1. Brief Overview of the Dissertation

This thesis has been written to lead the reader clearly through the decision making process that has occurred during its completion. It will focus on research areas which historically have been under-represented in outdoor education literature. For example, Priest (1999) asserts that more inquiry is needed to provide evidence of "what transfers, how much of it, for how long and because of what program elements or barriers".

Gillham (2000), McKenzie (2000) and Stake (1995) all highlight the importance of describing the context of the study to aid the experience of the reader and to raise awareness of any potential bias. By offering a "thick description" (Schofield, 1993) of the context of the study, I aim to allow the reader to discover whether this is relevant to their own practice. Therefore the first sections of this dissertation will introduce my background, and information on the Tullochan Trust (TT) and its "Way through the Wilderness" (WTTW) programme. This background then leads to a review of the literature that influenced the theoretical framework of the dissertation.

The theoretical framework chosen is that of constructivism which is allied to a qualitative mode of inquiry. This was chosen after a lengthy process of grappling with how people make meaning, and form knowledge, from an outdoor experience. Barrett and Greenaway (1995, p.54) highlighted the importance of understanding the nature of outdoor education from the participants' perspective. Through guided interviews with seven young people who took part in the WTTW programme, an insight into their perspective will be gained. Priest emphasised that outdoor education research should examine "the elements of adventure programming and the means by which these elements bring about change" (1999, p.315). Hence, the research focuses on how the programme has influenced the young people, and the elements that they believe led to that influence. Furthermore, Takano (2010, p.78) describes that there is a lack of longitudinal studies in outdoor education, so little is known about "transferring changes to the client's real life and sustaining the change in the face of a contrary environment" (Priest, 1999 p.315). Therefore the interviews were conducted exactly a year

on from the WTTW programme and it is this middle ground between the programme elements and the influences for the participants that will be the basis for discussion in this study.

At times my work will be written in the first person. This approach is increasingly common in recent academic literature and recognises the researcher as being embedded in the research rather than a neutral observer (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

1.1 A personal journey in research: why this study is important to me

This MSc is part of a personal journey of appreciating the world around me and of understanding the field of outdoor education research.

Growing up in Scotland, the Fallon family spent their weekends and time together skiing, hill walking, sailing on the Clyde, and collecting wood on the banks of Loch Lomond. These pursuits were an everyday part of our lives. Our holidays were mostly spent camping and cycling in Scotland. Even my first trip abroad as a teenager had an outdoor element: sailing on the Norwegian fjords. For our family the outdoors was very much about being together, rather than focussing on an activity.

As I studied for my undergraduate degree in Psychology and Business studies, I began to realise that part of who I am had been about my development in the outdoors. Originally, I believed that my interest was in people, hence the study choice of Psychology. I sought to understand different people's perspectives on life, through travelling and working in different environments (including charitable work in Nepal, a ski season in Europe, a marketing internship in the USA and working for a management consultancy firm in London). It was at this point that my interest in people and love of the outdoors combined through my postgraduate diploma in Outdoor Education in 2002. This thesis is a continuation of that process and I have chosen to wait until now to write it as I wanted to gain practical experience working in the outdoors. I realised during my diploma year that my practical knowledge was lacking and would have enhanced my studies; I hope it will now enhance this research.

Since the Postgraduate year, I have been working for The Outward Bound Trust (OBT) in many capacities, from assistant to senior instructor. In November 2009, I took on the role of looking after our education accounts in Scotland.

The programme I have chosen to study is one that I have worked on as an instructor three times. Each time it was a stimulating experience. TT, a small charity in West Dunbartonshire, has been running WTTW programmes at Loch Eil since 1998. At twenty five days it is unique, as it is the longest programme run at OBT and the same individuals return for four courses over an eight month period. The programme has a progressive design leading to a three day expedition. As a researcher and instructor it is a privilege to be able to return to the participants after the experience to gain a new personal perspective on the programme.

1.2 Why this study is important to the Tullochan Trust

As far as external assessment is concerned, this has happened for TT only once. They commissioned a university evaluation of the WTTW programme in 2003 (TT, 2009). The study looked at how the charity measured their work, rather than evaluating any participant accounts. Therefore, although WTTW has been running for thirteen years, this will form the first academic attempt to look at the nature of the programme through the eyes of the young people. This is important, as young people are central to our work and our focus, and they can offer insights into the development of the programme for the future. It will also add to the academic research for the charity. I am grateful to OBT and TT, who are both supporting my personal development through this research.

To understand case studies, Gillham (2000) states the first thing to consider is "the *context* from which the research questions, the means of investigating them, and likely explanations will emerge. An *emergent* design is characteristic of this style along with *inductive* theorizing, ie. Making sense of what you find after you've found it" (p.6). Therefore, a background to TT and the WTTW programme will be elucidated. McKenzie (2000) also highlighted the importance of grounding research in the context of the programme being studied. She notes that this is absent in the majority of

studies reviewed in a previous meta-analysis (Hattie, Marsh, Neill & Richards. 1997). Stake (1995) concurs, saying that an intrinsic case study describing the context is important for the vicarious experience of the reader (p. 65).

2 Background

2.1 The Tullochan Trust : an overview

The TT was founded in 1996 in West Dunbartonshire. This local authority has nineteen recognised areas of multiple deprivations and is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2006). "All the areas have a wide range of social and economic problems which have a detrimental effect on many young peoples' lives and development" (TT, 2009). Further to this, Kemp (2008) states that "51% of kids in the West Dunbartonshire area are living on the breadline" (p.1). In addition, across the authority there is very little opportunity for the mixing of young people from different areas. Territorialism and sectarianism are raised as concerns in recent reports of the area (HMIE, 2008; Donaldson 2008). It is within this wider youth context that the TT operates.

The TT was founded by Fiona Stuart after she was handed a £1000 donation at her father's funeral with the express wish that she "do something he would be proud of". Fiona's father, Brigadier Alastair Pearson CB DSO*** OBE MC KStJ TD was one of Britain's most decorated WWII soldiers. After the War, he bought Tullochan farm, and settled into farming life. He contributed time to many local charities in his role as Lord Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire and he valued courage and leadership. To honour her father's values and his home, TT was born.

Fiona also believes in the value of having courage when faced with adversity and states that "if you show young people unyielding commitment they will respond positively" (F. Stuart, personal communication, 13th Dec, 2009). A pledge of the TT is that they will be there for as long as a young person wants them to be. Indeed the director of educational services for West Dunbartonshire agrees, stating:

"One particular strength of the Trust is the fact that it does not simply engage young people in one-off activities or courses. Rather, it sticks with young people, even when the going gets tough, and continues to engage with them into their adult lives" (T. Lanagan, personal communication, 12th March, 2009)

The TT strategic plan 2008-13 states their vision of "a better world- with stronger, safer communities where opportunity, achievement, wellbeing, respect and social harmony are reflected in the quality of people's daily lives" (TT, 2008, p.2). Their mission is "to give young people support, guidance and opportunity, wherever there is a need, to enable them to fulfil their potential and to make their place in tomorrow's world" (ibid). In particular, TT value courage, leadership, teamwork, respect, achievement, integrity, quality and long-term commitment (ibid).

Fiona set about designing programmes to foster these values in young people. Many of the projects involved some element of local community service and a residential stay. By taking young people out of West Dunbartonshire the projects, such as the OBT programme, aim to provide new life experiences, raise aspirations and broaden horizons to ensure young people are "a positive part of their community, more employable, healthier" (TT, 2009) and also have "a strong set of values, aspirations and ambitions" (ibid).

There is some evidence of the success of the charity from both its growth and the testimonials of past participants and partners (see Appendix 1a-c). Since 1996, TT has grown to work with 500 young people annually and is the largest youth charity working in West Dunbartonshire. It has a turnover close to a million pounds, with thirty four staff, thirty active volunteers and fifteen trustees. Further to this, the 2008 Youth services report holds up the TT projects as an "excellent example of joint working involving the voluntary sector and local schools" (Clark, 2008, p.iii).

Furthermore, the Deputy Headmaster of Our Lady & St Patrick's High school states, "Tullochan's ability to offer young people exposure to a very different world beyond their often narrow, alcohol fuelled, comfort zone and territorial communities is exceptional. All the young people

involved with them showed a marked improvement in attitude and attendance and a reduction in the number of exclusions" (G. Meiklejohn, personal communication, 10th December, 2009)

TT now runs many different programmes for young people ranging from helping ease primary pupils' transition to secondary school, to supporting individuals taking part in Raleigh International expeditions. The OBT programme, although there from the beginning of the TT with the WTTW project, now forms only one part of their wider work. The OBT and TT partnership is one that has lasted and changed as both organisations have evolved during the last thirteen years.

