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IMPORTANT ISSUES IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION: ERIC/CRESS MINI REVIEWS.  
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EDUCATION AND SMALL SCHOOLS, LAS CRUCES, N. MEX.  
MAR 80 16P.

the juvenile delinquent are noted along with its effectiveness in rehabilitation. Several information sources are indicated. "ERIC Information Resources on Outdoor Education and the Handicapped" includes a listing of ERIC documents, bibliographies, and directories pertaining to outdoor education and to the handicapped. Four sample outdoor education programs designed for the handicapped and included in the ERIC data base are summarized and guides for program development are listed. Two packages of learning activities and teaching materials are also described. Nature centers are defined in terms of site selection, facilities, and services in "Outdoor Education Nature Centers". The centers' benefits and values are noted. The establishment of a center (planning, construction, organization of space, publicizing) is explained. Some features of existing centers are highlighted. (S2)

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DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 191 637

PC 012 231

**AUTHOR** Brady, Susan; Charveria, Linda Stout.  
**TITLE** Important Issues in Outdoor Education: ERIC/CRSS Mini Reviews.  
**INSTITUTION** ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Las Cruces, N. Mex.  
**SPONS AGENCY** National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.  
**FOR DATE** Feb 80  
**CONTRACT** #00-79-0023-Opt. 2  
**NOTE** 16p.  
**EDRS PRICE** MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
**DESCRIPTORS** \*Adventure Education; Behavior Change; \*Delinquency; \*Disabilities; Environmental Education; \*Information Sources; Learning Activities; \*Nature Centers; \*Outdoor Education; Program Design; Program Evaluation; Recreational Facilities; Rehabilitation Programs

**ABSTRACT**

The mini reviews in this collection synthesize current information regarding three timely topics in outdoor education: utilizing adventure education in a wilderness mode for

ED191639


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ERIC/CRESS MINI REVIEWS

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March 1980

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PREFACE

In an effort to more readily meet the needs of its users, ERIC/CRESS (Educational Resources Information Center/Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools) contracted authors this year to produce the "mini reviews" included in this collection. Since ERIC/CRESS receives repeated requests for information on certain timely topics, it was determined that we might most efficiently answer such requests with pre-printed fact sheets and/or mini reviews. Accordingly, we prioritized our user requests and contracted authors to produce brief synthesis pieces dealing with juvenile delinquents and adventure education, handicapped education, and nature centers as pertaining to outdoor education. These topics, then, are indicative of major concerns of the outdoor educators and others requesting information on outdoor education from ERIC/CRESS. Designed to aid the busy practitioner in accessing important information, these publications have now been collected in a single document for purposes of providing microfiche availability and announcement in Resources in Education, the ERIC monthly index to documents in the ERIC data base.

Since we are mandated both to retrieve and disseminate information pertinent to outdoor education, we solicit more detailed papers dealing with these and other outdoor education topics as well as topic suggestions for comparable fact sheets and mini reviews.

action is his usual mode of self-expression. Cognitively, he deals poorly with abstractions and is a limited learner.

Following the model of adult correctional institutions, rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents removed from the community has traditionally consisted of incarceration in large, impersonal facilities with a strong emphasis on regimentation and strict adherence to the rules. Yet it was known as early as the 1950's that such treatment was not only dehumanizing and costly but ineffective as well; recidivism rates were running 50% to 80% nationally. Incarceration became both increasingly difficult and socially undesirable as rising delinquency began to involve all socio-economic groups and was no longer largely confined to males. In the mid-1960's, concern for alternative approaches led to the exploration of adventure education in the treatment of juvenile delinquency (Nally and Ham, 1988).

#### *Adventure Education Defined*

Adventure education refers to learning programs in which outdoor pursuits that are perceived as either physically or psychologically dangerous are used within a framework of safety and skills development to present meaningful challenges leading to increased self-reliance and personal, social, and environmental awareness. The concept — variously referred to as adventure-based education, wilderness adventure programs, and environmental stress-challenge programs — is an outgrowth of the Outward Bound Schools begun by German educator Kurt Hahn in Wales in 1940. Hahn's goal was to build the character and judgment of young men by using challenge as an educational tool to impel them to perform beyond their preconceived physical

and psychological limits. Although there is no formal controlling body for adventure education, the Outward Bound organization serves as a focus for the movement by providing instructor training and consulting on program development. Similarly, the rigorous basic Outward Bound course serves as a model for most of the programs, although some do not stress challenging outdoor situations as much as recreation and fun.

