

Why intentional experiences? The impact of adventure

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ADVENTURE
INSTITUTE

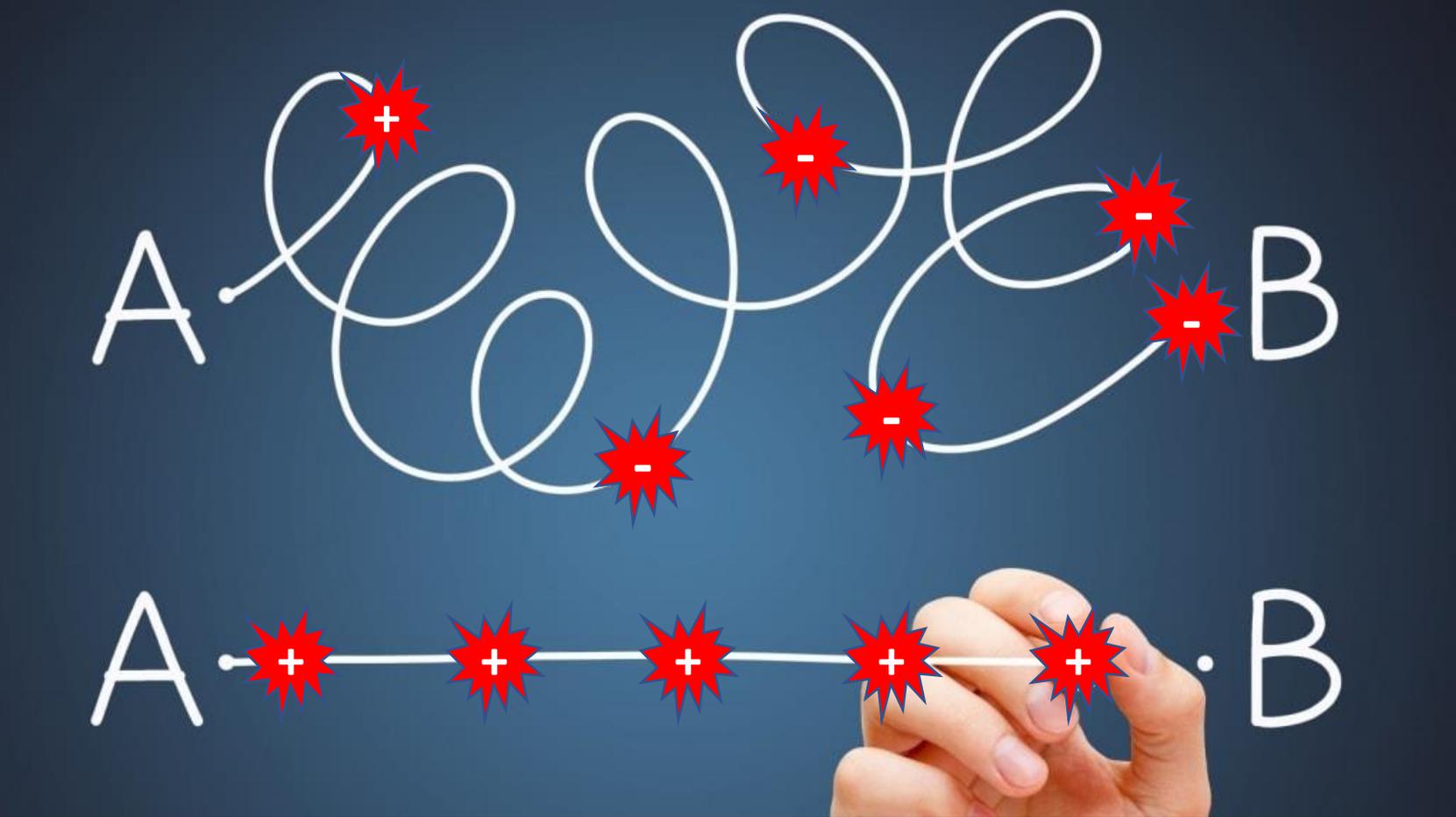


**Tshwane University
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We empower people

Assumptions for presentation:

- Mixed audience:
 - combination - academic and practice.
 - managers and practitioners.
 - adventure related experiential learning and adventure guides.
- I will be making generalised statements.

Objective of presentation: Intentional Adventure



Adventure is:

Participant is **willing**.

An exciting or **unusual** (novel) experience.

Participation in **exciting** undertakings or enterprises.

A bold, **usually risky** undertaking; hazardous action of **uncertain outcome**.

1. **Adventure** is less about what you do and more about how you do it.
2. **Adventure** is personal.
3. **Adventure** is not only physical, but mental, emotional, psychological.
4. **Adventure** is about the courage to envision something different in our lives and in our world.
5. **Adventure** is inherently discontinuous.
6. **Adventure** is about uncertainty and embracing discomfort.
7. **Adventure** is a bias to action.
8. **Adventure** is a balance.
9. **Adventure** is an ability that is exercised like a muscle.

Two Stories - Context:

Tshepo, a young man from rural Kwa-Zulu Natal who grew up in the outdoors. Each morning on their 5km hike to school Tshepo had to cross two river streams (in rainy season, sometimes not being able to cross). He would normally reach school two hours later.



Credit: Stock photo ID:1195882959

Bongi, a young woman from Sandton, lives in an upmarket security estate. Her father's chauffeur drops her off and picks her up at school after a 10min drive.



Credit: Stock photo ID:610261880

Two Stories continue - Outdoor Adventure:

Tshepo's perception of **outdoor adventure** is not necessarily positive - the outdoors up to now in his life was part of a struggle, it complicated his life.



Credit: Stock photo ID:1195882959

Bongi's perception of **outdoor adventure** is intimidating as she has never been exposed to such activities or environment. She grew up very protective.

