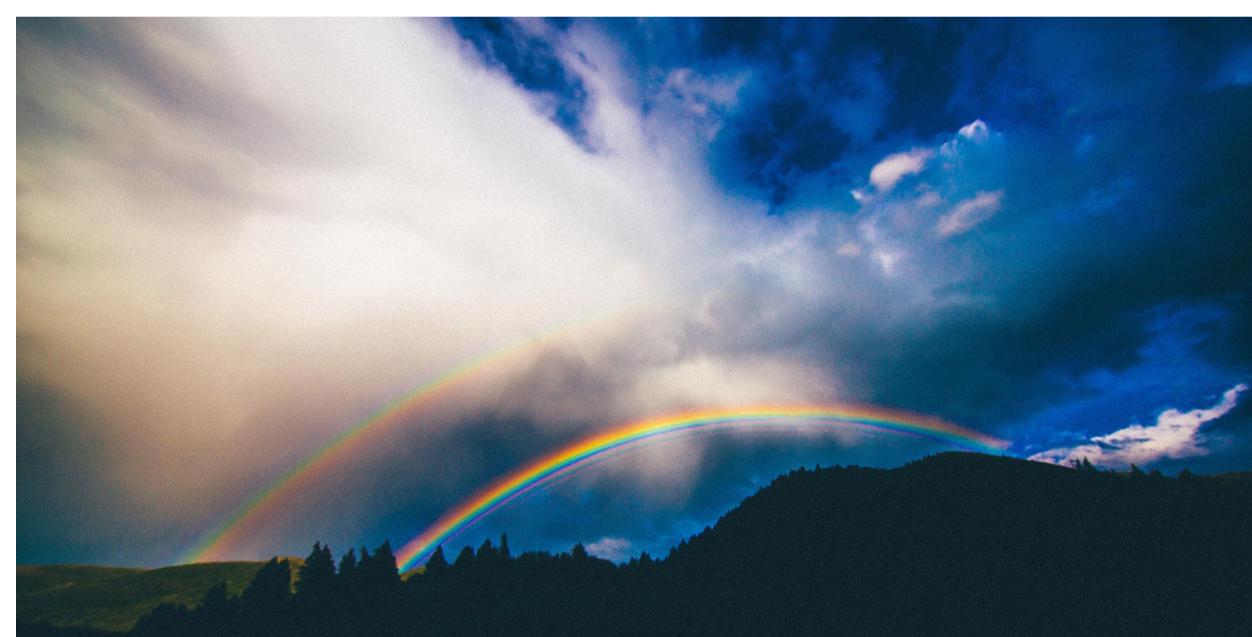
FIGURE THREE: Participation Frequency Spectrum

Outdoor Learning experiences also impact participants by making them feel part of something bigger than themselves. Exploring a nearby forest, river, bike path, or community garden shows people how dynamic, beautiful, or imperiled their own region is. Participants can learn to see the impact of change at this level when they know what to look for. Can we show them how to observe regional impact in a new way? Can we help them understand how their own behaviors make a difference? Can participants learn specific ways that your organization is making a positive regional impact? Can they get involved? (See Figure 4.)



FIGURE FOUR: Impact Spectrum

Participants who make personal and regional connections often are keen to explore global impacts as well. Conversely, participants may know about a global issue but not know how it connects to their own lives and communities. In our learning experience designs, we use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for these three levels of systemic connections (2). Pre- or post-experiences that mesh SDGs with articulated personal goals and motivations, or with regional activities, help participants come full circle. Everyone counts, everyone can make a difference, and everyone can find strength in collaborative community action. At a time when mental health problems and social disconnection are on the rise, it is incumbent upon learning experience designers to explicitly foster personal-local-global sensemaking.



**LOOKING TO DEVELOP LEADERS?**  
If you found this article useful, read *Synergising Skills*, from page 25.

### Building equalizers with stacked spectrum

To develop a single spectrum, first define three or four increments and then consider a given participant profile along its trajectory. Remember that spectrum thinking centers on participant profiles first, and experience features second. You build the experience based on the needs, interests, or motivations of the participant. I recommend beginning the process with only one spectrum and one target participant profile. Allow conversations

to grow organically around it. Remember to use your Mission Statement or other organizational artifacts to anchor the activity in your shared values.

As your team deploys spectrum thinking more regularly, it is possible to build stacked spectra into an equalizer for a given participant profile. You might wish to do this to see how different variables work together, which may support discussions about revisions to the experience, both with and without the participants in question. Taking the neighborhood hike example, we consider our participant leader who resides in a neighborhood where we have been previously unsuccessful in attracting new participants. The participant leader is the reference point for these stacked spectra. (See Figure 5.)

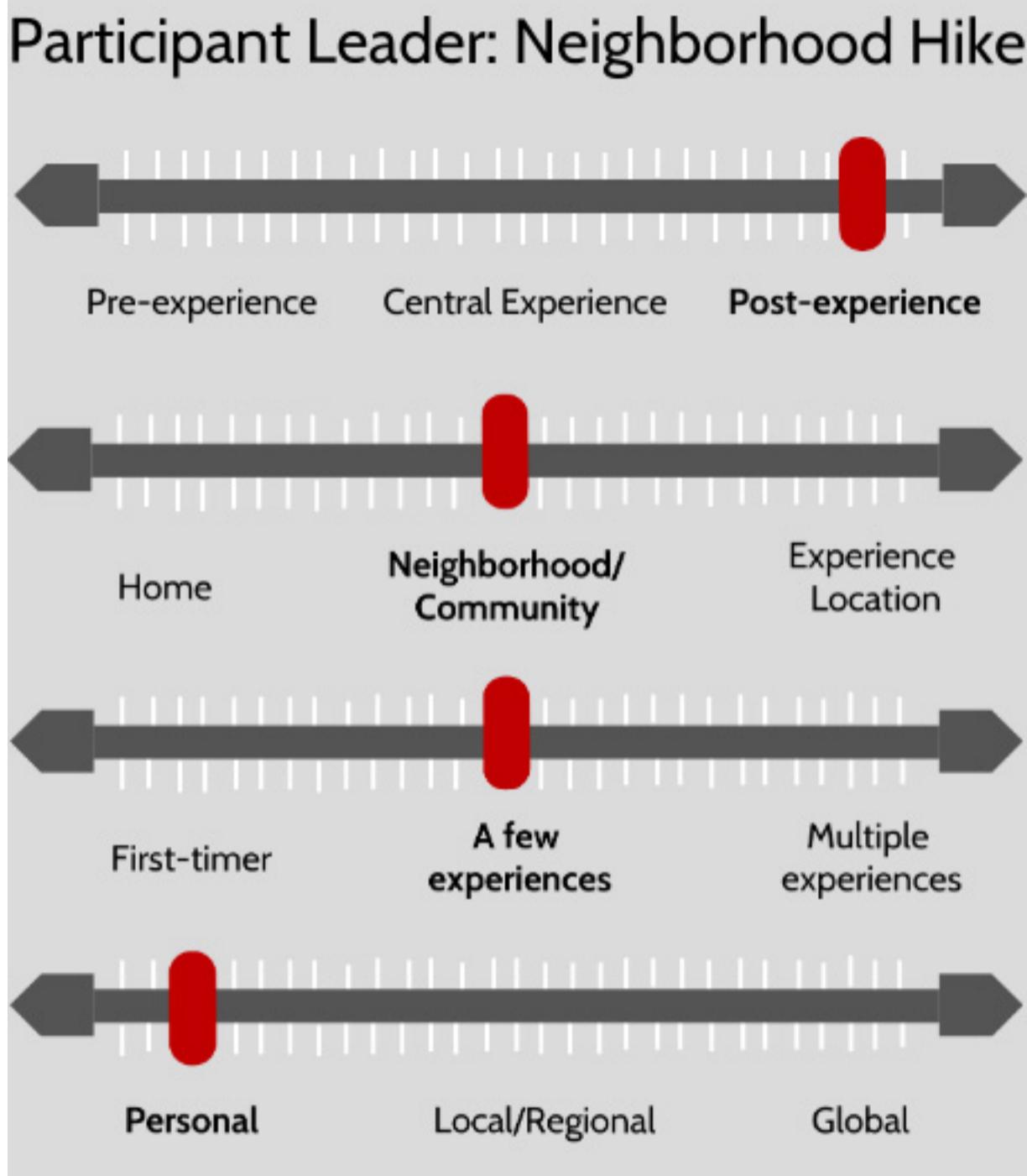


FIGURE FIVE: Building equalizers

Spectrum thinking is not a replacement for other kinds of data collection, metrics or planning tools. When used as a one-time retreat activity, it will undoubtedly fall short on its promise.

But organizations seeking to increase their resiliency must commit to increasing their capacity across several relevant spectra.

When used regularly, spectrum thinking is a strategic and collaborative planning compass that helps us better navigate a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world ■

#### REFERENCES

1. [www.iftf.org/fullspectrumthinkingbook/](http://www.iftf.org/fullspectrumthinkingbook/)
2. United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

#### IMAGES

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#### AUTHOR

Catherine Saldutti, President & Founder of EduChange

Catherine is the President and Founder of EduChange, a firm devoted to re-engineering academic systems and programs in secondary schools. She has led teams of master educators, researchers and STEM professionals to design learning experiences for formal classrooms for over 27 years.

# PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

## The path ahead: Professional recognition for the workforce



For individuals and organisations across Outdoor Learning the challenges brought about by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic have given sharp focus to the need for wider valuing of Outdoor Learning in UK society and stronger public confidence in the professional status of our workforce. Now, perhaps more than ever, a cohesive force for the Outdoor community and its influence on UK society is essential for our collective future. One of the key approaches, supported at the 2016 November IOL Conference, was for IOL to work towards operating as a professional institute capable of seeking a Royal Charter. Much has been done towards this goal and this has not been a straightforward task with a clear line of sight between beginning and end. We have been moving along a winding road with many opinions, choices and decisions to be made in a landscape that has revealed itself only as we travelled through it. This article discusses some aspects of the journey so far and the intended future direction.

Soon after the journey began, it was clear that one of the choices to be looked at was what it means to be recognised as a member of a professional body. There are 400 or so active chartered bodies, and definitions of a professional body are plentiful, one example being from the Professional Associations Research Network: *"They are dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge and practice of professions through developing, supporting, regulating and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence."* Similarly, as I summarised in a previous issue of *Horizons* (Summer 2017), Philip Elliott (1972), Michael Bales (1988) and David Carr (2000) offer three similar but different perspectives, each with their own merits. When these definitions and others are looked at as a whole, three common strands are noticeable. It is

these three strands which have been underpinning developments both within IOL for our membership, and in our wider collaborations and work for the sector.

### 1. Members of a profession provide a service of value to society

Looking across the range of several hundred professional institutes in the UK it is clear to see that many champion the contribution and voice of their members. Whilst each profession has its own priorities and concerns, representation activity can be broadly summarised in two areas: members interests regarding the current and future workforce, and the value of the profession for individuals, communities, society and the economy. Some professional institutes cover both areas in their campaigning and representation activity, such as the Royal Institute of British Architects or the Royal Society of Chemistry. In other sectors the work of a range of professional institutes is complemented by a sector-specific representative organisation, for example the the Construction Industry Council or Scottish Renewables.

The number of representative and stakeholder bodies with overlapping messages and concerns is as broad in our sector as in many others. Establishing new ways of working with others must continue to be the way forward to ensure that the members of its professional institute are acknowledged for contributing valuable cultural, community and educational assets for the UK.

## 2. Members of a profession are recognised for their competence and ethics

Establishing greater recognition that the professionals in our sector operate at comparable levels to those in other sectors has required looking at what it means to be a professional within Outdoor Learning; the expected values and behaviours as well as the levels of experience and competence that underpin safe, ethical and effective practice. Developed through consultation, the *Outdoor Professional Profile* (*Horizons* Winter 2019) describes a desired set of values and behaviours for Outdoor professionals.

