

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING
IN THE CLASSROOM SETTING

By

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ABSTRACT

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Outdoor experiential training is an effective way to improve team work. Often times people are forced to work in a group with predetermined goals. There can be many problems when this happens. One problem may be conflict amongst team members. Managers must first know the difference between groups and teams.

A group is a collection of people who generally have a common objective – which is not one they have had a role in shaping or directing. On the other hand a team is an energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives; who work well together, and enjoy doing so; and produce high quality work. In order for a group to become an effective team, the group needs to go through five stages of group development. As groups go through these stages of development, they become a team rather than a group thus leading to work that is more productive.

The groups were surveyed before and after the outdoor experiential learning session. The participants were asked eight questions on how the group was performing. The questions needed to rate group versus team behavior on a scale from one to five.

One indicating behavior of a group, while a five would be behavior of a team environment. The mean score before the training was 4.16, with a standard deviation of .72. Standard deviations of less than one indicate the participants were in agreement with one another in their responses. After the training session, the mean score was 4.52 with a standard deviation of .59. The increase in the rating indicates that group's function more as a team after the outdoor training session. The decrease in standard deviation indicates team members' ratings had less variation, therefore more individuals providing higher ratings. The combination of the increase in ratings and decrease in standard deviation shows that groups behaved more like teams after the training session.

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Chapter 1

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

Training Methods

There are numerous ways to educate people. Most often learning is done in the classroom. DeSimone and Harris (1994) state that the following approaches can be used in classroom training: lecture, discussion, audiovisual methods, or computer training. DeSimone and Harris agree, lecturing is the most common technique used for training, but used alone might not be the most effective. The reason is that lecture is an effective way to receive factual information to a large number of people; but it does not allow a lot of two-way communication (1994).

The classroom is not the only place that learning takes place. DeSimone and Harris state that people can also be taught by using experiential methods (1994). What is experimental education? According to Luckmann “Experimental education is a process in which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences.” (1996, p. 7). Some of these methods include: case studies, games and simulations, role-playing, and outdoor experiential education. This style of training is increasing in popularity since it allows the participants to take an active role in the learning process.

Outdoor Experiential Training (OET) can also be referred to as Experience Based Training and Development (EBTD), Outdoor Education, Outdoor Based Training, Outdoor Management Development, Adventure Training, and Outdoor Experiential Development. For the purpose of this research project the term Outdoor Experiential Training is used. Thompson states “Outdoor experiential training is a blend of cognitive

learning plus subjective interpretations based on the learner's feelings and values" (1991, p. 46). Thompson claims that OET is most often used for lessons about teamwork including cooperation, trust, and collaboration. To increase creativity, problem solving, leadership, communication self-esteem motivation, and risk taking are also skills that can be taught using this style of training. Thompson states, the three most common types of this training are: wilderness experience, the high-ropes course, and low-ropes course (1991).

What are Ropes Courses

A ropes course is a group of activities usually done outdoors and completed by a work group. Participants can choose from a high or low ropes course. The activities are typically the same, but done at different levels above ground. Learners tend to believe that there is more risk in a high ropes course. The truth is, the risk is about the same due to the use of safety equipment (Thompson, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

The researcher will use material through the use of participation, facilitation, and observation. The focus of this project is on team effectiveness that occurred during each of the outdoor learning experiences observed. The researcher believes that this type of training not only gets people out of the office for the day, but also increases the effectiveness of the team. The main reason for this research is because many companies are utilizing the use of teams. Often, teams are thrown right into the job with little or no time to get to know one another. In the researcher's experiences, teams are just assigned and then must work together towards a common goal. Due to our fast paced society, the job needs to get done as soon as possible—this can lead to no time for group

cohesiveness. Many times teams do not understand how to work together, this can make the job harder to accomplish.

Outdoor education is one way to include participants in the learning process. The purpose of this study is to identify if there are any changes to team dynamics during a ropes course and a follow-up after. The teams consist of groups in the University of Wisconsin Stout's Organizational Leadership class.

Significance of the Study

If the ropes course does have an impact on teams, corporations can use this to help break down barriers. It can also be used to help teams become more efficient and effective. Going through a one day outdoor education program could save companies a lot of money and time.

Definition of Terms

Basic skills training: The process of reading, writing, and skills needed to perform their job (Harris & DeSimone 1991).

Debriefing: "Is a qualitative discussion period that allows participants to analyze their efforts to solve problems and act cohesively as a team. It is a critical step in applying the outdoor experience to the workplace" (Wagner, Baldwin & Roland 1991, p. 54).

Facilitator: Trained personnel responsible for the leading the intervention or training. These people are the key element in the success of the program (Wagner, Baldwin & Roland 1991).

Feedback: Information given to the participants on what the facilitator observed during the exercises. This information should include both positive comments and ways to improve (Harris & DeSimone 1991).

Group: A collection of people who generally have a common objective, which is not one they have had a role in shaping or directing. Robbins states, “two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent who have come together to achieve a particular objective” (1993, p. 723).

Group Cohesiveness: “It is the attractiveness and closeness group members have for themselves and the group” (Lussier 1996, p. 348).

High Ropes: “Events with a high degree of perceived risk, such as zip lines for canyon crossing.” These activities encourage the participants to bring their fears and inhibitions and let them go. Please note that the risk of these activities is low due to the use of safety lines (Thompson 1991, p.48).

Icebreakers: Simple, fun, and short activities that allow participants to get familiar with one other.

Intervention: An active process by which information is shared by a facilitator with the intent to increase awareness, knowledge, and provide them with the skills and alternatives to their current means of accomplishing an activity (Flor, 1992).

Low Ropes: Thompson (1991) states uses many learning situations from the high-ropes course, but are closer to the ground. These activities are more portable and appear to have less risk to the participants.

Non-technical Training: Training in which the key component is interpersonal communication (Harris & DeSimone 1991).

Organizational Development: “An effort (1) planned, (2) organization wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organizational effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization’s process using behavioral science knowledge” (Aldag & Stearns 1991, p. 722).

Ropes Course: A series of activities that take place outdoors. Typically involving a work group. There are two styles of ropes courses: low-ropes and high-ropes (Wagner, Baldwin & Roland 1991).

Synergy: “The simultaneous action of separate agencies which together have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects” (Hanson & Lubin 1995, p. 23).

Team: An energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives; who work well together, and enjoy doing so; and produce high quality work.

Team Building: An organizational development technique used to assist work groups operate more efficiently and effectively (Lussier, 1996 p. 398).

Team Dynamics: “Patterns of interactions that emerge as the group develops” (Lussier, 1996 p. 346).

Technical Training: Process of upgrading a wide range of technical skills needed by everyone in an organization (Harris & DeSimone 1991).

Training: Lussier states, is the “process of developing the necessary skills to perform the present job” (1996, p. 458).

Wilderness Experience: One or more of the following activities: sailing trips, backpacking, mountain climbing, rafting trips, canoeing, and camping trips. Usually used for self-discovery and self-esteem (Thompson, 1991).

Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in all of the outdoor education programs throughout the research.

1. All groups had an educational or training issue that needed to be addressed.
2. All groups participating had different problems within their group. For instance, some of the teams were unable to function as team and/or unable to do the work assigned to them. There were group members who did not treat each other as equals.
3. All members were treated with respect throughout the outdoor educational experience.
4. All facilitators were adequately trained to perform all aspects of the outdoor educational training duties, including giving feedback and debriefing.
5. All groups participating consisted of the same structural make-up. For example, all groups consisted of team members, or all managers.
6. The outdoor educational experience influenced the participant's behavior.