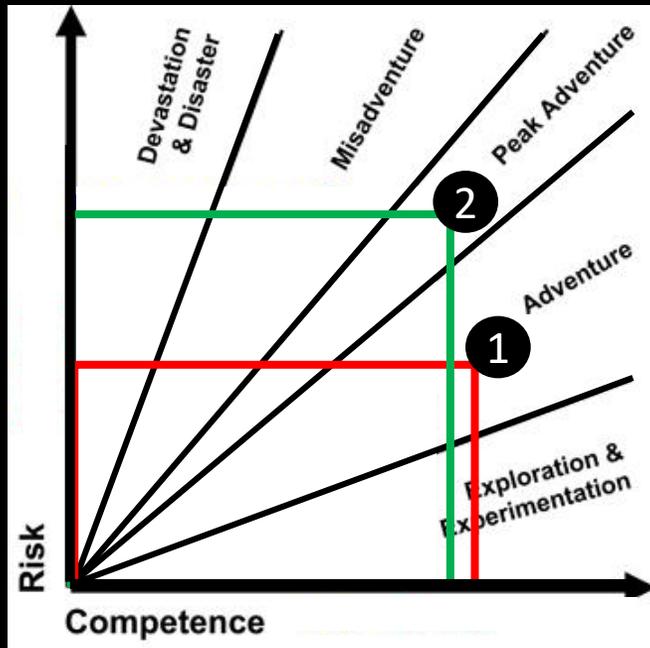


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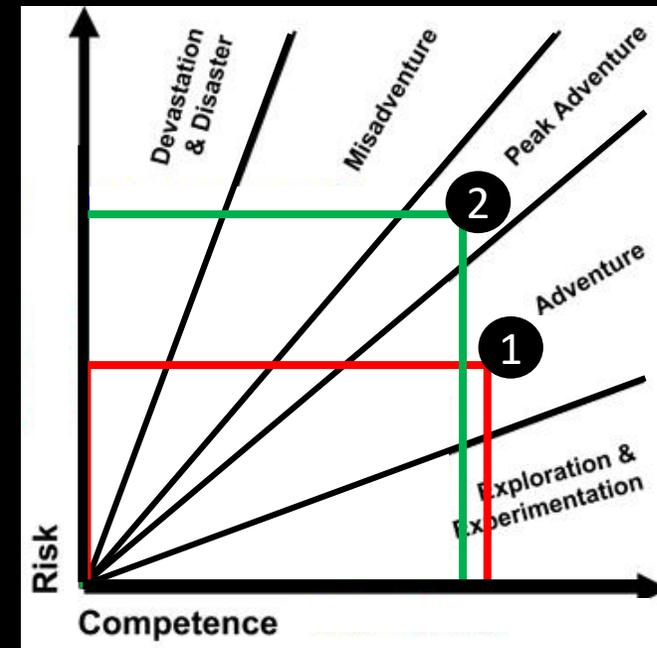
Two Stories continue - Adventure:

Tshepo is not unfamiliar with adventure as he loves travelling, he visits family each December in both cities and rural KZN.

Bongi is not unfamiliar with adventure as she loves competing in public speaking competitions.



They are both unaware that they are endeavoring in Adventure.



Two Stories continue - Adventure Guiding:

When **Tshepo** was eighteen he started studying and went on an adventure hike with his class at University. He did not look forward to the trip due to his history with the outdoors (it did not sound like a positive exciting experience to him), he was however looking forward to spending time with his new friends.

On the trip they were expected to do an abseil, when he took too long before going down, the guide showed signs of irritation and made a snotty comment about him stalling the group (his new friends laughed at him and it regularly came up during the hike).

The trip was super exhausting, when they returned after three days, some members had traumatic experiences due to the facilitator, bullies in the group and the technicality of the hike. At the carpark, they returned their kit, greeted each other and just got into their cars and drove off.

Tshepo vouched to never go on an organised **adventure ever again. Technically the guide was highly competent but could have facilitated the human processes so much better. Tshepo has since criticized all outdoor adventure events due to that negative experience and has never been on one again.**

Two Stories continue - Adventure Facilitation:

When **Bongi** finished school she went on a post-matric camp to prepare them for the “world” after matric.

At the campsite they started off with icebreakers, their group then immediately started with the climbing wall and obstacle course. When she (being a little overweight) could not do the activities, she was asked to sit them out (this was very hard for her as she felt her friends looked down on her from thereon).