Complementing this, the more recent work on professional recognition benchmarks levels of education, responsibility and experience working in any area of Outdoor Learning. Professional recognition brings the sector workforce together under a common framework whilst still valuing each individual's specialisms and qualifications, e.g. instruction/ coaching awards, association memberships, teaching and/ or management qualifications, etc. Professional recognition also brings formal expectations and responsibilities including a commitment to safe, ethical practice, evidence of completing CPD annually, being up-to-date and connected to current good practice, and being listed on a register of professionals. There are two broad categories:

### Associate Professional in Outdoor Learning

Associate Professionals in Outdoor Learning have responsibility for leading safe and engaging Outdoor Learning sessions in order to achieve intended outcomes. They have a minimum of one year of Outdoor Learning work experience, plus relevant qualifications at RQF/CQFW Level 3 / SQCF Level 6 or higher (e.g. Forest School Leader, Lowland/Mountain Leader Award, Rock Climbing Instructor, Outdoor Activity Instructor Apprenticeship, etc.). The new RPIOL Award places employer endorsement at the heart of the process and offers a fast track to recognition as an Associate Professional in Outdoor Learning.

### Professional in Outdoor Learning

Professionals in Outdoor Learning have responsibility for shaping effective Outdoor Learning by exercising autonomy and judgement within medium / long-term parameters. They have a minimum of at least five years' experience in Outdoor Learning (including at least two years in a position of responsibility) plus degree level learning. An equivalent experience process for those without a relevant qualification at RQF/CQFW Level 5 / SQCF Level 8 or higher. A peer-endorsed application process is open to current members of IOL, AHOEC and OEAP for recognition as a Professional in Outdoor Learning.

## 3. Members of a profession have specialised training, skills and experience

It has long been recognised and valued that governing, representative or awarding bodies in specialist fields have offered training, qualifications and awards relevant to the Outdoor Learning sector. In addition, further and higher education establishments have offered undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, many of which are supported by a wealth of research. Employers and training providers are also significant providers of workforce education with site-specific and activity specific instruction, coaching and assessment processes. Complementing all these, the IOL awards of RPIOL, APIOL and LPIOL value the approach, understanding and experience of reflective practitioners.

More recently IOL has led on the establishment of occupational standards for the sector that are being used as a common reference point for employers, training organisations and awarding bodies to use when recruiting staff and designing qualifications. This work continues and the input of many members from across the UK in consultations over the past six months has informed the current approach.

### Outdoor Activity Instructor

This occupational standard was first published in 2019 (*Horizons* Winter 2020) and covers roles where an instructor, leader, coach or teacher:

- Provides safe and engaging Outdoor Learning sessions
- Organises resources and delivers within agreed programmes
- Prepares for and achieves intended outcomes

### Outdoor Learning Specialist

This occupational standard will use the Outdoor Learning Specialist Apprenticeship standard currently being written by employers in the sector (due 2021) as its starting point, before



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wider consultations to ensure we have met the needs of all relevant stakeholders across the UK.

- Establishes need, plans programmes and evaluates outcomes
- Applies Outdoor leadership judgement to manage risk-benefit decisions
- Facilitates inclusive individual and group learning programmes outdoors
- Manages resources and staff allocated and solves complex problems

### Chartered Outdoor Professional

Not strictly an occupational standard, to become a Chartered Outdoor Professional, applicants will have to demonstrate that they are operating at a higher level than their relevant occupational standard and that they can demonstrate impact over time. Professional recognition will be the gateway for access to the chartered process where members will have to show they:

- Shape effective Outdoor Learning by exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters
- Build programmes of learning using outdoor experiences by drawing on relevant research
- Think and operate medium / long term and plan and develop courses of action
- Initiate and lead complex tasks and processes and positively influence the work of colleagues
- Deliver value to customers and the profession and role model professional practice

## The path to chartered professional status

The requirements for awarding chartered professional status are managed by a chartered institute after first being agreed with the Privy Council. It is an optional process offered by some chartered institutes and not by others. A number of professional institutes which are not chartered have partnered with a relevant chartered institute in order to offer their members a pathway to chartered professional status. So far we have been exploring all possible options and focussing on a framework for accreditation. Consultations have indicated a preference for a fast evidencing process following achievement of the professional recognition gateway. A live assessment interview is viewed as an important step to ensure the process is as accessible as possible for all across the breadth of the sector, as well providing the opportunity to celebrate the applicant's excellence, innovation and quality

### SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVES

IOL CEO Andy shares thoughts on recent hard lessons and important solutions in Outdoor Learning on page 43.



PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION GATEWAY



SELF-ASSESSMENT PERSONAL STATEMENTS



GATHER WORKPLACE EVIDENCE – REPORTS, VIDEOS, LETTERS, ETC.



ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW AGAINST SET REQUIREMENTS



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL IN OUTDOOR LEARNING

within their field over time. Chartered Outdoor Professional will be available to all in the sector with the required level of education and experience whether an Outdoor Learning Specialist (facilitators, practitioners, teachers, coaches, etc.), a Manager in Outdoor Learning (leaders, managers, advisors, consultants, etc.) or a Workforce/ Profession Developer (trainers, course directors, lecturers, researchers, etc.). There will be two classes of Chartered Member or Fellow. Member will be awarded to those whose capability and experience is a mix of strategy and operations; Fellow will be awarded to those who show influence and impact over a longer period of time with a predominant focus on strategy.

Professional recognition, and the path to being able to offer chartered professional status for members is getting closer, but is one strand within the wider development of a

professional institute and a stronger and cohesive sector representation and voice. There is still much to be decided and opportunities for refinement and change where necessary. To date the project has included the comments and support of members of IOL, AHOEC, OEAP, SAPOE and others within Outdoor Learning and I hope this will continue and further expand. Please look out for UK-wide briefings and consultations and share your views so we can include them in future developments.

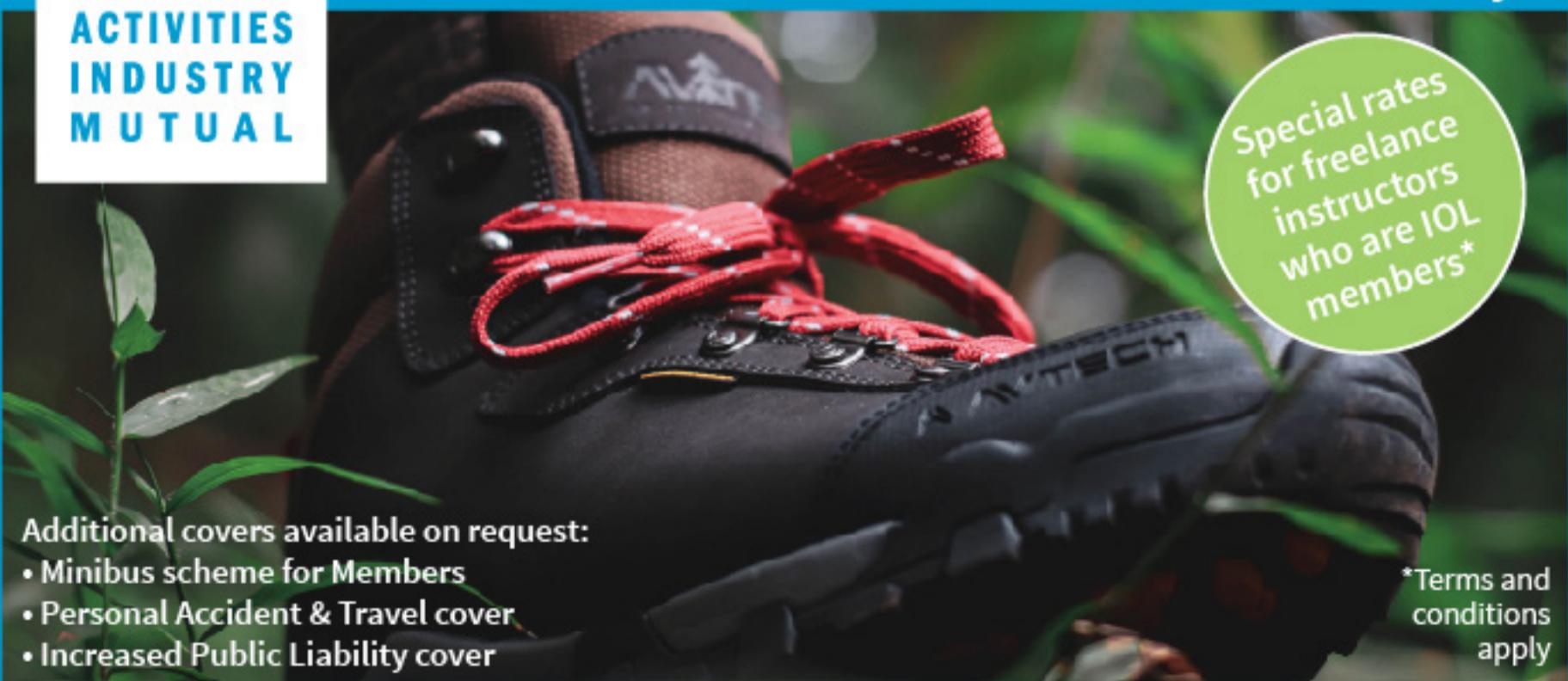
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ACTIVITIES INDUSTRY MUTUAL

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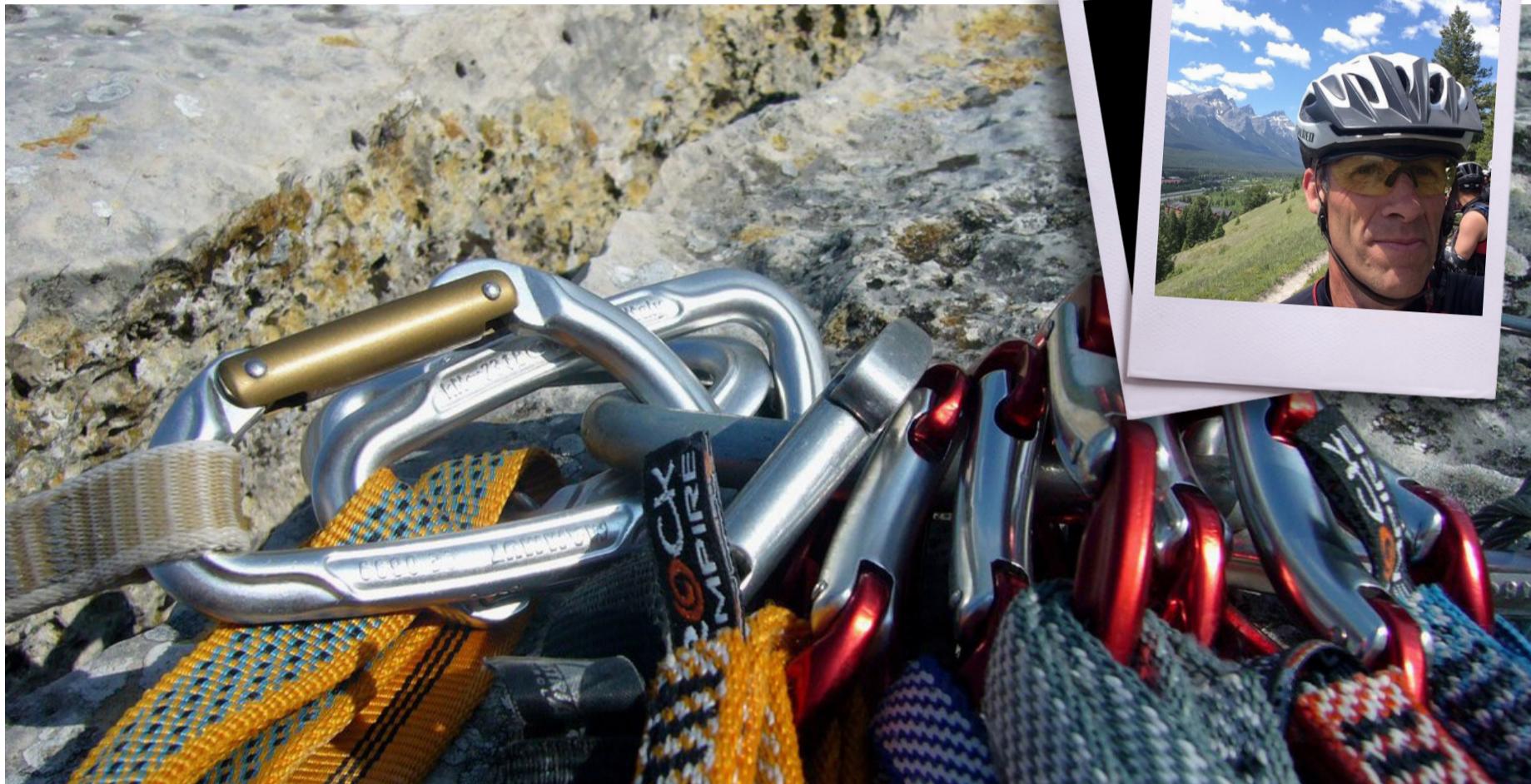


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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tim Morton, Head of Service at Adventure RMS, answers questions about changes to AALA



## What's your role?

As the Head of Service my role is to manage the work we do on behalf of the AALA, the Ministry of Defence and other clients. This includes, along with our liaison officers, supporting and consulting inspectors as they review applications for AALA licences. I'm also required to endorse all reports submitted by the Adventure Risk Management Services (Adventure RMS) team and provide the AALA with a decision on each application.

