

University of Richmond

UR Scholarship Repository

Honors Theses

Student Research

1996

The study of leadership in experiential/adventure programs

Gabriel DeMola

University of Richmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/honors-theses>



Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

DeMola, Gabriel, "The study of leadership in experiential/adventure programs" (1996). *Honors Theses*. 1129.

<https://scholarship.richmond.edu/honors-theses/1129>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

The Study of Leadership in Experiential/Adventure Programs

by

Gabriel DeMola

Senior Project

Jepson School of Leadership Studies

University of Richmond

April, 1996

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND LIBRARIES



3 3082 00611 6429

3

The Study of Leadership in Experiential/Adventure Programs

Senior Project

Jepson School of Leadership

15 April 1996

Table of Contents

Introduction

What is Outdoor Leadership?

What Makes Experiential/Adventure Education Effective?

What Is Distinctive About an Experiential/Adventure Program?

Research Determining Whether or Not the Experiential/Adventure Program is Effective and Durable Over Time

Experiential/Adventure and Judgement and Decision-Making Ability

Experiential/Adventure and Managerial Effectiveness:

Planning and Clarifying Roles and Objectives

Problem Solving

Informing and Teaching

Monitoring and Conflict Resolution

Motivation and Inspiration: Charismatic, Transformation and Self-Efficacy

Supportive

Mentoring

Self-Confidence, Conceptual, and Interpersonal Skills

Leadership Functions in Decision Groups

Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that someone with massive academic knowledge of something like kayaking, but poor self-confidence and no experience is "an accident waiting to happen." The same can be said about teaching leadership. Armed with theories and classroom simulations, the textbook leader will find him/herself frighteningly unprepared when placed in an actual leadership position if his/her leadership understanding is not grounded in a reality where the choices are real, concepts are magnified, and the consequences immediate. In the kayaking situation, the student has no idea what the swift water feels like, he/she has only read descriptions. After negotiating rapids which are difficult and seemingly unpredictable, it doesn't take long for the student to realize that the nature of the rapids cannot be broken down into elements through mere explanation, they need to be felt. An experiential/adventure prepares the student for leadership, just as the actual experience of kayaking prepares a person for kayaking.

The following research will explore the ways in which experiential/adventure education serves as an effective tool for teaching leadership. The paper will describe the attributes which make it an effective tool and delve into the distinctions of the experiential/adventure program. It will also study and analyze the results of tests used to determine its effectiveness and long term retainability of the skills developed by students in these programs. Furthermore, this paper will demonstrate how this unique style of learning grounds the fundamental elements of leadership which are paramount to its understanding and practice.

WHAT IS OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP?

Very simply, an experiential/adventure program consists of assigning a designated group to complete a series of challenging tasks in an outdoor setting. An experiential/adventure program varies from an afternoon ropes course, a weekend excursion to the mountains, or a month long expedition. The experiential/adventure program focuses on the personal growth and development of the individual through the process of group dynamics. The impact of the group process on individual participants is one of the most powerful catalysts to providing insight into the self. "The essential factors in this process are: uncertainty and risk-taking; challenge and reflection; a cooperative group environment and consensual decision making; a novel setting, dissonance, and unique problem-solving situations. It is the awareness and conscious use of these factors that enable experiential educators to design programs which bring participants to the edge of their comfort zone for the purpose of exploring facets of self such as perceived limitations, behavioral response styles, and values (Flor, 1991)." These factors are employed in the forms of exercises, initiatives, and activities that are central to the adventure experience. For instance, the use of ropes courses or rock climbing, wilderness travel, and problem-solving initiatives place participants in situations in which they are called upon to use their creative/intellectual capacities.

"Tapping into this growing resource are American businesses. American businesses spend approximately \$60 billion a year on both

formal and informal training (Latteier 1989)." This training is presented through a variety of methods, ranging from lecture style, class-room seminars to the action-oriented focus of corporate adventure training. Studies have found that corporate adventure training improves managerial business practices through the use of carefully constructed adventure experiences. The focus of the experience is on team building, leadership development or even organizational change. The essence of these experiences involves small groups being challenged by unfamiliar tasks that are associated with real work situations. To complete these tasks requires the combination of a variety of skills such as leadership, problem-solving, decision making, judgement, innovative thinking, commitment, self-confidence, trust, cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution (Gass, Goldman, and Priest 1992).

WHAT MAKES EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE EDUCATION EFFECTIVE?

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE ABOUT AN EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE PROGRAM?

Paralleling the growth of the experiential/adventure industry is an increasing concern that some corporate adventure training programs have little or no application to the business workplace. In the field of leadership studies, academics question the validity of these programs in their attempt to teach leadership to students. Many ask as to what effect the training will have on the company structure? If the bottom line of a company is profit and the corporate adventure has no effect on this, than why should companies be willing to pay for one of these experiences? Many experiential/adventure training programs do offer valuable

educational experiences that can improve business practices (Bronson, 1992). The training programs that are most effective, generally have three characteristics in common: (1) context, (2) continuity, and (3) consequences. The following pages will explore these characteristics and explain its effectiveness in teaching leadership.

Context refers to the process of structuring key elements during the experience in order to create the necessary connections between the adventure experience and the workplace. Continuity is the insurance that the learning that occurs in the adventure experience will be connected to future learning experiences available for employees in the workplace. Consequences address the fact that the outcomes of adventure experiences are not artificially contrived but provide feedback on their actions. (Gass, Goldman, Priest 1992).

A parallel can be drawn from the theory behind effective corporate adventure training to leadership training in higher education. Relating the experience to a context, such as leadership theory in a classroom, renders the material in a way that can be applied. If the adventure programs develop problem-solving or communication skills, but do not relate it to the lectures or theories behind leadership, then the gains are not likely to translate into improved learning. "For corporate adventure, the success in creating an appropriate context for beneficial change centers on the creation of "isomorphic" connections between the adventure and business environment (Bacon 1983)." "The concept of isomorphs demonstrates how elements that

are not identically common, yet are analogously similar, can create change when appropriately linked together (Hofstadler, 1979)."

Adventure experiences inherently possess key elements that create a successful medium for change, but failing to design the context of the activity to mirror the workplace creates programs that "hit" or "miss."

