CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature overview on the nature of adventure-based programmes in an effort to increase understanding in the processes and requirements for adventure-based interventions that encourage and enable learning and growth in adolescents.

A brief overview of the development of adventure-based programmes for youth in South Africa is provided. Major trends were identified rather than providing a comprehensive picture. Some current issues in the adventure-based field are highlighted, followed by a look at possible future challenges to organizations offering adventure-based programmes to youth.

In an attempt to simplify the readers' understanding of the nature of adventure-based programmes, the five major components were identified:

the **P**rocess

the **P**articipant

the **P**rogramme

the **P**ersonnel

the **P**lace

Views on the essence and characteristics of each component are outlined, indicating the role and relevance of each in optimizing the adventure-based programme as an educational experience. The information provided reflects the enormous potential adventure-based programmes offer to the field of child and youth development. Not all adventure experiences are educational and it is

unjustified to claim the development of self, social and environmental awareness on the basis of mere participation in an outdoor adventure-based activity.

In the last section the relevance of the social work profession to adventure-based programmes is discussed and the utilization of adventure-based programmes as intervention strategy is placed within the framework of the Child and Youth Care System of South Africa (CYCS). Lastly, the role a social worker can perform as member of the staff component during an adventure-based programme is analysed.

2.2   OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT 0F ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES IN SA

2.2.1.   PAST DEVELOPMENTS

1900 –1950

The first half of the 20th century witnessed the development of various national youth organizations: Student Christian Association (SCA) in 1896; S.A. Youth Clubs (1909); Boy and Girl Scout Movements (1912-1916); Pathfinders for Black, Coloured and Indian youth respectively (1931); Voortrekkers (1931); The Hobonim (1939); Agricultural Clubs (1938) and the Land Service Clubs (1934) which combined their forces to form the Land Service Movement (1951); (Spies & Louw, 1999:2-4).

1951 – 1970

The Veld and Vlei outdoor centre at Estcourt was established in the mid fifties, based on the philosophies of Outward Bound. A second centre was opened at Swartvlei Lagoon in the Southern Cape (Spies & Louw, 1999:3). In 1957 Ian Player and Magqubu Ntombela founded the Wilderness Leadership School (WLS), focussing on conservation awareness (Robertson, 2000:2).

1971 – 1990

The South African government played a more significant role in developing campsites and cultural centres throughout the country. Fifteen camp facilities were made available by the end of the seventies and veld schools became common practice. In 1986 the first government funded training centre for outdoor leaders, The Outdoor Adventure and Recreation Centre [ORAT], was developed at Oudtshoorn (Spies & Louw, 1999:4). Many associations for adventure and outdoor related programmes were established at regional and national level. These associations included the South African Adventure Committee, Outdoor Adventure Association (OAA) and Christian Camping International South Africa (CCISA).

1991 – 2000

Adventure-based programmes gained increased momentum as the value of experiential learning was realized in the nineties. The WLS introduced a number of new programmes (Imbewu, Pride of Table Mountain, Khula Nam, National Opinion Leader Trail) to expose more people to wild areas (Robertson, 2000:2). Ropes courses were introduced to many outdoor centres. Certain schools started offering adventure-based programmes as part of an extra curricular activity. In 1992 a second national training centre for outdoor leaders was opened and funded by the government at Middelburg, Mpumalanga. Due to a lack of funds this centre, together with the one at Oudtshoorn, was later privatized (Spies & Louw,1999:3). Outward Bound started operating in South Africa since 1992 with the aim "to impact the lives of young people in South Africa who have been marginalised and disadvantaged" (Robertson, 2000:3). The mid nineties saw the establishment of many non-profit organizations developing adventure-based programmes to children and youth, e.g. EDUCO, President's Award Trust and National Peace Accord Trust.

The first conference with Adventure as central theme was organized in 1997. The "Power of Adventure" conference is now an annual event. CCISA also organizes an annual conference for its members.

In 1997 many of the veld schools established in the seventies, became environmental education centres now functioning under the auspices of he provincial Departments of Environmental Affairs (Spies & Louw,1999:3).

The National Peace Accord Trust has been organizing "community-based wilderness therapy projects with the focus on community reconciliation through individual healing since 1996" (Robinson, 2000:5). In 2000 the South African Wilderness Therapy Institute was established.

2.2.2.   PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS

Attempts to establish a co-ordinating body for adventure-based organizations/ companies/ individual practitioners and programmes in South Africa have yet to yield positive results.

An increased awareness and demand for adventure-based programmes for children and youth, especially youth-at-risk, is experienced. Research and literature resources, although limited, have increased in South Africa and confirm the significant strides adventure-based programmes have taken in the last decade.

Since April 2000 all "guides", i.e. "… anyone facilitating an outdoor experience …" (Robertson, 2000:9), require formal training and registration under the Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training Authority (THETA), under the sub-category of Wilderness Therapy Guiding. According to Robertson (2000:9) this will require the integration of training programmes and procedures for such guides within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), implemented by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). (The source referred to is Robertson's lecture at the POA-conference).

2.2.3.   FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The twenty-first century is certain to present outdoor leaders and other practitioners with many challenges. These challenges can be addressed through a systematic process called "futuring", defined by Trotter (1998:20) as a "discipline

that uses various methodologies to anticipate possibilities based on current trends, to assess the likely impact of these possibilities on different aspects of people's lives, and to establish responses that enable people to control the directions of their lives or to be prepared to deal with the uncontrollable consequences".

Trotter (1998:20-23) advises camps (adventure-based programmes) to "**practice specialized diversification**", i.e. doing that which the organization does best, based on an identified market need; **diversify the camp experience** through professional networking, new target groups, e.g. adults and family camps; **use technology** for information processing, personal communication devices and creating a virtual adventure experience; and to **compete in the 21st century** by being an entrepreneur, being a leader and manager, and being the best provider.

The American Camping Association – Not for Profit Council (ACA web page, 2002) undertook a study to examine influences and trends on camping programmes offered by non-profit organizations which experience increased pressures to scrutinize the scope of their services concerning appropriateness, commitment, and economic viability. Eight trends were identified with issues and recommendations. A summary of this study is included here due to the relevance of these trends facing many South African non-profit organizations and other companies, including individual practitioners offering adventure-based programmes to youth-at-risk. Trends were defined as "tendencies, drifts or changes"; and issues as "the problems identified due to the changing trends" (ACA Web page, 2002).

> **Trend # 1**: "All successful not for profit organizations acknowledge the importance of mission statements".
> **Issues:** The camp mission must fit the non-profit organization's mission and be a "roadmap" for addressing current societal needs.
>
> **Trend # 2**: "Camps have contributions to make in addressing societal problems".
> **Issues:** The outcomes and processes of adventure-based programmes should be determined and articulated to the public.

Trend # 3: "Not for profit organizations face fiscal challenges related to their mandate and role".

Issues: Obtaining adequate funding for programmes.

Trend # 4: "Leadership in any organization is key".

Issues: Recruiting quality staff and volunteers.

Trend # 5: "Many youth services exist along with youth who have many needs".

Issues: Identifying the unique contribution adventure-based programmes make in meeting the needs of youth and marketing these benefits.

Trend # 6: "Not for profit organizations must be efficient in providing services".

Issues: Making the most of facilities and technology.

Trend # 7: " The demographics of American society are changing".

Issues: Participants and staff should reflect local and national diversity, and adventure-based programmes should address youth development issues.

Trend # 8: "Accountability is critical in all social organizations".

Issues: Determining what specifically camp accomplishes in the lives of youth and showing accountability to public and funding sources. Youth of all backgrounds and abilities should be accommodated and diversity in staff and participants should be reflected.

In order to survive in the new millennium, the challenge is to do more with less; adapt corporate principles and practices; be informed and sensitive to societal trends and reflect the specific outcomes and results of programmes to all stake holders (ACA web page, 2002). Wisdom is needed to hang on to the traditions and practices that remain relevant, whilst adapting and developing new programmes to meet the current demands.

