Paul Petzoldt’s Perspective: 
The Final 20 Years

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Paul Petzoldt, who died in 1999, was one of the early pioneers in outdoor education that saw the future need for trained outdoor leaders. Petzoldt honed his ability to teach outdoor leadership education throughout a lifetime of guiding, teaching and writing. In an effort to foster the outdoor profession’s rich tradition, portions of unpublished manuscripts, journals, notes and letters written by Petzoldt served as sources for this article. These unpublished records were written during the last twenty years of his life and focus on the process of training outdoor leaders to conduct educational expeditions. The authors chose three interconnected, recurring themes out of a larger body of work that address refinements in Petzoldt’s philosophy and methods made over the last twenty years of his life. These refinements include: (a) crucial components in the first 24 hours of an educational expedition, (b) the “grasshopper teaching” method and, (c) judgment and decision-making.

Keywords: Paul Petzoldt, outdoor leadership, teaching methods, judgement, decision-making

Introduction

“N”ow a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code. In the days to come, though my lips were numb, in my heart how I cursed that load” (Service, 1916; The Cremation of Sam McGee). Paul Petzoldt recited this passage to emphasize that outdoor leaders must make a deep commitment to the groups they lead. Paul Petzoldt died in 1999, and for most of his life he sought to develop, define and teach outdoor leadership skills (Ringholz, 1997). He used subtle (an expressive smile), and not so subtle (kicking “billy cans” in the fire) methods to make his points. No one who learned from him ever forgot the experience. Since his first climb of the Grand Teton in 1924, he developed a desire to teach people as well as guide them through the mountains. As a climber he developed the American climbing commands and the sliding middleman technique to free climbers from being roped continuously. His strength and prowess on rock and snow are legendary (Ringholz, 1997). In every experience, with every person, he refined his understanding of outdoor leadership. During the 1932 K2 expedition he experimented with energy conservation techniques. That expedition also reinforced his belief that poor group dynamics can cause failure to reach a goal. “Expedition behavior,” a well-documented tenet of leading groups in the outdoors, (Drury & Bonney, 1992; Petzoldt, 1974; 1984) was a direct outcome of the 1932 climb (personal conversation).
Paul Petzoldt played an integral role in the development of outdoor leadership in the United States (Ringholz, 1997). Petzoldt held the position of chief instructor for the first Outward Bound School. He left behind one of the most successful outdoor leadership schools in the world, the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). After NOLS, he helped launch the Wilderness Education Association (WEA) and in his last few years he formed the Paul Petzoldt Leadership School for youth. He passionately recorded his ideas on outdoor leadership until his death. Petzoldt did not consciously use written theory about education or group development models. Instead, he was a true experiential educator whose theory came from practice. He would try an idea in the field, write it down, think about it, modify it and try again.

Little has been published about Petzoldt’s thoughts during the last twenty years of his life. Petzoldt’s books, The Wilderness Handbook (1974), Petzoldt’s Teton Trails (1976) and The New Wilderness Handbook (1984), provided the general public its first, real exposure to his written word. Following these seminal works, Petzoldt continued to teach, analyze, refine and write. Boxes of old field journals, unfinished manuscripts, letters, speeches and personal notes were pulled from the basement of his home in Maine after his death. These unpublished, historical gems provide a window into his thoughts over the last twenty years of his life. Three interconnected, recurring themes were gleaned from these writings that demonstrated his unceasing drive to explain effective training methods. These themes were aspects of leadership and teaching that are important in the planning and execution of an educational expedition. Petzoldt drilled these themes into potential leaders and instructors. They were (a) the crucial components in the first 24 hours of an educational expedition, (b) the “grasshopper teaching method” and, (c) judgment and decision-making. He emphasized these themes with one simple goal in mind—mind to train leaders to take participants into the outdoors safely and enjoyably. Paul Petzoldt’s lifelong commitment to outdoor leadership did not waver from this goal. The following are some of his ideas taken from his unpublished field journals, manuscripts, and speeches.

The First 24 Hours

Ask any outdoor leader about the most intense teaching times in a course and you will probably hear that the first day or two are the toughest. So much is happening. Group members meet each other and gear is issued. The environment and course elements produce student stress. There is an urgency to get to the field and get started. While programs differ in intent and duration, the priorities that instructors establish in the first 24 hours are critical to the success of the program. Petzoldt said it this way, “The first day of any outdoor leadership education program will be a difficult one. There is a temptation for the instructor [sic] to try to give decision-making [sic] education before going to the field—and perhaps some is necessary. That which is not absolutely necessary should be postponed till actually in the field” (Petzoldt, n.d.). The emphasis Petzoldt placed on not overloading the student with information was central to tone setting. He believed that students should learn from experience as a predictable progression unfolds on an educational expedition. Effective teaching requires setting a firm foundation of expectations, parameters and behavior balanced with the logistics of living in the wilderness. Petzoldt had a clear vision of what instructors should focus on during a course start. He did not care how neat and tidy students were in the beginning. He believed that students should get to the field quickly and instructors should begin the shakedown. He recorded his thoughts this way:

The first day we have done a lot in order to get the expedition started and we’ve started to develop judgment among the students. If some students are disturbed by fragmented and incomplete teaching of subjects, it may be necessary to explain that education in the outdoors is a continuing process, that subjects are not learned all at once, as chapters are written in a book. They will be learning a little bit about every subject the entire time that they are in the field. Hopefully this will eliminate dissatisfaction with only partial explanations of the various things they are doing. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

Petzoldt simplified the task of curriculum management by focusing on four priorities. He stressed that these priorities should be considered each day in the field. He stated his perspective by the following, when giving advice to a field instructor:

First we must make decisions (I suggest you take your students along with you on your teaching and decision-making—the thinking out loud to them) for the day considering our four priorities that we take into consideration with every decision:

The first day the leader will need to emphasize the following:

1. The safety of the individual.
2. The conservation of the environment.
3. The protection of the equipment.
4. Expedition behavior.

The safety of the individual. This concerns many aspects of safety such as avoiding blisters, sunburn, insect bites, chilling the body, overheating the body, fatigue, sprained muscles or being separated from the group.
The conservation of the environment. This concerns disposal of human waste, littering, disturbing flora and fauna, polluting water, causing fire or causing erosion.

Protection of the equipment. This concerns keeping equipment dry, avoiding loss of equipment and damage to equipment the first day and night of use. [sic]

Expedition behavior. This concerns loud and boisterous noises, meeting horses, cycles, hikers on trails, avoiding disturbing other users, obeying laws, rules, regulations, avoid disturbing wild life, avoiding conflict within your group, and promoting enjoyment and fun.

Every day we must give priority to making decisions concerning the previously described areas. Then, after that is done, the rest of the time we will teach the decision making process concerning other aspects of outdoor leadership.

[Petzoldt, n.d.]

