

The Effects of a Holistic Wilderness Camping Model

by

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ABSTRACT

This case study sought to answer the question: What are the effects on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provides youth with an urban program component in addition to wilderness out tripping? Four males, aged 16-18, registered in the *Leaders in Training* program at Project C.A.N.O.E. (Creative and Natural Outdoor Experience) participated in two self-report measures prior to, following and four months after a wilderness and urban program. The measures assessed changes to participants' self-perception and resilience. Each LIT also participated in a semi-structured interview. Overall, results indicated an increase in participants' self-perception from pre test to post test, which was maintained at the time of follow up. In addition, nine theme groupings emerged from the interviews, which were summarized into two categories: *Feedback on the Program Structure* and *Effects of Program on Youth Participants*. This study provides a basis of understanding on the influence of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping model from the perspective of the participants. It concludes by discussing the implications of these results for program facilitators and highlighting areas for future research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	viii
Acknowledgments.....	ix
Dedication.....	x
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Impetus for the Study.....	1
Research Question.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Delimitations.....	6
Summary.....	6
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Background.....	8
Experiential Education.....	9
Wilderness Therapy.....	10
Wilderness Experience Programs.....	11
Therapeutic Wilderness Camping: Project C.A.N.O.E.....	11
Towards Holistic Wilderness Programming.....	13
Self-Perception.....	14

Resilience.....	15
Key Studies.....	15
Summary.....	16
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	18
Introduction.....	18
Rationale for a Dual-Focused Approach.....	18
Case Study Research Design.....	19
Researcher Stance.....	20
Researcher Assumptions.....	21
Overview of Research Procedure.....	22
Participant Selection.....	22
Instruments.....	24
Data Collection.....	26
Data Analysis.....	27
Validity.....	32
Summary.....	32
Chapter Four: Results.....	33
Introduction.....	34
Presentation of Qualitative Data.....	35
Section One: Feedback on Program Structure.....	36
Theme Grouping #1: Ownership in the Program.....	36
Theme Grouping #2: Opportunities for Individual Space.....	38
Theme Grouping #3: Fun.....	41

Theme Grouping #4: Wilderness Context vs. Urban Context.....	42
Theme Grouping #5: Staffing.....	45
Section Two: Effects of Program on Youth Participants.....	48
Theme Grouping #6: Self-Awareness.....	48
Theme Grouping #7: Coping with Adversity.....	52
Theme Grouping #8: Self-Reliance.....	56
Theme Grouping #9: Skill Transference.....	59
Summary of Key Quantitative and Qualitative Findings.....	61
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications.....	69
Introduction.....	69
Replication Results.....	70
Self-Report Measures.....	70
Program Augmentation Results.....	73
Ownership in the Whole.....	73
Opportunities for Space.....	74
Elements of Fun.....	76
Distinguishing Wilderness vs. Urban Context.....	77
Staffing.....	79
Self-Awareness.....	80
Coping with Adversity.....	81
Self-Reliance.....	82
Skill Transference.....	83
Implications.....	84

Limitations of this Study.....	88
Future Research.....	91
Conclusion.....	93
References.....	98
Appendices.....	105
Appendix A: Human Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval.....	106
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form.....	107
Appendix C: Interview Guide.....	110
Appendix D: Overall Scores for SPPA and RS.....	111
Appendix E: Quantitative Reference Tables.....	112
Appendix F: Individual SPPA Profiles.....	113

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants' Subscale Scores on SPPA	36
Table 2: Mean Scores of Participants on SPPA.....	37
Table 3: Mean Scores of Participants on RS.....	38
Table 4: Nine Theme Groupings Emerging from an Analysis of the Interview Data.....	39

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DEDICATION

For youth, outside.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Impetus for the Study

After my first summer washing dishes at a YMCA residential camp, I became convinced that my immersion in the camping field would continue indefinitely. Supportive parents, a privileged background and my own efforts to continue working in the field paved this path north from southern Ontario to camp for consecutive summers afterward where I began counselling, and facilitating leadership development programs for adolescents. After spending late nights in the camp kitchen, listening to a mentor talk of his experience with at-risk youth at another camp, my path in the field soon headed in this direction: working in more isolated and continual wilderness experiences with at-risk youth. What I quickly noticed about these participants was the lack of support persons and resources in their everyday lives that had helped to secure camping as a consistent presence in my life. Instead, returning rates of campers to the organization were low. Those participants who had returned expressed to me their frustration at explaining the summer's successes to unsympathetic authority figures at home and at school. They also relayed the difficulties of sustaining their efforts towards positive change in personal behaviour and attitude and towards siblings and school, once they had left the uniquely special environment where the summer program had taken place. The largest impact that these youth had on me was simply that I did not see most of them again.

This study is designed to explore the effects of a specific wilderness program: Project C.A.N.O.E. (Creative and Natural Outdoor Experience) (PC) on youth participants. This non-profit organization, founded in 1976, provides wilderness canoe

trips to youth at risk in the Temagami and Haliburton regions of Ontario. The following provides a brief background of the organization:

The organization's mission is to help youth at risk build positive futures for themselves. Youth gain an increased sense of self-efficacy, life skills and healthy interpersonal relationships through wilderness canoe trips and other challenging outdoor activities. PC's main program provides wilderness canoe trips to youth who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities with a group of peers. These youth, who are dealing with emotional, behavioural, social or learning difficulties, are referred to the organization by parents and social service agencies. On the canoe trips, the youth paddle to a new campsite everyday, sleep in tents and cook meals outdoors. The staff who lead the canoe trips have a strong commitment to working with youth at risk, and are professionally trained in canoe trip leadership, lifeguarding and wilderness first aid. They also partake in an intensive six-week training period prior to the start of the summer program (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2004, 5).

PC is a prime example of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program: one which combines the therapeutic relationship between counsellor and participant with challenging wilderness experiences, tailored for each member of the group. The holistic nature of PC's program serves youth on a year round basis, as the program coordinator works with the oldest participants in the city after the completion of the summer program, to gain certifications relevant to wilderness camping, and experience working with younger youth, thereby enabling these participants to explore opportunities to work in the field on their own.

As a researcher, counsellor and avid outdoors person, I have both personal and professional interests in this topic. My experience with the wilderness, through the facilitation of wilderness programming, has led to significant personal learning, and largely defining life experiences. The opportunity to work in wilderness environments with youth has led me to find rich personal growth in isolated and marvellous settings. Indeed, the decision to further academic studies in the School of Child and Youth Care

was largely motivated through learning in the outdoors. This learning in the wilderness continues in every facet of duty or pleasure, which I still actively pursue today.

My decision to explore this topic is also motivated by a professional interest to further the work and research done with youth in wilderness contexts. It is my ambition to help co-create relationships with both youth and their support persons, within and outside the wilderness context, in order for success and achievement to cross geographic borders and foster more holistic levels of care. I believe that by gaining a greater understanding of the effects of holistic therapeutic wilderness camping programs, facilitators can become more effective in their program planning and in the individual aspects of their relationship with each youth.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to this study, which seeks to explore the nature of four participants' experience with a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program. It will begin by asking the question that guides the study and will follow with a description of the purpose of this research. In addition, this chapter will define terms situated in the context of wilderness programming and employed for use in this study. Finally, this chapter will describe the delimitations of the study by outlining the intentions of this research. The second chapter will provide a comprehensive review of the literature related to research in this field. In the third chapter, I will carefully describe the methodology used to conduct this research. Chapter four will display the results of this study and chapter five, the final chapter, will discuss the implications of these findings, the limitations of this research, and will highlight areas recommended for further research.

Research Question

The question that guides the study asks: What are the effects on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provides youth with an urban program component in addition to wilderness out tripping? Further questions will specifically explore the augmentation of an urban program. These questions are: Will a continuous 'follow-up' model improve upon the benefits reaped by youth participating in a therapeutic wilderness camping program? Finally, what are the responses of these youth to continued interaction with a program that has provided them with a positive experience in the wilderness and a follow-up program back home?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to find out what effects, if any, this program may have had on youth participants by seeking to address some of the questions prompted by studies previously conducted in similar programs. Specifically, the purpose of this research was to evaluate the primary assumption that the program's inception is based upon: that these youth benefited from being involved with PC on a year-round basis.

This study took the following steps to answer the research question. First, the present study examined self-perception and resilience measure responses in participants collected after the completion of PC wilderness program to establish whether they were similar to those reported in key related studies. Self-perception and resilience are both considered pro-social behaviours which PC hoped to improve among participants (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2004). Second, the proposed research added a new variable to the research question and examined whether the effects measured at the end of a wilderness experience were maintained or augmented by a follow-up program located in an urban

setting. This new variable is an extension to the research noted in key studies within the existing literature.

This study identified youth who have participated in at least one summer program at Project C.A.N.O.E. and who are pondering further options in the field, as participants shifting into leadership roles and as future staff, role modelling for younger participants. It provided these youth an opportunity to communicate their experiences through the use of follow-up semi-structured interviews. It sought to provide program coordinators and fellow campers a more thorough understanding of their experience with wilderness camping in order to provide these professionals with ideas to further help facilitate the experience of wilderness camping for youth.

Definitions

The following definitions are presented in order to ensure proper interpretation of the terminology within the context in which these terms are used in this research.

At-risk youth:

Youth, aged 12-18 who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities with a group of peers. The youth, who are dealing with emotional, behavioural, social or learning difficulties, are referred to the organization by parents and social service agencies (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2004, 7).

Out tripping: the process of travelling through backcountry wilderness in canoes, carrying all food and equipment required to render participants self-sufficient for extended periods of time.

Hard skills: physical components of wilderness programming such as steering a canoe, portaging, and reading a topographical map.

Soft skills: non-physical components of wilderness programming such as communication, conflict resolution, role modeling, and leadership.

Self-perception: based on the self as constructed through narratives that provide the basis for autobiographical memory, which develops over time (Harter, 1999).

Resilience: “the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse” (Ungar, 2004, p. 342).

Delimitations

The following delimitations will be imposed by the researcher. The study was limited to male youth participants, ages 16-18, who had previously participated in PC. This study was also limited to those participants who had completed two self report measures at three pre-determined intervals in addition to a semi-structured interview, developed by the researcher, in regards to the effects of individual course components and overall impressions of the program. Finally, the present research was limited to data collected from the participants between June 2004, and December 2004.

Summary

The amount of research dedicated to looking at the effects of wilderness programming on youth is growing. The links to success and change upon program completion, however, is still relatively unexplored. The study contributed to this body of knowledge by examining effects of the program on youth participants, and by asking youth about their experience following both wilderness and urban components. This kind of research might provide program coordinators, parents, counsellors, and youth themselves with insight into how to best support participants following the program, in order to reap continued rewards and successes from each participant’s experience.

This chapter introduced the topic of this study and outlined the purpose for conducting a study on the effects on youth participants of this holistic therapeutic wilderness camping model. Terms were defined that will be employed throughout the study to provide an understanding of their usage within the context of this study. In addition, the delimitations of this study were outlined.

To properly describe the theoretical foundation and a review of the current research related to the effects of wilderness camping on youth, the following chapter will present literature, which has led to the program model presently used in this study. To understand what kind of program the youth in this study participated in, it is necessary to separate this program from the alternatives that exist under a large umbrella of wilderness programming. Therefore, this review will explore the background of the experience of wilderness on people, experiential education, wilderness therapy, wilderness experience programs, therapeutic wilderness camping, and finally, Project C.A.N.O.E. with an emphasis on holistic programming. It will also outline the key studies which formulate the basis for further research that will be addressed in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature, which addresses the effect of wilderness programming on youth participants. It will begin by exploring the background of the effects of wilderness on people. It will then explore the concept of experiential education and outline three forms of wilderness programming: wilderness therapy, wilderness experience programs, and therapeutic wilderness camping in order to differentiate what Project C.A.N.O.E. provides; specifically, holistic programming. Lastly, this review explores key studies which conclude by asking questions that this study seeks to address.

Background

The effects of wilderness, acting as a therapeutic agent for positive change in human lives, are well-documented. (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Schroder, 1996; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Dating back to the early 1900s, 'tent therapy' found its roots outside The Manhattan State Hospital East where 40 tuberculosis patients were placed in tents on the hospital property in an effort to isolate those patients from others. Significant improvements in their conditions followed, so much so, that the hospital was prompted to continue the practice. Many of the patients who received early 'tent therapy' were released (Caplan, 1974). More recent studies have expanded the research on the effects of the wilderness on people to find out that many utilize the same elements of early 'tent therapy' as a form of escape (Milton, Cleveland & Bennett-Gater, 1995).

A proliferation of wilderness programming extended from the efforts of German educator, Kurt Hahn, following World War II (Kimball & Bacon, 1993). Hahn's

teaching, originally fostered to train British seamen on the survival of war, quickly gained popularity after the war and expanded into the United States, adopting the name, Outward Bound. As Davis-Berman and Berman (1994) explain, it became apparent that these programs positively influenced youth living with various emotional, psychological, and behavioural problems. The philosophy of Outward Bound is firmly rooted in the assumption that people learn best by doing (Rosol, 2000). Learning by doing is commonly referred to as experiential education.

Experiential Education

Of all things that might be true about experiential education the one thing that is unassailably true is that you can't find out by defining it. – John Huie (cited in McPhee, 1992, p. 19).

Defining experiential education is a difficult task. Proudman (1992) argued that experiential education was not simply, 'learning by doing'. He suggested that good experiential learning instead, "combines direct experience that is meaningful to the student with guided reflection and analysis" (p. 19). The risk of defining the term means leaving it for others "to regurgitate it at will – a written sentence copied and lost between the yellowing pages of one's notebook" (McPhee, 1992, p. 19). Ringing true for me is the presumption that experiential education is a process of active engagement within various complex and layered relationships: self, teacher, and environment. Proudman (1992) suggested that experiential education be left undefined, offering instead, that "if we truly subscribe to the idea of life-long learning, then our understanding and definition of experiential education will also change and expand" (p. 23). The Association of Experiential Education (1994) described experiential education as a process through which individuals, through direct experience, construct knowledge, skill and value.

Whatever an exact definition, it is in my experience that wilderness programming operates within a model of experiential learning, and teaching.

The following is a review of the various avenues of wilderness programming: wilderness therapy, wilderness experience programs, and therapeutic wilderness camping. There exists a genuine need to differentiate between various wilderness programs. As the field as a whole continues to expand, so do the philosophies inherent to each, as well as the public misperception as to what exactly each program is and does. Under the semblance of 'wilderness therapy', many of these programs, which often adhere to a 'boot camp' mentality, have falsely portrayed wilderness therapy, most significantly, resulting in the death of participants (Janofsky, 2001).

Wilderness Therapy

Wilderness therapy, most recently, has developed an integrated definition (Russell, 2001). This definition is a culmination of the previous literature drawn from various sources (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Kimball & Bacon, 1993). The main ideas expressed in this definition include: a foundational theory of the wilderness program should be based to target outcomes and evaluate effectiveness of the intervention, assessment and treatment plans should determine client suitability and precede participation, and wilderness therapy should utilize outdoor pursuits such as primitive skills and reflection to enhance personal and interpersonal growth.

Finally, Russell (2001) concluded:

Involvement in outdoor adventure pursuits should occur under the direction of skilled leaders, with activities aimed at creating change in targeted behaviours. The provision of group psychotherapy should be facilitated by qualified professionals, with an evaluation of individuals' progress being a critical component of the program. Programs often work with the family to help the client and family understand their role in the treatment and post-treatment process. At the conclusion of the program, staff should work with

the appropriate professionals in the follow-up environment to help the client maintain any progress that has been made as a result of treatment (p. 76).

I have described wilderness therapy in order to help delineate among various wilderness programming. What follows is the same process of description concerning wilderness experience programs.

Wilderness Experience Programs

Wilderness experience programs (WEPs) have been described as outdoor programming conducted by organizations in the wilderness for the purposes of personal growth and education (Frises, Hendee, & Kinziger, 1998). Though this description holds similarities with that provided for wilderness therapy, clear distinctions are apparent. WEPs, like Outward Bound today, may or may not have professional therapists, or specific plans-of-care for *clients*, rather than *participants*, included in each program. Also, participants may find that some WEPs focus less on areas of personal growth and instead have a purely recreational stance emphasizing the value of fun (Estes & Henderson, 2003; Rossman & Schlatter, 2000). These are the types of characteristics that separate wilderness therapy from programs that simply cater to groups that set out to experience the wilderness.

Therapeutic Wilderness Camping: Project C.A.N.O.E.

There are many organizations that utilize experiential learning in the wilderness context that may be deemed therapeutic. The history of therapeutic camping programs began with Camp Ahmek, in Algonquin Park, Ontario, where the camp's goals specified the socialization of the camper's behaviour (Davis-Berman, Berman & Capone, 1994). Though not adhering completely to Russell's integrated definition of wilderness therapy, many therapeutic wilderness camping programs today facilitate positive well being

among participants and promote the value of the wilderness (Grey, 1979; Marsh, 1999). An example of one such organization is PC. Primarily serving the greater Toronto area, PC operates summer and fall trips in the Temagami and Haliburton regions of Ontario.

The wilderness component of PC's LIT program in the summer of 2004 was created to provide a uniquely tailored experience to each participant. Low staff-camper ratios reflect the suggestion in the literature that one on one support and opportunities for personal space has helped to create positive outcomes for campers (Milner, Nisbet, & Bacon, 1997; Wetzel, McNaboe, & McNaboe, 1995). Upon arrival, participants took part in many introductory sessions at the base camp, which covered a broad spectrum of important topics including: route planning, food and equipment packing, appropriate behaviour, roles of staff and participants. Throughout these four days, participants engaged in fun-filled activities designed to maximize each youth's experience and prepare them for what lay ahead. While on the trip, participants combined strengths to complete many challenges presented by an extended canoe trip such as setting up tents, and preparing meals. In addition to the regular routine, participants rotated through a *Leader of the Day* (LOD) experience, whereby two youths, with input from the group would lead each day, organizing the route, delegating duties, deciding upon meals, and snacks, as well as finalizing campsite locations. The wilderness canoe trip was also enhanced by the provision of unique activities designed to engage youth with a variety of soft-skills. In four day blocks, the staff introduced activities related to themes on self-awareness, communication, and diversity.

