Outdoor Education

More Than Fun and Games

An Honors Thesis

by

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Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract

Creating this project was truly an exciting way to complete my four years as a member of the Ball State University Honors College. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to combine and connect multiple experiences of my college career with professional research as well as local organizations to form an informative, practical, and enjoyable Honors Thesis.

It has been my observation that students not only require academic stimulation and support in the classroom environment in order to increase social, emotional, and metacognitive skills, but that Outdoor Education programs are also necessary to ensure students' growth and success both in school and in life. This approach to student learning is often overlooked or dismissed entirely, yet the popularity of such programs has spread so immensely during recent years that many organizations and facilities have created Outdoor Education activities tied closely with Indiana Academic Standards and rooted in increasing the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of children.

With home and school violence ever-prominent in today's society, the importance of allowing all children the opportunity to learn and apply knowledge in all areas of life is quite evident. For a variety of reasons which I will both explore and explain, Outdoor Education provides a realistic means for students of any age, gender, or capability to participate and learn cooperatively with other students. This Senior Honors Thesis provides a closer look at Outdoor Education for educators everywhere.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Cynthia Farren for her flexibility, insightful comments, and willingness to be accommodating despite her extremely demanding schedule.

I would also like to thank Dr. Barb Stedman for being an incredibly understanding professor.

I would like to thank the entire staff of Delaware County Special Olympics for sharing their extensive experiences and knowledge of Outdoor Education.

I would like to thank James Leslie of Adventure Environmental Learning Center for providing such excellent information about his center and Outdoor Education.

I would like to thank Will Lorigan of Camp Crosley YMCA for all of the information provided on their camp and its function.

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I would also like to extend a thank you to Lisa Teagle and Brenda McGriff, two outstanding 4th grade teachers at Wes-Del Elementary, for their support and encouragement in completing this Thesis project.
Necessary Steps in Implementing Outdoor Education Activities

Undertaking a project of this caliber could easily become an overwhelming task. The idea forms, the motivation is there, and yet moving from start to finish seems an impossible task. Many educators have successfully implemented Outdoor Education programs to further supplement student learning, therefore the process must not be altogether impossible, but finding a feasible starting point is often more difficult than expected. To increase productivity and ensure a successful program, consider the following six steps prior to implementation:

1. Utilize available resources
2. Notify contacts and organizations
3. Generate funding
4. Recruit volunteers
5. Maintain city regulations
6. Inform participants

Some steps in this process may become obsolete, depending upon the type of Outdoor Education program intended as well as the desired location. Organizations or facilities already in existence do not require that you notify city officials and comply with city regulations for the obvious reason that they have previously done so during the building of their facility. Each of the remaining five steps, whether on a large or small scale, play integral roles in successfully utilizing Outdoor Education as an effective means of student learning.
Step 1: Utilize Available Resources

An often overlooked possibility is that of utilizing current, available resources. Why reinvent the wheel when simple improvements are more beneficial?

Many established facilities currently in operation in Delaware County as well as the immediate Muncie area are more than willing to provide all necessary information and assistance in planning and organizing Outdoor Education events. Some organizations are willing to go so far as to provide equipment free of charge. Profitable contacts in the immediate Muncie area include the Delaware County Special Olympics, Camp Adventure, and the Camp Crosley YMCA. Each of these facilities or organizations maintains outdoor challenge courses for students and provides equipment for their activities at little or no cost.

A second viable option is that of hosting an original Outdoor Education program or activity day in which you determine each aspect of the program. In the Muncie area, possible contacts include Hillcroft Services, Inc., the Isonogel Center, Inc., the YMCA, and Ball State University Office of Recreational Services. Each of these centers or locations is willing to rent space for outdoor activities as well as provide rental services for equipment. Hillcroft Services and the Isonogel Center maintain large outdoor areas ideal for Outdoor Education activities, and Ball State University offers two large lawn areas as well as one indoor location in which to host events. The local YMCA also provides rental of indoor facilities should inclement weather be a concern.
Established Facilities

In the event that time, funding, or volunteers become unavailable or strained, multiple facilities in the immediate Muncie area, in Delaware County, and in the state of Indiana are currently established and will provide all necessary amenities and equipment for your students to enjoy an Outdoor Education experience. Following are brief descriptions of three operating facilities in Indiana, two of which are located in Delaware County, as well as a complete listing of challenge courses available throughout the state of Indiana as of 2001:\(^1\)

1. Delaware County Special Olympics
2. Adventure Environmental Learning Center
3. Camp Crosley YMCA
Hosting an Original Outdoor Education Program

Multiple locations in the immediate Muncie area serve as excellent venues for self-created Outdoor Education programs or activity days. The locations are quite varied and should be utilized according to number of anticipated participants, area required for activities, and anticipated weather or seasonal temperatures. Following are locations available for rental should you choose to plan and implement your own Outdoor Education experience:

1. Hillcroft Services, Inc.

2. Isanogel Center, Inc.

3. Ball State University
   a. Lafollette Field
   b. soccer field area
   c. intramural fields
   d. Worthen Arena
Step 2: Notify Contacts and Organizations

After considering all viable options for facilities, both previously established or open spaces for original setup, it is necessary to contact these organizations and facilities personally, whether that be by telephone, through email, or in personal interviews and visits. Telephone or email conversations may suffice for initial contacts, but further investigation of facilities will most likely require a tour of the grounds, an inspection of available equipment, and a personal interview with the director of the facility. Becoming familiar with your potential locations is always beneficial to planning as well as hosting an event. For example, outdoor locations may be chosen based upon square footage dependent upon games and activities planned and the corresponding space required.

Other necessary considerations include ample parking space and restroom facilities. Parking should be taken into consideration when scouting potential facilities as students and volunteers will be arriving in varying numbers of vehicles dependent upon the organization of the event. If entire school systems are involved, parking for four to ten buses would suffice. However, if the event is open to the public and used to promote community-wide Outdoor Education, ample parking is a necessity. In regards to restroom facilities, if indoor facilities are preferred, simply ensure that all facilities in the area are in fact accessible and open for use. If renting outdoor spaces, ask when making contacts the type of restroom facilities available, if any. Outdoor spaces rented through Ball State University, for example, do not provide restroom facilities of any kind, and unless nearby indoor facilities are open for public use, companies renting portable facilities must also be contacted.
Delaware County Special Olympics

In the immediate Muncie area, many contacts are available for consultation regarding a project of this nature. With a focus on disabled or handicapped students, an important initial contact might be the Delaware County Special Olympics located in Muncie, Indiana. This organization, established more than thirty years ago, hosts adult Special Olympics activities each year and is currently looking to incorporate a youth program to extend their services to a greater number of local residents.

The organization functions year-round in promoting physical and emotional fitness and well-being for all interested adult residents of the County who sustain disabilities (personal communication, March 12, 2004). In order to keep positive attitudes as well as a high level of competition among participants, the Delaware County Special Olympics hosts practices before each athletic event to prepare competitors for the physical demands as well as review rules, terminology, and use of equipment. Practice updates are posted daily on the Delaware County Special Olympics phone line, so a simple phone call to the organization will provide a complete listing of all practices and their locations around Muncie. Practices are typically held at elementary and high school gymnasiums if you would like to meet with the coordinator or some of the participants.