2.2 The Way through the Wilderness programme: an overview

The WTTW programme started with an unsuccessful trip to Newtonmore in 1997. Undeterred, Fiona entered into discussions with Tony Shepherd at OBT, Loch Eil and formed a partnership which still endures. Fiona designed WTTW, which began in 1998, with very little experience of designing outdoor programmes. The programme is about promoting the values of the TT, specifically: leadership, teamwork, courage, taking responsibility, and respect for peers, adults and the environment. Fiona Stuart (2009) described how initially WTTW had been used as a method of the schools gaining relief from their disruptive pupils for a week. She had to build relationships with all the agencies involved in the experience to ensure the young people chosen were those who would be most likely to benefit. She also established communication between the OBT instructors and the teachers back at school, through individual reports. Fiona and the TT youth workers personally discussed reports with young people, instructors, parents and staff in schools (example of course report in Appendix 2). TT used the WTTW as an incentive to encourage positive behaviour whilst in the home and school environments.

In describing the context further, Priest recommends certain elements to include (1999, p.315). I have used these as a guide in my summary of the programme. They are: duration, content of programme, facilitation, place, participants and follow-up during the courses.

Duration: The four courses that formed the twenty-five-day WTTW programme were for thirteen to fourteen year-olds and based around the principle that the young people would take on more challenge incrementally. The 2008-09 participants had three, five-day courses in November, February and March before their final ten-day course in July. In the July course, the participants led a three-day multi- activity expedition through the Highlands.

Content of programme: The 2008-9 programme's objectives were decided in partnership with TT and were stated on the participants' certificate:

"This Four week programme spread over one year, increases self-awareness, personal responsibility and an appreciation of the natural environment. Participants experience genuine adventure and, through increased determination, gain confidence to overcome new challenges. They also develop team, leadership and communication skills" (OBT, 2009).

Facilitation: The sample group was mainly staffed by me. On the first two courses I was assisted by a trainee instructor and on the final course I was absent through sickness. A colleague took on the group for the final testing phase of the programme. The course director added consistency throughout the programme for the participants.

Place: The courses took place at OBT Loch Eil, a residential centre near Fort William. The focus of the course, and of OBT, was to get young people journeying in the Highlands. The programme did this through an emphasis on whole day activities away from the centre, where the participants learned the skills to lead their final expedition. Each activity, day and course had a review focus of transferring learning to the next activity and building skills for the final expedition and future challenges the participants might face.

Participants and follow-up: The course participants were chosen by the schools and TT. They may have experienced some challenges at home or in school and were therefore deemed to need extra support. As their instructor, I purposefully avoided knowing too much about each participant's background, so as not to influence how I worked with them. A second tier of support was provided by

a member of the TT staff, who took part in the whole programme. Between courses the participants had the support of one another and of the TT youth group and leader. They also had personal challenges set in their course report which they have time to consider before returning to the centre. This could be as simple as challenging Nina to stop saying "I can't" and replacing it with "I might find this difficult, but I am going to try". Although the participants all come from West Dunbartonshire, they attend four different secondary schools; they would not have known one another before the programme; there was also a mixture of genders in the group (7 male: 4 female). Also all but one of the participants were in their third year of high school; one male, was in his second year.

3. Literature Review

Rickinson et al. (2004) highlighted a 'blind spot' in outdoor learning research as the nature of 'learning' in outdoor education. Their report critically examined 150 studies published from 1993-2003. They looked at various outdoor learning environments, such as day courses and residential experiences. They concluded that outdoor adventure education can make a positive impact on a person's attitudes, beliefs, self-perceptions, interpersonal and social skills, and provide cognitive and physical/behavioural benefits, as well as provide affective and interpersonal/social outcomes. The authors also concluded there is more value in programmes that are longer**,** have well thought out preparatory and follow-up work, emphasise the role of facilitation, and that link programme aims to programme practices. Recommendations that were made included: learning more about how and why programmes work, the nature of the learning, and the historical and political aspects of outdoor education. Therefore, the WTTW programme is worthy of study as it relates to the values outlined by Rickinson et al.: it is the longest programme OBT run, has a good follow-up structure through reports, there is an established partnership between TT and OBT and the programme aims are a central part in preparing young people to take on the leadership of their own final expedition. This paper takes on the recommendations to try and add research to an area where a gap was identified and learn about the nature of the programme by looking at its influences through the eyes of the young people. It will not however, look at the historical or political context of outdoor education.

Previous research has claimed various programme components as having influence. McKenzie (2000) reviewed the existing literature prior to the year 2000 and divided the programme elements into six characteristics including, the physical environment, activities, processing, the group, the instructor, and the participant. Some recent findings have supported McKenzie's work and agree that physical environment (see for example Gassner & Russell 2008; Takano 2010), time for group and personal reflection and processing (see for example, Gassner & Russell, 2008; McGough, 1997; Sibthorpe, 2003), challenging activities (see for example, Gassner & Russell, 2008; Smith, Steel & Gidlow, 2010; Whittington & Hixon Mack, 2010), diverse group of people or social aspects (see for example, Smith, Steel & Gidlow, 2010; Takano 2010; Whittington & Hixon Mack, 2010), instructor (Shooter, Paisley & Sibthorpe 2009; Thomas, 2010) and participant (see for example Whittington & Hixon Mack, 2010) are valid programme elements.

Further programme characteristics have also been added and deemed noteworthy in their own right beyond McKenzie's description. These include, the role of expedition (see for example, Beames, 2005; Gassner & Russell, 2008), the role of expectations (see for example Bell, 2010; Zink, 2005), and fun and enjoyment (Smith, Steel & Gidlow, 2010).

By reducing the experience to programme elements described by participants as having influenced them, it is hoped that there will be a greater understanding of the processes involved in the WTTW programme. However, in reading around how young people make meaning from the experience and the various processes involved, it is theoretically challenging to decide to separate programme elements. As this study is looking at the influences a year on from the programme, it may be problematic to attribute development to the programme and elements specifically. The participants will have had a year of further experiences in which to frame the programme, and their views may have changed considerably. The findings will therefore only represent a snap shot of their views in that moment, one year on from the OBT course.

Although it may be challenging to isolate programme elements and the resultant influences for the participants, it is important to hear young people's accounts of their experience and document

these. Looking at outdoor learning from the participants' perspective was called for by Barrett and Greenaway in 1995. They highlighted the "desperate need for new research which focuses on young people themselves". They go on to say that "young people's account of their outdoor adventure experiences and their views about what most influences their learning and development are almost entirely absent from the literature assessed in the review" (p.54).

The majority of studies before 1995 had focussed on measuring self-concept or evaluating programme efficacy in relation to outcomes. However, since 1995, there has been a growing body of research looking at the nature of the experience from the participants' viewpoint. There have been several Masters dissertations written in this vein: Eddington (2007), researched participants' ideas relating to adventure, Goodyear (2003) aimed to uncover the expedition processes that might lead to change, Telford (2005) analysed whether an outdoor experience had any impact on physical activity 17yrs after the course, Mayer (2009) looked at the experiences of international students on an outdoor residential. The present study will be an addition to the growing body of qualitative work undertaken to look at the nature of outdoor experiences from the participants' perspective. It will aim to look at the key influences resulting from the experience exactly a year after the course ended. Takano, emphasises the need for understanding participants' longitudinal perspectives as they "represent an obvious gap in the literature surrounding how outdoor education experiences are experienced and understood" (2010, p.78).

Research papers have also concentrated on the need to understand the nature of the experience through participant accounts, (see for example, Baldwin, Persing, & Magnuson, 2004; Beames,2005; Cassidy, 2001; Davidson, 2001; Gassner, & Russell, 2008; Rea, 2008; Takano 2010; Waite, 2007, Zink, 2005,).

Baldwin, Persing, and Magnuson's, (2004), theoretical paper emphasises the need for research to look at how change occurs and offers a framework to probe programme characteristics further. Baldwin et al. criticise the well-cited meta-analyses of Hattie et al. (1997) and McKenzie (2000), which look at programme outcomes, for showing little understanding of how change occurs.

They suggest one way of looking at the programme characteristics that influence change, is to follow Hamilton's (1980) hierarchical "ladder of evidence" (p.195). This ladder assesses whether a) participants say they have been affected, b) is there external evidence of effects, c) is there evidence that the programme was responsible for the effects, and d) what it was about the programme that was responsible for the effects. This approach first focuses on the participants' account and then further analyses the data to rule out extraneous variables which might have been responsible for the change. The features of the programme are then discussed in light of existing social theory. One key assertion is that explanatory theories should be tied to a detailed understanding of the programme components and context. Baldwin et al's theoretical paper is useful in building a framework to question the research data by describing Hamilton's hierarchy and has been used as a lens for data analysis in this dissertation. However, it needs elaboration. Miles and Huberman (1994) deal with the practicalities of research by outlining some common features of analytic methods. The combination of questioning through theory and practical research steps has informed this study.