These priorities shaped the outline of the first day and influenced information shared with students prior to arrival at a course. For example, Petzoldt resisted the temptation to give a full-blown lecture on expedition behavior at the beginning of a trip. He provided information on an “need to know basis” until he could discuss the concept in more detail.

As part of setting tone and expectations, Petzoldt emphasized the necessity of explaining the educational process. As Petzoldt alluded to earlier, students can become disturbed or distressed by not knowing the exact plan and all the facts associated with a subject. In Petzoldt’s later years, he spent significant time in the field with college students, university professors and seasoned outdoor professionals while teaching Wilderness Education Association (WEA) courses. Therefore, to deal with these populations he included in his tone-setting strategy the following advice for instructors:

Explain that there may be many ways to do outdoor skills and teach outdoor leadership. We know one way, one method that has proven to be effective and to accomplish our goals and this way, our way is the one we will teach and use on this expedition. This in no way says ours is the most effective, programmatic or productive way. We know of no ‘best’ ways – since any method can be improved as we hope our method improves and changes to be even more productive in the future.

What we wish to do for you is to teach you our proven way and encourage the development and improvement of your judgment so you can adjust the learning you receive here to the unique situations you will confront later with your own groups in different environments, with different people and with different expeditions purposes. [sic]

Therefore to make our learning most efficient and effective we ask your help in accepting our methods and our teaching on this one and only expedition. After this program or course you will have complete freedom, on your own judgment, to change what we have taught, add it to your past methods of outdoorsmanship – or dismiss it all together and go back to your previous methods you think more productive.

This understanding about not arguing about mythical ‘best’ ways will be difficult for some to understand or cooperate in keeping their arguments to themselves, especially those with experience who came to the program thinking they know the ‘best’ ways. It will be a blow to some egos to not try and enforce their methods that they think ‘right’ and ‘better’ or ‘only’ ways. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

In order to weave the four priorities throughout a course and build on concepts and skills, Petzoldt believed that a specific style of teaching was needed. Like the students Petzoldt taught in the field, he also found that new instructors were accustomed to teaching information in large chunks, such as the 50-minute college classroom lecture. For example, at the beginning of a course most assume that “how to pack a backpack” should be taught. An instructor will gather the students and give a 45-minute lecture and demonstration on the intricacies of backpacking. The lecture/discussion might be followed by having students pack their own backpacks. Petzoldt gives this advice for the first day on the trail:

Hopefully the group can reach camp without time out for a backpacking lesson. Let them struggle with their packs. Let the packs be sloppy. The first day we must get to the first camp and have time to prepare shelter and food and teach what is essential. We will probably not have time to go into details of how to pack a pack and carry a pack and put a pack on the back or other teachings. All that comes later.

It will probably be necessary to slow down the scout at the head of the line because most people have not been on educational programs. They’ve been on destination-oriented hikes and they have a habit of going as fast as possible to reach a destination. We probably can’t give much of an explanation the first day. We may explain that the first day we want to take a leisurely pace to arrive without fatigue and without blisters. If anything happens along the way appropriate for educational illustrations we will use opportunity teaching. Opportunity teaching will count for a great deal of the education and even on the first day we can seize any opportunity that might develop. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

The “Grasshopper Teaching” Method

As described above, Petzoldt used opportunity teaching to convey information on the first day of a course. Petzoldt spent a significant amount of time in his later years attempting to articulate to instructors what the ideal teaching method was for an outdoor leadership course. He coined the term “grasshopper
method" as a preferred teaching methodology. The grasshopper method of teaching allows an instructor to "hop" from one subject to another as circumstances allow. He wanted an introduction to the subject, a demonstration and practical application in close time sequence for optimal learning of outdoorsmanship (Petzoldt, 1984). This term, grasshopper method, was one of many colorful analogies that Petzoldt coined to grab the students’ attention. He was a master at it! The following are his thoughts on the grasshopper method:

This is teaching what is necessary, it is realistic and under actual conditions—the most effective type of leadership teaching. However, it is fragmented, a little of this subject, a little of that subject, a little of this skill and a little of that skill.

Thus, the teaching will be throughout the entire educational expedition. Fragmentation of learning and actual experience will be furthered by “opportunity” teaching. That is taking advantage of situations that present an unusual opportunity to teach knowledge, judgment and skills pertaining to a present and actual situation. This situation itself may present a solution based upon many subjects and parts of several skills.

This type of leadership education we call the grasshopper method is a necessary and practical method of leadership education in the field. The method places a burden on the instructor to keep track of what is taught concerning each subject by the “grasshopper method” of jumping from one subject to another as opportunity and necessity dictates. The instructor must make sure before the educational program is finished to teach and give the experience concerning the subject not covered by the necessary day to day teaching and the opportunity teaching combined. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

What is important to understand about Petzoldt’s teaching method was his attempt to formalize the process in order to present an entire curriculum. Outdoor leadership could be taught using this “hop scotch” approach of presenting information. It should be noted that the grasshopper method is actually an extension of his original thoughts on opportunity teaching. “It is very effective to use actual situations for demonstrating various facts of outdoorsmanship. Any opportunity that arises on the trail or at the campsite can trigger on-the-spot teaching” (Petzoldt, 1974, p. 268). Petzoldt was trying to explain that the grasshopper method was a more sophisticated adaptation of opportunity teaching or what is commonly known as the “teachable moment.” The grasshopper method was Petzoldt’s way of saying that instructors must systematically link teachable moments to present a complete curriculum. If the instructor could understand and apply this concept, the propensity to share too much information would not exist during the first 24 hours. More importantly, Petzoldt believed that if instructors could role model this methodology, the students would then begin to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to demonstrate judgment.

Petzoldt qualified his experience with the grasshopper method when he stated this warning to instructors. “The explanation of the difference in teaching will need to be explained and illustrated over and over and again and again before the college upperclassman, the college graduate and even the college professor, so ingrained in our educational system, can understand or apply this method” (Petzoldt, n.d.). Petzoldt went on to explain the necessity to frame the grasshopper method for the unsuspecting student:

The instructor teaching outdoor leadership under actual conditions in the field must understand how such teaching is different in method and purpose from classroom teaching. Classroom teaching generally consists of giving information by voice, reading or artificial visual aids. Though the purpose of such teaching is supposed to be effectively translated into field conditions that is not what actually takes place.

The main purpose to the student will be to memorize material so he can make a grade and pass a course by being able to speak or write the memorized material. Seldom and sometimes it never needs to be translated into decision making with real people under real circumstances.

