

## Beyond the Backyard:

### Alternative Venues for Student Development

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This program will explore the potential of outdoor venues to enhance learning and personal development for all students, including those who struggle socially and academically in more traditional settings.

#### Premise No. 1:

- Almost all undergraduate reform efforts over the past two decades point to a needed increase in student engagement, both in and outside of the classroom

#### Premise No. 2:

- Experiential education is a proven method of increasing student engagement in campus and civic issues

#### Premise No. 3:

- Adventure education is a legitimate and highly engaging form of experiential education.

## Key Principles of Experiential Education

"Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences"

Association for  
Experiential Education  
(AEE)

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis.
- Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results.
- Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning.

## Definition of Adventure Education

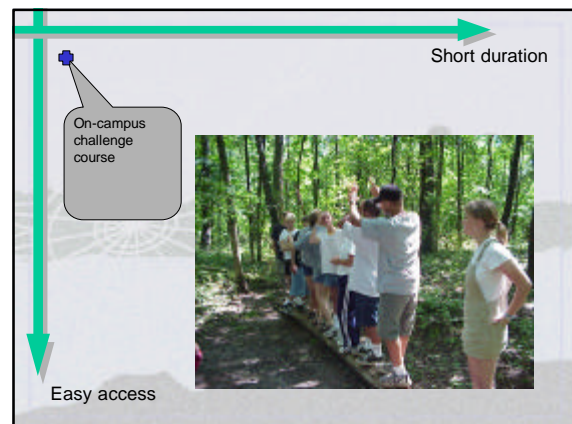
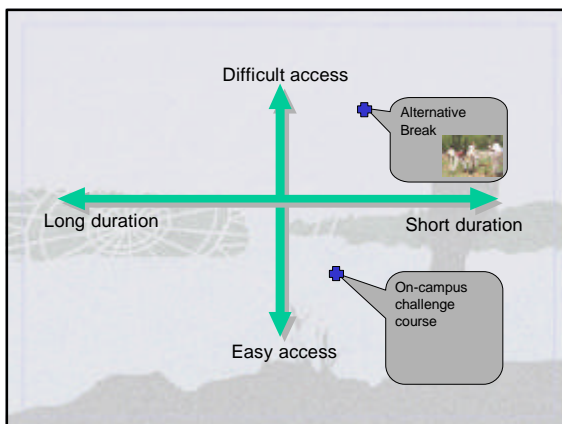
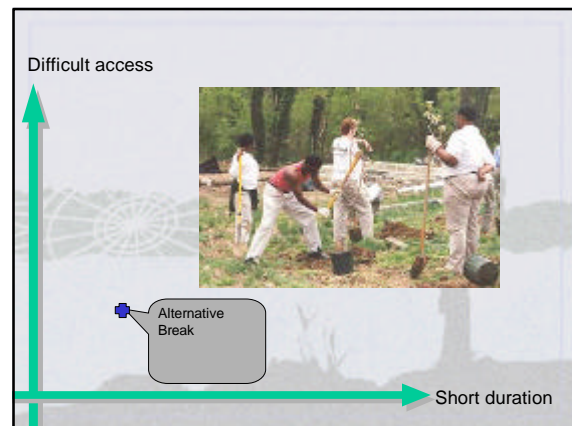
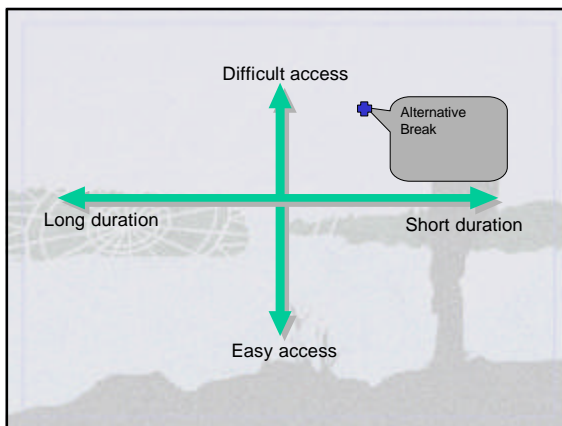
An experience-based educational program, on-campus or off-campus, that involves physical and intellectual challenge offered by outdoor settings and elements. Examples include challenge courses, backcountry expeditions, urban orienteering, etc.