One paper that stimulated thought around both theory and the practicalities of research was Beames (2005). In this paper clear methodological steps were described. The methodology used: categorical aggregation, has helped inform my data analysis (p.16). This was a process of gathering together similar phrases used by the participants until they could be sufficiently represented by a theme. Hamilton's Ladder of evidence was also used in my study as a framework to gather these instances together under four headings representing the rungs on the ladder. The verification aspect of Beames' work illuminated steps that could be taken. Firstly, a 'critical friend' (see also, Kvale, 2009) used my methodology to analyse two interview recordings and discuss her thoughts. Secondly I enlisted a colleague with whom I could discuss my findings. Finally 'member checks' (see also, Stake, 1995) were completed to make sure I was correctly interpreting the interviews.

Beames (2005), studied an overseas expedition and found that participants developed mental resilience, were more willing to take on challenges, and have in some way gained a greater understanding of themselves and an ability to work with others. Beames studied how people construct

meaning from their interaction with the world around them. Social theory was used as a lens for Beames' study.

This paper stimulated deeper thought around how young people make meaning from their experience; specifically, whether I believe facts and knowledge are out there to be discovered or whether meaning is socially constructed and context specific. Kvale (2009), in *Doing Interviews* referred to this using the metaphor of the miner and the traveller (p.20). The traveller interacts and interprets meaning as he finds it, whereas the miner believes meaning is out there to be identified. Although Beames discussed how young people make meaning, this is absent from some other papers (e.g. Hattie et al. 1997). Understanding different researchers' beliefs around how meaning is constructed from an experience can help to highlight different assumptions in methodological choice and illuminate views of practitioners. This will be discussed further in relation to this study in the theoretical framework.

Two other researchers explored the concept of how young people make meaning from the experience. They were Cassidy (2001) and Davidson (2001). Cassidy looked at narrative as an interpretive lens: transfer of meaning beyond the experience to someone's life-story. Cassidy states that, "Participants must be given the opportunity to explore personally meaningful concepts that come from their own history, context, and feelings for true learning to occur" (p.22). Looking at how individuals describe their experiences a year after the course may give some insight into what has been relevant and lasting for the young people in the study and therefore what learning has transferred to their lives.

Davidson (2001) similarly states: "the essence of learning from adventure is the process of making meaning out of experience - of action and reflection" (p.11). Davidson goes on to suggest that "A need has been recognised to develop research which explores the "process variables" of adventure experiences instead of focussing on measuring outcomes" (p.12, see also Ewert, 1987; Hastie, 1992; Wichmann, 1991). The nature of the experience and making meaning from it will be considered when trying to understand the programme. Allison and Pomeroy (2000) state, "indisputably, understanding

our work is a prerequisite for improving it" (p.97). Therefore by looking at the young people involved in the TT, I hope that the programme and the partnership with OBT will continue to improve.

In summary, this study will add to the growing body of research looking at participants' perspectives on their outdoor experience. It will offer a "thick description" of the experience and outline key responses from the individuals. It extends the body of current research by analysing participant responses a year on from the end of their programme.

4. Theoretical Framework

Allison and Pomeroy's (2000) paper states, that we must "consider our own ontological visions and confront our epistemological preferences" (p. 93). These will have an influence on choices taken regarding how to critically read and analyse previous research.

In my experience as an instructor, no two working weeks have been the same. The weather, time of year and different individuals in the group have varied with each course. Review discussions have also varied and individuals have seemed to take away personally relevant and meaningful learning. This has stimulated my increased interest in how people make and take meaning away from an experience. I first considered the idea that we are selective in what we assimilate from an experience in a Personal and Social context lecture at Edinburgh University in 2002. We played a game entitled stereo headphones. Three people formed a line while seated. The two on the outside talked quietly into the person in the middle's ear. When discussed in the group it became apparent that the listener only selected information that was more interesting or relevant to them. This demonstrated to me the idea that we seek, and pay attention to, information that is meaningful to our own worlds. The theory that we construct our own worlds could mean that we do not perceive things as they are, but rather as we are (see for example, Bloomer, 2001, p.430; Boghossian, 2006, p.715; Brooks & Brooks, 1999, p.4; DeLay. 1996, p.77). Therefore, it could be argued that there are many multiple realities, depending on the situation and who is involved.

This seed of how we construct meaning has developed over the subsequent years and is being reconsidered in this study. Allison & Pomeroy's request to outline our ontological visions and epistemological preferences will now be considered. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) have defined ontological assumptions as concerning "questions about the nature of reality" (p.3). From this standpoint my ontology would be that of relativism, where reality is multiple and will be constructed differently by people, depending on the meaning they draw from their world. This would sit within the Constructivist paradigm. (see for example, Piaget, 1950, DeLay, 1996, Von Glaserfeld, 1995, 7& Luckmann, 1966). A paradigm can be described as "a representative model of how we perceive reality, how one interprets the complexities of knowledge, and how these collections of philosophical assumptions about reality in turn influence how one seeks to acquire knowledge" (Priest, 1999 p.309).

Constructivism has been defined by Brooks and Brooks (1999) as "a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own "rules" and "mental models," which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences". In contrast to behaviourism which places responsibility for learning with the teacher or instructor, this approach places agency of the action of learning with the learner. From a constructivist perspective, even if you teach knowledge through rote, participants will still take their own meaning from it. This idea combines the traditional and constructivist theories in education. It has been called a "post-progressive" movement (Bosacki, 1997, p.36). There are many different types of constructivism, for example: cognitive, critical, radical and social. However, they all share the same core idea that learners "construct their own knowledge" (Boghossian, 2006, p.714). In this study, constructivism is only discussed in this broader view.

This stance is particularly relevant when considered against the definition of Experiential Education which describes it as "a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experiences" (Association Experiential Education [AEE], 2009).

Maykut and Morehouse, state, "Epistemological assumptions concern the origins of knowledge". Therefore, following on from my ontology, in this research, participants have been interviewed to establish their subjective interpretations of how the experience has influenced them. Each account holds equal validity. This approach has been chosen, as the constructivist paradigm sits within the qualitative, subjective mode of inquiry. It has been informed by information on how paradigm positions influence research methods (Allison, 2000, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 p.12,)

The belief that there are multiple realities and that meaning may be drawn from an experience in individual ways, will affect how knowledge will be gleaned from the data. These principles of individual meaning from an experience will place a greater need for emphasis on verification in the data analysis stage, to help create a broader understanding of the participant responses beyond the level of the individual researcher.

Constructivist approaches to education are gaining credence in Scotland and the theory of the complex nature of learning is extending this view. In recent Scottish physical education research complexity theory is emerging as supporting the curriculum and pedagogy developments (Jess, Atencio & Thorburn, 2011). A complex approach to learning emphasises "the constructivist learner who produces and reproduces knowledge evolutionarily and actively" (Morrison, 2008, p.27). Jess et al.'s paper reminds us that "learning is a collaborative endeavour reflecting the complex interactions *within* the different groups of children" and those involved with them (p.180). They go on to say that "learning emerges through the relationships that develop between these constituent 'elements' which are themselves considered shifting, dynamic and diverse" (p.180). This view suggests that the learning of individuals is not a linear process where it is easy to distinguish cause and effect and rather lends weight to the constructivist view of "active learners". Learning is perhaps more akin to a web analogy where elements interact to create influence. If one element is changed this can directly affect these influences. It is for this reason that systems and their constituent elements are difficult to understand and control in outdoor education research as they often constitute a moving target. This

can be compared to complex adaptive systems in biology (Holland, 1992 p. 18). Holland describes a "kaleidoscopic array of simultaneous interactions" within biological systems (p. 19). It is within this backdrop of complexity that an in-depth, individual case study can illuminate some of the processes. By having described my background, TT, WTTW, recent literature and how this relates to the chosen methodology this case study aims to give the reader the opportunity to understand the particularity of the case. This has been referred to as having the aim of "particularisation" rather than generalisability (Stake, 1995, p.39).

5. Methods

This methods section will explain the steps taken in planning and executing this dissertation. As previously stated the TT was chosen as the topic of this case study due to my intrinsic interest in the WTTW programme and its unique characteristics for OBT.

5.1 The subject group

Stake (2005), acknowledges in case study research the sample size is often too small to warrant random selection, but that there should be an awareness of variety and opportunities for intensive study (p.451).

