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THE BACKCOUNTRY CLASSROOM

2ND EDITION



LESSONS, TOOLS,
AND ACTIVITIES
FOR TEACHING
OUTDOOR LEADERS



The Backcountry Classroom:

Lessons, Tools, and Activities for
Teaching Outdoor Leaders

Second Edition

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History of Outdoor Leadership

I. Outcomes

A. Outdoor leaders provide evidence of their *knowledge and understanding* by:

1. Describing the definitions of fundamental terms used by outdoor leaders
2. Describing the evolution of outdoor leadership before and after the Outward Bound movement
3. Describing the role Paul Petzoldt played in the development of outdoor leadership
4. Describing current organizations and services that promote leadership development
5. Explaining the meaning of key terms: experiential education, outdoor education, adventure education, and environmental education
6. Explaining the historical linkage between outdoor education and outdoor leadership
7. Describing the relationship between Outward Bound, the National Outdoor Leadership School, and the Wilderness Education Association and the purpose of each
8. Explaining the purpose and programs of outdoor leadership development services

B. Outdoor leaders provide evidence of their *skill* by:

1. Sharing an understanding of outdoor leadership history with participants

C. Outdoor leaders provide evidence of their *dispositions* by:

1. Sharing an understanding of and enthusiasm for the heritage of outdoor leadership
2. Celebrating the contributions of key individuals and organizations in the evolution of outdoor education

II. Content

A. Outdoor leadership. Terms that have influenced its development:

1. Experiential education: "Emphasizes direct experience as a resource that can increase the quality of learning through combining direct experience that is meaningful to the learner with guided reflection and analysis" (Raiola and O'Keefe 1999, p. 47).
 - a) Outdoor education: "Outdoor education means learning in and for the outdoors. It is a means of curriculum extension and enrichment through outdoor experience" (Smith et al. 1972, p. 20).
 - (1) Outdoor recreation: Participants engage in socially acceptable outdoor activities during their leisure time.
 - (2) Environmental education: "A process that creates awareness and understanding of the relationships between humans and their many environments—natural, man-made, cultural, and technological. Environmental Education is concerned with knowledge, values, and attitudes and has as its aim responsible environmental behavior" (Environmental Protection Agency 1988, p. 3).
 - (3) Adventure Education: No consensus has been reached concerning the exact definition of adventure education. Professional adventure educators agree that it does contain elements of excitement, uncertainty, real or perceived risk, effort, and interaction with the natural environment (Raiola and O'Keefe 1999).
 - (a) Adventure education includes the development of two distinct relationships:
 - i) Interpersonal relationships: How two or more people interact in a group. Group dynamics such as conflict, cooperation, communication, decision making, and leadership influence serve as content for the learner.
 - ii) Intrapersonal relationships: Individual developmental attributes such as self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, spirituality, or leadership style (Priest 1999).
 - (b) Outdoor adventure education has been articulated this way: "One of the most important themes in outdoor adventure education is that the participants should be provided with the necessary skills, both mental and physical, to enable them to experience success in using and preserving the outdoors . . . Some of the generally accepted

goals are personal growth, skill development, excitement and stimulation, challenge, group participation and cooperation, and understanding one's relationship to the environment" (Cinnamon and Raiola 1991, p. 130).

B. Historical overview. A brief historical overview of outdoor education is needed to appreciate the roots of outdoor leadership. The following represents only a few key individuals among a whole host of educators who have shaped outdoor leadership development.

1. 1800s: The organized camping movement begins in the United States. Frederick Gunn and his wife found the Gunnery School in Connecticut and integrate camping as part of their school programming.
2. 1910: The Boy Scouts of America is incorporated. Ernest Seton is appointed the first Scout Chief. A naturalist and author, he creates a youth organization called Woodcraft Indians that emphasizes outdoor skill development.
3. 1920s and '30s: L. B. Sharpe integrates education into organized camping. The first director of Life Camps for underprivileged youth, "he began using the term outdoor education synonymously with public school camping" (Raiola and O'Keefe 1999, p. 49).
4. 1930s: John Dewey, an educator who emphasizes the importance of experience-based learning inside and outside the classroom, becomes a leader in the progressive education movement in the United States.