#### *Adventure Education Program Characteristics*

While it must be stressed that each program is different, they do share some common goals, objectives, activities, structures, and methods. Thus it is possible to generalize to some degree about the nature of adventure education programs.

The objectives of adventure education programs fall into three categories: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills. In affective terms, the programs attempt to improve the student's self-esteem, self-reliance, self-assertiveness, and self-awareness; to better his social attitudes, interpersonal communications, and trust and love of others; and to increase his awareness of, appreciation for, and identification with the environment. In terms of cognitive skills, adventure education programs attempt to impart specific knowledge and skills required for wilderness situations and also to improve the student's knowledge of group dynamics and his group interaction skills. Finally, the programs attempt to develop an increased level of physical conditioning, coordination, and agility. The entire adventure education process is one of balanced self-development.

Most Outward Bound adaptive programs are about a month long, although some schools sponsor specialized seminars lasting a week or less. Virtually



CLEARINGHOUSE ON RURAL EDUCATION and SMALL SCHOOLS



# OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Mini Review

## OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDUCATION AND JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

The juvenile delinquent typically displays a complex and negative set of personality characteristics. His self-perceptions are confused and he has a negative self-image. He lacks self-reliance and refuses to take responsibility for himself, yet neither trusts nor gets along well with others. The juvenile delinquent rarely applies forethought to his actions; his life is usually a series of failures. Having little personality strength for

and psychological limits. As the public began to recognize the value of controlled challenge in personal development, the schools flourished and in 1963 the first of six American Outward Bound Schools was founded in Colorado.

By the mid-1980's the concept of adventure education was firmly established. The movement grew and today there are more than 200 adventure education

the facilities, quarters, and equipment. They begin general physical conditioning and intensive training in basic skills necessary to complete the course. Such skills might include first aid, safety, search and rescue techniques, map and compass skills, fire building, outdoor shelters, backpacking, survival strategies, and equipment use.

In the second phase, students apply their new skills in an instructor-supervised group expedition for five to fifteen students. The nature of the expedition will vary with the environment, but could include such activities as canoeing, river rafting, swimming, rock and ice climbing, mountaineering, gorge exploration, camping, backpacking, and night journeys. The expedition is given a specific goal, such as arriving at a certain point by a certain time, and the activities leading to the goal are generally organized so as to present increasingly difficult physical challenges in circumstances perceived as dangerous by the students. (It should be noted that the instructor has control over the danger because he takes all necessary precautions, is himself an expert in the skills required, has trained his students to the point of efficiency, and is aware of their abilities both individually and as a group.)

It is in phase two that teamwork, cooperation, and communication are emphasized. As the instructor retires from an active leadership role and serves more as a resource person, responsibility for accomplishing the expedition goal falls on the group as a whole. Only by working together to meet both individual and group challenges along the way can they succeed. For example, the course may include a steep climb to arrive at a camp site. Each student must negotiate the climb individually if the group is to meet the challenge of making camp at the appointed spot. The exercise of such traits as self-discipline, determination, leadership, unselfishness, humility, and foresight is essential and is reinforced constantly by the satisfaction and even the elation that comes as each challenge is successfully met.

Phase three consists of either an unsupervised small group expedition or a "solo" (a period of contemplation, isolation, and self-sufficiency in the wilderness), or both. Participants may be left in a predetermined spot for the duration (usually one to three days), or may leave the base camp for the wilderness and return at a prearranged time. They are given only minimal equipment and expected to use their new skills to provide food and shelter. Phase three is, in effect, a final examination. The examination demands not so much a mastery of skills, though that is of course essential, as a mastery of self. In the privacy of total solitude and face to face with an unyielding nature, few students can avoid an evaluation of themselves and of their abilities in relation to the adventure education ex-

periences

Adventure education is education in a microcosm. Therein lies much of its value for the juvenile delinquent. The limited world of the adventure education program is a society unto itself, with established rules, clearly defined jobs, and a small group of people who must interact for the good of the whole. Success in the microcosm is immediately applicable and transferable to the society at large. In the course of his few weeks in the program, the juvenile delinquent can experiment with new behavior for a limited period of time without making a rather overwhelming commitment to it. He can learn its value and begin to internalize it, aided by the constant reinforcement of meeting challenges successfully and growing group support.