## How did you get into licensing?

My first experiences of the AALA licensing scheme were as an activity provider and licence holder. Over the years I think I'd been inspected by at least half of the original team of Inspectors. In 2004 I began work as a freelance inspector for the licensing service and then became a full-time senior inspector in 2010. I continued to work for the licensing service until the end of their AALA contract in March 2020, as the Deputy Head of Inspections for the last three years.

## What are the main recent changes to AALA?

From 1 April 2020 the HSE have contracted Adventure RMS to provide an inspection-only service. These new arrangements are significantly different because unlike TQS Ltd (who traded as the AALS), Adventure RMS are not contracted to provide a licensing service. We are required to undertake the review of applications forwarded by the AALA (part of the HSE) and provide them with a report, including a decision on the licence application. All other functions previously delivered by TQS (application form processing, fee handling, administration, complaint handling, public information and sector liaison) are now undertaken by the AALA itself.

Adventure RMS has a role in supporting the AALA (when requested) with technical expertise

and advice in relation to enquiries, complaints and questions; and in helping to review the existing guidance notes available to providers, their clients and members of the public. The application process including the form, payment arrangements and required information, has been developed and is managed by the AALA, who also provide the first point of contact for all enquiries.

The other key changes are to the inspection process itself. Adventure RMS had already developed a process through which applications were in part reviewed remotely.

## GET UP-TO-DATE WITH SECTOR NEWS

For the latest Outdoor Learning sector news, head over to page 7.

As it has turned out we have been able to build on this system to allow application reviews to continue during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

The new application review (inspection) process includes:

- **A Core inspection** which is done by the inspector and uses the information provided by applicants when they apply
- **An Application consultation** which reviews the inspector's work and considers what else may be required to complete it
- **A Further inspection** (site visit) where an inspector will visit the applicant, a venue, meet with staff and /or observe an activity
- **A Report** which is written by the inspector, reviewed by the consulting Inspector and ultimately endorsed by the Head of Service

The process intends to try to identify any issues early and to therefore give providers an opportunity to address them. It also supports inspectors through a required consultation process and ensures that decisions are in line with the requirements of the regulations, robust and consistent.

### Are there any plans to raise the license fee?

The application process, including the fees, is managed by the AALA under the new arrangements. Adventure RMS doesn't set or receive application fees.

### Are there any plans for combined inspections? (For example Adventuremark/ AALA or NGB/ AALA inspections)

In addition to acting as the AALA inspectorate, Adventure RMS are also appointed as subject matter experts (SMEs) to the Ministry of Defence and already work with local authorities and the police. The new arrangements have made this possible and mean that many of the barriers (real or perceived) to providing AALA inspections alongside other accreditation/inspection regimes have been removed.

That isn't to suggest it would be straightforward or is being developed right now. But arrangements which might reduce the cost and time required of providers who wish to hold accreditations in

addition to the statutory obligation to hold an AALA licence, should be entirely possible.

### With COVID-19 disruptions, have there been any adaptations to the AALA process?

Since the 1 April we have undertaken the review of over 200 applications, either to renew existing licences or for entirely new ones. Most of these were undertaken entirely remotely. Our inspectors use Teams video conferencing and have been able to undertake face-to-face meetings, tour stores and activity locations and even observe some delivery via instructor-cam! Since early August we have started to undertake visits where these are required and can be undertaken in a way which complies with our own and the providers' arrangements for infection control.

### What else needs to be on our radar?

Our experience of working with the AALA so far has been extremely positive. Their approach has been to try and support individual providers and the industry in whatever way the regulations allow. They have also been receptive to information about the challenges the industry is facing in relation to the current crisis and the licensing regime more generally.

The AALA is restricted in what it can do to support providers by the regulations themselves, of the 20 regulations, more apply to the licensing authority than to providers! Providers should expect a consistent approach which requires of them no more, or less, than the regulations dictate. This includes things like applying on time, providing the required information with an application and paying the application fee in order for the application to be processed, all of which are and always have been part of the regulations themselves.

### What's the biggest challenge facing the sector in terms of licensing?

The Adventure Activity sector is incredibly diverse and the challenges (in relation to licensing) facing a sole trader operating from a home base will always be different to those facing a multi-centre provider.

The sector has also become used to a licensing regime with both its advantages and frustrations. Perhaps the greatest challenge, for all, will be deciding what this regime, whether statutory, non-statutory or a combination as we have now, will look like in order to best provide for the needs of users, providers, stakeholders and others and then to find a way to effectively communicate this to decision-makers ■



## GET USEFUL AALA RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Go to Adventure RMS website <https://adventurerms.org.uk> for:

- > Guidance on the application review process. The full application review process, with a description of each stage, can be found here: <https://adventurerms.org.uk/the-adventure-rms-application-review-process/>
- > Guidance on site visits during the easing of lockdown restrictions can be seen here: <https://adventurerms.org.uk/inspection-visits-during-the-easing-of-lock-down/>
- > Access to *Safety management updates* and FAQs.

AALA also shares guidance and access to licence applications. Go to: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>

# Appetite for change?



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# SYNERGISING SKILLS

## Developing good judgement and decision-making skills

Effective judgement and decision-making lie at the heart of everything we do in Outdoor and Adventure Education. A decision on a route choice, a call on how best to teach a skill, or a judgement on how best to facilitate the learning from an experience all require the instructor to select from a range of possibilities based on their understanding of the demands of the group, the setting of the session and its objectives.

Despite the importance of decision-making skills these have been traditionally left to develop over time with experience in a rather adhoc way. This approach is not without its advantages because individuals can construct their own knowledge, it is, however, somewhat unreliable and prone to being short cut! Recent research has shown that experience and reflection are crucial aspects of the development of decision-making skills for Outdoor professionals (1). It seems logical that if we want to develop instructors who can make good calls on how best to do our complex jobs, greater understanding of how we facilitate effective judgement and decision-making in instructors is required.

### How do judgement and decision-making work?

Effective judgement in the Outdoors is a combination of two different decision-making processes; the synergy is dependent on the context of the decision. If conceived as a spectrum, at the extremes, two types of decision-making can be identified (see Figure 1). In situations in which the information is accurate, reliable and time is available, decisions are mainly made in a logical and linear way (a classic view of decision-making). At the other extreme, in situations with poor, unreliable, or incomplete information, and with time pressure, the decisions are more gut-feel or intuitive (a naturalistic view). Most decisions sit between these extremes and are a combination of the two. The naturalistic decisions made in the field are scaffolded on the logical framework of absolutes such as transport requirements, equipment needs, legislation or operational procedures. These are arranged and agreed prior to the activity, while the logical decisions made in planning are tempered by the decision-makers' own experiences and biases.

In practice, this means that in-action judgements and decisions are based more



### Dual-Process Decision Making

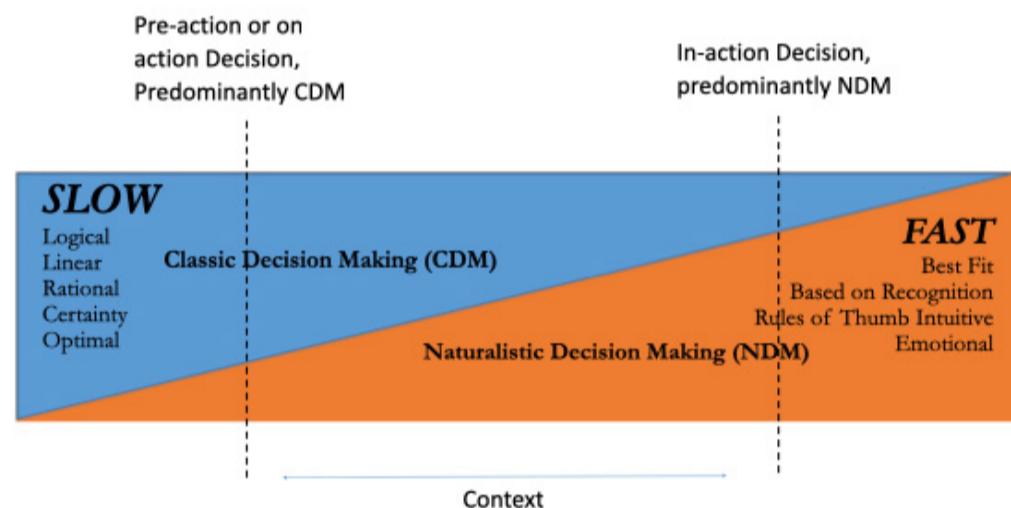


FIGURE ONE: Dual-process decision-making

on experience (recognising situations or applying rules of thumb that have been developed and are thus mainly naturalistic), while decisions that are pre-action (planning) or post-action (some aspects of reflection), that are based on the quality of information and have time available, are more classic. A crucial aspect of this synergy is the capacity of the instructor to audit the decision-making process beyond just the outcome but also how that decision is made: should I be relying on my gut feel here?

Because these decisions are a combination of naturalistic and classic processes, they are dependent on learning from the instructors' experiences and can be prone to errors if the experience is narrow or shallow. Potential instructors require the reflective skills to maximise their experiences, which in turn means a shift from technically focused instructor training programmes towards programmes in which the skills to learn from experiences (i.e. reflection) are taught and developed so instructors can learn independently and make the most of the prerequisite logbook experiences required, for instance, for NGB awards.

This article reports on one approach being taken.

## DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING IN ADVENTURE SPORTS COACHES

In 2018 Mountain Training and British Canoeing introduced decision-making as a discreet syllabus topic within their NGB awards to complement the more traditional technical content. Clearly, it is worth discussing how we might develop an instructors' decision-making process.

Decision-making is a really important part of the risk management process. The instructor must be fully able to explain and justify their decisions as part of their own reflection, potentially to a line manager or even a jury in a worst case scenario. In-action decisions are built on an in-depth comprehension of the situational demands which are linked to their work and the group they are working with. There is a need to be able to fully understand these situational demands and how key factors interact with each other. The instructor needs to comprehend what is happening, why it is happening and how it is going to evolve.

These considerations can be grouped in three broad topic areas:

### Location

This is the physical environment.

### Environmental conditions

These considerations change from season-to-season, day to day, hour to hour, and minute to minute.

### The client/s

Their motivation, levels of fitness, skill level, number, experience, ability, and their equipment, as well as their wider learning, social, emotional needs.

These three all interact with each other and are underpinned by the instructors' perception of the situation, their motivations and biases, views of good teaching, learning and leadership, personal skills and their experience. In effect this gives us fourth factor: the coach themselves.

Understanding the synergy of these four aspects can mean the difference between an inspiring day out or a dreadful one.