The most effective teaching in the field though, it is fragmented to solve daily necessities and opportunity situations should not be translated into memory for the regurgitation of that memory but must be translated into decisions—decisions that are translated into action. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

**Judgment/Decision-Making Skills**

The final theme pulled from Petzoldt’s work was the importance of developing judgment and decision-making skills. Petzoldt wrote tirelessly on these concepts the last 20 years of his life, and came into contact with a new generation of students with prior outdoor leadership experience. Petzoldt’s experience showed him that a participant’s prior experience sometime, hinders further development in decision-making skills. This was not a new topic for Petzoldt. He broached the subject in his first book, *Wilderness Handbook* (Petzoldt, 1974). “Dealing with the ‘expert’ who has had some experience and wants to publicize his knowledge presents a problem. He finds it more interesting to question than to listen” (Petzoldt, 1974, p. 265). He was constantly confronted with individuals who had preconceived notions of how things must be done in the outdoors. What was unique about his last 20 years was his consistent exposure to college students and university instructors on WEA trips. Petzoldt was working with students not only with technical skills but also with preexisting leadership skills:

Since most outdoor trips made by the students have been
‘running’ trips to reach a goal and return with little or no time allowed for education and decision-making it will be difficult for many students with previous experience to adjust to the educational trip. The instructors will need to mix the necessary learning with physical activity concerning necessary skills along with explaining why it is necessary to not follow the running, exhausting habits of most outdoor trips previously experienced by the students.

The difference between the educational trip and the running exhausting, goal-oriented trip must be understood. The relaxed, enjoyable, comfortable educational expedition will be difficult for the running, stress goal-oriented experience students have previously accepted as outdoor leadership education.

Many students will start the outdoor leadership education program with ideas, truths, prejudices, and habits that hinder programmatic learning based on demonstrable situation. The teacher, instructor cannot erase these traits by words. Argument will be counter productive. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

The underlying theme for the first day and throughout the entire course is judgment/decision-making. Confronting student attitudes and preconceived notions are just a few of the several factors an instructor must address. Instructors must also think out loud and explain the “whys” of their decisions once the student’s mind is open. Petzoldt struggled to articulate how to use and teach judgment/decision-making. He believed the foundation for quality outdoor leadership was judgment and decision-making. Petzoldt professed that instructors could help students develop quality judgment and decision-making skills. To him, it was the decision-making and judgment ability that separated effective from non-effective instructors. Petzoldt’s experience showed him that students schooled through traditional education tended to be dualistic thinkers. Petzoldt explained judgment this way:

First we need to understand between ourselves what is meant by the word judgment as it relates to the wild outdoors. Judgment is the process of using previous learning and experience to make a decision and execute decisions. Therefore all the information and experience presented in the program is for the purpose of making and executing decisions in similar circumstances in the future. However, these future situations will never be exactly the same as those circumstances where the teaching takes place. Therefore the decisions will be somewhat different to fit into different circumstances such as different people, different environment, different weather, different purpose, etc.

Teaching judgment under actual realistic conditions in actual environments with actual people gives a vast combination of decision-making experiences that the student can remember to apply to his future leadership. If the student memorizes the decisions and methods used, he [sic] may be able to describe the process in words and speech to pass an exam. However, if the learning is to be effective in the future, the memorized response will not be adequate. Decisions will not be the same and the executions will not be the same as the memorized process.

How then do we teach the student this ability to have judgment in these future situations? One method is to be sure the student knows what we call the ‘Whys’ in relation to making and executing the decisions in the particular situation under which we are teaching.

Why are we teaching the subject?
Why are we teaching it now?
Why is our decision working?
Why does it apply to our purpose?
Why is it being done the way it is being done?

Judgment decision-making, according to Petzoldt, was the combination of information available at the moment combined with past experience to yield a decision. All decisions should reduce the odds of injury or loss to people, conserve the environment and protect equipment needed for the expedition. Petzoldt attempted to emphasize the importance of judgment by making a comparison to the average person’s attitude towards technical skills:

Skill level is not the most important part of outdoor leadership. Having judgment is the most important aspect. Another important aspect is knowing one’s limitations and knowing one’s ability. Having judgment to accept leadership within one’s limitations [sic]. Since faulty planning is responsible for about 75% of deaths, accidents, search and rescue and plain unrewarding trips [sic]. Being taught the knowledge and judgment of how to plan a trip is indispensable to trip leadership. This is generally not considered a ‘skill.’ Skill in the outdoors is interpreted by most outdoors men [sic] to mean experience in physical activities such as biking, climbing, canoeing, etc.

Judgment and ability to plan and execute expedition behavior and judgment on how to use and still conserve the environment are far more important than the ‘skills’ unless you consider all the above ‘skills’, which is not the tendency of the average person. (Petzoldt, n.d.)

Petzoldt sometimes would say that judgment is the result of previous bad decisions. Therefore, it is important to give students information and reasons why decisions are made. The leader can accomplish this by thinking out loud. The process of thinking out loud at the beginning of a course is a crucial step in the development of a student’s judgment. Petzoldt thought that
future judgments would be more sound if the "whys" of past decisions were clear.

Summary

Paul Petzoldt was one of the early pioneers in outdoor education that saw a future need for trained outdoor leaders (Ringholz, 1997). He spent the majority of his life searching for ways to move groups through the wilderness safely and enjoyably. Was he successful in his quest? Certainly we must admire any educator who stayed focused and true to his/her calling. What Petzoldt had was a true calling to develop methods necessary to meet his seemingly simple goal. The amount of material that he wrote in his lifetime and in big, scrawling longhand during the last twenty years of his life was testimony to his commitment. He refused to end the search of finding more effective ways to teach future outdoor leaders. A diminishing community of first generation outdoor leaders who learned directly from Paul Petzoldt can still be found in the field. However, scores of second and third generation outdoor leaders who may have heard of Petzoldt or maybe even heard him speak in his later years have now moved into industry leadership positions. They enjoyed his story telling ability but to experience his methods firsthand no longer exists.

Paul Petzoldt did not use theory. He made theory by learning from his rich experience. In the 1960s and 1970s he recognized that outdoor leaders had to take better care of the environment and testified during the Wilderness Act hearings for better education about the environment. He put low impact camping methods into his curriculum despite his past guiding practices of leaving cans in the backcountry. He was willing to change and tinker with ideas and equipment as technology emerged. He never stayed fixed on one idea as "the truth." The authors have chosen only three topics that seemed to have dominated Petzoldt's thoughts in the last twenty years of his life. These thoughts included: (a) crucial components in the first 24 hours of an educational expedition, (b) the "Grasshopper Teaching" method and, (c) judgment and decision-making. Petzoldt would simply say, "rules are for fools." It was instructor judgment that dictated all appropriate decisions. Petzoldt believed that the methodology used on an educational expedition must be different from other types of expeditions. Like a grasshopper, the instructor will hop from subject to subject as opportunities arise while systematically covering a curriculum. Instructors must also explain the "whys" of every decision so the student could comprehend on a deeper level. He understood the importance of setting a strong tone and tried to help leaders through a very intensive time at course start by giving them a system of priorities to guide their decisions.

