

HORIZONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OUTDOOR LEARNING

IN THIS ISSUE

WHAT NOW?
SYNERGISE SKILLS AND
BUILD ORGANISATIONAL
RESILIENCE



ISSUE 91 AUTUMN 2020

USE PEER PRACTICE
LEARN FROM LOCKDOWN, BE A ROLE
MODEL AND TRY SENSORY APPROACHES

EDITORIAL



Weathering the storm: reimagining tomorrow and trying to be resilient

Unfortunately we can't just wrap up, batten down the hatches and wait for the storm to pass. Here, in this issue, there are some brilliant ways to strengthen our resources, build our resilience and, where necessary, reimagine the future of Outdoor Learning.

Although the precise nature of the storm we're each facing will be different, we are not alone... feel connected to Outdoor Learning professionals from around the world by reading their experiences of COVID-19 (from page 8). Go to our new 'Viewpoint' feature (page 40) for practitioner opinions on our sector, and get involved with the new 'Knowledge base' (see the back page).

Uncertain about where to begin with reimagining our new normal? Head over to page 15 for Catherine's guide to spectrum thinking. Here you will learn how you can *"seize the opportunity to consider ways to expand our audience, to include more touchpoints with active participants, and to leverage the distant but connected virtual environment"*. It is as good as it sounds! From page 32, Kerry shares lockdown learnings from the Suntrap Forest Centre; I loved watching the film shorts created by young people as part of the *At home safari film challenge*. There is also plenty of inspiration to be found in the sessions shared in 'Coming to our senses' (page 12), and practical guidance to follow in the interview with Tim, who answers questions about changes to the Adventure Activities Licensing Service (page 22).

Reflect on the skills and experience we need, individually and as teams, in order to bring our reimaginings to fruition. Start by reading 'Professional matters' (from page 19) which includes examples of professional benchmarks, and then head over to Paul and Loel's article about developing good judgement and decision-making skills on page 25. From synergising skills, it's only a small leap to multi-solving; Marcus writes about how our sector has an opportunity to both recover from COVID-19 and tackle the climate crisis facing us (page 28).

Alongside the new 'Viewpoint' section, there are also other new features to explore. 'Being Earthwise' (page 38) introduces a new question and answer approach to nature connectivity, and Janek shares the first of four articles thinking about diversity, equity and inclusion (page 35).

Whilst we dream of calm seas and blue skies, I hope you find lots to mull over and begin reimagining futures with ■



EDITOR

Dr Carmen Byrne
horizonseditor@outdoor-learning.org

Horizons looks to share different perspectives, ideas and good practice from across the Outdoor Learning sector. I'm always interested in hearing about your experiences and ideas for features. Look at our writer's guidelines, and then have a go at writing an article: <http://bit.ly/Writing-for-Horizons>

READER VIEWPOINTS

It's great to introduce a new regular 'Viewpoint' feature which asks readers to give their opinions about current issues in Outdoor Learning.

Go to page 40 to get the latest thoughts about what our sector is doing well, and what could be better. Plus, find out how to have your say!

IMAGE CREDITS

Images are sourced from pxhere.com. Photographers retain copyright.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	2
SCANNING THE HORIZON	4
Resource recommendations from readers	
INSIGHTS	7
IOL and Outdoor Learning sector news	
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES	8
Outdoor Learning professionals share the impact of COVID-19 By Calvin Healey	
COMING TO OUR SENSES HOW TO... GUIDE	12
Emotional understanding through the Outdoors By Nuala Dunn, Stu Meese and Geoff Cooper	
SPECTRUM THINKING	15
The great equalizer for resilient organizations By Catherine Saldutti	
PROFESSIONAL MATTERS	19
The path ahead: Professional recognition for the workforce By Neal Anderson	
IN THE SPOTLIGHT	22
Tim Morton answers questions about changes to AALA	
SYNERGISING SKILLS	25
Developing good judgement and decision-making skills By Paul Smith and Loel Collins	
MULTI-SOLVING	28
Recovering from COVID-19 and tackling climate change By Marcus Bailie	
MUST-READ RESEARCH	31
From the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning (JAEOL)	
LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN	32
Film-making, bug hotels, natural dyes and much more... By Kerry Rolison	
ROLE MODELLING NEW	35
Part one of a series thinking about Outdoor Education, diversity, equity and inclusion By Janek Mamino	
BEING EARTHWISE NEW	38
Answering questions about nature connectivity By Geoff Cooper	
VIEWPOINT NEW	40
Readers tell us what they think	
PERSPECTIVES	43
Hard lessons and important solutions By Andy Robinson	



IN THE KNOW

The new members-only 'Knowledge base' is now live on the IOL website.

