

LEVEL 4 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Sean Garvin	Student ID number:	2539592
Programme:	HWS Summer Programme		
Module:	Theoretical Issues in Outdoor Pursuits		
Module code:	BMSH4107	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Tom Moore	Internal Verifier:	Denise Leonard
Assignment Title:	Essay	Word count (or equivalent):	1500 words
Submission deadline:	14 th July 2026 15:00 (BST)	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	11 th August 2026 15:00 (BST)
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)
Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to: • Refer to a model of experiential learning as an effective means of developing and improving knowledge and understanding of both personal safety and environmental issues in adventurous activities • Describe and apply a model of experiential learning in relation to their own experiences of the practical programme • Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts including Rhonke's (2000) 'Challenge by Choice' and Mortlock's (1984) 'Stages of Adventure' • Demonstrate an awareness of key issues relating to environmentally sustainable practice in outdoor pursuits • Demonstrate an awareness of their own physiological needs and prepare appropriately for a range of outdoor adventurous activities in a variety of environments and prevailing conditions;

TASK DESCRIPTION

Evaluate the potential value of outdoor education as a means of experiential learning reference.

Your essay discussion should refer to each of the four stages of Kolb's theory.

The learning can be with regards any aspect of the experience but should be linked to your personal journey of discovery during the programme.

Student acknowledgement of ai use

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Signed:

Sean Garvin

During my time studying at the University of Wales Trinity St. David, I came to understand the importance that outdoor education has in today's world. Outdoor education as a whole is able to make an impact on students because it causes them to learn through experiential learning. Before going on this journey in Wales, I had briefly experienced outdoor education when I was younger during summer camp activities and occasional school field trips. Some of these activities included zip lines, rope courses, etc. I remember when I was younger that no teacher/lecturer ever told us about how experiential learning worked, and they would simply tell us to go ahead at trying out the activity. There was no period of time where reflection was encouraged afterwards, and the groups never got together and spoke about how the experience felt for them. Overall, the learning aspect of the activity was typically ignored by the teachers, and it was simply an activity instead of a learning experience. For these reasons, I did not learn and grow as much from these activities I had done in the past which could have been points of experiential learning.

All of this changed during my experience in Wales, and the overall experience made me believe that the implementation of experiential learning within outdoor education is extremely important. Through Kolb's four stages of experiential learning, the cycle itself influences the individual to reflect on their experiences and then find a way to approach another challenge having learned from their past experiences. This cycle does not necessarily mean that you can only learn from reflecting on your mistakes, but it also means that you can grow from things you did well. This experiential learning cycle happens constantly and especially during a learning opportunity like this program. If you looked closely into every day, there were moments where every person there had a concrete experience, had their reflective observation, conceptualized what they did, and actively experimented with what they did. One of the first major experiences that I noted as a great moment of experiential learning was when we visited the Gower Peninsula for the day. Our first task of the day on this day of the trip was to navigate our way to Tomo and Dean Mapstone who were at a specific location. Johnny was put in charge of this hike, and he was given a map and we were off. The group travelled

very far out of the way initially, and we found ourselves having to back track all the way in the opposite direction to eventually find where Tomo and Dean Mapstone meant to meet us. After meeting up with Tomo and Dean Mapstone we were given the same map and told to navigate around the peninsula and all the way to the (at the time unknown) cave adventure. It was during this walk where our buddy Will tasked Johnny, Marshall, and I with pacing out our steps to keep track of how far we have walked. Doing this would allow us to navigate better because the grid lines on the map were 1 km apart. First, Will had us each walk out and then tell him when we were at 200 meters. After we were slightly off, Will told us how to properly pace ourselves and from what I remember he said that 150 paces were roughly 100 meters. After telling us this, Will had us try again and instead tell him when we had reached 400 meters ahead of where we just were. When we stopped at what we thought was the 400-meter mark, we were almost exactly correct. This challenge that Will gave us was an example of Kolb's cycle of experiential learning. In the first cycle, the concrete experience was trying to pace 200 meters. After I had failed to do so, I had my reflective observation where I saw the experience for what it was and that my calculation of 200 meters was off. The abstract conceptualization of this experience came as Will taught us that 150 paces are 100 meters. And finally, the active experimentation piece of the cycle came when we tried again and successfully walked 400 meters.

