

Reflective Paper

Introduction

Reflective writing involves the recollection of events and actions and is a method of making sense and identifying connections between personal, academic, and professional experiences leading to improved performance and insight (Markkanen *et al.*, 2020). To reflect upon my study, I will be applying Gibbs' (1998) reflective cycle (Figure 1) to consider whether the research design was appropriate.



Figure 1. Gibbs' (1998) Reflective Cycle

Firstly, I will look at the alignment of my study using Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle. This process highlights that, despite the alignment being supported by literature, improvements can be made. A mixed method approach that includes a survey with pre-test interviews to help formulate questions alongside the semi-structured interviews will be recommended (Biggam, 2018; Buschle *et al.*, 2022). In addition, the possibility of comparing both negative and positive reactions to produce a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. Secondly, the experience of conducting the research will consider using both questions from Biggam (2018) and Gibbs' (1998) reflective cycle. A more participant led approach will be proposed with a flexible methodology to allow for real world impacts (Campbell, 2010; Williams, 2012). Further research into clarifying questions and good interview practice will be advised to reduce bias (Dilley, 2000). Lastly, action plans for improving the study for dissertation level will be considered within the end of Gibbs' (1998) Reflective Cycle and the future implications for practice advised.

The Alignment of the Study

Bloomberg and Volpe (2018) state that to achieve optimal alignment in a study, methodological integrity is essential at both a philosophical and practical level and provides an indication of a study's quality. It is important to identify a worthy topic, formulate the research problem and the study's purpose precisely. The study should find the research question answered, the purpose accomplished and a contribution to addressing the problem made (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2018).

Description

The study sought to answer the research question of "To what extent and in what ways can solos as part of an international expedition undertaken by young adults contribute to increased wellbeing?". This question was identified after researching the use of solos by practitioners to enhance reflection, resourcefulness, self-reliance, and confidence building (Daniel *et al.*, 2014). As an outdoor learning practitioner and expedition leader that professionally focuses on youth led international expeditions, I noted the similarities between this and the personal growth outcomes of youth expeditions as highlighted by Stott *et al.*, (2015). Peterson *et al.*, (2021) demonstrated how many of these personal growth outcomes can be related to wellbeing outcomes involving reflection, self-actualisation, emotional restoration, and physical restoration. Further studies contributed to the evidence suggesting solos could positively affect the wellbeing in participants and provide a connection to nature (Daniel *et al.*, 2014; Freeman *et al.*, 2017; Williams, 2012). Connection to nature and wellbeing is linked to established wellbeing theories of Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) Attention Restoration Theory and Ulrich (1984) Stress Recovery Theory providing a strong literature basis for considering solos as a tool for practitioners to improve wellbeing for young adults on international expeditions.

From literature review, I identified the aim of the study as being "to advance the understanding of the ways solos, as part of an international expedition, can contribute to increased wellbeing for young adults" and formulated 3 objectives:

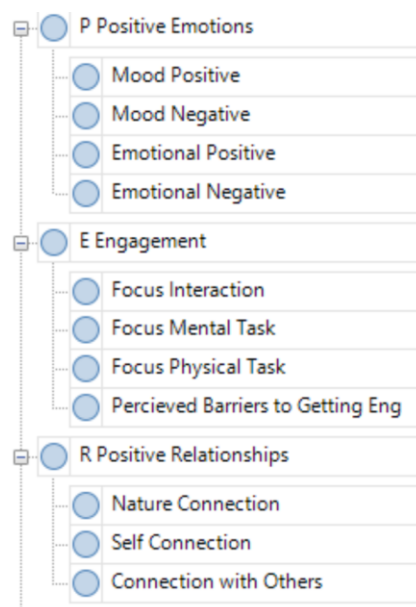
- 1) Identify the ways solos as part of an international expedition undertaken by young adults contribute to increased wellbeing.
- 2) Explore participants' views and perspectives on the extent solos contribute to increased wellbeing.
- 3) Formulate recommendations for practitioners on utilising solos as a technique for improving wellbeing for young adults on international expeditions with the aim of maximising their benefits.