This new resource is a place to share knowledge, presentations and links about all aspects of Outdoor Learning provision.

It will be particularly helpful to students, apprentices, and members completing RPIOL, APIOL or LPIOL Awards.

To learn more about the 'Knowledge base' go to the back page.

SCANNING THE HORIZON



WEB

Resourcing resilience

Resource:

The Resilience Project.

Why it's useful:

The Resilience Project, based in Australia, has a lot of online information and resources about mental health strategies to help people become happier and more resilient, which is a key and growing aspect of work in Outdoor Learning.

Where to find it:

<https://theresilienceproject.com.au>

Recommended by:

Calvin Healey, Program Manager.

Calvin shares professionals' perspectives from around the world about what is happening in Outdoor Learning during COVID-19. Read from page 8.

WEB

Designing learning

Resource:

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines by CAST.

Why it's useful:

These guidelines have been iterated since the 1990s and reflect considerations for learning experience designs that accommodate all learners at every stage of their development. They are useful for formal and informal educators alike, are comprehensive yet manageable, and apply across domains and disciplines.

Where to find it:

<http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Recommended by:

Catherine Saldutti, President and Founder of EduChange, based in Los Angeles, California.

Go to page 15 to read Catherine's article about using Spectrum Thinking to build resilient organisations.

TOOLS

Acting for change

Resource:

John Muir Award by the John Muir Trust.

Why it's useful:

There's plenty of inspiration to be found on this website and the award itself allows young people to explore and discover wild places and to engage in positive action for change. There's lots of ideas, examples and links to further resources.

Where to find it:

www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award

Recommended by:

Nuala Dunn, Freelance Outdoor Environmental, Arts Educator.

Go to page 12 for Nuala, Geoff and Stu's how-to guide to sensory awareness and emotional understanding in Outdoor Learning.

Resource recommendations by readers for readers





Gaining flexibility

Resource:

Yoga for the inflexible male by Yoga Matt.

Why it's useful:

Taking the time to work on your own movement and flexibility is key to continued working as an Outdoor practitioner. This book is a useful stepping stone to helping manage expectations (and potentially limit damage to your own ego) and help individuals who may not have engaged with yoga, start that process.

Where to find it:

Good bookstores.

Recommended by:

Paul Smith, Multi-disciplined Adventure Sports Coach and Coach Educator.

Paul, with Loel, writes about developing good judgement and decision-making skills from page 25.

IMAGES

Images are sourced from pxhere.com, except for *Last child in the woods* which was sourced from Blackwells.co.uk Photographers retain copyright.



Being guided to safety

Resource:

Guidance from the Licensing Authority on the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (known by its reference L77) by HSE.

Why it's useful:

It sets out the regulations applicants are required to meet, so is essential reading for anybody applying for a licence. In addition to some really useful guidance, the crux section is Appendix 3: the 20 regulations that make up the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. After over 15 years of inspecting I'm still surprised by the number of people who apply without actually reading them, especially regulations 6 and 9. It's a bit like turning up for an assessment course without ever reading the syllabus.

Where to find it:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l77.htm

Recommended by:

Tim Morton, Head of Service at Adventure RMS.

Read the interview with Tim about the latest updates to Adventure Activity Licensing from page 22.



Keeping a sense of wonder

Resources:

Last child in the woods by Richard Louv.

Why it's useful:

Possibly the first book I had read which articulated my own concerns about the problems for humanity if we are disconnected from the natural world. The problem hasn't gone away, but perhaps we are becoming more aware of it. During our lockdown many more people have become aware of how important the natural world is for their own wellbeing, be it a walk in the park or watching the birds from their window. I hope as we begin to come out of lockdown we don't lose that sense of wonder and hopefully care for the natural world.

