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**Creating a Context-Adapted Evaluation Tool for the Outdoor Leadership Development
Series of the Outdoor Program at the University of Wyoming**

By

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B.A., Colgate University, 2011

Plan B Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters in Science in Natural Science – Natural Science Education
in the Science and Mathematics Teaching Center of the
University of Wyoming, 2017

Laramie, Wyoming

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Abstract

I created a literature based, context-adapted evaluation tool at the University of Wyoming for the Outdoor Leadership Development Series (OLDS) of the Outdoor Program (UWOP). I developed this summative survey to assess the outcome of the OLDS program's learning objectives, filling a need for programmatic evaluation and assessment. The survey anonymously evaluates participant attitudes and skills regarding community and relationship building, technical skills development, exposure to the natural environment, leadership, and general programmatic assessment. I worked closely with the UWOP to build and pilot a user-friendly evaluation specific to their needs that will be implemented by UWOP staff in the future.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my chair, Ana for her endless patience and determination to help me finish this project. Through topic changes, health challenges, and the difficulties of working together at a distance, I have never felt unsupported or as though I would not finish. I would also like to thank Dan for his enthusiasm in helping me with project, always making time for my questions, and being genuinely interested in my work. I hope it will be a helpful tool for the OLDS program. Thank you, Doug for multiple brainstorming sessions and willingness to dive in when I did not have a clear direction for this paper. Thank you, Myron for your thoughtful insights regarding this project and readiness to work with me this past year. Thank you Kate for making the time to be on my committee and providing helpful input and feedback at our committee meeting, I really appreciate it.

Thank you to my family who has provided me with unwavering support and help throughout this project. I could not have done this without you. Thank you to my friends for their editing, reviewing, and many discussions revolving around this work, I appreciate each of you. Finally, thank you to the many doctors of all kinds that have gotten my head and my health back to a place where completing this project has become a reality, you are miracle workers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Taping your hands to protect them from the inevitable carnage of Vedauwoo, listening to the methodical crunch of snowshoes under the moonlight, reveling in the warmth of a cup of coffee brewed in the backcountry: these are a few of the experiences that participants may experience on trips with the University of Wyoming (UW) Outdoor Program. Loosely formed in 1995, the UW Outdoor Program (UWOP) has brought experiential outdoor education to the students, faculty, and greater community of Laramie for over two decades. Built on the guiding philosophy of “embracing experiential learning involving students, providing opportunities for personal growth and educating participants through outdoor adventure,” the Outdoor Program offers “clinics and outings [that] may involve risk, both real and perceived that provide participants with a sense of challenge and accomplishment that allow them to grow” (UWOP, 2017).

Purpose

I sought to create a research-based, context-adapted evaluation tool for the Outdoor Leadership Development Series (OLDS) at the University of Wyoming. This project created and piloted a summative survey, with the larger question of analyzing the data and evaluating the program left to further researchers and/or the UWOP staff.

Outdoor Leadership Development Series

In addition to facilitating outdoor experiences for students, faculty, and community members, the UWOP is also home to the OLDS program. This free program is available to all UW students and focuses on creating “effective beginner outdoor leader[s] and educator[s]” (UWOP, 2017). After an academic year of meeting monthly, shadowing and assisting Outdoor

Program trips, completing medical training, and planning and participating in small group backpacking trips; students are positioned to seamlessly enter the outdoor professional world. With learning objectives centered on building both technical and leadership skills, creating community, and learning about the natural environment, the OLDS program also enables students to transfer skills honed through the program to other professions.

The OLDS program utilizes both experiential education and outdoor adventure education as the foundational teaching pedagogies for its programs. Originally pioneered by John Dewey, experiential education is based on the philosophy that students learn best through relevant experience (Dewey, 1938). Dewey's seminal work, *Experience and Education* (1938), discussed the necessity of valuable experiences for students throughout their education. To quantify these experiences, he stated that experiences ought to contribute to physical, intellectual, and moral growth as well as facilitate some sort of interaction (Dewey, 1938). Arguing that these hands-on experiences ought to be the foundation for learning, Dewey's ideal has become the basis of today's experiential education.

Experiential learning has become increasingly widespread in education, and is especially prevalent in outdoor education today. The Association of Experiential Education (AEE, 2015) defined outdoor education as "a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities" (p. 1). With a description of experiential education built into this definition of outdoor education, the linkage between the two overlapping pedagogies is evident.

Building on the belief that experience-based learning is an effective teaching strategy, adventure education focuses on using outdoor challenges to strengthen students and expand their

abilities. Regarded as the driving force behind “the Outward Bound Movement” (Van Oord, 2010, p. 253), Kurt Hahn pioneered outdoor adventure education in the early 1940’s. Hahn believed that a combination of fitness, expeditions, projects and ‘Samaritan service’ was the key to combating the “declines of modern youth” (Hahn, 1965), and founded the original Outward Bound (OB) School in Aberdovey, UK to fight against the restrictive, ineffective nature of modern education. These ideas of adventure and challenge based education set in the outdoors have endured for the past seventy years, as OB remains one of the preeminent schools for outdoor adventure education today (OB, 2017).

Though Hahn stressed the necessity of students retaining their experiences and learning at OB after leaving the program, the importance of evaluation and reflection within experiential and adventure based education was emphasized in recent years. A study of the long-term impacts of outdoor education found “effective, multifaceted evaluation” vital to the continuing success of outdoor education programs both individually and as a whole (Bogner, 1998, p. 28). Similarly, a study of Japanese fourth graders concluded that outdoor education must include not only the physical experience itself, but also examine participants’ interpretation and perception of it (Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013).

The value of participants’ own evaluation of their experience can be further expanded to evaluation of organizations as a whole. When observing organizations, evaluations that engender the most use and eliminate uncertainty are the most powerful (Patton, 2004). Referred to as utilization-focused evaluations, these are created in cooperation with the organization to effectively address a specific need (Alkin & Taut, 2003; Patton, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The field of Outdoor Education is currently individualized and hyper-segregated, making a generalized understanding of the goals and mission of the field challenging to find (Robbins, 2015). Without a unified set of principles, it is difficult to create an all-encompassing evaluation; therefore, an individualized, utilization-focused evaluation tool is needed to analyze and aid the effectiveness of the OLDS program (Alkin, 2004; Patton, 2004).

Additionally, programmatic evaluation is not a priority in university level outdoor programs (Attarian, 2001). The significant effort invested in participants in more extensive outdoor leadership programs such as OLDS calls for an effective, reliable evaluation tool to quantitatively assess the impact of the program on its participants.

Research Questions

The goal of this Master's project was to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the literature inform the creation of an effective evaluation tool for the OLDS program?
2. What is the most useful evaluation tool for assessing the participant outcomes of the OLDS program's learning objectives?

Significance

Creating a program-specific evaluation for the OLDS program benefits both the organization and its participants. An evaluative tool based on prior research and built to fulfill the needs of the UWOP will quantify learning objectives and track participant outcomes. A structured evaluation will also clarify programmatic goals for the OLDS program and build a consistent data set for future analysis. The initial survey can be used as a foundation to build from, adjusting or adding to it as best suits the needs of the OLDS program.

In conjunction with benefits to the program, an effective evaluation tool will also benefit the OLDS participants. Conscious reflection is a vital portion of the learning experience (Kolb, 1984; Lewis, 2012). As stated by Greg Ley (2015) in his study of outdoor leaders, “challenge, reflection, and opportunity” (p. 32) taken together are key to the growth and development of leadership. As students develop their leadership capabilities throughout the year, a final reflection of their process and transformation will help cement their learning and process larger concepts from their experience (Lewis, 2012).

Challenge and opportunity for growth are intrinsically built in to most outdoor adventure programs (NOLS, 2017; OB, 2017), with reflection being the aspect most easily overlooked. The value of reflection is emphasized in Lewis’ project, which discussed how to most effectively generalize and transfer students’ learning to other environments. She wrote, “Without methods to internalize, understand, and transfer learning, the efficacy of experiential education programs is threatened” (Lewis, 2012, p. 8). Building an evaluation that creates reflection opportunities for both students and leaders, will help solidify the experience and learning of all involved with the OLDS program.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Educational Theory

To understand the OLDS program, it is vital to recognize its foundational educational theories. Depending on the theories that they are based, similar outdoor programs can have very different values and learning outcomes for their students. In discussion with the Director of the UWOP, Dan McCoy, he stated that the OLDS program was built on a combination of experiential education, outdoor education, and adventure education (personal communication, D. McCoy, 2016). Here, experiential education is the broadest reaching theory, followed by outdoor education, with adventure education being the narrowest (Figure 1). Understanding the theoretical framework and foundational ideas of each educational theory clarifies the context and larger body of research upon which the OLDS program was created.

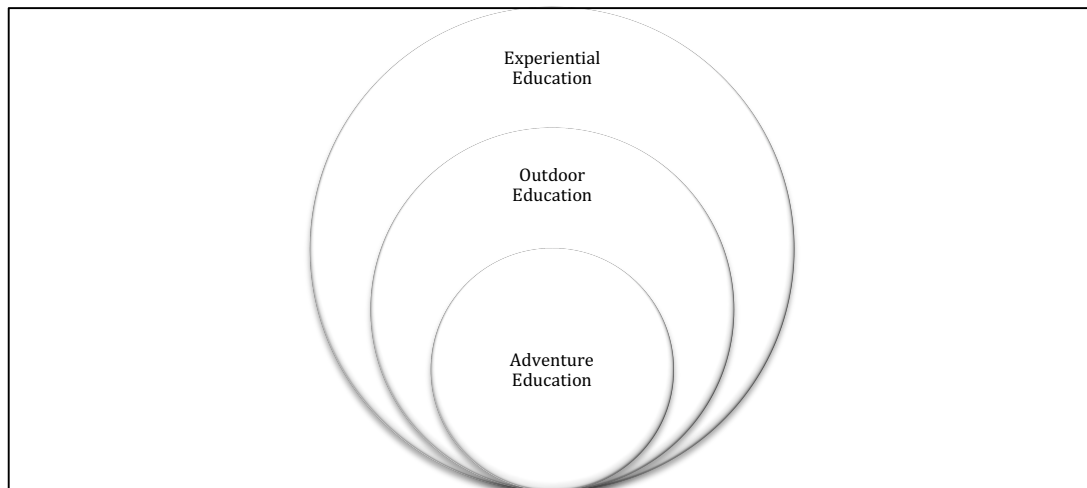


Figure 1. Scale of the OLDS program educational theories.