Limitations

Listed are the following limitations the researcher found during the study.

1. The studies were conducted with a group of students, not a work group. These students did work as a team during class, but their jobs did not depend upon them.
2. The participants were going through the activities as part of their Organizational Leadership class.
3. The sizes of the three groups varied through out the observations.

4. One of the groups that participated was given a survey before and after the outdoor based training. The survey was based on a five point Likert scale. This did not allow participants any room to comment on the days events.

Overview

In the next chapter, the researcher examines at the difference between groups and teams. Group process, as well as what questions groups need to ask themselves during this process. Team building training is also discussed along with how to makes team building training successful. The history of ropes courses are examined.

In chapter three, the researcher discusses what was seen while participating in an outdoor experiential training program. The researcher facilitated two outdoor learning experiences. This is discussed in detail. Direct observation of an outdoor experiential training. During this training session a pre survey and a post survey were conducted.

In chapter four the researcher examines the results of the pre survey and post survey. The researcher will compare the post survey numbers with pre survey numbers. The goal of this section will be to prove that an outdoor experiential training program will increase team effectiveness.

In, chapter five summaries of the findings are presented.

Chapter 2

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

This chapter looks at the difference between groups and teams, and what makes a team effective. Ways to improve team effectiveness through teambuilding are discussed. Then, the researcher looks at the goals of teambuilding as well as how to make these activities successful. The chapter, also examines the history of outdoor experiential training. Lastly, who participates in outdoor experiential training as well as the cost are also examined.

Groups versus Teams

As stated before, a group is a collection of people who generally have a common objective – which is not one they have had a role in shaping or directing. On the other hand a team is an energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives; who work well together, and enjoy doing so; and produce high quality work. Shari Johnson (personal communication, October 1996). Hanson and Lubin (1995) state, “Calling a group or work unit a team implies a particular process of working together, in which members identify and fully utilize one another’s resources and facilitate their mutual interdependence toward more effective problem solving and task accomplishment” (p. 24).

It is extremely important for teams to recognize and accept their own needs, while being sensitive to the needs of other team members. The difficult part is maintaining some balance between the needs. When team members have both a high concerns for

their own needs and the needs of others, the effective team principle of functioning is accomplished (Hanson & Lubin 1995).

Given the above information, one can understand that teams are more productive than groups. What can be done in order to help a group function as a team? What is the process for a group to become a team? Once they start to work as a team, how can a manager easily tell?

Group Development

An individual can be involved in more than one group. Knowing that a person can be on more than one group one might wonder what kind of groups they can be involved in. Groups can be both formal and informal. Examples of these groups include work, task and interest groups, social, and friendship groups. As stated before, members can be involved in more than one group, but it is generally agreed that all groups go through the same stages. There are five stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Through out this development process, the group dynamics are unique and will continually change. Shari Johnson (personal communication, October 1996).

In the first stage, forming, group members are uncertain of what is going on. This is an orientation period for everyone. The group is unsure of its purpose, structure, and leadership. Members are also anxious about what their groups will be like and are preoccupied about how they will fit in. In order to move to the next stage of group development, the group will first get to know one another's strengths and weaknesses. In this stage, the group needs to set ground rules, as well as working with management on setting boundaries. The main goal in this stage is to define the goals, expectations, and

tasks. Once these are defined, the group will address who and how these activities are to be accomplished. To accomplish these goals the team leader will make individual assignments. Members will move to the next stage, storming, when the members begin to think of themselves as part of group.

The next stage, storming, is one of intragroup conflict. This stage is also referred to as conflict. “Members accept the existence of the group, but there is resistance to the constraints that the group imposes on individuality” (Robbins, 288). One of the conflicts at this stage is who will control and lead the group. When this occurs, there will be an increase in tension and disunity. Other conflict items include power, control, and influence. Members are questioning themselves, in how they will influence the team, and who is influencing them. Often times in this stage, unrealistic goals are established. Group members may have further concerns with excessive work and competitions.

The group may experience power struggles and arguing among each other, which may lead to members becoming very defensive. It is important that there is discussion concerning these issues with each other or the leader in order to make sure every one understands what is going on. Upon completion of this stage, a clear hierarchy of leadership exists within the group. Team leaders in this stage may coach other members and work on conflict resolution. This is important to learn so that conflicts do not get out of hand. Development of interpersonal and group maintenance skills may need addressing by the team leader as well.

In the third stage, norming, close relationships develop. This is also known as the teamwork stage. The group has a good sense of camaraderie and identity. Team members understand the roles they play. Group cohesiveness begins to be demonstrated.

Establishing and maintaining of ground rules continue. Members are friendlier and have more confidence with one another. Constructive criticism is acceptable at this stage. The norming stage is complete when the group has a common set of expectations about what is acceptable and not acceptable behavior. In this stage, the group will also have a solid structure. The team leader will take on a supporting role, at the same time not letting conflict get out of hand. Maintaining the group's energy and encouraging the team are responsibilities of the team leader.

In the fourth stage, performing, the group is operating at full potential and is accepted. This occurs because the group's energy is moved from getting to know each other to performing the task. Groups are very close and attached to the team. Team members understand and monitor personal and group processes. There is a greater understanding of others' strengths and weaknesses. Significant progress is made toward team goals. The team leader will monitor team goals and keep them on track. At the same time, the leader will delegate activities to other members.

In permanent work groups the last stage of development is the performing, but for temporary assignments the group will go through the adjourning stage. The group will begin to prepare for separation. The group's priority is focused on wrapping things up and less on task performance. Some group members are upbeat, while others are depressed over the loss of camaraderie and friendships gained during the life of the group. There may be a review of goals and performance, which could lead to a celebration.

Training

Managers cannot just say “poof” and their group becomes a team. Becoming a team takes time and understanding among one another. One way to assist a group into becoming a team is to have some training. A manager can choose to send the group to one of the following types of training: basic skills, technical, and non-technical. Examples of basic skills are reading, writing, and skills needed to perform the job. Technical training is usually needed by the whole organization, for example, new methods and/or procedures, computer, safety, and quality training. Non-technical training includes communication and interpersonal, customer relations, sales and team building training. Team building is one choice for training the group to function as a team (Harris, & DeSimone 1994).

Definition of Team Building

What is team building? Hanson and Lubin (1995) state, “team building is usually, part of an Organizational Development (OD) effort; in which a team studies their own process (how members work together)” (p. 24). When this is complete, the group takes action steps in order to create a climate in which members’ energies are directed toward problem solving and maximizing the use of all members’ resources in this process.

Liebowitz and De Meuse define team building as “a long-term, data-based intervention in which intact work groups experientially learn, by examining their structures, purposes, norms, values, and interpersonal dynamics to increase their skills for effective teamwork. It is a direct attempt to assist the group in becoming more adept at identifying, diagnosing, and solving its own problems, usually with the aid of a behavioral science consultant” (1982, p. 2).

Why use Team Building

Certain symptoms may exist within a team before a manager decides to have a team building session. If a team has unresolved conflicts between members, these conflicts block understanding and tie up team time. This results in inappropriate utilization of team member's resources and unclear decision making. It can lead to low productivity and unproductive meetings. There is an unclear understanding as to who is doing what and when, lack of interest and creativity. All of this can lead to complaints from other departments that the team is not responsive to the needs of others or meeting its responsibilities.

There are countless reasons why a company would want to conduct a team building session. One reason is when the team has a new leader. This will assist the new leader in the understanding of the team, how it operates, and the culture. It will also give the team members the opportunity to get to know the team leader. This could include anything from how the team leader works to the leader's work and life experiences. By understanding one another it will be easier to work with each other.