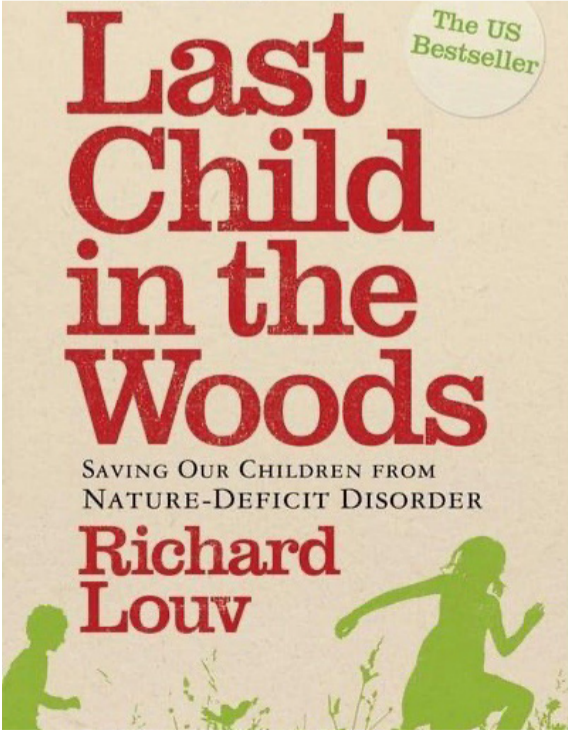
Where to find it:

Good bookstores.

Recommended by:

Kerry Rolison, Head of Suntrap Forest Centre, East London.

Get inspiration from Kerry's article about learnings from lockdown at Suntrap Forest Centre, from page 32.



SPECTRUM THINKING

The great equalizer for resilient organizations

In the present moment, many organizations face disruptions in service, loss of participants or visitors, and dwindling revenues. To negotiate this landscape, we may seize the opportunity to consider ways to expand our audience, to include more touchpoints with active participants, and to leverage the distant but connected virtual environment. In sum, we must work to increase the resiliency of our organizations in dynamic social and economic environments. Spectrum thinking is a strategic planning process that taps the power of range and diversity on a variety of continua. Spectrum thinking allows designers and leaders to consider a range of times, places and purposes that enable us to learn more about, and better serve, our program participants. And it may be used for a variety of different actions: information-gathering efforts, new experience design, or recruitment tactics.

Spectrum thinking works best when we consider a certain participant profile with the goal of building an experience for that individual or small group. It may seem strange to examine such a small segment. Not only does this approach keep the team focused, it allows for deeper consideration of the barriers, needs, and goals that encourage or prevent given participants from enjoying your offerings. When we consider several spectra simultaneously, we can use them as a sound engineer might, setting the dials to create the kind of resonance desired when all elements work in concert.

This article provides four different spectra, each one emphasizing a different scenario and target audience. You can see how an organization might “dial in” to a new or enhanced offering using spectrum thinking.