My methodology was based around Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of wellbeing theory that provided five essential pillars to wellbeing and added Eacker (2020) and Peterson *et al.*, (2021) recommended 6th element of Vitality thus providing 6 wellbeing themes to consider:

- P- Positive Emotions
- E- Engagement
- R- Positive Relationships
- M- Meaning
- A- Achievement/Accomplishment
- V- Vitality

While my approach was inductive and allowed additional themes to emerge, I found that any additional themes considered, aggregated under these 6 main themes. The nature of solos requires the facilitator to be absent, I took a phenomenological method and used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data asking participants about their lived experience of a solo (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2018; Biggam, 2018). I used Peterson *et al.*, (2021) questions to frame the semi-structured interview. It became necessary during interviews to ask further clarifying questions in addition to these questions to encourage and enhance participants' contribution (Appendix 1).

I transcribed the interviews using Office 365 Microsoft Word Dictate feature and checked them against the audio. The interviews were then analysed through thematic analysis in NVivo 12 Pro resulting in 138 coded points that were aggregated under the PERMA-V themes (Figure 2).



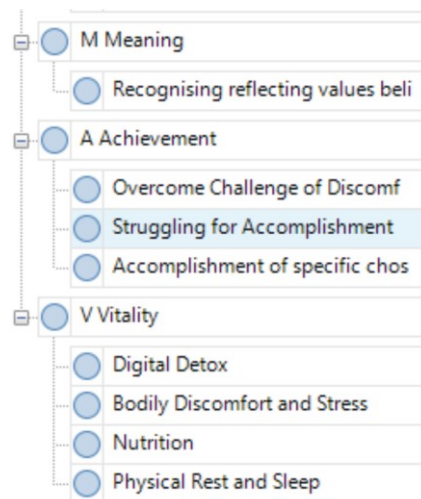


Figure 2. Coding for Research Project

The analysis of these results found that participants did appear to have wellbeing benefits from the experience of the solos with the specific themes of Engagement and Positive Emotions standing out. However, due to only having 2 participants and 4 interviews it was not possible to form any further conclusions from the data.

Feeling

Before the study began, I was daunted by the concept of condensing a large topic into a manageable research project within the timeframes given. I wanted my project to be based around developing practical tools that I could apply within my professional practice and combine the learning from the previous module of Health, Wellbeing, and the Outdoors BMOE7003. In August 2021, I used solos as a reflective practice during an expedition to Scotland with disadvantaged young adults to enhance personal growth outcomes and became interested in whether solos could be utilised to improve wellbeing outcomes while on international expeditions.

I found the review of literature supported the concept of using solos as a tool for achieving wellbeing outcomes and the research question formed easily, with both the research aims and objectives linking well, despite the objectives feeling exaggerated considering the scale of the study. The research question lent itself to qualitative data collection with a phenomenological methodology though I did consider that for a larger study a mixed method approach including a questionnaire that also collected quantitative data may have been beneficial. My identification of Seligman (2011) PERMA with Eacker (2020) and Peterson *et al.*, (2021) together with the additional “V” provided a theoretical basis for my research that made me more confident in the framework for my analysis.

After the study I felt that the alignment of the study worked well. Although, due to the small number of participants and limited interviews it was not possible to formulate full answers

to the research question, achieve the objectives and make a notable contribution to addressing the problem identified (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2018). I felt that it laid significant groundwork for a larger study at dissertation level and provided lessons for improving the study design that I will evaluate in the next section.

Evaluation

The experience of conducting the research was positive and finding literature that connected wellbeing and solos was evident (Daniel *et al.*, 2014; Freeman *et al.*, 2017; Peterson *et al.*, 2021, Williams, 2012). I found it harder to find literature relating to the use of solos on expeditions as part of a wider programme, as the majority related to expeditions specifically for the purpose of participants performing solos or solely as a reflective exercise at the end (Peterson *et al.*, 2021; Naor and Mayseless, 2020; Williams, 2012).

The most significant study for me was Peterson *et al.*, (2021) “How Does Being Solo in Nature Affect Well-Being? Evidence from Norway, Germany, and New Zealand” which helped signpost the links between personal growth outcomes and wellbeing outcomes for further reading and provided an initial introduction to Seligman (2011) PERMA model of wellbeing which I then investigated further to give a methodological basis that helped to align the study.