The subject sample was the WTTW group I had instructed over the period from November 2008 until July 2009. The chosen sample had a gender split of two females and five males. They had different social circumstances and varied considerably in how vocal they were in reviews on the course. The participants had been involved with TT for varying lengths of time. Some had joined projects in Primary school, whereas others had just joined prior to WTTW. This group is believed to be broadly representative of the previous TT groups who have taken part in the WTTW programme.

This sample was purposefully chosen for a number of reasons. The previously built rapport was seen as an advantage, as it was thought that it would facilitate a more relaxed and open interview. While instructing the group, I had observed that these students take a long time to trust anybody that works with them. If I had chosen a TT group that did not know me, I may have struggled to build

common ground and trust in the interview period. Davidson (2001) asserts in her research that creating common ground was important for the quality of the later interviews.

For those who took part in the interviews, I hope it was a rewarding reminder of the programme and of what they had achieved; thus an extension of the meaning they have drawn from the programme.

Newburg, Kimiecik, Durand-Bush and Doell (2002) state, “helping people find meaning and engagement in whatever they do is one key to helping them perform well and achieve their potential” (p.50). As a researcher, but also the group’s instructor, this resonates with the chosen aims when working with the young people in this study.

5.2 Chosen methodology

Based on the constructivist paradigm this study is an exploratory case study with an emergent design. The emergent design is characterised by progressive focussing throughout the research process (Stake, 1995). The focussing through data analysis began after each interview. This then informed emerging themes, in subsequent interviews which can then be probed deeper (Gillham, 2000 p.6). This qualitative approach is deemed most appropriate based on the theoretical framework and previous research on participants’ perspectives. Hamilton’s aforementioned ladder of evidence provided a framework to question the data which illustrated the emerging themes. Allison and Pomeroy (2000) used Midgley’s swiss roll example to suggest that we will continue to gain new perspectives, depending on the research tools we use to look at outdoor education. By continuing to use the knife (different research techniques), to cut the swiss roll (outdoor education) in different ways, we can gain as much of an understanding of the field from participants’ perspectives as possible. The chosen methods for this case study have been informed by various qualitative approaches (Baldwin et al. 2004; Beames, 2005; Hamilton, 1980; Kvale, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

By choosing past WTTW participants the methodology has been based on the qualitative posture of in-dwelling. In-dwelling is where "the qualitative researcher is a part of the investigation as a participant observer" and also "in depth interviewer" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 25). However, they also have the ability to reflect on the situation "to rethink the meanings of the experience" (ibid).

5.3 Study design

An interview method was chosen, in preference to questionnaires or written narratives, for several reasons. The participants were familiar with this format as one-to-one meetings occurred at the end of every course. As it was familiar it was thought this should lead to more open answers. Often the participants on this programme have an aversion to reading or writing, and associate this with school. Therefore, they might have disengaged with questionnaires or written accounts. The interview was seen as an opportunity for both myself and the participant to construct meaning, understanding and develop the learning experience during the discussion.

Stake (1995) does not recommend recording interviews, as he believes the art of the interpreter is in gleaning the meaning. However, I took the decision to record on my Blackberry, with the permission of the participants and then transcribe the audio. This allowed me to refer back to the transcription at a later date, to discover meaning which I may have originally missed. This approach is common in qualitative inquiry (see for example, Beames 2005; Sibthorpe, 2003). As this was my first attempt at qualitative inquiry of this nature, developing my interviewing skills was essential. I aimed to create an atmosphere of empathetic neutrality. This approach described by Patton, (1990), advocates an empathy with the people and neutrality to the findings

A semi-structured interview guide was prepared to aid the interview process. The guide aimed to avoid the pitfalls of questions which were closed, unclear, vague or too complex (see Appendix 3). Patton's (1990) six types of questions were used as a basis for the guide, and these focussed on experiences/ behaviours, opinions/values and feelings style questions. It also included a rapport-building, memory-based question to break the ice in the interview, as informed by the pilot study. The

position of “in-dwelling” recognised the human as an instrument. Therefore, there was enough flexibility in the guide to allow unexpected content in the interview to be investigated in more depth. This also allowed for themes from the initial interviews to be probed further if they resurfaced in subsequent interviews. As there had been no interaction with the participants for a year, it was anticipated that more probes and prompts might be needed at the start of each interview. These cues were included in the interview guide to help maintain the flow of the discussion. This was beneficial, as some participants were nervous when we first began. The aim of this was to give the participants the confidence to speak and rebuild rapport.

Interviews were to continue until saturation of themes was reached (Silverman 2000), but it was never intended to include more than the eleven participants in the group. One question I considered was how I would recognise the saturation point. Janice Morse (1995), who wrote a critique of saturation, defines it as “collecting data until no new information is obtained” (p.148). This was my aim.

5.4 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations in this study were informed by the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA, 2004) which can be summarised as two perspectives, “one is concerned with the values of honesty and frankness and personal integrity, the other with those of responsibilities to the subjects of research, such as privacy, confidentiality and courtesy”. (Walliman 2001, p. 213)

All participants were asked for their consent to take part in the study and were contacted via the TT youth worker that worked with the group. The nature of the study was clearly outlined to explain why they had been invited to take part. The participants were given the right to withdraw at any point in the research process. Their parents or guardians were also informed and their permission sought. A copy of the letter which seeks their “informed consent” is attached in Appendix 4 (Silverman, 2006, p.324). At the start of each interview the participants were also given more information about the study and asked if it was acceptable to record the account. Interview recordings

were locked on the Blackberry recording device. The recordings and transcripts used a pseudonym and the research maintained anonymity for the participants by removing all identifiers when written up. The seven participants for the purpose of this study are Arthur, Nina, Keith, Richard, Jamie, Stuart and Jenny.

As I know the participants, I have had to be aware of my own bias and interpret the findings as close to the participant's meaning as possible. This was achieved by checking my interpreted meaning with the students during the interview itself, by repeating phrases and asking for clarification. Also, after data analysis, verification was sought from the participants on my interpreted findings. By listening to the accounts prior to the next interview, time was given to reflect on the effectiveness of the way questions were posed.

5.5 Data Collection

Two pilots and then seven interviews were completed with participants, exactly a year after the programme ended. Four of the participants could not be contacted as one was on holiday, one had moved away and two others had moved on from the Trust.

5.5.1 The pilot interviews.

The proposed qualitative method was tested in two pilot interviews. The first allowed the recording equipment to be tested. It involved an OBT Instructor who was currently working on the TT programme. She offered advice on the style of questions and gave an indication of appropriate timing. I realised when replaying the interview that I had a tendency to ask two questions together which could lead to confusion. In the second pilot with a TT youth worker (a past WTTW participant), it was ensured that only one clear question was asked at a time and that the exact questions for the study were tested. This second pilot was more realistic as the youth worker had also previously been a participant on a Classic Course at Loch Eil in 2005 which I had instructed. In addition it was at the TT offices, the planned location of all participant interviews. This interview tested my ability to build rapport with a previous participant who I had not been in contact with for a period. He spoke at

length about personal issues and the difference WTTW, his Classic course and Raleigh International had made in his life. After the interview, he shared some useful insights on how to engage the participants in my questioning, for example a general icebreaker question at the start of the interview. Transcribing these pilots gave practice at listening and reading the interview material to decipher the best way to analyse the data and to draw out key themes. It also illustrated the privileged position I was in as a researcher when people share their personal views on their experiences and I had to be very aware to take all possible measures to respect that.

5.5.2 The interviews.

The interviews took place at the TT offices in a semi-formal environment, close to the participants' homes to ensure they had easy access but also to satisfy ethical considerations and guardians' peace of mind. The individual interviews were designed to last no more than 45 minutes. In reality, the longest was 40 minutes and the shortest was 26 minutes.

Although the focus of the interview guide was designed around what might have influenced the young people on the WTTW programme and what elicited these influences, the young people were also encouraged to speak about what was important to them in this period. This approach is recognised by Beames (2005); Bell 2008; Davidson (2001) and Stake (1995). The significance the young people placed on key elements, and the situational aspects of the interview, were noted on a contact summary sheet immediately after the young person had left. This created time for immediate reflection on aspects of the interview that might not be adequately represented in the recording and transcription. For an example of a completed contact summary informed by Miles and Huberman (1994, p.53) see Appendix five.

Soon after the interview the data was listened to again and the contact summary sheet reread to reaffirm the context.