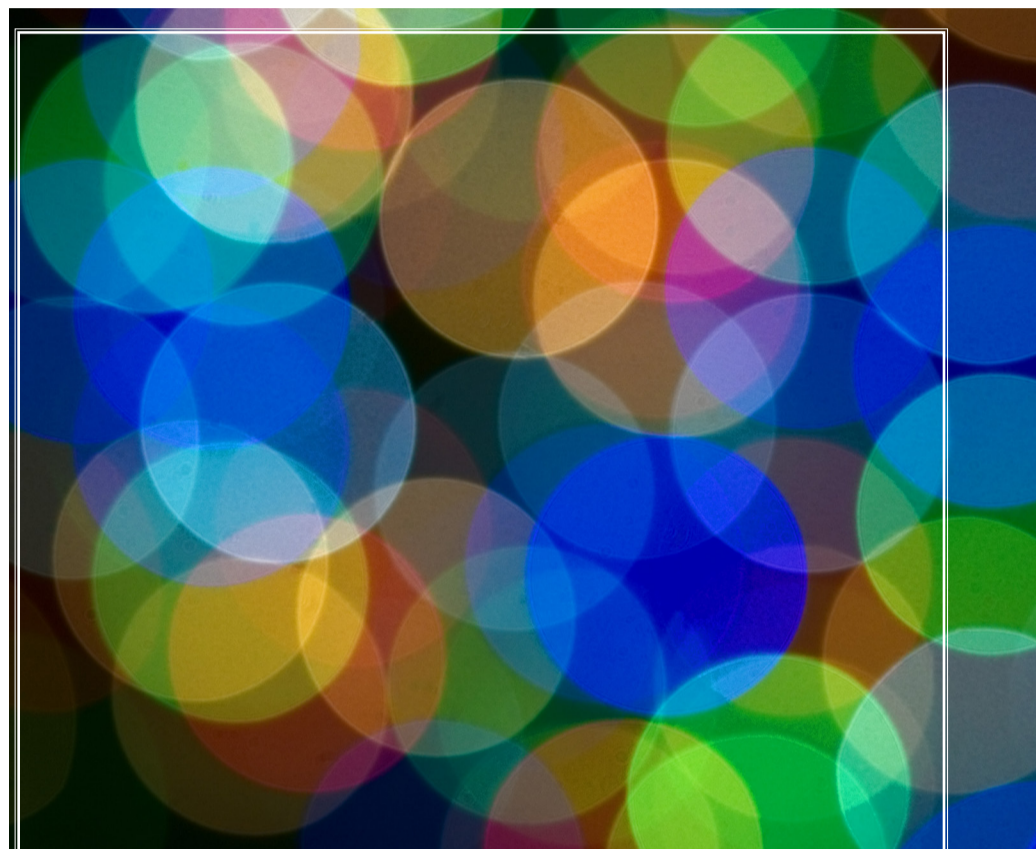
Developing appropriate spectra

Different spectra are appropriate for different organizations, but the goal remains the same: to design for range. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines, which are grounded in principles of architectural design, were developed by Anne Meyer and David Rose in the 1990s and are now available through CAST. UDL helps us consider a given learner as a human with complex needs, interests, and goals, rather than as a unidimensional student or participant. Since 2008, I have led teams of learning experience designers to enact spectrum thinking sessions based on these Guidelines. Here I provide some example spectra and ways to deploy them for organizational brainstorming and planning purposes.

It is always a good idea to have your Mission Statement, Core Values, or other organizational guidelines handy so that spectral discussions remain grounded in the ‘look, sound, and feel’ of your experiences and offerings. In the following examples, notice how each spectrum addresses a type of learning experience for a particular participant segment.

TEMPORAL SPECTRUM

This range plots the possible timeframes surrounding a learning experience. My team often taps this spectrum to consider the development of rich pre- and post-experiences, with an eye toward how those might inform the experience itself. I find that all too often, organizations will focus solely on the central experience, for



DEFINING SPECTRUM THINKING

The Institute for the Future (ITF) defines spectrum thinking as:

“Full-spectrum thinking is the ability to seek patterns and clarity outside, across, beyond, or maybe even without any boxes or categories while resisting false certainty and simplistic binary choices.” (1)

example the hike they are leading. With all eyes on the hike, the pre-experience may be limited to sending a list of recommended gear for the hike and scheduling details, perhaps accompanied by a short video or safety guidelines. Though this information is essential, it is not really a learning experience in and of itself. We may miss out on ways to engage participants prior to the hike. And when hikes are cancelled due to pandemic lockdowns or extreme weather events, the disruption can devastate an organization.

Offsite pre- and post-experiences may help absorb the shock of these periods. They may become avenues for new participant recruitment. And they may allow us to address known issues within the central experience. (See Figure 1.)