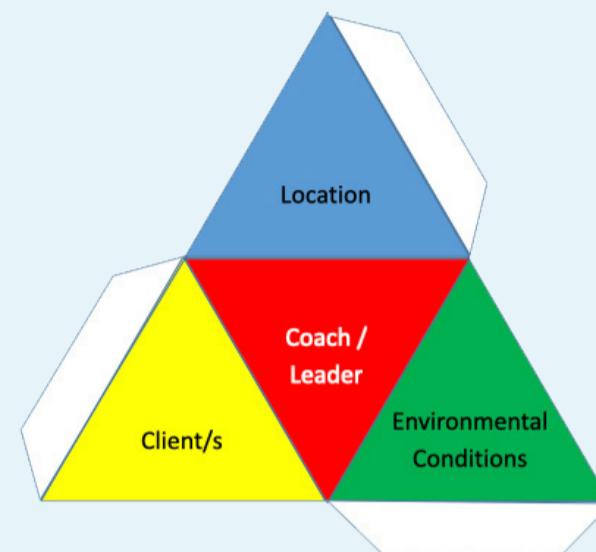
The successful balance of location with environmental conditions should have a positive effect on the client/s to create the best possible learning experience; leaving the client/s feeling suitably inspired, supported and appropriately challenged. A slight misjudgment in choosing an appropriate location or matching the location to the environmental conditions for any particular group may mean that their needs are not met and they are left unfulfilled. In practice, decision-making is an ongoing process, and occurs during:

- Planning: at base in the weeks, days and hours before setting out
- Preparing the activity: structure of session/day
- Observation and monitoring of the client/s taking part in the activity and conditions: continually and dynamically assess the situation throughout the session/day
- Reacting and adapting to unplanned instances during the session/day
- Post activity reflection: informing future decision making, based on honest reflective practice

Given its significance we have been keen to experiment with different approaches to develop effective decision-making in potential coaches. One such approach that has been working effectively in the field is the *decision-making factors pyramid*.

## DECISION-MAKING FACTORS PYRAMID

We conceptualised the four considerations to create a triangular-based pyramid, the coach/leader forming the base, as they have the biggest effect on the stability of the pyramid (see Figure 2). When folded the height of the pyramid is a measure of the coach/ leader's technical competency, perhaps meeting the standards of a national governing body award; while the surface area of the base of the pyramid represents the coach/ leader's overall experience level. The volume of the pyramid represents the capacity of the coach/ leader, based on their technical competency and experience levels.



FIGURETWO: The net of the Pyramid shows how the four broad considerations fit together

### Using the decision-making factors pyramid

Since March 2016 we have been using the pyramid at the start of a range of training and assessment NGB courses, as well as in bespoke personal development courses (from introductory to advanced levels). We encourage groups to discuss and highlight the specific factors and then list them on the faces of the pyramid for a specific journey or activity. The exact method of use varies depending on the size of the group, but typically groups examine each broad consideration together and write specific factors down on the triangle. Occasionally they may need prompts to think deeper within a topic area, particularly with large generic elements such as weather.

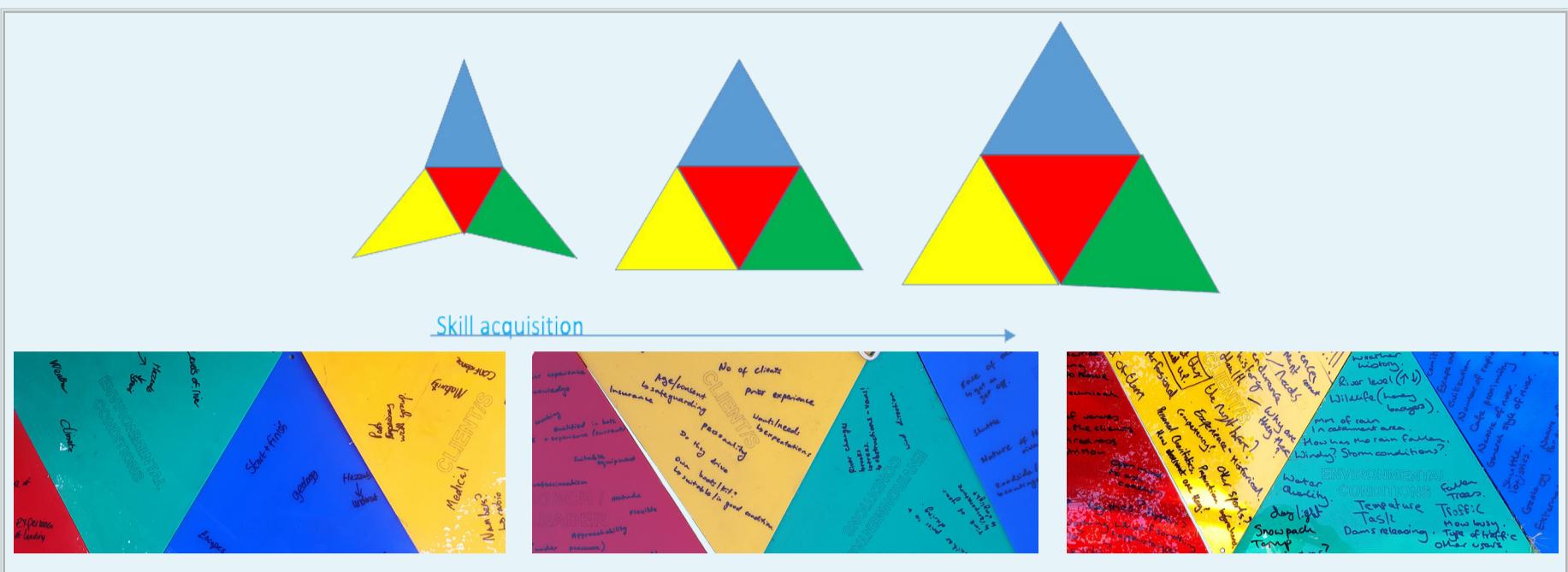
The act of getting participants to discuss the different factors increases understanding through peer discussion. It also allows us to explore, challenge and redress any potential biases within their decision-making process and provides an avenue to introduce the idea of heuristic decision-making errors. During activity we reference back to the model at the point of decisions needing to be made in order to weigh up the considerations and to make the process cognitive. Likewise, post-activity reviewing produces factors that they hadn't considered before and can be added to their list of factors they will need to balance in order to make sound educational decisions in future.

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1. Collins, Carson, Amos and Collins (2017). Examining the perceived value of professional judgement and decision-making in mountain leaders in the UK: A mixed-methods investigation. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, vol 18 (2): 132-147.

### IMAGES

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The physical act of participants writing these factors down also helps the course or programme delivery. We can see what gaps there are in the participants' decision-making process and then adjust the delivery process to enable opportunities for guided and experiential learning to occur, while still meeting the needs of the participants and any syllabus requirements. The reality is that you often don't know what you need to consider in a particular factor until you have experienced it. For example visiting a west-facing crag during strong westerly winds, may mean that you find dry rock, but the wind chill factor combined with your clients' clothing choice means that you can only spend limited time there before they get too cold to learn effectively.

Broadly speaking the wider the experience levels of the participants, the more factors they have already needed to consider whilst making decisions in the past. The next step is enabling them to understand how all of the pieces fit together. A happy by-product of participants coming up with their decision-making factors, is that they are recording their key considerations for a formal risk assessment and enhancing their situational awareness.

### Decision-making adjustments with experience

As a coach/ leader's experience develops they become more aware of the key factors they need to take in to account. As a

coach/ leader increases their range of experience and at the same time develops their skill at making sound and timely decisions, the base of their *decision-making factors pyramid* becomes wider, creating a stable and consistent performance as the factors they take into account increase. This change in volume of the pyramid is demonstrated in Figure 3, which shows direct comparison of three different pyramids completed by groups of individuals who are at vastly different stages of their development as coaches/leaders.

The use of this model has shown several noticeable key benefits for the participants:

- The *decision-making factors pyramid* makes it explicit to participants that we cannot focus just on one element (technical hard skills, for instance) during either their own or their clients' development.
- It can help the participants to identify the potential constraints that they are working within, which they may not have been considered before, and also identify how those constraints could change depending on the changing needs of their clients. As such it allows for initial consideration for the experimentation of the interplay between the different factors to create the ideal learning environment.
- It gives some feel for the sort of things that the participants should really be incorporating into their risk assessments.

There are also additional benefits for us as trainers/ assessors:

- It is an excellent icebreaker. Participants often open up to other participants very quickly, discussing factors that have been issues for them in the past. This not only saves time but adds to the development of a team feel.
- The *decision-making factors pyramid* allow us to identify gaps in our participants' current knowledge and can help us adapt our plans to target these areas for development; potentially creating a much more client focused learning approach to syllabus-based course delivery.
- The pyramid can be used as a tool to prompt reflection either at the end of the day, or during an activity itself.

### Try the decision-making factors pyramid

Reflect on one of the adventurous activities you deliver and write down the list of factors that you consider under the broad topic headings of: location; environmental conditions; client/s; and coach/leader. Compare it to a colleague's or your team's ideas ■



### AUTHORS

Paul Smith and Loel Collins

Paul, now a multi-disciplined Adventure Sports Coach and Coach Educator, worked in secondary education until 2014. He became a course provider in 2006, providing the full spectrum of climbing awards, as well as the Foundation and Development Coach schemes.

Loel Collins is the Director of Learning and Development at Plas y Brenin, the National Outdoor Centre. He has worked in the Outdoor sector for over 30 years. For the past 10 years, he has taught and was a researcher at the Institute of Coaching and Performance for the University of Central Lancashire.

# MULTI-SOLVING

## How the Outdoor sector can recover from COVID-19 and tackle climate change

There is a growing determination across the country, and across the world, that once COVID-19 is a bad memory of a traumatic upheaval, the New Normal must not be the same as the Old Normal. We must do things differently; we must *“build back better”*. However, for sectors such as the Outdoor industry the immediate priority is surviving. If the current crisis tells us anything, it is that if the stakes are high enough we **can** do things differently, we **do** care about one another and we **have** the desire to make the world a better place. With minor adaptations, and in some cases no adaptations, the Outdoor sector is well placed to be at the heart, and at the leading edge, of that New Normal.

Solving acute short-term problems while at the same time ensuring long-term planetary sustainability is what the university-based think-tank Climate Interactive calls multi-solving. At the core of this approach is the rhetorical question *“How does me solving my problem help you to solve your problem?”* This is most vividly set out in the 17-minute Ted Talk by Dr. Elizabeth Sawin (1), which anyone trying to recover from the COVID crisis, and who is also concerned about the environment, is strongly urged to watch. Amongst other multi-solving scenarios, Dr Sawin describes solving current acute health problems at the same time as combatting climate change.

A multi-solving approach, therefore, seems to be ideal for the Outdoor sector achieving economic recovery from the acute and harrowing COVID-19 crisis and at the same time combatting the chronic and potentially catastrophic consequences of climate and ecological collapse.