Another time to use a team building session is during the formation of a new group. It enables the team from the start, to set up their goals, climate, and structure. This gives the group a great start on becoming an effective team. Anytime there is intra-group conflict the group should go through team building training. This allows the group the opportunity to get issues and concerns out in the open.

It is also a good idea to have a team building session when a merger takes place. When this happens there are many unanswered questions. Many people are unsure of their jobs. Team members are not sure if they will have a job tomorrow or next week.

When there is a merger culture shock may take place. If there is no training on this, it will be very difficult when working across company teams. By doing team building training, members can get together and discuss any issues and concerns. If managers are present they may be able to address any concerns.

Finally, if the team loses a key player it is important to do team building training. It is especially important in the case of downsizing, this can help ease the loss. This again can bring the rest of the team members together so that issues and concerns can be addressed. The team will need to address what needs to happen to compensate for the loss.

Leibowitz and De Meuse, agree that team building should be done when attempting to strengthen an existing team, and when establishing a new team. They also recommend team training when a team is re-formed after reorganization or improve interfaces among several teams. All of these situations allow members to come together and discuss any concerns and get to know one another (1982).

Once the decision is made to conduct a team building session, the next step is to decide who is going to conduct the training. It is possible to have the manager do the training or bring in a consultant. Either way, the risk is high when assisting a team to study their own progress. When someone gets involved with these activities, conflicts and feelings are brought to the surface. Many times these feelings cause considerable tension and anxiety. Although this is true, the benefits are likely to be much higher.

By doing this, issues are put out on the table where they can be examined, and develop ways of relating to them. These activities can also increase team members' competence to handle interpersonal conflicts, which can create an atmosphere in which

members are not engaged in interpersonal infighting but are using their time and energy in creative problem solving.

Other items consultants or managers may do is to help the team develop a process orientation and skills in self-observation. This may be followed up with techniques for data collection, feedback, and assessing team members' leadership styles. Once this information is collected, it will be analyzed to see the impact on team functioning. One important outcome of team building is to help a team develop a "model of excellence" against which to measure their own performance (Hanson & Lubin 1995).

Successful Team Building

In order for team building to be successful any person in a leadership role must be involved and committed. If employees see managers committed, they will believe it is important and worth while. Next, the team leader must be willing to take a closer look at his/her own role in relation to the team. A high commitment must exist on the part of the team members and a willingness to take 100% responsibility for making the effort work. If team members take less than 100% responsibility it will leave many loopholes. Members may then take a "wait and see" attitude.

A commitment must exist on all team members to study their own process and critique their own performance. Team building activities are a never-ending process and continue throughout the life of the team. Team building activities are not limited to special sessions, retreats, or occasions when the consultant comes, but rather should take place on a day-to-day basis at work. One place to do this type of training on a daily or weekly basis is in team meetings. Team members also need to have a commitment to put into practice what they learned at special sessions.

Team members need to remember that team building is not a one-time process, but rather a process of continuous diagnosis, action planning, implementation, and evaluation. In order for team building to be successful, it is important that all team members see the relevance of this self-study to more effective functioning and have a commitment to looking at and critiquing their own behavior.

Effective Teams

Managers may wonder when their teams become effective. According to Hanson and Lubin there are many factors to effective teams. One way to know a team is effective is they have a shared sense of purpose or common goals. Team members must also be willing to work toward achieving these goals. Another factor in effective teams, Hanson and Lubin (1995) state is “an awareness of and interest in its own process and the examination of norms that are operating within the group. Identification of own resources and the utilization of these resources depending upon the needs of the team at any given time. At these times the group is willing to accept the influence and leadership of the members whose resources are more relevant to the immediate task” (p. 20). Group members put a continuing effort into listening and clarifying what is being said. Team members also show an interest in what others are saying and feel like hearing them out.

An effective team shows encouragement, freedom of expression, and allows differences of opinion. The team members do not demand narrow conformity or adherence to formats that inhibit freedom of movement and expression. Effective teams are willing to address conflict and discuss items until it is either resolved or managed so that it does not reduce the effectiveness of the individuals involved. Energy is exerted toward problem solving rather than being used in interpersonal issues or competitive

struggles. Balance roles in order to facilitate both the accomplishment of tasks and feelings of group cohesion and morale.

Mistakes are viewed as a way of learning rather than an occasion for punishment. Effective teams are encouraged to take risks and increase creativity. Teams that are effective are responsiveness to the changing needs of other team members and to the external environment to which the team is related. Effective teams are commitment to periodic evaluation of team performance. Team members who identify with one another view this attractiveness as a source of both professional and personal growth. Recognizing the development of a climate of trust is the crucial elements needed to facilitate all of the above elements.

According to Shari Johnson, effective teams have the following traits:

- Clearly established goals that are accepted by team members.
- Established high standards of performance for itself, rather than being pressured to perform by its supervisor.
- Allow members to disagree, and then find an effective way to resolve problems and intergroup conflict.
- Review of past actions, as a learning tool to plan appropriate strategies.
- Has a sense of unity and “oneness.”
- Effective teams experience synergy (being greater than the sum of the parts).
- Develop a comfortable working atmosphere in which people are alert and engaged.
- Effective teams also have members who listen to each other and provide useful feedback.

- Use constructive criticism when necessary to facilitate group interaction and to accomplish tasks.
- Express ideas fully and frankly so that everyone has all relevant information and “hidden agendas” are minimized.
- Assists a member when needed to ensure successful completion of the team’s goals.
- Attach a high value to new, creative approaches to problems.
- Knows the value of “constructive conformity” and knows when to use it to facilitate the team’s activities.
- Is flexible because its members influence one another and their leader.

Huczczko agrees, in order to be an effective team the group must understand the groups strengths and weaknesses. Huczczko states “A team should assess itself in seven areas, asking critical questions in each” (1990 p. 38). The seven categories are: goals, talent, roles, procedures, interpersonal relations, reinforcement, and external relations.

The first category is goals. One question groups should ask themselves if there a clear direction? Another question may be what are the purposes, missions, and goals of the team? The next category is talent. In this component, the group needs to look at the skills necessary to complete the task. Once that has been defined the group must question if the skills are available, to complete the task.

Roles is the next area groups need to examine. In this area it is extremely important that team members understand what role(s) they play. It is also important that everyone understands what must be done in order to succeed. Procedures are the next area for development. One question to be asked is whether the team created effective and

efficient operating procedures? Members must examine how they solve problems, make decisions, share and receive information.

Interpersonal relations, is the next component for successful teams. Members must look at how they get along with one another. How members communicate with each other should also be examined. How conflicts arise and how they are resolved is key in interpersonal relations.

Reinforcement is the next component for effective teams. Active reinforcement is needed for effective teams to sustain teamwork. One way to increase reinforcement is to express appreciation to others. Team members must make sure they go out of their way to tell other members these positive comments. Not only do team members need to get feedback from others it is important that the organization needs to show appreciation.

The last component is external relations. When teams recognize opportunities and threats from the environments they put themselves in a better position to develop plans to capitalize on them. One way to increase team effectiveness is to have the group attend an outdoor experiential training program.