The use of Peterson *et al.*, (2021) questions to frame the semi-structured interviews worked well. However, I found I needed to ask further clarifying questions which may have introduced bias.

Within the analysis, I coded positive reactions which ultimately aggregated under each theme. This could have been done differently with negative reactions coded equally to provide comparison. The size of the study was also a limiting factor as with only 2 participants and 4 interviews achieving the objectives and answering the research question was not realistic but did provide an effective test run of the methodological process that I will be considering upscaling for my dissertation.

Analysis

The limited but growing body of literature around the subject of solos provided a good literature basis while still allowing for the identification of areas that had not been considered, this was specifically in relation to young adults on international expeditions. The initial aligning of the study worked and proved to be effective throughout.

There were various alteration that might have helped provide more cohesive answers to the research question and more effectively achieve the objectives. A mixed method approach that included a survey that obtained some quantitative data and further clarification of “why” participants felt they had wellbeing outcomes may produce more coherent and actionable results (Biggam, 2018). Biggam (2018) emphasises that research can be both

quantitative and qualitative in nature with a leaning towards one approach, which in this case would be qualitative.

Furthermore, it would be viable to code the negative reactions and represent this as a direct comparison. This would create themes such as Negative Emotions, Negative Engagement, Negative Relationships, Negative Meaning, Negative Accomplishment, Negative Vitality. This would then allow comparisons. While this may contribute to an overall understanding within the study it could shift focus away from the research questions and objectives.

The introduction of potential bias by using clarification questions not previously prepared is a consideration. Further research into appropriate clarifying questions should be conducted and prepared with Buschle *et al.*, (2022) suggesting the use of a qualitative pre-test interviews that can help outline questions through a non-biased approach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I found that the alignment of the study was appropriate but could be improved upon by several means. A mixed method approach that included a survey alongside the semi-structured interviews would have provided more coherent and specific answers to the research question (Biggam, 2018). This would be effective at informing any recommendations for practitioners and identifying the specific ways that solos can improve wellbeing. The possibility of comparing both negative and positive reactions to the experience would allow for a deeper understanding of the experience of solos by participants. Finally, the use of qualitative pre-test interviews may help outline further clarifying questions in a non-biased manner (Buschle *et al.*, 2022). Further reading into survey design and questioning will be necessary when considering upscaling the study at dissertation level.

Action Plan

To improve the study for dissertation level, I will be conducting further reading into survey design and mixed method approaches using Biggam (2018) as my initial reading. I will also investigate Seligman (2011) PERMA model to consider whether I can adapt my thematic analysis to also reflect negative reactions to solos.

The Experience of Conducting Research

Biggam (2018) points out that every research method has its limitation and hurdles to be overcome providing several questions that can help reflect upon the process:

- Was the process of research appropriate to achieving the research question and objectives?
- Are there any known criticisms of the chosen research strategy?
- Can results be generalised?
- Was the sample population big enough?

- Was the approach to collecting data limited in anyway?
- What efforts were made to ensure the research was as far as possible, fair and free from bias?
- Is the research vulnerable to claims that it is unreliable?

I will consider these questions in combination with Gibbs' (1998) reflective cycle (Figure 1) when reviewing the experience of conducting research for the study and any ethical issues that arose.

Description

The initial research design was for 3 participants aged between 25-30 attending an international trip to Iceland for 13 days and carrying out day treks within the Icelandic wilderness. Solos would be performed at the beginning, middle and end of the trip with 9 semi-structured interviews undertaken during the "debriefing" element of the solo using questions from Peterson *et al.*, (2021).

The limited sample number ran into recruitment issues as due to a positive test result of COVID-19 one of the participants was unable to attend the trip limiting the participant numbers to 2 individuals both male of similar age and socioeconomic background.

Once in Iceland there were logistical issues with fitting solos around a tightly packed itinerary meaning I was limited in choice of location and time spent resulting in a facilitator led approach where participants were instructed when they were doing a solo, for how long and where they were doing it.