While I recognize that this is not a comprehensive interpretation of the theories, for understanding the OLDS program specifically, this hierarchal model is an effective way to frame its educational framework.

Experiential education. Experiential education is based on the idea of learning by doing (Kolb & Fry, 1975). Roughly defined as “hands-on learning” (Robbins, 2015, p. 9), experiential education was further delineated in recent years to include education that is “authentic, student centered, hands-on, and situated in relevant learning contexts” (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Yates, Wilson & Purton, 2015, p. 1). John Dewey first outlined and emphasized the importance of tying experience and reflection together with learning. Dewey’s work pioneered a radically alternative method to the traditional schooling of the time (Yates, Wilson & Purton, 2014). Experiential education was built upon Dewey’s foundational idea that students required more integration with the world and that more authentic connections and relationships would enhance learning (Robbins, 2015).

Teachers who worked in experiential education also transitioned into a new role of facilitators or guides for their students’ learning (Chapman, 1995; Joplin, 1995; Robbins, 2015). In conjunction with this relationship shift, the cyclic nature of experience, followed by reflection, followed by another experience was emphasized for students (Kolb; 1984; Lewis, 2012; Ley, 2015). Reflection cementing learning is found throughout the literature for both experiential education and outdoor education (Kolb, 1984; Ley, 2015; Lewis, 2012; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015).

Outdoor education. There remains much disagreement as to exactly how outdoor education should be defined. Widely regarded as one of the earliest proponents of outdoor education, L.B. Sharp (1943) wrote that Outdoor Education was, “that which ought and can best be taught inside the schoolroom should there be taught, and that which can best be learned through experience dealing directly with native materials and life situations outside the school should there be learned” (p. 363-364). Another popular definition is one developed by

Donaldson & Donaldson, (1958) which states, “Outdoor education is education ‘in’, ‘about’, and ‘for’ the out-of doors” (p. 17). Sharp’s initial definition of outdoor education stressed location of learning and using the outdoors as a classroom, while Donaldson & Donaldson further specified that outdoor education ought to relate to the subject of the outdoors as well as use locations outside of the classroom.

Multiple other authors have created definitions of outdoor education (e.g. Priest, 1986; Robbins, 2015), but recurring themes are that the education ought to be related to the outdoors and should, when possible, takes place outdoors (Donaldson & Donaldson, 1958; Priest, 1986; Robbins, 2015; Sharp, 1943). Often, outdoor education and adventure education overlap in their emphasis on getting students outside and using activity to learn in the outdoors (Priest, 1986).

Adventure education. The most specific education branch that the OLDS program identifies with, the principles of adventure education closely align with the mission of the OLDS program. Pioneered by Kurt Hahn in the 1940’s, adventure education was initially created as a “moral equivalent of war” (Hahn, 1965, p. 2) to equip students to overcome the “enemies within – fear, defeatism, apathy, selfishness” (Lawrence Holt, Hahn’s business partner cited in Wilson, 1981, p. 26). These failings were combatted with a new type of schooling that built on principles established by both experiential and outdoor education. Hahn’s first groundbreaking school, established in 1941, allowed its students to discover their “hidden powers” and grow into themselves (Van Oord, 2010, p. 257). This all-boys school became the first blueprint for adventure education, allowing students to learn and grow through challenging experiences outside the classroom.

A strong definition of modern adventure education is:

...adventure education is conceptualized as one form of experiential education characterized by: (a) the planned use of adventuresome activities, (b) a real-life activity or learning context, (c) goal-directed challenges that must be solved individually and in groups, (d) an outdoor or wilderness setting, (e) cooperative small group living and activity participation, (f) trained leaders/facilitators, and (g) specific, pre-planned educational or developmental goals. (Baldwin, Persing & Manguson, 2004, p. 168)

This definition integrates aspects of both experiential and outdoor education into its characterization of adventure education. Incorporating other foundational aspects like using physical challenges as vehicles for personal development (Hattie et al, 1997), Rohnke's (1984, 1989) challenge by choice (Wallia, 2008), exposure to wilderness (Robbins, 2015), and building group dynamics (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 2000); Baldwin, Persing & Manguson (2004) effectively outlined the defining characteristics of Adventure Education today.

University Level Outdoor Programs

Transitioning from educational theories to the larger field of university level outdoor programs gives a current context for the OLDS program. By examining comparable programs, I understood the modern priorities of university level outdoor programs and saw how the UWOP compares to other outdoor programs throughout the United States. University level outdoor programs have been gaining popularity since the mid-1980s (Attarian, 2001). In addition to an increasing number of colleges and universities providing students with a structured way to get outside, student participation in outdoor program activities has increased (Attarian, 2001). There are now extensive outdoor education programs found at small, liberal arts colleges such as Colgate University (Colgate Sports and Recreation, 2017) and large state universities like

Michigan State University (MSU Outdoors Club, 2017). If students are interested in exploring the outdoors or learning outdoor skills, it is likely that their school has a program to help facilitate these goals.

Additionally, being outdoors has gained more media attention in recent years. Traditional college “best of” lists now include articles like *The 35 Best Outdoor Schools in America* (Best College Reviews, 2017) and *20 Best Colleges and Universities for Outdoor Adventures 2016* (College Choice, 2016). Magazines like *Outside* and *Backpacker* discuss the best colleges for students to explore and get involved in the outdoors (Andrews, 2012; Bannon & Webber, 2016). With the explosion of social media in recent years, information and access to outdoor places is easily found, further fueling the students’ interest and involvement in outdoor programs.

Comparable institutions. I examined the differences in university level outdoor programs throughout the United States to gain an understanding of how the UWOP compares to similar programs. I focused my examination on public, land grant universities, with between 10,000 and 20,000 students. Schools that met these criteria and had active outdoor programs in spring, 2017 were: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Montana State University, New Mexico University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, University of Idaho, University of Maine, University of New Hampshire, University of Vermont, and University of Wyoming (Figure 2). A more complete comparison of these programs as well as citations is found in Appendix A.



Figure 2. Locations of universities with comparable outdoor programs to the UWOP (World Atlas, 2016).

Aspects of these programs were consistent throughout most (or in some cases) all of them. The majority of program mission statements addressed the following: a) making new friends, b) exploring new places, and c) learning new technical skills. Schools that had additional outdoor leadership programs extended their mission to include leadership development (e.g. Maine Bound, University of Vermont, University of Wyoming). Additionally, nearly every program (except North Carolina State Agricultural & Technical State University) had a gear rental service, often with an accompanying guide about the surrounding area.

Multiple programs had freshman wilderness orientation trips, which were aimed at transitioning students successfully to college life (e.g. South Dakota State, University of Maine, University of Wyoming). These programs were often advertised as allowing students to build meaningful relationships, try exciting things, and explore the surrounding area (e.g. University of

New Hampshire, University of Vermont). Other programs had student-led trips that were available to other students and faculty at the university (e.g. Montana State University, New Mexico State, University of New Hampshire). The University of Alaska-Fairbanks was the only program that employed professional staff specifically as trip leaders for their Outdoor Program. Other commonalities shared between many programs were the presence of a climbing wall for student use, and opportunities for students to earn professional certifications through courses hosted at the university (e.g. Wilderness First Aid, Avalanche Level I).

University of Wyoming Outdoor Leadership Development Series. A subset of the UWOP, the OLDS program is a free, open enrollment, academic-year long program available to all students at UW. “Primary qualifications include an interest in outdoor activities, a willingness to learn and share, and a commitment to the program” (Ley, 2015, p. 34). Each class is made up of 12-14 students, with varying academic and experiential backgrounds. The fall semester of the program focuses on integrating students into the UWOP community. Students attend monthly meetings, go on a three-day backpacking trip, shadow a class run by current outdoor program leaders, and earn their Leave No Trace trainer certification (Ley, 2015). During the spring semester, students take Introduction to Outdoor Leadership (see Appendix B for sample syllabus). Here, they study both the theoretical and practical application of leadership skills such as “conflict resolution, group development, expedition behavior, diversity and inclusion, and problem solving” (Ley, 2015, p. 37). Additionally, students have the opportunity to earn either a Wilderness First Responder or a Wilderness First Aid certification, building their competence with medical issues in the field.

Learning objectives.

Though the OLDS program is a unique aspect of the UWOP, its mission is the same as the larger outdoor program, stating:

As a part of the Campus Recreation Department, the Outdoor Program helps recruit and retain students, faculty and staff by providing a wide range of inclusive, safe, reasonably-priced outdoor programs and services to the UW community. We expose individuals to the natural environment, provide skill and leadership development opportunities, facilitate interactions and fun. (UW Campus Recreation, 2017)

The Director of the UWOP and I broke down this mission into individual learning objectives for the participants of the OLDS program (see Figure 3).