For example, my team observed that certain hikers sometimes reject the food options provided during Outdoor Learning experiences and field work. Some of our students have never eaten an energy bar or trail mix in their lives, and this seemingly small issue might associate negative feelings with the hike (particularly if

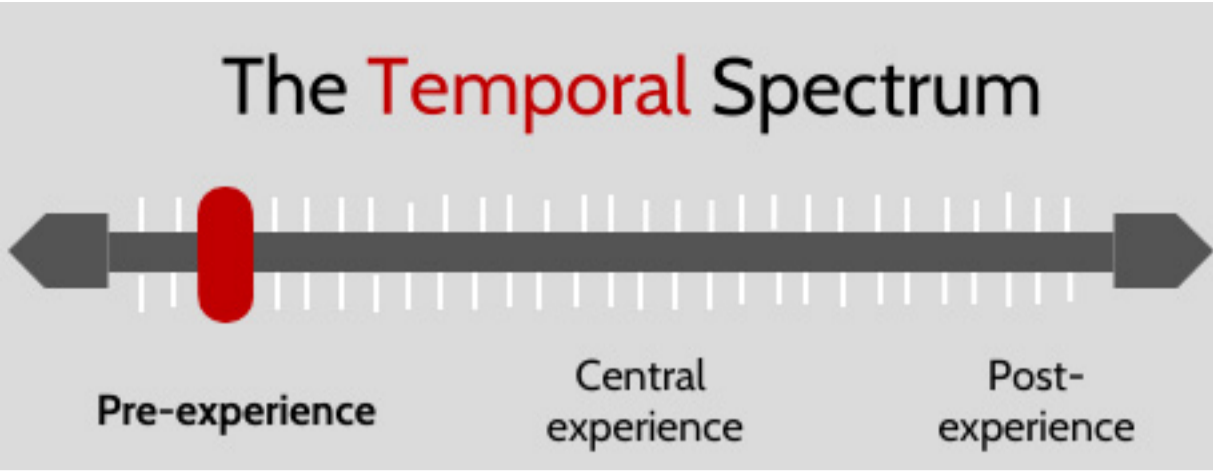


FIGURE ONE: Temporal Spectrum

the students don't eat). The opportunity presents itself: can we craft a pre-hike experience that allows participants to follow basic criteria to prepare their own trail snacks?

Many hikers grab bars and packets for underlying reasons, including type of nutrients, stability outside a refrigerator, and convenient storage. The trail snack challenge may be conducted while participants are remote, and is perfect for those spending more time in their own kitchens. Leaders could hold virtual meetups to frame the challenge and create a web page where people can ask questions, share photos and recipes, and receive feedback. Participants could prepare snacks consistent with their cultural culinary preferences, effectively respecting heritage and identity while increasing anticipation for the hike in parallel. The product of this pre-experience, the trail snack, becomes a self-actualized preparation step that may make novice hikers feel more confident and autonomous about hiking in general. Hikers may even receive guide-approved badges for their self-made snacks while enjoying them on the trail. By creating a trail snack challenge, we may be able to correct a known problem without altering the central experience, re-engage past participants, and tap new channels for participant recruitment. And by attending to one spectrum and one participant segment (those who don't enjoy our provided food options), it is possible to create an entirely new offering. As you see who participates in the new offering, you are primed to gather additional participant information that can inform revisions.

LOCATION SPECTRUM

This spectrum plots alternate locations for activities where participants engage with organizational leaders. This is an interesting spectrum for Outdoor Learning and school leaders to consider, since experience planning usually revolves around the trails, rivers, sites or buildings where the central experience takes place. But when our locations are off-limits, for seasonal or other reasons, the learning doesn't have to be. The "any time, any where" mantra applies to this spectrum. (See Figure 2.)



FIGURE TWO: Location Spectrum

A great way to identify potential new participants is by tapping the networks of your past participants. However, when we tap their geographies rather than their interest-based or social connections, we can diversify our participant group as well.

Continuing our hiking example, let's say that one of your past participants resides in an area that does not easily connect local transportation options to your commonly used trail locations. This brave pioneer may help you understand how she overcame the transportation hurdle, as well as other barriers that may prevent others in her neighborhood from engaging with you. As you well know, place-based experiences require leaders who are familiar with

a given location. Might this pioneer, regardless of her hiking abilities, become a participant leader who draws new recruits? Why not bring a hike to her neighborhood?

