

Connections and Disconnections: Traditional and Emerging Technology in Outdoor Education

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Abstract

Outdoor education has been impacted with a proliferation of modern technological innovations, most of which have been accepted and even embraced without much questioning. It is argued that in the rush to adopt this technology, some aspects of personal growth and learning in the outdoors, as well as connections to the natural world, can be compromised. Traditional and emerging technology and their associated philosophical underpinnings, methods and policies each have varied and significant effects on outdoor experience. This paper examines some of the problematic elements of educating in the outdoors that are caught up with the issue of technology as a mediator of experience. Woven into the discussion is the question of whether emerging technology helps to connect students to the out-of-doors or work toward the separation of humans and the rest of nature. It is concluded that an informed and critically reflective understanding of one's programme, one's goals and one's participants will aid in an appropriate use of technology that seeks to balance both traditional and modern approaches.

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