



Outdoor News

Journal of the Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia

Volume 24 No 2, January 2006

From the Committee

Scott Polley

Welcome to the first *OEASA News* for 2006, or the last for 2005: whichever way you would like to look at it!

The year 2005 was a fairly successful one for OEASA, with the following humble achievements:

- 1 Representation on various boards and committees including SAREA, Recreation SA, Bushwalking Leadership and others
- 2 The first OEASA only state conference for eight years, with attendance at about expected levels
- 3 Establishment of OEASA Web site, <www.oeasa.org/>
- 4 Membership numbers remaining fairly constant
- 5 Production of two newsletters, with a move to a more professional presentation by appointing Peter Carter as editor
- 6 Maintained a sound financial position
- 7 Commissioned research by Rob Hogan regarding bookings in National Parks
- 8 Annual OEASA certificate presentation dinner attended by over 120 people: the biggest yet

Contents

From the Committee	1
From the Editor	2
News and reports	3
Notes from the Conference	5
Rolling to Learn... Learning to Roll Revisited	9
Membership form	14

Next committee meeting: Friday 3 February, 6pm at the Hackney Hotel

Outdoor News is supported by



And: Paddy Pallin, Scout Outdoor Centre, Mountain Designs, Outdoor Adventure Skills

9 Support for the Port Augusta Outdoor and Aquatic Centre training week

10 Input provided to the Adventure Activity Standards and Safety Codes of Practice

11 Hosted the first 'Psychological First Responder' held in Adelaide with Dr Simon Crisp

12 Sent representatives to the National Outdoor Conference held on the Gold Coast in July

In general, a reasonable list of achievements for the 30 odd year old organisation that is run by volunteers and receives no government funding. Your membership and any profits from activities keep the organisation afloat.

The committee was small but active, with Mark Hayward steering the helm for the second year, ably supported by treasurer Phil Noble, and Libby Robertson as secretary. Other active committee members included Wayne Hooper, Mike Meredith, Peter Kellett, Dale Hobbs, Andrew Govan, and Andrew Quinn. Others have also made contributions as the need has arisen. Peter Carter was appointed editor of *OEASA News* and will continue in 2006.

Mark Hayward is hanging up his hat for 2006, with a change in career direction in the short term at least, and a new chair is sought. No doubt this will be the first item on the agenda for the first committee meeting, on a date to be advised.

In general, a reasonably successful year for Outdoor Education in SA.

Plans for 2006 include risk management forums, the certificate presentation dinner, greater cooperation with other 'outdoor' organisations, sharpening up the Web site, some 'hands on' professional development, and we'll keep working on regular newsletters. We could do more, but need more volunteers...

Hope 2006 is a great year for you and your family.



From the Editor

Peter Carter

You may have wondered what had happened to the next issue of *Outdoor News*. So did I. Several people have now explained the situation.

If this edition has Scott Polley's name all over it it's because he has taken the initiative to keep things happening. As he notes, Mark Hayward has taken up a new venture, leading to a number of other changes.

Feature article this time is a look at the teaching of kayak rolling. Whether to teach the skills early or later in the syllabus, and the roll to be used for teaching, have been discussed for many years, from the 1960s in my recollection, and no doubt before then. I think Scott has summarised things well. One other book you might add to his list of references is by Derek Hutchinson: *Eskimo Rolling for Survival* (Black, 1988). Arctic and modern rolls, with Derek's usual diagrams. (BTW, I supplied the images for Scott's article, and the conference pics.)

Wayne Hooper has a report of the Conference, and there

are other interesting items too.

If you're looking for resources on Barker Inlet, Chapter 12 of the recently published *Adelaide: Nature of a City* is available online at www.biocity.edu.au/. The book itself ought definitely be on your library's acquisition list. The area has *Caulerpa taxifolia* infestations, and information about that is available from www.pir.sa.gov.au/pages/fisheries/environmental/caulerpa_taxifolia.htm. My own notes on the area are currently at www.users.on.net/~pcarter/canoe_sa/maps/ti_notes.html.

If you had sent material intended for *Outdoor News* and it hasn't appeared in this edition, please send it again, directly to me, either by email to pcarter@acslink.net.au or by post to PO Box 133 Brooklyn Park SA 5032.



Left: Hon John Hill, Minister of Environment and Conservation opens the conference

Right: Tim Collins: National Parks and Outdoor Education



The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia

Aims

- 1 To promote the development of Outdoor Education in South Australia
- 2 To represent Outdoor Educators on issues and matters concerning the use of the outdoors
- 3 To maintain the professional development of personnel working in the area of Outdoor Education
- 4 To maintain, support and develop the role of Outdoor Educators in South Australia
- 5 To promote the professional interchange of information between members and other related organisations through conferences, meetings, seminars and publications
- 6 To promote a philosophy of environmental awareness, preservation, conservation and positive attitudes towards the use of the outdoor environment
- 7 To act in an advisory capacity to community, government and non-government agencies

The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia supports these national ethical guidelines for outdoor educators:

- The Outdoor Educator will fulfil his or her duty of care
- The Outdoor Educator will provide a supportive and appropriate learning environment
- The Outdoor Educator will develop his or her professionalism
- The Outdoor Educator will ensure his or her practice is culturally and environmentally sensitive

OEASA Committee 2006

Chairman: vacant

Secretary: Libby Robertson

Treasurer: Phil Noble

Members: Scott Polley, Peter Kellett, Mike Meredith, Kate Lucas, Nerilee Flint, Andrew Quinn, Andrew Govan

News and reports

Psychological First Responder Report

Scott Polley

This course was held for the first time in Adelaide in November. Seventeen people attended the three day course, including teachers, university lecturers, counsellors, TAFE lecturers, company directors, managers, and field staff.