While his central ideas have remained the same over the years, Petzoldt's perspective was subject to refinement during the last twenty years of his life. We should harbor the valuable lessons that have been passed down in our rich tradition of outdoor leadership. It is a privilege to share pieces of Petzoldt's work with outdoor professionals so his legacy will not be lost. Petzoldt actively paved our future until the very day he died. Petzoldt left us with a perspective that continues to merit discussion. What remained unchanged for Petzoldt, and for us, today, was the "burden of the load"—the outdoor leader's commitment to the group must run deep.

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References


Inclusive Outdoor Education: Facilitating Groups that Include People with Disabilities

Deborah Sugerman

As people with disabilities become increasingly involved in outdoor adventure programming, it becomes the responsibility of the practitioner to facilitate safe and effective inclusive programs. This article introduces the Model of Inclusive Facilitation that leads practitioners through a process of gathering information and learning techniques to facilitate groups that include both people with and without disabilities. The model includes: (a) developing a resource base of written materials and community contacts, (b) addressing personal attitudes as well as learning general language and interaction guidelines, (c) obtaining information specific to a client’s disability, (d) designing adaptations to make programs structurally and programmatically accessible, (e) implementing the program, and (f) evaluating the process. The goal of the model is to enable facilitators to be comfortable and competent in including people with disabilities in their programs by developing the ability to focus on participants’ abilities rather than disabilities.

Key words: disabilities, outdoor education, adventure education, accessibility, inclusion

People with disabilities are increasingly involved in adventure programs. Recent research indicates that patterns of participation in adventure activities for people with and without disabilities are similar (McCormick, n.d.). Individuals are not interested in participating in segregated programs designed specifically for people with disabilities, but are interested in participating in programs that are inclusive. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legally provides access to inclusive adventure programs and ensures that people with disabilities have opportunities that are similar to those of the rest of the population (McAvoy & Lais, 1999; Sugerman, 1993). As a result of the ADA, the responsibility for inclusion rests with the facilitators of adventure programs. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to ensure that s/he is knowledgeable about disability issues and is able to safely, effectively, and successfully implement programs for all individuals who participate in adventure activities, including those who have disabilities.

The purpose of this article is to introduce a model that leads practitioners through a process of facilitating outdoor adventure groups that include people with disabilities. It offers a sequential outline of steps that will enable the facilitator to become more comfortable with, and more knowledgeable about, disabilities. My experience has been that many facilitators, novice or seasoned, have little experience working with people who have disabilities, and are sometimes at a loss concerning where to begin learning effective techniques. After many years of teaching an undergraduate course about how to include people with disabilities in adventure programs, I realized that the process I used to help students develop necessary skills and attitudes was applicable to a broader population of adventure facilitators. The concepts of the process were developed to form The Model of Inclusive Facilitation (see Figure 1). The goals of the model are to enable practitioners to: (a) be comfortable

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and competent in including people with disabilities in their programs, (b) develop the ability to focus on participants’ abilities rather than disabilities and, (c) manage and minimize the impact of a disability on the adventure experience. The model starts with the development of a resource base of written materials and community contacts that can be accessed by the facilitator. It continues by addressing personal attitudes and feelings about working with people who may have different needs than the typical participant, as well as general teaching guidelines concerning facilitating groups that include people with disabilities. The next step in the model involves obtaining information specific to a client’s disability from the resource base and from the client. The following step entails developing adaptations to make programs structurally and programatically accessible. The next steps in the model include trying out the adaptations in a practice environment, and implementing the program. The final step in the model involves reflection on, and evaluation of, the process outlined in the model.

Developing a Base of Resources

The first step in the Model of Inclusive Facilitation (See Figure 1. Step 1) involves the development of a base of community resource people and written resource materials. This base will form a support structure from which facilitators can gather information and obtain feedback. The resources will be instrumental when designing a plan of how to include individuals with a disability in adventure programs, and should be developed before any clients with disabilities take part in programming. To build a network of resource people, contact local organizations in the community such as centers for independent living, therapeutic recreation departments at local colleges and universities, rehabilitation hospitals, disability specific organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, or the state Department of Rehabilitation. The network should include people with disabilities and professionals who have backgrounds in working with people with disabilities. The two groups may offer different perspectives and information, depending on facilitator needs. People with disabilities may be good resources concerning questions about a specific disability or care of equipment related to a specific disability. Professionals in the disability field, many of whom have disabilities themselves, may be good references for ideas about adapting equipment, or the implications of certain disabilities for outdoor activities. In addition to local resource people, national organizations that specifically work with people who have disabilities in integrated adventure settings, such as the American Canoe Association (www.acanet.org). Project Adventure (www.pa.org), Wilderness Inquiry (www.wildernessinquiry.org), and C.W. HOG (www.isu.edu/department/cwhog), are excellent resources. Other national organizations include the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (http://www.nrpa.org/index.cfm?publicationID=21), and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (http://www.nrpa.org/index.cfm?publicationID=21). These organizations, as well as similar local organizations, may be able to provide information about disabling conditions, ideas about adapting equipment, and suggestions concerning managing and leading inclusive outdoor adventure programs.
Addressing Personal Attitudes

The next step in the Model of Inclusive Facilitation (See Figure 1, Step 2) entails recognizing, understanding, and confronting personal attitudes about people with disabilities. Because of the manner in which American society has previously removed people with disabilities from everyday life, most of us have not had personal contact with anyone who has a disability. Most discomfort comes from not knowing what to say or how to act around people with disabilities. This step in the model is an opportunity to examine attitudes towards disabilities, and to change attitudinal barriers in facilitating groups that include people with disabilities.

From their experiences with disabilities, Paige and Carpenter (1986) described a dichotomous approach to working with people with disabilities (see Figure 2). They stated that people with disabilities are viewed from either a compensation or a transcendence viewpoint. The compensation approach is based on the belief that people with disabilities have suffered a loss because of their disability that results in the individual not being whole or complete. It is the trained professional who provides the assistance that the individual with a disability needs in order to compensate for the loss. In this approach, the job of the facilitator is to help the individual with a disability compensate for loss by providing human and technological aids. The facilitator becomes the expert, giving advice and teaching methods of using technology to overcome the disability. The transcendence approach is based on the belief that each individual is a whole person and has the ability to become the manager of his or her life. The professional works with an individual with a disability so that s/he can achieve personal control of the human and technological aids necessary for independence. Using this approach, the job of a facilitator is to provide resources and facilitate the adventure experience (Paige & Carpenter, 1986). The model of perspectives on disability is helpful to facilitators in examining their personal belief system concerning disabilities. Ultimately, the goal is to view people with disabilities as valuable, contributing members of the community, and the practitioner as the facilitator of the experience. Understanding values

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Figure 2. Model of perspectives on disability.

1. a well administered, well documented program,
2. appropriate numbers of qualified staff to participants (based on the type of activities, staff qualifications, environmental conditions, and the physical/cognitive requirements of the activities),
3. appropriate activities and locations for participants and,
4. appropriate methods of informing participants of potential risks involved (Schleien et al., 1993).
and beliefs concerning people with disabilities, and being willing to address prejudices, is an important step in providing effective facilitation for inclusive adventure programming.