2.3.   THE NATURE AND REQUIREMENTS OF AN ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMME

2.3.1.   THE PROCESS

There are two major aspects to an adventure-based programme that need to be understood before commencing with the planning and execution of an outdoor programme with emphasis on adventure as education medium:
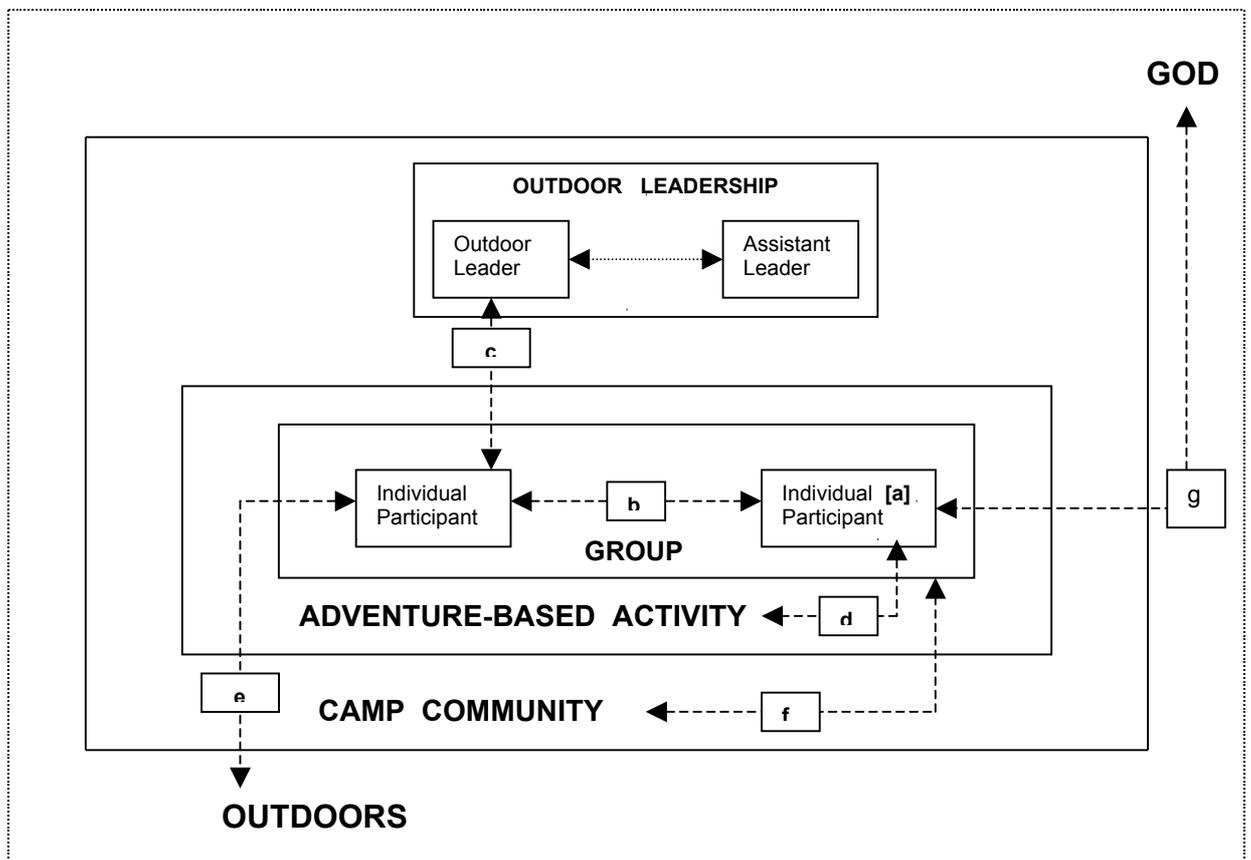
2.3.1.1   The components of an adventure-based programme.

2.3.1.2   The essence of adventure.

This process of developing an adventure-based programme is similar to preparing a dish: there's the ingredients (components) and then there's the spices (adventure).

2.3.1.1.   THE COMPONENTS OF AN ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMME

Figure 1.   Components of an Adventure-based Programme

In **Figure 1** the researcher illustrated the different components of an adventure-based programme and this reflects the interaction areas, i.e. the relationships between the participant and the components of an adventure-based programme.

Adventure-based programmes abound with learning opportunities. Every component of the adventure-based progamme presents the outdoor leader with opportunities to enhance the participant's intrapersonal skills, i.e. relationship with self: self-esteem, self-confidence, self-awareness, self-management, spirituality as well as interpersonal skills, i.e. relationships with others: communication, team work, conflict management, citizenship (Priest 1990:140; Moote & Wodarski, 1997:149; Morrison, Alcorn & Nelums, 1997:323; Ibbetson & Newell, 1996:166). The researcher regards each component as an intervention tool or medium that can be used or manipulated by the outdoor leader to achieve the aims and objectives of the overall programme. The participant is the centre point around which everything is organized and structured:

Participant : self (intra-personal relationship) - a

Participant : group (inter-personal relationships) - b

Participant : outdoor leader (adult-adolescent relationship) - c

Participant : outdoors (eco-psychological relationship) - d

Participant : activity (relationship with outdoor pursuits) - e

Participant : camp community (inter-personal relationships) - f

Participant : God (spirituality) - g

2.3.1.1.1 Participant: self

Adventure implies active participation, requiring mental involvement and action, ultimately leading to self-development. Explanation and demonstration hardly ever lead to real and lasting learning. Only active learning will do this (Silberman, 1996 :x).

Adventure-based learning is active, fast-paced, fun, supportive and personally engaging. Participants need to figure things out themselves, try out new skills, carry out assignments that depend on knowledge they already have or must

acquire. Quinn (1990:147) argues that the world can be a small and narrow place unless one seeks to explore. Adventure provides opportunities for exploration which lead to an extension of the self. Quinn (1990:148) describes the need for adventure appropriately: "Without actively seeking, without attempting to, and going beyond what one already knows one can accomplish, there is no growth. Strenuousness of mind, heart, and body engenders growth". It is this extension of the self that leads to growth, which in turn feels good and leads to further exploration, and ultimately the participant moves towards fulfillment.

2.3.1.1.2   Participant: group

The group-living experience is a very powerful component of an adventure-based programme and is of primary importance to social learning. Halliday (1991:18) views the small group situation as the "laboratory for social learning" and quotes Dimock on the role of the small group: "The process of living together in small groups out-of-doors is the major content of the camp curriculum – not discussion, instruction, training, or recreation imported into the outdoor setting".

Adventure-based programmes are organized around many small group experiences, e.g. the cabin unit. The outdoor leader can construct a situation in which each participant has opportunities, instructions and rewards for learning within the group. The benefits of the group in working with "troubled youth" are numerous, and according to Rose (1995 :17) includes "role players for behavioural rehearsal, persons to do monitoring, partners for use in a 'buddy system'. Also: "Members can 'brainstorm' goals, alternative behaviours, reinforcement, and even intervention strategies. … Furthermore negotiation and problem-solving skills are readily addressed in the context of the group as members solve group problems and negotiate differences among members. … They become aware that they have skills and knowledge that can benefit others". Working with groups require specific and extensive skills in which the outdoor leader must be trained in order to be maximally effective.

2.3.1.1.3   Participant: outdoor leader

In the structured environment of an adventure-based programme, youth can live, play and learn with and from positive role models that make the time to listen, talk, guide, reflect, stimulate and just be there (Halliday, 1991:18). The outdoor leader is not just trained to conduct activities safely and skillfully, but also to facilitate the learning process, i.e. making sense or deriving meaning from the experience (Knapp, 1990:189).

2.3.1.1.4   Participant: outdoors

The outdoors and the resources of the natural environment constitute a high impact environment due to the physical contrast to everyday life settings. Ever since the earliest attempts at adventure education, nature has been the setting, be it in the mountains, at lakes, the sea or deserts (Priest, 1990:325). The influence of the outdoors as component of an adventure-based programme is explained in more detail in point 2.3.5.

2.3.1.1.5   Participant: activity

Adventure-based activities allow children and youth to participate in appropriate risk-taking behaviours (Moote & Wodarski, 1997:161). A detailed discussion on programming for adventure-based programmes is provided in point 2.3.3.

2.3.1.1.6   Participant: community

The camp community is a highly attractive and functional setting in which adventure-based programmes take place. Point 2.4.3.1 highlights the meaning and characteristics of this component of an adventure-based programme.

2.3.1.1.7   Participant: God

Many adventure-based programmes have a Christian emphasis, while others may not support any specific religion or denomination The researcher has personally

witnessed and heard of life changing experiences campers have had during an adventure-based programme grounded and run according to Christian principles. It appears as if all of the above components create a climate for change and provides practical opportunities to witness and practice Christian principles. Badke (2000:65) is of the opinion that children can gain more "from one week of camp than they would from a year of Sunday school".

The process of learning can be influenced by changing any of the identified components and emphasizing specific aspects, e.g. appointing a different outdoor leader, changing the outdoor environment and introducing different activities. The aim is growth or improvement in the relationship between the participant and the component by focussing on the interaction between the two, resulting in the personal development of the participant.

