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PREFACE: WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

Anderson B. Young

Coordinator

Fifth Biennial CEO Research Symposium

It happened again. In the middle of January, people traveled from all corners of North America and from Japan for a few days at Indiana University's Bradford Woods. As nice as Bradford Woods and its people are, however, they were not the attraction. Even for those from Canada, Minnesota, and New Hampshire, the prospect of warmer weather in Indiana was not enough. What drew these people together was a commitment to building the empirical, theoretical, and philosophical bases of education in the outdoors and the recognition that the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors (CEO) Research Symposium is a genuinely unique opportunity to share research findings and to talk extensively and meaningfully with other outdoor education researchers. At no other outdoor education related conference is the focus exclusively on research. At no other conference do we find such a mix of academic disciplines (e.g., forestry, social work, psychology, leisure studies, education, etc.)

Providing this kind of service is what the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors was created to do. CEO was established in 1987 as a means of improving communication among those involved in outdoor and environmental education. It was the product of a series of informal meetings with leaders of various outdoor education related organizations, which culminated in a founders' planning retreat held at SUNY Cortland's Outdoor Education Center on Raquette Lake, NY. The founders had two major goals for CEO. First, recognizing that the proliferation of outdoor-related organizations precluded anyone from keeping track of all the conferences, publications, and other resources, CEO was created to be an information clearinghouse. CEO's quarterly publication, *Taproot*, is regarded by many as the only place where one can learn what ACA, WEA, NAAE, AEE, and other organizations are doing, what new resources

have been published, and other valuable information. Second, recognizing that the research needs of the field (and the needs of researchers) were insufficiently supported by any national or state organizations, the CEO founders established a research committee to identify ways CEO could strengthen the research foundations of our field. These biennial symposia have been the principal initiative of the CEO Research Committee, and the results have been impressive.

Through these five symposia, over 80 articles have been published. Over 60 of those have reported the results of research. Each symposium has also included invited or featured presentations. Eight have been comprehensive reviews of literature in such areas as group development and dynamics, personal growth, therapy, and women in the outdoors. Twelve were thoughtful papers on topics ranging from environmental ethics, to spirituality, to research methods and measurement. These featured papers enriched and enlivened the discussions during symposium weekends and have spent a lot of time on photocopiers at universities everywhere. The featured papers of this year's program were no exception. All of us were glued to the words of the panel on "Components of the Outdoor Trip: What Really Happens." Camille Bunting's unique work on the physiological aspects of outdoor education was eye opening. Finally, Mike Gass and Dan Garvey examined the impact of an adventure-based college orientation program—15 years later!

Adding to the richness of the symposium and the proceedings is the variety of research contexts. Herein are studies dealing with adventure education, interpretation, summer camps, therapeutic interventions, and more. The CEO symposia and proceedings add to participants' and readers' depth and breadth of knowledge in outdoor education (though there were

not the usual number of papers reflecting the aims and context of education for environmental literacy.)

No proceedings can adequately convey the atmosphere of the event itself. The mood is informal and cordial. The opportunities for formal and informal discussions are ample. The participants include established scholars, new assistant professors, and hopeful graduate students. By the time the weekend is over, new studies are planned and new research partnerships are formed. These are characteristics of the symposia that have been repeatedly praised on the participants' evaluation forms.

It has been my good fortune to be involved with CEO from the beginning, especially with the research committee and the biennial symposia. For the success of these initiatives, I (we) owe thanks to many. The original research committee, chaired by Camille Bunting, included Gary Robb, Charles Mand, Alan Ewert, Mike Gass, and Karla Henderson. Charlie Mand helped to fund the first two events. Camille set the standard for program planning, and Mike's guidelines for the abstract review process are still in place. Karla was our first *Proceedings* editor and has been a frequent contributor. Alan has played different and critical roles in the success of each symposium. Gary and his staff at Bradford Woods have been wonderful hosts, attending to every detail.

Other people have played major roles over time. I've leaned on Leo McAvoy so often in planning these events. He has often edited the proceedings, presented papers, and guided our large and small group discussion sessions. Deb Bialeschki and Chris Cashel have always answered the call and contributed much to the successes of these programs. Likewise, Tom Smith, Karen Fox, and Bert Horwood played vital roles in the second, third, and fourth symposia. For the third time, Allison Stringer's name is appearing on the cover of our proceedings, this time moving up to the role of lead editor. To all, I extend heartfelt appreciation of their efforts and kindness on behalf of these endeavors.

I also thank SUNY Cortland, especially the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, the Center for Environmental and Outdoor Education, Darleen Lieber, and Charles Yaple. They have kept CEO going for 13 years, simply because it's worth doing, not for the college, but for the profession.

In the year preceding this symposium, outdoor education lost two of its very best people, Phyllis Ford, of Oregon, and Joe Pierson, Director of SUNY Cortland's Outdoor Education Center on Raquette Lake. Both were founders of CEO. I had the privilege of working with both Phyllis and Joe in several other contexts as well. Most marvelous was watching them do outdoor education. May we honor and remember their lives and contributions as we advance the mission and impact of our field.

Holding the Fifth Biennial Coalition for Education in the Outdoors (CEO) Research Symposium in the first fortnight of the year 2000 would seem to have presented an irresistible opportunity to prognosticate about outdoor education research in the new millennium. Wisely, in my view, the topic never appeared in the publicity, program or discussion sessions of the event. For an endeavor as nascent as outdoor education research, agenda setting for the next thousand years (or even the next century) would be presumptuous. But we did discuss many problems and opportunities that need to be addressed in the next few years. High on the list for most of us is being involved with the Sixth Biennial CEO Research Symposium in January 2002. So collect some data, volunteer to help with planning, or simply plan on attending the next one. Its time will soon be here. ♡

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