C. Overview of outdoor leadership organizations

1. Outward Bound (OB) (www.outwardbound.com)

a) History

- (1) Kurt Hahn, born in Germany of Jewish descent, developed a reputation as a progressive educator. He spoke out against Hitler during World War II and was imprisoned for a short time, and then released with the help of influential friends. He was exiled from his native home and moved to England. He founded the Gordonstoun School in Scotland and later moved to Wales. Hahn integrated adventure into his curriculum (such as seamanship and mountain sports) as a way to help his young men develop morally and physically. Hahn felt strongly that service to the community should also be part of the educational process (North Carolina Outward Bound 1993).
- (2) Hahn and others created the first Outward Bound school as a way to properly prepare young British seamen for war. "Outward Bound grew out of the need to instill a spiritual tenacity and the

Table 26.1. COMPARISON OF OUTWARD BOUND, NATIONAL OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP SCHOOL, AND WILDERNESS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Organization	Date and Place Founded	Founder(s) and Other Key Players	Mission Statement	General Philosophy	Number of Branches/Affiliates	Number of Students Per Year
Outward Bound International	1941 Aberdovey, Wales	Kurt Hahn	"... to help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings" (www.outward-bound.org/about_sub1_mission.htm).	"To foster the core values of courage, trust, integrity, compassion, and cooperation" (www.outward-bound.org/about_sub1_mission.htm).	Forty-one Outward Bound schools worldwide (www.outward-bound.org/about_annual.htm)	173,000 (www.outward-bound.org/about_annual.htm)
Outward Bound USA	1962 Marble, Colorado	Josh Miner Early key players: Paul Petzoldt Tap Tapley	"... to enhance individual character, promote self-discovery, and challenge students to cultivate self-reliance, leadership, fitness, compassion, and service through exceptional wilderness education" (www.lynnseiden.com/article119.html).	"To broaden enthusiasm for and understanding of self, others, and the environment. To enhance interpersonal communications and cooperation" (North Carolina Outward Bound 1993, p. 8).	Seven U.S. schools and centers	65,000 (www.outward-bound.com/pdf/2000-2001_Annual_Report.pdf)
National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)	1965 Lander, Wyoming	Paul Petzoldt Early key player: Tap Tapley	"... to be the leading source and teacher of wilderness skills and leadership that serve people and the environment" (www.nols.edu/about/values.shtml).	"The NOLS community—its staff, students, trustees, and alumni—shares a commitment to wilderness, education, leadership, safety, community, and excellence. These values define and direct who we are, what we do, and how we do it" (www.nols.edu/about/values.shtml).	Eleven branches worldwide	3,000 (www.nols.edu/about/history)
Wilderness Education Association (WEA)	1977 Lander, Wyoming	Paul Petzoldt Bob Christie Frank Lupton Chuck Gregory Early key players: Dr. W. Forgey Jack Drury	"... promoting the professionalism of outdoor leadership and to thereby improve the safety of outdoor trips and to enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors..." (www.wearinfo.org/welcome.html).	Through the processing and assessment of leadership experiences, the WEA prepares individuals to lead safe, enjoyable, and environmentally sound backcountry outings. The WEA provides leadership training through a decentralized network of colleges, universities, and outdoor programs	Forty-four affiliate colleges, universities, and outdoor programs	200

will to survive in young British seamen being torpedoed by German U-boats during World War II. What began as a training exercise for apprentice British seamen and youth in Wales has since evolved into a modern-day program for self-discovery and personal development" (North Carolina Outward Bound 1993, p. 4).

- (3) Josh Miner brought Outward Bound to North America in 1962 and hired Paul Petzoldt as chief instructor for the Colorado Outward Bound school.

b) Mission and philosophy

- (1) Outward Bound's mission is "... to enhance individual character, promote self-discovery, and challenge students to cultivate self-reliance, leadership, fitness, compassion, and service through exceptional wilderness education" (www.lynnseidon.com/article119.html).
- (2) Outward Bound's general philosophy is "to broaden enthusiasm for and understanding of self, others, and the environment. To enhance interpersonal communications and cooperation" (North Carolina Outward Bound 1993, p. 8).