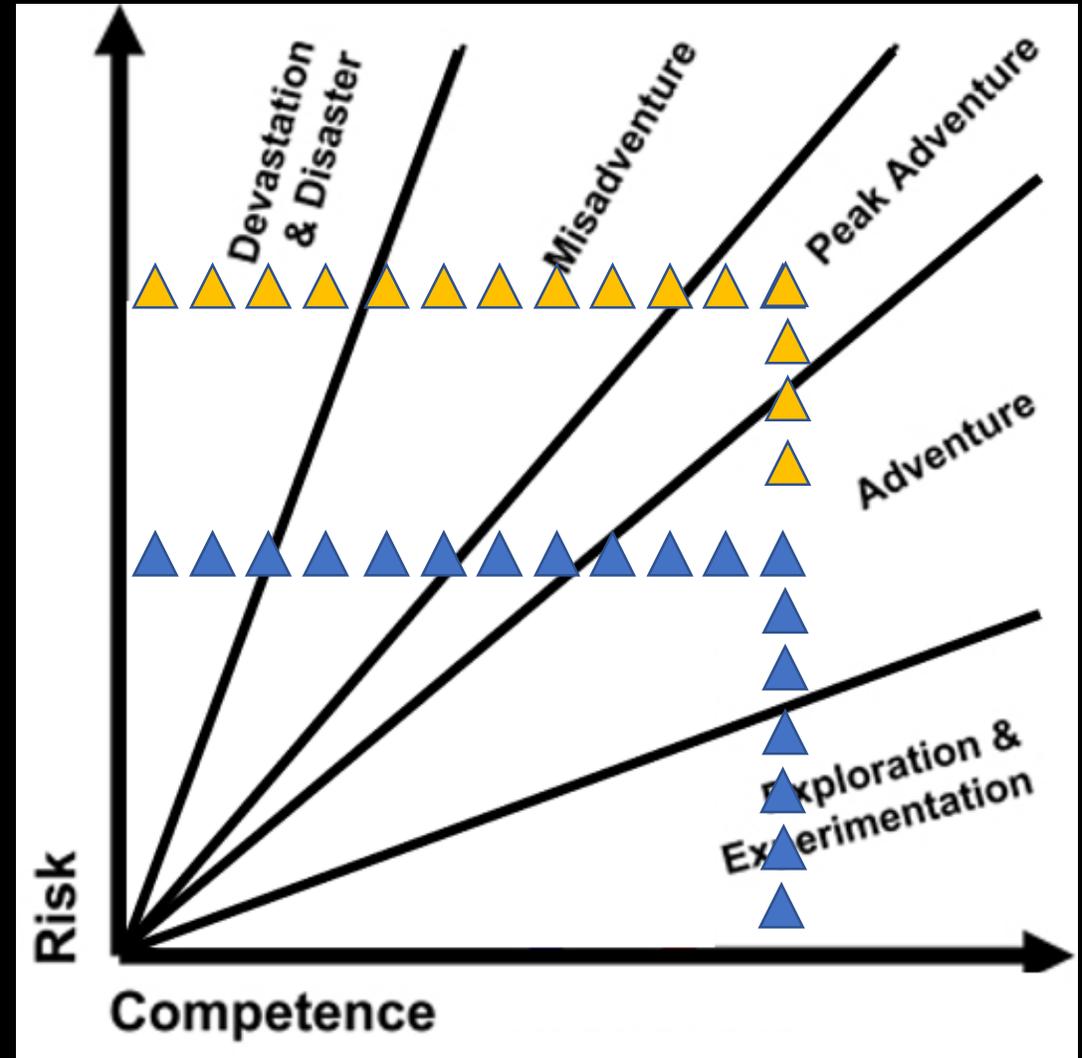
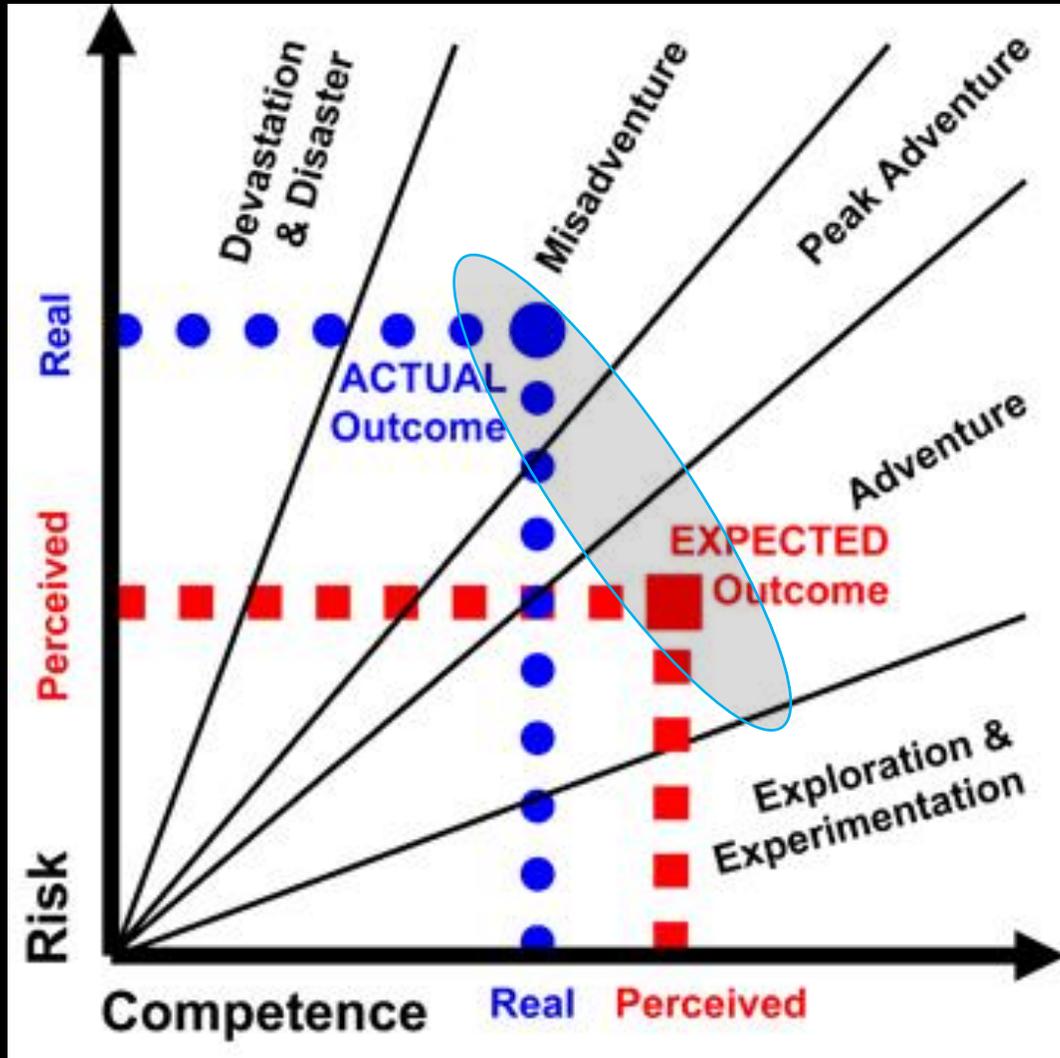
The facilitators said they are going to learn life skills, but they never reflected on any of the experiences/ activities. Apparently, the teachers did not want them to sit in a circle for too long, just talking, and doing no activities. They did multiple activities but never discussed how the activities are transferred to real life.

There was one boy who experienced chronic trauma due to his relationship with his dad (history of trauma), he could not execute the activities and “freaked out” (facilitator words) each time the facilitator came across as too strict or dominant. This made the group very uncomfortable. The facilitator did not know how to handle him.

Bongi vouched to never go on an organised **adventure event ever again. She has since criticized all outdoor adventure events due to that negative experience.**

Adventure Paradigm

With guided reflection and repeated attempts, perceptions come in line with reality.