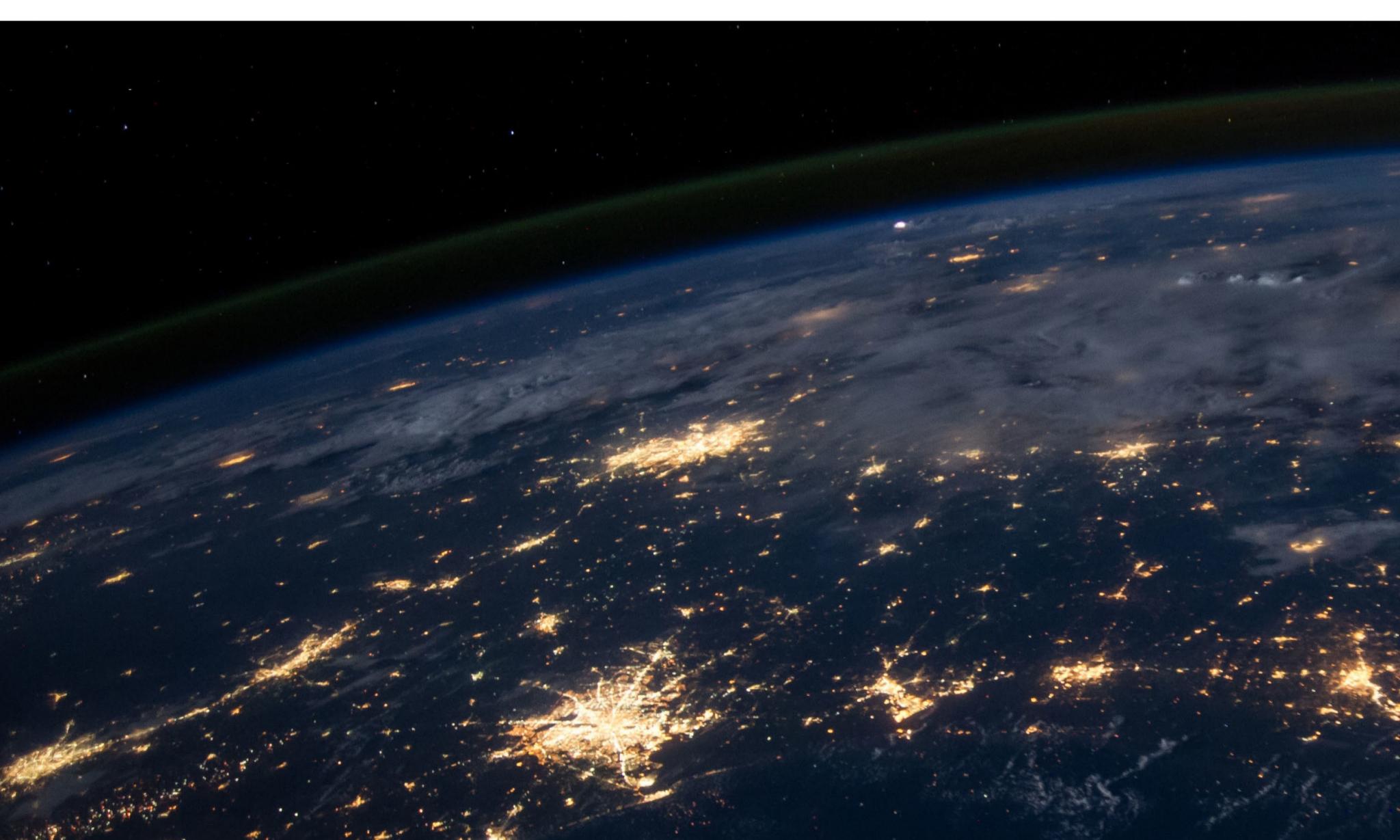
There are many calls for an approach along these lines. In April, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, called on the world’s governments to seize the opportunity to,

“...build back better by creating more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies.”

The UN climate chief, Christiana Figueres added:

“With this restart, a window of hope and opportunity opens ... an opportunity for nations to green their recovery packages and shape the 21st century economy in ways that are clean, green, healthy, safe and more resilient. (2).

In May, in a letter to the Prime Minister, the Chair of the



Committee on Climate Change (CCC) advised the UK government on how climate policy can play a core part in the recovery from the COVID crisis.(3) Also in May 2020, over 350 organisations (representing over 40 million health professionals) and over 4,500 individual health professionals from 90 countries, wrote to the G20 leaders calling for a “*healthy recovery*” from the pandemic. In an open letter they said:

**“A truly healthy recovery will not allow pollution to continue to cloud the air we breathe and the water we drink. It will not permit unabated climate change and deforestation, potentially unleashing new health threats upon vulnerable populations. (4).**

Perhaps most significantly, in late June, Climate Assembly UK, the Citizens’ Assembly that was established to advise UK government, issued an interim briefing on COVID-19 recovery and the path to net zero carbon emissions (5). Climate Assembly UK’s members are significant in that there is no other group that is at once representative of the UK population, and well-acquainted with the sorts of measures required to reach net zero Carbon emissions. They concluded that 93% of assembly members “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that,

**“As lockdown eases, government, employers and/or others should take steps to encourage lifestyles to change to be more compatible with reaching net zero [carbon emissions].**

79% of assembly members “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that,

**“Steps taken by the government to help the economy recover should be designed to help achieve net zero [carbon emissions].**

The Outdoor sector seems to be uniquely positioned to help children and young people to take these steps to encourage lifestyles to change to be more compatible with reaching net zero.

Older guests and clients can also learn how to achieve net zero carbon emissions by the way courses and centres are run, and through semi-educational programmes and green recreation.

In the Old Normal we didn’t pay the real cost of a great many things, from flying to food. It requires some very strange financial manipulation for it to be cheaper to fly to the other side of Europe than it is to get a train to the other side of the country. The real cost, at least in terms of their carbon footprint, of out-of-season cherry tomatoes is 10 times that of in-season UK-grown, loose, common variety tomatoes, or what used to be just called tomatoes. When we come to look back on it, we will realise that the Old Normal was a very strange place.

Deep down, most of us already knew that the Old Normal was not sustainable, although we may have had difficulty admitting it, and even more difficulty in articulating it. It was what we were used to. We were part of the linear economy: extracting raw materials from the planet, making it into stuff, briefly using that stuff, then discarding it into landfill.

By contrast, the New Normal thrives on the circular economy (6). We avoid buying to excess stuff that we do not need or really want. We value and look after things that have use, worth, life or value. We re-use, or enable others to re-use, things that still have use, worth, life or value. We repair, or find someone who has the skills to repair, things that can be repaired, and we recycle the things that can’t. Everything is ultimately reduced to recyclable components, either technical nutrients or biological nutrients, to use circular economy terminology. Nothing is wasted. Waste is a design failure. There is no waste in nature, only in human endeavours (7).

Experiencing this in practice, on a residential or non-residential course, already happens on many Outdoor programmes.



## DISCOVER MULTI-SOLVING

Delve deeper into ideas of multi-solving and access useful tools to help inform your practice.

Visit: [www.climateinteractive.org/ci-topics/multisolving/what-is-multisolving/](http://www.climateinteractive.org/ci-topics/multisolving/what-is-multisolving/)

## THINKING DIFFERENTLY?

Try Spectrum thinking on page 15 to learn new ways to build resilient organisations.



Increasing the impact can be achieved, in many cases, more by a change of marketing and emphasis during the course than by fundamental programme changes.

Of course, the New Normal will not just happen by accident, although it will happen from necessity. At the heart of each revised business model there needs to be a carefully considered zero carbon action plan, a ZCAP or 'Z-cap' to use the jargon (8). Living as close to net zero emissions, albeit for a brief period of time, is what the programme becomes.

The New Normal, post-COVID-19, can embrace more than zero carbon for there is an obvious potential to include a lot more. Indeed,

“...one of the most exciting aspects of delivering a zero carbon future is that it holds the potential to be one of the most exciting opportunities in human history, offering us the chance to simultaneously resolve a multitude of social, personal and interpersonal problems.

The so-called co-benefits (8). Rich countries such as the UK need to realise that, economically, we have already arrived. As a nation we have all the resources we need: it is time to embrace the fruits of growth that have been achieved over many decades of struggle. We have grown enough, indeed we have more than enough; we just need to appreciate it more and share it better. In the words of Katherine Trebeck and Jeremy Williams in *The economics of arrival* it's time for the UK to "make itself at home" socially and politically (9). Again, the Outdoor sector is good at helping people to feel good about themselves, their neighbours and their communities.

In the Outdoor sector Z-CAPs and co-benefits have always existed. We have always cherished zero carbon ways of doing things, although we have called them different things: environmentally friendly; in tune with the planet, with ourselves and with our neighbours. We have always seen adventure, challenge and exhilaration as inherently environmental pursuits, so the sector has a head start in helping to create the New Normal.

“Now is exactly the time to invest for low-carbon growth, the growth story of the future... The low-carbon transition is a sound and sensible way of emerging from post-crisis stagnation.

Writes Nicholas Stern, former Chief Economist at the World Bank, author of the UK Government's 2006 *Economics of Climate Change Report*, and former co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, in 2015. Pre-COVID! (10).

We already have the technology and the expertise both to ensure that UK society and its economy recovers promptly and fully from the COVID-19 crisis **and** to prevent global warming rising above 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. The Outdoor sector can present ready-made solutions that are good for a recovery from the COVID crisis and good for the planet.

Crucially important in creating our various and diverse New Normals is to teach our children and young people what their place is within it for ultimately they won't see it as the New Normal. For them it will just be, well, normal ■

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## IMAGES

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## AUTHOR

Marcus Bailie

Marcus is passionate about the outdoors and the Outdoor sector. His interests have migrated steadily from adrenaline-pumped kayaking expeditions, to teaching rock-climbing and mountaineering, and to the conviction that adventure activities, when delivered well, have a powerful and beneficial effect on children and young people. These days his energy is focused on trying to ensure that the Outdoor sector plays a central role in the climate and ecological emergency we find ourselves in.

# MUST READ RESEARCH

## Highlights from the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning (JAEOL)



### ENJOY RESEARCH ADVENTURES

IOL members can access five past papers from JAEOL as part of annual Institute subscription and there is also a discounted subscription opportunity.

For more information on how to submit an article, or to get access to JAEOL, visit: [www.outdoor-learning.org/Journal](http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Journal)

**T**he *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, an official IOL publication, which focusses on publishing and sharing research with the aim to promote dialogue, research, thinking, teaching and practice from critical perspectives in the fields of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning. It publishes papers concerned with social, cultural, political, ethical and environmental issues in the Outdoor Studies field. All the research articles featured in JAEOL go through a rigorous peer review, involving editor screening and anonymised refereeing.

Thinking about the key themes emerging within this issue of *Horizons*, our Editor Carmen selects a few JAEOL articles you may wish to explore ■

### THEME: SENSORY

#### JAEOL ARTICLE

Mutual experiences: understanding children's play in nature through sensory ethnography by Jostein Rønning Sanderud. Published online December 2018 and printed vol 20. no. 2, pages 111-122.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the concept 'mutual experiences' to highlight how a researcher's sensory experiences may contribute to producing knowledge concerning children's bodily play in a natural environment. The article also demonstrates how photo-interviews can give a researcher virtual access to places and events where s/he cannot be present. The inspiration for the concept of 'mutual experiences' emerged from three sources: (1) The premise that human experiences and knowledge are embodied and develop interactively from environments; (2) the literature on sensory ethnography; and (3) ethnographically inspired studies of children playing in a natural environment.

Go to: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2018.1557058](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2018.1557058)

### THEME: LEADERSHIP

#### JAEOL ARTICLE

Exploring the influence of Outdoor Management Development (OMD) program on leadership and teamwork competencies by Anna Kourtesopoulou and Athanasios Kriemadis. Published online August 2020.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to ascertain whether (1) there were any immediate effects on managers' leadership competencies, leadership outcomes and teamwork as a result of the Outdoor Management Development (OMD) program and (2) there were any differences among managers' competencies in relation to demographic variables. A sample of 51 Greek business managers participating in a two-day low-ropes course were assessed before and after training, using questionnaires and observation instruments.

Go to: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2020.1784763](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2020.1784763)

### THEME: SUSTAINABILITY

#### JAEOL ARTICLE

Nature Mentors: a program to encourage outdoor activity and nature engagement among urban youth and families by Hackett et al. Published online February 2020.

#### ABSTRACT

Significant declines in outdoor activity and engagement with the natural environment are growing concerns with negative impacts on well-being. We pilot-tested an intervention encouraging outdoor activity among adult mentor and child mentee pairs and families, in partnership with Milwaukee's Urban Ecology Center. Findings indicate the significance of environmental barriers to behavior change, especially in urban areas, as well as the potential utility of programs like Nature Mentors in producing shifts towards more time spent outdoors and in contact with nature.

Go to: [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2020.1730203](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2020.1730203)

# LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

Film-making, bug hotels, natural dyes and much more...



## LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION?

Be inspired by the resources and ideas available on the Suntrap website: <https://suntrapcentre.co.uk/suntrap-at-home>

Watch the winning *At home safari film challenge* films:  
<https://suntrapcentre.co.uk/at-home-safari-film-challenge>

Learn more about urban birding and David Lindo here:  
<https://theurbanbirder.com>

When I was a teenager, I spent a couple of weeks working with the British Trust Conservation Volunteers (now The Conservation Volunteers) helping with practical conservation tasks in Lancashire. I loved it. It was probably where I began to realise that the natural world was important to me. Working at Suntrap Forest Centre based in Epping Forest, East London for over 30 years has allowed me to share that passion with thousands of children and young people. But in July 2019, after over 50 years of operation, Suntrap closed for school and other group visits.

