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Comparative Report
Cranbrook in the Field
2006 - 2009



CRANBROOK
SCHOOL

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OUTWARD BOUND

Inspiring Australians

About this report

This report presents the results of a four year longitudinal study outlining the effects of the Cranbrook in the Field courses on a specific participant cohort. The same year group completed the Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) research tools over four years of involvement in their Outward Bound courses. This report compares the LEQ results of the four different programs attended including observations and Effect Sizes. It also highlights the impact of ongoing participation in these outdoor education programs.

About the courses

Overview

In 2006, Year Seven CITF in the Orroral Valley, ACT marked the beginning of the Outward Bound journey for these Cranbrook boys. The eight day program with a 'fantasy adventure' framing had a basic focus on looking after self, learning to be away from home and feeling safe, happy and comfortable in the bush. Activities included bush craft, low ropes, a small amount of hiking, initiatives and a commando course.

The Year Eight CITF program in 2007 was set in the Namadgi National Park, ACT. It was a nine day program that built on the bush skills previously learnt on Year Seven CITF and focused on teamwork and developing maturity. Activities included abseiling, expeditioning, ropes course and bushcook.

In 2008, the Year Nine group travelled to the Snowy River National Park, Victoria. The course focused on responsibility, introducing leadership and improving teamwork skills. The participants were able to put the skills they had learnt during their previous two CITF courses to the test by undertaking more of the group management and navigation. The students participated in a rafting expedition, solo reflection time, rock climbing and longer expeditions.

The 2009 Year 10 CITF was the culmination of the four year CITF program. This course took place around the Coleman Plains area in the Kosciuszko

National Park which is a well known challenging terrain but also a highlight for CITF participants. During this program, students were expected to take responsibility for themselves and the group, with the main focus on leadership and striving for excellence. Participants were encouraged to reflect on what they had learnt over the four years and what insights they would take away from CITF to impact their future lives. This pinnacle CITF experience included navigation in a more remote area than in the past, weather extremes, longer expeditions, caving, canoeing, a longer solo and a values journey.

Course Objectives

The course aims for the CITF programs have been deliberately 'ramped' so they increase in the depth of topic and impact over the four year attendance at Outward Bound. The aims of the Year Seven and Eight programs have a strong focus on 'self', as well as becoming comfortable in the bush and working with others. The Year Nine and Ten programs build on these aims and place a stronger emphasis on leadership, responsibility and teamwork.

The instructing staff involved in these four CITF programs reported that the course aims for each program were relevant to their group and these aims were successfully achieved during course.

Year Seven

Course Theme:

"I can take care of myself" - with very strong and consistent Fantasy Adventure ('Warrior') framing throughout the entire course.

Course Aims:

- Having fun and enjoying being out in the bush.
- Introduction to bushcraft and bush safety skills.
- Having a positive experience being away from home and among peers.
- Developing confidence and a positive self-image.
- Developing a sense of teamwork and pride in achievement.
- Nurturing rapport between staff and students.

Year Eight

Course Theme:

"I am learning to be part of a team"

Course Aims:

- Improving personal confidence and self-esteem.
- Developing maturity (looking beyond 'me').
- Developing friendships and improving interpersonal skills.
- Learning practical outdoor skills.
- Building resourcefulness.
- Experiencing successful teamwork and cooperation.
- Fostering a sense of community and responsibility.

Year 9

Course Theme:

"We are journeymen, sharing leadership and friendship"

Course Aims:

- Improving communication and teamwork skills.
- Developing introductory leadership skills.
- Encouraging personal achievement, responsibility and initiative.
- Building self-confidence and encouraging independence.
- Challenging each individual to overcome difficulties and adapt to change.

Year 10

Course Theme:

"What Footprint do you want to leave after four Outward Bound experiences?"

Course Aims:

- To create a 'Peak OBA-CITF Experience' –a positive celebration for the culmination of the CITF program. A final Outward Bound insight that we are 'capable of *even more* than we thought possible'.
- Further development of Leadership skills including personal and team leadership, compassion, cooperation, analysis of information, communication, decision making, goal setting and time management.
- Taking responsibility for and ownership of decisions and outcomes.

