Case Study 1

One question that seemingly continues to defy solution, and cause all sorts of difficulties when it comes to talking to outside agencies is; what actually is 'outdoor education'? There have been many definitions over the years and as many alternative names put forward; and yet, somehow, we are still not quite comfortable with who we are or what exactly we do. Hopkins and Putnam (1993:16) refer to this dilemma by commenting:

“...the effectiveness of [outdoor] education depends upon:
• a clear specification of the [outdoor] education process
• the relating of this process to specific individual needs.”

We are not confident that these two desiderata are always met. It is an unfortunate tendency of outdoor educators that their rationales tend towards obfuscation and mystification.

The traditional definition used by the National Association for Outdoor Education (NAOE; before it became the Institute for Outdoor Learning, IOL) was:

"A means of approaching educational objectives through direct experience in the environment using its resources as learning materials." (Hunt, 1989:17)

It can easily be seen how this defines the potential outcome of outdoor education and the vehicle by which this is achieved. It is less clear, however, on the nature of the actual activity involved, how the environment is utilised and what specific educational objectives are being discussed.

The Dartington Conference of 1975 (DES, 1975:1-3), often taken as a seminal moment in outdoor education, provided a working definition of outdoor education as “those activities concerned with living, moving and learning in the outdoors”. It went on to outline the three most important aims of outdoor education as heightening awareness and respect for:

• Self – through the meeting of challenge;
• Others – through group experiences and the sharing of decisions;
• The natural environment – through direct experience.
These aims are, perhaps, more recognisable to us today than the working definition which presents a strong activity focus, more akin to the idea of outdoor activities.

A more recent approach, that taken by Higgins and Loynes (1997:6) which uses a three circle model to suggest that outdoor education is the common ground, or overlap, between ‘outdoor activities’, ‘environmental education’ and ‘personal and social development’, can be seen as a descendant of the Dartington definition. Higgins and Loynes argue that most practitioners would agree that outdoor education must encompass:

- An educational element which stimulates personal and social development;
- An experience which includes themes of ‘outdoor’, ‘adventure’ and ‘education’;
- Learning as an experiential process which utilises direct experience;
- An increased self and social awareness, plus increased awareness of community and environment.

This model is clearer on what is involved in outdoor education but it could also be argued that it encompasses areas which are not strictly outdoor education. Does outdoor education have to use an outdoor ‘activity’ for example? Or to put it another way, what is an outdoor activity? Is it more than a strict diet of climbing, canoeing and so on? The Higgins and Loynes discussion also brings in the use of adventure; which many would see as precluded from today’s tightly controlled outdoor education field – or would this suggest that adventure can only be defined in a traditional, physical, sense. Hopkins and Putnam (1993:6) suggest that adventure can be described as “an experience that involves uncertainty of outcome”; an element that may be absent from the viewpoint of the instructor, but not necessarily from the viewpoint of the participant.

Finally, the Higgins and Loynes definition includes the suggestion that outdoor education should lead to an increased awareness of the environment. In modern terms, can such areas as management training and development, which are based almost exclusively within a training centre or hotel, be included within a definition that specifies an outdoor experience, let alone an increased environmental awareness? Hunt (1989:16) highlights this difficulty by suggesting that outdoor education can be better approached by highlighting possible themes; these include:

- Development of skills, whether technical, intellectual or social;
- Scientific or aesthetic appreciation of the outdoor environment;
- The concept of service, to society, the community, the environment or the activity;
- Personal development.

This idea of themes finds favour amongst many writers: Cooper (1998), the Dartington Report, and Hopkins and Putnam all include similar suggestions. One approach to defining Outdoor Education is to treat it not as a discrete subject, but as an integrated approach, or process, to learning, which includes and stimulates the development of self-reliance, self-discipline, judgement, responsibility, as well as
relationships with others and the environment. This approach, whilst hardly punchy, does highlight the significance of self-development as a significant educational component of outdoor education. It would appear that we might be more comfortable with talking about the process and content of what we do rather than trying to come to any agreed definition.