From the on-line feedback the course was an outstanding success, delivering what was, in essence, an outstanding course.

The focus of the course was to help those having direct contact with people where there is a risk of a mental health issue requiring further action to get some basic knowledge and tools for appropriate first response.

The course was well structured, using the senior first aid course model as a base. This worked really well, with use of terminology that was familiar and adapted to psychological health responses. The group worked their way through a well structured workbook, accompanied by presentations, PowerPoint, video, vignettes and role play.

Given the increased incidence of psychological health disorders diagnosed in Australia, and the statistically low risk of physical injury during an outdoor education experience, it could be argued that this course is more likely to save a life than any advanced First Aid courses.

This course is thoroughly recommended for anyone working with young people or adults where detection of psychological health issues, appropriate responses to 'do no harm' and maintaining a safe psychological environment are important.

The next one is coming to Adelaide in March 2007, but courses are running in Melbourne and other locations in 2006 if you can't wait that long!

For details check out www.neopsychology.com.au/



The Bush tucker and Trangia® tips session

Qualifications for leading rock climbing trips in DEH-managed parks and reserves

Neville Byrne, DEH

The Department for Environment and Heritage (South Australia) (DEH) recognises that there are industry-accepted national competencies for instructing, leading and guiding various types of rock climbing activities. DEH supports these competencies and acknowledges that training/assessment in relation to these competencies is available via a range of avenues, both in South Australia and interstate.

DEH does not require organisations or individuals conducting rock climbing activities in its reserves to hold specific qualifications. Rather, it is the responsibility of the organisation conducting the activity (under its Duty of Care obligations to participants/clients) to ensure that instructors, leaders or guides have the necessary skills and knowledge to safely conduct the activity in way that protects the environment.

DEH still requires organisations conducting rock climbing activities or similar businesses within a reserve to obtain a Commercial Tour Licence to conduct this business on public land. DEH may request commercial operators to certify that they are aware of the competencies and the need for appropriately trained staff.

DEH expects that all organisations (regardless of whether they are commercial or not-for-profit) using its reserves will have well-developed risk management approaches to ensure the safety of individuals under their care. If DEH is requested to appear before any investigation into an outdoor recreation incident, it will reinforce the position that the national competencies for instructing, leading and guiding have existed for a number of years and organisations should have modelled their risk management plans on these and other community/industry standards.



Richard Geytenbeek describes bird nesting box construction

Inspiration from Norwegian Outdoor Educators

Scott Polley

Australia is not the only country with a growing interest in the role of Outdoor Education as a foundation for identity, health and community. You might be interested to know that every Norwegian secondary Physical Education teacher must have a minimum competence in outdoor skills and camping, as outdoor activities are a compulsory part of the middle school curriculum.

'The Outdoor Life' is a loose translation of the Norwegian word 'Friluftsliv'. It is a word that conveys the importance and meaning of whole of life outdoor experiences and knowledge to Norwegians. The Norwegian Journal of Friluftsliv, a free on-line journal, is worth a read if you are interested in philosophy, practice, the meaning of outdoor experiences, or just how others go about the business of Outdoor Education.

The following message is from the editor inviting you to read the latest article in the journal.

The Norwegian Journal of Friluftsliv

Aage Jensen

The third article in *The Norwegian Journal of Friluftsliv* is especially written for the Journal by Sigmund Kvaloy Setreng. In the first part of his article he retells a fairy tale about the Ash-lad: the mythological figure who has made such great impact on Norwegian culture and way of thinking. His ability, called serendipity, makes it possible for him to cope with the different challenges ahead of

him and develops an organic view of the world: a world view characterized by its complexity and ever-changing processes.

Sigmund Kvaloy Setreng has been called Norway's leading environmentalist, and his involvement with ecophilosophy and ecopolitics began shortly after having taken his philosophy degree at the University of Oslo.

Kvaloy Setreng has written other articles in English, especially about complexity and time. If you are interested to get some references; please send me an e-mail.

I hope to present an article written by Svein Loeng at the beginning of December this year. Loeng introduces his article this way:

Traditionally we focus on "declarative and procedural knowledge" when we talk about school and study. What should be the focus of friluftsliv as a university college subject? The answer depends on what we consider to be the characteristics of friluftsliv. In my opinion a study of friluftsliv should develop a "feeling for nature".

The search for "knowledge" should be the result from this "feeling". More about this in my article in the next number of *The Journal of Friluftsliv*.

You are welcome to comment on or discuss the articles presented so far. You will find the articles here <www.hint.no/~aaj/>

Outdoor Education in SA and NT

Scott Polley

In 2005 the new Outdoor and Environmental Education Stage 2 course (replacing Outdoor Education) was run for the first time. Although not without the usual problems of changing curriculum, there are some strong indicators that, overall, the new course has been successful. These are:

- the continued increase in student numbers from 2003-2005
- the low level of scaling for the more academic 2-unit course
- the high level of completions of the 1-unit course

Well done to the Subject Advisory Committee, Chief Moderator, Ann Marks (SSABSA) and all the teachers involved. Recent indications are that even more students will be studying OE in 2006, so things are moving in the right direction.

As usual, OEASA will present certificates of excellence to those students that achieve outstanding merit, as nominated by their teachers and selected by the OEASA committee, at the annual OEASA awards ceremony in May/June 2006.