- Commitment to strive for excellence including goal setting, Experiential Learning Cycle, commitment, team work and follow-through.
- Environmental service.

Observations

Year Seven CITF: Instructors reported that the majority of boys found the Year Seven CITF program to be fun yet challenging. As it was the first time away from home for many of the participants, packing their own bags, helping with group tasks and having time goals to achieve were new concepts. The small circuit, activity focused program and fantasy framing proved to be an excellent way to ready the boys for their future years at Outward Bound. The student mentors had a positive impact on the groups, were a great help to staff, and appeared to get a lot out of the experience for themselves. Even if they did sometimes share too much information with the Year Seven boys about Outward Bound behind the scenes.

Year Eight CITF: Both instructors and Cranbrook staff felt that the program length and structure of Year Eight CITF was ideal for that year group. It provided them with a challenging expedition, as well as enough flexibility and time to set the boys up well with skills they would need on Year Nine CITF. Due to the Year Seven experience, the participants were generally very capable and prepared for the challenge of this Outward Bound course. Most were enthusiastic and excitable but easily distracted. The course was an opportunity for them to develop their awareness of others and to break social stigmas.

Year Nine CITF: Accompanying teachers on the Year Nine program gave the feedback that their groups had started the course as 'rowdy individuals' and were quickly transformed into coherent, self-motivated groups. This impact and degree of improvement can be attributed, in part, to the succession of Outward Bound courses they had attended. The boys were physically and socially ready for the challenges presented in the Year Nine program. Some students did begin the program with a negative attitude as they felt they had already completed the same CITF experience twice before. However, the instructors addressed this issue early on and encouraged the boys to motivate themselves and make the most of their CITF opportunity. By the end of the course most participants were fully engaged in the program and were well set up for their Year Ten CITF experience.

Year Ten CITF: This program took the CITF challenge to a whole new level for the year group. It required them to draw on all they had learnt and to put into practice their group management, time management, navigation, team work and leadership skills. The days were long and full and the program demanded much of the boys. A common statement used at Outward Bound is that you 'get out of it what you put into it.' The hard work the participants put into the course allowed them to achieve ambitious goals and take real, memorable lessons away from it. The instructors reported that the program was an important rite of passage for the students. Despite a few behavioural issues that were dealt with in the field, the Year 10 program was a highly impactful and successful course.

The research results

Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ)

In 2006, a 24-item LEQ tool was specifically tailored to program objectives for the Year Seven CITF program. This LEQ-CITF7A incorporated a Bush Enjoyment dimension- the degree to which the individual feels comfortable in and enjoys natural bush environments.

The LEQ-CITF7A measured the following dimensions of life effectiveness:

Bush Enjoyment: The degree to which the individual feels comfortable in and enjoys natural bush environments.

Personal Organisation: The extent to which an individual is effective in managing his possessions and organising himself to be on time.

Pride in Achievement: The extent to which an individual feels satisfied with and esteemed by his personal accomplishments and achievements in life.

Psychological Resilience: The extent to which an individual is able to handle difficult situations by believing in himself, maintaining a positive attitude and persevering.

Self Awareness: The extent to which an individual knows himself, understands his thoughts and feelings and reflects on his attitudes and behaviour.

Self Esteem: The extent to which an individual has positive thoughts and feelings about himself and believes he is a worthwhile person.

The 2007 Year 8 questionnaire (LEQ-CITF8A) omitted the Bush Enjoyment dimension, as requested by The Cranbrook School, which removed four items and resulted in a 20 item self report evaluation of five 'Personal Life Effectiveness' dimensions.

The 2008 Year 9 CITF course was the first year that this student cohort completed the standard LEQ-H questionnaire. Given the nature of the CITF course, participant age, and the LEQ-H aims and objectives, it was decided that the LEQ-H was the most appropriate evaluation tool for CITF's reporting purposes. During the 2009 Year 10 course, the boys again completed the LEQ-H questionnaire.

The LEQ-H is designed to measure the following dimensions of life effectiveness:

Time Management: Effective use of time.

Social Competence: Confidence and ability in social interactions.