The following example illustrates the concepts of isomorphs using a low ropes course element called the "Spider's Web." To accomplish the task, each student must pass through one of the holes without any member touching the web. Only one person may pass through his/her designated hole. They are allotted a certain amount of time to do this. The group must develop strategies to safely deliver everyone through the web. Stepping away from the experience and reflecting on how this relates to leadership is where the real learning takes place. The web serves as a metaphor for completing a group project. Everyone has an idea of how to execute the group project, however, they must decide as a group on a particular strategy. The brainstorming process begins as the group formulates ideas on how to deliver each other through the problem. Each student has their own "hole of responsibility" to pass through. If someone does not make it through their "hole", the project fails. During the process, the student learns how each individual is inextricably tied to the group as it takes more than one individual to safely pass through a hole and more than one individual to assist. Allowing oneself to be lifted through one of the hard to reach holes demands a sense of trust. Passing through the hole signifies the delivery and transfer of the group project

to class. Reflecting on the group dynamics in theory with the actual action of delivering students through the web lead to an enhanced understanding of leadership.

In this exercise, the context of this adventure activity was framed around three critical isomorphs for the students: the timely and efficient delivery of the group project; the responsibility placed on students to complete the project; and the sense of trust developed among students to complete the project. The construction of these isomorphs created a context in which the energies, focuses, and outcomes of successfully completing the task initiatives provided the students with useable strategies for completing group projects and for perhaps resolving the problem of students who don't carry their own weight in the projects.

While the context of an activity pertains to how present learning experiences address current issues students are learning in leadership, continuity focuses on how this learning can be applied in future situations. For businesses, effective training programs structure experiences that take future development into account, including the need for employees to change and grow as the company adapts to future fluctuations in the business environment. (Gass, Goldman and Priest 1992). In one example, a company did an adventure training program to assist with a problem in which their employees were afraid to share their ideas in work groups for fear that their ideas would be ridiculed or stolen. As a result, the training program structured experiences which called upon new, alternative behaviors such as trust, sharing, open collaboration, and replaced these new behaviors with the previous dysfunctional

ones. In terms of application to leadership training in higher education, the exercises in the adventure training program would serve as a vehicle to lift followers to a heightened level of effectiveness. As mentioned before, there is little benefit in promoting certain ideas in an adventure training program if these principles will not be utilized by students in practicing leadership. When aspects of adventure experience are successfully integrated into context and structured in a manner where learning is relevant to ideas learned in the classroom, only then does the adventure program have a meaningful transfer of learning.

This meaningful transfer of learning can be grouped into two major categories that would apply to leadership training through adventure experience. The first is non-specific transfer. This occurs when the specific processes of learning are generalized into attitudes and principles used by the learner. The second is metaphoric transfer which occurs when parallel processes in one learning situation becomes analogous to learning in another different yet similar situation (Gass, 1991).

For example in a non-specific transfer, a participant in the adventure experience may develop more creative thinking techniques and may find that he enjoys the success in solving difficult and unusual problems. When faced with an opportunity to integrate these new skills with different problems at the office, the employee transfers the general learning concepts assimilated from the learning environment and integrates it into the work place. The following example now shows how metaphoric transfer occurs during the experience.

"Twelve members of a research and development team for a small company are given the task of getting their entire group over a fourteen-foot high wall without the use of any props. Two of their members are temporarily blindfolded and three are not allowed to speak. They quickly find that the crux of the problem is not in getting the first person over, nor in hopes helping the half of the group with special needs, but in finding a way to assist the last stranded person. In their haste, they have failed to find a solution to the real problem and have been distracted by immediate superficial problems. The outcome is typical of their problem-solving sessions back at the drawing board, where they often fail to give an appropriate amount of time to assess a situation before implementing an action plan (Priest 1988)."

One would believe that this is an effective exercise, but question whether learning is really taking place. What is so distinctive about adventure learning? Why couldn't the R and D team elucidate the problems just through the experience of working with each other?

The reality of consequence distinguishes adventure training from a wide variety of other learning exercises. In most classroom seminars, it is common for students to learn through lectures and simulations. Risks in these indoor exercises usually involve play money, rewards or punishments. The consequences of actions are imagined and may mean little to its participants in a classroom setting. In adventure programs, however, participants are uncertain about the outcome. They are in an unfamiliar, even hostile environment, facing novel situations. For these reasons their attention is most likely focused and their perceptions and senses are heightened. There is a sense of powerful learning and immediacy to every action in adventure training. Following this experience, students are often left with an empowered vision and critical feedback on their newly learned skills. What is so unique about the consequences and the environment is that no one person

really possesses any skills that transcend that of the rest of the group. This presents the opportunity to learn from raw human experience. "The courses structure real tasks which present real problems to real people in real times with real constraints. The reason why the consequences have such an impact is because the time and distractions from reality is collapsed into a singular focused experience (Gass 1991)." The following from Cresick and Williams illustrate the distinction of adventure/training and how the outcomes of action create a learning process which could lead a person to modify his/her behavior.

"Although outdoor tasks are not normal, they are inescapably real. Managing an outdoor situation is like managing life- it is full of unpredictable events and people. A result has to be achieved and there are only limited resources and time available. Because tasks are so different to the normal work situation, the underlying management processes are laid bare. An impetuous decision to act outside an agreed, overall plan results in a group being in the wrong place at the wrong time- a clear lesson on the consequences of committing resources without adequate communication or regard to the overall situation (Cresick and Williams, 1979)."

In order for the effect of consequences to provide a learning and meaningful experience for the group, consequences should: be tailored to meet training objectives, be valued with the perspective that outcomes arise from learning from mistakes (King 1988), be educationally relevant and appropriate, arise naturally from the setting and not be dictated by a trainer or facilitator, be real but within acceptable and recoverable limits of safety, and be customized for each individual (Priest 1992).

