

2011-2014 PHD RESEARCH **SAMANTHA MCELLIGOT**

WHY RESEARCH EXPEDITIONS?

The benefits of outdoor programmes have been widely researched with expeditions shown to have a very positive developmental experience for young people. This particular project was an expansion of the previous expedition research base and explored the factors that maximise the positive experiences of young people participating in expeditions.

The study not only provided scientific evidence of the learning outcomes from an Outlook expedition, it also became fundamental in the shaping of everything we now do. Shortly after the results were published, we integrated many of the findings and recommendations into our Leader training programmes with a view to maximising the positive impact of expeditions on participants.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The first year of the research project involved over 800 15-19 year olds whilst on summer expeditions with Outlook, the second year included over 900 13-22 year olds, and the final data collection in 2013 saw over 1100 16-21 year olds take part. The research examined the effect of leadership behaviours on aspects such as participants' self-esteem, teamwork and communication. Specifically, the research focused on transformational leadership, which has demonstrated effectiveness in a variety of contexts, such as the military, the public sector, business, and more recently, teaching and higher education. For more information, please click [here](#).

Please click [here](#) for more information about the nine transformational leadership behaviours developed as part of the expedition leadership model: [PHD - Transformational Leadership](#)

More information about the learning outcomes examined in the research is available by following this [link](#)

RESULTS

The results from the three data collections were very positive; with the final round of data collection supporting the findings from 2011 and 2012. The results consistently demonstrated that not only do Outlook's expeditions have a positive and significant impact on the participants' self-esteem, leadership skills, levels of responsibility, teamwork and communication skills, but that Outlook expedition leaders were already demonstrating high

levels of transformational leadership behaviours, which, in turn, impacted positively on the learning outcomes of the participants. Please click on the following links for more details of the three years' results:

[Results 2011-12](#)

[PhD Results 2013](#)

In short, expeditions have a positive impact in elevating learning outcomes, and the expedition leaders' behaviours are critical in maximising the learning outcomes.

2013 RESEARCH - DEVELOPING A TRAINING INTERVENTION FOR EXPEDITION LEADERS

2013 saw a large number of expedition leaders take part in a training intervention to see if transformational leadership behaviours could be modified. The training workshop was developed by the University research team and three selected, senior and very experienced leaders of Outlook's internal and associate staff, and consisted of a 2.5 hour workshop that focused on profiling individuals' leadership behaviours and forming action plans specific to each leader. Compared with a control group of leaders, who received the normal Outlook training as part of their CPD, the leaders who were given the intervention training scored significantly higher in all the transformational leadership behaviours. This demonstrates the validity of the intervention, and as such, the training workshops were rolled out at all of the 2014 Leader Team Training events for all expedition leaders

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research has been approved by the Ethics Approval Committee for Bangor University's School of Sports, Health and Exercise Sciences.