The microcosmic society of a small group of peers works in the juvenile delinquent's favor to provide a framework of support for the—sometimes agonizing development of individual strengths. Furthermore, small group living is a simple and direct social situation which provides the opportunity for the development of vital techniques of group interaction, invaluable for those who have difficulty coping with complex social interaction. Unable to remain isolated, the delinquent must learn to rely on others and, in turn, have them rely on him, sometimes in life-and-limb-threatening circumstances (Golins, 1978; Lowenstein, 1975).

The value of adventure education for the juvenile delinquent also lies in its appeal to his mode of learning. The concrete cognitive development so necessary for the delinquent is facilitated by the incremental presentation of specific outdoor skills. Skills instruction begins at the novice level and builds step by step to higher levels of mastery. Practice in applying the skills comes with the introduction of increasingly difficult problems and challenges throughout the course. The problems themselves — designed to arouse curiosity, strengthen competence, and promote cooperative solutions — are difficult, but also straightforward, structured, and not at all abstract. In fact, they are often so concrete that their solution is imminently desirable. (It is raining. How best to stay dry? It is cold and windy. How best to stay warm?)

Problem solution has a behavioral impact as well, since adventure education operates in a consequential setting. That is, the consequences of finding or not finding a problem solution become apparent immediately. If an individual doesn't figure out how to pitch a shelter in the rain, or if he is too lazy to do so, he will get wet quite soon. If he doesn't start a fire, both he and his food will be cold. Exercising the determination, judgment, and skills necessary to solve these problems results in immediate positive reinforcement. Success in solving problems during the course makes the juvenile delinquent more willing to attack his problems at home

juvenile delinquents particular trouble. Sometimes there is not enough individual attention. Once the program is over, delinquents often return to environments ignorant and unsupportive of the values and lessons of an adventure education course. But on the positive side the programs' need for persistence challenges the delinquent's lack of endurance and determination. The need for pacing and forethought challenges his impulsivity. The need for adherence to safety rules challenges his concept of the worthlessness of rules and laws. The need for collaboration challenges his lack of faith in others; and the solo, his need for companionship (Kelly and Baer, 1968). At least in these regards, adventure education appears to be ideally suited to offsetting or exploiting many of the juvenile delinquent's negative personality characteristics.

In what may be his first associations with mastery, the challenges of the course repeatedly expose him to success and its satisfactions, and help break his longstanding pattern of failure. He learns to deal with frustration and stress using determination and self-discipline. The delinquent sees the value of forethought and planned action over impulsivity. He must achieve beyond his preconceived limits, demonstrating his competence by action, in terms he can comprehend. He takes satisfaction from his improved physical condition. More self-confident, he is better able to interact with and depend on others. The con-

cept test. Furthermore, the experimental group had higher post-test self-concept scores than did a control group following standard institutional treatment.

In 1973, a report of Higher Horizons, a coeducational Outward Bound adaptive program for delinquent youth, sponsored by the New York State Division for Youth, indicated that participants evidenced greater harmony in group living and working, and greater sensitivity to the feelings of others. And a 1974 study regarding the social functioning of juvenile delinquents who had participated in the Wilderness School (Connecticut) indicated that after the program, the delinquents were less involved with drug and alcohol abuse than a sample of non-program delinquent youth. Also, program participants depended on welfare and other social services to a lesser degree than before the program, and to a lesser degree than the control group.

In short, results of these and other programs have been extremely favorable based on attitudinal testing, observation, and follow-up monitoring. The indications are that in addition to an improved self-concept, juvenile delinquents in adventure education programs demonstrate more positive attitudes towards their peers and authority; a reduced school drop-out rate; very successful post-treatment adjustment with respect to academic achievement and employability; and most importantly, a drastically reduced rate of recidivism (Wichmann, 1976).

and take responsibility for solving them.

A further value of adventure education for the delinquent is its remote setting. The wilderness is a strange and evocative environment for most delinquents. They are at once more alert and receptive. Yet despite its unfamiliarity, the vast, concrete, physical reality of the wilderness is something the juvenile delinquent can comprehend and respect. It complements his physical nature and is a perfect setting for its expression. Confrontation with the wilderness, when it occurs, is direct, usually physical, and often painful. But the environment is uncompromising and unyielding. It is the individual who must modify his behavior to survive (Golins, 1978; Lowenstein, 1975).