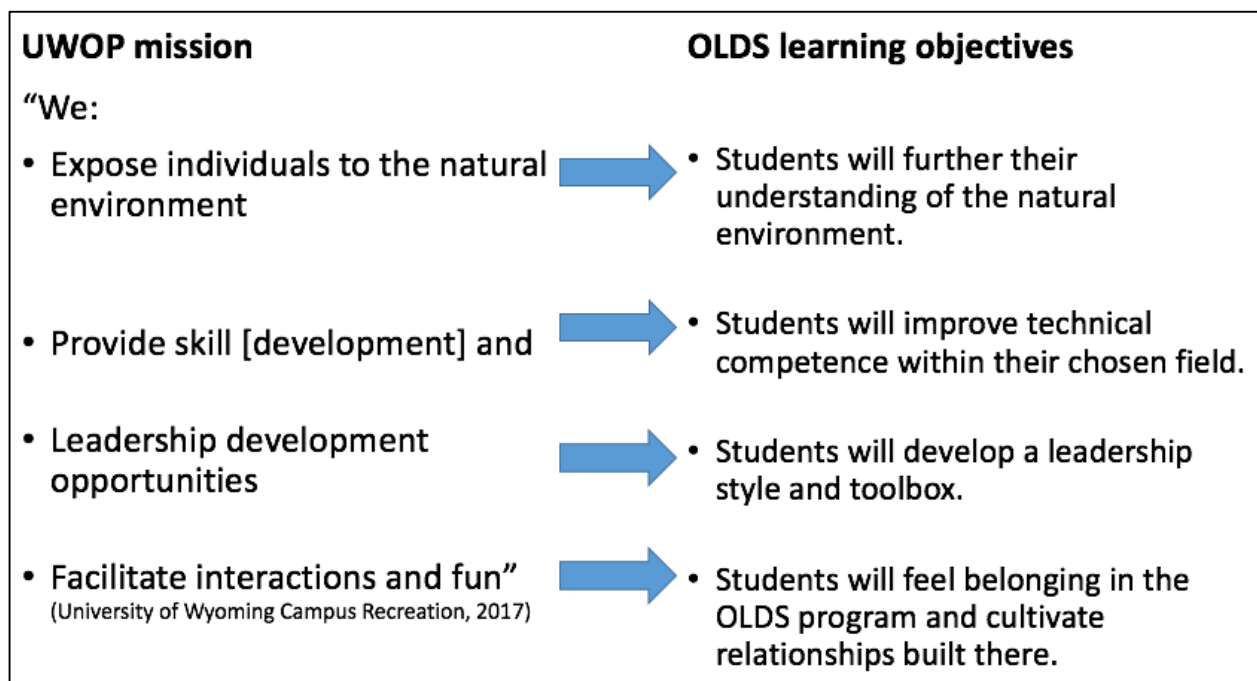


Figure 3. UWOP mission translated into OLDS learning objectives.

By specifically outlining learning objectives for their students (Table 1), the OLDS program created a clear communication of its values and priorities for its participants. These learning

objectives align with objectives most often outlined in similar outdoor education programs (Robbins, 2015).

Table 1. *OLDS Learning Objectives*

Students will feel belonging in the OLDS program and cultivate relationships built there.
 Students will further their understanding of the natural environment.
 Students will improve technical competence within their chosen field.
 Students will develop a leadership style and toolbox.

Community and relationship creation. One of the most important aspects of outdoor adventure education is its ability to create community and facilitate new relationships (Goldenberg & Pronsolino, 2008). In an evaluative study of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and OB course participants, “the most frequently mentioned attribute for both [NOLS and OB participants] was ‘group,’ while ‘interactions’ was the most frequently mentioned consequence for OB and the second most frequently mentioned for NOLS” (Goldenberg & Pronsolino, 2008, p. 273). As early as 1970, outdoor education was praised for its ability to positively impact students’ affective domain, facilitating positive relationships both within peer groups and between peers and leaders (Donaldson & Goering, 1970). In fact, in the earlier days of outdoor education, studies that explored the positive social impacts of outdoor education held the most consistently positive correlations (Donaldson & Goering, 1970). For many students, the opportunity to socialize with new people is a driving influence behind their participation (personal communication, D. McCoy, 2016). Likewise, students who enrolled in the OLDS program were “integrated into the culture of outdoor leadership, even if they might not realize it until later...they [were] exposed to the language, rituals, morays, and unspoken social rules that they will need in order to integrate in the future” (Ley, 2015, p. 38).

In addition to inclusion within the outdoor community, involvement in the OLDS program entrenched students in the culture of UW and the wider Laramie community. OLDS students come from various backgrounds, which created a conduit for students to build their larger sense of community within UW. Additionally, by shadowing and assisting on UWOP trips, OLDS students interacted with other students, faculty members, and community members in a meaningful way (Gruenewald, 2005; Umphrey, 2007). By helping teach these courses, OLDS students deepened their own connection to the greater Laramie area.

Exposure to the natural environment. Rather than rigidly teaching students about the importance of the environment and forcing the idea of conservation, the UWOP exposed OLDS participants to the environment, allowing students to come to their own conclusions regarding the land (personal communication, D. McCoy, 2016). Gruenewald (2005) presented this method of exposure as the essential model, stressing that people can embrace their environment “whether or not they identify as ‘green’ [environmentalist/conservationist/etc.]” (p. 263). Participant exposure to the environment was done through the lens of the educational theories OLDS was built upon. Multiple extended backpacking trips as well as shadowing and assisting courses in the outdoors, allowed students to immerse themselves in the wilderness of Wyoming and its surrounding states. This exposure may have led to enhanced environmental awareness and appreciation of the natural environment (Blaikie, 1992; Bogner, 1998; D’Amato & Krasny, 2011; Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013).

Multiple studies quantified student attitudes towards nature, with the majority using an outdoor experience as the intervention (Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Bogner, 1998). Several studies found statistically significant differences in their students’ attitudes towards nature following an intentional outdoor experience (Bogner, 1998; Okada,

Okamura & Zushi, 2013), indicating that both increased exposure to and time in nature can, in these examples, be correlated to increasingly positive attitudes toward the environment.

Building technical skills. Technical skills development is often the advertised goal for adventure education programs. The technical skills are the fun, exciting aspects that are most clearly advertised with beautiful pictures enticing student participation (NOLS, 2017; UW Campus Recreation, 2017). Activities such as climbing, rafting, and mountain biking are an immediate draw for adventurous students, though may be a cause for concern among more tentative ones. Karl Rohnke's principle of *challenge by choice* allows students to decide for themselves the level of challenge and level of risk they are willing to take (Wallia, 2008). For OLDS students, choosing to challenge themselves through opportunities like creating and completing a backpacking trip in the desert are opportunities for growth (Ley, 2015). Similarly to OB and NOLS programs that allow students to struggle within reason (Wilson, 1981), the OLDS program built experiences where students may fail initially but then learn through those failures and become stronger for them (Ley, 2015).

OLDS participants must both shadow and assist a technical skills based UWOP class. Here, OLDS students practiced both their practical and theoretical skills with regard to specific technical skills (Winch, 2010), using the leader of the class as a mentor and model. These experiences were intentionally structured, allowing students to learn through observation and immersion, then providing a safe environment for OLDS participants to practice and build their technical skills (Ley, 2015).

Leadership development. Arguably the defining aspect of the OLDS program, leadership development is emphasized throughout the participants' experience (Ley, 2015; UWOP, 2017). Extensive research has been dedicated to studying and quantifying leadership

however, I found simpler definitions such as “[leadership:] putting yourself and those around you in a position to succeed with integrity” (Matthews, 2015, p. 2) most relevant to this project. Van Velsor & Wright’s (2012) outline of leadership competencies as “adaptability, effective communication, learning ability, and multicultural awareness” (Matthews, 2015, p. 4) also creates a useful structure for student leadership development programs. These key competencies are echoed in multiple sources, indicating a universal need for these traits in effective leaders (Kouzes, DeKrey & Posner, 2013; Ley, 2015).

Outdoor programs emphasize the importance of leadership and decision-making skills as an essential outcome for their programs (NOLS, 2017b; OB, 2017; Robbins, 2015). Student leadership programs highlight the necessity of the transference of new leadership skills to both the professional world (Matthews, 2015) and school environment (Lewis, 2012). By building interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution, self-confidence, and strength in the face of adversity, students are able to draw on these experiences to overcome obstacles in their world that may have otherwise overwhelmed them (Hahn, 1965; Matthews, 2015; Wilson, 1981).

Evaluation Theory

I examined multiple evaluation theories to understand general evaluation theory and determined that the most useful evaluation for the OLDS program would be a) closely tied to assessing specific programmatic needs, and b) easily implemented by UWOP staff. Marvin Alkin’s (2004) purpose of evaluation aligns with my goals as I was creating this evaluation tool.

The ultimate purpose of evaluation, as I understand it, is the enhancement of educational and social conditions through the improvement of programs and organizations designed to address these conditions. I believe that this is best accomplished through the conduct

of an evaluation that is meaningful, relevant, and useful to those who are ultimately in a position to improve these programs. (p. 297)

I combined Alkin's (2004) theory of context-adapted utilization and Patton's (2004) utilization-focused evaluation to create a relationship focused, program driven evaluation tool with an emphasis on use and implementation.

Context-adapted utilization. Created by Marvin Alkin (2004), context-adapted utilization is a theory of evaluation rooted in collaboration between the evaluator and the client or program that will be implementing the evaluation tool. Alkin based context-adapted evaluations on four themes: a) emphasizing usage and utility of the evaluation, b) adaptation and willingness to adjust the evaluation so that it is most beneficial for the user, c) creating and building a relationship and buy-in with the user, and d) willingness to do the majority of the work before implementation of the evaluation (2004). Alkin stressed that the evaluator not impose their own ideas or expectations on the evaluation they create, but instead focus on creating a tailored evaluation that serves to fulfill the specific need outlined by the user (2004). Additionally, he emphasized creating a tool that would actually be used by the program. If the evaluation is too complex or difficult to implement then all potential value is lost (Alkin, 2004).

