



Ethical (practice) perspectives in the outdoors

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Ethical (practice) perspectives in the outdoors

Kass Gibson  and Mark Leather 

Those engaged in adventure education and outdoor learning undoubtedly consider themselves 'ethical' practitioners and their research as 'ethical'. Indeed, within the field, pressing issues with ethical dimensions have been discussed. In practice terms, much attention has been devoted to the environmental sustainability of adventure tourism and outdoor education (Prince, 2017; Ross, Christie, Nicol, & Higgins, 2014) and opportunities for moral deliberation (Thorburn, 2018), moral relations (Andersson & Ohman, 2015) and ethics of care (McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006) in outdoor educational practice. Similarly, the incongruousness (and ethical ambiguity) of 'outdoor' experiences often, if not predominantly, occurring in indoor spaces framed by business principles, and market logics (Beames & Brown, 2014, 2017) has also received attention. Furthermore, codes of practice and legal requirements also create potential moral hazards requiring navigation. That being said, there is a tendency for moral concerns and ethical perspectives to be taken for granted as a procedural task navigated prior to research or practice, ancillary to the substantive focus and/or uncritically implied and accepted. Indeed, in broader terms, terminology and practice regarding what is ethically defensible is fiercely contested. The central purpose of this special issue, then, is to foreground ethical practice and perspectives in the outdoors by exploring what is meant by 'ethical' in both practice and research terms.

In research terms, review of research protocols by ethics committees is a cornerstone of contemporary empirical research practice, yet ethical research requires a much broader array of processes, challenges and approaches than acknowledged within review procedures (Guillem & Gillam, 2004). Furthermore, principles guiding research ethics are oftentimes too narrow to accommodate research approaches that go beyond the laboratory specifically and hypothesis testing more generally. Indeed ethics committees and review procedures may not only be inaccessible to practitioners, but also create (artificial) distinctions that impede or distract from doing good work; differentiation between what counts as research and service evaluation, for example, comes to mind (Giraud, Cioffo, Kervyn de Lettenhove, & Chaves, 2018). Even then research suggests institutional research ethics review is neither preventative of nor responsive to scandals and bad practice (Hedgecoe, 2016).

Papers contributing to the special issue should seek to advance knowledge of ethics in research and practice, promote critical reflection and share good practice. As such, we welcome submissions addressing but not limited to:

- Case studies, discussions and/or analysis of ethical challenges, successes and failures in adventure education and outdoor learning practice;
- Empirical studies and/or conceptual reflection on what constitutes 'ethical research';
- Critical reflection and practical guidance on ethical challenges associated with, for example, practitioner research, power differentials and risk management in research;
- Critiques of ethical guidance, professional body's ethics frameworks and review processes;
- Theoretical and/or empirical studies of cross-cultural, indigenous, feminist ethics and/or cultural safety in research and practice;

- Ethical perspectives on land management and access for adventure education and outdoor learning.

The special issue welcomes studies from a range of methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. Initial submission deadline: July 2019. Proposed publication release: early 2020. If you wish to discuss ideas and potential contributions please contact: Dr Kass Gibson—kgibson@marjon.ac.uk or Dr Mark Leather—mleather@marjon.ac.uk

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