Grade Distribution for Outdoor Education Subjects: NT and SA results

Year	Code	Subject Name	Results	A	B	C	D	E
2005	2OES2	Outdoor and Environmental Studies	141	31	56	40	9	5
2005	2OE11	Outdoor Education I	158	16	70	47	20	5
2005	2OE21	Outdoor Education II	151	14	60	43	24	10
2004	2OED2	Outdoor and Environmental Education	241	62	72	71	21	15
2003	2OED1	Outdoor and Environmental Education	10	0	5	1	3	1
2003	2OED2	Outdoor and Environmental Education	204	43	55	59	33	14

Total completion for 2005 (eg 2OE11 and 2OE21) 299, so some increase since 2004

Notes from the Conference

Wayne Hooper

Keynote address

Hon John Hill, Minister of Environment and Conservation

The Minister began his address by referring to his memory of the value of Outdoor Education from many years ago when he was a teacher at Para Vista High School and witnessed the positive outcomes achieved in the programme run by Greg Cox.

He emphasised the role of Outdoor Education in contemporary society where the concept of Sustainability is an emphasis.

He referred to the review, which is being undertaken at the moment, to come up with more suitable categories to communicate better the role of public reserves in South Australia. This is in the light of the fact that 25% of SA is public land.

Mr Hill then emphasised the role of Outdoor Education in highlighting the importance of natural areas. He referred to the fragility of the natural landscape and acknowledged the fact that less than 20% of the landscape south of Goyders Line is native vegetation. Thus it is important that Outdoor Education is about more than life skills and adrenaline flow but also focuses on the natural environment.

Mr Hill referred to the policy of Nature Links, where wildlife corridors are created using private and public land.

He acknowledged the implications of climate change resulting in the likelihood that the temperature may increase by around 6°C by 2070. This would have a devastating effect on natural ecosystems. In SA there is likely to be less rain but the storms may be of greater intensity. Our society will need to deal with these issues as they impact.

The Minister then turned his attention to the role of Outdoor Educators in opening up the eyes of a whole generation to these environmental issues which will impact on lifestyle. He acknowledged the importance of National Parks in their role to protect natural ecosystems while allowing access to people. He made the point that National Parks access must be managed to maintain the ecosystems they are supposed to protect and referred to the 500,000 hectare Wilderness Area which is part of Yellabinna Park in the far west of the State which has very limited access. The Minister is supportive of mechanisms being set up to facilitate dialogue between the park managers and others using parks for Outdoor Education or Recreation. One issue, which has been the subject of consultation of late, is the issue of public liability. Park Rangers have been involved in the discussion of Adventure Activity Standards and there has been liaison with Recreation SA on Safety Codes for Rock Climbing and Abseiling. John Hill commented that Adventure Activity Standards won't take the place of strong envi-

ronmental ethics and good leaders. He also made the point that it is important to be aware of the impact that recreational activities have on natural environments. He said that systems for registering users of parks could be useful.

It is obvious that both the Minister and Tim Collins, who expanded on the Minister's keynote address later in the conference, are keen to set up a formal partnership between OEASA and the Department of Environment and Heritage to consider issues of common concern.

Robert Hogan recently conducted a survey on behalf of OEASA in response to concerns raised by some schools re access to National Parks. The areas highlighted in Rob's paper may be of relevance when discussing these issues. OEASA would welcome input from any member wishing to make a contribution to the discussion or who would like to be involved in meetings with DEH.

Wilderness First Aid

Sam Islip

Sam ran an informative discussion on Wilderness First Aid. Some of the topics of major concern for Outdoor Educators included were:-

- Hypothermia: Sam pointed out that it is very hard to reverse wet and cold in the bush and so prevention with warm and dry is very important
- Allergic reactions: are a disfunction of the immune system. There is a protocol developed by the government for anaphylaxis. If there is a known participant on the trip with this risk, then they should have their doctor's written protocol for their dosage, etc. to use and some other member of the group should be familiar with this
- Asthma: a big risk. All participants should have their own management plan and medication. If a participant, using a preventer, has had three small attacks in a week they are unstable and need medical reassessment before going bush. If an attack happens in the bush they will need a bronchodilator. Emergency treatment is four puffs, wait four minutes. If no improvement, four puffs again and continue to administer until well or medical help arrives
- Treatment of cuts/grazes: clean all wounds first before covering. High pressure irrigation with potable water is good, clean around wound (not in) with Betadine. 'Long term' dressings such as Fixamul, Hyperfix Polyachrilate fixation sheets or spray on dressings are available. The appropriate size of them and storage/carrying of some of the products is improving. They are worth investigating.

It was a very interesting session which focussed much more on the long term management of illness or injury after the immediate treatment as the ambulance can be a long time off in the Wilderness.

Outdoor Recreation and Developing Resilience

Bill Coutts and Denise Evans

Bill and Denise presented a most interesting and thought provoking session which was relevant to all educators but is of particular interest to Outdoor Educators.

They identified the relevance of resilience in modern society and suggested the development of this attribute is an important part of the contemporary curriculum. One definition they used to summarise the term resilience was the capacity to act with determination in the face of adversity.

They emphasised the fact that anxiety is a common emotion that everyone will experience at some time and that one in five people will experience emotional problems during their life. Signs of anxiety were defined as worry, avoidance, negative thinking, shyness, psychosomatic illness or sleep disorders. They put forward the notion of younger people being part of what has been termed the 'bubble-wrap generation' where children are more protected by their parents than previous generations and that in many cases modern-day parents reinforce anxieties. When this concept was put to the audience there was a variety of opinions on this idea. (My impression was that the opinion was divided between age groups!)