The style of instruction in adventure education programs is particularly valuable to the juvenile delinquent. The instructor provides information and assistance in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. He is perceived as a competent and caring adult authority figure, a terribly important resource for the alienated juvenile delinquent wary of authority in its more standard and menacing forms (Golins, 1978).

Adventure education programs present a unique set of difficulties and challenges to juvenile delinquents, above and beyond the standard emotional and physical challenges of such programs. Because they arrive more physically unprepared than most partici-

stant self-examination results in greater self-awareness, more accurate self-perceptions, and an improved self-concept.

#### *The Effect of Adventure Education in the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents*

The effect of adventure education on juvenile delinquents has been documented in several studies, originating with the landmark work of Francis Kelly and Daniel Baer in 1968. It was Kelly, a psychologist, who first suggested treating delinquents with adventure education and who in 1964, through the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, set up an experimental program for sixty adolescent delinquent boys, using the facilities of three U.S. Outward Bound Schools. Based on scores of the Jesness Inventory Scale administered before and after the Outward Bound course, the experimental group significantly improved their social attitudes related to value orientation, alienation, manifest aggression, asocialization, and social maladjustment. Pre- and post-program scores on the Semantic Differential Test were also significantly improved in the area of self-concept.

Improved self-concept also resulted from Homeward Bound, a Massachusetts correctional program patterned after Outward Bound. As reported in 1979, experimental subjects showed a significant increase in self-concept in the course of the program, based on pre-



The design and structure of a program may be a significant determinant of its effectiveness. Some programs are organized for groups composed totally of delinquents. Such groups apparently do not function so well as heterogeneous groups because delinquents find it harder to organize themselves, to encourage each other, and to demonstrate persistence in overcoming challenges. Longer programs, especially those with follow-up provisions, provide more opportunities for

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The greatest amount of data available regarding adventure education programs for juvenile delinquents concerns recidivism. While it must be stressed that not all studies similarly define "recidivism," results are nonetheless very positive (Caldwell, 1978). The usual recidivism rate reported for delinquents who have experienced adventure education programs is approximately 20%, which compares very favorably with the 50% to 60% rate common for traditional treatment programs in the 1960's. In the original Kelly and Raer study, the recidivism rate nine months after the program was expected to be 40% for the experimental group of delinquents. In fact, the rate was just 20%. A control group routinely treated in public institutions recidivated at a rate of 34% in the same time period. "Reactive" juvenile delinquents (those committing what would be considered adult misdemeanors) in the experimental group demonstrated the lowest rate of recidivism, only 10%. Overall, juvenile delinquents in the experimental group who were committed to treatment for the first time recidivated at a rate of 35% versus 47% for first time commitments in the control group.

The discharges from Florida's Short Term Elective Program, S.T.E.P., for juvenile offenders, which combines wilderness survival training with group therapy, evidence a 28% recidivism rate. A study of program participants indicated that subsequent violations were most likely to occur seven to nine months and more than nineteen months after release from the program.

Recidivism studies have provided much information regarding the effectiveness of adventure education programs for specific populations of juvenile delinquents. Virtually all the studies agree that the older the child when he enters an adventure education program, the better his chances for success. Kelly and Raer note the importance of the age at which the delinquent's first court appearance occurs. They indicate that Outward Bound programs may have a greater impact on delinquents whose first appearance occurs after puberty, perhaps as a reaction to adolescent crisis. That study also indicates greater adventure education success with first time offenders than with habitual delinquents. The type of offense may also be significant in terms of program effectiveness. Several studies indicate that adventure education benefits delinquents who have committed misdemeanors or

...throughout the program. It is possible that a willing learner is impelled at a calculated risk to succeed and acts within a primary peer group most often in a wilderness setting to master a conditional series of problems which enable the learner to lead a more autonomous life.

Courses are patterned after the standard course pioneered by the national network of Outward Bound Schools, and feature the mastery of an outdoor pro-

self-examination, behavior change, and rapport between the staff and their charges. Finally, these adventure education programs with a higher level of excitement and greater challenges produce more feelings of accomplishment and competence for the delinquent than the more contemplative and intellectual programs.