Equally important in addressing attitudes is learning general guidelines regarding speaking and interacting with people with disabilities. Learning current and appropriate language helps facilitators communicate effectively on the subject of disability and shows respect to persons with whom the facilitator is communicating and interacting (Language is a powerful tool, n.d.). Language guidelines include:

- Using the term person with a disability because s/he is a person first and secondly has a disability.
- Avoiding terms that group all individuals with disabilities together such as the deaf or the disabled.
- Avoiding terms that stereotype people with disabilities such as brave, inspirational, unfortunate, or special.
- Using the term people with disabilities rather than trendy terms such as physically challenged, differently abled, or handi-capable (Language is a powerful tool, n.d.; Weber & Zeller, 1990).

Interacting with a person with a disability involves treating that individual as a person first; the disability should be a secondary consideration. Guidelines for interacting that avoid stereotyping people with disabilities in inappropriate ways include:

- Speaking directly to the person who has a disability;
- Respecting privacy by not asking personal questions that you would not ask a person without a disability;
- Respecting personal property (e.g., not leaning on someone’s wheelchair without permission);
- Asking first if assistance is needed rather than assuming it is needed (Interactions with people who have disabilities, n.d.; Weber & Zeller, 1990).

Learning general guidelines around speaking and interacting with people with disabilities presents an opportunity to utilize the written resources and personal contacts previously developed to become familiar with, and ask questions about, disability issues, and also to learn about people with disabilities as individuals, not as their disabilities.

Obtaining Specific Information

When a potential client has an identified disability, the facilitator needs to obtain specific information about that disability and the implications for adventure programs. The resource base developed in the first step of the model (see Figure 1, Step 1) will be important in obtaining this specific information. Having written information about certain impairments gives facilitators a general idea of what they might expect from a person with that particular disability. The resource books listed not only describe specific disabilities, but also health and safety issues, implications for instruction and possible equipment adaptations for various disabilities. Facilitators can refer to books and articles to answer questions they may have, or to reinforce learned information. Community resources can share information related to specific disability issues, such as methods of transferring, care of leg bags, care of hearing aids, etc. A person who uses a wheelchair would be an excellent resource to discuss how the chair is used and how to take care of it during adventure activities.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of information that is available. Start slowly with information that is immediately important and relevant to current programs. Read information, access websites, and talk to people who know about the disability in which you are interested, as well as people who have the specific disability themselves. The more information gathered on a topic, the more specific questions will arise and hopefully be answered, and the more generalizable the information will be to other disability groups.

This stage (See Figure 1, Step 3) also includes gathering information from the participants themselves, including medical information and a pre-program interview. The medical information sheet should be a general, non-discriminatory form that is used with all students. Examples can be seen in several of the books included in the written resource section of the model (e.g., Schleien et al., 1993; Weber & Zeller, 1990) and can be obtained from wilderness medical organizations such as SOLO (www.solo.com) and Wilderness Medical Associates (www.wildmed.com). An interview should be conducted with able or disabled participants in order to develop a mutual understanding of expectations and to estimate the participant’s ability level. Questions that will help develop a picture of how s/he will fit into the program might include: specifics about the disability, management of symptoms, how long the participant has had the disability, previous experience doing adventure activities, and activities in which the participant is regularly involved. At this point, it is imperative for both student and instructor to understand the importance of teamwork: the instructor is usually the expert in the adventure program, the participant is usually the expert in his/her disability. The team of instructor and participant will work together to make the experience as successful and positive as possible.
Developing Adaptations

The next step in the Model of Inclusive Facilitation (See Figure 1, Step 4) involves developing adaptations, or making changes in the standard components of an activity or program. In designing programs for people with disabilities, several types of adaptations may be possible: equipment adaptations, procedural adaptations, skill sequence adaptations, environmental modifications, and program modifications (Schleien et al., 1993). An example of an equipment adaptation is the use of a folding lightweight fabric seat (e.g., Crazy Creek Chair) to provide back support in canoeing or kayaking. A procedural adaptation may involve having a participant wear a Type I Personal Flotation Device (PFD) rather than the customary Type III PFD for more flotation in the front. An example of an adaptation of skill sequence is having a participant enter a kayak on land, then launching it into the water. Starting a kayaking course on a dock instead of a sandy beach that is difficult to access in wheelchairs is an example of adapting the environment in which the program takes place. Learning how to paddle in a swimming pool before kayaking in the ocean is an example of a program modification or adaptation. Based on the participant interview and community contacts, the facilitator may have a good idea of the general type of adaptations that may be necessary in the adventure program. The following general guidelines ensure that all persons are participating in the program in as typical a manner as possible, and that the perceived differences between people with and without disabilities are reduced:

1. Adapt on an individual basis. Each person is different. People who have the same disability will be very different in their abilities to accomplish a specific task. In order to adapt for each specific individual, begin by analyzing the skills involved in the program, then analyze the participant's ability to perform the skills by discussing the program with him/her. Work as a team; the facilitator is knowledgeable about the program and equipment, and the individual with a disability is knowledgeable about his or her abilities. Together, discuss the implications of the activities and what modifications might be needed.

2. Adapt only as necessary. As much as possible, standard equipment should be used for activities and adaptations made only as needed. The more extensive an adaptation, the more it may adversely affect the basic nature of the activity. The more complicated the adaptation, the more likely something will go wrong. The equipment may be changed so much that the individual is unable to use it in the manner it is supposed to be used. Extensive adaptations also stand out and make it known that the individual is "different" from the rest of the group. Care should be taken to make sure that adaptations are needed and are as unobtrusive as possible.

3. Adapt for functionality. It is not necessary to purchase expensive specialized equipment to adapt gear. Most adaptations can be designed with simple materials such as duct tape and closed cell foam. The idea is to use what is readily available so people can develop similar adaptations on their own if needed. By having several ideas in mind, the instructor/participant team can decide what option may work best. Experimentation with ideas will most likely result in creative and useful adaptations (Aronson, n.d.; Schleien et al., 1993; Weber & Zeller, 1990).

Adaptations bridge the gap between the abilities of the participant and the demands of the activity and are an important step in the Model of Inclusive Facilitation. Generally, it is important to try out any adaptations in a controlled environment before using them extensively. Practicing the activity with the adaptations ensures that the adaptations work as desired, and allows the opportunity to solve problems that may arise. Experimenting in a safe, controlled environment will give both the participant and facilitator confidence in the equipment and the program model. The most important piece involved in implementing any adaptations is the facilitator's attitude that success involves collaboration between him/herself and the participant with a disability.