Of particular relevance to Outdoor Educators is the fact that in many cases students will be anxious about an upcoming camp. Parents need to be positive about the children's involvement to assist in alleviating anxiety and schools need to prepare students appropriately to cope with the demand of the new situations that confront them on camp.

Skills that are necessary in this process include:

- forming relationships
- problem solving
- developing a sense of identity
- having a sense of purpose
- group exposure
- group problem solving
- networking
- parent/teacher /parent role modelling
- role play /role reversal
- peer learning
- sharing.

Many students have limited problem solving skills and are not comfortable in peer learning situations.

It is important to build and enhance protective factors into the programme so that students develop a sense of connectiveness, can form relationships, have self belief, and an appropriate level of self esteem. It is important that participants feel they have a sense of control and can handle the demands placed on them in new situations such as a camp. Without these attributes inappropriate behaviour is likely, which undermines the programme.

Another concept that Bill and Denise put forward is that contemporary society does not emphasise persistence as

a desirable attribute to the level that was accepted in the past. This has major implications when participants are in new and potentially stressful situations.

As Outdoor Educators it is important that when planning programmes we consider the following:

- What do we want?
- What do we already do?
- What knowledge do we need?
- What actions are required?
- How will we check effectiveness?

Alarming statistics quoted in the session were that 20% of the population will suffer mental health problems and that 24% of them will have an episode by the time they reach 18 years. Bill and Denise believe that depression can be overcome to a large extent by teaching resilience at school. It is also likely that in many cases it is not a skill that is being taught at home.

Some of the strategies for teaching resilience according to Bill and Denise include brainstorming, group work, group discussions, pair work, questivities and role plays. Some of the topics to be addressed in lessons include self-esteem, keeping calm, self-talk, problem solving, anger-management, acknowledging other points of view, and reflection.

In conclusion, some approaches which Outdoor Educators could employ to develop resilience include:

- employing small, appropriate challenges
- creating opportunities for students to develop competence in the area of resilience
- developing increased involvement and attachment to positive social groups
- considering the challenges and how we provide these experiences for all students
- developing an understanding of how we ensure that the level of challenge is appropriate.

Outdoor Education and the use of Technology

Richard Geytenbeek, Arbury Park Outdoor School

Richard's talk was both diverse and stimulating, illustrating a range of technologies which would enrich a school's programme.

Firstly, Richard demonstrated a range of techniques to make topographic maps three-dimensional using various media from simple cardboard models to magnificent glass fibre large-scale models. The feature of Richard's approach is the learning potential students can gain from the process including an understanding of contour lines on a map to the principles of water catchment. The models which Richard exposes the students to would certainly bridge the gap between a two dimensional map and the topography of an area. Many students have difficulty with this transition.

The next area which Richard shared with us was practical ways of involving groups of students in the manufacture and use of bird nesting and bat roosting boxes. He has designed a range of jigs for building them.

He has through research and trial and error developed a wealth of knowledge on the design of boxes and the factors which determine the success rate in attracting inhabitants. A most interesting aspect of Richard's work with these boxes is the development of a variety of methods of monitoring the activities in the boxes with a range of ingenious camera techniques. For surprisingly little money Richard has come up with a range of approaches to remotely observe the activities inside the boxes when they are inhabited. Some of these techniques include a hand operated 'pole cam' or an ingenious semi permanent waterproof camera. Richard's research on a range of readily available security cameras and how they can be used for observing wildlife remotely would be most useful for anyone who would like to use this technique. He has facilitated the ability of students who have been turned on by this activity at Arbury Park to be able to continue monitoring when they return to their home school. Rotary have also picked up on his designs for monitoring programmes they support. Richard has also used the boxes as mini weather stations to measure microclimates and determine the conditions conducive to habitation of the boxes.

Richard showed us several approaches to frog watching with examples of home made recording devices which have scope to enhance the students' involvement in this programme. He has expanded this concept to capture sounds of both frogs and bats which, using digital recorders, can be analysed by students using information readily available from the Web.

The culmination of Richard's talk was information on the students' interest in a solar electricity demonstration which he has set up at Arbury Park. It demonstrates the sun's ability to generate electricity through a recycling pump in a pond and a meter which indicates the output depending on the amount of cloud cover and the inclination of the solar panel. This apparatus stimulates considerable interest from students as they monitor the output during the day.

Anyone interested in further information on any of Richard's projects is welcome to contact him at Arbury Park Outdoor School.

Andrew Quinn: A personal adventure

Andrew presented a stimulating and informative presentation supported by great photographs of his recent personal adventure incorporating kayaking in some incredible rivers in Tibet. He also shared some interesting anecdotes of a range of cultural experiences he had while on the trip.

His motivation was to do his own personal trip incorporating the elements of risk, challenge and adventure.

He outlined several criteria which were part of the ethos of his trip including:

- he wanted to stretch himself
- doing it for the sake of doing
- delving into the unknown
- being motivated by a freely chosen concept

- create a state of mind where he can accept and celebrate an uncertain outcome
- wanting no point of reference, i.e. a non English speaking environment and without preconceived ideas
- solo, with no direct support mechanisms and no obvious easy escape
- to live with the consequences
- to use Tibet as the medium to explore and challenge his perspective of the world

He wanted to set up an adventure which would challenge him socially, emotionally, mentally and physically.