Learning

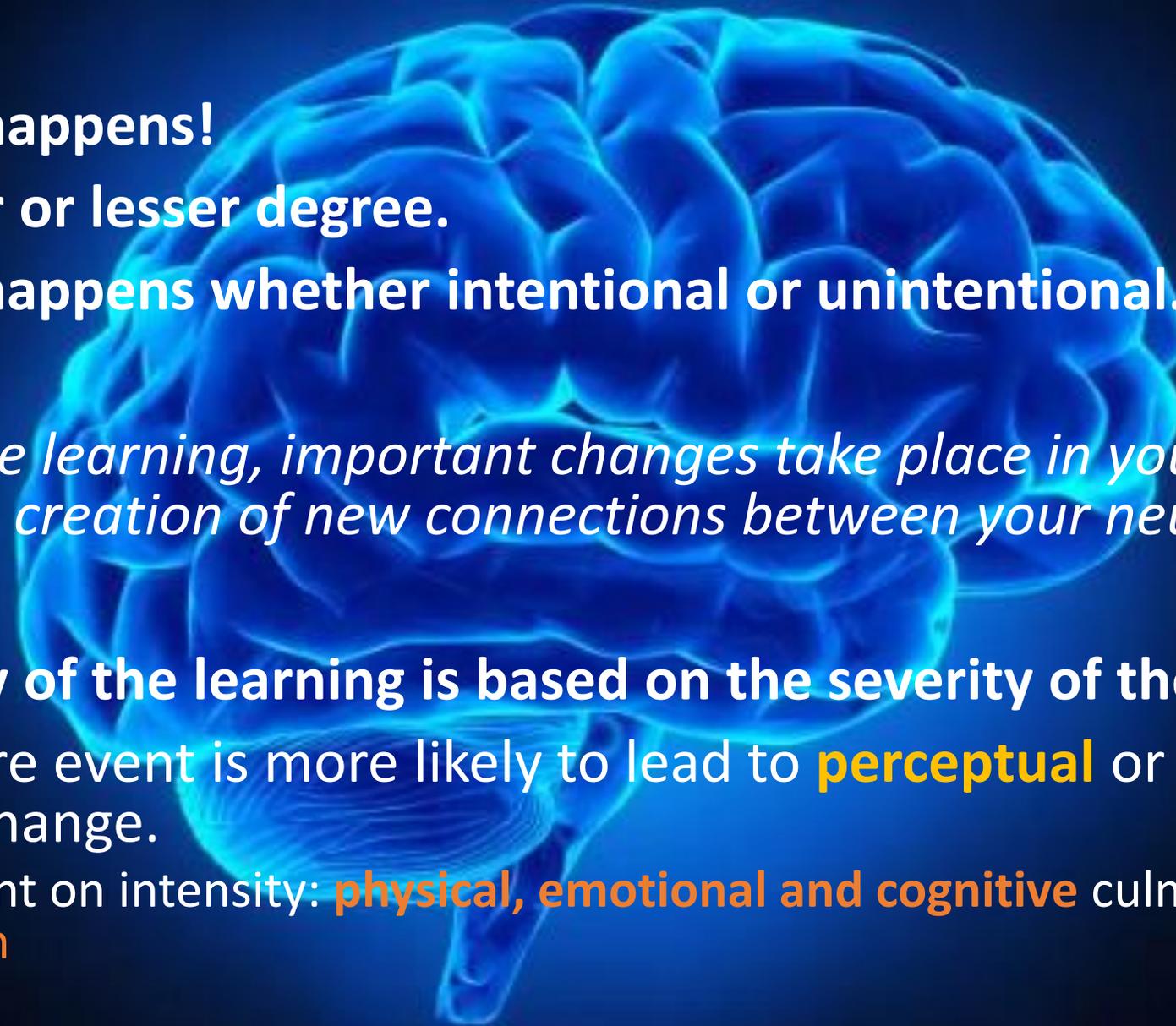
1. Learning happens!
2. To a larger or lesser degree.
3. Learning happens whether intentional or unintentional.

When you are learning, important changes take place in your brain, including the creation of new connections between your neurons.

The intensity of the learning is based on the severity of the event:

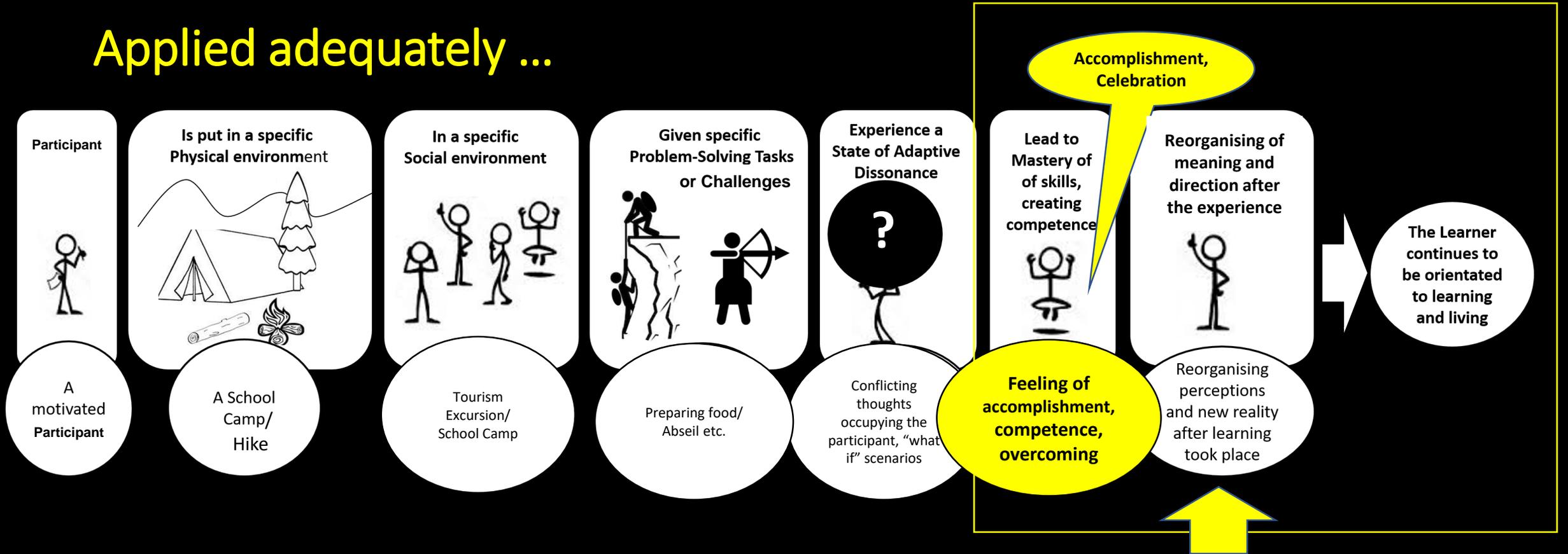
A more severe event is more likely to lead to **perceptual** or even **behavioral** change.