Achievement Motivation: Motivated to achieve excellence and put the required effort into action to attain it.

Intellectual Flexibility: Adapts thinking and accommodates new information from changing conditions and different perspectives.

Task Leadership: Leads other people effectively when a task needs to be done and productivity is the primary requirement.

Emotional Control: Maintains emotional control when faced with potentially stressful situations.

Active Initiative: Likes to initiate action in new situations.

Self Confidence: Confidence in abilities and the success of actions.

Overall Outcomes

As the LEQ-CITF7A / 8A and the LEQ-H are different tools we cannot compare them directly. We are, however, able to directly compare the Year Seven CITF to the Year Eight CITF program (with the exception of the Bush Enjoyment dimension) and the Year Nine CITF to the Year Ten CITF program.

LEQ-CITF7A / 8A (with Bush Enjoyment removed):

Dimension	Overall Effect Size	
	Year 7	Year 8
Personal Organisation	0.43	0.63
Pride in Achievement	0.24	0.42
Psychological Resilience	0.35	0.56
Self Awareness	0.27	0.37
Self Esteem	0.20	0.25
Course Average	0.26	0.44

LEQ-H:

Dimension	Overall Effect Size	
	Year 9	Year 10
Achievement Motivation	0.37	0.92
Active Initiative	0.60	0.66
Emotional Control	0.60	0.72
Intellectual Flexibility	0.46	1.07
Self Confidence	0.46	1.07
Social Competence	0.44	0.74
Task Leadership	0.63	0.88
Time Management	0.65	0.75
Course Average	0.52	0.85

The overall impact of the participants' perceptions of their Personal Life Effectiveness skills is measured in terms of 'Effect Size'.

Effect sizes for Outdoor Education can be interpreted as follows (Neill, 2002):

- ve = negative impact
- 0.0 = no impact
- 0.2 = small positive impact
- 0.4 = moderate positive impact
- 0.6 = strong positive impact
- 1+ = very strong positive impact

For example, the overall effect size for the 2009 CITF course was 0.86 indicating a 'strong positive impact'. 81% of participants surveyed showed an increase in the comparisons of themselves from the start to the end of course and an increase of 31% in the rate of learning.

The tables illustrate a yearly increase in the average course effect size, signifying that each year's course had a greater effect on the participants than the previous year. The Year Seven CITF program had a small positive impact, Year Eight had a moderate positive impact, Year Nine showed a moderate to strong positive impact and the Year Ten CITF Program had outstanding results with a strong to very strong positive impact.

The average effect size for past Outward Bound Australia programs is 0.47 and the more typical effects of other outdoor education programs for school students are lower, approximately 0.2 (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997). In a meta-analysis of outdoor adventure programs, longer programs were proven to have a higher effect on participants than shorter programs (Cason and Gillis 1994, as cited in Hattie, et al, 1997). It is reasonable to assume that ongoing exposure to outdoor education programs would have a stronger impact than participating in one 'longer' course. We can therefore conclude that the repeated attendance of Cranbrook students on Outward Bound courses can account in part, for the above average results from the Year Nine and especially Year Ten CITF programs.

If a Cranbrook School year group was only to attend one Outward Bound course rather than the four currently attended, it is likely that the results would more closely reflect those of past Outward Bound programs i.e. an average effect size of 0.47, in comparison to the 0.85 reached on the 2009 Year Ten CITF program.

Research shows that outdoor education programs continue in their effect after course completion (Hattie, et al, 1997). This means that the starting point for Personal Effectiveness evaluation continues to develop as the participants do i.e. the way a participant rates themselves at the start of a course is influenced by what they have gained from previous experiences. Both tables above clearly show an effect increase in *all* dimensions, confirming that the students built on what they had gained from the previous course and continued to record increases in the positive impacts of the program.

Conclusions

Through careful 'ramping' of the CITF programs, which includes an increase in challenge in the areas where the courses were run, activities included in the program, facilitation and level of responsibility given to the boys; Outward Bound has delivered a successful and highly impactful succession of programs to the students in the year group studied. This is highlighted in the increase in average course effect size each year and the exceptional results from the 2009 Year Ten CITF program.

References

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