5.6 Data Analysis

Here is a summary of procedures undertaken as adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994). Examples of each stage are attached in the Appendices (6&7). After the interviews; contact summary sheet; and transcription of the interviews, open coding was employed. Open coding involved highlighting interesting sections and writing notes in the margins of the transcripts. These sections formed data chunks which were then tabulated under the four previously stated questions highlighted by Hamilton (1980) to build a ladder of evidence. Specifically they were read several times to make sure they represented the effects the participants described, evidence for these effects, evidence that participation in the programme was responsible for the effects and the programme elements that were attributed to the effects. Descriptive codes were initially applied to the data chunks. These related to the following eight themes: place, a tough challenge, fun, self, future goals, being more willing to try hard challenges now, time for reflection, and other people. Extraneous data was looked for in the transcripts to verify if there was any other evidence that could be responsible for the influences. Each separate question was then grouped across all participants to draw out any patterns across the data. These were then tabulated to summarise each question on one A4 sheet and to draw out key themes common to all participants. Any extraneous factors were noted on these sheets. From here it was easier to determine if the influences had any obvious evidence in the participant responses and what programme elements the participant attributed to those influences. In this interpretive stage, several of the original descriptive codes were discounted as the evidence was insufficient to warrant further discussion.

5.7 Verification

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that the lone researcher has a “critical friend who can supply alternative perspectives, support and protection from bias and self-delusion” (p. 46). My critical friend listened to, and discussed with me, two of my interview recordings. Firstly, it is worth noting that she found it difficult to understand the depth of meaning without being face to face with the interviewees. As a doctor she was aware of how much can be ‘given away’ by body language and facial expressions. This emphasised the benefit of the contact summary sheet being completed

immediately after the interview, as a reminder of these contextual elements. When questioned on any potential bias she had heard, she felt that the two interviewees seemed genuine in their responses and what they relayed enthusiastically about their experience. The descriptive codes and resultant interpretive codes were discussed and she felt that the people and level of trust involved in the experience were important for participants gaining in confidence. Specifically, the instructors and other group members were seen as important elements. The challenge element of the activities and the resultant increased determination of the participants were also acknowledged. The role that expectations had to play in outcomes was also discussed, as this is was evident in both accounts.

After further discussion of the original descriptive codes with peers, they were reduced to three main findings. These findings related to the pattern codes which appeared across all accounts: people involved, challenge and processing the experience. Finally, seven months after the original interviews, the findings were further discussed with the young people. Four of the young people met for these member checks. Individual discussions on the findings gave further insight into their thoughts. Specifically the main influences were further highlighted as increased confidence and being more willing to take on a tough challenge now. These meetings were face to face at the TT youth club and were organised by the staff there. This emphasis on reflection and verification of data was to protect against my own bias and intrinsic interest in the topic (Bell, 2008, P.166). The member checks gave me confidence in my data analysis and consensus was agreed with the participants. Each discussion lasted around twenty minutes.

Satisfied that the data analysis had produced meaningful themes from the verification process, the findings will be further discussed in light of the current literature.

5.8 Limitations

The main limitation with this case study is that it may be difficult to generalise to other OBT courses. However, it may be possible to generalise to other, similar TT-specific OBT courses. By including as much detail as possible regarding the case, the reader will be able to see if it is possible to find similarities with other cases. These details should improve the reliability of the case study.

Drawing together themes across the participant data, there may be a possibility that the individual accounts be lost, although the nature of the programme as a whole might begin to be understood. It *is* recognised that the individual accounts had value in their own right, however for the purpose of this study they were not focussed upon beyond the individual quotes.

Although qualitative research allows for the impact of the researcher to be acknowledged on the data collection and analysis process, it also looks at the extent of the connection between the researcher and the quality of the interaction. All of these significantly influence the nature of the data that is collected and I must remain aware of this throughout the process. As a new qualitative researcher it was particularly important to reflect on my interview skill after each interview. For example, with the quieter subjects prompts and probes were used to keep the flow of conversation without resorting to leading questions. To improve trustworthiness and to acknowledge my interpretive influence on the data, I have already outlined the background, epistemology, ontology that influenced my research design. This allows the reader to determine the credibility of the dissertation process in relation to the current research paradigm.

In the data collection process it is recognised that transcribing data is fraught with slippage (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There is an immediate interpretive influence on the level of detail included in the transcript. For example, I have decided to include all 'ums' and 'ers' whereas others might not. With this in mind, once the data was coded, the recordings were listened to again for confirmation that tone did not illuminate something different from the inferred meanings.

It is accepted that the sample size is small at seven participants. However, there were several recurring themes that appeared in the data across all respondents which led to confidence that it was still valid. Ideally the whole group would have been interviewed. However, it would have been inappropriate to interview participants from a different group, as they would have had different programme elements influencing them. They had a different group, activities and instructor. It was also important that the interview occurred exactly a year after the course to determine, at that point in time, what memories had transferred for the participants. Out of those that participated in the study,

although they all volunteered to take part, only four were now still involved with TT. Hence the study represented a wider sample than those still involved in the TT experience.

6. Presentation of Findings & Considerations for Practice

6.1 Overview of data

Gassner and Russell (2008), Priest (1999) and Takano (2010) called for longitudinal studies to increase knowledge on how much of the experience transfers and for how long. This section looks at the participants' key memories a year on from the programme. By using Hamilton's theory to build a ladder of evidence (Baldwin et al. 2004, p. 169), the points discussed aim to give insight into the WTTW programme.

One of the first questions posed in the interviews related to participants' memories of the WTTW. They seemed keen to share their varied, colourful stories with me. Much had happened in their lives since the course, yet they still held vivid memories of some aspects of the programme.

Common themes emerged from these stories, for example: meeting new people, responding to a challenge, or gaining in confidence. However, the stories they chose to tell as illustrations of these themes were different from each other. This reinforced my thoughts on a constructivist stance to meaning- making in outdoor learning and the design of this study. The individuality in their stories also adds complexity through the web of influences and programme elements that are described. It is acknowledged that it is difficult to separate elements as "learning emerges through the relationships that develop between these constituent 'elements' which are themselves considered shifting, dynamic and diverse" (Morrison, 2008 p.180). Therefore, only the two influences common to all participants are presented: increased confidence and the willingness to take on a tough challenge. These influences will be discussed and the various elements the participants held responsible highlighted. These elements will be considered in light of current outdoor education literature and also any implications these may have for both programme design and delivery in the future.

6.2 Introduction to findings

In the open coding stage of analysing the data, I created a long list of my first thoughts about the transcripts (see Appendix 6). The thoughts included, for example, those related to the participants' memories of fun or enjoyment of the experience, how they are now more willing to take on a tough challenge, and the choices they have made in the last year and for their future. The benefits to self were described as improved attitude, confidence or self-belief. The participants all commented that they had made new friends and had learnt to appreciate, respect or socialise with others more. Place was also mentioned - specifically the centre or wider physical environment of the centre.

Hamilton's ladder of evidence was then used to analyse the data. Succinctly, the rungs on this ladder are: a) Do the participants say they have been affected? b) Is there evidence for the effects? c) Is there evidence that participation led to these effects? d) What in the programme was responsible for these effects? (Hamilton, 1980). At this stage some of the information was discounted as it did not fulfil all rungs on the ladder.

As an example, appreciation of the outdoors and a 'leave no trace' approach were themes highlighted in the first interview. This is in line with the literature, as the physical environment of an outdoor learning course has been seen as an important element in supporting programme outcomes. (Gassner & Russell 2008; McKenzie, 2000; Takano 2010). So, I selected physical environment as an initial theme to probe more deeply in the following interviews.

However, when talking about the physical environment with the other participants, it was generally a quick "yeah the scenery was amazing" rather than anything deeper. Place was spoken about more in relation to it being a catalyst to make new friends or in relation to the challenge of expedition. For example, Jenny talked about the centre being a break from technology and therefore special for "making new friends and getting to know new people". This finding is supported by Smith, Steel and Gidlow (2010) who also studied this age group and discovered "although students participated in outdoor environments, their main priority was with whom they were spending time" (p.146). Therefore, the theme of place was omitted from the final discussion.

From this process of questioning the influences and the evidence, the programme elements will be discussed. The key influences for these WTTW participants were 1) increase in confidence and 2) being more willing to take on a tough challenge.

6.3 Increase in confidence:

The participants all said that one effect of the programme was that their confidence had increased. As evidence for this in their accounts they said that since completing the programme they were more positive, more outgoing, more talkative and some had joined clubs (like a Basketball team) or signed up for experiences such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. They felt the programme had had some effect as they would not have had the confidence to do this before WTTW. The programme elements that were significant for the participants' increase in confidence were: being in a group of people they did not know; having multiple courses; the staff support; and the different activities. These elements will be discussed separately. Both the aforementioned TT (2008) and OBT's (2007) mission statements assert that they help young people realise their potential. In WTTW this is evident as the participants commented that they now had the confidence to make positive choices for their futures.

6.3.1 The Group

Being part of a group of people that did not know one another was an important programme element for all participants. They interpreted this as a factor leading to increased confidence. The significance of the social aspect in an outdoor programme is supported by the literature (Beames, 2005; Neill & Dias, 2001; Sibthorpe, 2003; Smith et al. 2010; Takano, 2010).