Geoff Cooper (1998:36) agrees with the Higgins and Loynes idea that outdoor education is multi-faceted, however he suggests a much broader definition that is inclusive of areas such as outdoor pursuits, field studies, development training, outdoor recreation and environmental education. This is in contrast to the idea that outdoor education is the overlapping between diverse areas. Cooper talks of outdoor education in terms of a ‘catch-all’ expression, which includes a variety of approaches or types (1998:21). Interestingly, however, he goes on to say; “It is important that outdoor leaders are aware of the distinctions between outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and outdoor education” (1998:42).

Even the term ‘outdoor education’ itself has fallen into some dispute as some may take it to imply that the only true providers are those in the mainstream educational sector. Outdoor learning is now coming into a common usage to emphasise the learning involved rather than merely the form of delivery; for example in the change from NAOE to IOL.

Both commonalities, and contradictions, however, are apparent, even from this short discussion. The outdoors is usually considered a vital component of outdoor education; even though many activities do not take place, strictly speaking, in the outdoors. Many people might well see a physical adventurous activity as a central defining feature; even though activities may well not be adventurous in the strictest sense of the word and may not even include physical involvement. Personal and social development is obviously an important feature of outdoor education; even though many organisations are purely activity based and only pay lip service to a learning element. Finally, traditionalists would suggest that service and a respect and love for others and the environment are essential; even though an increasing number of modern outdoor activities, and perhaps by default, outdoor education are essentially selfish in nature.

It is worthwhile to consider that outdoor education, if that is what you chose to call it, can and does mean different things to different people. Each viewpoint is valid in its own intrinsic right; even though to an outsider each may be completely different. The key may be that each view, and experience, of outdoor education is both unique to the individual and equally just as prone to development and change; and thus impossible to define as a single, discrete and static entity.

References
All references are included in the bibliography, below, except for:

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Whilst many of the books listed below are available from mainstream booksellers, and certainly from Amazon, some, notably some of the American texts, can be harder to find. The Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) bookshop ([www.outdoor-learning.org](http://www.outdoor-learning.org)) should always be regarded as a first point of contact for book enquiries; if they don’t have it in stock they will be able to tell you if it is available and when they can get it.

**TECHNICAL SKILLS**

There are a huge number of books concerning technical outdoor skills; these range from beginners ‘how to’ guides directed at the general public, to very specific and technical books for ‘experts’. The list below gives the primary books associated with the National Governing Bodies’ award schemes.

**CANOEING & KAYAKING**


As the official British Canoe Union text, this is the most appropriate general book in the area, although it would be worth looking at some of the many specialist books for the many canoe and kayak disciplines when it comes to specific information. Perhaps two of the most useful specialist texts are:


This book, or more accurately the techniques it contains, could be considered a must for all white-water paddlers.


The definitive, and established, guide to sea kayaking.


Written in conjunction with the BCU and the National Mountaineering Centre at Plas-y-Brenin this books provides ideas for both serious and fun training in kayak and canoe skills.
CAVING

Currently there is no single up-to-date text for cave leadership in the UK. However with the formation of the British Caving Association and the re-organisation of much of the UK’s caving ‘structure’ this should change shortly.

MOUNTAIN LEADER SCHEMES


A summary of safe practice for all mountaineers but regarded as ‘essential reading’ for the Mountain Leader schemes. (There is also a video linked to this booklet).


Although superseded to some extent by the new Hillwalking guide by Steve Long (below) this book, generally known simply as ‘Langmuir’, is still the definitive guide for the Mountain Leader’s Scheme and as a mountaineering guide in general. This latest version includes information on the new access regulations.


This is the official handbook for the Mountain Leader and Walking Group Leader schemes.

ORIENTEERING

There are a large number of books, usually published by Harveys and/or *The British Orienteering Federation* covering all aspects of orienteering. The book below is probably the best guide for those wishing to teach/coach orienteering.


ROCK CLIMBING


A comprehensive and valuable guide to rock climbing – probably just about the best on the market.


The official handbook of the Mountaineering Instructor and Single Pitch Award schemes
SAILING


Although not the ‘official’ text (the RYA have a series of booklets for their various schemes), Bond is a good general sailing text and is often regarded as an ‘unofficial’ governing body text.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS


A ‘simple’ summary of the principal theories and practices involved with working with young people and could be regarded as a ‘first point of call’ in these areas. This book is aimed particularly at students and practitioners who need a succinct summary rather than detailed discussion.