However, this isn't another story of an Outdoor Environmental centre being shut; quite the opposite. Waltham Forest Council, owners of the site, had made the decision to invest £4.5 million in refurbishment to ensure it is a fit for purpose hub for environmental education in the borough's climate and ecological emergency strategy. The centre will promote sustainable behaviour, providing learning opportunities about the ground-breaking energy-efficiency measures being put in place throughout the site. Changes include an energy-efficient retrofit of the main (previously drafty) Victorian building. Twenty fully insulated, seasonally heated wooden camping pods, with a multi-use camping pavilion for up to 80 people, fitted with solar panels, will replace camping in tents. Further sustainable measures include electric vehicle charging points, a bike store, a rainwater harvesting roof on a new outdoor classroom, green roofs on the animal cages, a Ridan composter (for food waste) attached to the camping pavilion, as well as improvement and development of habitats in the Centre's seven acres of grounds, including an orchard.

Work started; surveys were completed, old, dilapidated outbuildings were demolished, foundations dug and filled, a new roof and insulation were installed. My skeleton staff and I set about an ambitious Environmental Education programme with local schools and community groups, aptly called *Suntrap on Tour*.

Over the years we've learnt that some of our visitors may not, at first, enjoy their encounters with the natural world; balking at being asked to sit on grass, pick up soggy leaves or look for invertebrates. From experience we know that it can take time for some of them to start to relax and enjoy being in the natural world. But we've found it can help if young people begin to understand the important role different species play in ecosystems. That without those creepy crawlies, leaves would not decompose and in turn there'd be no compost to make a healthy soil for the plants to grow in. Through encouragement we help them to start to nurture a love of the natural world and consequently a healthy respect for all living things that often carries on into their adulthood.

To continue this strategy from September 2019 we ran activities at community events, schools, green spaces and especially in Epping Forest for children to understand more about the local natural environment. At schools we offered a bespoke range of two-hour outreach sessions tailored to the National Curriculum and Exam Board specifications for all age groups, from early years to post-16. These included: hands on sessions with some of the Suntrap animals; fire-lighting on venue grounds; and exploring local woodlands. Our animal discovery sessions in local libraries, parks, festivals and even care homes were always popular.

All the while we were looking forward to getting back to the ground-breaking new site at the end of May 2020.

Then the country went into lockdown. Building work stopped. 'Suntrap on tour' stopped.

Children couldn't go to school. Trips into Epping Forest, other than by foot, were being discouraged. So, we had to come up with a new plan to ensure that in these new and strange circumstances children and families were encouraged to stay in touch with the natural world.

One solution has been a 'Suntrap at home' activity page on the Suntrap website. Like many other centres across the country this has been a way to help the local community by providing ideas for simple activities which can be done inside or out, with as few resources as possible, but with an emphasis on the natural world. Each day staff started pulling ideas together, trying them out in their own house or garden and making sure there are plenty of photos to go with each activity.

Projects have been diverse and varied such as 'Seeds that can be found in your fridge to grow!'; 'How to make a bug hotel'; 'Be a tree estate agent' and 'Natural household dye-making'. Never forgetting that children could be living in a home with no access to their own outdoor space. President of the Friends of Suntrap, David Lindo (The Urban Birder) shared his tips for enjoying the outdoors from his flat in lockdown in Spain. David also judged entries for the *At home safari film challenge*, a contribution to Waltham Forest Council's virtual cultural programme. David said,

*“I was overwhelmed by the sheer creativity and fun that these films exhibited. Some were clearly well thought out, directed and edited. A superb effort!*

The competition was for under-17-year-olds to submit a one-minute

natural history-style film made in their home or garden. The prize allowed 10 winners to each bring 7 guests and have a night under the stars in our new four-berth camping pods. Those without a garden were not excluded, so to encourage creativity and imagination, for example, using toys or making a jungle in the living room were all permissible. The results clearly showed that it was possible to make a good short documentary with nothing more than a mobile phone, an enthusiastic interviewer and some interesting subjects.

In their submissions feedback has included:

*“Here is a video technically put together by myself but envisioned by my son. He learnt about birds for a month at home and waited in the garden, watching the birds and cats for key scenes, which I helped film while we discussed their story. He's previously found a dead bird, so he's been very interested to know about the life cycle, wanting to protect the birds, but knowing he can't always.*

*“Thanks for organising such a great initiative, it was a fun thing to do.*

*“Thanks for putting together such a nice initiative. It was a fun and educational project to keep my son busy with, whatever the outcome!*

One important factor learnt throughout this period has been the importance of embracing virtual technology in all its forms. During the lockdown Suntrap has increased its social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Between 20 April to 4 June 2020 we had 2,175 visitors to our website, with 83% new, we had 2,092 new visitors to the website. 17% of website visitors came from our Facebook and Twitter accounts. It wasn't just local people interested in Outdoor Learning and Suntrap we had an international pick up from as far as Helsinki, Amsterdam, Paris and Vienna.



## GET A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

See page 8 for professionals' opinions from around the world about the impact of COVID-19 on our sector.

The team have had to adapt to working in isolation and attending online meetings, also in utilising YouTube with photography, filming and editing tutorials, as well as face-to-camera presentations. This aspect of lockdown has, for some of the team, been a steep and daunting learning curve but as with all good Outdoor practitioners the importance of keeping flexible, creative and adaptable has been stood us in good stead!

The lockdown has broadened our horizons and pushed us to fully utilise social media and this will continue in the future. During the refurbishment closure the team had been actively going out to schools; this practice will continue far longer than we expected, as the challenge of getting children to our centre in the middle of the forest is still to be addressed. However, adapting to post-lockdown is now included in the building accessibility plans.

Furthermore, as part of the borough's ongoing school support, we're providing free training, consultancy and curriculum-linked ideas to local schools to help make regular Outdoor Learning in their own grounds the norm. For the first time we filmed a video sharing the benefits of our services. The signs that schools are embracing Outdoor Learning are positive. At our visit at Downsell Primary School in Leyton feedback from the teachers included:

*“I hadn't noticed how many natural things there were in our grounds until this training made me look!”*

*“How can you think of so many different ways of using the outdoors, I'd never have thought of them.”*

How many people during this lockdown period have realised just how important nature is to our wellbeing? How much more so for children whose whole routine has been completely disrupted and who may be very anxious about loved ones they cannot visit? It could be that by encouraging families to get closer to nature we could be laying the foundations for naturalists of the future right here in East London ■



### IMAGES

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### AUTHOR

Kerry Rolison, Head of Suntrap Forest Centre, Epping Forest, East London

Kerry has a background in primary education and has taught in schools in Haringey and Waltham Forest. She joined Suntrap in 1989 and became Head in 2005. As well as managing the centre, with such a small staff she can turn her hand to many things including cutting the meadow, cooking dinner for 30 children or looking after the beehives!

# ROLE MODELLING

Part one of a new series thinking about Outdoor Education, diversity, equity and inclusion



In Professional Matters in issue 89 of *Horizons* (1), IOL write of raising our game in the Outdoor sector. Within the equality section of this article you will find this sentence:

**“We will work to ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.**

Further on, in the diversity section, it reads:

**“The more diverse our workforce, the better we are able to respond to and reflect the individuals and communities we support.**

Though for organisations and individuals alike, COVID-19 has put many into survival mode, as the waters begin to settle we should begin to wonder how we are going to emerge ready to intentionally move forward to make changes that reflect this pledge by IOL.

Look at the place you work and ask yourself, “*how much does it reflect the individuals and communities that I support?*” The statistics would suggest, not very well. In terms of diversity, UK companies at large do not reflect the country in which they operate (2), and they aren’t improving quickly (3).

Of the four largest UK Outdoor Learning providers, not one has a percentage of Black, Asian, Minority and Ethnic (BAME) staff above 5% (4). Considering that one of these companies advertises that it employs 3,000 staff per year, that’s not very ethnically diverse however

you wish to look at it. Acknowledging these figures is a starting point and provides a place to move forward from.

Many organisations, such as the Adventure Syndicate, the Lindley Educational Trust and the Outward Bound Trust, are working hard to increase diversity in the Outdoor industry. It is great that IOL and other Outdoor Learning organisations are focusing on these topics and creating working definitions. As Camber Outdoors says: “*If we’re not clear on what inclusion, equity, and diversity mean, then we’ll never be clear on how to build them into our companies* (5)”.

According to dictionary definitions, a role model is a person who is emulated by others (6); therefore, in theory we all can be role models. But there is no part of the base definition that mentions positive emulation. Research into role modelling by the medical industry reinforces this: “*Role modelling is a powerful teaching tool for passing on the knowledge, skills and values...but its net effect on the behaviour of students is often negative rather than positive* (7)”.

Just like any other aspect of education, positive role modelling comes from knowledge, intent and effort. Research exploring markers that lead to positive role modelling has found that similarities such as race (8) are very effective. This is supportive of Bandura’s Social Learning theory which discusses the mediating a (role) model does within a child’s environment. In short, children will learn best from educators they feel they have similarities with (9, 10).

Though gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and financial demographic are often important parts of a person's identity, this is not to suggest that it is impossible to educate someone of a different race or sex as the educator. As Erikson describes, the initial development of our own identity and the search for role models happens simultaneously, and most acutely between the ages of 12-19 (11,12). Coincidentally, these are also the ages when most people in the UK will attend formal Outdoor Education programmes.

All of this suggests that connections between the student and the educator are a crux of role modelling, and research has shown that the more parallels there are between the student and the educator, the greater the chance of success will be for learning outcomes.

## STRATEGIES FOR FINDING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSE ROLE MODELS

Here are some potential barriers to finding and supporting diverse role models, and methods which can be used to overcome them.

### 1. "We can only hire those who apply"

Perhaps the question is not, "why isn't a more diverse group applying?" but instead, "where can we advertise to attract a more diverse applicant pool?" An example is Rooney's Rule, from the American National Football League, which has an interview quota for new positions. If a team doesn't have enough applicants from under-represented groups, they can't interview until they do. This adds an opportunity for those who don't usually have it. This suggestion is also found in the Parker Review (2) to motivate change to the mono-ethnic culture found in UK corporate boards.

In the field of Outdoor Learning, this perspective could spur creative advertisement methods for job openings. How do you give potential new staff an awareness of your vacancies?



### 2. "We need to hire the best regardless of their background"

People's backgrounds form part of the reason why they can or cannot present as the most skilled (see *On a plate* by Toby Morris). The root of this whole problem is systematic; how do we play our part in this Catch 22? If you find yourself with a choice of new hires for one position, why not hire the most diverse? Really, why not? If they meet your specified requirements, then they will also bring a perspective that you do not have, putting them ahead of those who are like you, in some ways at least. Are you replacing staff with their doppelganger? The IOL has done a great job of opening opportunities by creating an Outdoor Instructor Apprenticeship. Can you use this to support diversity within your company?

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### FINDING THE PATH AHEAD

Learn the latest about the IOL journey to charter status and what it means for members.  
Go to page 19.



## MICRO-AGGRESSIONS

Micro-aggressions are defined as: “*brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group* (16).”

### 3. “Our systems need to support us, not define us”

Wright and Gray concluded that there are still significant gender-based challenges in the Outdoor Learning sector (13). Camber Outdoors produced a study looking at gender in the American Outdoor Industry, which states; “*Men are more likely to think the workplace is equitable; women see a workplace that is less fair and offers less support. Men think their companies are doing a pretty good job supporting diversity; women see more room for improvement*” (5). There is no expectation for one educator or Outdoor Learning organisation to positively change the nation. But being part of the change is an expectation we should all hold ourselves to. There will be reasons that your staff team is predominantly one demographic, and it is not biological. Few of us will have the power to lead from the back in this instance; leadership in this domain is about getting to the front, doing the hard work and finding a path we can all follow.