In addition to the wilderness component, PC has implemented a winter program, which operates in Toronto with the intent of strengthening an overall, stronger commitment to PC's mission, and to those children involved. The urban component to

PC's LIT program consisted of three focus points throughout the fall of 2004. First, participants gathered together to compete in a team triathlon, organized for charity. This provided the first instance for the group to reconvene since the conclusion of the summer program. The second focus point was a one-day mountain biking trip in Newmarket, Ontario. Initially, a weekend hike was planned but due to extra-curricular commitments, the group opted for a one day experience. The third event participants worked towards during the fall of the urban program was a first aid certification course, which occurred shortly before Christmas.

Towards Holistic Wilderness Programming

PC's commitment to holistic wilderness programming is a response to the needs voiced by youth participants. Year round programs are rare. In the Ontario Camping Association (OCA) alone, there are approximately 300 camps operating in accredited and provisional status (Retrieved [March 29th, 2004] from <http://www.ontcamp.on.ca>): most operate on a seasonal basis. The winter program aims to continue to meet and to extend upon the organization's mission and to make practical improvements on the return rate of participants. PC's mission statement (2004) also states that "sustaining contact with our leaders in training in the off-season has been identified as a priority by our board and staff" (Retrieved [March 29th, 2004] from <http://www.canoe.org>). Drawing from my own experiences as a previous staff member at PC, I support this implementation as a means to sustain and increase the positive ends that many youth have achieved, as a result of participation with PC. Further, I believe there is an inherent responsibility for similar organizations to adopt such program components into an overall model in an effort to increase the contact of at-risk youth with positive, stable influences in their own lives. These issues have been approached recently, yet left largely unanswered in the literature.

Self-Perception

Based on the definition provided earlier (see Definitions section), self-perception is a construct which refers to an individual's self-representation. In order to better understand this construct, it is necessary to review the current literature. This literature suggested that the sheer number of related terms such as self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy has left many studies related to self difficult to interpret (Wylie, 1979, 1989). In order to clarify the terminology, the literature points towards a need to make a clear distinction between terms related to self-representation, and terms related to self-evaluation (McGuire & McGuire, 1980). Related to self-evaluation are constructs and instruments that ask individuals to make value judgments about the self. In contrast, self-representation constructs of self tend to pose the question, 'What am I' or 'Who am I more like' to individuals (Harter, 1988). To some degree, this distinction between self-representation and self-evaluation may be arbitrary because individuals may still respond to questions regarding self-representation in an evaluative sense (Emde, 1994). For example, if asked who I am, I may respond that I am a good hockey player, thereby defining myself in an evaluative sense. Based on the research conducted by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1971), it may be best to acknowledge that evaluation is, to some degree, always used by individuals to organize the concept of self. Indeed, self-perception falls somewhere along an evaluative continuum. However, it is the point that self-perception is a concept that taps certain domains of the self, and not just a global self-worth, that clearly separates this construct from others (Harter, 1988). This bodes well with my own outlook on self which aligns with a concept that allows for many different construct domains in addition to a global self-worth. This description also aligns with a constructionist discourse of resilience.

Resilience

Resilience in this study is described as the outcome of negotiations between individuals and their environments (see Definitions section). This constructionist approach to resilience is informed by Gergen (2001), who explained that those within society who control the most power also control the definitions of health and illness. What is important to outline in the current literature is the distinction between resilience as seen in an ecological framework (Masten, 2001), which suggested that risk and protective factors are predictors of resiliency, and resilience as defined as dynamic in its contextual nature. This literature suggests that there are many factors at play in this dynamic process which occurs over time (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2001). This research also coincides with that of Boyden (2001) which stated that the nonsystemic relationship between risk and protection for individuals is complex and relative. Several researchers have examined how participants reacted to challenge factors aimed at increasing resilience (Olson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Broderick & Sawyer, 2003) The rationale for adopting a constructionist discourse to resilience in this study is to remain open to the varying meanings of resilience, according to different people. This openness will hopefully deepen our understanding of the construct, and help foster diversity in the way we approach research with different youth, each bringing differing interpretations and meanings of what it means to be resilient.

Key Studies

Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001) conducted a study using qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the impact of adventure trips on the self-perception of urban adolescents. Participants' self-perception was assessed using the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPAA) (Harter, 1988) prior to, following and four months after

participation in a 3-day outdoor adventure program. The basis of learning in the program and the activities were experiential. Qualitative components of the study included leader and participant observations, as well as interviews, conducted immediately and four months following the adventure trip. Findings by Garst, Scheider and Baker supported a mixed method approach to the study, reporting significant positive changes in adolescent self-perception. This study strongly advocated consideration for holistic wilderness programming stating that “the inclusion of a post-program follow-up may assist experiential outdoor adventure providers to identify program influences” (p. 48).

Similarly, Neill and Dias (2001) conducted research, supporting the claim that controlled exposure to challenge significantly enhances participants’ psychological resilience. Participant gains were assessed using the Resilience Scale (RS) (Wagnild & Young, 1993) before and after participation in a 22-day Outward Bound program, as well as in a control group. This Outward Bound program concentrated on aspects of personal development and was grounded in experiential learning. Results support a direction for further study: “the transferability of large resilience gains to everyday life also warrants investigation” (Neill & Dias, 2001, p. 6). Findings also indicated that qualitative investigation may help to better understand participant views, specifically, “exactly what sort of behaviours in an adventure education setting are considered by participants to be particularly supportive or unsupportive” (Neill & Dias, 2001, p. 6). Together, these key studies illustrate the need for further exploration of holistic programming in a wilderness setting.

Summary

The literature presented in this chapter on the background of the effects of wilderness on some people, experiential education, wilderness therapy, and wilderness

experience programs, holistic therapeutic wilderness camping and key studies informing this research provides a framework for positioning PC in the lives of these youth participants. This chapter also presented a current review of the literature associated with resilience and self-perception, constructs which PC seeks to improve within participants and which have been highlighted for study in this research because of their use in key related studies. The purpose of the present chapter was also to provide an overview of the current research that is extended upon by this study. These key studies suggested that significant gains in self-perception and in resilience are registered by participants after participating in wilderness experience programs, similar to that which is offered by PC.

The current research attempts to contribute to the body of literature by first attempting to replicate the findings from previous research on positive effects for participants of wilderness programs. Second, the present study seeks to link these youths' experiences with PC in a wilderness setting to extended programming within an urban setting as well. This study will benefit the future of wilderness programming by presenting the experience of these participants in order that counsellors and administrators may better understand the effects of the program. Finally, the results of the study will give voice to the lived experience of these youth, who have been remained relatively silent in the body of literature.

The following chapter will provide a methodological outline of the process utilized by this research. It will present a description of the research design, the researcher's stance, the selection process of participants, the instruments employed in this study, and a description of the methods used to collect and analyze the data.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will provide a description of the methodology employed in the present research. First, it will present a rationale for both quantitative and qualitative research with a particular focus on case study research design. Next, it will describe my stance and entering assumptions as the primary researcher in this study. This chapter will also speak to participant selection and it will provide demographic information about the participants included in the study. It will also describe the instrumentation used and it will underline the reasons for choosing the particular instruments. Finally, this chapter will present a detailed account of the steps taken to collect data, and the procedures enacted to analyze the raw data.

Rationale for a Dual-Focused Approach

Previous research in wilderness program evaluation has uncovered specific discrepancies related to standards of evaluation whereby researchers have been both celebrated and censured for supporting studies that have primarily employed either qualitative or quantitative methods (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994). In examining the effects of this program on youth participants, I believe the perspective of participants to be most important. It was my intention that the participants' voices be heard throughout the research. Therefore, in order to find out what kind of effects the program had on these participants, I sought, attempting to capture the emic perspective, what Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) described as, "the participant's viewpoint" (p. 548). Qualitative research aims to obtain rich descriptions and represent the meaning of the participants' life experiences. Qualitative research explores at a personal and subjective level, making it

more suitable for a study involving a smaller number of participants (Anderson & Arsenault, 2000). For these reasons, I found qualitative research complementary to the objectives of this study.

To strengthen and complement the design of the study, I sought measures that would provide assessments of constructs that PC strives to help participants improve within themselves: self-perception and resilience. This exploratory study then would examine a therapeutic wilderness camping program; specifically, the effects that the program has on a small group of youth participating in complementing wilderness and urban components of the program. Rooted in both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study used two standardized tests to measure changes in self-perception and resilience prior to, immediately following, as well as again four months after the wilderness component of the program, a 22-day out trip. The qualitative element of the study consisted of a single set of interviews conducted at the time of the four-month follow-up, well into each youth participant's participation in the urban component of the program. These interviews brought voice to the perspectives of the participants' experience and serve to expand and enhance the data collected using the quantitative measures.

The rationale for using both qualitative and quantitative research paradigm for this research is based on a particular interest in exploring personal meaning of the participants augmented by an assessment of findings regarding constructs highlighted by the organization as areas in which it seeks to help participants foster positive change.

Case Study Research Design

With its complementing foci, this study may be regarded as a quasi-experimental design, employing a case study approach. Cherry (1999) explained that this design

differs from a true experimental design because a required condition is not met. In this study, a control group will not be utilized. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), case study research is defined as “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 545). To effectively gain understanding concerning the experience of the youth, in-depth, semi-structured interviewing will be utilized in an effort to convey participant perspectives as a part of a voice-centered, collaborative approach (Rogers, 1993). The semi-structured interview is a common way for gaining qualitative research (Kvale, 1996). A researcher carries out the interview with participants, co-creating an informative conversational type dialogue in order to communicate an understanding of the participant’s experience. The interview is recorded. Participants will be viewed as individuals who have unique information and perceptions regarding a situation and experience; these are key informants (Cherry, 1999; Gall, Borg, & Borg, 1996).

Researcher Stance

In case study research, I recognize that aspects of the researcher may be difficult to suspend for the duration of the exploration. I also acknowledge that the role the researcher plays in data collection and analysis is complex, whereby the researcher “becomes personally involved in the phenomenon being studied” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 554). The complexity of this process is astounding. I believe that the process of knowledge being co-created in the interview process cannot occur unless the participant feels that the interviewer is present and mindful in the relationship. However, on the issue of personal involvement in the data-collection process, I was uncomfortable with a researcher stance that supported an unguided process of subjective personal involvement. In order to check my feelings and subjective influences on the research, I undertook a

subjectivity audit daily using a journal (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Using a journal helped to reflect on presumptions that I strove to leave outside of the interview process, in order to remain open to deeper understandings of the uniqueness of each participants' stories. This, in turn, promoted self-awareness throughout the study (Beck, 1994).

I recognize that my assignment as both a researcher and a program leader (in the wilderness component) of the program posed a challenging ethical dilemma for the participants. Thankfully, the nature of the organization and specifically, the trust of the relationship between participants with leaders, lends itself favourably to this research. My experience as a member of this small group enabled positive relationships to develop. Constant reflection on my part maintained an accurate reporting of each individual's unique perspective and understanding. Also, understanding that the perspective I bring to the research is also potentially valuable, I know that I had an opportunity to add to and enhance the research from a privileged position of experience. I am not new to the process of therapeutic wilderness camping, though I learn new things about myself and others with every impact of the experience. I have experienced change myself. I understand how it feels for me to have gone through various changes in a wilderness setting, and to see those changes affect my life away from rivers and trees. As there is an emphasis on "the constructive nature of knowledge created through the interaction of the partners in the interview conversation" (Kvale, 1996, p. 11), I may aid the understanding of outside audiences through my influence in the collaborative nature of the interview.

Researcher Assumptions

Through daily subjectivity audits, I continually recognized the following personal assumptions regarding the effect of wilderness camping on youth participants, and ideas

about how the urban component might affect participants and about the participants themselves:

1. Participants will be affected through their experience with PC.
2. This experience will have varying levels of impact on participants.
3. I will be affected through my role(s) in this experience.
4. There are both positive and negative discernible effects, related to this experience for participants.
5. Positive change, what it means to be 'healthy', and judgements about the lives of participants at the conclusion of this research are constructs created by people.
6. Despite the uniqueness of all participants' experience, patterns of similarity will be present.
7. Participants will do the best they can to provide the researcher with information.

Overview of Research Procedure

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee for this study before any research began (see Appendix A).

Participant Selection

The sample for this study was based on youth participating in the *Leaders in Training* (LIT) program at PC, 2004. Those who registered with the program were briefed concerning the purpose and objectives of the research and asked whether they would volunteer in the study. There was no coercion to participate in the study linked to a participant's program application; all participants were accepted into the program prior to being asked to participate. A description of the study was distributed and an informed consent form was obtained from both participants and guardians (see Appendix B). Participants' names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

The participants have been involved in varying degrees with PC in the past. Some have participated in shorter out trips (eight or 12 days). Others have also taken part in fall out trips, in addition to the summer program in Temagami. The four, male participants in this study were between the ages of 16 and 18 years, all of whom were returning campers to PC, with an interest in developing leadership skills and working as role models for younger campers.

Generally speaking, youth participating at PC are a challenging and rewarding crew, each displaying unique responses to the experiences they encounter in the wilderness environment. In the past, these youth have demonstrated significant levels of perseverance and dedication to tasks of individual and group importance. These key informants provided insight into the effectiveness of a holistic program model which will not only direct PC, but other program models and practitioners.

In order to protect the identities of participants, their names have been changed to pseudonyms. All participants are returning campers to PC. All reside in southern Ontario and three of four live in urban centres.

Peter was 18 years old at the time of the interview. He has participated with PC for the past four summers. In two of those summers, he participated in multiple canoe trips. Interestingly enough, he and I participated in his first canoe trip together with PC. This was Peter's first *Leader in Training* (LIT) out trip.

Justin was 16 at the time of the interview. He had participated with PC in each of the previous four summers. We also, shared his first canoe trip in his primary season with PC.

Adam was 17 at the time of the interview. Adam had also participated with PC over the past four summers. In his previous summer, Adam was involved in the planning

of the LIT trip but was forced to leave early due to injury. This was my first time working with Adam as one of the trip facilitators.

Tony was also 17 at the time of the interview. Tony had previously joined PC canoe trips in each of the last five summers. This, however, was his first LIT experience, and his first experience with me as one of the trip facilitators.

Instruments

Reviewing the literature identified many scales that measured the construct of self, and three, which measured resilience (Bandura, 1986; Block & Kremen, 1996; Coopersmith, 1967; Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999; Marsh, 1990; Rosenberg, 1965; Wagnild & Young, 1990). The Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) (Harter, 1988) and Resilience Scale (RS) (Wagnild & Young, 1990) were selected for use in this study based on their suitability in the following areas: high reliabilities (SPPA range of .74 to .93) (RS range of .76 to .91), acceptable test-retest intervals for the design proposed, consideration of participant age, gender and grammar appropriateness, and most influentially, because of their recent use in similar areas of wilderness research (Garst, Scheider & Baker, 2001; Neill & Dias, 2001). Using similar measures would allow me to more directly compare results of the present study with those of earlier key studies.

The SPPA takes a domain-specific approach, which suggests that participants can delineate between different competencies within self-perception in contrast to measures which, promote a more generalized, broader approach. As a result, the SPPA in particular supports the constructionist research proposed. As was mentioned earlier, the use of these measures in reported key studies related to wilderness programming serves to

provide a foundation for insightful results from this study to extend the learning provided by those studies (Garst, Scheider & Baker, 2001; Neill & Dias, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to gain the in-depth narratives sought to access information about the effect of the program on youth participants. The strengths of this method allowed me to find relevant and meaningful knowledge through purposeful dialogue (Kvale, 1996). I developed the interview questions by delving into the literature of wilderness programming (see Appendix C). Most importantly, I returned to my research question to focus my questioning. What resulted were a few ideas on how to gain entry to the participants' lived experience. I began the interview by asking general questions about the participants' history with the organization, and comparisons to other programs. This led to broader questions related to the effect of the program that allowed each participant to respond with the most salient themes that may have been at the forefront of their articulated experience.

In the second portion of the interview, I attempted to link specific course components with impacts, if any, on youth participants. Gently using probing questions, I sought ideas that had not been exposed. Though I did attempt to engage in a process of ongoing clarification and interpretation, I attempted to keep my sentences brief while encouraging longer responses from participants (Kvale, 1996). My style was very much consistent with the process by which I had facilitated the wilderness component of the program. In this sense, sufficient time was placed in building and maintaining the relationship between myself and each participant. Much of our earlier efforts were rewarded by way of what I perceived as a smooth transition from previous locations and topics of conversation between people to the interview process itself.

Data Collection

On the first day of the program, as a part of their pre-trip planning, the group of participants agreed on the time for the collection of the first SPPA and RS. The second test interval occurred the day following our arrival from the canoe trip. The final follow-up test interval transpired in the last week of the urban program, prior to the academic Christmas break in December. Two participants from out of town completed the measures and their interviews during a weekend when both attended a first aid course in Toronto. The two remaining participants completed those measures after school, at a mutually agreed upon location. Interviews with those participants were also conducted at that time.

Interviews were approximately one hour in length, depending on the breadth of each participant's response. I began each interview by reviewing the rights of each participant and the purpose of the interview. I highlighted the importance of creating comfortable, safe spaces for the participants throughout the interview and encouraged the participants to use the interview as an opportunity to share their experience and to have their voice heard. Following each interview, I allowed time for debriefing and encouraged participants to share their feelings about the whole process. For all participants, the interview was the last personal contact I would have for an indefinite period of time. Due to the emotional nature of the program, and of the interview, I ensured that ample time was available to discuss each participant's well being so as to not leave anyone feeling vulnerable, including myself! Finally, participants were reminded about upcoming activities pertaining to the continuation of the urban program, scheduled for January, 2005.

The data were collected between June and December, 2004: a six-month period. During this time, completed self-report measures were stored in my room at the base camp, in a locked safe, only accessible by me. In the fall, the safe was moved to the city and after each interview, all interview tapes and the final self-report measures safely moved to the safe. Any identifying materials, such as the consent forms and contact information were stored separately from the data.