Definition of Outdoor Experiential Learning

Outdoor Experiential Training (OET), can also be referred to as Experience Based Training and Development (EBTD), Outdoor Education, Outdoor Based Training, Outdoor Management Development, Adventure Training, and Outdoor Experiential Development. According to Miner (1991) EBTD is a process which uses hands-on challenge or adventure, usually in the outdoors, combined with review and feedback to improve work place performance” (p. 59). Advocates assert EBTD has a great impact on the development of skills as, communication, decision making, leadership, conflict

resolution, problem solving, risk taking, strategies, self awareness, team building, trust, and role clarity (Miner, 1991).

EBTD programs are divided into two kinds: wilderness training and outdoor-centered training. Wilderness training, according to Miner (1991), “consists of activities in which participants sleep outdoors in remote areas, while climbing, rafting, sailing, or doing some other high adventure activities. The second outdoor-centered training is usually held at some kind of facility like a resort or training center. It consists of activities such as ropes/challenge course or initiative games which can be done in a less wild setting” (p. 61).

History

According to Thompson (1991) “the first formal adventure-based educational program started in 1941 at a school on the coast of Wales” (p. 47). A one month class in seamanship and survival skills was offered to British seaman. This training was described as “an educational and training system for strengthening an individual both physically and spiritually. Two decades later, in 1962, the concept reached North America in the form of the Colorado Outward Bound Schools” (p. 47). In 1974, Youth groups, seniors, and disabled people were able to attend outdoor education. The Association for Experiential Education was organized.

It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s when corporate organizations started to use outdoor educational programs (Thompson, 1991). Organizations wanted to use these programs for motivational, recreational or training excursions, instead of the usual personal development.

Today, many organizations are sending their employees on an outdoor learning experience. These training programs can be from a few hours to a few days. The learning experience occurs on a well-crafted safe course. Each organization that specializes in outdoor education has unique courses with various activities.

According to Wagner, Baldwin and Roland (1991) state “More than 100 training organizations currently offer some type of outdoor training.” These programs are provided to develop teamwork and leadership skills using structured activities in the great outdoors.

Goals of Outdoor Experiential Training

Understanding the goals and objectives of EBTD is critical to the effectiveness of the program. It can be determined how and why the program is or is not successful. Miner (1991) states, “EBTD is used for a wide variety of goals. The most widely include team building (including trust and communication), self-esteem, leadership, decision making, problem solving and risk taking” (p. 61). EBTD can also be used for ethics, conflict resolution diversity and value clarification. EBTD can have a lasting positive impact on individuals and the company. According to Mitten (1995), another goal of EBTD is to help participants learn more about being part of the group.

According to Gall (1987), a several of the following items must be included in an outdoor educational training program. An orientation meeting for the participants should be conducted to ease everyone’s fears. In this, meeting participants will establish realistic expectations. Secondly, the facilitator will be able to conduct a preliminary assessment of both the group and individual needs, and understand what the participants

would like to get out of the training. In order for this, or any training, to be successful support from upper management is necessary.

During the training session, it is important to make sure the facilitator is using metaphors that can be linked to the work environment. During the training session, it is important to have carefully lead discussion about what happened. These discussions help to build trust, acceptance, and understanding between team members. Before the participants return to work, they should have carefully developed action plans in place. The last item to ensure success, is to schedule a follow-up with the both the participants and the facilitator(s) (1987).

Problems

Every training program has at least one problem, and so does EBTD. One problem with EBTD is that it can be viewed as a “feel good” experience, or a day away from the office (Wilson, 1997). One way to ensure that the training program is effective is to use follow up. Follow up, or debriefing as it may be called, can be anything from five to ten minutes after each activity to a day in the classroom. During this time connections are made back to the “real world.” After the program, some companies may choose to have the consultant visit on a regular basis to assist the participants in applying what they have learned. Without this follow up connections may not be made and the trip may be viewed as another day away from the office.

Manager Success

According to Adams (1997), managers must be consistent in everything they do. The employees must be able to rely on the manager to behave in similar ways when

similar situations occur. Managers cannot be mercurial an up one day and down the next. For some managers this may be the hardest characteristic to master.

Mangers must be scrupulously honest. If managers are proceeding with employee coaching because they think it is the trendy thing to do or because everyone else is doing it, then stop before beginning. Managers must sincerely believe that this is the best and most appropriate way to help their employees.

Mangers must demonstrate passion for the company, product, and/or service. The managers enthusiasm must be committed to making employees the very best. The passion and commitment will shine though and will have a positive impact on employees.

Support the training efforts of the company. Mangers must invest both time and money to support the company's training efforts. The employees want their managers to follow up with information, support, and clarification that will strengthen the required skills managers have identified through coaching. Be flexible and able to make adjustments as necessary. Recognize that the strategies managers have created may need to be modified at a moment's notice due to a client or customer request.

Chapter Review

In this chapter the researcher looked at the history of ropes courses as well as outdoor experiential training. The difference between groups and teams is discussed. The stages of group development are examined. Team building is defined, and the researcher discusses what makes a team building session effective. The goals and problems of team building are examined.

Chapter 3

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING OBSERVATIONS

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the researcher looks at observation through participation. The researcher had the opportunity to participate in an outdoor experiential training from Adventures in Confidence. Since this was an area of interest for the researcher, an observation through facilitation was the next step in the research. The researcher facilitated three different outdoor experiential training sessions.

Observation through participation

The first technique used in this project was observing through participation. By participating in an outdoor educational event, the researcher was able to get a feel for the exercises and process first hand. Also, by participating in an outdoor education program the researcher was able to get feedback from the other group members. This enabled the researcher to learn what participants liked, disliked, and what they learned. It was also possible to learn what activities had the greatest impact on the group.

The members for this study were students from graduate level classes taught at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, fall semester, 1996. Those students interested participated voluntarily. Adventures in Confidence, a company from Hudson, WI, conducted the training. There were fifty-five students involved in this outdoor team building activity. All groups consisted of sixty percent males and forty percent females. Each of the four groups consisted of some students that knew each other, some participants were acquainted each other and some students did not know anyone. One purpose of the ropes course was to get the students familiar with one another in the

University of Wisconsin-Stout graduate program. The outdoor exercise was also used as a learning tool to help students learn the importance of team building, communication, risk taking, decision making, and leadership.

The team building exercises started with the entire group participating in various icebreakers. Icebreakers are lighthearted, warm-up exercises completed with the whole group. These icebreakers allowed all participants to warm up with one another and get familiar with the facilitators while having fun. Some examples of the icebreakers the graduate group participated in were Everybody Up, Moonball and Eathwinds, Group Juggling, Warp Speed, Quick Line Up, and Birthday Line Up. In the Juggling activity everybody was in a circle. The goal of this activity was to see what happens when there are many things going on in our lives. The facilitators began the exercise by tossing a sponge ball back and forth with each other by first calling the other person's first name to get their attention. This activity forced the participants to get to know one another and to learn everyone's first name. Of course one sponge ball was not enough. The facilitators kept tossing more items into the circle. These items included a plastic chicken, tennis balls, and a deflated volleyball. This activity was an excellent icebreaker because it was fun and it allowed everyone to learn each other's names. Even though it was the first activity, it was very interesting to see the relationships that were beginning to develop. It was easy to tell everyone was having more fun and felt more relaxed. The entire group spent about an hour together. It was great way to start the day.

Before the group broke into four separate groups one facilitator informed the entire group of what was going to happen. As the icebreakers concluded the students were broken up randomly into four separate groups, each group had between eleven and

fifteen members. Every group had twenty minutes at each challenge activity. Once the activity was complete the group would spend five to ten minutes debriefing.