### 4. “People won’t stay if they don’t feel welcome”

People are unlikely to turn up if they are not invited. It is important to remember that there is a difference between “*you are welcome here*” and “*this place was made with you in mind*” (14). I believe that to make people feel welcome, you need to create a space with them in mind. Coastal Spirit, a sea kayak company in Anglesey, has a women-specific mentorship program and a surf and tide race course run by all-female coaches. By having women run the course, they are better positioned to think about the women taking the course. Work out or seek guidance on the barriers preventing staff from having a long tenure with you. Focus on your least represented group, as clearly there are more barriers for them if fewer of them are engaging or staying.

### 5. “Am I the solution or the problem?”

The largest amount of work to be done, is on educating ourselves, as individuals. What are our cultural norms or biases that will exclude those who have not historically been present in our industry? Be conscious of micro-aggressions. There may not be an “*explicit intent to degrade, exclude or to discriminate*” (15), which makes micro-aggressions difficult to identify and navigate. They cause a negative impact and are only solved by identifying the implicit bias that we all carry with us.



SEE THE FULL CARTOON BY TOBY MORRIS: Go to <https://digitalsynopsis.com/inspiration/privileged-kids-on-a-plate-pencil-sword-toby-morris/>

While I have tried to provide a perspective on role modelling and how it is affected by diversity, those who work in each Outdoor Learning organisation will be fundamental to building change into their companies.

Diversity is important for your company because the UK is a diverse place and it is likely that your students/ clients will become more diverse over the coming years. The pivot the entire Outdoor industry revolves around, which aims to change lives, build futures, teach resilience, and spark greater possibility, is going to be more successful if we have a staff team that “*reflects the individuals and communities that we support*” ■



#### AUTHOR

Janek Mamino

Janek has spent the last few years working as a sea kayak, hike and white water canoe instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). He is now in Ireland working for the From Outdoors to Labour Market programme and Wild Summits while pursuing an MSc in Education.

# BEING EARTHWISE

## Answering questions about nature connectivity

“

*I work in a mainstream school, with teenagers who often live very chaotic lives. I'd like to try something different outdoors either using our playing fields or nearby woodland. I'm thinking that this time could be good for mentoring-to-reset, to help the teenagers get some headspace, learn something new about their local environment and feel ready to be part of our school society. Ideas on how we can bring nature and positive reinforcement together would be great.”*

Mrs Robinson. Behaviour Manager, Yorkshire.



### TRY SENSORY ADVENTURES

Go to page 12 for session examples and information on how to download a handbook with around 50 activities to try

I like the way the question makes a link between nature and personal and social development. Working with young people in the outdoors you realise that those who feel good about themselves and who are comfortable with others are more likely to appreciate nature. Conversely, connections with nature can motivate and inspire as well as improving physical and mental health.

With teenagers I'd recommend developing a step-by-step approach to nature activities. Start by getting to know individuals and the group. Simple outdoor icebreakers and energisers help with breaking down barriers and allow leaders to observe individual concerns in a group. Here's an example of a lively short activity called POW. The group forms a circle, and encouraged by the facilitator counts aloud. On the count of 10 individuals leap in the air with one arm outstretched, shouting a very loud "POW". The facilitator then starts the counting but stops before 10, letting individuals continue counting silently. They leap up and shout "POW" when they think 10 is reached.

School grounds can be used to introduce various forms of orienteering that encourage physical activity. These can be related to the local environment by asking participants to make observations, answer questions or collect natural objects at points on the course. There are excellent resources for teachers who wish to set up orienteering courses (1).

Woodlands are ideal places to make connections with nature. The leader needs to set the scene, choose activities carefully for the group, encourage support, trust and co-operation, and let nature play its part. There are many resources that encourage emotional understanding through sensory activities. These are often undervalued in the school curriculum where cognitive learning predominates (see 'Coming to our senses' on page 12).



## LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION?

Find Outdoor Learning ideas on the Learning through Landscapes website. Search by age and subject: [www.ltl.org.uk/free-resources/](http://www.ltl.org.uk/free-resources/)

### REFERENCES

1. McNeill, Cory-Wright and Renfrew (1997). *Teaching Orienteering*. BOF.
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3. Cornell (1989). *Sharing the joy of nature*. Dawn Publications.
4. Cooper (1998). *Outdoors with young people*. Russell House Publishing.
5. OEAP (2012). *Environmental learning handbook and cards*. Harvey.
6. <https://www.ltl.org.uk/free-resources/>
7. <https://www.aretacentre.co.uk/schools-youth/outdoor-activities-free-coronavirus/>

### IMAGES

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## Additional ideas

Earth walks were developed by the Institute of Earth Education (2) as a series of connected activities to encourage wonder and feelings for nature. They involve, for example, getting close to the earth, looking at details (a leaf, a decaying log, a seed, smelling a flower or pine needle), finding different touches, or creating a map of sounds. One example is 'meet a tree', where participants are led blindfolded on a journey to get to know a tree through touch and smell and when taken back to the start they try to retrace their steps without the blindfold.

Joseph Cornell (3) developed the concept of *flow learning* to raise environmental awareness. This is based on four stages that flow from one to another: awaken enthusiasm, focus attention, direct experience, share inspiration. I was always surprised by how teenagers, including some with unruly lives, enjoyed spending time alone in nature. This is a chance to just be, absorbing the sounds and atmosphere of a place, noticing an insect, a change in the temperature, and the shape of a cloud or a passing shadow. It's

possible to structure the activity by asking participants to recall three different sounds, use their hands to feel warm and cold places, or think of a few words to describe their experience.

There are guidelines for using environmental or land art with young people (4). The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) has produced an environmental learning handbook and set of activity cards (5). Learning Through Landscapes offer free outdoor resources mainly aimed at primary level (6). Arete Outdoor Centre has an excellent range of free outdoor activity sheets that were produced during COVID-19 school closures (7).

## DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Email [horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org) to ask Geoff a question about nature connectivity ■



### AUTHOR

Geoff Cooper

Geoff has long been an advocate for Outdoor Learning and believes that it has an important part to play in questioning values and encouraging environmental awareness and action. He enjoys journeys on foot and by boat which allow time to meet people, share stories and appreciate nature.

# VIEWPOINT

Readers tell us what they think



## WHAT'S THE QUESTION?

As a sector, one aspect of what we do is to encourage people to appreciate the wonder of the outdoors.

We asked readers to share how well they think we, as a sector, have been doing this.

Here's what they said:

**“**As many Outdoor industry players realise, the government administrations are essential in advancing the critical industry issues. Sustained advocacy by the industry has ensured that we receive a fair share of attention from the administrations. Thanks to the lobbying these sustained efforts have contributed to industry growth, as well as attracted government resources enabling advancement in the development and scaling of Outdoor programs and activities; contributing enormously to public and student Outdoor Education and awareness, thus attracting unprecedented numbers outdoors prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

With great achievements and success in policy, administration and awareness, inclusion and global collaboration are factors that erode the industry, and still receive no or little attention. Importantly, inclusion requires infrastructure improvements to make the Outdoor industry infrastructure accessible to people faced with disabilities. We need to address issues to do with affordability of activities and programs enabling accessibility by low income families and communities, as this further boosts future economic growth in the Outdoor recreation industry. Further international collaboration enhances wider industry development and strengthens the advocacy voice, in part because of the larger coalition.

And this we can achieve, with more diverse and inclusive management boards and administration management teams and international collaboration and engagement to educate.

### VIEWPOINT BY:

**Mutumba Faisal**

Co-founder, Uganda Junior Rangers Program (NP Junior Rangers (U) Ltd). Kampala, Uganda, East Africa.

**“**The wonder of the outdoors is in my view, the natural world, the aspects that get on with doing their thing without being man-made: land and water, wildlife, weather and seasonal change. These things are still, for many people, as much of an external hindrance to human life than an inherent asset; soil makes our clothes muddy rather than provides us with nutritious food, trees push up pavements and drop leaves rather than allow us to breathe, and insects irritate rather than pollinate. To counter this and help restore nature as being wonderful, the Wildlife Trusts run 30 Days Wild, a campaign to help people notice or take part in small aspects of wildness every day during June. This has enabled those taking part to become more aware of nature around them, from noticing moss growing on the wall by the bus stop, to discovering an unexplored nature reserve. Outdoor Learning participants have been able to extend their guided learning experiences with Wildlife Trust education staff into their home, school and work lives rather than the outdoors being simply something that exists only in places of school trips, or holidays. Sharing the wonder and delight through social media and personal connections helps open the eyes of other intrigued people, multiplying the smiles and the deeper breaths after summer rain. This deepening connection to local nature has been a two-way relationship – research by the University of Derby has shown that after taking part in 30 Days Wild, participants feel both happier and healthier, with the positive effects lasting months after the campaign itself.

Small steps help and, despite COVID-19, this summer was an even bigger 30 Days Wild as it brought people together and slowing down helped them to appreciate how nature helps our mental and physical health. Outdoor Education and first-hand experience of nature is one of the best marketing strategies for the wonder of nature; when we can show that it is wonderful we will also demonstrate that it is an essential part of our survival, rather than an optional extra. If only we could take politicians on Outdoor Learning experiences...

### VIEWPOINT BY:

**Susan Edwards**

Adult Education Manager. Surrey Wildlife Trust, UK.

“ Unfortunately I believe that although some young people may learn to appreciate the outdoors while in our care, it is not due to a robust or systematic effort on our part, rather our approach is inconsistent, limited and unsupported and the lure of adventure activities (kinaesthetic learning) paired with reviewing (cognitive learning) has crowded out that of aesthetic appreciation and affective learning. There are a number of reasons for this, including: measurement, attainment and commercialisation.

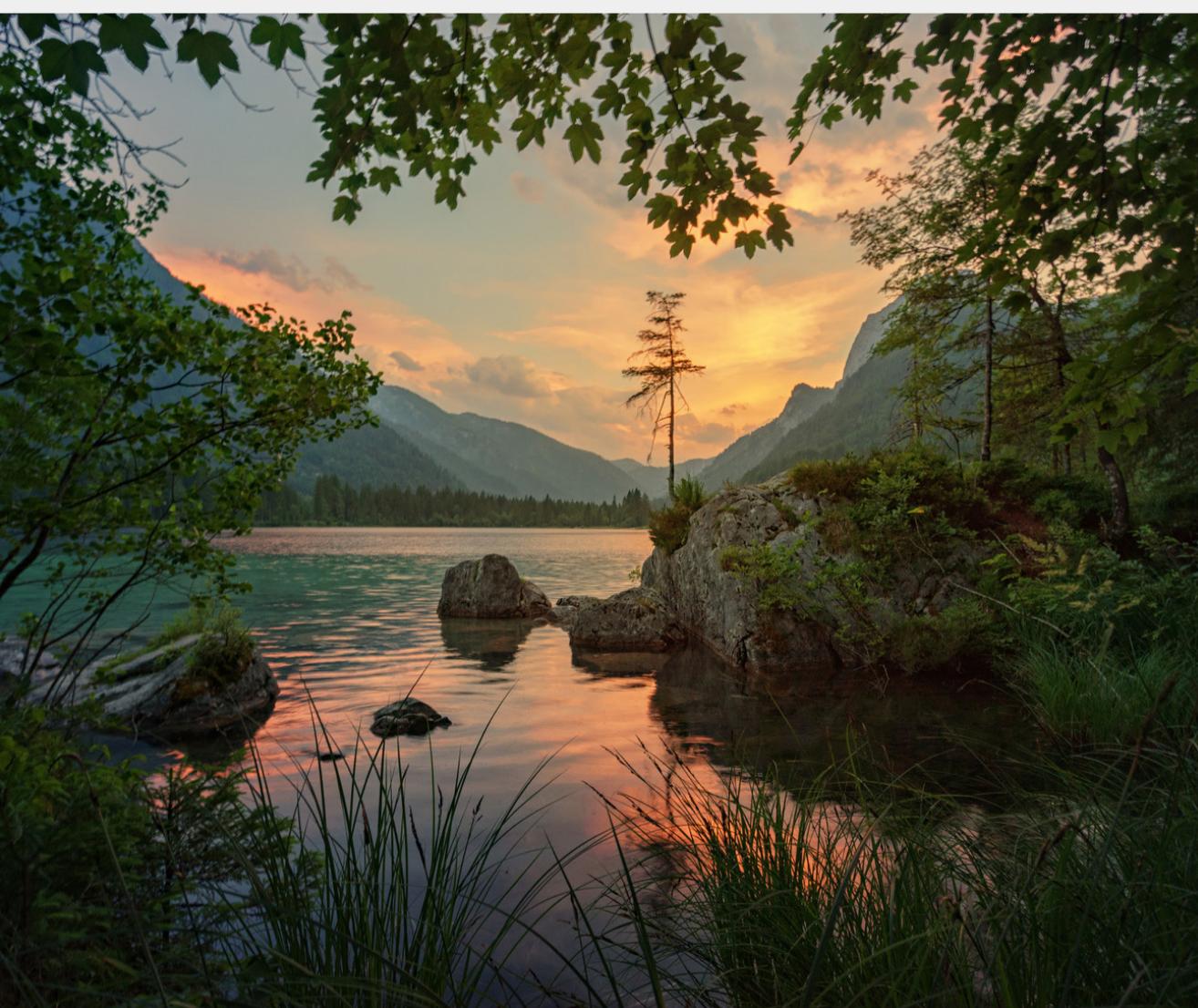
Where we have had to prove our commercial worth within an increasingly commercialised educational market those things that are measurable are prioritised. It is easier to highlight the achievements of climbing a rock face, canoeing a river, completing a walk or lighting a fire, than it is to quantify the amount that the mountain was appreciated, or the degree that the beauty of the river was recognised, and consequentially much easier to sell as an outcome. While as a sector we are used to dealing with the hard to measure and intangible outcomes such as confidence and communication, the historic military and social engineering roots to our sector have led us to be more comfortable talking about whether we have made better people for the good of society, better communicators, leaders and team players, rather than talk about people's spiritual, aesthetic or mindful growth.

