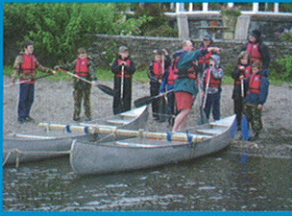




HORIZONS



Issue 53 Spring 2011

professional development
for outdoor practitioners

contents

2	Regular Feature	GREENscene Edited by Ken Oglvie
4	Outdoor Education	DO LEARNERS LEARN WHAT TEACHERS TEACH? - by Orlando Rutter
8	Insight	TRACKING AND THE ART OF SEEING - by Steve Hanton
11	Development Training	HOLISTIC LEADERSHIP - by Bob Larcher
14	Professional Matters	TOOLS, TOOLBOXES AND SOLUTIONS - by David Crossland
16	Outdoor Education	USING PERSONAL GOAL SETTING TO INDIVIDUALISE THE OE CENTRE EXPERIENCE - by Dave Harvey
20	Health & Safety	RISK-BENEFIT ANALYSIS - by Tim Morton
24	Regular Feature	GEARTalk - Edited by John Traynor
26	Professional Matters	NO FEAR - by Colin Imrie
29	Health & Safety	MANCHESTER HOLE 2005 - by Lessons Learned Group
30	Sport & Recreation	"GOING UP": UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING EFFICIENT UPHILL WALKING - by Richard Ensoll
34	Professional Matters	CAN YOU TALK THE TALK AS WELL AS DOING THE WALK? - by Lawrence Chapman
36	Professional Matters	LIFE AND TIMES OF THE "JOURNAL OF ADVENTURE EDUCATION AND OUTDOOR LEARNING" - by Dave Hardy
38	Regular Feature	NEW BOOKS - "Children Learning Outside the Classroom" and "Nature Kindergarten"
39	Regular Feature	Horizons Spring 2011 Prize Draw

Amendment. In Horizons 51 we published "Spectacular Ospreys" article in which there was incorrect information which was not supplied by the author. **This is an amendment.** There are now some 200 pairs established in Britain. The majority of these are in Scotland, and Loch Garten in Cairngorm is probably the best known of the Osprey observation sites. In England and Wales the Lake District Ospreys were the first pair to have returned naturally to breed. There are two pairs that return to breed in Wales, and 2010 was the second year to have breeding ospreys in Kielder Forest in Northumberland. There has been licenced re-introduction in Rutland Water (midlands). There are currently no ospreys in native Northern Ireland. - Ed.

editorial

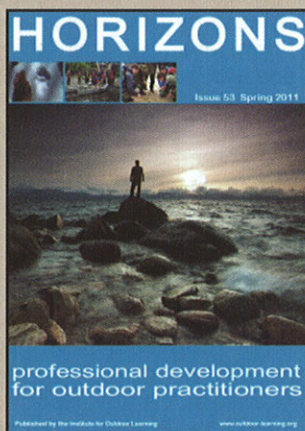
Welcome to the first Horizons of 2011

We have had an enthusiastic response to Fiona's call inviting articles, especially from APIOL and LPIOL members. My postbag is bulging with a fantastic selection of thoughts and experiences. We have articles on tracking and the esoteric side of bushcraft, on coaching walking uphill. We have insights into leadership and thinking strategically about problems, solutions and the challenges to our field and a look back at 10 years of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning since it split from Horizons. There are ideas shared for making outdoor education more effective: highlighting the benefits not just the risks, goal setting for effective learning, managing challenging behaviour and educating holistically for sustainability. How about that for a cross section of ideas for your professional development? Plus of course our regular features GREENscene (by Ken Oglvie) and GEARTalk.

I think this issue illustrates the passion we have for our work and is why, even when significant sectors of the field face funding challenges, there will always be people who find ways to ensure that the valuable work we do continues to grow and develop.

Elsbeth Mason

HORIZONS professional development



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Can you 'TALK THE TALK' as well as doing the walk?

- Some thoughts on rebranding for survival

by Lawrence Chapman

The world is fast changing at the moment, we all know of centres that are under threat of closure and school budgets are going to be tight. So are we just going to roll over or battle on arguing that there shouldn't be any change. I believe that a change in what we say and do could be the best chance of flourishing in difficult circumstances.

(Please note that through this discussion I have used the term Outdoor Education. I mean this to be thought of in the widest possible context to include learning outside the classroom, and all forms of working in and discovering the outdoors.)

I believe we, the outdoor industry, need to be able to articulate the benefits of Outdoor Education in terms that are closely linked with the other priorities of headteachers. Here I will especially discuss those priorities facing secondary heads. These priorities include how to get good results with the English Baccalaureate, reduce costs of permanent exclusion, self evaluation and OFSTED. I will look at each of these in turn.

Of course we all feel that all pupils should have access to outdoor education and that outdoor education has intrinsic value, but this is a new world..... And needs new ways of thinking.