Once everyone participating was with the correct group, a facilitator came and took them to the correct activity. Each group had four challenge activities to try to accomplish. All groups were given twenty minutes to try and complete the activity. After all groups had gone through each activity the whole group was brought together to discuss what occurred during the day. The facilitators asked participants what worked well and what did not. One question the facilitators asked is what would change when everyone returns to the classroom and work in their respective teams.

For the first activity, the researchers' group participated in the Blind-Rock exercise. The goal of this activity was to get the group across a series of rocks while only one team member had sight. The person that had sight told the next one where to go to get to the next rock. The second person told the third person and so on. This process continued until all members were across the acid river. In reality, there was not Acid River, or any water around. The facilitators had the group use their imagination. If someone fell off the rocks or touched their foot on the ground they "died" or lost a leg. If this happened, the group had to deal with the circumstances and move forward. The main objectives of this activity were to create trust and communication within the team. Trust needed to be established early in the activity in order to accomplish the goal. The group's facilitator was extremely effective in communicating the necessary instructions.

The researcher's group was able to decide on a leader quickly. The group talked for a minute or two and finally one individual volunteered to lead, so the rest of the group

put on blind folds. The researcher felt effective directions were given to the group. The group was able to accomplish their goal.

Once the activity was completed, the group was asked to rate the activity on a scale of one to five. The rating was on how effective the activity was, not how much fun everyone had. The facilitators asked the group on the count of three to use one hand to rate the activity. The facilitators first asked the participants who rated the activity the lowest to speak. When they were done speaking, the participants who rated it highest were asked to provide feedback. During this time, all participants were encouraged to speak openly and honestly about the activity. When the group finished speaking, the facilitator(s) shared with the group their observations. The facilitator also gave suggestions on how to operate as a more effective team. One suggestion the facilitator gave the researcher's group was to listen to the instructions.

The second activity was Chernobyl. In this activity, the group must dispose a bucket of nuclear waste (water) safely. The goal was to illustrate teamwork, listening, and communication. The facilitators gave the group instructions. The group jumped right into the activity without spending too much time deciding what needed to be done in order to successfully complete the task. The first attempt by the researcher's group was not very successful. The group was not working well as a team and no one was listening to one another. By this point in time everyone was getting frustrated and mad. The group decided to take a break and make plans for the second attempt in completing this activity. After taking the time to work together and communicate, the group was able to complete the activity successfully. The major issue the group faced was challenging the "unwritten rules" the team was given. Granted the group did not

complete the activity the way it should have been completed, but the goal was accomplished.

Once again after the activity, the group rated it. This time the facilitator was able to offer feedback in order to be more effective. The main problem for the group was having too many leaders and no followers. Everyone had their own idea in how to accomplish the goal, but never communicated this to one another. Once some group members decided to let others lead it was a little easier to try to accomplish the goal. Overall, the group rated the activity low. The group felt that rules were not followed, and no one communicated with each other. This taught the researcher a lesson, take the time to plan before jumping headfirst into an activity.

The third activity was The Platform. In this activity, it was necessary to get all team members from one side of the tree to a four by four square piece of wood, without touching the ground. This activity was used to help the group work more like a team. This exercise allowed everyone an opportunity to have an equal responsibility, as they must swing and all fit on the pallet. One individual had difficulty getting onto the pallet. The team however, refused to give up and eventually got across to the pallet. This time, the group planned who should go first and how twelve people were going to fit on a four by four board. The group made sure there was enough room on the board so that the last person to come over had enough room to fit. Once the exercise was completed the group again debriefed. This time everyone worked well as a team. One individual had many problems getting across, but with the help of the team everyone was on the pallet.

The final activity was called Spider Web. In this activity, there were a number of ropes tied between two trees crisscrossing one another. The goal was to get all of the

team members from one side to the other, using each hole once. This time, the group planned who should go first and who should go in what hole. The researcher's group was able to finish the activity with great success. The group even made sure there was enough strength on both sides of the Spider Web. The facilitator informed the group that the group worked extremely well together. After the debriefing session, everyone felt as though the group can function as a successful, effective team.

When all of group activities were complete, everyone was brought back together for cool down activities and a final debriefing session. These activities were used to see if the whole group was able to work as a team. Due to the great facilitation, the group was able to accomplish all the activities. Once these cool down exercises were complete the facilitators recapped the day and questioned the participants about what they learned, what they liked and disliked. The facilitators also allowed the participants to feed off each other's reactions and encouraged open discussion amongst the members.

The researcher felt the day was very successful. The researcher saw how some participants were natural born leaders and some that needed encouragement to speak. Over all, the researcher felt as though the group was able to work as a team. The only thing the researcher would change is the breaking up of the groups. The researcher believes it would have been beneficial for each of the graduate majors to work together. Since all of students spend so much time working as a team in the classroom, this would have been a great way to start the school year. It would allow everyone in the program to get to know each other.

Observing Through Facilitation

The second technique used was facilitating two outdoor education sessions. By facilitating an outdoor educational session the researcher was able to view the experience from a different prospective. As a facilitator, the researcher gave the participants the tools necessary to complete the task. While facilitating, the researcher was able to observe the verbal and non-verbal communication that took place between the participants.

First Observation

The members of the first group were college seniors, who were students in University of Wisconsin-Stout's fall 1996 Organizational Leadership course. There were eighty students involved in the outdoor learning session. The group consisted of fifty-five percent females and forty-five percent males. The outdoor learning experience started with the entire group participating in icebreakers. The participants did not realize they were a part of a study so they were more inclined to give candid and honest responses. When the whole group was warmed up, they were separated into predetermined groups. In the Organizational Leadership class, students are required to work in a group. Since these groups were already established, they worked with their team. The goal of the outdoor training was to help increase teamwork within each team.

The researcher facilitated the Birthday Line Up as the second ice breaker. In this activity, the group arranged themselves in order of their birthday starting in January without talking. When the group was done, or after ten minutes, they had to shout out their birthdays starting at the front of the line. After that was completed, the researcher debriefed the activity. The group discussed the obstacles they ran into since they could

not use their voice to communicate. It was very interesting to see the numerous ways people used to arrange themselves in month order first, and then date order.

The researcher also led the Loop-de-Loop exercise. In this exercise, the group held hands in a circle. The group talked about distractions in the work place. This can be anything from telephones, to meetings, to children, and deadlines. To illustrate how this works on the job, the researcher first added one bent hula-hoop to the circle. Members were to pass the hula-hoop to the person next to them without breaking the circle. The hula-hoop first went to the left and when the researcher yelled “switch” the hula-hoop was passed to the right. Once the group had somewhat of a handle on this, two more hula-hoops were added. The researcher instructed the group to change directions in the way the hula-hoops were going. The goal was never to have more than one hula-hoop on a person. While all this was going on, balls were thrown in to increase the chaos. After about ten minutes, the activity was complete.

The researcher was not scheduled for this activity, but the person responsible did not feel comfortable. Next, each of the five facilitators took a group to their receptive activities. The researcher chose one exercise to facilitate. This would give the researcher the opportunity to see all of the groups going through the same exercise. The researcher was able to see how each group attempted to accomplish the goal. The researcher facilitated the Acid-River session with each of the five groups. It was very interesting to watch how each group tried to accomplish the goal of getting all team members from one side of the river to another. There were five planks in various places, and two boards to assist the team to get across the river.

Group A

The first group was able to complete the activity in five minutes. The group jumped right into the activity and completed it with no problems. Two people in the group took charge while the rest followed. The group rated the activity high, since they were able to complete the activity in a short period.

