

Institution: Buckinghamshire New University
Unit of Assessment: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
Title of case study: Outdoor pedagogy and practice: Non-Formal education and outdoor education
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Since the late 1990s, research has been undertaken into the theoretical and practical implications of nature-based physical activities and outdoor education. The research, which consisted of phenomenologically-informed case studies, has linked informal, non-formal and formal outdoor learning to consolidate understanding of the social, personal and environmental impacts. The impact has been significant in providing theoretical and practical foundations to inform practitioner work in youth based non-formal outdoor education in European countries. This has been achieved through the establishment of companies and a centre promoting outdoor education, and the production of practical Handbooks available to download.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Work on the under-researched area of outdoor education began in the mid-1990s. Professor Humberstone and colleagues' research concentrated on outdoor education, teacher and pupil interaction and issues of diversity (in particular gender). Humberstone focused on developing theory-based practice in outdoor education, working towards developing the emerging field of outdoor learning, and linking the theories of outdoor learning and nature-based sport.</p> <p>Building on these foundations, research, directed by Professor Barbara Humberstone, has developed through a related series of projects and publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an EU funded project 'Non formal Education through Outdoor Activities' (NFE), 2004-2006, project-managed by Dr Dorin Festeu, Senior Lecturer (2000 onwards), the overall aim of which was to research the needs and create a European network of training centres to disseminate excellent practice in outdoor adventure education and experiential learning • the 'Breaking Barriers' project (2009-2010) initiated through the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning which focused on the rehabilitation and integration of disabled young people through the creation of an informal network of organisations devoted to non-formal education and outdoor activities for young people with disabilities; • the 'Well-being and Outdoor Pedagogies' project which examined outdoor learning and its implications for young people's well-being. This project was supported through the appointment of a research assistant, Dr Ina Stan (2009-2010) supported by Institutional investment. <p>The research insights arising from this work concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive impact on the personal and social development of young people of all abilities from learning through outdoor activities • How the over-emphasis on safety and risk avoidance rather than on the natural environment and learning disrupts children's engagement with nature and limits outdoor experience. • How the over emphasis on obesity and healthy eating can have negative effects on pupils

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and that parents' and carers' voices should be heard.

- The importance of the form of teachers'/ facilitators' interaction with children and young people in providing for democratic shared positive learning.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Humberstone, B, (1998) Re-creation and Connections in and with Nature: Synthesizing Ecological and Feminist Discourses and Praxis? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 33 (4), 381-392.

Humberstone, B. and Stan, I. (2012) Nature in Outdoor Learning-Authenticity or performativity Well-being, nature and Outdoor Pedagogies project. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* 12(3):(183-198)

Humberstone, B (2011) Embodiment and social and environmental action in nature-based sport: Spiritual Spaces, Special Issue- Leisure and the politics of the environment *Leisure Studies* 30 (4) 495-512.

Stan, I. and Humberstone, B. (2011) An Ethnography of the Outdoor Classroom – How Teachers Manage Risk in the Outdoors, *Education and Ethnography* 6 (2): 213–228.

Humberstone, B. and Stan, I. (2012) Outdoor Learning: Pupils' experiences and teachers' interaction in one outdoor residential centre, *Education 3-13, International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*. 39, (5): 529-540.

Humberstone, B. and Stan, I. (2011) Health, (Body) Image and Primary Schooling Or 'Why do they have to be a certain weight'? *Sport, Education and Society* 16(4): 431-449.

The quality of these outputs is evidenced by the peer-review process undertaken by the journals in which the articles are published.

4. Details of the impact

Humberstone has focused on developing theory-based practice in outdoor education, linking the educational theoretical dimensions of outdoor learning with nature-based sport.

The NFE project provided the impetus and theoretical underpinning that drew together practitioners and academics to create a Non-Formal Educational Framework (NFEF) which constitutes the main element of a European Training Centre of Excellence within the European Institute of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE). The NFE collaboration included 18 partners from 12 European countries, mostly practitioners, and attracted 250,000 Euros from EC funding. Dialogue and research into needs and good practice was undertaken by partners overseen by Humberstone and Festeu and outputs from the project included a set of resources aimed at enhancing professional practice and influencing professional standards. These constitute a Handbook and guidelines 'Non-formal education through Outdoor Education in Europe', achieved through direct work with 50 people and the collaborative contribution of over 250 people (Source 1). These resources have been distributed at Practitioner conferences, via the EOE website and since 2012 have also been downloadable via academia.edu. (Number of views 1013). The

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Handbooks are aimed at providers and practitioners of outdoor learning for youth work. The Handbook is used in all the countries of the partner practitioners.

As a result of the NFE project, 14 small companies have been established in the outdoor education sector in the Brasov region of Transylvania. It has been estimated that each company has, on average, approximately 400 customers using these outdoor education services, meaning that the overall customer base exceeds 5500 people. The social impact of the services provided by these outdoor education companies is illustrated by the rapid expansion of children being actively engaged in outdoor activities with the parents.

In Hungary, the NFE project has led to the establishment of a Training Centre by the Human Reform Foundation in Chirui Bai, currently providing training for approximately 25 people each year. The majority of these people have established their own businesses in outdoor education or they use outdoor education in schools where they teach. Moreover, the Foundation, using the NFE methodology, is reaching approximately 200 people per year, where volunteers are trained in the maintenance of the region's natural habitat.

Following on from the NFE project, Professor Humberstone was invited to supervise the Breaking Barriers project, a European network of institutions using outdoor adventure education and experiential learning to support young people with different disabilities and to establish good practice for exchange between youngsters and social workers in this field. A Handbook of Good Practice on 'Non formal education through outdoor activities for disabled people' resulting from this project has been widely distributed and is freely available through the EOE website (*Source 2*). The two Handbooks have had 2894 views since 2011.

The academic research has also been disseminated to practitioner groups via:

- Conferences and workshops European youth workers and practitioners in social work, teachers and providers (annual EOE conferences <http://www.eoe-network.eu/conferences/> (from 2000 in Sweden, Germany, Poland, England Wales, Slovenia, Finland, Iceland (2014)
- NFE workshops (2004-2006) UK and Romania Stan, I. (2005) The Non-Formal Education through Outdoor Activities Project. *Variety 2*. Pp. 16-17. (international nature friend) <http://www.iynf.org/>
- Workshops e.g. Institute for Outdoor learning (UK) (biannual conferences)
- Practitioner journals e.g. Horizons-UK, Festeu & Humberstone (2005) Working together in Europe Non-formal Education and Outdoor Education in Horizons 31 p.16-18.
- European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) activities (Prof Humberstone was Chair of the EOE 2004 – 2008). The EOE is a European network of professionals, from social and youth workers, teachers and educators, academics and students.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Non- formal Education through Outdoor Activities Guide – <http://www.eoe-network.eu/publications/publications/>

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2. Non –formal Education through Outdoor Activities for Disabled People Guide (Breaking Barriers)
http://www.eoe-network.eu/fileadmin/PDFs/Handbook%20of%20Good%20Practices%20_Breaking%20Barriers%20Project.pdf
3. Contacts re Centres, EOE, Polish centre Fradja <http://www.frajda.com.pl/>