

Signs of Change Conference 2010

Change Report Outline

Title: Facilitating change in outdoor education towards sustainability

Reporter: Allen Hill, University of Otago School of Physical Education

Contact Details:

742 Highgate

Maori Hill

Dunedin 9010

Ph: 03 4676149 (hm), 03 4798378 (office)

Email: allen.hill@otago.ac.nz

Overview

This change report outlines practical ways in which a group of outdoor education teachers have brought about change in their thinking, practices, and pedagogy to better educate for a sustainable future. Dominant conceptions of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand, based primarily around outdoor pursuit activities, have developed to be largely separate from the aims of education for sustainability. These dominant notions of outdoor education can reinforce the vocational functions of education in preparing students to be effective in the global market-place, rather than promoting transformative change towards a more sustainable world. This report draws from qualitative data from a University of Otago PhD research project, which sought to challenge the status quo and re-envision outdoor education through a sustainability framework. In particular, the report presents a model for facilitating change towards sustainability in outdoor education programming and pedagogy (see appendix 1). This model suggests that change can take place at three levels for teachers and educators: First, the level of philosophy, values, and understandings, which underpin teaching practices and programmes; second, the level of resources, infrastructure, and programming, which refers to the ways in which outdoor education programmes are set up and how they utilise resources; and third, the level of teaching and learning strategies (pedagogy), which refers to the nature, content, and processes of learning activities and experiences. Drawing on specific examples of teachers implementing change, this report argues that effective transformation considers the interaction of all three levels. It also briefly discusses the key principles which underpin the change process. This report humbly shares some stories of modest changes in outdoor learning experiences, which are focused on better educating for a sustainable future.

Appendix 1