Data Analysis

This section describes the methods used to analyze both the quantitative and qualitative measurements for the study. Concerning the quantitative measures, the SPPA self-report measures were analyzed using the standards provided in the researcher's manual (Harter, 1988). Mean test scores were calculated in each of nine domains. Regarding the RS, mean test scores were also calculated. The passing of time was reflected in the following intervals for both measures: pre-test, post-test and follow-up. The standard deviations for both measures were also calculated. Due to a small, non-randomized sample, no further analysis was conducted.

The present research sought to replicate studies by Neill and Dias (2001) and Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001). The latter researchers explored the impact of outdoor adventure trips on participants' self-perception while Neill and Dias (2001) investigated participant gains in resilience. Garst, Scheider and Baker implemented three test intervals: pre test prior to the beginning of an adventure program, post test following the conclusion of the adventure program, and four months following the conclusion of those programs. Neill and Dias applied two intervals: prior to and immediately following a wilderness program.

The present study sought to replicate the test intervals of Garst, Scheider and Baker and to extend the interval design of Neill and Dias by implementing three intervals for testing: pre test, post test and four month follow up. This study also attempted to replicate the key studies by exploring self-perception and resilience in its participants using the same measures applied by the key studies. Self-perception was measured using the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) (Harter, 1988) and resilience was assessed using the Resilience Scale (RS) (Wagnild & Young, 1990). Pre testing occurred prior to the beginning of a 22-day canoe trip while the post test followed immediately afterward.

The present research extended the key studies by exploring the effects of a wilderness canoe trip augmented with an urban program component. The program's urban component began immediately following the wilderness canoe trip. Therefore, the present study extended the research of the key studies because these youth participated in an urban component following the wilderness canoe trip prior to the four month follow up test interval. Follow up semi-structured interviews were also conducted at the third interval.

Determining the process to analyze the qualitative data was a difficult task because strategies have been left largely undefined (Yin, 1994). Furthermore, there is no one method to conduct analysis, reflecting the dynamic nature of different projects and the information consistent and unique to each (Osborne, 1990). In order to begin analysis, I returned to my research question to review the objectives of my exploration. After reviewing my research question and researching various analytic approaches, I outlined the principles of interpretational analysis (Tesch, 1990). Based on the path of the study to this point, it was my feeling that an interpretational analysis would facilitate the

emergence of insightful findings. According to Gall, Borg, and Gall, “interpretational analysis is the process of examining case study data closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied” (p. 562). The present study follows a methodology informed by steps and techniques suggested by Yin (1994), Tesch (1990), Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), Kvale (1996), Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul (1999) and Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003).

The first step of the analysis involved listening to each recorded interview and taking notes regarding the tacit knowledge prompted by the understanding and relationship that had been fostered between me and each of the participants. I wrote ideas about how participants reacted to questions, changed their tone of voices, coughed, paused, etc. My privileged position as a leader and as a researcher has allowed me to develop a close relationship which suggested to me that I may be able to pick up on subtle nuances of meaning. Next, I transcribed each interview verbatim. While transcribing, I paused to underline specific passages that I felt were unique or had developed tangential ideas around (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1999). After completing this step, I printed several copies of the interviews and sent one to each of the participants. Each participant was asked to independently review the transcripts for accuracy. This also provided the participants with an opportunity to clarify or omit any answers they were uncertain about. This step in the data analysis allowed for an inner validity check.

The second step involved focusing the analysis (Taylor-Powell, 2003). Once again, I returned to my research question. Afterwards, I reread the revised transcripts in relation to the research question and the specific questions being asked in the interview paying specific attention to how aspects of these questions linked to the research question remembering exactly what I was asking and how, in turn, the participant had responded. I

then proceeded to break each interview down into 'meaning units'. What was classified as a singular meaning unit was the smallest piece of information that could stand alone and that aided an understanding of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I conducted this process one interview at a time. While dividing the transcripts into meaning units, I labeled each unit with a phrase or heading that captured the essence of the idea. To complete the focus of the analysis, I then placed each meaning unit into initial categories. These categories were dictated by the questions asked in the interview.

In step three, to display the categories, I created a conceptual map using the initial categories. Beginning with the first interview, I placed each meaning unit onto the floor. In total 72 piles were created. Using the next interviews, I placed similar meaning units in the categories dictated by the first interview. I repeated this process for the remaining interviews. In each interview, after the meaning units were placed into their initial categories, I was always left with meaning units that advocated for new categories. At the end of each interview, I added on extra spaces for these 'stand alone' meaning units. This process yielded 29 additional piles.

Already, I could see that emergent themes and patterns were grouping together in the initial question-based categories. However, I suppressed the urge to 'give in' to simply group the remaining units into topic-related, established categories. Instead, I allowed for sufficient time to think about all the meaning units before I continued with the analysis. This time created an allowance for immersion in journal writing and brainstorming about prospective ideas that had come out of the process completed. Next, I reviewed the stand alone units which had not been placed in existing categories. Once again, I searched for related categories. With all the interviews laid out, I was able to combine some of the initial categories based on how the participants had provided

information at different times and because of the slight differentiation of questioning between the interviews. In this sense, some of the initial categories were repetitious so I dissolved them into one another. Other related categories were then joined under a new descriptive category label to give a clearer representation of the meaning units in that category (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). At the end of this step, categories clearly reflected a) answers to general broad questioning about the program and its effect on participants, b) answers to questioning concerning specific course components and their impact on participants and c) external dialogue categories regarding facets of each participant's experience that did not accurately fit in any of the previous categories.

In the fourth step of the qualitative data analysis, I reviewed the meaning units, individually, within each newly formed category. Once again, I summarized the meaning units with a word or phrase that captured the essence of the meaning unit. After completing this process for each of the 30 categories, several words and phrases repeated themselves. In the final step of the analysis, I grouped these repeating words and phrases together in order to create the emergent themes that form the qualitative results. Through this final step, two categories of theme groupings were formed, with five themes included in the first group, and four included in the second. Several of these themes are inter-related which demonstrates the connectedness of components of the experience for participants. It is also necessary to acknowledge again the subjective nature of this research. I am responsible for the final representation of the data which, because of the dynamic inter-relatedness of the data, could be arranged differently. I, however, chose to represent the final emergent themes as such after consulting with participants and receiving oral approval of this arrangement, which suggests that this arrangements best

speaks for the participants' themselves. This process also yielded a second internal validity check in the study.

Validity

There are four specific ways I have guarded for internal validity throughout this study. The first way to acknowledge my subjective presence within the program and within the study relates to the subjectivity audit (see Researcher Stance). As an interpretive researcher, the second way of achieving validity is by having applied criteria of authenticity and relevance to this study in order to guard for validity within the research (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). A third measure of validity will depend on the level to which the ideas within the research resonate with audiences who have participated in therapeutic wilderness camping (Osbourne, 1990). This validity check may promote verisimilitude and, in turn, support the research's generalizability (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). A fourth internal check for validity was conducted by the participants themselves as described in the Data Analysis section.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology used in this research and to present to the reader the rationale for utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches in case study research. I have also described my stance as a researcher and my entering assumptions and provided a description of the process of participant selection. The description and rationale for the instrumentation used has been provided. Lastly, this chapter presented an account of the specific steps taken to collect and analyze data and the steps taken to ensure validity within the study. The following chapters will present findings that have emerged from the data analysis and an accompanying discussion related to those emergent findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to find out what kind of effects, if any, the LIT program at PC may have had on youth participants. This study also sought to replicate previous research and extend those studies to address some of the questions prompted by that research. These questions were related to a holistic program model for wilderness camping programs: would a continuous ‘follow-up’ model improve upon the benefits reaped by youth participating in a therapeutic wilderness camping program? What are the responses of these youth to continued interaction with an urban-based follow-up program that has linked them to an earlier positive experience in the wilderness?

The quantitative data are displayed in the Appendices. Table 1 describes the participant subscale scores for the SPPA. Table 2 and Table 3 display mean scores and standard deviation for all participants who completed a self-report measure on self-perception and another on resilience at three intervals during the study: prior to the wilderness out trip, following the wilderness out trip and four months later, within the urban component of the program (see Appendix E). Graphs that represent participant’s individual self perception profiles are displayed in Appendix F.

Regarding the qualitative interviews, the general notion expressed by all participants through the interviews was that the program had provided participants with a positive experience. Participants involved themselves in the interviews with openness and honesty, providing thought and insight concerning the effects of the program on members of a group sharing the same experience.

For many participants, the experience of this program has had a major impact on the path of their personal development and decision-making processes. By sharing their stories, the participants' own learning has increased. And while respecting the individual nature of each participant's experience and learning, similar patterns have emerged in their responses. These patterns are represented in nine theme groups, divided into two sections. These theme groupings surfaced by tracking the similarity of responses to questions posed to participants in the interviews. For a detailed description of this process, see the Data Analysis section in the previous chapter. Many of the themes are inter-related and each speaks to the complex task of highlighting the discernible effects of this program on these youth.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the research findings obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It will begin by providing a description of all participants. Refer to the appendices for a display of the means scores and standard deviations for each participant across the two self-report measures. The qualitative data are displayed in the nine themes that were identified, divided into the following two sections: *Feedback on the Nature of the Program* and *Effects of Program on Youth Participants*. The themes related to the nature of the program provide useful details and insight pertaining to program development. The themes related to the effects of the program provide an understanding of how this program is affecting its participants.

Quotations from the participant interviews are displayed where they assist in illustrating a particular aspect within a theme. Some quotations of length are included to provide the audience, where needed, with contextual completeness. Regarding the subjective nature of the findings, I accept responsibility for organizing and presenting the

findings. I have, however, collaborated with participants to decide first, on the transcripts accuracy and second, upon the final theme groupings that are presented.

Presentation of the Qualitative Data

Results of the analysis of the qualitative data are displayed in Table 3. Nine theme groupings emerged that are divided in two sections. These sections are: *feedback on the nature of program structure* and *effects of program on youth* participants. Within the first section, there are five theme groupings: ownership in the whole, opportunities for space, elements of fun, distinguishing a wilderness vs. urban context, and staffing. Within the second section the four theme groupings are self awareness, coping with adversity, self-reliance, and skill transference. The following is a comprehensive summary of each section and relevant theme groupings.

Table 4: Nine Theme Groupings Emerging from an Analysis of the Interview Data

	Section One: Feedback on Program Structure
Theme Grouping #1	Ownership in the whole
Theme Grouping #2	Opportunities for space
Theme Grouping #3	Elements of fun
Theme Grouping #4	Distinguishing wilderness vs. urban context
Theme Grouping #5	Staffing
	Section Two: Effects of Program on Youth Participants
Theme Grouping #6	Self-awareness
Theme Grouping #7	Coping with Adversity
Theme Grouping #8	Self-reliance
Theme Grouping #9	Skill transference

Section One: Feedback on Program Structure

Theme Grouping #1: Ownership in the Program

All participants in this study first arrived at PC having experienced other wilderness-related programs. With regard to these other programs, three of the four participants expressed negative or indifferent comments concerning the structure of those programs. When Peter was asked what his experience was like at another camp, the following dialogue ensued:

Peter: “not good, it wasn’t anything. They didn’t let you shower”.

Sean: “They didn’t let you shower”?

Peter: “No, we were there for a week”.

Sean: “But you don’t shower at PC.”

Peter: “You still jump in the lake like three, four times a day”.

Sean: “So you couldn’t jump in the lake at this other camp”?

Peter: “It was scheduled. So you’d have this at three, this at four. It’s all stationary camping. So you do whatever is happening around the camp”.

Sean: “And why was this a negative experience for you”?

Peter: “It wasn’t any fun. It was just like go by their rules or sit at the side and don’t do nothing”.

Peter’s comments emphasized a dislike for being told where to go, what to do, and at what time to do so.

Similarly, Adam summarized his feelings about his previous camp experience by referring to another camp he had attended as a ‘cabin camp’. When asked if he could compare PC with the previous camp, he stated, “You’re not in the wilderness. You’re in a cleared area that they’ve cleared. And you’ve went with the entire camp. You’re not

off with your own group". Tony, faced with a similar question, responded that the program he had previously attended prior to coming to PC, "doesn't compare...you don't need things to like have fun. You don't need to climb rocks or kayak to have a really good time. You know, I still had a better time at PC and all that stuff wasn't there".

The answers provided by these participants speak to the structure, design and scheduling of wilderness-related programming. Inherent in those comments are expressions of what 'fits' for each as individuals, participating in a wilderness camping program. In each of the participants' responses, the underlying themes of ownership and voice registered as necessary and present in a positive fit with PC. The following responses attest to these themes of ownership and voice.

Referring to the events of the upcoming day at PC, Adam exclaimed, "We have more of a say in it. And if we don't like it, we can actually turn down the idea. If we do like it we can maybe emphasize that and do more of it". Correspondingly, Peter described why he enjoyed his first summer with PC: "When I did my first summer, I really liked it a lot because I guess they gave you an open choice of pretty much everything during the day instead of just like, 'at two, you go horseback riding, and if you don't want to do that, then you'll just stay at the cabin'." When asked to compare his previous experiences at another camp with regards to ownership in the program, Peter replied, "here you have a say in everything that you do. Therefore, it's more like yours and everybody else's as well. It's better than just them making up the rules at the beginning". Likewise, Adam expressed his dislike towards autocratic leadership of some staff situations: "I don't like it when staff makes all the decisions. I like it more or less when the group makes more of them". Later, Peter elaborated on the kinds of things he had a say in at PC: "Everything! Like pretty much what you want to eat that night. Like

what you want to do during the day and how long you want to do stuff. And when you want to break: stuff like that”.

Overwhelmingly, these participants voiced the importance of having their voices and choices heard within the context of the group. Justin explained his perspective stating, “If I didn’t want to take the first aid course, I didn’t have to. They weren’t going to force me to. If I didn’t want to go on trip, I didn’t have to. But that would suck (laughing)! We didn’t have to cook. We didn’t have to clean dishes but we pretty much volunteered to do it because there’s no point in letting one person do everything. I still remember that good ole’ shepherd’s pie”! While the content of their responses slightly differs, the thematic elements of ownership in the program and the importance of having a voice and a choice within the group are evident across all of participants.

Theme Grouping #2: Opportunities for Individual Space

Related to the previous theme grouping, opportunities for individual space was a theme that arose from some of the participants’ responses. Like having a say in the order of the day, these responses pertained to the importance of having space to foster time to think things out, as an inventory of one’s own well-being. These responses primarily emerged during dialogue associated with the participants’ solo experience. During the wilderness canoe trip, all participants chose to schedule a solo experience into one of the last days of the trip. The solo could last the afternoon, evening, and overnight, depending on the wishes of the participant. During a solo, participants pack a minimal supply of provisions and are dropped off, individually, in close proximity from the main campsite but seemingly, alone. The following responses first describe the participants’ solo experience and subsequent opportunities for personal space and second, deal with the importance of incorporating that described space into wilderness programming.

Peter described his solo experience as “the quiet time of the trip. When I was on my solo trip after I just sat and thought about what happened so far on the trip”. In the same vein, Tony described his impression of solo experiences:

The solo experience is always good. Just too like that point of the trip it’s always good to sit down, away from everybody else and just think for yourself. Like not let other people’s thought processing affect yourself. It’s good to sit down and have that time to yourself. How often to you get something like that, without any kind of distractions?

Adam chose to use his solo time less reflectively but just as effectively: “I caught up on quite a bit of sleep”.

Peter also described the times, apart from his solo experience when he was able to find comfortable personal space: “If you’re cramped up with a bunch of people then you don’t really have time to think for yourself.” Similarly, Adam reported that “back in the city, you don’t really have time to stop and think about things.” Peter continued by describing a regular moment of personal space: “During my wake up times during trip I’d be in the front of the canoe or the back of the canoe, just thinking”. Tony also put forth these sort of impromptu opportunities for personal space and reflection: “I guess those times like when there’s completely nothing to do: when you are just in your tent, like changing out of your wet clothes, or ready to go to bed. You think about things”. He went on to explain why this process occurred saying:

When you’re at camp there is no distractions like there is in the city so you have that time to actually sit down and think: ‘How is this affecting my life?’ ‘How could I change it and do I want to change it? Will it benefit me?’ You always have more time to think, up north, in Temagami, yeah.

Overwhelmingly, these participants reported finding these opportunities for personal space readily while at PC.

On the matter of providing for these opportunities of space to permeate a wilderness program, Peter provided his own template for this space:

Just go somewhere, take a paper and pen and just like keep it for yourself and you can look back on it whenever. Just write down your problems or your enjoyments because when you're on trip, you don't really have enough time to stop and think cause most of the things are just a blur and then when the trip is done, then you remember them. So, during that time it helped me stop and think about everything. Kids should have their own time to regroup.

In the same vein, Adam suggested:

PC more or less gave me a chance to go out in the wilderness, and clear my mind of everything in the city: anything that's going wrong, you know? And it just gives me a chance to open my mind to other situations and how to think about okay, not just what's going on in the city and what can I do about it, you know?

To summarize, these findings describe the participants' recollections of prescribed and impromptu opportunities for personal space providing both a description of where and what that looks like but also, why those spaces are important to each individual. Finally, one participant provided a rationale and an outline for using personal space in wilderness programming.

Theme Grouping #3: Fun

The participants highlighted this theme grouping as significant to their positive impression of the program as a whole. Their responses, however, underline how the element of fun permeates independent parts of the program at PC. Some of these independent parts, such as program staffing and elements of participant self-awareness, are represented in these findings as theme groupings and as was suggested earlier, many of these theme groupings are inter-related. For purposes here then, I will reserve those findings related to fun in other theme groupings for later presentation. The findings presented in this section relate, specifically, to program structure and specific activities. It can be noted that the element of fun appears regularly throughout the interviews for each participant.