This activity did not go as planned. First, the course was not set up correctly. The researcher set the course according to the drawing, but the planks were not in the correct place. This allowed the students more leeway in completing the activity. Since the researcher did not have the opportunity to complete this activity during another training session the bugs had to be worked out during this training session.

Group B

Before the second group came over the researcher and the other facilitator moved the course around. Group B had difficulty completing the activity. No one took charge of the activity. The sixteen people broke off into two mini groups and each decided to work on their own. The group was unable to get everyone across the river.

During the debriefing section the group discussed what could have been done better. One item everyone agreed on was that they should have talked and listened to one another. The group was able to see what happens when there was not a leader. The group decided to work on those factors in the next session.

Group C

The third group was excited to try this activity. The facilitators gave the directions and group was off to work. Before the group did anything everyone worked together to make a plan of attack. They decided where the boards needed to go in order

to get the team across the river. After that was decided, they then decided who should go when. The group was able to successfully complete the activity.

During the debriefing part of the activity, the team felt as though they were successful. The team informed the facilitators that was the best team work they have done all day. They were learning how to plan before they started the activity.

Group D

The fourth group had difficulties completing the activity. This group has been experiencing problems in the classroom. The men in the group felt as though they were the most important assets. After the group had their instructions, the men started to boss the women around saying they knew how to complete this activity. By this point, the women were not happy with the situation but agreed with their ideas. After fifteen minutes the group was able to get only five members across the river.

During the debriefing session, the group talked openly about what happened. The group agreed that there was little to no communication with each other. The researcher pointed out what was noticed with the men in the group. The men were unaware of what they were doing.

Group E

The fifth group was very eager to complete the activity. This group had successfully completed the other four activities. After given the directions, the group asked each other what they thought would be the best way to accomplish the goal. After listening to everyone who had ideas the group decided on the best method. The group was able to complete this activity with no problems.

In the debriefing session, the group rated this activity high. The team said they used all of the knowledge they had gained during the day. First of all, they asked everyone for ideas. Then they decided on the best way to complete the goals. The team felt as though this technique would be extremely helpful when they were working on projects back in the classroom.

Researcher's Observation

The researcher was a little nervous while facilitating the icebreaker session. The researcher was not scheduled to facilitate the activity, but someone did not feel comfortable. One item the researcher would change would be to have a cheat sheet for each activity. Included on this cheat sheet would be the name of each of the activities. Then the researcher would include a summary of the activity and any and all rules necessary to complete the activity. Finally, the researcher would include a section on debriefing, this would include what a facilitator should look for in this activity.

The researcher believes each of the facilitators should have gotten together to do a dry run of each activity. The researcher felt as though there was not enough experience with all of the facilitators. This would have given all of the facilitators the opportunity to facilitate the activity one time before doing it for the participants. The researcher also thinks all of the facilitators should have had a class or discussion on what makes a good facilitator. Although, the participants had a good time, the researcher was unsure of the effectiveness of this team building training.

Second Observation

Since the first observation through facilitation was informative, the researcher thought it would be beneficial to do it again. This was the researcher's second time

facilitating the team building session through a ropes course. The researcher felt more comfortable with what was going to happen. The researcher developed a cheat sheet in order to remember what each activity was trying to develop. The facilitators still had not attended a course or communicated about what could be improved with the skills on facilitation.

This training consisted of college seniors enrolled in the Organizational Leadership class at the University of Wisconsin- Stout, spring 1996. The activity took place during the normal class period, which the participants were excited about. There were approximately eighty students involved in the outdoor learning session.

The outdoor learning experience started out with the whole group participating in icebreakers. These icebreakers included Everyone Up, Birthday Line Up, and Group Juggling. The researcher facilitated the Birthday Line Up as the second ice breaker. In this activity, the group must arrange themselves in order of their birthday starting in January, without talking. When the group was done, they had to shout out their birthdays starting at the front of the line. After that was completed, the researcher debriefed the activity. The group discussed the obstacles they ran into since they could not use their voice to communicate. It was very interesting to see the many ways people used to arrange themselves in month order first, and then date order. The entire group participated in two other icebreakers facilitated by other people.

When the whole group was warmed up, they were separated into predetermined groups. In the Organizational Leadership class, students are required to work in a group. Since these groups were already established, they worked with their team. The goal of the outdoor training was to help increase the teamwork within each team. The instructor

decided this would be the most beneficial for each of the groups, since some of the groups were experiencing problems. These problems included not getting along with one another. Some of the groups would not listen to each other and one or two people would do all of the work. In other cases, groups would have men and women who could not communicate. Each case described above led to people not wanting to be a part of the group and low productivity.

Each of the four facilitators took a group to their respective activities. The researcher chose one exercise to facilitate. This would give the researcher the opportunity to see all of the groups going through the same exercise. The researcher hoped that the groups' effectiveness would improve throughout the day. Even though the teams had different activities during the day, all activities focused on team building. By facilitating one activity, the researcher was able to observe all groups working together, not just one.

The researcher facilitated the Blind-Walk session with each of the five groups. It was very interesting to watch how each group tried to accomplish the goal. The goal of Blind-Walk is to get all of the team members from one side of the river to another by walking on a series of large rocks. In this activity, only the leader has the ability to see.

Group A

The first group was able to complete the activity, once a leader was chosen. The group debated as to who wanted to be the leader. Only one person lost a leg in the activity, but the group got through it. The group rated the activity high, since they were able to complete the activity. The leader in the group told everyone the importance of communication, especially when people may not have all of the tools necessary to

understand. The leader had to tell the next person exactly what to do since they did not have any sight.

Group B

This group was able to decide on a leader quickly. The rest of the group put on the blindfolds fast. The group made it across the river on the rocks no problems. The biggest lesson the group learned was communication. At first, the leader gave vague descriptions of where to step. After complaints from other team members the leader gave more descriptive directions. During the debriefing section the group discussed what could have been done better. One item everyone agreed on was that they should have talked and listened to one another.

Group C

The third group was excited to try this activity. The facilitators gave the directions and group was off to work. One person volunteered to be the leader and everyone agreed. The rest of the group put on blindfolds and they started the activity. The group was able to complete the activity without anyone falling off the rocks. During the debriefing part of the activity, the team felt as though they were successful.

Group D

The fourth group had difficulties completing the activity. This group has been experiencing problems in the classroom. In this, group two men were disagreeing about who would be the leader. After a few minutes of disagreeing one man gave in, and let the other one lead. Once a leader was decided, the group was able to complete the activity with no problems.

During the debriefing session, the group talked openly about what happened. The group agreed that there should not have been that much disagreeing about who should be the leader.

Group E

The fifth group was very excited to try to complete this activity. The group first decided on a leader. Then, they decided what order everyone should when. The group had some of the better communicators in the middle so the participants at the end did not miss out on any important information. The group was able to successfully complete the activity in the shortest amount of time.

In the debriefing session, the group rated this activity high. The team said they used all of the knowledge they had gained during the day. First of all, they decided who would lead the activity. The team felt as though this technique will be extremely helpful when they are working on projects back in the classroom.

The group was asked to rate the effectiveness on a scale of one to five. On the count of three, all members held out the number of fingers that they wanted to use to rate the activity. Then participants were asked to give their observations and why they choose the rating they did. During these debriefing sessions, the facilitator offered feedback as to what was noticed during the activity. This is a very important part in the team building session. It gives the participants information on what the team can do in order to be more effective.

Direct Observation of Participants

Direct observation of an outdoor experiential training was the next approach the researcher used to gain information. The main purpose of using type observation was so

that the researcher could give 100% attention to what is going on. By following one group, the researcher was able to see how the team grew and how effective they became. This direct observation session involved forty college seniors. These students were from the University of Wisconsin-Stout's summer 1997 Organizational Leadership class.