RESEARCH DETERMINING ~~WETHER~~ OR NOT THE EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE PROGRAM IS EFFECTIVE AND DURABLE OVER TIME

Having described the components that amount to an effective

experiential adventure program and which make the program distinctive to teaching leadership, I will now shift course and delve into the research which seeks to measure the effects the course has on its participants. The research was conducted in 1994 by Simon Priest and Mary Ann Lesperance using three corporate teams as the experiment and 1 team as a control. Its intent was to trace the development of teamwork within intact work groups engaged in corporate adventure training. All three teams were found to have experienced significant increases in teamwork during a 48 hour corporate retreat, while the control group which was not exposed to the adventure training remained the same in relation to their perceptions of teamwork. To gauge the degree to which the participants enhanced their perception of teamwork, subjects responded to each item by marking the extent to which each behavior was noted in their group. The ten items of this Team Development Indicator were: understanding and being committed to group goals; having friendly and genuine interest in one another; openly acknowledging and constructively confronting conflict; listening to each other with sensitivity and understanding , promptly making decisions and executing solutions; recognizing and respecting diversity; holding high standards for own work and group efforts; looking to one another for help and advice during challenges; recognizing, rewarding and celebrating group achievements; and finally, encouraging and accepting feedback on group performance. The increases were found to be in proportion with the experiential components of the retreat. The increases were not just a result of the outdoors experiences such as group initiative activities and

problem solving tasks but also its relation and relative applicability to concepts and the classroom lectures on group development roles and responsibilities. The aspect of the training was greatly enhanced by the theoretical concepts discussed prior to practice. To use a metaphor, in order to develop great chefs (high performance teams) one must not only provide the recipes (lecture on teamwork), but also provide time for cooking practice (team building experience through adventure training). It is clear from the study that the program brought changes in the team behaviors of the three experimental groups, however, the question remained as to how these improvements transferred back to the work place and how long did they last.

Of the three experimental groups that noted significant increases on the Team Development Indicator, one group had a follow up segment during the weeks after the experience, while one group had a self-facilitated follow up and the other group had no follow up. In relation to the three different follow-ups, the group not receiving any supportive procedures reverted back to baseline measures by the end of the six months. The group which had follow up such as team meetings, refresher training, social gatherings, staff luncheons, and coaching subteams maintained the levels of their team behaviors without significant change. The group that was self-facilitated was able to increase the levels of their team behaviors. Follow-up of the experiential component renewed the vitality the first experience gave them. For the self-facilitating group, reflection of the experience and how it tied to teamwork and problem-solving tasks in the work place actually continued to

increase over time. Without the necessary reflection and without continuing to build upon the concepts which were made so evident on the course, the team behaviors resorted to its original state. The research suggest that after six months any improvements may be lost without support in the form of follow-up. If follow up occurs, the improvements may be maintained for up to six months and may even continue to grow if a self facilitation strategy is employed. More empirical studies and research is needed however, to discern the influence of follow-up on the longevity of these programs. In Conclusion, the three groups in these research studies improved from 50% to 70% on the team development indicator as a result of participating in the program. Weeks after the euphoric team building high wore off, the team building levels dropped to 65%. While the group with follow-up remained at the 65% level, the group that was self-facilitating continued to grow in teamwork topping out at the 80% mark. While overall increases of 10% to 30% may not seem like a great deal, they represent considerable potential for enhanced performance, productivity and profit to most corporations. In the classroom, retaining 70% and 80% of the knowledge learned is far greater and more effective than just half (Lesperance, M. and Priest, S.).

Another research study to support the finding by Simon Priest and Mary Ann Lesperance was conducted by Michell Sakofs of an experiential/adventure group called Outward Bound. Essentially, the opinions held by Outward Bound participants on the impact of the Outward Bound experience was collected through the use of a survey. The key components probed in this investigation were

leadership, teamwork, risk-taking, and confidence. Overall, it was determined that the Outward Bound experience made a positive impact on the majority of the participants lives and that this impact endured over time (SEE APENDIX A). In regards to whether or not Outward Bound enhanced leadership skills, the mean of a 7 point scale was 5. The clustering of data in the middle-high range suggests that participants benefitted from the leadership component of Outward Bound. As far as long term benefit, 2% felt it had faded and was gone , 49% felt it had faded but was still with them, 30% beloved the impact was as strong today as it was the course end, while 19% believed the impact is stronger today than at the course end. In terms of the impact that teamwork had over time, 1% reported the effect was gone or almost gone, 25% said that it had faded, 46% said that it was as strong today as at the course-end, and 28% said that it was stronger toady than at the end. In terms of confidence, 92% indicated that they had grown in confidence due to the experience. Over time, 40% indicated that the effect of confidence is as strong today as it was at the course end while 35% indicated that this effect grew over time. The collected evidence indicates the strength of transferability from the context of the wilderness course to the tasks and challenges in their lives back home. Students learned that they could achieve something they had thought impossible because of their preconceived personal limits, and they related this experience with how their minds reacted when confronted with difficulty. The experience of an experiential adventure program is just as taxing mentally and psychologically as it is physically. When related to concepts from class lecture, the

meaning of the outdoor tasks intensifies and as a result, derives greater meaning. Moreover, the novelty of the situation magnifies the experience. Like a renewed sense of perception, students observe leadership and practice it with the innocence of a child but with the richness and breadth of adult experience. In other words, the impact of this experience is so powerful that it endures over time. The reason the experience may have faded for some who participated in the course could be that they were possibly not in tune with the leadership concepts, or really all that interested in the leadership variables acting in this raw environment. In a school of leadership, where students immerse themselves in literature and theories, partake in classroom exercises and simulations, and are keenly aware of the evolution of the leadership process, an experiential/adventure program would manifest the subtleties and ineffable essence of the phenomenon into a light of penetrating clarity. The awesome capacity to teach leadership in an outdoor program is incomprehensible until one considers the exponential number of combinations of situational interactions that could arise at any particular moment. With gained confidence evidenced by proven action, with renewed vision of the self discovered in group process, and finally a cohesive vision of teamwork learned as a result of the novelty of the situation, the experiential/adventure program distinguishes itself as a unique and powerful tool in leadership education.

EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE AND JUDGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING ABILITY

The power to teach leadership in the experiential/adventure

program can be broken down into two components which we will explore in depth, one conveying the judgement and decision-making ability and the other which involves managerial effectiveness. Essentially, these two components encompass a wide range of concepts consummating in a leadership style. The interconnectedness of the concepts draws upon the essence of leadership studies. Judgement and decision-making ability learned in the field is based on the Normative model as outlined by Reitz. The normative model is divided into seven steps. The detailed understanding, delivery and practice of this process is the backbone of thousands of judgements/decisions a leader will have to face in any situation.