2.3.1.2.   THE ESSENCE OF ADVENTURE

Adventure is an experience requiring **active participation of the whole person** (Heunis, 1997:61). Adventure cannot be experienced without "doing it". Quinn (1990:146) writes: "If a climber has not fallen, he has not climbed; and if the canoeist is dry, she has not paddled".

Adventure is more a **state of mind** than an activity. It is a subjective issue and what constitutes adventure for one participant, will not automatically imply adventure to another (Heunis, 1997:66). It is highly unlikely that canoeing on a calm river will be adventurous for an experienced canoeist, while a short hike or camping trip may be an adventure to a person who has never lived in the outdoors.

An **uncertain result** created by the **risk element** of an activity is another characteristic of an adventure experience. The participant weighs his abilities up against the requirements to accomplish the task, but is never sure that he will master the skill (Heunis, 1997:67). Quinn (1990:146) is of the opinion that "when complete confidence and competence reign, adventure cannot exist". The well-known definition on adventure by Priest (1990:2) summarizes this point: "To

adventure is to venture forth into the unknown, to undertake an activity that has an uncertain outcome for the adventurer and may be risky or dangerous".

Problem-solving is an integral part of adventure as the participant plans and negotiates his way through and over **challenges** or **obstacles** (Heunis, 1997:67).

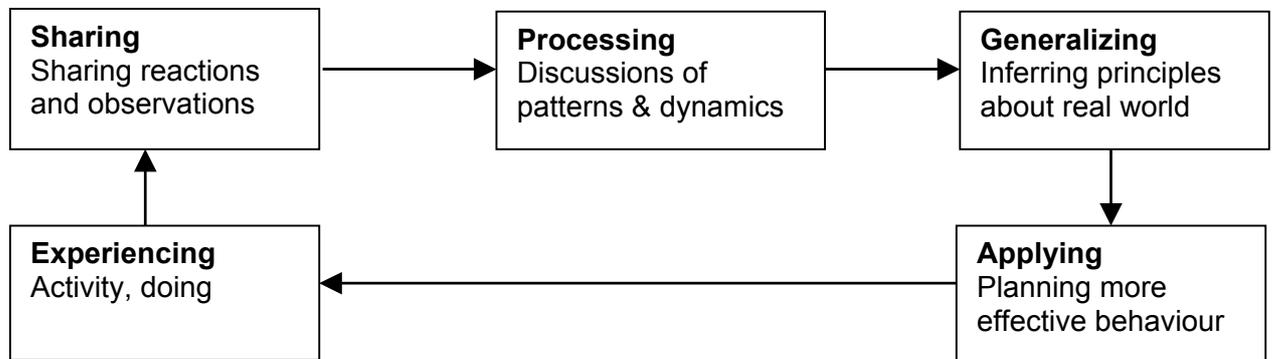The **rewards** of adventure are mostly intrinsic rather than extrinsic and include:

- enjoyment, fun, exhiliration, discovery (Quinn, 1990:147; Ibbetson & Newell, 1996:167);
- the novelty of an experience "out of range of previous background" (Quinn,1990:148) and " … removed from every day opportunity that may require skills not called for in daily routines …" (Csikszentmihayli & Csikszentmihayli, 1990:154);
- Intrapersonal growth, i.e. expanding the self through the development of skills and personal qualities (Quinn, 1990:148 and Priest, 1990:1);
- " … liberating the individual from the constraints of the comfort zone …" (Puth, 2000:114); enabling the discovery of true potential (Priest, 1990:1 and Quinn, 1990:147); and
- peace (Heunis, 1997:68) resulting from the success of achieving or completing the goal.

2.3.1.3.   THE PROCESS OF ADVENTURE-BASED LEARNING

Participation in adventure-based programme does not automatically contribute to personal development and hardly produces learning on its own. The question to be answered here is: How to optimize the experience for the participant from recreational to educational?.

2.3.3.1.1.   Experiential learning

Figure 2.   Experiential Learning Model by Pfeifer & Jones (Marais, Hermannson, Wortley & Conradie, 2000:4)

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Sharing             │──────▶│ Processing          │──────▶│ Generalizing        │
│ Sharing reactions   │      │ Discussions of      │      │ Inferring principles│
│ and observations    │      │ patterns & dynamics │      │ about real world    │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
         ▲                                                           │
         │                                                           ▼
┌─────────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Experiencing        │◀─────────────────────────────│ Applying            │
│ Activity, doing     │                              │ Planning more       │
│                     │                              │ effective behaviour │
└─────────────────────┘                              └─────────────────────┘
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This model by Pfeifer & Jones (1980), based on the experiential learning model of Dewey, was presented by Marais, Hermannson, Wortley & Conradie (2000:4) during a lecture at the 2000 POA Conference.

Adventure-based activities operate from the model of experiential learning (Moote & Wodarski, 1997:149; Proudman, 1990:339). To enable learning, meaning must be derived from the experience. Meaning is primarily derived through reflection, discussing and analyzing the experience, and sharing outcomes from the activity (Knapp,1990:18; Heunis, 1997:63).

2.3.3.1.2.   Facilitation techniques and skills

The outdoor leader's role is far more encompassing than merely organizing and presenting activities to participants (Proudman, 1990:339). The outdoor leader plays a key role in facilitating practical learning. Barak (2000:3) presents nine skills or "competencies" which the facilitator should possess, with an indication of tasks and roles to be performed. (The source referred to was a lecture at the 2000 POA Conference.)

- understanding the context and processes: the overall programme and each component, the culture;

- leadership skills: planning, decision-making, negotiation, mediation, concensus building, standard setting, co-ordinating, counseling;

- communication skills: verbal and non-verbal; fluency in in the language of the participants or vice versa;

- listening skills: active listening, giving feedback and listening to non-verbal clues of behaviour;

- group dynamic skills: a sound knowledge of group processes, team-building abilities, conflict resolution, motivation, time-keeping and pace setting;

- analytical skills: collecting and analyzing information, questioning, inquiring, summarizing;

- technical skills: skills relating to the activity being instructed, coaching, instructing;

- rational skills: objectivity, neutrality; and

- personal characteristics: self-awareness, energy, self-ease, openness, empathy.

"Facilitation" in adventure-based programs refers to the role of the outdoor leader to aid and assist the process of deriving meaning from the adventure-based experience for the participant, using the skills and knowledge listed above. The responsibility for learning rests with the participant, but the outdoor leader provides the participant with the necessary resources, opportunities, time and support to experience the "aha" (learning) moment.

2.3.3.1.3.   Transfer of learning

Learning from adventure-based experiences is transferred to the participant through various processes. Gass (1990:200-207) identified three processes:

- **Specific transfer** occurs when the participant is able to exercise the skill acquired, e.g. orienteering, canoeing, fire building, independently from the outdoor leader and camp environment. This is usually evident with physical skills mastered by the participant.

- **Non-specific transfer** occurs when specific principles and values interwoven in the teaching of an activity are transferred to the "outside" living environment of the participant.   Co-operation, problem-solving, determination and environmental awareness are often by-products gained through participation in an adventure-based programme.

- **Metaphoric transfer** occurs when an activity contains structural similarities (isomorphism) with a real life situation familiar to the participant, allowing parallels to be drawn from the experience to life in general.   Marais, Hermannson, Wortley & Conradie (2000:2) provides the following explanation: "Metaphors are defined as a way of seeing something else, e.g. Life is a gamble. This is how abseil on an experiential learning programme can be a metophor for letting go of old habits, baggage, and moving on to another place".   (The source referred to was a lecture at the 2000 POA Conference.) The use of metaphors is a cornerstone in adventure-based programmes and it is vital for the outdoor leader to master competency in this process.

It is the experience and opinion of the researcher that it is very difficult to pinpoint the specific events and moments when learning occurred in the participant, especially in an outdoor setting and with a programme where so many variables could impact on the outcome of the adventure experience. There is no DIY guide with step by step procedure to follow that allows for cause-and-effect situations. It has been said that adventure-based programmes are somewhat like electricity: "We know that it works, but we do not know how" (author unknown, but cited in Moote & Wodarski, 1997:160). Research studies tend to focus on the outcomes of adventure-based programmes and hardly any research is available on the process of adventure (Moote & Wodarski, 1997:152); systematically evaluating how effective the process is and why (Ibbetson & Newell, 1996:167). One study that deserves mentioning is the research undertaken by Heunis (1997) titled: "Adventure related team building in a contemporary society: A Human Movement Science Perspective".