Participants may choose to compete in as many sports as they feel capable. The selection of athletic events includes golf, softball, flag football, volleyball, aquatic sports such as swimming and swim relays, bowling, long distance walking, skiing, basketball, relay races, Bocce ball, power lifting, horseshoes, and an annual Polar Bear Plunge. Awards banquets are held for participants at the conclusion of each season to recognize individuals for their outstanding achievements. In 2003, 184 individual athletes
participated in one or more of these sports ("Delaware County," n.d.). Additional
resources and publications regarding these activities, sports, and the participants are
available from the Delaware County Special Olympics office.

Because of the nature of the organization, planning and organizing your own
Outdoor Education day or event can be done in affiliation with Delaware County Special
Olympics. Coordinator Barb Cox and other staff members there are incredibly
supportive of individual endeavors and are more than willing to provide help when
necessary. For example, updates on the date and location of your Outdoor Education
event can be posted on the Delaware County Special Olympics phone line, therefore
allowing anyone contacting the organization to also be aware of your planned event and
participate if eligible. The organization also offers affiliation when advertising for your
event, as well as offers to provide up to ten volunteers on the day of your event to aid in
setup and work with participants throughout the day. Any equipment owned by
Delaware County Special Olympics is available for use free of rental charge. In addition,
should you create a PowerPoint presentation advertising your event, the organization will
also run the advertisement free of charge on Channel 42 (personal communication, March
12, 2004).

Contact: Barb Cox
Coordinator of Delaware County Special Olympics
(765) 287-0041
www.specialo.uwctl.org
Barb_Cox@oldnational.com

Location: Delaware County Special Olympics
3701 N. Broadway Ave.
Muncie, Indiana
Adventure Environmental Learning Center

Shifting the focus from adults to children, a second contact might be that of James Leslie, coordinator and director of Muncie area Adventure Environmental Learning Center. This program was designed particularly for utilization by Muncie Community School Corporation, yet over recent years the camp has expanded to allow neighboring school corporations to employ their services and participate in a Challenge Adventure Day for a minimal $30 fee (personal communication, April 30, 2005). The facility provides educators and their students with a variety of outdoor activities and initiatives to promote not only physical fitness and strength, but also teamwork, cooperation, and positive attitude toward peers, school, and wellness. To better serve all of Delaware County, Adventure has recently expanded and now maintains challenge courses in Eaton and Blackford County.

Schools wishing to participate at Adventure must contact James Leslie approximately one year in advance to request specific dates of arrival and ensure all necessary staff and equipment are available. If schools have attended Adventure in previous years, these schools will receive notices from Mr. Leslie regarding potential attendance dates as well as the grade levels and number of students planning to attend. If schools have not participated in Adventure challenge activities, these schools should contact Mr. Leslie and request a calendar of open attendance dates as soon as possible.

Schools are at liberty to decide which grades may attend the camp and on what dates, although the camp is designed to service students grades K-12. Many schools decide to send students to Adventure every two years in attempts to keep the trip new and exciting, but also continually reinforce the values and skills learned there.
Prior to students’ arrival, teachers from participating schools travel to the camp to meet with Mr. Leslie and discuss the programs to be utilized—Outdoor Activities or Science Investigation—so that the necessary preparations can be made and equipment reserved. During this visit teachers also participate in three to five day training sessions, the duration of which depending on the challenge activities to be utilized by their students. For example, elementary students attending Adventure work primarily on the low ropes portion of the challenge course (personal communication, May 7, 2005).  

Teachers bringing elementary students would require three days of training on this low ropes course. Training covers basic climbing vocabulary, safety guidelines and precautions, themes of questioning to connect the activity with students’ prior knowledge, setting goals for the activity, learning maintenance and safety standards for the course, and role playing to ensure that the day runs smoothly when the students actually arrive. If teachers are expecting to bring junior high students to Adventure, they participate in a four day training session on the teams rope challenge course, and teachers bringing high school students participate in an extensive five day training session on the high ropes challenge course.

Within each challenge course training session, teachers also learn and practice implementing various initiatives, or team-building activities. These activities are highly important to the Adventure curriculum and are the core focus of the facility. Students participating in initiatives learn the value of teamwork, encouragement, and cooperation, and that these aspects, when practiced by each member of a team, lead to success and accomplishment.

At the conclusion of each training session, regardless of duration or challenge course studied, all teachers must also complete and pass a five page written exam. The
exam covers all topics discussed in training, particularly issues of safety and equipment usage (personal communication, May 7, 2005).

Upon students’ arrival at the camp, all necessary equipment previously discussed by teachers and Mr. Leslie will be set out and ready for use. Handbooks and literature on challenge courses and initiatives are available at all times for teacher use and reference. These handbooks also include ideas for variations on each challenge course to accommodate for the needs of disabled students. Teachers become the leaders of Adventure by using the knowledge gleaned during training to lead their students through the challenge course and various initiatives.

Contact: James Leslie  
Director of Adventure Environmental Learning Center  
(765) 281-6743  
www.muncie.k12.in.us/adventure_environmental_learning

Location: Adventure Environmental Learning Center  
4881 S. Proctor Road  
Muncie, IN
Camp Crosley YMCA

Camp Crosley is an adventure-based Outdoor Education facility that incorporates physical challenge activities with a simulated classroom environment. The facility is located north of Muncie in North Webster, Indiana. Camp Crosley has been operating for eighty-four years and serves to provide students with an unforgettable experience in which they learn to develop physical as well as social skills and values. The Camp is run by full-time professionally-trained staff members to ensure students’ safety and learning.

Schools that have never attended Camp Crosley but wish to schedule participation dates must contact Executive Director Richard Armstrong or Challenge Director Will Lorigan by telephone, register online, or complete and fax or mail a registration form along with a $50 deposit to request arrival and departure dates. Schools that have in previous years attended the Camp are mailed registration contracts for their convenience. Arrival dates may be scheduled up to one year in advance, but may also be scheduled as soon as one week in advance, although the latter may prove more difficult since other schools may have already registered during that time. The Camp does provide cabins for overnight lodging, so schools may request to stay up to seven nights. Schools from across the United States are welcome to attend; registration is not limited to Indiana residents by any means (personal communication, May 4, 2005). Students age six to sixteen may attend the Camp throughout the summer months. A variety of activities are offered, including canoeing, hiking, orienteering, rock wall climbing and fishing, as well as indoor and outdoor ropes courses, rappelling, archery, and riflery (“Camp Crosley,” 2004).
Teachers and other school staff members accompanying students to Camp Crosley need not participate in any type of formal or informal course training, as the staff manages each of the activities and is fully aware of all safety precautions and regulations. However, teachers are welcome to visit the Camp prior to students’ arrival to participate in team-building activities and tour the grounds. The Camp is fully outfitted with all necessary equipment, and it will be provide for students upon arrival. Camp Crosley also provides camping opportunities for students with special needs, as well as trained staff and medical professionals to assist in creating an awesome, safe experience for the students (“Camp Crosley,” 2004).