Implementing the Program

The next stage in the Model of Inclusive Facilitation (See Figure 1, Step 5) entails bringing together the skills developed in the previous steps of the model and implementing the program. At this point, facilitators may realize that their teaching and group management skills transfer easily to inclusive groups. Once adaptations are in place, instructing a person with a disability is usually similar to instructing a non-disabled participant. An effective facilitator recognizes that each person in the group has the ability to contribute to the overall success of the program by focusing on the abilities of group members, rather than disabilities. This approach sets the tone of the program, and allows for creative problem solving among all the group members.

Implementing programs includes not only physical integration (e.g., adapting equipment so that an individual with a disability can participate in a program), but also social integration or the development of mutually beneficial relationships between people with and without disabilities (Lais, 1987). This can be accomplished through setting group guidelines, modeling appropriate behavior, and developing symbiotic relationships among participants. Developing guidelines involves the group discussing how members will treat each other.
during the program (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). This discussion is an appropriate place for each participant to express goals, expectations, needs, and fears for the upcoming program. The facilitator sets the expectation that, by working together, the group will be able to overcome any individual difficulties and be able to reach group and personal goals. The group guidelines should be reviewed periodically during the program to ensure that participants are comfortable with them and are working towards accomplishing them.

Some able-bodied participants may not have experience being around individuals with disabilities, and may not know how to communicate or interact with them. The facilitator’s role at this point is to model respect for each individual in the group and appropriate communication and interaction techniques. The initial discussion of individual needs will set the stage for behavior guidelines, but it is through role modeling by the facilitator that participants will see appropriate behavior in action, and will transfer this knowledge to their own actions. Any issues that arise concerning attitudes or actions can be seen by the facilitator as an opportunity to educate group members in the process of inclusion.

Developing symbiotic relationships involves teaming individuals with differing abilities to accomplish goals and tasks (McAvoy & Lais, 1999). An example might be teaming an individual who has balance difficulties with someone who uses a wheelchair. This relationship allows for stability for the person walking and extra momentum when necessary for the person in the wheelchair. Symbiotic relationships infer that each party in the relationship contributes to the accomplishment of the goal or task and is considered an equal member of the relationship. Through creative problem solving the group can find solutions to issues that arise during the program.

Evaluating the Process

Through evaluation of the process outlined in the model (See Figure 1, Step 6), the facilitator identifies areas that were strengths in implementing the program and areas that need additional attention. The evaluation is done on both an informal and formal basis. Informal evaluation occurs throughout the program as facilitators interact with participants and observe their responses to particular aspects of the program. Reflection on these responses, and discussion with group members and other facilitators, can reinforce effective program elements and generate ideas for improvement. Through more formal evaluation, each step in the process is reviewed with the goal of finding specific information that will better enable the practitioner to facilitate clients with disabilities. For example, it might be found that more community resources are needed for assistance in understanding the implications of specific disabilities in outdoor environments. It is through these evaluation methods that the facilitator begins to build a stronger base of knowledge, skill, and attitude concerning the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into adventure programming.

Conclusion

At this point, facilitators should feel comfortable and competent including people with disabilities in adventure programs. They will have the knowledge of where to go for resources, how to ask for help when needed, and how to work together with an individual who has a disability in order to make programs successful. Inclusion presents a unique challenge and opportunity for adventure educators. By working through the Model of Inclusive Facilitation, practitioners will be able to successfully instruct a more diverse grouping of people. The techniques used by the facilitators will enable each individual, regardless of ability level, to utilize his or her unique skills and abilities. The techniques will also offer opportunities for all individuals to begin to appreciate and value diversity. In diverse groups, members may find that they have much in common with each other. Stereotypes may be confronted, discomfort eased, and distance between individuals reduced (Anderson, Schleien, McAvoy, Lais, & Seligman, 1997; McAvoy, Schatz, Stutz, Schleien, & Lais, 1989). The end result will be an atmosphere where differences are honored and embraced as opportunities to learn about others and ourselves.
References


Leadership and Gender-Role Congruency: A Guide for Wilderness and Outdoor Practitioners

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Research in the field of psychology concerning gender and leadership (e.g., Carli, 1999; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Jordan, 1991; Rojahn & Willemsen, 1994; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989) unveils a challenging paradox for women leaders. If women assume a leadership style that is gender-role incongruent—a stereotypically "masculine" leadership style—they may receive negative evaluations from their participants. This creates particular challenges in outdoor and wilderness contexts where leaders need to be able to employ a variety of leadership methods. So what choices do women have in developing a successful leadership style? How can male and female leaders address gender-role expectations in their programs? Outdoor and wilderness leaders can break down gender-role expectations by identifying their leadership styles and internalized gender biases, creating awareness in colleagues of gender-role expectations, and mentoring program participants in becoming effective leaders.

Key words: gender-role congruency, gender-role expectations, women's leadership, wilderness leadership

Introduction

How can I be an effective leader and educator? This question is asked over and over by reflective practitioners in the outdoor and wilderness education fields. Such educators receive constant feedback and evaluations on performance from colleagues, participants, and administrators, and based on this information, attempt to meet everyone’s expectations. How many of these expectations are based on gender?

Research in the field of psychology concerning gender and leadership (e.g., Carli, 1999; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Jordan, 1991; Rojahn & Willemsen, 1994; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989) unveils a challenging paradox, particularly for women leaders. Effective leaders use a variety of leadership styles, both masculine and feminine, as well as those not associated with a particular gender, based on situational circumstances. If women, however, assume a leadership style that is perceived as masculine—directive and assertive, and thus gender-role incongruent—they are often evaluated negatively. This creates particular challenges in outdoor and wilderness contexts where leaders sometimes need to employ a variety of leadership methods. So how can women be successful leaders and be judged based on performance rather than gender?

First, it is important to concede that leaders are eval-
uated based upon a variety of factors: gender, race, sexual orientation, attractiveness, level of experience, social class, etc. (Swim et al., 1989). There are also variables within those categories. Some people, for instance, do not identify as either male or female, or gay or lesbian. Sorting through the possibilities of why a participant has certain expectations of a leader could be an infinite task. Additionally, when working collaboratively, leaders are often evaluated in comparison to their counterpart: male/female, program director/assistant, white/non-white. Gender is just one of many ways that participants stereotype their leaders, yet it is a significant one.

How does the gender-role congruency theory apply to outdoor and wilderness education contexts, and how can women leaders maintain a leadership style based on situational needs rather than expectations of their gender? How can male colleagues become familiar with the gender-role dilemma faced by female leaders and also identify ways to break down gender-role stereotypes?

The Dilemma

A woman who is a leader is already gender-role incongruent because men in American society are expected to be in leadership positions whereas women are expected to be in subordinate positions (Jordan, 1991). Compounding the problem, a woman in a more traditionally female-dominated role, like teaching, "would receive fewer negative sanctions than would a woman in a leadership role as a construction crew supervisor" (Jordan, p. 236). Female outdoor leaders are therefore doubly gender-role incongruent in that they lead in a traditionally male-dominated arena (Jordan) where some masculine-attributed actions, such as technical climbing, teaching survival skills, making emergency decisions, or making scientific presentations, are necessary. All respondents in Jordan's study, in fact, expressed a preference for male outdoor leaders. Before a woman outdoor leader can even exhibit a leadership style, she is already facing a bias just by occupying that position.