Utilization-focused evaluation. Creating an evaluation based on the likelihood of its use is called utilization-focused evaluation and was first delineated by Michael Patton (2004) in his *The roots of utilization-focused evaluation*. Patton focused on creating a "psychology of use" by closely involving the user in the creation of the evaluation tool, thereby giving them ownership and understanding of both the process and implementation of the evaluation (2004, p. 278). Additionally, Patton placed immense importance on the relationship built between the evaluator and the user, stressing that "there are five key variables that are absolutely critical in evaluation

use. They are, in order of importance: people, people, people, people, and people” (2004, p. 291). He emphasized the “personal factor” throughout his work, where he repeatedly encouraged relationship building and understanding between evaluator and user (2004, p. 282). These relationships are the foundation for the user buy-in, which is critical in the long term use and utility of the evaluation.

Survey theory. In order to create an effective evaluation tool for the OLDS program, I researched best practices for survey creation as well as how to ensure reliability and validity throughout the survey. Kelly & Gratto’s (2015) *Developing a Survey to Determine Student Perceptions of Readiness at the Beginning of an Educational Leadership Program* cited three key aspects of their tool creation that are relevant to this OLDS evaluation. The first is *reliability*, which was defined as “the consistency of a measure or an instrument” (Kelly & Gratto, 2015, p. 24). This was interpreted to mean that the evaluation survey, if given repeatedly to the same subject, should produce the same results (Kelly & Gratto, 2015; Litwin, 1995). This is also known as test-retest reliability (Litwin, 1995). Next, Kelly & Gratto (2015) cite *face validity*, which is a measure of whether or not the evaluation appears valid to those who it is administered and others who are in contact with the tool. Finally, they discussed *content validity*, stating that this measures the accuracy with which the questions assessed and addressed their intended subject (Hauge, C.H. et al., 2015; Kelly & Gratto, 2015).

In addition to building a survey with reliability and validity, Smith (2012) wrote that surveys should be short, scaled and coded consistently, utilize the “funnel approach,” and be piloted before being disseminated. Keeping surveys short allows participants to remain focused and willing to proceed with the survey, using scales allows for more specific data to be collected, keeping questions and scales consistent (e.g. asked as a positive, low-high scale) limits

participant confusion or mistakes in answering, and the “funnel approach” allows participants to begin and end with easier questions (2012, p. 5-6). This method of ordering questions allows survey participants to begin with easy questions, then work through the more difficult questions, finally finishing again with easier questions as they are more fatigued (Smith, 2012). Keeping these principles in mind while creating a survey will lead to a more successful evaluation.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Background

The University of Wyoming is a public, land grant university, with 13,929 students in 2017, located in Laramie, WY. Students from all 50 states and 90 countries attend the university (UW Profiles, 2017) and choose from a wide range of majors for both undergraduate and graduate students. This evaluation tool is for OLDS participants exiting their year long program. OLDS students can range from freshmen to graduate students, with widely varied courses of study. This diversity of students is intentional; with an open application process the OLDS staff admits students with differing backgrounds. Major criteria for involvement in the OLDS program are: interest in the outdoors, desire to improve their leadership skill set, and curiosity in exploring the field of outdoor education (D. McCoy, personal communication, 2016; Ley, 2015). This project focused on creating and piloting the evaluation tool, not administering it to current OLDS participants.

The methodology I followed is outlined in Figure 4. Initially I created the project based on my personal experiences and interests, combined with the needs of the UWOP. Next, I researched relevant literature to create context and understanding of the theory relevant to building the evaluation tool. Finally, I revised the survey through multiple rounds of revisions with my advisor, the Director of the UWOP, and my peers to ensure reliability and validity of the tool.

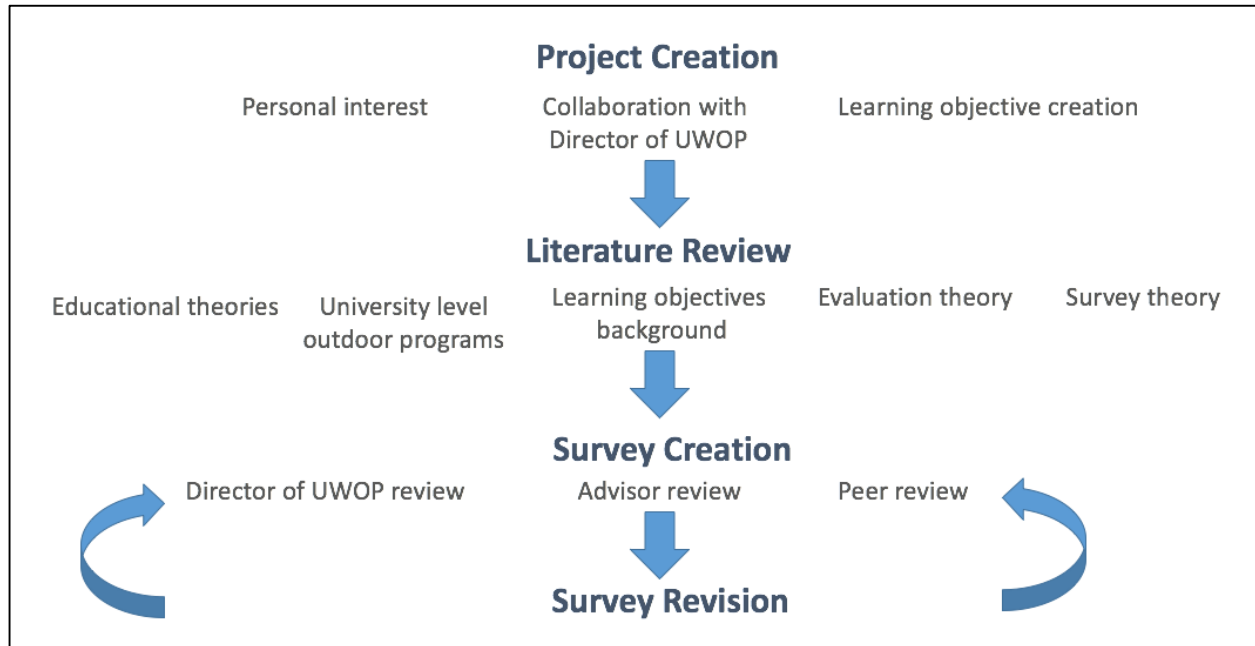


Figure 4. *Project methodology.*

Project Creation

My initial interest in this project stemmed from my personal involvement in outdoor education programs throughout my college years, followed by enrollment in the Teton Science Schools (TSS) graduate program. My time at TSS furthered my leadership and teaching skills, emphasized place and environment, and cemented my interest and involvement in the larger outdoor education community. TSS also instilled the value and importance of evaluation in my teaching. I wanted to bring this benefit to university level outdoor programs, which have historically not prioritized evaluation (Attarian, 2001).

Working closely with the director of the UWOP, we decided to create a summative survey for the OLDS program. The initial question was: What would be the specific goal of the assessment, the most useful aspect of the program to track? We determined that the UWOP's greatest need was assessing the efficacy of the delivery of the OLDS program's learning

objectives to its students. Using the mission statement of the UWOP, we identified five learning objectives for the OLDS program, which were the framework for the evaluation.

Literature Review

Once these learning objectives were in place, I conducted an extensive literature review to determine how to create the most effective evaluative tool for the OLDS program. The initial literature focused on educational theories under which the OLDS program was built. Exploration of the seminal works in experiential education (Dewey, 1938), outdoor education (Donaldson & Donaldson, 1958; Sharp, 1943), and adventure education (Baldwin, Persing & Manguson, 2004; Hahn, 1965) guided my understanding of the field. I also explored studies that had conducted surveys in the outdoors (e.g. Bogner, 1998; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013), and previous Master's projects (Ley, 2015; Matthews, 2015; Robbins, 2015; Trainor, 2014) focusing on explanation and definition of these educational theories.

Next, I researched each learning objective of the OLDS program so that I could create effective, literature based evaluation questions. I studied the educational theory behind the learning objective (e.g. Dewey, 1938; Hahn, 1965), learned about the aspects that make up the objectives (e.g. Gruenewald, 2005; Matthews, 2015) and found relevant studies that had assessed these objectives (e.g. Bogner, 1998; Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013). I focused on literature regarding developing community through relationship building and connection to place (e.g. Goldenberg & Pronsolino, 2008; Umphrey, 2007), exposing students to the natural environment (e.g. Blaikie, 1992; Bogner, 1998; Okada, Okamura & Zushi, 2013), developing technical skills (e.g. Van Oord, 2010), and building leadership (e.g. Ley, 2015; Matthews, 2015). I then synthesized this literature into a framework of possible skills and attitudes to be addressed in the survey.

Next, I studied specific evaluation theories, determining the most effective method of creating the evaluation tool. Marvin Alkin's (2004) Context-Adapted Utilization emerged as the most relevant theory on evaluation styles. The integration of evaluation theory with the needs of the UWOP was a critical combination, most effectively addressed through Alkin's (2004) blueprint for creating a use-based evaluation tool. After combining this with Patton's Utilization-Focused Evaluation (2004), I created the OLDS evaluation based on the needs of the program with an emphasis on its future use. Finally, I examined studies that had successfully assessed participants' experiences in outdoor education through delivery of a survey to determine the types of questions that had been proven to be reliable and valid (Kelly & Gratto, 2015).

Specifically, the UWOP sought an evaluation tool that assessed the outcome of the delivery of its learning objectives to its OLDS participants. Additionally, the evaluation needed to be easily administered, take less than half an hour, and address both attitudes and concrete learning taken away from the program (personal communication, D. McCoy, 2016). As I developed the survey, it was repeatedly revised based on Dan McCoy's opinion, creating an evaluative tool specifically tailored to the needs of the OLDS program.