Step 1 "is the observation and recognition of a need or opportunity to act on behalf of maximizing individual and group goals (Cockrell, 22)." In this step, it is important to recognize the personal variables of the group which will including varying degrees of education, experience, physical ability, health, technical skills, moral values, personality and emotions. Everyone also brings their own personal goals and expectations to the experience which may or may not be in sync with each other. The conflict between these goals will need to be resolved for the course to proceed smoothly. Group members will also establish a culture that is evident through some degree of cohesiveness, morale, empathy and motivation. The individual or combination of these variables need to be considered in recognizing the need to act on behalf of maximizing individual or group goals. An important thing to consider is that every decision has a

consequence that will affect the entire group in some way. Groups need to critically think about each situation, a process they will go through many times on a course, and many times through life.

Step 2 "is the collection of all available information that describes the conditions of the need or opportunity." In this case, information needs to be collected of the hazards a party faces in reaching their destination. How steep will the terrain be, is the river crossable, and can every member of the group maneuver through the heavily bouldered section. Additionally, the reasoning involved in Steps 1 and 2 translate to the way we lead a group in the real world through the process of critical thinking.

Step 3 "includes the identification and analysis of potential options for action that can be executed to satisfy the need or opportunity based upon the observations and collection of information." Any options that a group member develops through the course of the information stage, that member must clearly articulate his views, and give reasons to the group as to why this course of action is the best way to meet the needs of the group. Identification of all potential options is much like a brainstorming session from which the group will hopefully have as many choices as possible. This pool of options is likely to range from the most conservative/low-risk type to the very liberal/ high-risk type. In devising this option, the group needs to be cognizant of the different group variables so they understand that the option is within the group's level of expertise and ability and that the option they choose maximizes the group and individual goals. Options for this step requires innovative and analytical

thinking and the motivation and trust of the entire group.

Step 4 "is the identification of potential consequences that may be incurred by execution of each individual option or combination thereof." Before deciding to execute the decision, the group needs to think about the consequences both immediate and long term that a single action can have on the group. In this step the group may also need to think about safety systems they may need to employ to minimize the danger and maximize their goals. This often involves more brainstorming and even more tedious analysis.

Step 5 "is the selection of one or any combination of the most appropriate options. For this step the appointed leader of the group may wish to be the sole-decision maker, may wish to conduct a vote or might impose no decision structure on the group, accepting whatever process and decision emerges from a laissez-faire style." Trust and respect needs to be developed among the group when deciding to take a course of action. Only when a judgement is made and action begun, with maximum allowable participation of the group in all steps of the process, can leadership take place in a manner that embodies the sense of quality students should strive for in outdoor leadership development.

Step 6 "is the execution of that decision, and step 7 is the evaluation of the outcome and consideration of subsequent decision-making and action if necessary (Cockrell, 22)."

EXPERIENTIAL/ADVENTURE AND MAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS

To further break down this normative decision making model,

certain components of managerial effectiveness, as outlined by Yukl, will be analyzed. The careful execution of these components allow the normative model to be so effective. Derived from personal experience on three ropes courses and a 25 day expedition, the following pages will show how the components of managerial practices directly correspond to the experiential/adventure program. It will also show how the experiential/adventure program is distinctive and useful in teaching and elucidating the following components with precision like clarity. The concepts are: Planning and organizing; clarifying roles and objectives; problem solving; informing and teaching; monitoring and conflict resolution; motivating and inspiring; supporting; mentoring; recognizing and team building.

PLANNING AND CLARIFYING ROLES AND OBJECTIVES

"Planning means deciding what to do, how to do it, who will do it and when it will be done (Yukl p. 80)." This involves processing information, analyzing it, presenting it, and then deciding on it. Be it in the wilderness or on a ropes course, planning is integral to the success of group goals. Because of the myriad of choices a group has to decide from, the group needs to tailor a planning process to maximize their goals, separating the good choices from the bad. During the planning process, groups need to be clear on the assignments of tasks and the end goal they have in mind for completing those tasks. The leader communicates a clear understanding of job responsibilities, objectives and expectations. Communicating the roles and objectives is very

important in staging a unified effort. Planning creates unity and maximum attainment of goals. Groups will discover in the outdoors that poor planning or operating outside of what is planned can lead to group failure which potentially places individuals in threatening, dangerous situations. Not structuring a course of action in the outdoors can be frustrating and disorienting for the group. For example, if a set plan of action is not determined on how to cross a rushing river, the group will not maximize its effectiveness. The group will split with individuals doing their own thing creating a potentially dangerous situation. To achieve the tasks set in an experiential/adventure program is the old adage, if the entire group doesn't succeed, no one succeeds. In order for the group to succeed, individuals realize they must perform at an optimum level for the benefit of the group since the challenge is so demanding. They learn that their individual actions not only affect themselves but affect each other.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem Solving deals with "identifying work-related problems, analyzing problems in a timely but systematic manner to identify causes and final solutions, and acting decisively to implement solutions to resolve important problems or crisis (Yukl, 69)." Because there are so many hazards to negotiate in an outdoor setting and a limited number of resources to deal with those hazards, problem solving among groups demands innovation, creativity and critical thinking. Critical thinking is apparent in disseminating the vast choices a group has to meet their objective.

For instance, during the descent of a treacherously steep ravine, many group members became frightened at the course they were proceeding on. The problem had to be solved on finding a way down which were within the group's comfort level yet still met the group's goal of setting camp at the foot of the glacier before night fall. The problem was analyzed, the different ways of solving it were reviewed and then a group consensus decision was made. Throughout this process, individuals discovered the need to empathize with the group in thinking of solutions so that the solution would be accepted and implemented. The problems that arose were problems that could not be slept over. Decisions had to be made fast to avoid a potentially risky situation.

INFORMING AND TEACHING

Effective ways to inform and teach were also discovered on this trip. The two leaders of the group were responsible to provide the group with information so they could achieve their goals. Without learning ways to effectively teach others skills and share information, group goals would not be met. For instance, the leaders presented information using different scenarios to make the learning more enjoyable and more meaningful. During the course, the instructors taught us the skills right before we needed them. They were not going to place us in a situation where the skills to execute a safe completion had not been taught. For instance, before crossing a river, the leaders instructed the group on how to make a travolean traverse. Before, glacier travel, the instructors taught the group the essentials of a rope team.