Andrew's presentation was most entertaining and thought provoking. He expressed a willingness to share his perceptions with anyone interested in undertaking a similar adventure and sharing his knowledge of the logistics of remote adventuring in Tibet.

He can be contacted via email at <aquinn@pembroke.sa.edu.au>.

Trails in SA

Anthea Shem, Trails Unit Department of Recreation and Sport

Anthea delivered a most interesting presentation enlightening us on the range of trails in SA and their potential use for recreation and education.

The development of trails is an ongoing process and the SA Trails Coordinating Committee, which has both government and community representation, oversees this process. There are also reference groups involved in the process who are part of the consultation process, e.g. The Farmers Federation.

The process is driven by the Recreation Trails Strategy for SA 2005–2010, which has vision/guiding principle statements underpinning it. Information on these processes or any aspect of trails is available from the Web site of the Department. It is of interest that a Trails Manual is in the process of being developed.

The range of trails in SA includes:

- national trails: e.g. Reisling, Mawson, Kidman, Eagle Mountain Bike Trail
- regional trails: e.g. Blinman Pools walk, Pioneer Womens Walk, Cudlee Creek Mountain Bike, Melrose Mountain Bike, Canoe Guides/Maps
- local trails: e.g. Tom Roberts horse trail, Riverton Trail.

Trail Maintenance is a costly and complex task and the development of new trails depends on the availability of funds.

Opportunities for outdoor educators:

- use the trail network
- notify the Department of hazards (Trails SA Web site)
- respect private land (notify of any vandalism, fires, stock issues)
- adopt trail sections.

We have access to the State trails Network data base (GIS) for use in the classroom.

Anyone wanting further assistance with issues relating to trails or is interested in applying for funding to assist with the development of a community trail can contact Anthea at the Department of Recreation and Sport.

Useful Web sites:

- www.southaustraliantrails.com
- www.horsesa.asn.au
- www.sa.canoe.org.au
- www.recSPORT.sa.gov.au

National Parks and Outdoor Education

Tim Collins National Parks Management, Department of Environment and Heritage

Tim gave a most interesting and informative presentation addressing the concerns that were raised by people who had responded to the survey on issues relating to access to National Parks by groups conducted recently by Robert Hogan for OEASA. Anyone who would like a copy of Rob's report and recommendations can obtain a copy from Libby Robertson.

Tim's role is as Programme Leader Trail Management in the Visitor Management Branch of DEH. He is responsible for all trails in National Parks plus the Heysen Trail, 16% of which is on DEH land.

Tim outlined the structure for management of National Parks emphasising that policies are developed state-wide but management is carried out through the seven regions. Each region has a management plan. Twenty percent of the State is National Park and there are 3 million visitors to parks per year, requiring a budget of \$26 million dollars to run with \$3 million collected as visitor fees.

Some of the management issues which are currently being addressed include:

- site hardening and development of facilities which minimise the impact of visitors
- risk management including signs, structures, and management of trip intention forms
- administration of permits which control visitor numbers at appropriate levels
- education, including interpretation programmes, cultural and other interest groups, signage, regulation of appropriate activities and addressing conflict between various user groups
- developing policy in relation to tourism and recreation, cycling, rock climbing, orienteering, levels of service
- Adventure Activity Standards: many activities impact on parks: e.g. bushwalking, caving, surfing, canoeing
- scientific studies on the impact of visitor usage on natural ecosystems

In conclusion, Tim expressed his support for the concept of developing a Working Group with representatives of OEASA, DEH and other stake-holders such as Bushwalking Leadership SA to consider:

- operating standards
- DEH management policies such as access requirements, the impact of administrative procedures and risk management issues
- the development of education programmes.



Rick Sarre

Legal responsibilities of the Outdoor Educator

Professor Rick Sarre

Professor Sarre's presentation clearly outlined the issues for Outdoor Educators in an entertaining way. He dispelled many of the myths which are commonly put forward. It was refreshing to hear that outdoor leaders who are appropriately qualified and use common sense on well-planned expeditions are unlikely to be considered negligent. He also addressed the issues of rising insurance costs by stating that the rises of late are not a result of increased payouts for accidents but of other economic factors which have affected the insurance industry. Negotiating fairer costs for insurance is a challenge which OEASA and other organisations with similar core business could take up.

Canoe SA

Ian Hume, Development Officer

Ian quickly ran through the changes that have come in qualifications for Instructors. He explained the sources for funding of canoeing and why there is such an emphasis on the elite part of the sport. However, he explained how the greater understanding that has developed in the elite sport in effective forward paddling technique can be applied to recreational paddlers to make them more effective, particularly on long expeditions. Some forward paddling technique coaching sessions have already been run for instructors and recreational paddlers (which participants found really helpful), and more will be planned.

Ian also clarified that whether qualifications were held in kayak or canoe, the logging of activities made it much easier to update qualifications.

Copies of presentations

Andrew Pope delivered a session at the conference on SACE Outdoor Education. Anyone who would like a copy of his PowerPoint presentation, that by Rick Sarre, or Rob Hogan's National Parks access survey, can obtain it from Libby Robertson at <libby.robertson@unisa.edu.au>.

Rolling to Learn... Learning to Roll Revisited

Scott Polley

It has been some time since Lyn Day and John Elwin (1993) published their paper that compared skill acquisition rates between a group of students who took part in learning to roll classes before learning basic paddling skills, and those who learned how to paddle alone.

In summary, Day and Elwin found that those who learned how to roll first were able to pick up other skills at a far more rapid rate, so that after 6 hours of learning to roll and 6 hours of flatwater paddling instruction these students had the equivalent skill level of students who had 12 hours of flatwater paddling instruction.