Aside from physical challenge activities, schools may request that certain academic activities be included in correlation with their students’ studies or Academic Standards. For example, in May 2004 I had the opportunity to attend Camp Crosley with a group of Burris Laboratory School 4th graders. The class had recently been studying the various Native American tribes that had once settled Indiana, so the Camp scheduled the class to participate in activities such as building Native American shelters, creating Native American tools, and observing a role-playing of a meeting between surveyors and the Miami tribe chief. For further information regarding Camp Crosley and the programs and activities offered, contact the Camp directly.

Contacts: Richard Armstrong
Executive Director

Will Lorigan
Challenge Director

(574) 834-2331
(877) 811-6189
www.campcrosley.org
info@campcrosley.org
Location: Camp Crosley YMCA
165 EMS T2 Lane
North Webster, IN 46555
Indiana Challenge Courses
(rev. 9/6/01)

Angola High School
Mimi Holsinger, Angola High School
219-665-2186
Referred by Tim Ogle & Brenda Rummel

Angola Middle School
575 E US 20, Angola, IN 46703
Principal Bill Church
219.665.9581  bcchurch@medsteuben.k12.in.us
Referred by Cyndi Nusbaum

Asherwood, run by Marion Community Schools
No housing available, staff does all of their own facilitating
7496 West State Road 124, Wabash, IN.
Jerry Sweeten, Director
Referred by Gary McClure

Boy Scout C.O.P.E. (Challenge Outdoor Personal Experience), Ashley, IN
high rope course
Referred by Bill Diehl

Bradford Woods
Amber Havens
5040 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, IN 46151
www.indiana.edu/~bradwood

Bremen Elementary/Junior High
dahuppert@bps.k12.in.us
Referred by Dick Reese

Butler University
1-800-368-6852
Referred by Marlowe Mullen, Greenwood High School

Campaigna Academy, formerly Hoosier Boys Town
7403 South Cline Avenue, Schererville, IN. 46375
(219) 828-7723
Referred by Mike Buckner

Camp Carson, YMCA Camp
R.R. 2 Lake Road, Box 365, Princeton, Indiana 47670
812-385-3597  Fax: 812-386-1654
www.campcarson.org
Referred by Jim Isaacs & LeAnne Kelley & Brenda Weber
Camp Crosley, YMCA Camp, North Webster
  Group dynamics, low ropes, high ropes course
  165 EMS T2 Lane, N. Webster, IN 46555
  219-834-2331  877-811-6189
  www.campcrosley.org
  Referred by Brenda Linky

Camp Potawotami YMCA Camp
  Sonny Adkins
  800-966-9622 (219) 351-2525 | FAX (219) 351-3915
  P.O. Box 38, South Milford, Indiana 46786
  ymca@camp-potawotami.org
  Referred by Mark Seele

Camp Pyoca  Church Camp located in Brownstown
  886 E County Road 100 S, Brownstown, IN 47220
  812-358-3413
  camppyoca@aol.com
  Referred by John Fee

Camp Reveal
  Referred by Brenda Weber

Camp Tecumseh YMCA Outdoor Center
  Mark Fuller
  12635 West Tecumseh Bend Rd., Brookston, IN 47923
  765-564-2898 Fax: 765-564-3210
  www.camptecumseh.org

Camp YALE (Young Adult Learning Environment), new course in Randolph County
  Rod Hines
  Randolph County Community Corrections
  216 South Meridian St, Winchester, IN 47394
  765-584-6276
  Run through our Court and Community Corrections system
  Judge Chalfant, Randolph County Circuit Court, 765-584-7070.
  Referred by Cathy Stephen, Superintendent Randolph Eastern School Corp & Tom Osborne

Christian Haven Academy, Wheatfield, IN
  Sheri Fansler 219-956-3125
  12501 N. SR 49, Wheatfield, IN 46392
  Referred by Guy Skrobul, Kankakee Valley High School

Columbus Youth Camp
  Ben Wagner, Director
  405 Hope Ave., Columbus, IN 47201
  812-342-3206 (Ben) 812-342-2698 (programs office)
  Becky Kime, in charge of challenge course. Becky has a company (100th Monkey)
  Has overnight facilities
  Referred by Stephen Bayer & Randy Barrett, Annette Dubois & Terrie Valentine
Craig Middle School – Challenge and Environmental Education Program
Billy Belt
6501 Sunnyside Road, Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-323-6805 ext. 315

Culver Military Academy, Culver
1300 Academy Rd, Culver, IN 46511-1291
219-842-7000
Referred by Scott Mills

DePauw University, Hartman Center
DePauw University, Greencastle, IN 46135 765-658-4870
hartmancenter@depauw.edu
Nikki Sherck, Interim Director, Hartman Center

Dunes National Lakeshore
Teams and Low Ropes
Dan Massa, Porter County Special Education Cooperative
219-464-9607
Referred by Paul Knauff & Pat Pierce & Phyllis Allison

Earlham College
8 acre high and low ropes course & indoor climbing wall (10 low elements, 3 high stations)
(pamper pole, Hi-Y, & set of bridges to zip line)
Thomas Berg, Challenge Ed
Earlham College, Drawer 87, Richmond, IN 47374-4095
http://www.earlham.edu/~outdoor/challenge/index.html
735-983-1886 wilderness@earlham.edu (general) or bergth@earlham.edu (Thomas Berg)
Referred by shively@rcs.k12.in.us

Fegly Middle School, Portage
2 Teams, 2 Low Ropes, Climbing Tower & High Ropes
Chris Evans, Principal 219-763-8150
Dan Massa, facilitator 219-464-9607
Referred by Paul Knauff & Phyllis Allison

Flat Rock YMCA Camp near St. Paul
Referred by Mark Kern

YMCA/Ruth Lily Camp in St. Paul (possibly the same as above?)
Referred by Libby DeMoss

Fox Hill Elementary School - MSD Washington Township
Teams and a Low Ropes @ Fox Hill Elementary
Dr Karol Farrell, Director of Special Ed
317.205.3332 ext 230
Julie Ulstrup Hajost, Challenge Education Coordinator
259.5421 x 104 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
jhajost@msdwt.k12.in.us
Referred by CE Quandt

Franklin Cultural Arts Center Team Challenge Course
Referred by Walt Raines
Franklin Parks Dept.
J.T. Volz
736-3691 (noon – 8pm)
Referred by Harriet Henry

Goshen Middle School
Lance McFarren
lmcfarren@goshenschools.org
Referred by Jim Kirkton, Principal Goshen High School
& David Clendening Principal, Goshen Middle School

Greenwood High School
Indoor challenge course (four station climbing wall, two rappel platforms, two dangle duo's, a cargo net, a tire trail and a trapeze dive.)
Referred by Marlowe Mullen, Greenwood High School

Hamilton Southeastern Jr. High
Laura Borders
317.594.4120
lborders@hse.k12.in.us
Referred by Randy Schoeff & Matt Davis

Indiana State University, Brazil IN
Field Campus, Team Initiatives, Initiative Games, High Ropes Course
ISU Dept of Recreation and Sport Management 812-237-2183
ISU Field Campus 812-448-1991

In Pursuit – Church Camp located west of Seymour on state road 258
497-0008
Referred by John Fee

Lawrence County Probation Dept
916 15th Street, Room 25
Bedford, Indiana 47421
Attn: Mrs. Nedra Brock-Fleetwood
Referred by Dale Underwood

Marengo Cave National Landmark – 25 miles west of New Albany
zip line, horseback riding, trails, canoes
1-812-365-2705
Referred by Jon Howerton

Michigan City Schools, at Joy Elementary
John Witcher 873-2000
Referred by Lisa Suter, Principal, Springfield Elem. & Lisa Emschwiller

Muncie Community Schools, Adventure Environmental Learning Center (“Camp Adventure”)
James Leslie, Challenge Education Coordinator
4881 S. Proctor Road, Muncie, IN 4730 765-281-6743
Mr. R. Warner VanFleet, 765-747-5345
Referred by Joe Stokes, Sutton Elem & Nancy Wean & Dick Daniel, Muncie Central
Hillcroft Services and Isanogel Center, Inc.