- c) Branches/affiliates: Outward Bound has four wilderness schools (Outward Bound West, Hurricane Island, Voyageur, and North Carolina); two independent urban centers (New York City Outward Bound Center and Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center); and the school-reform program, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, in the United States. There are approximately forty-one schools around the world today.

2. National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) (www.nols.edu)

a) History

- (1) Frustrated by the lack of qualified instructors in the profession and responding to the growing public interest in backcountry travel, Paul Petzoldt founded the National Outdoor Leadership School in 1965.
- (2) In 1966 NOLS allowed women to be students on courses, a radical departure from current practices of that time period.
- (3) The 1970s were marked by rapid growth and expanded course offerings in Mexico, Alaska, the northern Cascades, and Idaho.
- (4) In addition to offering wilderness leadership courses, NOLS offers other services, such as publishing educational resources, conducting research, sponsoring the Wilderness Risk Manager's Conference, and partnering and supporting Leave No Trace.
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- b) Mission and philosophy
 - (1) NOLS's mission is "... to be the leading source and teacher of wilderness skills and leadership that serve people and the environment" (www.nols.edu/about/values.shtml).
 - (2) NOLS's philosophy is to share "... a commitment to wilderness, education, leadership, safety, community, and excellence" (www.nols.edu/about/values.shtml).
 - c) Branches/affiliates: NOLS currently operates from established bases located around the world (e.g., Patagonia, Kenya, Yukon, and the Pacific Northwest). NOLS headquarters is located in Lander, Wyoming.
3. Wilderness Education Association (WEA) (www.weainfo.org)
- a) History
 - (1) In 1976 a group of Western Illinois University students led by Paul Petzoldt and Dr. Frank Lupton traveled through the Targhee National Forest of Wyoming and the Wind River Range on an experimental course that would later become the model for the WEA National Standard Program.
 - (2) In 1977 Paul Petzoldt and a group of college professors discussed the need for college-level professional training programs for the development of wilderness leaders and educators. On October 9, 1977, the Wilderness Use Education Association (WUEA) was created.
 - (3) In 1978 WUEA was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in the state of Wyoming. In 1980 it was officially renamed WEA, and Paul Petzoldt was appointed executive director.
 - (4) WEA courses typically consist of students who are seeking professional outdoor leadership development. WEA Outdoor Leadership certification is awarded to students who successfully meet certification criteria.
 - b) Mission and philosophy
 - (1) WEA's mission is "... promoting the professionalism of outdoor leadership and to thereby improve the safety of outdoor trips and to enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors."
 - (2) WEA's philosophy: Through the processing and assessment of leadership experiences, the WEA prepares individuals to lead safe, enjoyable, and environmentally sound backcountry outings. The WEA provides leadership training through a decentralized network of colleges, universities, and outdoor programs.
 - c) Branches/affiliates: Forty-four organizations are accredited to offer WEA courses.
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D. Paul Petzoldt

1. Paul Petzoldt played a major role in pioneering formal training and gaining recognition for professional outdoor leadership. Petzoldt saw a need for a new breed of outdoor leaders based on the growing use of the wild outdoors and progressive education programs instigated by Outward Bound.
2. Highlights of Petzoldt's life and accomplishments:
 - a) An internationally recognized pioneer in the field of wilderness education, Petzoldt's early exploits as a mountaineer and wilderness guide provided the experience and background that became the foundation of his later teachings.
 - b) He directed the Petzoldt-Exum School of American Mountaineering in the Teton Range during the 1920s.
 - c) He was a member of the first American expedition to K2 in the Himalayas in 1938.
 - d) He taught mountain evacuation and cold-weather dress to U.S. ski troops during World War II.
 - e) He testified before the U.S. Congress to help bring about the 1964 Wilderness Act.
 - f) He is the author of *The New Wilderness Handbook*.
 - g) He and NOLS instructors developed some of the first Leave No Trace techniques to be practiced by wilderness leaders. He and his instructors were concerned about the ekistic relationship of users in a wilderness environment.
 - h) He cofounded the Wilderness Education Association (WEA) in order to integrate outdoor leadership as a discipline in higher education.
 - i) He founded the PPLS (Paul Petzoldt's Leadership School for Youth) outdoor program in Maine in 1996.
3. Paul Petzoldt was one of the first public voices to raise society's awareness of the need for qualified outdoor leaders. Petzoldt never ceased his effort to educate outdoor leaders to be safe, environmentally sound users of the wild outdoors until his death in 1999. In his lifetime, Petzoldt saw outdoor leadership rise to a respected level of professionalism. Now, a myriad of related organizations, enterprises, and services have evolved to support the outdoor leadership profession. The following represent only a few examples.