Knowing that the instructors would not intentionally place the team in a dangerous situation and that the skills would be taught in a sufficient, manner instilled a great sense of trust and satisfaction between the leaders and students.

MONITORING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Throughout the course, the instructors monitored the group, offering suggestions on how to maximize effectiveness with respect to the path the group had engaged. They also evaluated individuals and offered suggestions on how to improve their skills. Because the experiential based program is collapsed into one segment of time, leaders are able to gauge group progress in a more efficient manner. In a situation where leader/follower exposure is very fragmented a couple of hours a week compared to an entire day, or a month of constant exposure, the feedback the leader provides is far more illuminating and constructive. At the end of the day or after every exercise, the group holds a meeting to assess the lessons that are learned. It is learned that without sufficient monitoring, the leader will be unable to detect problems until they become serious. Without effective monitoring, a leader will be unable to provide appropriate recognition for achievements, identify individuals who need coaching or assistance in accomplishing their work objectives, and evaluate performance of individuals accurately. Additionally, without the group facilitating their own meetings to monitor themselves, they may not continue to relate their group vision with the concepts and lessons learned in the field. Another important aspect of the meeting was

to resolve conflict any members of the group had with each other. For instance, in one meeting, a women complained that the men were overstepping the line in trying to hard to help the other women out. In resolving the conflict, she stated everything in terms of how it made her feel. She opened up discussion for the men to voice their concerns in the situation. Throughout, there were no personal attacks, and the group remained objective to the problem. The line of free, open communication which existed in the group allowed this particular member to resolve the conflict that was irritating her, thus reducing her ability to be effective. Because she raised this concern, a resolution was determined and the group could return to their normal functions.

MOTIVATION AND INSPIRATION: CHARISMATIC, TRANSFORMATIONAL, AND SELF-EFFICACY

The leaders were motivating and inspiring on the course. The leadership of the two instructors of the group were charismatic and transformational. The charismatic leader in this situation increased the social identification of the group by providing the group with a unique identity. During the course, the group came to see how their efforts and work roles were related to a larger entity, thus making their work more meaningful and important. The leaders also strengthened the identity of our group through group slogans, meetings, and the group journal. In less than a week, the daily rituals of the group had developed into a culture which was meaningful and distinctive to the group.

The most valuable motivational technique arose from self-

efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that one is competent and capable of attaining difficult task objectives. People with high self-efficacy are willing to expend more effort and persist longer in overcoming obstacles to the attainment of task objectives (Yukl, p.327) Collective self-efficacy refers to the perception of group members that together they can accomplish exceptional feats. Self-efficacy was not taught to the group, instead it was a concept inferred from the motivational talks our instructors gave. The self-confidence gained from accomplishing earlier tasks in combination with the talks given by the instructors contributed to the strong feeling of empowerment inherent in self-efficacy.

The leaders of the group were also transformational. "The leader transforms and motivates followers by: making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes, inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team, and activating their higher-order needs (Bass, 1985)." The leaders empowered and elevated the group to higher standards of expectations, skills, and group process. The variables which made the leaders charismatic and transformational are transferrable to the work place. Observing this leadership in the outdoor environment shed new insight into what it means to be motivational and inspiring.

SUPPORTIVE

In a setting where the challenges are demanding and the interpersonal work relationships are close knit, it is important to establish a supportive work environment. Throughout the course,

students bolstered each other's self esteem. During problem solving, the group was polite and diplomatic when it came time to present solutions and listen to each other. Students refrained from making assumptions on anyone's idea. Preconceptions and judgmental responses did not come into play when the preservation of the group was at stake. People did not compete with each other. Instead they worked with each other and continued to fuel one another with the energy of the entire group.

MENTORING

The aspect of leadership which initiated a cognizant reflective approach was mentoring. The leaders asked the students to relate their own expectations and goals of the trip so they can help them improve their goals along the way. Because the leaders showed concern for each student's development, an open channel of communication provided a free exchange of ideas and advice. This channel provided opportunities for students to develop. The mutually cooperative relationship also increased commitment to the group and attached meaning to the tasks the person was completing.

SELF-CONFIDENCE, CONCEPTUAL, AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

The experiential/adventure also builds important traits and skills for a leader to be effective in carrying out these practices. Skills like self-confidence and conceptual skills arise from knowledge of past experience. Research on executives found that many of the most important lessons learned by them involved overcoming adversity and handling serious problems in earlier job

assignments (Yukl, 129)." The continued succession of meaningful moments, moments where adversity is overcome, creates a watershed of experience. The final decision of the choices made and the variables which go into those decisions translate to self-confidence because the person has had to cope with the many variables that exist in this outdoor setting and has in a way, become familiar with the interplay of those variables. Conceptual skills like intuition and judgement do not arrive at just being able to see the black and white. Instead, one possessed of conceptual skills has the ability to see the gray, sift through its complexities, and decide on a course of action using critical thinking skills and judgements based on the barrage of experience from the program. "Intuition is not a mystical process but rather is the result of extensive earlier experience with similar problems (Yukl, p.275)." The relevant knowledge gained from the experiential/adventure program can be tapped when needed and transferred to the actual situation. "Most studies on leader traits find that self confidence is related positively to effectiveness and advancement (Bass, 1990)." Self-confidence as did conceptual skills, differentiated between effective and ineffective managers in the study of critical incidents by Boyatzis and self confidence predicted subsequent advancement to higher levels of management in the assessment center research at AT&T (Howard & Bray, 1988). Leaders with high self-confidence and conceptual skills are more likely to attempt difficult tasks and to set challenging objectives for themselves (Kouzes and Posner, 1987). Overall, self-confidence and conceptual skills are two

skills developed in a experiential/adventure program which are critical to the components of managerial effectiveness and the sound execution of the normative model of judgement and decision-making

Interpersonal skills, skills which are essential for influencing people, focus on how one sees other people. "Empathy and social insight are important in understanding someone's motives, values, and emotions. Understanding what people want and how they perceive things is necessary to select an appropriate influence strategy to use with them (Yukl p.273)." In the outdoor setting, barriers disintegrate and the nature of how people behave rapidly comes into sharp focus. The tasks are challenging and people are racing against time to find the most sufficient manner to complete the task with optimum effectiveness. Having participated in four experiential/adventure program it seemed that people behaved in a natural true fashion around each other. Prejudices, bravados, insecurities, and inhibitions seem to drop away. Communication becomes clear, uncluttered by nonsense and muddle. Instead of remaining conscience to insignificant details, people are in tune with their self and each other's person. The socializing that takes place seems to transcend the reality of the mundane work day. This experience gives rise to a new viewpoint of what it means to possess interpersonal skills.