In addition, they made an anecdotal observation that those who learned how to roll seemed to continue learning how to paddle at a faster rate and appeared more confident in a kayak.

The concept of teaching people how to roll first is not new, with the Greenland folk insisting that the young men knew how to roll before going out in their kayaks. A number of educational institutions and individuals around the world carried on this idea of teaching how to roll first. Again anecdotally, this approach appeared to improve individuals' confidence in water, and in particular moving water. A downside might have been too much confidence and not enough competence, with several reports of inexperienced whitewater paddlers dying because they thought that a kayak roll would save them if they got in trouble. A classic case of misadventure through getting the confidence/competence ratio wrong.

It remains that water confidence most likely improves the learning of kayak skills through a reduction in emotional stress caused by fear of capsizing. As one of my peers has been heard to say, 'You can't feel comfortable on top of the water until you feel comfortable in the water.'

When teaching people how to roll, paddling skills are often counterproductive, with established movement patterns requiring breaking down and retraining. This is both a kinaesthetic and psychological process, and teaching people how to roll effectively usually addresses both of these issues.

What type of roll to teach?

I have now seen a range of rolls and sequencing ideas put into practice, and all seemed to be effective in obtaining a basic roll. All graduates of these programs appear to have mixed success once they leave the sheltered water of beach, pool or lake and go into a more open environment of sea or whitewater.

I have tried to summarize some of the sequencing ideas and thinking behind their use.

The C to C roll

The roller sets up in classic roll position, with the paddle parallel with kayak. The roller then drifts the front paddle blade out to 90°, and pushed as close to the surface of the water as possible. The back paddle blade comes out of the water and sits on top of the now upturned boat. The torso

is angled to one side, and then the paddle is pulled down as the torso moves to the other side. The name 'C to C' is intended to describe the change in spine shape from a C facing one way to a C facing the opposite direction.

In general this roll is simpler to learn than most, and usually results in the fastest rate of learning. For people with a good level of flexibility (young normal weight adolescents or adults) this roll generally works well.

Critics of the roll have found that those with less flexibility (obese, older adults, injuries or other) have less success. Other critics have found that the roll isn't powerful enough to be effective in more challenging conditions such as aerated water found in whitewater or surf, or when under new pressure such as cold water.



Gordon Begg demonstrates a grass roll

Teaching sequences and methodologies vary. One program I know gives a dry land demonstration and practice of how to roll then put people into a pool to copy in a more closed environment. Another I know deals with water confidence first, progressing to capsizing drill and wet/clock dry clock (person underwater counts at same time buddy standing alongside does. If the same time elapses for both the buddy and the kayaker, then it is likely that the kayaker has a level of water confidence.) Then move to 'hip flicks' off the side of the pool, and then hands. Finally a paddle is placed into the hand with the action broken down into four steps. Step 1 is set up. Step 2 is to move the blade around to 90° to the boat, with the blade as close to the surface of the water as possible. Step 3 is pull down on the blade. The head starts resting on one shoulder, and finishes resting on the shoulder of the paddle blade used to support the roll. Another instructor I know was experimenting with teaching the high support after water confidence gained. This was followed by progressively taking the paddler over to the side until the body was parallel with surface of the water, before completing the modified support stroke from an underwater start.

The Pawlata

This roll uses an extended lever by holding the end of the paddle in one hand, and the middle of the shaft in the other.



HE Pawlata demonstrates his modified Greenland roll. Note the left hand position on the end of the blade (as with a Greenland paddle), not the side, as is commonly taught today.

Pennants are rarely seen on kayaks these days.

(ICF picture)

This roll is most likely to bring success to the first time roller, as the long lever can overcome any shortcomings in body action. Good for people who have less flexibility due to age, weight or other physical limitations.

Critics of this roll might say that the paddler has to change paddling grip so much that once they are up they remain vulnerable to capsize until they revert to the original grip. In addition, although the Pawlata can make a great progression to other rolls, many paddlers who learn this roll do not progress beyond it. In pressure situations, because of the extra time to set up and the increased orientation it can take longer to set up, increasing the risk of swimming due to not enough air. Finally, as most Pawlata rolls finish with the paddler resting back, there is increased risk of striking the face in whitewater.

I was privileged to see a well thought out teaching sequence for this roll with older adults. The program started with water confidence drills, followed by hip flicks on the side of the pool, and then some hip rotations keeping the boat up but without the paddle. To get the timing of knee drive and paddle down participants do a few (safe) high supports. This is followed with some guided paddle strokes with the head above water, then a guided roll with the paddler fully submerged.

Hand roll

This roll uses the hands only to initiate momentum, supported by a body roll to the back of the kayak. This roll is particularly useful in Canoe Polo, and can be useful when conditions mean the temporary loss of paddle such as whitewater or surf kayaking.

This roll requires good body action and flexibility, and for novices a boat with lower volume.

Critics of this roll suggest that those that learn to hand roll will often fall back on it under pressure, and lose control of their paddle. They are then rendered unable to paddle in situations where the paddler is carried away such as windy conditions, whitewater and surf kayaking. The finish point on the aft deck also increases the risk of injury to the face in whitewater conditions.

One of the teaching sequences I have seen used involves water confidence drills, followed by hip flicking off the side of the pool, and then a guided roll with a kickboard for extra water resistance. Once this is mastered then the kickboard is removed. Alternatively, other items such as PFDs are left floating on the water for increased resis-

tance until the action is mastered.