Despite the many indications of its success, adventure education is not a panacea for the treatment of juvenile delinquents. In the first place, because so many programs are in the formative stages, there is no standardization of programs. In the second place, only a small percentage of delinquents are served by existing adventure education programs. Of over 250 U.S. programs in 1978, only 58 programs in 27 states accepted delinquents. Most of these programs accepted only limited numbers of delinquents into the regular quarters. Participants were usually males between the ages 16-18 and 19. Only 29% of the programs accepted anyone younger than age 12. However, it is certainly clear that a well-designed program of adventure education can be a very useful alternative in the treatment of certain juvenile delinquents. Adventure education should be viewed as a possible major step for early intervention into delinquency patterns.

#### More Information

A list of adventure education programs available as of November, 1978, entitled "A Directory of Adventure Alternatives in Corrections, Mental Health, Special Education, and Physical Rehabilitation," *Journal of Experiential Education*, VI (2), pp. 28, Fall 1979, may be ordered from:

Association for Experiential Education  
P. O. Box 4825  
Denver, Colorado 80214

A forthcoming paper by Gerald Galins discusses the background of adventure education as a therapeutic tool, and its uses both as a constructive alternative to long-term institutionalization and as a supplement to existing programs of youth serving agencies. The paper, entitled "Utilizing Adventure Education to Rehabilitate Juvenile Delinquents", will be available from National Educational Laboratory Publishing, Inc., in the late spring of 1980. The following abstract of the Galins paper is indicative of the document's substance.



suit, such as mountaineering, river rafting, sailing, etc., as a mechanism for personal development. The courses are tailored to the needs and capabilities of the delinquents. Much emphasis is placed on thorough referral and follow through.

For delinquents, criminal or non-criminal, adventure education is used to either divert them from costly incarceration, or to supplement traditional treatment approaches.

As a diversionary mechanism, adventure based education represents a cost effective alternative to incarceration. As a supplementary program, adventure education enhances treatment goals. There is an ample number of exemplary programs throughout the country.

ERIC invites authors of pertinent program reports, theses, speeches, conference papers, and other materials to submit them for input into the ERIC data base. Such materials may be sent to the attention of Ms. Judi Conrad at:

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New Mexico State University  
P. O. Box 3AP  
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

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For further information contact: ERIC/CRESS, Box 3AP, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003 (505) 646-2623

NELP-813.00, Stock No. EC-053

ED 149 884 *Outdoor Education: A Bibliography of ERIC Abstracts Supplement No. 7 by ERIC/CECS (1978) NELP-84.00, Stock No. EC-040.*

ED 164 158 *Outdoor Education: A Bibliography of ERIC Documents Supplement No. 8 (1978) NELP-83.75, Stock No. EC-083.*

ED 167 317 *Outdoor Education: Community Studies Through Field Experiences by Malcolm D. Swan (1978) NELP-85.50, Stock No. EC-074.*

ED 138 971 *Outdoor Education: A Selected Bibliography from ERIC Abstracts/ERIC/CECS Supplement No. 6 by ERIC/CECS (1973) NELP-83.50, Stock No. EC-032.*

Bibliographies may be ordered from:

The Council for Exceptional Children/ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children  
1820 Association Drive  
Reston, Virginia 22091

881 Attitudes Toward the Handicapped—1978

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# OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Mini Review

## ERIC INFORMATION RESOURCES ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND THE HANDICAPPED

### GENERAL RESOURCES

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ED 091 895 *Outdoor Education and Its Contributions to Environmental Quality: A Research Analysis by Robert L. Vogt and Sonia Vogt (1974) NELP-82.25, Stock No. EC-015.*

ED 109 338 *Adventure Programming by John A. Newcomb (1978) NELP-83.00, Stock No. EC-036.*

ED 134 384 *Integrating Orienting in School Programs by Douglas Bradford (1977) NELP-83.00, Stock No. EC-048.*

ED 185 864 *Directory of Outdoor Education Programs in the United States (1978) NELP-85.50, Stock No. EC-074.*

Forthcoming ERIC/CECS Publications Available from NELP, Spring 1980:

*Unifying Adventure Education to Rehabilitate Juvenile Delinquents by Gerald Golias*

*Establishing an Outdoor Education Association: The New York Model by Tom Benjamin*

*Legal Liability—Adventure Activities by Betty van der Sluisen*

*Directory of Selected State Outdoor Education Programs: State Responses to a 1979 Query Conducted by the Council on Outdoor Education/AANPERD.*

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