The first solo (Solo 1) was undertaken at a viewpoint overlooking a beach of black sand with a colony of sea birds on the cliffs below and mountains in the background, lasting 30 minutes (Figure 4). It was limited in its isolation due to it being a marked viewpoint on the map and consequently participants, though spending time on their own in a natural setting, were not completely alone in a wilderness setting impacting their experience as stated by Participant 2 (Figure 3).

"It was amazing in terms of view, but it didn't feel as secluded as it could have been."

Solo 1, Participant 2

Figure 3. Quote from Solo 1, Participant 2



Figure 4. Viewpoint at Solo 1

Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated with significantly adverse snow and ice conditions, making it a safety concern to ask participants to remain in the open for a prolonged period so only 1 further solo was performed rather than the planned further 2.

The second solo (Solo 2) took place at the end of the trip at a black sand beach with views of a sea arch and fjords lasting 30 minutes (Figure 6). This solo was more isolated than the previous and was notable for a large amount of seals and sea birds present allowing greater interactions with wildlife. However, it was cold, resulting in physical discomfort for the participants (Figure 5).

"Bit cold, not gonna lie. Pretty bloody cold"

Solo 2, Participant 1

"It was cold. It was like bitterly cold..... it was like you couldn't take your hands out of your gloves because you feel like frostbitten within seconds."

Solo 2, Participant 2

Figure 5. Quote from Solo 2, Participant 1 and Solo 2, Participant 2



Figure 6. Participant 1 and Participant 2 at Solo 2

Following both Solo 1 and Solo 2 semi-structured interviews were conducted (Appendix 1). Within these interviews some bias may have been presented in the form of further clarification questions although I attempted to limit this by keeping these questions consistent throughout all interviews.

The transcribing of the interviews was completed through Office 365 Word Dictate function, checked against the audio and uploaded into NVivo 12 Pro. The interviews were then coded and although I coded negative and positive reactions from the interviews, I eventually aggregated only the positive reactions under the themes when analysing the results due to the short timeframe of the study.

Visualising the results of the data to present on the poster also proved a challenge and I ultimately determined a Sunburst Hierarchy Chart with a breakdown of the percentage of aggregated coding to present the results of the study in the most succinct manner.

Feeling

Before the study I felt that the trip to Iceland presented a good opportunity to carry out my research. I was concerned about bias due to my personal relationship with participants, potentially leading to answers that would fit in with what I wanted.

During the study I found it difficult to get Participant 1 to engage fully with the questions who was resistant to discussing his thoughts and feelings during the solos and the use of further clarifying questions aided this while at the same time potentially introducing bias. It made me more aware of the ethical considerations around participants needing to consent to interviews and their ability to remove consent during the process.

After the study I was pleased with how the solos and interviews went and felt that I had managed to limit my interfering with participants answers although I did note in the transcripts in attempting to summarise participants views, I could unwittingly introduce bias (Figure 7).