Some quotes from the participants illustrate the link between confidence gained and being in a group of people they did not know. Stuart said "I became more of a leader and I've got a lot more confidence. I used to just be in my shell and sit by myself, but now I can sit with people and talk to them". Jamie stated, "I'm more outward and friendly towards people I never knew". Nina affirmed

"It was a really good experience and I learnt a lot from it and I realised through doing different activities and getting to know other people you can do more things and be more confident".

Aspects of the programme were mentioned as having supported the group to develop strong bonds which led to increased confidence. Jenny believed that one of the elements that assisted the group getting to know one another was the centre. "There is nothing to distract you, you don't have lap tops... I suppose it makes you communicate more." Jenny compared this to home where young people only came to socialise if you had the latest toy. In her case it was a trampoline. She also referred to having difficulty making friends in school. However, the centre created a levelling experience without distractions. She spoke about it being a shared experience. "Do you remember when you lifted me over there or we done that, you fell, just sort of wee things. It was a good experience, really good." Richard and Jamie shared Jenny's sentiments. Jamie said: "I thought it was quite a good place for what it is. The best, and away from everything. Everyone gets along there."

The centre community as an element was also discussed. Richard focussed on the fact that he learnt to respect others through sharing accommodation with them. He knew that people in other groups were being challenged too and this understanding led to respect. Stuart also talked about this aspect and learnt from working with others that "you have to respect other people to get respect".

In the literature, McKenzie states, "the feeling of belonging is thought to fulfil a basic human need which is often not met in participants' daily lives" (2000, p. 22). Smith et al. (2010) also found that the outdoor experience created a break from their normal pattern of life including "all the stuff they normally have" (p.145). This is supported by the participants' responses.

Smith et al. (2010), concluded that the outdoor residential was "a fun experience primarily because it was a social experience" and most students "regarded camp as synonymous with social interaction and friends" (p.143). Sibthorpe (2003) also concluded that "the social environment was considered essential and the importance of social learning was valued" (p.154). The prevalence of the social support from the group in the responses would reinforce these findings.

In Takano's (2010) longitudinal study the highest response rate was for "living and working together with people from different backgrounds" (p.88). Although this may relate to the cultural aspect of an international expedition, it emphasises the people aspect of a programme. She concludes that the "element of human or diverse community is by far the most crucial" (p.89). It was not purely the social aspect that my participants referred to in their accounts; it was specifically the fact that these were 'new' people for them to meet from different schools.

From individuals that did not know one another they went on to be a supportive group. A supportive group has been reported to cause psychological benefits such as enhancing a person's capacity to deal with life's challenges. Neill and Dias, (2001) discovered that "perceived social support was positively related to the growth in resilience during the Outward Bound programme" (p.40). There was evidence that my participants were supportive of one another. Jamie spoke appreciatively about a peer encouraging him on a tough challenge. Arthur's high point was helping Nina get to the top of Jacob's ladder. He said it was "quite an achievement for me helping someone else. I know I can do it myself, but helping other people get it was quite a high point".

In summary, Stuart's recommendation for future programmes was "putting them in groups they don't know to help them gain in confidence". It would be worthwhile to understand this element further with regard to other OBT courses. All OBT's open enrolment programmes and some work with Scottish councils mix young people from various schools. In my role at OBT, I plan programmes in partnership with schools in Scotland. The implications of this could be it is more of value to work schools in clusters, rather than individually when aiming to develop confidence. The idea of working with more groups of young people who do not know one another is worth exploring. It would bring other areas of OBT's work into focus, for example, how individuals are then supported beyond the experience.

6.3.2 Staff support

McKenzie (2000) describes that of all programming elements, the instructor has received the most attention in the literature. The instructors, course director and TT youth worker were all discussed by

the participants. Jamie spoke about some of the processes that were put in place to help the group get to know one another which then gave him the confidence to be "friendlier". He gave the example of how in the first week I would sit them in a group and say "tell us about yourself" and then he said, "we would tell each other what happened and I thought it was really helpful".

Giving the participants a voice and the opportunity to achieve an activity on their own terms is an important part of an OBT course. At the start of any programme questions are always asked on what the participants want to get out of the experience and therefore what they must put in to achieve these results. The answers to these questions form an initial group contract. In this contract, as the instructor I described "challenge by choice". Schoel, Prouty and Radcliffe (1988) suggest that this "creates a respectful and supportive environment where effort is valued over performance". In the final WTTW expedition, the expectation is always that the participants are now testing new skills. The ownership and responsibility for choices are given to the students where possible throughout the programme. They will navigate, choose campsites and organise the team, on their own terms. Nina mentioned that it was this responsibility that allowed her to develop faith in herself and her team members. She realised that the success of her efforts was her own.

In this study the instructor element and processes put in place were thought by all the students to be "helpful". However, it is less clear from the accounts what characteristics had led to this effect. This is perhaps due to the fact I was both instructor and researcher. I felt I brushed over this element quickly so as not to confuse my position in the interview. Nevertheless, this indeterminate finding is in line with the literature. Desirable characteristics of instructors and their effectiveness have been widely, yet inconclusively studied by various researchers (see summary in McKenzie 2000). For an example of the contradictions, some studies found males were more effective instructors (Riggins, 1985) whereas another found females more effective (Phipps & Claxton, 1997). In addition, not all studies recognised the instructor impact as a programming element. Gassner and Russell (2008) in their study of an OB programme did not find the instructor was a "significant contributor to long-term impact" (p.133).

Perhaps, as there are often conflicts in the types of role that an outdoor practitioner has to undertake between managing the safety and facilitating a group, it has created some inconsistency in the research (Thomas, 2010). Different skills will have to be displayed at different points to be most effective. I perceived the WTTW group to have had a mix of styles from me (the 'questioning' group instructor), an enthusiastic trainee, an ex-army course director, an alternative instructor for their final programme and a supportive TT youth worker. However, from the participant accounts it is difficult to split the effects across these elements.

There are important implications for future practice that should be considered. If the instructor is a significant support element for these participants to gain in confidence, how do we make sure the right staff member is chosen?

The key characteristics have often been summarised as "hard skills", "soft skills" and "conceptual skills" (see a summary in Shooter, Sibthorpe & Paisley, 2009, p. 5). These terms have proved problematic in academic definition, but have become widely used by practitioners. Some of the problems associated with the terms "hard" and "soft" are that: the terms may infer it is more worthy to attain something that is "hard" and therefore more important, or that there is some gender stereotyping that occurs for example with women being "soft" (ibid, p.6). Shooter et al, prefer the terms "technical skills" and "interpersonal skills" for outdoor leaders with the conceptual elements such as judgement and decision-making interfacing between these skills and the programme elements (p.11).

Therefore, their suggested approach is where the programme goals are aligned with the specific outdoor leadership skills of the instructor. Shooter et al. state the need to move "toward context-specific thinking in regards to outdoor leadership skills, because the relevance of these skills depends on the programmatic context." (p.8). This model (for a summary see Figure 1, p.10) is interesting with regard to WTTW. As instructors we elect to work this programme and are then chosen by the course director. This context-specific model fits with the approach taken by OBT and may therefore may be

good model for future programmes.