Survey Creation

I created the initial survey draft to assess each learning objective (Kelly & Gratto, 2015) in less than thirty minutes (Smith, 2012) using a combination of Likert style (Smith, 2012) and short answer questions. I created a survey section to assess each learning objective, with an additional section for program evaluation (Figure 5).

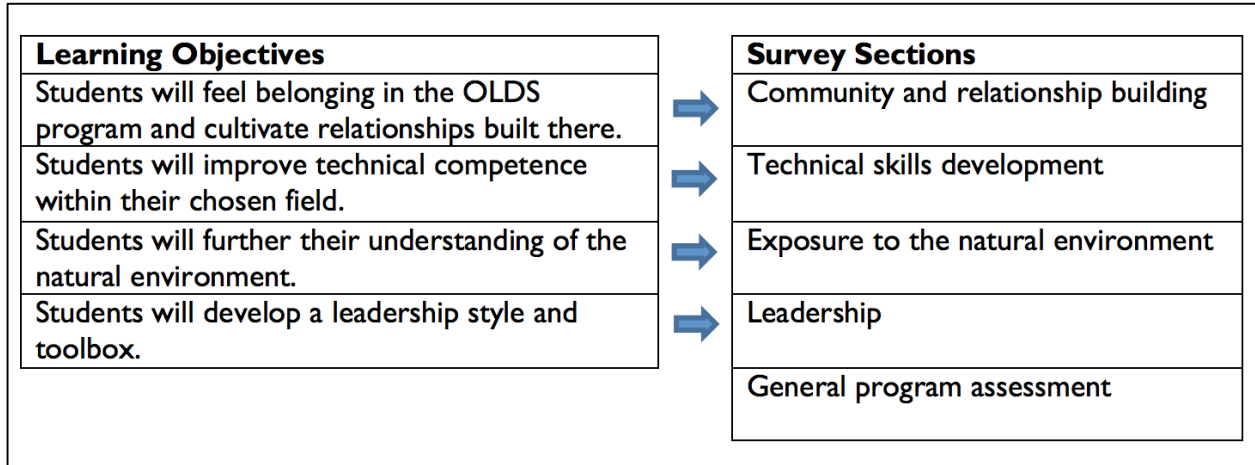


Figure 5. OLDS learning objectives translated into survey sections.

After several rounds of revisions, I sent the survey to select individuals, those who I regarded as having extensive experience with programs similar to OLDS. Their time and knowledge of various aspects of the outdoor education community were also taken into consideration, as well as their willingness to give thoughtful, productive feedback. Each of these peers took the survey then gave me feedback about each section, specific questions, and flow of the survey as a whole. This process allowed me to make the survey more effective and the questions more accurate, by revising the survey after aggregating and integrating my peers’ feedback into the survey. I gave the survey to my peers multiple times to increase its validity (Litwin, 1995). Finally, I sent the survey to Dan McCoy for review and the final draft was converted into an electronic version via Google Forms®.

I built this tool as a summative survey for students who have completed the OLDS program and designed it to take less than thirty minutes to complete. Participants will be asked to take the survey electronically at the conclusion of their program. Using a combination of Likert scale, short answer, scenario-based, and multiple choice questions, this survey assesses the efficacy with which the OLDS program’s learning objectives were delivered to its students. Each learning objective is assessed in its own section, with an addition of a general programmatic

assessment at the end. This is an anonymous survey; no identifying data will be collected from the students.

Chapter 4

Results

Table 1 (repeated). *OLDS Learning Objectives*

Students will feel belonging in the OLDS program and cultivate relationships built there.

Students will further their understanding of the natural environment.

Students will improve technical competence within their chosen field.

Students will develop a leadership style and toolbox.

OLDS Program Assessment: Exit Survey

Welcome!

Congratulations on completing your OLDS program! This survey is intended to assess how well the OLDS program has delivered its learning objectives to its students. The questions are a combination of collecting your opinions and assessing your knowledge directly. This is an anonymous survey, your responses will be aggregated and assessed as a group.

Please take your time and give thoughtful answers and feedback to these questions, your responses will be used to help improve the program and experience for future students.

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Community and relationship building

This section assesses your sense of belonging within both the OLDS program and the University of Wyoming.

I felt I belonged in the OLDS program.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

I believe the relationships I built in the OLDS program are valuable.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

I benefited from the mentorship of the instructors of the OLDS program.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

Completion of the OLDS program strengthened my resolve to complete my degree at the University of Wyoming.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

Has completing the OLDS program furthered your connection to the University of Wyoming? If so, how? If not, why not?

Technical skills development

This section assesses your competence with skills you are expected to have built throughout your OLDS program.

My participation in the OLDS program furthered my technical competence (e.g. campcraft, climbing, skiing).

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

The technical skill I feel most competent teaching is: (e.g. canoeing, backcountry cooking, backpacking)

The technical skill I feel least competent teaching is: (e.g. snowshoeing, kayaking, navigation)

Describe a brief lesson for new students on the optimal packing of a backpack for a multi-day trip as if you were doing a pre-trip shakedown.

7 Principles of Leave No Trace

Plan ahead and prepare || Travel and camp on durable surfaces || Dispose of waste properly || Leave what you find || Minimize campfire impacts || Respect wildlife || Be considerate of other visitors

Choose one LNT principle (above) and outline a brief lesson or teachable moment you would plan for your students surrounding it. Be sure to include your intended audience (age, number of students, etc.) and the location of your lesson.

Medical scenario

You and your co-leader are backpacking with a group of 12 students in the Wind River Range and are currently 10 miles from the closest trailhead. It is 2:00 PM, 70 degrees, sunny, and windy. You do not have cell service in this area. You see a pair of climbers at the base of a cliff. One is yelling, trying to flag you down.

As you approach, the scene becomes more clear. The climber yelling and waving their arms appears to have been belaying the other, who is still tied in, sitting on the ground, clutching their ankle tightly, and groaning in pain.

If presented with this scenario, how would you proceed? Describe, in sequence, all steps you would take to assess and aid the injured climber from your initial arrival on the scene to the point you would leave the patient or pass their care on to someone else.

Are you certified as a Wilderness First Responder or are you Wilderness First Aid certified?

- Wilderness First Responder
- Wilderness First Aid certified
- Neither

Leadership

This section assesses both your attitude towards your personal leadership development and your understanding of larger leadership principles studied throughout the program.

I believe I developed or further cemented a specific, effective leadership style through my completion of the OLDS program.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

My experience throughout the OLDS program supported the creation of my personalized leadership toolbox.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

How do you define leadership?

What do you believe is your strongest leadership skill? Give an example of effective implementation.

What do you believe is your weakest leadership skill? Describe how you worked to strengthen it throughout the year.

NOLS No-Doze Leadership Styles

Analyst & Architect || Driver || Spontaneous Motivator || Relationship Master

Choose the leadership style(s) above that most resonate(s) with you. Describe how your leadership style aligns with your above choice(s).

Exposure to the natural environment

This section assesses whether or not your relationship with the environment surrounding the University of Wyoming has changed through your involvement with the OLDS program.

My participation in the OLDS program furthered my understanding of the natural environment.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

I am more aware of the environment that I recreate and teach in after completing the OLDS program.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

My involvement in the OLDS program increased the amount of time that I spend outdoors.

Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly agree – Does not apply to me

What are three specific things you learned about the environment surrounding Laramie during your OLDS program?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

General program assessment

This (final) section asks for your feedback on the OLDS program, so that it can be improved for students in the future.

Of the things you learned throughout your OLDS program, which one is the most valuable to you? Why?

What aspect(s) of the OLDS program were the least valuable for you? Why?

What could the OLDS program do differently to make the experience better for future students?

I would describe this course as:

- Entirely experiential
- Primarily experiential with some traditional components
- Primarily traditional with some experiential components
- Entirely traditional

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Chapter 5

Discussion

Rationale for Evaluation Tool

I designed the survey for the OLDS program to assess the four learning objectives outlined as desirable student outcomes by the Director of the UWOP (Kelly & Gratto, 2015). I assessed each of these learning objectives through a combination of Likert scale, short answer, scenario-based, and multiple choice questions, which were tested and refined to create reliable, valid questions through review with the Director of the UWOP, my advisor, and my peers. I used multiple rounds of feedback from my peers, all of whom have extensive experience and with an understanding of the field of outdoor adventure education, to build content validity within the survey (Clause, 2015).

I based each survey question on: a) an individual learning objective, b) literature outlining important aspects of the larger topic (e.g. Strength of relationships built through education – Dewey, 1938), c) direct communication with and needs of the Director of the UWOP, and d) peer feedback. Additionally, I revised each question multiple times to strengthen its reliability and validity (Clause, 2015; Kelly & Gratto, 2015). Based on this process, I created this literature-based survey to be as effective and as useful as possible.

Community and relationship building. Assessing learning objective: *Students will feel belonging in the OLDS program and cultivate relationships built there.* I created the community and relationship based questions to assess students' sense of belonging in the OLDS program and the larger University. Evidence that students with a stronger connection to their community reap larger benefits from educational programs is found in the literature (e.g. Umphrey, 2007), with an emphasis on building strong interpersonal relationships. Umphrey (2007) and Gruenewald

(2005) stressed the value of students engaging with their larger community and its surrounding environment and called for community and identity building through exploration of the environment and local people. Building on this value of community, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that students with a stronger connection to their university are more likely to complete their degree at their university, furthering the UWOP's larger mission of student retention.