A good general, if ‘Americanised’ text which uses a good number of anecdotal examples.


Roger Greenaway (see also websites below) is probably the UK’s foremost expert in the field of reviewing. He is due to publish a definitive guide to reviewing, from Russell House Publishing, sometime in 2006/7. In the meantime, the two books above give a good insight into the subject.


This is a useful, and important, practical guide to leadership based on real-life experience and scenarios. This is probably the most comprehensive UK based text in this area.


Probably the most comprehensive book on leadership in outdoor education available, it does need to be borne in mind that this is an American book with a natural bias to the American style of working.


A concise guide to Dyslexia and to working with students with dyslexia in an outdoor education setting.
CURRICULUM AND LEARNING


These two books, which are rather similar, (the 2006 text is essentially the new edition of the 2002 text) provide an in-depth and very detailed examination of the theory and practice of experiential learning.

Written specifically for Scotland, this short book nevertheless contains some useful discussion in a more general sense and a comprehensive list of contact details and information sources. (Out of print but may be available in libraries or through the IOL)

This document summarises the key findings of a major review into research concerning outdoor learning between 1993 and 2003. The literature encompassed three main types of outdoor learning with primary school pupils, secondary school students and undergraduate learners: fieldwork and outdoor visits; outdoor adventure education; school grounds and community projects.

A comprehensive edited collection of papers on the theoretical foundations of experiential education including historical and philosophical perspectives.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Although now a little dated, this is a seminal text with a good discussion of the history and underpinning of outdoor education plus some interesting case studies.
Although now rather out of date this remains a major milestone review of research undertaken in this area (there is expected to be an updated version of this review published sometime in 2006/7).

An exploration of activities that can be used to give meaning to outdoor activities.

**ADVENTURE THERAPY**

The single most comprehensive text covering the whole of the adventure therapy field.

This is the proceedings from the second International Therapy Conference and contains papers from the great majority of leading thinkers in this field.

These two books (the 2002 book is an updated ‘complement’ to the material covered in the earlier 1988 book) focus specifically on adventure based counselling; a discrete element of adventure therapy.

**ENVIRONMENT**

Geoff Cooper’s book is more than simply an ‘environmental book’ it also provides valuable material for introducing people to the natural environment and also for utilising the environment in outdoor activities.

This book presents the case for fieldwork and field centres; as such it provides a useful source for relating environmental work to curricular outcomes. The National Association for Field Studies Officers also produce other texts for specific curricular subjects; see [www.nafso.org.uk](http://www.nafso.org.uk).
For more investigation into environmental matters a good starting point would be the website of the John Muir Trust - www.jmt.org - which provides some useful background material on developments, particularly in Scotland, but also an extremely comprehensive section containing links to other websites.

RISK AND SAFETY


Although rather an academic text, it is available in hard-back only, this is the only book dedicated to this subject and is therefore essential for anyone involved in the legal side of outdoor work. It would, however, also be a useful 'library' book for any outdoor organisation.


Although not strictly a book to do with outdoor education, this has become a standard text in this area because of the way it addresses society’s perceived obsession with safety.


Currently this is the only dedicated book in the area of safety and risk management in outdoor education. It is expected that Bob Barton, an expert in the area of outdoor safety, will be publishing a definitive UK text soon. (the IOL bookshop/website will be the place to find out when this book is published).

GENERAL TEXTS


To date, this is the most comprehensive text written on outdoor education in the UK. The chapters, which cover just about every aspect of the field, are written by the acknowledged experts in the subject. This book is aimed at both student and practitioner markets.


For some time now the two Miles and Priest books (the 1999 text is an updated version of the 1990 book) have been the definitive and comprehensive guides to outdoor education. Although still extremely important, their American bias and the
publication of *The RHP Companion to Outdoor Education* (above) have made them less obvious as the general text of choice.


Not a textbook as such, the source book is the largest, and most definitive, source of outdoor education directory information, such as organisation address, available in the UK.