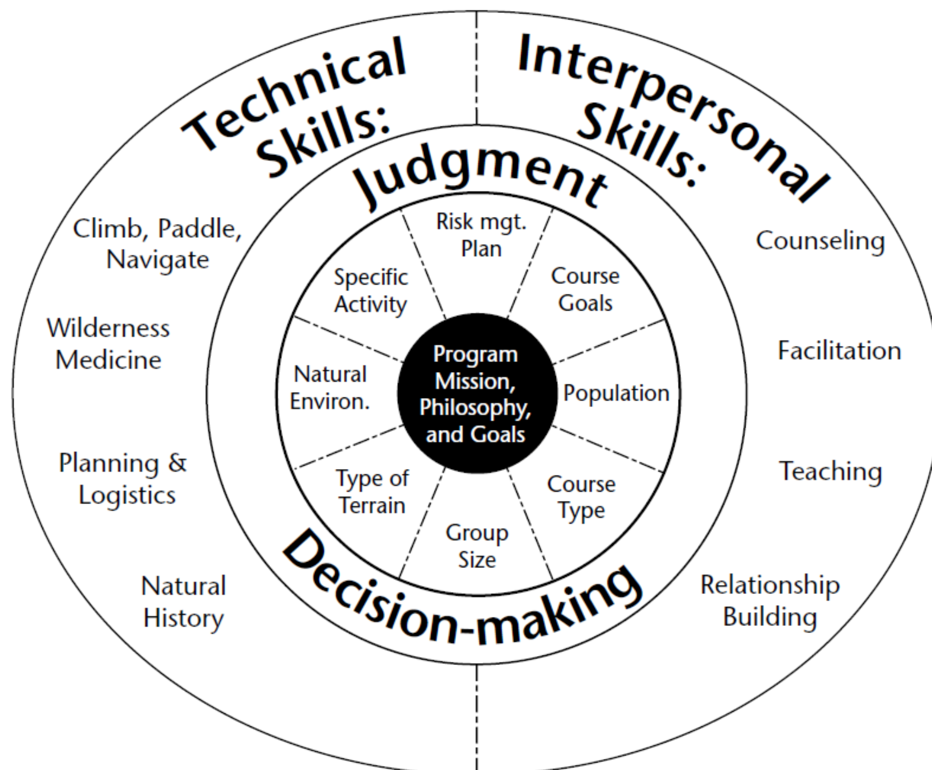

Figure 1. **Program-perspective model of outdoor leadership skills**

I could not find discourse on the role of visiting or support staff in the literature. However, the staff who were mentioned and who supported this programme were the course director and TT staff. Stuart spoke fondly of the course director when they returned to the centre from their final expedition - "we all jumped on Dennis and gave him a hug", whereas Keith said, "Dennis was a good role model, always working hard behind the scenes to make sure we had a good time". Nina spoke of being determined to show Dennis she could do it and Stuart spoke about gaining his respect.

The support of the TT worker was also recognised. "We knew she was there and would support us, but she took a back seat and left us to decide for ourselves, but we knew she was there if we needed a shoulder to cry on". Jenny said, "I don't know, seeing what TT has done for me-and OB- to see that work on other children as well it's a good thing what happened to me. I went through a tough time and they helped me through".

What I would find interesting for future studies is to understand the effect of the visiting member of staff who accompanies the group. The West Dunbartonshire 2008 study of youth service says the motivation and commitment of staff is paramount to the success of an organisation. The Ofsted (2005) Effective Youth Services report demonstrated services that performed best had youth workers that established strong and positive relationships with young people and contributed positively to their personal development. Active leaders were seen to be more successful than passive observers.

This staff team were fully involved in the programme and took part in all activities and the same member of staff remained with the same group throughout, adding a great level of support for the participants. This was noticeably beneficial with Nina commenting on having a shoulder to cry on or Jamie commenting on them bringing fun to it or Richard commenting being able to talk to them as if they were their own age. In this course, as the instructor, I thought the presence of the TT worker was an incredibly steady influence on the group. Ours felt like a strong partnership with the interest of the young people central to both of us.

This dissertation has made me consider the role of visiting staff on an OBT programme. I believe it is currently an under considered area of OBT programmes and outdoor education research. It would be beneficial to understand how the instructor - staff relationship affects a course. It would also be useful to understand how the differing roles visiting staff choose to play affects OBT programmes. Currently visiting staff are given the option of being as active as they like and joining in with groups as they choose. In WTTW the staff member was active in all parts of the programme and this was thought to be beneficial by the young people. There are implications of this for my role working with education staff to design their pupils' experiences. This finding has made me reflect on how I support staff: Both prior to their OBT course so the staff and pupils are prepared for the experience and also after the programme to make sure the learning transfers to the home environment. All visiting staff come to OBT with a great deal of expertise in working with young people and also in education. How we work together to share knowledge could be improved with these considerations.

6.3.3 Multiple courses

The fact that participants had multiple courses in their programme allowed them time to reflect and practice skills they had learnt. This was stated to lead to increased confidence. Arthur said he had remembered the first week because it was all new and the last week as this was the final expedition they had been working towards. For Stuart multiple courses were essential, as he stated overcoming fears played a part in becoming more confident. Having the opportunity over multiple courses to go back to the same activity and improve his performance helped him to see his progression. The example of overcoming his fear of heights was given through gorge walking, and some of the in-grounds activities (simulated Parachute jump and Jacobs Ladder). Stuart said he still reminds himself of the comfort zones model when trying something challenging.

Jenny also talked about how reflecting between courses helped the group succeed. “I don’t think we’d have been so good on the last expedition as well if we had not messed up one of our expeditions”. On the first expedition some individuals had left their boots out, not cooked their dinner properly and left tent doors open when they got up in the night. Inevitably, it rained and these actions resulted in one girl getting very wet and not feeling very well in the morning. It also resulted in the discomfort of wet boots. This was an experience they did not repeat in future expeditions.

Nina seemed to understand some of the underlying elements of the progression through multiple courses and said, “As the weeks went on we got to try more things. I think it was you just getting to know us and us getting to know ourselves and what we could do” and as a result she said “I believe I can actually do more stuff, like I used to say I can’t a lot but now I don’t say it. I’ve not said it since the first Outward Bound. I’ll give something a try and normally I moan or something when I’m doing it but I still do it”. The advantage for the instructor in having the same participants return four times is they have time between courses to plan for their capabilities and reflect on progress so far. DeLay (1996) states that, “it should be understood that interpretation of experience is influenced by social constructions and personal interpretation” (p.78). He goes on to say, “Experiential programs need to take account of prior history of the participant. Lack of contextualising hinders participant

growth and learning. The learner's own knowledge and prior experience are the most important ingredient in new knowledge construction and must be respected" (ibid). Therefore, by seeing the participants multiple times we come to understand their previous outdoor experiences and build on those.

Stuart mentioned that on the final course he felt he "had nothing to lose" as he did not have to see the group again and "came out of his shell". This resulted in his ability to talk to the group more and he said this has helped him with his confidence in group work during school. There was evidence of this as he spoke about getting good marks doing a talk in English which he would not have done before.

Richard reflected on the different courses and the fact that in the first course he was positive, the second he was more of a leader and the third he was "on a downer". These different experiences allowed him to consider how his different attitude affected his experience. He has taken away the fact that it is better to have a more positive attitude and as a result is more confident going for work interviews. It seemed that having multiple courses allowed the participants time for preparing between courses for an increase in challenge. It was "curiosity" that kept Jamie coming back for all four courses. He said "It was good that it was quite long. It would give you time off. Weeks before the next one which gives you time to think: Can I do the next one? Can I be bothered to do the next one? With me it was just curiosity as I was hearing about different stuff people had done".

I could not find literature relating to multiple courses in an experience. Perhaps this is an understudied area of the literature. However, the period between courses seemed significant for these participants to develop in confidence and supports the assertion by Taniguchi, Freeman & Richards (2005), which states "researchers agree with Dewey that the learning process involves more than just being exposed to an experience; time for reflection gives the experience more opportunity for permanency and relevance" (p. 132). The implications for delivery of multiple courses are that instructors know the young people and can reflect and plan prior to each course what would work for those individuals.

6.4 Theme 2: More willing to take on a challenge now

The influence of taking on a challenge was a common area of discussion in the post-course interviews. Participants' described how having completed tough challenges on the course had resulted in them feeling more capable to persevere when faced with a difficult task back in their home or school environment. As a result they said they were more focussed to achieve their future aspirations.

All seven participants spoke about their change in approach when faced with a tough challenge. These often started with one of these phrases "if I am scared...", "if I don't like it...", "if I find it difficult..." I will still try now.

Arthur said "really, really think it through, really, really concentrate on it and try. Don't rush into something which is what I used to do". Jamie related this willingness to try at school work, "usually when I'm doing school work and I think, right I'm stuck I can't do it anymore, I give it a big try and I usually do it."

The programme elements that the participants attributed to this influence were, overcoming setbacks, activities that require effort, and an incremental increase in challenge. They reflected on the fact the activities often felt tough at the time, yet were fun on reflection. Reflecting on these elements will illuminate how they have contributed to participants being more willing to take on a challenge.

6.4.1 Overcoming setbacks

This group overcame several setbacks which included poor performance on their first expedition, a group member being sent home for safety/ behavioural reasons, group members challenging their fears, and one participant was often overwhelmed by a challenge description. Neill and Dias (2001) studied resilience in relation to a challenging Outward Bound programme and their study supported the fact that being challenged "can and does make people stronger, particularly when the salve of social support is applied" (p.41). The "perceived presence of social support network enhances a person's capacity to deal with life's challenges" (Neill & Dias, 2001, p.36). Perhaps the

extended length of this allowed the social support of the group to grow which in turn gave the group confidence to take on a challenge. This idea has made me consider if the level of challenge can be as high on shorter courses as individuals would not perhaps have the time to build the strong support required to overcome any setbacks.