Looking at leadership styles further complicates matters. Gender-role expectations suggest that masculine leaders are autonomous, organized, task-oriented (Guido-DiBrito, Noteboom, Nathan, & Fenty, 1995), controlling, unemotional, directive, assertive (Roijahn & Willemsen, 1994), autocratic, dominating, or independent (Eagly et al., 1992). Feminine leaders, on the other hand, are mediating, facilitating, less efficient, less action-oriented (Rogers, 1995), understanding, helpful, warm (Roijahn & Willemsen), democratic, unselfish, collaborative, interpersonally oriented, concerned with others, or emotionally expressive (Eagly).

Women in positions of leadership who have a more masculine leadership style, and are therefore gender-role incongruent, face negative evaluations and reactions from participants. In Carli's (1999) study on social influence, women who displayed competence, directness, or authority wield less influence than men who display similar behavior. Additionally, female leaders suffered negative evaluations when they used a directive leadership style, whereas men could use a variety of styles without repercussions. In the study by Eagly and Karawawska (1992), women were negatively evaluated when they exhibited masculine leadership styles and particularly when they were autocratic. Yet, one of the reasons women were seen as less desirable outdoor leaders than men, was because men were more authoritative and more capable of administrative roles (Jordan, 1991).

On the other hand, if a woman in an outdoor or wilderness setting has a feminine or gender-role congruent leadership style, she would be evaluated positively (Roijahn & Willemsen, 1994) for her interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills, or participant nurturing, but not for her technical or physical skills (Jordan, 1991). In outdoor settings, however, masculine forms of leadership are often necessary. In the case of an emergency, for example, it's not wise to seek group consensus on what action to take.

The research findings on men and gender-role congruency are conflicting. In a study by Roijahn and Willemsen (1994), both male and female leaders were devalued for acting in gender-role incongruent ways when group members were of equal status and there was no assigned leader. In the Eagly et al. (1992) study, having a feminine leadership style did not negatively influence evaluations for male leaders.

The essence of any truly successful leader is the ability to use a variety of leadership styles based on the requirements of the situation (Symphony Orchestra Institute, 1998). In outdoor and wilderness programs, both masculine and feminine leadership styles are essential. Participants need to be nurtured and supported by both male and female leaders. The use of consensus and democratic forms of decision-making, moreover, demonstrates inclusivity and being open to different ideas. In the event of an emergency or in teaching technical skills, however, educators must be autocratic and authoritative in order to ensure everyone's safety. Some decisions need to be made solely by group leaders because only they have the experience with the skill being taught, the risks of a certain route, or the weather patterns of the area; they also have the responsibility of the group to consider. It cannot be expected that women leaders maintain an exclusively feminine role, nor should they be penalized for having to assume this role.

In summary, based on the gender-role congruency theory, women who demonstrate masculine leadership styles in wilderness and outdoor settings are negatively
evaluated by program participants. Men do not have as many difficulties in exhibiting gender-role incongruences and have more options for utilizing different leadership styles. Women leaders clearly face a difficult dilemma. They can either act in accordance with gender-role expectations (not exhibiting status and competence even when a masculine style is required), or receive negative evaluations from participants. How can both male and female outdoor and wilderness leaders work effectively and supportively with this dilemma?

Suggestions to Leaders

With all these conflicting messages, how can women successfully and effectively lead wilderness and outdoor programs? How can male counterparts support women’s leadership styles and break down gender-role expectations? There are three ways, appropriate for both male and female leaders, to create awareness about the dominant systemic influences that constrain or limit women’s actions as leaders:

1. Identify leadership styles and internal biases.

2. Create awareness in colleagues of gender-role expectations.

3. Mentor program participants in becoming effective leaders.

In this way, outdoor and wilderness leaders can create learning environments where the voices of men and women carry equal weight, and where leaders can be evaluated based on performance and not gender-role congruence.

Identify Leadership Styles and Internal Biases

It is essential to first look at your own leadership style, the educational context, and internal biases you may exhibit as a leader. Take time to journal on, think about, or discuss leadership styles and gender issues with colleagues or mentors. Consider the following questions:

- How would you describe your leadership style?
- Would you characterize your leadership style as more masculine or feminine?
- How is your leadership style limited, or supported, by the gender-role expectations of your colleagues or participants?
- How does the context in which you’re working necessitate one leadership style or another?
- What are some of the reactions to your leadership style from men? From women?
- How have you responded to these reactions, both professionally and personally?

- What would you like to change about how you react?
- Do you compete for power or status with your male or female colleagues?
- How has the nature of being in wild and outdoor landscapes (dealing with emergency situations, poor weather, and physically demanding work) shaped your leadership style?

Another part of understanding your leadership style is confronting your own biases toward gender issues, leadership, and authority. Again, thinking reflectively upon a series of questions may help you to identify areas where you are expressing your own gender-role expectations:

- What are your expectations of leaders based on gender?
- How have you confronted authority in the past and did your actions differ based on the gender of the leader?
- Do you favor working with or mentoring one gender more than the other?
- Do you call upon or depend on male participants more than female participants, or vice versa, especially in crisis or in physically demanding situations?
- Do you perceive wilderness education as a male-dominated field?

It is important to understand your own biases because participants learn more from what you do than what you say. If you want to eliminate expectations based on gender, yet look to the male participants in your program to do the physically strenuous tasks, you are presenting a conflicting message.

Identifying your leadership style, internal biases, and the situations where you want to use different behaviors may make it easier to discuss gender-role expectations with participants and colleagues. This information may also make you more adept at advocating for yourself, or for women, the use of masculine leadership styles.

Create Awareness in Colleagues of Gender-Role Expectations

Your colleagues and team members are essential participants in implementing effective programs and recognizing where gender-role discrimination might be impeding program success. Having colleagues who understand gender-role congruency theory and how this manifests itself during programs is crucial for program implementation. Two ways to create awareness in colleagues are pre-program discussions about gender-role
expectations and team leadership, as well as in-program support regarding gender-role conflicts or issues.

Prior to the start of the program, discuss leadership styles with your team members. You can use the questions from the previous section as a start. Discussions around each person's leadership goals will help to clarify needs and expectations of each team member. Consider the gender dynamic created by the team makeup and how this will impact participants' expectations. For example, a male program director with two female assistants may create an imbalance in the team dynamic. How can team members mitigate participants' gender-role expectations by modifying individual actions? Talk about ways to intervene in situations where issues of gender or reactions to authority arise in the group (or in your team). When should someone intervene? Who should facilitate the intervention? Is intervention an appropriate reaction given the educational priorities of your program? In planning your program, be mindful of linguistic sexism and gender exclusive language in your program and its literature.