A guide for those investigating the idea of working in outdoor learning, this book is a resource for school careers advisors and those in similar positions as well as for individuals.

(Note: both the Source Book and Careers Guide are updated and re-published every two or three years so it is always worth checking with IOL that you have the most recent copy.)

**DEVELOPMENT AND PHILOSOPHY**


A collection of essays and discussions by some of the leading thinkers in the area of values. (Out of print but may be available in libraries or through the IOL)


Essentially a series of papers by the leaders and developers of the major outdoor education degrees in the UK, this book debates the philosophical and practical arguments regarding HE study in this area.


This book discusses the feminist discourse in the outdoors – this book is valuable for the specialist researcher/student, but rather academic for the general reader.


Proceedings from the *Whose Journeys?* Conference, this contains a significant collection of papers on a number of current themes.


This seminal, and highly influential, text is the outcome of the ‘Hunt Committee’ chaired by Roger Putnam which looked at the status and future for outdoor education in the UK.

Hunt looks at some of the fundamental ethical issues that outdoor educators have to constantly deal with; notably the book also looks at a risk-benefit analysis for outdoor education.


Colin Mortlock remains one of the UK’s most significant thinkers within outdoor education. The two books above are both rightly regarded as seminal texts on the values and philosophy that outdoor education aspires to. Although, because of their highly personal nature, many people will not agree with all that Colin says, these books will always inspire debate.


Regularly updated, this is a bibliography and review of, mainly but not exclusively, North American writing and research regarding women in outdoor education and recreation.


This book uses critical analysis to evaluate the major claims, and assumptions, made for outdoor education. It is an important book precisely because it requires us to challenge many of the assumptions that outdoor education takes as standard.


This book expands on Wurdinger’s 1997 book (above) by examining some of outdoor education’s more controversial issues in considerable depth using a panel of ‘for’ and ‘against’ writers. Although a very useful book many of the issues considered relate specifically to an American market.


There are a number of books written about women and the outdoors but this one, despite its American influence and bias, is probably the most comprehensive.

**GUIDE TO JOURNALS**

There are only four peer-reviewed journals in the field of outdoor education (assuming an overlap between experiential education and outdoor education) these come from, in the order below, the UK, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Strictly speaking there is no international outdoor education journal although each of the four regional journals listed do address international perspectives.
There are also a number of magazines that can provide a valuable source of information and material; these include.

- **Summit** - the membership publication of the British Mountaineering Council
- **The Great Outdoors** - a general, public, magazine that has occasional valuable articles
- **Horizons** - the main publication of the Institute for Outdoor Learning
- **CoDE** - the membership publication for members of the British Canoe Unions coaching scheme
- **Canoe Focus** - the main publication of the British Canoe Union
- **Speleology** - the main publication of the British Cave Research Association (see technical skills above). It replaced the established Caves and Caving.

In addition there are a great many generally published magazines aimed at specific outdoor sports.

**GUIDE TO INTERNET RESOURCES**

There are a large number of websites relating to outdoor education and associated activities, many of which are linked to private organisations or universities. The selection below, however, will give a more than adequate coverage of all areas of outdoor education and, in addition, contain a seemingly endless list of links to other sites.

[www.wilderdom.com](http://www.wilderdom.com)

This site is largely written by James Neill, of the Outdoor Education Research and Evaluation Centre, Australia. It includes an incredible 1,200 plus pages and is certainly one of the most comprehensive guides to all aspects of outdoor education to be found anyway.

[www.reviewing.co.uk](http://www.reviewing.co.uk)
Written by Roger Greenaway, this site has a focus on reviewing skills and Roger’s own work in this area, but it also contains extremely extensive book and article review sections on all aspects of outdoor and experiential education. Notably, however, the site is full of reviewing material and suggestions.

www.aee.org

The site for the Association for Experiential Education; probably the largest experiential education organisation in the world, the association is largely American but does have a European ‘branch’

www.wildernesstherapy.co.uk

Although this is the site for a small private organisation it is well worth a visit for its introduction to the subject and its useful range of further links; and some entertaining photography.

www.outdoor-learning.org

The site for the Institute for Outdoor Learning, the UK’s primary organisation for all aspects of outdoor education. This website is very useful for its large quantity of news and information, and also contains membership information for the institute’s ordinary and accredited membership schemes, plus an online shopping service for its bookshop (see introduction above).

www.equaladventure.co.uk and www.equaladventure.co.uk/interventure

These two, inter-linked, sites are devoted to providing and encouraging adventure and outdoor activities for people with disabilities. The Equal Adventure site is focused on providing support in this area of work/recreation whilst the Interventure site has more of a focus on opportunities and, notably, expeditions.

