



Expedition Leadership and APIOL

by Jo McCready

I was asked recently to write a small article about why I had become involved with IOL and the APIOL process from the perspective of an expedition leader. The article was part of a larger piece to allow other leaders to see the possible benefits of this reflective process.

It then crossed my mind that a wider range of people with an interest in the outdoors might find it of use. With this in mind here is the article below. In many ways it is only a snapshot of my thoughts but I hope it stimulates some debate and assists other people in deciding on the merits, or otherwise, of reflective learning.

APIOL & Expedition Leadership

In October of last year after 25 years of involvement in the outdoors I started my Accredited Practitioner (AP) with the Institute of Outdoor learning (IOL).

But why had I decided to do this and of what possible benefit could it be for me?

I knew of IOL and had even attended a course they ran a number of years ago but I thought no more of it at that stage. Last year, a colleague of mine suggested I look them up as they had developed a few courses that may be of interest to me. I looked up the website (www.outdoor-learning.org) and started to read. The more I read, the more it made me think about the work I did in the outdoors, the people I worked with and the many different ways I worked with them.

I got involved and then started the process of going through APIOL. What struck me about the process was that it made me think deeply about my work in the outdoors, especially expeditions and expedition leadership. The areas I started to look at made me reflect on what I did and why I did it in ways I hadn't thought of before. It made me think about memorable experiences and why they stuck in my mind. It made me think of the various styles of leadership I'd used with the wide variety of groups I'd

worked with. One area of particular interest was how, as leaders, we handle passing the decision-making process or elements thereof over to the groups we worked with. This called for judgement of the group, acknowledgement of the dynamics within that group and the nature of the activity itself. This also raised the notion of allowing people to develop by giving them increased responsibility even when they had it thrust upon them!

I have found the APIOL process to be thought provoking, stimulating and downright useful. It made me 'reflect' on why the expedition process in particular is such a powerful vehicle, not only for the development of the students I've worked with but for me as an individual. This can only benefit my development as a leader and impact on the future groups I shall work with. ■



Author's Notes

Jo McCready is the IOL Professional Development Co-ordinator for Wessex region. "I wear many hats in my working life. In essence, I design and facilitate development courses for people as diverse as college students through to corporate clients. My emphasis is on using experiential learning to provide a range of experiences that enable people to understand their behaviour and its impact more fully on others."

Photograph: by Peter Braidwood

APIOL Applications OPEN

APIOL Applications for a new intake of participants are open until 31st October 2012.

How to get started - Complete the APIOL Self Assessment, to help you decide whether APIOL is the right thing for you to embark on, at this moment in time. Then contact IOL for your logbook.

What does it cost? - The APIOL accreditation process costs £450. This includes: A half day induction workshop, Supporting documentation, The support of an APIOL Mentor, APIOL completion interview

An initial fee of £50 is payable when applying. The balance of £400 is due before you attend the Induction workshop and are allocated a Mentor.

See the APIOL Web area

<http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=72>