Fun as an element of the program is most prevalent in the participants' responses when questioned about the reasons, ideas, and expectations surrounding participation with PC. When asked why he originally accepted a social worker's request to look into PC as an option for the upcoming summer Peter answered, "I just wanted to do something that would be fun during the summer". Tony responded in a similar fashion when asked if he was happy he had participated in the program. He answered by saying, "If I had of missed out and knew I missed out on that much fun, I would have like regretted it so bad". Adam, speaking in hindsight about his expectations of PC said, "I don't expect much from anything. I just expect to have fun and if that happens, I'm happy". This expectation, however, may be broken down into specific responses aimed at specific parts of the program.

The scope of activities, or reasons, for participants to mention fun as an element of participation is encapsulated but not restricted to the following topics of response. Adam

pointed to the planning portion of the canoe trip saying, “I also got to get into preparing our program and preparing our trip and our route map and all that kind of stuff, which is really fun”. Justin reported sharing accomplishments with the group as being a source of fun: “doing major events like going up Ishpatina and Maple [hiking] with friends that you know is pretty fun”.

Overwhelmingly, the participants’ responses described the spontaneous nature of unplanned games and activities during the program as fun. When asked if these activities had an impact on the group Justin responded, “Oh yeah, like if somebody wasn’t having fun up until then, then they should be having fun after it”. Tony highlighted the game, ‘kick the can’, as a source of this described fun saying, “that was a fun game...because everybody is trying to help each other out; everybody’s trying to get people out of jail”. Adam, in the same vein, spoke about the game, ‘camouflage’:

Yeah, it made it a lot more interesting and fun as opposed to just sitting around the campfire watching the logs burn...right, actually getting out there and doing things and having fun and everything. It livened up the trip.

Finally, Peter associated his positive experiences with the familiar base camp saying, “as soon as I see ‘Briggs’, it brings up memories of how fun the past was therefore you remember like oh God, that trip was so good and this one is probably going to be even better because it’s 22 days”!

Theme Grouping #4: Wilderness Context vs. Urban Context

Originating as a wilderness-based program, the core of PC is steeped in wilderness and as such, the level of exposure of participants to wilderness-based activities and environments is high. The participants’ responses illuminate their northern exposure with the plethora of comments related to the wilderness as a place, often contrasted with

the city. What the participants' responses indicate is a clear articulated understanding of what is a wilderness context. Because this description is created in contrast to what the city is not, the responses from each participant have also created an understanding of the urban context. The following presents these contrasted descriptions: wilderness context versus urban context. Pertaining, specifically to the wilderness context, these responses by participants can be categorized as either rich descriptions of the physical environment with which these individuals have grown familiar or through descriptions of what the wilderness is not.

Tony described a wilderness context through his depiction of Florence Lake, in Temagami: "the water is extremely blue, like a sea. It's a beautiful place, like beautiful rocks...I don't know. Mainly the water; the water is sparkling blue". Similarly, Justin stated:

I don't know what she [Julie: trip leader] was thinking but, well, that was a pretty nice night tonight because you could see the moon; it was behind us, I think. And the reflection on the water and then you see bats buzzing around, within inches of your face and you could hear the 'phaphump' and it was gone. And me and Julie were sitting there, the water was so calm, I've never seen it so calm in my life and it was like you're sitting there, you're just like, 'wow', looking over the edge and you see the little stream behind you. You look back and it's done; it was pretty good. I had fun.

Later, Justin provided an anecdotal description when asked whether the wilderness environment registered an impact on him as an individual: "Yeah, because you can't really go anywhere without getting lost! 'Get lost'? I am lost. Where am I going to go"? Justin later went on to provide his feelings towards the wilderness context saying, "It's

not there to screw up. You have to take care of it. The no trace camping...what is it...leave footprints; take memories or something like that. Everybody respects it, like on our trip everybody respected it. We'd sit there going through this one canyon...you'd look up and 'how the heck did this form'?" From the following response, Justin's wilderness context can be illustrated in reference to the 'bush': "I just spent 22 days in the bush. I call it the bush. You can't really say anything else because 'I just spent 22 days in the forest'...The bush gives it depth, makes it look like it's overgrown and you're huddled around a tree for warmth. When you say the forest, you think of the woods".

The wilderness context was also described in contrast to an urban context. Adam answered the question pertaining to the impact of the wilderness by stating the following:

It wasn't the city. It was a place other than the city where you didn't have to think about the city...right, like nothing in sight. You know maybe the other people remind you of the city but everything else; it didn't remind you of the city. It brought you to another place that gave you an area that allowed you to keep everything in the city in the city.

Similarly, Peter summed up his wilderness context in relation to his perception of constraints in the city. He stated:

It's just fun to be up there instead of cramped up in the city. You feel, well, I feel there's nothing I can't do. There's a bunch of open air so you have your own space, instead of being cramped in the house with four walls around you; there's no boundaries so just freedom and you can yell as loud as you want; you can sing songs as loud as you want.

The nature of a wilderness context also presented challenges to the participants in the program. On the matter of solving conflict within a group, Adam explained:

It's really hard when you're on a wilderness trip...It's not like you can get up and go away and go to another section of the camp. You're with that group; you're in that tent with that person, right? Maybe you can talk about switching tents if there is another tent but that's about as far as you can go. When it comes to portages and stuff like that, there is no way you can avoid each other, you know? There's one trail that you go through; you're bound to walk into each other.

To continue with this type of explanation, Peter also described some tangible differences between a wilderness context and an urban context:

Here, we're relying on 911 like once you dial 911 that's like...you can cut yourself in the kitchen and all you gotta do is call 911 and that's all you really need. If you cut yourself in the woods, then you couldn't dial 911 cause you're standing between a rock and a tree.

To summarize, participants generally described a wilderness context through physical descriptions or in relation to an urban context, inferred by spoken differences between the wilderness environment and the city.

Theme Grouping #5: Staffing

This theme grouping emerged across the responses from all participants with regard to what separates PC from other wilderness experiences these youth have been a part of. The participants' responses are thematically connected but they can be divided

into four main ideas: role modeling, attitude, characteristics, and role as facilitators. Tony indicated that the staff at PC acted as role models for him. He stated:

It was your guys' influence...like it's not like you influence us to do bad things. You always say something, like maybe a speech or something you do that'll always just make me think like, 'Oh, that was really cool! I like that'! I don't know, I guess I might idolize some of you like you, Vanessa; I guess I look up to you guys and certain things that you guys do.

Later in the interview, Tony relayed an example how a staff's intervention had impacted his experience. Tony explained that:

Me and Adam got into a scuffle...like I stopped to think like 'is it worth going home for'? To fight and leave all this behind: over something so stupid. Before, I probably would have just fought and like, went home and been stubborn and stuck up how I usually am but at that moment I stopped to think and that's like a good thing.

Tony also explained how he actively perceived the role modeling by staff as situations unfolded: "like when you guys sit back and you know, let us do things. I could like sit there and be like, okay, he's doing that thing there. I guess this should be just for us to do". Soon after, Tony added:

It's not like you just know what you're doing and do it. You do it in a positive, likable way...like a way that people actually listen to you and like what you're saying and, you know, will actually pay attention.

The second idea raised in the participants' responses deal with the attitudes of staff working for PC. Justin relayed a story in which those attitudes had impacted him:

I used to be shy and when my parents broke up that was a big heartbreak...I got pretty depressed you could say so I was pretty well under the weather all the time and coming to PC, you're always around joyful, cheerful people so it makes you cheer up; you can't not laugh at something Sean does.

Tony confirmed this idea when he pointed at the attitudes of staff as being partly responsible for him having a good time while at PC: "you guys always trying to lighten up the mood, you know: always trying to make it better for people, and it works".

In the third idea, one interesting characteristic of PC staff was described by two participants. Adam carefully described the staff at PC:

Yeah, the staff at PC; they're more alive like. And as I said during the summer, 'where do you get your staff from, the insane asylum'? And he [a staff member] turned around and goes, 'Yeah, that's actually what we do, we walk up and buy them...okay we need this many staff' and they're like, 'okay, here you go'.

Similarly, Tony simply stated:

At PC, they're [the staff] just off the hinges! I don't mean that in a bad way. I just mean like, you know crazy fun like they know how to have a good time. They know how to make everybody laugh. They always make sure that everyone is having a good time.

Finally, the last idea related to the staff at PC, described by the participants dealt with the role of staff as facilitators of the program. Justin said of the staff at PC that "they encourage you to do like, I guess, to your maximum: go right out to where you can't do anything else". Adam put forth that "they're out there for you and not for themselves;

where as at other camps they're just there for the pay and everything. And PC, what I've seen is they're there for you and not for themselves". Correspondingly, Tony added that "if we need to chat you guys are there, you're always there to be like 'no, I'm not going to tell you that: figure that out on your own'." Furthermore, Justin added a similar comment when he stated: "Yeah, it's just having people that are there for you if you need them". And Peter capped these statements in this narrative:

They helped us along the way...and they were there the whole time. They know that they're there to help make the trip fun...They're there and you can explain your problems to them and about how you're feeling and they won't tell anybody else.

Section Two: Effects of Program on Youth Participants

Theme Grouping #6: Self-Awareness

The participants' responses suggested through the interviews that an opening for these individuals to articulate an understanding of themselves as individuals within a group created at PC. Across all of the participants, this understanding was communicated by providing rich descriptions of themselves, with regard to the effect PC has had on each individual. Inherent in the latter descriptions are the concepts of outgoingness and athleticism. Communication is another large concept acknowledged by these participants.

Peter provided a description of himself prior to, and following his experience with PC:

Before I came here, it was just my way: everything goes but then like, now I tell people that I'm more of a communicative person, yeah. And social and a lot has to do with camp cause you're stuck with a bunch of kids, right? That's all you gotta do is you gotta work it out.

Interestingly, Tony's self-description also focused on a contrast of the person he perceived he was prior to participating with PC compared to who he sees himself as now.

He stated:

I was always told before when I was younger to think before I do things and when I'm out there, say I'm climbing the side of a mountain face or going up devil's mountain or something or before I'm about to throw a rock at somebody I always stop and think before I do something because when you're out there, it's a lot more dangerous. I guess that helps me think before I do stupid things and, I don't know, it gave me like, a clearer mind, and a better understanding of, you know, myself and I realize myself that I like going up there, and how it helps me with city life. So, it's a good thing.

In a like sense, Justin described himself in relation to the changes he had noticed about himself:

Well, I know I can be shy a lot like when I'm home, I meet new people; I say, 'Hi, how are you doing?', and then bugger off into the basement. I was thinking about that at school. If I know somebody, I'm completely fine around them, but I guess, whenever I meet new people, I'm like, see you later: it'd be like a five minute interview and I'm gone.

When asked if being a part of the program had affected the way he communicated with others, Justin answered, recounting his interpretation of interacting with others at PC:

Well, after a couple of days you learn how, you pretty well observe you could say, on how everybody functions so you can understand their sense of humour: you don't overdo it like, maybe they don't like talking about other people so you wouldn't like, force them to talk...like, respecting other

people's, I guess beliefs and all that. You have to sit back and wait for it; you're pretty good after awhile.

Along with these narratives, each participant used the same descriptor in further assessments of themselves: outgoing. Later, in Justin's interpretation of how he interacted with others at PC, he stated:

Before I started going to PC, I was really shy....I'd usually just stay with my own friends and everything so I wouldn't try and meet new people, wouldn't really try and go out with anybody either and then I started coming to PC and PC is more of a happy happy type of place.

For Justin, PC prompted him to "either jump in or get out". In the same vein, Adam relayed his stance towards being outgoing at PC:

I would describe myself as a very like outgoing but yet a shy person, right? I'm not the kind of person to like walk up to you and just start a conversation, right? I'd sit back and wait for you to come to me, but once it's started, I'll keep the ball rolling.

When asked which conditions at PC were necessary in order for him to be as outgoing as possible, Adam voiced the "need to be invited; once I'm invited, I'm there". Finally, Adam suggested that that invitation signified: "respect more or less. I don't want to be anywhere I'm not wanted, you know, because if I'm not wanted there's no point in being there".

When asked what made him an outgoing person, Justin suggested:

I try and do the hardest things to try and conquer it, for self esteem I guess.

So, you'd sit there and do things over and over again and work out what you

have to do and try and figure out where you can put your feet or where you can put your hand to climb over: I guess I try and conquer whatever it is.

In response to the same question Tony stated, "I guess the fact that I would rather be outside than inside and I'd rather do something than nothing".

Interestingly, most of the responses by participants associated with being outgoing also incorporated a reference to being athletic. Peter said: "I've always been active, like in sports and stuff; I'm a sports kind of guy". In addition to the notion of athleticism, there is a certain level of tenacity voiced within these narratives. Like Justin's earlier description of rock-climbing, Peter exclaimed that "I'll do anything; nothing can stop me. You wanted a tree climbed, I'd climb it. You wanted a hill ran down, I'd run it".

Finally, communication and the acknowledgment of differences within the group was an idea voiced by some participants. Peter, referring to others within the group, advised:

You gotta talk about how you feel and you gotta ask them how they feel and what they're thinking so you guys can work together which helps you communicate a lot better which therefore, in the end, makes you want to ask more questions and stuff like that, to find out how they're doing.

Similarly, Adam stated:

If there's something going on during the day, you know, you need to talk about it and figure out different ways to like...we all better get it off the mind right, then there's people out there you can talk to whether it be an adult or somebody your own age, there's somebody there.

Both Tony and Justin's responses suggest the benefits of good communication with those people who are there in the program. Tony stated: "it's good to talk to people who are, who don't think the same way as you are, who don't live their life the same as you". In a like sense, Jason said of the other participants: "they're all in different cultures! We learned a lot from each other" prior to recounting a story that another participant had told him in the summer, which he remembered when a similar occurrence happened in his own life: "I went 'ah yeah, that's Tony, Tony and his grandma'."

Theme Grouping #7: Coping with Adversity

The role of adversity in the experience of these participants at PC stands as a significant finding in this study. Adversity is most commonly referred to by reference to inclement weather or in relation to the unfavorable actions of individuals within the group at certain times. In relation to this adversity, each participant disclosed important findings about how each coped with this adversity throughout the experience at PC.

Environmental factors created the most significant source of adversity reported by all participants. Specifically, it was the way in which weather had impacted a participant's behaviour that led to many of the following comments. Justin reported being discouraged when "you're all wet from the knees up or knees down or whatever...I want the day to end and I want to go to sleep and be warm and dry. I didn't want to be wet; that was kind of discouraging". Similarly, Peter reported that "most of the days where it was stormy and people were wet there'd be the odd argument and then sometimes that brought down certain people". He went on to signal the contagious nature of ruined days saying, "If somebody's day's ruined on those kinds of trips, then everybody's day pretty much gets ruined". Later, Peter recalled an example of his description from one of the first days of the canoe trip:

The night when they [other participants] jumped on Adam's tent: the next day was just 'pick on Adam' day for those two and, since you had three kids who weren't participating, the others all had to do extra work so that brought us down and by the end of the day, nobody wanted to do anything except go to bed and just hope the next day would be a lot better.

Evidently, Tony's discouragement mainly centered on the weather. He stated:

When we were at the base of Ishpatina and it was just raining for three days, I didn't want to do anything. I was going up Ishpatina and everyone was down; there was no sun...like, we were always wet. I felt discouraged a few times like, you miss people at home.

For Justin, those same moments, at Ishpatina Ridge, were also a source of adversity. In the following excerpt, Justin explained his discouragement:

Justin: We all went to the top of Ishpatina and Trevor stayed back. That was negative on the group because we wanted, we did that session up there...the ah...whatcha ma call it?

Sean: The "bitchn' stitch"?

Justin: Yeah, he wasn't there to put his own opinions in so you couldn't really say much: you could say stuff about him but he wouldn't be able to like, put his own input in like, as a group.

In summary, these excerpts demonstrate the role of two main concepts: weather and group functioning that comprised each participant's experience of adversity with PC.

One final indication of adversity, reported by participants, surrounded the evacuation of two group members at the half way point of the wilderness canoe trip. Tony, in retrospect, approached the evacuation quite pragmatically saying, "I don't

consider that a bad or a good thing; it was just something that had to happen and it just affected me that I met somebody and then didn't end up finishing with them".

Interestingly, when asked what stood out now in his mind about those days, Tony replied, "it was wet...I guess maybe the weather had something to do with it but those were not great days. Yeah, not everybody was at their best that time during trip".

Peter shared this pragmatism when he put forth that "the presence of them was missed but the attitude that they brought toward trip at times was not".

Justin, who had shared a previous canoe trip with one of the evacuated participants and who helped hike those leaving out to the access point said:

I guess as soon as we got to the van I got the picture that alright, well, there was four of us coming down; there's two of us coming back....I felt really sad because you just lost two guys that were part of the trip...It was seeing how they responded to leaving".

Adam's experience of the evacuation, in contrast, was very introspective. He stated:

Just the fact that the food drop and everything, meaning that the access to get out of camp...no matter how much fun camp was, just that day brought back a lot of memories, like how much I missed my mom and my brothers and everything and it's like, I want to go too, you know? That's what was basically going through my mind during that time.

Managing and coping with adversity during the program turned out to be a shared concept for each participant, related to this theme. Each participant spoke about coping with adversity, and provided narratives on how each managed difficult times during the program.

Tony relayed the stance that simply, “there are those days but camp wouldn’t be camp without those days”. He went on to suggest to anyone, considering PC as an experience:

The bugs! You can’t control that: sometimes, like Gado-gado [peanut butter pasta dish] nights. There is always those bad nights but you can’t dwell on it. You have to look past it and look for positives and like, you have to look forward to the next day cause if you one day is not going so good just be like, you know, tomorrow’s going to be a better day. Or, for anybody who might be coming to camp: always think positive. Those bad days aren’t necessarily a bad thing. They could be good, depending on how you look at it.

Tony’s remarks suggest that the individual’s perception will determine the way each person copes with adversity. Correspondingly, Peter’s outlook suggests a similar view of perceiving adversity in order to control the end result. Referring to the adversity, he stated:

I’d just have to figure out the best way to deal with it was just to like, write it down somewhere so that you knew that that did happen, just so maybe you can change it sometime.