"Real skill in working with others must become a natural, continuous activity, since it involves sensitivity not only at times of decision making but also in the day-by-day behavior of the individual...Because everything a leader says and does (or leaves unsaid or undone) has an effect on his associates, his true self will, in time, show through. Thus to be effective, this skill must be naturally developed and unconsciously, as well as consistently, demonstrated in the individual's every action (Katz, 1955 p.34)."

Interpersonal skills are further developed through the roles of the leader and group in their ability to plan, solve problems, support, and monitor. One would surmise that poor interpersonal skills would in effect, hinder the leaders capacity to be effective in a leadership role.

LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS IN DECISION GROUPS

Finally outdoor leadership capitalizes on the leadership functions in decision groups. It meshes the components of task-oriented behavior with relationship oriented behavior. In group situations, the experiential/adventure program incorporates the roles of the leader in the fulfillment of group goals.

The behaviors that emerged from the group in relation to decision making were a combination of supportive leadership, directive leadership, participative leadership, and achievement-oriented leadership. As stated above, supportive leadership gives consideration to the needs of the subordinates, displaying concern for their welfare, and creating a friendly climate in the work unit. Directive leadership is the appointed leader letting subordinates know what they are expected to do. Participative leadership meant consulting with subordinates and taking their opinions and suggestions into account. Achievement-oriented leadership consisted of setting challenging goals, seeking performance improvements, emphasizing excellence in performance, and showing confidence that subordinates will attain high standards (Yukl,287)." The typical evolution of group process during an experiential/adventure program is as follows. At first, the group

depends on the direction of the leader. Because the group is inexperienced, has low self-confidence and high anxiety, the group would thrive on directive leadership. By reducing the role ambiguity of the group and teaching them the skills necessary for attaining the goals, the leader in turn throws the ball back to the group and stresses the importance of group cohesion in achieving objectives. The leader is directive when it comes to teaching the group skills and setting a task, however, how the group goes about performing the task is a combination of supportive, participative and achievement-oriented leadership. The more experience the group gains, the less they depend on the leader. Through personal experience in the experiential/adventure program, more learning had occurred, and there was an increase in group satisfaction due to the fact that the leadership was participative and achievement oriented. Because more value and meaning was invested in the followers in this situation, the group was more effective in the achievement of their goals.

In the decision group on the experiential/adventure course, a number of steps ensue to facilitate systematic communication, evaluation and analysis of information and ideas. The steps are: process structuring which involved the actual presentation of the problem, stimulating communication which is the asking for the opinions of group members, clarifying communication which is used to reduce confusion, summarizing to review what is said, and consensus testing to check on the amount of agreement among group members (Yukl, 415). Through the execution of these steps dozens of times during the course, the student will leave with an

impression and understanding of this process, and possess the knowledge of how the complexities of different variables interplay in a group situation. The students will also leave with a final prescription of the leader's role in the group process. Borrowed once again from Yukl, the six major points are: "the leader should listen attentively and observe nonverbal cues to be aware of member needs, feelings, interactions, and conflict. The role of the leader should be to serve as a consultant, advisor, teacher, and facilitator, rather than as a director or manager of the group. The leader should model appropriate leadership behaviors. The leader should establish a climate of approval for expression of feelings as well as ideas. The leader should encourage the group to deal with any maintenance needs and process problems within the context of the regular group meetings. Finally, the leader should relinquish control to the group and allow the group to make the final choice in all appropriate kinds of decisions (Yukl, 419)." In the outdoor setting as in any work situation, group process and how the leader behaves is crucial to the fulfillment of goals.

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, this paper focused on the distinctiveness of the experiential/adventure program. Because of the unfamiliar background and novel situations, the immediate consequence of choice, the collapse of reality and time into a singular focused experience, and the powerful metaphoric transfer into the classroom or workplace the experiential/adventure program is a unique tool in teaching leadership. To be effective, it was found that the tasks

in the experiential/adventure program needed to be grounded in leadership concepts which could then be transferred and applied in real work situations. Based on the research analyzed in this paper, it was found that in order for people to retain their leadership concepts and skills over an extended period of time, follow up meetings to reflect on the course experience needed to occur. Although the research presented in this paper proves that the experiential/adventure program enhances leadership, a lack of empirical studies does not completely validate the intent of the findings in the research. Because of the complexity of the variables involved in a course and some of the undefinable attributes gleaned from the research, researchers are still unsure about the overall effectiveness of an adventure/experiential program over a prolonged period of time. Despite lacking evidence in this area, researchers have made some headway in determining which courses work and which courses miserably fail. The majority of the courses found to work have three characteristics in common: context, continuity, and consequences. These characteristics make experiential/adventure powerful and distinctive to other methods used to teach leadership.

The latter section of this paper demonstrates how the course of action in an experiential/adventure course relate to leadership theory, managerial effectiveness, conceptual skills, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills, group decisions and cohesion. The special, powerful distinctions of experiential/adventure teaches these concepts and skills in a hands on, applicable manner which can be easily transferred to the workplace.