So the challenges and opportunities that we face are:

■ ■ The English Baccalaureate or EBac

The EBac is the new measure of school standards and achievement. It's not really supposed to come into force for another year but is already having an impact as the recent league tables showed how schools would fair under the new measure. The EBac will require an A-C GCSE pass in English, Maths, Science, a humanity (History or Geography) and a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) like French or German. Headteachers expect the "floor" measure

which is whether a school is doing well or not, to be set at 35% of pupils achieving the EBac. To reach the 35% target Heads think they will need to have 70% of their pupils on the EBac programme and furthermore the EBac will take up 80% of the week, or in plain speaking leave just 1 days worth of time for anything else like PE, PSHE, music, cooking etc.

■ ■ School Self Evaluation

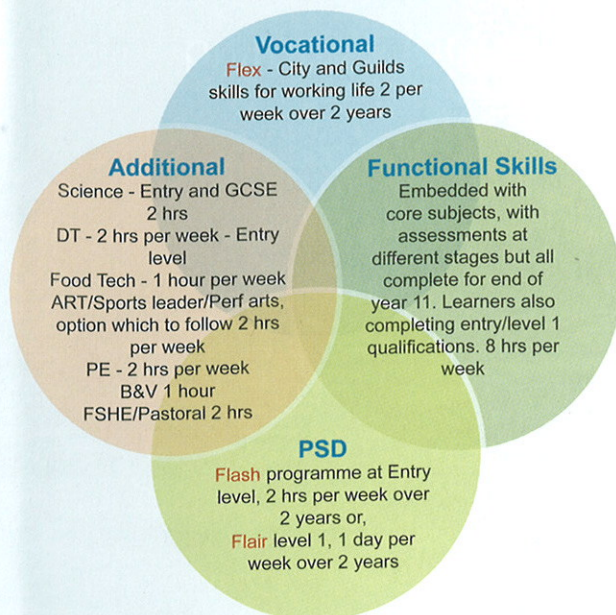
All schools have for some time been keeping a School Self Evaluation (SEF) as a way of OFSTED assessing the school before they actually arrive on site. The coalition have said that school will no longer have to complete a SEF but it does seem likely that school will still need to keep self-evaluation but it will be called something other than a SEF. The outdoor industry needs to be clear about outcomes that heads will be able to report in their self-evaluation.

■ ■ Exclusions

The headlines in some of the press is that headteachers are being given more powers to exclude pupils who are giving them problems, however this is not the full story as schools will now be responsible for paying fully for alternative provision where previously this has been paid by the local authority. So Heads are thinking about ways to make inclusive provision and programmes within what they can offer on a routine basis.

■ ■ Are there any opportunities?

I believe there are. In addition to changes about the way we talk about outcomes I believe we can change some of our programmes to offer what schools need. At the time of writing we are still waiting for the Wolf report on vocational learning, but we are hoping that Foundation Learning will remain part of what schools can offer. Foundation Learning is Entry level and level 1 courses in a range of vocational and work related areas. These are ideal courses for the 20-30% of learners not following an EBac route. There is a myriad of qualifications and the online catalogue is



easy to search through. At my school we are offering Employability and personal development with units including living healthily, working as part of team and many others. There aren't modules in canoeing, off road cycling, belaying etc, but these are the methods we are using to achieve the units.

In this way we are offering accreditation with points for schools, we are creating a motivating curriculum that will provide for learners who find classrooms difficult to cope with or like applied learning. If pupils are motivated to learn they we be less disruptive and senior leadership time can instead be spent on school improvement like focusing on those pupils who are predicted grade D GCSE and see if that can be moved to a C grade. They are less likely to need an exclusion and the costs that I have already identified with this.

We have developed a range of Foundation Learning programmes that work with a wide range of pupil ability and allow for the selection of a wide range of vocational

course. Outdoor Education is in the prospectus along with construction and catering etc.

The other strand I have been working on is to use Outdoor Education as a vehicle for other learning. We have been running a one or two night residential that is focused on careers guidance. During the time away there are adventurous and team building activities running with good debriefing sessions. We also take members of the careers and Connexions team with us and during the stay each young person will have two 1:1 sessions with a mentor/advisor to discuss their ideas and write an action plan for the days, weeks and months after the residential. The outcomes are around engaging and supporting learners to make choices about their future. The methods and vehicles of learning are embedded in outdoor learning.

■ ■ Summary

Try to stay up to date with what the driving influences are in schools at the strategic level. Know how to articulate the outcomes of outdoor education in terms of these. For example reducing exclusion, increasing attendance, reducing the risk of students becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Demonstrate how you can add to the achievements of the pupils and the school.

Work with schools to develop new programmes and new courses. Think in new ways like using accreditation that is not specific to the outdoor industry and will add points to the schools Contextual Value Added (CVA) score, those in the catalogue will do this. ■

Notes

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FL Catalogue available at <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/publication.aspx?id=fd6eddef-c4ae-4606-a024-8cc8897963ea>

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Images: all from the author

