

Robinson Expedition

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Part 1: Practical Guidance and Didactical Approach

Background and keywords:

Vague value systems and norm structures and the growing pluralization and globalisation of our society are increasingly hampering the endeavours of children and adolescents to find their identity. Various studies, such as the PISA study, show that boys are particularly affected. A wide range of behavioural difficulties have been observed in boys in particular. Increasing physical violence, hyperactivity or concentration difficulties are some



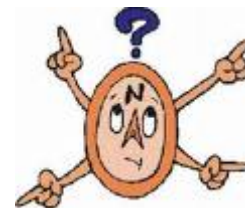
examples of the ways in which these behavioural difficulties manifest. The root cause of these manifestations also lies in insufficient opportunities for exercise (for boys). The activity presented here can and are designed to be undertaken specifically with boys who show signs of these behavioural difficulties. They should not be undertaken in a familiar environment (school); an outdoor environment is ideal and the right equipment and material is essential.

Similar topics:

Deviant behaviour, aggressive behaviour, search for an identity, socialisation, leisure-time and adventure education

Materials:

- Ground map
- Compass
- Change of clothing



Duration:

4 hours (may last as long as necessary)

Number of participants:

The activity must be undertaken with at least 2 groups. A group should comprise 4 to 5 boys. A maximum of 4 groups (20 boys in total) should take part in the activity.

Age:

Boys aged 8 to 10

Aims:

The activity should enable the boys to

- satisfy their need to exercise;
- work and make decisions in a team / in a group;
- test and compare their motor skills and abilities.

When the activity is over the boys should

- be capable of reflecting on their behaviour;
- have learned new movement exercises and activities;
- have developed a team spirit;
- have made decisions as a team;
- have developed an understanding of the other members of the group.

(Short) explanation:

Robinson Expedition is a leisure-time and adventure activity. The boys should do things as a group / as a community that they would presumably rarely or never do in daily life. This is not only designed to automatically overcome their concentration difficulties, it should boost their self-awareness and ability to work as a team as well. A range of games and events are ideal for this purpose. Those chosen here may be curtailed, supplemented and / or changed in a variety of ways.

The leader / teacher must make adequate preparations for the activity at various levels.

1. The boys must be told what to expect during the lesson. This includes:

- preparing the appropriate gear (weatherproof shoes, rainwear etc.)
- forming groups
- appointing the group leader
- acquiring the skills required to use a compass and read a map
- possessing knowledge of flora and fauna ...

2. To develop and reinforce a sense of shared identity in the run-up to the activity, each group must choose:

- its group names
- a uniform, if applicable
- a slogan
- a logo
- a song etc.

3. The boys are outdoors. Woods, nature reserves, camping sites, etc. are ideal for this activity. The activity leader should check beforehand whether permits are required for certain activities (campfire, and so forth).

4. (Teaching) staff must also be on hand, depending on the number of participants in the group. As the boys will be 8 to 10 years old, health and safety legislation requires each group to be accompanied by an adult (teacher, staff, parents etc.). Staff must also be on hand at each stage of the specific activities that are to be undertaken.

When all the preparations are complete, each group will receive a ground map and a compass; they will be told about the coordinates for the start, the stages that they are

required to complete and the location of the finishing line. The accompanying adult may only intervene or assist in an emergency. The boys know

- that they must complete every stage;
- that they can gain points at each stage;
- that points will also be awarded for reaching the finishing line (depending on the time taken to reach the finishing line).

The activity leader will make sure that each group completes the stages in a different sequence. This will ensure that there are no waiting times at the different stages. If this is not possible, individual groups may start at intervals of 20 or 30 minutes. As the order in which the stages are completed is basically irrelevant they are not listed and described in any particular order below. The order in which they are used in practice depends on a number of factors and must be determined by the leader.

Stage 1: The river seesaw

A seesaw with a very small running area (not more than 15 centimetres wide) is set up in a stream (about 2 meters wide). The boys must get to the other side of the stream / river / across the seesaw. They must have physical contact with each other when crossing the seesaw. They may decide for themselves what approach to take. This exercise provides a challenge for five boys in that apart from the balancing skills required by the individual, the ability of the group to work as a team is tested since some members of the group will be still on the 'ascending end' and other members of the group will already be on the 'descending end' when the seesaw tilts. The exercise is repeated if someone falls into the water. Points will not be awarded if the boys do not manage to cross the seesaw as a group without falling off it.



Stage 2: Walking on stilts

The boys have to cross water again. Various logs (stilts with a reasonably sized diameter) are inserted into the floor of a small pond. Their distances and heights must vary (measured from the surface of the water). The boys have to get from one side of the pond to the other without any assistance by using their motor skills to go from one log (by shifting their legs) to the next.

Stage 3:

Physical relaxation, time to focus on the mind and training the boys' powers of concentration! The boys have to answer questions about nature, flora and fauna.