- Dependent on intensity: **physical, emotional and cognitive** culmination and **repetition**



Outward Bound Process

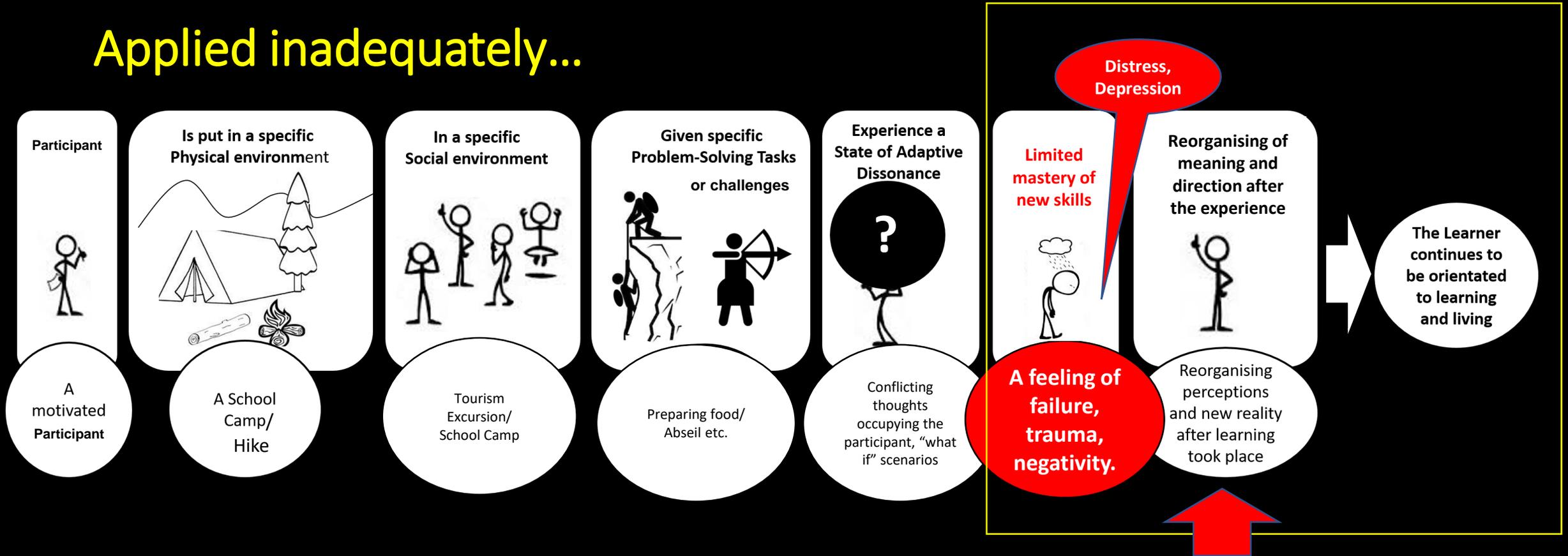
Applied adequately ...



Snyman (2021) - Walsh and Golins (1976) - McKenzie (2003)

Outward Bound Process (continue)

Applied inadequately...



Snyman (2021) - Walsh and Golins (1976) - McKenzie (2003)

Adventure Applications

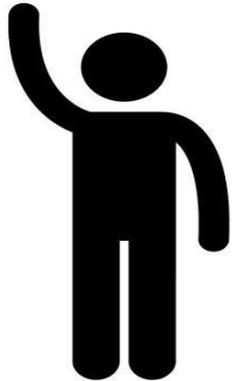
RECREATION	EDUCATION	DEVELOPMENT	THERAPY/ RE-DIRECT
<p>What do I want: Fun Laughter, I want them re-energized through laughter</p>	<p>The group need to understand the concepts, I want to add knowledge, the need to better understand the topic at hand and themselves.</p>	<p>Improving functional behaviour, teaching people how to behave differently via behaviour.</p>	<p>Change dysfunctional behaviour patterns utilizing adventure. Habilitation and rehabilitation.</p>
<p>It changes: Feeling</p>	<p>Feeling & Thinking</p>	<p>Feeling, Thinking & Behaving</p>	<p>Feeling, Thinking, Behaving & Resisting</p>
<p>Activity: Hike, climb, play, canoe</p>	<p>Learning via adventure, new ways to solve problems</p>	<p>Real life and simulate – transfer. Relationships</p>	<p>New strategies to cope via adventure, transfer to real life</p>
<p>Orientation: Activity</p>	<p>Task</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>Improvisation</p>
<p>Do 100% / Debrief 0%</p>	<p>75% / 25%</p>	<p>50% / 50%</p>	<p>25% / 75%</p>

Credit (adapted from): [Outdoor & Experiential | ePortfolio | Simon Priest](#)

Programme characteristics

PARTICIPANT

Age, culture,
experience,
gender,
personality etc.



