

## **Creativity and innovation in a holistic program design**

Dr Andrew Martin

Dr Andrew Martin is a senior lecturer in the Department of Management, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand (email: [a.j.martin@massey.ac.nz](mailto:a.j.martin@massey.ac.nz)).

At the recent International Outward Bound Symposium in Australia, an activity day was set aside, which included traditional activities including climbing/abseiling, ropes course activities, water activities, a tramping trip with aims to share ideas and best practices. However, it was two creative activities, developed at Outward Bound Czech Republic (OBCZ) that demonstrated a more innovative approach to program design.

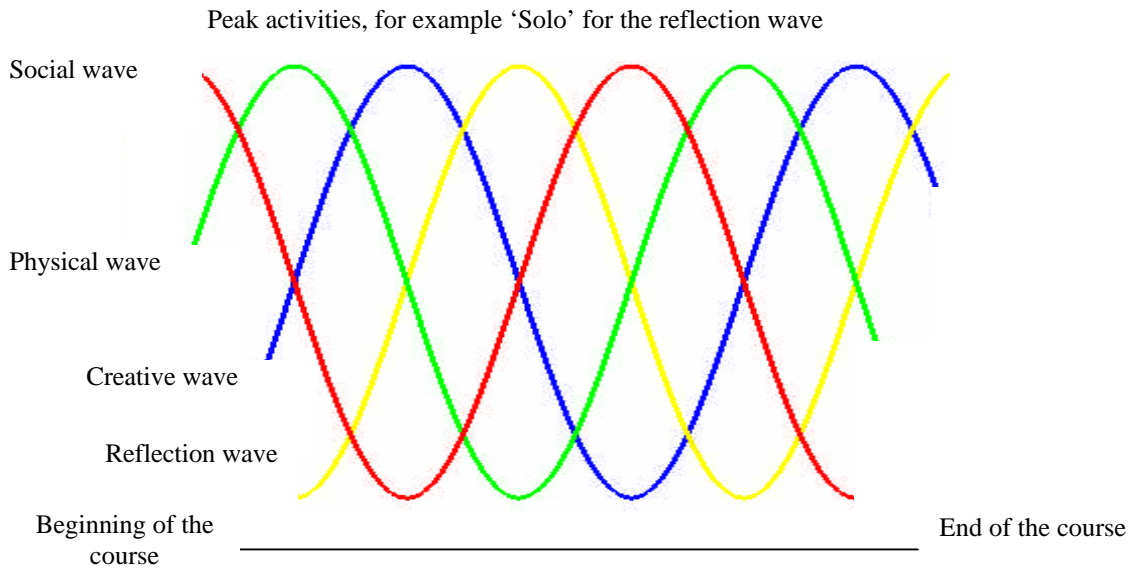
Traditionally Outward Bound courses have involved mainly physical outdoor activities, which were sequenced, briefed and debriefed as part of 'the adventure wave' (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). However, there is a need for a more holistic approach that balances physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of personal development (Martin, 2001c).

Whilst the roots of Outward Bound were based on Kurt Hahn's educational philosophies, the philosophical roots of the Czech school were based on the ancient Greek word '*kalokagathia*', which Krouwel (2000) indicated, "stood for an ideal nurture concept that featured harmonious development of outward merits and inner world beauty based on

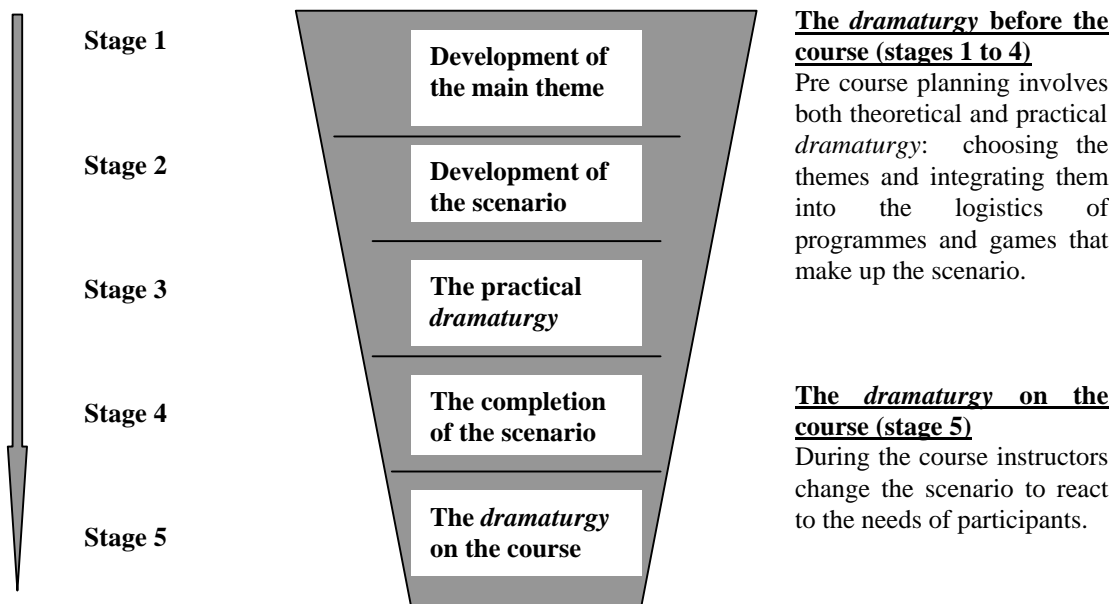
spiritual moral principles” (p.63). The Czech school had begun as ‘Vacation School Lipnice’ in 1977, as a result of long-term effort to establish a centre of educational value based in a natural environment.