CASE STUDY 2: OUTDOOR EDUCATION TRAINING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A major difficulty with any discussion of outdoor education arises from the nature of the field itself. Far from being a discrete and homogeneous entity it is made up of a wide and diverse variety of sectors. These sectors range from personal development centres to outdoor management development organisations to high skills centres such as the national centres. Other sectors comprise of private multi-activity organisations and a decreasing number of local authority centres. In addition, charities are widely represented, as are individuals (sole traders) such as mountain guides and freelance instructors. Many would also suggest voluntary organisations such as the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade and so on have a strong link to outdoor education. A further complication is that many of these sectors overlap to a large degree, for example; management centres may offer multi-activity breaks during quiet periods whilst many multi-activity centres will also offer corporate courses. As with the definitions of outdoor education discussed earlier, the expressions we use to
describe this range of interests has also come in for some heated debate. No truer example of this can be found than the recent, and highly contentious, expression, which has come into popular use, that of the ‘outdoor industry’. This expression implies that the outdoor field has moved into a professional era of clients and providers. Whilst this might be the case for many of us, it also excludes large swathes of those who, for example, are in the voluntary or educational sectors.

This diverse field means that training and education, notably within higher education, for those wishing to work within outdoor education has an equally diverse number of aspects to consider. It thus becomes important to consider what are the ‘core’ needs for employers and how do these dovetail with the requirements of an academic curriculum. Interestingly, it is often the case that the academic aspects of an outdoor education are the very aspects that employers most want. Subjects such as the underpinning areas of philosophy, history and a greater understanding of what outdoor education is all about can often be lacking in outdoor instructors who have not been through a university, or similar, education. Likewise an understanding of important subjects such as safety management, sociological understanding and a greater ability to interact with clients of all varieties and levels can be some of the distinguishing features of an outdoor education graduate.

However, these aspects, the ‘added value’ elements of a graduate outdoor education instructor, can often, and usually are, relegated to additional ‘wants’ rather than essential ‘needs’. The needs of an employer usually revolve around the ability of their staff to effectively, safely and legally run the appropriate outdoor activities. In the current climate of licensing and public image/concern, these needs tend to mean having appropriate levels of experience, outdoor activity ability and, most importantly, the possession of National Governing Body (NGB) awards. However, it is not the place or purpose of universities and colleges to provide this aspect of training. The employers like to have the ‘wants' but must have the 'needs'. Although it has never been the prerogative of potential employers to dictate the contents of higher education courses, it is nevertheless the case that outdoor education degrees are vocational in nature. It is in matching the vocational and the academic, the ‘needs’ and the ‘wants’, that higher education providers can face challenges. It can be quite difficult to marry these two sides together - a pure 'needs' course is an instructor training course with no academic credibility, whilst a pure 'wants' course may be what distinguishes a graduate from a 'trainee,' but renders that same graduate unemployable at the first hurdle when faced with the need for NGB awards.

The employers, of necessity, focus on 'needs' whilst the validating authorities and universities focus, as a requirement, on the 'wants'. One trick may be to hide the 'needs' within the 'wants'; using practical elements to deliver academic learning outcomes. This may be effective but can also be very expensive in terms of both staff time and financial outlay. It must be said that no one, to date, has devised the ‘perfect’ solution to these dilemmas; no one has yet written the ‘perfect’ outdoor education degree course.
Teaching and Assessment

Module Example – Outdoor Education: Core Studies 1

Outdoor Education requires a significant philosophical and theoretical underpinning in order to be truly effective as an educational methodology. This will usually be taught throughout the duration of an outdoor education degree. The module example given here is a core module, delivered in the first semester of the degree, designed to start students thinking about their own beliefs and understanding of what being an outdoor educator is. Many of the sessions contained within this module will be expanded on in more focused and subject specific modules as the course progresses. The outdoor experience delivered in week 3 serves as an exemplar session, allowing lessons regarding the theoretical underpinning of practical activity to be understood and discussed throughout the rest of the module.