Leaders can collaborate with the participant to stage a one-hour neighborhood hike. A trail map could be developed and provided, daypacks and other regular hiking gear brought to the meeting place, and the participant with local knowledge leads the hike, alone or with other locals. Advertising the neighborhood hike can be strategic due to the hike's neighborhood draw, and a rain date may be set without too much disruption. Participants would gain comfort with elements that may be new to them; wearing a pack of a certain weight, selecting footwear, or using a trail map without the use of a Smartphone, even if the location is quite familiar. The role reversal is a powerful relationship-builder: members of the organization learn a new trail alongside local 'guides' who share stories and points of interest. At the end of the hike, all participants reflect on their neighborhood hiking experience, and explore what would make a journey to the remote trailhead a realistic possibility. The neighborhood hike simultaneously rewards a past participant with a leadership role in a post-experience, provides insights into transportation or other barriers that make engagement difficult, and serves as a recruitment opportunity for the organization.

PARTICIPATION FREQUENCY SPECTRUM

In the Location Spectrum example, the participant tapped to lead the neighborhood hike did not have advanced hiking skills. The organization was able to re-engage her by identifying her ability to overcome transportation difficulties as an entry point for leadership, and by honoring her local knowledge. When we engage learners in a new skill set like hiking, it is easy to focus on their technical ability level (novice, intermediate, or advanced). Though many guides relish opportunities for technical advancement, repeat participants may not be aiming to traverse steeper terrain or hike twice as many kilometers. When we separate an individual's participation rate as a separate spectrum, we may uncover new ways to support our biggest fans, and possibly recruit new ones. (See Figure 3.)

Participants who repeatedly engage with us are valuable sources of information. They are also the very people we cannot disappoint. Ultimately, organizations who wish to increase participation frequency need to a) create participant profiles as early as the first experience; b) continue to expand the profile using both participant and organizational feedback; and c) provide modifications, rewards, new roles or additional offerings that honor these participants.

Some organizations now use electronic tablets such as iPads so participants can complete intake or evaluation surveys on site. However, the questions tend to focus only on the organization's performance. We can employ spectrum thinking to acquire information that is more participant-centered, crafting questions related to personal goals, emotional or wellness connections, and key takeaways. Hikers are tired by the time they reach the end of the trail, so a short, virtual post-experience that happens several days after the hike may work better. Accumulating learning science research indicates that human brains can't do the thing and reflect on the thing in the same moment. This is what makes a separate post-experience necessary.

Fast-forward to a participant's third hike with the organization: information gathered from the first two hikes informs an in-person conversation with one of the guides during lunch on the third hike. The guide learns that the repeat hiker craves forest sounds and uses the hikes as opportunities to practice nature photography. The guide might offer to showcase their photos in a special gallery on the website, and narrate a soundscape recorded along their favorite trail. Would these participants be interested in leading a small friends-and-family type event to share their multimedia portfolio more broadly?

When we explicitly acknowledge the talents, interests, and goals of repeat participants, we show them, and others, that people representing diverse perspectives and ability levels can thrive on their own terms.

This paves the way for specialised offerings that keep them coming back, and helps inform our recruitment efforts to boot.

IMPACT SPECTRUM

This is probably my favorite spectrum, as it pushes organizations to consider their impact through the eyes of their participants, and at a minimum of three distinct levels. Beginning at the level of personal impact, we may see intersection points with participation frequency. If a participant is compelled to join a second, third, or fourth hike, can we help her discover why? Classroom educators preserve time for self-reflection after a learning experience to help students make explicit connections to their own motivations, emotional responses, cultural connections, and goals. Similarly, Outdoor Learning participants may not be able to articulate exactly how hiking impacts them without some structured prompts or conversations. Why not offer some post experience time to help them figure it out?