Table 2. *Community and relationship building survey question rationale*

Survey Question	Format	Sourced From
I felt I belonged in the OLDS program.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives
I believe the relationships I built in the OLDS program are valuable.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Dewey, 1938; OB, 2017; Ley, 2015; NOLS, 2017b; Robbins, 2015; Umphrey, 2007
I benefited from the mentorship of the instructors of the OLDS program.	Likert Scale	Eby et al., 2013; Ley, 2015
Completion of the OLDS program strengthened my resolve to compete my degree at the University of Wyoming	Likert Scale	Dan McCoy; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005
Has completing the OLDS program furthered your connection to the University of Wyoming? If so, how? If not, why not?	Short Answer	Goldenberg & Pronsolino, 2008; Gruenewald, 2005; Umphrey, 2007

Technical skills development. Assessing learning objective: *Students will improve technical competence within their chosen field of activity.* I created the technical skills assessment section of the survey to directly assesses students' competence with specific skills that the OLDS program taught. I built this section based on the specific outcomes desired by Dan McCoy, allowing for a specific, useful assessment of student learning (Alkin, 2004; Patton, 2004). By asking students directly which technical skills they feel most and least competent teaching, the OLDS program will be able to quickly assess which technical skills students are

learning from their program. I created the questions assessing student competence with Leave No Trace teachings and medical scenarios based on the original literature presented to the students (The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, 2017; Tilton, 2010).

Table 3. *Technical skills development survey question rationale*

Survey Question	Format	Sourced From
My participation in the OLDS program furthered my technical competence (e.g. campcraft, climbing, skiing).	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Hahn, 1965; Hattie et al., 1997
The technical skill I feel most competent teaching is:	Short Answer	OB, 2017; NOLS, 2017b; Peer Review
The technical skill I feel least competent teaching is:	Short Answer	OB, 2017; NOLS 2017b; Peer Review
Describe a brief lesson for new students on the optimal packing of a backpack for a multi-day trip as if you were doing a pre-trip shakedown.	Short Answer	Cox & Fulsaas, 2003; Dan McCoy
Choose one LNT principle and outline a brief lesson or teachable moment you would plan for your students surrounding it. Be sure to include your intended audience (age, number of students, etc.) and the location of your lesson.	Short Answer	Dan McCoy; The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, 2017
If presented with this [medical] scenario, how would you proceed? Describe, in sequence, all the steps you would take to assess and aid the injured climber from your initial arrival on the scene to the point you would leave the patient or pass on their care to someone else.	Short Answer	Dan McCoy; Tilton, 2010
Are you certified as a Wilderness First Responder or are you Wilderness First Aid certified?	Multiple Choice	Dan McCoy

Leadership. Assessing learning objective: *Students will develop a leadership style and toolbox.* I made the leadership section of the survey to evaluate students' personal understanding and application of leadership. This combination of theoretical and practical knowledge is essential to developing leaders (Winch, 2010) and the combination of assessment of both aspects measures students' comfort with their own leadership. Additionally, I assessed

specific outcomes like the creation of a leadership toolbox at the request of Dan McCoy (Alkin, 2004; Patton, 2004). The NOLS compass leadership tool (Gookin & Leach, 2009) is a way of categorizing leadership characteristics that was impactful for my peer reviewers, who suggested that it be used as a way to easily classify and categorize students' leadership styles.

Table 4. *Leadership survey question rationale*

Survey Question	Format	Sourced From
I believe I developed or further cemented a specific, effective leadership style through my completion of the OLDS program.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Eaton, 2015; Kosseff, 2003; Ley, 2015
My experience throughout the OLDS program supported the creation of my personalized leadership toolbox.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Eaton, 2015
How do you define leadership?	Short Answer	Dan McCoy; Ley, 2015; Matthews, 2015
What do you believe is your strongest leadership skill? Give an example of effective implementation.	Short Answer	Ley, 2015; Matthews, 2015; Van Velsor & Wright, 2012; Winch, 2010
What do you believe is your weakest leadership skill? Describe how you worked to strengthen it throughout the year.	Short Answer	Matthews, 2015; Van Velsor & Wright, 2012; Winch, 2010
Choose the leadership style(s) above [driver, spontaneous motivator, relationship master, analyst & architect] that most resonate(s) with you. Describe how your leadership style aligns with your above choice(s).	Short Answer	Gookin & Leach, 2009; Peer review

Exposure to the natural environment. Assessing learning objective: *Students will further their understanding of the natural environment.* I created this survey section to assess students' attitudes towards the environment, to quantify if there was a change between incoming and final environmental attitudes. I based these questions upon previous environmental attitude studies (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2002; Okada, Okamura, & Zushi, 2013) and place-based literature (Gruenewald, 2005). I built this section to quantify whether exposure to the

environment created a change in, or strengthening of environmental attitudes for OLDS students (personal communication, D. McCoy, 2016).

Table 5. *Exposure to the natural environment survey question rationale*

Survey Question	Format	Sourced From
My participation in the OLDS program furthered my understanding of the natural environment.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Gruenewald, 2005
I am more aware of the environment that I recreate and teach in after completing the OLDS program.	Likert Scale	OLDS learning objectives; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2002; D'Amato & Krasny, 2011; Priest, 1986
My involvement in the OLDS program increased the amount of time I spend outdoors.	Likert Scale	Goodman & Knapp, 1981; Okada, Okamura, & Zushi, 2013
What are three specific things you learned about the environment surrounding Laramie during your OLDS program?	Short Answer	D'Amato & Krasny, 2011; Goodman & Knapp, 1981; Priest, 1986

General Program Assessment. I made this final section to gather student opinions regarding the OLDS program specifically. The wishes of Dan McCoy directed my work, with the goal that the programmatic assessment created here will be helpful in the delivery of future OLDS programs (Alkin, 2004). By asking students about aspects of the program that were most and least valuable to them, the OLDS program will have direct feedback on which pieces of their program are most and least effective for their students. Ideally these responses will generate programmatic adjustments based on this direct feedback (Alkin, 2004; Patton, 2004).

Table 6. *General program assessment survey question rationale*

Survey Question	Format	Sourced From
Of the things you learned throughout your OLDS program, which one is the most valuable to you? Why?	Short Answer	Baldwin, Persing & Manguson, 2004; Sibthorp et al., 2011
What aspect(s) of the OLDS program were the least valuable for you? Why?	Short Answer	Baldwin, Persing & Manguson, 2004; Kearney & Perkins, 2014; Lewis, 2014; Ley, 2015
I would describe this course as: Entirely experiential/Primarily experiential with some traditional elements/Primarily traditional with some experiential elements/Primarily traditional	Multiple Choice	Yates, Wilson & Purton, 2015
What could the OLDS program do differently to further benefit future students?	Short Answer	Dan McCoy; Kolb, 1984; Ley, 2015
Is there anything else you would like us to know?	Short Answer	Dan McCoy

Limitations

I relied heavily on the theories of Context-Adapted Utilization and Utilization-Focused Evaluation in my creation of the survey, with the acknowledgement that there may be other evaluation theories I overlooked. Also, although I always strove for impartiality and creating evaluations without bias, that is an unrealistic goal for the scale of this project. My personal experience with surveys and outdoor related evaluations combined with the experiences and needs of Dan McCoy and my peers impacted the creation and revision of the survey. Additionally, since there was no implementation of the tool, participant data collection, or participant data analysis – due to the scale of a Master’s project – there has not been a true test of this tool with OLDS participants.

Recommendations for the OLDS program

My recommendations are based on the assumption that the survey will be implemented as an evaluative tool for the OLDS program. By giving the survey to participants, the OLDS program will collect meaningful data specifically tailored to better understanding the outcome of their program delivery. If the tool is never used, any potential benefit from the evaluation is lost.

Collect and analyze the data. This will be done most easily if the survey is disseminated through a platform that groups and analyzes the data itself (e.g. Google Forms®). The Likert scale and multiple choice questions will be automatically coded and analyzed, while the short answer and scenario-based questions will require a rubric. An example of an initial rubric is a dichotomous scale. Students either answered the question satisfactorily (yes) or did not (no). If the UWOP wishes to expand the analysis, this rubric can be extended to look for themes or specific technical knowledge in the future.

Modify the survey and make programmatic adjustments. After analyzing the results from a full class of participants, the UWOP will have a much better idea of whether each learning objective is clearly assessed by the survey. If one or more of them are not, questions can be added, modified, or deleted to make the evaluation more effective. These data can then be translated to programmatic adjustments. Responses to the survey will illuminate where students feel least competent or have the least understanding, as well as where they feel strongest. The instructors of the OLDS program can then choose whether or not they would like to use these data to inform instruction for the next class of participants.

Re-administer survey and repeat recommendations. As this evaluation becomes more effective with use, it should be adjusted to grow with the OLDS program and assess its needs. Hopefully the OLDS instructors will find value in a more intentional assessment from their

students, and the students themselves will gain understanding and transference from this reflective practice.

Recommendations for university outdoor leadership development programs

Prioritize individualized, targeted evaluation. Outdoor leadership development programs invest a significant amount of time and effort into their students. A data set quantifying the outcome of their program is useful in supporting the validity and efficacy of the program. Especially as universities undergo budget cuts and readjustment of funding, an evaluation detailing the benefit students gain from the program is extremely valuable. This will be done most effectively using both the context-adapted and utilization-focused evaluation models, creating specific evaluations for each program based on the user's needs.

Use similar methodology. Though each outdoor leadership program requires an individual evaluation tool, the general methodology (see Figure 4, p. 22) that I used is transferrable. Using the literature as the foundation for the evaluation, followed by developing and revising the tool are universally applicable methods. Additionally, building a close relationship between evaluator and user will be invaluable in both creating the evaluation tool and its future implementation.