Hillcroft Services and Isanogel Center are both excellent Outdoor Education facilities in the Muncie area. Both work to provide educational experiences for disadvantaged or disabled children and adults. Overarching objectives of the respective organizations are to promote physical, social, and emotional well-being and growth among their participants as well as provide them with experiences to better prepare them to be active, contributing members of a community ("Hillcroft," n.d.).

Hillcroft is located in Muncie, Indiana and offers a spacious open lawn area bordered by fields, trees, and one large parking lot. The site is ideal for hosting Outdoor Education activities and can be utilized free of charge by contacting Hillcroft and scheduling specific event dates. The site is best suited for groups of fifty participants or less, bearing in mind the space needed to set up and run multiple outdoor activities (personal communication, March 18, 2004). To obtain further information about Hillcroft Services, Inc., contact the organization directly.

The Isanogel Center is located southwest of Muncie, Indiana and offers a large outdoor campsite and activities area for participants. Each summer Isanogel hosts one- to two-week residential camp programs, as well as year-round weekend sessions, for children and adults with disabilities ages eight to adult, during which campers work to develop self-esteem and independent living skills. Outdoor Education activities available to campers include dance, fishing, music, ropes, drama, and swimming. Campers are also invited to participate in nightly campfires and cookouts as well as arts and crafts ("Isanogel," n.d.).
Contacts: Jeffrey Neuman
Executive Director of Hillcroft Services, Inc.

Becky Donovan
Human Resources Director of Hillcroft Services, Inc.

(765) 284-4166
(800) 591-2808
hillcroft@hillcroft.org

Location: Hillcroft Services, Inc.
114 E. Streeter Ave.
Muncie, Indiana

Contact: (765) 288-1073
isanogel@iquest.net

Location: Isanogel Center, Inc.
7601 W. Isanogel Rd.
Muncie, Indiana
Ball State University

Ball State University maintains three large, outdoor lawn spaces, each of which can be rented for one day and utilized for any purpose short of destroying the field. The first location is essentially the front lawn of Worthen Arena known locally as Lafollette Field. This area is often used for informal football practices and scrimmages, so Outdoor events planned in the spring must be scheduled around University sports. The activities on this field must also be limited; the lawn area was used as a catch-all site during the building of Worthen Arena and currently contains various building site debris. The lawn is a wonderful area for hosting outdoor events, yet because of this history, activities requiring crawling or rolling on the ground are discouraged (personal communication, April 20, 2004). Parking is more difficult if this site is utilized; the nearest lots are located directly behind the Arena or across McKinley Avenue in the Residence Hall lot. Portable restroom facilities would be necessary unless access to facilities inside Worthen is granted.

The second Ball State University location is the grassy area near the baseball diamond on Bethel and Tillotson. This area is generally reserved for intramural competitions, therefore scheduling conflicts in both fall and spring must be avoided. This area may be preferred to Lafollette Field simply because there is ample parking in a large gravel lot as well as in the paved stadium lot across the street. Restroom facilities are not available in this area, so portable facilities are necessary.

The third and final outdoor location is situated between University and Tillotson directly west of the Ball State University soccer field. This site could possibly be the easiest for participants to locate as the well-known Muncie landmark, Ball Memorial
Hospital, is located directly across the street. Parking should not be an issue at this site either; spaces are available in the visitors’ lot of Ball Memorial Hospital, and limited spaces are also available on the opposing end of the soccer field near the Cooper Science building and West Quad.

If an indoor location is desired, Ball State also allows renting of Worthen Arena. However, scheduling conflicts with University sports such as volleyball and basketball must be avoided, so check sports calendars for practice and game times.

Contact: Autumn Duncan
Worthen Arena
(765) 285-1151
adduncan@bsu.edu
Step 3: Generate Funding

After contacting various organizations and locations in regards to renting their facilities and equipment, the ever-present issue of funding now takes precedence in the planning of the event. Regardless of offers for free advertising or volunteers to aid in setup and organization, expenses for rental of land and equipment as well as for refreshments and awards must also be considered. Multiple facilities, restaurants, stores, and community organizations will be willing to make donations or provide considerable price breaks if contacted in a timely manner. In the event that you require extensive funding for a large scale Outdoor Education event, prominent businesses and corporations may be able to endow grant money allotted for educational endeavors or events aimed at improving community life.

Oftentimes, these restaurants, stores, or businesses must be contacted multiple times by telephone or through email to increase your chances of receiving their help. Grant proposals may be required by some businesses, as well as personal interviews and documentation of the event.⁵
Donation Locations

Many materials and supplies are useful in organizing and hosting a successful Outdoor Education event. If large numbers of students are invited to participate, purchasing T-shirts in bold colors might aid in dividing students into groups and eliminate the need for nametags that could fall off and get lost during activities. If sports equipment is needed and no affiliation with local organizations have been established, contacting sporting goods stores, Ball State University, Delaware County Special Olympics, or the YMCA would allow for rental or provide price breaks on purchases.

If students are traveling a considerable distance to attend your Outdoor Education event, or the students will be staying for the duration of the day, refreshments and perhaps meals should be made available. Food provisions can be obtained in one of two ways: local restaurants could possibly donate enough supplies for each student, or bulk purchases of cost-effective foods like hot dogs and pop or water could be made. The cost of these purchases could be alleviated by charging a minimal admission fee to the Outdoor Education event. If admission fees are not an option, local organizations might also consider sponsoring your event in return for free advertisement and publicity. If contacted early on in the planning process, restaurants are also often willing to donate gift certificates that could be given away or raffled as prizes.

Contacts: Equipment Rental or Purchase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ball State University</th>
<th>Muncie YMCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Recreation</td>
<td>(765) 288-4448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(765) 289-1241 (information)</td>
<td>(765) 286-0818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purchasing supplies and equipment, aside from donations, reduced prices, and sponsorships, can still be expensive. Applying for grant money is one possible way of alleviating the cost. Although this possibility requires additional time and effort, including the submission of a written proposal, many large corporations focused on community-enriching activities are good candidates. For example, the Lilly Endowment Foundation, an organization rooted in community that functions to provide funding for individuals and groups who could not otherwise afford endeavors such as attending college, is always willing to accept and consider grant proposals (personal communication, May 14, 2004).\textsuperscript{2}
Step 4: Recruit Volunteers

Any well-organized event requires the help of volunteers. Whether these volunteers are adults or college and high school students, the help they provide is undeniable. Aside from advertising for volunteers in local newspapers or on radio stations, local schools are often on the lookout for potential service projects and are happy to become involved in community events.