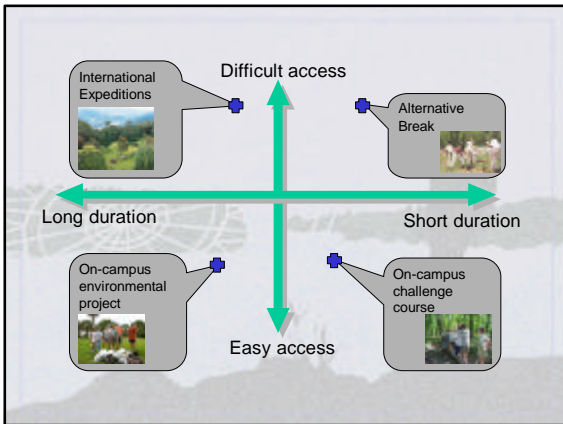
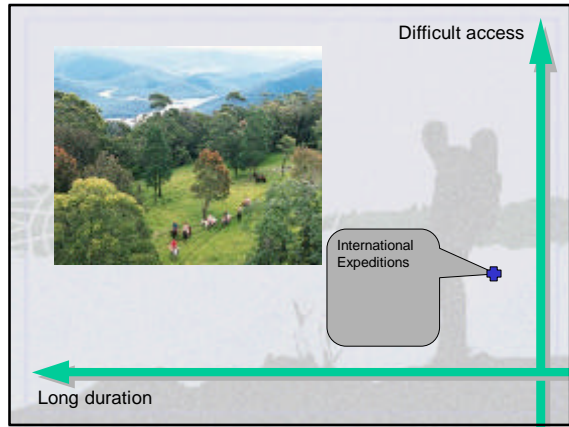
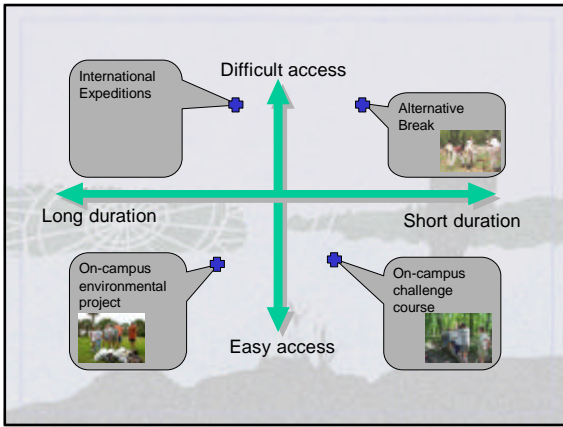
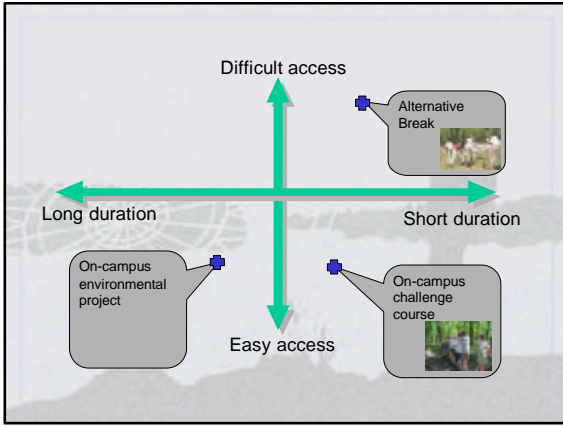
## “The Learning Expedition”

A type of adventure education program developed using principles employed by Outward Bound; initially these were wilderness-based, but the term may now be used to describe a variety of educational programs.

## Types of learning expeditions

- Two continua: Access and Duration
  - Access: Easy to Difficult
  - Duration: Short to Long





**Student issues:**

- Access
  - cost
  - physical ability
- Experience level
  - varied expeditions are necessary to meet differing needs
- Potential benefits
  - increased confidence through challenge
  - difficult-to-reach students often connect with learning expeditions
- Learning style differences
  - understanding the learning cycle (Kolb)
  - basic challenge/support issues (note OB's "challenge by choice")

## Common myths that are obstacles to developing learning expeditions

- Institutions without access to wilderness areas are out of luck
- Challenge courses (low-ropes courses) are prohibitively expensive
- Staffing issues are problematic—qualifications are too complicated

## Getting started

- Solicit interest on your campus—faculty, staff, students with skills in adventure/wilderness/outdoor leadership
- Consider several possible options, from very low-cost to higher-cost
- Seek out community partners—commercial, non-profit, educational (K-12), religious
- Visit/learn about other institutions' programs

## References/Resources

Adventure literature book list (Williams):  
[leewilliams.edesigns.net](http://leewilliams.edesigns.net)

Gass, M.A. and Priest, S. (1997). Effective leadership in adventure programming. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Klein, D. (1997). Beyond the wilderness (The learning expedition). About Campus, Vol. 1, No. 6 (January/February).

Kolb, D.A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as a source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

## Events

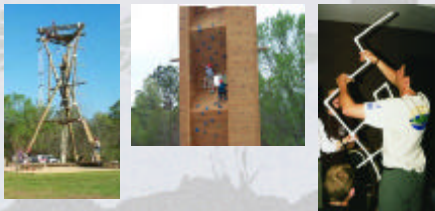
- Student Affairs and the Great Outdoors: A Professional Development Institute (May 29-June 1, 2002; Boone, North Carolina)  
[www.greatoutdoors.appstate.edu](http://www.greatoutdoors.appstate.edu)

## Organizations

- Association for Experiential Education: [www.aee.org](http://www.aee.org)
- Association for Outdoor Recreation and Education: [www.aore.org](http://www.aore.org)

## Commercial/Business

- Alpine Towers  
(affiliated with TeamWork/TeamPlay)  
[www.alpinetowers.com](http://www.alpinetowers.com)



For copies of these slides  
and additional resources:

[leewilliams.edesigns.net](http://leewilliams.edesigns.net)