As with the other sessions, the entire group was together for the icebreaker session. The icebreakers used in this session were Birthday Line Up, Everyone Up, and the Loop-de-Loop. In this session, the researcher led the Loop-de-Loop exercise. In this exercise, the group was in a circle holding hands. The group was talking about distractions in the work place. It could be anything from telephones, to meetings, to children, and deadlines. To illustrate how this works on the job, the researcher first added one bent hula-hoop to the circle. Members were to pass the hula-hoop to the person next to them without breaking the circle. Once the group had somewhat of a handle on this, two more hula-hoops were added. The facilitator then instructed the group to change directions in the way the hula-hoops were going. The goal was to never have more than one hula-hoop on a person. While all this was going on balls were thrown in to increase the chaos. After about ten minutes, the activity was stopped.

The researcher asked for peoples' opinion on the activity. Most participants could relate with the activity. Many times people are pulled in different directions, thus leading to chaos. The group discussed at great lengths what kinds interruptions can occur in the workplace. Coping techniques were also discussed. Everyone left the exercise with new techniques in dealing with being over loaded. The purpose of the icebreaker session was to get the members familiar with one another. The icebreaker session was set the tone for the day.

When the icebreaker session was complete, the members were broken into four predetermined groups. In the Organizational Leadership class, students are required to work in team for some activities. Since some of these groups were not working well together it was decided to have them go through the outdoor experiential training as a group. Once all of the groups were together, a facilitator came and took them to the first activity. The facilitators instructed participants about the rules of the exercise and debriefed the group when the exercise was complete.

The first activity the researchers' observation group participated in was Nordic Skis. The "skis" are six feet in length and have room for six people's feet. In this activity, the group needs to work together to go walk on the skis through a predetermined path. All participants were able to see and hear. The group started out with getting on the skis and just walking. Part of the group started with the left foot first and the other half started with the right foot. After falling down, the group decided they needed to work together. One person suggested that the whole group start with the right foot and then the left. This idea worked very well. The group was able to successfully complete the activity.

The second activity was Acid River. In this activity, the group needed to get everyone from one side of the river to safety. The group had rocks in which they could place the wood pieces in order to get across. The group was not very successful in completing this activity. They just jumped right into the activity with no planning. This led to extreme frustration with the activity. The group learned the importance of communication and making a plan before starting any project.

The third activity was The Platform. In this activity, it was necessary to get all team members from one side of the tree to a four by four square piece of wood, without touching the ground. This activity was used to help the group work more like a team. This exercise allowed everyone an opportunity to have equal responsibility, as everyone must swing and all fit on the pallet. This time, the group planned who should go first and how twelve people were going to fit on a four by four board. The group made sure there was enough room on the board so that the last person to come over had enough room to fit. To do this some of the people went on others' shoulders. There was plenty of room for everyone.

The final activity was Spider Web. In this activity, there are a number of ropes tied between two trees crisscrossing one another. The goal is to get all of the team members from one side to the other, using each hole once. The group was able to finish the activity with great success. This time, the group planned who should go first and who should go in what hole. The group even made sure there was enough strength on both sides of the Spider Web.

After all groups completed each activity, everyone was brought together as one larger group. In this large group, everyone participated in the cool down exercises, and debriefing activities.

The group the researcher observed was given a pre-survey ten minutes before the training. These participants were also give another survey three weeks after the team building session. The results of the surveys are discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

In this chapter the researcher explains what occurred during the outdoor experiential training. In this training session, the researcher was able to experience first hand what happens during a team building course. After attending an outdoor training session, the researcher facilitated two outdoor experiential training sessions. In the first session, the researcher facilitated the Acid River activity. The researcher facilitated the Blind Walk activity in the second session. By facilitating different activities, the researcher was able to see how groups develop. The researcher also completed a direct observation of an outdoor experiential training session. This allowed the researcher to see what was going on without worrying about facilitating the activity.

Chapter 4

OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING FINDINGS

Overview

In order to discover if a team building session is effective, the researcher conducted a pre survey and a post survey. The pre survey was given to the participants ten minutes before the outdoor experiential team building training. The post survey was given to the participants the next day in class. The researcher examines the mean score and standard deviation of each question.

The survey asks the participant to rate each question on a scale from one to five. If the participant choose a low number for example, one, that indicates in that area there are more group characteristics. If the participant choose a high number for example, four, that indicates there are more team characteristics. There was a significant change in both the mean score and standard deviation. The mean score increased by at least .20 points, which indicates that the participants felt the team training was effective. The standard deviation decreased by .02. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question. The combination of the increase in ratings and decrease in standard deviation shows that groups behaved more like teams after the training session.

Results

Question One

Members think they are grouped together for administrative purposes only. Individuals work independently, sometimes at cross purposes with others.

Members recognized their interdependence and understand both personal and team goals are best accomplished with mutual support. Time is not wasted struggling over "turf" or attempting personal gain at the expense of others.

1

2

3

4

5

Table 1

Analysis of Question 1

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.15	4.49
Standard Deviation	.72	.59

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question one, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on goals, and how the goals will be accomplished. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.15. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .72. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 3.43 to 4.87. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.49, with a standard deviation was .59. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 3.9 and 5.08. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .34 points. The standard deviation decreased by .13. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Two

Members tend to focus on themselves because they are not sufficiently involved in planning the unit's objectives. They approach their job simply as a hired hand.

1

2

3

4

5

Members feel a sense of ownership for their jobs and unit because they are committed to goals they helped establish.

Table 2

Analysis of Question 2

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.00	4.60
Standard Deviation	.83	.59

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question two, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on how they feel about their jobs. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.00. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .83. This indicates that the majority of the responses ranged anywhere from 3.17 to 4.83. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.6, with a standard deviation was .59. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 4.0 and 5.2. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .46 points. This question and one other the mean score went up by the most amounts of points. The standard deviation decreased by .24. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Three

Members are told what to do rather than being asked what the best approach would be. Suggestions are not encouraged.

Members contribute to the organization's success by applying their unique talent and knowledge to team objectives.

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Table 3

Analysis of Question 3

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.39	4.59
Standard Deviation	.66	.62

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question three, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on the participant works. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.39. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .66. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 3.73 to 5.05. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.59, with a standard deviation was .62. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 3.97 and 5.21. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .20 points. The standard deviation decreased by .03. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Four

Members distrust the motives of colleagues because they do not understand the role of other members. Expressions of opinion or disagreement are considered.

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Members work in a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreements and feeling. Questions are welcomed.

Table 4

Analysis of Question 4

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.41	4.63
Standard Deviation	.66	.48

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question four, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on how much trust there is. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.41. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .66. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 4.11 to 5.07. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.63, with a standard deviation was .48. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 4.15 and 5.11. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .22 points. The standard deviation decreased by .18. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Five

Members are so cautious about what they say that real understanding is not possible. Game playing may occur and communications traps are set to catch the unwary.

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Members practice open and honest communication. They make an effort to understand each other's point of view.

Table 5

Analysis of Question 5

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.32	4.71
Standard Deviation	.71	.51

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question five, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on communication. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.32. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .71. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 3.61 to 5.03. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.71, with a standard deviation was .51. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 4.20 and 5.22. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .39 points. The standard deviation decreased by .21. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Six

Members may receive good training but are limited in applying it to the job by the supervisor or other group members.

Members are encouraged to develop skills and apply what they learn on the job. They receive the support of the team.