It has been my experience that schools should be contacted by mail rather than by phone or email, and letters should be addressed to directors of specific organizations or clubs, such as SADD, MADD, Key Club, and National Honors Society. High school students involved with these organizations are often willing to volunteer hours toward community-building events. Other students may simply wish to volunteer in preparation for college applications; therefore, if a large quantity of volunteers is necessary, specify this in the letters you send. College students, particularly those who are members of service sororities and fraternities, might also wish to become involved. College service organizations in the Muncie area can be contacted by email through the Ball State website.⁶

Depending upon the quantity of volunteers needed, parents might also be a consideration. Many parents would enjoy the opportunity to participate in a fun, outdoor activities day with their child. This opportunity to volunteer would simply need to be posted on all advertisements, fliers, and radio announcements.
Step 5: Maintain City Regulations

Regardless of the site selected, if the location is outdoors, space requisition forms must be completed and filed. These forms may be obtained from the organization from which you are renting. If the site is rented from Ball State University, the correct form may be obtained from the Student Center offices on campus.

In addition to space request forms, specific city regulations must also be met. A noise ordinance form must be completed and filed with the Board of Public Works and Safety. This form may also be obtained from the Student Center offices on campus. Official copies of both forms are included.
ON-CAMPUS SPACE REQUISITION FORM

Date(s) Requested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations Name</th>
<th>Day of Week</th>
<th>Space Requested</th>
<th>am/pm</th>
<th>am/pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Person</td>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>Time Requested</td>
<td>am/pm</td>
<td>am/pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Event (Be specific) Attendance Time of Event

Please indicate below the amount of equipment needed for your event. If any equipment is to be held more than one day, you must store it INDOORS as it cannot be left outside overnight. Indicate below the additional equipment needed. Each classroom is equipped with electricity as well as appropriate seating.

GROUNDS

_____ Trash Containers
_____ Barricades

ELECTRICITY

_____ Power on
_____ Extension cords
_____ Amplivox/PA system
_____ Lecterns

(YOU MUST PICK UP ELECTRICAL/ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT)

ELECTRONICS *

MOVING/BORROWING

_____ 8' Tables
_____ 6' Tables
_____ Card tables
_____ Chairs

_____ 24" Platforms (4' x 8') (23 available)
_____ 16" Platforms (4' x 8') (8 available)
_____ 12" Platforms (4' x 8') (8 available)
_____ 8" Platforms (4' x 8') (8 available)
_____ 6" Platforms (3' x 6') (4 available)

Where do you want this equipment delivered?

* To arrange for video equipment, contact EQUIPMENT AND PROJECTION SERVICES (5-5337).

PLEASE PRINT

Applicants Name

Address

Telephone

Today's date

Email Address

OFFICE USE ONLY:

_____ DENIED

_____ STUDENT NOTIFIED

In person, by telephone,
roommate, answering machine,
organization mail box

Comments:
Authorization Exemption
Ordinance #27-00 Paragraph 2 Sub-Section D
Under the Muncie Noise Regulations

Requested Date: ____________________

Requested By: ____________________________________________
(Business Name, Organization and Individual's Name)

Mailing Address: ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Daytime Phone Number: ________________________________

Evening Phone Number: ________________________________

Address of Event: _________________________________________

Time of Event: ______________ AM/PM Duration time for Event ________ Hours

Reason for Request: _________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Authorized this ______ day of _____________________________, 200__.
Step 6: Inform Participants

The final step in the process of organizing an Outdoor Education event is that of publicity and informing all eligible participants of specific dates, times, and locations. The simplest and quite possibly most effective means of communicating this information with participants is by distributing fliers to local schools, churches, and restaurants, as well as hanging multiple fliers around town and other frequented places of business. If specific schools need to be informed, mailing fliers or informative letters to those schools would also be necessary.

As previously mentioned, the Delaware County Special Olympics is more than willing to provide publicity through their phone line and television Channel 42 in affiliation with the organization. Contacting 104.1 WLBC as well as the Muncie Star Press might also prove fruitful, as they are often willing to promote community events such as Outdoor Education days by way of radio announcement and newspaper advertisement.
Hosting Original Outdoor Education Programs

For all the hard work and planning required to plan and organize an Outdoor Education event, this nontraditional method of education is not strictly limited to large-scale, one-time events. Outdoor Education is a form of education that can be implemented daily within the classroom or school. Multiple methods of implementing small-scale activities have been created and new, innovative ideas are continually surfacing. These small-scale methods are now commonly referred to as Project Adventure, which is a challenge-based curriculum focused on building positive interaction through improvement of problem-solving and cooperative skills.\(^7\)

Project Adventure was initially designed for special education classrooms, yet the benefits of such a program are far-reaching in any setting. The program works on many levels; in it’s most basic form, student learn to build an atmosphere of acceptance rather than rejection, which in turn fosters relationships of trust and willingness to take risks without fear of degradation. A recently-published research article on the topic detailing the benefits of the project states that “Project Adventure is based on the philosophy of adventure-based counseling with the overall goal to improve students’ self-concept” (Forgan, 2002, p. 52). The article also suggested the importance of establishing guidelines that all students must both agree upon and abide by at all times to make the activities successful. Some teachers go so far as to write these guidelines as a written agreement and ask each student to sign the agreement before beginning.

*Five Guiding Principles of Project Adventure*

1. Work as a team member toward the team goals.
2. Keep each other emotionally and physically safe.
3. Give and receive honest feedback (in a kind and nonthreatening manner).
4. Refrain from devaluing anyone, including yourself.
5. Get over “it” (whatever may upset a team member during the activity) (Forgan, 2002, p. 55).

Finally, successful Project Adventure Outdoor Education days can be implemented with the purchase of a few inexpensive items. This list was compiled and published in the aforementioned research article by a teacher who creatively designed activities for his students using a small list of common objects for less than one hundred dollars, some of which may be useful in creating your own Outdoor Education activities (Forgan, 2002, p. 53):

1. foam balls
2. nylon stockings
3. foam noodles
4. old tennis balls
5. bandanas
6. cones
7. ropes

Many individuals have created similar programs within their school systems, or are able to travel with their programs to schools in need of such positive, team-building activities. Becky Dietrich, an elementary P.E. teacher at Grissom Elementary in Muncie annually hosts Outdoor Education days for her students. The event is an exciting way for the students to work together and create a successful day for the entire school.

Cindy Verbarg is yet another individual who travels to various schools across Indiana with her Outdoor Education program. I had the opportunity to observe and participate in one such day hosted at Amy Beverland Elementary School in Indianapolis. Ms. Verbarg was more than willing to share paperwork detailing ideas, activities, and planning strategies. She also allowed me an inside look at the school-wide activity day; I was able to lend a helping hand by managing the Diving activity for the day!
When organizing an Outdoor Education event, Ms. Verbarg provided materials suggesting activities (including brief explanations) that require inexpensive equipment but are extremely enjoyable for students: 8

✓ **Cycling** – two students stand between a pair of tables and face one another. At the signal, both students will push themselves up between the tables until their legs are dangling in the air. They will begin cycling their legs as if pedaling a bicycle. The challenge is to “cycle” the longest!