Later, he continued with this example saying:

The next day I just woke up and said it was like a fresh sheet of paper and pretty much what I wrote in my journal that night like, yes, the old news and to write something like that again on a new sheet of paper would just be, like repeating itself so you’d want to start with new things.

Justin's approach to coping with adversity led him to "think warm happy thoughts". He explained that "you'd be paddling along...left, right, and I guess you just have to think of something else: what we're going to eat for dinner"? Likewise, Adam reported, "I just go off for walks".

In all of their responses, these participants reported first, processing the adversity and second, reacting to it based on strategies they each found success working for them as individuals. Tony, when asked whether his strategies succeeded said, "I completed the trip for one thing. And I was always remembering that those people at home, they're going to be there. They want you to finish. They miss you just as much as you miss them.

Theme Grouping #8: Self-Reliance

Throughout the course of the program at PC, all participant participated in numerous challenges that independently, pushed the individuals towards new experiences and combined, added up to each person finding new limits for themselves, having completed some remarkable feats as a group. Through their responses, the participants' level of self-reliance is affirmed. Specifically, the participants articulated two clear notions: having accomplished and achieved something, as well as experiencing a sense of pride through success.

To begin, Tony mentioned that the hard skills he learned while on the canoe trip reaffirmed who he had described himself as. He stated: "when I'm paddling, I'm feeling so strong". Along with paddling, Adam recounted the mental process that occurs for him while portaging, another hard skill, which provided a vehicle for him to push himself to new limits:

When you're doing it, right? Okay, I need a break. I just sit there and say to myself, 'no, don't take a break yet, go a little bit more, go a little bit more', then when I get a little bit more I'm like, 'no, not yet, keep going, keep going' right? So, I push myself to my limit then, when I'm finally kaput, I drop the canoe and then I take a little break, and then I throw it back up and usually the breaks are only about a minute and then I'm going again, you know? I don't like stopping. I just like to keep going, just going and going, you know? I don't like to stop.

For Peter, portaging provided a dramatically similar vehicle. He explained what takes place for him while portaging by saying:

There was a bunch of times I wanted to stop because it was hard but, and then after when you're done you feel, 'ahhh', relieved that you accomplished something big and, well, those hard skills, liked helped me. Like in sports, okay, well, you can't stop here; I've been through worse than this. So, in that case, I'll keep going.

Adam relayed how another skill had brought to him, a sense of achievement.

During the course of the fall program, each participant had the opportunity to complete a St. John's Ambulance Standard First Aid course. Of that experience, Adam stated:

I'm really glad that I got my first aid. I've been trying to get that for awhile, right? Getting the money together and that and every time I get the money together, I need it for something else and I'm like, 'crap, alright'. So, just finally being able to get it: that was a big achievement for me.

For Peter, the achievement sunk in on the last day of the canoe trip. When asked what was running through his head while paddling back to the dock, Peter explained:

Achievement, like I almost wanted to cry because I've never been away from home for a month, in that long a period. I thought 18 days was bad, and like 241 kilometers is a big commitment; that's a lot to do. So, achievement, success, because I knew that I was finally home: no more pooping in the woods or like, being wet; all that stuff was behind me. I knew I did something big.

Describing similar emotions, Justin explained his interpretation of the final day canoeing: "I think arriving back from the whole trip was, I'd say it was kind of emotional because you just spent, whatever it was, like 22 days with pretty well no human contact: no electricity, anything, TV"! Later, Justin elaborated on his understanding of having completed such a long trip: "I spent the rest of the time with three other people I didn't really know at the beginning now we're sitting here laughing... You know what you feel like? You know so many more people. You feel like they're just like your family". And Tony, when asked what kind of an impact arriving back at Briggs after completing the canoe trip had on him, he provided the following:

The biggest impact I guess it would have is like, 'I'm done' but that could be good and bad cause like, you're done, right? You're relieved, you completed it but then you're done. You're like, 'I'm done. I'm not going to do this anymore'.

Related to self-reliance, pride was another concept that emerged through the participants' responses. What proved most interesting, and overwhelmingly apparent, in the data, and across all the participants, was the references made to 'bragging rights', usually, relating to climbing Ishpatina Ridge and Maple Mountain, the first and third highest peaks in Ontario, respectively. Adam described those moments saying, "I don't

think I can put it into words. It's an adrenalin rush like, 'wow', I did it". Shortly afterward, Adam explained that "it gave me a sense of accomplishment. I bragged about it. I looked at my Mom, 'yeah, I climbed the highest peak of Ontario; can you do that?'" Similarly, Peter explained:

It's [climbing the ridges] a unique accomplishment like, I was here...gives me something to brag about in class when after I just got back, I'll be like, 'Yeah, well I just got back from' and people would be like, 'Oh yeah, well I went to Florida' and I'm like, 'well oh yeah, I went camping and I went to the two highest points in Ontario' and they'd be like, 'Oh cool, I didn't even know Ontario had a highest point'.

Lastly, Tony provided some closing comments on this concept of pride and what it means to have completed a challenging component of the program. He posed the question to himself, "how many people can say they did the first and third highest points in Ontario"? And afterward he described himself as feeling, "accomplished: not like I can do things that people can't; I just have done things people haven't done".

Theme Grouping #9: Skill Transference

The last theme grouping voiced by the responses of participants through the interviews dealt with skills, which participants recognized as being transferable from the wilderness context, where they were learned, back into the city, where they live. The two skills that appear most prominent within this theme are cooking, and a sense of routine.

Regarding cooking, Tony explained that it was the shared understanding of what had been accomplished each day that provided him with the satisfaction around cooking a great meal that each member of the group could share in. He stated:

After a hard day everybody knows how hard your day was because everybody went through the day with each other so when everybody sits down and enjoys something, that's a big thing cause the guy beside you is, you know, working just as hard as you; he appreciates that meal just as much as you do.

Justin mentioned cooking as being fun because of the variety involved as well as the social aspect:

Cooking's fun! You don't have to make it a chore. You can add pretty well whatever you want to it. I don't like Frank's Red Hot that much but I still tried it a couple times. Everybody else seems to like it and that was just, well, 'enjoy yourselves'.

Similarly, Tony added that spicing things was his favourite part of cooking: "I love that! Like making stuff taste good and just seeing everybody's face and the reactions to how it tastes; that's the best part"!

Adam relayed that learning how to cook on the canoe trip had given him a necessary skill to live: "You need to live, right? What are you going to live off: hot dogs and hamburgers for the rest of your life"? Likewise, Justin summed up these responses by saying the following pertaining to cooking: "I think it signifies that you are able to take care of yourself". In accordance with what Adam expressed, Justin stated: "If you can't eat, you can't live. You gotta have nutrients coming from somewhere. You can't just take vitamin supplements". As an aside, he continued by stating: "When you can cook, women like it".

The second idea that resounded regarding the transference of skills was slightly reminiscent to dialogue surrounding the program structure. Tony spoke about how

aspects of the group functioning had transferred over to their lives back in the city.

Specifically, he pointed toward the group's routine saying:

When you wake up every morning and pack your stuff, pack the canoe; it became routine and that helped when I came back to the city. I was cleaning my room, taking a shower, brushing my teeth. I tended to a routine.

Regarding this routine, Tony said of the canoe trip experience:

If you don't have routine then you're all over the place and you know you have to do things. With routine, you know what you have to and what has to be done and when it has to be done and that helped when I got back to the city.

Overall, the skill that participants referred to as most helpful transferring from the wilderness context back into their lives at home was cooking. In the participants' responses there was an underlying social tone. Participants described sharing the experience of preparing and enjoying a good meal with one another founded on the understanding between them about what they had each accomplished that day. Also within the responses of participant was a sense of relief that cooking had instilled: participants equated being able to cook as being able to take care of themselves specifically referring to cooking in an urban context. A sense of routine was also articulated by one participant.

Summary of Key Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The present research sought to answer the primary research question: what are the effects on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provides youth with an urban component in addition to wilderness out tripping? In addition to the research question, this study sought to answer three related questions: will

a continuous follow up model improve upon the benefits reaped by youth participating in a therapeutic wilderness camping model? What are the responses of these youth to continued interaction with a program that has provided them with a positive experience in the wilderness to a follow-up program back home? And, finally, do these participants benefit from being involved with Project C.A.N.O.E. on a year round basis?

In addition to the central research questions, results from previous key studies outlined avenues for future research that this study attempted to explore (Neill & Dias, 2001; Garst, Scheider & Baker, 2001). These avenues included: exploring the quality of a wilderness based program related to measures of success among participants, examining the value in temporary leaves of absence for participants from potentially negative home environments, and observing the level of skill transference and transference of resilience and self-perception gains from the wilderness context to the home environment.

The present research found several key findings related to the avenues highlighted by previous studies and to the primary questions, which guided this study. This section will first highlight the key findings related to previous studies and then will address the results that provided answers to the primary research questions. Implications of these key findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

The first key finding of these results addressed the idea of transferability prompted by the results of the previous key studies in three areas: self-perception, resilience, and specific transferable skills learned during the wilderness component of the program. Scores of the SPPA may suggest some consistencies with the results found in the research of Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001) who found increases in participant behavioural conduct from pre test to follow up. The present research also observed

increases for behavioural conduct from pre test to follow up, but also observed increases in close friendship, social acceptance and scholastic competence across these intervals. Overall, increases to self perception scores for participants were observed in three of the four participants and research with a larger sample is needed to make a comparison with the previous studies.

The second key finding, also related to transferability, was the observed scores of the RS, which noted in three of four participants a decreased follow up mean score as compared to the mean score observed at the time of pre test. Two of the participants' mean scores increased at the post test, which was consistent with previous research by Neill and Dias (2001); however, there were no further gains observed at the third test interval. Further research related to this result will be discussed in the following chapter.

A third finding involved the specific skill transference of cooking, from the wilderness context to the urban context, as reported by participants through their interview responses. Participants indicated that cooking became the vehicle for sharing understanding and congratulations among the group about tasks accomplished together during the day. Participants also recounted that cooking provided them with tools to take care of themselves back in their homes. As Adam indicated, "What are you going to live off: hot dogs and hamburgers for the rest of your life"?

Another key finding which addressed areas recommended for future research by previously indicated key studies was the quality of the program related to its' overall effectiveness. The present research contained comments from participants that overwhelmingly noted the structure of the program, which participants felt allowed their individual voices to be heard on a regular basis. Participants described how they felt ownership of the program within the context of the group and that they were actively

engaged in the decision-making processes of the group. Participants also recalled having the ability within the context of this program, specifically during the solo component, to take time for themselves on a regular basis, to organize their own thoughts, to reflect and generally, to maintain well-being.

The final area recommended for future research by the previously mentioned key studies surrounded the question of the value of temporarily being away from potentially negative homes. No results from the present research indicated that participants benefited from being away from their home, specifically. However, participants overwhelmingly expressed their pleasure at 'getting out of the city', which suggests the value of a temporary absence from the urban environment. Across many theme groupings, participants recounted the temporary escape from a lack of space, smog, noise, negative influences and general distractions all present in their urban environments.

The next findings relate specifically to this study's central questions, including the primary research question. This research question asked: *what are the effects on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provides youth with an urban component in addition to wilderness outtripping?* The first findings of this study that addressed this question are: participants' understandings of self-awareness and self-reliance.

Through the responses of participants in the follow up interviews, participants gave self-descriptions about themselves within the context of the group. These rich descriptions were similar in that participants often described themselves as outgoing and athletic. Participants also recalled specific differences with others in the group. Participants were able to articulate how these personal differences affected communication styles and group decision making. These responses formed the basis of

an awareness of self and suggested that one of the effects of this program was the participants' realization of the potential effect they themselves have in group contexts.

The second understanding of this finding articulated by participants related to specific effects of this program was an articulated acknowledgment of being self-reliant. Participants routinely equated the challenges of the program as normal and each described the mental process of meeting these challenges similarly. The mental process articulated by participants to meet the challenges, which commonly were physical, seemed to be a personal and private process where participants rationalized a way of thinking that advocated for seeing through each challenge to its completion. Portaging is an example of this self-reliant mental process. Participants routinely challenged themselves to take more steps before resting, which suggested that the drive to achieve is a factor in their mental decisions to continue. This implies a relationship between these participants' sense of achievement related to overall levels of self-reliance implying a determination by participants to 'prove to themselves' that they can accomplish something prior to actually believing that they can.

The second finding that addressed the question of effects on youth participants by this program is a developed understanding by youth participants of a wilderness context versus an urban context. By this, the results of the present study revealed that participants, at the end of this program, were able to articulate a clear understanding of what the wilderness context is. These descriptions were very comprehensive: some outlining the distance to medical attention as part of this understanding while others' responses described feelings experienced while deep in isolated areas of the wilderness. This finding suggests that this program had the effect of helping to foster an overall

understanding of a wilderness context where participants experienced a felt connection with the land over which they traveled.

The next question addressed by this study was: *will a continuous follow up model improve upon the benefits reaped by youth participating in a therapeutic wilderness camping program?* These results indicated two things. First, as was discussed earlier, improvements to participant's self-perception were observed from pre test to follow up in the scholastic competence, behaviour conduct, close friendship and social acceptance domains. The second key finding related to this question surrounded the use of the same staff persons for both the wilderness component and urban component of the program. The organization believed that by positioning one of the trip leaders in the urban setting, who had developed positive relationships with the participant, these youth would feel a level of support in their urban settings not previously achieved by wilderness-based programs. This research sought to explore this idea by asking the question related to the impact of a follow up model. Though the results of this study do not explicitly suggest that consistent staffing in both contexts improved upon the benefits reaped by youth, their reported positive relationships with staff proposed an ability to maintain the successes built during the wilderness component. Participants expressed their comfort in opening up to staff members about important issues. Participants also stated that staff were readily available should they need to speak with someone. This suggests that by positioning staff members within the urban context, participants utilized a trusted resource that they had developed a positive rapport with earlier in the program, advocating for consistency in program staffing across contexts.

The next question addressed by these results asked, *what are the responses of these youth to continued interaction with a program that has provided them with a*

positive experience in the wilderness and a follow-up program back home? These results indicated two key findings related to this question. First off, participants overwhelmingly reported that they had fun throughout the program's entirety. Though the responses by participants refer to fun in a general and broad sense of the term, its use may suggest that participants benefit from this program simply by attending, as a way of experiencing other places, and other people than they are previously used to. This relates directly to the key studies which proposed future research into the idea that these programs are valuable simply because they give participants temporary reprieves from adverse environments. As was discussed earlier, the notion of fun was expressed by participants in many subject areas of the interviews. As a result, this finding suggests that there may be a deeper effect experienced by participants that were broadly referred to in this study as simply, fun. Another finding related to the responses of participants dealt with the certification process of standard first aid. One participant in particular remarked how he had always had difficulties getting the financial requirements together to gain the qualification. Another participant expressed how he intends to seek employment using that certification next season. These responses suggested that participants responded favourably in reaction to a continued interaction with a holistic program.

In summary, the purpose of this chapter was to present the results of this study, which sought to examine the effects on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness program. This chapter began by reviewing the purpose of the present research related to the previously mentioned key studies. Next, this chapter presented descriptive data regarding each of the study's four participants. The quantitative data from each self report measure was then displayed followed by the qualitative data, which included nine theme groupings divided into two sections. Tables were included to provide helpful

visual summaries of both the quantitative and the qualitative results. Finally, the key findings related to both the previously mentioned key studies and to the central questions that guided the present research were described.

The following chapter will discuss the findings of this research. It will outline the implications of the key findings for the organization, and for the field. The limitations of the present research will be described and areas where future research would be useful will be highlighted. Finally, it will conclude by describing the impact this process has had on me both as a researcher and as a facilitator of wilderness based programs.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

This chapter will begin by presenting a broad discussion of the results of the present research in relation to the key studies informing the research, existing literature in the field, and to the central questions that guided the process. This chapter will discuss the implications of the key findings of this research as they pertain to program facilitators, the organization involved, and to future studies highlighted earlier in the chapter. The limitations of this study will then be listed, followed by suggestions for future research. This chapter will conclude with a discussion on the impact this study has had on me, both as a researcher and as a facilitator of wilderness-based programming.

The specific purpose of this study was to answer the research question which asked what effects, if any, a wilderness-based program, augmented with an urban component following the wilderness canoe trip, would have on youth participants. The research implemented both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain data that would provide answers to the research question. Participants completed two self-report measures at three interval periods during the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants and through their sharing and a subsequent analysis, nine major themes emerged in two main sections. The results are representative of the four individuals who participated in the LIT program at PC in 2004. Consequently, these results may not be generalized to youth in other situations. However, these youth are members of a unique group. They are youth who intimately know and understand both the wilderness context where this program began and also the urban context where this program seeks to continue. Their experiences may speak to others searching for related understanding.

Replication Results

This study explored the effects on youth participants of wilderness programming augmented with an urban follow up component. The present research sought to replicate key studies which tested for gains to participants' self-perception and resilience. This research also attempted to extend the previous key studies by conducting semi-structured interviews after a four month follow up period where each youth participated in a series of urban activities aimed at extending their experience from the summer program.

Self-Report Measures

Due to the limited number of participants, no statistical analysis was conducted on the quantitative data. The data is displayed in the Appendices for reference for descriptive purposes. Three of four participants demonstrated increased scores to their overall Self Perception Profiles (SPPA) from pre test to follow up. Within the independent domains, the current research may suggest some similarity with the study conducted by Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001), which indicated significant increases from pre test to post test for social competence and significant increases from pre test to follow up for behavioural conduct. The current research demonstrated increases in five independent domains, including both domains noted in research of Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001). The additional domains which indicated increased scores in this study were scholastic competence, physical appearance, and close friendship. The present research may suggest that participants were able to transfer gains in self-perception from a wilderness to an urban context. Further research is needed with a larger sample.

Similarly, the sample size in this study did not allow a comparison to occur between the scores of the RS in the present research with the study conducted by Neill and Dias (2001). In that research, significant increases were observed across all participants. The

present study noted that only two of the four participants demonstrated increased scores from pre test to post test, while three of four participants saw decreased scores at the follow up interval leaving only one participant with an increased score from pre test to follow up.