Experiential learning within outdoor education in this example allows students to learn valuable skills while also learning to emphasize the four stages of Kolb's learning cycle. From the experience that I just described I learned not only how to pace out my steps while walking without digital navigation, but I also deepened my self reflection skills and further built my skills working with peers and learning from those around me. Overall, this experiential learning being implemented into outdoor education is important because it can help build technical skills needed to further continue outdoor education, but most importantly it deepens our ability to reflect on ourselves and learn from our experiences. When I look back on the entire program as a whole, I think about how I changed as a person over those very short three weeks. I believe that I changed in many ways and one of those ways was that I now have a new perspective on my experiences. This learning cycle, as well as the other self-reflecting that we did throughout the program has taught me the importance of taking just a small bit of time out of your day to sit back and reflect on your actions and experiences. Since being

home from this program, I believe that I have spent more time reflecting on my days and I think it adds value and happiness to my life.

The most important aspect of experiential learning is the reflection afterwards. As I have stated before, experiential learning activities can teach you technical skills, but they also teach you how to rewire your brain to reflect on all of your experiences. The reflection aspect of this program was, in my opinion, likely the part of the program that helped me grow the most as a person. Before this program I would describe myself as someone who is always looking for what's next or how to complete the next task. I have never been one to stop and reflect and see how far I have come, and I have typically focused on the negatives too often. This program came at a great time in my life where I just finished a long season of baseball that was very successful. My body was exhausted and my mind was the same, and a study abroad program was exactly what I needed. A new place and new activities helped me build a new sense of confidence within myself. The lessons we learned, and especially the emphasis on the importance of reflection became extremely important to me on this trip and it is what helped me enhance not only the experiences that I had but also the relationships that I made with those around me. Now going into my last year of college I have found myself feeling a bit lost on the edge of entering into the 'real world' and I think that the reflecting skills that I learned during this program along with the new, different sense of confidence have seriously helped me along my journey of finding my sense of self.

Overall, I believe that using outdoor education and experiential learning together helps people grow in so many ways. Outdoor educational activities like those we did during the program such as rock climbing, abseiling, coasteering, etc. are meant to challenge individuals and allow them to look within themselves and see who they really are. When people do many of these activities without experiential learning, like Kolb's cycle, being emphasized, it can lead to individuals taking the experience for just that, an experience, and moving on. However, when students are given the opportunity to focus on something like Kolb's cycle, they are able to grasp a greater understanding of themselves, how they felt during the experience, reflect on what they did well, what they did poorly, and how they can improve in the future. I think that this way of thinking that includes self-reflection and intentional changes in behavior or actions to better oneself is very important in the development of an individual. It is very hard to look at every single thing that you experience and reflect on it, conceptualize it, and then

experiment with it, but people who are able to do so are able to develop a greater level of self-awareness due to this cycle. I know that in my personal experience there was definitely one or two hikes/walks where I simply went through the motions and did not engage my mind and really reflect on what I did or saw that day. This was at the beginning of the program when I hadn't fully grasped the importance of self reflection. I realized very quickly as we did our journal entries throughout the experience that reflecting on my experiences throughout the day not only was what I was expected to do, but it truly enhanced my experience and fully allowed me to grasp what I did. The reflection I remember most was after the 'Australian Repelling' when we walked face first down the cliff and climbed out together. I don't think I have ever felt adrenaline like that in my entire life and I remember writing in my journal how proud I was in that moment because I knew that two weeks before when I got to Wales, if I had been told we were doing that specific activity I would have been scared out of my mind. That moment of reflection was when I realized how much the program had helped me grow, and it made me realize that the growth I experienced was conceptualized by me due to the fact that I reflected and thought deeply about how I felt throughout. Thinking deeply about your experiences and what they mean to you is extremely important, especially within the lens of outdoor education.