### Dramaturgy

The courses at OBCZ are developed for the specific needs of the individuals and group, and are characterised by a wide variety of social, physical, creative, and reflection activities. ‘Dramaturgy’, a method of program design, is used by instructors to link, integrate, and intertwine these activities. Figure 1 illustrates how these activities with associated peak activities can be intertwined as part of the ‘dramaturgy wave’ (Martin, 2001b). ‘Dramaturgy’ is an effective method of course design, which links, integrates, and intertwines the key elements of the educational process (Martin, 2000). First themes are chosen and then the scenario is created involving more specific objectives and the logistics of the individual activities. The planning of the course ‘dramaturgy’ is a continuous process that ensures that the course themes provide a thread throughout the scenario. The activities are carefully sequenced to maintain a holistic balance of intensity and ‘rhythm’ (Martin, 2001a). Figure 2 illustrates the five stages of planning the course ‘dramaturgy’.



**Figure 1** 'The dramaturgy wave' (adapted from Martin, 2001a, p.36)



**Figure 2** The five stages of developing dramaturgy (Martin & Leberman, 2000, p.6)

## Intertouch

One of the Czech courses, Intertouch, which was first presented at the Outward Bound Symposium at Thomson Island in 1997, was trialled at OB Australia in 1999. A subsequent course was also held in Hong Kong in 2000 (for more details of this years Intertouch course in the Czech Republic see [www.intertouch.cz](http://www.intertouch.cz)). As a result of the Czech influence OB in New Zealand now has a creative day as part of their 21-day course; creative activities have also filtered into debriefs and shorter professional development courses.

The two activities demonstrated at the recent Symposium are described below:

*'Colour mass'* is a creative workshop, which involves framing small pictures from a mass of colour. Three to five participants were seated around a large sheet of paper/card and they painted. Primary colours were blended to explore different shades and colours. They painted by using fingers and pieces of plastic, playing with the colours, blending and smearing them. The paintings were abstract and colourful. After finishing the pictures and while they were drying, there was a short excursion around them and the groups shared a few words about their paintings. When the paintings were dry, participants took small paper/card frames and searched for beautiful details to cut out and put in their frame creating a new picture. Pictures were hung with pegs on a line to produce a 'gallery'. The 'exhibition' started by each artist discussing why he or she had chosen his or her picture.

*'Pointillism'* is a dynamic and creative team game involving running and painting. It involves recreating an art 'masterpiece' using dots, lots of dots. Four teams of up to eight people were given a famous (e.g. Monet) painting to copy. Four 'canvasses' (large card taped on a wall) started to be filled in with dots (we used a water tank, which was a good choice). The paint was twenty metres away in the 'studio' with the pictures reached at different times by hopping and painted by big toes, thumbs and noses. Time was allowed for planning strategy and reflection time in the 'studio'.

At the beginning of the *'Pointillism'* game it was difficult to believe that a quality picture could be produced with just noses, thumbs and toes. However, the resulting 'canvases' were difficult to distinguish from the original masterpiece. Everyone had had great fun and many had paint on parts of their body from head to foot, as a result of spontaneous body art.

The following comments from participants after the Intertouch course, run jointly in Australia by OBA and OBCZ instructors, illustrate the impact of these types of activities. Whilst many of the games originated in Czech, the OBA instructors also contributed a number of creative activities. For example, a piano was taken apart and its parts were used to create a musical 'symphony'.

