

EDUCATIONAL VALUES AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *This paper explores some of the main philosophical issues surrounding the concept of value, and proceeds to draw out the implications for 'Outdoor Activities'. Educational activities are widely supposed by philosophers to satisfy at least two conditions (Clayton, 1993; Griffin, 1996; White, 1982): the knowledge condition and the value condition. The first demands that any activity describable as educational must involve the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. The second stipulates that what is learned is in some way worthwhile or beneficial. The focus of this paper is on the second of these requirements, and in particular with the question of how outdoor adventure education might be said to fulfil it. The theoretical exercise of elucidation and analysis called for by this task is worth undertaking. There are views of outdoor activities which are confused or inadequate, and such views are likely to have harmful consequences if they influence educational policy or the practice of instructors and facilitators (Reid, 1996). Outdoor activities are analysed from the perspective of educational aims in terms of the various components of human well being (Langford, 1985). These include: Intellectual or cognitive value associated with certain kinds of systematic inquiry (Humberstone, 1997); Ethical value, as expressed in notions of principled conduct, interpersonal respect, courage and self-control (Newton et al's, 2001); Economic value as expressed in the ideas of work, usefulness and productivity (Hal, 1999); Hedonic value, which is the value attached to our capacity for pleasure, enjoyment or satisfaction; Health and welfare value, that is physical and mental well-being (Armstrong and Biddle, 1992). The argument of this paper is that a pluralistic account of value is required to capture the variety of ways in which outdoor activities satisfy the value condition of education.*

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