✓ **Hula Hoop/Jump Rope Marathon** – students jump rope or hula hoop as many times as they can!

✓ **Baseball** – students are divided into four groups, and each group is matched with a baseball bat placed twenty to thirty feet away. At the signal, one member of each group runs to pick up their group’s bat, places their forehead on the bat handle, and spins around the bat one time. The student then runs back to the group and tags the next student.

✓ **Soccer** – six students don belly bumpers, three red and three blue, and play a game of soccer! The object of the game is to score a goal.

✓ **Volleyball** – students are divided into two groups, and each group receives two bails attached to parachutes. The object of the game is to volley the ball back and forth between teammates as many times as possible within thirty to sixty seconds. This takes teamwork!

✓ **Diving** – students sit in chairs around a small wading pool and remove socks and shoes from one foot. Each student places the bare foot into the pool, and at the signal, tries to find and pick up marbles in the water using only their toes.

Please note that not all activities require any form of athletic ability; many are simply to increase cooperative skills or boost self-confidence in students who excel in other areas, such as picking up marbles with their feet!

Ms. Verbarg also provided a list of indoor activities for students should the weather be uncooperative or simply too cold to set up outside. Some of these activities include:

✓ Belly Bumpers
✓ Roller Racers
✓ Ring Toss
✓ Fill the Buckets
✓ Hang Up Clothes
✓ Waiter Relay
✓ Stepping Stones
✓ Noodle Throw
✓ Bubbles and Sidewalk Chalk
✓ Parachute
✓ Potato Sack
✓ Balloons

These activities work well for any age group or grade level, although slight modifications may be necessary. The bottom line is building a positive, supportive atmosphere with students. As experienced firsthand by several teachers implementing Project Adventure, “the experiential social skills activities help develop an atmosphere of acceptance, where students are willing to take risks, share, discuss, and problem-solve together” (Forgan, 2002, p. 52).
The growth of education depends upon constant reflection and attention to the changing academic and nonacademic needs of students. Students face a myriad of difficulties originating both from home and school atmospheres, all of which are reflected in classroom behavior and performance, and educators are continuously expected to provide support for each child's social and emotional growth. In addition, educators are expected to adhere to Academic Standards and ensure that each student in each classroom meets specific academic criteria determined through standardized testing. To cope with the ever-changing needs of students as well as the demands of the state and nation, countless new, innovative methods and techniques are attempted by educators to provide the best possible education for their students. The Outdoor Education program was designed to function in a similar manner: it is a positive approach to overcoming everyday challenges faced in the classroom.  

The first issue confronted by Outdoor Education is student responsibility and self-concept. It has been my experience that many elementary students, regardless of school atmosphere, have difficulty assuming responsibility for their actions, words, and even homework! They have the incredible tendency to rely upon reminders and direction from teachers and parents instead of using problem-solving skills and making proactive decisions. Students of this age group also have a particularly difficult time identifying one another's strengths rather than their weaknesses, resulting in a lack of courage, strength of character, and ultimately low self-concept among students.
A recent research article (Gass and Priest, 19) detailed the results of Outdoor Education on recovering alcoholic adults as researched in a 1987 study by S.B. Bacon. The program was designed to teach self-reliance; the participants were provided with all the necessary experiences, support, and tools needed to be successful and were then challenged (initially within the confines of the Outdoor Education program) to assume the responsibility and rely upon themselves to make positive decisions (Gass and Priest, 18). An excerpt from this article provides an inside look at a strategy used to move the adult participants in the program toward self-reliance and in turn increase their courage and strength in making good decisions in the future:

"At some point on this ropes course we expect that you'll feel some degree of challenge, risk and maybe even fear... When we see that you are in the midst of a serious challenge, we're going to do another strange thing. I know you are all used to depending on staff for support for your sobriety and you have probably also gotten used to the idea that the...instructors are on your side... Out there in the real world, you're going to be tempted and when that happens, you're going to be all alone... Just when it gets real hard on the ropes course and you're really tempted to quit, we—that is, the instructors—are going to try and talk you into quitting. That's right, instead of offering support or help we're going to try and get you to come down... What I'm saying is, you can't trust us on this one. Or maybe I'm saying that you need to trust your own ability to know what's right and do it no matter what others tell you..." (Gass and Priest, n.d., p. 19).

Clearly the participants in this activity were given a choice: rely upon themselves and believe they were strong enough to succeed, or give up. The decision also resulted in the
participants taking responsibility for their actions; the choice was theirs to make, therefore all responsibility fell to them as well.\textsuperscript{11}

This strategy, although on a slightly smaller scale, is implemented with elementary students participating in Outdoor Education and Project Adventure. The challenges and activities, known as initiatives, stress responsibility for words and actions as well as boost self-confidence and courage to take risks in order to succeed. For example, elementary students facing the ropes course might be afraid to finish the course, just as the instructor informed the recovering alcoholics they might be. Yet through careful and thorough explanation and modeling by the teacher, students realize that the choice is theirs to make and are free to weigh the consequences and then assume responsibility for their choice.

This process of weighing consequences and assuming responsibility clearly has application to all areas of life. Students are faced with many types of decisions every day, from the moment they wake up in the morning to the moment they fall asleep at night. They have the power to decide to have a positive attitude; to decide to be encouraging rather than discouraging; to lie about incomplete homework assignments or tell the truth; the opportunities to make positive decisions each day are endless, and these Outdoor Education activities not only help adults recover from harmful temptations such as alcohol abuse, but also help young children learn and discover ways to proactively become courageous, responsible people.

A second prominent issue faced by many young children is that of moral development. This is not a recent concept by any means: Lawrence Kohlberg, infamously among educators for his research and theories on morality among children, determined that children raised in an environment in which empathy and support are encouraged and
modeled are more likely to develop good moral judgment. This morality is not quickly attained, however. According to Kohlberg, children must pass through six consecutive stages of moral development before attaining Universal Ethical Principles, or the highest form of moral development ("Kohlberg," 2000).

All children begin in Stage 1, known as Punishment and Obedience, a stage in which behavior of a child is determined by the presence or occurrence of physical punishment. If children are raised in the aforementioned supportive environment, Kohlberg observed that they will move progressively through each of the next five stages and eventually come to inherently understand the different between right and wrong ("Kohlberg," 2000); that every human being is considered equal under any circumstance, therefore no rules or regulations need be imposed on this person to ensure that he or she treats other people and property with deserved respect.