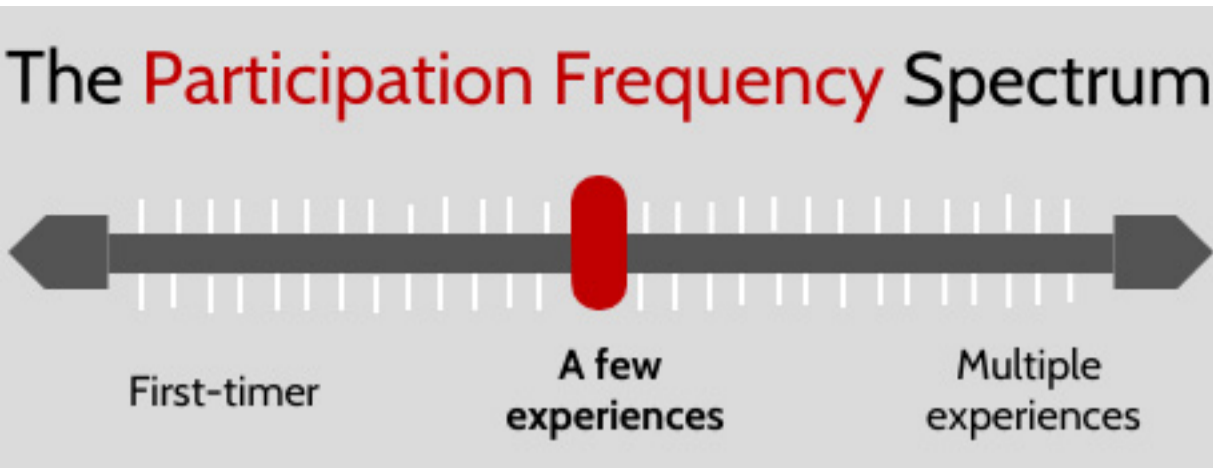


FIGURE THREE: Participation Frequency Spectrum

Outdoor Learning experiences also impact participants by making them feel part of something bigger than themselves. Exploring a nearby forest, river, bike path, or community garden shows people how dynamic, beautiful, or imperiled their own region is. Participants can learn to see the impact of change at this level when they know what to look for. Can we show them how to observe regional impact in a new way? Can we help them understand how their own behaviors make a difference? Can participants learn specific ways that your organization is making a positive regional impact? Can they get involved? (See Figure 4.)



FIGURE FOUR: Impact Spectrum

Participants who make personal and regional connections often are keen to explore global impacts as well. Conversely, participants may know about a global issue but not know how it connects to their own lives and communities. In our learning experience designs, we use the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for these three levels of systemic connections (2). Pre- or post-experiences that mesh SDGs with articulated personal goals and motivations, or with regional activities, help participants come full circle. Everyone counts, everyone can make a difference, and everyone can find strength in collaborative community action. At a time when mental health problems and social disconnection are on the rise, it is incumbent upon learning experience designers to explicitly foster personal-local-global sensemaking.



LOOKING TO DEVELOP LEADERS?

If you found this article useful, read *Synergising Skills*, from page 25.

Building equalizers with stacked spectrum

To develop a single spectrum, first define three or four increments and then consider a given participant profile along its trajectory. Remember that spectrum thinking centers on participant profiles first, and experience features second. You build the experience based on the needs, interests, or motivations of the participant. I recommend beginning the process with only one spectrum and one target participant profile. Allow conversations

to grow organically around it. Remember to use your Mission Statement or other organizational artifacts to anchor the activity in your shared values.

As your team deploys spectrum thinking more regularly, it is possible to build stacked spectra into an equalizer for a given participant profile. You might wish to do this to see how different variables work together, which may support discussions about revisions to the experience, both with and without the participants in question. Taking the neighborhood hike example, we consider our participant leader who resides in a neighborhood where we have been previously unsuccessful in attracting new participants. The participant leader is the reference point for these stacked spectra. (See Figure 5.)

Spectrum thinking is not a replacement for other kinds of data collection, metrics or planning tools. When used as a one-time retreat activity, it will undoubtedly fall short on its promise.

But organizations seeking to increase their resiliency must commit to increasing their capacity across several relevant spectra.