Safety and standards: the unintended consequence of the push for standards and safety has meant that increasingly our workforce is drawn from and attracts people who have physical skills (qualifications) and relationships with the outdoors rather than an aesthetic relationship. This over time has led us, as a sector, to see safety and adventure as our domain and to forget that that appreciation and wonder of nature and the outdoors formed a cornerstone of the birth of our sector and a key aspect that attracts many people to the outdoors. This unconscious shift has affected so many aspects of our understanding of Outdoor Learning that we don't even question it any more. For example the training we promote is often technical and skills based, rather than aesthetic and we think of our sector as an industry. To do better we need to acknowledge that as a sector the relationship between kinaesthetic, cognitive and affective learning is out of balance, we need to understand the drivers for this and make a change.

#### **VIEWPOINT BY:**

**Bryn Beach**

Outdoor Educator, with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art. South East of England.



“ Sometimes I think we do lots to preserve the environment that we, as Outdoor activity providers, operate in. It would appear that we do appreciate the wonderful place that we cherish so much. At both national and local levels schemes appear to preserve plants that we unfortunately trample on our way to go climbing at our crags. Look at Haytor (Dartmoor). The footpath and parking arrangement deliberately concentrates visitors to one area in an attempt to preserve other parts of the moor. This is known as honeypotting, like “bees to a honey pot”.

I don't know if the odd scheme is enough. Sometimes I think there is an educational barrier presented to us when we are young which prevents us from fully appreciating the situation. If we can't educate our young appropriately then it would appear that we do not appreciate the wonderful place that we cherish so much.

In our world of scoring well in tests, where is the appreciation that trampling physically changes our beautiful plants? Stem lengths are shortened, pod number and percentage cover decreases and flower failure increases. Distributional changes also occur, soil gets compacted, seedling mortality increases and root penetration decreases. Oh, and the water table is altered so flooding occurs. If only this could be presented in an appropriate way to our young then perhaps we wouldn't need honeypots. My parents always said prevention was better than cure.

#### **VIEWPOINT BY:**

**Rob Humphries, APIOL.**

Ghyll Head Outdoor Education Centre, Lake District, Cumbria, UK.

#### **TURN FOR MORE VIEWPOINTS**

Go to page 42 for more reader opinions and to find out how to have your say.



**“**The answer is that we might never know. Natural curiosity is supplemented by wonder and awe as experiences accumulate, and is thoroughly personal. A developed sense of wonder then is beyond our control as practitioners; who knows what degree of wonder people will develop or what will constitute the wonderful for them? However, our role as mediators of this process is still significant. Unusual or unique experiences, outside people's normal frames of reference, can be powerful, emotional and meaningful, and practitioners often facilitate these experiences and influence what happens next by the degree to which they choose to answer the question, “can the mountains speak for themselves?”.

At the heart of wonder lies our values, as individuals, as a community and as a society. How we see the world is a product of historical influences and current ones; encouraging a sense of wonder has a purpose as a result and we do well to be open and honest about what that is. “Wow, look at the stars” can remain a spectacular memory, or it can lead to deep thinking about our origins, spirituality and purpose in life. Similarly, the intricacy of dew on a spider's web can make a nice photograph, or be the doorway to discovery of the natural world. The danger is that without this encouragement to appreciate the world we have, people will not think about what it means and what we need to do to look after it. We might never know what impact we have as practitioners but we can ensure that we are alive to the opportunities, big and small, to experience, and encourage, a sense of wonder.

**VIEWPOINT BY:**

**Dave Harvey**

PhD candidate (researching Outdoor Learning provision). University of Cumbria.

**“**Lockdown restrictions, for me, have amplified the value of the outdoor environment; when you're not allowed out of your own home, or limited to a local area, the value of such resources soon becomes apparent and the desire to experience more of it increases. We have all probably spent more time in, and therefore noticing, parts of our local outdoor area more than ever. Footpaths, cycle tracks and playing fields, which have previously been overlooked or driven past, have recently seen an overwhelming increase in traffic and attention. Long-time residents have suddenly been 'discovering' new local areas and views, minutes from their front doors, that have been lying undiscovered for years. Even I, as a dedicated explorer and advocate of the great outdoors, was both delighted and embarrassed to find such hidden gems, so close to home.

Appreciation of the outdoors and noticing the small stuff have been key elements of the Outdoor Education lessons that I have been involved with delivering in recent months. The wonder of the outdoors, for many, often conjures up images of mountain tops and wide-open spaces. While we've not recently been able to take our groups to such places, we have been able to encourage small-scale exploration of homes, gardens and even single plant pots. Taking time to watch a leaf unfurl or a flower grow brings with it a sense of wonder, which is easily overlooked, yet just as easily developed. So how is it that when people are allowed out into the 'great outdoors', so many seem to be okay with leaving litter? Readers of this magazine will no doubt be just as saddened and confused as I am about this. Is it that they don't care, or that they are simply unaware of their own actions? I suspect it is the latter and that the message of 'leave no trace' shouldn't be one just reserved for wild places. The challenge is how to make this become a cultural norm across all environments, indoors and out, so that the wonder of the outdoors continues to be wonderous ■

**VIEWPOINT BY:**

**Ian Martin**

Head of Outdoor Education. St David's College. Llandudno, North Wales.

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Join the conversation by asking the Editor to add you to our Viewpoint list.

You'll then receive details about our next topic for discussion.

Get in touch via email:

[Horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:Horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org)

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# PERSPECTIVES

## Hard lessons and important solutions



The last few months have been a time of an enforced and increased focus on many things that have a direct bearing on the world of Outdoor Learning. Changing sources of physical and mental health, tests of financial sustainability and alternative approaches to meeting learning and development needs are a few that spring to mind. These and other issues are ones that have received increased attention at a personal, organisation and wider community level.

I have had some very challenging conversations across our professional community as new legislation and government guidance has forced long established ways of delivering Outdoor Learning to become at least temporarily unavailable. This has had significant personal impacts which I'm sure you've either experienced or noticed; impacts that may take a while to rebuild from and may require change to practices and organisation models.

The last few months has also shone a very hard light on the value placed on Outdoor Learning and the role it plays in school-led

education and wider society. Some of the issues revealed have been uncomfortable. At a time when children and young people especially, should have been turning to the outdoors as a valuable option for restoring self-confidence, contributing to their ongoing education and presenting healthy options to engage with the natural environment, too often the opposite has happened. Even in the parts of the UK where Outdoor Learning is built into curriculum delivery, the residential models that are so often core to that delivery have been excluded and delivery models have broken down.

I think the big lesson here is not so much that Outdoor Learning is not truly valued in UK society, rather that the current approaches are not realising its true potential and, importantly, not sufficiently progressive or integrated in their nature.

A series of disparate experiences in the Outdoors before reaching adulthood, with limited clear progression and recognition of contribution to wider personal development, is a problem.



#### IMAGES

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This problem is magnified when society is forced to jettison any 'unnecessary' activity that is perceived to contribute to the impact of a pandemic.

Whilst I've no doubt that the coming months will continue to see legislation and guidance that restricts or even completely rules out certain practice, I am also clear that learning and development outdoors can be much more impactful than screen-based activity and involves much lower risk of transmission than indoor groupings.

UKOutdoors has become a very useful vehicle for getting a clearer and more consistent dialogue with some key influencers of the constraints impacting Outdoor Learning. The conversations around the UKOutdoors Transformation Group table have also revealed how much more there is still to do in establishing an integrated and progressive model that adds value to activity at regional, home nation and UK-wide levels. For the rich and varied Outdoor Learning practices, organisations and representative bodies across the UK to better contribute to the development of individuals and society, we must continue to seek common ground.

I'm personally encouraged by the progress made with building UKOutdoors during the testing last six months. I encourage you to consider what it is that you, and the beneficiaries of your practice, need from a UK-wide body that provides a voice, standards, guidance and accreditation across the whole of Outdoor Learning. Please share your thoughts through contacting me or any of the team [institute@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:institute@outdoor-learning.org) ■

#### AUTHOR

Andy Robinson  
IOL Chief Executive Officer

# ACR

► [www.adventureclimbrescue.co.uk](http://www.adventureclimbrescue.co.uk)



# IOL KNOWLEDGE BASE

The IOL Knowledge Base is a members-only resource for all professionals in Outdoor Learning.

It builds on the very successful member-to-member webinars offered during the COVID-19 pandemic and will be a place to share knowledge, presentations and links on all aspects of Outdoor Learning provision. It will be particularly helpful to students, apprentices, and members completing RPIOL, APIOL or LPIOL Awards.

Here is our starting point. How the Knowledge Base develops will be shaped by what you, our members, find most valuable.

To contribute a link or article, or to request resources in a particular area, please email: [institute@outdoor-learning.org](mailto:institute@outdoor-learning.org)



## FACILITATING LEARNING

- > FL1 Theory of Change
- > Outdoor Therapy Statement of Good Practice
- > National Outdoor Learning Award
- > High Quality Outdoor Learning
- > Teaching Outdoors webpage and links

## ACTIVITY SKILLS AND COACHING

- > Governing and Awarding Bodies
- > IOL Bushcraft Professional Practice Group
- > IOL Field Studies Professional Practice Group

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION

- > Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpage and links
- > LGBT+ Rights
- > IOL Adventure for All Professional Practice Group

## EXPERIENCE AND JUDGEMENT

- > Adventure Activity Information Log
- > Professional Recognition
- > PP1 Reflective Practice

## RESEARCH AND REPORTS

- > Supporting evidence and research papers
- > High Quality Outdoor Learning
- > Regional Research Hubs

## ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

- > IOL Climate Change Position Statement
- > Respect, Protect, Enjoy: The Countryside Code

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- > IOL Code of Professional Conduct
- > 7 Steps to CPD
- > Outdoor First Aid Training
- > Duty of Care, DBS, Safeguarding
- > Educare CPD Training Offer

## OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP

- > Risks and benefits webpage and links
- > Occupational Standards



## VISIT THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Go to the IOL website: [www.outdoor-learning.org](http://www.outdoor-learning.org)  
IOL members can log in for immediate access. Or, visit to learn about the benefits of becoming an IOL member.