Kohlberg’s conclusions have been verified in multiple cross-cultural studies and are the basis of the 2001 research article “Thoughts on Moral Development and the Adventure Field” (Prouty, 10). The article introduces the idea of Characier Education, a program quite similar to the basic concepts of Project Adventure and Outdoor Education:

Character education is in the limelight right now...[due to] a growing increase in awareness of such long standing "traditions" as playground bullying...as well as the high profile incidents of gun violence in schools...[This] increased awareness of the need for character education and moral development is a good opportunity for all of us Adventure practitioners and supporters. It is a time to make it known that good Adventure programs, by their very structure, powerfully and ably address the ancient issue of how to develop the morality of youth (Prouty, 2001, p. 10).
The article continues to outline specific ways in which this nontraditional program incorporates outdoor activities and challenges with character-building experiences. For example, students participating on ropes courses or other team challenges learn to use dialog as a means of expressing their emotions and generating empathy towards others.\(^{12}\) Group members work together to form a tight community through trust initiatives, or activities in which individuals must trust the group for support (Prouty, 11). Surprisingly, these initiatives work extremely well and are highly effective if the connection between activity and the real world are clearly and succinctly communicated by the teacher.

Statistics collected on school violence and bullying in elementary, middle, and high school pose yet another threat to student learning. According to a 2001 study of school bullying in grades six through twelve, nearly fifteen percent of students in the sixth grade reported incidents of bullying ("U.S. Department of Justice," 2003). Although this may not seem an overwhelming percentage, in a typical classroom of twenty-five students, bullying would directly affect three to four of those students. It has been my experience that in some classrooms, this number is much higher. Coping daily with this type of atmosphere could severely impact students’ ability to learn.

Katie Kilty, a senior trainer for Project Adventure, believes that Outdoor Education could be used to combat this culture of violence.\(^{13}\) In a 2001 article, Kilty writes of the nature of many students’ lives and the challenges they face: "Violence has become a familiar part of young people’s lives. Across the country, they are increasingly exposed to violence through various forms of media and entertainment. Violence is also experienced in the home. The exposure in all arenas is both gratuitous and presented as a
means of conflict resolution” (p. 13). To illustrate the efficacy of the Outdoor Education program, Kilty also described her observations of students from an urban alternative school participating in the program. These students had just experienced the death of a classmate that was allegedly gang related. The students in the school, some who had previously been great friends, were clearly divided and harbored strong feelings of hatred toward one another, so much so that many could not stand to be in the same classroom with one another, let alone cooperatively participate in Outdoor Education activities:

We didn’t know what to expect when we pulled out the jump rope to play Turnstile. We were prepared for grumbling, maybe worse, but we just started turning the rope and something magical happened. The students, both male and female jumped in one after another. Once they started, they did not want to stop...These students, surrounded by uncertainty, violence and fear, perpetually in survival mode, were embracing the opportunity to play...The influence of their existing environment was strong, however, and the moments of levity were brief. Too quickly the self-doubt and stress of their lives returned. It seemed too risky to stay with feeling good and letting go. It was easier to revert back to the safety zone of acting tough, being cool, lashing out before getting hurt. For those in survival mode, play can feel vulnerable and frightening and temporary (Kilty, 2001, p. 13).

Utilization of Outdoor Education, however, provides a means for students of any age dealing with an array of violent experiences to learn to develop empathy and understanding toward one another, as well as provides a healthy outlet for feelings of anxiousness, insecurity, and even anger or frustration. Students involved in Outdoor
Education activities learn to listen rather than assume and work together rather than separate into opposing groups.

Also discussed in Kilty's article was yet another purpose for implementation of this program: the importance of physical activity (Kilty, 15). All too often free time such as recess or short breaks during the school day are limited or eliminated entirely, and students who depend on these breaks to release energy and manage stress are forced to channel their emotions within the classroom. This sometimes results in violent outbursts, emotional "meltdowns," or on the most basic level, an inability to sit still and focus on lessons and classroom activities. Other students need to be active and physically engaged during the school day because of weight issues, or simply because they are quite sedentary at home and do not engage in sufficient physical activity during the day. I believe educators often overlook this need for students to enjoy time spent outdoors when it can clearly be a highly influential and productive outlet.

Many of these issues affect a small number of students, or a select few classrooms and schools. Consider the schools which boast academic excellence and calm, supportive learning environments—what is the purpose of implementing the Outdoor Education program with these students? The final issue facing all students, regardless of school atmosphere, socioeconomic background, or academic status, is the impact of students' emotional state on learning (Elias, 29). Every educator or parent has experienced the effects of a child's emotions on his or her ability to focus and be productive learners. Any situation, ranging from a fight with a friend to a low spelling grade to a reprimand from a teacher can cause children to feel disappointment, anger, frustration, or sadness. Many adults have a difficult time coping with these feelings and performing daily work responsibilities; imagine the struggle a child faces!
I have observed emotional changes in countless students where behavior, words, and body language change within seconds due to a negative situation or occurrence, and they are unable to focus on anything but their situation. Some students lash out at their peers, while others shut down entirely, unable to function unless given ample time to regroup:

Our children are not academic machines; they are social and emotional creatures, just like their parents and teachers. When they are hungry, hurting, heavy-hearted, or humorless, they are not going to learn well, retain a lot of what is taught to them, or put what they learn to good and productive use. We need to rethink the way in which we approach standards in education (Elias, 2002, p. 29).\textsuperscript{14}

Each of these issues facing students and educators in classrooms across the country are undeniable and in need of remedy. Among the variety of methods various educators may choose to combat such issues as low self-concept, school violence and bullying, or lack of physical exercise, Outdoor Education does represent only one technique. Yet the positive influence on students in every classroom seems endless when the program is implemented with extensive time, effort, and consideration of student needs.
School Bullying

Bullying is one form of violence that seems to have increased in recent years, although it is not clear if the increase reflects more incidents of bullying at school or perhaps greater awareness of bullying as a problem.


Rates of Bullying and other School Discipline Problems
Drawbacks

The benefits and positive aspects of Outdoor Education are many and varied. Clearly the possibility of increasing students' social, emotional, and academic learning is attainable through utilization of this method. In relation to my experiences in the classroom, as well as through conclusions published in aforementioned research articles, Outdoor Education can be a highly effective means of presenting and teaching social skills and behaviors as well as adhering to Academic Standards. Yet it is equally as clear that multiple drawbacks exist. As outlined by professors of Outdoor Education Priest and Gass,

Clients in outdoor programs often fail to grasp the connection between what they learn from adventure experiences and how these may help them in the future. Some ask, ‘what has this got to do with real life?’ and many are unable to apply or transfer their new found learnings back to their work, home, or school (n.d., p. 18).¹⁵

Numerous factors must fall into place and work as planned in order for the program to succeed to its greatest potential.

Educators realize that any typical school day is actually anything but. School convocations, field trips, daily specials like Music, P.E., and Art classes, individual students’ doctors appointments, or the overall tone and mood of the day can derail even the most carefully laid plans. In a profession where flexibility is essential, adding yet another event to the daily agenda can pose quite a problem. In order to thoroughly explain activities, initiatives, and overall goals to students as well as debrief students
afterward to clarify the connection between these goals and their lives, time previously allotted for lessons and other classroom activities must be given to Outdoor Education. By the same token, if students are unable to recognize the parallels between the Outdoor Education activities and the real world, regardless of time spent explaining and debriefing before and after, students' transfer of knowledge could be severely restricted or nonexistent. A lack of transfer defeats the entire purpose of the Outdoor Education program (Gass and Priest, 23).