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring the personal experiences of the students and using these to produce a working definition of ‘outdoor education’.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Defining the outdoor experience</strong></td>
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<td>Building on week 1; looking at the specific components of an outdoor education experience in order to highlight what it is about this style of work that makes it conducive to learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What is adventure, the outdoors, etc?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking the identified components and looking at the ‘cliché’ descriptions to establish the actual and possible meanings of some of the expressions commonly used.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>An outdoor experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in a structured outdoor experience or activity to identify and highlight some of the components established in week 2 and to provide a common experience to refer back to for the rest of the module.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>History and influences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The key literature</strong></td>
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<td>A summarised history of the development of outdoor education noting, in particular, some of the key thinkers (Kurt Hahn, John Dewy, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, etc) and some of the more important current literature (Colin Mortlock, Simon Priest, Peter Barnes etc).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questions of philosophy and values</strong></td>
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<td>Examining both the underlying philosophical beliefs inherent in outdoor education and how these might translate into individual values; then taking this further by asking how these philosophical underpinnings and values relate to a modern society.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The outdoor field/industry today</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking at the users of outdoor education; how the outdoor education field is made up, notably in the commercial, charitable and state sectors and how financial and philosophical requirements have influenced these areas.</td>
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### Module Overview

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to leadership, the law and ethics</strong></td>
<td>An introduction to the theory of leadership and how it fits within a modern legislative and ethical framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Current issues in outdoor education</strong></td>
<td>Examining some of the more ‘contentious’ issues within modern outdoor education; working with young offenders, management development etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>The safety culture</strong></td>
<td>The ‘largest’ of the current issues (thereby justifying a session to itself), looking at how society regards risk and safety management and how this impacts on the practice of outdoor education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Defining the outdoor professional and a personal ‘professional philosophy’</strong></td>
<td>Taking everything that has been covered in the module as a whole, examining what sort of person makes the ideal outdoor ‘professional’ and relating this to what motivates the students to want to work in outdoor education.</td>
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### Module Assessment

A portfolio is an effective assessment tool for this type of module. It can consist of two parts; encouraging and requiring the student to look at not only their own practice, but also to take a critical look at some of claims made for outdoor education and the way in which this is discussed.

1. **Reflective Biography**

In this part of your assignment you are required to write your reflections on an incident or event which challenged your assumptions concerning participation in, or the practice of, outdoor education and made you decide to change your attitudes or behaviour. The writing in this part of the assignment is reflective and should, therefore, be written in the first person. It should have the following structure:

- Introduction which briefly justifies why the particular event has been chosen
- Narrative in which the story of the incident is told
- Analysis in which the salient issue that the story illustrates is explored
- Reflection in which the way in which the author has been changed is described

2. **Critical Review**

In this part of your assignment you are required to write a comparison and review of two articles (provided by the module tutor); you should include

- A brief description of the purpose of the articles
- An evaluation of the evidence presented
- An evaluation and comparison of the argument developed
- An exploration of the significance of the findings, this should be related to your understanding and experience

This part of the portfolio should be presented as a piece of academic writing using the third person, appropriate referencing etc.
About the Author

Peter Barnes works on the BA (Hons) and postgraduate Outdoor Education programmes at the Jordanhill Campus of the University of Strathclyde. He has had a wide and varied career including youth work, military service, radar systems design and many years of outdoor work with Outward Bound and others in a variety of countries. He was also responsible for the instigation and development of outdoor education at the University of Central Lancashire. His PhD research was in ‘The Motivation of Staff Working in the Outdoor Industry,’ and his current research issues include the content and viability of outdoor degrees. He has been the chair for the Northern region of the Institute for Outdoor Learning and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Peter has published widely in a diverse range of subjects revolving around leadership and the outdoors as well as caving, mountain-biking and mountaineering; most recently he has co-edited the *RHP Companion to Outdoor Education*.