2.3.2.   THE PARTICIPANT

2.3.2.1.   DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE (12-18 YEARS)

2.3.2.1.1 Physical and biological development

- Variance in levels of physical maturation is evident (Newman & Newman, 1997:308; Vernon, 1993:120; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).
- Changes in height, weight and body shape occur that could have implications for popularity, leadership and self-confidence (Newman & Newman, 1997:308; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).
- Boys mature more gradually than girls and react more positively to early maturation than girls, who seem to evaluate early maturation more negatively (de Anda, 1997:17; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).
- Rapid muscular growth occurs with maturation of the body's motor systems; skeletal growth is completed by 17/18 (Newman & Newman, 1997:307; Singer & Hussey, 1997:40; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

2.3.2.1.2 Emotional, cognitive- & psychological development

- Adolescents experience a variety of new emotions; moodiness can occur, together with rebellion and emotional outbursts. Girls tend to turn inward, experiencing feelings of guilt, shame, self-doubt and depression. Boys are more likely to become irritable and angry. Many problems experienced by adolescents are linked to the overly controlled or under controlled or impulsive expression of emotions (Newman & Newman, 1997:316; Vernon, 1993:122; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).
- Emotional maturity lags behind physical maturity and the adolescent could become self-centred or egocentric (Ramsden, 2000:16; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).
- The adolescent exhibits a "know-it-all" attitude and does not admit to ignorance easily (Ramsden, 2000:17; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

- Increased brain functioning enables abstract thoughts and capacity for adult judgement, distinguishing between the real and imaginative (Singer & Hussey, 1997:41; Vernon, 1993:119; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

- Development of sexual identity; physical appearance becomes increasingly important as interest shifts from the same sex to opposite sex (Ramsden, 2000:17; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

- Adolescents swing between independence and dependence and continue to need guidance, support and discipline from parents and significant adults (Vernon, 1993:121; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75; Ramsden, 2000:17).

- Peer group influence is dominant over parent influence and the adolescent will spend more time away from home with dyadic friendships and cliques. Peer relationships are influenced and modified when sexual interests and behaviour are introduced to the group (Newman & Newman, 1997:322; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:45; Vernon, 1993:118; Ramsden, 2000:18).

- Adolescents are self-conscious and sensitive to social dynamics in groups, often over reacting to social interactions (who said what to whom); (Vernon, 1993:118; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75; Ramsden, 2000:18).

2.3.2.1.3   Special considerations

- The social and cultural context of the adolescent (participant) should be considered when addressing developmental needs for programming purposes (Coughlan, 1997:16,17).

- Adolescence is a time of momentous change and transition and therefore a crucial time for providing life-skills development programmes focussing on issues such as communication, interpersonal skills, group co-operation and problem-solving (Moote & Wodarski, 1997:147). Peer group pressure can be influential in high risk behaviours such as substance abuse, but it can also encourage positive values such as co-operation, sharing (generosity) and sense of community (Newman & Newman, 1997:323).

- Early adolescence is a "time of transition" for youth and it is at this stage that many youths experiment with risk-taking behaviour, e.g. drug and alcohol abuse (Moote & Wodarski, 1997:147).

- The 12-14 year olds, especially the boys, are keen to be in the outdoors; they enjoy team (group) events and organized games seem to be a favourite. Skill development is important and they will practice skills with the necessary guidance (Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

- Girls 14+ gradually become less active while boys' leisure activities continue to centre around sport. Opportunities for constructive recreation with adult guidance that is non-threatening, unobtrusive, non-judgemental and inspiring are important.   Personal responsibility should be encouraged and the adolescent assisted in developing feelings of self-worth and esteem (Ramsden, 2000; Folkerth in Ball & Ball, 1990:75).

- Not all adolescents share the same enthusiasm to participate in adventure-based programmes and Coughlan (1997:122) recommends that "youth … should have expressed an interest and shown ability to cope with the wilderness experience; be sufficiently mature to handle the social and emotional challenges and they should be able to function at a level at which they are able to think abstractly and to transfer learning through the use of the metaphor".   Prince Charles of England is a fitting example of a young adolescent who did not share his father's appreciation for the adventure-based education which he, prince Philip, had received at Gordonstoun, a school based on the principles and philosophy of Outward Bound. At age 13 Charles was sent to Gordonstoun for his high school education, a period described as the unhappiest time of his life (Heunis, 1997:59).

2.3.2.2   BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Within an unusual setting such as the outdoors where they can try new behaviour, children of all ages will, at some time or another, exhibit unacceptable bahaviour requiring discipline. The mere nature of adolescence as discussed in 2.3.2.1.

indicates the tendency of adolescents to rebel and to be impulsive, self-centered and unmotivated, bordering on laziness, especially if they do not participate in a programme by choice. During staff training attention should be given to discipline procedures and methods, as well as the circumstances requiring discipline. Role playing and group discussion on possible and actual incidents are techniques that enable staff to gain more insight into these behaviours (Ball & Ball, 1990:79).

2.3.2.2.1.   Behavioural challenges

Ball & Ball (1990:76) identified the "special problems" that could occur during an adventure-based programme:

- **Enuresis**: Bedwetting is not limited to the younger participant. The researcher experienced this condition in girls up to fourteen years of age. A procedure for dealing with the clothes and bedding should be in place so that outdoor leaders can deal with the issue quietly and sensitively. It is important to ensure that the participant has sufficient medication for the duration of the programme.

- **Encopresis**: Although the researcher has not come across adolescents who "soiled" their underwear, the occurrence of this condition cannot be excluded.

- **Sleeping problems**: Nightmares and/or sleepwalking may occur if the participant has a history of either. The outdoor leader should be watchful for this.

- **Eating disorders**: Anorexia nervosa (limiting food intake) and bulimia (over eating followed by inducing vomiting) tend to be more prevalent amongst girls concerned about gaining body weight. One condition which the researcher has witnessed in programmes to children and youth from under-priviledged communities, is the tendency to consume way above average amounts of food. The conclusion amongst staff was that this could possibly be attributed to the lack of sufficient food in the home.

- **Stealing**: The participant who has taken things from others should be confronted and requested to return the item(s) with an apology. Discussion with the group is necessary, but avoid ostracizing the participant.

- **Hyperactivity**: The participant who constantly moves about, runs ahead, is impulsive and inattentive, could be demanding attention from the outdoor leader.

- **Homesickness**: The adolescent who misses home and friends is often the person who has difficulty adjusting to the programme and fellow participants. In adolescence the participant might be less tearful than younger persons and indicate their feelings by withdrawing from the group and/or activities. Some participants develop strange "illnesses" and ailments.

- **Suicidal behaviour**: Many adolescents, especially girls, tend to suffer from depression in varying degrees and this could contribute to thoughts on suicide.

- **Sexual behaviour**: Adolescents often utilize the opportunity in the outdoors to "act out" sexual behaviour, either openly in the group or secretively.

- **Chemical abuse**: Adolescents who use substances like alcohol and/or tobacco will often bring these substances to the outdoor facility/adventure-based programme.

The occurrence of the above behaviours is not limited to youth-at-risk and does not imply that the child is not fit to participate in the programme. However, if not dealt with properly and timeously, many of the goals and benefits of the programme are jeopardized.

2.3.2.2.2   Dealing with challenging behaviour

The outdoor leader needs to be watchful and alert to the occurrence of any of the conditions or behaviours listed above, and report it to the designated superior with whom the outdoor leader can also consult. It is important not to ignore the incident or condition, especially when the safety of the participant is compromised.   From

the onset of the programme participants should be informed about the implications and consequences of unacceptable behaviour, e.g. chemical substance abuse. During the camp orientation on day one it is beneficial for the cabin group to draw up their own "cabin rules" with consequences for defiance of these rules.

It is the experience of the researcher that, due to the caring nature of outdoor leaders, they often feel responsible to solve problems and cure conditions experienced by participants. This curing or problem-solving ideal is unrealistic as these conditions cannot be cured by the adventure-based programme unless there is a staff member with the necessary training to deal with the participant, or unless the programme specifically addresses the condition with the aim of curing it. Even then outdoor leaders need to realize that behavioural change for the most part is a long-term process. It is more realistic to address behavioural issues than trying to cure them.

Lishner & Myers (1997:37) reported that studies of parents who have raised children with a high self-esteem, show that these parents "generally use an authoritative approach. They are both democratic and strict; combine love and acceptance with strong demands for academic performance and good behaviour; show respect for and allow individual expression within clearly defined and firmly enforced limits; reward more than they punish; and set clear, consistent rules – letting children know about expectations".

