**Title**

EFFECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA’S OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES CLASS ON STUDENTS’ ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

**Abstract**

There is current concern that the younger generations of people in America have become, and are becoming, more disconnected and less exposed to natural resources in the great outdoors (Louv, 2005). This disconnection from nature has resulted in the term ‘nature deficit disorder’ being used to describe this phenomenon (Louv, 2005). To help address this issue of nature deficit disorder, many school and summer programs have been developed to help reconnect and expose children to nature. However, while many school and summer programs have been shown to have a positive impact on children’s environmental stewardship and confidence levels within the great outdoors, limited research has been conducted on university programs aimed at achieving the same goals. Hence, this exploratory study examined the effects of participation on the University of Georgia’s Outdoor Adventure Activities Class (PEDB 1090) on participant’s environmental stewardship and confidence levels within the great outdoors. A pre-post test survey structure was used on a treatment group (participants in the class) and a control group (those interested in the class, but unable to take it) to determine whether or not participating in the class altered environmental stewardship and confidence levels. Overall, results suggested that participation in the class did not have an effect on students’ environmental stewardship, but did have a positive effect on students’ levels of confidence within the great outdoors.

**Table 1:**

***Socio-demographic Characteristics of Students in the Treatment and Control Groups***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | | **Treatment Group (n / %)** | **Control Group (n / %)** |
| Gender | Female | 33 / 73.33 % | 22 / 66.67 % |
| Male | 12 / 26.67 % | 11 / 33.33 % |
| Year in School | 1st | 6 / 13.33 % | 0 / 0.00 % |
| 2nd | 3 / 6.67 % | 0 / 0.00 % |
| 3rd | 6 / 13.33 % | 3 / 9.09 % |
| 4th | 23 / 51.11 % | 6 / 18.18 % |
| Other | 7 / 15.56 % | 24 / 72.73 % |
| Age | 18-19 years | 9 / 20.00 % | 0 / 0.00 % |
| 20-21 years | 14 / 31.12 % | 3 / 9.09 % |
| 22-23 years | 20 / 44.44 % | 22 / 66.67 % |
| 24-25 years | 0 / 0.00 % | 5 / 15.15 % |
| 26 + years | 2 / 4.44 % | 3 / 9.09 % |
| Ethnicity | White/ Caucasian | 35 / 77.78 % | 19 / 57.58 % |
| Hispanic/ Latino | 4 / 8.89 % | 1 / 3.03 % |
| Black/African American | 0 / 0.00 % | 6 / 18.18 % |
| Asian | 4 / 8.89 % | 0 / 0.00 % |
| American Indian | 0 / 0.00 % | 0 / 0.00 % |
| Other | 2 / 4.44 % | 7 / 21.21 % |

**Table 2:**

***Results of Cronbach’s Alpha Analysis on the Pre Test of the PEDB 1090 – Outdoor Adventure Activities Survey***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Pre Test** | **Number of Items** | **Cronbach's Alpha** |
| **Total** | **24** | **0.737** |
| **All NEP Statements** | **12** | **0.770** |
| Pro NEP Statements | 8 | 0.769 |
| Anti NEP Statements | 4 | 0.565 |
| **All Confidence Statements** | **12** | **0.859** |
| People | 4 | 0.582 |
| Outdoors | 4 | 0.836 |
| Skills | 4 | 0.887 |

**Table 3:**

***Significance Levels of Paired T-test for the Twenty-Four Likert-Response Statements for the Treatment Group1***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Mean Difference**  **(Post-Pre)** | **t** | **df** | **Sig. (2-tailed)** |
| **Environmental Stewardship: Pro-NEP** |  |  |  |  |
| We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support. | 0.044 | 0.286 | 44 | 0.776 |
| The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset. | 0.378 | 3.538 | 44 | 0.001 |
| When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences. | 0.044 | 0.374 | 44 | 0.710 |
| To maintain a healthy economy we will have to develop a "steady state" economy where industrial growth is controlled. | 0.267 | 2.011 | 44 | 0.050 |
| Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to survive. | 0.000 | 0.000 | 44 | 1.000 |
| The earth is like a spaceship with only limited room and resources. | 0.222 | 1.461 | 44 | 0.151 |
| There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialized society cannot expand. | 0.289 | 1.482 | 44 | 0.145 |
| Mankind is severely abusing the environment. | -0.022 | -0.167 | 44 | 0.868 |
| **Environmental Stewardship: Anti-NEP** |  |  |  |  |
| Humans have the right to modify the natural environment. | 0.400 | 2.362 | 44 | 0.023 |
| Humankind was created to rule over the rest of nature. | 0.200 | 1.545 | 44 | 0.130 |
| Plants and anumals exist primarily to be used by humans. | -0.133 | -0.829 | 44 | 0.411 |
| Humans need not adapt to the natural environment because they can remake it to suit their needs. | -0.089 | -0.530 | 44 | 0.599 |
| **Confidence Levels: Interactions with Other People** |  |  |  |  |
| I do NOT feel confident being in the woods with other people. | 0.156 | 1.479 | 44 | 0.146 |
| I feel comfortable with meeting other people. | 0.533 | 4.000 | 44 | 0.000 |
| I feel confident being in the woods with other people. | 0.267 | 1.574 | 44 | 0.123 |
| I feel uncomfortable around other people. | -0.044 | -0.189 | 44 | 0.851 |
| **Confidence Levels: In the Great Outdoors** |  |  |  |  |
| I feel confident being in the forest. | 0.400 | 3.728 | 44 | 0.001 |
| I do NOT feel safe in the outdoors. | 0.333 | 3.317 | 44 | 0.002 |
| I do NOT feel confident being in the forest. | 0.267 | 1.956 | 44 | 0.057 |
| I feel safe in the outdoors. | 0.422 | 4.313 | 44 | 0.000 |
| **Confidence Levels: Skill Sets** |  |  |  |  |
| I feel confident in my outdoor skills. | 0.711 | 6.563 | 44 | 0.000 |
| I feel confident teaching others outdoor skills. | 1.133 | 8.268 | 44 | 0.000 |
| I do NOT feel confident in teaching others outdoor skills. | 0.800 | 4.342 | 44 | 0.000 |
| I do NOT feel confident in my outdoor skills. | 0.444 | 3.084 | 44 | 0.004 |

1 The Likert-response statements have been reorganized to facilitate a clearer understanding of the results.

**Table 4:**

***ANOVA Test Results for the Gain Means of Each Sub-Construct***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gain Mean Sub-Construct** | **Mean Square** | **df** | **F** | **Sig.** |
| Pro-NEP | 0.513 | 1 | 2.534 | 0.116 |
| Anti-NEP | 0.333 | 1 | 0.959 | 0.331 |
| People | 2.524 | 1 | 7.109 | 0.009 |
| Outdoors | 3.925 | 1 | 15.158 | 0.000 |
| Skills | 11.803 | 1 | 27.105 | 0.000 |

**Appendix A**

**PEDB 1090 – Outdoor Adventure Activities Survey**

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