The RS scores in this research may be related to the changes experienced by participants in moving back to their urban lives following the wilderness program. The urban program did not take place each day, as was the case in the wilderness component. At most, participants were met bi-weekly. These scores may also represent the outcome of a negotiation between the participants with the new unfolding challenges that they were presented with back in the city. Also, it may be that, relatively speaking, the follow up RS scores are actually quite high. As was the case in the research of Green, Kleiber, and Tarrant (2000), which indicated “interested and caring adults” as the most influential protective factor contributing to participants’ resilience, two of the participants in the present research recorded higher scores while in close contact with program staff (p. 77). Participants returning to the organization were veritably excited about the prospects of their upcoming trip. Pre test and post test interval scores may have reflected this attitude and excitement. More research into the inclusion of year round programs is needed to uncover the reasons for low recorded RS follow up scores.

Overall, it is not possible to determine whether the SPPA and RS were adequate measures for this research. The SPPA did report transferable gains to participants’ self-perception, which related to some of the theme groupings reported by the participants in the interviews such as self-awareness and self-reliance. Elements of the participants’ responses in these theme groupings are related to one’s self-perception. Similarly, the RS reported increased resilience scores for two participants from pre test to post test, which is

consistent with the theme grouping, coping with adversity. The examples provided by participants were specifically related to challenges managed in the wilderness component. This may suggest that the SPPA and RS were both sensitive enough measures to record changes to participants' self-perception and resilience. However, more research is needed to investigate the decrease in resilience scores after the wilderness component was completed.

The differences between the scores of the RS and the SPPA in the present study and findings from previously mentioned key studies may be attributed to differences in the sample selection. First, participants in this study were returning campers. In the study by Neill and Dias (2001), no indication is given that these youth had experienced any wilderness programming prior to that experience. Group size was another differing factor between studies. Garst, Scheider, and Baker (2001) reported 58 participants while Neill and Dias indicated 49 participants. The total number of participants in this study was four. Also, in the previous study, a third test interval was not administered. The follow up scores in the present research indicated an overall decrease to resilience scores.

Secondly, the length of the wilderness component may help to explain the differences in reported results of this study, compared with earlier research. For example, the wilderness component noted in the research of Neill and Dias (2001) was three days long as compared to the 22-day canoe trip in this study (p. 43). It may be that first time participants who burst into a three day wilderness program will naturally report higher test scores because that length of experience may not warrant enough time for participants to experience adverse conditions.

Overall, the present research compared to previous studies indicate the need for future research, specifically to investigate reported differences between first time

participants and returning campers. Age may also play a contributing role in differences among groups participating in similar wilderness-based programs. Though results are unclear in this research compared with the earlier studies, it may be that participants of differing ages experience novelty in different ways, which would then affect the impact of the overall program.

Program Augmentation Results

The qualitative data in the present study consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted at the follow up interval. These interviews revealed, across all participants, two emergent sections of theme groupings: *Feedback on the Nature of Program Structure*, and the *Effects of Program on Youth Participants*. These sections will be discussed in relation to the research within this field.

Within the first section, there were five major theme groupings related to program structure: individual ownership, issues of space, elements of fun, distinguishing wilderness versus urban contexts, and staffing. By exploring these theme groupings, a clear indication of what these participants have said regarding holistic therapeutic wilderness camping can be inferred.

Ownership in the Whole

Overwhelmingly, participants reported experiencing program ownership within the context of the group. Subsequently, results indicated that this sense of ownership was important to participants. Often, participants drew from previous experiences where they were not given the opportunity to have input into a group's decision and contrasted those previous experiences with their more recent experience at PC. The suggestion that these participants experienced a sense of program ownership within their group may be uniquely reflective of this organization, where the staff-camper ratios allow facilitators to

encourage and spread evenly, the daily responsibilities of the group. Also, this was an LIT program, geared towards participants interested in developing the skills necessary to develop and further their aspirations as young leaders. This factor may have also influenced the role of participant ownership of the LIT program.

However, because no uniform standards exist for defining wilderness organizations, such as PC, it is not possible to compare the prevalence of this theme in this program with research that highlights this sense of ownership in similar programs. This highlights an area where future research is needed. This research does allow us to look internally at this theme in relation to the program's effectiveness by reviewing the goals of the program (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2004). These included "providing each camper with individual support and attention" and "providing opportunities for campers to be part of a positive group environment" (p. 29). Reviewing this goal helped to explain why participants experience program ownership. Furthermore, this goal indicated that the program's attempts to provide small staff-camper ratios combined with the opportunities for campers to participate in a positive environment may be responsible for the program ownership experienced by participants.

Opportunities for Space

The second theme grouping within this section voiced by participants was the opportunities for space. Participants described the importance of having the space and time to reflect on one's own, away from the rest of the group. Participants described success in achieving that sense of space at PC. One participant also advocated for the inclusion of this space across the breadth of all programming at PC.

In considering this sense of space experienced by participants it is important to acknowledge again the smaller total number of participants within this group: two staff

with four participants. Pragmatically, that number equated to three canoes, and three tents, far fewer of both than most groups traveling in a residential camp setting where the total number of people traveling together is usually 10-12. The participants in this study experienced the greatest sense of space during the solo period of the canoe trip, when each participant spent anywhere from an afternoon to an overnight perched alone at various locations within proximity of the main campsite.

From the perspective of the trip leader, who is primarily concerned with safety, a smaller number of participants meant that the solo exercise could occur. In the literature, the factors of total number of participants and the availability of time for this structured activity are both elements of a program considered “conducive to spiritual development” (Stringer & McAvoy, 1992, p. 19). Logically, it is an easier task to find individual space while traveling in the context of a canoe trip when there are less people. These findings suggest that the quality of the program is related to the size of the group. These results also implied that smaller staff-camper ratios may be conducive to opportunities for participants to become actively engaged in the decision making processes of the group as well as allowing for more opportunities for participants to take time and space for themselves, in an effort to maintain a positive frame of mind. These findings support the discussion in the research of Garst, Scheider, and Dias (2001), which hypothesized that smaller staff-camper ratios may increase participants’ skills “if the participants are engaged” (p. 48). These findings are also consistent with the literature that equated low staff-camper ratios with overall effectiveness (Wetzel, McNaboe, & McNaboe, 1995).

As was previously mentioned, one of the participants advocated for the inclusion of this type of programming as part of each canoe trip. Another of the program goals (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2004) stated, “providing each camper with an experience tailored to them

as individuals” (p. 2). For this group, the idea of solo was pitched to and accepted by the participants. In this respect then, another of the program goals was fulfilled through the inclusion of space in a structured activity because this activity was tailored to the requests of the group. The nature of traveling in a smaller group also allowed for more impromptu opportunities for space. This finding is consistent with the literature that has advocated a belief in the importance of individual space. Milner, Nisbet, and Bacon (1997) have suggested that time be incorporated into the classroom in order “to reflect on behavior, plans, and goals and to learn to be quiet, still, and calm for a period of time” (p. 34).

Elements of Fun

The third theme grouping within this section of results dealt with the participants’ responses indicating that each experienced a high degree of fun at PC. According to participants, the spontaneous nature of unplanned activities and the choices of structured activities contribute to their experience of fun in the LIT program. These results support the literature that suggests individuals, when given the choice, will participate in activities that provide a degree of happiness, often provided by having fun or experiencing enjoyment (Estes & Henderson, 2003). These findings also suggest that although ‘fun’ is difficult to define; individuals have an innate awareness of their experience. Support for this suggestion was demonstrated by the participants’ broad use of the word, to describe specific games as well as an overall feeling. In the research of Rossman and Schlatter (2000), they suggest that fun be conceptualized not as the outcome of recreation but as a vehicle for other positive outcomes. This may be an appropriate way to conceptualize the responses of participants regarding fun at PC.

Distinguishing Wilderness vs. Urban Context

In this theme grouping, participants articulated the ability to clearly distinguish a wilderness context from an urban context. The participants described the wilderness context in rich descriptions recalled from memories. It is interesting to note the poetic use of language in these descriptions. The participants' descriptions are steeped with vivid images of several nature elements: water, wind, sky, air, etc. They also provided understandings of the wilderness context by contrasting the differences from the city. Participants emphasized the fragile nature of a group traveling in the wilderness referring to practical amenities no longer readily available such as a telephone to dial 911.

Another point worth mentioning in relationship to this theme is the participants' references to open space in the wilderness as opposed to being "cramped up" in the city. Comments by participants that articulated a wilderness context in contrast to their urban surroundings carried escape-like undertones. For example, Tony expressed a need to "get out of the city" as if trapped. This finding is consistent with previous literature that revealed escape patterns of response in participants' impressions of wilderness programs (Milton, Cleveland & Bennett-Gates, 1995; Schroeder, 1996; Garst, Scheider & Baker, 2001).

This seems to fit with another of PC's program goals: "Providing each camper with an exposure to nature, and the importance of environmental stewardship" (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2003, p. 2). From the participants' responses, this exposure has helped each youth develop an understanding of a wilderness context. Currently, much of the literature concerning people and space suggests that peoples' understandings about these connections are almost non-existent. David Suzuki recently addressed humans' lack of

connection to the environment in an address at the University of Waterloo. According to Bussell and Moogk-Soulis (2005):

Suzuki's main theme was that society needs a better connection to the world around it. Interconnectivity means that people are easier to satisfy rather than when they try to buy happiness. "We're all caught up with this idea that I've got to work longer, harder in order to make money to get all this stuff. Nobody's asking, am I happier because I've got all this stuff?" I think it demands a reassessment of what our core values are." He acknowledged that adults are very set people, which is what limits change. "The way that we learn to see the world is the way that we will treat it when we grow up." Change starts with teaching children, and "The easiest and most effective way to do that is to get children out into the wilderness. They need to see their genetic connection to the world.

Correspondingly, efforts by many environmentalists are aimed at helping to foster, in youth, a sense of connectedness with the wilderness. In a recent canoeing expedition sponsored by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, trip participant Christine Persaud created a large oil canvas to help depict "what connects us to the land" (Krzepkowski, 2005, p. 12). This connection was also recognized by James Raffan, who studied peoples' sense of place in the Thelon Game Sanctuary in 1992. Raffan (1993) recounted one of his participants' interviews:

Obviously in an expansive, pedagogic mood, he leisurely took my measure.

"The land, as we see it, is very important to us," he began. "When we travel like this, we think about our elders and when they were telling us that the

land gives us everything. Out here, we always have that connection to the Creator, the one that made this” (p. 52).

The results of this study thus support literature (Beringer, 2004), which advocates for the continued exposure of youth to natural physical environments in order to foster a sense of connectedness and relationship with the physical environment in which we live.

Staffing

The final result to be discussed concerning feedback on the nature of program structure is the theme grouping of program staffing. Overwhelmingly, participants reported their approval for the staff at PC. In their responses, they noted positive role modeling, cheerful attitude, favourable characteristics, and the importance of the role of the staff within the context of the group as specific references to the impact the staff have had on these participants. Heinz-Ziliotto (2004) reported the primary goal of the program: “providing healthy role adult role models who are also authentic” (p. 2). The participants all discussed how, to varying degrees, staff had a profound impact on their experience of the program as a whole. Their responses indicate that the PC program goal noted by Heinz-Ziliotto (2004) is being met.

Using the organization’s goals, staff members develop an environment at PC that is seemingly low structured: that is, the structure is determined by the needs of the participants. Often, as was voiced by these participants, group decisions are made by participants. At the same time, following the organization’s goals, each camper is provided with “individual support and attention” indicating a high level of camper care (Heinz-Ziliotto, 2003, p. 2). By helping to ensure these conditions, staff attempt to let the environment itself do most of the teaching through novel experiences, which is believed to play a role in the creation of new knowledge (Holling, 2004).

Overall, this discussion of these themes highlighted the thoughts and opinions of youth participants involved with this holistic therapeutic wilderness program. The results indicated the prevalence of important issues relevant to program structure in this field. They also help separate this program from others and aid a broader discussion on the suitability of different types of programming for a diverse range of individuals considering these types of programs.

Within the second section, results formed four major theme groupings: self-awareness, adversity, self-reliance, and skill transference. By exploring these results, an understanding of what effects this program has had on these youth participants can be achieved.

Self-Awareness

The first theme in this section suggested that participants gained an awareness of themselves in the context of a group. This awareness was articulated in the interviews when participants often related to their ability to communicate with others. Many of the participants described their communication styles referring to how this differed from others and how they negotiated differences between them in order to continue working as a group. It is interesting to note that although participants recalled this negotiation among the group, each described himself as “outgoing”, which suggested commonalities within the group, in addition to difference. This finding is consistent with the research of Rew (2003) where it was noted that becoming aware of one’s self is supportive in the overall social process of self-care. This notion will be returned to in the theme grouping of self-reliance discussed later.

Coping with Adversity

Another finding within this section dealt with the emergence of adversity during the course of the program. Participants reported experiencing adversity through feelings of discouragement related to two factors: inclement weather and group dysfunction. Repeatedly, participants recalled how they “were down” when the weather was “bad”. Most cited being “wet” as one of the biggest challenges to overcome over the course of the program. An interesting relationship between the factors of weather and group dysfunction seemed to appear as each participant remembered discouraging experiences within a two-day time period. These tended to occur during the most inclement weather of the canoe trip in which a significant level of group dysfunction was observed. Another dimension of this adversity is its’ relationship to the participants’ resilience. Literature has suggested that doses of adversity can help to foster resilience (Baruch & Stutman, 2003). These findings may be consistent with that literature if resilience is viewed as the outcome of the negotiation between each participant and the adverse conditions they experienced how each of these youth adapted to that suggested that doses of adversity can help to foster resilience (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick, & Sawyer, 2003; Ungar, 2003). However, this adversity recalled by participants may have other implications.

A very interesting dimension to the discussion in the literature surrounding the use of adversity is connected to earlier findings of this study. As was previously discussed, participants in this research articulated an understanding of a wilderness context. This supported an environmentalist belief in the importance of demonstrating humans’ connectedness to land. According to Ungar (2003), “programming for at-risk children and youth that seeks to bolster their ability to cope with adversity would be more effective, based on the reasoning of deep ecologists, if nature is more than just a

backdrop” advocating instead for a transcendence of self that crosses divisions between humans and nature (p. 24). Participants in the present study described the way in which they coped with the discouragement of inclement weather and group dysfunction. Their responses all contained patterns of acceptance and allowance in experiencing adversity. Participants shrugged off the adversity as “part of camp” instead focusing on simpler matters such as dinner and getting a good night’s rest, opting instead to look at the day ahead as “a new sheet of paper”. These responses are consistent with the idea of wilderness playing a larger role in managing adversity because of the acceptance to levels of adversity, voiced by the participants. It is important to remember that these participants were returning campers to PC and as such would have likely faced similar experiences of adversity in earlier trips. Thus, it is logical to assume that previously facing adversity has led to a more composed outlook by the participants coming into this study. There is room in the literature to further explore the seemingly comfortable relationship of returning participants with varying levels of adversity.

Self-Reliance

In a related finding to the self-awareness piece discussed earlier, an additional finding in the effects of this program on the youth participants was increased self-reliance. This theme grouping emerged from responses by the participants who described having a frame of mind to render themselves independent during the challenges posed throughout the program. Participants primarily cited the physical challenges such as portaging though each response retold the mental process that took place within the participants’ heads. The described rationalizations aided the ability of these participants to successfully navigate those challenges and gain the sense of achievement so closely related to this theme grouping: pride.

The consistent emergence of a sense of pride joined the process of achievement to comprise this theme grouping of self reliance. Participants overwhelmingly reported that achieving certain physical challenges throughout the course of the trip provided them with a sense of pride, which they suggested gave each “bragging rights” back in the city. Though the positive reframing surrounding each participant’s perspective is consistent with the resilience research by Wolin (1994), bragging as a way of communicating these successes is an area worth exploring in future research.

Skill Transference

The last theme grouping in this section was skill transference. The responses related to skill transference indicated that participants gained a broad range of skills during the program. Participants highlighted aptitude in many physical skills inherent to wilderness programming such as paddling and portaging. Most prominently, participants recalled skills related to cooking and to the overall adherence to a routine. Of these skills, participants revealed through the interviews how cooking and the use of routine, such as cleaning one’s room, and getting one’s self organized, could be implemented in the urban context. Interestingly, participants seemed relieved that they had achieved a certain level of culinary proficiency and participants expressed their pleasure of enjoying a meal with someone who had shared the experience to get to that meal. This proficiency supports literature that advocated for research into programs that provide skill transfer from wilderness environments to the personal lives of participants (Ewert & McAvoy, 2000).

To conclude, the interview results indicated a willingness of participants to openly discuss the impacts of their experience. The following section will explore the implications of these findings. The program’s impact was discussed in relation to

findings that indicated themes specifically related to effects experienced by participants while participating in the LIT program at PC.

Implications

The results of this study suggested implications for program facilitators, the organization of PC and other holistic therapeutic wilderness programs, as well as for future research. The implications will be presented in the order of which the key findings were stated in the previous chapter.

The first key finding was the transferable gains demonstrated by participants from their increased self-perceptions scores to their indication of specific cooking skills, which they remarked were able to transfer from the wilderness context to their home lives. This finding has implications for program facilitators exploring potential urban additions to wilderness-based programming. The positive results associated with transferability of certain skills suggest that this program may be effective in addressing aspects of the participants' home lives. The question now is what other skills, conducive to both wilderness and urban contexts can a program like this focus on? The literature has suggested that specific skills like cooking are simply transferred through learning life skills by living on the land, and having to deal with natural consequences and the outcomes of an individual's own choices (Whiteman, 1998). This supported a deeper connection with wilderness to foster transferability of skills as proposed by Ungar (2003).