Compounding these two problems of finding time to implement Outdoor Education and ensuring transfer is the issue of long-term versus short-term effects of the program. Time spent working with this program will vary depending upon the school and individual classroom need; however, teachers must work to guarantee that the amount of time spent is always sufficient enough to ensure long-term rather than short-term changes in student thinking and behavior. Without an adequate time frame, "this approach can be destructive and the changes short lived" (Gass and Priest, n.d., p. 22). In essence, students must learn to make the connection between the activities and their daily lives well enough to continue this transfer and application of teamwork, cooperation, and positive thinking for years to come. This may result in a need for the school system to implement the program at every grade level and not just with one or two classes. When students are repeatedly exposed to the Outdoor Education mindset, they are more apt to learn the values stressed there. However, if repeated participation is not a realistic goal and Outdoor Education is introduced only briefly, students are likely to change or modify their behavior for only the duration of their participation, rather than exhibit long-term changes in behavior.
The final two drawbacks of the Outdoor Education program are contingent upon the teacher, or facilitator. First and foremost, the facilitator must possess a deep understanding of the purpose and process of Outdoor Education in order to successfully implement it. This seems a rather obvious and trivial point, yet the understanding must be in place to ensure the facilitator is capable of communicating all directions, goals, and connections effectively. If students are uncertain about any combination of these three aspects, the material may be confusing and therefore obsolete and pointless (Gass and Priest, 23). Consequently, not only are time constraints placed on the school day when attempting this program, but additional demands for time are placed on the facilitator. Aside from the daily planning, organizing of resources, and grading of projects and papers, teachers must also find time to plan Outdoor Education strategies that best fit the needs of his or her particular students.

Finally, the facilitator must be fully aware of all students’ backgrounds and experiences in order to effectively connect the activities to students’ prior knowledge and promote transfer. Many students are forced to cope with problems at home which teachers may know very little about; instead of assuming the details of a situation, it is imperative that teachers take the time to look more deeply into the issue and do “much more than merely placing labels or images from the [students’] environment on to adventure activities” (Gass and Priest, n.d., p. 23).
Student Benefits
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It is my firm belief that all students may benefit from Outdoor Education days, nontraditional activities in which their participation requires strength of body and mind to the best of each child's ability. The concept of personal best plays an ever-increasing role in this scenario: students who are not athletically inclined may shine in other areas such as maintaining positive attitudes and morale, encouraging classmates, organizing activities, running stations, or simply giving each activity their best effort, regardless of the outcome.

Many students are actually surprised to find they enjoy working with classmates who are positive and encouraging rather than athletic and uncooperative. By the same token, those students who are athletically inclined and often participate in multiple sports and activities may benefit from participating in activities that demand teamwork and encouragement to be successful. Simple initiative activities such as passing a looped band around a circle of classmates without breaking the chain are great ways to allow the talented athletes to exhibit their knowledge of the human body and its capabilities while working not as individuals, but as part of a larger whole.

All athletic abilities aside, Outdoor Education benefits students of all walks of life. Students are individuals, each bringing their own specific talents as well as problems into the classroom each day. Some students bring learning disabilities to the table; others struggle through emotional handicaps, or disorders such as ADD or ADHD. Still others must discover ways to maneuver through the school day due to physical disabilities, ranging from vision or hearing problems to use of a wheelchair or crutches. Outdoor
Education is an inspiring way to allow each child to participate in team-building, cooperative activities without feeling hindered by or focused on their individual challenges or disabilities.

Outdoor Education is not a dismissal of these disabilities, but a method of overcoming them and illustrating to students that they are in fact more similar than different, a concept many elementary students have difficulty grasping. Most, if not all, of the challenge ropes courses presented at the Adventure Environmental Learning Center, Camp Crosley YMCA, and the endless list of other ropes course sites provide modifications to the courses for students with any type of disability, and each of the initiatives presented are also feasible for every student. Outdoor Education works more as a tool for leveling the playing field, which is most certainly the ultimate goal of any educator: to instruct students in a way that is beneficial to each student in the classroom.
Notes

1 This list was provided by Mr. James Leslie of Adventure Environmental Learning Center.

2 Instances of personal communication were established via email or telephone conversation.

3 This facility also provides schools with a newly-renovated Science Investigation program in which students are given the opportunity to utilize equipment such as nets, rain gauges, thermometers, barometers, and microscopes to collect and investigate the various plant and marine life growing at the camp. Students are also provided with multiple handbooks to plant life in the area to help them better identify and classify their samples.

4 Following one semester teaching in a Burris classroom, I accompanied the Burris 4th and 5th grade students to Camp Crosley YMCA and acted as a camp counselor to a group of ten 4th grade girls during their week-long Outdoor Education experience.

5 Format guidelines of grant proposals should be obtained from specific organizations. These organizations may also require visual documentation of the event. Lilly Endowment Fund requires submission of a highly specific outline of the event prior to submitting an official proposal document.

6 All information regarding or pertaining to Ball State University may be obtained via the Ball State University home page: http://www.bsu.edu.

7 Additional information on Project Adventure may be obtained from the article “How Experiential Adventure Activities Can Improve Students’ Social Skills (Forgan & Jones, 2002). James W. Forgan is an assistant professor of Special Education at Florida Atlantic University. Christopher D. Jones is an elementary teacher of students with varying exceptionalities at Pinewood Elementary School in Stuart, Florida.

8 The materials provided by Ms. Verbarg were fairly extensive and are not fully detailed in this list. The activities included were selected as a mere sample of Ms. Verbarg’s activities. The complete list contains eighteen activities that can be modified for various grade levels and locations.

9 Each of the Outdoor Education Challenge Course sites detailed under Step 2, with the exception of Hillcroft Services, Inc. and the Ball State University locations, also provide documented correlation of their activities and initiatives to multiple Indiana Academic Standards.

10 This reference to personal experience regards my sixteen-week student teaching experience in a 4th grade classroom at Wes-Del Elementary in Gaston, Indiana.
11 Additional information regarding this study and its participants (Gass & Priest) may
be obtained from their article “Using Metaphors and Isomorphs to Transfer Learning in
Adventure Education.”

12 The concept of Character Education (Prouty, 2001) is closely related to the study of
Emotional Intelligence, an area which child psychology recently began investigating
more closely as an influential developmental factor.

13 Katie Kilty is a specialist in Sports Psychology and Performance Enhancement for
Project Adventure. She developed the Adventures in Wellness and Sport Psychology,
Performance Enhancement, and Adventure models for Project Adventure.

14 Maurice J. Elias is a professor at Rutgers University and a respected author on the
emotional health of children. Further information regarding the impact of the emotional
state on learning may be obtained from Elias’ book (2002) “Raising Emotionally
Intelligent Teenagers: Preparing Children to Become Compassionate, Committed, and
Courageous Adults.”

15 Michael Gass is chair of the Department of Kinesiology and coordinator of the
Outdoor Education program at the University of New Hampshire. Simon Priest is the
coordinator of Outdoor Adventure classes at Brock University in Ontario, Canada.
References