Bibliography

Bonney R., Drury J. The Backcountry Classroom ICS Books, Inc. Merrillville, IN 1992

Cockrell, David The Wilderness Educator ICS Books, Inc. Merrillville, Indiana 1991

Bronson "Evaluation of Corporate Adventure" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 15 no.2 1992

Creswick, C., Williams, R. "Using the Outdoors for Management Development and Team Building" Management Today October 1979

Flor, Richard "Building Bridges Between Organization Development and Experiential/Adventure Education" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 14 no.3 November 1991

Gass M., Goldman K., and Prist S. "Constructing Effective Corporate Adventure Training Programs" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 15 no. 1 May 1992

King, K. "The Role of Adventure in the Experiential Learning Process" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 14 no. 2 August 1991

Koesler, R., Propst, D. "Factors Influencing Leadership Development in Wilderness Education" November 1994

Lesperance, Mary Ann and Priest, Simon, "Time Series Trends in Corporate Team Development" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 17 no. 1 May 1994

Latteier, C. "Learning to Lead" United States Air Magazine 1988

Phipps, Maurice "Experiential Leadership Education" The Journal of Experiential Education November 1988

Priest, Simon "Outdoor Leadership Training in Higher Education" The Journal of Experiential Education vol. 17 no.1 May 1994

Sakofs, Mitchell "The Impact of Outward Bound Programming Over Time: An Interim Report" October 1995

Yukl, Gary Leadership in Organizations Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1994

Appendix A:

The following graphs which illustrate the impact Outward Bound had on leadership and its characteristics were taken from a study conducted by Mitchell Sakofs.

Chart 20

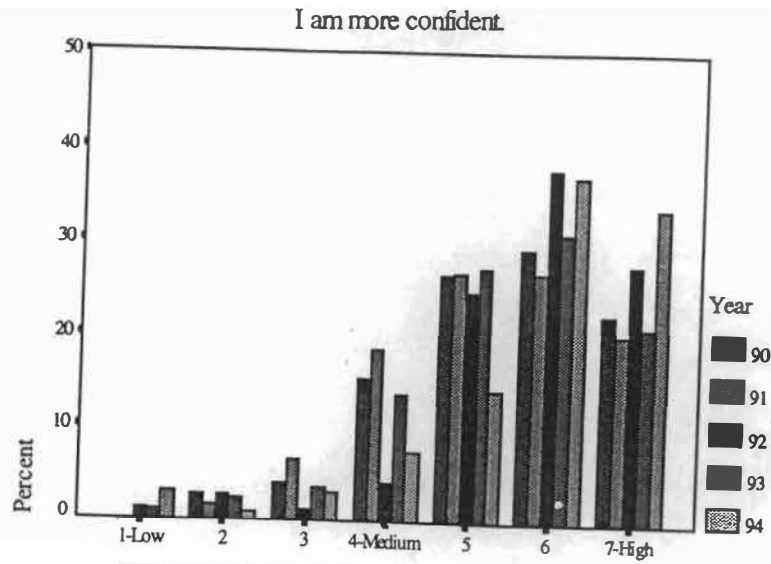


Chart 22

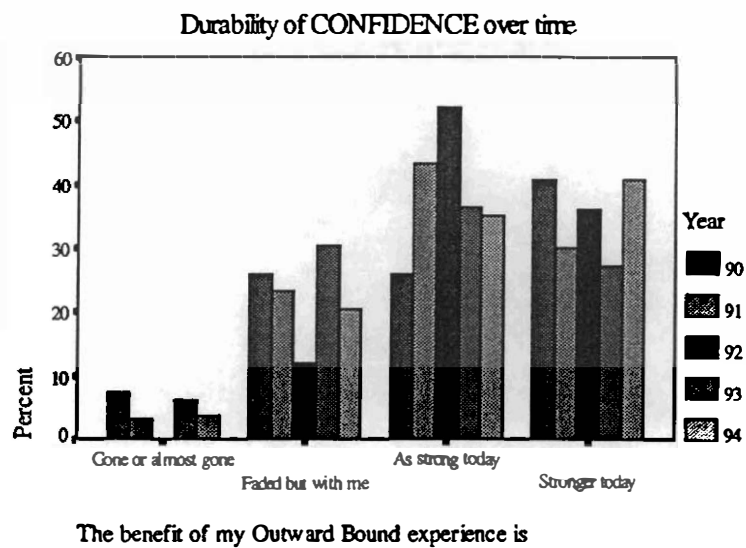


Chart 11

I have better teamwork skills.

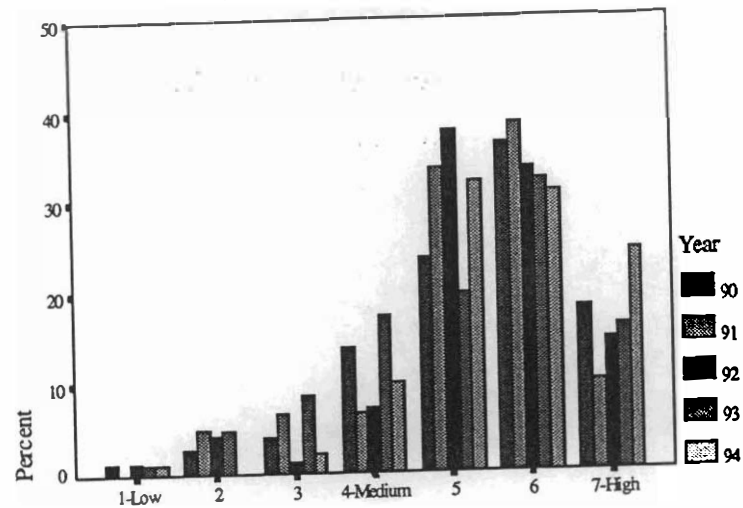
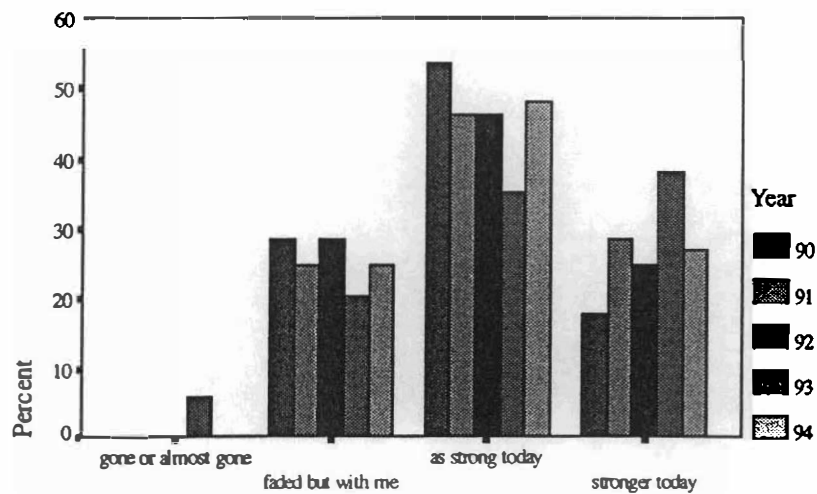