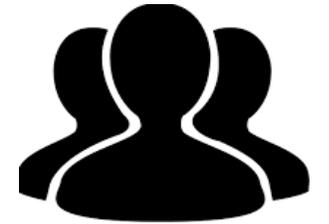
PLACE

Indoor, outdoor of
combination –
rural, urban,
rustic or glamour



GROUP

Skill, history,
diversity, climate



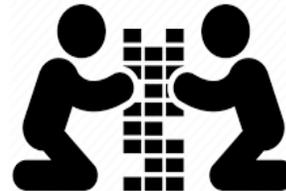
PROCESS

Time, what first,
what last – based
on application



ACTIVITY

Availability, skill
level required,
suitable for
outcomes



FACILITATOR/ GUIDE

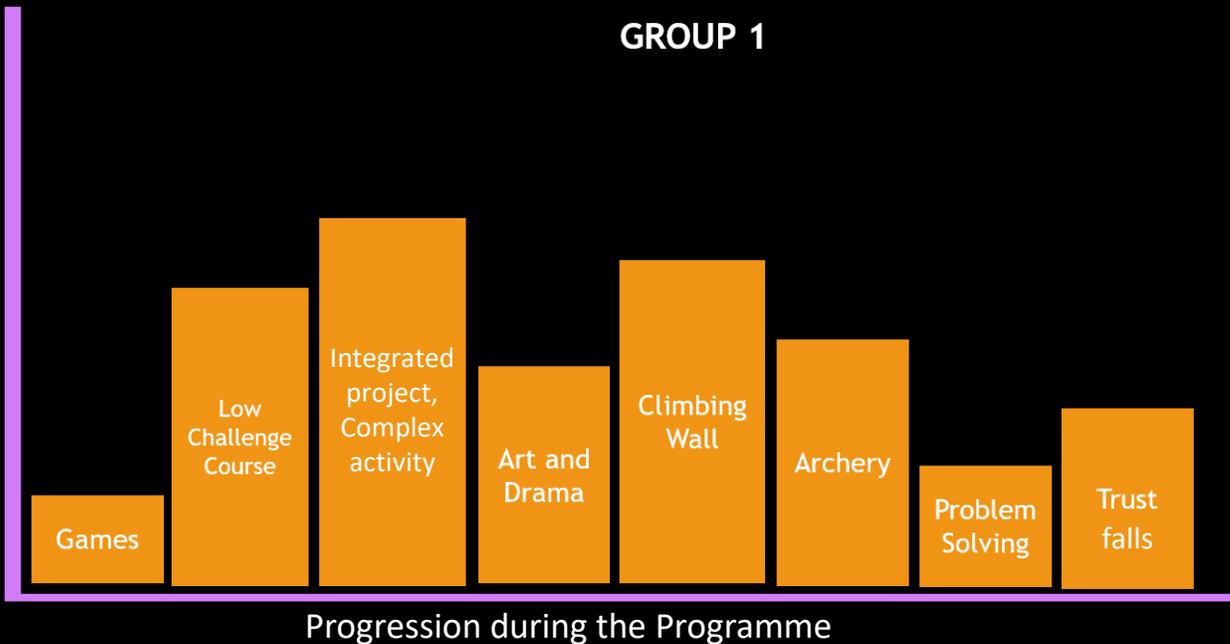
Age, maturity,
experience,
“hard skills”, “soft
skills”,
competence.



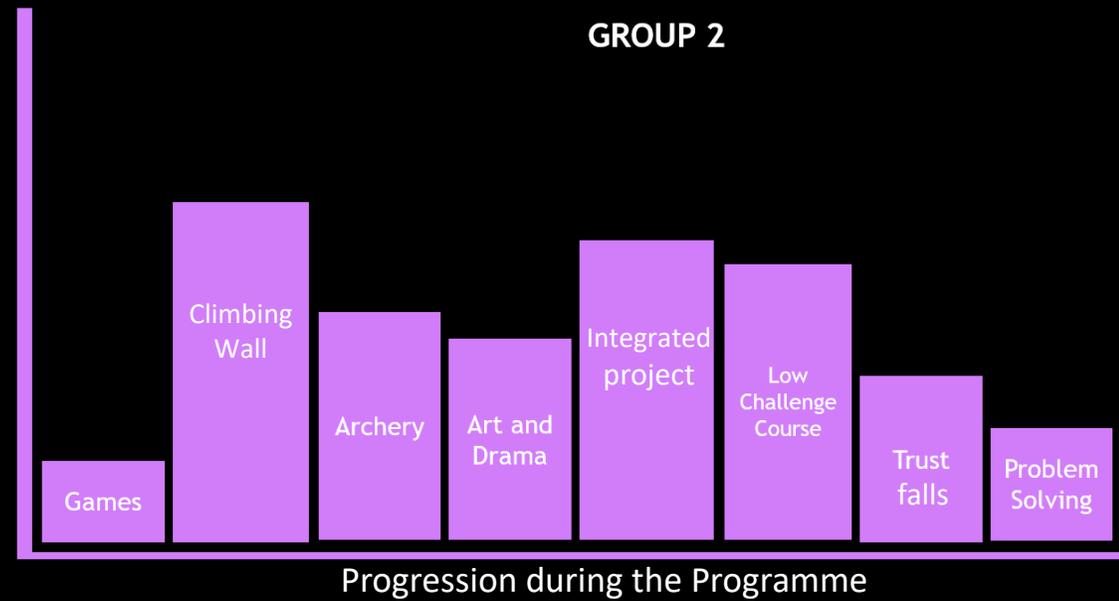
Programme stages and activity intensity

What is happening...