The leader of this stage has prepared a quiz diagram:

Plants	Animals	Wood	Day/ Night	xxx	xxx
😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
😊😊	😊😊	😊😊	😊😊	😊😊	😊😊
😊😊😊	😊😊😊	😊😊😊	😊😊😊	😊😊😊	😊😊😊
😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊
😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊	😊😊😊😊😊

Each category contains questions of varying degrees of difficulty (identified by smileys). The boys have to answer at least 3 questions in each category for example. They have to discuss and decide as a group whether they want to opt for the easy or difficult questions. This activity teaches the boys decision-making as well as self-awareness. The stage leader must ensure that the questions are suitable for the particular age group.



Stage 4: The Air Pirates

A simple exercise: albeit not for all members of the group. Their task is to cross a river again. There are trees on both sides of the river. A rope that ends one meter above the ground and is knotted at the lower end is attached to one side of the treetop. Each member of the group must cross the river "flying and holding onto the rope".



The first members of the group can help themselves by getting the other members to give them a push to enable them to reach the other riverbank more easily and safely. This will be more difficult for the last member of the group.

Stage 5:

The fifth stage aims to give the boys' team spirit and powers of concentration an additional boost. Five boys are given the task of balancing on a normal playground seesaw together. When all their feet are off the ground they have to hold their balance for 30 seconds. Anyone who has tried this exercise themselves knows that this is virtually impossible.

Each group may also be given tasks which award them extra points if they complete them. Creativity knows no bounds in this case. For example, each group could be given a sum of money of x euros (1 euro for example). The relevant task could be to buy the most creative / nicest / largest object etc. for this sum during the game / the activity (if the surroundings permit this).

Reflection:

The activity should be considered on two levels:

1. As stated at the outset, each group is accompanied by a teacher / educator / parent and asked questions based on standard criteria such as:
 - Which stage was the easiest / the most difficult for you?
 - Who really helped you / did not help you?
 - What did you particularly like / what did you not like at all?
 - What exercise would you not have been able to complete on your own without assistance?
 - Were you a team?
 - Were you a good team?

All the members of the group should be given the opportunity to compare notes and discuss their adventures and experiences with the members of the group as well. This requires the accompanying adult to exercise his people skills. It is essential not to hurt the feelings of any of the boys. The accompanying adult should place (particular) emphasis on their strengths (based on his observations) and their weaknesses (not in the forefront).

2. All the groups should reflect on the activities together. The individual is not really the issue here; it is the community, the activity itself, requests for more of these types of events etc. This reflection should take place in a relaxed situation. A campfire with a barbecue or similar setting is recommended for this activity.



Variations (continuation):

The activity presented here has only five stages. A large number of other stages may be added to it. The number of stages chosen may accordingly play a large part in the duration of the activity.

Moreover, the objective may vary depending on whether the objective is to develop cognitive, affective or motor skills and / or abilities. The choice of stages must also be organised differently and varied depending on the objective.

The bibliography contains numerous references and useful internet sites / sources of information on this aspect.

Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information

As it is only possible to provide a brief outline of the extensive theoretical background and further information that is available on this topic we shall confine ourselves to this level of information. The main theoretical aspects that reappear in the activities presented above are:

1. Concentration difficulties experienced by boys
2. Leisure-time and adventure education

The choice of background information below is not exhaustive:

1. Concentration difficulties experienced by boys

Concentration difficulties may be due to a number of reasons, including overburdening or under-stimulating a child at school, family problems and mental health issues or, as is frequently the case, too little motor activity.

If a child experiences concentration difficulties, particularly in connection with the **demands of schoolwork**, learning therapy is recommended to assist concentration (linked to the school curriculum). If inner psychic conflicts are likely to be the root cause, psychotherapy may be useful (and necessary).

It is a good idea to consult a **school psychologist** initially and then take further steps before the child's symptoms worsen and he develops a fear of school and becomes caught in a vicious circle of failure and fear from which he is only able to extricate himself with great difficulty.

2. Leisure-time and adventure education

Leisure-time education is a scientific theory which is primarily concerned with typical issues in the leisure-time domain and is designed to make an individual capable of dealing with the problems in his life himself and playing a part in making the world of work more humane and democratic and changing the environment.

The aims of leisure-time education are to:

1. Live independently
2. Take the initiative
3. Make social contacts
4. Be spontaneous
5. Have fun
6. Relax and rest

Leisure-time education uses stimulating didactic methods and informative advice, communicative stimulation and participative planning.

Adventure education is a method of inducing individuals and groups to act with all the implications and consequences that this entails, by giving them tasks to do and placing them in situations that are as real as possible and allow them to experiment safely, and is of a suitably serious nature.

Adventure education uses different types of experience.

1. Adventure

The most important aspect here is the challenge posed by the unknown, i.e. the assumption of incalculable risks, the individual is compelled to leaving his comfort zone and hence put - at least a part of his self - on the line.

2. Fascination

This involves a distinct ability to be fascinated, to marvel and be filled with enthusiasm.

3. Sociability

Adventure education makes use of the 'desire to be sociable' and 'feeling at ease in one's inner circle'. Schilling has attempted to develop a didactic and methodical concept: "sociability as the object of an educational process", which should familiarise adolescents with different forms of expression and enable them to practise and cultivate them and transfer them to their daily lives.

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