Avoid humiliation and embarrassment to the participant, whatever the strategy to deal with challenging behaviour. Prevention is always better than cure and by setting clear boundaries for behaviour with real consequences applied consistently by the outdoor leader, many potentially challenging behaviours can be avoided. Certain behaviours require medication and can be treated effectively, e.g. bedwetting. Programme leaders should ensure that participants on medication have sufficient medication at camp for the duration of the programme.

2.3.3   THE PROGRAMME

2.3.3.1   PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

2.3.3.1.1   Adventure-based programmes should be consciously **planned** and be **goal orientated** (Proudman, 1990:339). Activities should be selected and/or developed to meet the aims and objectives of the programme.   Ball & Ball (1990:131) are of the opinion that " … to develop program activities without goals and objectives in mind is simply to provide a potpourri of unrelated activities, many of which may be just as easily available in the camper's home setting".

2.3.3.1.2   Adventure-based programmes should be **tailored to the specific developmental needs, interests and abilities** of the target group, in this instance early adolescents (Ibbetson & Newell, 1996:165; Ball & Ball, 1990:132). Steps to create a developmentally appropriate activity are identified by Lishner & Meyers (1997:38) :

- Identify and analyze the developmental need to be focussed on, e.g. the enhancement of self-esteem.
- Assess and adapt the activity to ensure that the components enhancing the specific development are embodied in the methodology and execution of the activity.
- Identify strategies for outdoor leaders that will promote the goal (enhance self-esteem), e.g. "structure situations to help campers be successful, communicate confidence in campers, develop new or adapted experiences that are relevant and important to campers, develop and use positive interactions and strategies for changing undesired or inappropriate behaviors, promote responsibility".
- Obtain and utilize organizational resources.

2.3.3.1.3   **Risk management** should be practised in all areas of adventure programming.   This implies that all the organization's resources – human, physical, financial, operational – should be geared towards the safety of every aspect of the programme operation, especially the participant (Ball & Ball,

1990:91). Tholkes (1998:24-26) provides valuable guidelines on the treatment of risk:

- Simply avoid or substitute activities where the risks outweigh the benefits.

- Reduce the possibility of injury to staff and participants by

    - training staff well or ensuring that staff have the necessary qualifications to present an activity;

    - regular safety classes with staff and participants to inform them about safety and accident prevention;

    - use of proper safety equipment; and

    - following well-documented accident procedures.

- Transfer some of the burden of the risk to others by having adequate insurance and asking participants to accept responsibility for their actions.

2.3.3.1.4   Evaluations should be conducted regularly to measure the achievement of objectives. Consequent adjustments and improvements need to be made where required. Each component of the programme should be involved, including staff, participants, parents (Ball & Ball, 1990:171).

2.3.2.2   PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Many activities are associated with adventure, e.g. rock climbing, orienteering, canoeing. However, it is incorrect and misleading to refer to these outdoor pursuits as adventure activities (Heunis,1997:65). Outdoor pursuits are utilized and optimized for education purposes due to the wealth of opportunities these activities present for learning. An experiential learning process can be conducted in any environment and with almost any type of activity or learning medium (Proudman, 1990:335).

There is hardly any limit to the variety of activities that can be included in an adventure-based programme. Ball & Ball (1990:137) provide a comprehensive list of general areas of activities with specific activities within each area:

Land sports and games: team and individual sports, as well as informal games.

Water sports and games: swimming for recreational, instructional or competitive purposes; water sport such as sailing, canoeing, fishing, water-skiing, rowing.

Arts: performing arts like music, dance, drama; arts and crafts including a wide variety, such as painting, beadwork, ceramics, leatherwork, metal craft, etc.

Outdoor-orientated activities: outdoor living skills such as camping out, fire building, outdoor cooking, shelter building; physical skills in outdoor pursuits like hiking, mountaineering, rock climbing; Nature-orientated activities including nature hikes, bird watching, gardening, conservation activities, etc.

Vehicular: go karts, bikes, flying.

Special events: usually theme days involving the whole camp community, such as olympics, pageants, etc.

Social recreation: quiet times, singing and free time in the programme.

Spiritually-orientated Activities: morning and evening devotions; Bible study, quiet times for reflection, etc.

2.3.2.3   SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PROGRAMMING

Special populations such as persons with physical and/or mental disabilities, diabetes, AIDS, etc. can be integrated into an adventure-based programme or could be accommodated separately. The benefits of an integrated programme are numerous as participants learn from and about each other. Additional research, staff training and possible modifications to the programme instruction and outdoor facility are required in order to accommodate persons from diverse backgrounds and abilities (Keung & De Graaff, 1999:21; Ball & Ball, 1990:136).

Progressive programming implies that different levels of competence can be achieved by the participant in a particular outdoor activity, e.g. mountaineering, sailing, canoeing. Skilled instructors with the necessary certified qualifications are required in these specialized activities (Ball & Ball, 1990:134).

Generalized vs specialized activities in the adventure-based programme is another option which the outdoor leader should consider. Younger participants seem to respond more positively to general outdoor activities, while adolescents tend to be attracted by activities requiring greater skill (Ball & Ball, 1990:135).

The **duration** of the programme is another issue and the most popular duration of residential adventure-based programmes in the USA appears to be seven days (ACA, undated:1).

2.3.4   THE PERSONNEL

2.3.4.1.   SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Priest (1990:212-215) identified seven skills and seven attributes in which the outdoor leader must be competent to be an effective leader:

2.3.4.1.1   Skills

- **Technical activity skills:** The outdoor leader must be competent in the outdoor activity being taught, e.g. outdoor living skills, mountaineering and rock climbing.

- **Safety skills**: Skills necessary to ensure the safety of participants in the activity being led could include first aid, water safety (life-guarding), navigation, search and rescue.

- **Organizational skills**: The outdoor leader should be able to plan, execute and evaluate an out trip; taking into consideration the special needs of participants.

- **Environmental skills**: The outdoor leader should practise minimum impact camping.

- **Instructional skills**: The outdoor leader should be able to teach participants. This includes teaching safety and the use of instructional aids when needed.

- **Group management skills**: These skills relate to the role of the outdoor leader as group facilitator.

- **Problem-solving and decision-making skills**: The outdoor leader needs to complete many assignments and deal with a variety of unpredicted incidents that occur during a day's work.

2.3.4.1.2   Attributes

- **Motivational philosophy and interest**: The reasons why the person became an outdoor leader vary, but it rarely is because of monetary rewards.

- **Physical fitness**: Working with youth in the outdoors is both physically and mentally demanding. The outdoor leader does not have to be an olympic athlete, but should have a minimum fitness level to perform tasks. The researcher regards physical fitness as a skill and regards "mental fitness" as an attribute to be valued in staff, especially when working with youth-at-risk.

- **Healthy self-concept and ego**: The outdoor leader must know him/herself, his/her strengths and weaknesses and motivation for the job. It is the outdoor leaders with a healthy self-esteem who will place the needs of the participant above their own, having no pressure to prove themselves and using "mistakes" as learning experiences to grow from.

- **Awareness and empathy for others**: The outdoor leader should understand the feelings of participants in certain situations. This awareness comes from the outdoor leader's own previous experience.

- **Personal traits and behaviour**: This refers to the personality traits of the outdoor leader that he/she modelled by him/her to the participant. In this regard Carlson is quoted by Halliday (1991:18): "The importance of the counselor cannot be over-emphasized. His or her personality, concern, and understanding, stamp themselves upon the camp experience".

- **Flexible leadership style**: The outdoor leader should adopt his/her leadership style according to the demands of the situation. This means being democratic

and sharing decision-making in general, yet being able to take the lead and make autocratic decisions when needed, e.g. in an emergency.

- **Judgement-based experience**: The outdoors can be very unpredictable, e.g. weather conditions. People and behaviour can be even more unpredictable and the outdoor leader is obliged to rely on their judgement on many occasions. When there is a lack of information in a situation requiring input from the outdoor leader for continuance/change, sound judgement by the outdoor leader can be critical. Previous experience provides a foundation for the development of good judgement.

The skills of an outdoor leader are generally categorized into "hard" and "soft" skills (Phipps & Swiderski, 1990:224, 225; Green, 1990:217). Those skills used in a variety of outdoor pursuits and outdoor activities, e.g. rock climbing, are referred to as hard skills (Green, 1990:218). The outdoor leader needs to master a basic skill level in a particular outdoor activity before being able to teach or instruct others in the techniques and procedures of the particular outdoor activity.

The soft skills an outdoor leader should master include "processing skills, communication skills and group dynamics" (Green, 1990:218). Soft skills relate to the "people skills of outdoor leadership" (Phipps & Swiderski, 1990:223). These skills develop over time and with a great deal of practice.

