

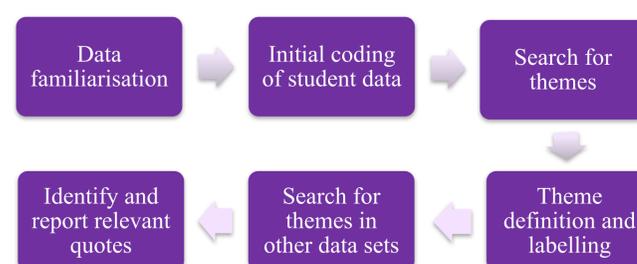
Disengaged students experience of attending an outdoor education centre: A qualitative study

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Introduction

- It is estimated up to 100,000 children and young people are unable to attend mainstream schools (Visser, Daniels & Macnab, 2005). Disengagement with education can lead to unemployment, mental health problems and involvement in criminal activity. Therefore, an alternative learning environment for these pupils is a necessary measure (Visser, Daniels & Cole, 2012).
- It is proposed that students who are persistent absentees have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) which are largely unrecognised and therefore are not provided for in school settings.
- Recently, there has been an increased interest in outdoor education provisions. However, research is limited due to the use of quantitative pre-post measures which are unable to investigate how and why outdoor education works. Furthermore, mostly adult samples have been recruited.
- The proposed study aims to address this gap by revealing insights in to how adolescents with SEBD, who do not attend school, perceive the experience of attending an outdoor centre.

- **Data analysis:** Braun & Clarke’s (2006) guidelines to thematic analysis were followed. The analysis was guided inductively by the student interviews. Analytic themes were then deductively identified within the keyworker and parent data sets, field notes and observations.



Findings

Table 1: Final themes identified in the data

Super-ordinate Theme	Sub-ordinate Theme
Barriers and Facilitators to learning	Motivation Engagement
Personal Development	Changing responses Adaptation Transferable changes Sense of Achievement
Learning Environment	Structure Containment
Reflection	Acknowledgment of past behaviour Insight in to intrapersonal changes Contemplating the future
Relationships	Students perception of relationship with others Relationships with other students
Sense of Belonging	Community at the centre Stability at the centre Rejection

The emerging themes identify a number of factors students perceive to be important to them during their time in outdoor education. This was further demonstrated by staff keyworkers and parents/guardians data.

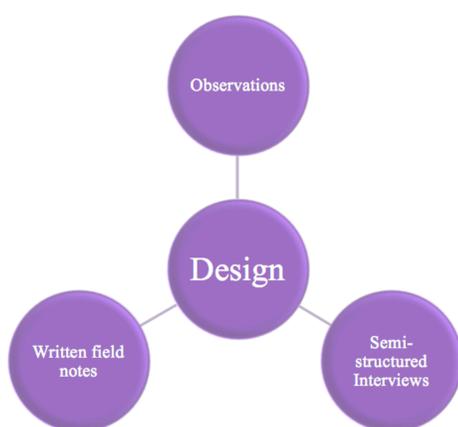
This study demonstrates the importance and value of students views. Furthermore, these results could be used to guide policy makers when producing school inclusion strategies to help re-engage students in education.

Research questions

1. What are students subjective experiences of attending an outdoor programme?
2. What are parents and outdoor centre staff’s perception of the usefulness of the outdoor education programme for students

Methods

- **Design:** Semi-structured interviews and ethnographic data (observations and field notes)
- **Sample:** Students attending an outdoor education centre ($N=10$), students staff keyworkers ($N=10$) and parents/guardians of the students ($N=3$).
- **Recruitment:** Purposive sampling was implemented to recruit students. Following this, staff keyworkers were recruited if they worked one-to-one with the student. Parents and guardians of the students involved in the study were also asked to participate.
- **Procedure:**
 - *Interviews:* Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, staff and parents/guardians following a topic guide. Interviews lasted between 20-50 minutes.
 - *Observations:* Overt observations were conducted with students. Observations took place opportunistically. Researchers spent half a day to a full day with each student and their keyworker as a participant observer.



References

1. Visser, J., Daniels, H., & Macnab, N. (2005) Missing: children and young people with SEBD. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 10 (1), 43-54
2. Visser, J., Daniels, H., & Cole, T. (2012). Transforming troubled lives: Strategies and interventions for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. *International perspectives on inclusion education*, 2, 405-407
3. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.