Activity Complexity/ Intensity - Emotional Cognitive/ Physical



Activity Complexity/ Intensity - Emotional Cognitive/ Physical

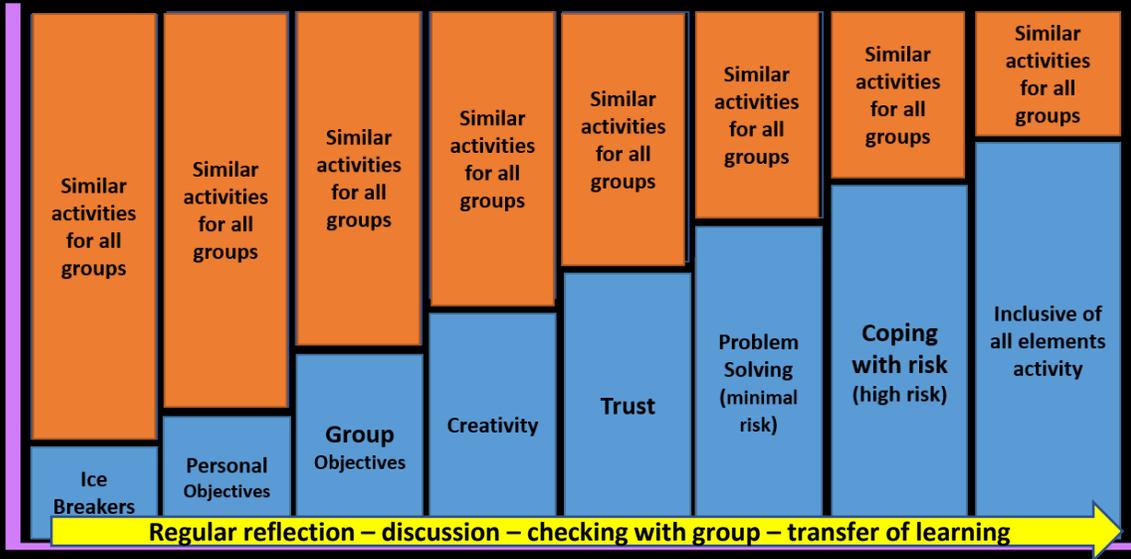


Programme stages and activity intensity

How it should look like...

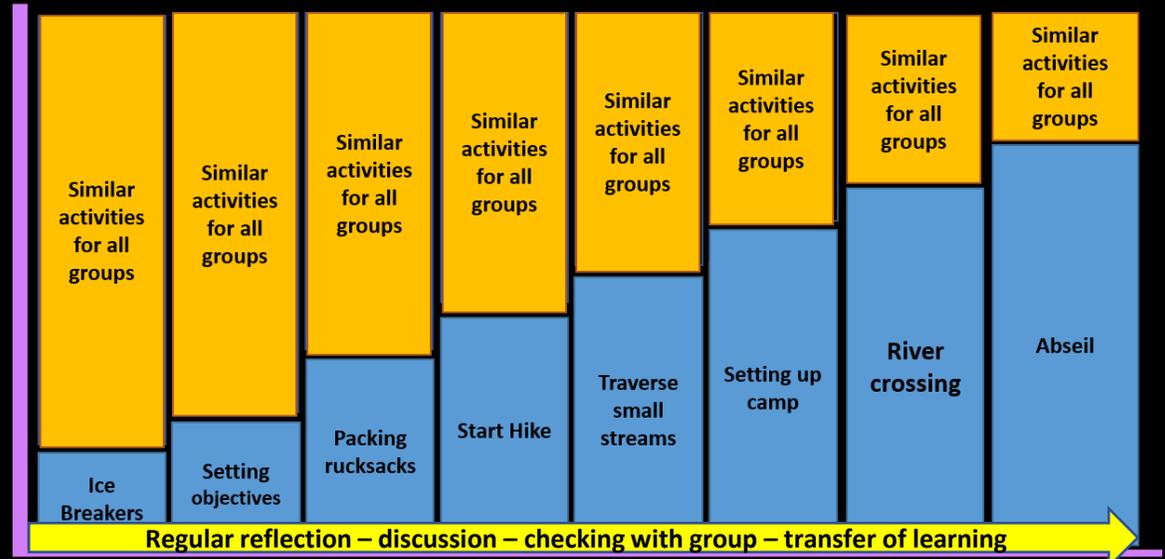
Adventurous Experiential Learning

Activity Complexity/ Intensity - Emotional Cognitive/ Physical

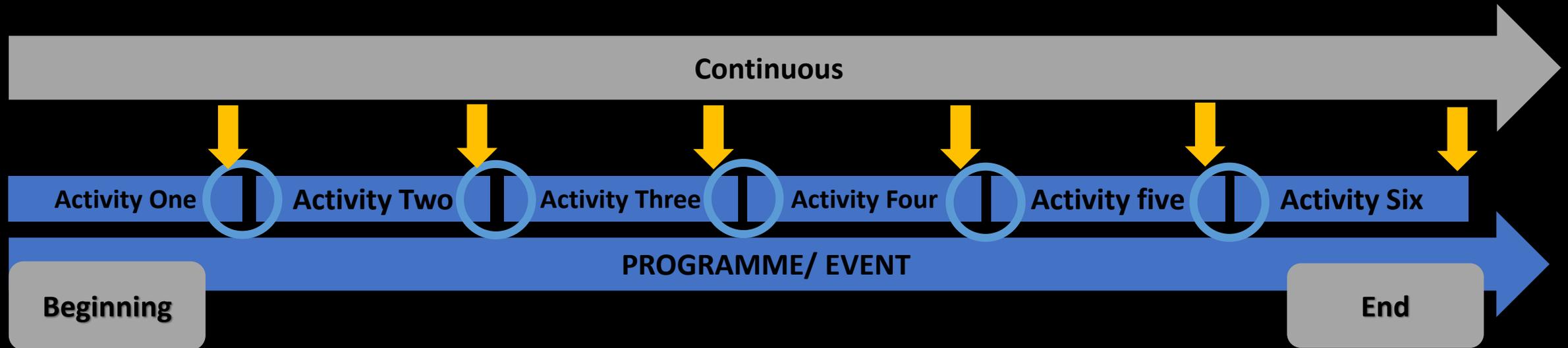


Adventure Guiding

Activity Complexity/ Intensity - Emotional Cognitive/ Physical



Debriefing/ Reflection/ Reviewing



Reflection at diverse stages, not just at the end of a programme: At the beginning of a programme and activity (framing). During an activity, at the end of an activity, during informal activities like lunch, walking from activity A to B etc.

Practice in SA

- No proper preparation of participants (emotional and physical)
- No proper progression of activities and programmes
- No proper briefing of activities to explain outcomes
- Wrong application of Adventure Applications
- No intentional consideration of characteristics
- No proper capacity for emotional awareness
- No reflection, reviewing or debriefing
- No adequate transfer of learning

What did these participants “learn” during these events – based on their stories.

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- Outdoor Adventure experiences are not cool.
- They will not easily step outside their comfort zones again.
- They are not as “okay” as their friends are.
- They are burdens in their group (any group)
- This learning is not limited to the adventure experiences, but who they are in relationships (partner, family, society).
- New fear paradigms and negative perceptions about life has been instilled after this experience.