It is a combination of these skills and attributes that enable the outdoor leader to achieve the programme objectives. Kimball (1990:13), director of the Santa Fe Mountain Centre, a therapeutic adventure programme adapted to fit the needs of the mental health system in New Mexico, commented on the use of the outdoor leaders' skills: "In terms of our success in a comprehensive mental health care system, it has been essential for our staff to view themselves as counselor/therapists first, and outdoor instructors second. This does not mean that we tolerate a lower level of wilderness skills among the staff, but it reminds us that our means (the wilderness) are secondary to our ends (therapy/evaluation). … Staff must be bilingual".

2.3.4.2. FACTORS IN EMPLOYMENT

Ball & Ball (1990:36) draw attention to the following factors that influence the appointment of outdoor leaders:

2.3.4.2.1   Age: Although age does not guarantee maturity, the outdoor leader should be at least 18 years of age. For assignments such as driving of vehicles, accompanying participants off-site, supervising high risk activities in areas such as the waterfront, the outdoor leader should be at least 21 years of age (legal adult age). It is preferable that the supervisor of the outdoor leader, i.e. programme leader, should be at least two years older than the staff member being supervised.

2.3.4.2.2   Sex: Same sex outdoor leaders should be appointed for participants of the same sex; especially where living quarters are shared.

2.3.4.2.3   Previous experience: This factor is always an added benefit and the need for previous experience will depend on the position. Experience can be gained on three levels:
• practising the skill (outdoor pursuit) being taught ;
• teaching/instructing others; and
• working with children and youth, especially in a group context.

2.3.4.2.4   Skill: The outdoor leader should be competent in both hard and soft skills.   Where possible certification of skills should be requested before appointment. The level of skill will depend on the activity being taught.

2.3.4.2.5   Background: The cultural and ethnic background of the outdoor leader can be a significant factor in employment. An outdoor leader from the same ethnicity as the participant has a greater understanding of the participant, and can have a greater impact as a role model. On the other hand, the outdoor leader from a different ethnic group and/or nationality can add an interesting dimension to the programme for both staff and participants.

In the U.S.A. summer camps annually employ close to 10,000 international counsellors who contribute and learn from the wide variety of outdoor programmes. Except for Outward Bound, the researcher is not aware of any other organizations in South Africa that employ full-time outdoor leaders from other countries.

2.3.4.3.   TRAINING

The New Century Dictionary (1948:838) regards the word "train" and "instruct" as synonymous, meaning "to prepare or equip, also to furnish with knowledge, esp. by a systematic method; teach; educate;   … also to furnish with authoritative directions; direct or command".   It is the responsibility of both the outdoor leader and employer to ensure continuous training and development. In the U.S.A. the researcher experienced training as outdoor leader on three levels, and this seems to be the general guideline for camps, as suggested by Ball & Ball (1990: 103 -– 112).

2.3.4.3.1   Orientation

This is the period from appointment as outdoor leader to arrival at camp. Before commencing employment, the outdoor leader should receive the following:
- information on the philosophy and aims of the programme;
- information on the organization offering the adventure-based programme;
- a contract with conditions of employment;
- a list of suggested items to bring; and
- a newsletter, if available.

2.2.4.3.2   Pre-camp training

This is the period before the arrival of participants. According to Ball & Ball (1990:107) some of the basic aims of this training session are:
- to build the staff into an effective and functional team;
- to create staff understanding and commitment to the philosophy, aims and objectives of the adventure-based programme and organization;

- to offer the outdoor leader the opportunity to practise skills such as teaching, facilitating, behaviour management, etc.; and

- to increase the knowledge of the outdoor leader on working policies and procedures.

The issue of child abuse should be addressed during this training session. Ball & Ball (1990:108) suggest an open discussion explaining basic definitions, guidelines for staff to monitor their own level of fatigue, and ways to deal with a situation with potential for child abuse and child abuse accusations. Staff should be alerted to recognize signs of physical and/or sexual abuse that may have occurred prior to the arrival of the participant.   The outdoor leader has a responsibility to report alleged abuse to the camp director/programme leader.

The availability of a staff manual is a valuable tool during staff training. Blue Star Camps "resurrected their adventure-based programme for youth-at-risk" and the importance of a staff manual including "information specific to the week long Camping Unlimited Program", together with additional training to staff, is confirmed by the owners of this private camp (Becker & Popkin, 1998 :24).

2.3.4.3.2   In-service training

In service programmes can ensure continuity in training and many issues can be explored in greater depth. Outside practitioners and professionals, e.g. social workers and psychologists, can be involved with topics that require expertise. It is important that topics for in-service programmes should be timely and practical (Ball & Ball, 1990:112).
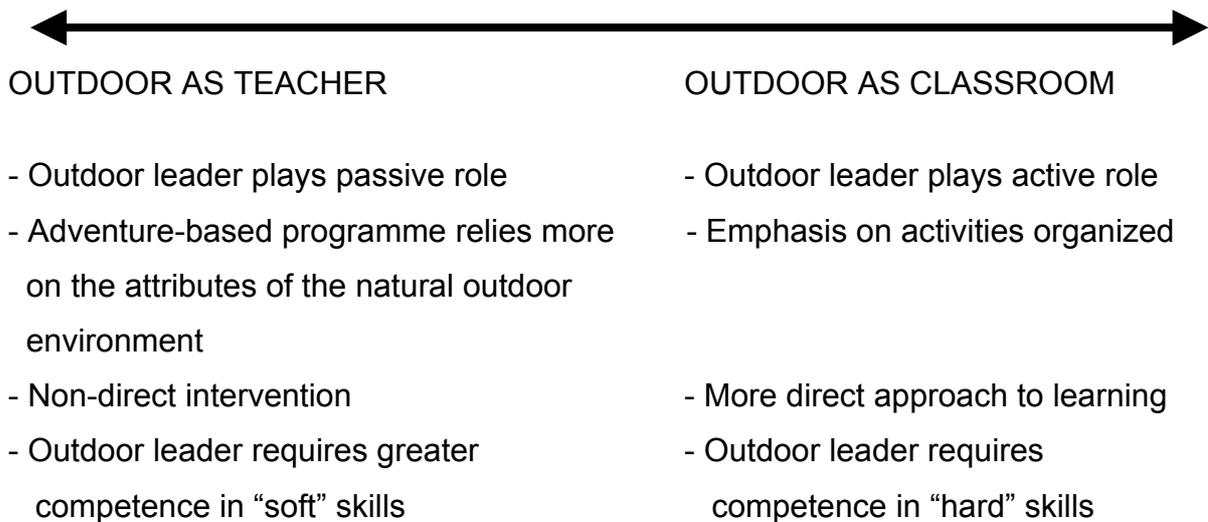
2.3.5.   THE PLACE

Ever since the earliest attempts at adventure education, the natural environment has been chosen as setting. The outdoors supports a range of activities that possess the "ingredients" of adventure; risky, uncertain, unknown, unfamiliar, involving the whole person – mind, body and spirit (Miles & Priest, 1990:326).

The outdoors is a unique learning environment and has the potential to enhance the development of children and youth.   Davies (1996:37) reflects on some features and benefits of the outdoors for development:

- The wider space fosters a sense of freedom, allowing children to be noisier and move about freely. This enables the child to release tensions.
- The natural environment can provide more opportunities to children to "direct their own learning" and to select activities that interest them.
- The availability of space offers the child "opportunities for solitary pursuits", a need as important for a child as for adults.
- Children can experience the natural world with all four senses: hearing, smell, sight, feeling.

The outdoors can be utilized on a continuum of "Outdoor as Teacher" to "Outdoor as classroom".

OUTDOOR AS TEACHER	OUTDOOR AS CLASSROOM
- Outdoor leader plays passive role	- Outdoor leader plays active role
- Adventure-based programme relies more on the attributes of the natural outdoor environment	- Emphasis on activities organized
- Non-direct intervention	- More direct approach to learning
- Outdoor leader requires greater competence in "soft" skills	- Outdoor leader requires competence in "hard" skills

This continuum was adapted and developed by the researcher with information from Robberts (2000:12).

In their study "A Qualitative Exploration of the Wilderness Experience as a Source of Spiritual Inspiration", Frederickson and Anderson (1999:21-39) strongly suggest that:

- it is the unique combination of biophysical, social and leadership characteristics that flow together and give meaning to the overall outdoor setting, and likewise to the wilderness experience; and

- it is a unique combination of social interactions, "group trust and emotional support, sharing common life changes, non-competitive atmosphere" and attributes of the landscape ("direct contact with nature, periods of solitude, inherent physical challenges") that "render a place as spiritually inspirational".