E. Other key professional organizations

1. Wilderness medicine certification providers
 - a) Levels of certification: Basic Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMT
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- b) Examples of providers:
 - (1) Stonehearth Outdoor Learning Opportunities (SOLO): www.soloschools.com/
 - (2) Wilderness Medical Associates (WMA): www.wildmed.com/
 - (3) Wilderness Medicine Institute (WMI)/NOLS: www.nols.edu/wmi/
- 2. Rock climbing and mountaineering certification and program accreditation
 - a) American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA): www.amga.com/. This nonprofit organization seeks to represent the interests of American mountain guides by providing support, education, and standards.
 - b) American Alpine Institute (www.mtnguide.com/): This organization is dedicated to helping climbers raise their skills, protect the environments in which they climb, develop good judgment, and safely gain access to the great mountains of the world.
 - c) American Alpine Club (www.americanalpineclub.org/): This nonprofit organization is dedicated to promoting climbing knowledge, conserving mountain environments, and serving the American climbing community.
 - d) National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): www.nols.edu. This organization offers specialized courses in rock climbing, mountaineering, caving, and boating.
- 3. White-water canoeing, kayaking, sea kayaking, and rafting certification: The American Canoe Association (ACA): www.acanet.org/
- 4. Accreditation services for outdoor education programs
 - a) Association for Experiential Education (AEE): www.aee.org/
 - b) American Camping Association (ACA): www.acacamps.org/
- 5. College and university preparation programs for outdoor leaders
 - a) Wilderness Education Association Affiliates: www.weainfo.org. These affiliates of the WEA offer outdoor leadership certification for college credit.
 - b) There are educational institutions that have created majors and minors specifically designed to train outdoor leaders.

III. Instructional Strategies

A. Timing. This topic is usually taught as time permits. It is particularly suitable for a rainy day or a rest day.

B. Activities

1. Lecture: This approach is most appropriate when participants have little or no knowledge of the topic. (See chapter 1, Teaching and Learning, for different teaching strategies.)

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2. "The Minute in History": Using a chronology of events, students are asked to volunteer to prepare a short presentation (one to three minutes) based on a small portion of history. Other resources should be available to help the students expand on the rudimentary information, such as Petzoldt's biography, *On Belay*, or a copy of an Outward Bound instructor's manual. Each day a presentation can be given at the daily debriefing or at some other appropriate time.
 3. Student-led presentations: Students are asked to take a portion of the lesson content and present it to the group. Students should be encouraged to use their creativity to make the presentations as interesting as possible (i.e., impersonations, skits, etc.).
 4. Storytelling: If a staff or group member has personal knowledge of the evolution of outdoor or wilderness education, his or her personal experiences could be used as a basis for a storytelling/discussion approach to the topic. A campfire or other teachable moment may provide a good opportunity for this approach.
 5. Organizational comparison activity: The instructor can provide participants with an example of a common outdoor activity that reflects the different philosophy of each organization. It should be pointed out that the differences are sometimes subtle, and an observer may find the distinctions among the programs blurred depending on the instructor, location, and/or situation. The following map and compass activity is an example.
 - a) Outward Bound: The group is asked to travel from point A to point B. Participants are given minimal instruction in map and compass use. The focus of the exercise is to build group unity and individual confidence as group members work together to reach the objective. Participants debrief the experience in terms of their personal growth and group dynamics.
 - b) National Outdoor Leadership School: The group is asked to travel from point A to point B. Participants are given extensive formal instruction in map and compass use, including the rationale behind the techniques used. The focus of the exercise is to teach specific map and compass skills. Debriefing and journaling of the activity may or may not occur.
 - c) Wilderness Education Association: The group is asked to travel from point A to point B. Participants are given extensive formal instruction in map and compass use, including the rationale behind the techniques used. The focus of the exercise is to provide decision-making opportunities and teach specific map and compass skills. Participants debrief the experience in terms of the leadership and decision-making skills related