The creative workshops of art, music and dance: Helped me explore and confront hidden feelings of creativity and release them with confidence and inspiration to create more.

It has opened up new areas for me to explore and learn; given me new confidence in myself, woken up my creative self, inspired me to continue 'workshops' Intertouch has started. It helped me confront, recognise and understand so many underlying emotions and feelings I was only barely aware of.

I couldn't imagine how full on and creative the activities were, also just the tone and scene setting. It provided a very safe learning environment.

All of the dance, drama, art, music, role plays, took me out of my comfort zone too, but I learnt most about these because I discovered I had a lot to offer to something I never knew I had the ability.

I feel more creative in my mind due to the art activities we did...It's when I look at the sunset, look at a painting, look at the landscape when I'm bush walking. I just feel like this part of my mind was opened a little bit more. The various activities involving painting helped develop my appreciation of colour. Painting the big concrete type 'silo' things reminded me how creative we all really are and that synergy is an amazing thing.

Intertouch allowed me to experience creativity at a new level. I had always been a creative person, however locked into old ways of creative expression. Since the course I haven't stopped singing, writing songs, poems, playing guitar, drawing and more. The best bit about it is that creativity enhances your thinking. I have been able to deal with different problems that come up at work more effectively. I believe it is because I look further than previous for solutions.

Intertouch has helped develop a creative side of me I didn't believe was there and now when introduced to something I have this belief that I can do it too. This came from all the workshops we did with paint, music, dance and so on.

As indicated earlier creativity is just one aspect that is integrated into the Czech courses.

The following participant quotes illustrate the impact and holistic nature of the course design.

...we were all immersed in one of the most challenging, exciting and testing 13 days of our lives. There is no way that I can break the Intertouch experience down into a few words. Suffice to say, for me it was a life changing experience where I got to know myself, my fellow group members and our instructors at a level I could not previously comprehend. This is not a personal development program that focuses only upon growth through physical challenge. Instead we were all creatively, emotionally culturally and even spiritually stretched (as well as the usual physical tests.... The whole experience was fantastic! I can't thank the instructors enough for the time effort and energy they invested in this project. It was an unforgettable experience that I will carry with me always.

It was like a lifetime of experiences/lessons compressed into 2 weeks. It was like an experiment where I experienced tests of every capability I thought I had as a human being, and more. I used every sense, every skill, every limb, every milligram of energy in the shortest space of time possible. I used neurons I knew I had, and created connections between neurons that have never been used. The critical element is that this 'experiment' occurred in a 'cocoon' of safety/support/compassion/caring, allowing me to play full out. This cocoon allowed me to go on this emotional roller coaster of the highest highs and the lowest lows without wanting to get off. I wanted to stay on because I knew that during this journey of 2 weeks I was learning what would possibly take me 2 years or more in my 'normal' life. I know that this was more than an educational experience because when I try to explain the activities/learning to others, I often can't find the words. Intertouch was a wake up call too because all of that was and is within me, I only need to tap into it.

These participant quotes highlight the importance of play in learning and the range of activities that challenge each individual differently to produce the learning. Instructors/trainers should also be encouraged to play, experiment and share new activities, challenging their comfort zones, not just physically. There are no standard people; there should not be standard courses. As Outward Bound develops a greater

range of courses, there is a need for a more diverse variety of activities that provide a greater range of physical, social, creative and reflective challenges...

*'Outward Bound, challenging more people, in more ways, more often'*

## References

Krouwel, W. (2000). *An investigation into the past, current and potential role of outdoor development (and particularly) outdoor management development practice in Britain in the light of practice at Vacation School Lipnice and Ceska Cesta in the Czech Republic*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Lancaster, UK.

Martin, A.J. (2001a). Dramaturgy: A holistic approach to outdoor education. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 6(1), 34-41.

Martin, A.J. (2001b). The dramaturgy wave. *Horizons*, 15, 26-29.

Martin, A.J. (2001c). *Towards the next generation of experiential education programmes: A case study of Outward Bound*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Martin, A.J. & Leberman, S.I. (2000). *Adventure the Czech way* [On-line]. *Scisco Conscientia*, 2(3), 1-17.

Martin, A.J. (2000). Towards a new generation of Outward Bound. *Horizons*, 10, 29-30.

Schoel, J. Prouty, D. & Radcliffe, P. (1988). *Islands of healing: A guide to adventure based counselling*. Hamilton, Massachusetts: Project Adventure, Inc.