Chart 13

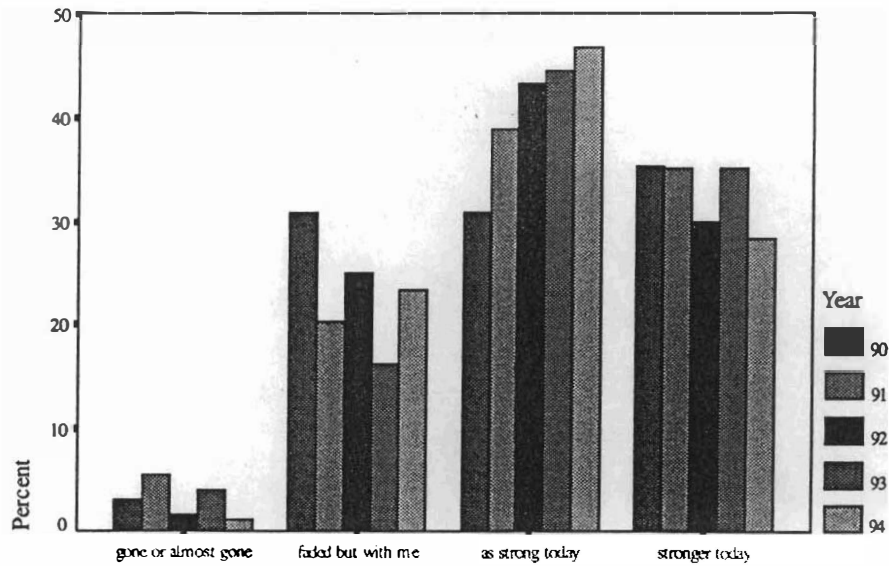
Durability of TEAMWORK over time



The benefit of my Outward Bound experience

Chart 25

Durability of RISK-TAKING over time



The benefit of my Outward Bound experience is

Chart 36

The overall benefit of my Outward Bound experience

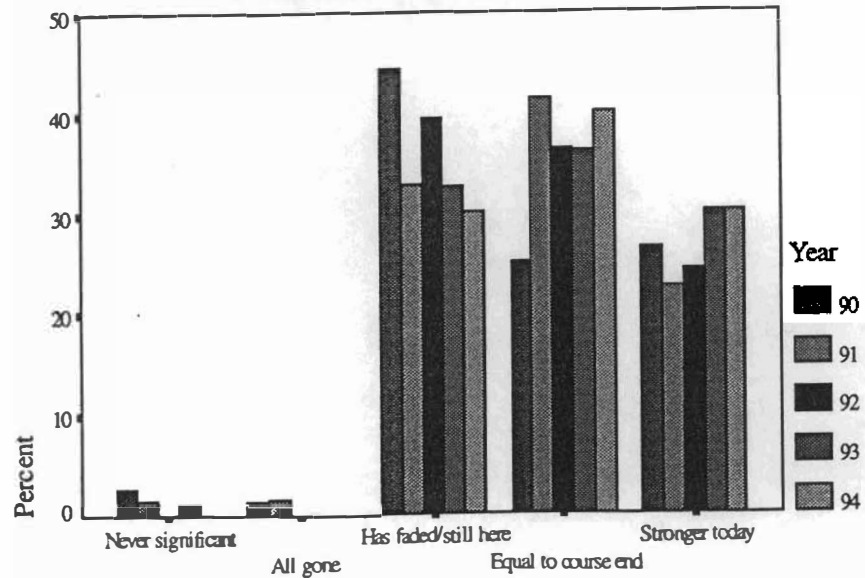


Chart 5

I am a more effective leader.

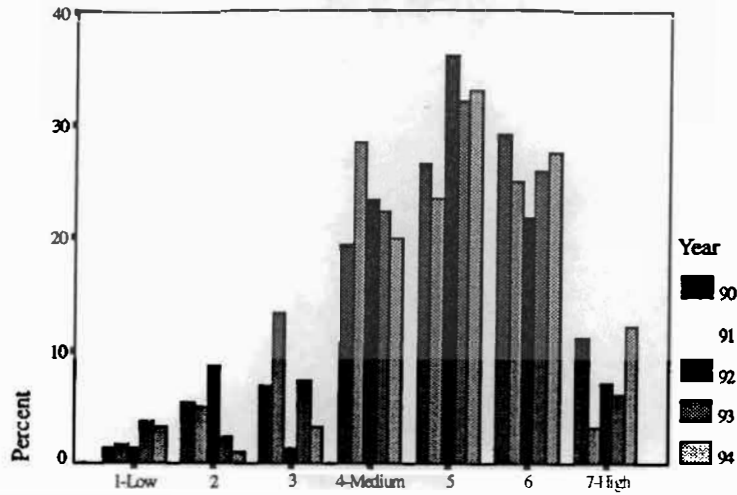
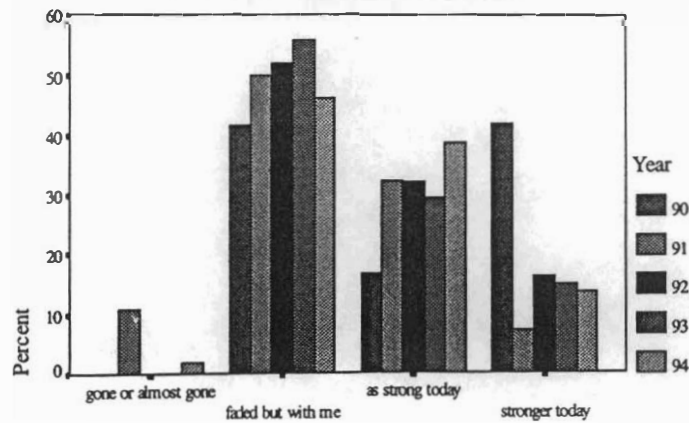


Chart 7

Durability of LEADERSHIP over time



The benefit of my Outward Bound experience is