This research by Frederickson and Anderson (1999:21-39) has significance for organizations falling prey to "venue fatigue", a term used to describe participants suffering from a "been-there, done-that" syndrome. It is the experience of the researcher that the quality of social dynamics within the group of participants and the level of learning (growth) within the individual, are the main contributors to participants returning to an outdoor facility or camp.

The alumni movements at many camps in the U.S.A. bear evidence to the meaning "place" can have for children and youth. At Camp Westminister an annual camp is held for alumni members and many still actively contribute to the camp facilities and programme. It is amazing to witness the bond between old campers, previous staff and the place they value due to their childhood experiences there. The researcher is unaware of any alumni movement for old campers and staff of adventure-based programmes in South Africa.

This research study focuses on the outdoors as setting for adventure-based programmes, but it must be added that many urban environments have great potential for developing adventure-based programmes to children and youth (Proudman, 1990:335).

2.4. ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES AND THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

2.4.1 THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

2.4.1.1 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

"Social work practice" refers to the activities social workers perform in carrying out their professional responsibilities; knowing what they are doing (knowledge base), why they are doing it (value base) and how they are doing it (skill base) (Morales & Sheafor, 1992:175).

2.4.1.1.1 Value base of social work

The value base of social work is the main motivation and driving force behind the existence of the profession. Values guide social work practice and the following basic social work values (Morales & Sheafor, 1992:224-228 and Compton & Galaway, 1979:128-134), are relevant to adventure-based programmes:

- belief in the inherent value and dignity of each individual;
- belief that each individual has the ability to change, grow and develop;
- belief that each individual has a social responsibility towards him/herself, the community and society;
- respecting confidentiality;
- maintaining a professional relationship with the client ;
- respecting the individual's right to self-determination; and
- commitment to high standards of professional and personal conduct.

Values and principles are inter-related and the list of guiding principles for social work practice compiled by Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji (1994:85-95) confirms the relevance of the following principles under the "value base" heading: "The social worker should practice social work; engage in conscious use of self; maintain professional objectivity; respect human diversity; seek personal and professional growth; engage in knowledge- and value-guided practice; be concerned with the

whole person; treat the client with dignity; individualize the client; lend vision to the client; build on client strengths; maximize client participation; maximize client self-determination; help the client learn self-directed problem-solving skills; protect client confidentiality ; adhere to the philosophy of normalization; continuously evaluate the progress of the change process; be accountable to the client, agency, community and social work profession".

The above-mentioned values and principles can and should be implemented in all adventure-based interventions with children and youth.   These values and principles emphasize the significant role the social work profession can play in developing adventure-based programmes to children and youth.

2.4.1.1.2   Knowledge base of social work

A social worker requires a wide and thorough knowledge on many issues about how "to deal with both their internal (psychological) and their external (significant others, groups, and neighborhood) environment" (Morales & Sheafor, 1992:175). The knowledge components of social work include: human development and behaviour; communication and expression of feelings; group processes; relationships amongst individuals and groups; community organization; social, public and child welfare services; and knowledge about the social worker him/herself (Morales & Sheafor, 1992:177-184).   This list of knowledge components is far from exhaustive as the primary knowledge of the profession "is drawn from the immense range of human problems; … has to be drawn from allied disciplines; … is changing constantly and advancing rapidly " (Compton & Galaway, 1979:48).

2.4.1.1.3   Skill base of social work

It is almost overwhelming even to start listing the skills social workers utilize in performing their duties. Morales & Sheafor (1992:251-270) list seven basic skills for beginning practice: basic helping skills, engagement skills; observation skills; communication skills; empathy skills; resistance intervention skills; social work assessment skills.

2.4.1.2   SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

Social work intervention focusses on the interaction between humans and their environments. Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji (1994:5) are of the opinion that social work is basically "devoted to improving the social functioning of people. It strives to prevent and solve human problems that are of a social, relational or interactional nature". The purpose of social work is caring, curing and changing (Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji ,1994:5). According to these writers (1994:6) the social worker guides a change process that is aimed at one or more of the following:

- enhancing the problem-solving and coping capacities of people;
- preventing the development of serious personal and social problems;
- restoring and maintaining the social functioning of people;
- linking people with systems and resources that can provide needed support, services and opportunities;
- promoting the creation and developing humane and effective social policy and human service programmes;
- planning, developing and administering social agencies and social programmes;
- protecting the most vulnerable members of society from destructive social influences; and
- developing and teaching the knowledge and skills needed to address and accomplish these purposes.

2.4.1.3   SOCIAL WORK AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Every day the media depicts youth involved in gangs and violence, substance abuse and other potentially damaging risk-taking behaviours. Persons in the helping professions are confronted with issues such as delinquency, pregnancy and dependency, together with other environmental stressors that include parental substance abuse, unemployment, single families, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.

Social work has a rich heritage in and strong commitment to youth development. It is, however, regrettable that more social workers are found in treatment-orientated programmes, rather than preventative, developmental services to youth. Community-based programmes and services that emphasize educational and developmental models need to be supported. Current child and youth development agencies could play a leading role in providing such programmes (Morrison, Alcorn & Nelums, 1997:32). These writers (1997, 322) are of the opinion that "the time seems particularly opportune to reassert social work presence and leadership in youth development programs".

In the USA camps are the third largest provider of services to children and youth, with over 8 500 day and resident camps serving six million children each year from every segment. The majority of these camps are non-profit undertakings, serving more than one million economically disadvantaged, physically or mentally challenged children (ACA, undated:1).

Recently, local welfare organizations like NICRO and many other child care institutions have become increasingly involved in the utilization of adventure-based programmes as diversion option in working with youth-at-risk.

2.4.2   ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES AND THE CHILD AND YOUTH CARE SYSTEM OF SA

The transformed Child and Youth Care System of South Africa (CYCS) is based on a developmental and ecological perspective. The key to this transformation is "to move away from a medical model" and focus on 'reframing problems as strengths, on competency building, and residential environments which empower children, families and communities (Robberts, 1996:17).

Four levels of intervention are identified in the CYCS framework (Robberts, 1996:21):

    Level 1 :   Prevention services and programmes

                      (General High-Risk Children, Youth and Families)

Level 2 :   Early intervention services & programmes

(Specific High-Risk Children, Youth and Families)

Level 3 :   Statutory process

Level 4 :   Continuum of care services to children, youth and families

The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (IMC) views "levels 1 & 2 as the highest priority in terms of resources, and in terms of referral into the system. Wherever a young person can be effectively served through levels 1 or 2 then that should be the first choice of intervention" (Robberts, 1996: 19).

2.4.3   ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMMES AND THE "CIRCLE OF COURAGE"

The new CYCS of SA has adopted the philosophy on educational practices of the Native American and First Nations communities of America and Canada. Bendtra and his colleagues presented this philosophy that "centred on a deep and fundamental respect of the child, and an understanding that in order to develop a secure sense of Self in the world, the child must feel held within a 'Circle of Courage' experiencing a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity" (Robberts, 2000:19).

2.4.3.1   The spirit of belonging

In traditional Native society many significant others beside the biological parents participated in child rearing, much like the concept: "It takes a village to raise a child". Treating others like family was a powerful social value that influenced the dynamics of human relationships and interactions. The sense of inter-relatedness with the natural environment was part of the spirit of belonging (Robberts, 2000: 20).

McMillan (1996:315) defines sense of community as " a *spirit* of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be *trusted*, an awareness that *trade*, and mutual benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as *art*".

Mary Pipher, clinical psychologist, family therapist and internationally acclaimed author of books such as, *Reviving Ophelia* and *The Shelter of Each Other,* explored options for building a sense of community and asks how children can be helped.   In an interview with Pipher, Marla Coleman (1999:18-21) wrote the following: "Community is our scarcest commodity in the 1990's. Enter camp – a community created exclusively for children.   … Camp is about relationships, getting along, belonging and feeling capable and significant.   …Independence is fostered as youngsters learn their value to this community.   Courage and self-esteem become bywords in a village that protects its inhabitants.   …Camp is community, …if we as the caretakers of this unique community experience, can embrace the needs of children in this era, then we can also be the vital link to the renewed health our society desperately needs".