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- They are sold for life and will look for any possible outdoor adventure opportunity.
- They will explore more experiences outside their comfort zones.
- They found they are actually more “okay” than they thought.
- They are influencers, more than they thought.
- They are able to transfer the positive learning to their lives.
- They are more equipped to deal with fear and problematic/ challenging experiences.

Intentional Adventurous Experiences

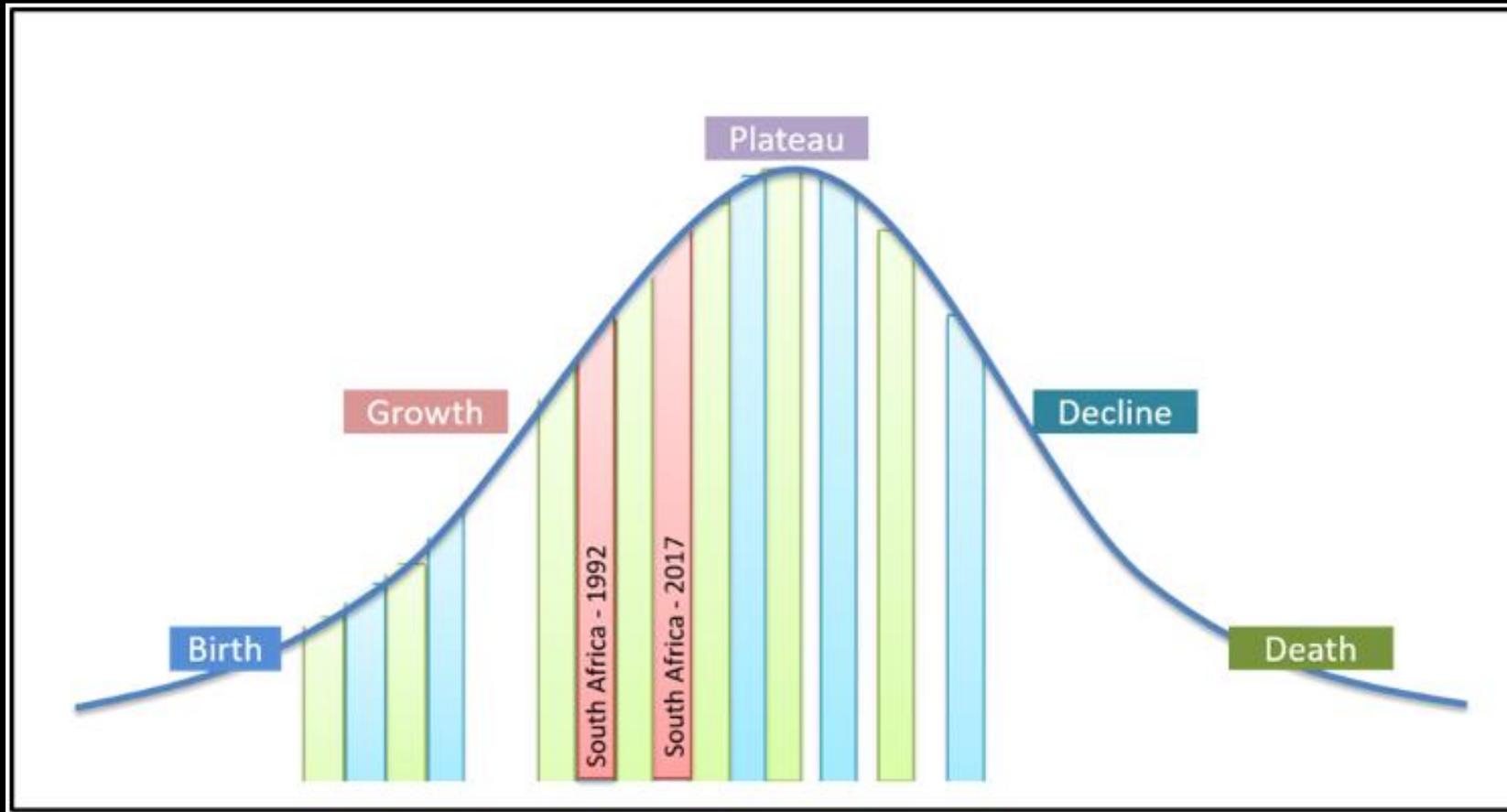
- Intentionally putting all together.
- Intentionally having relevant discussions in between and after experiences.
- Being conscious of heart and brain experiences.



Benefits Adventurous Experiential Learning

- **Increased self-confidence:** When you face and overcome challenges in an outdoor setting, it can boost your self-confidence. You learn that you are capable of more than you thought possible, and this can give you a sense of empowerment.
- **Improved problem-solving skills:** Adventure related experiential learning often requires you to solve problems in real time. This can help you to develop your problem-solving skills and learn how to think on your feet.
- **Enhanced people and team skills:** Adventure related experiential learning often requires you to work together with others to achieve a common goal. This can help you to develop your teamwork and community skills and learn how to communicate and collaborate effectively. Understanding emotional intelligence.
- **Increased resilience:** When you face challenges in an outdoor setting, you learn to persevere and overcome obstacles. This can help you to develop resilience, which is the ability to bounce back from setbacks.
- **Improved self-awareness:** Adventure related experiential learning can help you to become more aware of your strengths and weaknesses. It can also help you to learn how to manage your emotions and cope with stress.
- **Enhanced appreciation for nature:** Adventure related experiential learning can help you to develop a greater appreciation for nature. You learn to appreciate the beauty of the outdoors and the importance of protecting the environment.
- **Increased creativity:** When you are faced with new and challenging situations, you are forced to think outside the box and come up with creative solutions. This can help you to develop your creativity, which is an essential skill for success in today's world.
- **Improved decision-making skills:** Adventure related experiential learning can help you to develop your decision-making skills. You learn to weigh the pros and cons of different options and make informed decisions.
- **Enhanced communication skills:** Adventure related experiential learning can help you to develop your communication skills. You learn to communicate effectively with others, both verbally and nonverbally.
- **Increased leadership skills:** Adventure related experiential learning can help you to develop your leadership skills. You learn how to motivate and inspire others, and how to take charge in difficult situations.

Our Industry



Thank you!

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