Additionally, find mentors outside your team with whom you can share frustrations, failures, and successes or with whom you can discuss how to address gender-role issues. Look to a leader you admire or a co-worker, or boss who has experience dealing with leadership, gender, and authority issues and who can give you suggestions and advice when it is needed.

During the program, check with your team members about both team and group dynamics. Reflect upon the way that decisions are being made or on established patterns that may relate to gender-roles. When tasks arise that could be perceived as being masculine or feminine, ensure that there is a balance of male and female leadership for both. Making unpopular decisions may be one of the more unpleasant leadership tasks and is the area where women may receive more criticism for being directive or autocratic. Here, too, is where the team should reflect upon any established patterns or potential participant reactions in order to decide who should present a decision or be the leadership “voice.”

Create situations during the program in which each team member, regardless of gender, can establish competence, status, and authority in front of program participants. Support decisions made by team members in front of the group, even when you may not agree with them, or devise ways for team members to be able to make decisions on their own. Allow for mistakes and give supportive feedback to each other. Shake up leadership roles. Rotate being "facilitator of the day" to create an equal leadership presence for all team members.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, be willing to intervene on behalf of your co-workers. When criticism of a person's leadership style is being directed towards a colleague, it is often extremely difficult for that person to intervene on her/his own behalf. No one, leader or participant, should be entirely blamed for a problem and no one should be subjected to more than two or three people criticizing her/him publicly (unless it is that person's choice to do so). When situations arise where a person is receiving excessive amounts of criticism, it is your job to intervene—take a break, stop the discussion, and allow the feedback or dialogue to continue in a different format or at a different time. Our working and teaching environments (backcountry, classroom, or ropes course) should be places where people are supported to grow professionally and personally, and our ability to intervene at appropriate times will assist this growth.

Unfortunately, none of these strategies may entirely prevent reactions to gender-role incongruent actions. They will, however, enable you to identify the root of the reaction and address it not from feeling criticized personally, but from understanding that you are being criticized for acting outside of the expected gender-role. These strategies will also create a team of people who are sensitive and aware of gender-role expectations, and who are willing to intervene in situations that might become harmful either for the leader or the participants.

**Mentor Program Participants in Becoming Effective Leaders**

Not all wilderness or outdoor programs aim to break down gender-role expectations. Most programs, however, do strive to inspire competent and effective leadership in their participants, regardless of age. As stated before, good leaders use a variety of leadership styles (both masculine and feminine) depending on the situation and participants are often called upon to demonstrate their leadership capabilities. In this manner, the same techniques used to support colleagues in assuming a variety of leadership styles can be used with participants. Acknowledge and teach different leadership methods, and if appropriate, discuss gender-role expectations. Ensure equal opportunities for all participants to assume leadership roles and encourage them to try different leadership methods. Have resources on leadership and gender available for participants who may be interested in finding out more about these topics.

Another way to provide participants with leadership opportunities is to create single-gender space. This is an excellent way to enable participants to explore different leadership styles and it may create opportunities for participants to assume roles that would automatically be assumed by the other gender. Having separate men and women's camps is one way to create opportunities for participants to assume leadership roles without fear of embarrassment or of making a mistake. Single-gender
space, however, needs to be consciously facilitated so that it does not become exclusionary of participants who do not identify with being either male or female. Having to choose one or the other may put that person in an uncomfortable position. One way to address this is to have a third-group option for participants who are uncomfortable in single-gender space or who may be transgendered. Moreover, have a ceremony, ritual, or discussion when the groups come together to share experiences and to reflect upon the activity. This kind of whole-group processing can create group ownership of separate experiences. Reflection upon why single-gender space is important is also a great way to create awareness of gender differences and similarities, and to discuss group dynamics in single-gender environments. This is a useful tool especially if your group is training to be outdoor leaders themselves.

Conclusion

Female leaders in wilderness and outdoor settings face a challenging dilemma because "behavior that violates gender-role expectations elicits penalties such as social rejection and negative evaluations" (Rojahn & Willemsen, 1994, p. 1). If women assume a leadership style that is gender-role incongruent—and being directive or assertive, for example—they may receive negative evaluations from their participants even though situations necessitate such behavior. Successful leaders need to be able to assume many different styles in order to react effectively to particular situations encountered (Symphony Orchestra Institute, 1998). Women are additionally gender-role incongruent just by being a leader in a traditionally male-dominated field (Jordan, 1991). What choices do women have, then, around developing a successful leadership style? How can male leaders address gender-role expectations? Outdoor and wilderness leaders, both male and female, can break down gender-role expectations by identifying their own leadership styles and internalized gender biases, creating awareness in colleagues of gender-role expectations, and mentoring program participants in becoming effective leaders.

These are not simple steps to take; addressing gender-role expectations in program groups can be extremely challenging. For many programs, addressing gender issues is not the focus or the intention of the curriculum. Finding time to discuss gender dynamics with either colleagues or participants, especially when that is not the focus, is difficult. As reflective outdoor and wilderness leaders, however, it is important to look critically at our leadership practices and what participants learn from them. Even though gender may not be the focus of your program, you are teaching participants about leadership and gender every time you make a decision, act gender-role congruently or incongruently, or manifest an internalized gender bias. Wilderness and outdoor leaders have the opportunity to train new leaders, at the very least, through modeling interactions with colleagues and program participants. If women want to have the freedom to assume the leadership style necessitated by situations and not by gender, and to be evaluated based on performance, not on gender-role congruency, then both men and women need to work towards breaking down gender-role expectations.

Notes

1. Gender can have a variety of definitions depending on innate characteristics, physical characteristics, sex roles, or social constructs. For the purpose of this article, gender is being used interchangeably with sex, or physical, sexual characteristics.

2. Eagly’s and al. (1992) gender-role theory maintains “that people develop expectations for their own and others’ behavior based on their beliefs about the behavior that is appropriate for men and women” (p. 5). Gender-role congruency, then, “is the extent to which leaders behave in a manner that is congruent with gender-role expectations” (p. 5).

3. One other variable not discussed here is the gender of the evaluator. Rojahn and Willemsen (1994) found that only men evaluated women poorly based on the gender-role congruency theory whereas women were unbiased about gender or leadership style.

4. Masculine or feminine leaders refer to leaders of either sex who exhibit masculine or feminine leadership qualities.

5. The Eagly and al. findings were that women were considered more task-oriented than men.

6. These questions are commonly addressed in pre-semester faculty team meetings at the Audubon Expedition Institute, a traveling outdoor field program for graduate and undergraduate students based in Belfast, ME. Having faculty teams aware of colleagues’ leadership styles assists in creating gender-balanced leadership as well as identifying potential problem areas.

7. For extensive discussion of intervention techniques and strategies, see Catharine Herr Van Nostrand’s book, Gender-Responsible Leadership: Detecting Bias, Implementing Interventions.
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