An adventure-based programme is a community of participants and staff.   As friendships (caring relationships) are established a *sense of belonging* is generated, which is the essence of *sense of community*. Every community (adventure-based programme) has certain norms, rules, standards and laws. *Trust* will develop in the authority structure (outdoor leadership) when order and purpose is evident. With a spirit of belonging and trust evident participants are free to be themselves and discover the benefits of different strengths amongst themselves. *Trade* will occur as they use their diversity to the benefit of each other and the group. *Art* refers to the symbols, stories, music and other symbolic expressions which are a vital part of many adventure-based programmes. They represent values like courage, sharing, caring, integrity - values that keep the spirit of community alive for many generations.   Symbolic rituals strengthen a sense of belonging and of being part of something important (McMillan, 1996:315-325). The alumni movement discussed in 2.3.4. is a good example of the impact of an adventure-based programme as community on participants.

2.4.3.2   The spirit of mastery

People strive to master their environments. When the child's need for competence is met, it motivates the individual for higher achievement. Youths that are deprived

of opportunities for success express their frustration through damaging behaviour or by withdrawing into helplessness and a low self-esteem. In traditional Native communities games and creative play were used to simulate adult roles. Boys played team games, learning toughness and courage. Girls engaged in hand crafts and art was an important part of their hand-work. Mastery of a skill produced recognition in the group as well as inner satisfaction (Robberts, 2000:22).

Adventure-based programmes offer many opportunities to the participant to master a skill as individual or as group. Outdoor pursuits such as abseiling, rock climbing, orienteering, canoeing and outdoor living skills are "perfect examples of personal growth activities where the approval of others performs the function of extrinsic motivation and reinforcement" (Puth, 2000:114).

Games and play are and should always be an integral part of adventure-based programmes. It is a great gift of life to know how to play and outdoor leaders should be educated to achieve all the meaningful benefits associated with play. Play is a natural way for children to learn and it affords them the opportunity to develop social, negotiation and other skills that are necessary for life. This process is essential for children in all grades.

During play children learn to inhibit other actions such as violence, teasing and stubbornness. Steffens & Gorin (1997:xi) have found that the "rates of aggression will drop by 50 percent or more on the playground, just by having organized, cooperative games". Children will become what they play. Steffens & Gorin (1997: x) also claim that "two simple twenty-minute observations of children's behaviour during recess in the fifth grade can help predict juvenile delinquency five years later". In Plato's words: "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation" (Henderson, 2000:373).

### 2.4.3.3	The spirit of independence

Children need a sense of power over their own behaviour and environment. Failing the development of independence often leads to the young people

becoming alienated, seeking alternative sources of power in chemical substances or membership in a counter culture such as gangs. In Native society the principle of guidance without interference was followed, a principle grounded in the right of all persons to control their own destiny and the belief that children will respond to positive nurturing (Robberts, 2000:21).

The researcher is of the opinion that the total adventure-based programme and experience "away from home" nurtures independence in each participant. Just the mere fact of leaving home (parents) and living with others in a different environment with a different schedule and challenging programme is a growth experience for many adolescents. Every skill acquired, whether physical, social, cognitive or emotional, is progress on the journey towards independence. Other specific activities that promote independence is the formulation of their own "cabin rules", being responsible for their "chores/capers", "solo" experiences and "challenge by choice" contract between participants and the outdoor leader.

2.4.3.4   The spirit of generosity

Native society taught their children the value of caring and sharing. There is a call for a return to the virtue of service, especially amongst youth, in an attempt to increase their self-worth as they care for others.

Assisting with meals, sharing commodoties and helping fellow participants are all acts of generosity. In South Africa, however, organizers of adventure-based programmes could do more to incorporate service to others as a planned activity of the overall adventure-based programme.

2.4.4   THE ROLE OF A SOCIAL WORKER AS STAFF MEMBER AT AN ADVENTURE-BASED PROGRAMME

Adventure-based programme participants and staff do not leave their personal problems and/or challenging behaviours at home.   Most outdoor leaders are also not trained in the social sciences.   A residential Jewish camp in Wisconsin recognized this gap in the staff set-up and collaborated with a child welfare

agency. A social worker was appointed as "Clinical Camp Consultant" – a term selected to capture a range of professionals providing services and to sound less threatening than, for instance, "camp psychologist" (Slay, 1998:28).

Slay (1998:29-31) describes the **role of the camp consultant** as threefold:

2.4.4.1   Assisting with camp issues, such as:

- behavioural problems of campers (aggressive behaviour, straying from the group, etc);
- learning disorders e.g. attention deficit disorder;
- abuse and neglect; and
- socialization problems often related to an existing emotional problem or developmental delay.

2.4.4.2   Supporting staff by:

- assisting staff with inter- and intrapersonal issues affecting their work performance;
- providing objective assessments of campers displaying behaviour and adjustment problems;
- referring families for outside social service assistance when needed; and
- observing and providing feedback on group dynamics; reviewing interventions.

2.4.4.3   Documenting cases by:

- Completing appropriate documentation (log sheets and weekly tracking sheets); and
- Submitting a report with recommendations at the end of the summer season.

Slay [1998:31] concludes fittingly: "The clinical camp consultant program strengthened each camp's commitment to the well-being of campers and promoted the current trend in child welfare for prevention and early intervention of childhood problems. The program generates a wide variety of possible implications and may open doors for mental health professionals at camp – from

agency partnerships to individual professionals at private camp". Appointing a social worker as staff member during an adventure-based programme can significantly impact on the outcomes achieved for the participants.

2.5 SUMMARY

Adventure-based programmes are not a recent educational invention and outdoor camping programmes have been organized since early in the 19th century. However, it was only in the nineties that adventure-based learning gained enormous momentum as intervention strategy. There are significant developments in the adventure-based field in South Africa with basic standards being developed and training required for all "guides", a term including outdoor leaders. The 21st century will certainly present programme leaders and outdoor leaders with many challenges relating to fiscal needs, programming requirements and efficiency in service delivery.

Adventure-based programmes consist of many components – the natural environment, outdoor leadership, small group, adventure-based activities, camp community, participant and God – and it is the relationship between the participant and all these components that can be influenced by the outdoor leader to aid the intra-personal and interpersonal growth of the participant. Adventure-based programmes must comply with the requirements of what constitutes adventure: active participation of the whole person, uncertain result, risk, problem-solving and rewards.

Participation in adventure-based programmes is no guarantee that learning and consequent growth will take place. The possibility of learning is enhanced through experiential learning and deriving meaning from the experience through facilitation techniques. Learning can be transferred through three processes: specific transfer, non-specific transfer and metaphoric transfer.

The developmental characteristics of early adolescents include physical maturation, capacity for abstract thoughts and adult judgement, intense emotional

experiences, and increased peer group importance. It is a vital time to provide preventative intervention programmes for early adolescents who are vulnerable to risk-taking behaviour. Adventure-based programmes address many issues and life-skills that are necessary for successful living: self-esteem, team-work, communication, decision-making, spirituality, sense of mastery and belonging.

Youth-at-risk can present the outdoor leader with many challenging behaviours: bed-wetting, eating disorders, stealing, hyperactivity, sexual behaviour, chemical abuse, etc. The outdoor leader should be prepared for the occurrence of such behaviour and know what policies and procedures to follow to deal with such behaviour.

The adventure-based programme needs to be planned and goal-orientated; to be tailored to the specific needs of the target group, to incorporate risk management strategies and to be evaluated by all role players. The scope of activities to be offered as part of an adventure-based programme is vast and varied. Adventure-based activities like abseiling, orienteering, canoeing, etc. appear to be appealing to the majority of adolescents. Provision for special populations, e.g. youth with disabilities, can have a significant impact on every aspect of an adventure-based programme. Progressive programming, generalized vs specialized activities and the duration of the programme are other programming considerations.

The skills and personal qualities required by outdoor leaders to be effective and efficient appear to be similar to that of the assistant to the archangel Michael and this is not surprising given the fact that the outdoor leader is the most important variable in the whole programme. Other factors to consider in employment are: age, sex, skill, previous experience and background. Training outdoor leaders can occur prior to, during and after the adventure-based programme. Training is an ongoing process.

The setting for the adventure-based programme is the natural environment which has the potential to enhance the development of all children and youth.   The

outdoors can be utilized as teacher, i.e. non-direct intervention, or as classroom, i.e. a more direct approach to learning.

Social work has a rich heritage in the field of youth development. Social workers are better equipped than most professionals to work in the adventure-based field and the training of social workers incorporates many of the skills and knowledge required by outdoor leaders such as group work skills, including facilitation, problem-solving, instructional, organisational, behaviour management and youth work skills. Adventure-based programmes present an excellent preventative intervention strategy for youth-at-risk and should therefore be supported and promoted in the Child and Youth Care System of SA. The outcomes of an adventure-based programme fit perfectly into the "Circle of Courage", allowing participants to experience a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.