Screw Roll

This roll uses a combination of lateral spine flexion and trunk/shoulder rotation to get a strong body action, and the paddle is swept from the setup position to a support position less than 90°, before being used to support on.

This roll generally requires flexibility, but can be achieved with either spine flexion or body roll alone. Once mastered, it is generally regarded as the strongest and best roll, particularly in aerated water.

Critics of the screw roll say that it takes too long to learn because of the complex movement patterns.

A teaching sequence I have used is to start with water confidence, followed by hip flicks and then using kickboard to hand roll. Once this is either mastered or they demonstrate sufficient body technique the paddler is then guided to work with the paddle.

Although there are a number of other rolls, novices will usually learn one of these first.

Questions for the novice instructor of rolling might be 'which one do I teach? First?'

There would be some debate about this, and the arguments go something along the lines of:

'Teach an easier roll first, then once they can use that one, they can learn a more complex roll'

'Teach them right first time, even if it takes longer, so that they don't have to unlearn negative movement patterns'

'It is not important how they get up, so long as they can get up in the conditions that they need to roll'

Methodologically, there are a number of arguments regarding the teaching of Eskimo rolling that can go along the lines of:

'Focus on understanding how the roll works, so that they can leave the instructional setting and continue to improve through giving themselves feedback'

'Functional understanding is not required, and analysing may in fact create confusion in the learner. Better to focus on rote memorising movement patterns'

Like a politician, I am going to say that these views are all right, depending on the context of teaching.

But first, some common ground.

Confidence in the learning situation is critical when learning to roll

Some call this 'water confidence', but it is probably more complex than that. Because rolling generally takes place under the guidance of a single instructor, the learner needs to have confidence in their instructor, and that they will keep them safe. Instructors can build confidence by:

- choosing warm water, or where not available, using other warming clothes such as dive hoods, wetsuits, dry tops and the like to keep as warm as possible
- carefully progressing from capsize drill to standing buddy rescues, with lots of training for the rescue buddies
- use of a suitable approach and tone for the client group
- maintaining proximity and vision of those in your charge at all times
- ensure you are highly skilled in boat retrieval of up-turned boats with a person in them
- choose water deep enough for a buddy to be able to effectively roll over learners, but not so deep that they hit their head.

The equipment needs to fit well

Getting the right boat where the learner can brace with knees, hips and feet will help with transmitting any body action to the boat directly and firmly. Ensuring that PFDs fit well (i.e. don't ride up, are not restrictive or too long in the torso), and that the boat has the right shape and volume for the learner. In general, round bottom boats (as opposed to flat bottom rodeo/surf kayaks) with smaller volumes are easier for the novice to roll.

Teaching needs to be clear and concise

Due to the large cognitive and neuromuscular demands (read 'due the amount of grey matter' and the skill's technical difficulty, any confusing or contradictory instructions are likely to throw the learner out considerably.

Teach the person, not the skill

Although you might have decided on a teaching sequence, it is worth remembering that we each have different preferred learning styles. Some are kinaesthetic learners, and learn best by being taken through the movement pattern manually. Others are visual learners, and prefer to use good, accurate demonstrations to gain insight into how a particular skill is developed. Others are auditory, relying on the spoken word to base their performance on. It is important to experiment a little with instructional styles and feedback to see what learning style works best for the individual learner. Also, make sure the learner understands that everyone learns at a different pace.

You can't learn when you are fatigued

Learning to roll is an extremely demanding physical activity, due to the dynamic nature of the action and the energy sapping nature of immersion in water. There comes a point when the paddler's muscles simply will not do what is asked of them, and it is fine motor skills which will start to show first.

Focus on the positive, and don't get too technical

Sometimes, in our enthusiasm to assist learners, we give too much information, which can only confuse the issue. Sticking to one thing at to work on at a time will make it easier for the learner to focus. The art is of course to be able to find out what is the most important thing to focus on.

Skill breaks down when introducing new techniques

This is particularly pertinent when a paddler has a working roll, but one that will not stand up to more demanding conditions. They may be quite reluctant to break down what they know in favour of new techniques. Letting them know this initial downturn in performance is normal may help avoid frustration.

Video feedback can be very effective

It is often easier for participants to pick up their learning difficulties, or even to understand what their instructor is saying when they have seen a visual image of themselves.

As part of my role at the University of South Australia, I have stuck with teaching the screw roll, and will be the first to admit that it has not always been successful, and that I constantly question what I am doing. However, the following might be useful to others who are formulating their own teaching sequence.

Teaching the screw roll: a learning sequence

The following sequence of teaching how to roll makes the following assumptions:

- you have several sessions
- you have a comfortable and safe environment, such as warm pool with competent instructors
- the learners have at least a moderate level of flexibility
- you have equipment such as goggles, wetsuits and warm water to maximise the comfort factor
- your desired learning outcome is to have competent rolling in demanding conditions in the long term

Part 1: Demonstration of the whole skill

This would be done by an experienced roller. The demonstration would ideally be done from many different angles and at a slower speed. Not too much information on what is going on technically.

Part 2: Water confidence

Begin with a capsize and exit without a deck on, standing alongside the paddler in chest deep water for those that have not been in a boat before. Progressing to capsize with a deck on with exit to feel comfortable in the boat, with the instructor, and in the general environment. Progress to capsizing, and then sitting forward and tapping three times, and an instructor or partner then turns the boat upright. Lots of activities upside down to orientate to where the surface of the water is, where the points of the boat are, etc.

Try getting them to capsize by reaching down into the

water as far as they can go. This will emphasize balance, but also get them used to a set up position with the body over the side, rather than over the midline of the boat.