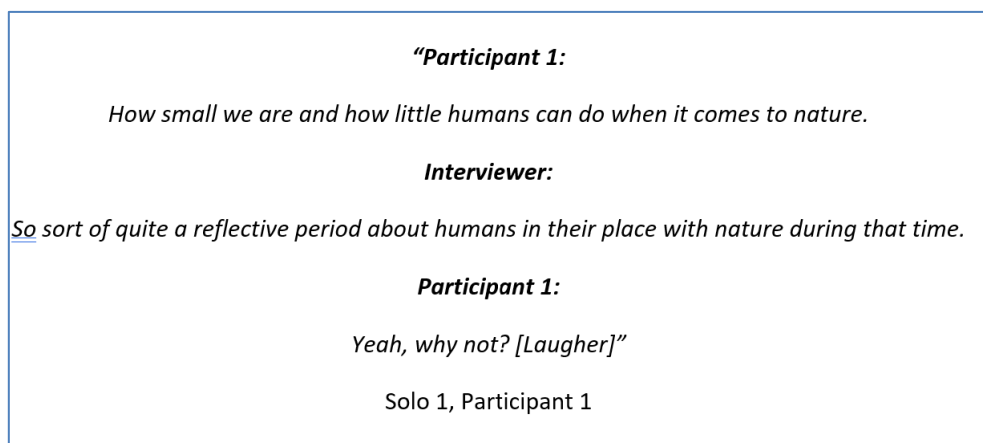


Figure 7. Quote from Solo 1, Participant 1

Evaluation

Overall considering the scale and timeframe of the study it was a success. However, there were a few key issues that had a significant impact on the study. Firstly, the recruitment issue resulted in 2 participants, although from different socio-economic backgrounds which it was too small a sample which limited the scope of findings and the robustness of the study. Secondly, the logistical aspects of the trip limited the solos to being facilitator led which, though as Williams (2012) expresses may be necessary for real world practice, a more participant led approach as recommended by Campbell (2010) would have been preferred. The weather and locations of solos were also impactful, but there were limitations placed by the risk assessment, my own professional qualifications and logistical considerations that made this unavoidable. Fourthly, further clarification questions created bias within the interviews. Fifthly and finally analysis of the results was likely biased due to a lack of comparison with negative reactions during thematic analysis.

Analysis

Covid-19 is unpredictable and unfortunately can only be adapted to in plans, but a larger scale study would not be as impacted by the loss of 1 participant. Campbell (2010) recommends a participant led approach, while professional companies such as British

Exploring Society and Outlook Expeditions would like to limit significant disruptions to their programme for research. However, such companies are expected to be supportive of solos happening naturally as part of practice. Being flexible with the number of expected solos and interviewing participants post expedition when they have had time to reflect on the experience, should be an effective methodology for future studies. This will also protect against logistical and weather issues. Further research into clarifying questions and good interview practice, for example the recommendations of Dilley (2000), on not only improving questioning but the practice of the interviewer may help reduce bias. A mixed method approach as highlighted in the previous section and by Biggam (2018) can produce more coherent results that will contribute to the field of solos, wellbeing and youth led expeditions.

Conclusion

I found the experience of conducting research to be a learning curve. The logistical, ethical and real-world impacts on the research design demonstrated the need for a flexible methodology when conducting research in as dynamic an environment as an international expedition. My role as a facilitator and interviewer is to limit my impact on participants experiences and I found balancing this with ethical and safety considerations to be a challenge when trying to achieve my aims within a specific timeframe. A mixed method approach and wider analysis of results would, in future, produce clearer and actionable results.

Action Plan

To improve the study for dissertation level, I will ensure a larger sample size and wider range of socio-economic background, sex and age in participants. Investigations will be made into my research design to make it more flexible for the dynamic real-world environment it is conducted in. A mixed method approach will be developed involving surveys with the objective of ensuring a coherent, consistent and objective as possible framework. This should contribute meaningful, practical insight to the theoretical discourse, and in so doing answer the research question, and hopefully achieve the objectives of the study.

Overall Conclusion

The experience of the study I have undertaken has highlighted that while the alignment was appropriate for answering the research question, lessons have been learned particularly considering ethical issues, methodological approach, and the adaptation of theoretical design to the impacts of real-world conditions. In the future this will allow me to have a more robust and reliable research strategy when I come to do a much larger study at dissertation level.

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Appendix 1

Transcript Participant 1 Solo 1

Interviewer:

This is the **interviewer** researching the question of to what extent and in what ways can solos as part of an international expedition undertaken by young adults, contribute to increased well being. This is my first interview with **Participant 1**.

I'm going to ask you a series of questions. It doesn't matter if we get through them all or not, it's just sort of to guide our conversation as we go.

So firstly, you took part in a solo earlier today, could you give me a description of the place in detail? Where did you go? What was it like there? What were the features of your surroundings?

Participant 1:

Went for a walk down the track. Had a little sit down on a couple of rocks so nice backrests it was beautiful. It was nice and warm. Almost had a little nap in the sun in front of me. There was a cliff face with birds flying on it nesting birds and there were waves crashing on the sand. The sand was Black.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much for that and then what sort of activities did you do?

Participant 1:

I sat and I watched the waves.

Interviewer:

So you spent you spent the period sitting down and watching the waves?