The second key finding of this research dealt with the idea that the quality and structure of the wilderness-based program would have an influence on the outcomes of participants, and the program's effectiveness. The results indicated that provisions by staff for ample personal space for participants, in combination with the low staff-camper ratios, provided an environment that fostered ownership for participants in the decisions

of the group. For facilitators, this research speaks to the quality of care that has been demonstrated to these participants. From this, facilitators, by reviewing the theme grouping pertaining to staff, can continue to model this blueprint for quality of camper care. This model seems to promote openness in communication, honesty, authenticity, and an emphasis on allowing participants room to make group choices and decisions.

For PC, this research suggests that the organization is meeting its program component goals according to the responses of the LIT group, 2004. In the previous discussion section of this chapter, the goals outlined by Heinz-Ziliotto (2004) were presented as consistent with the results of the present study. And while many Ontario Camping Association accredited organizations may expand with increased enrollment, careful attention must be paid to the positive impact of smaller staff-camper ratios. The current literature has suggested that smaller staff-camper ratios increase the overall effectiveness of these organizations (Greenwood & Turner, 1987; Wetzel, McNaboe & McNaboe, 1995).

The next key finding of this research was related to the central research question which asked what the effects were on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provided youth participants with an urban component in addition to wilderness outtripping? The key findings related to this question were an articulated understanding of participants' self awareness, self-reliance and a deep understanding of the wilderness context. The implications for program facilitators is an awareness of the effect contributing challenge factors inherent to wilderness-based programming, such as portaging, the weather, and group communication have on participants. By planning accordingly, facilitators can continue to provide opportunities for participants to meet these challenges in an effort to build self-awareness, self-reliance

and a deeper understanding of the wilderness context. For the research, these results indicate the potential for learning fostered by an understanding of the wilderness context. This idea has been presented by the research of Ungar (2003) discussed earlier.

The second question posed by the present research asked whether a continuous 'follow up' model improves upon the benefits reaped by youth participating in a therapeutic wilderness camping program. The key findings from this study related to this question were the increased scores of self-perception for participants and the notion that staffing positively influenced the ability of participants to retain successes from the summer. The implications of these key findings, specifically an observed increase to self-perception for participants may support the implementation of holistic components to wilderness-based programs. Again, for other program facilitators, careful consideration should be given to potential gains that holistic programming may bring to the lives of participants.

Another implication for PC concerning these findings, specifically the notion of consistent staffing in the wilderness and urban contexts are the sense of continuity that may be experienced by campers. This finding suggested a positive relationship between staff and participants that provided a support person, which participants can utilize in their home environments.

Responses from both participants in the present study who had shared previous trips with me indicated a level of rapport not easily developed with all participants. Correspondingly, the pattern of having one of the facilitators from the summer help organize and lead activities during the urban component of this program provided campers with a sense of consistency and continuity. Although this research did not address this directly, the participants' willingness to share so openly during the

interviews suggests a level of comfort positively related with the previously mentioned rapport.

For PC, these findings also may suggest that in order to recruit staff members who are representative of the populations of youth the organizations work with, a goal recently articulated at PC board meeting, it may be necessary to implement year round programming. This way, a stronger base of older participants continue returning to the organization, and eventually enter leadership streams or intern development programs with the goal to return as staff members.

The final question posed by this research was: what are the responses of these youth to continued interaction with a program that has provided them with a positive experience in the wilderness and a follow-up program back home? The present study found favourable responses by participants to all aspects of the program, the use of the word 'fun' as a general descriptor in many of these positive responses, and an indication that first aid certification was a positive focus point of the urban component. The implications of participants' encouraging responses to aspects of continued interaction with PC, specifically the first aid instruction suggests that this organization is on the right track. For these participants exposure to this program, namely, the urban component, which enabled each to gain first aid certification, has given them an opportunity to continue participating in wilderness programming albeit in another role. Most of the participants have reached or are nearing the age restriction at PC. Having completed the LIT program at PC now gives them an opportunity to apply for an internship with PC or abroad. The first aid certification provides participants with a basic industry standard.

The broad use of 'fun' as a description of the participant's overall experience of the program has implications for program facilitators. In wilderness based programs,

facilitators aiming to help participants make the most of their experience may very easily provide too much structure. In contrast, the literature suggests that facilitators use the natural environments as more than a back drop in wilderness programs (Raffan, 1993; Ungar, 2003) to maximize and deepen understandings achieved in the wilderness. This key finding is a good indicator that the program at PC is currently providing a structure that meets these participants' needs.

Overall, the key findings of this research suggest that this program is having positive effects on youth participants. Recommendations to improve upon the effects described in these findings are the continued development of the urban component to provide more activities for participants to take part in. This research found recurring conflicts of interest in participants' schedules, which made it difficult for these youth to be in attendance for each focus point. Combined with the decreased scores of the RS for participants at the time of the follow up interval, these results may suggest that more group contact is needed within the city to retain any increases reported by participants at the post test. Another recommendation for PC is the continued use of staff members in the urban context who were present during participants' wilderness component. Responses by participants suggested that the positive relationship between youth and staff could provide continued safe and caring facilitated exchanges in participants' home lives.

Limitations of this Study

There are several limitations in this study. To begin, there were a limited number of participants compared to the number of participants indicated in the key studies. This research focused on four participants between the ages 17-18. In contrast, Garst, Scheider and Baker (2001) indicated 58 participants, ages 12-15. Similarly, Neill and Dias reported 49 adult participants.

The participants in this study were experienced. Individuals who volunteered to participate in this research were all previously campers with the same organization and as such, returned to PC with a positive frame of reference concerning wilderness-based programs. To this, the participants represent different views than youth who may come to PC for the first time. As such, they bring both knowledge, understanding and positive memories from previous experiences with PC that may pervade this research. Though this may influence their experience of this program, it may also enhance their understanding of the program's effects on them, having participated for a longer periods of time. It is unclear what the experience levels for participants were in the previously indicated key studies.

The length of the wilderness component differed between this study and one of the key studies. Neil and Dias (2001) reported a three-day experience while the PC program included a 22-day canoe trip.

The staff-camper ratios for this study (1:2) were smaller than the staff-camper ratios in the research by Garst, Scheider, and Baker (1:3.6). The staff-participant ratios were not mentioned in the study by Neill and Dias (2001).

All participants who registered in the LIT program at PC in the summer of 2004 were male, with the exception of one. Because it is against policy to place one woman on a trip comprised of all males, that individual was placed in another program within PC. The results, then, have not incorporated a female perspective. However, the present study was exploratory and did not to seek to generalize results across all populations of youth. Rather, these findings sought to generate understanding about the impact of this type of program on these youth participants. The other studies indicated male and female participants.

This program is reflective of wilderness-based programming in North America. Though similar principles are reflected in all wilderness programs, the effects of these programs still may be a reflection of the geographic context that these programs are located in. For example, activity-based wilderness programming in North America could be seen as educational alternatives whereas the trends of Scandinavian outdoor education reflect attempts to address local environmental problems (Brookes, 2001).

All of the youth in this study are from the same area (southern Ontario) and are not representative of other youth from different places and cultures. Though cultural diversity was reflected across the participants, this factor was not explicitly taken into account during the data analysis.

A fourth limitation is that this study does not include detailed demographic information regarding the economic backgrounds of participants' families. This, as well as other demographic factors, may affect the access to such programs and may well be a factor relating to different response patterns to the self-report measures and the interview questions.

Finally, there are issues associated with the self report measures completed at three intervals by each participant. The first is social desirability. Participants in this study, as well as in the key studies may have filled out the measures with answers that cast their behaviours in the most favourable light. This is a phenomenon amply documented in the research literature (Armitage & Connor, 1999; Kristiansen & Harding, 1984). In addition, although all participants were previously accepted into the program prior to being asked about their potential involvement, participants may have initially reacted differently to the pre test self report measures, which took place early in the program when they were establishing their first impressions of the staff members involved.

However, results from the theme grouping of program staffing suggest that my involvement did not have a negative impact on any participant's experience. Participants indicated positive relationships with staff, and reported a sense of ease in approaching staff with problems.

Future Research

Finally, pertaining to the research field, the results of this study suggest that more research is needed. The need for future research that is positioned around the experience of returning participants to wilderness programming was also described earlier in this chapter. This section will make this, and other needs, more explicit.

Overall, future studies with a larger sample are needed to look at various interesting issues prompted by this study. These issues are: potential resilience gains following wilderness components, and further examination of small staff-camper ratios. Information on a long term basis is needed to establish whether a year round program affects the return rates of participants to these types of organizations. Therefore, it is suggested that longitudinal studies be implemented to determine the impact of year round programming on enrollment in holistic therapeutic wilderness programs. The results of this study suggested that the participants' experience with PC was positive. Future research could evaluate whether this positive experience increases the likelihood of participants to continue returning to the program? What other factors determining participants' return are at play?

Future research is also needed to explore the comfortable relationship between returning participants and adversity observed in the present study. The literature suggests that this comfort may spawn from a deeper relationship with the physical environment (Ungar, 2003) and may help to foster resilience (Wolin, 1994). If this program is partly

responsible for helping participants foster a deeper connection with the wilderness, then future research may indicate whether this program could foster improved ecological connections with land for youth. Previous research has outlined a severe disconnection between urban youth and their relationship with nature physical environments (Haluza-Delay, 2001).

To help explain the differences in observed test score results of the RS from this study, which demonstrated overall decreases in all participants excluding one as compared with previous key studies, future research should be conducted to compare effects on returning campers with participants experiencing wilderness-based programs for the first time. In addition, follow up testing would allow researchers to evaluate whether potential increases to first time participants' resilience scores are retained four months following the conclusion of the wilderness experience.

More research is needed to continue to explore the effects of these programs after wilderness components have been completed. The responses surrounding experiences of success achieved by participants in this study indicated an element of bragging. Future research is needed to explore this phenomenon. Future research may answer the following questions spawned by the results previously indicated: What supportive social networks exist back in the city for participants to communicate their experiences? Did participants have to compete within these networks to have their voices heard? The results of the present study indicated that the presence of the staff member in the city allowed campers a forum to discuss their experiences within the same group as in the wilderness context. However, the results indicated suggest that a lack of connection still may exist for participants between wilderness and urban components of wilderness-based programming. Future research would ask participants about this disconnection between

experiences in wilderness context and urban contexts. The impetus of this study, in part, came from the observed lack of connection between seasonal wilderness programs and the lives of participants back in their homes. This study suggests that the continued implementation of holistic measures, such as the presence of staff members who have positive relationships with participants, and increased activities that provide opportunities for groups of participants to meet and exchange stories in the city, prefaced by wilderness programs, is needed to increase the support systems that surround these youth.

Finally, similarly related to the previously proposed area for future study, research is needed to explore the impact of skills first introduced to participants through a wilderness program. The results of the present research suggested that the wilderness context may be an effective vehicle for teaching youth life skills such as preparedness, and self-reliance through the use of routine and cooking. Cooking, for example, was seen by participants as a skill that was needed in the wilderness experience but also as a skill that was useful to participants in returning to their regular lives. Future research could uncover other rates of skill transference.

Conclusion

The impact that this study has had on me is difficult to describe. As this research represents the culmination of much of my personal and professional focus over the last year and a half, it goes without saying that the experience has been deeply meaningful. This type of work and the way in which I approached it required a personal commitment to the topic, as well as to the people involved. Because I have been personally affected by the wilderness and Project C.A.N.O.E., I have attempted to allow myself to be shaped by the experience of these participants, in order to provide honest and open facilitation in my role as a leader, a friend, and also as a researcher. In that sense, this experience has

touched the far reaching intersections of self, work, and study, through a process of deep immersion.

Along the way are the words of colleagues, these participants, past campers and staff: all ringing reminiscently in my ears. The following is a gathering of those words and worlds, arranged in a way that has aided the process of this research, and shaped my being throughout.

The impetus for this study began as my experience in wilderness programming began to deepen. Working with at-risk youth in northern Ontario, the inability to link consecutive positive experiences in the wilderness, due to a lack of financial support, or unsympathetic support persons at home, or both, seemed to hinder these individuals' return to seasonal programs in the wilderness. Coupled with these participants' seemingly overwhelming success during the summer and the life the wilderness had breathed into them, I became deeply moved to explore the apparent disconnection.

Prior to this research, the understanding of the impact of wilderness programming on people that I shared with the youth I worked with provided the opening required to establish positive relationships during and after the program. However, it was the participants in this study who have provided me with the privileged opportunity to share an understanding of their relationship with wilderness programming using the relationship they and I have created as the vehicle for this sharing. For this, and for their words, I am thankful.

Through the shared experience of meeting and re-meeting these participants, through the canoe trip, and the subsequent fall program, through ups and downs and wet tents and suntans, and eventually through the stories shared in the interviews, I have been included in a process of sharing stories all too important to miss. Too often, within

wilderness camping programs, the paper trail for some participants is thin, their presence greatly missed the following season, and their voices left silent to the question of why they were not able to return and the overall effects of the program. This study represents an opportunity to listen and to put forth best efforts to help generate and recreate the understanding that has been communicated in the results of this study.

In my years working with at-risk youth, I am only now beginning to see signs of long term success through a positive email from a past camper, or a familiar face at the next staff training: "That canoe trip really changed the way I look at things" or "Thank you for making a difference in my life". The reality of this field is that facilitators work today for tomorrow, planting seeds, actively watching, listening and hopefully, laughing. The signs of success follow the trickle down, way down. This research has almost cheated this sequence of events, and afforded audiences an opportunity to hear participants' perspectives on the effect of this programming, to help seek out answers that they may make meaning of for their own use based from those directly involved.

The perspectives of these participants have been most recently affected by the effects of a holistic therapeutic wilderness program. Since my first summer with PC, the philosophy behind this organization has shifted to recognize the potential positive impact that year round programming may have on participants. The shift to holistic programming is a reaction to the voices of previous participants. In an effort to improve camper enrollment, skill transference, and to gain access to the urban centers, which has traditionally been left out of the scope of wilderness programming, the program helped to create an opportunity for research in this field to focus on its changing face. It is an exciting and emerging front and one which I again am privileged to be a part of. The

efforts to foster holistic care in urban centers stimulated my personal learning and provided ample rewards by simply listening to the responses of these participants.

During an orientation, a co-worker suggested that when we cease to learn from our experiences working with youth then that may be the best indicator to move on to another form of employment. Judging by my experience with this study, I still have much to learn. What has become infinitely clearer through this research is the need to continue along the path towards the provision of year round opportunities to youth in an effort to strive towards holistic levels of care. Establishing a relationship that helped to create an opening through the interviews, where participants could share their views of what works best for them will prove instrumental in the future design of wilderness programming: a belief in small numbers, the teaching of skills that help participants experience success in their home lives, as well as certification that can help foster opportunities for these young leaders to become role models for younger participants as they strive to gain employment in the field of wilderness programming. These are some of the effects rendered from this study. Through the process of storying and sharing, a picture has emerged representative of these participants' philosophy of life. Inherent to this philosophy is as love for the present, for its passion, and for the freedom many of us take for granted.

In a recent CBC interview (Rogers, 2004); 94 year old Canadian artist Doris McCarthy shared her views on the process of aging. In this monologue, McCarthy stated that as you get older:

You lose all your fears. You drop them; they're no longer important. You no longer care about what people think. You make your own code and

you live by it. And you're relaxed about it because you believe in it and you've tested it and it works.

Later, while I sat reviewing the interviews, I immediately stopped to reread a statement by one of the participants (Peter): "there's no boundaries so just freedom. And you can yell as loud as you want; you can sing songs as loud as you want...Nobody will be there laughing at you". I immediately made the connection to McCarthy's interview, to life unfolding at either end of a spectrum, and I at once recognized the impact of the wilderness both in McCarthy's philosophy and in Peter's freedom. What McCarthy's wisdom suggested to me is an avenue to freedom that we have in the wilderness but that we are only awakened to when we immerse ourselves in it. Peter helped me to remember this and his words suggest that wilderness is the correct path, or scrub trail, to follow toward McCarthy's road in an embracement of old age. To close, I am pleased to put forward the words of Nessmuk (1988) that aptly captured my experience with these participants through this research: "We're not out here to rough it. We're here to smooth it. Things are rough enough in town" (p. 78).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Human Research Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval

Human Research Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval

<u>Principal Investigator</u> Sean Loughheed Graduate Student <u>Co-Investigator(s):</u>	<u>Department/School</u> CHIL	<u>Supervisor</u> Dr. Roy Ferguson	
<u>Project Title:</u> The Effects of a Holistic Wilderness Camping Model			
<u>Protocol No.</u> 200-04	<u>Approval Date</u> 17-Jun-04	<u>Start Date</u> 17-Jun-04	<u>End Date</u> 16-Jun-05

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Committee has examined this research protocol and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.



Dr. Martin Taylor
Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions or minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of "Request for Continuing Review or Amendment of an Approved Project" form.

200-04 Loughheed, Sean

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

The effects of a holistic wilderness camping model

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled '*The effects of a holistic wilderness camping model*' that is being conducted by Sean Lougheed who is a graduate student in the department of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. You may contact him if you have further questions by phone at (519) 528-3607 or through Project C.A.N.O.E. at (416) 534-9002 or by email at seanloug@uvic.ca

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a master's degree in Child and Youth Care. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Roy Ferguson. You may contact my supervisor at (250) 721-7983.

The purpose of this research project is to address the assumption that a holistic approach, which includes a wilderness outtrip as well as an urban program, to wilderness camping will provide participants with a positive experience. The key to the research will be evaluating the assumption that these participants will benefit by becoming involved with Project C.A.N.O.E. on a year-round basis.