Bandura (1997) states that “success builds a robust belief in one’s personal efficacy” (p.80) and that a “resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perceived effort” (ibid). Jenny commented on the fact that earlier expeditions having not gone to plan was a positive thing, as it made the group work harder in the final expedition. This avoided any sense that they could cruise through, and they succeeded on their own terms in the final expedition. In the first week of the WTTW one participant was sent home. On reflection he said this made him more determined to succeed when he returned. Bandura (1997) states that: “some difficulties and setbacks serve a beneficial purpose in teaching that success usually requires sustained effort (ibid). Difficulties can provide opportunities to learn how to turn failure into success by honing one’s capabilities to exercise better control over events” (p.80). This theory fits with recent psychological theory which values effort over achievement (Dweck 2006). It suggests that if you value the effort then by default you can learn to relish a challenge.

6.4.2 Activities that require effort

Gassner and Russell (2008) found “challenging physical activities in the out of doors are very meaningful to participants in the long-term” (p.148). Stuart commented on learning about his limits “I learnt a lot from it like how much I could push myself and stuff”, as did Jenny who said that through the WTTW she was “committed and pushed”.

This study supports this assertion, as the activities that the participants’ remembered and chose to recount, were often the ones they found challenging and required continued effort. The idea of effort and process-oriented goals was studied by Rubens (1997) and a concept of “broad adventure” was seen as leading to mastery. Broad adventure is characterised by “a long time scale, many challenges varied in nature, some or much effort involved, responsibilities devolved to the students”

(p.41). The example given by Rubens is of a journey or expedition as a typical activity which incorporates "broad adventure". It is notable in this study that expedition is the main activity that has been memorable for all the participants. The other activities mentioned separately by individuals were jog and dip, mountain rescue exercises, building a Tyrolean bridge, building a raft and overcoming a fear through abseiling or rock climbing but none of these were as important as the expedition. All of these required effort. Canoeing was the only activity not mentioned in relation to effort by a participant. Richard said it was enjoyable as it was more relaxing and gave them time just to enjoy one another. On the other extreme Arthur said "I actually liked it when it was quite rough and we were only just hanging on by the tiniest thread and just managed to get through". Jenny summarised the memory as, "it sticks with you, you know it was hard but looking back it is always something you will remember". Nina also reflected on the fact that on the expedition she took on more responsibility, was more willing to take on a team role and had more faith in herself as the courses progressed. This also fits with Rubens idea of "broad adventure".

In 2007 OBT took the decision to place emphasis on adventures out with their centre grounds. Expeditions were incorporated into all programmes as standard and whole day, adventurous activities were encouraged. Certainly for the WTTW participants it is these activities that were of value which adds credence to this approach.

6.4.3 Incremental increase in challenge

The incremental increase in the challenge on the courses was also mentioned and understood. Jamie reflected on his thoughts between the courses. He knew the fact "it will be harder and it won't be as easy as last time because there will be more expected of you. So you have to give it a good think about how you're going to do it." Keith also spoke about his awareness that the first three weeks were building skills for the final a course and there was a progression through the weeks. This supports the studies that state, "challenges present in activities are thought to have the greatest influence on programme outcomes if they increase incrementally" (Mckenzie, 2000, p.20). Casson

and Gillies (1994) in their meta-analysis discovered that longer programmes had a bigger effect. This could go some way to explain the effect of this programme element.

It was not as straight-forward as a certain activity type equating to a certain level of challenge for these participants. Richard and Arthur found the same activity challenging in different ways. This is an example of where the divergence in the programme experience occurred. Richard was surprised by how mentally challenging the course was and how achieving success was often about a positive attitude and willingness to try, even when you do not want to. Richard spoke about Jog and dip as an example of something mentally challenging and that required effort to do every morning. He said that "it was never as bad as he thought it was going to be", whereas Arthur spoke about getting up at 6.30am as a physical challenge. Arthur went on to speak about the exhaustion he felt from the physical challenges. Being challenged was something that the participants said they valued, even though they found it hard at points in the course.

When considering incrementally increasing challenge throughout OBT programmes it has also made me reflect on how we transfer learning from one activity to the next, one programme to the next and then on beyond the programme. It is this incremental increase in challenge that the participants seemed to appreciate and it seemed to motivate them to try even when they found an activity difficult.

6.4.4 Reflections on effort, fun and reward.

"I don't think there were really any low points 'cause it was really enjoyable, but maybe at the time it could have been low but now thinking back on it I don't think of them as low points because looking back you are laughing about it as well and saying I remember that or something else happened and that happened. Yeah it was good." (Jenny)

All participants said the programme was a good experience and they would do it again. However, Jenny's quote highlights the most interesting element of reflection on enjoyment. It is notable because it was not thought to be fun at the time. There were many stories of adventures and

achieving things they found challenging. Richard said “Some bits are harder than others. You just have to put up with it though don’t you. It’s really fun. Definitely one of the highlights of being at schools anyway”

Jamie said “back then I didn’t think it would get better, I thought it would get worse. But when I look back on it now I would want to do it again because I thought it was quite fun and it got better”. He also said of the final expedition “It wasn’t funny at the time but looking back you can laugh at it.”

Richard, Arthur, Keith and Nina recounted happy stories of camping, canoeing and socialising with other people on the course. They spoke of enjoying the challenges and how they had achieved them and what they had learnt from them. They also shared the sentiment of it being a “different kind of fun”.

As an instructor it was rare and special to hear these reflections on the experience and how their perceptions had changed over time. It made me consider different types of enjoyment/ fun/ reward and how these relate to learning and the impact of an experience. Fun is worthy of study as it “can have a positive effect on the learning process by inviting intrinsic motivation, suspending one's social inhibitions, reducing stress, and creating a state of relaxed alertness” (Bisson & Luckner, 1996, p.108).

Bengoechea, Strean and Williams (2004) studied sport coaches perceptions on fun. They discuss the assumption that skill development and fun are often seen in opposition. Deliberate practice is often used as an activity to increase a level of performance. It requires effort, is not always enjoyable and is characterised by delayed gratification (p.198). This sense of delayed gratification is evident in the participant responses. The participants have commented on how tough they found it at the time, yet rewarding on reflection. It is worth considering what motivates them to take part.

Bianco, Higgins and Klem (2003) discuss the fact that when a participant deemed a task important they are more likely to “invest additional time and effort in it, increase persistence in the

face of difficulty, and display active engagement in the task (p.1093). Bianco et al. researched how facilitators describe a task and whether the emphasis is placed on importance or on fun. They concluded in task descriptions, to aid motivation, facilitators need to emphasise for example either "we are doing this for fun" or "we are doing this because it is important". Bianco et al. suggest this description needs to match the students' perspective on the activity for motivational factors to be strong (p.1102). Emphasis had been put on the final expedition being important throughout this programme. Nina spoke about breaking down in tears when the final expedition was described on a map. She found the scale of what was ahead of them overwhelming. However, she acknowledges that knowing it would be tough upfront made her "want to try harder". She spoke very positively about the final expedition in the post course interview.

This concept has implications for my practice. In my current working role, I am the person who speaks to teachers and pupils in schools to design their programmes. I then have to communicate the results of this to instructors who work the programmes. One consideration in light of these findings is how I describe that something being challenging at the time, yet fun on reflection might be a valuable part of the experience. When I spoke to participants, I discussed this idea to verify my data. I described three types of fun. These were type one fun: fun at the time, but you forget it quickly; type two fun: tough at the time, but fun on reflection and type three fun: no fun at the time and no fun on reflection (Cordes, 2009). I then said if back in 2008, you had the choice of Alton Towers or OBT which do you think you would have taken? They all said Alton Towers. I then asked having now been which would you have taken? They all said WTTW. I then asked how I persuade people that the effort is worthwhile and Stuart said to tell them stories of the difference it has made for people. This is a salient lesson for me in describing our experience, to use real examples and case studies to make connections for people and emphasise the importance. Certainly the idea of three types of fun is already a concept I have shared with young people when describing what an OBT course might include. It has been well received and easily understood.

7. Conclusions

The key influences for these participants were firstly increased confidence achieved by being in a group of people they did not know; multiple courses and taking part in lots of different activities and secondly a greater willingness to take on a challenge now. This had been helped by overcoming setbacks, activities which require effort and often delayed gratification and an incremental increase in challenge

For the participants, there seemed to be a web of meaning, with an overlap of different programme elements and their influences, rather than an obvious cause and effect. This finding lends weight to both complexity theory and the constructivist stance on how young people make meaning from an experience. Delay (1996) notes that, “in the end, under a constructivist epistemology, it is understood that programmes do not change people; participants do the changing.” (p.80). Therefore, although we work to programme objectives it is the meaning that participants draw from an experience that will transfer. The more we study participants’ perspectives and question our practice the more we can begin to understand how change occurs.

As with any good journey this MSc process has widened my own horizons. By analysing the TT programme I now have the responsibility to bring some elements of my work more into question.

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