Editorial

Glyn Thomas

Welcome to another issue of the Australian Journal of Outdoor Education where you will find four refereed papers, and one book review. This issue includes papers from two first-time authors, which is important because it demonstrates the commitment of the AJOE to help new authors to share the findings of their research.

The first paper from Clare Dallat reports on the risk communication strategies currently being employed in some schools in Victoria, Australia. Risk management seems to be a topic of great interest at conferences that I attend and it is important for work like Clare's to be published so that we can be sure that both theory and practice are well informed by research. In the paper, Clare raises concerns about the way parents are informed about risks in outdoor education programs and she challenges the commonly used 'deficit' model of risk communication and calls for a more holistic model of risk communication.

In the second paper, I teamed up with Tom Potter and Pete Allison to write a paper that draws on our editorial experience with the three main journals in the outdoor experiential education area. The paper sought to provide an overview of the peer reviewed research that has been published in the last decade in order to reveal strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and what we perceive to be blind spots. We also provide suggestions for future research and the continued development of the emerging research culture in the outdoor experiential education field. We express our special thanks to Dr Mike Brown, from the AJOE Advisory Board, for overseeing the review process for this paper.

Brendon Munge, a first-time author with the AJOE, shares the findings of his research exploring the perspectives of Australian employers on graduates from an outdoor education degree program. This research compliments similar studies conducted in the UK and USA and investigates the efficacy of the numerous training/education pathways that currently exist for a person aspiring to work in the outdoors. The report provides both positive and sobering information for higher education graduates and the academics who seek to design and implement degree programs specializing in outdoor education or related fields.

The final refereed paper from Eddie Gillespie and Sandy Allen-Craig presents the findings of a preliminary study into the effects of a wilderness therapy program for male youths at-risk. The research was conducted on a five-week residential program implemented in Australia that was designed to help the participants build life skills and resilience. The positive findings give some preliminary support for the use of wilderness therapy as an intervention tool to help male adolescents considered at-risk.

The single book review in this issue is from Scott Polley on the new text out of the USA called Teaching adventure education theory: Best practices. This book targets those who are preparing outdoor leaders and will be of interest to anyone charged with such duties. Don't forget that the next Australian Outdoor Education Conference is scheduled for January 10-13, 2010 in Fremantle, Western Australia. Check the Outdoor Education Australia website for more details at www.outdooreducationaustralia.com.au

Enjoy the reading.

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Editor