Participant 1:

Oh, I love the waves.

Interviewer:

Nice and what was your perceived experience with that? How did you experience that time?

Participant 1:

I kind of sat there thinking and thought these waves they're white like against the blacks and that was massively dramatic. And then although they're all the same, they're all very different and they all have very different effects. And how much power they all had.

And then I just kind of started looking around. Then just almost fell asleep.

Interviewer:

Nice and how did all that make you feel?

Participant 1:

Nothing really, no no. Just kind of sat there.

Interviewer:

So how were you feeling physically?

Participant 1:

Relaxed, but I didn't really. Yeah just relaxed.

Interviewer:

And mentally?

Participant 1:

No difference, to what I was before really just relaxed.

Interviewer:

Yeah, so you're feeling relaxed, but it wasn't due to the solo. You were relaxed before this point?

Participant 1:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and then what sort of things did you think of?

Participant 1:

How small we are and how little humans can do when it comes to nature.

Interviewer:

So sort of quite a reflected period about humans in their place with nature during that time.

Participant 1:

Yeah, why not? [Laughter]

Interviewer:

I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. Is that how you feel?

Participant 1:

Let's go with that one.

Interviewer:

OK, and were there any other aspects that happened during that period? Is there anything you feel like could have been done to enhance that?

Participant 1:

No, not really. I kind of got bored after 20 minutes. Maybe 'cause I do it anyway like I go out and sit around in nature. And when I was in Bangor, down by the pier. I used to sit when I was just like thinking about things. I used to go down there and sit there. And just kind of zone out entirely. But I don't know after everything that's been happening. I just kind of. I only do it with laughter. Yeah, because it's one of my coping strategies. Yeah sorry I only really do it if I have to. Otherwise im just going crash and burn.

Interviewer:

So you associate it to a coping mechanism and that maybe made it harder to engage with it in this situation?

Participant 1:

I think so anyway. Yeah? And then like after sitting there for 20 minutes I was like, yeah..

Interviewer:

Do you think a greater amount for time would have let you relax into the activity?

Participant 1:

No, it's pretty relaxing, right? Yeah, yeah, no great on the amount of time I just would prefer to be looking for things to do rather than sitting there and relaxing. OK, so if I don't need the 20 minutes then 20 minutes is a good amount of time.

Interviewer:

Did you feel there was a requirement to sit and do nothing? Due to the description of a solo?

Participant 1:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

You weren't under an understanding that you could kind of do whatever you wanted?

Participant 1:

No, I kind of knew I could do whatever I wanted, but then there was also a hill. I didn't wanna go down the hill 'cause I have to go back up the hill. Yeah, so then I was like, I just thought I would just kind of try chill a bit.

Interviewer:

OK. Awesome. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience?

Participant 1:

Nope

Interviewer:

Great, thank you very much.

Transcript Participant 2 Solo 1

Interviewer

OK so this is **interviewer** researching the question of to what extent and in what ways can solos as part of international expedition undertaken by young adults contribute to increased well-being? I have with me **Participant 2**. So **Participant 2** I'm just going to ask you a series of questions we may or may not get through all of them, it doesn't really matter we're just trying to get an idea of how the experience you had earlier today went.

So firstly, could you give me a description of the place you went to? Where did you go? What was it like? And what were the features around you?

Participant 2:

Uh, well I have no idea what it was called, but it was a sort of plateau, overlooking a volcanic spit with a beach and some cliffs. Quite rugged, uh, over to the left side there was a bit of fresh water and then some mountains in the distance.

Interviewer:

Nice and what did you do in this space?

Participant 2:

I just found myself a spot on the path sat down and looked. I just had a look around, didn't really do anything. I spent most of my time just seated in one location and let my eyes wander, let my mind wander.

Interviewer:

So you let your mind and eyes wander, nice. What was your experience then during that time?

Participant 2:

First, I just sat and listened to the waves. I wasn't really thinking about much then I started to notice the geography kind of. I started to wonder about how some these places were created in the past and how they got to that stage. Then a fly landed on me.

Interviewer:

So you had an interaction with nature.