Potential Future Studies

Continuations of this study involve implementation of the survey, collection and analysis of data, suggestions for programmatic improvement, followed by additional data collection and analysis. On a larger scale, intentional programmatic evaluation at the university level is something that I hope becomes more common. Perhaps this project can serve as a blueprint for other outdoor leadership development programs to build their own evaluations.

Conclusion

For this project, I answered the following research questions:

1. How does the literature inform the creation of an effective evaluation tool for the OLDS program?
2. What is the most useful evaluation tool for assessing the participant outcomes of the OLDS program's learning objectives?

by creating and piloting an evaluation for the OLDS program. I built a summative survey to assess OLDS participant outcomes under the framework of programmatic learning objectives derived from the mission of the UWOP. I designed the survey questions based on researching a) educational theories under which the OLDS program was founded, b) literature and previous studies that supported each learning objective, c) relevant evaluation theories, and d) survey best practices. I worked closely with the UWOP to tailor the evaluation specifically to their needs, as well as to build a "psychology of use" (Patton, 2004, p. 278), ensuring that the evaluation will be implemented in the future. This project strengthened my belief in the value of programmatic evaluation, illuminating the benefit for the current instructors and staff of the UWOP, current and future OLDS students, and the larger university outdoor leadership program community.

My process of building context and foundation for the evaluation in the literature, collaborating with the program that will use the evaluation, creating and revising the survey, and piloting the survey is easily translatable to other university outdoor leadership programs. Programmatic evaluation is needed in university outdoor leadership programs to quantify their benefit to students, protecting these programs from budget cuts or university restructuring. By creating meaningful, effective evaluations, university outdoor leadership

programs will be able to measure their impact on their students, adjust and strengthen their programs, and build a data set for future research.

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Appendix A

Comparable University Level Outdoor Programs

Program	Mission	Classes/ Events	Professional Certifications	Gear Rental	Climbing Wall	Freshman Orientation Trips	Leadership Development	Ropes Course
University of Wyoming	As a part of the Campus Recreation Department, the Outdoor Program helps recruit and retain students, faculty and staff by providing a wide range of inclusive, safe, reasonably-priced outdoor programs and services to the UW community. We expose individuals to the natural environment, provide skill and leadership development opportunities, facilitate interactions and fun.	Yes – Outdoor Program Student Leaders	Yes – WFR	Yes	Yes	Yes – Four day: hiking/ rafting / canoeing/ kayaking	Yes - OLDS	No
University of Alaska-Fairbanks	It is the mission of UAF Outdoor Adventures to promote and enable UAF students and affiliates to explore, discover, and understand the timeless beauty of wild Alaska.	Yes – DRAW, University Staff & Student Leaders	Yes – WFA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes – Academic course	No
University of Idaho	The Outdoor Program is a non-profit service organization dedicated to providing the university community with education and resources for wilderness-based, human-powered, environmentally sound activities. We promote teamwork, leadership and growth through outdoor adventure experiences.	Yes – Outdoor Program Student Leaders	Yes – WFR, Avalanche Level I	Yes	Yes	No	Yes – leadership & low ropes programs for groups/ programs	Yes

<p>University of Maine</p>	<p>Maine Bound is a program within Campus Recreation at the University of Maine. It is based out of the Maine Bound Adventure Center. Through Maine Bound, we offer a comprehensive outdoor experience for all skill levels. By combining recreation and education our programs offer adventure opportunities for every lifestyle while instilling skills that are used in everyday campus life. Through our professional staff and devoted student instructors we are passionate about educating everyone in all the responsible fun and adventure that the majestic Maine outdoors has to offer.</p>	<p>Yes – “Maine Bound,” multiple levels of student leaders</p>	<p>Yes – WFA</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes – 2 or 5 day: hiking, canoeing, climbing, kayaking</p>	<p>Yes – advancement through Maine Bound</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</p>	<p>The MIT Outing Club (MITOC) is dedicated to helping the MIT and Cambridge community enjoy the great outdoors. MITOC members are students, staff, alumni, and faculty from MIT and the greater academic community who come together for year-round outdoor recreation in the company of other enthusiasts. MITOC members hike, climb, ski, bike, camp, tramp, backpack, snowshoe, and canoe to the highest, widest, most scenic vistas in New England and beyond. Join us for friendship, adventure, and fun!</p>	<p>Yes – Outing Club, members only (students, faculty, community members)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes – “leader development program” for leaders</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Montana State University</p>	<p>The ASMSU Outdoor Recreation Program provides the university community with opportunities for adventure, discovery, personal growth and engagement via human-powered outdoor adventure pursuits.</p>	<p>Yes – Outdoor Program Student Leaders</p>	<p>Yes – WFR, Avalanche Level I, Single Pitch Instructor, Swiftwater Rescue</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes (not OP)</p>
<p>University of New Hampshire</p>	<p>Outdoor Adventures offers all-inclusive trips, clinics and events open to both beginners and experienced participants. Join us to learn new skills, explore beautiful areas of New England and meet new people!</p>	<p>Yes – Outdoor Adventure, student leaders</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes – Five day: Backpacking, challenge course, canoeing</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>

New Mexico State University	The New Mexico State University Outdoor Recreation program provides dynamic facilities and programs to meet the needs of students, faculty, staff and the community. We offer opportunities to meet new people, see new places and have new and diverse experiences. We encourage you to explore the world around you and learn about yourself, others, and your environment.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes – Outdoor Leadership Program	No
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University	The Campus Outdoor Recreational Experiences is dedicated to leadership, education, teamwork, relationships, and adventure. Outdoor programs are offered to appeal to multiple interests and multiple levels of expertise. From white water rafting and kayaking to canoeing, rock climbing or caving, hiking or backpacking, there is something for you. No matter if you are a beginner or experienced leader, our whole goal is to Get You Outside!	Yes – Campus Outdoor Recreation Experience	No	No	No	No	No	No
North Dakota State University	Are you interested in getting your exercise outside or do you just want to explore the outdoors? Then gear up for adventure at The Outpost!	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
South Dakota State University	We are committed to providing enjoyable, challenging, meaningful and educational experiences that will allow individuals and groups to learn the skills necessary for survival and safety in outdoor activities as well as develop an appreciation for the environment.	Yes – Outdoor Program	No	Yes	Yes	Yes – Six days: Backpacking, climbing, biking	No	No
University of Vermont	The mission of the University of Vermont Outing Club is to provide affordable, wilderness-based trip experiences, equipment rental, skill instruction, leadership development and community learning opportunities to UVM students.	Yes – Outing Club with multiple levels of student leaders	Yes – WFR	Yes	Yes	Yes – Six days: backpacking or biking	Yes – Wilderness Instructor Leadership Development; Skill development series	No

University of Wyoming: <http://www.uwyo.edu/rec/outdoor-program/>

University of Alaska-Fairbanks: <https://uaf.edu/draw/outdoor-adventures/>

University of Idaho: <http://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/campus-recreation/outdoor-program>

University of Maine: <https://umaine.edu/campusrecreation/mainebound/>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: <http://mitoc.mit.edu/>.

Montana State University: <http://www.montana.edu/outdoorrecreation/>

University of New Hampshire: <http://campusrec.unh.edu/outdoor-adventures>

New Mexico State University: <https://recsports.nmsu.edu/outdoor/>

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University: <http://www.ncat.edu/student-affairs/student-services/intramural-sports/core.html>

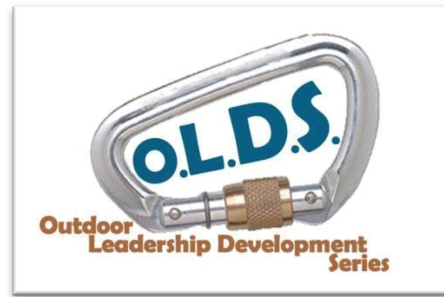
North Dakota State University: <http://und.edu/health-wellness/wellness/outpost/>

South Dakota State University: <https://www.sdstate.edu/wellness-center/outdoor-programs>

University of Vermont: <http://www.uvm.edu/~outside/>

Appendix B

OLDS Leadership Course Syllabus Greg Ley 2015



COURSE SYLLABUS ENR 2800: Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Spring Semester 2015

Instructor: Greg Ley
gley@uwyo.edu
(307) 277-5738 (cell); (307)766-2402 (office)

Office Hours: Monday 9 – 11am and Tuesday 9 – 11am.

Class times and location: Wednesdays 5:10 – 7 pm, Physical Sciences Building 231

Prerequisites: Participant in the Outdoor Leadership Development Series or National Outdoor Leadership School articulated courses for direct UW credit.

Course Description:

This class is designed to increase knowledge and competencies related to leading others in the outdoors. There is significant focus on self-awareness, judgment, and decision-making. Students can expect that teachings and experiences will be directly related to improving their ability to plan and lead backcountry trips. The specific skills and theories students learn throughout this course provide a foundation for other leadership endeavors.

Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the experiential learning cycle and its applications to leadership.
2. Develop critical communication skills such as feedback and conflict resolution.
3. Understand and develop self-awareness through reflection.
4. Understand the foundational concepts behind effective leadership.
5. Be prepared to teach fundamental outdoor skills to novices.
6. Understand and evaluate the steps necessary to plan and implement a backcountry expedition.
7. Synthesize own signature leadership style.

Expectations

1. Attend all classroom and field sessions
2. Think and act critically
3. Actively participate in discussions, exercises, and group work
4. Complete reading and homework assignments prior to class
5. Provide feedback to other students and instructors
6. Challenge existing abilities, beliefs, and comfort zones

7. Be prepared to be outside for at least 30 minutes at each class

Components of Class

1. Student-led discussions
2. Lecture
3. Experiential learning and hands-on application
4. Scenarios
5. Planning and implementing an expedition

Policies

The instructor(s) of this course reserve the right to change the content of this syllabus at any time. Students will be notified of any changes that are made in the next class meeting or via email. Students may also request changes to the syllabus, but must recognize in doing so that certain parts (some content and scheduling) of the course cannot be changed. You will have a chance at the end of the semester to evaluate the instructor(s) of this course. However, your honest feedback is also helpful throughout the course to ensure a positive experience for yourself and those that will follow you in future years.