When used regularly, spectrum thinking is a strategic and collaborative planning compass that helps us better navigate a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world ■

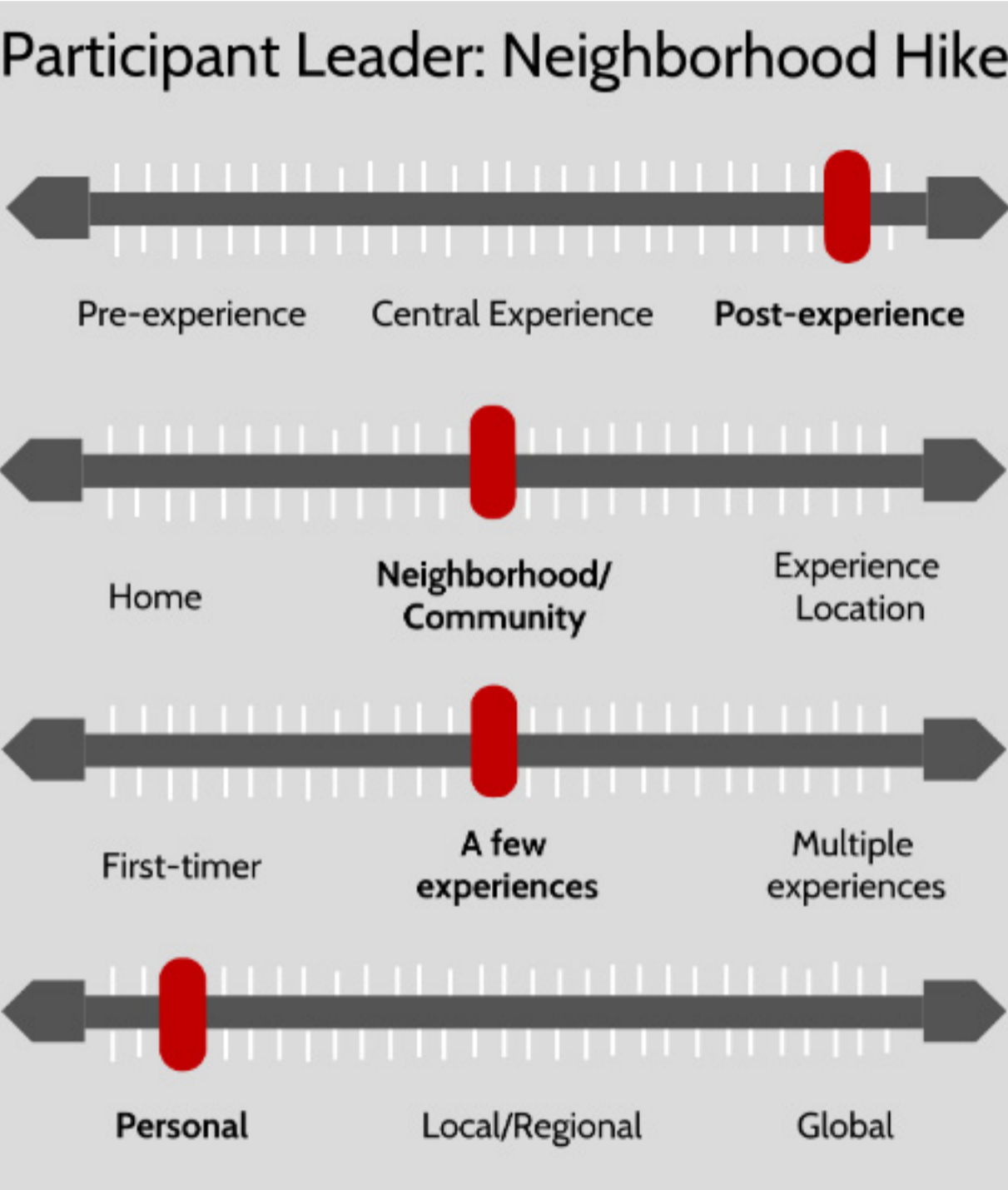


FIGURE FIVE: Building equalizers

REFERENCES

- 1. www.iftf.org/fullspectrumthinkingbook/
- 2. United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

IMAGES

Figures 1 to 5 have been supplied by the author who retains copyright. Other images have been sourced from pxhere.com and photographers retain copyright.



AUTHOR
Catherine Saldutti, President & Founder of EduChange

Catherine is the President and Founder of EduChange, a firm devoted to re-engineering academic systems and programs in secondary schools. She has led teams of master educators, researchers and STEM professionals to design learning experiences for formal classrooms for over 27 years.