Research of this type is important because to date there has been minimal research in the field of wilderness camping that evaluates year-round programming for participants. This research explores a holistic view of wilderness camping, something which, traditionally, has operated only on a seasonal basis.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been involved with Project C.A.N.O.E. in the past and you have expressed interest in joining the *Leaders in Training* (LIT) program, beginning this summer. The LIT program will have a year-round focus including a 26 day outtrip in the summer and regular meetings and activities back in the city during the rest of the year.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include completing 2 questionnaires (taking about 1/2 hour) a total of 4 times from the middle of June to the middle of December 2004. Your voluntary participation would also include a 1-2 hour semi-structured, audio tape-recorded interview regarding your experience with Project C.A.N.O.E. including both the wilderness outtrip and the urban activities. Sean Lougheed will conduct the interview. Subsequently, you will be given a copy of the transcripts to review and comment upon as well as being given a copy of the analysis of the data to review for accuracy and clarity. Your participation in this study also includes the use of the descriptive data collected in the program referral forms including those entitled, "Questions for Parent/Guardian" and "Questions for Applicant" though none of the information that may be used will make you identifiable to anyone reading the final thesis.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time required to complete the questionnaires and the final interview, scheduled to take place between the middle of November and the middle of December 2004. You can determine specific times and locations for the interview, according to your own schedule and convenience.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity to speak about Project C.A.N.O.E. and the holistic wilderness camping experience. As a participant, you could speak about eh effects, if any, that it has had on your life. The data collected will contribute to a clearer understanding of the limits and possibilities of holistic wilderness programming for youth. The data collected will also serve to evaluate the quality of this specific program model.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data collected to that point would be destroyed immediately.

As a potential candidate, please remember that your decision to participate or to decline to participate in this research will have no bearing on either your selection in this program as well as any effect on the outcome of your participation in the program.

The researcher will not be made aware who is participating until the time of the interviews and the decision to participate in the research has no bearing on your inclusion in the program. If you choose not to participate in the research you need not return this signed informed consent form.

The researcher has a relationship to potential participants as trip leader/trip participant. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps have been taken. The referral coordinator, another trip leader or a board member will administer the questionnaires so that I will not know who is participating in the study until the time of the interviews in the final month of the research.

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ensure that the person administering the questionnaires prior to each time provides periodic reminders about the terms of the research that you are asked to complete the self-report measures. Participants will be reminded that their inclusion is completely voluntary and that they may decline participation without consequence should they desire to do so.

In terms of protecting your anonymity no descriptive information that makes you identifiable to anyone reading the final thesis will be used. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Raw data will be stored under lock and key at all times. Once the research has been completed, audiotapes, transcripts, and self-report measures will be destroyed.

Other planned uses of these data include the written thesis, professional conference presentations and published articles in scholarly journals.

Data from this study will be disposed of by destroying the information from the measures and interviews, including the audiotapes.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: in addition to the thesis, subsequent professional articles may be written and published. As well, possible presentations involving Project C.A.N.O.E. may be considered.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4362).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions or participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

Your additional signature below indicates that you consent to having the interview recorded on audiotape.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and the researcher will take a copy.

APPENDIX C

Interview Question Guide

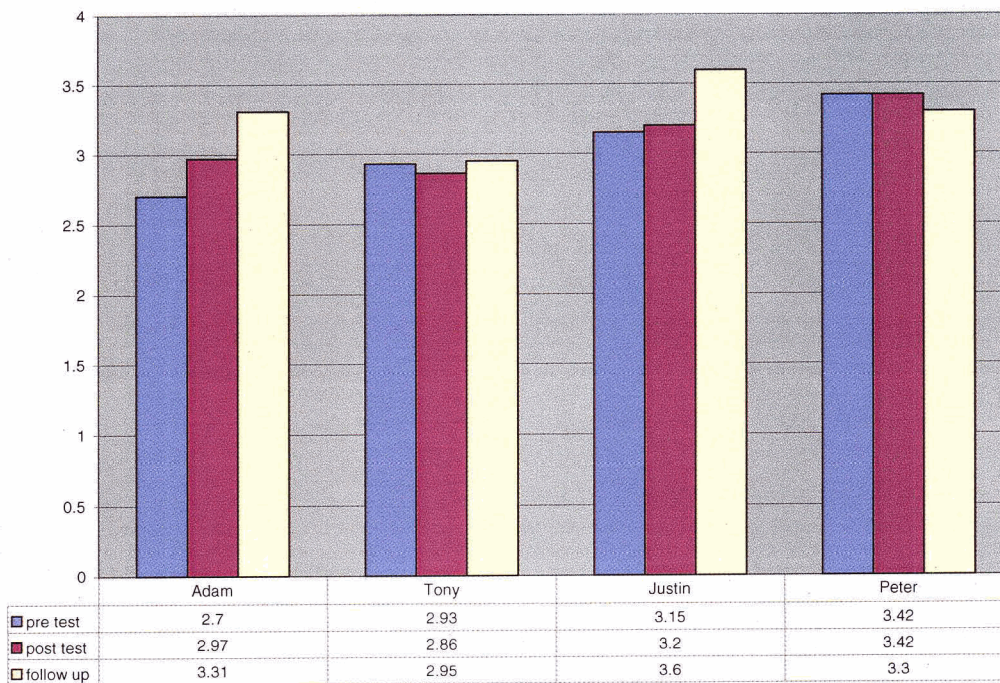
What is the effect on youth participants of a holistic therapeutic wilderness camping program that provides youth with an urban component in addition to wilderness out tripping?

- 1) How long ago did you participate in your first Project C.A.N.O.E. out trip?
- 2) What were your reasons for participating?
- 3) What has your experience been with other programs in your community?
- 4) Have you been to other camps? If so, tell me about your experience.
- 5) How does your experience at Project C.A.N.O.E. compare to other programs?
- 6) Are you happy you decided to participate in the program? Why or why not?
- 7) Do you think your experience with Project C.A.N.O.E. has had any effect on you as a person?
- 8) What parts of the program are responsible for having this effect on you?
- 9) Were there any negative parts of to your experience?
- 10) Was there a time you felt discouraged on trip? Did you overcome that? How?
- 11) What kind of a person would you describe yourself as?
- 12) Has that changed at all since the program began? How?
- 13) How did the following parts of the program have an impact on you?
 - a) Interacting with other Leaders in Training (LIT)?
 - b) Project C.A.N.O.E. staff?
 - c) Soft skill programming on trip?
 - d) Working on hard skills?
 - e) Group debriefs?
 - f) The wilderness environment?
 - g) Being a part of the evacuation?
 - h) Your solo experience?
 - i) Games & initiatives?
 - j) Climbing Ishpatina Ridge and/or Maple Mountain?
 - k) Completing the service component for the MNR: campsite clean-up
 - l) Arriving at Briggs?
 - m) Completing the trip?
 - n) Participating in fall activities?
 - o) Is there anything else you would like to add to this list?
- 14) Has it been a good thing participating in Project C.A.N.O.E. this year?
- 15) What do you hope to get out of the program? Do you think you will achieve that?

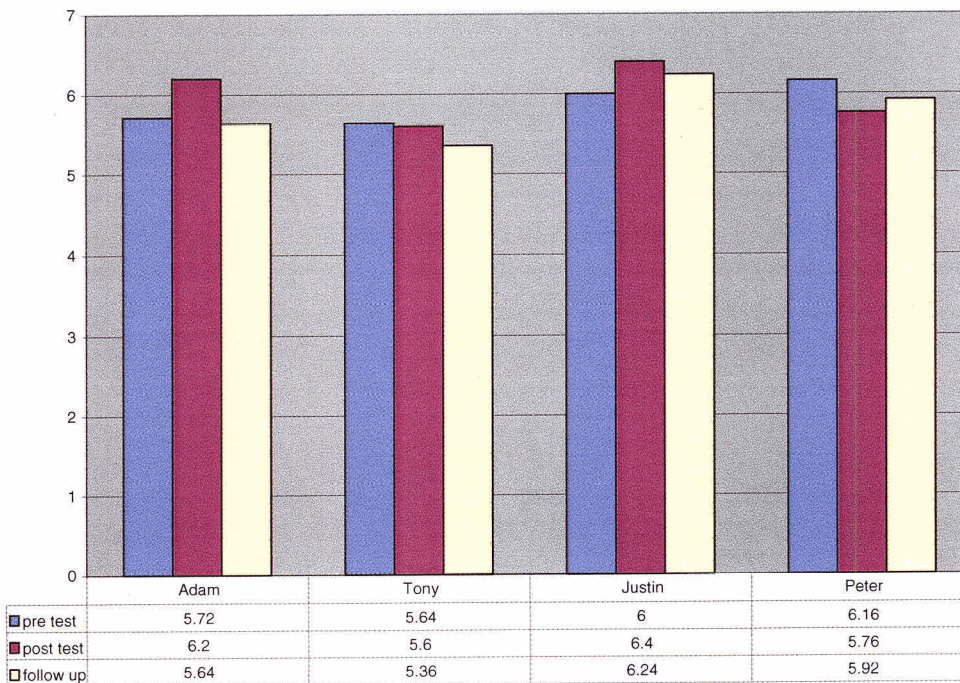
APPENDIX D

Overall Scores for SPPA and RS

Self-Perception Profile - OVERALL



Resilience Scale - OVERALL



APPENDIX E

Table 1: Participants' Subscale Scores for SPPA

	Scholastic	Social	Athletic	Physical	Job	Romantic	Behavioural Conduct	Close Friendship	Global Self worth
Adam									
Pre	3.2	2.2	3.4	1.8	4	1.4	3	2.8	3.2
Post	3.4	2.4	4	2.2	3.4	2	3	3	3.4
Follow	4	3	4	2.6	4	3	3	3	3.2
Tony									
Pre	2.8	2.8	4	3	3.2	3.2	2	2.4	3
Post	2.4	2.6	4	3.2	3.4	3.2	2.2	1.2	3
Follow	3	3	4	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.2	2.6	2.8
Justin									
Pre	2.2	3	3.4	3.8	3.6	3	2.6	3	3.8
Post	2.4	3	3.8	3.8	3.2	3.4	2.6	3.4	3.2
Follow	3.4	4	4	4	3.6	2.8	3	3.8	3.8
Peter									
Pre	3	3.8	4	3.2	3	3.4	3	3.4	4
Post	3	3.8	4	3.2	3	3	3	4	3.8
Follow	3	3.8	4	3.2	3	2.8	3.2	4	3.8

Table 2: Mean Scores for SPPA

	Peter	Justin	Adam	Tony	Standard Deviation
Pre test	3.42	3.15	2.70	2.93	0.31
Post test	3.42	3.20	2.92	2.86	0.25
Follow up	3.30	3.60	3.31	2.95	0.27

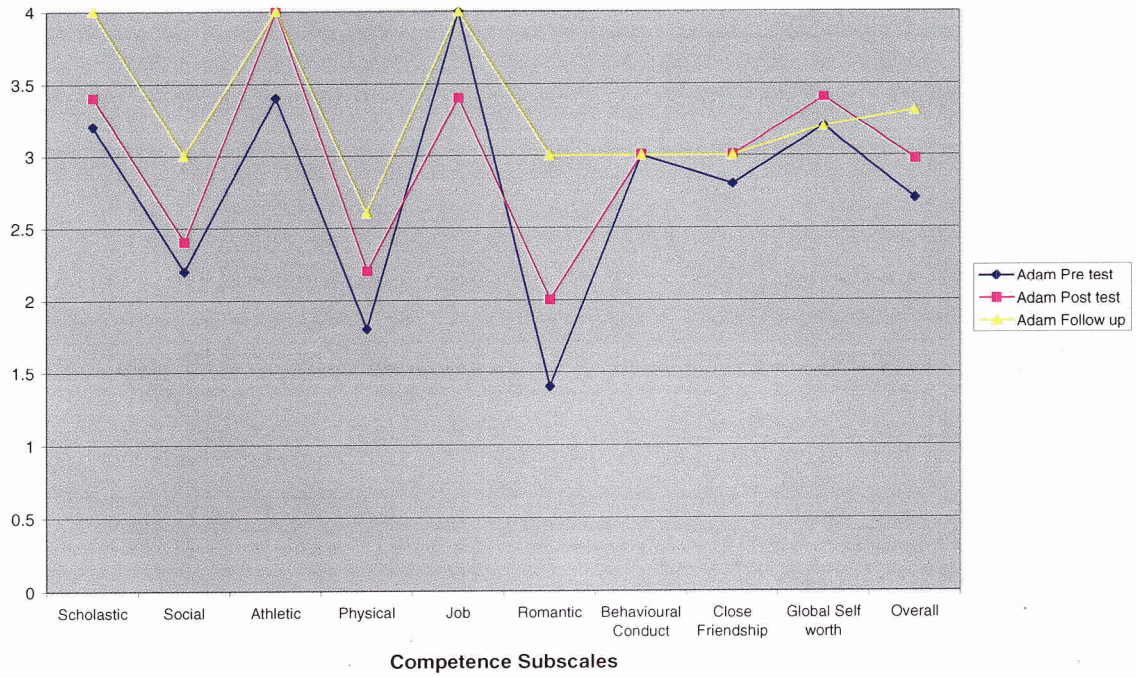
Table 3: Mean Scores for RS

	Peter	Justin	Adam	Tony	Standard Deviation
Pre test	6.16	6.00	5.72	5.64	0.24
Post test	5.76	6.40	6.20	5.60	0.37
Follow up	5.92	6.24	5.64	5.36	0.38

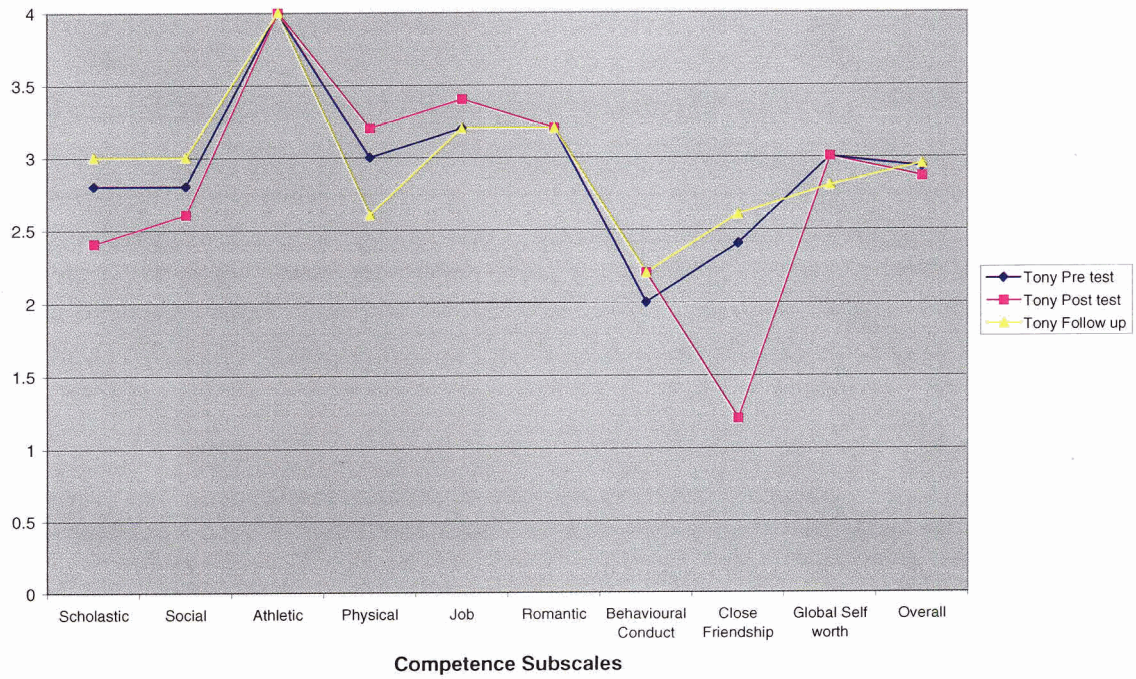
APPENDIX F

Individual SPPA Scores

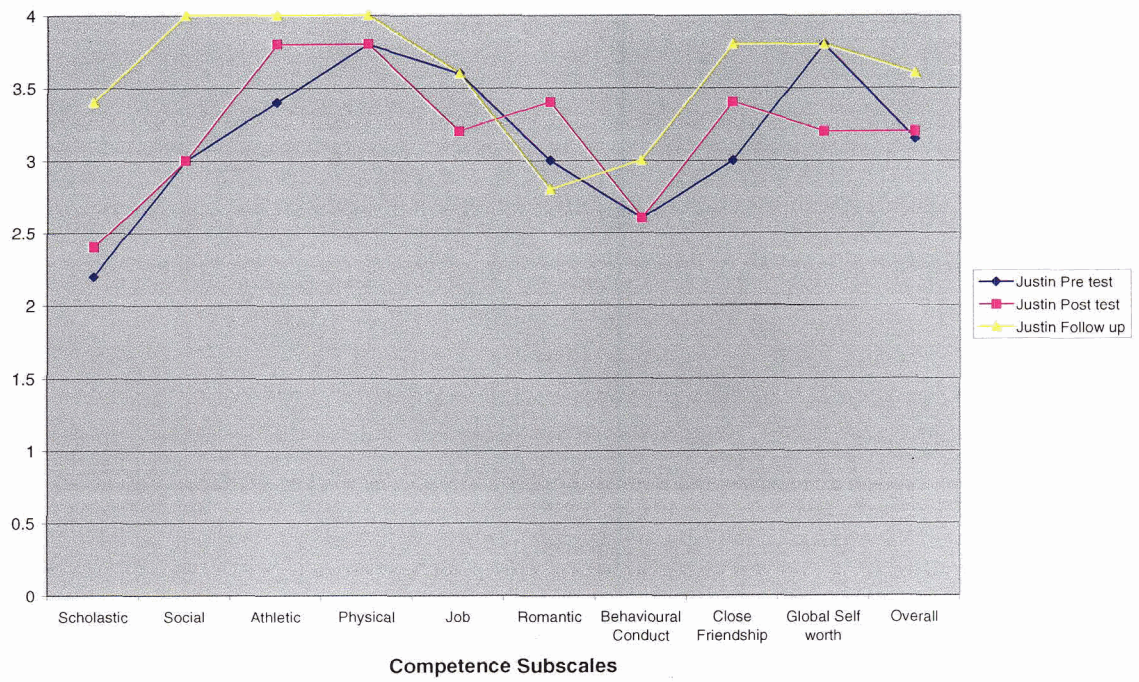
Self-Perception Profile - ADAM



Self-Perception Profile - TONY



Self-Perception Profile - JUSTIN



Self-Perception Profile - PETER