Part 3: Knee lift and head push

This aspect is critical to a successful roll. Participants place both hands on the side of the pool, and then tip the boat until they can place their head on their hands. They turn the boat as far upside down as they can, and the right the boat whilst their head remains on their hand. Focus here is on getting them to push their head down into the hand when turning the boat over, at the same time lifting the knee on the side they are leaning. They should focus on turning the boat around as far as they can, rather than righting the boat initially. When they start coming all the way over, emphasise to leave their head down. Cues such as look at your hands, etc. can help.

After working at the side of the pool with this, progress to instructors hands, so that they might get some idea on how effective their hip flick is.

Part 4: Sweep and hip flick with kickboard

So far, the focus has been on lateral movement of the head and torso, and knee lift on the side that they are leaning. The screw roll also uses rotational movement to provide further momentum to the roll. Using the kickboard to do a supported hand roll allows the learner to use both movements, and mimic the body action used in a complete screw roll.

The learner gets into a set up position with the kickboard. This starts by holding the kickboard straight out in front initially, and then the learner continues to hang on the kickboard, but turns it over so that the shoulder on the side they are rolling on 'rolls over'.

The learner is then supported by the shoulder and under-arm and taken over onto their rolling side such that they can still get their head out of the water. They are then instructed to slap the water with the kickboard whilst still in the set up position. Following this, they are asked to sweep the board to 90°, and then pull down: all in one motion. Importantly, they are reminded to start with their head 'up', and finish with the head 'down', and to lift the knee on the side they are leaning. Watching the kickboard throughout the movement can work for some individuals. The learner is then allowed to start lower and lower in the water, until they can capsize and roll themselves. This final step is not essential, as some will not succeed at

this activity, but will still be able to roll with a paddle.

If possible, the learner should finish either upright or slightly forward.

Part 5: Support strokes

Before going over with a paddle in hand, it is important to transfer the previous lateral movement and knee lift with timing with paddle support to the roll. This can be done by practicing a few support strokes first. A protected high support, where paddle is held at shoulder height, elbows down and tucked. The learner falls on to the rolling side, and uses paddle support, knee lift and head down all at the same time to generate the powerful final stage of the roll. This relationship should be made clear to them. Again, they should finish upright or slightly forward.

Part 6: Guided rolling with paddle

Now comes the tricky part. As a general rule, learners don't start this stage until the previous ones are mastered.

Learners are taught the screw roll set up position. The learner starts in normal paddle position with elbows at approximately 90°, evenly spread on the shaft. They then move the paddle blade of the side they are going to roll on forward until it is parallel to the boat and as far as they can below the boat. The wrist is rotated forward or cocked until the paddle blade is now flat against the water when the boat is upside down. Importantly, they should be leaning over the side of the boat as much as possible, with their head on the opposite shoulder to the side they are rolling on. After 'slapping' the water three times to check that the paddle blade is flat and on the surface, they 'sweep' the blade around on the surface of the water to approx 90°. The paddle blade is flat or has a slight angle towards the surface. After 'sweeping' the next movement is 'support', where learners use the same action as in the support stroke to finish the movement. Importantly, the movement is done all in one go, and the knee lift head down movement is timed correctly.

Common problems found are:

1. Lack of water confidence: this will undermine everything, and restricts the learner from attending to the movement patterns you have described.
2. Paddle 'dives' on sweep: this is usually the wrist not doing the right thing! As stated, it starts 'cocked' forward, and then progressively rolls backward until almost fully 'cocked' backward at the finish of the roll.



The setup looks OK...



...so what happened?

Some people will use greater buoyancy on the paddle to provide more support (small rubber tubes, paddle floats, etc). They can provide more success, but can make the learners more prone to shoulder injury, and give them inaccurate feedback about their body movement, resulting in a poor roll under pressure.

3. Head comes up too early: as head movement is largely responsible for hip movement—where a lot of the drive for the roll comes from—getting your head right is critical. It is a natural thing to get air, but emphasise that this is a major cause of slower skill learning.
4. Head doesn't finish down: although very unnatural, this finish position is critical to allowing the boat to roll upright. Watching the paddle can sometimes help this.
5. Lack of power in knee lift: many have difficulty remembering to do this, despite the drills. Can be worth progressively going back stages until knee lift is present and then progressively moving through stages again.
6. Poor fitting boat: much harder to roll in a boat with less thigh support and poorly fitted foot braces.
7. Physical issues: obesity, age, reduced flexibility all make it more difficult. The screw roll should work well for these groups, so long as they can rotate their body a little.
8. Finally, it can be useful to progressively take the learner over on the side, with the head still out of the water initially, supporting them under the shoulder and arm. They can then see what is happening with their paddle, and can get some of the timing together.

Conclusion

Although there might be some debate about which roll to teach first, and then the sequence and methods to teach it, there is little doubt in my mind that learning to roll can improve people's paddling. Even those that don't have a successful roll will often have improved water confidence, with possible improvements in their paddling as a result of this alone. I have presented one possible sequence to teaching one type of roll in order to provide people that are novice teachers of rolling some possible guidelines, and for the experienced rolling teachers some sense of common ground no matter how you teach it.

Finally, as a teacher of rolling, it remains one of the great joys to spend some time with people in the water, to see them develop a stronger relationship with water, then see them develop their water confidence, and finally the biggest smile in the world if they get it!

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A 1976 pic of your editor setting up for a Reverse Screw roll: not a recommended teaching roll, but one that has its uses



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