Participant 2:

Yeah, I was thinking this is the first wild animal that isn't a bird that I've seen in Iceland. [Laughter]

Interviewer:

And how did that make you feel?

Participant 2:

Well, it was kind of annoying, just like they are in the UK. I tried to get rid of it, swatting it away and it kept coming back.

Interviewer:

And how did the the experience of what you were thinking about and these interactions make you feel?

Participant 2:

It's just nice in general, it's just nice. Nothing super specific, just positive.

Interviewer:

And would you say it was a positive way in terms of mentally? Or was it just physically you having a nice time or just a general?

Participant 2:

Physically, it wasn't very comfortable. Because it was volcanic rock I was sat on, but mentally you forget what you're sat on when you got views like.

Interviewer:

Nice and what sort of things did you think about?

Participant 2:

I did find myself going back to some of the conversations we'd had on the trip. I found myself looking for Obsidian. Like we've been talking about. Obviously I gave up after a couple of minutes when I realised I was never gonna find any around. It's completely the wrong place to look, but Yeah, I suppose it was a bit reflective on the last couple of days and overall.

Interviewer:

And then just overall, was it an experience you'd enjoyed and you want to repeat?

Participant 2:

To repeat, yeah I think really there are better places to do it.

Interviewer:

Was it lacking in features?

Participant 2:

Yeah, it was amazing in terms of view, but it didn't feel as secluded as it could have been.

think. It was awesome being there but also knowing I was going to be interviewed after meant I spent the first 10 minutes thinking, I wonder what I'm going to tell **interviewer** about this. It was kind of distracting knowing the interviews were coming.

Interviewer:

So that was a distracting part of the process?

Participant 2:

Yeah, I kind of felt like if it was, you know, I didn't know about that I would have gotten into it faster. I've done solos in the past before and you don't have that bit of it and it's better. It was a distraction but when you get into it, and it did take 10-15 minutes to get into it, you kind of forget about that aspect of it. And that's when I really liked it, as I always do when I do it on my own.

Interviewer

Nice, thank you very much **participant 2**.

Participant 2:

Thank you.

Transcript Participant 1 Solo 2

Interviewer:

This is "Interviewer", researching the question, to what extent and in what ways can solos as part of an international expedition undertaken by young adults, contribute to increased well-being? I have with me "Participant 1". I'm going to ask you a few questions about the recent solo experience you had. This is just a structure for the interview and it doesn't matter if we get through all of them or not.

So the first thing I'd just like you to do is, could you describe the place your solo took place in detail? Where did you go? What was it like there, and what were the features of your surroundings?

Participant 1:

We went to see well call it probably a bit of stack with a few arches off it that was underneath a cliff. There was glacial till, so we walked down it then had a walk along the beach made of black sands and there was some ice on the beach which was quite cool and then a waterfall. There was quite a bit of ice on the waterfall and just over the side of the estuary was a nice big spit.

Interviewer:

So what sort of things did you do during your time?

Participant 1:

Had a little walk on the beach to have a look and then I started going towards the spit and then thought I can't be bothered so turned round and started going back up the hill. I got a little rock that was sticking out of the till which was obviously being carried by the glaciers and then dumped. Then I had a sit down had a little look and took a couple of photos and just kind of sat and had a look around.

Interviewer:

And what did you experience during this time?

Participant 1:

Saw some seals, when you say experience do you mean saw?

Interviewer:

What sort of things what you experience?

Participant 1

Ah, I saw seals which was quite cool, they came quite close. Then at first there was loads of clouds in the background behind where the arches were. Then over time the clouds kind of dissipated and you could start to see all the scenery further and further back. It was really quite nice and lots of waves, big waves 'cause it was really bloody windy.

Interviewer:

And how did you feel physically during this time?

Participant 1:

Bit cold, not gonna lie. Pretty bloody cold but yeah, pretty relaxed when I got out with the wind and just kind of sat, I made a little arm chair out of one of the little holes in the ground which was quite comfy.

Interviewer:

And then what about emotionally?

Participant 1:

Uhm, nothing. I was just relaxed, just kind of sat there. I didn't think about too much. I thought about my new job.