Academic Honesty

UW Regulation 6-802. The University of Wyoming is built upon a strong foundation of integrity, respect and trust. All members of the university community have a responsibility to be honest and the right to expect honesty from others. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable to our community and will not be tolerated [from the University Catalog]. Teachers and students should report suspected violations of standards of academic honesty to the instructor, department head, or dean. Other University regulations can be found at:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/new-regulatory-structure/index.html>
<http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/new-regulatory-structure/index.html>

Non-Discrimination Statement:

It is the policy of this course to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Beyond the law, I am committed to making the class accessible to everyone, and will make any possible adjustments in order to ensure that all students are able to participate and demonstrate their abilities fully. Please discuss any concerns or requests you have with me at the beginning of the course. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with University Disability Support Services (UDSS), 109 Knight Hall, 766-6189; TTY 766-3073.

Textbooks/Readings:

Required Book: Bound, O. (2007). *Leadership the outward bound way: becoming a better leader in the workplace, in the wilderness, and in your community*. Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers Books.

Optional Book: Gilbertson, K., Bates, T., McLaughlin, T., Ewert, A. (2006). *Outdoor education, methods and strategies*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. (Chapter readings are required and available on the e-companion site for the course)

Assigned readings will also be provided in advance through e-mail or the e-companion course site.

Points Breakdown

20%	Participation and attendance (includes classroom, trips, and other meeting times)
30%	Written and Practical Assignments
35%	Expedition planning/implementation (includes planning, execution, and evaluation)
15%	Comprehensive Final Project (10 minute presentation and reflection piece)

Grade Assessment—Out of 100 possible points

100–90	A
89–80	B
79–70	C
69–60	D
≤ 59	F

Class #	Date	Theme	Reading (Complete prior to class)	Assignment due at or before class
1	Jan 28	Intro to class Teaching in the Outdoors and Leading Initiatives	OE Chapters 1, 6, 7 (PDFs)	
	Jan 30 – Feb 1	Yurt Trip!		
2	Feb 4	Leadership Styles: OB, NOLS, & Others	OB Chapters 1 (Introduction), & 2 (Becoming a leader)	
3	Feb 11	Self-Awareness, Johari window, emotional intelligence, Comfort Zones		
4	Feb 18	Shackleton Leadership, Group Development	OB Chapter 4 (Team building & trust), & Shackleton (PDF)	Designated leadership proposal
5	Feb 25	Planning an Expedition I, Conflict Resolution, Assessment of Leadership Skills	OB Chapter 7 (Planning an expedition)	
6	March 4	Judgment & Decision-Making Guest Speaker: Dan McCoy	OB Chapters 5 (Taking Risks and Making Decisions), & 6 (Finding Courage and Overcoming Fear) Heuristic Traps, McCammon, I. (PDF)	Leadership Toolbox Mid-term
7	March 11	Planning an Expedition II, Midterm class evaluation Guest Lecturer: Mark Jenkins Expedition Behavior	OB Chapter 8 (taking responsibility in the outdoors)	
8	March 13-22	Spring Break Expedition		
9	March 25	Turn in gear & money, schedule individual debriefs, SB trip discussion		SB journal and self-awareness reflection
10	April 1	Risk Management, Feedback and Communication	OB Chapter 3 (communication) OB Case Study pg. 231	SB trip evaluation
11	April 8	Waterline Model	Waterline model (PDF)	
12	April 15	Diversity in the Outdoors	Diversity reading list (PDF)	

13	April 22	Inclusion in the Outdoors		Inclusion ideas
14	April 29	Professional and Community Leadership, Jobs in Outdoor Leadership	OB Chapter 11 (workplace communication), 13 (community leadership)	
15	May 6	Designated Leadership Debrief, Revisiting Leadership		
16	May 13 (or TBD)	Final Presentations		Leadership Toolbox Final

Themes in **bold** are topics that are required for the Leadership Toolbox assignment.

Description of Assignments

Late Assignments

Late assignments may be dropped one letter grade or more unless a university excused absence or a note from a doctor is provided. Late work will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance and Participation (20% of final grade)

Attending, participating, and being involved in class means you will come prepared (having read the material and ready to contribute to a reading discussion), on-time, and actively participate in discussions and/or ask questions. Each class is satisfactory/unsatisfactory and is usually worth about 1% of your grade. One unexcused absence is already factored into participation; use this day for illness (if necessary) please. If you are sick, please do not come to class. If you need to miss class more than once, provide the instructor with a university excused absence (cleared through the Dean of Students Office) or a note from a doctor, and we will work out a way to make-up the absence.

Written and Practical Assignments (30% of final grade)

Plan and Lead a Class Activity

See rubric for more detail.

Using Gilbertson et al (2006), the DADDA acronym for team building activities, or other resources, create a lesson plan for a class initiative, team builder, or purposeful game. The lesson plan should be no longer than 3 pages, and should use a formal, clear lesson plan format, including sources used. You will then lead the activity for the OLDS class. The lesson plan for your activity is due by email and hardcopy on the day you lead it.

Designated Leadership

See rubric for more detail.

This assignment is designed to provide you the opportunity to take a designated leadership role in planning and leading a trip or event. Using the skills and resources you have learned in class, you will plan and implement an event or trip. Students can work together or solo.

The assignment has three required parts:

1. One-page proposal describing the event or trip.
2. Formal, clear lesson plan with all the details for the trip or event.
3. A written reflection on the experience. In class everyone will debrief and share their experiences (see calendar).

Available leadership options:

1. Your trip assist for the OP, depending on the nature of the trip (trips with time pressure are not good options).
2. A trip or program for the Outdoor Leadership FIG (Freshman Interest Group) students.
3. A progression of team building and “get to know you” initiatives for a group you are a member of.

4. A program for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, an after-school program, or Laramie Parks and Recreation.
5. Propose your own trip or event.

Leadership Toolbox (Mid Term and Final) See rubric for more detail.

Create a leadership toolbox that can be used as a resource as an outdoor leader. Create a custom leadership tool box that is meaningful and can be used to develop a signature leadership style. The leadership toolbox can be in any tangible form, for example a 3x5 card box or a journal/notebook. The leadership toolbox must:

- a. Include a summary of the import points from the lesson/topic.
- b. Include practical reference tips and tools for future use.
- c. Be formatted in such a way that any person can look at the topic and understand the concept.
- d. Cite where you found your resources.
- e. Include all the required topics: leading initiatives, expedition behavior, leadership styles (OB & NOLS), group development, assessment of leadership skills (Ch. 7), plus two additional topics of student choice for midterm.
- f. Include all the required topics: conflict resolution, risk management, decision making, feedback, comfort zones, plus two additional topics of student choice for final.

Expedition Assignments (35% of final grade)

Expedition Planning and Implementation

A significant part of this class is the planning and execution of an extended wilderness trip. You and your classmates are responsible for planning an entire expedition including: leadership, itinerary, budget, travel, menu, risk management plan, and evaluation. You will be given a budget at the beginning of the planning time and expected to stay within the budget and follow University and Outdoor Program policies. The trip is to be scheduled for 7-9 days during Spring Break. The grade will be split into planning, execution, and evaluation of the entire experience at the discretion of the instructor. Additionally, there are specific due-dates for items related to planning for the trip. Your group will be expected to turn in those completed assignments on-time. Please see the Spring Break Expedition Trip Planner for details related to those assignments.

Specific planning due dates:

Groups chosen, and leaders picked:	February 4 th (during class)
Location and general activities chosen:	February 10 th (day before class, emailed)
Budget plan:	February 17 th (day before class, emailed)
Meal plan, shopping list, and gear list:	February 24 th (day before class, emailed)
Permit plan:	March 3 rd (day before class, emailed)
Itinerary and maps: on March 11 th)	March 10 th (day before class, emailed; maps brought to class
Equipment pulled and marked:	March 11 th (day of class)
Paperwork scanned and emailed:	March 13 th (Friday before departure)
Gear cleaned and returned:	March 24 th (day before class)
Credit cards, receipts, etc. returned: better)	March 25 th (to OP Coordinator, by day of class; earlier is

Spring Break Journal

Each class member will keep a daily journal of their experience on the spring break trip. At a minimum, we ask that members write about the basic experiences of each day (e.g. length of hike, weather, food, interpersonal issues, equipment issues, etc.), clear evaluation of the itinerary (effectiveness, appropriateness, changes, etc.), location of camp, and any other observations about the group (e.g. mood, personal feelings about the trip, how everything is working out). The purpose of this assignment is to have you reflect on the day-to-day decisions and experiences of your small group expedition. This assignment will *not* be graded for spelling or grammar, but it must be legible, and content must be substantial.

Self-Awareness Reflection

After returning from spring break expedition, reflect on the skills and knowledge you had before you left on your trip and then reflect on the experience. This is essentially the last step in the experiential learning cycle. Write a self-

awareness paper about the experience you had and what you learned. See rubric for more details and guided questions.

Final Project and Presentation (15% of final grade)

Final Project and Presentation

See the rubric for grading details.

This reflective activity is designed to help you consider the personal growth you have experienced throughout your time with OLDS. There is a great deal of flexibility in the way you demonstrate your experience, and you may choose a form of art, writing, or verbal presentation to reflect your learning. You will be expected to present your reflection project in a 10 minute presentation. We ask that you take into consideration the time, effort, and finances that were used in supporting this program and dedicate a similar effort to the project.