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Table 6

Analysis of Question 6

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.15	4.56
Standard Deviation	.68	.57

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question six, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on enhancements of skills. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.15. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .68. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 3.47 to 4.83. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.56, with a standard deviation was .57. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 3.99 and 5.13. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .41 points. The standard deviation decreased by .10. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Seven

Members find themselves in conflict situations which they do not know how to resolve. Their supervisor may put off intervention until serious damage is done.

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Member recognize conflict is a normal aspect of human interaction but they view such situations as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity. They work to resolve conflict quickly and constructively.

Table 7

Analysis of Question 7

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	4.07	4.46
Standard Deviation	.64	.63

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Question seven, asks the participants to decided whether or not they are a group or a team based on goals, and how they will be accomplished. In the pre survey, the mean response was 4.07. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .64. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 3.43 to 4.71. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.46, with a standard deviation was .63. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 3.83 and 5.09. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .39 points. The standard deviation decreased by .02. When the standard deviation is less than one that means the participants were in agreement with their responses to the question.

Question Eight

Members may or may not participate in decisions affecting the team. Conformity often appears more important than positive results. (Groupthink)

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Members participate in decisions affecting the team but understand their leader must make a final ruling whenever the team cannot decide, or an emergency exists. Positive results, not conformity, are the goal.

Table 8

Analysis of Question 8

	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
Mean	3.80	4.27
Standard Deviation	.86	.73

Note. response scale 1 = group dynamics 2 = mostly group dynamics 3 = neutral

4 = mostly team dynamics 5 = team dynamics

Finally, question eight asks the participants to decide whether or not they are a group or a team based on their decisions affecting each other. In the pre survey, the mean response was 3.80. This means the average participant felt as though the group was functioning as team. The standard deviation was .86. This indicates that the majority of the response ranged anywhere from 2.94 to 4.66. After the outdoor experiential team training session the mean score was 4.27, with a standard deviation was .73. This means the average participant felt the group was functioning as a team. The standard deviation indicates that the majority of the responses after the training were between 3.54 and 5.00. This data indicates that the average score on the team scale went up .46 points. The standard deviation decreased by .13.

Summary

In each of the questions asked the mean score increased by .20 points. This means participants feel more like a team than a group after the team building training. The standard deviation decreased by .02. When the standard deviation decreases that means the participants answer the questions close to each other. Using the data the researcher can prove that outdoor experiential training works as a team building tool. It

is a good idea to have a group go through some type of team training. In the long run, a team is more effective than a group.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Summary

Outdoor experiential training is an effective way to improve team work. Often times people are forced to work in a group with predetermined goals. There can be many problems when this happens. One problem may be conflict amongst team members. Group members may be unsure of what their roles are. In order for teams to be effective managers must first know the difference between groups and teams.

As stated before, a group is a collection of people who generally have a common objective – which is not one they have had a role in shaping or directing. On the other hand a team is an energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives; who work well together, and enjoy doing so; and produce high quality work. In order for a group to become an effective team, the group needs to go through five stages of group development. As groups go through these stages of development, they become a team rather than a group thus leading to work that is more productive.

Purpose of the study

The researcher will use material through the use of participation, facilitation, and observation. The focus of this project is on team effectiveness that occurred during each of the outdoor learning experiences observed. The researcher believes that this type of training not only gets people out of the office for the day, but also increases the effectiveness of the team. The main reason for this research is because many companies are utilizing the use of teams. Often, teams are thrown right into the job with little or no

time to get to know one another. In the researcher's experiences, teams are just assigned and then must work together towards a common goal. Due to our fast paced society, the job needs to get done as soon as possible—this can lead to no time for group cohesiveness. Many times teams do not understand how to work together, this can make the job harder to accomplish.

Outdoor education is one way to include participants in the learning process. The purpose of this study is to identify if there are any changes to team dynamics during a ropes course and a follow-up after. The teams consist of groups in the University of Wisconsin Stout's Organizational Leadership class.

Methods and Procedures

Outdoor experiential training is an effective way to improve team work. In this study the researcher, first participated in this type of training. After seeing the benefits of this training, the researcher facilitated two ropes courses. One of the groups was unaware that they were being used in this study, while the other group knew they were a part of a study. The researcher wanted to make sure that no one was acting in a different way when being watched. The final procedure used was direct observation of a ropes course. This group knew they were being watched and were asked to complete a pre survey and a post survey.

By participating in a ropes course the researcher was able to experience this style of training first hand. By facilitating two ropes courses, the researcher was able to get information from two groups. Having two groups gave the researcher more proof that this style of training is an effective team building tool. Direct observation allowed the researcher to see many things that were missed while facilitating.

Conclusions

The team building training was successful in each ropes course. The researcher believes that team training needs to be done to some extent with all groups. Too often people are assigned to a group with predetermined goals and then management questions when the group fails. Conducting team training from the start allows the group to get a start on the right foot. During team training, it is very effective to have the members establish goals. The group can also set ground rules, and assign tasks.

Each of the groups in the study progressed as a team throughout the day. Many of the groups were having problems communicating and working together. This behavior is characteristic of groups in stage one of team development. In order to proceed to the next stage, group members need to understand one another and the goals they are trying to accomplish. This training enabled the groups a chance to get to know one another, which increases communication. Each activity allowed participants to complete tasks in a non-threatening environment.

As a result of the ropes course each group was able to function as a team. This was illustrated by increased communication and improved efficiency of the activities throughout the day. This was also proven in the surveys conducted before and after the training.

Recommendations

If the researcher conducted the study again, only a few changes would be made. First of all, the researcher would study an actual work group. A follow-up focus group would also be conducted six months to a year later to see how effective the training was

long term. The researcher would also like to look at gender issues. For example, how men and women get along in the work place. One focus of this training would be to see who makes more of the decision, men or women. Overall, the study was successful, the researcher would only make these few changes in a future study.

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APPENDIX A

Groups Versus Teams

Groups	Teams
<p>Members think they are grouped together for administrative purposes only. Individuals work independently, sometimes at cross purposes with others.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members recognize their interdependence and understand both personal and team goals are best accomplished with mutual support. Time is not wasted struggling over "turf" or attempting personal gain at the expense of others.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members tend to focus on themselves because they are not sufficiently involved in planning the unit's objectives. They approach their job simply as a hired hand.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members feel a sense of ownership for their jobs and unit because they are committed to goals they helped establish.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members are told what to do rather than being asked what the best approach would be. Suggestions are not encouraged.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members contribute to the organization's success by applying their unique talent and knowledge to team objectives.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members distrust the motives of colleagues because they do not understand the role of other members. Expressions of opinion or disagreement are considered.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members work in a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, disagreements and feelings. Questions are welcomed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members are so cautious about what they say that real understanding is not possible. Game playing may occur and communications traps are set to catch the unwary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members practice open and honest communication. They make an effort to understand each other's point of view.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members may receive good training but are limited in applying it to the job by the supervisor or other group members.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members are encouraged to develop skills and apply what they learn on the job. They receive the support of the team.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members find themselves in conflict situations which they do not know how to resolve. Their supervisor may put off intervention until serious damage is done.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members recognize conflict is a normal aspect of human interaction but they view such situations as an opportunity for new ideas and creativity. They work to resolve conflict quickly and constructively.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>
<p>Members may or may not participate in decisions affecting the team. Conformity often appears more important than positive results. (Groupthink)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Members participate in decisions affecting the team but understand their leader must make a final ruling whenever the team cannot decide, or an emergency exists. Positive results, not conformity, are the goal.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 5</p>