Interviewer:

Yeah, So what sort of things were you thinking about?

Participant 1:

And what I could bring into the new job and the kind of things that I could start to do if they let me and and then thought about Ja Ja Ding Dong (Icelandic Song from Movie Eurovision). Then just kind of thought about how the formation and been formed over time and the relentless power of the waves and the wind was forming everything.

Interviewer:

So really, a period of some reflection and engagement in what was around you.

Participant 1:

Yeah, I suppose so.

Interviewer:

Yeah, is there anything else in your experience that you think is of note?

Participant 1:

It was more fun than last time 'cause it was more to see. 'cause last time there was very little to see and do, but there this time it was quite nice 'cause it could just kind of sit there and just.

Interviewer:

So the landscape was much more engaging.

Participant 1:

Oh yeah, it's better than last time.

Interviewer:

What was more engaging about it?

Participant 1:

Much more going on.

Interviewer:

Yeah, dynamic would you say?

Participant 1:

I don't know. I think more the landforms to look at and kind of figure out. How did that happen. 'Cause obviously with my degree (Geography) and my past job (Geography Teacher) it was kind of my interest 'cause it was more fun than last time. Oh and I watched a seagull it was brilliant he kept trying to land on a cliff but he couldn't do it. Then he landed on another bird and the other bird kicked off, which was funny.

Interviewer:

OK, great thank you "participant 1" . Is there any anything else you would like to add?

Participant 1:

Nope

Interviewer:

Fantastic thank you very much.

Transcript Participant 2 Solo 2

Interviewer:

This is "Interviewer" researching the question to what extent and in what ways can solos as part of an international expedition undertaken by young adults contribute to increased well being? I have with me "Participant 2", who is doing a second interview after his second solo. So "Participant 2", I'm going to ask you a series of questions. They're just a structure for the interview and it doesn't matter if we get through all of them.

So the first question is. You've just taken part in a solo activity. Could you describe the place in detail? Where did you go? What was it like there and what were the features of your surroundings.

Participant 2:

Well, it was a Cliff overlooking a sea arch. I can't remember the name of the place. It looked out over a wide fjord, mountain in the distance across the sea. And it was very cold and windy.

Interviewer:

Nice and in terms of activities. What did you do during your solo?

Participant 2:

I Started off, well, I had a little walk off the Cliff and then I just sat down on a rock and had a look out and that was basically how I spent the whole time just looking.

Interviewer:

Nice and What did you experience during that time while you were looking?

Participant 2:

Uhm started off just looking out at sea and looking at the waves, the power of them feeling the wind and just thinking about that until I saw a seal. Then I just started watching the seal. Well I think that took up the rest of the time and watching it go under diving around and splashing on the surface. Then near the near the end the clouds started to clear, so I started looking at the mountains again.

Interviewer:

Nice and how did that make you feel?

Participant 2:

Yeah, it's pretty good. The power makes you feel pretty insignificant. But yeah, not in a bad way just in a awe inspiring way. The Seals didn't really make me feel anyway it was just fun and interesting and I felt lucky to see it.

Interviewer:

In terms of, how did you feel physically during your time, was it a relaxing time?

Participant 2:

It was. It was cold. It was like bitterly cold, wasn't it was like you couldn't take your hands out of your gloves because you feel like frostbitten within seconds. But with the right kit it was just about manageable to stay out in that weather.

Interviewer:

Nice and what about emotionally?

Participant 2:

I don't really get emotional and scenes like that. Yeah, the closest I got to emotion, I'd say it was like I did feel lucky to be there.

Interviewer:

Nice and What sort of things did you think about?

Participant 2:

Not a lot really. It was quite nice to not think about anything. I didn't really let me mind wander to too many places because I was looking out for whales or watching the seals and was kind of occupied.

Interviewer:

So you were quite engaged in the landscape around you?

Participant 2:

Yeah, yeah, I didn't really start thinking about home or anything like that. It was all quite in the moment.

Interviewer

Nice, and is there anything other about your experience that you think is notable?

Participant 2:

No, I can't think of anything else.

Interviewer:

Awesome, well thank you very much "participant 2".